

Critical Social Sciences

Studies in

Milan Zafirovski

Liberal
Modernity
Freedom, Liberalism
and Its
and Anti-Liberalism
Adversaries
in the 21st Century

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Liberal Modernity and Its Adversaries

Studies in Critical Social Sciences

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Liberal Modernity and Its Adversaries

Freedom, Liberalism and Anti-Liberalism
in the 21st Century

by

Milan Zafirovski



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Chapter One

Introduction

Studying Liberal Society and Modernity

The following is a comparative-historical sociological analysis of modern liberal society and its adversaries. This study of liberal society and modernity, i.e. simply liberalism, has two major interlinked objectives. First, this is to argue and demonstrate that liberal society and modernity is a free as well as equal and just social system and historical period, and to that extent the most appropriate, compatible and desirable Durkheimian societal type within, as Comte would put it, contemporary civilization or humanity.

At first sight, this may look like a redundant tautological objective, as is within the framework of liberalism as the principle and social system of liberty as well as equality and justice (Dahrendorf 1979; Habermas 2001; Mannheim 1986; Van Dyke 1995). Yet, it is not in general, given anti-liberal, especially conservative, including fascist, claims and accusations condemning and attacking liberal society and modernity as almost the exact opposite to such a social system, especially in America under neo-conservatism (viz. attacks on modern US liberals for creating or supporting repressive “big government”, “regulation”, “tax and spend” policy, etc.). In particular, the objective is to present and substantiate the above argument in respect with contemporary

democratic Western civilization and history since at least the Enlightenment and the 1789 French Revolution commonly considered as ushering in liberal society and modernity. This is to posit and document that within modern Western civilization, liberal society as a rule has been and remains the social system or project of liberty, equality and justice, and conversely, its illiberal, including conservative, fascist and communist alternatives, systems of unfreedom, inequality and injustice.

The second objective is to argue and demonstrate that contemporary civilization during its relatively *long durée* (Braudel 1979) of two centuries since the 18th century Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and perhaps before (the late 15th century Renaissance) has essentially moved in the direction of liberal society and liberalism via societal liberalization, liberation and human emancipation. This holds true primarily of Western Europe and secondarily America, albeit with a myriad of anti-liberal reactions, interruptions, enemies, contestations, subversions or threats, ranging from medievalist traditionalism and religious orthodoxy, including theocracy, and arch-conservatism to fascism and communism and to neo-conservatism, the new theocratic fundamentalism and neo-fascism.

The second objective may also seem redundant or tautological in view of the frequent observation that the Enlightenment, for example, begot and ushered in liberal-democratic society and modernity, i.e. liberalism, as its child (Habermas 2001). However, it is less so in light of the fact that this child from the very birth up to the 21st century has been vehemently condemned, attacked and temporarily “exorcised” in the sense of Puritan “Salem with witches” (Putnam 2000: 355) as “illegitimate”, “evil” and “witch” by anti-liberalism. These attacks started from medievalist arch-conservatism in the wake of the French Revolution, continued with fascism and communism in interwar Europe, and resumed with neo-conservatism in America and Great Britain and neo-fascism in Western and other societies during the 1980s–2000s.

Liberal-democratic society and modernity, while an evident hallmark of contemporary Enlightenment-based Western civilization, has always been contested and assailed, albeit never completely destroyed, by anti-liberal forces arising in negative reaction, persisting and even occasionally, as in Germany in the 1920s–30s and America during the 1980s–2000s, resurrecting and reinforcing since. In this sense, the history of contemporary Western civilization since the Enlightenment, if not the Renaissance as its prelude, has

been, as Comte, Spencer, J. S. Mill, Durkheim and other sociologists (Beck 2000; Giddens 2000; Habermas 2001) imply, the story of the struggle between liberal free, open, society and its adversaries and detractors (Popper 1966). Particularly, it has been the history of a battle between liberalism and conservatism, including fascism, as what Mannheim (1936) calls immediate and subsequently perennial antagonists, more precisely, of the genesis, development and extension of liberal society and modernity, and the adverse reaction and continuous hostility to and attacks on it by conservative-fascist forces. The battle between liberal society and its adversaries and detractors, notably conservatism and its extreme offspring fascism, continues in various forms and degrees, including culture, temperance and violent wars, though to a lesser extent in Western Europe than America (Bell 2002), by the 21st century, just as it started in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and enfolded subsequently.

The study argues that liberal-democratic society and modernity in general and in the long run has been and is expected to ultimately become victorious in this protracted conflict over its adversaries or remains resilient to anti-liberal assaults, denials and reversals. In particular, the objective is to present and substantiate this argument with regard to contemporary advanced and democratic Western societies since WW II, especially the late 20th and early 21st century. This is to posit and document that by the 21st century most Western societies continue, or resume and reinforce their long-run movement toward liberal modernity and liberalism through renewed and reinforcing processes of liberalization (Inglehart and Baker 2000), though with salient exceptions or deviations, above all America under anti-liberal neo-conservatism during the 1980s–2000s.

In sum, the twin objective of this study is to elaborate on and demonstrate that liberal society and modernity is free, equal and just social system and historical time, and has been and continues to be the primary reality, trend or blueprint of contemporary Western civilization. The second argument is qualified by recognizing secondary exceptions, aberrations or diversions, as epitomized by America's both celebrated and deplored (Lipset 1996) anti-liberal exceptionalism due to the historical and continuing prevalence of conservatism, notably religious fundamentalism represented by Protestant sectarianism.

The study proposes that liberal society and modernity satisfies human civilization's perennial quest and craving for the "good society" typically defined

and identified (“proven”) by, as Adam Smith suggests, the triangle and triple “plan” of liberty, equality and justice in, as Mannheim (1986) emphasizes, conjunction and mutual reinforcement. It also proposes that liberal modernity is, as Weber implies by describing capitalism as the “most fateful force in our modern lives”, the most likely “fate” and eventual “destiny” of Western civilization and global society (Inglehart 2004). This proposition is in turn qualified by taking account of or envisioning some persisting and probable exceptions, ranging from America under anti-liberal conservatism (e.g. “Bible Belt” evangelicalism) to conservative Catholic societies and theocratic states (Ireland, Poland, the Vatican) and to Islamic theocracies.

At this juncture, a methodological disclaimer is perhaps in order. The preceding and ensuing discussion fully accords with Durkheim-Weber’s precept for value-free sociological analysis of social phenomena as “things” and “data”, involving statements of fact, rather than value judgments. For example, stating that liberal society and modernity has been in the past, actually constitutes and is likely to become the social system and historical reality of liberty, a modern instance of the “good society”, is a factual statement of historical processes, empirical facts and expected future tendencies, not a value judgment and evaluation. It is a non-evaluative statement of fact by simply saying “what has been and is”, and not what “should be or have been”, with “good” referring to what Durkheim calls collective representations and human ideals of the “good society”, not to analysts own concept of “goodness” and evaluation.

In accordance with Thomas’s (1951) sociological theorem (also Merton 1995), it refers to people’s “definitions of the situation” called the “good society”, i.e. their “social constructions of reality” (Berger and Luckman 1966), within modern Western civilization since the Enlightenment, as Durkheimian “things” and data in their own right. In Weber’s terms, “good” refers to social actors’ subjective valuations (value judgments) and “normative ideals” of what they conceive and expect as the “good” society, including economy, and its “cultural significance” for their ends-means scheme, “pursuit of happiness” and ultimately lives. In this sense, the present, like other reasonably value-free sociological, analysis treats these human values and ideals concerning the “good society” as its subject-matter and objective data a la Durkheim’s “things”, rather than intrinsic or indispensable to it – nothing more, nothing less. It is, as Weber suggests, basically immaterial whether actor values coin-

cide or not with those of the analyst so long as the latter takes and analyzes them as scientific facts and simply given but does not judge and pronounce on them by making value, necessarily subjective, judgments.¹

Also essentially non-evaluative, value-free is the statement that contemporary Western civilization during its *long durée* has since the Enlightenment, if not the Renaissance, tended and continues to develop in the direction of liberal modernity and society. It is in virtue of registering and identifying what historically “has been” and actually “is”, and in part prospectively “will be”, in view of relevant historical processes and present-time trends rather than proposing and urging what “should have been” and “ought to be” in this respect. In short, it is a reasonably objective diagnosis of, not a subjective prescription for, liberal society and modernity, i.e. liberalism. And, not only “liberals”, but also anti-liberals (cf. Deutsch and Soffer 1987; Dunn and Woodard 1996) can and do make such diagnoses, but, of course, unlike the first, deny prescriptions in this sense.

In sum, stating that liberal society and modernity is the social system and historical time of liberty differs from, by involving factual statements, recommending that it “should be”, as liberals advocate, or “should not be”, as do anti-liberals, such a system. Also, stating that liberal modernity is a prime long-run historical process in Western civilization differs from advising that it “ought to be” as “good, as for liberalism, or ought not to be” as “bad”, as per anti-liberalism, such a trend. Both cases involve statements of fact and refrain from making value judgments in Weber’s sense. Even “liberal society and modernity is the social system and historical time of liberty as well as equality and justice” is a statement of fact and tendency, rather than, as it might seem at first sight, value judgment. It is so given that liberty, equality and justice have different and even opposite meanings and treatments in liberalism by contrast to anti-liberalism, including conservatism, and hence are understood

¹ To recall, Weber cautions in his methodological considerations that sociology and other science “offers the following advice to those who turn to science for “normative ideals” [or values]: ‘Be whatever you are.’” Formally, for the reason of space and economy, and assuming the familiarity with Weber’s and other classical sociologists’ and economists’ writings, their full references are not provided, by analogy to the standard citation practice with respect to classical philosophers or physical scientists, from Plato and Aristotle to Machiavelli and Hobbes to Descartes and Bacon to Kant and Hegel.

in an objective value-free, neutral fashion, in Weber's words, as "beyond good and bad".

Specifically, the same statement comprising "liberty, equality and justice" means a positive evaluation of praise, approbation and "goodness" in liberal society and modernity (liberalism), yet the negative of condemnation, reprobation and "evil" in its anti-liberal alternatives, including authoritarian conservatism, especially totalitarian fascism, and in part anti-egalitarian economic "libertarianism". Liberals and anti-liberals read and interpret such statements in mutually contradicting and antagonistic terms, and to that extent neither can accuse the author of making concrete value judgments by using these evidently value-laden principles and terms, yet considered like other values, as Weber and Durkheim suggest, "objective facts" and given "data".

As so often in social life and emphasized by Simmel,² what is, such as individual liberty, equality and justice, a "virtue", "cure", "panacea", "benefit" or high value to liberalism, is a "vice", "poison", "danger", "cost" or low value to anti-liberalism like conservatism and fascism, and conversely (e.g. coercion, repression, discipline, "law and order"). This is useful to stress, because the present study is a conceptualization of liberal society/modernity as a social system and historical time of freedom, and its identification and rediscovery as a master historical process, rather than its positive or negative evaluation in any of these ways. It is a diagnosis, and when possible likely prediction of realities and trends, not a prescription or proscription of a societal heaven for liberals and "hell" for anti-liberals, including conservatives, fascists and communists.

Before proceeding further, another disclaimer is in order. Substantively or ideologically, this book is not and cannot be described neither in terms of the "left" nor the "right"; at least, this would be the worst description of it. US and other conservatives, fascists and other "right" anti-liberals will likely dismiss and designate this book, like any other focusing on liberal society and modernity, as "leftist", and orthodox Marxists, post-modernists and others on the anti-liberal "left" as "rightist". A preemptive answer and "consolation prize" to anti-liberal US and other conservatives is that this is a book that probably

² For example, Simmel remarks that what is a (fatherly) king for some groups is a tyrant for others instead.

Tocqueville, classified by Parsons³ (1937: viii) among the “conservatives” of the French sociological tradition (together with de Maistre and Bonald), even seen as the “patron saint” (Putnam 2000: 24; also Lipset 1996) of American conservatism and communitarianism, would probably have come close to writing in terms of substantive argument (not form) and evidence if he lived, notably visited America again, during the early 21st century (as implied in Lipset and Marks 2000). So would *mutatis mutandis* other (mis)perceived conservative heroes in sociology and economics like Comte, Spencer, Smith, Mill, Marshall, Weber, Durkheim, Pareto, Parsons and others. By analogy, such an answer and “consolation prize” can be given to Marxist, post-modernist and other “leftist” anti-liberals in respect with Marx and notably his sophisticated or partial disciples like Michels and Mannheim (as suggested by Dahrendorf-Habermas’ neo-Marxian “liberalism”, for example). In short, this is a book in the spirit and substance, though, of course, not the letter and form, of both Tocqueville and Mannheim, which denies and preempts its designation as either “leftist” or “rightist”.

Liberal Modernity: Realization of the Perennial Quest for Liberty

In principle and reality, liberal society and modernity is a free as well as egalitarian, open, just, rational, secular, inclusive, universalistic and humane social system and historical period. To that extent, it represents the sociological and historical realization or expression of the perennial human quest, ideal or dream of the free, open or generally “good society” as defined, in people’s collective representations, definitions and constructions of reality, by liberty as well as equality, justice, joined with rationalism, secularism, inclusion, universalism, and humanism.

In the words of Jefferson, the atypically (Archer 2001) Enlightenment-inspired founder of American liberalism and secularism – yet a secondary social force in American history and life dominated by political-religious conservatism, notably Protestant sectarianism since Puritanism (Lipset 1996) –

³ Parsons (1937: xiii–iv) comments that Tocqueville “represented the anxious nostalgia of the Ancien Regime” and describes him as “the apologist of a fully aristocratic society”. In turn, Hayek (1948: 4) includes Tocqueville among the early representatives of “true individualism” and by implication classical liberalism overall.

liberal society and modernity realizes or expresses the constant human search, ideal or dream of liberty, justice and equality, in the sense of “all men are created equal”, “for all”. Such Enlightenment-based ideas indicate that liberal society, in the sense of a Weberian pure or ideal type, is universalistic and inclusive in liberty, justice and equality on the assumption that these are inherently and ultimately universal, rather than particularistic, exclusive or closed as logical self-contradictions and practical perversions, and so to be universalized and “opened” to all individuals and groups. Thus, liberalism reveals its true libertarian, egalitarian and fairness universalism, inclusiveness and openness, as distinguished from anti-libertarian, anti-egalitarian and injustice particularism, exclusiveness or closure characteristic for anti-liberalism, especially conservatism and its “monster child” or ally fascism.

Modern liberal society is or strives to be not simply free, just and equal, as in the restricted and perverted sense of some social groups within society, plus societies in global terms, being “freer” and “more equal” than others, as in US anti-egalitarian economic “libertarianism” and (also) militarist-imperialistic neo-conservatism with its inherited invidious distinction between “American” and “un-American” or “foreign” persons and activities, manifesting what observers call “ascriptive” Americanism (King 1999; Turner 2002). Rather it is or aims to become universally and inclusively free, just and equal, albeit, as various critics would object, with many historical exceptions and actual deviations from this ideal-typical universalism and inclusion and openness in freedom, equality and justice in Western societies, including Jefferson’s America, such as exploitation, slavery, discrimination, segregation, racism, xenophobia, colonialism, imperialism, militarism, aggressive wars, occupation, and subjugation.

And these exceptions, while, as Pareto would remark, not confirming (as illogical) the “rule”, do not completely invalidate it in that they are usually secondary and historically diminishing – at least since WW II and during the 1990s–2000s – variations within the primary process, trend and blueprint of universalism in liberal society and modernity, by comparison with anti-liberalism like conservatism and fascism, where they typically occupy or play the prevalent place or role. As argued, most of these exceptions to universalism in liberty, equality and justice, from intra-social political repression to inter-social military aggression, have actually been and are likely to be the result of liberal society and modernity being invaded, contaminated, subverted and

even destroyed, as in interwar Europe and in part America during the 2000s, by extraneous anti- and pre-liberal, especially conservative, including fascist, forces and tendencies. To that extent, such exceptions in a sense “confirm” rather than invalidate the “rule” of universalistic liberty, equality and justice in liberal society and modernity as a social system and historical period. At least, universal liberty, justice and equality “for all”, if not always completely attained reality even at the threshold of the third millennium, was the original and remains the cardinal ideal (“I have a dream”) of liberal society and modernity as a social system and historical time, i.e. of liberalism as an ideological principle or utopia in Mannheim’s (1936) sense in contrast to anti-liberalism like conservatism that, as he puts it, has “no utopia” of universalism, and its derivative fascism.

In essence, as a sociological reality or historical ideal, liberal modernity is the modern epitome of the “good”, especially free and open, society (Popper 1966), realizing and manifesting the human seemingly eternal search and dream of liberty, equality and justice. Perhaps, as anti-liberals claim, not every “good” society and life is liberal, i.e. free, open, egalitarian and just, as indicated by despotic Catholic-based medievalism and theocratic Puritanism and other sectarian Protestantism, providing eternal models of “goodness” for European (Nisbet 1966) and American conservatism (Dunn and Woodard 1996; Lipset 1996), respectively. Yet, the converse is almost invariably true. Virtually any historical and existing liberal *cum* free and open society has been and is a type of the “good society” (Popper 1966) as represented by collective representations and defined by social definitions in these societies.

The above holds true at least within the framework of contemporary Western civilization, defined as and determined by liberal modernity (Habermas 2001), and even beyond (Inglehart 2004) during the early 21st century. It does so, with the predictable, persisting and admittedly “double-edged” (Lipset 1996) exception of America pervaded and even dominated yet again by resurrected religious conservatism, exemplified by what sociologists describe as “Bible Belt” evangelicalism and Islamic theocracies like Iran, which both condemn, attack and destroy liberal society and modernity as the “supreme evil” through “proto-totalitarian” alternatives to human liberty and life (Bauman 1997). Except for these deviant and other less salient and extreme cases, (e.g. Catholic Ireland and Poland, cf. Inglehart 2004) in contemporary Western and many other societies and for most people within them, liberal modernity, i.e.

societal liberalism, has come to be experienced and signify the very “good society” humans always searched for and dreamed of, specifically the social system and historical time of liberty, equality and justice. In short, liberal modernity is considered and lived as the modern, specifically Enlightenment, redefinition and realization of the “good society”.

The preceding signifies that contemporary civilization, specifically liberal modernity as created and ushered in by the Enlightenment redefines and realizes the “good society” as the social system and historical period of conjoined, synergic liberty, equality and justice. Liberalism sharply contrasts with what Weber and Mannheim call medievalist traditionalism and its “self-reflective” product conservatism, for in medievalist and subsequent conservative definitions and realizations the “good society” is the pre-liberal system and time of religiously grounded and sanctified repressive rule, inequality and injustice in accordance with “God’s providential design” (Bendix 1984: 39), exemplified by the feudal ancient regime in Europe and elsewhere.

Second, it means that contemporary Western and other societies, or most people within them, excluding their ultra-conservative and theocratic deviations like America during repressive neo-conservatism and Iran under Islamic radicalism, identify and equate the social system and historical time of liberty, equality and justice with liberal society and modernity. In functionalist Parsons-Merton’s terms, liberal society and modernity has become, for better (to liberalism) or worse (to anti-liberalism), a functional equivalent for and substantive identity with the social system of liberty, equality and justice, and consequently the “good society” in contemporary Western civilization and even beyond (Inglehart and Baker 2000). This proposition needs to be qualified by taking into account the predictable salient “double-edged” exception of America in which dominant neo-conservatism like Reaganism, as an admittedly “extremist” anti-liberal ideology and politics (Blomberg and Harrington 2000), has succeeded to form, and more strikingly to persuade most Americans in, sort of equation of “liberal” to “evil”, “un-American” and “foreign”. Yet, if “liberal” is, as Weber would suggest, what essentially defines and differentiates “West” (“Occident”) from “East” (“Orient”) as “conservative” or “traditionalist”, including “despotic”, this reopens the question as to what is really “Western”, as claimed by neo-conservatives equating it with “American”, in contemporary America under neo-conservatism ushering in the 21st century.

Alternatively, an illiberal, including hyper-conservative, fundamentalist, theocratic and fascist, society has come to signify and be experienced by most of their members, except for its anti-liberal rulers as well as its true and sado-masochistic believers (Bähr 2002; Bauman 2000; Fromm 1941; McLaughlin 1996) as the social system, reality and symbol of illiberty, inequality and injustice (Dahrendorf 1979) in contemporary Western and other societies. This needs to be qualified by considering expected deviations such as America during anti-liberal religious-political neo-conservatism, epitomized by “Bible Belt” theocratic evangelicalism, and Iran under Islamic theocracy, as “proto-totalitarian solutions” to liberal society/modernity (Bauman 1997).

In comparative-historical terms, this prevalent Western and global experience or meaning of liberal modernity as the functional equivalent of a free, egalitarian and just society, i.e. in the Jeffersonian sense of “liberty, equality and justice for all”, is probably surprising to and denied by US conservatives from McCarthy et al. to neo-conservatives – and perhaps most Americans, not to mention Iranians and European neo-fascists – establishing and believing in the exact opposite equation and imputation of “liberal” with “un-freedom” (viz. “big government”, “regulation”, “tax and spend” policies). Historically, this holds good in spite or rather because of Jefferson’s and perhaps Madison’s “atypical” (Archer 2001) and suspected “foreign”, French and “atheistic” (as imputed by their federalist detractors), liberalism and secularism. As known, Jefferson’s “un-American” liberalism and secularism always provoked recurring conservative nihilistic reactions, counterattacks and subversions, if not destructions, of its creation and project of liberal-secular democracy, society and modernity, i.e. anti-liberal tendencies. These latter range and persist from post-revolutionary American authoritarian conservatism rooted in French arch-conservative Joseph de Maistre and exemplified by “Hamilton’s brand”⁴ (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 88) or Federalism to similarly repressive and radical neo-conservatism such as “rigid and uncompromising” Reaganism (and its derivatives) embodied in anti-liberal “rigid extremists” (e.g. alongside

⁴ Dunn and Woodard (1996: 34–88) admit that “Hamilton’s brand of conservatism may be properly labeled authoritarian conservatism” in virtue of advocating “a society and government ruled principally by an elite class” or aristocracy, predictably concentrated in the anti-egalitarian Federalist Party emphasizing, thus following British aristocratic arch-conservative Edmund Burke, the “importance of property and human inequality”. In their view, “the origin of authoritarian conservatism is generally traced to Joseph de Maistre” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 88).

Reagan, Newt Gingrich in the view of Blomberg and Harrington 2000). At least in this “deviant case” (Inglehart 2004) of America and its anti-liberal conservatives inflicting (“persuading”) most Americans with the “liberal” and “un-freedom” equation, ignorance and the consequent arrogance and even “sadistic” (Bauman 2000) intolerance of liberal modernity and liberalism as “un-American” otherness and Other is hardly ignorant blissfulness as in the fundamentalist tenet of “blissful ignorance” exemplified in the US conservative formula “no schooling is better than secular education” (Darnell and Sherkat 1997).

The above in particular holds true so long as, as Jefferson, Madison and other US early liberals-democrats imply, the venerable “pursuit of happiness” through “liberty, equality and justice for all” is solely possible or most successful within liberal society and modernity distinguished from its illiberal and pre-modern alternatives like repressive anti-egalitarian conservatism and medieval or feudal traditionalism. If so, then this suggest a supreme and perverse irony that the “American Dream” broadly, opposed to narrowly, materialistically, understood can only or most effectively attained within liberal society and by way of liberalism. This is ironic, for liberalism is allegedly in US conservatism from Federalism to McCarthyism to Reaganism, an “un-American”, “foreign” European “ungodly” creation, project and activity imported and disseminated by Enlightenment-inspired and so “atheistic” Jefferson as the testimony to his Paris life, a sufficient reason in itself for suspicion to US conservatives of all stripes, colors and times, from the nativist, authoritarian and anti-egalitarian post-revolutionary Federalists like Hamilton and Adams (Dunn and Woodard 1996) to nationalist neo-conservatives a la Reaganite “rigid extremists” and racist neo-fascists such as “Christian” terrorist militia.

In sense, these allegations that liberalism is “alien” and imported to America are actually correct, but so is American conservatism, including its religious version like Puritanism and other Protestant sectarianism, as US conservative sociologists (Nisbet 1966; also Lipset 1996) suggest by identifying its European and medievalist roots and ancestors. After all, just as Jefferson’s “foreign” liberalism and secularism, “all-American” theocratic Puritanism as what Tocqueville describes as the destiny of America was essentially European and French, i.e. Calvinism transmitted from the old world to the new nation via England (Sprunger 1982).

Such are apparently, as Merton (1968) would put it, the perversities and eccentricities of anti-liberalism. Specifically, they pertain to American conservatism's equation of "liberalism" to "un-American", so its failure and resistance to acknowledge that liberal society and modernity is the social system, historical time and project of universal liberty, equality, justice and democracy in America, so of fulfilling the "American Dream", and to that extent the modern epitome of the "good society" as the perennial ideal of humans, including Americans themselves.

Alternatively, the "American Dream" remains a dream and even, as sociologists suggest, becomes a sort of "nightmare" (Beck 2001) of "illiberty, inequality and injustice" for most people, excluding the narrow ruling group or the less than 1 percent "top heavy" (Wolff 2002), within anti-liberalism. This was historically indicated by various anti-liberal institutions and practices in American history and society from the 17th to the 21st century. Early anti-liberal cases in point are New England's Puritan theocratic repression and persecution, including witch-trials, of the "ungodly" and "impure" and the Southern usually conservative system of slavery, segregation, vigilante violence, discrimination and denial of all kinds of liberties and human rights (Amenta, Bonastia and Caren 2001; Cochran 2001; Jacobs, Carmichael and Kent 2005; Messner, Baller and Zevenbergen 2005).

Such subsequent cases involve McCarthyism and its own proxy of Puritan witch-hunts of "un-American" persons and activities and its generalization in neo-conservatism (Plotke 2002) with its repressive culture and military wars (Munch 2001; Wagner 1997). In a sense, these two forms of American anti-liberalism represent variations on recreating "Salem with witches" (Putnam 2000) as both a historical reality and a sociological metaphor of the opposite of liberal modernity, even of the "good society" in virtually any definition, except for Puritan and other illiberal Divine-ordained rulers. Hence, arch-conservative and proto-Puritan "Salem with witches", as the micro-cosmos, model and image of an anti-liberal, conservative oppressive, exclusive, sectarian and theocratic society, is eventually self-destructive and self-contradictory to the "American Dream", the constitutional principle of "pursuit of happiness" and Jefferson's ideal of liberty, equality and justice "for all." To that extent, "Salem with witches" is the constitutive component and syndrome of illiberty (and irrationalism) of American religious conservatism (Puritanism

or Protestant fundamentalism), part and emblem of the conservative (Puritan-fundamentalist) “method in the madness” (Smith 2000) of anti-liberalism. Conversely, it is not, as claimed by its adherents or descendants by their “liberal mythology” (Gould 1996) and probably interpreted by most Americans, an exceptional anomaly within a supposedly democratic-republican polity and society a la Winthrop’s theocratic “shining city upon a hill” celebrated and emulated by US neo-conservatives like Reagan and other “rigid extremists” (Blomberg and Harrington 2000).

Overall, the purpose of this section has been to theoretically establish that liberal society and modernity tends to be a free, equal and just social system and historical period, or more so than its anti-liberal, including conservative, adversaries and detractors, and consequently “good” as understood, via Durkheimian collective representations and Thomas-like social definitions, in contemporary Western civilization. This has placed liberal modernity in contrast with Weber-Mannheim’s medieval traditionalism and its heir conservatism, including fascism, in which the “good society”, i.e. societal “goodness”, was and basically remains collectively represented and defined a la Durkheim and the Thomas sociological theorem as the exact opposite of a social system and time of liberty, equality and justice, or at most its simulation, as in neo-conservatism and economic “libertarianism”. For that purpose, such theoretical arguments will be elaborated and substantiated in the remainder of the study.

Concept and Reality of Liberal Modernity

The thesis that liberal society and modernity as the social system and historical period is the realization or expression of the perennial human quest for liberty and the good society is elaborated by identifying and considering its constitutive elements as well as main adversaries or detractors. In general, the concept and reality of liberal society and modernity is premised on the ideal and social institutions of human liberty, i.e. societal liberalism. Positively, liberal society/modernity is a social space and a historical time of freedom, joined with equality and justice, so free as well as equal and just, libertarian, egalitarian and fair alike.

Negatively, it constitutes a social system and a historical period liberated from and superseding various anti-liberal forces and “signs of illiberty”

(Dahrendorf 1979: 93), especially medieval-rooted and inspired conservative “decreed ligatures” and institutions, including theocratic church, nationalist-imperialist nation/race and authoritarian or totalitarian state. In this sense, liberal society and modernity is what Mannheim (1986: 81) would call the “sociological constellation” and the historical act and process of liberation from such anti-liberty forces and symbols. Notably, the latter involve conservatism as the principal immediate and eventually perennial antagonist of liberalism, ranging from its pre-modern form or origin in feudalism and medievalist traditionalism, to its subsequent variants, including fascism, and its contemporary form neo-conservatism.

Dimensions of Liberal Modernity

In particular, the constitutive and defining dimensions of liberal society and modernity can be classified into socio-cultural, political, economic and global, which are typically intertwined and mutually reinforcing within this social space and historical time of liberty, equality and justice. For instance, analysts identify the following characteristics of modern liberal society: geographic mobility, technological and economic innovation, familial and social mobility, secularization, pluralism, a commitment to human liberties and rights (Wall 1998: 4).

First, liberal society and modernity is defined and typified by the following set of reciprocally related and reinforcing socio-cultural dimensions and outcomes. These are civil liberties and human rights; as a corollary, free civil society and culture; egalitarianism in the sense of equality of life chances or opportunities; social justice or equity in the meaning of fairness; multiculturalism, i.e. pluralism and diversity, including collective identities, and the like. For example, analysts notice that America as a society of immigration par excellence represents, despite conservative denials, attacks and protestations, “a diverse, pluralistic society” (Garry 1992: 5). This dimension renders, or is likely to eventually make, America a liberal society in demographic and cultural, even if not political and ideological, terms, though conservative and other anti-liberal, notably neo-fascist, social forces usually seek and succeed to suppress and discredit this culture diversity, like pluralism in politics and ideology, as “un-American”.

Liberal society is further defined and typified by another related set of reciprocal and mutually reinforcing socio-cultural dimensions. These incorporate cultural liberalization in the sense of moral liberation and autonomy and religious tolerance and freedom; secularism expressed in a substantive differentiation of religion and secular society or culture; rationalism manifested in the appreciation and adoption of reason, science, education and technology; individualism involving individual liberties, rights and privacy; humanism reflected in respect and promotion of human dignity, happiness, liberty and life as the prime goal not to be subordinated or sacrificed to higher supra-human, theological or political purposes, and the like.

Second, liberal society and modernity is defined and typified by a set of socio-political dimensions and outcomes, also intertwined and mutually reinforcing. These involve political freedoms and rights; as a corollary representative or constitutional democracy; secular polity via a formal separation of religion-church and politics-state; ideological-political pluralism through a multi-party system; institutionalized dissent, opposition and tolerance in politics; state neutrality and efficient public administration (bureaucracy); democratic rule of law and formal rules of the game (legal-rational authority); welfare (social-insurance) institutions and universalism in public benefits; enlightened judicial and penal minimalism, and the like.

Third, liberal society and modernity is defined and typified by a set of, also intertwined and mutually reinforcing, economic dimensions and outcomes. These encompass economic freedoms, choices and rights; as a corollary, a free market economy; industrial democracy in the form of countervailing labor power, liberties and rights; economic egalitarianism via reasonable and comparatively, compared with non-liberal societies, low and eventually diminishing wealth/income inequalities and poverty, equal life chances (equality of opportunity), redistribution to economically non-privileged and progressive taxation of the privileged; economic universalism involving universal life chances "for all", inclusion and achievement overcoming particularism, exclusion and ascription; distributive justice or fairness, including the lack or reduction of exploitation, discrimination and other unfair practices in distribution, and so forth.

Fourth, liberal society and modernity is defined and typified by a set of global or trans-national dimensions and outcomes, similarly in reciprocal relationship and reinforcement. These comprise the process of globalization

or world integration; as a corollary, the creation of a global liberal, free society; globalizing cultural, political, economic and other universalism resulting in cosmopolitanism, including world citizenship and orientations in substantive terms, transcending localism, parochialism, regionalism and nationalism; pacifism in the sense of institutions and practices promoting and maintaining world peace and prohibiting or refraining from imperialist conquest and aggressive war superseding militarism, offensive wars, imperialism or colonialism; multilateralism through international coordination, cooperation and consent substituting for unilateralism, imperialism or empire, so the arbitrary decisions and military domination by a single imperial nation-state; globalized progressivism and humanism by global technological, medical and economic progress for humanistic purposes, benefiting all societies and humans, and so on. This study specifies and reconsiders these sets of dimensions and outcomes of liberalism (summarized in Table 1), with a primary focus on liberal democracy and civil society.

Liberal Modernity and its Adversaries

As indicated, liberal society and modernity as defined has been since its beginning counteracted, attacked and occasionally or transiently destroyed and reversed by a myriad of anti-liberal forces and adversaries (Popper 1966). Historically, these forces emerge with traditionalism, specifically feudalism and late medievalism, eventually turned, through what Mannheim (1986) calls its self-reflection about and adverse reaction to liberal modernity, into proto- or traditional conservatism in Europe (Nisbet 1966) and later America (Dunn and Woodard 1996). They continue through subsequent European and American conservatism, including medieval-rooted (Catholic and Protestant, as well as Islamic) religious orthodoxy and its crusade-style battle (Habermas 2001) against liberalism, notably liberal-secular democracy and civil society. In Europe, these anti-liberal forces escalate or climax through fascism as their extreme subtype or ally, as indicated by WW I and II as largely the effects of traditional conservatism and Nazism respectively, and in America via McCarthyism as an American fascist version or proxy during the Cold War.

And they, albeit “presumed dead” after their defeat in these wars, especially the last war (Giddens 1998), resurrect in the form of neo-conservatism, including the new religious fundamentalism and sectarianism, primarily in

Table 1
Dimensions of Liberal Society and Modernity

I. *Socio-cultural dimensions*

civil liberties and human rights
 free civil society and culture
 egalitarianism – equality of life chances/opportunities
 social justice – equity, fairness
 multiculturalism – pluralism/diversity, collective identities
 cultural liberalization – moral liberation and autonomy
 religious tolerance and freedom
 secularism – substantive differentiation of religion and secular society
 rationalism – appreciation and adoption of reason, science, education and technology
 individualism – individual liberties, rights and privacy
 humanism – respect and promotion of human dignity, happiness, liberty and life

II. *Socio-political dimensions*

political freedoms and rights
 representative or constitutional democracy
 secular polity – formal separation of religion-church and politics-state
 ideological-political pluralism – multi-party system
 institutionalized dissent – opposition and tolerance in politics
 state neutrality and efficient public administration (bureaucracy)
 democratic rule of law and formal rules of the game – legal-rational authority
 welfare institutions – social insurance, universalism in public benefits
 enlightened judicial and penal minimalism

III. *Socio-economic dimensions*

economic freedoms, choices and rights
 free market economy
 industrial democracy – countervailing labor power, liberties and rights
 economic egalitarianism – diminishing wealth/income inequalities and poverty, equal life chances (equality of opportunity), redistribution, progressive taxation
 economic universalism – universal life chances, inclusion, achievement
 distributive justice/fairness – reduction of exploitation, discrimination and other unfair distribution

IV. *Global social dimensions*

process of globalization: world integration
 global free society, including economy, polity and culture
 globalizing political, cultural, economic and other universalism – cosmopolitanism
 world citizenship
 pacifism – world peace, prohibition of imperialist conquest and offensive war
 multilateralism – international coordination, reduction of unilateralism
 globalized progressivism and humanism: global technological, medical and economic progress for humanistic purposes, benefits for all societies and humans

America (Lipset 1996; Munch 2001) and to a lesser extent Europe and Great Britain, in virulent opposition to post-war political and cultural liberalization, notably the liberal 1960s. Strikingly, during the 1980s–2000s conservatism and even fascism “resurrected from the dead” (Dunn and Woodard 1996), though liberalism’s defeat of the latter during WW II “permanently discredited an array of myths which, ever since the end of the 19th century, had been mobilized against the heritage of 1789 [the French Revolution]”⁵ (Habermas 2001: 46).

The outcome has been anti-liberal neo-conservatism, exemplified by British Thatcherism and American Reaganism as repressive, anti-egalitarian and ultimately inefficient and even self-destructive ideologies and social systems (Giddens 1998; Hodgson 1999), including neo-fascism as a neo-conservative species of totalitarianism, racism and xenophobia *déjà vu* in Europe, including neo-Nazism in Germany, and beyond, even America (e.g. neo-fascist supremacist and “Christian” militia). At this juncture, history seems to replicate itself. Namely, just as fascism, including Nazism, was the extreme version, creation or ally of illiberal traditional conservatism (Blinkhorn 2003; Dahrendorf 1979; Moore 1993) in interwar Europe, as was quasi-fascist McCarthyism of paleo-conservatism in post-war America, so is in essence, with certain minor qualifications, neo-fascism in this region and America one of anti-liberal European and American neo-conservatism.

For instance, the above holds true of neo-Nazism in relation to German and Austrian neo-conservatism (e.g. in Bavaria and other regions in Germany and Austria), as well as of neo-fascism in Italy and elsewhere in Europe (e.g. France, Holland) relative to Italian and other European (French, Dutch) neo-conservatisms (as vividly or grotesquely exemplified by the alliance between Mussolini’s heirs and Berlusconi et al.). It also applies to the relationship of neo-fascism (e.g. “Christian” terrorist militias) to neo-conservatism in America, notably “rigid” and “extremist” Reaganism and its derivatives (Blomberg and Harrington 2000; Giddens 2000; Hodgson 1999). Moreover, since fascism has always been and remains a species of extreme conservatism, Reaganism,

⁵ Habermas (2001: 46) suggests that fascism’s defeat by liberalism during WW II “not only sparked the democratic developments”, as in Germany, Japan, Italy, Portugal and Spain, but “undermined the foundations of all forms of political legitimation that did not [at least verbally] subscribe to the universalist spirit of political enlightenment”.

in virtue of being “rigid and uncompromising” neo-conservatism (Blomberg and Harrington 2000), potentially constitute or eventually creates neo-fascism, and Reaganites and their mutants (e.g. Gingrich) as “rigid extremists” virtually are or ultimately become and ally with neo-fascists, albeit couched and “sweetened” (Beck 2000) in all-American (faith, patriotism, etc.) “apple pie authoritarianism”⁶ (Wagner 1997). Historically, neo-fascism in America is or relates to neo-conservatism, especially its “extremist” branch of Reaganism and its mutants, in the way McCarthyism, as an American version or proxy of fascism, was or related to paleo-conservatism, i.e. as an extreme anti-liberal creation and ally of conservatism (Bourdieu and Haacke 1995).

Hence, to grasp better the relationship of neo-fascism to neo-conservatism in contemporary Europe and America alike it is useful to reconsider or remember those of fascism and McCarthyism to European and American paleo-conservatism, respectively. More important, neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, regardless of whether or not the second is the creation and variant of the first, in Europe and America are both anti-liberal adversaries, as were European and American paleo-conservatism and fascism, including McCarthyism, and it is this conservative-fascist historical *déjà vu*, i.e. sequence and continuity, in anti-liberalism that is primarily relevant within the context of liberal society and modernity.

In a sense, the above historical sequence and continuity indicates that the opposition and tension of contemporary liberal society and American and other neo-conservatism, including the new “born again” religious, notably Protestant, fundamentalism and sectarianism, as well as its ally neo-fascism, is a modern form of what Mannheim (1986) and other analysts identify as the original and persistent antagonism between liberalism and traditionalism. The latter specifically involves medievalism, including feudalism, as well as its derivative proto-conservatism and its own eventual offspring, fascism. It indicates that the principal, albeit not only, as well as the most powerful,

⁶ No wonder, Reagan et al. have more frequently been described as, if not considered, “fascists” in America and especially beyond than any other US neo- and paleo-conservatives, minus McCarthy and Goldwater. In turn, this anti-liberal “holy trinity” is not surprising given that Goldwater and Reagan and other neo-conservative “rigid extremists” (e.g. Gingrich, cf. Blomberg and Harrington 2000) have been declared or covert supporters and admirers of McCarthyism (Plotke 2002), just as Winthrop, the master Puritan theocrat, and his “shining city upon a hill”.

expansive and persisting anti-liberal force and adversary of liberal modernity has been and remains conservatism, ranging from proto-conservatism *cum* medieval traditionalism become “self-reflective” vis-à-vis liberalism through fascism and to neo-conservatism. And due to the dominance of conservative and other illiberal forces, notably religious conservatism in the form of Protestant sectarianism from original Puritanism to modern fundamentalism (Dunn and Woodard 1996) during most of its history from the 17th to the 21st century, America has been and remains the most salient and enduring deviation (Inglehart and Baker 2000) from liberal society and modernity among Western societies. This thus reveals celebrated or triumphalist (Bell 2002), American exceptionalism, though deplored by Jefferson-Madison’s liberals, and its admittedly “double-edged sword” (Lipset 1996).

Other adversaries and detractors of liberal society and modernity include communism in the form of Marxism as an ideology and historical authoritarian communist societies such as the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, with certain exceptions (e.g. former Yugoslavia, in part Poland and Hungary), as well as their non-European versions in China, Cuba and elsewhere. Included in these adversaries or rather detractors and critics are neo- or post-Marxian post-modernism as well as anti-Marxian communitarianism, especially communitarian republicanism, as mostly critical and skeptical theoretical accounts of liberal modernity, so of secondary importance for the present analysis. As Popper (1966), Mises (1950), Hayek (1948) and other “libertarian” economists (Friedman and Friedman 1982) suggest, communism or undemocratic state socialism can also be included among liberal society’s adversaries and detractors despite its acceptance and application of some principles of liberalism, notably the Enlightenment, such as rationalism and secularism in the radical form of atheism and anti-religion ideology, though with certain exceptions such as the former Yugoslavia and communist (yet remaining staunchly Catholic) Poland tolerating rather than banning religion and church. However, because communism is really what Weber calls *caput mortuum* (practically dead) at least in Europe, as indicated by the collapse of the communist Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, unlike fascism and authoritarian conservatism that are endemically resurrected from the “dead past” via European neo-fascism and American neo-conservatism, it is not reckoned with as belonging to the main contemporary adversaries of liberal society and modernity, i.e. liberalism. In short, communism is for all intents and purposes the dead and even

self-terminated enemy in Popper's sense, conservatism and fascism ever-revived and persistent, so more lethal, adversaries, of liberalism. Alternatively, this is because liberalism has completely defeated and discredited communism or undemocratic socialism, but not yet authoritarian conservatism, notably in America, and even fascism in Europe, despite its previous victories over conservative-fascist forces, as during WW II and most of the post-war period.

In turn, within contemporary non-Western, non-communist and non-Christian societies, the most persistent and virulent anti-liberal adversaries and detractors predictably involve what Weber would call Oriental religious conservatism such as Islamic, Hindu and other fundamentalisms and theocracies in Iran, India and elsewhere. The present study explores liberal society and modernity in relation to its illiberal adversaries and detractors (Table 2), especially conservatism and fascism in Europe and America, for the sake of contrast, differentiation and illustration.

Table 2
Liberalism and its Adversaries and Detractors

Traditionalism in Europe

medievalism
feudalism
despotism
theocracy

Traditional conservatism in Europe and America

religious orthodoxy: orthodox Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam
fascism – German Nazism, Italian, Spanish and other interwar European
fascisms
McCarthyism – American extreme conservatism or fascism

Neo-conservatism in Europe and America

Thatcherism and Reaganism
neo-fascism in Europe and America – neo-Nazism in Germany, neo-fascist
movement in America
“new” religious conservatism: “born again” Protestant fundamentalism and
sectarianism in America

Other anti-liberal adversaries, detractors and critics

Communism – Marxism and historical communist societies (Soviet Union,
China)
post-modernism – post-modern critical theory of liberalism
communitarianism – communitarian republicanism
non-Christian religious conservatism – Islamic, Hindu and other
fundamentalisms and theocracies

Liberal Society and Contemporary Western Civilization

As mentioned, liberal society has been the primary social system or project and liberalization the master process or trend in contemporary Western civilization since the 18th century through the 21st century. This statement is qualified by taking into account certain secondary anti- or quasi-liberal exceptions such as America during most of its history (Lipset 1996; Munch 2001), and counter-reactions, reversals or interruptions, spanning from medieval-rooted conservatism to fascism and communism and to neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. At this juncture, a number of empirical generalizations, propositions and predictions can be formulated as below.

First and foremost, by assumption, almost tautology, liberal society and modernity has always been and remains the original and enduring project and creation, plus the realization, of modern liberalism understood as the ideal of liberty, equality and justice, in particular as the child (Delanty 2000; Habermas 2001) of the Enlightenment and its ideals. Next, liberal society tends to mature, consolidate and further evolve within the Western world and expand beyond during the late 20th and early 21st century, albeit with predictable exceptions or deviant cases like America during neo-conservatism, conservative Islamic societies and traditional Catholic countries, including Ireland and Poland (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart 2004). Hence, liberal society can be expected to eventually become the likely future and destination of – i.e., as Weber describes capitalism, the “most fateful force” in – most Western and other democratic societies in the *long durée* (Braudel 1979) of centuries (e.g. the 21st century and beyond), with some possible, yet eventually transient deviations corresponding to those in the past, including America under the continuing dominance of anti-liberal conservatism.

Alternatively, liberal society and modernity in spite or precisely because of being the social space and time of liberty, equality and justice has been, is and will be counteracted, attacked and occasionally and transiently, but not completely and permanently, destroyed by various anti-liberal forces, from medieval traditionalism and proto-conservatism to fascism and neo-conservatism, including the new religious fundamentalism and neo-fascism. In particular, what was the initial antagonism and struggle between early liberalism and medievalist traditionalism or the old conservatism, including subsequently fascism, in Europe in the wake of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution has ramified, continued or replicated, with some modifications, as that

of modern liberal society and neo-conservatism, including the new religious fundamentalism, in America and to a lesser extent Great Britain and European societies, where neo-fascism also resurfaced, during the late 20th and early 21st centuries. As a corollary, conservatism originated from medievalist traditionalism, typically functioned through its traditional forms, including fascism, and basically remained via neo-conservatism and neo-fascism as the main, though not sole, and perennial adversary and detractor of liberal society and modernity.

As another corollary, America has been, continues to be and is likely to remain in short to medium terms the most enduring and salient exception or deviation from liberal society and modernity within contemporary Western civilization because of the historical, continuing and possible predominance (Lipset 1996) of anti-liberal religious conservatism in American society, from the 17th to the 21st century. Yet, during *long durée* (Braudel 1979) in terms of centuries, if not what Schumpeter⁷ (1939) and other sociologists (Chase-Dunn 1992; Kowalewski 1991) call Kondratieff “long-run cycles” or “long waves” (half a century or so), liberal modernity, so liberalism, is likely to eventually triumph in American, as has already in most Western societies. This triumph is likely in spite or perhaps because of such persisting conservative domination and its destructive impact on human liberty, dignity and eventually life, as via the death penalty as part of a Draconian “crime and punishment” penal system as well as “preemptive” global war and military destruction in the service of an anti-liberal would be “empire” (Steinmetz 2005). These propositions, generalizations and expectations are further elaborated, specified and substantiated throughout this study.

Liberalism: Idealism and Institutionalism of Liberty

By definition and assumption, if not tautology, liberal society and modernity, as a social space and historical time, is premised on and sociologically implements and extends liberalism in the sense of an ideology or utopia in Mannheim’s sense as well as, when institutionalized, a practice and culture

⁷ Schumpeter (1939: 169–70) uses the term “Kondratieff Cycle” or “Kondratieffs” to designate “long-run” business cycles or waves in Western capitalism lasting between 45–60 years, with the historical average of approximately 60 years for the period of 1825–1935.

of human liberty, liberation, respect and life. Alternatively, liberalism constitutes the ideological principle and institutional, political-cultural equivalent or expression, the ideal and reality, of liberal, so liberated and free, society and modernity.

Liberalism is inherently an ideal and, when prevalent and institutionalized, by analogy to capitalism as its economic element and product, a social system, society of liberty, thus by definition “libertarianism” (which makes the latter redundant and duplicate as an ideological concept and word). This may sound self-evident and tautological, as is for contemporary liberals. Yet, it is not so for anti-liberals, notably US and other neo-conservatives and “libertarians”, just as European neo-fascists, since they deny that liberalism is “true” liberty dismissed as “false freedom”, “license”, “permissiveness”, even “un-freedom”, that liberal-secular society and democracy (Deutsch and Soffer 1987) is truly “free” and “American”, as shown by anti-liberal allegations about “big government” liberals in America. At any rate, to understand the ideal and reality of liberal society and modernity requires considering the concept and practice of liberalism as its ideological and institutional equivalent in historical and contemporary comparative perspective.

By assumption, the concept and term “liberalism” in the present and prevalent meaning since the 18th century Enlightenment as its modern point of origin signifies and comes from “liberty”, “liberation”, “liberated”, “liberal”, and the like. Other earlier, contemporaneous and partly related meanings of “liberalism”⁸ include, for example, what Smith and other classical liberal economists and philosophers call generosity, liberality, magnificence and tolerance. Of these the last meaning seems particularly relevant, typical or integral to liberalism’s subsequently prevailing and general meaning of “liberty”

⁸ Kloppenberg (1998: 6–14) comments that historically “liberal” has meant both “generosity” since the 14th and “tolerance” since the 18th century and suggests that “no static portrait or definition of liberalism would be accurate for all times even in [America]”. For example, Adam Smith and other 18th century writers still use “liberal” in the meaning of generosity (“liberal expence”, “liberal reward”, “profuse liberality”) or “liberality” as near synonymous with “magnificence” and “magnanimity”. However, he comes close to or adumbrates liberalism’s subsequent and contemporary meanings as “tolerance” and “liberty” by expressions like the “liberal expression of a more enlarged and enlightened mind”, “liberal education”, etc. Notably, like most Enlightenment social theorists, Smith usually attributes a positive connotation to “liberal” in all its meanings, which contrasts with its largely pejorative meaning (“L-word”) in America ushering in the 21st century and in part Great Britain under Thatcherism over the 1980s–90s.

and “liberation”, i.e. “freedom” and “freeing”, within Western societies, with the predictable exception of America owing to conservative pejorative misconstructions of “liberal[s]” in almost opposite terms, viz. “big government”, “control”, etc.

In Weber’s words, liberalism in a certain historical period and society such as the Enlightenment-defined late 18th century and Western civilization since that time represents and functions as a “pure ideal type” of liberty or freedom (used interchangeably), liberation or freeing from various illiberal social forces and “signs of illiberty”, including religious and other tradition. Recall, he cites the “ability to free oneself from the common tradition”, notably its religious form, as a sort of practical (exercise in) liberalism, the act and process of “liberal enlightenment”.

Ideal and Social System of Liberty

Generally, liberalism constitutes the institutional system, by analogy to capitalism as well as socialism and fascism as such systems, just as, as perhaps commonly understood, the ideal and theoretical principle, of human liberty and liberation. Hence, liberalism’s first defining and constitutive facet is, to use Sorokin’s (1970) terms, ideational or idealistic – an idea, ideal, ideology, doctrine, philosophy, including discourse, rhetoric or metaphor, of liberty or simply idealism of freedom. As defined, it represents what contemporary sociologists describe as “Grand Theory” (Somerville 2000: 45), just as do Marxism, functionalism (e.g. Parsons), fascism and conservatism, specifically the idea of freedom (Kinloch 1981: 20). Others object that liberalism and related concepts like liberation and liberalization can be “sets of imprecise metaphors” (Bourdieu 2000: 57–127), even identify the “false colors” of liberty and liberalism a la laissez-faire in the economy, as manifested in the “brutal and tyrannical exercise of economic force” in modern global capitalism.

A second defining and constitutive dimension of liberalism is a social system or structure, institutional arrangement, policy and practice of liberty, i.e. a sort of institutionalism of freedom. Thus, just as conservatism, including fascism, as its polar opposite and antagonist, liberalism is not only a particular form, as implied in the above description as “Grand Theory”, of ideology or utopia in Mannheim’s sense. It is also a definite type of society, including polity, culture and economy, i.e. societal reality.

The above yields the distinction between theoretical and practical liberalism – just as, by analogy, conservatism or fascism, Marxism or communism – the idealism and institutionalism of liberty or freedom. In Weber’s framework, as indicated, liberalism either as an ideology or an institutional system is a special case of ideal, pure types, alongside, for example, individualism, collectivism, nationalism, imperialism, militarism, pacifism, feudalism, patrimonialism, mercantilism, capitalism, Protestantism, Catholicism, conservatism, socialism and his other “isms”. Hence, all those characteristics (conceptual “purity”, abstraction, synthesis, analytical “utopia”) Weber attributes to his various ideal types holds true of liberalism as both an ideological concept and a social system, just as they do for conservatism as its immediate and perennial antipode. The principal point is that liberalism as a pure type constitutes *both* the idealism and institutionalism, i.e. ideal and society, of liberty or freedom as elaborated below.

In sum, to define liberalism as the principle and institutional system of liberty means that it is both the ideal, desideratum (“utopia”) and realization, practice, i.e. idealism and institutionalism, of freedom.

Consequently and predictably, the ideal and institutional practice of freedom in modern Western society has been almost invariably associated with, as pertinent sociological analyses emphasize, the “political force of liberalism” (Dahrendorf (1979: x). In these accounts, liberalism constitutes what Mannheim (1986: 91) denotes as the “principle of liberty” and Hayek (1992) the “ideal of freedom”, historically rooted in the 18th century European Enlightenment. As observed, liberty or freedom constitutes a sort of liberal ideal and “partisan” program even in Western and other free societies, including America (Dahrendorf 1979: 95). In short, as an ideal and a social system, liberalism’s “core value” is human freedom (Reiman 1997: 21), in particular individual freedoms (Razeev 2002: 17).

First, liberalism defined as the principle, ideological program, philosophy, and advocacy or idealism of freedom represents a sort of liberal epistemology and epistemics (Shackle 1972). A case in point is what Malthus describes as the “liberal spirit of philosophy” as well as of most social science, including economics and sociology. Liberalism thus understood, as Spencer puts it, “advocates greater freedom from restraint, especially in political institutions.” He remarks that since the 18th century in Western societies, liberalism “habitually stood for individual freedom vs. State-coercion”, stressing

“liberty, antistatism, and individualism” (Lipset and Marks 2000). Notably, he observes that liberalism in that it “stands for the liberty of the individual against society” comes in conflict with conservatism that “stands for the restraints of society over the individual” and in defense of “coercive arrangements”.

For instance, liberalism in the sense and shape of what Spencer’s follower Mises (1950) denotes the “liberal ideal of society” or the “liberal world of thought” involves “demands for liberty of conscience and expression of opinion”. Further, Mises (1953: 414) states that “all the marvelous achievements of Western civilization are fruits grown on the tree of liberty” and by implication liberalism as what his colleague Hayek (1992) also calls the “ideal of freedom”. This is also implicit in Dahrendorf’s (1979) view that liberty is a liberal, distinguished from illiberal, notably conservative, program within contemporary free societies. By assumption, as such an ideal and program liberalism has admittedly always “emphasized freedom as the ultimate goal” (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 5–6), in particular “personal liberty”⁹ (Mueller 1978: 201). In sum, as social epistemology liberalism constitutes the “principle of liberty” which conceives human freedom as integral or, to use Mises’ word, “indivisible” and “central to the realization of human personality” (Kinloch 1981: 20).

Second, liberalism understood as the social system, institutional arrangement, policy and realization, i.e. institutionalism, of liberty constitutes what can be called liberal ontology and empirics by analogy and connection to liberal epistemology and epistemics. When described as the “philosophy and practice of liberty” (Van Dyke 1995: 78), liberalism represents the liberal epistemology and ontology, theory and reality, of freedom, respectively. In particular, as the “practice of liberty” liberalism constitutes the institutional reality (and notion) of a “social order in which individual liberty will be able to flourish equally for all to the limit of their capacities” (Van Dyke 1995: 79). In short, the institutional “system of liberty” (Manent 1998: 224) defines liberalism, especially in its original European meaning, as societal ontology/reality.

⁹ Specifically, Mueller (1978: 201) proposes that Paretian liberalism is a “social decision function based on personal liberty”.

The Ideal and Social System of Liberty, Equality and Justice

The principle and social system of liberty defines liberalism in the strict and narrower sense. This definition can be, as is usually, extended to incorporate equality and justice, alongside liberty, as other liberal ideological principles and institutional practices. This yields an extended definition and conceptualization of liberalism in terms of a synthesis and reciprocal reinforcement, i.e. a kind of synergy, between liberty, equality and justice. For example, Smith essentially defines liberalism in these extended terms by what he describes as the joint “liberal plan of equality, liberty, and justice”. J. M. Keynes (1972: 311) also does so implicitly by suggesting that liberalism’s political problem and goal “is to combine three things: economic efficiency [and equality], social justice, and individual liberty.”¹⁰

Hence, in an extended sociological definition, liberalism constitutes and operates as the principle and social system of liberty, yet in, as Mannheim (1986) stresses, conjunction and interaction with equality and justice as complementary and mutually reinforcing, rather than (as often assumed) exclusive, liberal ideals and practices. Simply, liberalism is about liberty only or primarily in combination and association with equality and justice, rather than dissociation and isolation from and opposition to them (as supposed by US “libertarians”). Hence, this signifies that liberal society, i.e. a social system of liberalism, is free as well as egalitarian and just, rather than only or primarily the first (as in “libertarian” redefinitions). In sum, in an extended sense and definition liberalism is defined as the synthesis and synergy of liberty with equality and justice, as considered next.

Synthesis of Liberty and Equality: Freedom and Egalitarianism

First, liberalism constitutes the principle and social system of liberty in association and mutual reinforcement with equality as a complementary rather than an opposite liberal ideal and practice rooted or implicit in liberalism contrary to “libertarian” anti-egalitarian assertions or implications. In short,

¹⁰ J. M. Keynes (1972: 311) states that the “first [economic efficiency and equality] needs criticism, precaution, and technical knowledge, the second [social justice], an unselfish and enthusiastic spirit, which loves the ordinary man; the third [individual liberty] tolerance, breadth, appreciation of the excellence of variety and independence”.

the “idea of equality lies behind the liberal idea that all citizens have the fundamental right to be respected as free and reasonable persons”¹¹ (Brink 2000: 13). Hence, liberal society and modernity is both free and equal, truly libertarian and egalitarian. The following presents liberal sociological arguments for a synthesis and synergy of liberty with equality and so egalitarianism, and reconsiders the relations between these principles and practices.

Most classical sociologists present or imply strong arguments for a synthesis and synergy of liberty and equality within modern liberal society. For instance, Spencer presents such a sociological argument by formulating the “law of equal freedom”, which posits that the liberty of each individual “may be unfolded without limit, save the like [liberties] of others [so] no one can be perfectly free till all are free”. Contemporary liberals or economic “libertarians” like Hayek (1960: 85) embrace or echo Spencer’s law of equal individual freedom by stating that equality, at least in the formal-legal or minimalistic sense of “treating people equally” or “general rules of law and conduct”, is the “condition of a free society”, in association with liberty. Similarly, his colleague Friedman comments that, according to classical liberalism, “each man has an equal right to freedom” (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 195), thus evoking Spencer’s “law.”

In turn, while by contrast to Spencer and his “libertarian” successors skeptical or critical of liberalism or modern capitalism (*Gesellschaft*), German sociologist Tönnies remarks that in accordance with the liberal premise of natural law “all people” are “free agents” and “a priori equal”.¹² Further, British sociologist Hobhouse, seeking to blend English liberalism with continental European socialism or Hegelianism¹³ (Kumar 2001: 44), states that “liberty

¹¹ Brink (2000: 13) adds that the assumption of individual freedom is “based on a post-Enlightenment belief in the reasonableness of human beings [resting] on their capacity to act autonomously”. While contemporary liberals link the assumptions of freedom and equality, most “libertarians” tend to dissociate and oppose them. Further, libertarian economists à la Hayek would argue that equality is not a truly “liberal” idea, i.e. not characteristics for original and classical liberalism but the result and cause of its “socialist” degeneration in its contemporary version. Thus, Hayek (1948: 30) contends and celebrates that “true” liberalism or individualism is non-egalitarian.

¹² Tönnies observes that the liberal “premise that all adult humans are equal through their capacity for free will is implicit in nature and thus in the simplest and most basic scientific knowledge”

¹³ Kumar (2001: 44) comments that Hobhouse “tried valiantly to fuse English liberalism with continental Hegelianism, but his English moralism and Protestantism kept getting in the way of the more systematic, collectivist vision that he also sought

without equality is a name of noble sound and squalid result". And even putatively "libertarian", anti-Marxian social philosopher Popper (1973: 44) warns that "unlimited freedom leads to its opposite, since without its protection and restriction by law [legal equality], freedom must lead to a tyranny of the strong over the weak."

Within contemporary, especially American, liberalism its prevalent conception and meaning is that of "equal liberty", including "fair equality of opportunity", on the grounds that every human "has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties which is compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all" (Rawls 1993: 281). In other words, modern liberalism endorses "equal entitlement to basic liberties", in particular the "expansion and redistribution of political and economic opportunity" (Van Dyke 1995: 79–83) or what Weber calls life chances (Dahrendorf 1979). Like in its original or classical version, in contemporary liberalism the "law of equal freedom" is primarily, though not exclusively, about individual liberties, choices and rights and, perhaps even more than its predecessor, their "fair equality". Thus, modern as well as original liberalism "accords primacy to individual freedom in political arrangements [by] enabling all citizens to engage in freedom of choice to as great an extent as possible without harming others [as well as] receive equality of treatment" (King 1999: 7). In sum, contemporary American and other liberalism tries to strike, even perhaps to a greater extent than the original, the "requisite balance between freedom and equality" (Bellamy 1999: 1).

Notably, the liberal synthesis and synergy of liberty and equality originates and exists within a sociological-historical framework. In historical terms, the principle of liberty defining theoretical liberalism as ideology can, as Mannheim (1986: 91) suggests and stresses, "only be understood in conjunction with its complement, the idea of equality" and so ideological egalitarianism. By assumption, this holds true of the social system of freedom in turn defining institutional liberalism in association with the practice of equality and so practical egalitarianism.

to promote". He adds that in particular Hobhouse regarded socialism as merely "advanced Liberalism" and so his "thinking inevitably carried many of the individualist premises of liberal thought" (Kumar 2001: 45).

Thus, Dahrendorf (1979: 101) identifies what he describes as the historical, long-term or “secular dialectics” between liberty and equality in the sense of their conjunction, reciprocal dynamics, mutual reinforcement, rather than contradiction, exclusion or disjuncture, as often supposed, within Western society since the 18th century, notably the French Revolution. Consequently, his original exemplar of this egalitarian-libertarian dialectics is the French Revolution with its joint, synergic principles of liberty and equality, plus humanity or “fraternity”. Specifically, this dialectics consists in equality promoting liberty via the “progressive extension of citizenship rights and the effective domestication of power” (Dahrendorf 1979: 124).

At this juncture, Dahrendorf (1979: 125) remarks that “only most anachronistic conservative would claim today that there is no such thing as social citizenship rights”. Among these, US neo-conservatives are particularly prominent and categorical in such negative claims and corresponding practices, epitomized by their persisting and even escalating attacks on and eventual eliminations or reversals of welfare institutions and programs, including the New Deal and the Great Society. Primarily as the result of conservative anti-liberal claims and practices, research shows (Amenta et al. 2001) that US welfare institutions and social policies, even political liberties and rights, such as the voting right, historically and continuously reveal comparative “backwardness” in relation to other Western societies. Hence, sociologists describe this backwardness in a welfare state and liberal-secular political democracy overall as the “new American exceptionalism” (Quadagno 1999).

In essence, Dahrendorf’s secular dialectics between liberty and equality then involves, as contemporary economists suggest, a sort of synergy of freedom and egalitarianism (Putterman, Roemer and Silvestre 1998). For example, these economists identify and emphasize “equality-efficiency synergies” in contemporary Western economies, observing that “postwar economic experience indicates that equality does not obviously conflict with growth” (Putterman et al. 1998: 866). In turn, some sociologists (You and Khagram 2005: 152–3) find what they describe as “vicious circles of inequality and corruption”, or conversely, “virtuous circles of equality and integrity (freedom from corruption)” to the effect that “greater inequality causes higher levels of corruption, and higher levels of corruption intensify inequality.” In addition, they suggest that income inequality is “no less important determinant of

corruption than economic development” and that its effects are “likely to be greater in more democratic countries” (You and Khagram 2005: 152).

Further, some writers suggest that the “secular dialectics” and synergy of liberty and equality has been even longer in historical terms, essentially since the beginning and origins of Western civilization. In this view, for example, the “Greeks, the Romans, and the Florentines proved that men could live in liberty and equality – [i.e.] that they could rule and be ruled in turn”¹⁴ (Manent 1998: 222–3). Tocqueville would and did add early America to these instances epitomizing the historical positive dialectics of liberty and equality. As known, he finds that in post-revolutionary America equality was a “social passion”, as exemplified in the Jeffersonian constitutional principle that “all men are created equal”.

Hence, Tocqueville implies that the American Revolution with its intertwined and mutually reinforcing principles of equality (and justice) and liberty “for all” in Jefferson-Madison’s codification is another original exemplar, alongside the French Revolution, of this positive libertarian-egalitarian dialectics and synergy. Notably, US historians observe that during the 1790s, seeking to implement Jefferson’s “egalitarian standard”, Jeffersonians attempted to “effect two related revolutions, both premised on the idea of equality”, one being economic, the other political “dismantling the politics of deference and encouraging the active political participation of all men” (Kloppenbergh 1998: 34–5). Also contemporary US sociologists approvingly comment that for the “young Frenchman” Tocqueville America was more “socially egalitarian” as

¹⁴ Manent (1998: 222–3) adds that social or civil equality signifies that “you had a right to whatever position you could attain through your own efforts”. He cites *le grand monde* (“high society”) from Balzac’s French novels in *Human Comedy* as both a literary and sociological masterpiece in its own right (for a sociological study, cf. Mallard 2005). Balzac’s *Human Comedy* is in turn an analogue of (also) the masterful aesthetics and proto-sociology alike of Shakespeare’s plays which, as symptom of its “method in the madness” of anti-liberalism and artistic antagonism, English Puritanism targeted when in power (the 1640s–60s) by closing, as Weber notes, a theater at Shakespeare’s last residence (Stratford-on-Avon), as the “theatre was obnoxious to the Puritans”. No wonder, as Weber comments, “Shakespeare’s hatred and contempt of the Puritans appear on every occasion”, as the models and symbols of anti-art as well as anti-liberal conservatism or traditionalism and irrationalism in early England and later, after failing in their theocratic design, colonial America.

well as more democratic than Europe with its supposed anti-egalitarianism, statism and authoritarianism (Lipset and Marks 2000).

In other words, as US historians observe, during the time of Tocqueville's visit America "had a degree of social and economic equality that existed nowhere else in the world [indicating] the American tradition of liberal egalitarianism" [or] foundation of natural rights, equality, and the pursuit of happiness" (Kloppenbergh 1998: 15–25). In this view, in particular "instead of grounding law on either ancient custom [a] or the logical fiction of a contract [b], American proponents of popular sovereignty followed the lead of Montesquieu and Rousseau by replacing the idea of fundamental law with the idea of the public will as the legitimating principle of the republic" (Kloppenbergh 1998: 30–1).

One may add, however, that the idea of popular sovereignty was moderated, if not counteracted, by the institution of an "electoral college" still in existence in America during the 21st century. Americans were dramatically reminded of the "electoral college" in the deadlocked 2000 presidential elections, which some analysts describe as "un-Election" (Hill 2002), yet did not result in sustained calls for a substantive reform or replacement of this peculiar and, within Western democracies unknown, element of the US electoral system. Judging by the virtual lack or rarity of post-electoral calls for such reform or substitution, it seems as if many US liberal politicians think that the "electoral college" is not necessarily an antithesis or constraint of "popular sovereignty" and to that extent America's democracy and republic, or perhaps opportunistically, for the sake of (re)election, acquiesce with an actually or potentially non- or pseudo-democratic mechanism and situation sustained and extolled by anti-liberal conservatives as "American", "republican", and "democratic".

Also, other analysts emphasize that in historical terms, America "has long prided itself on being [both] an egalitarian [and free] society" (Carter 1996: 93). And this synthesis has defined America's exceptionalism (Lipset 1996) or triumphalism (Bell 2002) and its supposed superiority and comparative advantage over and invidious distinction from Europe disdainfully described as mostly neither "egalitarian" nor "free", perhaps except for Great Britain as well as contemporary European welfare-state societies seen as being only the first, but not the second.

The liberal synthesis and positive dialectics of liberty and equality is also observed, even reinforced and expanded in contemporary Western and other democratic societies. An instance is the observed direct or indirect relationship of political freedom and democracy to economic equality, and conversely the link between authoritarian politics and wealth or income inequality¹⁵ (Lee 2005; Muller 1995; Niggle 1998; yet see Bollen and Jackman 1985). Thus, data indicate that countries with high liberal political democracy indices (Bollen 1990; also Vergunst 1998) usually exhibit equivalent degrees of economic equality and egalitarianism, i.e. low Gini coefficients (Alderson and Nielsen 2002; Deininger, Klaus, and Squire 1996) of income *inequality*, as well as poverty rates (Smeeding 2006), and conversely. For example, Scandinavian countries possess both the highest indexes of liberal democracy and the lowest Gini coefficients of economic inequality and poverty rates (Smeeding 2006) in contemporary Western society and the world. By contrast, America has both one of the lowest indexes of liberal democracy (Bollen 1990), including Consensus Democracy (Vergunst 1998), and by far the highest wealth-income inequality coefficient and poverty rate (Smeeding 2006) among contemporary Western societies (Gustafsson and Johansson 1999). In addition, those non-Western countries with lower (higher) political democracy indexes are found also to have higher (lower) inequality coefficients, so non-democratic, illiberal societies tend to be more unequal, anti-egalitarian in economic terms than others (Lee 2005). Alternatively, more fully institutionally democratic-liberal or less authoritarian societies, non-Western and Western, are more economically egalitarian than others.

A related, more general instance of the conjunction and dialectics between liberty and equality is the positive relationship of political freedom and democracy to egalitarianism and universalism. As in the previous case, comparative estimates suggest that those Western and other societies with higher

¹⁵ Lee (2005) registers, as “widely accepted”, that democratic societies tend to be more egalitarian or “equity oriented” (in a seeming conflation of equality and justice) than their authoritarian counterparts. In particular, he finds that institutionalized liberal democracy reduces economic inequality (indirectly) by reversing the effect of government or public sector size from an increase to a decrease. While “in institutionalized democracies, inequality will decrease with larger government size”, in authoritarian political systems the effect of the latter “will be positively associated with income inequality” (Lee 2005: 159–63).

liberal democracy indices tend as a rule, with rare minor exceptions, to have greater degrees of economic and other egalitarianism or universalism (“collectivism”), including universal welfare benefits, consensus government, absence of violent political conflict (Pampel 1998), than others. Thus, Scandinavian countries’ highest indexes of liberal democracy are associated with their greatest degrees of economic as well as political egalitarianism and universalism within contemporary Western society and the world. Conversely, America’s one of the lowest indexes of liberal and consensus democracy is related to the lowest (and negative) estimate of egalitarianism and universalism among contemporary Western societies. Perhaps with this mind, even some US leading economists admit that during the post-war period like the 1950–60s economically and socially egalitarian (and “regimented”) Scandinavia “was freer than my America” (Samuelson cited in Tilman 2001: 39), according to most liberal, J. S. Mill’s criteria of freedom.

However, this unexpected admission by typically over-patriotic, if not ethnocentric, (as implied by Dore 1992) US economists, just as sociologists (Lipset and Marks 2000), signifies by no means that Mannheim-Dahrendorf’s conjunction, secular dialectics or synergy between liberty and equality does not operate in contemporary America as the putative superior exception within the Western world, presumably exempt from and suspending the rule. Rather it does but in a reverse, perverse in the sense of Merton (1968; cf. also Boudon 1982; Giddens 1984) and negative form, analogous to adverse selection, via a connection, if not a vicious circle, between comparatively low “degrees of freedom” and economic equality alike. This is indicated by the liberal-consensus democracy index that is lower than those of most Western societies, and the lowest estimate of egalitarianism and universalism (or the highest Gini coefficient of economic inequality) among these, during the 1980s–2000s. This reverse operation or circle includes what analysts generally find as “vicious circles of inequality and corruption” by contrast to “virtuous circles of equality and integrity (freedom from corruption)” (You and Khagram 2005).

In retrospect, this reverse operation or vicious circle is a far cry and striking aberration from Tocqueville’s identification and extolling of equality as a “social passion” in early America, which made the “new nation” both more egalitarian and democratic and freer, so more “liberal”, than was the “old” and un-democratic or illiberal, feudal-rooted Europe (Lipset and Marks 2000). So, if America “has long prided itself on being an egalitarian [and free] society”

(Carter 1996: 93) alike as a hallmark of its superior, triumphant exceptionalism versus Europe, the reversal of the positive dialectics and synergy between equality and freedom, notably ever-declining economic egalitarianism as an ideal and a condition, in American society during recent times casts doubt on this pride, at least on the first part of the equation. In short, contemporary America during neo-conservatism is not a superior exception to, but rather a reverse or adverse confirmation of the liberal conjunction, secular dialectics or synergy of liberty and equality.

In general, the contemporary positive dialectics of liberty and equality is expressed in that Western and other liberal societies pursue and realize both libertarian and egalitarian principles and values in some degree of synthesis and equilibrium. As analysts observe, liberty and equality both “articulate the normative expectations” of citizens in liberal societies, who “do not want their fellow citizens, the government, social organizations, the business sector, religious authorities, [etc.] to control their lives [and] expect to be protected by the institutions of constitutional freedom” (Brink 2000: 10). This simply means that people in contemporary liberal societies want and seek both liberty and equality, as well as jointly justice, in Mannheim’s conjunction and Keynes’ combination, not just economic freedom in isolation from and opposition to these other liberal values (as US and other “libertarians” allege or imply).

Though perhaps to a lesser degree by comparison with Western European and other democratic societies like Canada, this synthetic want continues to hold true of the contemporary, though diminishing, liberal, distinguished from the conservative, segment and project of America (viz. the “blue” versus “red” US states). It does to the extent that the latter continues or adopts the endeavor to balance the Jeffersonian Enlightenment-inspired principles of “all men are created equal” and “liberty for all”, in spite or because of “libertarian” reductive (Tilman 2001) claims or imputations that “all Americans need” is economic freedom, notably free-market enterprise. If Americans are allowed and given less equality than freedom (or rather less of both) by the anti-liberal neo-conservative ruling elite during the 1980–2000s, this does not mean they “get what they really want” from the prism of the original and “exceptional” constitutional, specifically Jeffersonian, synthesis of egalitarianism and “libertarianism”, as detected and extolled by Tocqueville and others.

In particular, if equality in material “condition” and “power” or “mental endowments” has been what Tocqueville calls a “social passion” since the

founding of America through the time of his visit in the 1830s, yet dramatically, at least its economic form, reduced, even ideologically discredited, by dominant illiberal forces and ideas during that period, then Americans “did not really get what they wanted”, despite “libertarian” anti-egalitarian assertions to the contrary. As regards the latter, “libertarian” economists like Hayek (1948: 30) state with no regret that libertarianism or “true individualism”, claiming that democratic ideals “spring” from basic individualistic principles, “is not egalitarian” on the grounds that “it can see no reason for trying to make people equal as distinct from treating them equally.” Such statements apparently argue that “trying to make people equal” absolutely in economic terms is either impossible or undesirable, even unjust if expressing unequal contributions (“marginal productivities”), which is well-established in the social-science literature as well as modern Western societies. However, contemporary liberalism, including the liberal welfare state or social democracy, does not try to attain absolute equality in the economy (as neither, for that matter, did even “socialism” or “communism” wherever established, including Eastern Europe, Soviet Union and China) contrary to libertarian as well as neo-conservative spurious accusations amounting to anti-egalitarian hallucinations seeing something that is non-existent – “trying to make people equal” absolutely in wealth – except in their own minds and negative fantasies (nightmares). Yet, what Hayek-style “libertarian” economics overlooks or denies is that “trying to make people equal” non-economically, notably politically as well as culturally, is both possible and desirable, i.e. just/fair given their original political and cultural equality as humans in Jefferson’s sense of “created equal”, as well as that modern democracy and civil society are precisely systems of such equalities in the polity and the social sphere, respectively. In a way, Hayek and other “libertarian” economists imply what their philosophical ally Popper (1973: 235) explicitly and somewhat aristocratically claims, apparently referring to Jefferson, viz. that the egalitarian social-political conception that “all men are born equal” is “probably false” [sic!].

Next, Tocqueville’s description of economic-political equality as a “social passion” applies probably even more to Jefferson’s liberal ideal of “liberty for all” and its, though more controversial and less measurable, decline and limitation in America by dominant illiberal forces during the 1980–2000s, as indicated or approximated by the comparative low or diminishing index of liberal-consensus democracy in Western societies. This holds true despite or

rather because of anti-liberal claims and corresponding practices to the effect that other American and “higher” values (e.g. national security, morality, faith, wars on crime, terror and “evil”) demand and justify such sacrifices in human liberties and eventually life, so Americans “get what they really want”, including government repression via a policing state (Bourdieu 1998), exemplified in the intrusive “vice police” in the illiberal South or “red” states, Weber’s “bibliocracy” (the “Bible Belt”), permanent war, ultimately self-destruction and death.

Synthesis of Liberty and Justice: Freedom and Equity

The aforesaid of liberty and equality holds true, *ceteris paribus*, of the relations between freedom and justice or equity. Thus, these relations essentially consist of the conjunction and positive dialectics between liberty and justice, just as equality. This is what, for example, the American Constitution’s and Revolution’s Jeffersonian principle of “liberty and justice for all” essentially indicates, perhaps even more vigorously or explicitly than the French Revolution that seemingly equates “equality” and “fraternity” with justice or equity.

First, sociological and other liberal arguments for a synthesis and synergy of liberty and justice are compelling. As hinted, an early pseudo-sociological or economic argument for such a synthesis or combination is present in Smith’s triple “liberal plan” of liberty, equality and justice. In particular, he argues that justice is more “essential to the existence of society” than what he calls “beneficence”. In his view, this is because a free society “may subsist without beneficence; but the prevalence of injustice must utterly destroy it”. Smith hence implies, perhaps surprisingly for most economists, that social justice or equity is the more necessary condition of modern liberal society than is what they call economic efficiency and rationality of which beneficence or altruism is often an eventual morally sanctioned effect or benefit, not only within the family (Becker 1991) but also in part the market (e.g. beneficent or altruistic wealthy classes, including US capitalist “robber-barons”). As a consequence of this “over-determination” by social justice compared with efficiency or beneficence, modern liberal society constitutes what Smith’s successor Pareto denotes as the “sociological system” that is as “more complicated” than and incorporating the “economic system” as its integral part. This then makes most economists’ or rational-choice theorists’ penchant for reductively conceiving

“society” in terms of “economy”, including the “marketplace”, a sort of flagrant *non sequitur*.

Spencer restates Smith’s liberal plan of liberty and justice in his statement that “Equity, Freedom” work in unison as the building blocks of a just and free society, thus expressing their conjunction, positive dialectics or synergy. Further, like Smith Spencer argues for “Justice before Generosity” and admonishes that “unjust selfishness [is] defeating itself”. Hence, Spencer implies precisely what Smith does before. This is that justice is a more substantial condition of modern liberal, free society than is economic efficiency and rationality, including its eventual benefit of generosity or altruism, as well as what contemporary rational choice theorists describe as hyper-rationality, of which “unjust selfishness” is an element or symptom, tends to be “irrationality” (Elster 1989: 9), thus self-defeating. In turn, while disagreeing with Spencer on many accounts, Durkheim would fully embrace and reinforce his sociological argument for the primacy of social justice relative to economic efficiency. For example, Durkheim argues that what he calls a “just liberty” is that for which society “is duty bound to enforce respect”, thus implying the synthesis or positive dialectics between justice and freedom. Also, what his contemporary Hobhouse proposes as the “new” liberalism is a theory and policy “committed to reconciling social justice with individual freedom on liberal grounds” (Smith 1998: vii).

Further, contemporary sociologists like Dahrendorf (1979: 318) argue that “freedom in society means, above all” recognizing social justice in the broad sense, including “diversity, difference, and conflict”, as well as life chances. In his view, particularly liberty is always an “extension of life chances [such that if] these are not given, there is no freedom” (Dahrendorf 1979: 93). Moreover, Dahrendorf (1979: 95) proposes that “new” life chances for an increasing number of citizens is a “sufficient condition of liberty” by contrast to a “strictly conservative position which (with Hayek) advises people to rest content with the life chances which they have got already”. Other contemporary sociologists suggest that liberty in society or “social logic” generally is “subject to the rule of equity” (Bourdieu 1998: 95).

Modern philosophical liberalism’s prevalent argument is that justice or fairness implies that “each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties which is compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all” and requires “measures to ensure that all citizens have sufficient mate-

rial means to make effective use of [their] basic [liberties and] rights" (Rawls 1993: 5, 157, 291). In short, liberalism defines "justice as fairness" (Habermas et al. 1998: 67), so a just liberal-democratic society as the "fair system of cooperation between free and equal citizens" (Rawls 1993: 166). This identifies a contemporary conjoined "liberal concern with freedom and justice" (Bellamy 1999: 140), thus expressing or recognizing the conjunction, positive dialectics or synergy of these two principles and institutional practices.

Although more concerned with freedom (as they reductively understand it) than justice and equality, even some "libertarian" economists implicitly or reluctantly recognize their positive dialectics in that freedom and equity, as Spencer puts it, "work in unison" for and in liberal society. For example, Hayek (1991: 52, 365) characterizes a free, just society as a set of "institutions of freedom and justice", though the latter is (as typical or predictable) reductively conceived as that of the "spontaneous [market] order" opposed to social (or distributive) justice dismissed as "meaningless" in such a (slightly modified) laissez-faire economic system.¹⁶ In a similar vein, Friedman recognizes that a free stable society presupposes a "basic core of value judgments", notably the principle of justice, "unthinkingly accepted by the great bulk of its members" (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 167). Predictably, however, this ideal is reduced to its "spontaneous" market form termed (unlike Hayek) "distributive justice" in accordance with the venerable principle of marginal productivity and utility.

Notably, as before, the liberal synthesis and synergy of liberty and justice emerges and operates in a sociological-historical framework. In sociological and historical terms, Mannheim's assumption of the conjunction and Dahrendorf's identification of the positive secular dialectics between liberty and equality imply or result in such interconnections and mutual reinforcements of freedom and justice. This holds true since equality constitutes the basis and primary condition for, though not identical to, as often supposed, equity or "justice as fairness". As hinted, the 1789 French Revolution with its Enlightenment-based ideals of liberty, equality and humanity supplies an implicit instance of this actual or potential synthesis and dialectics. The American Revolution or Constitution, specifically the Jeffersonian, also

¹⁶ Also, Hayek (1948: 30) suggests individualism "must not be sacrificed to the gratification of our sense of justice" or other feelings like envy.

Enlightenment-inspired, ideal of “liberty and justice for all”, provides a probably more explicit example.

Dahrendorf specifically suggests a positive “secular dialectics” between liberty and justice via the interconnection of freedom and the expansion of life chances. He observes that modern post-medieval Western history has been the “quest to expand life chances” (Dahrendorf 1979: 89), thus by implication justice and equality as well as freedom both historically defined in terms of such an expansion. Further, Dahrendorf (1979: 95) remarks that, primarily as the consequence and enduring legacy of liberalism, notably the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, in modern Western societies liberty is “invariably judged in terms of its capacity for opening up new life chances without destroying those already there”. Simply, liberal society appraises, conceives and promotes freedom not solely in itself but also in its positive dialectics or interconnection with social equity expressed in fair life chances or equality of opportunity, as the principle of “liberty and justice for all” in essence suggests.

Thus, some of its adherents stress that contemporary American liberalism comprises not only a “legitimate concern” with liberties, choices and rights, but an “equally important thirst for justice” (Kloppenber 1998: 12), as well as equality as its basis, thus following and implementing Smith’s classical “liberal plan”. In this view, “if liberalism meant nothing more than celebrating freedom, it would indeed be inadequate. Tradeoffs between freedom and equality may appear inescapable, but in practice they are connected. Individuals cannot exercise freedom unless they are afforded equal protection under law from others who would restrict their choices. Likewise, no significant political thinker in the [liberal] American tradition has valued equality without valuing freedom” (Kloppenber 1998: 13). If so, this implies that America, as legally founded on the Jeffersonian constitutional principle of “liberty and justice for all”, during most of its history has not been an exception to the historically general positive dialectics or synergy of freedom and equity (and equality), contrary to anti- or pseudo-liberal, conservative or “libertarian” claims to the opposite by dissociating and depreciating the second from the first.

The liberal conjunction and positive dialectics between liberty and justice, historically commencing in the late 18th century with the Enlightenment and its direct or indirect political outcomes the French and American Revolutions, has since continued and even intensified and expanded within contemporary

society. This observation is qualified by taking account of some aberrations and reversals, as in Europe during interwar fascism and in part postwar neo-fascism (viz. Germany since 1990s) and America under neo-conservatism and its prelude McCarthyism, including resurrected religious fundamentalism. Further, contemporary analysts observe that in contemporary Western society the “main political problem concerns justice for all” (Dombrowski 2001: 9). The latter is logically or empirically conjoined with equality and liberty “for all” in the manner or spirit of Jefferson, which thus continues, implements or evokes the original principles of the American and French Revolutions and the Enlightenment like Smith’s triple “liberal plan”.

Specifically, “justice for all” is the principal political concern in contemporary Western liberal societies, notably European welfare states or social democracies, yet secondary, if not non-existent, in their anti- or pseudo-liberal counterparts like America during the 1980–2000s under neo-conservatism and to a lesser extent Great Britain¹⁷ over the 1980–90s. In these latter, fairness and egalitarian concerns are either by assumption or in reality less manifest, intense and genuine, even opposed and suspected. This is epitomized by the observed Draconian, “harsh moral tenor” (Hudson and Coukos 2005; also Smeeding 2006) of US and British conservative political (public-aid) institutions since their beginning in the late 19th century, as “rooted” in traditional religious conservatism, specifically Puritanism, as indicated by the “explicit” link of Reaganism and Thatcherism with Puritan Methodism.

Generally, contemporary sociologists suggest that in modern liberal globalized society, freedom ultimately depends on the principle of “fundamental social justice” as well as economic equality or material security (Beck 2002: 40). This implies that global, cosmopolitan liberal society ushering in the 21st century is still defined or typified by what Durkheim calls “just” and equal liberty, rather than solely or primarily by market liberties and “free enterprise”, contrary to what US “libertarian” economists claim. They thus realize and demonstrate the conjunction, positive dialectics, synergy or proximate balance between freedom and justice (and equality), as a major ideal and

¹⁷ Strikingly, immediately upon his election in 2005, the new leader of the British Conservative Party urged incorporating and emphasizing considerations of “social justice” in the party program, in sharp contrast to his predecessors like Thatcher typically opposing or neglecting such concerns in favor of their obsession with “free markets” and “low taxes”.

outcome of liberalism by contrast to economic “libertarianism” and political-religious neo-conservatism. In sum, modern liberal society during the 2000s continues to be defined and typified by Smith’s synthetic “liberal plan” of liberty, equality and justice, implementing and expressing their conjunction and secular dialectics, just as it was during his time, the late 18th century Enlightenment.

Chapter Two

Liberal Society and Modernity: Ideals and Institutions of Liberalism

General Considerations

To summarize the previous chapter, liberal society and modernity is the sociological and historical realization or expression of the principles and ideals of liberalism as the idealism and institutionalism of liberty. And, liberalism's defining and typifying ideal and institution is human liberty not in isolation but in synthesis and synergy, or reciprocal relationship and reinforcement, and proximate equilibrium with equality and justice as its complementary ideals and institutions. Since liberty, equality and justice exist and operate within Smith's "liberal plan" as well as Mannheim's (1986) "conjunction", Keynes' (1972) "combination", and Dahrendorf's (1979) "secular dialectics", they form the "holy trinity" of principles of liberalism versus its adversaries like conservatism and fascism and the distinguishing structural and historical attributes of liberal society and modernity by contrast to its illiberal, including conservative and fascist, opposites.

Most conceptions and typologies of the ideals and institutions of liberalism explicitly or implicitly incorporate and emphasize this triple "plan" and "trinity" of liberty, equality and justice and their variations and ramifications. Contemporary liberal

writers¹ conceptualize and classify modern liberal principles and implicitly institutions as individual liberty, equality, including equal treatment and equality of opportunity, institutional neutrality, *impartiality* and tolerance, the role of reason, the usefulness of government, and some others like a need for state-provided social services like welfare, health care and education, alongside the traditional functions of policing and defense, as well as for progressive taxes (Van Dyke 1995: 79–80). In other views, modern liberalism is premised on such ideational and institutional elements as “a constitutionally warranted sense of respect for the life and liberty of each individual, a concentration on equal rights, an affirmation of the value of democratic government and moral pluralism, and the advancement of a market economy [i.e.] justice, reasonableness, freedom, equality” (Brink 2000: 9–10).

In an extended conception, classification or codification, the ideals and institutions of liberalism, i.e. the defining attributes and constitutive components of liberal society and modernity, comprise the following: integral liberty; egalitarianism; social justice; democracy; social pluralism; social universalism; individualism; rationalism, progressivism, modernism and optimism; humanism and secularism; pacifism and the like (see Table 3). These liberal ideals and institutions are reconsidered next in this order.

Integral Liberty

By assumption, the master ideal and principle as well as the institutional practice and outcome, of liberalism, the distinct definer and constituent of liberal society is integral liberty. It is so in association and mutual reinforcement with, rather than disjuncture and exclusion from, the other elements of the liberal triple plan and “holy trinity” like equality and justice. In essence,

¹ Similarly, according to the former US Supreme Court judge and liberal Oliver Holmes, liberalism’s core norms and values are the following: “*personal security* (the monopolization of legitimate violence by agents of the state who are themselves monitored and regulated by law), *impartiality* (a single system of law applied equally to all), *individual liberty* (a broad sphere of freedom from collective or governmental supervision, including freedom of conscience, the right to be different, the right to pursue ideals one’s neighbor thinks wrong, the freedom to travel and emigrate, and so forth), and *democracy* or the right to participate in lawmaking by means of elections and public discussions through a free press”.

Table 3
Principles of Liberalism, Institutions of Liberal Society

Integral liberty

integral economic and social liberty
 integral negative and positive freedom
 integral formal and substantive freedom
 integral individual and public liberty
 social foundation of liberty

Egalitarianism

comprehensive social equality and inclusion
 secular egalitarianism
 integral egalitarianism

Social justice

universal equity
 justice for a free society

Democracy

liberal ideal of modern democracy
 system of political liberty, equality and justice

Social pluralism

political pluralism
 political neutrality and tolerance
 cultural pluralism

Social universalism

universal liberty
 moral universalism

Individualism

social-institutional individualism
 individual liberty, rights and dignity

Rationalism, modernism, progressivism and optimism

rational enlightenment
 social modernization, progress and hope

Humanism and secularism

sanctity of human persons and life
 secular values and institutions

Pacifism

principle and institution of peace
 defensive war

liberalism in ideological terms is the “ideology and utopia” in Mannheim’s sense, and liberal society and modernity the social-systemic and historical realm and realization, of integral liberty.

The principle of integral liberty posits that human freedom is, positively, holistic, composite or systemic; negatively, indivisible, irreducible or non-fragmentary. For example, some economists emphasize the “methodical liberty of the Liberal State” (Robbins 1957: 212) and generally that “freedom is indivisible” (Mises 1956: 40) within and for liberalism. The principle relates to what contemporary analysts describe as the “glorious indetermination of liberty” (Manent 1998: 228) in relation to its integration, complexity and indivisibility in liberal society and modernity. Liberty in liberal society and modernity is complex, integral, composite, or aggregate and in this degree indeterminate, irreducible, or indivisible. In particular, it is resistant to “determination” through economic “rational choice” reduction, fragmentation, disaggregation, i.e. de-composition, into “free enterprise” a la Asian (Singapore, Korea, Taiwan) capitalist dictatorships (Habermas 2001), Chile’s “free markets” fascism, and authoritarian-oligarchic “unfettered” capitalism (Pryor 2002) in America under anti-liberal neo-conservatism.

Integration of Economic and Social Liberty

Specifically, the integrative principle posits that human liberty in liberal society and modernity is composite or holistic in the sense of being both economic and social, including political, cultural and civil liberties. Consequently, it is not exhausted by and indivisible or irreducible, as done by most economists and “rational choice” sociologists, into market freedom. In this sense, liberty is what Durkheim calls a “total social fact”, a sociological category spanning liberal society and modernity as a whole, including, but not limited to, economy and the laissez-faire era and ideal, rather than a particular market-economic phenomenon.

The liberal-sociological principle and institution of integral liberty is to be accentuated with regard to its particular economic form, given that “libertarian” economists, as well as neo-conservatives (a la Thatcher and Reagan) claim or imply that “free market enterprise is all you need”, foundational and primary, while non-market, including political and civil, liberties redundant,

derivative or secondary (Tilman 2001). In general, most mainstream economists almost automatically or instinctively tend to reductively define and conceive liberal society in terms of a “liberal” economy, “spontaneous” economic order a la Hayek, “marketplace”, “free enterprise system” or simply capitalism. They thus, in their own terms, reveal a preference or what Veblen would call the trained capacity for committing the fallacy of economic determinism, notably market absolutism and fundamentalism (Barber 1995; Giddens 2000; Hodgson 1999).

Still, some contemporary “libertarian” economists’ embrace or imply the liberal principle and institution by reluctantly admitting that market-economic liberty “is itself a component of freedom broadly understood” or of “total freedom” (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 8–9). In this connection, integral or holistic liberty precisely corresponds to and means “total freedom” in sociological terms, viz. both economic and non-economic liberties, “free enterprise” in economy and society, though not “absolute freedom” in the metaphysical sense a la laissez-faire “free-market” absolutism (Barber 1995; Giddens 1998; Hodgson 1999). Simply, liberty is integral, holistic, total or sociological in Durkheim’s sense of holism by virtue of being freedom in liberal society and modernity as a whole, including polity and culture, not only in a “liberal”, capitalist economy and during its actual or supposed laissez-faire period.

It is primarily in this sense that liberty in liberal society and for liberalism is, as pseudo-Weberian economist Mises recognizes, indivisible and irreducible to any one of its forms and dimensions, no matter how foundational and important (“free markets”) these are for “libertarian” and other economists, plus neo-conservatives. Yet, when recognizing and stating that “freedom is indivisible”, Mises (1956: 40) usually means that political and other non-economic freedoms are not divisible or separable from economic liberty, notably free capitalist enterprise, so ultimately capitalism, as their foundation, source or primary, but rarely or not at all the opposite direction of social-into-market “indivisibility” or inseparability in respect with liberty. To that extent, Mises’ argument, typical of most “libertarian” economists (as analyzed in Tilman 2001), including his colleague Hayek, does justice only to the first part of the equation of “indivisible” freedom, while overlooking or downplaying the second. Namely, the full equation of “indivisible” freedom posits that neither

social nor economic liberties are “divisible” and reducible into each other, but constitute integral, holistic and total freedom in a sociological, as distinguished from metaphysical, sense.

Hence, what distinguishes sociological liberalism from pseudo-liberal libertarianism and anti-liberal neo-conservatism is the principle that liberty is integral, composite or complex in the specific sense of being more than only, so indivisible and irreducible into, economic freedom or “free market enterprise” as its particular component. This relates to the fact that liberal society and modernity, as what Pareto (and Durkheim and Parsons) calls the total “sociological system” is “more complicated” than a free-market economic system a la laissez-faire capitalism as one of its integral elements or subsystems. In sum, the above elaborates and specifies the liberal ideal and institution of integral liberty as the integration and composite of both economic and social, market and political-cultural liberties, as operating in economy and all society, so Friedman’s “total freedom” in sociological terms.

Integration of Negative and Positive Freedom

Another way to elaborate and specify the liberal principle and institution of integral liberty is in terms of an integration or combination of negative and positive freedom. This means that liberty in liberal society and for liberalism is an integral or composite of both negative and positive, just as of economic and social, freedoms as usually understood. This is also instructive to emphasize if what differs sociological-philosophical liberalism from quasi-liberal economic “libertarianism” as well as anti-liberal conservatism is precisely considering liberty a complex set of both positive and negative liberties, not only or mostly of the second, as most “libertarian” economists claim or imply, while conservatives, almost like fascists, deny, eliminate or restrict both forms. To use the familiar sociological and philosophical distinction, the liberal principle and institution of integral liberty posits and entails not only, as does “libertarianism” and declaratively neo-conservatism, “freedom from” societal, including, but not limited to, government, coercion and constraint. It also does “freedom for”, free individual and collective action, autonomy and self-determination (Habermas 1989).

Contrary to the “libertarian” obsession with the first and the conservative-fascist elimination or restriction of both, negative freedom is logically and

substantively just, to use Robbins' (1952) expression, half of the full equation of integral liberty in liberal society and modernity, the other being positive freedom, just are market-economic, relative to non-economic, freedoms. For example, the US constitution, at least in its liberal, Jeffersonian rendition and interpretation, posits or implies an integration and balance of negative and positive liberty. It does so by integrating and balancing freedom "from" arbitrary government coercion via the "rule of law", "due process", separation of church and state with freedom "for" individual and collective action through the "pursuit of happiness", "equal protection under the law" of individuals and racial groups within a system of prescribed rules and institutions. In this respect, the liberal principle of integral and compound liberty really does justice to this constitutional integration and balance of positive and negative liberties "from" and "for" in America. By contrast, US pseudo-liberal "libertarians" by favoring negative to positive freedom, and a fortiori anti-liberal conservatives (and neo-fascists) denying or violating both, overlook and deny their implied integration in the very Constitution that they extol as the "Bible" of (their) American civil, if not true, religion (Beck 2000; Munch 2001).

In retrospect, John S. Mill perhaps provides a classical liberal definition of negative social freedom in terms of the "nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society [state] over the individual", with some intimations of its positive and active form in autonomy and self-direction. Some contemporary authors object that classical liberalism overall tends to define individual freedom "negatively" and propose that "it is also positive in that individuals use their freedom to do many different things in different ways" (Razeen 2002: 17). Even if such negative definitions prevail in classical liberalism, particularly political economy, its contemporary version typically purports to incorporate in some sort and degree of integration and balance both freedom "from" government intrusion and compulsion and freedom "to" act for individual and collective, economic and social, purposes, in contrast to "libertarianism" retaining and even intensifying the early liberal over-emphasis on negative and market liberty. In this sense, "libertarianism" is described as extreme, conservative, anachronistic liberalism seeking to restore the "golden past" or myth of absolute negative liberty a la laissez-faire market absolutism and economic anarchy (Eisenstadt 1998; Tilman 2001).

Alternatively, when self-declared liberals in the classical tradition, as stressed by his disciple Hayek (1941) like economist Mises (1950) define liberty

as “freedom from the State” and suggests that this indicates the “negativity of the concept of freedom”, this actually provides a “libertarian” negative rather than modern liberal definition that defines the concept also by a positive dimension. Further, contemporary sociologists object that such libertarian-economic definitions are not only negative but also overlook or downplay that liberty is not only freedom from government coercion but generally from the “constraints of a capitalist society” (Dahrendorf 1979: 102). In this view, what is called the new liberty is defined in terms of “a freedom from the constraints of a capitalist or socialist society bent on expansion” (Dahrendorf 1979: 102). In turn, “libertarian” economists Mises, Hayek, Friedman et al. would erase “capitalist” and underline “socialist” on the grounds that capitalism, as they understand it – i.e. minus welfare egalitarian capitalism and social democracy – is intrinsically Smith’s “system of natural liberty” (Buchanan 1991: 24–7) and “socialism”, while including in it liberal-social democracy, the “road to serfdom”.

If so, “libertarian” negative definitions of liberty paradoxically are not “negative” enough on their own terms by omitting an essential dimension of, and so not doing full justice to, the supposed “negativity” of the concept of freedom. This is the omission of what Weber would call substantive, sociological coercion in both economy and society, as distinguished from its formal, legal-political form appropriated, embodied and exercised by government with its monopoly of physical force and violence. The omission can be attributed to “libertarian” economists’ “trained capacity” and penchant for reductively conceiving all liberal society and modernity, including political democracy and the civil sphere, as capitalism, a laissez-faire economy or “spontaneous” market order, as the fallacy of misplaced economic concreteness (Hodgson 1999; Tilman 2001). Hence, “libertarians” overlook or deny what economist-sociologist Pareto² and other economists and sociologists like Smith, Mill, Durkheim and Parsons propose and emphasize. Recall, this is that liberal society and modernity constitutes what Pareto calls a total “sociological system” and capitalism, i.e. a free-market order à la Hayek, an economic

² Pareto, incidentally, is one of the heroes, due to his theory of perfect competition and market equilibrium, including the Pareto-optimum, of “libertarian” economics, specifically the Chicago, albeit not the Austrian anti- or non-equilibrium, school (Kirzner 1997) which especially rejects or suspects Walrasian-Paretian general-equilibrium economic theory (cf. also Blaug 2001).

sub-system and integral part of this larger and more complex social structure (Arrow 1994). And the “libertarian” failure to realize or acknowledge these relations between the two systems apparently entails or leads to denying and neglecting that its “negativity” consists of freedom from both government coercion and economic (“capitalist”), just as other social, including cultural or civil-society, constraints and compulsions, exemplified by wealth and income inequality, poverty, neo-conservative repressive culture and violent wars in America during the 1980–2000s. Even the supposedly pro-capitalist and laissez-faire US constitution and legal system implies, especially in its liberal Jeffersonian amendments or interpretations, a comprehensive concept of negative liberty. This is a concept of freedom not only from government coercion but also from certain “constraints of a capitalist society”, such as slavery, segregation (e.g. the “separate but unequal” ruling), discrimination, extreme exploitation (slave-like and child labor), abject material deprivation (some welfare assistance) and the like.

In general, a frequent contemporary liberal objection is that the “libertarian” notion of liberty, along and linked with being reductively economic (Hodgson 1999; Tilman 2001), “is negative because it [is] resigned to, indeed pleased with, existing conditions” (Dahrendorf 1979: 91–2; also Hindmoor 1999). A similar, more specific liberal objection is that “libertarians” pay “little or no attention to the possibility that conditions may be such as to make liberty worthless [as] the sheep and the wolf [are equally free]” (Van Dyke 1995: 106). For most US and other contemporary liberals, freedom from state power or negative liberty “makes no difference unless individuals are thereby freed to achieve their desired goals (positive freedom)” (Kloppenbergh 1998: 14). In this respect, US liberalism is more than “libertarianism”, let alone conservatism due to its tendency to eliminate or restrict both types of freedom, congruent with American values and institutions, notably the Constitution’s Jeffersonian implied integration of negative and positive liberties by blending freedom from arbitrary government coercion and freedom for the “pursuit of happiness”, including personal and collective autonomy or identity.

In sum, integral, composite liberty in liberal society and modernity comprises negative and positive liberties, i.e. “freedom from” government coercion and other societal constraints as well as “freedom to” engage in individual and collective action, i.e. self-determination. In this respect, contemporary liberalism essentially differs and distances from “libertarianism” preferring

instead negative and narrow market to positive and integral societal freedom and a fortiori conservatism typically characterized by a distaste and suspicion for both and nearly any liberties (excepting “free enterprise” for conservative elites).

Integration of Formal and Substantive Freedom

The liberal principle and institution of integral liberty also posits and entails integration and proximate balance of what following Weber can be called formal-legal and substantive societal liberties, by analogy to rationality. Thus, Weber remarks that formal liberty, i.e. “freedom in the legal sense” signifies the “possession of rights, actual and potential”. He then distinguishes this formal aspect of liberty from what he calls the “substantive content” of institutional liberties and laws, exemplified by natural law whose “essential elements” are identified as freedom in general, in particular that of contract.

For example, Weber suggests that the “substantive freedom” of market contract consists in the “complete absence of substantive regulation of consumption, production, and prices” by non-market institutions, including tradition, religion and government. Also, by famously identifying normative-institutional (non-contractual) elements in market contracts, Durkheim implies that this “substantive freedom” is societal and sociological in that, as he puts it, “if the contract has the power to bind, it is society which gives this power to it” and that it is “possible only thanks to a regulation of the contract which is essentially social”. Hence, through their legal and sociological elements, economic contracts and the corresponding market transactions exemplify, though do not exhaust, contrary to orthodox economists’ views, the integration of formal and substantive freedom, as posited and entailed by the liberal ideal and institution of integral liberty.

Some contemporary authors adopt or evoke Weber’s formal-legal definition of freedom by stating that the “principle of modern liberty [is] the principle of human rights” (Manent 1998: 220) as institutionally recognized and formulated in laws, from natural law to modern positive laws as its assumed or claimed expression or specification, including constitutions. Notably, this view also embraces or echoes Weber’s concept of “substantive freedom” by stating that “each human being is the best judge of what is most conducive to his or her own self-preservation [i.e.] the security of mere life [and] the pursuit

of happiness" (Manent 1998: 220). These statements, apparently referring to the US Constitution, imply that the latter comprises and integrates formal and substantive liberties through integrating or balancing the "principle of human rights" and the freedom in the "pursuit of happiness". This is a moment that contemporary American liberalism detects and emphasizes, unlike "libertarianism" due to its typical preoccupation with formal freedoms, and neo-conservatism typically preoccupied with eliminating or restricting both the "form" and "substance" of human freedom and so eventually life.

At this juncture, formal and negative, especially substantive and positive, liberties often (but not always) correspond to and intersect with each other within liberal society and modernity. Cases in point are freedom "from" and the right to "due process", freedom "to" and the "pursuit of happiness" in the US Constitution in the Jeffersonian construction. Generally, contemporary liberalism, like sociological analysis, attempts to do justice to both formal and substantive freedom, in contrast to "libertarianism" and economics with its "revealed preferences" for the first (e.g. "due process", "equality before the law") over the second, and conservatism, including fascism, with its acquired distaste and what Veblen calls "trained incapacity" for both and virtually any liberties, minus capitalist "freedom" and "choice" for conservative-fascist masters and the "fittest" (as Mussolini³ himself suggests).

Integration of Individual and Public Liberty

In addition, the principle and institution of integral liberty means and entails an integration and proximate balance of individual, private, personal, civil and public, political liberties. While the first are considered and described as classical-liberal, and the second as republican-democratic, liberties, early and even more contemporary liberalism incorporate and integrate individual and political freedoms alike. As some contemporary sociologists suggest, liberalism postulates as an ideology and realizes as an institutional system liberal and political freedoms and rights alike, thus private and public autonomy or self-determination (Habermas 2001: 65). In this context, the private autonomy

³ In Mussolini's view, capitalism is not just a "system of oppression" but rather of the "choice of the fittest, equal opportunities for the most gifted, a more developed sense of individual responsibility."

of persons is defined as consisting in that individuals “should be able to form, revise, and rationally pursue their own conception of a good life” is being “primarily a question for self-determining individuals, not for collectives” (Brink 2000: 10–1).

Hence, private autonomy in liberal society and modernity is equivalent to personal liberty as the “freedom to live one’s life according to one’s given conception of the good life”, or simply self-determination. In turn, the public autonomy of citizens is defined in terms of their “capacity to reflect on the adequateness and legitimacy of the norms, principles, and procedures that set limits to [one’s] personal freedom” (Brink 2000: 10–1). By analogy, public autonomy in liberal society is equivalent to political liberty or democracy as a sort of collective self-determination or “will formation” (Habermas 2001). Like its classical version, contemporary liberalism promotes not only the “idea of individual self-determination” or free personal choice (Brink 2000: 35) but also that of public autonomy or democracy, as emphasized by contemporary liberal scientists (cf. Habermas 1989). In this sense, the contemporary type is both “liberalism in civil liberties” (Lipset 1955: 190), i.e. individual freedoms, and “liberalism in political freedoms”, as analytically distinct, yet actually intertwined and mutually reinforcing form and components of integral liberty in liberal society and modernity.

While liberal-secular democracy, including the separation of church and state, is a case and aggregate outcome of the second, an instance of the first is what can be analogously denoted liberalism in academic or intellectual freedom, notably higher education. As some sociologists remark, in Western societies a “modern university has its common basis in the liberal idea of independent inquiry, free discussion, and academic self-government [so] the liberal principle or conception of academic freedom [means that] scholarly responsibilities are consonant with a liberal position” (Bendix 1970: 95). In spite or rather because of this promotion of academic and other freedom, “like other tenets of liberalism, this idea is subject to attack from the right and left [including] attacks of religious and political fundamentalists upon the inherent radicalism of free inquiry” (Bendix 1970: 95).

Hence, free inquiry and other intellectual freedom are what distinguish both classical and contemporary liberalism from its adversaries, including conservatism, especially religious fundamentalism and fascism, as well as communism. Further, in virtue of its integration and balance of individual

and political liberties, self-determination and democracy, liberalism is distinct not only from conservatism, fascism and communism attacking and suppressing both. It is also from “libertarianism” preferring and subordinating the first to the second elements of integral liberty, notably private “free market enterprise” to democratic governance (Tilman 2001), public autonomy and collective “will formation” (Habermas 2001).

In summary, according to the liberal ideal and institution of integral liberty, the latter is an integration, composite or balance of, first, economic and social, second, negative and positive, third, formal and substantive, and fourth, individual and public liberties. In this sense, liberty in liberal society and modernity is truly “total”, but not absolute, freedom in the sense of a Durkheimian complex social fact, a sociological, as distinguished from narrowly economic-legal as well as metaphysical, system and category in Pareto’s meaning of holism and complexity. Liberty is a “sociological system” and category also on the account of its societal foundations, discussed next.

Social Foundations of Liberty

Liberty is a complex sociological category in that it can originate, exist and function only in human society, which indicates its essential social roots and conditions, notably in institutions. This is a classical sociological liberal argument explicitly expounded by Durkheim as well as more implicitly Weber, who thus exhibit what Parsons (1937) would describe as a convergence upon the social-institutional conception of liberty in liberal society and modernity. To recall, Durkheim argues that liberty derives from, rather than being “antagonistic” to – as supposed, in his view, by Spencer as well as Hobbes and Rousseau – societal practices, rules and institutions (“social action”). In other words, liberty constitutes and expresses what he calls a “conquest of society over nature” and consequently is “far from being an inherent property of the state of nature” a la Hobbes and Robinson Crusoe’s island, even though, as UK marginalist economist Edgeworth (1967: 115) admits, “economists delight to place [solitary couples] in lonely islands”.

In particular, Durkheim suggests that liberty represent and functions as a social-institutional phenomenon by arguing that the usual antinomy between the “authority” of rules and institutions and the “freedom” of individuals is simply false. Instead, he contends that liberty itself is the “product” of a

system of social rules on the ground that only such rules “can serve as a barrier against such abuses of power.” Notably, for Durkheim what he calls “just liberty that society is duty bound to enforce respect for [is] the product of a set of rules and institutions”. This means that the liberal conjunction, positive dialectics or balance of integral liberty with justice, and by implication equality, is in essence such a product of social rules and institutions.

In contemporary sociology, Durkheim’s conception of liberty and sociological theory generally is often (but not always) considered a “quintessential construction of modernity, and [he] a quintessential liberal of sorts. [Its] contradictions are contradictions at the heart of modern society – and of liberal ideology”⁴ (Lehmann 1995). In such views, Durkheim “shared the vaguely liberal and republican ideals of human progress unleashed in history” (Lemert 1999: 249). In turn, other sociologists object that “in its classic or Durkheimian version, the liberal tradition is marked by a “dualism”. Society and government constitute two interdependent, but partially autonomous spheres of thought and action”⁵ (Bendix 1970: 210). What is pertinent to the present purpose is that Durkheim shared and redefined the liberal conception of the social embeddedness of liberty as essentially a societal, notably institutional, creation, so a sociological category.

In Parsonian terms, Weber implicitly and perhaps unwittingly converges with Durkheim on the societal embeddedness conception of liberty, just as, in Parsons’ (1937) interpretation, a normative-institutional (“voluntaristic”) theory of social action and structure. For illustration, Weber argues that the “freedom of the human will”, especially in the form of free individual action, is “embedded” in the human economy and society as a whole. In his terminology, this can be described as substantive liberty, exemplified, though not exhausted, by what he refers to as the “substantive freedom” of market contracts and transactions as well as instrumental-economic rationality and societal rationalization generally. This is what contemporary sociologists (Aron 1998: 302) essentially imply by commenting that Weber “recognized that

⁴ Lehmann (1995) comments that Durkheim was a “leading intellectual” in a liberal organization the “League of Rights of Man” in France.

⁵ Bendix (1970: 210) adds that “from a theoretical standpoint this tradition is unsatisfactory because it constantly shifts from the empirical level, as in the analysis of market-behavior or the individual’s group affiliation, to the ethical and political level, as in the demand that the state should act to prevent the undesired consequences of market behavior or group-affiliation.”

rationalization did not guarantee the triumph of [Hegelian] historical reason or liberal values”.

The above implies that what Weber calls formal or instrumental rationality – i.e. “calculation” or “instrumentally-rational action” – so its emanation and realization in modern capitalism defined by economic and other rationalization, was not a sufficient condition for liberal society and liberalism, just as of liberty as such. This is because rationalization or rationalism is just one of the defining and constitutive elements of liberal society that is more than only “rational” or “capitalistic”, but also, and not necessarily related, free, egalitarian, just, democratic, secular, civilized, human and the like. The reason is that economic and other rationalization in general, capitalism in particular, is not in itself enough for and does not exhaust liberty, so liberal society, as indicated by the incidence of totalitarian rationalism, as stressed for socialism by Hayek (1955), and capitalist authoritarianism or dictatorship (Pryor 2002). Liberal society is typically “rational”, including “capitalist”, in economic and other terms, but not conversely. Not all rationalism or capitalism is liberalism in the sense of an ideal and social system of liberty, joined with equality and justice. Hence, Weber by recognizing the above effectively recognized and predicted the Hayekian problem of totalitarian rationalism, including, what Hayek overlooked or denied, capitalist (just as communist) authoritarianism as the antipode of liberalism as defined.

In addition, Weber’s definition of formal freedom in terms of “possession of rights” institutionally reproduced by legal rules, premised on “natural law”, and other social norms is essentially convergent with Durkheim’s conception of “just liberty” as the “product of a set of rules and institutions”. Perhaps recognizing and reflecting this convergence, in contemporary sociology, like Durkheim, Weber is often described as “a liberal in despair” indicating what is called the “ideological moment” in the Weberian “instrumental reduction of modernity [and so liberalism]” (Alexander 1982: 98; cf. also Swedberg 2003: 283).

Contemporary heterodox economists like Polanyi (1944: 256) also embrace and develop Durkheim and Weber’s conception of the sociological embeddedness⁶ of liberty by contending that the “discovery of society is the anchor

⁶ In contemporary, especially economic, sociology Karl Polanyi (1944) is best-known for the early, anthropological conception of the “social embeddedness of economic

of freedom” and that this is precisely its meaning in complex liberal societies. So do, moreover, orthodox, libertarian economists like Mises and Hayek, albeit perhaps unwittingly or reluctantly given their dismissal of Durkheimian and cognate sociological theory as “collectivism” and, specifically by the second, “constructivist rationalism”.

For illustration, in a strikingly sociological statement almost à la Durkheim as the perceived enemy of individualism, Mises (1966: 279) states that “only within the frame of a social system can a meaning be attached to the term freedom [as] a sociological concept [that is] meaningless in conditions outside society.” Alternatively, Mises proposes that in the state of and against nature in Hobbes’ sense there exists no freedom, thus adopting and even reinforcing Durkheim’s respective contention that liberty is “far from being an inherent property of the state of nature”.

Although less explicitly and clearly, Mises’ follower Hayek also, in a way despite himself and his vehement rejection of Durkheimian sociological “collectivism”, “rationalism” and “positivism”, subscribes to or echoes Durkheim’s and Weber’s conception of the social-institutional embeddedness of liberty. Hayek (1960: 207–8) proposes that free society allows that “each individual has a recognized private sphere clearly distinct from the public sphere, and the private individuals obey only the rules which are equally applicable to all.” *Prima facie*, this appears to be just a “libertarian” way to restate Durkheim’s sociological proposition that liberty is the product of society, notably of a “set of rules and institutions”, though Hayek would reject this interpretation given his distaste for sociology, especially what he perceived as its Durkheimian “collectivist”, “rationalistic” and “positivist” version. The above holds good of Friedman’s libertarian-economic statement that liberty “has to do with the interrelations among people; it has no meaning whatsoever to a Robinson Crusoe on an isolated island” (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 12). Consequently, even neoclassical economists like Robbins (1952) and Hicks (1969) describe economics as the science of an exchange-market or social economy, i.e. the economic activities of “man in society, including a “compar-

action” (Granovetter 1985). In turn, both Weber and especially Durkheim substantively anticipate and influence this conception, just as that of the social embeddedness of liberty.

ative study of different institutions, from the point of view of their efficiency”, thus as redundant in a Robinson Crusoe’s (plus communist) economy.⁷

As they stand, these statements and descriptions restate and evoke Durkheim’s sociological-embeddedness argument that liberty, including its economic form like free market enterprise, results from social action and society, and alternatively is not an “inherent property” of the Hobbesian state of nature as exemplified and symbolized by Robinson Crusoe’s “isolated island” and “economy” and laissez-faire anarchy with its law of the “jungle”. And by discovering and emphasizing the societal embeddedness of liberty within liberal society and modernity, liberalism is by assumption “embedded”⁸ (O’Riain 2000) economic and social liberalism as distinguished from what Polanyi (1944) would call dis-embedded “libertarian” economics and an archaic (Beck 2000) or mythical laissez-faire economy.

Liberal Egalitarianism: Comprehensive Social Equality and Inclusion

Another fundamental principle and institution of liberalism, i.e. defining attribute and constituent of liberal society and modernity, is egalitarianism as an ideal and institutional arrangement of comprehensive social equality, inclusion and openness, in reciprocal relation and reinforcement with integral liberty. In this respect, liberalism is (also) intrinsically or eventually egalitarianism in contrast to anti-liberal conservatism, including fascism, that is typically and vigorously anti-egalitarianism and quasi-liberal “libertarianism”

⁷ Hicks (1969: 328) adds that the “comparative study of different institutions, from the point of view of their [economic] efficiency, must fall within the scope” of welfare economics and that this is not necessary in the event of a “Robinson Crusoe economy”. In his view, “the only thing which is interesting about the economic activities of Robinson Crusoe is the cleverness which he exhibits in the attainment of a respectable standard of living when deprived of the advantages of the division of labor” (Hicks 1969: 328). Instead, Hicks (1969: 328) suggests that “man in society raises additional difficulties because he is sometimes able to achieve his own individual ends more fully, not by increasing the efficiency of production, but at the expense of his neighbors.”

⁸ O’Riain (2000: 188) proposes that embedded economic liberalism consists in that market and state “balance each other” and “economic forces are embedded in political realities”. In this view, during the post WWII era “a particular set of relations between state, society and market was institutionalized internationally, creating a system of relatively stable national economies organized through an international order of ‘embedded liberalism’” (O’Riain 2000: 188).

described and extolled as non-egalitarianism by its adherents (e.g. Hayek 1948; Mises 1966; also Friedman and Friedman 1982). Hence, liberal society and modernity is essentially an egalitarian, inclusive and open (Popper 1973), just as democratic and free, social system and historical time, while illiberal, including conservative and fascist, societies and times are mostly non-egalitarian, exclusive and closed, and so authoritarian (Fung 2003) and un-free systems and periods.

Liberal Sociological-Economic Egalitarian Arguments

Sociological as well as economic (Putterman et al. 1998) liberal arguments for egalitarianism are by assumption entailed in those for equality as well as justice in society. Thus, Smith's triple "liberal plan" of equality, liberty and justice entails an egalitarian and "libertarian" blueprint and argument. Similarly, Spencer's formulation and celebration of the "law" of equal freedom can be seen as formulating and celebrating the law of egalitarianism in liberty, thus liberal egalitarian society. By analogy, Tönnies' interpretation of "natural law" – i.e. that "all people" are "a priori equal" and "free agents" – can also be interpreted as one of egalitarianism, at least in ideological or formal, as distinct from institutional or substantive, terms, within contemporary liberal society (*Gesellschaft*). Similarly, Veblen refers to what he calls the "liberal construction of the principles of self-direction and equality among men in their civil capacity and their personal relations", thus implying equalitarianism, entwined with individual liberty, in liberalism.

Notably, Mannheim's (1986) suggestion that the principle of liberty can "only be understood in conjunction" with that of equality as its complement suggests that egalitarianism is complementary and necessary to understanding liberalism in the strict sense. In consequence, when identifying the positive "secular dialectics" and synergy between liberty and equality Dahrendorf (1979) simultaneously identifies such a dialectic between liberalism and egalitarianism as ideological principles and social systems, ideals and institutional practices. Also, Popper (1973: 268), often described as liberal or "libertarian", posits and even reinforces and dramatizes the sociological argument for a positive dialectic of egalitarianism and liberalism by contending that, conversely, the "adoption of an anti-equalitarian attitude in political life is just criminal." In his view, this is because anti-equalitarianism "offers a justifica-

tion of the attitude that different categories of people have different rights; that the master has the right to enslave the slave; that some men have the right to use others as their tools. Ultimately, it will be used to justify murder" (Popper 1973: 268).

If so, anti-egalitarianism is in essence anti-liberalism in the strict and prevalent sense of anti-libertarianism, Dahrendorf's (1979) sign and factor of illiberty, and conversely, contrary to "libertarian" allegations that egalitarianism contradicts the principle of individual liberty and so "libertarianism", including what Hayek (1948) calls "true individualism". As it stands, Popper's somewhat unexpected statement is one of the strongest, most explicit and dramatic arguments for egalitarianism and against anti-egalitarianism on the very grounds of liberty, including liberal democracy, versus unfreedom and authoritarianism or totalitarianism (master-slave relations), within contemporary liberalism or "libertarianism". It argues and predicts that egalitarianism in the sense of equal rights and treatment of "different categories of people" and so comprehensive social equality, inclusion and openness is liberal-democratic.

And vice versa: anti-egalitarianism thus understood is illiberal and undemocratic, thus substantively indefensible, unjustifiable or non-rationalized, so irrational, in terms of liberty and democracy, contrary to its conservative and "libertarian" justifications as spurious Paretian derivations, Freudian-like self-rationalizations or Mannheim's status-quo ideologies (Wrong 1994). This exposes various neo-conservative and "libertarian" defenses and rationalizations of anti-egalitarianism as illiberal and undemocratic, and reveals and validates liberal arguments for egalitarianism as truly "libertarian" and democratic. Neo-conservative anti-egalitarian, like anti-liberal, ideas, institutions and practices probably reflect and implement conservatism's strong (albeit disguised) distaste and incapacity for both liberty and societal equality, inclusion and openness, while those of libertarianism express its distrust of the latter on the dubious premise that freedom and egalitarianism are exclusive substitutes rather than complementary "goods".

Hence, in respect with egalitarianism and so liberalism as a whole, conservatism acts on its fear of and hostility toward liberty and equality, inclusion and openness alike, and libertarianism on its self-delusion (or "bad dream") that the second excludes the first despite the accumulating evidence by many economists to the contrary within liberal Western society and beyond

(Acemoglu 2005; Aghion, Caroli and Garcia-Penalosa 1999; De La Croix and Doepke 2003; Rodrik 1996). No wonder, some contemporary economists find “numerous examples of equality-efficiency synergies” and suggest that “post-war economic experience indicates that equality does not obviously conflict with growth” (Putterman et al. 1998: 866). In this view, “while the operation of unfettered markets engenders great inequalities of wealth, claims that markets would be inefficient without such inequalities are largely speculative”⁹ (Putterman et al. 1998: 866).

Liberal society and modernity therefore distinguishes itself from conservatism, fascism, communism and other “illiberal, authoritarian” (Fung 2003: 519) societies in which egalitarianism has been as a rule “anti-libertarianism” in the sense of destruction or subversion of the ideal and institution of integral liberty. For example, US conservative sociologists admit that liberalism promotes equality, inclusion, openness and democracy or popular sovereignty, as well as individual liberties and rights, in contrast to conservatism that admittedly fears and attacks all these ideals, institutions and practices (Nisbet 1952: 173). In this view, American and other conservatism, including by implication its mutant or ally fascism, harbors and acts on the “fear of the free individual” (Nisbet 1952: 172) and social equality, inclusion and openness alike, while liberalism enhances both personal freedoms, so “libertarianism”, and egalitarianism, apparently a double anathema for US and other conservatives. Further, contemporary US conservatives frame this contrast in terms of a cultural, if not civil-political, war between anti-egalitarian and anti-libertarian conservatism and what they condemn or disdain as “liberal values such as equality, freedom [and others]” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 6).

In sum, the above arguments suggest that egalitarianism is the constitutive principle of liberalism broadly understood and an essential attribute of liberal society and modernity, in complementary and synergic relations with integral liberty. In particular, they indicate that egalitarianism as the principle

⁹ Putterman et al. (1998: 866) conclude that orthodox economics “provides no proof of the superiority, much less the necessity, of either unabridged private property or of its highly unequal distribution”. Generally, they suggest that economic egalitarianism “concerns what degree of equality could be achieved, and at what cost, using available instruments (markets, taxation, various forms of property rights)”, and political egalitarianism “concerns the possibility of implementing the use of these instruments in democracies to alter income distribution in an egalitarian direction, assuming such alterations are economically feasible” (Putterman et al. 1998: 862).

of comprehensive social equality, inclusion, openness, or equal life chances (equality of opportunity) is the necessary, though perhaps not sufficient, condition of integral liberty, and alternatively anti-egalitarianism its antithesis and threat, in liberal society.

In a sense, “libertarians” and even neo-conservatives are correct in contending that egalitarianism is not in *itself* a sufficient condition for liberty and a free, open or “good” society, by usually citing communism where, like in fascism, supposed or forced economic, though not political, equality and inclusion are related to the destruction of freedom and democracy, i.e. totalitarianism. However, this correct insight is sacrificed to the failure or unwillingness to realize that egalitarianism in the sense of broad social equality, inclusion and life chances has been the necessary condition for liberty and democracy, and alternatively anti-egalitarianism their antithesis, in liberal society, as suggested by Dahrendorf and Popper, respectively. Thus, that egalitarianism is the indispensable prerequisite for integral liberty is implicit in Dahrendorf’s (1979) detection of the historical link between the expansion of life chances, i.e. equality of opportunity, and liberty in Western liberal societies. Alternatively, that anti-egalitarianism is the antithesis of and threat to liberty is explicit in Popper’s (1973) contention that anti-egalitarianism is “criminal” to the point of justifying murder.

Liberal and Other Egalitarianism

While liberalism, especially its contemporary version, is essentially egalitarian, particularly in social-political terms, as well as inclusive and open, not all egalitarianism is liberal in origin, content or form. Thus, liberal egalitarianism is usually distinguished from its other forms in non-liberal ideologies and social systems, including Weber’s world “religions of restraint” (Bell 1977) like Christianity and Islam (Davis and Robinson 2006). In particular, Dahrendorf 1979: 124) contrasts what he calls the “deceptive egalitarianism of Christian faith” with liberal, arguably genuine, equality, inclusion and openness that comprises both the “progressive extension” of life chances, including citizenship rights, and the “effective domestication” of political power. This means that the distinguishing feature of liberal egalitarianism in relation to its earlier Christian and other religious, like Islamic (Davis and Robinson 2006), forms is that it consists or results in an inclusive welfare state and liberal

secular democracy, respectively, as distinct from what US neo-conservatives and fundamentalists advocate and establish as largely exclusionary and non-universalistic “faith-based [charity] initiatives” and an illiberal, non-secular government overall.

Thus, Dahrendorf and other contemporary sociologists (Habermas 1989) imply that liberal egalitarianism tends to be universalistic in contrast to its “deceptive” and exclusive religious (Christian, Islamic and other) forms. These by assumption or in practice exclude and thus “deceive” out-groups, as done by Puritanism and its survivals in America (Merton 1939; Munch 2001). These out-groups range from other religions and “infidels” – the two are equated by an exclusive, sectarian religion – to different ethnic-racial “categories of people” (Popper 1973) to true atheists, agnostics or skeptics subject to an exclusionary treatment and worse, including death for blasphemy in Puritan New England, during American history, up to the 21st century (Edgell, Gerteis and Hartmann 2006).

At least, liberal egalitarianism is more comprehensive, inclusive or open than that, even if not, in Christianity as a whole in a sort of charitable interpretation taking as granted the latter’s claims to universalistic ecumenicalism (traditional Catholicism), then in what Weber and other sociologists (Lipset 1996) call Protestant sectarianism, fundamentalism and radicalism, as originally epitomized by Puritanism, in America, especially the ultra-religious and conservative South. Liberal-secular egalitarianism is more comprehensive because of Puritan-rooted religious sectarianism’s exclusion, even persecution and extermination, of out-groups (Merton 1939) via Cromwell-Winthrop’s style holy wars against “infidels” (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000), including non-Protestants like Catholics (“Papists”) in Great Britain and non-Christians such as native Americans during New England’s Puritan theocracy (Munch 2001).

Thus, liberal welfare-capitalist states (Esping-Andersen 1994; Quadagno 1999) or social democracies in Western Europe, notably Scandinavia, and elsewhere (e.g. Canada) are commonly observed and perceived to be more comprehensive, inclusive, open, or generous, humane, and even, as US economist Samuelson admitted, freer than their sectarian-Protestant, Puritan-rooted (Hudson and Coukos 2005), “faith-based” egalitarian or charity alternatives in America during most of its history (Jepperson 2002), including the 2000s. This is what comparative sociological studies suggest estimating that the degrees

of egalitarian economic and implicitly political universalism or universalistic egalitarianism (“collectivism” or “progressivism”) are as a rule higher in liberal-secular European societies than America under religious-political conservatism during the 1980s–2000s (Pampel 1998; also Amenta et al. 2001).

Alternatively, US “compassionate” religious, Protestant and other, neo-conservatism, just as its older version in the past, via such “faith-based” practices persistently seeks and impose on polity and society (Lipset 1996) “religious or quasi-religious solutions” (Jepperson 2002: 71) to economic inequality (if ever), poverty and welfare.¹⁰ Moreover, it applies religious solutions to virtually all social problems, notably “moral issues” (e.g. crime, deviance, sin, vice) yet exploited for theocratic and other political purposes (the “Bible Belt” project, elections) à la Machiavelli, as witnessed by the neo-conservative war on drugs (Hill 2002) and other culture, just as military, wars (Wagner 1997). Yet, despite conservative-sectarian claims to the opposite, such non-secular solutions are far from being more comprehensive, universal, ecumenical, inclusive, generous, humane, let alone “libertarian”, than their attacked or disdained alternatives in liberal egalitarianism, embodied in a secular welfare state; on the contrary, as Dahrendorf (1979) and US sociologists (Amenta et al. 2001; Quadagno 1999) suggest.

Moreover, they are no solutions at all but rather anti-liberal problems on their own rights, hence necessitating their own solution, from the angle of liberalism and within the framework of modern liberal society. They are so in that they tend to eliminate, undermine or make “deceptive” in Dahrendorf’s sense not only liberal economic and other egalitarianism and universalism. This is witnessed by what US sociologists identify as the “new [old] American exceptionalism” (Quadagno 1999), specifically comparative backwardness (Amenta et al. 2001) among modern Western societies in respect with the welfare state and progressive social policy.

In turn, such “exceptionalism” or backwardness is primarily grounded in and justified by such “religious solutions” to social problems, exemplified by

¹⁰ In passing, welfare is not really a problem but a kind of solution and mitigation of material deprivation as the real issue for contemporary liberalism and liberal society. This is in sharp contrast with American and other neo-conservatism as well as economic “libertarianism” redefining welfare-assistance as problematic and even, like poverty, near-criminal (Bauman 2001), an anti-welfare “backwardness” (Amenta et al. 2001) and exceptionalism (Quadagno 1999) historically grounded in Puritanism and its anti-caritas and non-compassion (Tawney 1962).

anti-welfare conservative policies rooted in Puritanism, with its famous, as Weber and other sociologists register, lack of and hostility to *caritas*, compassion and tolerance in favor of moral-political absolutism (Munch 2001; Tawney 1962; Tiryakian 2002), as well as survivals or revivals like Methodism (Hudson and Coukos 2005). They are also problems rather than solutions within liberal modernity in tending to dispense with, undermine or subvert democracy by, as Dahrendorf 1979: 44) notes, “merging politics and religion” dispensing with or undermining the constitutional separation of church and state. They thus tend to eventually dispense with all human liberty and life through a politics and culture of repression and ultimately death, as epitomized by the death penalty for blasphemy in theocratic Puritanism and for functionally equivalent “ungodly” and “un-American” activities in repressive “tough on crime” US neo-conservatism.

Overall, religious alternative “solutions” to egalitarianism are both anti-egalitarian and anti-libertarian, so anti-democratic in these terms, in that merging religion and politics eventuating in theocracy “has rarely done societies any good” (Dahrendorf 1979: 44). Rather, this merging has been typically “a dangerous mixture” (Dombrowski 2001: vii) for liberal democracy and human liberty and ultimately life, as invariably seen in all theocracies, Christian and non-Christian alike (i.e. Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Islamic, Hindu, and others).

In sum, liberal-secular egalitarianism as a rule exhibits and pursues a higher degree of comprehensives, inclusion and openness in the form and sense of, to paraphrase Jefferson’s principle, equality, just as liberty and justice, “for all” at least as an ideal or goal if not yet reality or outcome, than its non-liberal, including religious, counterparts. At the minimum, even the secular (e.g. post-modernist, radical or Marxist) critics of contemporary liberalism would admit that liberal egalitarianism is less particularistic, exclusionary, discriminatory, “stingy” (Amenta and Halfman 2001; Quadagno 1999), repressive and so “deceptive” in Dahrendorf’s sense than are its illiberal, including religious, alternatives such as “Christian” Protestant egalitarian “faith-based” charity in America as well as, as Weber and others imply, the Islamic form of economic justice (Davis and Robinson 2006).

In this respect, the liberal egalitarian type is true, complete egalitarianism in contrast to its religious and other illiberal-authoritarian opposites as spurious, partial or deceptive. From the prism of liberal society and modernity,

egalitarianism that is not comprehensive, fully inclusive and open regardless of religious and other in- and out-group affiliation, as well as compassionate, reasonably generous and humane, is a logical self-contradiction, so ultimately its own actual self-negation as inequality, exclusion and closure, just as is non-universal, exclusive or closed liberty. This is what, for example, the US Constitution and Revolution signifies by the underlying liberal Jeffersonian principle of universal equality (“all men are created equal”) as well as “justice and liberty for all”.

Also, it is what contemporary American liberals recognize and emphasize in contrast to their adversaries like neo-conservatives and in part “libertarians” who tend to overlook, deny and disguise such evident egalitarianism, universalism and other “virtues” (Kloppenbergh 1998) and achievements (Chafe 2003) of liberalism” in the “Bible” (Munch 2001) of their civil religion. As contemporary liberal analysts comment, the “right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence [was] a right to equal opportunity, [which] derive[s] modern liberalism from classical liberalism” (Pelton 1999: 9). Another related example is the French Revolution in virtue of its principle of comprehensive egalitarianism (and brotherhood), with anti-egalitarian contemporary US conservatives (Dunn and Woodard 1996) disdainfully opposing its egalitarian universalism to the American Revolution’s supposed neglect of equality (not “all men are created equal”?) in favor of religious (and other) liberty and faith.

By contrast, contemporary US liberals, based on an alternative egalitarian-universalistic, Jeffersonian reinterpretation of the American Constitution and Revolution, hold that liberalism via a sort of welfare state and government activism promotes universal egalitarianism, including “equal entitlement” (Van Dyke 1995: 83) for all, regardless of what Simmel calls the “web of group affiliations”, including both religious and secular membership. In this view, the argument that government activity in the function of promoting comprehensive egalitarianism through the “expansion and redistribution of political and economic opportunity” for all represents a “central feature of progressive liberalism – activism aimed mainly at giving worth to liberty and making opportunity equal and effective” (Van Dyke 1995: 3). Specifically, described as “not satisfied with the kind of liberty that permits the big fish to eat the little ones”, egalitarian, progressive liberalism proposes that if freedom “is to have worth, people must be in a position to take advantage of it” and proposes

activating government as an “instrument in making liberty worthwhile” (Van Dyke 1995: 4).

Liberalism hence advocates and promotes both genuine libertarianism, contrary to the “libertarian” imputations to the opposite a la liberal “big government”, and truly comprehensive egalitarianism in that it, as its adherents stress, holds that the goal of a free, just political system or state “is not only to protect individual freedom, but to promote equal opportunity for all” (Pelton 1999: 9), so negatively, to eliminate or minimize group discrimination. As regards the latter, however, in this view, “discriminatory group concepts pervade [US] policies” and such “group discrimination generates a vicious circle” involving “conflicts and resentment”¹¹ (Pelton 1999: 217).

The preceding observation apparently refers to US neo-conservative discriminatory practices against various ethnic, political and other minorities reclassified as “un-American” continuous with or reminiscent of paleo-conservative McCarthyism (just as liberal “policies of favoritism” of these subordinated groups). A manifest case in point of the first is the neo-conservative discriminatory practice against legal immigrants denied welfare and related benefits and rights by various laws like the 1996 Welfare Reform Act. This conservative pattern of discrimination has reached the point of denying habeas corpus to immigrants and foreigners through indefinite detention and even reported torture on grounds of suspicion for terrorism and rationalized by the “war on terror” during the 2000s. These and numerous other denials and violations of elementary liberties and human rights to legal, not to mention, illegal, immigrants by neo-conservatism are probably the last remaining form of open legal-institutional discrimination in America. Apparently, these groups are discriminated against and abused all within the “law and order”, which evokes, if not continues, the 1896 Supreme Court’s infamous ruling that similar discriminatory or segregation practices (“separate but equal”) are “constitutional”. A latent instance of “policies of favoritism” involves “liberal” affirmative action programs often perceived and opposed by non-minorities

¹¹ Pelton (1999: 217) adds that “group discrimination generates a vicious circle that can only be ended by nondiscrimination in policies and practice, by group-blind respect for individual rights in policy and practice. To continue policies of favoritism of one group over another is to court and nurture group conflicts and resentment”.

(e.g. so called WASP-s) as sort of “reverse discrimination”, which explains the neo-conservative backlash against these policies during the 1990–2000s.

In general, contemporary liberalism constitutes the principle and institutional practice of universal egalitarianism by devising and realizing the “ideal of full and equal treatment” (Terchek 1997: 232) and comprehensive inclusion of humans irrespective of their in- or out-group ethnic, religious and political status. Hence, Jefferson’s “all” ideally are included into, and alternatively none are excluded from, liberal society and modernity as a supremely egalitarian, inclusive and open social system and historical period. As more critical analysts admit, modern Western liberal societies and democracies endow and so empower human beings with a wide-ranging “basket of rights and obligations”, including equality of treatment of all expressing universal egalitarianism and described as the “fundamental entitlement” (King 1999: 302) in contemporary liberalism.

The above means that modern liberalism in Western societies through its comprehensive egalitarianism and genuine libertarianism (again a redundant term within the context of liberal society) seeks to realize the Enlightenment’s ideal. The latter was epitomized by Smith’s “liberal plan” and Spencer’s “law of equal freedom”, as well as by the French Revolution’s promise of equality and in extension justice and liberty in association (e.g. “Universal Rights of Man”). As hinted, this also holds true, with some adaptations, of contemporary American liberalism as an integral part of the Western liberal “family”, though historically secondary (yet see Kloppenbergh 1998; Nisbet 1966) and increasingly, as during the 1980–2000s, impertinent, even discredited, if not “buried”, by anti-liberalism, compared to religious conservatism epitomized by predominant Puritanism and other sectarian Protestantism (Lipset 1996; Munch 2001), in America. Thus, like Western liberalism, its American variant pursues – yet less explicitly, almost as what Mannheim (1936) calls the “collective unconscious” – the Enlightenment’s egalitarian-libertarian ideal as inspiring and filtered via Jefferson’s universalistic principle of equality, justice and liberty “for all” and its impetus of the US Revolution and institutional codification in the Constitution.

Generally, contemporary liberalism sharply differs in this respect from “libertarianism” that tends to subordinate and ultimately sacrifice equality to liberty reductively understood *cum* primarily market freedom. It is also different from neo-conservatism that, despite its increasingly “libertarian” rhetoric and

disguise of “free markets” and “small government”, continues the proto-conservative, including the fascist, pattern of suppressing and fearing both liberty and equality. In retrospect, modern liberalism hence continues and often reinforces the original, though somewhat implicit, universal egalitarianism, just as libertarianism, of its classical ancestor. Thus, contemporary sociologists remark that classical liberalism “has traditionally been associated with the idea that the legal/political authority should promote equality of opportunity”¹² (Somerville 2000: 126–7). This is in apparent reference to the late 18th century French and American political revolutions more (the first) or less (the second) inspired by the Enlightenment as a kind of prior intellectual liberal revolution (Dahrendorf 1979).

Critics also admit that liberalism is universally egalitarian especially in regard with equality of opportunity as well as norms and procedures for legitimation of political power (Brink 2000: 13). In this view, comprehensive egalitarianism also underpins the liberal “presumption of equal value regarding different conceptions of a good life”, which makes freedom of choice in contemporary liberalism “deeply egalitarian” (Brink 2000: 14–36). In liberal society and modernity, liberty is a kind of Shakespearean question of to be either egalitarian and comprehensive in the sense of Spencer’s law of equal freedom and the French-American Revolutions “for all” – or not to be. For the second involves Hobbes-Popper’s scenario of the master’s “right to enslave the slave” and “big fish to eat the little”, which is essentially the anti-liberal conservative-fascist and in part spurious libertarian concept and reality of “freedom”.

Hence, in comparative sociological terms, in virtue of its comprehensive egalitarianism liberalism tends to result in and be connected with both egalitarian, inclusive or open *and* free, “libertarian” and democratic capitalist and socialist societies alike in contrast to their traditional (e.g. feudal) and conservative, including fascist and neo-conservative or “libertarian”, as well as communist counterparts. In respect with egalitarianism, modern liberalism involves and creates, just as is epitomized and realized in, egalitarian demo-

¹² Somerville (2000: 126–64) objects that traditional liberalism “however, has nothing to say” about what he calls “the realities of exploitation and institutionalised oppression”, in apparent reference to classical political economy and sociology since Smith and Comte, respectively, yet, minus Marx et al.

cratic welfare capitalism (and socialism) or liberal-social democracy (Esping-Andersen 1994; Quadagno 1999), rather than anti-egalitarian, authoritarian or laissez-faire capitalist types (Habermas 2001).

These latter capitalist types are exemplified in what US economists (Pryor 2002) describe as oligarchic and “mafia” (or “cowboy”) capitalism a la Enronism in America during neo-conservatism, medieval traditionalism, proto-conservatism, fascism, and communism (in the sense of socialist authoritarianism). As other economists point out, modern liberalism entails and results in “liberal-democratic capitalism”, i.e. an “egalitarian and democratic variety” of it, as well as in “more liberal moderate or democratic versions of socialism” (Hodgson 1999: 2). For instance, sociological studies (e.g. Erikson and Goldthorpe 2002, also Breiger 1995) show that liberalism via liberal-based industrialism or capitalism generates and predicts “different mobility structures for preindustrial and industrial societies” (DiPrete 2002: 274), predictably, higher in the second than in the first. This confirms Dahrendorf’s (1979) thesis that liberalism historically tends to produce the “progressive extension” of life chances or equality of opportunity through welfare capitalism (and socialism), as well as the “effective domestication” of power via liberal-secular democracy, so it is both universally egalitarian and democratic or “libertarian”.

Integral Egalitarianism

Liberalism advocates and realizes what can by analogy to liberty be called integral, holistic equality and inclusion by incorporating and promoting all of their forms and dimensions. This hence makes liberal egalitarianism complete in respect of forms and dimensions of equality, as well as universalistic in terms of individual and group inclusion. Thus, liberal egalitarianism incorporates, integrates or balances both what Weber would call formal, legal or nominal and substantive, sociological or effective equality, by analogy to rationality. For example, Durkheim remarks that the liberal ideal of equality “originated as a demand of natural law”, commenting that the “fact is that men are endowed differently by nature; thus the demand that all should be equally treated cannot rest on any theory that all are equal.” Since by assumption or in reality this signifies and leads to “equality of All before the Law”, he suggests that natural law is the origin of the ideal and practice of formal equality in liberalism.

Durkheim also implicitly identifies the liberal ideal of substantive and actual equality, at least its societal origin and content, by noting that the “soberest reasons of expediency recommend equality to Liberalism”. Specifically, he observes that the liberal ideal of equality is “based on social considerations [to which] the susceptibilities of individuals must give way”. On the account of its basis in social, distinguished from individual and factional, factors, the liberal ideal also contains substantive equality in the sense of pursuing and resting on what Weber calls referring to economic “substantive rationality” ultimate values, as different from legal norms/positive law defining its formal type.

Comparatively, such an incorporation and proximate balance of formal and substantive, nominal and real, equality is what distinguishes liberalism and its egalitarianism from pseudo-egalitarian libertarianism that typically favors the first to the second type. It also differs it from anti-egalitarian conservatism, including fascism and neo-conservatism, which basically opposes and fears both types and virtually all equalities, as well as liberties. Thus, when Mises (1950) asserts that the “equality Liberalism creates is equality before the Law; it has never sought any other”, he actually means “libertarianism” as a modern spurious, extreme rendition (Eisenstadt 1998) and economic reduction (Tilman 2001) of, rather than, liberalism proper, including both its classical and especially contemporary versions. For example, Smith’s classical “liberal plan” of equality, as well as liberty and justice, implies both its formal and substantive types, as does Spencer’s “law of equal freedom”, not to mention Durkheim-Weber’s more sociological and less utilitarian versions, at least in contemporary liberal renditions and interpretations. Alternatively, only anti-egalitarian economic “libertarians” like Mises, Hayek and their followers can interpret Smith’s and other egalitarian blueprints of classical liberalism as “never” seeking anything else than “equality before the Law”. Hence, “libertarianism”, as its supposed successor or “puritan” (Bird 1999) guardian, not only fails to do full justice to classical liberalism and its egalitarianism. It also overlooks or denies that, by committing and perpetuating a sort of legalistic fallacy, as Dahrendorf (1979: 124) states, equality before the law “means little if the power to make law is confined to the few”.

Liberal egalitarianism and universalism posits that legal-formal equality, while the necessary, is not the sufficient condition of substantive, effective equality in Weber-Durkheim’s terms of “ultimate values” and other “social

considerations”, contrary to the typical “libertarian” dissolution of the second type into the first and the conservative-fascist rejection and suppression of both. Admittedly, in modern welfare social-democratic liberalism or capitalism formal-legal equality per se, stipulating that “all citizens have equal rights”, is still “not enough [as] to really count as equals, [for] some citizens may require special attention” (Brink 2000: 13).

In addition to formal and substantive equality, liberal egalitarianism also incorporates and integrates economic and especially social, including cultural and political, equalities alike. This indicates that it, particularly its contemporary type, is also integral in the sense of comprising and integrating both economic and cultural-political egalitarianism. Notably, liberal egalitarianism considers economic and cultural-political equality or inequality, just as liberty or illiberty, to be intertwined, mutually reinforcing and so inseparable in reality rather than independent, isolated or separate, as seen in “libertarianism” and conservatism. In this view, particularly “for the sake of an enlarged culture [one needs] a political agenda that makes as a central priority the provision of basic material goods in a way that secures a decent life for all citizens”¹³ (DeLue 1999: 24).

The above signifies that cultural equality and freedom, or an equal and free civil society, presupposes and relates to elemental material and political equalities and rights. These involve a reasonably or minimally egalitarian economic system, epitomized by Western European, notably Scandinavian, welfare capitalism, devoid of extreme wealth inequalities and sharp class divisions (viz. widespread poverty, labor exploitation), as well as inclusive liberal-secular democracy superseding institutional exclusion, closure and discrimination.

And conversely, liberal egalitarianism suggests that a free egalitarian market economy such as welfare capitalism and inclusive political democracy, contrary to the view of most economists and “rational choice” sociologists, necessitate and rest on an “enlarged” culture and equal civil society as their cultural basis, complement or reinforcement. In virtue of this incorporation

¹³ Alternatively, DeLue (1999: 24) admonishes that an “enlarged culture, so essential to protecting the cooperative arrangement of society, cannot be sustained if there are serious social antagonisms caused by an absence of a commitment to provide the elements of essential material decency to all citizens”.

and integration of economic and political-cultural equality, liberalism differs both from libertarianism, with its typical “revealed preference” for the second over the first type as a non-entity or non-problem automatically resolved by “free markets”, and from conservatism, including fascism, due to its distaste and “trained incapacity” for both and any egalitarianism. In sum, in modern liberalism, egalitarianism is integral in virtue of incorporating and integrating formal and substantive as well as economic and political-cultural and all other equalities. It is also comprehensive or universalistic by its equality for and inclusion of ideally “all” individuals and groups into liberal society and modernity.

Liberal Justice: Universal Social Equity

As indicated, still another fundamental principle and institution of liberalism, i.e. defining attribute and constituent of liberal society and modernity, is universal social justice in the sense of equity or fairness (used interchangeably, though subtle distinctions are possible and made in the scientific literature and common discourse). In this sense, liberalism is the idealism and institutionalism of universal social justice, reciprocally linked and reinforced with liberty and equality, inclusion and openness, and liberal society a just, equitable, as well as free and egalitarian, inclusive and open, social system. In liberal society, comprehensive equality or universal inclusion constitutes the necessary, though perhaps not sufficient, condition of social justice and liberty.

Alternatively, social justice *cum* fairness in liberal society is grounded in, yet not identical to and exhausted by, economic and non-economic equalities. In liberal society equity rests on, but is not necessarily, equality, “egalitarian” predicts, albeit is not invariably, “equitable”, which both connects them and avoids their frequent conflation or equivalence (and “libertarian” or conservative accusations of liberalism for equating the two). In short, equality is the fundamental condition of, while not identical to, equity/justice/fairness, and liberal egalitarian society typically and eventually tends to be equitable/just/fair, and conversely. This is what US economist Samuelson implies by admitting that egalitarian Scandinavian societies are freer and implicitly fairer than America.

In particular, equality is a basic condition of equity in the form of what Tocqueville and Hayek (1991) would call equal treatment of the equal, including equivalent or proportional material and other rewards for equal or proportionate merits, contributions or performances. This defines what from Aristotle to Schumpeter has been called distributive justice, including its economic version defined by the neoclassical equation of incomes and (marginal) productivity, and “meritocracy” generally. By contrast, in liberal society the unequal treatment of the equal generates and defines social inequity, with non-equivalent and non-proportional rewards for equivalent and proportionate achievements defining distributive injustice, including its economic form or exploitation (e.g. incomes lower than marginal productivity or more realistically overall merit and effort).

The above also holds true of the equal treatment of the unequal, including equivalent rewards for *non*-equivalent merits that defines distributive injustice or “exploitation of the great by the small” (Olson 1971), as “libertarians” like Hayek (citing Tocqueville) insist. Alternatively, the latter would claim that it is inequality rather than such equality that can (also) generate and define social justice in the sense of unequal treatment of the unequal, including differential rewards for different merits, thus defining distributive justice in economy (e.g. varying incomes in accordance with various marginal productivities). These are the probably prevalent definitions and conceptions (e.g. Becker 1976; Buchanan 1991; Friedman 1976; Friedman and Friedman 1982; Hayek 1991) of social, including distributive, justice and injustice respectively in economic “libertarianism” and neo-conservatism like Thatcherism and Reaganism, in apparent reaction to the supposed liberal equation of equality with equity, and of inequality with injustice.

For example, prominent US libertarian economists (Friedman 1977: 199–200) apparently attacking Marx’s theory of distributive injustice or exploitation, claim that the “fundamental injustice is the original distribution of resources – the fact that one man was born blind, and the other not.” As it stands, this seemingly irrefutable and apparently categorical statement is both axiomatically true or truistic and patently false or reductive. It is true in associating “fundamental injustice” in economy and society with the “original distribution of resources”, or truistic in it merely adopts the almost common definition of the first, specifically distributive injustice, in terms of the

second. Second, it is patently false or reductive (and perhaps trivial) in that it explicitly overlooks or implicitly denies that in sociological and economic terms “fundamental injustice” as defined consists not in “the fact that one man was born blind, and the other not”, as an accident or “freak of nature”, but that some are born rich, powerful or “more equal” a la Orwell, and others poor, powerless or less equal, due to the nature, structure and functioning of human society.

The above commits a double, intertwined fallacy of misplaced concreteness: first, dissolving social-economic (in)justice to that resulting from the operation of nature rather than society, second, reducing “resources” to inherited physical characteristics as different from their societal forms like wealth, power and status within Weber’s stratification trilogy. In a way, it is really remarkable and self-contradictory than a commonly perceived hard-line or pure *economist* should attribute (in)justice in economy and society to “unjust” nature, and, relatedly, redefine “resources” as *non-economic* genetic traits like being born blind or not! In this sense, the above seemingly definitive economic rebuttal of Marxism turns out to be not only anti-sociological, as predictable for libertarian economics, but even anti-economic, in virtue of its peculiar or perverse naturalism, specifically biological determinism. Such are apparently the peculiarities or, to use Merton’s (1968) word, perversities of libertarianism and its dogmatic anti-egalitarianism and depreciation of justice in economy and society.

Contrary to the above libertarian and conservative accusations, classical and contemporary liberalism proposes, implies or recognizes these definitions of social, including distributive, (in)justice, though they are perhaps less manifest and emphasized than those in terms of equality, such as “equal treatment of the equal” for justice or equity and “exploitation of the weak by the strong” for injustice or inequity. Hence, liberalism effectively suggests and acknowledges that equality is not, when specifically assuming the form of equal treatment of the unequal, the sufficient condition for social justice *qua* equity. This suggests that in liberal society equality and egalitarianism is not only an end in itself, an ultimate value in Weber’s sense, as Popper implies and most “libertarian” economists object, but also and perhaps primarily the means and basis of social justice, as well as liberty. Alternatively, if equality, as in the case of equal treatment of the unequal, including equivalent rewards for non-equivalent contributions, does not lead to and enhance social justice and liberty, it

has no intrinsic worth and even Durkheimian useful function in liberal society, contrary to the “libertarian” and conservative-fascist attacks on liberalism for its supposedly strict egalitarianism (e.g. absolute economic equalities).

At the minimum, in liberal society, equality and so egalitarianism is, in the form of equal treatment of the equal, what Robbins (1952) would call half of the equation of social justice, the other being some kind of just, deserved inequality such as unequal treatments of those unequal in terms of their achievements and merits, distinguished from ascribed characteristics as in racism, including nationalism. Usually, equality as the “prerequisite for a just society” (Brink 2000: 186) is the primary and prevalent definition and conception of social justice not only in liberalism itself but also in social science and common discourse, and the unequal treatment of the unequal auxiliary and complementary, perhaps excluding “libertarian” economics. Simply, social justice, like liberty, in liberal society is based on or linked with just or deserved, as distinguished from unjust or undeserved, equality and inequality alike. This invalidates and preempts anti-liberal, especially “libertarian” and neo-conservative, allegations of the conflation of equity and freedom with absolute egalitarianism in contemporary liberalism.

Conversely, what liberalism recognizes and liberal society aims to eliminate or minimize, yet anti-liberalism, notably conservatism and fascism, denies and perpetuates is that insofar as, in Pareto’s words, they are “not intended to protect order and prosperity, but to defend privileges, to perpetuate robbery”, economic-political inequalities like exploitation and domination, represent and eventuate in injustice, including unjust and excessive repression. They are, as contemporary liberal writers put it echoing Pareto, “undeserved inequalities” (Terchek 1997: 2) in virtue of being reproduced by historical and existing institutions, including institutionalized or legalized exploitation, discrimination and exclusion. Hence, rather than, as per “libertarian” economics, reflecting unequal, superior and inferior capacities and merits a la social Darwinism (Bourdieu 1998), such inequalities are injustices, revealing and perpetuating an unjust society, not, as US “libertarians” and conservatives claim, “meritocracy” as a system of deserved, just inequality. In sum, modern liberalism defines social justice, so just society in terms of a complex of institutions and practices that “would benefit *all* of the individuals within it, and that would not benefit some through the exploitation of others” (Pelton 1999: 213).

Liberal Sociological-Economic Justice Arguments

Predictably, liberal sociological and other justice arguments are in part premised and implied in or coupled with those concerning equality as well as liberty. As indicated, a case in point within classical liberalism is Smith's "liberal plan" and argument for justice predicated on or intertwined with those for equality and liberty. In a sense, his argument that social justice is more "essential" to the existence of liberal society than is beneficence implies that equity is conditional not only on economic efficiency and its resulting or expected effect generosity per se, but also and more on equality at least in the sense of equal treatment of the equal. Also, his stark, even prophetic warning that the "prevalence of injustice must utterly" society, though it may persist without "beneficence", can be interpreted as partly implying that lack of equality in this sense is more socially destructive than that of economic rationality and charity. This holds true, though one may argue that the latter are associated with decreasing material inequality, as in the assumed direct link of development and resulting diminished wealth disparities (Kuznets 1972).

In this sense, even Smith might say, to reverse a US president's electoral slogan, "it is social inequality, not the economy as such, that is stupid" in respect of justice and hence the ultimate survival of a just and free society. While these implications are questionable to and rejected by "libertarian" economists claiming Smith as their "father" (Buchanan 1991), at least he would not disagree with the equation of justice in which just equality through "equal treatment of the equal" is minimally one half and in liberal society typically a primary element relative to fair, deserved inequality via "unequal treatment of the unequal". What is beyond doubt, despite various interpretations, and more important in this context is that Smith makes one of the most explicit and strongest liberal plans and arguments for social justice within classical economic liberalism or political economy.

Similarly, following on or evoking Smith in this respect, not only laissez-faire as usually supposed, sociologist Spencer makes or implies such justice arguments. He does so by observing that changes in liberal society involve "abolitions of grievances suffered by the people [i.e.] mitigations of evils which had directly or indirectly been felt by large classes of citizens, as causes of misery or as hindrances to happiness." Notably, Spencer implies that attaining social justice – i.e. "gaining of a popular good" as a sort of equivalent or proxy of equity – is the "eternal conspicuous trait" of liberalism, thus echo-

ing Smith's statement that justice is more "essential" to liberal society and its survival than anything else, including beneficence or generosity. Also, recall Durkheim's assertion that liberal society is defined by and so "duty bound to enforce respect for" what he describes as "just liberty", a synthesis of justice with freedom.

In general, most classical and contemporary sociologists, economists and other social scientists, except for anti-egalitarian "libertarians", present, imply and embrace arguments for justice, as well as freedom and egalitarianism. Also, as contemporary writers suggest, "from time immemorial, philosophers have sought the structure of a *just* society, of a society that would benefit *all* of the individuals within it, and that would not benefit some through the exploitation of others" (Pelton 1999: 213). In this view, such perennial quest "derives from a moral sense", specifically "morality for its own sake", as the reason "why the assurance of nondiscriminatory processes is a major obligation of a just society toward its individual members" (Pelton 1999: 213–5). In sum, both classical and contemporary liberalism upholds and purports to realize the principle of "fundamental social justice" and security (Beck 2002: 40), as the essential attribute, in conjoined and mutually reinforced with liberty and equality, of liberal society and modernity.

Liberal Democracy

The Liberal System of Political Liberty, Equality and Justice

A next fundamental principle and institution of liberalism, so defining attribute and constituent of liberal society and modernity, involves democracy, including democratic theory, politics and culture. In liberal society and modernity, democracy constitutes and functions as a particular, political dimension of the principle and institutional system of integral liberty as well as of comprehensive egalitarianism in the sense of equality of treatment and opportunity and social justice as fairness. In the context of liberalism, democracy is the institutional expression and realization of the liberal ideal and practice of liberty, equality and justice "for all", in the form of a theory and system of political liberties, choices and rights.

That democratic theory, politics and culture form the intrinsic part of liberalism and liberal society, while axiomatic and tautological for liberals,

needs to be emphasized. This is because historically the ideal of modern democracy and political freedom within the Western world is rooted in and derived from liberalism, notably the Enlightenment, against the opposition of antagonistic anti-democratic conservatism emerging from and seeking to perpetuate or restore the darkness of despotic and theocratic medievalism. For example, France's arch-conservative Joseph de Maistre, just as, with some qualifications, his counterparts Great Britain's medievalist or traditionalist Edmund Burke and America's anti-egalitarian Alexander Hamilton, admittedly "expressed authoritarian conservatism most clearly in response to the ideas of the Enlightenment" (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 88), as well as the French Revolution, so in adverse reaction to early liberalism overall. Also, the ideal of modern democracy, while posited by the Enlightenment as original theoretical liberalism, has been realized or approximated in reality primarily within Western liberal society and modernity since the French-American Revolutions rather than in illiberal, including conservative and fascist, typically authoritarian societies and periods.

In political terms, liberalism is hence the idealism and institutionalism of democracy, and liberal society is invariably a democratic polity and culture. By contrast, anti-liberal ideologies, institutional arrangements and societies are in essence anti- and pre-democratic and authoritarian, as shown by conservatism, including medieval traditionalism as its point of origin and fascism as its ultimate destination and neo-conservatism as its late revival. This indicates that, in virtue of its constitutive principles of integral and universal liberty, egalitarianism and social justice, liberalism is both the necessary and sufficient condition of democracy precisely defined in these terms as the theory and system of equal and fair political liberties, choices and rights "for all". In short, liberal society necessarily entails a democratic polity and state as its intrinsic element.

In essence, liberal democracy has been the only genuine, effective and viable – despite allegations by European fascists and US conservatives of its "moral crisis" (Deutsch and Soffer 1987) – form of democratic theory, politics and culture within contemporary Western society. This holds true in spite or rather because of its illiberal, typically spurious, ineffective and unviable substitutions like conservative, fascist, communist, Christian or Islamic "democracies". In this respect, modern democratic societies as a rule are primarily "liberal", including secular, egalitarian, inclusive, universalistic and equitable,

democracies perhaps more than anything else. Alternatively, some “illiberal democracy” is a contradiction in terms and virtually an historical-empirical impossibility, unless one accepts claims to conservative, fascist, communist, Christian or Islamic “democracies”. As Mises (1950) emphasizes, “democracy without Liberalism is a hollow form” and solely within the sociological and historical framework of liberal society and modernity does it “fulfill a social function.” The disjuncture of democracy and anti-liberalism is indicated by what contemporary sociologists identify as “authoritarian, illiberal states” (Fung 2003: 519), and its association with liberalism by liberal-democratic Western and other societies.

Modern Democracy, Liberalism and Anti-Liberalism

At least, the theory and ideal of modern democracy has originated and most developed in liberalism since the Enlightenment, and realized to the greatest degree in the form of democratic politics and civil society within Western and other liberal societies, starting with the French and American Revolutions. Alternatively, illiberal ideologies and social systems adversely react to and attack liberal society precisely because of its ideal and institution of democracy, within the general framework of integral and universal liberty, egalitarianism and justice, thus being anti- and, as Mannheim (1967) put it, pre-democratic.

The above has been a pattern of anti-liberalism spanning from medieval traditionalism and proto-conservatism to fascism and to neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. For instance, conservatism in Europe and subsequently America developed as and through religious and other traditionalism and its medieval-style “self-reflective” adverse reaction and “mindless battle” (Habermas 2001) against democratic liberalism as what Mannheim (1936) calls the “immediate antagonist”, notably the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, as well as Jeffersonian ideas in its American “federalist” variant. It did so in an attempt to preserve or restore the feudal *ancien regime* and the “Dark Middle Ages” and their functional equivalents in Puritan New England symbolized by “Salem with witches” (Putnam 2000: 355). And it has continued to function as such ever since, up to the early 21st century. Thus, Mannheim (1967: 181–2) defines liberal-democratic ideology (“mind”) by the “principle of liberty” in general, in particular by an emphasis on the freedom and “plasticity of man” as well as explanation of social phenomena “in terms of contingency rather

than essence". This is in sharp contrast to its conservative *cum* "authoritarian, pre-democratic" counterpart attacking that principle, including the liberal idea of progress and liberation countered with "static, hierarchically ordered models" of society and "excellence".

In another even sharper contrast, fascism, as the "extreme" species (Dahrendorf 1979; Giddens 1979) of conservatism, arose and expanded via a kind of social contagion in vehement hostility and attack against liberal democracy and liberalism in interwar Europe, viz. Nazism versus the Weimar Republic in Germany, as did, with certain differences (e.g. what Hayek dismisses as Enlightenment-based "constructivist rationalism") communism before and after. And, like its proto-type in early modern Europe, neo-conservatism in America as well as in part Great Britain essentially "resurrected from the dead" (Dunn and Woodard 1996) and expanded in vehement negative reaction to political democratization and cultural liberalizations, notably secularization, during the 1960s. Predictably, it did so in attempting to restore what it claims to be traditional, even eternal, superior "American" values and institutions, both sacred a la "Deity", "piety" and "morality" and secular like authority, hierarchy, patriotism and "law and order" (Deutsch and Soffer 1987; Dunn and Woodard 1998; Heineman 1998; Lipset and Marks 2000). In general, just as liberalism has been consistent and vigorous in developing and realizing the ideal and institution of democracy, so has anti-liberalism like conservatism in attacking and suppressing democratic ideas, politics and culture in spite of conservative "libertarian" claims and rhetoric. This is a pattern historically evinced from medieval traditionalism and proto-conservatism in Europe and America like Puritanism and "Federalism" to interwar European fascism to US McCarthyism and lastly neo-conservatism and neo-fascism in both societies.

No doubt, liberal ideology, society and modernity is inherently, though not solely, the ideal, social system and historical time of democracy and political freedom. And conservatism, fascism and communism are illiberal ideologies, societies and times precisely, albeit not only, because they are non- and pre-democratic in Mannheim's sense and authoritarian. Conversely, they are anti-democratic because they are anti-liberal, despite their, especially both communist and conservative, claims to the opposite. At the minimum, liberalism is democracy and political "libertarianism", also redundant term at this juncture, though theoretically not all democracies may be liberal in origin,

content or form, viz. “conservative”, “communist”, “Christian”, “Islamic”. However, this seeming plausible theoretical possibility usually remains hypothetical. So it should be distinguished from the historical-empirical incidence and salience of democracies as primarily liberal in their origin, content and form, with only secondary and in long-terms transient illiberal, including proto- and neo-conservative, variations within Western society, with the predictable exception of American (if) dominated during most of its history by anti-liberal conservatism.

Thus, despite various waves, survivals and revivals, even occasional dominance, of conservatism, including medieval traditionalism, in contemporary Western, notably American, society, modern democracies, including democracy in America, at least its Jeffersonian rendition and project, are typically considered and described as “liberal” rather than “conservative”. This in turn reflects the democratic origin, development and legacy of liberalism versus conservatism. Expressing this heritage the term “liberal democracy”, like “liberal” education or science, makes more both formal and substantive sense within modern Western societies than do conservative and related, fascist, communist, Christian or Islamic, “democracies” (and sciences), as typically authoritarian, pre-democratic illiberal political systems (Fung 2003).

In retrospect, as hinted, most classical economists, sociologists and other social scientists and philosophers conceive liberalism in terms of democracy, an ideal and institutional set of political liberties and rights, and distinguish it from its adversaries like conservatism, including medievalism, other traditionalism and fascism, as well as communism. For instance, Bentham suggests that what he calls a “liberal plan of political discussion” is the condition and constitutive element of modern deliberative democracy, thus anticipating similar ideas in modern liberalism stressing will-formation in polity through rational and tolerant deliberation and communication (e.g. Habermas 1989).

Similarly, Spencer remarks that what he calls “true” Liberalism “in the past disputed the assumption of a monarch’s unlimited authority” and also “in the present will dispute the assumption of unlimited parliamentary authority” by adopting and implementing the “theory of a limited parliamentary authority”. At first glance, this remark may warrant the precisely opposite interpretation that Spencer’s liberalism disputes or restrains not only monarchy and autocracy but parliamentary republics and democracy. Spencer would probably reject such an interpretation in favor of the argument that liberalism opposes

or restrains unlimited and abusive power exercised by any separate element of the polity, including parliaments, just as governments, in democracy. This is explicitly suggested by the classical liberal theory and institutional practice of separation of secular political powers since Montesquieu and its acknowledged impact, albeit according to (Dahrendorf 1979: 157) “delayed and distorted”, on the American Revolution and Constitution.

Hence, Spencerian liberalism’s constraint on “unlimited parliamentary authority” relative to the other elements of a democratic polity essentially adopts and evokes Montesquieu’s theory of separation of political power, for which precisely such restraints provide a key rationale. In this sense, it restrains “unlimited” parliamentary and other political authority in order to expand, promote or sustain liberal democracy itself precisely defined by such limitations and separations of political power. Thus, when Spencer contends that liberalism’s function was “putting a limit to the powers of kings” in the past and “putting a limit to the powers of Parliaments” in the future he implies that its aim or effect is to devise such limitations and separations as the necessary, albeit not sufficient in Weber’s substantive sense, conditions and constituents of liberal democracy. What is suggested is that liberalism considers unlimited, absolute political power, including that of a parliament and government, to be undemocratic and corrupt, as per lord Acton’s dictum, thus subverting and threatening liberal democracy. And, the theory and institution of separation of mutually moderating powers is precisely designed and applied to supply an antidote to the poison of absolute political power and corruption.

In sum, Spencer and other classical liberals suggest that liberalism is “principally a doctrine of the limitation” of state powers (Beiner 1992: 26), including that of democratically elected parliaments and governments, in the apparent belief that unlimited, absolute power is undemocratic and, to cite lord Acton, “corrupts absolutely”. As French economist J. B. Say also put it making explicit what Spencer implies, according to the liberal principles and modes of government, “moderation is the best policy” in respect of political power exercised by various institutions and individuals within liberal democracy.

In essence, most early and contemporary sociologists and economists view the concepts and terms “political liberalism” and “democracy” as essentially equivalent and entwined, so almost interchangeable, as exemplified by Mannheim’s (1936) expression “liberal-democratic” ideology (also Zaret

1989). This holds true in general terms, taking into consideration certain salient exceptions within economics and sociology like Marx and his followers such as Michels, as well as political conservatives.

For instance, largely influenced by Marx and his distrust of what he dismissed as “bourgeois” liberal democracy, as well as by Weber’s “iron cage” diagnosis or prediction, Michels in his analysis of the “iron law of oligarchy” objects that Liberalism does not primarily “base its aspirations upon the masses. It appeals for support to certain definite classes, which in other fields of activity have already ripened for mastery, but which do not yet possess political privileges [cultured and possessing classes].” In Michels’ view, for liberalism the masses “pure and simple are no more than a necessary evil, whose only use is to help others to the attainment of ends to which they themselves are strangers. The inward dislike of liberalism for the masses is also apparent in the [favorable] attitude of the liberal leaders to the principles and institutions of aristocracy.” In particular, he cites what he describes as the “organic defect of all German liberalism” accused of masking its “partisan struggle” against socialism and “simultaneous and voluntary renunciation of all attempts to complete the political emancipation” of the bourgeoisie by the “fallacious assertion that with the unification of Germany and the establishment of the empire [all] the aspirations of its democratic youth have been realized”. Simply, following or evoking Marx and as typical for most Marxian sociologists, Michels suggests that German and other liberalism is no more democratic than its alternatives, including traditionalism or conservatism in Germany and Europe overall, thus making virtually no difference between liberal and non-liberal political ideologies and systems in respect of democracy.

Having in mind these exceptions in economics and sociology, notably, most early and contemporary sociologists and economists typically consider political and other liberalism the foundation and primary source of democracy as the liberal creation, derivative or project. For example, Mises (1950), who can be described as the most classically liberal (as suggested by Hayek 1941) libertarian economist, proposes that “political democracy necessarily follows from Liberalism”, and conversely, that “always and everywhere”, the second “demands” and “desires” the first. In his view, liberalism specifically demands and desires, first, the “fullest freedom” for expressing political opinion; second, that the state be instituted “according to the will of the majority”; third, legislation through legitimate, elected representatives; and fourth, that

government, described as a “committee” of these representatives, “shall be bound by the Laws”.

Mises infers that, in virtue of its “highest” political principle of “self-determination” of individuals and peoples, the ideal and social system of liberalism is a democratic republic or republican democracy. By implication, the latter sharply distinguishes itself from its non-democratic and non-republican alternatives usually favored by illiberal ideologies and social systems, from medieval traditionalism and proto-conservatism (e.g. monarchy, royal absolutism) to interwar fascism and communism to neo-conservatism. For instance, fascists, communists and US neo-conservatives, just as Islamic fundamentalists in Iran, all favor a sort of non-, pre- or pseudo-democratic republics. In sum, Mises suggests that liberal democracy and republic is, first, libertarian by its “fullest freedom”, second, representative due to legislation via a “committee” of people representatives, third, moderate, fourth, constitutional and secular in being “bound” by law, and, fifth, non-violent and pacifist (peaceful) in that violence either in revolution or inter-state war is “always an evil” to liberalism.

Also, contemporary social scientists register the “compatibility” between liberalism and democracy in Western societies to the effect that a democratic political system or minimally non-dictatorship is one of the “features of a liberal society” (Frohock 1987: 53–153). Others stress that liberalism aims at “maximizing individual autonomy, knowledge and intelligence”, as well as their relevance in “combating socioeconomic inequality”, by means of “rational constitutional safeguards in a democracy” and “accommodation of social diversity through majority rule”¹⁴ (Kinloch 1981: 20–2). This means that liberal politics and democracy is libertarian, individualist, rationalist, egalitarian, republican, constitutional, pluralist and majoritarian in contrast to its illiberal, conservative-fascist and communist alternatives, with certain variations, like official republicanism and constitutionalism in US conservatism, communism and Iranian Islam. In sum, like their classical predecessors, contemporary liberals argue and show that liberalism, in virtue of its constitutive principles like autonomy, equality and tolerance, and democracy in the sense

¹⁴ Kinloch (1981: 35) registers that liberalism is “concerned with maximizing individual autonomy based on abstractions of individualism, reason, and society. Consequent solutions include an emphasis on democracy and pragmatism and the development of a more civic culture”.

of majority rule in politics, “go hand in hand”¹⁵ (Kloppenber 1998: 7). In this view, democratic liberalism “incorporates the liberal concern with freedom and justice into the democrat’s desire to ensure that citizens have an equal say in influencing and holding to account the rules and rulers governing them” (Bellamy 1999: 140).

Societal Pluralism

Still another constitutive principle of liberalism and attribute of liberal society constitutes societal pluralism entwined and mutually reinforcing with such other principles and attributes as integral liberty as well as comprehensive egalitarianism, social inclusion and democracy. In short, liberalism and pluralism, as modern liberals stress, “go hand in hand”¹⁶ (Bellamy 1999: 2). In particular, societal pluralism represents a special, group dimension and ramification of the principle of integral liberty. Specifically, it is one of positive freedom “for” collective action, diversity or difference, autonomy and relative independence within liberal society as the egalitarian and universalistic system of equal liberties for all of its groups and individuals. In this sense, pluralism and/or diversity in society is the element and sign of liberty, egalitarianism, universal inclusion and democracy, so both “libertarian” and egalitarian-democratic. For contemporary liberalism, “a reasonably harmonious and stable pluralist society [rests on] equal liberty of conscience and freedom of thought” (Dombrowski 2001: 4).

In essence, liberalism is inherently the ideal and practice of societal pluralism, and liberal society and modernity a pluralist social system and historical time. This distinguishes it from what Dahrendorf (1959) calls totalitarian monism and monist systems defining and typifying illiberal ideologies, institutions and societies, from medievalism and proto-conservatism to fascism

¹⁵ Yet, Kloppenber (1998: 12) suggests that democracy is “distinguishable” from liberalism and admonishes that “unless the principle of majoritarianism is tempered with principles such as autonomy and toleration, democracy can become tyranny”, apparently echoing Tocqueville’s warning about the democratic “tyranny of the majority”.

¹⁶ Bellamy (1999: 3) comments that “though pluralism *per se* is not necessarily amenable to liberalism, the pluralist phenomena of western societies usually are. However, a genuinely pluralist liberalism must change from being a meta-political doctrine of liberal values to become a democratic politics of compromise”.

and communism to neo-conservatism, with some secondary modifications. In a sense, social pluralism represents the constitutive ideal, attribute or aggregate outcome and the necessary condition or functional prerequisite of liberalism in the sense of ideology and liberal society and modernity alike.

In particular, this holds true of political pluralism in respect with liberal democracy, just as of cultural diversity with regard to free civil society. Political pluralism is, as Dahrendorf (1959) and other sociologists suggest, intrinsically democratic in theory and practice, so necessary, though perhaps not sufficient in itself, for democracy, in contrast with monism typical for conservatism, fascism and communism, as essentially anti-democratic. And, liberal democracy is inherently a pluralist system and type of government and polity contrary to conservative, fascist, communist, Christian or Islamic “democracies” that are substantively (albeit not always formally) monistic, so non- or pre-democratic regimes. Similarly, cultural diversity or multiculturalism, as an integral element of human liberty (Hirschman 1982), is necessary, though probably not self-sufficient, for free civil society and culture.

Generally, contemporary liberals stress that political and cultural pluralism¹⁷ “permeates modern societies, the mixed blessing of their differentiation and openness [and] liberalism accommodates difference by protecting each person’s capacity to pursue his own good in his own way to the extent that is compatible with the similar pursuits of others” (Bellamy 1999: 1). For instance, they proposes that the “fragmentation of authority institutionalized by the U.S. Constitution reflected the reality and the ideals of a wildly diverse, pluralistic society [i.e.] the persistence of diversity in American patterns of thought and behavior during the colonial and early national periods” (Kloppenber 1998: 23–36). The above indicates that societal pluralism within liberal society and modernity can be divided into political and cultural, considered next.

¹⁷ Dombrowski (2001: ix) distinguishes what he calls “mere pluralism” from “reasonable pluralism” in that the “former, but not the latter, is perfectly compatible with dogmatism if the plurality of religious groups that are different from one’s own are viewed as potential objects for persecution”.

Political Pluralism

Political pluralism, and hence neutrality toward pluralist ideologies and their advocates, defines and typifies liberal democracy and society in contrast to its illiberal, conservative-fascist and communist alternatives as typically anti-pluralist or monistic and non-neutral in this respect. Specifically, liberal democracy is defined and typified by political and ideological pluralism, including a multi-party system, and a liberal state or government in particular by neutrality, impartiality and tolerance in respect to various and often conflicting social and interest groups and their conceptions and practices of the “good” life and society, viz. the “pursuit of happiness”. Simply, as some modern liberal put it, in liberal democracy “even if one detests pluralism, one nonetheless has an obligation to tolerate others if they are reasonable” (Dombrowski 2001: 159).

This neutrality and tolerance is what distinguishes liberal democracy/government from its illiberal counterparts. These are defined and typified by substantive and even formal political-ideological monism, as are medievalism, authoritarian conservatism, fascism, and communism, and non-neutrality and intolerance in respect to multiple conflicting social groups and their varying conceptions and practices of the “good” life and society, as with neo-fascists in Europe and religious fundamentalists in America. Consequently, liberal democracy recognizes and institutionalizes political and other social conflicts through recognizing, institutionalizing or legalizing, and promoting pluralism, diversity, neutrality and tolerance in politics and all society, while its illiberal alternatives deny and suppress conflict by imposing and practicing anti-democratic monism, uniformity, non-neutrality and intolerance.

These differences in treating and tolerating conflicting social groups, ideas, values and practices between political liberalism and non-liberalism, including the old and new conservatism and fascism, as well as communism, essentially translate into the opposition and struggle of democracy and authoritarianism or totalitarianism, liberty and un-freedom in general. This is what Dahrendorf (1959: 314) suggests by stating that “the struggle between freedom and totalitarianism [is] one between different attitudes toward social conflict. Totalitarian monism is founded on the idea that conflict can and should be eliminated. The pluralism of free societies is based on the recognition and acceptance of social conflict.” The statement reaffirms that political liberalism, in virtue of pluralism, is a necessary condition and integral element of liberal society, including democracy, and an indicator of liberty, in contrast to non-liberalism

as, due to monism, a factor and ingredient of totalitarianism, so one of Dahren-dorf's (1979) forces and signs of illiberty.

In general, liberalism, as its modern adherents suggest, creates, protects and promotes both "social and ideological pluralism" (Habermas et al. 1998: 57). A specific dimension or method of realization of this pluralism is what is described as an "inclusive and noncoercive rational discourse between free and equal participants",¹⁸ though such democratic argumentation is seen as "different from both rational choice and fact-stating discourse" (Habermas et al. 1998: 81–82). In particular, ideological pluralism consists in a plurality of different, even conflicting ideologies or worldviews of the "good" life and society, all accorded equal treatment through liberal government's neutrality, impartiality and tolerance, as well as their political translation and legitimization or legalization into a multi-party system in both formal-legal and substantive-sociological terms, simply, not only multiple but ideologically different or opposing parties and similar conflict, interest groups. In this view, ideological pluralism is promoted, sustained and protected in that political liberalism, "as a reasonable construction that does not raise a claim to truth, is neutral toward conflicting worldviews" (Habermas et al. 1998: 50).

Political Neutrality and Tolerance

As a consequent of its ideal, recognition and promotion of pluralism in polity and all society, liberal democracy or government tends to be neutral, impartial, "value-free" or simply tolerant toward conflicting political subjects, including parties as conflict or interest groups, holding and seeking to translate varying worldviews or ideologies into concrete institutions and policies. This implies that liberal democracy or political liberalism is, in virtue of its principle and practice of pluralism and neutrality or tolerance, intrinsically egalitarian and universalistic in the sense of an equal treatment of virtually all diverse and conflicting worldviews and groups, with occasional exceptions like fascists, terrorists, religious extremists and various other "die-hard" totalitarians in Europe and America. Negatively, it does not favor or privi-

¹⁸ Habermas et al. (1998: 62) add that this discourse involves the "procedure of an argumentative praxis that proceeds under the demanding presuppositions of the "public use of reason" and does not bracket the pluralism of convictions and worldviews from the outset".

lege one ideology and political group over another, so it contains no, to use Weber's terms, positively and negatively privileged ideologies and groups. By contrast, in its illiberal opposites "some are more equal and freer than others", as theology and religion in medievalism and arch-conservatism, racist nationalism in fascism, atheism in communism, "faith" and "Americanism" in US conservatism.

In particular, some sociologists observe that within contemporary liberal democracies, in secular political terms the "truth claims of all reasonable worldviews have equal weight [as] disputes concerning metaphysical and religious truths remain unresolved under conditions of enduring pluralism" (Habermas et al. 1998: 66). This view argues that political liberalism "can afford a kind of tolerance toward not unreasonable world-views [as] an act of faith in reason" – e.g. reasonable faith in the real possibility of a just constitutional regime – and judges or measures conflicting, secular and religious alike, ideologies "more by the authenticity of the lifestyles they shape than by the truth of [their] statements" (Habermas et al. 1998: 66–7). Arguably, a major cause for such a liberal treatment of differing ideologies is the "public devaluation of religious or metaphysical explanations [vs.] the rise of the epistemic authority of the empirical sciences" (Habermas et al. 1998: 79).

In respect of its pluralism, neutrality, tolerance, scientific rationalism and relativism or non-absolutism contemporary political liberalism remains a true descendent of its classical ancestor, consequently liberal democracy a continuing realization or expression of Enlightenment ideals and values. As modern liberals emphasize, a liberal-democratic society is "characterized not only by a pluralism of comprehensive religious (or philosophical) doctrines, but also by a pluralism of *reasonable* comprehensive religious (or philosophical) doctrines [though] not all reasonable comprehensive doctrines are liberal on their face"¹⁹ (Dombrowski 2001: 9).

Comparatively, these attributes distinguish liberalism from its illiberal adversaries. These typically *cannot* afford almost any kind of neutrality and tolerance toward plural and differing reasonable world-views, such as secularism in Catholic and Protestant medievalism and proto-conservatism,

¹⁹ Dombrowski (2001: 159) states that "the religious (or philosophical) positions of people in contemporary society are radically different from each other, hence the price moral people would have to pay for annihilating these differences is too costly".

liberal-democratic ideas in fascism, communism and neo-conservatism, due to their devaluation of human reason and values, i.e. irrationalism and anti-humanism. They judge and favor conflicting ideologies by absolute “truth”, thus claiming moral-religious absolutism. For example, driven by the shared distrust of reason and humans, Lutheranism and Calvinism reportedly “were as dogmatic and intolerant as the Catholic Church had been [while] Pluralism itself made religious liberty possible rather than anything intended by the Catholic Church or Luther or Calvin” (Dombrowski 2001: 4). Consequently, this view suggests that to regard, as non-liberalism does, ideological-political and other social pluralism or difference “as a disaster is to see the free use of human reason itself as a disaster” (Dombrowski 2001: 4). In particular, in this view, a “liberal is one who knows he or she is not God” (Dombrowski 2001: 158) or even a Divine agent, representative or messenger. This thus contrasts liberals with the invariably anti-liberal Catholic Popes (Burns 1990) and their Protestant emulators like Luther and Calvin as well contemporary religious conservatives or fundamentalists, all sharing such claims to some kind of God’s status, agency or representation, viz. Divine Rights and Providential Mission. For example, Cromwell, in the wake of the temporarily triumphant Puritan Revolution (1642–5) establishing a “Holy Commonwealth”, claimed the title “Lord Protector of the Realm”.

In turn, as its adherents accentuate, liberalism recognizes and accepts the objective reality of pluralism in politics and society as a whole by pursuing what its authors call “consensus on political essentials which grants equal freedoms to all citizens without regard to their cultural heritage, their religious convictions, or their individual lifestyles”²⁰ (Habermas et al. 1998: 66–7). And this is perhaps the only or primary consensus on what Parsons²¹ (1951) calls “basic values” that liberalism tries to realize and typifies, and is necessary to liberal democracy and society. It thus differs from some illiberal total, absolute consensus on values, as an instrument of perfect, complete integration

²⁰ Habermas et al. (1998: 78) suggest that “in spite of the lack of a substantive consensus on values rooted in a socially accepted worldview, they continue to appeal to moral convictions and norms that each of them thinks everyone else should accept.”

²¹ Delanty (2000: 42) describes Parsons as a contemporary “American liberal”, though usually described as a “conservative”, including Protestant or Puritan (Alexander 1983; Mayway 1984; Munch 1981), sociologist, by most sociologists. Also, Parsons often described himself as a “New Deal liberal”, and Democrat rather than Republican.

and repression, beyond equal, just and universal liberties, social diversity, tolerance and neutrality in Jefferson's sense of liberty, equality and justice "for all". An illiberal case in point is the forced consensus by American conservatism, including McCarthyism, on anti-liberal or non-secular values like "faith-based" government and civil society, "one nation indivisible under God", "we trust in God", "manifest destiny", the "war on evil" (Munch 2001).

Apart from this primary consensus, liberal democracy is essentially characterized by a sort of political and cultural dissensus and other forms of institutionalized and peaceful conflict. By contrast, its illiberal opponents are characterized with fear, suspicion and suppression of dissent, just as any conflicts, and obsession with near-total consensus, social control and integration. This is exemplified in the medieval and perennial conservative, including fascist, as well as communist, authoritarian imperatives and slogans of "law and order" as a treat to modern liberal democracy (Dahrendorf 1979). Hence, liberalism conceptually acknowledges and liberal democracy institutionally legitimizes the "irreducible plurality of worldviews that are held to be true within each of the corresponding communities of believers, although everyone knows that only one of them can be true" (Habermas et al. 1998: 81).

At this juncture, liberal-pluralist democracy creates what Weber calls a rational-legal type of legitimizing power and political-ideological (and religious) pluralism and conflict, unlike its illiberal antipodes. These instead provide charismatic (as in fascism and communism) and traditional (as in medievalism and conservatism), so, as Weber and Mannheim suggest, non- and pre-democratic legitimation to domination, even denying legitimacy to diversity and conflicts in both politics and culture.

In this respect, the historical movement from medieval despotism and conservative authoritarianism, epitomized by the feudal *ancien regime*, to contemporary political liberalism and liberal democracy, starting with the Enlightenment and the French Revolution eventually eliminating that system, appears as a special case or parallel process of that from charismatic and traditional to rational-legal legitimation and political authority, so of the Weberian master trend of social rationalization and modernization in the Western world and beyond. As sociologists observe, within Western societies the "legitimation problem resulted from the fact that the pluralism of worldviews that followed the schism of the religious confessions gradually stripped political authority of its religious grounding in "divine right." The secularized state

now had to derive its legitimation from different sources [i.e.] democratic participation” (Habermas et al. 1998: 111–2). This signifies that the modern liberal state is a type of rational-legal political authority, while its theocratic and despotic predecessors during medieval and earlier times were forms of charismatic and/or traditional authority as what Weber calls the “basically authoritarian principle” of legitimation and type of authority.

The above holds true, with some variations, of their post-medieval subsequent replicas and emulations in religious conservatism, as well as fascism and communism while excluding or mitigating the theological dimension. If Weber is correct in diagnosing and predicting the transition from charismatic-traditional to rational-legal authority as a major dimension and product of political-social rationalization, liberal-secular, i.e. pluralist, neutral and tolerant, democracy is destined to become or remain the primary, if not only, system of government in modern and future Western societies by analogy (but not identity with) welfare capitalism or a market economy as an economic structure. Conversely, its illiberal, i.e. monistic, non-neutral and intolerant, notably theocratic-conservative, adversaries are destined, as Weber implicitly predicts, to mutate into extinct and endangered “species” within Western societies in the future, including the “exceptional nation” (Lipset 1996) America over *long durée* (centuries) or Kondratieff waves (50–60 years).

At any rate, a pluralist polity, in particular a neutral-tolerant state in respect of conflicting political and religious groups and ideologies, constitutes the ideal and institutional practice of contemporary liberalism, just as of its classical predecessor since the Enlightenment. As analysts remark, a “fundamental premise” of classical and modern liberalism (McCann 2000: 6) is that liberal democracy is a system of political pluralism and consequently the state is to be “neutral in respect of the validity of competing ways of life and is expected to enforce that neutrality through the rule of law” (King 1999: 8). Admittedly, the modern “liberal state does not only aim for neutrality among competing reasonable conceptions of human excellence within a liberal order; it also respects all citizens as being equally entitled to having their voice heard in the generation of the norms, principles, and procedures that govern life in liberal society” (Brink 2000: 12). This suggests that liberal government and democracy is both neutral to conflicting political conceptions and legal-rational in the Weber’s sense of the rule of natural and positive law and democratic, as opposed to authoritarian charismatic-traditional legitimization of power.

At this juncture, one may add that the problem of the rule of law and enforcing political neutrality or impartiality and tolerance is “basic” to modern liberal-secular societies (McCann 2000: 7). If so, then the liberal rule of law, expressing universal legal egalitarianism via equality of treatment and so being essentially democratic, is to be distinguished from the illiberal “law and order” as its basically exact opposite and threat, historically characteristic for medievalism and proto-conservatism as well as fascism, communism and neo-conservatism, as usually anti-egalitarian, hierarchical and authoritarian or repressive. For instance, this is what Dahrendorf (1979: 98) implies by contrasting modern liberal societies and their democratic rules of “social games” from the “conservative-authoritarian movement by way of law-and-order slogans” as belonging to their anti-liberal “collectivist” threats (along with the “revolutionary-socialist movement”).

Thus, both the liberal principle of state neutrality and tolerance toward rival conceptions of the “good” life or society and its enforcement through the rule of law are grounded in the democratic universalistic “idea of equality” (Brink 2000: 12–3), including equal freedom, rights and treatment for all. As modern liberals emphasize, in liberal democracy “equal rights to liberty are secured through universal, general laws produced by a constitutional framework, democratic institutions and an economic market embodying the requisite balance between freedom and equality” (Bellamy 1999: 1).

Specifically, the rule of law in liberal democracy and society involves or generates legal and judicial, notably penal or criminal-justice, minimalism, exemplified by abolition of the death penalty, cruel and inhuman punishment, excessively long prison sentences, and the like. In stark contrast, non-liberal “law and order” entails penal maximalism, manifested in practices ranging from “witch-hunts” in medieval European Catholicism via the Inquisition and early American Puritanism with its “Salem with witches” to fascist “final” solutions and communist “purges” to US neo-conservative Draconian “tough on crime” institutions and policies. The liberal rule of law is minimalist in the sense of a minimal, enlightened penal government as the ideal and legacy of the Enlightenment (Rutherford 1994) in contrast to the illiberal “law and order” as maximalistic enforced via a total, intrusive and oppressive “big” policing, yet “small” welfare, state (Bourdieu 1998).

At least, liberal legal minimalism (Fung 2003) substantively, albeit not always formally, differs from its illiberal opposites in that it is democratic,

egalitarian, universalistic or inclusive, as well as humane, “mild” or “soft” on punishment. These are authoritarian, non-egalitarian and exclusive or particularistic, so inhumane to the point of penal barbarism through punishments with “Draconian severity” (Patell 2001), including mass executions and imprisonment, for both crimes and sins, either moral, as in medieval religious conservatism and US neo-conservatism, or ideological, as in fascism and communism. At this juncture, some contemporary sociologists charge that “because classical liberalism “favor[s] a state that is minimal [i.e.] it performs just a few functions such as protecting individual liberties, several potential associative contributions to democracy are not particularly important to liberal minimalists. Indeed, to the extent that associations contributing in those ways may extend the role and reach of the state, [they] may be positively hostile to them”²² (Fung 2003: 529). Presumably, these objections hold true more of classical than contemporary liberalism insofar as the latter integrates this legal minimalism with activism, i.e. a minimal state in terms of a penal code or social control with an activist government in respect of human-well-being, equality of opportunity and rights or a welfare state. If contemporary liberalism thus blends penal minimalism with a sort of well-being and/or liberty promoting maximalism, then such charges are not completely accurate and fair in this respect.

Specifically, legal minimalism assumes the form of a minimalist penal government and social control overall in liberalism, yet that of a welfare state in the general sense of a political system, or welfare, “human-face” capitalism, that promotes the well-being of and helps rather than inflicts suffering, including death, on and controls, restraints and punishes its citizens. Instead, state control, restraint and punishment is the genuine function and meaning of the anti-liberal “small” and “limited” government in America after the image of *laissez-faire* or anarchy in economy, yet joined with Leviathan or harsh repression (Pryor 2002) in society. In short, in liberalism legal minimal-

²² Fung (2003: 530) adds that liberal minimalism objects “more strongly still to proposals for direct participation in governance. All of these measures extend the reach of collective coercive power into economic and social realms of life [to] be left to individual rather than collective choice. [It is] more friendly to the socialization and resistance contributions of associations [so if] a voluntary and plural ecology of associations fosters civic virtues such as tolerance, the state itself may be less disposed to violate individual liberties. Associations that are capable of resisting the power of the state and checking its expansionary tendencies similarly stabilize liberal orders.”

ism is such in penal terms, its non-liberal rival in the sense of social welfare or human well-being, which epitomizes liberal humanism versus illiberal anti-humanism, even inhumanity.

Further, contemporary, including American, liberalism both continues and integrates classical penal minimalism with a sort of legal maximalism in respect with human well-being, dignity and life as well as liberty and rights. It does so via an active welfare, service or helping state providing various services and aids (e.g. income transfers, health and child care, parental leave, education, pensions) to its citizens rather than just controlling, policing, constraining and severely punishing them for their sins or crimes as do its anti-liberal authoritarian counterparts. This is perhaps the only or main sense in which contemporary liberalism creates or endorses legal maximalism and the liberal state is really a “big” or large (Lee 2005), including “tax-and-spend” activist, government, as illiberal, especially neo-conservative, groups in America and beyond accuse and impute.

The modern liberal answer and rationale is that this is legal maximalism in the prime function, service and favor of human material and spiritual well-being, dignity, liberty and life (e.g. universal and comprehensive health care) rather than against them. The latter is instead typical of its illiberal authoritarian, including conservative-fascist, counterparts mixing a “small” or non-existent helping service, “welfare” (as disdainfully called) and a “big”, intrusive oppressive policing state (Bourdieu 1998). Liberal legal maximalism is epitomized and realized via a comprehensive, generous, tolerant and humane as well as, as Samuelson admits, democratic-libertarian welfare state broadly understood as welfare, “human-face” capitalism. By contrast, its illiberal, including conservative, fascist and communist, counterparts are so through a totalitarian and inhuman police state, including the vice police, as in US religious conservatism, especially the “Bible Belt”, fascism and communism, sharing some form of alcohol prohibition or restriction, for example. This is a substantive, sociological difference between liberty and un-freedom (“heaven and hell”), not just the formal-legal as claimed by conservative, fascist and communist anti-liberals and often supposed by others.

In sum, like its penal minimalism, liberal society’s legal maximalism in this sense is essentially well-being-, life- and liberty-promoting, humanist and libertarian alike. By contrast, illiberal-authoritarian, including fascist and neo-conservative, maximalism is typically hostile and destructive to these values,

i.e. the politics and culture of oppression, death and un-freedom via a maximal repressive, inhuman and cruel government, as epitomized and symbolized by “witch-hunts” in medieval Catholicism and American Puritanism, genocide in fascism, “purges” in communism, and widespread executions and mass imprisonment in US neo-conservatism.

In general terms, the rule of law has an essentially different function and meaning in political liberalism and its enforcement a differing content or method in liberal democracy than has its version of “law and order” in non-liberalism and illiberal “democracies”. In Weber’s terms, the liberal rule of law represents a sub-type or dimension of rational-legal political authority or state involving both formal and substantive democratic legitimation, in contrast to the anti-liberal “law and order” slogan as one of charismatic-traditional authority lacking either formally or especially substantively or simulating such legitimacy. The point is that the rule of law in liberal democracy and society is not only rational-legal, i.e. rationally grounded and legitimized in Weber’s sense. It is also democratic, egalitarian, universalistic and generally freedom-enhancing by enacting equal freedom and treatment, neutrality and tolerance of all political subjects, in contrast to its “law and order” illiberal alternatives as both non-rational in this sense and non-democratic.

Notably, the liberal rule of law is the rational-democratic instrument for realizing and enacting neutrality and tolerance as well as equality and liberty generally. Instead, non-liberal “law and order” is precisely a non-rational and pre-democratic instrument of preventing and suppressing neutrality and tolerance, and imposing and maintaining government non-neutrality, partiality, privilege, intolerance, inequality and un-freedom overall. The rule of law in liberal democracies is just a means to other ends like political neutrality, equality and human freedom and life generally. However, “law and order” in non-liberalism is often (also) an authoritarian and anti-human end in itself, i.e. social control and punishment for its own sake, as demonstrated by “witch-hunts” and other inhuman and cruel practices in medievalism, conservatism, fascism and communism, and functionally equivalent Draconian “get-tough” anti-crime laws and policies in US neo-conservatism, all being a sort of “art for the sake of the arts”.

For example, the media (e.g. Reuters) critically scrutinized a 2006 US Justice Department report indicating an ever-growing, record number of 7 million Americans, i.e. 1 in every 32 American adults, were imprisoned, on probation

and on parole by the end of 2005. Notably, 2.2 million Americans were imprisoned, overwhelmingly (almost two thirds) for non-violent offenses such as “drug war crimes” (Miron 2004) *cum* sins and other sinful or “ungodly” violations of conservative anti-liberal culture wars. This scrutiny suggests that “tough sentencing laws, record numbers of drug offenders and high crime rates have contributed to the United States having the largest prison population and the highest rate of incarceration in the world, according to criminal justice experts” (as reported by Reuters). In particular, it cites the finding (of the International Center for Prison Studies in London) that “more people are behind bars in the United States than in any other country. China ranks second with 1.5 million prisoners, followed by Russia with 870,000.”²³ Predictably, Draconian, “tough on crime” US neo-conservatives (e.g. the legal director of the US Criminal Justice Legal Foundation) countered by claiming that “we have more crime. More crime gets you more prisoners”.

Apparently, such claims overlook or deny that both “more crime” and “more prisoners” in contemporary America are primarily (albeit not solely) the product of the neo-conservative institutional reproduction of crimes and deviance, including insanity (Sutton 1991), so criminals and deviants. Specifically, “more crime” results *inter alia* from the pervasive proto-conservative gun culture in the image of Hobbesian state of nature (Munch 1994) and the form or residue of the “Wild West” (Hill 2002) as well as from other neo-conservative institutions and policies like an anti-welfare or warfare, Puritan-rooted repressive state (Hudson and Coukos 2005) that tends to equate the “lazy” poor or welfare recipients with, so eventually make them, criminals and deviants (Bauman 2001). As contemporary sociologists observe in

²³ As also cited, according to the US Drug Policy Alliance’s representative, America “has 5 percent of the world’s population and 25 percent of the world’s incarcerated population. We rank first in the world in locking up our fellow citizens.” In particular, in the view of the Sentencing Project’s policy analyst, the US government “now imprison[s] more people for drug law violations than all of western Europe, with a much larger population, incarcerates for all offenses” and America generally “has a more punitive criminal justice system” than other Western societies. Admittedly, “we send more people to prison, for more different offenses, for longer periods of time than anybody else”, with drug offenders accounting for about 2 million of those 7 million Americans subject to “tough” conservative policies, while other Western “stress treatment instead of incarceration.” As the President of Families Against Mandatory Minimums also commented on the Justice Department report, “why are so many people in prison? Blame mandatory sentencing laws and the record number of nonviolent drug offenders subject to them.”

apparent reference to America under neo-conservatism and its perpetuating of the gun culture via “concealed weapons” laws, “a society in which each believes he can police other’s actions on his behalf by relying on the firepower on his own weapons is in danger of destroying its liberties, because everybody has to fear everybody else. Such a society is close to Hobbes’s state of nature” (Munch 1994: 69).

A fortiori, “more prisoners” in America is, as seen, primarily, even solely, the outcome of Draconian “get tough” neo-conservative anti-crime and/or anti-sin laws and policies a la the war on drugs and other culture wars resulting in “drug war crimes” (Miron 2004; Reuter 2005), thus of what sociologists describe as the “political economy of imprisonment” (Sutton 2004). For example, while most Western liberal democracies define the use of illegal drugs as basically a medical problem, so non-violent drug offenders as addicts or patients to be treated (rehabilitated) in corresponding medical facilities, US conservative anti-liberalism define such uses and users as crimes and criminals to be punished with Draconian severity and imprisoned often for life (e.g. “three strikes and you are out” laws), even actually or potentially executed for “free enterprise” (selling drugs). If anything, this striking comparative contrast in addressing the problem of illegal drugs – and, one can add, alcohol and other sins – indicates the sheer magnitude and intensity of repression and anti-humanism, manifested in its disregard for and eventual elimination of human freedom and life, of American Puritan-rooted conservatism compared with Western liberalism. As contemporary analysts observe, most Western liberal democracies “have managed more humane implementation of [drug] prohibition, indeed none have managed to create a regime as harsh as that in the United States, so the argument [that prohibition predictably generates overly harsh punishment] would have to be made specifically in the U.S. context”²⁴ (Reuter 2005: 1076).

And it is not just, as US neo-conservatives claim, that “more crime gets you more prisoners”, but also, what they overlook or deny yet is well-known to social scientists and liberals, more prisoners result in more crimes in a feedback process of mutual reinforcement. Thus, if, as sociologists and unorthodox

²⁴ Reuter (2005: 1076) adds that California prison guards’ “political activism” in retaining long prison sentences for non-violent drug offenses indicates that “prohibition predictably generates overly harsh punishment.”

leading US economists suggest, “prison itself is a school for countercultural identity, and thus the breeding ground for future crime” (Akerlof 2002: 427), then the neo-conservative “political economy of imprisonment” in America objectively, albeit perhaps unintentionally (in a charitable interpretation) or perversely, operates as the institutional reproduction of crimes and criminals rather than, as claimed or intended, their elimination or reduction. In this sense, US neo-conservatism actually reproduces, not eliminates, crime and criminals by imprisonment, notably for drug-war crimes and other sins, as well as ever-after, as through denials of voting rights to (about 7 million) ex-prisoners (Uggen and Manza 2002), a practice virtually unknown in Western liberal democracies, prohibitions or discriminations against them in employment and even housing, thus effectively forcing or inducing them to return to criminal activities and the prison system, coming a full circle. To that extent, Draconian “tough on crime” anti-liberal institutions and policies in America are self-defeating or self-destructive on their own explicitly stated goals and terms of “fighting” crime and criminals, just as are, relatedly, neo-conservative reasserted (Steinmetz 2005) militarism, imperialism and offensive wars against the “evil” world (e.g. Vietnam’s and Iraq’s second war). Yet, judging by the almost invariable success of neo-conservative “tough on crime” (including death-penalty) policies and slogans, as the most effective Machiavellian strategy (Hill 2002; Levitt 1996), joined with that of “patriotic” wars a la the “war on terror”, in US elections and politics overall, this path from “more prisoners to more crimes” is the most perverse or best kept secret, if not the most “blissful ignorance” (Wacquant 2002), in contemporary America.

In sum, both “more crime” and “more prisoners” mutually reinforced in America are, to use Merton’s concepts, the respective latent and manifest functions, unintended (or perverse) and intended consequences, of anti-liberal neo-conservatism, of its dual design of American society as a Hobbesian state of nature pervaded by the Wild West’s gun culture and as an open prison or Puritan-like monastery (recall Puritanism’s warning, cited by Weber, of everyone becoming a “monk”), respectively. *Prima facie*, the ever “more crime and more prisoners” evidently self-perpetuating and mutually reinforcing outcome is an anti-liberal and anti-human dystopia, vicious circle, or nightmare scenario contradicting and destroying any liberal hope of human freedom and humane life, yet sort of heaven (Lemert 1999), virtuous circle or dream-world for American neo-conservatism.

Not surprisingly, such neo-conservative “more crime, more prisoners” counterarguments apparently define what are widely regarded as trivial or minor drug offenses and sins like marihuana possession and use as serious “war on drug crimes” and considers those more than 1 million imprisoned or otherwise punished nonviolent drug offenders to be real criminals almost equated with or treated like murderers and other violent felons. Retrospectively and predictably, American Draconian “tough” neo-conservatism thereby continues or evokes the Puritan definition of dissenters or non-conformists as “witches”, including its rendition in paleo-conservatism like McCarthyism, and the Nazi construction of non-Nazis and non-Germans as “objective enemies”. This makes one wonder as to what really is “new” in “neo-conservatism” in America in this and most other respects in relation to theocratic Puritanism and paleo-conservatism as well as European fascism.

No wonder then, Dahrendorf (1979: 98) diagnostically or prophetically identifies the “conservative-authoritarian movement by way of law-and-order slogans” in America and beyond as a major “collectivist” threat to modern liberal society and its rule of law and legal system, thus diagnosing or predicting these neo-conservative Draconian “tough” laws and policies, including the US largest prison population and the world’s highest rate of incarceration as their outcomes. Generally, norms and procedures of liberal democracy as what Dahrendorf (1979: 23) calls “formal rules for all sorts of social [conflicts]”, epitomizing Weber’s democratic legal-rational authority, are substantively (though not formally or seemingly) different from those in its illiberal alternatives, including conservative, communist, “Christian” (e.g. Vatican-influenced, “Bible-Belt”) and Islamic “democracies”. In sum, political pluralism, including neutrality, impartiality and tolerance, is a major principle and practice of liberalism and the necessary condition and constituent of liberal democracy and society.

Cultural Pluralism and Tolerance

By analogy to political pluralism in relation to democracy, cultural pluralism and tolerance, i.e. multiculturalism, is a defining element and necessary condition of liberal civil society or culture. As such, cultural pluralism promotes, reflects or epitomizes civil liberties and rights, especially the freedom and right of both individual and collective autonomy or self-determination, iden-

tity and dignity. In particular, liberal civil society is characterized by tolerance to “cultural otherness” (Bauman 2000), diversity and difference, an equivalent in culture, including religion and morality, to state neutrality and impartiality toward different political groups and ideologies in democracy. For instance, Mises (1950) remarks that “because it desires peace Liberalism demands toleration for all opinions”,²⁵ thus linking its political pacifism in both domestic and international terms and its intellectual and other cultural pluralism.

Generally, both classical and contemporary liberalism is premised on the principle of cultural-political pluralism, in particular tolerance and “maximal expression of all interests” (Kinloch 1981: 20) in culture and politics alike. However, some of its adherents suggest that contemporary liberalism faces what is called the problem of “toleration of the intolerant – especially intolerant fundamentalists [etc.]” (Dombrowski 2001: xi). This is in apparent reference to American religious fundamentalism or evangelicalism (Smith 2000) and its intensive and persistent hostility toward and attacks on liberal-democratic principles and practices, notably what sociologists describe as its “sadistic intolerance to cultural otherness widespread in American society” (Bauman 2000: 106), most visibly, extensively and intensively in the ultra-conservative, religious and “under-democratized” (Amenta et al. 2001) Southern “Bible Belt”.

In retrospect, this is not a completely new and unusual situation for liberal democracy and modernity. Liberal modernity has since its beginning faced and attempted to resolve such problems of tolerating the “intolerant”, notably religious and other extremists. These ranged from medieval Catholic theocrats and inquisitors to their Protestant, especially Puritan emulators and other proto-conservatives attacking the tolerant Enlightenment to fascists in interwar Europe and elsewhere such as Cold War McCarthyism and communists to religious neo-fundamentalists in contemporary America and neo-fascists in (also) European societies. For example, recall early liberalism in Europe during the 18th century and later faced the double or multiple problem of tolerating both Protestantism (Lutheranism and Calvinism) and Catholicism as equally “dogmatic and intolerant” and, through pluralism,

²⁵ Also, Knight (1964) observes that “however favorable an opinion one may hold of the business game, he must be very illiberal not to concede that others have a right to a different view and that large numbers of admirable people do not like the game at all.”

created and promoted religious tolerance and liberty more “than anything intended by the Catholic Church or Luther or Calvin” (Dombrowski 2001: 4). Relatedly, during the most of 19th century the liberal problem was tolerating intolerant religious and cultural-political conservatism, including aggressive nationalism, in Europe, in particular Germany as well as America in the form of post-civil war anti-liberal evangelicalism as the legacy of Puritan-inspired Great Awakenings and what Pareto identified at his time as jingoism.

The problem evidently culminated or escalated in Europe during interwar years when liberalism in Germany (e.g. the liberal Weimer Republic) and elsewhere had to grapple with tolerating that extreme exemplar of intolerance and, as Mannheim (1936) suggests, of cultural irrationalism, fascism, notably Nazism, as the extreme version (Dahrendorf 1979) or monster child (Blinkhorn 2003) of traditional conservatism. As known, this liberal toleration of intolerant fascism ultimately proved to be the last act of liberalism, so self-destructive, in interwar Europe, most manifestly Germany. Further, the liberal problem of tolerating fascism assumed a certain modified and mitigated form in Cold-War America, with New Deal liberalism facing the challenge of intolerant McCarthyism as a sort of American functional substitute of fascism or extreme paleo-conservatism (Plotke 2002). Further, since McCarthyism American liberalism, when (briefly) in political power, has typically faced the problem of toleration of intolerant and extreme religious fundamentalism and political conservatism, including their ally neo-fascism (“Christian” militia), as dramatically witnessed during the cultural liberalization and diversification, secularization and democratization of the 1960s–70s, notably neo-conservatism as a hostile reaction to and reversal of these processes, emerging in the 1980s (Habermas 1989) and climaxing in the 2000s.

In general, it seems as if social history repeat itself as a farce or otherwise in this respect. This makes the liberal problem of tolerance of the intolerant, particularly religious and political extremism, a *déjà vu* for contemporary liberalism and its adversaries, especially conservatism, including fascism. Hence, if this history and its present continuation are of any guidance, one can expect or suspect that so long as extremism, notably conservatism in America and neo-fascism in Europe, persists in its intolerance to cultural and political difference, liberal society will continue to face and try to solve this problem in its midst in the future. Specifically, it will likely continue to tolerate at least in part these intolerant or “unreasonable” groups, practices and ideas, includ-

ing neo-fascism in Europe and religious fundamentalism in America, as it has done mostly in the past and does in the present, though the liberal self-destructive tolerance of interwar fascism and other extreme conservatism provides a warning and lesson in this respect (Blinkhorn 2003).

For instance, contemporary liberal societies continue to tolerate many political and civic groups and associations that are intolerant, extreme or unreasonable and otherwise “illiberal in their doctrines and practices, exclusive in memberships, and hierarchical in organization”²⁶ (Fung 2003: 521). These groups include neo-fascists in Europe and religious fundamentalists in America, as integral elements of, yet constantly undermining and threatening, liberal democracy and civil society, so human liberty and eventually life. Evidently, the problem of tolerating the intolerant and illiberal is difficult and complex, and the solution may often be sub-optimal and even self-defeating, which indicates an aspect of what critics call the “tragedy” of contemporary liberalism (Brink 2000). Perhaps it is a sort of zero-sum game or “no win” situation: by tolerating intolerant, extreme or unreasonable groups and practices, liberal society may commit a kind of suicide or euthanasia, yet by not so doing it effectively ceases to be “liberal”, “pluralist” and so democratic.

Still, contemporary liberals suggest one particular instance in which liberalism does not tolerate the intolerant and yet remains true to its commitment to, and even in doing so protects, pluralism and tolerance, neutrality and impartiality. In this view, what liberalism “does not tolerate is any attempt by one community to impose a comprehensive doctrine on others” (Van Dyke 1995: 88) so to substitute monism, intolerance and partiality for pluralism, tolerance and impartiality. This means that pluralist and tolerant liberalism does not tolerate monism and intolerance, which may sound tautological, but is the inverted meaning and effect of liberal pluralism and tolerance. Overall, contemporary liberals like Habermas (2001) would suggest that liberalism does and should tolerate only “reasonable”, “not unreasonable” groups, world-views and practices, but this still does not fully resolve the problem of tolerating the intolerant. Rather, it solves it in the direction of non-toleration of the

²⁶ Fung (2003: 521) suggests that “a rich plurality of associations – many of them illiberal in their doctrines and practices, exclusive in memberships, and hierarchical in organization – can nevertheless contribute to democracy by fostering self-respect in individuals whose memberships in these associations are often multiple, cross-cutting, and dynamic”.

intolerant, which opens the question of liberalism's commitment to complete, true or unrestricted cultural-political pluralism, tolerance and neutrality. Also, this solution presupposes a sort of social consensus on what is "reasonable" or "unreasonable" in liberal society and modernity.

Yet, even in liberal society what is "reasonable" for liberalism – e.g. cultural diversity and its tolerance – can be and usually is "unreasonable" for non-liberalism, including conservatism and its fascist subtypes, and conversely, so the issue boils down to "who defines what, how, when". Hence, ultimately defining and agreeing on (the "social construction" of) "reasonable" or "unreasonable" even in liberal society is a matter of political power and domination, specifically of Weber's rational-legal authority defining its democracy, just as is in illiberal societies, viz. of charismatic and traditional non-democratic authority in fascism (and communism) and traditionalism or conservatism, respectively. Simply, in order for liberalism to define "reasonable" and so "tolerable" as a matter of wide agreement, it needs to become and remain politically dominant as well culturally salient.

Abstracting from the vexing problem of tolerating or denying tolerance to the intolerant or unreasonable, for contemporary liberals historically "toleration and liberalism grew hand in hand along with the view that citizens can be allowed to have irreconcilable conceptions of the good and of the common good [i.e. simply] pluralism"²⁷ (Dombrowski 2001: 6). In this view, particularly "valuing autonomy requires a large measure of tolerance for those whose beliefs and convictions differ from one's own", which is sort of liberal society's price for such individual and collective autonomy and freedom (Dagger 1997: 196). Admittedly, liberalism is a tolerant doctrine and social system aiming "to let citizens decide for themselves how they want to lead their lives and how, if at all, they want to contribute to the common good" (Brink 2000: 23).

Predictably, liberalism not only tolerates but institutionally recognizes, promotes and protects cultural diversity and even conflict, seen as a dimension of integral liberty, particularly civic liberties, and a necessary condition or constitutive element of liberal civil society or culture. It does so in

²⁷ According to Dombrowski (2001: 157), a key argument in favor of tolerance in culture, including religion, morality and science, as well as in politics is that it "allows for a variety of opinions, which is a step toward progressive evolution of real knowledge".

the belief that, as Dahrendorf (1979: 318) states, “freedom in [civil] society means, above all, that we recognize the justice and the creativity of diversity, difference, and conflict”. In particular, as indicated, liberalism institutionalizes cultural as well as political conflict by creating and insisting on “formal rules for all sorts of social [conflicts]” (Dahrendorf 1979: 23), notably norms and procedures of liberal democracy and civil society as different from those in non-liberal “democracies” and societies, i.e. in Weber’s terms, democratic legal-rational versus authoritarian charismatic and traditional authority. As analysts emphasize, cultural, including ideological, religious, moral and other, diversity provides “one of the prime constituents of genuine liberty”, while observing that as a result of lacking tradition, specifically a feudal past and notably Enlightenment, America “is deprived of what Europe has in abundance: social and ideological diversity” (Hirschman 1982: 1479). Hence, for contemporary liberalism, “to object to diversity is to reject liberty” (Van Dyke 1995: 86), especially civic liberties, so free civil society or culture and eventually political democracy.

The above suggests that for liberalism, just as modern Western democracies are either pluralist in ideological-political terms or not a (liberal-secular type of) democracy at all, so civil society is diverse in cultural-social terms through a plurality of cultures and civic groups or else ceases to be such a sphere of individual and collective liberties. In this view, liberal societies are also defined by their creation of the “space for a plurality” of both civic and political associations, including those illiberal, i.e. intolerant, extreme or unreasonable, as necessary conditions and constitutive elements of democracy and civil society respectively and jointly. They do so by creating “legal protections that allow a much broader range of associations to flourish than do authoritarian, illiberal states”²⁸ (Fung 2003: 519). This indicates that free civil society, joined with pluralist democracy, distinguishes liberal societies from their illiberal counterparts that suppress and constrict both through a mix of social and political authoritarianism. In particular, classical and

²⁸ Fung (2003: 519) adds that the liberal concern for the “relationship between democracy and association ends with this concern that the freedom to associate, whether for intrinsic or instrumental purposes, be preserved quite apart from the other ramifications of the resulting associations. Despite other objections to libertarianism, a central [liberal] insight is that the freedom to form associations is itself a valuable accomplishment and milestone for democracy.”

contemporary liberalism generates and predicts free civil society, as well as liberal-secular democracy, and thus substantively differs from conservatism, including medievalism, fascism and neo-conservatism. These instead engender and predict their authoritarian opposites through suppressing or limiting cultural diversity, as by irrational culture wars in America (Bell 2002), as well as political pluralism.

Social Universalism

By assumption and/or in reality, liberalism through, perhaps counter-intuitively at first glance, multiculturalism, just as social via comprehensive egalitarianism, creates, promotes and protects liberal universalism in the sense of universal inclusiveness, relativism and self-determination in culture (Habermas et al. 1998), including morality and religion, and society overall. Liberalism is simply social universalism in the Kantian and Jeffersonian sense of “equality, justice and liberty”, the “pursuit of happiness”, dignity and identity “for all” plural and often conflicting groups, like individuals, in society and the French Revolution’s declaration of “universal” liberties and rights of humans.

In Parsons’ (1951: 123) words, liberalism is societal universalism in the sense of Kant (Munch 1981) in virtue and the meaning of the “incidence of universalistic orientations within the social system”, including the “institutionalization of universalistic and functionally specific institutions”, of liberal modernity. In short, it is so by what he calls its “universalistic definition of the object” (Parsons 1967: 206–7), which is a Parsonian way of stating Kant’s as well as Jefferson’s principle of liberty and inclusion “for all”, thus incorporating and exhibiting the “Kantian core” (Munch 1981). Negatively, liberal universalism does not mean a comprehensive doctrine, value or institution that is “universal” and “absolute” in time and space, so overriding social pluralism and relativism, as in turn misconstrued by religious absolutism and fascism with their “universalistic” claims masking their particularism, as exemplified by American conservatism. Thus, contemporary sociologists (Munch 2001: 239) observe that US moralistic-religious movements have a “particularistic side” and that extreme (radical right-wing) conservative groups “are still more extreme in their moral particularism”. Also, in this view, the US “moral mission serves as a legitimation of the enforcement of rather particularistic

interests in foreign affairs and of internal fundamentalist Protestant movements against the reality of a liberal and pluralist society” (Munch 2001: 269–70). If so, this is a far cry from what Parsons (1951) et al. celebrate as American religiously grounded “universalism-achievement” in an invidious distinction from supposed European and other non-American particularism and ascription. In particular, it is a shadow or ghost of what Parsons (1966: 79–80) extols as “ethical universalism” attributed to “ascetic Protestantism” in America and elsewhere.

These features and outcomes of liberal universalism thus understood are distinguished from and opposed to anti-universalistic particularism in the form of exclusion, absolutism and coercive determination as defining or typifying non-liberalism, from medievalism and proto-conservatism to fascism and communism and to neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. Admittedly, liberalism’s tendency toward what its conservative critics dismiss as “pluralistic fragmentation” is also that toward universalism and inclusion, exemplified in its establishing and protecting universal cultural and other civil liberties and rights for these plural and fragmented groups (Beiner 1992: 23) or simply “for all” à la Kant and Jefferson.

Universalism, Particularism and Pluralism

In particular, the liberal tendency involves “moral pluralism” (Brink 2000: 9) and consequently what Parsons (1951) and other sociologists (Habermas 1989) call ethical universalism in the sense of both universal liberties “for all” in and universalistic principles of morality – e.g. Kant’s free agency (Beck 2000) and categorical imperative (Habermas 2001), respectively – as opposed to particularism defined by exact opposites, moralistic un-freedom and sectarianism. At least as an ethical ideal, liberal moral universalism and so pluralism is defined by what Weber calls the primeval “ethic of brotherhood” as the underlying principle of the French Revolution, including, in Parsons²⁹ (1951:

²⁹ Parsons” (1951: 88) full statement is that “the fusion of a plurality of expressive interests [can result] in a diffuse attachment to a class of objects or an abstract cultural object, e.g., universal love in a religious sense”. This, at least by the terms used (“plurality”, “universal”), intimates a link from moral pluralism to ethical universalism in a Kantian-Jeffersonian path from the tolerance of “cultural otherness” (Bauman 2000) to free agency, liberty in morality “for all” – and conversely.

88) words, “universal love in a religious [or secular-humanistic] sense”, thus, if one wishes, Sorokin’s (1970: 678) “Christian love” if really universalistic, ecumenical. (The latter in passing indicates that liberalism is not, as religious fundamentalists and fascists accuse, anti-Christian and anti-religious overall; on the contrary, cf. also Buchanan and Tullock 1962).

Liberalism’s pluralistic tendencies also entail religious inclusion, toleration and pluralism as contrasted to exclusion, intolerance and monism in religion, so to sectarianism and fundamentalism. Generally, liberalism harbors and enhances “universalism that is highly sensitive to differences” (Habermas et al. 1998: xxxv) in culture and all society. This holds true in general, albeit sympathetic critics (Patell 2001) object that this sensitivity leads to dubious relativism that illiberal conservatism from medievalism to fascism to neo-conservatism and neo-fascism condemns and eliminates in favor of moral-religious absolutism by claims to absolute truth and values in religion and morality (plus politics) and anti-liberal culture and military wars. Thus, it is objected that “individual and communal identity can draw on pluralism’s respect for the dignity of others without slipping into a cultural relativism that prevents us from making philosophical judgments. The triumph of multiculturalism within the US academy in recent years is too often reflected in precisely this sort of cultural relativism” (Patell 2001: xvi). Still, faced with a choice, however spurious perhaps, between cultural relativism and moral-religious absolutism, characteristic for fundamentalism, most contemporary liberals would opt for the first in contrast to US and other cultural conservatives.

According to its adherents, a major reason why liberalism and its moral universalism is “highly sensitive to differences” in morality, religion, culture and politics is that contemporary Western liberal and other societies are becoming increasingly diverse or pluralist in cultural and political terms. As observed, these societies “are moving further and further away from the model of a nation-state based on a culturally homogeneous population [as] the diversity of cultural forms of life, ethnic groups, religions, and worldviews is constantly growing” (Habermas et al. 1998: 117). The above signifies that in the process of globalization, blending cultural-political diversification, including ethnic-racial heterogeneity, and mostly economic integration, modern liberal societies in virtue of such diversity are increasingly becoming global or cosmopolitan and thus universalistic in values and practices, as opposed to being local or parochial and so particularistic in this respect. And for most contem-

porary liberals, “there is no alternative to this development, except at the normatively intolerable cost of ethnic cleansing. [A supposedly homogeneous nation] would merely serve as a façade for a hegemonic majority culture” (Habermas et al. 1998: 117).

This recognition and protection of social non-homogeneity or diversity is an additional principle and practice that distinguishes contemporary liberalism from non-liberalism, especially neo-conservatism in America and neo-fascism in Europe. It makes it distinct from US and other neo-conservatism driven by its persistent idea of a homogeneous “pure”, “indivisible”, “one nation under God” (Giddens 1998) with a Divinely ordained “manifest mission” to save the world from its moral “sins” and “ungodliness” (Terchek 1997), and its attack on or distrust of ethnic diversity typically reaching the level of religiously based nationalism, manifested in fundamentalism’s ideal of a “Christian nation” (Friedland 2001), racism and xenophobia. It also distinguishes modern liberalism from fascism’s practice of ethnic cleansing and genocide, yet again prefigured, if not inspired, by religious proto-conservatism like medieval Catholicism and anti-Catholic Puritanism via holy wars against “infidels” such as Irish Catholics and Native Americans in Puritan ruled old and New England (Gorski 2000; Munch 2001).

In contrast to anti-liberalism, including religious conservatism and fascism, modern liberalism has simply abandoned the ancient or medieval notion of *one* homogeneous people, nation, religion, church or state “under God”. It regards this notion as a dangerous nationalist-theocratic and ultimately, as demonstrated by Germany under Nazism and America during neo-conservatism, militant and imperialist illusion (Steinmetz 2005) in contemporary increasingly multicultural³⁰ and global or cosmopolitan societies through globalization. As its adherents stress, liberalism acknowledges that integration in modern democratic and pluralistic societies “cannot be shifted from the level of political will-formation and public communication onto the seemingly natural cultural substrate of a supposedly homogeneous people” (Habermas et al. 1998: 133). And the latter is precisely what anti-liberalism, notably

³⁰ Habermas et al. (1998: 118–9) suggest that contemporary multicultural societies “can be held together by a political culture only if democratic citizenship pays off not only in terms of liberal individual rights and rights of political participation, but also in the enjoyment of social and cultural rights [i.e.] social security and the reciprocal recognition of different cultural forms of life.”

conservatism and fascism, has historically attempted to do and persisted so up to the 21st century. For liberalism it is not a fictitious homogeneous and indivisible “nation under God” with a Divinely ordained mission (Munch 2001) to “save” the world by effectively destroying it, but individual citizens regardless of their ethnic, religious, moral and other cultural ascription like ascriptive Americanism (King 1999; Turner 2002), that are primarily relevant to social integration.

In general, some analyses³¹ (e.g. McVeigh 1995) suggest that “consistent” contemporary liberalism, with exceptions like US and other *laissez-faire* economic “libertarians”, establishes, promotes and defends ethnic and other socio-cultural heterogeneity or diversity in sharp contrast to “consistent” conservatism seeking homogeneity in this respect, with exceptional cases such as “free-market” conservatives. Even some critical analysts admit that modern liberalism, due to being “marked by tendencies toward pluralistic fragmentation”, consists of the “dialectic” of diversity or heterogeneity, plus individualism or privatization, just as sameness, uniformity or homogenization and planetarization as “two sides of the same coin” (Beiner 1992). At least, this admission recognizes that cultural and other pluralism or multiculturalism is half of the dialectics and equation of liberalism, from the initial “dialectic of Enlightenment” (Horkheimer and Adorno 1993) to neo-liberalism in a social, as different from economic (Bockman and Eyal 2002), sense.

Hence, the liberal principle, model or method of cultural integration tends to be primarily individualistic, pacifist, egalitarian, universalistic and inclusive, including cosmopolitan, and secular, thus democratic. Negatively, it is not collectivist, nationalistic-militant, non-egalitarian, particularistic and exclusive, including parochial, and theocratic, so authoritarian, as in non-liberalism, especially conservatism, including religious sectarianism as well as fascism like Nazism. In short, contemporary liberalism is egalitarian, universalistic, pluralist, so democratic in this respect by recognizing or warning,

³¹ According to McVeigh (1995), “consistent” contemporary social and economic liberals favor cultural as well as political heterogeneity, and “consistent” conservatives mostly homogeneity. Exceptions to this pattern are “social reactive” economic liberals and “social proactive” conservatives favoring homogeneity and heterogeneity, respectively. Curiously, McVeigh suggests that most “consistent” liberals prefer not only social heterogeneity to homogeneity but also inequality to equality, so are non-egalitarian, in contrast to “consistent” conservatives preferring the opposite, thus being egalitarian, which is a usual view in both modern liberalism and conservatism.

unlike neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, that “when a politically dominant, majority culture imposes its way of life on minorities [it] denies effective equality of rights to citizens from other cultural backgrounds”³² (Habermas et al. 1998: 144).

By contrast, liberal society acknowledges, establishes and protects minority cultures and rights, thus avoiding and counteracting what Tocqueville would call the tyranny of a majority culture, the outcome eventually generated or implied in anti-liberalism, in its various historical forms from medievalism to conservatism, fascism and to neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. In particular, as modern liberals stress, liberal culture or civil society “resists historical tendencies to reinstitute various forms of bigotry that threaten respect for diversity and undermine the search for a “better” or “best” way to maintain and protect it” (DeLue 1999: 24). Such tendencies are primarily characteristic for its illiberal, especially conservative, counterparts since medieval traditionalism and the “Dark Middle Ages” and before, through neo-conservatism and the early 21st century.

In sum, liberalism establishes, preserves and endorses social universalism in Kant-Jefferson’s sense of liberty, equality and justice “for all” as well as (hence?) multiculturalism in the form of cultural diversity, plurality and tolerance as the necessary condition and integral constituent of free civil society and culture, just as political pluralism and toleration conditioning and constituting liberal democracy and politics.

³² Habermas et al. (1998: 144–5) comment that “this problem concerns political issues that bear on the ethical self-understanding and the identity of citizens. In these matters minorities should not be simply outvoted by a majority. Often the regulation of culturally sensitive matters [official language, school curriculum, churches, abortion, family] is merely a reflection of the ethical-political self-understanding of a majority culture that has achieved dominance for contingent, historical reasons” (Habermas et al. 1998: 144–5). Arguably, “such overwhelming regulations can also spark a cultural struggle by disrespected minorities against the majority culture even within a republican polity that guarantees formally equal civil rights [Francophones in Canada, Basques and Catalans in Spain]. The problem of born minorities, endemic to all pluralistic societies, becomes more acute in multicultural societies” (Habermas et al. 1998: 145). They hence suggest that the “majority culture must detach itself from its fusion with the general political culture in which all citizens share equally; otherwise it dictates the parameters of political discourses from the outset” (Habermas et al. 1998: 146).

Individualism

Another fundamental principle and institution of liberalism, so defining and constitutive attribute of liberal society and modernity, is individualism as an individualist dimension, expression or realization of integral liberty through an emphasis on individual freedoms, rights, dignity and human life. This can be considered and described as sociological, including political and cultural, or ontological individualism, to be distinguished from, even though often linked with, scientific-methodological or epistemological, individualism (Boudon 1982) of secondary concern in the present context.³³ Admittedly, liberal society is legally premised on and institutionally protects what analysts call a “constitutionally warranted sense of respect for the life and liberty of each individual” (Brink 2000: 9). This expresses liberal individualism (Kinloch 1981; Calhoun 1993) in political and other social terms. Particularly, early liberal ideology or philosophy was what Mannheim (1936: 28) denotes “individualistic liberalism”. In turn, he suggests that the latter was the initial major instance of “exaggerated” ideological or “theoretical” individualism overall. In sum, what distinguished classical liberalism as a philosophy and social system, and its modern version continues, with certain qualifications, is individualism in theory and institutional reality (Frohock 1987: 53–5).

For example, Spencer, following or evoking Smith and other early liberal economists and philosophers, states that classical liberalism advocates and

³³ Mises (1966: 42) states that the principle of methodological individualism in economics and praxeology as a sort of sociology “deals with the actions of individual men [for] all human actions are performed by individuals”. Hayek (1948: 4–7), remarking that liberal or true individualism involves figures like Locke, Mandeville, Hume, Smith, Burke [sic!], Tocqueville, Lord Acton and Spencer, proposes that individualism is “primarily a theory of society, an attempt to understand the forces which determine the social life of man, and only in the second instance a set of political maxims derived from this view of society”. He thus distinguishes methodological and socio-political individualism as the primary and secondary types, respectively. Amplifying Hayek’s views, Elster (1990: 235–6) holds that political individualism characteristic for liberalism “has nothing to do with methodological individualism” as especially employed by economics and its rational choice extensions in social science. In turn, Bowles (1998: 75) cites as a classic case of methodological individualism the axiom of exogenous preferences termed “as old as liberal political philosophy itself” and objects that Hobbes’ “mushroom metaphor abstracts from the ways that society shapes the development of its members in favor of ‘taking individuals as they are’”. Similarly, liberal analysts note that Hobbes’ state of nature, “in which everyone’s right to everything effectively leaves no one with a right to anything” (Dagger 1997: 4) represents a “fiction within the contractualist tradition” (Beiner 1992: 8) of liberalism.

implements “removals of hindrances to individual activities” while narrowing the “sphere of governmental action”, by increasing the “area within which each citizen may act unchecked” and diminishing the “range of governmental authority”. In this respect, he implicitly defines liberalism by the twin principles and practices of extension of individual activities and liberties and of limitation of government action and power. Spencer hence implies that liberal individualism encompasses negative and positive individual liberties alike, with “freedom from” government coercive constraints and “hindrances” seen as the necessary and even sufficient condition for “freedom to” engage in individual actions.

Later economic liberals like Mises (1950) suggest that that the “aim and object” of classical and modern liberalism is “to obtain legal recognition of the subjective rights of citizens, to limit the arbitrary action of officials to the narrowest possible field”, thus restating Spencer’s dual principle and practice of extending individual liberties and limiting government authority. Mises argues that in general liberalism as a social and economic philosophy requests liberties and rights, “not grace”, in particular that “there is no other way of realizing this demand than by the most rigid suppressing of the powers of the State over the individual”, thus echoing Spencer’s theme of “the Man vs. the State.” Arguably, this signifies that negative individual liberty like individuals’ freedom from state coercive power, is the necessary condition for its positive type, i.e. their freedom “to” act for their own private purposes, which is apparently consonant with Spencer’s ideas.

Further, Mises contends that, in consequence, liberty is simply “freedom from the State” and thus negative. This indicates what he calls the “negativity” of the concept in classical liberalism in his “libertarian” rendition (Hayek 1941) and reinterpretation. Also, Hayek (1948) proposes that “true” liberal individualism demands a “strict limitation of all coercive or exclusive” government power and coercion, and “not only believes in democracy but can claim that democratic ideals spring from the basic principles of individualism”. In turn, he claims that the latter is not egalitarian and equitable, thus implying a sort of non-egalitarian and inequitable, so self-defeating and self-contradicting “authoritarian democracy”³⁴ (Brouwer 1998).

³⁴ Hayek (1948: 32) tacitly cites Spencer in stating that “society is greater than the individual insofar as it is free”.

Hence, Mises, Hayek and other economic “libertarians” (Friedman and Friedman 1982; Buchanan 1991) make the concept of individual liberty even more “negative” than is, as often assumed (Patell 2001), in Spencer as well as other classical liberals like Smith and Mill. Recall Spencer’s twin principles and practices of extension of individual liberties and limitation of government power posit and involve not only individuals’ “freedom from the State” but also their freedom “for” action. Thus, if individual liberty is only “freedom from the State”, “libertarianism” is more incomplete and inadequate in this sense than Spencer’s and other early often criticized, even by modern liberals (e.g. Bird 1999), liberalism and individualism, in that it adopts only his “principle of limitation” of government, while overlooking or downplaying its complement, the extension of individual autonomy. Apparently, this is one of those respects, alongside Hayek’s self-defeating non-egalitarian and inequitable “authoritarian democracy” (Tilman 2001), in which “libertarianism”, including its individualism, appears or is described as “extreme”, “truncated”, “spurious” or “atomistic” liberalism even by comparison to Spencer’s and other early versions.

In general, by contrast to “libertarianism” as its putative successor or guardian, classical liberalism encompasses negative and positive individual liberty, so individualism in conjunction and proximate balance, as exemplified in Spencer’s twin principles of limitation of government and extension of personal autonomy. This is what also Parsons (1937), while highly critical of Spencerian individualist sociology (“Spencer is dead”), suggests by observing that the main aim or “burden” of European liberal individualism has been moral in the sense of a “concern for the ethical autonomy and responsibility of the individual, especially against authority”. It means the synergy of combined liberal concern for both positive and negative individual liberty, the first precisely defined by “autonomy and responsibility”, the second by autonomous action “against” political authority in particular. If so, then negative individual liberty or individualism as defined is a particular form of its positive type as a broader category, though the first is considered to be the necessary and sufficient condition of the second, within classical liberalism.

Alternatively, by reducing positive to negative liberty and individualism, so the general to the particular, economic “libertarianism” commits sort of “fallacy of misplaced concreteness”. It overlooks or denies that what classical and contemporary liberalism posits, viz. individual autonomy comprises but

is not exhausted by that “against” political authority, as its special case. Liberalism recognizes, while “libertarianism” neglects, that personal “autonomy and responsibility” for action, thus individual positive liberty, is a “total” sociological phenomenon involving, but not limited to, its political “concreteness”, just as negative liberty is more than only “freedom from the State” but also that from various other societal constraints, including what Dahrendorf (1979) identifies as those of “capitalist society” as a whole.

Classical liberalism thus avoids and, contrary to its pretensions to being the true liberal heir, “libertarianism” commits a dual illiberal fallacy. This is, first, the dissolution or subordination of positive to negative individual liberty; second, the reduction of the second itself to one of its particular forms. As regards the first, classical liberalism “supports more extensive positive duties than libertarian individualists tend to admit, as exemplified in “cooperative individualism” (Smith 1998: vii). As for the second, it tends to “shield individuals from collective influence” (Frohock 1987: 103–5) or constraint. The latter thus includes both its political and non-political, economic and cultural forms, i.e. government coercion and all other constraints in society like economy and culture, while libertarianism evidently reduces all these to the first by defining negative and all liberty as primarily “freedom from the state”.

In classical liberalism in particular, individualism has reached or been perceived to reach what Spencer’s sociological critic Durkheim somewhat regretfully connotes as the “cult of the individual” as a functional substitute for declining traditional religion in modern society, a sort of, as Pareto implies in reference to socialism and nationalism, liberal “secular religion”. This is suggested by the observation of the “sacralisation” of the individual in liberalism, as expressed in a “lack of concern with the private realm” characteristic of government in modern liberal societies³⁵ (Barnes 2000: 127). This is in sharp contrast to their illiberal-authoritarian, including conservative, fascist, communist and theocratic (e.g. Islamic), opposites, whose governments deny and suppress the existence of such a domain of civil society via intrusion and oppression of individuals’ privacy, life and liberties.

³⁵ Barnes (2000: 138) adds that the modern liberal state “allows leeway for the exercise of the formidable self-organising powers of social agents” and is “responsive to a remarkable if imperfect degree to the needs and demands of all of them”.

In Durkheim's words, the individual in terms of privacy, moral liberty and life is sacred or respected entity in liberalism and a "profane" or depreciated non-entity in favor of supra-individual entities and purposes like Divinity and Divine design, church, repressive community, authority, leadership, hierarchy, nation or state in anti-liberalism, from medievalism and proto-conservatism to fascism and communism and to neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, with qualifications in regard to "libertarianism" due to its partial, economic individualism a la "free enterprise". Thus, classical liberal individualism's manifest opposition to what Spencer and Smith would call "undue state intervention", including an advocacy of economic *laissez-faire* and a night-watchman state, sharply contrasted with the "continuing obsession within anti-liberal circles with notions of community" (Bird 1999: 9–204). Admittedly what individual freedom, autonomy and emancipation are to liberalism, community, coercive social authority and tradition are to conservatism since medievalism as the perennial model for the conservative, as well as fascist, notion of the "good society [and life]" (Nisbet 1966: 9).

Social vs. Atomistic Individualism

Contemporary liberalism has essentially embraced, though with some moderations and qualifications of what Mannheim (1936) calls "exaggerated", classical liberal individualism. He, as well as Parsons (1937) would suggest that the main contemporary moderation or qualification in this sense concerns what they call atomism as sort of exaggerated or excessive individualism. However, in some views, classical liberalism's "best" formulations, as in Tocqueville and Mill, "have never been guilty of the atomistic fallacy" but instead were concerned about the "prospect" of contemporary atomism or excessive individualism (Beiner 1992: 18). Arguably, it entails and endorses a "moderate liberal view of social responsibility better than [an] atomistic individualist perspective" (Smith 1998: vii). This suggests that classical liberalism's is a sort of cooperative and social individualism rather than anti-social atomism within a Hobbesian state of nature (Munch 1994) in the way of "libertarianism", and its contemporary version continues and amplifies such moderation.

At this juncture, both classical and contemporary liberalism involve sociological, notably normative-institutional and cultural, individualism (Parsons

1937; Smelser 1997). This is different from Hobbesian state-of-nature atomistic and anarchic individualism basically adopted by “libertarianism”, thus becoming, contrary to opposite claims (Friedman and Friedman 1982), the functional equivalent or proxy of anarchism, notably economic anarchy a la Hobbes and laissez-faire (Pryor 2002; Tilman 2001). Generally, with such moderations of its exaggerated atomistic or “libertarian” anarchic version, individualism remains the “substance and strength” of contemporary, just as was of classical, liberalism (Bird 1999: 1).

Individual Liberty, Universal Rights and Dignity

The “substance and strength” of liberal individualism is evidently respect for and promotion of individual liberty, i.e. human autonomy and emancipation, universal rights, dignity and life, in the context of society, rather than an anti-social state of nature as in its libertarian or anarchistic versions. Thus, liberal individualism makes a “case for a degree of individual autonomy, and a strong argument against the universal claims of a paternalistic ruler or state” (Hodgson 1999: 70). Even some US conservative sociologists admit, with predictable disapproval, that the “hallmark of liberalism is devotion to the individual, especially to his political, civil, and social rights. What tradition is to the conservative and the use of power is to the radical, individual autonomy is to the liberal. The touchstone [is] individual freedom, not social authority. The central ethos of liberalism is individual emancipation” (Nisbet 1966: 9). In this view, for example, utilitarian liberalism, as represented by Bentham and Spencer, adopted positions on “church, state, family, moral tradition that did not differ from earlier views of the Enlightenment” (Nisbet 1966: 9). As typical of US and other conservatives, this observation identifies the European Enlightenment as the primary origin and form of liberalism and its individualism, so condemns it as a sort of “original sin” and ultimate “evil” for conservatism and other anti-liberalism since the 18th century.

The above generally admits that, rooted in the individualistic Enlightenment, liberalism respects and promotes as “sacred” or constitutive of the “good” society what conservatism or anti-liberalism since medievalism condemns and suppresses as profane and “evil”, which indicates that human liberty, dignity and eventually life are subject to diametrically different or opposite liberal and illiberal evaluations or definitions. It simply suggests that

liberalism is individualistic, truly libertarian, rationalistic and humane, and non-liberalism, notably conservatism, the exact opposite, in which these anti-liberal attributes are celebrated rather than regretted.

By implication, these sharp differences or oppositions are historically due to the fact that, as Mannheim (1986) emphasizes, liberalism emerged from the individualistic, libertarian, rationalistic and humanist Enlightenment, and anti-liberalism, specifically conservatism, from collectivist, authoritarian, irrational and anti-humanist medievalism or feudal traditionalism. And both liberalism and non-liberalism have continued in their subsequent development as ideologies and institutional systems, with some variations or modifications, to reflect their opposite genesis in a kind of path-dependence, if not generic determination. Thus, at the start of the 21st century, neo-liberalism in a cultural sense remains, with certain modifications, essentially individualistic, libertarian, rationalistic and humanist in the way of the Enlightenment (Habermas 1989). In turn, neo-conservatism, especially in America, appears as almost, with some adaptations, as anti-individualistic, in moral-social terms at least, authoritarian, irrational and anti-humanist as medievalism and traditionalism. In this respect, contemporary liberalism is simply the heir of the individualistic Enlightenment, and anti-liberalism, notably neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, of collectivist medievalism, including feudalism and patrionialism (Cohen 2003).

Thus, contemporary liberalism is the heir of the Enlightenment, and hence its classical ancestor, in respect of individual liberty, rights and dignity in that it promotes or presupposes what its adherents call “private autonomy” (Habermas 1989: 97). Negatively, it does not promote sacred tradition, theocratic religion, hierarchy or oppressive social authority, which is precisely what anti-liberal conservatism does as the legatee or offspring of medievalism. Historically, the Enlightenment or classical liberalism generally “elevated individual freedom over the acceptance of imposed hierarchy [and] the private life over the earlier demand of theocrats and republicans that individual citizens can find fulfillment only in, and thus must sacrifice themselves for, the good of the church or the state (Kloppenber 1998: 5–6). Hence, “at the heart of the liberal individual’s relation to society [is] autonomy” (Favell 1993), not blind obedience to tradition, religion and authority, as in what Mannheim (1967) calls the conservative “pre-democratic mind” and other sociologists the conservative-fascist “authoritarian personality” (Adorno et al. 1950; Miller,

Slomczynski and Kohn 1987), including a “sado-masochistic character structure” (Fromm 1941; McLaughlin 1996).

Notably, contemporary, like classical, liberalism is the true heir of the Enlightenment by embracing and extending its universalistic or egalitarian, as distinguished from exclusive, non-egalitarian, individualism, i.e. equal individual liberties and rights “for all” in Jefferson’s sense. Following or implementing the Enlightenment ideal of ethical universalism or egalitarianism (as exemplified in the Kantian categorical imperative), modern liberalism treats fundamental human liberties and rights like individual autonomy and privacy as “grounded in moral equality” and postulates that a “natural or human right must belong to all people, regardless of their citizenship or membership in a community” (Dagger 1997: 5).

The above means that liberal individualism consists in respect for and promotion of individual liberties and rights generally, particularly in granting and extending them to all human individuals. It does so irrespective of their supra-individual nativity, ascription or affiliation a la what sociologists describe as American nativism (Merton 1939) or ascriptive Americanism (King 1999) predictably perpetuated or resurrecting under anti-liberalism in America, notably in the neo-conservative war on terror and “evil” through different treatments and invidious distinctions of Americans versus foreigners, including violations of habeas corpus by indefinite detention and torture. To illustrate the difference between liberalism and anti-liberalism in this respect, during the neoconservative “war on terror” foreigners are subject to treatments that are theoretically inconceivable to be applied to Americans, and that are more typical of third-world and past fascist dictatorships than of modern liberal Western democracies. As noted, these neo-conservative measures include, but are not confined to, the violation of habeas corpus for non-Americans by their indefinite detention and torture on the grounds of “terrorism” and reclassification as “enemy combatants” denied any legal protection, even elemental human status. It is remarkable that the 2006 law denying habeas corpus to legal, let alone illegal, immigrants and foreigners and even tacitly approving their torture passed by bipartisan, conservative-liberal patriotic consensus, as did that authorizing the Iraq aggression a few years before.

Overall, the US neo-conservative government has, in bipartisan collaboration with an almost rubber-stamping Congress evoking fascist-communist

legislatures or Le Bon's parliamentary crowds, perpetrated all these acts in deliberate and even patriotic violation of "all forms of decency and the laws of war" (Bauman 2001: 208–9), including such international conventions of the civilized world as the Geneva Convention about prisoners. These acts and events reaffirm that nationalist narcissism or excessive patriotism rationalized as triumphant Americanism, while constitutive element and the existential rationale of conservatism in America and everywhere, is the "fatal attraction", Trojan Horse or poison for American and any liberalism.

Hence, unlike anti-liberal American and other conservatism, liberal individualism is both truly libertarian and egalitarian or universalistic in contrast to "libertarianism" that is usually, as unapologetically stressed by Hayek (1991), non-egalitarian or inequitable, as expressed in his rejection of the ideal of social justice, in this and other respects, let alone conservatism, including fascism, consisting of neither liberty nor equality. In contrast to conservatism and even spurious libertarianism, liberalism admittedly accords and protects human liberties and citizenship rights "universally, without having to scrutinize the ethical beliefs of all citizens [as its] highly valuable aim" (Brink 2000: 24). Further, liberal individualism is, besides libertarian and universalistic in the manner of Kant and Jefferson, comprehensive or total in Durkheim's sense of social facts in that it encompasses, following or realizing the Enlightenment, all individual liberties and rights, economic and social alike, in a synergy and balance. By comparison, "libertarianism" is incomplete in this sense owing to its typical preference for "free markets" to civil and political liberties, and conservatism, including fascism, as mostly void and adverse with its distaste and "trained incapacity" for both freedoms.

In this respect, (utilitarian and other) liberalism's individualistic ideas not only "did not differ" (Nisbet 1966) from, but substantively developed from and were identical to those of the Enlightenment. Thus, Mises (1950) observes that the individualistic and libertarian as well as rationalist and humanist program of liberalism "was summarized in the demands of natural law [i.e.] the Rights of Man and of Citizen, which formed the subject of the wars of liberation in the 18th and 19th centuries." He thus suggests that liberal individualism is rooted or condensed in the Enlightenment due to its implied principle of the liberties and rights of "Man and of Citizen." This principle was later explicitly formulated and attempted to implement by, just as inspiring or precipitating (Dahrendorf 1979), the French – and in part, via its acknowledged,

including Montesquieu, influence on Jefferson, Madison and other US revolutionaries, American – Revolution and its various sequels, variations and ramifications in “liberation” revolutions, from the 18th to the late 20th and early 21st century in Europe, Latin America and Asia.

In turn, the conception of universal individual liberties and rights of the Enlightenment and subsequently or consequently contemporary liberalism is “rooted in firm and widespread convictions about human dignity and equality”³⁶ (Dagger 1997: 4). This thus confirms the positive dialectics and synergy between liberty and equality, true libertarianism and egalitarianism. Some US liberal authors suggest that Mises’ observation holds true to some extent of the American Revolution as a case of “wars of liberation” by stating that its aim was “autonomy not only for the nation but for individuals”, the first being “inseparable” from self-government, the second from moral liberty and responsibility³⁷ (Kloppenbergh 1998: 30). In this view, individual autonomy consisted in the “combination of personal independence and moral responsibility [i.e.] balancing the radical ideas of freedom and equality with the demands of duty” (Kloppenbergh 1998: 35). Generally, liberal individualism stands between the Enlightenment as the origin or program and liberation or autonomy of individuals and groups as the destination or realization. Further, Mises (1950) admonishes that individuals without liberties and rights “are always a menace to social order”, echoing Smith’s warning about injustice as being more socially destructive than “beneficence”, and suggests that “social peace is attained only when one allows all members of society to participate in democratic institutions.”

The preceding means, as contemporary sociologists note, that unreasonable, illegitimate, including unconstitutional, limitation and suppression of

³⁶ Dagger (1997: 4) objects that contemporary political disputes, particularly in the US, “reduce too quickly to contending claims over rights, which means not only that they are difficult to resolve but also that they often must be adjudicated by the courts; and that means that the composition of the courts is increasingly a matter of open political dispute.” He comments that this is “not a healthy situation [for] there is too much of value in the idea of rights – an idea rooted in firm and widespread convictions about human dignity and equality – to forsake it” (Dagger 1997: 4).

³⁷ Kloppenbergh (1998: 30) proposes that individual as well as national autonomy “rather than freedom [was] the aim of the American Revolution”, this making a distinction between the two aims. Most modern liberals use the terms individual (and public) “liberty” and “autonomy” interchangeably, or regard the second as the element of the first.

human liberties, rights, dignity and life (e.g. execution of innocent individuals in America, especially Southern states like Texas) results in an “illiberal” and so basically un-free, society (King 1999: 7–8). Alternatively, it signifies that liberal individualism posits, and modern liberal society seeks to attain, social integration through respect for and universalistic or egalitarian extension of individual liberties and rights within a framework of institutions, i.e. institutional, as distinguished from atomistic, individualism. This is sharp contrast with their coercive suppression and violation in anti-liberalism, including neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, or their largely non-egalitarian or inequitable distribution, as implicitly admitted, by rejecting social justice, by Hayek (1991), in libertarianism (Tilman 2001).

In short, liberalism attains or preserves social integration by being predicated on the “impartial treatment of its members and places a high value on individual autonomy” (King 1999: 8). In Parsons’ (1937) terms, it provides or endorses a “voluntaristic” liberty-based, individualistic, universalistic, yet normative-institutional, non-atomistic, solution to the (supposed) problem of social order or integration. The liberal is distinguished both from the coercive solution proposed by anti-liberalism like conservatism, including fascism, and communism, and the atomistic “state of nature” solution by pseudo-libertarianism and anarchism (Wrong 1994). This indicates that liberal individualism in virtue of these properties is distinct not only from anti-liberal, including conservative, especially moral-cultural, anti-individualism and anti-humanism. It is also from, which is often overlooked by various critics of liberalism as well as “libertarians” and anarchists, libertarian and anarchistic “individualisms”, epitomized in Hobbesian-style economic anarchy (Pryor 2002) observed or predicted for US laissez-faire “libertarianism” or neo-conservatism like “free enterprise” Reaganism.

Other Principles and Institutions of Liberalism

Rationalism, Modernism, Progressivism and Optimism

Another set of foundational principles and institutions of liberalism, i.e. of defining attributes and necessary conditions of liberal society and modernity, comprises rationalism, modernism, progressivism and optimism. In general and essence, liberalism is a complex of rationalism, modernism, progressiv-

ism and optimism, intertwined and mutually reinforced with its other principles and institutions, and liberal society a rationalist, modern, progressive and optimistic social system. Comparatively, liberal ideology and society therefore sharply contrasts to anti-liberal ideologies and societies as mostly anti-rational or irrational, traditionalist, regressive and pessimist, such as medievalism, proto- and neo-conservatism, fascism and neo-fascism, perhaps minus communism, as implied, by attributing to it Enlightenment-based disdained “constructivist rationalism”, in “libertarian” economics (cf. Hayek 1955; Infantino 2003).

Like the other principles and attributes of liberalism, liberal rationalism, modernism, progressivism and optimism originate and are represented in the Enlightenment as a supreme rationalist, modernist, and optimistic philosophy and movement in post-medieval Western history. For example, Weber points out the “rosy blush” of the Enlightenment, described as the “laughing heir”, specifically the optimistic antipode, of pessimistic Protestantism, particularly “gloomy” Calvinism and its “Anglo-Saxon” transplant Puritanism. In particular, he observes that the Enlightenment’s optimism, expressed in economy and society via a belief in the harmony of private and public interests, “appeared as the heir of Protestant asceticism” and original-sin pessimism in the realm of economic as well as political and cultural ideas and institutions.

Thus understood, the optimistic Enlightenment is the original and enduring source of what Mannheim (1936: 123) describes as the “undaunted optimism” of classical and modern liberalism, i.e. what US conservative sociologists deplore as the liberal principle of “hope” and contrast to it with the preferred anti-liberal religious-conservative ideal of theological and eventually theocratic or fundamentalist “Bible-Belt” heaven (Lemert 1999; Wuthnow 1998). Historically, since the Enlightenment, liberalism harbors and promotes the idea of, confidence in and emphasis on human reason, rationality and social progress or improvement, notably advancement in science and technology, as well as politics and the arts or aesthetics and morals or ethics. This makes what an early economist, Seligman calls “liberal and progressive elements” in society basically identical or entwined and mutually reinforcing. A case in point is identified in Comte’s liberal or humanitarian positivism (Bailey 1994: 325) substantively derived from and continuing the Age of Enlightenment.

In comparative-historical terms, liberalism expresses and is expressed in the “rational tradition of the West” (Noakes 2003: 81) in modern times, i.e. what Weber calls Western societal rationalism and rationalization, distinguished from its non- or pre-Western liberal types (if any) and what is seen as Oriental non-rationalism and non-liberalism (“despotism”) in society. For example, Bentham, usually considered the founder of utilitarian liberalism, proposes what he calls “liberal improvement” in virtually all realms of society, thus expressing the idea of social progress in and through liberalism as both an ideology and institutional system. Also, what Comte diagnoses or heralds as the new “positive” society and historical time, overriding its prior theological and metaphysical versions, is essentially based in and driven by what Weber denotes “liberal rationalism”. The latter is in the form of near-universal societal rationalization and belief in progress, as opposed to irrationalism, stagnation, pessimism or fatalism seen as underpinning theocratic-military systems and times like feudalism. Further, contemporary writers remark that evolutionary positivism and rationalism à la Comte remains “a central strand of modern liberal thought”, especially in the US (Stanfield 1999).

The aforesaid of Comte’s positive age holds true of Spencer’s equivalent notion of industrial society as essentially rational (Mueller 1996), modern, progressive and pacifist – i.e. grounded in what Mannheim (1936) calls rationalistic and individualistic liberalism – relative to earlier militant or military societies characterized by exactly opposite features like offensive war. Thus, Mannheim (1936: 123) remarks that, with “undaunted optimism” rationalistic liberalism seeks to “conquer a sphere completely purged of irrationalism”, including fatalism and religious superstition, expressed by the Catholic Inquisition in Europe and Puritan witch-hunts in America, seen as reigning in medievalism and before. In short, Mannheim treats and describes liberalism as essentially rationalistic, including progressive (Kettler, Volker, Stehr 1992) and optimistic, just as individualistic. While he does not invariably relate liberalism’s principles of rationalism, progressivism, optimism (and pacifism) to its “libertarianism” or “principle of liberty”, Popper (1973) implies such links by contending that the first entails or leads to the “recognition of the claim of tolerance” as the requisite or effect of liberty “for all.” Notably, he argues that liberalism entails “faith in reason and liberty” alike, thus implying an intrinsic link or coexistence and congruence between its rationalism and its “libertarianism” (Popper 1973: 303).

In this connection, a standard economic, rational-choice (e.g. contractual) interpretation of liberalism and its rationalism is that “liberal ideal assumes that rational individuals must recognize the mutual gains from cooperative behavior, and reach contractual agreements on institutions that benefit all” (Mueller 1996: 343). However, rationalistic liberalism or liberal rationalism has historically or empirically been more than just profit- and utility-maximization. This is what Weber and his followers like Parsons (1937) and others (e.g. Bendix 1977) suggest by observing that societal rationalization in modern Western society incorporates but is not limited to economic rationality or utilitarianism, so liberalism includes, yet is not exhausted by capitalism, as just one of its integral elements or particular forms. As usual, rational, including public, choice theories, as the narrow and simplistic economics of politics and society, commit the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness” in the sense of reducing the general or primary to the particular, concrete or secondary, viz. rationalism to economic rationality, liberalism to capitalism, society to economy, e.g. politics and culture to “free markets”.

In general, the preceding indicates what Weber and contemporary sociologists describe as an “elective affinity” of rationalism with classical and modern liberalism, notably that “rationalist presuppositions are more characteristic of liberals than conservatives” (Alexander 1998: 33). In particular, contemporary liberalism continues to embrace and value rationalism and human reason, including the “tradition of rationality and science, bequeathed by the Enlightenment” (King 1999: 11), thus of its classical ancestor. Also, it preserves, with certain adaptations, the “undaunted optimism” of its classical ancestor, notably the “rosy blush” of the Enlightenment. Like their predecessors since the Enlightenment, modern liberals are, or describe themselves as, “generous and optimistic, insisting that ordinary people ought to be able to make fundamental choices for themselves” (Terchek 1997: 3). In sum, European and especially American liberals are “optimistic about the future of society” (Delanty 2000: 42) in contrast to the “new” and old anti-liberals like (neo) conservatives and (neo) fascists, as typically pessimistic or “gloomy” in Weber’s sense of Calvinism and its derivative Puritanism.

Liberal Humanism and Secularism

Still another set of foundational principles and institutions of liberalism, so constitutive attributes and necessary conditions of liberal society and modernity, contains humanism and secularism as well as pacifism. By analogy to the previous set, liberalism constitutes essentially a complex of humanism, secularism and pacifism, intertwined and mutually reinforcing with its rationalism, modernism, progressivism and optimism, as well as its other principles and institutions, and liberal society and modernity a humanist, secular and pacifist social system and historical period. In this respect, liberalism as a set of ideas and social institutions alike substantively differs from non-liberalism typically being a compound of anti-humanism, anti-secularism and militancy, including militarism, as witnessed in medievalism, proto- and neo-conservatism, fascism and neo-fascism, and communism, with some qualifications for supposed Nazi “secularism” and communist “atheism”. Hence, liberal society and modernity is a distinct social system and historical time compared with its alternatives that are usually inhuman, non-secular, including theocratic, and militant-militarist, as shown by feudal, conservative, fascist and communist, with these qualifications, societies and times.

In particular, liberalism is essentially humanism, and most liberals are humanitarians in some sense and degree. Thus, Mannheim (1936: 229) refers to the “liberal-humanitarian idea[l]” rooted, as the other main ideals of liberalism and attributes of liberal society, in the humanist Enlightenment and what Parsons (1937) call the “humanistic” Renaissance before. For example, Pareto, albeit somewhat sarcastically, points to “humanitarian sentiments” as the driving force of the liberal-secular (“anti-Christian”) French Revolution.

Notably, by combining the humanitarian ideal with secularism, liberalism is primarily secular humanism, as distinguished from its non-secular or religious versions, such as Christian, Catholic, Protestant, Islamic and Hindu “humanisms”. As contemporary liberals argue, the liberal emphasis on reason leads to secular humanism”, as well as to endowing people with a “capacity for moral judgment, for distinguishing between good and bad, right and wrong” (Van Dyke 1995: 89–90). Arguably, this is what distinguishes liberalism from conservatism and other illiberal ideologies and social systems observed to “abhor” (Van Dyke 1995: 90) secular humanism or dissolve and sacrifice it to its religious forms. Historically, this is an anti-humanist pat-

tern and system, a sort of “method in the madness” (Smith 2000) in Weber’s sense of ascetic “methodical” sanctification observed in anti-liberal Calvinist Puritanism (Methodism). It emerged in European medievalism, continued through proto-conservatism in the aftermath of the Enlightenment (Nisbet 1966) and persisting via neo-conservatism (Beck 2000) in America and neo-fascism in Europe during the early 21st century.

The core or “proof” of liberal secular humanism is, as Durkheim somewhat unhappily implies by the “cult of the individual”, and its contemporary adherents suggest, respect for and promotion of the “sanctity” of human life, person and dignity, as the “most basic moral value” (Pelton 1999: 8) in liberalism. In this view, liberalism, specifically the Enlightenment, historically derived from, or rather rediscovered, reaffirmed and retrieved, such values from Parsons’ (1937) “humanistic Renaissance” and the classical age like ancient Greece. Yet, it did so versus the legacy and opposition of anti- or quasi-humanist medieval Catholicism and the Vatican theocracy subduing humanistic classicism and Protestantism, especially Calvinism and Puritanism, opposing, even, as Pareto observes, halting in North Europe or abhorring its artistic renaissance started in Italy.

As such, in comparative-historical terms, liberalism both manifests and is manifested in the secular and humanistic or moral “traditions of the West” (Noakes 2003: 81) alike since at least the Enlightenment, as distinguished from their non-secular and non- or pseudo-humanistic forms elsewhere, as Weber and others propose or imply. At this juncture, secular humanism, just as liberalism in general, originates and appears as the historically specific or exclusive product and element of Western civilization, albeit this may imply a sort of “Eurocentrism” (Habermas 2001). Weber implies that, like rationalism and rationalization embodied in and proceeding via modern capitalism and liberal democracy, plus rational science, technology, art, etc., secular humanism and liberalism overall is found “only” in the West, and not anywhere else.

By contrast, non-secular humanisms, anti-humanism and non-liberalism, including feudalism, traditionalism and other proto-conservatism, are present and even prevalent in the “Orient” as well as the “Occident prior to the Enlightenment and the Renaissance. While such Weberian West “only” theses can be disregarded as “Eurocentric”, it still is instructive to reconsider the remarkable historical fact that liberalism, its secular humanism in particular, has been originally produced and observed solely or mainly in Western

European societies, at least since the Enlightenment and the Renaissance, and then diffused elsewhere, including their colonies like America, against various oppositions, especially that of what he calls traditionalism or arch-conservatism, which explains the lack of complete transmission, especially in the “new nation”.

Moreover, recent sociological studies (e.g. Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart 2004) indicate that even at the start of the 21st century, “old” Western and other European societies and their historical extensions and functional equivalents (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand) continue to be the main, though not the sole, center of liberalism and secular humanism. For illustration, reportedly, the “Swedes, the Dutch and the Australians are closer to the cutting edge of cultural change than the Americans” (Inglehart 2004: 16). In particular, “though church attendance remains relatively high in Poland and Ireland [and the US], it has fallen drastically in most of the historically Catholic countries of both Western and Eastern Europe; and it has fallen even more drastically in most of the historically Protestant societies – to the point where some observers now speak of the Nordic countries as post-Christian societies” (Inglehart 2004: 17).

Alternatively, most other societies, including notably the “first new nation” (Lipset 1996) America as the salient “deviant case” within the Western world and under-developed countries, remain or descend, as in the US case, into a locus of anti-liberalism in spite or perhaps because of the global process of liberalization. Notably, this anti-liberalism involves religious, moral and cultural conservatism and traditionalism, including both anti-secular “humanism” like Christian and Islamic fundamentalism and sheer anti-humanism as in neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. For instance, it is found that “emphasis on religion declined in most of the advanced industrial societies [Austria, Canada, France, Germany, South Korea, Poland, Spain and the UK]. But it increased in most of the developing [and poorest] countries [Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Mexico, Nigeria South Africa] (there was also a slight increase in the U.S.)” (Inglehart 2004: 4).

In particular, America far from being, as many postwar modernization US sociologists like Parsons (1951) and others (Lipset 1994) somewhat ethnocentrically supposed, a “prototype of cultural modernization for other societies to follow”, turns out to be a “deviant case, having a much more traditional value system than any other advanced industrial society” (Inglehart 2004: 15).

Moreover, in a drastic contradiction to such suppositions, not only does the US rank “far below” other Western societies on the traditional/secular dimension, it also reveals “levels of religiosity and national pride [nationalism] comparable to those found in some developing societies [manifesting] the phenomenon of American Exceptionalism” (Inglehart 2004: 15).

Overall, the above yields the inference that these findings support the liberal prediction of secularization and liberalization, albeit with “some striking deviant cases, with the peoples of both the United States and Ireland showing a much more religious outlook than their economic levels would predict (Inglehart 2004: 5). Further, these observations identify a so-called “new Postmodern political cleavage” within modern societies pitting “culturally conservative, often xenophobic” groups against those liberal and “change-oriented”, and a sort of related culture war of traditional-religious vs. secular-rational authority (Inglehart 2004: 11). In global terms, such cleavages are identified between liberal Western democracies with “strikingly different political cultures” (e.g. self-expression) where “authority shifts from religious to secular institutions and ideologies” and non-Western authoritarian societies still dominated by traditionalist religion (Inglehart 2004: 18). And, as seen, in terms of religious traditionalism or non-secularism, just as nationalism, America is found to be closer to the non-Western than the Western world.

This persisting difference or comparative path dependence (Inglehart and Baker 2000) in secular humanism between Western Europe versus America and Islamic and other developing countries cannot be fully comprehended and explained unless reconsidering the fact that the West was the original home of liberalism and secularism, notably of the humanist-rationalist Enlightenment, just as Renaissance, later transmitted and transplanted beyond. Alternatively, it cannot unless taking into account the moment that liberalism basically remained “foreign”, as US conservatives and Muslim fundamentalists both accuse, to distant “lands” and “new nations”, including America and most other geographically non-Western countries, from Russia to China to Iran and most of Latin America, at the start of the 21st century, with the exception of such former British colonies as Australia, New Zealand and particularly Canada, plus perhaps Japan and South Korea. If so, such path dependence validates Weber’s Western Europe “only” thesis not only as diagnostic of the past and present, but also as predictive and even prophetic of the future, perhaps beyond his own expectations, viz. the diffusion of liberalism

and rationalism. Whether as the reason of relief, as for US neo-conservatives, or regret, as for their liberal counterparts, the fact is that secular humanism and liberalism remains primarily an element of Western European societies, notably welfare states or social democracies, even several centuries after the humanist Enlightenment and its subsequent diffusion beyond.

Notably, such “Western”, and in extension partly or diluted American, liberal secular humanism is epitomized, expressed and grounded or rationalized by the “sanctity” of human life, person and dignity. By contrast, illiberal anti-secular abhorrence is manifested in denying, sacrificing or subordinating such humanity to “higher”, supra-human entities and causes, viz. Divinity, church, nation, state, race, community, etc. in medievalism, conservatism and fascism, and their secular versions (e.g. “dictatorship of the proletariat”) in communism. In liberalism the priority is that of the human person and life over the “common good” (Pelton 1999: 89) instead prioritized in its illiberal alternatives, in typically authoritarian forms and disguises, viz. the medieval God’s Kingdom on Earth, the Puritan “Holy Commonwealth” in England and America, the Nazi “thousand-year” state, the “communist community”, neo-conservative “faith-based” society (e.g. the “Bible Belt”) in America, etc.

For instance, such sanctity of humans or secular humanism is the underlying reason why liberalism as a humanistic ideal rejects and liberal society and modernity as a humane social system and time prohibits the death penalty. Conversely, in opposition to liberalism, the illiberal sacrifice and subordination of humans to supra-human ends explains and predicts mass or regular executions for both crimes and sins in non-liberalism, from medievalism with its Inquisition and its offspring proto-conservatism to interwar fascism and its “final solution” to American neo-conservatism and its Draconian “tough on crime” policies in the 21st century. In this sense, for liberalism rejecting or prohibiting the death penalty by government is the ultimate or minimal act of recognition of the sanctity of human life and so secular humanism, and its advocacy and typically arbitrary or summary use by anti-liberalism, especially European fascism and American conservatism, its official denial and sacrifice. At least, secular humanism manifested in the sanctity of human life helps explain and predict why liberal society avoids and prohibits the use of the death penalty, as do all Western European and other modern democracies.

On the other, its abhorrence explains and predicts why illiberal medieval, conservative, fascist, communist and theocratic societies, from the Vatican

Inquisition to Puritan America to Nazi Germany and Soviet Union to China, Islamic Iran, institute and widely and arbitrarily apply this ultimate punishment. For modern liberalism and in liberal society, “though the death penalty is just punishment for some murders, abolition of the death penalty is part of the civilizing mission of modern states” (Reiman 1997: 27). Alternatively, if abolition of the death penalty is “civilizing”, illiberal legal systems do not merit to be considered “civilized”, ranging from the Medieval Inquisition and theocratic Puritanism and its “Salem with witches” to fascism and communism to US neo-conservatism, Chinese communist-capitalist authoritarianism and Islamic theocracies, resorting to functionally equivalent (for the last three, cf. Jacobs et al. 2005) executions of “enemies” (Bähr 2002).

Further, for contemporary liberalism, not only such penal minimalism, but most other liberal principles and practices are grounded in, derived from or linked with secular humanism. In this view, the “high regard in liberalism for individual rights, individual freedom, and even equality of opportunity, is merely derivative from the core liberal value of respect for the individual human life” (Pelton 1999: 89). This means that in modern liberalism secular humanism ultimately grounds, justifies and predicts “libertarianism”, individualism and egalitarianism or universalism, just as does, conversely, illiberal anti-humanism opposite principles and practices like authoritarianism, anti-individualism and non-egalitarianism or particularism (e.g. exclusion). The emphasis is on “secular”, as distinguished from religious humanism which, in virtue of its theocratic elements or tendencies, can be at most the basis or source of individual freedom in religion and theology – e.g. what Durkheim calls “free” inquiry into or interpretation of sacred texts like the Bible or Koran – not or less in politics and civil society. Simply, secular humanism is the foundation of liberal-secular democracy, and its religious type of a sort of theocracy, viz. Christian humanism of Catholic-Puritan medieval and later theocracies, Islamic “humanism” or egalitarianism (Davis and Robinson 2006) of past and contemporary Muslim theocratic states.

Hence, in respect of individual liberties and rights, the first type is a complete or genuine humanism, and the second incomplete or spurious in which humans are effectively subjected and even often literally sacrificed to supra-human, Divine entities and causes such as “God’s Providential Design” (Bendix 1984), “God’s Kingdom on Earth” and “Holy Commonwealth” (Zaret 1989). For instance, Dahrendorf (1979: 124) implies that Christian humanism,

just as egalitarianism or universalism, is “deceptive” in this respect, i.e. neither a necessary nor sufficient condition of individual liberty and democracy, compared to its liberal-secular type.

Alternatively, the above signifies that pseudo-liberal “libertarianism” or individualism is not only theoretically illogical and self-defeating. It is also, as modern Western history mostly suggests, empirically impossible without secular humanism, thus casting doubt on the “libertarian” magic formula of freedom *cum* “free market enterprise” minus humanistic egalitarianism and universalism; e.g. most US libertarians reportedly support the death penalty and are anti-egalitarian or anti-justice (as noted in Tilman 2001). Simply, individual liberty becomes an empty slogan, or self-delusion without respect for the sanctity of human life and person as characteristic for contemporary anti-liberalism, notably neo-conservatism, disrespect inherited from anti-humanist medievalism and proto-conservatism, and culminating in fascism, including Nazism in Europe and McCarthyism in America. In sum, liberalism is humanism and secularism, thus substantively distinct not only from illiberal anti-humanism like feudalism, conservatism, fascism and communism, but also from non-secular humanisms or humanist non-secularism present in or claimed by Weber’s great world religions, notably traditional Christianity as well as Islam and others.

Liberal Pacifism

Also, liberalism is primarily, with some qualifications for defensive or just war, pacifism, as a particular dimension of its secular humanism. Thus, liberalism repudiates on principle and liberal society in reality avoids or prevents war and violence, particularly what Spencer calls offensive or aggressive wars characterizing its illiberal forms like militant or military, opposed to industrial, societies. It is in this particular sense of offensive, as distinguished from defensive, war or aggression that liberal or industrial society is, as Spencer puts it, peaceful, pacifist or non-militant both in intra- and inter-societal terms, dealing with its own citizens or groups and other societies alike. This is contrast to its illiberal, including medieval-theocratic, conservative, fascist and communist, types as usually militant, bellicose, war-like or violent overall in both respects.

Thus, following Spencer, Mises (1950) emphasizes that in liberalism the “human mind becomes aware of the overcoming of the principle of violence

by the principle of peace". According to Mises,³⁸ liberalism considers war as such to be "injurious even to the victors" and particularly "will nowhere find a valid cause for wars of aggression" and in this sense represents or generates "liberal pacifism" opposed by militarism described as "anything but a product of peace-loving". Further, he predicts that "where liberalism prevails, there will never be war", and conversely. At most, war, almost invariably in its defensive or just form defending against intra- or inter-societal aggression, is nearly always the last resort and ultimate necessity, rather than a matter of choice or preference, for liberalism and liberal society. This was demonstrated by the conduct of liberalism in the two world wars of the 20th century against its illiberal adversaries like authoritarian German conservatism and totalitarian fascism, respectively.

Liberal society and modernity tends to be specifically pacifist in respect of both the sanctity of the human person and the peaceful co-existence of other societies. Yet, it is not, as often supposed or imputed by anti-liberals like fascists and conservatives, in the case of intra- and inter-societal violence or aggression by its members and these societies. Simply, liberal society only defends itself when threatened by either its parts or other societies, as during WW I and II, but never attacks them for whatever reason. This is in sharp contrast to illiberal, including feudal, conservative and fascist, societies whose preferred action ("favorite pastime") is precisely "attack and destroy" through aggressive civil or culture and foreign or global wars against "evil" (Hauerwas 1992). Cases in point span from medieval Catholic and Protestant (particularly Calvinist-Puritan) crusades against "infidels" (Gorski 2000), and their equivalents in Islamic jihads (Turner 2002), to Nazi aggressions against "enemies" and to the neo-conservative war on the "axis of evil".

In turn, liberal society's disinclination for or avoidance of war consolidates or reinforces democracy and liberty, while illiberal societies' predilection for and practice of offensive wars did and, as Pareto prophetically warns in the dawn of WW I, "would probably have the effect of imposing a military dictatorship"³⁹ on themselves and those subjugated by them. This is what exactly

³⁸ In Mises' (1950) view, that liberalism "aims at the protection of property and that it rejects war are two expressions of one and the same principle" of peace or pacifism.

³⁹ Pareto predicts that "there exist changes which could produce wars among the civilized nations [which] would probably have the effect of imposing a military dictatorship on some European nation".

also happened in Nazi Germany and fascist Italy and their conquered territories during WW II. On this account, liberal pacifism thus understood is democratic and “libertarian”, just as humanistic, and anti-liberal, including conservative-fascist, militarism dictatorial as well as anti-humanistic. Thus, if the outcome of anti-liberal militarism is military dictatorship or a sort of warfare state, liberal pacifism results in peaceful democracy or a “welfare state” in the broad, as distinguished from the prevalent limited and often misunderstood meaning by US conservatives as “socialism”, “statism” or “collectivism” (Lipset and Marks 2000), sense of a social system promoting peace and human well-being rather than war and in-human repression and destruction.

No wonder, a pacifist welfare state thus understood has been a creation and fixture of modern liberal societies like Western Europe, notably Scandinavia and Canada, and a militaristic warfare state of their illiberal counterparts, from European medievalism and proto-conservatism to fascism and communism and to American and British neo-conservatism. In particular, ushering in the 21st century, the peaceful welfare state remains, with some modifications and adaptations, typical for European liberalism, and the belligerent imperialist warfare state for American neo-conservatism (Steinmetz 2005), as shown by various indicators, including relative peacefulness or belligerence and military spending.

Moreover, liberal pacifism in the sense of absence of war, plus a “state of emergency” à la the neo-conservative “war on terror” (Turner 2002), or the presence of peace, so a peaceful “welfare state”, in society is the necessary (albeit not sufficient) condition for democracy and liberty. At this juncture, some US conservative sociologists (Lipset and Marks 2000) somewhat ethnocentrically and disdainfully brand the welfare state as a foreign, European creation, so “un-American”, thus implicitly suggesting that instead the *warfare* state, as its polar opposite, is “all-American”, as indicated by what others identify and stress as the reassertion of conservative-reproduced, notably Puritan-rooted, American militarism and imperialism (Munch 2001; Steinmetz 2005; Tiryakian 2002) in recent times, just as before. This implication holds true insofar as the dismissal or “non-selection” of the liberal-pacifist welfare state logically or eventually implies the “rational choice” of a conservative, including fascist, warfare state as its antithesis, and conversely, choosing the latter means rejecting or “de-selecting” the former. Predictably, American anti-welfare and militarist neo-conservatism demonstrates the first scenario,

and European, notably Scandinavian, welfare and pacifist social democracies the second.

Overall, expressing liberal pacifism and anti-liberal militarism respectively, welfare and warfare states are typically (with secondary variations) what economists call substitutes rather than “complementary goods”, opposites, not complements. Consequently, their actual or potential mixture (e.g. Bismarck’s welfare-warfare state in Germany?), just as that of religion and politics (Dahrendorf 1979; Dombrowski 2001), tends to be eventually non-viable, explosive and self-destructive (as shown by the fate of Bismarckian militarist conservatism in WW I, not to mention that of its successor Nazism during WW II). To that extent, to choose between a liberal-pacifist welfare and an anti-liberal warfare state is a “social choice” that must eventually be made and cannot be evaded in long terms, a sort of Shakespearean “to be or not to be” existential question in terms of human well-being, liberty and ultimately life or death. For instance, this seemingly abstract and unnecessary choice is actually exemplified by the alternative between, say, a Scandinavian and fascist type of society, social-democratic Sweden and Nazi-militarist (e.g. Hitler-Bismarck”) Germany. In America, this is the choice between a society in the image of Jefferson-Madison and their liberal and basically pacifist ideals and one in that of Winthrop-McCarthy-Reagan and their anti-liberal and militarist (and theocratic) designs, simply between America as the land of freedom and peace *and* as “Salem with witches” (Putnam 2000) and Orwellian permanent war cum peace. And, as the above statement implies, most US neo-conservatives usually make their negative “rational choice” by denouncing and rejecting the welfare state, so effectively Jefferson-Madison’s economic-political egalitarianism and pacifism, as “un-American”, with the implication that the warfare state in the tradition of Winthrop-McCarthy-Reagan is exactly “all-American”. In turn, contemporary sociologists suggest that the supposedly “all-American” anti-welfare and/or warfare state is a part and instrument of “apple pie” authoritarianism (Wagner 1997) enforced and sustained by conservatism through its anti-liberal culture, political and militarist wars on the “evil world” sociologically and geographically.

Alternatively, the above confirms or highlights that liberal pacifism, so a pacifist welfare state broadly understood, is the necessary condition for democracy and liberty in modern society. By contrast, Spencer, Pareto, Mises and others suggest that anti-liberal militarism, thus a warfare state is their

poison or threat through, as even a moderately conservative US president warned, its military-industrial complex and offensive wars such as religious crusades, fascist aggressions, neo-conservative invasions of “evil”, “ungodly” and “inferior” countries. Thus, what Weber calls “public peace” within and across societies is the condition sine qua non of political democracy and free society, just as of market exchange.⁴⁰ On the other hand, as one of the US founders, Madison⁴¹ explicitly warns, “no nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare”, which can be plausibly extended or interpreted to incorporate both war against other societies and within society itself, i.e. civil or culture wars.

Hence, through its pacifism condemned and misunderstood by anti-liberal adversaries, liberal society effectively tries to avoid what anti-liberalism, notably conservatism or fascism, seeks to achieve: to make democracy and liberty, plus truth and human dignity and life, the “first casualty” of aggressive war, a warfare state or militarism. Thus, liberal society is pacifistic or non-militant in Spencer’s sense just because it is democratic, “libertarian” and humanistic. And conversely, its democracy, liberty and humanism are sustained, protected or reinforced by its pacifism or peace. In turn, its anti-liberal, especially conservative and fascist, alternatives are warlike and militaristic primarily due to being, as Simmel suggests for militant despotism, non-democratic, with their bellicosity and militarism reproducing military and other dictatorship. This implies that anti-liberalism, notably conservatism, including fascism, disdains, condemns and attacks liberal pacifism not only because it is, as European fascists and American neo-conservatives accuse, “too soft” or “pacifying” toward domestic and foreign “evil enemies” (Bähr 2002). It is also because it expresses and seeks to maintain democracy and liberty by maintaining peace in society, eschewing civil-culture wars at home and offensive war against other societies.

Hence, while liberal pacifism has a pejorative and distorted meaning in anti-liberalism, notably European fascism and US neo-conservatism and so

⁴⁰ For example, Weber remarks that “all of the ‘public peace’ arrangements of the Middle Ages were meant to serve the interests of exchange.”

⁴¹ Recall, Madison reinforces this warning stating that “of all the enemies to public liberty war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes [as] known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few.”

most of America, it is, in the sense of peace in society and between societies, one of the constitutive elements and even conditions of liberty and democracy in liberalism at least since Spencer, with some variations. "Pacifism" may well have become a "bad name", especially in America under the influence and indoctrination of belligerent religious conservatism (cf. Hauerwas 1992) and nationalistic Americanism (Turner 2002), including McCarthyism and Reaganite neo-conservatism, at least since the perceived "pacification" of the "evil empire" during the Cold War and the Nazis prior to WW II in Europe. Yet, a free society is basically pacifist in the sense of Spencer's non-militant industrial societies. Alternatively, an un-free or authoritarian society has typically been in history and continues to be throughout the 21st century essentially anti-pacifist or militaristic in Spencer's sense of militant societies pervaded by bellicose foreign policy or war as well as domestic state repression or "culture wars". In sum, free (un-free) societies are usually pacifist (militant), though, contrary to Spencer, not every "pacifist" society is "free", yet, in accord with his ideas, virtually every "militant" social system or warfare state is "un-free" or repressive.

Consequently, the pacifism of liberalism is not, contrary to anti-liberal imputations, a utopian ideal or self-destructive policy and "softness" toward "evil enemies" or "witches" (Putnam 2000) to be destroyed and exorcised home and beyond, so a sort of "irrational exuberance" and luxury, as US neo-conservatives claim, model liberal societies, including America, "cannot afford" (a phrase they particularly employ in respect to the putative impossibility of a universal health system in the world's richest country). Rather it is a necessary condition and Parsonian functional imperative for a free society, including liberal democracy and civil sphere. In turn, conservative, including fascist, anti-pacifism or militarism, expressed in offensive ("preemptive") wars, a warfare state or a military-industrial complex, tends to eventuate into and reproduce, as Pareto prophetically admonished and predicted, military-style dictatorship.

The above indicates that pacifism, though seemingly "too soft", "weak", "unpatriotic" or non-rational in short terms – e.g. the "pacification" of Hitler et al. in the 1930s or the Soviet "evil empire" since the 1950s – is the best safeguard of freedom and democracy, not to mention human physical well-being and life, so socially rational and patriotic, in the long-run. This was shown by the avoidance of a really MAD, mutually assured destruction (Habermas

2001) outcome during the Cold War primarily thanks to pacifist *cum* prudent and reasonable liberal foreign policies. By contrast to liberal pacifism, anti-liberal, notably conservative-fascist, militarism or its warfare state is the exact opposite: “resolute”, “brave”, “super-patriotic” and rational or effective immediately, yet “not-so-resolute, brave and patriotic”, irrational and even self-destructive ultimately, viz. the Nazi-provoked WW II, the Vietnam War, the war on the “axis of evil”, etc. For example, Mises (1957: 137) remarks that “in invading Poland Hitler and the Nazis made a mistake; the invasion harmed what they considered to be their interests”, as did, with some qualifications, America by invading Vietnam in the 1960s and (probably) Iraq in the 2000s during the liberal-conservative cold and post-war hyper-patriotic consensus on nationalist and bellicose foreign policy (Singh 2002) and endemically reasserted imperialism (Steinmetz 2005).

Thus, liberal pacifism or the “welfare state” is eventually protective and rational in respect to a free society and even the survival of humanity, and anti-liberal militarism or the “warfare state” ultimately destructive and so extremely irrational in this sense to the point of self-destruction or universal nihilism a la MAD. Consequently, nothing is “wrong” with liberal pacifism so long as it more rationally or effectively and enduringly sustains free and any human society than anti-liberal militarism or the warfare state as destructive irrationalism in this respect. In this sense, pacifism and its “welfare state” reflects, epitomizes and reaffirms liberal societal rationalism in Mannheim’s sense of rationalistic liberalism as well as humanism, while anti-pacifism and militarism with its the warfare state expresses, exemplifies and confirms anti-liberal, especially conservative and fascist, irrationalism and anti-humanism.

In historical terms, pacifism via a pacifist “welfare state” is the particular expression or outcome of the observed process of what Weber calls “general” or “universal pacification” and rationalization overall in Western society. Thus, Weber observes that the “spread of pacification” reflected or coincided with the “rationalization” of the rules for the use of physical force culminating in the notion of rational political authority and legitimate legal order, so the modern concept of a sort of *non*-warfare state in both intra- and inter-societal terms. To that extent, liberal pacifism does justice to this process and thus expresses rationalism and progressivism, and illiberal, notably conservative and fascist, militarism reverts or subverts it and so reveals irrationalism and atavism.

On this account, liberal pacifism, is not only more effective or rational for the development and every survival of a free human society. It is also, contrary to its detractors' accusations and to what is almost commonly supposed, especially in America, more realistic and socially grounded in the process of pacification and rationalization than illiberal anti-pacifism that appears as both ultimately irrational or self-destructive and anti-historical, alien or even delusionary within the context of Western "pacified" modernity. To paraphrase such founders of America, notably American liberalism, as Jefferson and Madison, liberal pacifism and a peaceful welfare state can and will, and illiberal anti-pacifism or a belligerent warfare state cannot and will not, "stand" during the *long durée* of free human society within Western civilization so long as it continues Weberian pacification and rationalization. In particular, paraphrasing Madison's warning and prediction, illiberal "Tyranny and Oppression" prophetically envisioned or feared to inflict America "in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy" plus domestic "enemies" subjected to culture wars and Draconian "tough on crime" penal policies, will not "stand" versus "pacifist" democracy and freedom in the *long durée*. This was indicated by the eventual collapse of such belligerent crusades as New England's Puritan theocracy (Munch 2001) with its attempted extermination of native Americans and witch-hunts, in the 1830s, Cold-War McCarthyism in the 1950s, the Vietnam War as well as the admitted failures or "imperfections" in the neo-conservative war on "terror" and the "axis of evil" during the 2000s.

Hence, the above likely augurs the eventual triumph of liberal pacifism even in America and the ultimate failure of certain modern reenactments or survivals of illiberal anti-pacifism. This in particular holds good of the Southern theocratic or religiously militant and nationalistic (Friedland 2002) "Bible Belt" as the epicenter and vanguard of new conservative anti-liberal domestic culture and often violent wars and the neo-conservative global war on "evil" seeking to establish an "empire for good" or another "American century" fulfilling a "manifest destiny" *cum* a Divine right to rule, "lead" or "save" the world by ultimately destroying it (e.g. US "nuke-them" conservatives like McCarthy, Goldwater, Reagan and other neo-conservative "rigid extremists").

The preceding is a variation on Spencer's diagnosis or prediction of a modern peaceful and democratic society superseding ancient militant and despotic societies, which suggests that anti-liberal, notably fascist and conservative, reversals of this process of pacification are atavistic and anti-democratic,

through destroying the welfare state and creating a warfare state engaged in a sort of permanent war on domestic and foreign “evil enemies”. In particular, at the start of the 21st century, this recasts contemporary liberal pacifism or peaceful welfare states as progressive, civilizing, democratic and humane, and, especially American, neo-conservatism or its belligerent warfare state as atavistic, primitive or barbaric, anti-democratic and inhumane. Yet all this is apparently sanctified by narcissistic and triumphant neo-conservative Americanism (Bell 2002; Turner 2002) and its self-designated “manifest destiny” to save the world from “sin” and “evil” by destroying it through eliminating “un-American” values and groups. The preceding holds true in terms of Spencer’s and Weber’s diagnoses and predictions of liberal pacification and eventual pacifism or elimination of militarism and war within Western modernity, as has happened in the European Union, and perhaps beyond.

The above has been necessary to reiterate and emphasize because “pacifism” has acquired a pejorative or dubious meaning not only in fascism and conservatism (as well as communism), but also even in parts of contemporary, especially American Cold-War, liberalism. The latter to that extent somewhat deviates from its classical version exemplified in Spencer’s idea of a free (un-free) *cum* pacifist or peaceful (militant-military) society and Weber’s diagnosis of “universal pacification” in modern Western civilization and beyond, as well as Madison’s own warning about the link of tyranny and a warfare state. At least from Spencer’s, Weber’s and Madison’s perspectives, just as liberal society is either peaceful in intra- and inter-societal terms or is not likely to remain free and even to survive, so is liberalism either pacifist in this sense or not “liberalism” proper but mutates into, approaches or allies with pseudo- or anti-liberalism, such as pre WWI European nationalism and imperialism, Cold-War Americanism, US belligerent neo-conservatism or “warfare state”, etc. Simply, liberalism without pacifism is a non sequitur, just as liberal, free, yet militant or warlike, society in Spencer-Madison’s sense is, as both classical liberals suggest, a contradiction in terms and empirical impossibility or aberration.⁴² So is consequently liberalism without cosmopolitanism, or with

⁴² Seemingly the British Empire is an exception to the rule, yet its very militarism conflicted with and undermined liberty and democracy and ultimately led to its collapse, from America to India and other colonies for which it was far from being free and democratic.

nationalism, ethnocentrism and exaggerated patriotism, insofar as the first is intrinsically pacifist as well as universalistic and egalitarian, and the second militant or ultimately imperialist, just as particularistic and exclusive.

In particular, if American liberalism becomes a liberal non sequitur and an illiberal non-pacifist neo-conservative mutant or ally in disguise if it is, as during the Cold War era and in part the war on “terror and “evil”, devoid of consistent cosmopolitanism and universalism. This holds true thus if the latter is substituted with ethnocentric particularism or nationalist exclusion, in turn eventuating into militarism and imperialism, yet rationalized as patriotism and sanctified by ascriptive Americanism (King 1999; Turner 2002) as America’s civil religion (Munch 2001).

In general, only at its own peril liberalism succumbed to, allied or flirted with illiberal nationalism, “patriotism”, anti-cosmopolitanism and militarism or anti pacifism. This is what happened in Europe prior to and during WW I, as well as America under McCarthyism, the Cold War, illegal or misguided “humanitarian interventions” (e.g. the bombardment of Yugoslavia in the 1990) and the neo-conservative “war on terror”. All these cases signaled the effective death, terminal condition or anti-liberal degeneration of liberalism (for domestic related degenerations cf. King 1999) in the pacifist sense of Spencer, Madison and Weber. For illustration, on the account of the formally illegal (unauthorized by the UN) and substantively misguided bombardment and military destruction of Yugoslavia in 1999 on behalf on what US secretary of state admitted to be an ethnic “terrorist army”, those “liberals” in the administration, including the “liberal” President, and Congress participating in and authorizing this act objectively qualify as war criminals (Bauman 2001), along with their European, especially the British “hawkish” (e.g. prime minister), allies, just as do many neo-conservatives during the “war on terror” and the “axis of evil” (e.g. Iraq’s second war). Thus, some observers suggest that the “International Tribunal which designated Milosevic a war criminal loses its credibility if, following the same criteria, it refrains from the inculcation of Clinton and Blair [etc] and all those who violated simultaneously all forms of decency and the laws of war” (Edward Said cited in Bauman 2001: 208–9).

Overall, the Freudian-like narcissistic complex of exaggerated patriotism and superior Americanism evolving into militarism, imperialism (Steinmetz 2005) and war rationalized on these grounds perhaps more than anything else constitute and threatens to become what critics (Brink 2000) calls the tragedy

of contemporary American and other, including British, liberalism. It is a tragedy or paradox because liberalism is intrinsically, despite these historical and current aberrations, pacifism at least in Spencer-Madison's sense, while anti-pacifism or militarism is equally inherent, so not really paradoxical or "tragic" to anti-liberalism, notably conservatism and fascism.

In sum, if modern liberalism, especially its American version, is to remain "liberalism" in this sense, it needs to overcome or neutralize the twin anti-liberal "fatal attraction". This is, first, nationalist ethnocentrism, self-rationalized as patriotism a la superior triumphant Americanism, second anti-pacifist militarism, in favor of the classical liberal, specifically Kantian, fusion of universalistic cosmopolitanism (Habermas 2001) and pacifism in Spencer-Madison's meaning. If anything, it is pacifism as well as cosmopolitanism that distinguishes liberalism from anti-liberalism, notably conservatism and fascism, as typically anti-pacifist and militant, just as anti-cosmopolitan and nationalistic.

Chapter Three

Social Factors and Effects of Liberalism

The Sociological Constitution of Liberalism

Liberalism as an ideological and social system is a historically recent and comparatively specific and contingent, so limited, phenomenon, a product and defining element of Western Modernity. Modern Western society constitutes what Mannheim (1986: 31–2) calls the “socio-historical precondition” or “sociological constellation” of liberalism¹ understood by him primarily as an ideology, and subsequently of conservatism as the anti-liberal reaction and antagonism, within his sociology of knowledge. Alternatively, within Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge, liberal ideology is the product of definite social factors in modern Western societies at a certain historical point. Specifically, these factors of liberalism encompass the conjunction of an “explicitly dynamic (processive)” (Mannheim 1986: 85) society, through the process of social differentiation and stratification, with ideas corresponding to these processes, and the political factor as a “nucleus” of the newly emerging strata. The latter include, first and foremost, the bourgeoisie (self) defined as the primary liberal stratum or class, historically “at the time of the Enlightenment” (Beck 2000: 19).

¹ This comparative-historical novelty and specificity or boundedness of liberalism indicate that, as Alexander (1998: 32) states, the “options for ideological discourse are more historically bounded [viz. conservative, liberal, radical]”.

Similarly, even economists like Mises (1950) point to the “general sociological and economic foundations of the liberal doctrine”, thus adopting or echoing the major premise of Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge in respect to liberalism as an ideology. Contemporary sociologists also adopt Mannheim’s premise by treating liberalism as a “lived tradition whose historically contingent central notions developed within, and have proven to be of great value for, individualist and pluralist cultures” (Brink 2000: 16–7). In this view, liberal ideals are “historically generated, the product of a particular, specifically modern culture and of a shared liberal tradition. [Thus] conceptions of individual rights, liberty, and autonomy are by necessity socially constituted” (Beiner 1992: 18).

However, Mannheim’s approach while insightful and fruitful in treating liberalism as an ideology, a set of principles and doctrine, leaves much to be desired in respect of its treatment as an actual or potential social system, a complex of institutions and practices realizing or reflecting these liberal ideals. By centering on liberalism as an ideology (or utopia) and de-centering on it as a social system, a liberal society, this approach overlooks that “Liberalism” has been, is or can be both, by analogy to, for example, medievalism, traditionalism, feudalism, fundamentalism, despotism, capitalism, socialism, communism, fascism, conservatism, neo-conservatism, neo-fascism, and other Weberian ideal types. The analogy of liberalism, though not fully identical and reducible (Dahrendorf 1979), to modern capitalism (and socialism), as both an ideological doctrine and a social system of institutions and practices, is particularly instructive. In this sense, liberalism was not only “historically generated” and “socially constituted” as an ideology and ideal, but also, as a social system and institutional structure, “historically generative” and “socially constitutive” of various other effects and phenomena in Western and other societies, such as liberty, democracy, equality, inclusion, justice, universalism, diversity, rationalism, secularism, optimism, pacificism, humanism, etc. In short, like capitalism liberalism is to be understood as both socially conditioned “idealism” and socially conditioning “institutionalism” (of liberty). Consequently, an expanded version of Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge applied to liberalism reconsiders both its societal factors as liberal ideology and effects as liberal society.

The Class Structure of Liberalism

As noted, a special dimension of Mannheim's sociological constellation of liberalism as an ideology was the new social stratification, specifically class structure, emerging in modern dynamic "bourgeois" society during post-medieval times. Predictably, following on Marx, Mannheim and other contemporary sociologists identify the bourgeoisie or capitalists as the main stratum or class ("bearer") of liberalism, just as the aristocracy as that of early conservatism *cum* "self-reflective" medievalist traditionalism. Further, like Marx, Mannheim (1936: 34) describes liberalism in the sense of ideology and movement, epitomized by the Enlightenment, as "one of the weapons" of the rising bourgeoisie or the capitalist class. Contemporary sociologists echo Mannheim by identifying the "liberal bourgeoisie at the time of the Enlightenment" (Beck 2000: 19). Still, Mannheim (1986: 43) implicitly allows for the possibility that liberalism may have multiple class bases, types or preferences in observing that its antagonistic reaction in the form of conservatism "assumes different forms in accordance with the changing composition of the 'bearing strata'", like aristocracy, bourgeoisie, and labor. By implication, like conservatism, liberalism can potentially be of bourgeois as well as non-bourgeois, including aristocratic and labor, varieties, albeit it is typically more the first than the second, in contrast to its antagonist conservatism. This is what Michels suggests by noting that, for example, German liberalism "has always been [before and since the unification of the empire] a multicolored admixture of classes, united not so much by economic needs as by common ideal aims."

In turn, Saint-Simon anticipates Marx and especially Mannheim's and Michels' implied multiple liberal classes. He does so by implicitly associating what he calls industrial classes in the broadest sense, including, but not limited to, the bourgeoisie, with liberalism, specifically rationalism and social progress, in his observation that the class that "marches under the banner of the progress of the human mind [is] composed of scientists, artists and all those who hold liberal ideas." This observation is more comprehensive and perhaps predictive, even prophetic, than Marx-Mannheim's more limited link of the bourgeoisie with economic-political liberalism, insofar as most, though not all, scientists, artists and other professionals and intellectuals have commonly held "liberal ideas", or more so than others, including bourgeois or capitalist classes, ever since Saint-Simon's time. It is particularly predictive or prophetic, just as diagnostic, of the prevalence of liberal ideas and values at

virtually all Western and other secular, as different from religious, universities and related intellectual settings, as Simmel and other sociologists (Bendix 1970; Schofer and Meyer 2005) observe and emphasize.

Alternatively, it casts doubt on the notion of an illiberal, including conservative, fascist and communist, secular university and higher and other education as a sort of internal contradiction and historical-empirical impossibility or rarity. This holds true in spite or perhaps because of the political-cultural dominance of anti-liberalism in society at large, as that of religious neo-conservatism like Protestant sectarianism (Lipset 1996) in America during the 1980s–2000s and during most of its history. In any event, Saint-Simon would conclude that scientists, artists and other intellectual classes in or outside of universities, from, as Simmel suggests, at least the Renaissance to the early 21st century, have continued to “hold liberal ideas”. And, as Saint-Simon would add, they have held such ideas even when facing predominant and oppressive anti-liberalism in their society, as during the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages”, the Protestant Reformation, notably Calvinist-Puritan theocracies in Europe and old and New England, the French ancien regime, fascism in interwar Europe (minus Nazi “scientists” and “artists”), McCarthyism and neo-conservatism in postwar America (excluding creationist, “intelligent design” and other “Christian scientists”).

By implication, Saint-Simon includes the nascent bourgeoisie in these liberal groups, but does not, unlike Marx, treat it as the sole or even main, to paraphrase Mannheim, “bearing” class or stratum of liberalism. Moreover, Marx usually equates and attributes “liberal” to “bourgeois”, so “liberalism” to (ideology of) “capitalism”, thus implicitly dismissing the first (the “baby”?) with explicitly rejecting the second (the “water”). Curiously, this is an equation orthodox economists also perform, from Smith to Hayek et al., albeit from a different theoretical perspective and with opposite evaluation in the proto-functionalist style of the “best of all possible worlds” (Merton 1968: 93). For example, Marx uses expressions like “a liberal revolt of the bourgeoisie against the throne”, “bourgeois liberalism” and even “bourgeois enlightenment” in France, while commenting that “liberal concessions had been wrung from [the French monarchy] through centuries of struggle” by the feudal third estate. In general, he redefines Western liberalism in terms of “representative government, bourgeois competition, bourgeois freedom of the press, bourgeois legislation, bourgeois liberty and equality”, so as “all-bourgeois” or

“capitalist” liberal ideology and social system that is “so full of consideration” for capital and capitalists. In particular, Marx apparently ridicules “bourgeois liberalism” in relation to medievalism sarcastically opposing a la Veblen what he calls the “liberal soul” to the “darkest days of the middle ages”, while declaring Belgium “the paradise of Continental Liberalism”, with England as one of its Anglo-Saxon version, with occasional insults (e.g. “liberal cretins throughout Europe”).

Contemporary sociologists follow or echo Marx and Mannheim by contending that social liberalism, including welfare-state ideology, originated in consequence to the “unsettling class conflict” between bourgeois and other, primarily working, classes within Western societies as “core states” during early industrial capitalism (Wallerstein 1974). Others observe that early liberalism was “associated with the rise of bourgeois classes” as well as modern nation-states in Western Europe (Burns 1990), particularly pointing to the “liberal bourgeoisie” during the Enlightenment (Beck 2000). A recent sociological theory continues this association by linking the new bourgeoisie as an investing class with – or self-rationalized and defended as “comprising everyone in modern societies” by – “advocates of the neo-liberal ideology” described as the “ideology of classlessness through universal ownership of small bits of market capital [which] ignores differences in the social circuits of capital” (Collins 2000: 21).

In turn, some contemporary sociologists posit and find an increasingly weak association or even disjuncture between capitalist business classes and political liberalism, but more or less consistent corporate-conservative links and affinities, in America, especially since the 1980s. For example, a sociological study finds that during the 1980s US corporate political strategies and activities involved an “ideological effort to promote conservatism [and] the expectations of corporate liberal theory are not confirmed. The position that business believed best promotes its class interests was conservatism [as] most corporations were conservative” (Clawson and Neudstadt 1989). Another study finds no evidence of “corporate liberalism” in America during the 1980s, described as “a period of unparalleled business hegemony in the political sphere” and suggests that such liberalism “may be restricted to periods of economic prosperity and stability”, as the early post WW II era, while the economic shocks of the 1970s “resulted in a more conservative orientation of business elites” (Burriss 1987).

However, other studies caution that “corporate liberalism” is not entirely absent by suggesting that US business elites during the 1980s exhibited ideological differences within a spectrum ranging from “extreme right-wing conservatism” to “redistributive liberalism”, with the center of gravity being a “moderate-reformist” centrism, as well as that their class origins were “less important” than the cultural (Barton 1985). A similar argument objects that both “conventional liberal” and Marxist theories underestimate the “persistence of heterogeneous political structures and processes in capitalist societies”, notably liberalism and conservatism among corporate elites, including America (Apostle, Clairmont, Osberg 1986). Still, some sociologists suggest that “corporate liberalism” has hardly ever been a completely valid proposition with respect to the majority of US business elites or capitalists, from the liberal New Deal of the 1930s and before to the neo-conservative 1980s–90s and beyond. A sociological study finds that the New Deal reforms “were initiated by state managers over the opposition of most capitalists [though] a small but significant group of capitalists were still a part of the New Deal coalition as late as 1936” (Allen 1991).

In retrospect, this opposition probably continued what Veblen and others identify as the anti-liberal or conservative ideas and practices of most early US capitalists, exemplified by the late 19th century legendary robber-barons as perhaps the “role models” and exemplars of anti-liberalism or conservatism in economic as well as political and religious terms. As regards the latter, this is what Weber suggests by observing that the “majority of the older generation” of US capitalists – i.e. “promoters,” “captains of industry,” of the multi-millionaires and trust magnates” – “belonged formally to sects, especially to the Baptists”.

In comparative-historical terms, the above was and remains in America by the 21st century a striking exception or deviation from Mannheim’s European “liberal bourgeoisie” during the Enlightenment (Beck 2000), especially in the Southern “Bible Belt” persistently under-democratized (Amenta et al. 2001) and ever-increasingly dominated by an alliance of the new “robber barons” a la Wal-Mart with fundamentalist Baptism. It thus displays American capitalist anti-liberal exceptionalism as a “double-edged sword” (Lipset 1996). For illustration, under neo-conservatism such an “all-American” exceptional blend of an “unfettered” capitalist economy and its various “robber barons” with political and religious anti-liberalism and its oligarchs and theocrats was

exemplified by that of Enronism as the epitome or symbol of legalized mafia-style capitalism and oligarchy with religious fundamentalism and quasi-theocracy in the US South and beyond (Cochran 2001; Pryor 2002).

In general, this blend of “unfettered” capitalism with its “robber barons” and non-economic anti-liberalism with its oligarchs and theocrats is one of those striking but not rare cases and prospective scenarios, alongside interwar fascism, as Mussolini suggests. As regards the latter, for example, Benito Mussolini redefined capitalism as both a “system of oppression” and of the “choice of the fittest, equal opportunities for the most gifted, a more developed sense of individual responsibility.” This can be considered a prototypical fascist, and in extension conservative, anti-liberal and so anti-democratic definition or rendition of modern capitalism, which evidently, to paraphrase Dahrendorf (1979), dissolves after the fact, or even a priori denies the very idea of, the marriage of the latter with liberalism and thus liberal democracy and civil society. Mussolini’s fascist-conservative dissolution and eventually destruction of capitalism and liberalism alike is instructive and provides a useful historical lesson, as do Weber-Veblen’s US anti-liberal “Baptist” robber-barons and their modern mutants like Enron- and Wal-Mart-style illiberal, including fundamentalist, capitalists. In particular, it contradicts libertarianism and its implied equation between capitalism and liberalism or liberal democracy and civil society, i.e. its claim that the capitalist economy as a “spontaneous” market order is almost invariably (Buchanan 1991; Mises 1966, Hayek 1960) “libertarian” and “democratic”, albeit with rare qualifications admitting historical instances of anti-liberal, authoritarian capitalisms, including Mussolini’s own and Nazi versions (Friedman and Friedman 1982).

In retrospect, the above blend of a “free enterprise” capitalist economy and political anti-liberalism, including religious fundamentalism and fascism, confirms that what Dahrendorf (1979: 101) describes as the “marriage of liberalism and capitalism” is not, as usually supposed, a sociological constant and necessarily “out of love” but often a historical contingency and of Machiavellian convenience, primarily for the second partner. Consequently, when Dahrendorf (1979: 101) proposes that this liberal-capitalist marriage “has to be dissolved” he probably does on the implied grounds that liberalism is subject to abuse and/or Machiavellian manipulation by capitalism and its anti-liberal elites. These anti-liberal, yet capitalist dramatis personae span from Veblen-Weber’s US “Baptist” robber-barons via European fascist-capitalists

like Nazi big business a la Krupp and Daimler-Benz and its Mussolini's versions to American post-war "captains of industry" with their "what is good for General Motors is good for America" slogan and Enron-style mafia capitalism (Pryor 2002; also Desai 2005) allied with religious fundamentalism and its theocratic design for a "Bible Belt" (as epitomized and symbolized by anti-liberal, "godly" and moralistic Wal-Mart).

In view of the above, capitalist, corporate "anti-liberalism" perhaps would be a more accurate proposition and description for most US and other business classes. This holds true at least of Veblen-Weber's pious aristocratic capitalists, the New Deal opponents (Amenta and Halfmann 2000), "what is good for GM is good for America" executives in the 1950s and the "new" capitalist class often establishing or verging on mafia ("cowboy) and anti-liberal, including religiously-politically conservative, capitalism in the style or image of Enron and/or Wal-Mart during the 1980–2000s. At the minimum, the historical and sociological poles of the US capitalist class, such as the sectarian robber barons of the 19th and 20th centuries and the fundamentalist "cowboy capitalists" (Enron, Wal-Mart et al.) of the 1980–2000s, give a pause to the thesis of business liberalism originating in Marx and Mannheim, as well as partly early liberal sociologists like Saint-Simon with his view of the bourgeoisie as part of "industrial classes".

Alternatively, these theories, while probably correct in diagnosing the past and then current tendencies, failed to envision or predict that Marx's capitalists or Saint-Simon's "industrial classes" can be not only "liberal". The latter can also, and often more, be "conservative", even, as Mannheim (1936) and Dahrendorf (1979) suggest, moving away from original liberalism, observed in early European capitalist societies arising out of and overriding feudalism, to subsequent conservatism prevalent in American capitalism since at least Veblen-Weber's non-liberal, conservative-sectarian "robber barons". In Mannheim's words, if liberalism was "one of the weapons of the rising bourgeoisie" in early capitalist Europe, then anti-liberal conservatism has become such a weapon for the capitalist class at later times, most manifestly and intensively in America from the late 19th century to the early 21st century, thus establishing and sustaining American capitalism's anti-liberal, including anti-secular, exceptionalism.

In this sense, the once-rising Enlightenment-era "liberal bourgeoisie" (Beck 2000), evolving into the dominant capitalist class, has become and remained,

especially in America and to a lesser extent Europe, including Great Britain, what he calls a strong “bearer” of anti-liberal conservatism just as was the medieval aristocracy that the bourgeois stratum opposed and eventually deposed precisely on the account of its reactionary arch-conservatism qua medievalist traditionalism. In turn, Michels provides a likely explanation of this liberal-to-conservative transmutation of the capitalist class by stating that political power is “inherently conservative”, which means that, especially, long unmitigated domination breeds and predicts conservatism. So does lord Acton by his famous statement and prediction about the absolutely corrupting effects of absolute power, expressing an original liberal principle.

If Marx-Mannheim’s association of liberalism with the capitalist class or bourgeoisie has been severed and even reversed in American capitalism, Saint-Simon’s link of “liberal ideas” with scientists, artists and other professionals as “industrial classes” has, as hinted, persisted and reinforced in Western societies and beyond, including America, since his time, thus becoming effectively prophetic. Sociological studies find strong positive relations of political, including civil-rights, as well as cultural liberalism and professional classes in modern America. Thus, a study registers the “liberal attitudes of knowledge workers” or a “consistent net association” of the key new-class category such as higher levels of education with political as well as implicitly cultural liberalism”² (Brint 1984).

Similarly, another study finds that “increasingly liberal attitudes” primarily among professional classes toward socio-political issues, including the welfare state, rather than changes in economic evaluations or socio-demographic composition, “explain the growing tendency of professionals to vote Democratic” (Brooks and Manza 1997: 191). In this view, alternatively professionals’ liberalism resulted in the “suppression of a Republican political realignment” in America during the 1970s–90s and trends in US politics comprise “liberal shifts involving the extension of rights to members of a particular group who

² Brint (1984) comments that, in addition to class antagonisms or contest for power and status with powerful and usually conservative business elites, the “liberal attitudes of knowledge workers may be the result of a conjunction of general trends in American society.” However, he adds that “only the younger specialists in social science and arts-related occupations fit the image of an oppositional intelligentsia [and] cumulative-trend explanations [best explain] upper-white-collar liberalism and dissent” (Brint 1984).

have historically been denied such rights”, rather than giving rise, as conservatives claim, to an “illiberal reversal” (Brooks 2000: 483–4). For example, observed “liberal trends in civil rights attitudes substantially reduced the margin of Republican victories in the 1980s, while enabling Democratic candidates to win the presidency in 1976, 1992 and 1996 [and so] suppressed a Republican political realignment” (Brooks 2000: 501). Such findings of a prevalent, albeit not universal, association of professionals with liberalism or non-conservatism in America and other Western, plus non-Western, societies vindicate Saint-Simon’s original diagnosis that scientists, artists and other parts of professional and “industrial classes” tend to “hold liberal ideas”.

The Historical Conjunction of Liberalism

Historically, liberalism as an ideology and social system was and remained essentially an attempt to transcend what Weber calls traditionalism, specifically medievalism and feudalism, as well as patrimonialism overall (Kiser 1999), with its economic serfdom, political despotism, religious coercion and theocracy, in the Western world. This formed what can by analogy be connoted as the historical constellation and conjunction for the rise of liberalism. Liberalism was an original antidote to the traditionalist, despotic, hierarchical, theocratic and irrational “Dark Middle Ages” in Europe. It instead aimed to establish and usher in modernity, liberty, egalitarianism, justice, universalism, inclusion, secularism, rationalism, pacifism and humanism, initially and primarily through the philosophy and intellectual movement of the Enlightenment in the 18th century.

What Durkheim would call the genesis of liberalism can be traced to the “battle against the inherited patterns of social hierarchy [or] privilege in the 17th and 18th centuries” (Kloppenber 1998: 25), as a long-standing heritage of economic and other traditionalism, notably feudalism, medieval despotism, irrationalism and theocracy, in Europe and elsewhere, with the actual or supposed exception of America as the “new nation” (cf. Lipset and Marks 2000). In particular, liberalism originally and subsequently have gradually or radically, as via the French and American Revolutions, replaced the “divine right of kings, claims to aristocratic privilege, and slavery” (Dombrowski 2001: 157), initially in Western and subsequently, albeit less completely, other societies.

Hence, liberalism marked a substantive discontinuity with most Western, specifically Christian, history after the demise of the Roman empire, as typified by “divine rights of kings”, “claims to aristocratic privilege”, some forms of slavery or serfdom, and other primarily feudal, despotic, irrational and theocratic features. Alternatively, it continued or revived, like its artistic predecessor the Italian Renaissance, the democratic and humanist and to that extent proto-liberal heritage of classical pre-Christian, especially Greek, civilization. In retrospect, this observation is contrary to the conventional sociological wisdom linking liberal individualism to Protestantism and, in Parsons’ (1937: 53) words, its “immediacy of the individual soul to God” (also Mayway 1984).

For instance, according to Parsons (1937: 53), “probably the primary source of this individualistic cast of European thought lies in Christianity [viz.] the immediacy of the individual soul to God, inherent in [Protestantism].” However, he admits that an effect of the “Protestant immediacy of the individual to God was the corresponding devaluation of his attachment to his fellows, above all the tendency to reduce them to impersonal, unsentimental terms and to consider others not so much from the point of their value in themselves as of their usefulness, ultimately to the purposes of God, more immediately to his own ends” (Parsons 1937: 54–5). This is effectively an admission of Protestant anti-humanism (“devaluation of his attachment to his fellows”), both transcendental (“the purposes of God”) and secular, almost Machiavellian and utilitarian generally (“his own ends”).

As it stands, the admission self-contradicts the link of Protestantism with liberalism via individualism and even converts it into an opposition. For if Protestantism admittedly has elements of transcendental anti-humanism – as also Weber and other sociologists (Bendix 1977; Tawney 1962) emphasize for Calvinism and its Anglo-Saxon derivation Puritanism – and of Machiavellianism, it is effectively anti-liberalism. Needless to say, liberalism is humanism and rejects Machiavellianism as well as utilitarianism overall, through its humanistic universalism. For example, Kantian ethical universalism is humanistic by proposing that humans should always be treated as “ends in themselves” rather than as means, which is exactly opposite to Protestantism’s admitted reduction of them into useful instruments “ultimately to the purposes of God” and “more immediately to [one] own ends”. This is what Kant’s categorical imperative that an individual’s own behavior should become a “general rule”

of conduct for others stipulates, thus contradicting Protestant transcendental and secular anti-humanism alike, especially Machiavellianism or utilitarianism (Mayway 1984). Simply, Parsons and even Protestants would admit that reducing humans to useful means to one's "own ends" à la Machiavelli or Bentham and Franklin cannot serve as a "general rule" of conduct even in the sense of the Biblical Golden Rule, let alone Kant's liberal categorical imperative (Habermas 2001), though they would claim such a status for the Protestant reduction of other individuals to instruments to the "purposes of God". At most, even if, charitably interpreted, the second reduction, unlike the first, meets the liberal categorical imperative, it does so in a transcendental, theological and to that extent supra- and eventually anti-human, theocratic form.

In sum, the first Protestant reduction expresses Machiavellianism and utilitarianism in general, and the second anti-humanism couched in and sanctified by supra-human purposes. In this respect, liberalism and its secular individualism rejected and superseded rather than, as Parsons et al. seem to suppose, adopted and developed supposedly liberal and individualistic Protestantism. Curiously, Parsons (1937: 57) himself elsewhere implicitly contradicts or relaxes this supposition by commenting that "their negative valuation of ritual is one of the few points on which the [Protestant] Puritans and the men of the humanistic Renaissance could agree", if the latter is considered a stage or precursor of liberalism, as discussed later.

Further, in some views, liberalism as a liberal ideology and society "is a radical break from the tribal past; it is the real, great revolution of humanity" (Infantino 2003: 149). In this respect, liberalism originated and functioned as both discontinuous and continuous with Western civilization since ancient Greece and Rome, its aberration and its evolutionary process alike. The first holds true of liberalism in relation to the Christian, medieval despotic-theocratic phase of Western civilization, and the second relative to its pre-Christian, classical democratic stage in the sense of ancient Greek democracy and Roman republic. If this is correct, then both anti-liberals like medievalists, conservatives and fascists are right in condemning and attacking liberalism as "non-Western", including "un-American", notably "non-Christian", and liberals correct in treating it as what Weber calls an exceptional and original Western phenomenon, so as "American" as the "apple-pie" (Kloppenbergh 1998).

Further, Weber suggests that only the Western world has known liberalism in the sense of a complex of and process of economic and social rationalism, including (but not limited to) modern capitalism, as well as political democracy, human liberties and rights, a neutral, limited and efficient state and public bureaucracy, a rational legal system, a free civil society and culture, individualism, egalitarianism, ethical universalism, secularism, developed science and technology, etc. Thus contemporary sociologists observe that liberalism, modern capitalism in particular, does *not* mark an evolutionary development" from traditional, including medieval "Christian" societies, but, as the "first genuinely global type of [society] in history, it has its origins in a [basic] discontinuity in the development of the West [viz. the intertwining of political and industrial revolutions from the 18th century onwards]" (Giddens 1984: 183). In a Weberian vein, it is observed that liberal-capitalist modernity was "born out of discontinuity" rather than continuity with traditionalism and placed a "caesurae upon the traditional world, which it seems to irretrievable to corrode and destroy" (Giddens 1984: 239). Special emphasis is placed on the "specificity of the world ushered in by the advent of industrial capitalism, originally located and founded in the West" (Giddens 1984: 239). In turn, such observations, like most economists, somewhat overlook or downplay the fact that the advent of capitalism was just a particular "episode" or special case of the rise of Western liberalism as both an ideological and social system, including what Weber identifies as the overarching process of societal, including economic as well as non-economic, rationalization in Europe.

At any rate, the sociological-historical constellation of the genesis of liberalism as an ideological-social system involved the interface and struggle between Mannheim's "explicitly dynamic" modern society and traditionalism, notably medievalism, despotism, irrationalism and theocracy, in Europe. In particular, liberalism was simply born out of the struggle between the secular and rationalist Enlightenment and the theocratic and anti-rational "Dark Middle Ages". As known, the Enlightenment and so liberalism ultimately prevailed in this struggle in most of Western Europe, though medievalism, in its various conservative sequels and ramifications, has virtually never "graciously" conceded the defeat since (so being what Americans would call a "bad loser"). Rather, medievalism, notably medievalist religion and theocracy, persisted in its "mindless battle" (Habermas 2001) and "holy war" against liberal and

other “infidels” (Gorski 2000), continuing via and prefiguring US anti-liberal culture wars, as the counter-Enlightenment (Nisbet 1966), as indicated by a myriad of syndromes. These syndromes include the persistence of the Vatican anti-liberal theocracy, notable the “papal struggle with liberalism” (Burns 1990), and the resurgence of medievalism from the “dead” (Dunn and Woodard 1996) in the form of proto- and neo-conservatism, and fascism and neo-fascism in Europe and America alike. In this sense, the origin and conception of Western liberal modernity and democracy are “rooted in the European Enlightenment (Beck 2000: 22), just as pre-liberal and pre-democratic, in the sense of Mannheim (1967), traditionalism in “Christian” medievalism or the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages”. After all, the very concept and term of Enlightenment was devised in explicit opposition to – and was negatively inspired by – the “Dark Middle Ages”, i.e. the perceived “darkness” of pre-liberal Catholic and other “Christian”, including Protestant late, medievalism.

At this juncture, it is to be noted that European medievalism, i.e. the “Dark Middle Ages”, in sociological, distinguished from chronological, terms, from the prism and dialectics of the Enlightenment and liberalism comprised not only Catholic theocratic-despotic medievalism, including feudalism in the narrow sense, as usually thought. It also, eventually jointly in their shared anti-liberal antagonism, encompassed its Protestant functional substitute or proxy in the form of what Weber considers Calvinist-Puritan theocracies (“state churches”) in Europe and America, notably “old and New England”, in the wake of the Reformation (Munch 2001) and especially the Calvinist “disciplinary revolution” (Gorski 1993). In a sense, for the 18th century Enlightenment and its liberalism and secularism, what Weber and other sociologists identify as the “unexampled tyranny” of Puritan Protestantism (Bendix 1977) in the 17th century and later was (*pace* Parsons 1937) as “dark” and “totalistic” (Eisenstadt 1965) as, if not more “totalitarian” (Stivers 1994) than, the official Catholic theocracy in the Vatican Church during medieval times.

In this respect, the Enlightenment was, as the very concept and term suggests, a sort of liberal intellectual revolution (enlightening) both against the Catholic, Vatican-dominated, and Protestant, especially Calvinist-Puritan, “Dark Middle Ages” understood sociologically, as was, for that matter, its political sequel or realization, the 1789 French Revolution as well as partly the American anti-colonial version in a Jeffersonian secular rendition or interpretation. At most, for the Enlightenment the difference between the early Catholic

“Dark Middle Ages” and the later presumably less “dark” or “lighter” Protestant Reformation was a matter of degrees of theocratic “darkness”, purity and un-freedom rather than substance, viz. between, to use a classification in Sorokin (1970), the “pure” Vatican theocracy and “diluted” Puritan theocracies exemplified by Weber’s “theocracy of New [and old] England”. The difference between the two was and remains one of relative degrees of un-freedom for classical and modern liberalism (Dombrowski 2000).

This is what Mises (1950) implies by stating that in classical liberalism since the Enlightenment the “darkness which lay over the paths of history recedes”. These “paths of history” apparently encompass not only, as claimed by Protestantism and assumed by sociologists like Parsonians, the Catholic and Byzantine “Dark Middle Ages”, but also their putative closure, the Protestant Reformation, including the Calvinist-Puritan “disciplinary” revolutions. For if the Reformation, at least the Calvinist-Puritan “disciplinary” revolution, was, as its adherents claimed, as “bright”, or “brighter” than the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages”, then the Enlightenment and liberalism as a whole would have found no, to paraphrase Parsons (1937) spots of “darkness” to illuminate and enlighten, so no rationale for its own genesis, existence and function of human enlightening. Yet what the Enlightenment instead found was Protestantism, specifically Calvinism and Puritanism, as at most what Parsons (1937: 17) would call an “illuminated spot enveloped by darkness”, along with medieval Catholicism presumably lacking any spots of light.

For example, for the Enlightenment and liberalism this was merely the relative difference in degrees of “darkness” and un-freedom between the “divine right of kings, claims to aristocratic privilege, and slavery” (Dombrowski 2001: 157) observed both during the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages” in the strict sense and the supposedly “brighter”, more liberal Protestant Reformation, in particular Calvinist-Puritan “disciplinary” revolutions. Contemporary sociologists observe that “initially, the Reformation was not a “modernizing” [liberal movement; it aimed to establish a “purer” medieval socio-political and religious order” (Eisenstadt 1965: 671) than did Catholicism itself condemned and attacked by Protestantism, notably Calvinism, for being, as Weber notes, “too lax” and “indulgent” in its church control and punishment of individuals (“sinners”). In this view, just as that of medievalist Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity, “the original political impulse of either Lutheranism or Calvinism was not in a “liberal” or democratic direction but rather in a more

“totalistic” one [by] restricting autonomous activities in both the economic and the political field” (Eisenstadt 1965: 671).

If so, then from the prism of the Enlightenment and liberalism overall, Protestantism was and basically remained as anti-liberal or totalitarian as, if not even, as also Weber, Simmel, and Pareto and other sociologists (Bendix 1977; Stivers 1994) imply, more than, traditional Catholicism, with qualifications for subsequently less illiberal and more moderate Lutheranism and Anglicanism compared to Calvinism and Puritanism as models of anti-liberalism. On this account, both official Catholicism (like Orthodox Christianity) and “totalistic” Protestantism, especially Calvinism and its Anglo-Saxon derivative Puritanism, were, like their offspring political conservatism, to use Mannheim’s term for the latter, immediate and subsequently remained perennial antagonists to the Enlightenment and liberalism in general.

At most, if not official Catholicism, then Protestantism, including Calvinist Puritanism, had “fortuitous” (Zaret 1989) links and contribution to liberalism, i.e. liberal democracy and civil society in Western societies, including Great Britain and early America. An instance of these “fortuitous” liberal-democratic contributions and links was that the Reformation fragmented the “religious unity of the Middle Ages [and] this religious pluralism eventually fostered pluralism of other kinds” (Dombrowski 2001: 4).

From the angle of the Enlightenment, despite this pluralism, Protestantism, especially Calvinism in Europe and Puritanism in England and America, did not transcend in real, as different from nominal, terms the Catholic theocratic “Dark Middle Ages”. Rather, as the preceding observations indicate, it purported and often succeeded, as in Weber’s theocratic “old and New England”, preserve or restore them from what Mannheim (1936) calls the “dead past” through reestablishing a “purer” medieval system, including its own brand of “purest”, Calvinist-Puritan theocracies. Protestantism thereby retained and perpetuated medievalism (Nisbet 1966) as its original and perennial anti-liberal, conservative ideal of the “good society”, as in the case of supposedly anti-medieval, yet actually medievalist Anglo-American Puritanism since Cromwell and Winthrop (cf. Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000; Munch 2001). If Protestantism did really illuminate and transcend the “Dark Middle Ages” during the 16–17th centuries, then the Enlightenment as their purported illumination and transcendence and so liberalism would have perhaps hardly ever arisen in the 18th century. In functionalist terms, Protestantism would

have been the functional equivalent of, thus making redundant, the Enlightenment, fulfilling the same societal needs and imperatives of liberty, pluralism and liberal-secular democracy. Alternatively, if Protestantism did so, the Enlightenment would have probably *not*, as Mises (1950) observes, “attacked” the Protestant churches of the 18th century, just as the Reformation had “criticized” the Catholic Church of the 16th century.

Abstracting from such seemingly but perhaps, as Pareto implies (cf. also Inglehart 2004), plausible counter-factual hypotheses, the Enlightenment and liberalism generally did arise not in spite but rather because of and in opposition to the Protestant Reformation, especially Calvinist-Puritan disciplinary-theocratic revolutions. It did so by precisely rejecting Protestant “totalistic” and other illiberal tendencies, just as those of the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages”, as exemplified by John Locke’s reported rejection of the Puritan theocratic ideal and practice of “godly politics” (Zaret 1989) in England. Negatively, the Enlightenment and thus liberalism was not the result and sequel of Protestantism, as assumed in Protestant societies and by sociologists like Parsons et al. Positively, it was an intellectual and social “protest” on its own right, as epitomized by the French Revolution, and alternatively against theocratic Protestantism, notably Calvinism and Puritanism, just as official Catholicism. For from a liberal angle, both represented, mirrored or symbolized the “Dark Middle Ages”, medieval despotism, irrationalism and anti-humanism.

At most, the above suggests that religious-political pluralism, and so liberalism, was the “fortuitous”, un-intended effect, a sort of necessity made virtue, of the Protestant Reformation in its rebellion against the Catholic-dominated “Dark Middle Ages”, but not a regular, intended outcome and a recognized value in itself. For instance, recall, liberalism since the Enlightenment has “made religious liberty possible rather than anything intended by the Catholic Church or Luther or Calvin”, who, including their respective Anglo-American descendants, Anglicans and especially Puritans, “were as dogmatic and intolerant as the Catholic Church”³ (Dombrowski 2001: 4).

³ Dombrowski (2001: 4) suggests that, in addition to the Protestant Reformation with the above qualifications, two main social changes in Western society ushering in liberalism in an “explicit way” include, first, the development of the central modern state negotiating its “way between the aristocracy and the rising middle class”, and second, the rise of modern science and technology requiring “freedom of inquiry”. As known, in particular Weber identifies and emphasizes these three social changes

That was precisely how the liberal Enlightenment regarded “reformed” Lutheranism and Calvinism, just as the “old” Catholicism. Consequently, it was the reason why liberalism and its religious pluralism and secularism arose in rejection of and discontinuity with rather than, as usually assumed, embracing and continuing the Protestant Reformation, notably its illiberal and theocratic branches, Calvinism in Europe and its derivative Puritanism in England and America. This is instructive to emphasize and clarify in light of the prevailing “naïve assumptions” (Coffey 1998: 962) of a kind of historical, even necessary fusion of Protestantism, especially Calvinism and Puritanism, with liberalism and liberty, i.e. the Protestant-Puritan “liberal mythology” (Gould 1996) of democracy and free civil society. The preceding indicates that this supposed “fusion” has been an historical accident, contingency and coincidence of Protestantism, including both its “liberal” forms, Lutheranism and Anglicanism and its illiberal ones, Calvinism and Puritanism, with liberalism within Protestant societies such as Western Europe, Great Britain and America.

In sum, the primary sociological and historical constellation of the genesis of liberalism as an ideology and social system was the interface and antagonism between modern Western “dynamic” society and static traditionalism, specifically medievalism, political despotism and theocracy both in their Catholic and Protestant versions. The specific form of this genesis is the birth of liberalism out of the Enlightenment and its struggle against and overcoming of the “Dark Middle Ages” in their pure, original Catholic and diluted, derived Protestant forms, epitomized by Vatican and Puritan theocracies/state churches, respectively. And, to paraphrase Durkheim, and as a sociological variation on Freud’s model of individual development, this genesis has in a sense over-determined and predicted the subsequent evolution and functioning of liberalism in a sort of path-dependence via a perennial “interaction” with its original antagonist, traditionalism or medievalism under a “new” form and disguise of “conservatism”, including neo-conservatism.

in his description and explanation of Western liberalism, rationalism and modernism, including, but not confined to, modern capitalism, attributed, for critics ethnocentrically, only or primarily to the “Occident” as contrasted to the “Orient.”

In Mannheim's (1986) words, the immediate antagonism toward liberalism at its "birth" by traditionalism in its illiberal medieval form, later evolving into conservatism via anti-liberal reaction, has since become and perhaps predicts for the future their perennial antagonisms. A case in point involves long-standing, seemingly eternal conservative "culture wars" against and forced on liberal "un-American" ideas, institutions, activities and groups in America virtually since its founding (e.g. the Federalist "Sedition" laws of the 1790s; cf. Lipset 1996) and even colonial times, as epitomized by New England's Puritan theocracy (Merton 1939; Munch 2001) and its "Salem with witches" (Putnam 2000), up to the 21st century punctuated by the neo-conservative "war on drugs" and harsh, virtually Draconian "tough on crime" social control. For instance, analysts observe that other Western societies "have managed more humane implementation of [drug] prohibition, indeed none have managed to create a regime as harsh as that in the United States" (Reuter 2005: 1076) during anti-liberal neo-conservatism.

Alternatively, to fully comprehend or make sense of these seemingly incomprehensible, senseless and admittedly futile (Bell 2002; Kloppenberg 1998) permanent conservative wars and other anti-liberal antagonisms in America at the start of the 21st century requires placing them in a historical and comparative framework. This is taking account of the original antagonism and "mindless" (Habermas 2001) crusade-style "holy war" (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000) of religious traditionalism and orthodoxy, including theocratic Calvinism and Puritanism, along with official Catholicism and the "papal struggle" (Burns 1990), against liberalism in its various antecedents like the Renaissance and forms such as the Enlightenment and secularism, during the 16th–18th centuries and later on. From an anti-liberal standpoint, contemporary culture and political-military wars by anti-liberal forces in America and beyond are sequels of those crusades, and their victories and repression a perpetual punishments for the liberal "original sin" of liberty, political democracy and secular civil society. Hence, these wars, primarily in America and to a diminishing extent in Europe, with exceptions like Catholic Poland, can be predicted to be eternal so long as what anti-liberalism, especially American religious conservatism construes as the "evil" of liberalism forever exists in accordance with the Puritan "Manichean warfare against Satan" (Walzer 1963); and the latter "never sleeps". For example, providing a prototype or

source for the anti-liberal, conservative hostility to dissent and pluralism in America, the US foremost Puritan master Winthrop attacked the “criticism of the magistrates [as] the “workings of Satan to ruin the colonies and Churches of Christ in New England” (Merrill 1945: 766).

In this sense, the evolution of liberalism in relation to anti-liberalism, especially religious conservatism as its persistent opponent, is path-dependent on and probably predicted by its genesis versus traditionalism, notably theocratic medievalism, as its self-declared immediate antagonist. In sum, liberalism while still a “child” was condemned, attacked and almost vanished as “evil” by medievalism, and so has been as an “adult” by conservatism and fascism since, and likely to be as a “more mature” entity by neo-conservatism and neo-fascism in the future. This necessitates devoting special attention to the genesis of liberalism in order to better understand its evolution and contemporary condition, as done next.

Liberal Society’s Genesis and Evolution – Social Origins and Development of Liberalism

With the above considerations in mind, the “birth” or social origins of liberalism can be divided into several stages of historical genesis and types of sociological constellation. These historical stages and sociological constellations are, for example, classical civilization and democracy, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the French as well as in part American Revolution in a chronological order. The first two stages and constellations constitute, or are often viewed as, the pre-history, gestation or anticipation of liberalism in the modern sense, and the last two as its true history and creation. For the present purpose, all these are considered to be the historical stages and sociological constellations of liberalism in a broad sense (Table 4).

Table 4
Historical Stages and Sociological Constellations of Liberalism

Classical civilization and democracy
The Renaissance
The Enlightenment
The French and American (in part) Revolution

The first historical stage and extant sociological constellation of the genesis, or at least anticipation, of liberalism as a set of substantive ideas and a type of society but not a formal term is probably classical Greek-Roman civilization or the Ancient Western World in Weber's sense who includes both Greece and Rome in the early West. Thus, analysts suggest that the classic civilization or Antiquity, just as its attempted revival through the Italian Renaissance, was the initial phase, form or antecedent of liberalism observing that the "Greeks, the Romans, and the Florentines proved that men could live in liberty and equality – that is, that they could rule and be ruled in turn" (Manent 1998: 222). To that extent, these were proto-liberal societies, though not so called, based on liberalism's essential principles of liberty, egalitarianism, justice, political democracy, as in ancient Greece, and the like. Notably, the basic liberal principle of individual freedom can, as suggested, be "traced back to Antiquity" (Hodgson 1999: 62).

Other authors in particular trace the genesis of liberal, i.e. free open, society to ancient Greece, notably Athens and its classical democracy. In this view, such a society made its "first appearance in Athens" (Infantino 2003: 149). If so, then Athens or ancient Greece represents the first historical stage and original sociological constellation of the genesis of liberalism as a free, egalitarian and democratic social system as well as implicitly a set of liberal ideas, though the term "liberalism" is not invented yet. Thus, sociologists notice that "ancient democracy in the classical Greek city-states was committed to a visible form of state power by means of a "publicness of copresence", just as modern liberal or constitutional Western democracy "entails a high degree of visibility by means of a "mediated publicness" through the media" (Ku 1998: 175).

And, since its genesis or gestation in ancient Greece, notably, Athens, liberal-democratic society "has always provoked the same [negative] reactions" (Infantino 2003: 149) by anti-liberal and anti-democratic forces seeking, to paraphrase Schumpeter (1950: 83), its un-creative destruction through a return to an ex ante state of pre-liberal darkness and tyranny. For instance, in contrast and opposition to proto-liberal ancient Greek democracy, the "monarchical states in Europe in medieval and early modern times conducted politics in secrecy while making conspicuous displays of their status and authority in the public space" (Ku 1998: 175).

At this juncture, the first, longest and perhaps most enduring, as demonstrated by the anti-liberal Vatican Church, adverse reaction to and destruction of liberal society in Western history was medievalism in the economic form of feudalism and the political-social shape of Christian, first Catholic and then Calvinist-Puritan, theocracy. It was simply and figuratively the “Dark Middle Ages” until the Renaissance, which introduces the second stage in the evolution of liberalism. In this sense, medieval ages are “dark” (Berman 2000) precisely because of their destruction of classical liberal society, democracy, publicity and related values, ushering in the end of proto-liberalism and the rebirth from what it, like democratic Athens, presumed to be the “dead past”, exemplified by despotic Sparta, of anti-liberalism and its subsequent dominance in the form of traditionalism, feudalism, despotism and theocracy. It is this sense, way and form that the “Dark Middle Ages” begot, just as epitomized, original reactionary conservatism by providing a model for the conservative idea and image of the “good society” (Nisbet 1966). This initial and persistent medieval ideal of goodness indicates that the “darker” in the meaning of the more illiberal is, the better is for post-medieval conservatism, including fascism, in Europe and America alike. But even this supposedly eternal darkness, ignorance and bliss, in accordance with medievalist theocratic millenarianism (Giddens 1984), eventually ended or was illuminated in Parsons’ sense via the attempted revival of classical ideas, values and works by the European Renaissance, as the second stage and sociological constellation in the evolution of liberalism.

Thus, the second historical stage and extant sociological constellation or anticipation of the genesis of liberalism as a system of both ideas and institutions is probably the Renaissance. The latter is so in virtue of its attempt at, as the term indicates, reviving Roman and especially Greek⁴ (Habermas 2001) civilization and its liberal and humanistic political and artistic values, institutions and practices effectively destroyed by or submerged into the servant of theocratic religion during the “Dark Middle Ages”. Hence, if it constitutes, reflects or leads to liberalism, the Renaissance in substantive terms transcends and terminates, though historically is situated within, the late “Dark Middle Ages” commonly considered to be the proto-type of illiberalism, as Marx sug-

⁴ Habermas (2001: 131) notes that the “Renaissance, with which our own conception of the “modern age” begins, referred back to classical Greece [as classical].”

gests sarcastically remarking that, especially for the rising bourgeoisie, “it is very convenient to be “liberal” at the expense” of these times.⁵ In this sense, the Renaissance, rather than the later Protestant Reformation hostile to and even, as Pareto observes, halting it, arose and acted as the transcending factor and terminator of a “dying” medieval civilization punctuated by theocratic repression and anti-human barbarism symbolized by the Inquisition. Alternatively, it did as Act 1 or an artistic-cultural prelude and anticipation of the subsequent Enlightenment and modern liberalism overall.⁶ Thus, Veblen remarks that the “medieval range” of conceptions and arrangements, notably “feudalistic or theocratic principles of law” a la “God’s tenure of office” and “institutions of status and prowess”, “first began to break down and give place to modern notions” during the Italian Renaissance.

Consequently, despotic Catholic-based retrograde medievalism and even the supposedly more progressive Protestant Reformation vehemently condemned and attacked the Renaissance and its underlying liberal, secular and humanist ideas and works. Moreover, as Pareto proposes, it was the Protestant Reformation that precisely “halted” the Renaissance “only too soon” in North European countries in contrast to Italy where it was absent or failed. Overall, he suggests that the “Reformation began among the rough [sic!] people of the North where Christian religion sentiment was more alive, while it made few proselytes in refined and skeptical Italy.” Pareto adds that the Protestant Reformation “was mainly a reaction” of the strong religious feelings of lower classes against growing skepticism in society, especially among the ruling class to the effect of reacting to and condemning the fact that “the theocratic upper classes became skeptical, while the popes were more concerned with terrestrial than with celestial interests.” He also explains what is commonly perceived as the anti-religious French Revolution in identical terms, viz. as a “religious revolution”, albeit in the form of what he calls “anti-Christian religion”.

Notably, as Pareto implies and US religious conservatives celebrate, the Reformation was admittedly a hostile “reaction against the secular church

⁵ Marx also sarcastically adds that “even bourgeois liberalism is declared socialistic, bourgeois enlightenment socialistic [etc.]”

⁶ In particular, Florence, deemed, as Shakespeare may suggest, the “birthplace of the Renaissance” (Emigh 2003: 1076), can be described as Act-Site 1 or the artistic-cultural prelude of the Enlightenment and modern liberalism.

and humanism of the Renaissance” emphasizing instead, starting with Luther and climaxing in Calvin and his Puritan disciples in old and New England, the “supreme authority of scripture and the fallacy of human reason” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 70). Thus, the Protestant Reformation, like traditional Catholicism, attacked its secular humanism since, as US conservatives lament, the Renaissance, epitomized by De Vinci and Michelangelo, “embodied a rebirth of an idea about man” and so replaced “medieval Christian notions that man was a flawed and sinful creature in God’s universe [with] an understanding that man himself was the center of all things” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 69). As they admit with regret, just as medieval Catholicism, Protestantism was a “specific rejection of the Renaissance” by condemning as “Ungodly” its secular humanism, as expressed in that the “ultimate hope of the Renaissance was that all men would realize and attain a perfection never before known” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 69–71).

Hence, only in the form and sense of the Renaissance during the 15–16th centuries (e.g. Florence) can the late Middle Ages be considered a historical phase or precursor and sociological constellation of liberalism as an ideal and social system defined by liberty and equality in their synthesis or synergy (Manent 1998: 222). Thus, Durkheim remarks that liberalism “has had as its precursors heretics of all kinds whom the secular arm rightly punished throughout the Middle Ages and has continued to do so up to the present day”. As known, these liberal precursors were particularly (though not only) present during late medieval periods, notably, as Simmel suggests, both inspiring and inspired by the Renaissance. Durkheim might have added that prior to the Renaissance (e.g. until the late 15th century) such liberal precursors were, if not an extinct then an endangered species, so “liberalism” a kind of oasis in the desert of traditionalism, despotism and theocracy during the mostly or truly “Dark Middle Ages”, as indicated by the fact that the papal Holy Inquisition was instituted at relative late medieval times.

In a sense, the Renaissance was a liberal artistic-intellectual, though not a socio-political, revolution or rebellion and protest against feudal traditionalism seeking to revive proto-liberal, classical Greek-Roman values, institutions and works, including implicitly liberty, equality and democracy, destroyed and subdued by theology, religion and theocracy during the “Dark Middle Ages”. Alternatively, the Renaissance provoked a strong anti-liberal reaction by medieval traditionalism turned into early reactionary conservatism. As US

conservatives approvingly comment, early conservatism was “a reaction to the idealism of the Renaissance [just as to] the flawed vision of the Enlightenment” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 65–6).

In retrospect, this hostile reaction to the Renaissance established and epitomized a conservative pattern, system or “method in the madness” in Weber’s sense of “methodical” sanctification in religious conservatism like original Puritanism and Puritan-rooted contemporary American evangelicalism (Smith 2000). This pattern consists in that, first, a revolution or reform by liberalism (Moore 1993) aims to transcend traditional despotism establishing liberal society, then traditionalism as reactionary conservatism “self-reflects”, reacts and arises against liberalism through a counter-revolution and restoration (Bourdieu 1998) of the “golden past”, which leads to another round of revolutions and counter-revolutions. Such adverse reactions to the Renaissance, just as to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution later, confirm that all conservative and other anti-liberal “movements to suppress liberal society are counter-revolutions” (Infantino 2003: 149). In this sense, the Renaissance ushered in or heralded not only modern liberalism, i.e. liberal modernity, notably the rationalist and humanist Enlightenment as sort of “soft” revolution. It also did, via adverse reaction and selection, reactionary conservatism as a “hard-core”, usually repressive and undemocratic, counter-revolution, including anti-Enlightenment ideas and values, in Europe and America alike.

If classical Greek-Roman civilization and the Italian Renaissance form a sort of pre-genesis, pre-discovery or anticipation of liberalism and so liberal society in the modern sense since the 18th century, the Western European Enlightenment in particular forms its true genesis and discovery. The history of Western liberal modernity is usually considered to begin with the Enlightenment (Delanty 2000; Habermas 2001) which hence requires special consideration.

The Enlightenment: The True Genesis of Liberalism and the Project of Liberal Society

While pre-discovered, in the sense of scientific pre-discoveries (Merton 1968), or anticipated by classical civilization and the late medieval Renaissance, Western liberalism/liberal modernity at least in its prevalent contemporary meaning was basically a creation or “child” of the European Enlightenment in the 18th century. As noted, most sociologists emphasize that the “understanding

of [liberal] modernity [is] rooted in the European Enlightenment (Beck 2000: 22; cf. also Delanty 2000; Habermas 2001). Like, and even more than, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment was an intellectual, albeit not political, proto-liberal revolution or reform against the despotic, notably theocratic, “Dark Middle Ages”. It was a revolutionary cultural movement against transforming secular culture, including science, education, philosophy and art, as well as politics, state and all human society and even life into the “servant” of religion, theology and theocracy. In this sense, the Enlightenment was Act II, the philosophical-sociological 18th century sequel and culmination of the artistic, idealistic and humanistic Renaissance of the 15–16th centuries. Veblen observes that liberalism and rationalism (“the modern scientific movement”) arose “in Italy in the days of the Renaissance, and Central Europe had its share in the enlightenment” premised on “notions of untrammelled initiative and rationality”.

Modern Enlightenment versus Medieval Darkness

A difference between these two historical stages in the evolution of liberal society and modernity was that, as hinted, the Enlightenment redefined the “Dark Middle Ages” to encompass not only, as did the Renaissance, the official or traditional Catholic religion, theology and theocracy, but also its Protestant substitutes since the 16th century Reformation. For the Enlightenment, notably its French (Delanty 2000) and in part Scottish (Zaret 1989) version, despite its, as Simmel puts it, “protest” against official Catholicism, the Protestant Reformation was still part and parcel, a sort of the last stand of the dying “Dark Middle Ages”. It was so in virtue of its “totalistic” theocratic and other illiberal aims, tendencies or outcomes, especially what Weber identifies as Calvinist “state churches” in Europe and Puritan theocracies in Great Britain (temporarily) and America (enduringly), primarily inspired by and even recreating a “purer” despotic medievalism, notably “Christian” theocracy (Eisenstadt 1965; Stivers 1994).

In historical terms, the Enlightenment was an 18th century intellectual revolution and movement seeking to supersede not only 15th century official theocratic Catholicism, as was the Renaissance, but also 16th century nascent anti-Catholic and anti-Renaissance Protestantism, and especially against 17th century Weber’s bibliocratic Calvinism and Puritanism establishing old and

New England's Holy and "Bible Commonwealth" (Gorski 2000; Munch 2001; Zaret 1989). In this sense, the Enlightenment was the philosophical-sociological continuation and version of the artistic Renaissance, the rebirth of the proto-liberalism and classical democracy of Antiquity (Hodgson 1999) versus an illiberal, anti-democratic conjuncture and often holy alliance of the Catholic and Protestant "Dark Middle Ages", medievalist Catholicism and Protestantism. Further, given that the Catholic original form of medievalism, at least the Inquisition and the Vatican Church, was discredited or diluted, though for liberal and illiberal reasons respectively, by the Renaissance and especially, as Pareto implies, the Reformation in Northern Europe, the Enlightenment was a liberal philosophical-sociological movement primarily against the Protestant derived version and attempted revival of the theocratic "Dark Middle Ages."

The above especially holds true, if not of the French version, given the intact dominance of Catholicism, in spite of some presence of Calvinism (via Huguenots) in France's *ancien regime* in which the Enlightenment "emerged in opposition to [Catholic] religion" (Delanty 2000: 27), then for the British, specifically Scottish, variant. Despite some occasional mutual aid, sympathy and flirting, the Scottish Enlightenment represented by Locke, Hume and others⁷ essentially and eventually "rejected" (Zaret 1989), transcended or suspected the theocratic and other authoritarian principles and practices of Protestant Puritanism and its Revolution eventuating in temporary theocracy and political despotism in the form of Cromwell's "Holy Commonwealth" ruled by a "Parliament of Saints" during the 17th century. Locke and other early Scottish Enlightenment philosophers like Hume and Smith "reject efforts by the state or monopoly churches to "save" people from their own moral mistakes" (Terchek 1997: 9). Specifically, they rejected such efforts by Puritanism whose

⁷ Kloppenborg (1998: 25) uses the expression the "sober Puritanism of Locke" in contrast to "the stark individualism of Hobbes". Also, Delanty (2000: 27) comments that generally in Scotland the Enlightenment "was greatly aided by the reformed [Puritan] churches (unlike in Catholic France, where the Enlightenment emerged in opposition to religion)". However, Zaret (1989) and Walzer (1963) argue that Locke and other representatives of the Scottish Enlightenment, including Hume and Smith, rejected or tempered rather than embraced Puritanism. This is what also Collins (2000) implies by observing that the Scottish Enlightenment was based on "civil servants" imposing peace on political-religious strife", notably on that of Puritanism against Anglicanism, the Crown and even Catholicism.

defining element and prime mover was precisely salvation of humans through theocratic repression and control by self-proclaimed Puritan rulers and saints with medieval-style Divine Rights to rule, exemplified by Cromwell as the self-declared “Lord of the Domain” in the “Holy Commonwealth”.

Moreover, a historical study suggests that the English-Scottish Enlightenment as a whole, traced to Isaac Newton and John Lock, “represented in its essence a challenge to the traditional reliance upon authority in religious and secular life, and carried an assertion of man’s ability to discover the secrets of the universe and exert some control over his destiny” (Bremer 1995: 225), thus to prevalent Protestantism, including established Anglicanism and the “new” Puritanism in Great Britain and colonial America. In this view, in colonial America, “pushed to its logical extreme, the Enlightenment would later become a philosophical movement totally antithetical to the Calvinist world view that lay at the core of New England Puritanism” (Bremer 1995: 225). According to the study, “but in the early 18th century, in England and in the colonies, many were attracted to the [Enlightenment] philosophers’ claim to have discovered natural laws, their optimistic view of man, and their skepticism toward all orthodoxies” (Bremer 1995: 225). If so, this observation implies that Protestantism, including Calvinism and Puritanism, embraced partially and temporarily the Enlightenment and its rationalism, universalism, individualism and liberalism, rather than, as usually supposed, especially by Parsons et al., conversely. Thus, while the Enlightenment was “antithetical” to Protestantism, especially Calvinism and Puritanism, the latter was occasionally enamored by, “flirted” with and especially exploited or manipulated the former, notably scientific and technological progress, for its own, typically theocratic, militarist and other authoritarian, purposes, viz. attaining what Weber describes and Parsons⁸ (1966: 79–80) extols as the Protestant ascetic “mastery of the world”. In this last respect, if British and American Puritans were “attracted” by these ideas, that was a “fatal attraction” from the prism of the Enlightenment’s ideals of liberty, democracy, reason, progress, secularism, universalism and humanism, so liberalism overall.

⁸ Following Weber, Parsons (1966: 79–80) identifies and extols “five components” of (ascetic) Protestantism as the assumed basis of the “modern institutional system”: asceticism, “a drive for active mastery over worldly things and interests”, rationality, ethical universalism, and functional differentiation and specialization.

In general, the observed antithesis between the Enlightenment and Protestantism, notably Calvinism, is what Mises, by contrast to Parsons et al., precisely suggests and predicts. Thus he observes that, just as the Reformation theologians “criticized” the Catholic churches of the 16th century, the Enlightenment philosophers “attacked” those being Protestant of the 18th century, adding that “very little of the spirit of Christ was to be found” (Mises 1950) in Catholicism and Protestantism alike at these historical points.

In this sense, if the Protestant Reformation “halted”, by condemning and attacking, just as Catholicism did, the Renaissance, albeit mostly in Northern Europe, then the Enlightenment attempted or succeeded the same versus the first, especially theocratic Calvinism and Puritanism. While the Reformation was a sort of 16th century illiberal counter-revolution versus the artistic, idealistic and humanist Renaissance, just as against traditional Catholicism, the Enlightenment was the 18th century liberal revolution against the Protestant version, extension or revival of the theocratic “Dark Middle Ages” during the 17th century through Calvinist-Puritan theocracies in England and America, as well as counter their Catholic archetype. This is what Weber implies by suggesting that Protestantism, particularly “gloomy” Calvinism and its English-American product “disillusioned and pessimistically inclined” Puritanism, “must not be understood as joy of living nor in any other sense as connected with the Enlightenment” described as its “laughing heir”, so an opposite in this and most other respects, notably liberal-secular democracy (Zaret 1989).

In short, the Enlightenment was a liberal revolutionary movement against both Catholic and Protestant anti-liberalism, i.e. traditionalism or conservatism, anti-humanism, irrationalism, despotism, and theocracy. Hence, unlike the Renaissance, the Enlightenment had to face two, to paraphrase Mannheim (1986), immediate, later to become perennial, antagonists: Catholic and Protestant illiberal forces alike, hence often forming, despite their presumably deep theological differences and animosities, “holy alliances” against liberal ideas, values and institutions. The latter suggests that ironically the Enlightenment and liberalism overall actually accomplished what Christian “ecumenical” theology and theologians had never fully succeeded before. This is to unite or ally theocratic Catholicism represented by the Vatican Church and Protestantism, in particular Calvinism or Puritanism, in this case in a crusade-like holy war against liberal ideas, institutions and practices.

Moreover, the Enlightenment has since resulted in or provoked a sort of “anti-liberal forces of the world unite” outcome: Catholic and Protestant,

Christian and non-Christian (fundamentalist Islam), religious and non- or quasi-religious (Nazism), Western and Eastern, past (paleo-conservatism, fascism) and present (neo-conservatism, neo-fascism). Thus, Veblen⁹ comments that Enlightenment-based liberalism and rationalism, exemplified by “early modern risings of the scientific spirit”, “presently ran into the sand, when war, politics, and religion reasserted their sway in the south of Europe”, in apparent reference to the late 19th and the early 20th century.

The Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment religious, political and military reactions epitomize the general pattern: liberal revolutions and social changes are counteracted by illiberal conservative counter-revolutions and restorations of an *ex ante* state of anti-liberalism and un-freedom, including, as in the case of medieval Catholicism and sectarian Protestantism, theocracy. The above is useful to emphasize because of the prevailing “naïve assumptions” (Coffey 1998) linking the Enlightenment and liberalism in general with Protestantism, such as Puritanism in America, even describing the first, especially its Scottish version, as the secular version, equivalent or sequel of the Protestant Reformation (for a critique, cf. Zaret 1989).

At any rate, the Enlightenment both continued and went beyond the Renaissance – and by implication classic Greek-Roman civilization – by adopting, yet further reinforcing, expanding and making explicit the latter’s rudimentary and implicit, pseudo-liberal ideas and practices. Perhaps the main historical innovation by the Enlightenment was to transform and extend the mostly artistic and implied proto- or quasi-liberalism of the Renaissance into a sort of universal and explicit liberalism, to make the principle of liberty valid and operate not only in the domain of art and other intellectual activity, but in society as a whole, including politics and economy.

Hence, the Enlightenment, not just because of the term, was a more complete, consistent and open challenge to, eventually being sort of “terminator” of, the “Dark Middle Ages” than the Renaissance and anything else before,

⁹ In a characteristic sarcastic and skeptical mode, Veblen adds that “essentially romantic notions of untrammelled initiative and rationality governed the intellectual life of the era of enlightenment”, citing the order-of-nature as a “characteristic pre-conception” of this era. However, this description overlooks or blurs the distinction, as made by Mannheim, between the liberal-rational Enlightenment and romanticism as an essentially illiberal conservative and anti-rational movement arising in reaction to liberalism and rationalism and an attempt to revive medievalism.

including, as often supposed, the Protestant Reformation. Alternatively, this caused medievalism, in the original form of traditional Catholicism and the derivative of conservative Protestantism like Calvinism and Puritanism to react by condemning and attacking the Enlightenment and liberalism overall as supreme or more “evil” than virtually any other forces of “Satan” before, including Durkheim’s medieval heretics and the Renaissance. In this sense, the Enlightenment and liberalism overall may have terminated the “Dark Middle Ages”, yet begot in reaction Mannheim’s perhaps more dangerous and persistent immediate and subsequently liberal antagonist in the form of religious and other authoritarian conservatism as the heir apparent of theocratic medievalism and traditionalism overall.

In terms of *dramatis personae*, if the Protestant Reformation was propelled, enacted and embodied by persons like Luther and Calvin in Europe and Cromwell and Winthrop in old and New England, the Enlightenment was, for example, by Descartes, Condorcet, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, d’Alembert, Turgot, Holbach, Helvetius in France, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, and Humboldt in Germany, Bacon, Newton, Locke, Hume, Ferguson, Smith in Great Britain, especially Scotland, and Jefferson and Madison in America. This indicates several subtypes and styles of the Western Enlightenment: French, German and British (and English and Scottish within it) as the original and primary, and American and others (e.g. British colonies) as the derived or secondary.

Prima facie, in sociological terms – liberty, equality, liberal democracy, a secular civil society, rationalism, humanism – the differences between, say, Luther and Calvin and Kant, Condorcet, Montesquieu, Voltaire in continental Europe, Cromwell and Locke and Hume in Great Britain, as well as Winthrop et al. and Jefferson and Madison in America, are admittedly salient, substantial and even irreconcilable (Bremer 1995). Further, these personalities differ not only, as usually supposed, in quantitatively higher or lower degrees of freedom. They differ in the very substance of liberty and illiberty as opposite qualities, so are as different and mutually opposed as, as both Catholic and Protestant theologians would put it, “heaven and hell” in sociological terms, viz. Kant and Voltaire vs. Calvin, Locke and Hume vs. Cromwell, Jefferson and Madison vs. Winthrop and Samuel Adams (despite the beer brand bearing his name).

Historically, these differences are perhaps as sociologically manifest and salient as those between Catholic medieval theologians like Saint Augustine

and Thomas Aquinas, let alone the popes and Inquisitors, and Renaissance figures like de Vinci and Copernicus, as well between these latter and Luther, Calvin, Cromwell and Winthrop. Alternatively, such sociological, as distinguished from psychological, differences are non-existent, rare or insignificant between most Enlightenment and Renaissance figures, viz. Descartes, Bacon, Newton, Kant on one hand and de Vinci and Copernicus on the other, at least on the account of both sharing the ideal of and commitment to liberty in society, including science, philosophy, art and all culture, like politics. Thus, these *dramatis personae*, though themselves different in psychological, religious, national and even philosophical terms – viz. French vs. Scottish-American and even German – embody, exemplify and confirm the substantive sociological differences of the Enlightenment, just as the Renaissance and liberalism in relation to the “new” Protestant Reformation, as well as the “old” Catholic “Dark Middle Ages.”

In essence, despite their various internal, primarily non-sociological differences, most Enlightenment figures, from Descartes and Bacon to Kant to Jefferson, represent what Bentham calls the “most enlightened advocates for liberty”. By analogy, their counterparts in both the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages” and the Protestant Reformation, from Aquinas to Calvin and Cromwell and Winthrop, can instead be (charitably) described and interpreted as “most enlightened advocates for illiberty” in the typical form of theocratic and other despotism, exemplified by medieval and Calvinist-Puritan theocracies.

These liberal figures held, as Smith’s French follower Bastiat implies, that “there are but two things that can save society: justice and enlightenment”, notably “the equality of well-being, of enlightenment, of moral dignity” in contrast to their predecessors in the “Dark Middle Ages” and the Reformation, instead holding opposite ideas and values. Further, echoing Bentham, Smith and other Scottish and French Enlightenment figures, Bastiat adds that the “marvelous structure” of society “is so constituted as to diffuse more and more enlightenment, morality, and happiness among more and more people”. Yet, as typical for most liberal economists, Bastiat, like Smith et al., tends to reductively conceive the free “social order” as the laissez-faire economy or marketplace, so “liberalism” as “capitalism”, thus anticipating Hayek et al.’s reduction and equation of society to a “spontaneous” market system.

The above commits an economic fallacy, pervasive in the history of economics from Smith to modern “libertarians”, which denies or overlooks

("forget") that the free-market economy is only an integral, however important, part of liberal society and modernity, so economic liberalism or "capitalism", though belongs to, does not exhaust societal liberalism and modernism as a whole. This is what Weber in particular suggests in warning that modern "capitalism" is but a special case of Western rationalism or liberalism – and not necessarily connected with its other cases, including rationalization or liberalization in art, other culture and even law. His case in point is the disjuncture between the Roman law as an exemplar of legal rationalism and "rational" capitalist enterprise in classical civilization as well as modern Great Britain adopting instead common law. Also, classical political economy, including the *laissez-faire* doctrine, was a particular strand of liberalism, notably the Enlightenment. Thus following or echoing Keynes' (1972) tracing of the *laissez-faire* doctrine to 18th century French political philosophers, contemporary institutional economists (Hodgson 1999: 63) remark that "free-market individualism has its roots in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment."

Hence, all these liberal and enlightened *dramatis personae*, from Descartes and Bacon to Kant to Jefferson, defined the rationalist Enlightenment as, in Sidgwick's words, a truly "innovating and reforming" period and movement of the 18th century in sociological "libertarian" terms by comparison with the Reformation and medieval times, though prefigured or preceded by the artistic and humanistic Renaissance as another earlier example in this respect. Further, while its differences from the Renaissance are matters of degree rather than substance of freedom, the Enlightenment is perhaps the most "innovating and reforming" and intellectually revolutionary period and movement in all Western history since the replacement of classical Greek-Roman civilization by the Christian "Dark Middle Ages", or in the modern West since the end of Catholic medievalism and the start of the Protestant Reformation in the early 16th century.

Notably, the Enlightenment was such a period by virtue of creating, or recreating and retrieving from the Renaissance, liberalism as both a philosophical-ideological and an institutional-political innovation and reform, or revolution in intellectual terms, *vis-à-vis* traditionalism, specifically medievalism with its theocratic despotism, anti-humanism and irrationalism. Predictably, just as the Renaissance provoked, albeit secondarily, what Pareto, Weber and other sociologists (Bendix 1977) consider to be the anti-artistic and anti-humanistic Protestant Reformation, and classical civilization did the

“Dark Middle Ages”, the Enlightenment via its “innovating and reforming” liberal tendencies acted as an agent provocateur by provoking the negative reaction or revenge of medieval traditionalism.

The latter became, as Mannheim (1986) implies, overly “self-conscious”, so transformed into conservatism as the immediate and subsequently perennial antagonist of classical and contemporary liberalism, so counter-Enlightenment. Thus, in Europe and America admittedly “conservatives at the beginning of the 19th century form an Anti-Enlightenment” (Nisbet 1966: 14). Recall, some US conservatives approvingly remark that French arch-conservative Joseph de Maistre, for instance, “expressed authoritarian conservatism most clearly in response to the ideas of the Enlightenment” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 88), inspiring or converging with other conservative anti-Enlightenment figures in Europe, as well as Great and America. In this view, such conservative anti-Enlightenment figures were supposedly libertarian and individualist (cf. Hayek 1948: 4) Edmund Burke in Great Britain, with his emphasis on and celebration of the “importance of property and human inequality”, notably his apparent longing for medieval-style aristocracy, as well as Hamilton’s brand of admittedly “authoritarian conservatism” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 87–8) in post-revolutionary America.

The preceding suggests that the Enlightenment was the true innovation and birth of both liberalism, as an intended outcome, and conservatism, as an evidently unintended and perverse (Merton 1968) effect as a “hostile child” through adverse reaction and anti-liberal antagonism. In this sense, without Enlightenment, there would have been simply no liberalism, so, as Mannheim (1986) suggests, no conservatism, in their modern forms and meanings, as distinguished from those in classical civilization and the Renaissance and in medievalist and other traditionalism, respectively. This confirms that it is difficult to fully understand liberalism and conservatism alike, including their antagonisms like US anti-liberal culture wars in Western societies without considering the European Enlightenment as the parent of liberals and the agent provocateur of medieval-rooted conservatives and other illiberal forces like fascism and in part communism.

Elements of Liberal Modernity in the Enlightenment

It is important to recognize and emphasize that the Enlightenment was the critical and defining intellectual process, movement, revolution or event

Table 5
Elements of Liberalism in the Enlightenment

Integral liberty
Social justice
Egalitarianism
Universalism and inclusion
Democracy
Pluralism
Individualism
Modernism
Secularism and humanism
Rationalism, progressivism, optimism
Pacifism

within liberalism and Western modernity as a whole (Beck 2000; Habermas 2001). The Enlightenment defined and engendered virtually all the essential principles of liberalism and elements of Western liberal modernity, i.e. integral liberty, social justice, egalitarianism, universalism, inclusion, democracy, pluralism, individualism, secularism, rationalism, modernism, humanism, progressivism, optimism, pacifism, and so on (Table 5). For example, principles and elements of liberalism like rationalism, secularism, materialism, and democratic republicanism represented the “driving forces” of the French Enlightenment (Delanty 2000: 29).

Thus, Weber identifies and emphasizes the Enlightenment’s liberalism, including individualism, rationalism, secularism, progressivism, humanism and optimism, contrasted with the opposite attributes of the Protestant Reformation as well as the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages”. For example, he implies liberalism and so liberty by commenting that the “ability to free oneself from the common tradition [is] a sort of liberal enlightenment”, in contrast to both Protestant and Catholic traditionalism in the form of despotic medievalism or theocratic fundamentalism.

Also, Weber stresses individualism and rationalism in observing that the “Rights of Man” program of the French Revolution “find their ultimate justification in the belief of the Enlightenment in the workings of individual reason”¹⁰ and the individual is “best qualified to know his own interests”. He contrasts these individualistic and rationalistic tendencies with the

¹⁰ Weber remarks that “this charismatic glorification of “Reason” [e.g. Robespierre] is the last form that charisma has adopted in its fateful historical course.”

anti-individualism and irrationalism of religious conservatism, such as traditional Catholicism and, though less visibly, Protestantism, specifically Calvinism and Puritanism, as expressed in its devaluation of human beings and intelligence dismissed and sacrificed in favor of Parsons' (1937) "purposes of God" and Providential ("intelligent") design (Bendix 1984; Merton 1968). In sum, the Enlightenment was, as Weber's philosophical disciple Husserl suggested, a "rationalistic philosophy" in the sense of "objective" science, thus transcending Catholic and Protestant anti-rationalistic theologies, including implicitly "Christian science" or what Pareto calls the "scientific errors of the Bible".

Further, Weber identifies and points out the humanism ("humanistic indifference") of the Enlightenment by contrast to ascetic Protestantism's anti-humanism in secular terms, i.e. non-humanistic bias in favor of Providence, as well as, though to a lesser extent, that of conventional Catholicism. Further, Weber implicitly detects secularism, if not atheism, by observing that in "Western Europe, since 17th century, the strata of Enlightenment religions produced, in both Anglo-Saxon and, more recently, French culture areas, unitarian and deistic communities and communities of a syncretistic, atheistic, or free-church variety",¹¹ thus contradicting religious radicalism, fanaticism or fundamentalism, including theocracy, as present in the Catholic "Dark Middle Ages" and the Protestant Reformation alike.

Also, Weber explicitly pinpoints and stresses the optimism of the Enlightenment and, notably, contrasts its "rosy blush" with the pessimism of Protestant asceticism, as epitomized in "gloomy" and "stodgy" (Gould 1996) as well as disciplinary and repressive (Gorski 1993) Calvinism and its "Anglo-Saxon" derivative (Bremer 1995), Puritanism. In particular, he notices that what he calls "disillusioned and pessimistically inclined" Puritanism or Puritan-based individualism displays a "striking contrast to the quite different spectacles through which the Enlightenment later looked upon men." In general, recall he suggests that "Protestantism must not be understood as joy of living nor

¹¹ Weber adds that "in Germany, Enlightenment religious views found a hearing among the same groups that were interested in Freemasonry, namely those who have little direct economic interests, especially university professors but also declassed ideologists and educated strata who partly or wholly belonged to the propertyless people."

in any other sense as connected with the Enlightenment” described as its “laughing heir”¹² in the sense of a chronological sequence, in which also the Reformation was an “heiress” of medieval Catholicism, not in Weberian substantive terms of “elective affinity” or convergence.

The preceding confirms that the European Enlightenment was at the birth and heart of modern liberalism, i.e. liberal modernity. Alternatively, it was a liberal cultural revolution and movement transcending not only the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages” but even, perhaps surprisingly for many, the Protestant Reformation also characterized by anti-liberalism, including medieval traditionalism, religious radicalism, anti-rationalism, anti-humanism, pessimism and asceticism (though of a different variety centering on the world and its ascetic “totalistic” mastery). Overall, the Enlightenment was the act and process of creation of modern liberalism via what Schumpeter would call the “creative destruction” of Catholic and Protestant theocratic medievalism alike and the resumption and reinforcement of the Renaissance as the liberal prelude or herald. This needs to be emphasized because modern liberalism, specifically liberal-democratic ideology, is often, especially in America and Great Britain, seen as the mere “extension” (Zaret 1989) of the Protestant Reformation, particularly Puritanism, rather the creation of the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment and the Conservative-Authoritarian Reaction

In comparative terms, to better understand the origins and elements of modern liberalism in the European Enlightenment, it may be instructive to compare these with those of, to paraphrase Mannheim, its main immediate and perpetual antagonist in the form of conservatism. Thus, as Mannheim (1986: 55) states, modern liberalism, including its theory and institution of secular democracy, is grounded in the Enlightenment as the “liberal idea” in sharp contrast to its rival conservatism. In his view, by comparison conservatism, as medieval traditionalism becoming “self-reflective” in the face of the liberal challenge to the “Dark Middle Ages”, is historically based “primarily on

¹² In Weber’s view, with its belief in the “harmony of interests”, the Enlightenment “appeared as the heir of Protestant asceticism in the field of economic idea”, but implies that this is just an appearance by sharply contrasting the “rosy blush of its laughing heir” with Protestantism’s lack of “joy of living”.

romanticism” and idealism generally, and its attempt to restore the romantic past, essentially feudalism, despotism and theocracy, including what Spencer terms the “romantic legends of feudal Europe”, in hostile reaction to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution as its political outcome and realization. For instance, German romanticism or idealism and hence conservatism was an adverse reaction to and “surprising turn from Enlightenment repudiation of metaphysics” (Collins 2000). Generally, the rationalist Enlightenment engendered in its turn the “romantic counter-Enlightenment, for which the individual is not only superior to society but is fundamentally opposed to it. The attack on reason [e.g. by Byron, Herder, and Goethe] was part of this revolt against society”¹³ (Delanty 2000: 27).

Echoing Mannheim, some US conservatives approvingly state that in opposition to the Enlightenment as the basis of liberal modernity, based on romanticism’s idea and glorification of the “golden” past, conservatism “began with the absolute reality of the institutional order as [it] found it, the order bequeathed by history” (Nisbet 1966: 9–14). Predictably, this was the social order begot and bequeathed by medievalism and traditionalism overall. Specifically, it was an economic system of feudalism with its serfdom and militarism, a political regime of despotism or tyranny and an overarching social structure of theocracy, as exemplified by the Vatican Church and Calvinist-Puritan “Bible Commonwealths” and which turned all culture, society and humans into the “servant” of theology, religion and theocratic, Catholic and Protestant “saints” as masters. Admittedly, the so-called rediscovery of medievalism in the aftermath of and adverse reaction to the Enlightenment and its sequel the French Revolution had its “first and lasting significance” for conservatism, especially its European type, “forming the model of the conservative image of the good society” (Nisbet 1966: 9–14). Consequently, early conservatism at the beginning of the 19th century formed what is described as a medieval-rooted “Anti-Enlightenment” (Nisbet 1966: 14). In virtue of its original and perennial medieval ideal and inspiration, conservatism was initially, and with secondary modifications and adaptations, basically

¹³ Delanty (2000: 38) comments that, for example, the ideas of Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche were a “repudiation of the Enlightenment”. In his view, generally the “social theory that emerges in the early 20th century in Europe is definitively anti-Enlightenment and announces the end of modernity [e.g. Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger]” (Delanty 2000: 39).

remained by the early 21st century anti-liberal medievalism, feudal traditionalism under different names and disguises, thus, like the proverbial emperor, revealing its essential emptiness, though this bareness is not always seen and told by its docile subjects, especially in America, on conservative “indecent” grounds.

As hinted, at this historical and other points romanticism, so conservatism comprised not only, as usually supposed, Catholic medievalism but also its Protestant version or revival via, as Weber, Pareto and other sociologists (Bendix 1977; Eisenstadt 1965; Munch 1981) suggest, the essentially conservative-authoritarian, “totalistic” Reformation in hostile reaction to and reversal of the liberal, artistic and humanistic Renaissance as well as “too lax” Catholicism. For both the “old” Catholicism and the “new” Protestantism with their joint “mindless” (Habermas 2001) anti-liberal and anti-modern battle attempted and often succeeded, as in Vatican and Calvinist-Puritan theocracies, to suppress and reverse the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, thus liberalism, through restorations of the medieval Golden Age as their shared and persisting ideal ever since. Catholic medieval-style and Protestant “reformed” romanticism or conservatism was originally the immediate and subsequently became “eternal” antagonist of the Enlightenment or liberalism. As Mises (1950) puts it, for the Christian Church, including official Catholicism and sectarian Protestantism (Calvinism, Puritanism) alike, the Enlightenment and modern liberalism overall “have created all the evil which afflicts the world today”. This provides a supreme Providential rationale for anti-liberal antagonism escalating in crusade-like battle a la both the “Papists” and Cromwell and Winthrop (Gorski 2000; Munch 2001), including a holy permanent culture war against liberal “evils” in contemporary Protestant America and to a lesser or decreasing extent in Europe, though Mises (1950) warns that “nothing could be less compatible with true religion than the ruthless persecution of dissenters and the horrors of religious crusades and wars.”

In class terms, the Enlightenment and consequently classical liberalism represented what Mannheim does, and Marx would, call “one of the weapons of the rising bourgeoisie” such as the French third estate against feudalism. By contrast, medieval-based romanticism and hence anti-liberal conservatism was such a weapon of the declining feudal aristocracy as the first estate in feudalism as well as the theocratic clergy as the second estate. In this sense, the Enlightenment and liberalism overall was a capitalist movement, revolution

and ideology versus romanticism and original conservatism as an anti-capitalist, feudal opposite.

However, contrary to Mannheim's and Marx's views, the rising bourgeoisie adopted or selected as a weapon rather than invented liberal principles created and made available for its "rational choice" by the Enlightenment philosophers and sociologists, including Locke, Hume, Kant, Condorcet and Montesquieu, perhaps excluding early economists like Malthus, Senior, if not Smith, and other perceived capitalist "apologists" (as identified in Samuelson 1994). And these Enlightenment representatives' primary aims were, just as those of the Renaissance figures like de Vinci and Copernicus, what Weber calls ideal, as distinguished from material, interests, specifically intellectual and scientific, so non-capitalist, non-economic and non-utilitarian, contrary to rational choice imputations of "materialism", "rational egoism" or self-interested behavior, and "utility maximizing" to literally all human actors and actions (Becker 1976). This is what Keynes¹⁴ (1960: 384) implies in general famously commenting that "practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct [economic and political philosopher]. [So] the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas".¹⁵ From the stance and interests of the rising bourgeoisie, the Enlightenment and liberalism was a progressive, rational doctrine, movement or intellectual revolution, and medieval romanticism or conservatism what Comte calls the retrograde, irrational and counter-revolutionary.

In historical terms, as Mises (1950) observes, modern liberalism was developed by the individualist social philosophy and proto-sociology of the "epoch of Enlightenment". By analogy, conservatism, as Mannheim (1986) implies, was developed from scholasticism, specifically scholastic theology, and medieval traditionalism overall become "self-reflective" in the face of and negative reaction to these liberal changes. Thus, like Mannheim, Mises (1950) remarks that conservatism in the modern sense "developed from the end of the 18th century on as a reaction against the social philosophy of rationalism" and

¹⁴ In Keynes' (1960: 384) words, "madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back."

¹⁵ Keynes (1961: 384) adds that the "ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else."

liberalism named the Enlightenment. In Mises' view, original conservatism opposed Enlightenment-based ideas, reforms and policies in favor of a "program of preservation of existing institutions and, sometimes, even of a return to extinct institutions", thus rigid and reactionary traditionalism as its prototype and source.

In particular, the latter involved medievalism, both in its pure original Catholic and derived revived Protestant version, as the mythical Golden Age and perennial ideal of conservatism. Thus, Mises registers that both Catholic and Protestant conservatism "appealed to the authority of tradition and the wisdom of ages gone by" and alternatively attacked the Enlightenment's "postulates of reason", thus mixing reactionary traditionalism with anti-rationalism. Mises specifically observes that the "main target" of these conservative attacks "was the ideas that had inspired the American and the French Revolutions and kindred movements in other countries. Its champions proudly called themselves anti-revolutionary and emphasized their rigid conservatism." He implies that both, as usually assumed, the French and, as more rarely so, American Revolution were sort of political variation, outcome or realization of the Enlightenment as their intellectual source and inspiration.

At this juncture, Enlightenment-based liberalism appears as historically "younger" than arch-conservatism in the old meaning of medieval traditionalism, i.e. feudalism, despotism and theocracy, yet "older" than conservatism in the modern sense of an anti-Enlightenment reaction and anti-liberal antagonism. In particular, Mises asserts that the "individualist social philosophy of the epoch of enlightenment disposed of the conflict between Individualism and Collectivism". He thus echoes Weber's description of the Enlightenment's principle that the "individual is best qualified to know his own interests". Notably, Mises implies that it was the Enlightenment, rather than, as often supposed, the Protestant Reformation, that primarily created or promoted, perhaps following the partly individualist Renaissance, political and moral individualism. Enlightenment individualism sharply contrasted to collectivism as typifying not only Catholic medievalism, but also, contrary to conventional wisdom, conservative Protestantism like Calvinism and Puritanism as, while individualistic in a religious-theological sense via Parsons' (1937) "immediacy" of the individual to God, anti-individualistic, repressive and disciplinary in political and moral terms, as Weber and other sociologists (Bendix 1977; Gorski 1993; Tawney 1962; Zaret 1989) notice. Predictably,

as US conservatives admit, post-Enlightenment conservatism, either as the overt European or disguised American revival of medievalism, adopted and continued this medieval anti-individualism in that “in reaction to the individualistic Enlightenment, stressed the small groups in society [especially family, church]” (Nisbet 1952: 170).

Enlightenment-Conservative Antinomies

In addition to individualism versus collectivism, like Weber Mises (1950) implies other pertinent antinomies between the Enlightenment and its romanticist-conservative reaction and antagonist, thus between liberalism and conservatism. These are, first, rationalism versus anti-rationalism, second, liberty and democracy versus un-freedom and despotism, third, secularism versus theocratic fundamentalism, fourth, optimism and progressivism versus pessimism and regression.

The first of these liberal-conservative antinomies consisted in that, as Mises (1950) puts it, modern liberalism is the “flower of that rational enlightenment which dealt a death blow to the regime of the old Church”. The latter, as hinted, incorporated both its ancient Catholic and “reformed”, yet also illiberal, Protestant versions, especially Calvinism and Puritanism as “iron” (Tawney 1962) and disciplinary or “hotter sort” (Gorski 2000) of Protestantism. Mises suggests that “in unmasking age-old superstitions the Enlightenment has once and for all established the supremacy of reason”.

Given that the Enlightenment was an 18th century social philosophy and sociology, by implication these superstitions within the Western world society at least spanned from the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages” (and before) to the 16th century Protestant Reformation. Both were irrational in that, for example, they shared a superstitious belief in the existence of witches and a practice of witch-hunts, from the medieval Inquisition to Puritan New England and its legendary “Salem with witches” both as a historical event and a symbol for an anti-liberal, i.e. oppressive, sectarian and irrational, society. Mises adds that “people called themselves happy in that they were citizens of an age of enlightenment which through the discovery of the laws of rational conduct paved the way toward a steady amelioration of human affairs”.¹⁶ This age of

¹⁶ Mises (1966: 864) laments that the “social philosophy of the Enlightenment failed to see the dangers that the prevalence of unsound ideas could engender. [Rational-

enlightenment thus transcended medieval anti-rationalism, anti-secularism and traditionalism overall, typical not only of the old Catholic medievalism but also of “reformed” Protestant conservatism, including, perhaps contrary to Weber’s thesis of its “elective affinity” with modern capitalism, Calvinism and Puritanism (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 1993; Walzer 1963; Zaret 1989).

Mises’ second liberal-conservative antinomy consisted in that what he describes as the Enlightenment’s “essential idea” of freedoms of thought, speech, and communication and the “accomplishments of the policies of freedom” were condemned and suppressed by “reactionary, superstitious, and unreasonable” conservative ideas and practices. In particular, he remarks that the Enlightenment philosophers, economists, sociologists and reformers were “almost unanimous in rejecting the claims of hereditary royalty and in recommending the republican form of government” and liberal-secular democracy. For example, contemporary sociologists comment that the “18th century works of Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as David Hume and Adam Smith moved the locus of authority away from kingly [and church] powers to the individual and the public as representative of the collective of individuals” (Biggart and Castanias 2001: 475).

By implication, Mises’ “accomplishments of the policies of freedom” were only possible within an actual liberal society and modernity, including secular political democracy (usually, but not invariably, republic), as the institutional expression and realization of the Enlightenment and so liberalism as the ideal of liberty. In turn, “reactionary, superstitious, and unreasonable” illiberal ideas and practices ranged from the “old” Catholic medievalism to “reformed” Protestant conservatism both being, as Comte states, retrograde or fundamentalist as well as superstitious (e.g. a belief in and reproduction

ism] blithely assumed that what is reasonable will carry on merely on account of its reasonableness. [It] never gave a thought to the possibility that public opinion could favor spurious ideologies whose realization would harm welfare and well-being and disintegrate social cooperation.” Mises invokes “reactionary, superstitious, and unreasonable” ideas during the 19th and 20th centuries as cases of “spurious ideologies”, alongside socialism, communism or Marxism, as the regular culprit. Moreover, he claims that the “history of the 19th and 20th centuries has discredited the hopes and the prognostications of the Enlightenment. The peoples did not proceed on the road toward freedom, constitutional government, civil rights, free trade, peace, and good will among nations. Instead the trend is toward totalitarianism, toward socialism”. So, he treats socialism, equated with totalitarianism, as the anti-Enlightenment and so an anti-liberal idea and system, which is controversial to democratic socialists, if not even Marxists, tracing their lineage in part to the Enlightenment and early liberalism.

of “witches”), cruel and anti-rationalist. Mises (1950) implicitly incorporates both conservative Catholicism and Protestantism into these ideas by observing that “no historian ever denied that very little of the spirit of Christ was to be found in the [Catholic] churches of the 16th century which were criticized by the theologians of the Reformation and in those [Protestant] of the 18th century which the philosophers of the Enlightenment attacked.”

Mises’ third liberal-conservative antinomy was manifested in that the Enlightenment was perceived and condemned by its conservative reactions as “undermining the religious feeling of the masses”. Its secularism, joined with rationalism, was manifest in that, as he puts it, “only in the Age of Enlightenment did some eminent philosophers abandon the traditional methods of the philosophy of history and stop brooding about the hidden purpose of Providence directing the course of events. They looked upon human events from the point of view of the ends aimed at by acting men, instead of from the point of view of the plans ascribed to God or nature.”¹⁷ Mises suggests that the “Old Church” as a whole, so ancient Catholicism and “reformed” Protestantism alike, condemned the Enlightenment and liberalism for committing what they defined as a mortal sin like “brooding about the hidden purpose of Providence”, thus as “evil” to be exorcised from “heaven” (Lemert 1999) in a theological and sociological, God’s Kingdom on Earth, sense. In consequence, both punished and relegated the Enlightenment and liberalism to “a hell in this [and other] world” (Tawney 1962: 267) through totalitarian theocracy, from the Vatican Church and its Holy Inquisition to the Puritan bibliocracy and its “Salem with witches” in early America.

Mises’ fourth liberal-conservative dichotomy was expressed in that the Enlightenment “displayed an optimistic view” against the “pessimism” or darkness of medieval traditionalism, including scholastic philosophy and Christian theology describing the “course of human history as the progressive deterioration of the perfect conditions of the fabulous golden age of the past”. This implies that while medievalism and other traditionalism was regressive

¹⁷ Mises (1957: 165) suggests that Enlightenment philosophers, citing Mandeville and Smith, “inaugurated a new social philosophy, entirely different from what is called the philosophy of history.” He adds that the philosophies of history like those of Hegel, Comte, and Marx were “adaptations of the Enlightenment’s idea of progress.” Curiously, Mises states that the Enlightenment’s doctrine of human progress “was an adaptation of the Christian philosophy of salvation [as] the Enlightenment altered this scheme in order to make it agree with its scientific outlook.”

or, as Comte would put it, retrograde, the Enlightenment was progressive in the sense of a belief in and promotion of social progress, including the “progressive technical domination of nature”¹⁸ (Adorno 1991). As Weber implies, pessimistic and retrograde medievalism – which is what the “Dark Middle Ages” also meant – incorporated not only traditional Catholicism with its usual pessimism or skepticism about humans and society. It also did originally Protestantism, notably what he describes as the “gloomy doctrine of Calvinism” in continental Europe and “pessimistically inclined” Puritanism in Great Britain and America. Mises and Mannheim may add that conservatism or romanticism, as medieval traditionalism turned unduly “self-conscious” in witnessing nascent liberalism, re-displayed traditional pessimistic and reactionary views in adverse reaction to the optimism and progressivism of the Enlightenment, seeking to reverse the course of social history back into the “fabulous golden age of the past.”

In historical terms, the Enlightenment and liberalism generally inherited and reinforced the optimistic and progressive ideas and tendencies of the Renaissance. By contrast, romanticism and post-Enlightenment conservatism inherited the pessimism, darkness and anti-progressivism, viz. religious fundamentalism, of medieval traditionalism, including its Catholic and Protestant versions. In this sense, modern liberalism is via the Enlightenment the true heir of the optimistic and humanist Renaissance, while conservatism, through romanticism, is the genuine legatee of pessimistic, dark and anti-humanistic medievalism, including both traditional Catholicism and conservative Protestantism, notably “gloomy” European Calvinism and “pessimistically inclined” English-American Puritanism. To that extent, the Enlightenment and liberalism as a whole has late- or post-medieval roots in terms of optimism and progressivism, but not, as often supposed, in the Protestant Reformation due to its typical pessimism, anti-humanism and even, as Weber suggests, anti-progressivism apparently inherited from the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages” as

¹⁸ Adorno (1991) adds that contrary to the initial aims of the Enlightenment, in modern capitalism, enlightenment “becomes mass deception and is turned into a means for fettering consciousness”, in particular that “the total effect of the culture industry is one of anti-enlightenment”. In his view, this exemplifies the dark side of what he and other critical theorists from the Frankfurt school call, following Hegel (Habermas 2001), the dialectic of enlightenment, specifically the capitalist subversion, degeneration or exploitation of the original Enlightenment and its ideals.

well as its, as Pareto stresses, hostility to and attack against the Renaissance to the point of halting it.

In sum, to understand inherent liberal optimism and progressivism necessitates reconsidering the optimistic and progressive Enlightenment as the true genesis of liberalism and in extension its prelude, the Renaissance. Alternatively, understanding typical conservative pessimism and anti-progressivism presupposes taking into account pessimistic, “dark” and regressive medievalism, including its Catholic and Protestant renditions, as the prototype and source of conservatism. The ensuing reconsiders some aspects of the Enlightenment that are particularly relevant for classical and contemporary liberalism. For example, recall, sociologists identify rationalism, secularism and materialism, as well as liberal-democratic republicanism, as the “driving forces” of the French Enlightenment (Delanty 2000: 29).

The Enlightenment and Rationalism

In intellectual terms, the Enlightenment was a social philosophy and sociology of what Weber calls rationalism or the process of rationalization in society, as manifested in its confidence in and emphasis on human reason and rationality. It did so in an initial liberal revolution and/or reform overriding irrational and anti-human medievalism, as the term “Dark Middle Ages” signifies. In so doing, it caused a virulent, tenacious and even perpetual adverse reaction by post- and anti-Enlightenment conservatism. The latter almost invariably tried to revive or preserve medieval irrationalism and anti-humanism through a permanent conservative counter-revolution and anti-liberal “holy war”, as exemplified by Pareto calls the “Roman [Vatican] theocracy” with its Holy Inquisition and its “papal struggles with liberalism” (Burns 1990), Cromwell-Winthrop’s crusades against “infidels” in old and New England (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000; Munch 2001), and by neo-conservative culture and other wars on liberal values and activities as “un-American” in America and beyond. For example, the European Enlightenment’s rationalism was expressed and embodied in Bacon’s empiricism, Condorcet’s social progressivism, Montesquieu political rationalization, Comte’s scientific positivism and Kant’s moral universalism, all these being prefigured or inspired by the basically rationalistic, humanistic and progressive Renaissance of De Vinci and Copernicus.

By contrast, medieval Catholic and Protestant irrationalism was manifested in various superstitions such as the belief in the existence and exorcism of “witches”, and the theological condemnation of astronomy (heliocentric theory), biology and virtually all physical and social science in favor of what Pareto calls the “scientific errors of the Bible” (including the “sun-revolves-around-the-earth” dogma and creationism) through theocratic repression like the Holy Inquisition’s burning of heretics and Puritan witch-trials in America. In turn, medievalist irrationalism’s conservative extension or revival is manifest in US religious fundamentalism’s persisting attacks on biological evolutionism via “embarrassing Monkey Trial[s]” (Boles 1999) and scientific rationalism overall, from the late 19th to the early 21st century (Martin 2002). In particular, the French Enlightenment is often described as a “celebration of reason and progress”, including the “victory of science over religion and ordinary knowledge” (Delanty 2000: 29). This is in contrast to medieval Catholicism and conservative Protestantism typified with the exact opposite, the conversion and sacrifice of all science, culture and humans to the servant and instrument of theology, religion and theocracy.

In the sense of “reason and progress”, what Weber hails as Western rationalism or societal rationalization is primarily the creation and project of the Enlightenment and liberalism overall. In turn, it is only secondarily the result of other factors like ascetic Protestantism and what he denotes as its “elective affinity” or “inner relationship” – yet increasingly disputed as a “beloved myth” (cf. Delacroix and Nielsen 2001; also Cohen 1980) – with modern capitalism as its supposedly unintended aggregate outcome. Counterfactually, if ascetic Protestantism such as Calvinism and Puritanism were really rationalistic in the general sociological sense of an appreciation, promotion and use of human reason and intelligence, as opposed to supra-human “intelligent design” (Bendix 1984; Merton 1968), and its capacity for social progress, the Enlightenment or liberalism would have been a redundant functional substitute (duplicate), so probably never emerged in the form it did. Yet, as Mises (1950) stresses, most Enlightenment philosophers, economists and sociologists, including Locke (Zaret 1989), Hume, especially Voltaire, Montesquieu,¹⁹

¹⁹ For example, Pareto cites Montesquieu description of Christian and other theology as “doubly intelligible by the matter which is treated and by manner of treating it”.

Condorcet, and Kant (Bauman 2001; Beck 2000; Habermas 2001; Munch 1981), “attacked” 18th century Protestant, just as Catholic, churches precisely because of their irrationalism, anti-humanism and other illiberal attributes. At any rate, Mises suggests that the triumph of liberalism as a philosophy and social system, distinguished from, even opposed, though sometimes connected “fortuitously” (Zaret 1989), to Protestantism, “produced all those phenomena which in their totality are called modern Western civilization.”

Moreover, Protestantism may have been instead a reversal, disruption, or pause rather than, as often supposed, a pinnacle in the historical development of Western rationalism. This is what Popper (1973: 302) implies by tracing Western rationalism’s evolution in a sequence from classical Greek civilization (“the Great Generation”, especially Socrates) to original Christianity (until its official recognition by Constantine) and to the Renaissance and to the Enlightenment, conspicuously and probably not accidentally, given its anti-Renaissance antagonism, omitting the Protestant Reformation.

Even if ascetic Protestantism, assuming that Weber is correct, has been a major factor and stage in the emergence and development of modern capitalism (yet see Collins 1997; Cohen 1980; Delacroix and Nielsen 2001), this does not necessarily apply to its relation to the evolution, let alone the genesis, of Western rationalism and rationalization in the sociological and secular sense of an emphasis on human reason, dignity and autonomy and social progress. Even if the first is true or paradigmatic, recall that Weber admonishes that modern capitalism is just a special, economic case of rationalism or what Parsons²⁰ (1937: xiii) calls in a Weberian vein the “partial ‘capitalistic’ version” of societal rationalization. Moreover, as Weber emphasizes, albeit Parsons somewhat downplays, capitalism is not necessarily and always associated with, but often disassociated from, non-economic, including political-legal and cultural-artistic, rationalism or rationalization such as liberal-secular democracy, codes of law, “rational foundations” of art, religion, science, morals, etc. Thus, Weber registers that the Western history/process of rationalism “shows a development which by no means follows parallel lines in the

²⁰ Curiously, Parsons employs this apparently Weberian expression in critical reference to Marx. Parsons (1937: xiii) states that Marx “was the apostle of transcending the limitations of the partial ‘capitalistic’ version of rationalization through its completion in socialism” and approvingly cites the view of some conservative sociologists (e.g. Nisbet) that “this was to carry the doctrines of the Enlightenment to a drastic conclusion.”

various departments of life" and that it is an "historical concept which covers a whole world of different things", stressing the divergence between legal-cultural and economic rationalizations, viz. the rational "Roman law of late antiquity", as well as "worldly rational philosophy", and modern capitalism in Europe and Great Britain.²¹

Simply, Enlightenment-based rationalism and liberalism overall incorporates, but is not exhausted by and thus cannot be reduced to, the rational "spirit" of modern capitalism as just one of its elements, and consequently, in the Weberian scenario, the supposed economic rationality of "ascetic Protestantism" such as continental Calvinism and its Anglo-Saxon derivative Puritanism. Even if ascetic Protestantism was economically and, for that matter, theologically, super-rational and liberal in the Weberian sense of modern capitalism, Popper's scheme implies that it was also anti-rational and anti-liberal in non-economic terms, i.e. emphasis on human reason, progress, liberty, and democracy. This is a contrast, if not a contradiction, that Weber somewhat overlooked or downplayed by emphasizing the capitalist-like "rationalism" and "liberalism" of Calvinism and Puritanism, fused with its political and cultural irrationalism or anti-liberalism expressed in what he calls its "unexamined tyranny".

Most important, the above sequence indicates and confirms that the Enlightenment, not the Reformation, was, albeit not the very genesis, the highest point, along with modern science as primarily its product and project, in the development of Western rationalism since classical, Greek-Roman civilization. Alternatively, it indicates that the Protestant Reformation was a sort of non-entity and missing phase ("no show") rather than, as usually supposed, an integral and even crucial factor and stage in this rationalistic development. As hinted, within a modified or substituted Weberian framework, this curious

²¹ Weber suggests that "the rationalization of private law, for instance, if it is thought of as a logical simplification and rearrangement of the content of the law, was achieved in the highest hitherto known degree in the Roman law of late antiquity. But it remained most backward in some of the countries with the highest degree of economic rationalization, notably in England, where the Renaissance of Roman Law was overcome by the power of the great legal corporations, while it has always retained its supremacy in the Catholic countries of Southern Europe". Also, in his view, "the worldly rational philosophy of the eighteenth century did not find favour alone or even principally in the countries of highest capitalistic development", citing Voltaire's doctrines as the "common property of broad upper, and what is practically more important, middle-class groups in the Romance Catholic countries."

outcome was in essence “pre-destined” by what Weber calls the “God of Calvinism”, i.e. the Calvinist dogma of Divine predestination, absolute transcendence and omnipotence. It determined by or path-dependent on the historical fact, as Pareto emphasizes, the Reformation had opposed and even “halted” the Renaissance as a salient factor and stage in the development of Western rationalism, liberalism and humanism.

At this point, the Enlightenment reappears as an attempt to remove or neutralize this anti-rationalist brake or stop-sign that the Protestant Reformation, especially Calvinism and Puritanism, put on the rationalist-liberal and artistic-humanist Renaissance, originally in Northern Europe, eventually and most enduringly in Great Britain and especially America. In passing, this halting or reversing of the Renaissance by Protestantism accounts for what Pareto, Weber and other sociologists observe as a kind of artistic backwardness, regression and virtual emptiness in these countries, persisting via the link between the continuing depreciation or neglect of art and the pervasiveness of Puritan values and institutions in contemporary America (Scitovsky 1972; Throsby 1994). Thus, analysts observe that in contemporary America “what’s wrong with the arts is what’s wrong with society” (Scitovsky 1972) continuously pervaded and dominated by anti-artistic Puritanism.

The above helps explain why, as Mises comments, the Enlightenment philosophers and sociologists “attacked” supposedly rational, individualistic and liberal, compared to Catholicism, Protestantism, notably Calvinism and Puritanism, during the 18th century. Notably, in Popper’s view, the historical sequence of Western rationalism is also the history and quest of freedom and a free open society, and to that extent of liberalism as the ideal and social system of liberty. In his words, the stages of the sequence of rationalism are “parts of an often interrupted movement, the efforts of men to free themselves, to break out of the cage of the closed society, and to form an open society” (Popper 1973: 302). If so, then the Enlightenment, if not the beginning, was the pinnacle of a long-standing process of attempts at liberation or “liberalization”, so liberalism as defined since classical civilization, with both Catholic medievalism and Protestant conservatism conspicuously, but predictably, “missing in action” or “excusing themselves” from this evolution.

As regards these missing links, Popper and others would suggest that Constantine’s institutional transformation of early Christianity into an official religion and theocracy was the extant reason for this voluntary “absence

of leave" both of Catholic medievalism and indirectly Protestant conservatism from such liberalization or liberation, thus effectively ushering in the anti-rational, illiberal and theocratic "Dark Middle Ages". In this sense, the Enlightenment really attacked and eventually transcended the "Dark Middle Ages" historically ushered in or heralded by this institutionalization of early Christianity into Pareto's Roman and Byzantine theocracy, yet extended and revived, rather than ended as usually supposed, by the Protestant Reformation from the 16th to the late 18th century. Hypothetically, if the Protestant Reformation, especially the oppressive "disciplinary" revolutions (Gorski 1993) of Calvinism in Europe and Puritanism in Great Britain and America, did not try to extend or revive anti-rational and illiberal medievalism for so long, but instead, as naively assumed, promoted secular rationalism (not just capitalism) and liberalism versus Catholicism defined by opposite attributes, the 18th century Enlightenment would have hardly "attacked" Protestantism and been even functionally redundant in these terms, so perhaps not happened as one of crucial historical episodes (Giddens 1984).

However, the Enlightenment, at least in Mises' and implicitly Popper's interpretation, was an attack on, rather than, as usually assumed, an extension and sequel of, the Protestant Reformation. It was so by defining or perceiving Protestantism, at least "disciplinary" Calvinism and Puritanism, as anti-rational and illiberal, notably "totalistic" (Eisenstadt 1965) and theocratic, with its further depreciation and condemnation of human reason, intelligence, liberty and eventually life in favor of Divine "intelligent design" and rule on the theological, specifically Calvinist, anti-humanistic grounds that, as Weber comments, humans "exist for the sake of God" (Bendix 1977), not conversely. To reiterate, the Enlightenment emerged and functioned as a sort of Schumpeter's "creative destruction" of the Catholic "Dark Middle Ages" and their extension or revival by the Protestant Reformation, destroying the old anti-rational, illiberal and theocratic social structures and creating the new rationalist, liberal and secular, with its "faith in pure reason and in the social progress that rationality is supposed to engender" (Marcus and Fischer 1986).

In sum, the above suggests that to fully understand the genesis and evolution of Western rationalism as well as freedom and liberal society requires understanding the Enlightenment as a rationalist and liberal movement and the major factor and stage in this long process starting with classical

civilization, abruptly interrupted or reversed by the “Dark Middle Ages”, and impeded, or not greatly aided by, by the Protestant Reformation. In comparative terms, the Enlightenment provided intrinsic and systematic sources and connections to Western rationalism and liberalism, while those of other factors were absent, as with Catholic and Orthodox Christian medievalism, or merely accidental, as by late-medieval Protestantism like Calvinist Puritanism (Zaret 1989).

The Enlightenment and Integral Liberty

In essence, the Enlightenment was a doctrine and cultural movement and revolution advocating and promoting integral, holistic liberty as the defining principle and institution of liberal society and modernity. If, as Mises (1953: 414) puts it, “all the marvelous achievements of Western civilization are fruits grown on the tree of liberty” and liberal society, then this tree was planted or at least, if it already had been by the Renaissance and classical democracy, most carefully, completely and consistently cultivated by the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was not only an idea, process and movement to “enlighten” people from the experienced and perceived “darkness” of the Middle Ages, but also to “free” them from their economic serfdom like feudalism, political despotism, including royal absolutism claiming Divine rights, and theocracy exemplified by both Vatican and Calvinist-Puritan theocracies. Simply, it was an attempt to “enlighten” through an effort to “liberate”, just as conversely.

The preceding indicates that rationalism and integral liberty were intertwined and mutually reinforcing in the Enlightenment and all classical liberalism, contrary to “libertarian” anti-rationalistic critics like Hayek (1955) et al. (Infantino 2003), who attack Enlightenment-based rationalist ideas and practices as “constructivist” leading to “collectivist” planning as the “road to serfdom”, with Comte’s positivism and “collectivism” as a major target. (To do justice to him, as implied, Mises is a salient exception to this Hayekian “libertarian” anti-Enlightenment antagonism, instead extolling the Enlightenment versus its anti-rationalist and illiberal adversaries, which more than anything else, including laissez-faire, makes him truly a classical liberal, as described by his disciple Hayek who deviates from his teacher at this point.)

In short, the Enlightenment's ideals and aims were "liberalizing" (Anderson 1991) and so liberating, just as rationalizing, in mutual association and reinforcement, or simply synergy.

Hence, the Enlightenment and consequently classical liberalism created, promoted and epitomized what contemporary liberals call the "natural alliance" of human reason and liberty, while establishing the "natural antipathy between belief formation and coercion", on the premise that the freedom of action is only possible if humans possess a "rational understanding" of their actions (Reiman 1997: 8). In this view, a case in point is the classical liberalism, combined and allied with rationalism, of the Scottish Enlightenment (Razeeen 2002: 2).

Another case in point is predictably the French Enlightenment, in which, as US conservatives remark with disapproval, the "accent was on freedom of form and spirit, on feeling and originality, with a sympathy for primitive nature. Gone were such traditional religious doctrines as man born in sin facing judgment before an omnipotent God" (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 27). For example, they lament the fact that "Rousseau's freedom was a release from God, culture, authority, and any kind of restraint [so] Deity, history and community – the nametags of conservatism – were anathema to Rousseau"²² (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 74). Predictably, as typical for US and other conservatives, including fascists, they claim that Enlightenment liberal-rationalist vision was "flawed" and "culminated" in the French Revolution, and denounce the "mistaken promises of modern utopian ideologies" (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 66). Also, contemporary sociologists (Smelser 1992) point to the "special utopian significance of rationalism in the French Enlightenment". However, as Mannheim (1986) implies, what is construed and condemned as "utopian" or the unrealistic "principle of hope" (Lemert 1999) by anti-liberal conservatism – which, as he puts it, "has no utopia" in favor of transcendental heaven (Wuthnow 1998) – is an actual or potential reality, so realistic, for liberalism and within liberal society and modernity. Notably, while what Mannheim (1986: 91) calls the principle of liberty or "inner freedom" is

²² Collins (2000) comments that the French Encyclopedia was a "center of network creativity" and in particular that "Rousseau finds his niche by critiquing Enlightenment progress and rationality; his sentimentalist defense of nondogmatic religion; new turf of antimodernist modernism in field of intellectual oppositions."

regarded as utopian and, as he emphasizes, attacked by conservatism, it is defined as real by liberalism and eventually realized in liberal society and modernity. To that extent, if US and other conservatives describe and dismiss liberalism as “utopian” in virtue of its ideal of liberty or principle of hope, then this is an unwitting compliment to liberal society and modernity rather than its, as intended, relegation to the realm of “mistaken promises.” At the minimum, if liberal society and modernity is, by virtue of that ideal, a mere utopia in the sense of a never-realizable principle of hope and “rosy” optimism, then US and other conservatism is an anti- or dystopia in the meaning or form of Orwellian authoritarian, notably theocratic, “heaven” (Lemert 1999; Wuthnow 1998), yet for conservative masters from Winthrop to Reaganite “rigid extremists”, while for others, as Tawney (1962: 267) observes for Puritanism, “making their life a hell” in this world.

In general, the French and European Enlightenment as a whole constituted a fusion or alliance of liberalism and rationalism as well as secularism, the principle of integral liberty with the emphasis on human reason, social progressivism and secular humanism (Delanty 2000; Habermas 2001). Both US conservatives and liberals distinguish the French-European from the American Enlightenment, as largely secondary and derivative, if not non-entity, compared with its illiberal theocratic adversaries like Puritanism (Munch 2001) and other Protestant sectarianism (Lipset 1996), during most of American history, despite or rather because of the atypical (Archer 2001) liberal and enlightened ideas of Jefferson during his Paris years and inspiration, Madison and their followers.

As a particular dimension of its principle of integral liberty, the Enlightenment postulated moral liberty and universalism, i.e. universalistic morality. In ethical terms, the Enlightenment was the ideal and project of what modern liberals call “universal moral liberalism”, epitomized in the “two great” formulations by Locke and Kant, understood as the “right of all human beings to freedom to direct their lives based on their possession of reason” (Reiman 1997: 1–6). Hence, the Enlightenment established and promoted what Parsons (1951) and other sociologists (Habermas 2001) call moral universalism, egalitarianism and inclusion in the sense of Kantian universalistic ethics (Caldwell 1997; Munch 1981) and Jefferson’s “liberty for all” in morality and so civil society (private life). Its universalism substantively differed from and superseded moral and other particularism, anti-egalitarianism and exclu-

sion, which denies and subverts this universalistic principle by favoring some as “more equal” and excluding others in this and all respects, as typical for both pre-Enlightenment medievalism and post-Enlightenment conservatism, including fascism. In this view, a special case of its intrinsic fusion and “natural alliance” of rationalism and liberalism, i.e. its principle and institution of integral liberty, consists in that the Enlightenment links its “aspiration to moral universality” with, specifically found universal freedom in morality on, its emphasis on reason or rationality as humans’ “distinctive capacity” (Reiman 1997: 3). As other contemporary liberals note, the Enlightenment fuses moral universalism in the sense of universal liberty in morality and all social life with rationalism, by founding the former on the latter²³ (Patell 2001: 191).

Generally, the Enlightenment recognizes and celebrates humans as free moral agents, endowing them with freedom, autonomy, dignity and responsibility, i.e. self-determination and self-realization, in morality (Habermas 1989). In particular, as mentioned, Kant is usually considered both by liberals and their conservative (and post-modern and other) critics the “most perceptive among the Enlighteners and the staunchest advocate of the “free agent” concept” (Bauman 2001: 62) in morality and other human behavior.

In turn, medievalist religious traditionalism and its “self-reflective” mutant conservatism engage in a systematic opposition to the Enlightenment and its Kantian principle of universal moral liberty, in the manner or reminiscent of what Weber calls methodical “sanctification” in Calvinist Puritanism (Methodism) as the process of creation and, as Comte puts it, reign of Puritan saints, like their Catholic predecessors, claiming Divine Rights to rule a la Cromwell as the self-proclaimed “Lord of the Domain” of Great Britain (Gorski 2000) and Winthrop et al. as self-declared Providential masters of New England (Munch 2001). Thus, contemporary liberals observe that, like European medievalism, American Puritan-rooted conservatism tends to deny moral agency and liberty, so responsibility and maturity – e.g. the 21-year legal limit for alcohol consumption and “dry” states (Merton 1968: 133) – to individuals by trying to “save” (Terchek 1997) them from themselves and their immoral

²³ Patell (2001: 191) proposes that the “universalism and rationalism of the Enlightenment must not be abandoned altogether in the favor of cultural relativism and absolute pluralism”, as presumably observed in the US academia.

errors like “sins” and “vices” construed and severely punished as crimes, also exemplified by “drug war crimes” in America (Reuters 2005).

Thus, both European medievalism and American conservatism seek to exclude most people from the exercise of personal moral freedom instead generously afforded, respectively, to medieval masters like sacred and secular feudal powers in a “holly alliance”, and to US conservative rulers, from Winthrop et al. to “Bible Belt” would-be theocrats. In the second case, this is a moral equivalent of the neo-conservative or “libertarian” economic formula of “free enterprise” for capital and repression for labor (Myles 1994), Anarchy for some and Leviathan for others, in the economy.

The Enlightenment also established moral universalism in the sense of a universalistic morality, again exemplified in Kant’s categorical imperative, valid or ethically, as distinguished from legally, obligatory for all human agents regardless of their social characteristics, including religious affiliation as well as political power. As contemporary liberals stress, Enlightenment-based universalistic morality, “by its very nature, recognizes no limits; it subjects even political action to moral scrutiny, although not so directly as our personal relationships”²⁴ (Habermas 1989: 41). In virtue of its universalistic morality, the Enlightenment rejects or transcends, rather than, as often supposed, continues Machiavellianism in politics and society overall, as indicated and symbolized by the sharp contrast between Kant’s and Machiavelli’s, even Hume’s and other utilitarian, ethical conceptions, also exemplifying such differences of political liberalism and democracy versus medievalism and despotism in general.

Alternatively, post-Enlightenment conservatism arising as renewed and “self-conscious” medievalism, including Machiavellianism, condemned and attacked the Enlightenment as the agent provocateur to the effect of provoking conservative reactions and counter-revolutions against its moral universalism and egalitarianism in the sense of both liberty and morality “for all”. Both European and American conservatism did so in an attempt to revert to the “golden” medieval past of ethical particularism, anti-egalitarianism and exclusion, a sort of revival of the antinomies and invidious distinctions

²⁴ Habermas (1989: 41) states that “in an extreme case this kind of [universal] moralization can even encourage terrorist actions – so runs an old anti-Enlightenment theme”, reappearing in US and European neo-conservatism.

between masters and servants (Beck 2000), saints and sinners, typically intertwined (viz. Puritan-like and other saints as masters, and conversely). This has been conservatism's consistent anti-Enlightenment pattern (Nisbet 1966) or "method in the madness", as in both the Vatican Church's continuing attacks on liberalism (Burns 1990) and American religious fundamentalism (Smith 2000), ever since the aftermath of the Enlightenment. And it has remained so by the late 20th and early 21st century, as suggested by the observation that the universal moralization and "critical judgments of a universalist Enlightenment morality, are seen as a threat" (Habermas 1989: 61) to the societal status quo, notably Machiavellian power politics, just as the "motivational bases" of modern capitalism, especially by religious-political neo-conservatism in America.

The above means that, just as medievalism defined the Enlightenment, American and other neo-conservatism, including neo-fascism, redefines and condemns moral universalism, liberalism or egalitarianism, i.e. both universal moral liberty and universalistic morality "for all", as a mortal sin, evil and danger to its own political dominance and eventually existence. For in a liberal society and modernity with what Hayek (1960) calls the "freedom to act wrongly" in moral terms, i.e. the Enlightenment-based free choice between virtue and vice, sainthood and sin (Van Dyke 1995), conservatism, notably its moralistic and religious type, lacks almost any existential rationale and is predestined to extinction ("gone with the wind"), so its adherents eventually to become an "extinct species".

In short, in a free society and time, conservatism eventually becomes what Weber calls *caput mortuum* (effectively dead) in reference to the religious (Protestant) underpinnings of modern capitalism. In fact, he implicitly predicts such a fate for social conservatism within liberal-capitalist modernity by observing that the "religious root of modern economic humanity is dead; today the [Calvinist] concept of the calling is a *caput mortuum* in the world." In turn, Weber's former colleague Hayek (1960), while evidently extolling the "freedom to act wrongly" as the condition of "moral merit", overlooks that this liberty, i.e. free choice between right and wrong, is the element and legacy of the Enlightenment, notably the Kantian principle of ethical universalism and free agency (Bauman 2001; Beck 2000; Habermas 2001; Munch 1981), thus by implication of its "constructivist rationalism" he vehemently attacks for supposedly involving or leading to collectivism, including socialist planning

as the “road to serfdom”. Overall, Hayek (1955) et al. (e.g. Infantino 2003) commit a version of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness in that they conflate the rationalistic abuse of the Enlightenment by “socialist” and other illiberal, including fascist, forces, with its typical use and implementation by liberalism, i.e. abuses with uses of reason, including science, so pathology with normalcy in respect with rationalism. To his credit, this is a fallacy Mises,²⁵ more sociologically minded and appreciative of Weber, yet usually seen as even more extreme and dogmatic than Hayek, avoids by recognizing and appreciating the Enlightenment, including what his disciple misconstrues and condemns as its “constructivist rationalism”.

At any event, as hinted, that social conservatism has become, as Germans would put it, *caput* is what that in a way has already happened in most Western European, especially Scandinavian, societies, including, as Weber and perhaps Mises would expect, Germany itself. This holds true in light of the finding that emphasis on religion, measured by church attendance, “has fallen drastically in most of the historically Catholic countries of both Western and Eastern Europe; and it has fallen even more drastically in most of the historically Protestant societies – to the point where some observers now speak of the Nordic countries as post-Christian societies” (Inglehart 2004: 17).

To that extent, in such “post-Christian” liberal societies religious and other medieval-like conservatives or theocrats have or are likely to become extinct, at least just irrelevant, extremist and ridiculous, just as their historical allies fascists, in spite of various revivals of anti-liberal conservatism and fascism. As also implied, this holds true of the Western world overall, yet predictably with the salient deviation of neo-conservative “Christian” (at least “Bible-Belt”) America identified as a “deviant case, having a much more traditional value system than any other advanced industrial society” and ranking “far below other rich societies” on the dimension of traditionalism/secularism, even reaching “levels of religiosity” (and nationalism) “comparable to those found in some developing societies” (Inglehart 2004: 15). In this view, such a striking

²⁵ In passing, it is remarkable that an American institute dedicated to Mises’ economics and sociology predicated and elaborating on, as Hayek (1941) approvingly remarked, on classical liberalism, including by implication the rationalistic Enlightenment, is located in an exemplary anti-liberal, anti-secular, and anti-Enlightenment, i.e. hyper-conservative, fundamentalist or theocratic, and anti-rationalistic (e.g. anti-evolution), part of America (Alabama).

deviation or backwardness (Amenta et al. 2001) in Enlightenment-based liberalism and secularism, and alternatively, pervasiveness and “leadership” in counter-Enlightenment conservatism, is what truly defines and perpetuates, more than anything else, including the supposedly all-American values and institutions of liberty, democracy and individualism (Lipset and Marks 2000), the “phenomenon of American Exceptionalism” (Inglehart 2004: 15).

Hence, to that extent that it condemns universal moral liberty, including the freedom of choice between virtue and its opposite, as “evil”, “sin”, or “threat”, US neo-conservatism only continues and reenacts an “old anti-Enlightenment theme” (Habermas 1989: 41) running from the post-medieval and conservative antagonism against the Enlightenment in the 18th century. This then situates neo-conservative anti-liberal culture wars in an extant historical point of origin, context and stage involving, for example, New England’s Puritan theocracy and its “Salem with witches”, the anti-Enlightenment evangelical “Great Awakenings” and their “Monkey Trials”, etc. In turn, the historical pattern perhaps predicts also their final destination and eventual outcome in the form of what US religious conservatives create or design as illiberal “faith-based” America.

The Enlightenment and Societal Modernism

As noted, modern Western society, i.e. what can be called societal modernism in the sense of an opposite of Weber’s economic and other traditionalism, is primarily the creation or project of the Enlightenment as the doctrine, movement and revolution of liberal modernity par excellence. For most early European liberal and other philosophers, economists and sociologists, including Kant, Hegel, Smith, Voltaire, Condorcet, Saint Simon and Comte, modernity, including modern natural and social science²⁶ (Delanty 2000), was a “child” of the 18th century Enlightenment (Habermas 2001: 133).

Notably, the concept or term “social science” was reportedly a “creation of the French [rather than Scottish] Enlightenment and reflected an entirely different conception of modernity and of knowledge” (Delanty 2000: 28) by comparison with pre-Enlightenment times, including by implication the Protestant

²⁶ Delanty (2000: 28) comments that the 17-volume *Encyclopedia* (from 1751–72, edited by Diderot) “epitomized the Enlightenment”.

Reformation, not to mention Catholic medievalism. In particular, most sociologists agree that, as epitomized by Saint Simon and Comte as well as what Durkheim calls sociological “forerunners” like Montesquieu and Rousseau, “modern sociology arose in the course of a critical encounter, first with the Enlightenment [and the French Revolution] of the 18th century” (Zeitlin 1981: v). The same can probably be said of modern economics since Adam Smith in respect to the Enlightenment, though minus the French Revolution. This is what Keynes implies by attributing the *laissez-faire* economic doctrine to certain political philosophers in France (e.g. Marquis d’Argenson about 1751) rather than, as commonly assumed, early British economists, including Smith himself. For example, Keynes (1972: 275–8) observes that the “individualism of [Enlightenment] political philosophers pointed to *laissez-faire*” and even that the “popularity of the doctrine must be laid at the door of political philosophers of the day [not] of the political economists”. In short, *laissez-faire* was just an economic dimension of what he calls the Enlightenment-based “philosophical doctrine that government has no right to interfere”. This confirms that *laissez-faire* economics and policy, so modern capitalism as an economic system premised on that doctrine (or myth), is a product or special case of the Enlightenment and liberalism overall, rather than conversely as libertarian economists (perhaps with the exception of Mises) are inclined to think due to their market absolutism (Hodgson 1999; Tilman 2001).

Also, contemporary sociologists stress that the “concept of “the modern” stands in the tradition of the Enlightenment [and] places as its prime value the freedom of the individual (Giddens 2000: 14). Most sociologists agree that the project of societal modernism, specifically liberal modernity “derives from the Enlightenment [though] increasingly being called into question and rendered problematic (Smart 2000: 447), especially by post-modern and neo-Marxist, just as conservative, critics and skeptics. Particularly, in some views, the French Enlightenment “laid the basis of an enduring conception of modernity as a discourse of knowledge and power” (Delanty 2000: 29).

Alternatively, pre-modernity, what Weber and Mannheim call economic, political and cultural traditionalism, notably medievalism, was the original nemesis of and the eventual “bad loser” – though subsequently resurrected from the “dead” as conservatism in anti-Enlightenment reaction to reemerge as an immediate and remain a perennial antagonist – to the Enlightenment. In this sense, the modernist Enlightenment has always faced the substantively

same opponent albeit in different forms and disguises, i.e. traditionalism initially as prior medievalism to be eventually transcended and subsequently in the somewhat “cosmetically” changed face of religious-political conservatism opposing and itself seeking to overcome its liberalism through perennial anti-Enlightenment holy crusades since the 18th century through the 21st century, as exemplified by neo-conservative anti-liberal “culture wars” in America during the 1980–2000s.

Hence, negatively defined, the Enlightenment was an ideology, movement and revolution of anti-traditionalism especially in religious, cultural and political terms in an initial challenge to medieval, Catholic and Protestant traditionalism. Yet it was subject to a subsequent and often successful, as in America during most of its history, counter-attack by conservatism seeking a return to *ex ante* medievalism, especially hierarchy, absolutism, fundamentalism and theocracy. Thus, contemporary liberals comment that liberal modernism or reason was “able to devalue and overcome tradition” solely in the “name of enlightenment” (Habermas 2001: 133). Further, Weber implies that the latter as an intellectual process or outcome is only possible through anti- or non-traditionalism in stating that the “ability to free oneself” from common tradition is an act or kind of “liberal enlightenment”. He suggests that this in particular holds true of such freeing from what he calls sacred tradition, i.e. religious traditionalism and orthodoxy. The latter is exemplified not only, as he seems to think, by medievalist Catholicism but also, as Pareto and other sociologists (Habermas 2001; Tawney 1962) suggest, by what Weber himself calls sectarian Protestantism (Lipset 1996), especially its “iron”, “hotter”, disciplinary or, in Simmel’s word, orthodox types like Calvinism and its subtype Puritanism (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 1993; Munch 2001; Zaret 1989).

At this juncture, the Enlightenment was the ideology and revolution of liberation from religious traditionalism through, or in virtue of, its anti- or non-traditionalism – though not, as medievalists and conservatives accuse or impute, atheism – in respect to religion as a supreme form and realm of sacred tradition and life, as Weber and Durkheim stress. Thus, contemporary sociologists observe that the Enlightenment “has shaken the foundations of religious life [and] served to show that the principle of subjectivity is incapable of regenerating the unifying force of religion within the medium of reason [while] religious orthodoxy [reacted] in its mindless defensive battle against [it]” (Habermas 2001: 135). This suggests that it challenged, transcended, and

perhaps rendered religious and political traditionalism what Weber calls *caput mortuum* (“presumed dead”) or substantively an alien element and anachronistic survival within Western liberal and rationalist modernity. In particular, the French Enlightenment ushered in, promoted and celebrated such liberal modernity that was “triumphant over tradition” and characterized by secularism expressed in the “victory of science over religion” (Delanty 2000: 29). Thus, the French Enlightenment “proclaimed the denunciation of religion as an ideological ‘illusion’” (Deutschmann 2001). As Pareto remarks, the Enlightenment represented by Voltaire and the Encyclopedists through its “humanitarian skepticism” inspired and thus “weakened” medieval upper classes and their rule, and in that sense the French Revolution was really its “daughter”.

Predictably, religious orthodoxy’s “mindless defensive battle” against the Enlightenment encompassed not only reactionary Catholicism but also what Simmel calls orthodox and Comte retrograde Protestantism, like Calvinism in Europe, Puritanism in Great Britain and America. For both orthodox Catholicism and Protestantism sought and often, especially or increasingly the second as with Puritanism in America, succeeded to resurrect from what Mannheim calls the “dead past” medieval traditionalism in religion and theology, including fundamentalism and theocracy. The “mindless” battle or reaction against the Enlightenment and liberalism generally has continued, even expanded and reinforced, especially and seemingly surprisingly in America as the “new nation”, through what Spencer calls offensive anti-liberal “holy wars”, aggressive crusades by religious-political conservatism.

At this juncture, for example, aggressive conservative culture and violent wars against liberalism raging in America during most of its history (Lipset 1996), function as, to paraphrase Clausewitz’s definition of war, the continuation or reenactment of religious orthodoxy’s initial policy (“mindless defensive battle”) against the Enlightenment in the 18th and 19th centuries by “other means”. These include government coercion, repression and Draconian punishment to the point of mass and permanent imprisonment and death through anti-liberal “tough on crime” laws and institutions. These are exemplified by the admittedly repressive, irrational and futile war on drugs (with its Draconian and so unreasonable “three-strike” laws), as a sort of neo-conservative functional equivalent or revival (apart from Bible-Belt “dry” states and the increased federal legal limit for alcohol consumption) of Pro-

hibition seemingly (Friedman 1997) replicating the latter's irrationality, futility and dismal failure (Merton 1968; Simon 1976). This and other cultural or temperance anti-liberal wars in America indicate that US illiberal conservatives have learned nothing from this and other American history of, as Pareto notices, enforcing "morality by law".

And, as hinted, this is the history of an anti-liberal and anti-democratic pattern or "method in the madness" rationalized as or reminiscent of Weber's Calvinist-Puritan methodical doctrine and practice of "sanctification". Historically, to recall, it ranges from Puritan New England and its "Salem with witches" in the 17th century through the fundamentalist Great Awakenings and their embarrassing "Monkey Trials" from the 18th to the 20th centuries to McCarthyism and its own "witch-trials" to neo-conservatism and its "heaven" (Lemert 1999), the evangelical "Bible Belt" of the 21st century (Bauman 1997; Boles 1999). Hence, it is difficult and even impossible to fully comprehend and just make sense of these seemingly incomprehensible and admittedly futile (Bell 2002) conservative anti-liberal culture wars in America without considering the historical moment that the Enlightenment rendered medievalist theology, religion and theocracy, i.e. the "Dark Middle Ages", a sort of *caput mortuum* and religious Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy's consequent "mindless" battle to resurrect this "dead past". And often the latter has succeeded in this battle or holy war since, as shown by what US conservatives celebrate as the resurrection of religious and other conservatism in America "from the dead" as against liberalism and thus its Enlightenment sources during the 1980–2000s (Dunn and Woodard 1996; Heineman 1998).

The above indicates that the Enlightenment was the progenitor of liberal modernity as its wanted "child" (Habermas 2001) challenging and transcending medieval traditionalism, including sacred tradition in the form of theocratic religion, and subsequently or consequently the agent provocateur of religious-political conservatism as the unwanted, anti-Enlightenment product and the sequel or revival of medievalism, including theocracy, exclusion, hierarchy and despotism. Both liberal societal modernism and illiberal post-medieval conservatism, including their culture and other wars in America and elsewhere, can be better understood by considering the historical circumstance that they were outcomes of the liberal-modernist Enlightenment, albeit the first as an intended effect, and the second as an unintended counter-effect in the sense of Mannheim's immediate antagonism.

Such a contrasting dualism of outcomes, liberal modernity and retrograde conservatism, so the project of liberty, enlightening and reason and the frequent product of illiberty, darkness and irrationality, thus epitomizes what constructive or sympathetic sociological critics, following Hegel,²⁷ identify as the “dialectic of Enlightenment” (Horkheimer and Adorno 1993). Yet, even these positive (as distinguished from destructive) critiques seem to overlook or downplay that the second outcome was due to the religious-conservative “mindless” war against and anti-democratic subversion of, and perhaps capitalism’s own Machiavellian abuse or manipulation of its “marriage” (Dahrendorf 1979) with, the Enlightenment or liberalism rather than intrinsic to it.

As a salient facet of its societal modernism and liberalism, the Enlightenment represented or generated cosmopolitanism as opposed to localism, parochialism and nationalism. It emerged as a vigorously cosmopolitan, global or open-world ideology, movement and revolution versus localist, parochial, ethnocentric, racist and closed medievalism, including its original Catholic and derived Protestant versions, as well as its extension or revival in conservatism. In this sense, the Enlightenment was the ideal of an open, inclusive, universalistic or cosmopolitan society (Habermas et al. 1998) in geographical and sociological terms. It thus contrasted to and opposed medievalism and its heir conservatism as the opposite ideal and reality of a closed, exclusionary, particularistic or parochial social order in respect to outsiders, notably foreigners. For instance, Weber observes that early American and other Puritans regarded and treated “bankers of foreign extraction” with “ethical mistrust” at best, given the Puritan persecution of out-groups like native Indians and even Quakers in New England (Baltzell 1979; Merton 1939; Munch 2001),

²⁷ According to Habermas (2001: 135), for Hegel “by putting reflection and instrumental rationality in the place of reason, the Enlightenment pursued an idolatry of reason [showing] the dialectic of Enlightenment.” In Hegel’s view, the “dialectic of Enlightenment is truncated [as] instrumental rationality is inflated into an unreasonable whole” (Habermas 2001: 141). Also, Habermas (2001: 139) comments that Weber identifies a “frozen” dialectic of Enlightenment in the form of a “destructive developmental cycle”, exemplified by an affinity between ascetic Protestantism and modern capitalism. Recall, Weber clearly and sharply distinguishes ascetic Protestantism and the Enlightenment, especially in terms of “joy of life”, optimism and social progress, all attributed to the latter in contrast to the former. In addition, Habermas (2001: 145) suggests that postmodern critiques aim “directly and unreservedly against the Enlightenment and its dialectic.”

just as the Irish Catholics (“Papists”) in Great Britain (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000).

Particularly, in geographical terms the Enlightenment arose as the ideal and project of globalized and even cosmopolitan, as opposed to national and ethnocentric, society, seemingly representing or adumbrating the concept of societal globalization. Contemporary sociologists retrieve and emphasize the European Enlightenment’s, including Kantian, original and consistent “distinction between cosmopolitanism and nationalism” (Beck 2002: 34), world citizenship and national membership. In this view, during the 18th century, the “idea of the “citizen of the world” was one of the programmatic, indeed fashionable phrases of the Enlightenment” (Beck 2000: 99). Further, other analysts point out that cosmopolitanism is historically “associated with the Enlightenment of the 18th century and its ‘impulse toward worldly breadth’” (Dicker 2003: 305).

The Enlightenment and Egalitarianism

As indicated, the Enlightenment constituted, generated or articulated egalitarianism in the sense of what Schmoller describes as the “democratic idea of equality”, “equality of rights” in society. If not inventing it, the Enlightenment most explicitly, systematically and consistently, as he²⁸ implies, formulated and promoted the idea of social equality and inclusion, i.e. egalitarianism. Specifically, this holds true of the Enlightenment in relation to modern secular, as distinguished from Christian and other religious, egalitarianism as primarily its product and legacy in Western liberal modernity. The Enlightenment’s egalitarianism is equality and inclusion of humans and human liberties and rights in and “before” society, i.e. legal and other social institutions, rather than in non-societal or non-empirical contexts (“heaven”) and before

²⁸ Schmoller states that the “democratic idea of equality as produced by Christianity, as formulated by the enlightenment of the eighteenth century, caused most states to give up the privileges of classes and strata, and to substitute equality of rights and of marion, with some sort of participation in self-government by the foil.” He also comments that “by demanding a just distribution of incomes, socialism has introduced nothing new, but has in contrast to the errors which were created by materialistic epigones in a short period of so-called philosophy of enlightenment, only returned to the great traditions of all idealistic social philosophy.”

transcendental supra-human entities, such as “equality before God” in Catholic, Protestant and other religious egalitarianisms.

As known, the Enlightenment primarily inspired the purely secular egalitarianism of the French Revolution expressed in the principles of “equality” and “universal rights of Man”, as well as, though to a lesser extent, the pseudo-secular or more religiously based egalitarian ideas of the American Revolution, notably Jefferson’s “all man are created equal” principle. This secular egalitarianism epitomizes and relates to the Enlightenment’s general secularism and humanism, while their opposites in Catholic medievalism and Protestant conservatism generate and predict non-secular egalitarian ideas, if ever, like “equality before God”, “God created all men equal in his eyes”, “we are all God’s children”, and the like. Hence, the Enlightenment’s comparatively greater and enduring impact, as in the case of that of Montesquieu (Dahrendorf 1979), on the French than the American Revolution, also perhaps more influenced by anti-liberal Puritanism, except for Jefferson et al., generated and explained the near purely secular egalitarianism of the first as compared with that of the second revolutionary project.

In general, the Enlightenment and liberalism as a whole posits or implies that religious, including Christian, egalitarianism is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition of secular egalitarianism and even, as Dahrendorf (1979) suggests, can be “deceptive” in this respect. For the Enlightenment philosophers and sociologists “equality” in heaven (Lemert 1999) and before God was not enough for equality in society and under its institutions, including “equality under the law” (Hodgson 1999: 63). Thus, even Jefferson’s “all man are created equal” by God was not sufficient for all humans being treated equally by the “powers that be”, as claimed by Divine Agents and Rights to rule, and having equal liberties and rights in social reality.

Moreover, such non-secular equality and communion “before and with God” can coexist with, even perpetuate and sanctify, extreme inequality and exclusion in society and under its institutions such as the law and courts. In short, theological heaven coexists with a sociological dystopia, “one nation indivisible under God” (Giddens 2000) with one society “divided into and in war with oneself”. This was dramatically witnessed in post-revolutionary America in which the mainly religious, Puritan-base egalitarianism or “creationism” of the Constitution not only did not prevent or end but perpetuated and justified actual societal anti-egalitarianism and exclusion in the form of

slavery for almost a century, ultimately resulting in a destructive civil war, and afterwards violent segregation (e.g. the “separate but equal” as “constitutional”) and discrimination for another, including vigilante violence (Jacobs et al. 2005) like lynching in the post-bellum South (Messner et al. 2005). Similarly, the new conservative-inserted constitutional quasi-theocratic clause “one nation indivisible under God” did not refrain America from, but rather contributed to, becoming or remaining a society “divided into and in war with oneself”, primarily due to counter-Enlightenment and other anti-liberal culture and violent wars by contemporary US conservatism, from McCarthyism in the 1950s to its generalization neo-conservatism during the 1980–2000s.

Alternatively, the Enlightenment’s implied liberal premise that religious egalitarianism is not enough for factual societal equality and inclusion helped explain and in a sense predicted this seemingly incomprehensible coexistence of the “creationist” egalitarian principle of “all men are created equal by the Creator” with, and even its perpetuation and justification of, such an extreme anti-egalitarian social system in the ante-bellum South for long, like segregation, discrimination, exclusion and other anti-egalitarian practices in the post-slavery era. The eventual discredit and end of this system happened not because, as usually supposed, but in spite of this “creationist” egalitarianism, i.e. primarily, albeit not only, as the result of secular egalitarian ideas and values traced back to Jefferson – viz. the non-theological rendition of “all men are created equal” – and Madison. As known, Southern dominant religions like evangelical Protestantism (Boles 1999) defended or resigned to slavery, just as segregation, discrimination, exclusion, lynching and other vigilante violence (Messner et al. 2005), xenophobia and foreign war later up to the 21st century, on religious grounds as a God-decreed destiny or “calling”, which probably prompted Mencken (1982) to coin the term “Baptism and Methodist barbarism” seen as ruling the South for long, from the Great Awakenings of the late 18th century. At least, the particular event of the end of slavery supports the Enlightenment’s view that religious or theological egalitarianism as well as individualism (*pace* Parsons 1937), exemplified in the pseudo-creationist egalitarian principle of the US Constitution, in itself, even if not supporting and perpetuating, is not sufficient for eliminating, extreme social inequality and exclusion, so for establishing actual, secular economic and political (Putterman et al. 1998) egalitarianism in society. Overall, this long coexistence of “creationist” egalitarianism and

secular anti-egalitarianism – equality in theological heaven and inequality in a sociological dystopia – in ante- and post-bellum US South at least up to the early 21st century, validates the Enlightenment’s tenet that religious egalitarian ideas are not the necessary and sufficient condition, but rather “deceptive”, of actual social equality and inclusion.

In essence, the Enlightenment rejected or transcended rather than, as usually supposed, adopted and continued “deceptive” religious “Christian” egalitarianism, seen as characteristic for both medieval Catholicism and conservative Protestantism. Hypothetically, if this religious or theological egalitarianism was not “deceptive” but, as its advocates claim, sufficient for actual social equality and inclusion, then the Enlightenment with its secular sociological variant would have been functionally redundant or impertinent and thus perhaps not happened on this account. In particular, the fact that the Enlightenment philosophers and sociologists “attacked”, as Mises (1950) points out, conservative Protestantism, just as medieval Catholicism, indicated that they found its theological egalitarianism – i.e. “equality before God”, “all men are created equal” by Divinity, “everyone is his own priest and monk”, etc. – and related tendencies to be precisely “deceptive” and so insufficient with respect to actual social equality and inclusion.

In sum, according to the Enlightenment, all humans are – and should be treated in liberal society and by its institutions as – equal precisely because they are “free and reasonable persons” (Brink 2000: 13). Alternatively, this is not (only) because they are “created equal” by the Creator and so are such “under God” and in theological heaven, yet not necessarily in the sociological reality of a Divinely ordained, typically non-egalitarian and repressive social order, as Weber and other sociologists (Bendix 1977; Eisenstadt 1965; Stivers 1994; Tawney 1962) observe for medieval Catholicism and Protestantism, including Lutheranism and Calvinism alike. In short, humans are equal because, as the Enlightenment posits, their essence is *human* reason²⁹ (Brink 2000), not some

²⁹ Brink (2000: 13) comments that “one of the basic ideas of the Enlightenment era was that if genuine knowledge of the world could be attained by all reasonable beings, then all reasonable beings should have an equal say in a society’s attempts to shape and control the world. This idea motivated political thinkers such as John Locke and Immanuel Kant [seen] as ‘early liberals’”. This simply means that because humans are “reasonable beings” they are and should be equal in society, not because “are created equal” by the Creator and so due to Divine “intelligent design” or some transcendental reason.

supra-human, transcendental Reason in the form of providential intelligence and design" creating them "equal". This difference epitomizes the Enlightenment's unique, prefigured by the Renaissance and classical democracy, fusion of egalitarianism and rationalism, "libertarianism" and secular humanism, in sharp contrast with the religious blend of egalitarian ideas with anti-rationalism, anti-liberalism and anti-humanism, a mixture that precisely makes them "deceptive".

The Enlightenment and Liberal Democracy

In conjunction and synergy with its secular egalitarianism, the Enlightenment produced and formulated modern democratic-liberal ideology, the theory of liberal democracy. In a sense, the theory and practice of liberal democracy was a political articulation, dimension and realization of secular egalitarianism, i.e. Schmolter's "democratic idea of equality", in the Enlightenment. Hence, its egalitarianism and secularism generated, encompassed and predicted, as the necessary, though perhaps not sufficient, condition of, the theory of liberal-secular democracy, in contrast to religious egalitarianisms as "deceptive" via "equality before God" instead of equal political rights and destructive in democratic terms, as Puritanism in New England, evangelicalism in the South.

Thus, some US conservative economists admit that "both the theory of democracy and the theory of the market economy are products of the [European] Enlightenment, and, for the 18th century philosophers, these two orders of human activity were not to be discussed separately"³⁰ (Buchanan and Tullock 1962). Admittedly, the modern theory and institution of democracy was and remains premised on the Enlightenment's conception of the "good"

³⁰ Buchanan and Tullock (1962) add that the positive "interpretation of trading activity has only been dominant since the eighteenth-century Enlightenment [as prior to it] 'trade,' as an activity, was suspect; and [traders] were somehow supposed to be following less moral pursuits than other members of society." Seemingly, they refer to, but as typical of US orthodox or ethnocentric (Dore 1992) economists, do not give credit to the classical sociological, Montesquieu conception of commerce as "civilizing". In turn, heterodox German economist Hirschman (1977: 10) recognizes that Smith's "idea of an 'Invisible Hand' – of a force that makes men pursuing their private passions conspire unknowingly toward the public good – was formulated in connection with the search for glory rather than with the desire for money by Montesquieu."

political society, viz. on the “faith that man can rationally organize his own society, that existing organization can always be perfected, and that nothing in the social order should remain exempt from rational, critical, and intelligent discussion” (Buchanan and Tullock 1962). In these views, epitomizing “public choice theory” as the economic approach to analyzing the polity, the French Enlightenment’s political rationalism, represented by Condorcet’s rationalist theory of politics (e.g. voting in elections), is particularly relevant. Other economists remark that the French Enlightenment’s representatives like Condorcet, the early hero of “public choice theory”, viewed, for example, voting as a “collective quest for truth. For them the question was how to design voting rules that yield good outcomes” (Young 1997: 199). In addition, critical economists observe that what is described and criticized as “free-market individualism has its roots” in the Enlightenment by embracing the “threads of individual liberty, absolute property rights and equality under the law, and wove them together into its visionary fabric of a market system” (Hodgson 1999: 63).

Curiously, the above implies that both political democracy and modern capitalism or “free-market individualism” in America itself are “products” of or have roots in the European, especially the French and Scottish respectively, Enlightenment rather than, or secondarily and jointly, Protestantism, notably “all-American” Puritanism, as in Parsonian “naïve assumptions” and “liberal” mythologies (Coffey 1998; Gould 1996; Zaret 1989). Another implication is that the Enlightenment, including its diluted and weak American ramification following New England’s theocracy, transcended and rejected rather than, as usually assumed, continued the supposed liberal-democratic Protestant Reformation, notably disciplinary Calvinist-Puritan Revolutions (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 1993; Moore 1993), just as Catholic non-democratic medievalism.

In turn, if, as also presumed, the theory of political democracy, as that of a free-market economy, was instead the product of the Reformation, including Puritanism in America, during the 16th-17th centuries, hypothetically the 18th century Enlightenment would have been redundant or irrelevant in functional terms, and historically *déjà vu*, so perhaps not happened. As in the case of egalitarianism, the particular fact that Mises’ Enlightenment philosophers, though more in Europe than America, except for Jefferson et al., “attacked” not only official Catholicism but also Protestantism in the

18th century indicates that they considered the second to be just, if not even more, as in the case of disciplinary Calvinism and theocratic Puritanism, non- or pre-democratic and otherwise anti-liberal in political and sociological, as distinguished from theological, terms.

This is instructive to emphasize because in most Protestant countries, especially America, like capitalism, modern liberal democracy, including its secular dimension in the constitutional separation of state and church, is still viewed as the product not or less of the Enlightenment but or more of the Reformation, including Lutheranism and especially Calvinism and Puritanism (as objected in Coffey 1998; Gould 1996; Zaret 1989). Liberal democracy and modernity – though perhaps not modern capitalism if Weber is correct despite a growing torrent of criticism (Cohen 1980; Delacroix and Nielsen 2001) – as produced by the Enlightenment, emerged not because but rather in *spite* of the Protestant Reformation, including Lutheranism and Calvinism in Europe, and Puritanism and Anglicanism in Great Britain and America, not to mention Catholic despotic medievalism.

For example, in a liberal-secular rather than conservative-religious interpretation (Lipset and Marks 2000), Tocqueville's secular democracy in America was produced and sustained by Jefferson-Madison's Enlightenment-inspired ideals and values, including in part those of Montesquieu (Dahrendorf 1979), Rousseau as well as Locke, Hume and other British liberal philosophers. Alternatively, it was so not because but rather in spite of, and opposition by, Puritanism, notably New England's Puritan theocracy (the official Congregational Church) during the 17th–19th centuries, and Protestant fundamentalism or sectarianism overall (Lipset 1996), symbolized by the Southern "Bible Belt" since the Great Awakenings, from the 18th to the 21st century.

Hence, in terms of historical *dramatis personae*, primarily because of Jefferson, Madison and their liberal followers, and in spite of Winthrop, Adams and their descendants in authoritarian conservatism (Dunn and Woodard 1996), including "rigid" neo-conservatism as embodied by "rigid extremists" a la Reagan et al. (e.g. Gingrich, cf. Blomberg and Harrington 2001), Tocqueville's democracy in America was established and sustained with celebrated resilience (Lipset 1996). In respect with liberal-secular democracy and modernity, such Enlightenment-inspired persons as Jefferson and Madison and Puritan theocrats like Winthrop et al. and their admirers were exact polar opposites, almost as different as "heaven and hell". Thus, Jefferson, Madison and their

disciples repudiated [Winthrop et al.'s] ideal of a "Christian Sparta" (Kloppenbergs 1998: 32) and were primarily responsible for the "disestablishment" of New England's Puritan theocracy half a century after the American Revolution (the 1830s), albeit they could not prevent its parallel reenactment or transmission in the South, including Jefferson's own Virginia, turned into a "Bible Belt" via the Puritanical Great Awakenings (especially the Second of the 1800s). Alternatively, if Winthrop's descendents and admirers completely prevailed over Jefferson and Madison during and after the Revolution, then post-revolutionary America would have likely become an extension of New England's Puritan theocracy, so Samuel Adams' "Christian Sparta", just as the South actually became from the Great Awakenings (Boles 1999). Particularly, if this happened, New England would have probably still been a Puritan theocracy long after the American Revolution (i.e. beyond the 1830s), so theocratic Puritanism (the Congregational Church) perhaps hardly ever disestablished.

In particular, as a relatively trivial but indicative well-known example, Jefferson had a collection of more than 6,000 books (later to replace the Congressional library burned by the British army in the War of 1812). This seemingly irrelevant personal detail is indicative and pertinent in a substantive sense in that it apparently indicated Jefferson's Enlightenment-based intellectualism and rationalism (including perhaps his Paris experience), notably his appreciation for science, knowledge and education, as well as his sharp differences from US anti-liberal conservatives, from Winthrop to McCarthy and Reagan et al., self-characterized by anti-intellectualism (Dunn and Woodard 1996), including anti-science and anti-education in secular terms (Darnell and Sherkat 1997). By contrast, US neo-conservatives like Reagan and other "rigid extremists" proclaiming that their favorite political "philosopher" was Winthrop or Christ (as in the case of a subsequent "compassionate" conservative US president) almost revealed (as "politically incorrect" comedians would put it) that their collection consisted of a single book or so, predictably the Bible, which reflects their celebrated anti-intellectualism, notably their hostility to and suspicion of secular science, knowledge and education. This is what some analysts (Hindmoor 1999) intimate by observing that Reaganomics as well as Thatcherism incorporated the Bible as its key ideological-political source and inspiration. Simply, even their respective book collections confirm

that Jefferson and his liberal disciples and Winthrop and Reagan and other conservatives are, as respective dramatis personae and adversaries, in US history polar opposites, as different as “heaven and earth”.

In particular, these collections, like various other symbols, reveal that these two groups did and do live, while geographically and historically in the same country and often period (e.g. Jeffersonians and anti-Jeffersonian conservatives in post-revolutionary America), sociologically on different planets and in divergent times. Jefferson, Madison and their followers lived and live in the society and age of Enlightenment and liberal modernity, Winthrop, McCarthy, Reagan and other rigid neo-conservatives in that of the Dark Middle Ages and pre-liberal traditionalism, notably despotism and theocracy reenacted and embellished as the Puritan and fundamentalist “Bible Commonwealth” in historical and contemporary America.

Generally, in terms of contemporary dramatis personae, analysts imply that if American democracy in Tocqueville’s sense has been resilient during the late 20th and early 21st century, this is because of Jefferson-Madison’s “flexible” disciples with a “reputation for accommodation” rather than and in spite of Winthrop’s inspired neo-conservatives like Reagan et al. categorized in “rigid extremists” due to being “notorious for being uncompromising” (Blomberg and Harrington 2001: 605). In this view, thus “examples of recent vintage include Newt Gingrich and Ronald Reagan in the rigid category and George Bush [I] and Bill Clinton in the flexible one” (Blomberg and Harrington 2001: 605).

By analogy to the revolutionary and post-revolutionary times, if the rigid, extremist and uncompromising category of Reaganite neo-conservatives (more) fully prevailed over their flexible counterparts during the 1980–2000s, then America would have likely been recreated as Adams’s “Christian Sparta”, even as an exercise in and testament (e.g. “Samuel Adams beer”) to Puritan “vigorous hypocrisy” (Bremer 1995) – as Reagan et al. attempted with their admiration for Winthrop’s theocracy as the “shining city upon a hill” – if not become a sort of “Protestant Iran” in terms of domestic culture wars and global crusades analogous to Islamic jihads (Turner 2002). And when they succeeded to attain such dominance, as in the hyper-conservative and persistently under-democratized South (Amenta et al. 2001; Cochran 2001), this actually happened or was approximated, as indicated by the observations that

“Bible-Belt” evangelicalism is essentially a functional equivalent of Iranian Islamic fundamentalism in terms of proto-totalitarian oppression (Bauman 1997), including executions of “enemies”, “sinners” and “infidels” (Jacobs et al. 2005). In sum, to paraphrase the above “flexible” and “compromising” (albeit somewhat overly bellicose and jingoistic) US President, “it is anti-liberalism, not liberalism, that is stupid” in terms of democracy and freedom, as well as rationalism, egalitarianism, justice, and humanism, contrary to what anti-liberals allege and most Americans think or perhaps “brainwashed, manipulated” (Beiner 1992: 27) to do so.

The above holds even more of the emergence of political democracy in Great Britain in relation to the English-Scottish Enlightenment as represented by Bacon, Locke, Hume, Smith and others. The British Enlightenment was its primary philosophical source and support rather than Puritanism, with its hostility or at most “fortuitous” (Zaret 1989) links to liberal-democratic doctrines and practices, and even more moderate, tolerant and less ascetic official Anglicanism, albeit the latter tempered Puritan moral-religious absolutism (Munch 2001), and thus indirectly contributed to secular democracy and society in Great Britain, while remaining a state church. By analogy, in terms of British *dramatis personae*, such Enlightenment figures or precursors like Bacon, Locke and Hume, not to mention Shakespeare, were polar opposites to Cromwell and other theocratic Puritans (Gorski 2000; Zaret 1989), though less so to more moderate Anglicans. Also, by analogy, if Cromwell and his followers were ultimately victorious in what Weber calls the “abortive” Puritan Revolution, Great Britain would have likely remained a theocracy à la the “Holy Commonwealth” and ruled by their “Parliament of Saints” rather than liberal democracy.

For example, Weber registers that Cromwell’s “Puritan town government closed the theatre at Stratford-on-Avon while Shakespeare was still alive and residing there in his last years. Shakespeare’s hatred and contempt of the Puritans appear on every occasion.” In passing, as though nothing had changed within English-American Puritanism ever since, during the 1990s US (New Hampshire) school officials removed “Shakespeare’s play *Twelfth Night* from the curriculum” (Hull 1999: 55) on puritanical “indecent” grounds. This relatively trivial event typifies what Tocqueville describes as Puritanism’s tendency to “frivolous” restrictions and indicates what sociologists identify as the Puritan or conservative-Protestant “path-dependence” of contempo-

rary America and to a diminishing extent Great Britain (Baker and Inglehart 2000).

In general, the “political theory” of the Enlightenment³¹ (Habermas 1989: 48) was strongly and unambiguously democratic in liberal-secular terms, thus challenging and transcending both the Protestant Reformation and Catholic medievalism, while reinforcing or culminating the prior ideas and practices of democracy, from classical Greek and in part Roman civilization to the Italian Renaissance. In this sense, modern secular Western and in extension other democracies, including democracy in Puritan-founded America, are products or projects of the “Enlightenment and its liberal heirs” (Habermas 1989: 49), rather or more so than of any historical-social factors, from early or medieval Christianity to post-medieval theologically “democratic” Protestantism. For example, contemporary sociologists suggest that the “political rationality, individualistic and democratic traditions” of the Enlightenment were epitomized and embodied by Locke and Rousseau, as representatives of its Scottish and French versions, respectively (Smelser 1997).

Specifically, what Weber would call the formal political rationality, i.e. legal democratic traditions, of the Enlightenment consisted in at least two elements and innovations to become the building blocks of Western liberal-secular democracy and modernity ever since. The first is the “separation of powers” (Habermas 1989: 48), such as legislature, executive and judiciary, within a political system starting with Montesquieu (Dahrendorf 1979). The second is the separation of powers across polity and society overall, the differentiation between secular and sacred power, politics and religion, state and church, perhaps beginning with Locke in tension and conflict with Puritanism and its theocratic vision and practice of “godly politics” in Great Britain (Zaret 1989) and later America (Munch 2001). The Enlightenment hence produced the idea

³¹ Habermas (1975: 111) states that “democratic will-formation turns into repression if it is not kept within limits by the freedom-guaranteeing principle of separation of powers is a theme of counter-enlightenment” [sic!]. This refers to “separation of powers” within a polity into legislative, executive and judicial rather than to that between sacred and secular power, church and state. Historically, the Enlightenment postulated and established the second as well as the first separation (Montesquieu). Yet, the counter-Enlightenment like US and other religious conservatism (Nisbet 1966) rejected or subverted this separation, as in America, into a formal-legal distinction, as distinguished from and substituting for the substantive differentiation of religion and politics in society (Munch 2001).

and practice of constitutionally “divided political authority”³² (Collins 2000), i.e. non-absolutist government and of a secular democratic state and polity formally, usually through a constitution, separated and substantively differentiated from church and religion. In both cases, the product and ideal of the Enlightenment was a non-arbitrary democratic government in respect of, first, its limited powers over its subjects, and second, its equal treatment of, or neutrality to, different and rival religions or worldviews. The Enlightenment and consequently liberal model of government thus aims at and results in what sociologists describe as a “domestication of state power and a humanization of social relations” (Habermas 2001: 44).

In turn, by aiming and doing so, the Enlightenment predictably was condemned by illiberal forces as the agent provocateur provoking the virulent anti-liberal conservative, including authoritarian or totalitarian, reaction or counter-revolution against these political and social processes. Thus, historically rooted in, allied with or openly or tacitly supported by conservatism, modern authoritarianism or totalitarianism, notably fascism, “broke entirely with the civilizing forces ushered in by the Enlightenment, destroying the hopes for a domestication of state power and a humanization of social relations” (Habermas 2001: 44). So did, with some qualifications, and continuously does neo-conservatism as a functional substitute, proxy or survival of authoritarianism, including fascism, in virtue of its anti-Enlightenment themes and practices, especially in America, persisting and even intensifying up to the 2000s.

Hence, liberalism’s “deep suspicion” of any type of arbitrary or non-neutral government was crucially influenced by the Enlightenment, especially its emphasis on the role of reason or human rationality in politics (Brink 2000: 41), just as authoritarian conservatism’s preference for and glorification of the opposite, state arbitrariness and repression, was a radical break with this influence. In this view, inspired by the Enlightenment, classical liberalism refused to accept any coercive, “heteronomous” (e.g. charismatic) political authority just as tradition and convention as “legitimate bases” of the social system, and the alternative liberal tenet – viz. that “government should always be able

³² Collins (2000) proposes that “Enlightenment intellectuals supported by combination of state bureaucracy as patronage base, plus divided political authority promoting cultural competition.”

to convince the citizenry that it is entitled to respect" – "was born"³³ (Brink 2000: 41). If so, in Weber's terms, the notion of legal-rational political authority defining liberal-secular democracy and modernity was "born" out of and due to the Enlightenment.

In this sense, the formal political rationality or democracy of the Enlightenment consisted in its implied liberal concept of legal-rational political authority, as a formally democratic type of legitimate power, contrasted to its charismatic and traditional types as, in Weber's view, non- or pre-democratic in this and also substantive respect. Thus, Weber contrasts legal-rational authority associated with liberal democracy to its charismatic and implicitly traditional (via "routinization of charisma") types as "basically authoritarian" thus defining non- or pre-democratic societies. This is what also contemporary sociologists suggest observing that Weber's legal-rational authority has been "dominant only in modern secular [democratic] societies" (Lenski 1994: 9) since especially the Enlightenment and its charismatic and traditional counterparts in pre-modern theocratic or non-democratic ones. By analogy to its formal type, the Enlightenment's substantive political rationality and societal democratic tradition consisted in its sociological differentiation, as different from merely legal separation, between, first, divided government powers and especially, second, religion and politics, sacred and secular power, values, and life in general. In sum, the Enlightenment was rational and democratic in a substantive sense by its project of a secularized liberal society, and in formal respect by its idea of a constitutional government and secular, religiously neutral state.

The "Neo-Enlightenment"

In spite or perhaps because of fascist totalitarianism's and repressive neo-conservatism's break with and destruction of the liberalizing, democratic and civilizing forces of the Enlightenment, via an expansion and intensification, even barbarization, of state power and a de-humanization of social relations (Bauman 2001; Beck 2000; Habermas 2001), contemporary liberal

³³ Brink (2000: 42) adds that the liberal idea is that "a social order is legitimate if and only if reasonable citizens of this order can be expected to acknowledge the reasonableness of the principles and norms on which it is built."

society moves in the direction of a sort of “neo-Enlightenment” rather than post-Enlightenment, contrary to anti-liberal claims. Predictably, this holds true for most contemporary Western societies with the partial or total exception and deviation (Inglehart 2004) of America during neo-conservatism and its apparently anti-liberalizing, non-democratic and un-enlightening, if not un-civilizing, political and cultural predominance (Bell 2002; Lipset 1996) during the 1980s–2000s.

Thus, comparative sociological studies find a strong and consistent trend among Western and other societies to a kind of neo-Enlightenment or new liberalism, as indicated by “shifts away from absolute norms and values toward a syndrome of increasingly rational, tolerant, trusting, and participatory values” (Inglehart and Baker 2000), while detecting America as a “deviant case” or statistical “outlier” primarily reproduced by dominant conservatism, including resurrected religious fundamentalism. If so, then this is a global shift from religious and other conservatism and traditionalism, including medievalism or its survivals, characterized by “absolute norms and values” like moral-political absolutism, to a new Enlightenment and liberalism precisely defined and typified by “rational, tolerant, trusting, participatory” and related values and institutions. In this sense, abstracting from salient American exceptionalism as an admittedly “double-edged sword” (Lipset 1996), Western society at the threshold of the third millennium *re-enters*, after various conservative-totalitarian anti-Enlightenment disruptions and reversals, the Enlightenment and thus liberalism in general.

At the minimum, in light of these recent global trends, the news or rumors of the “death” of the Enlightenment and so liberalism are “exaggerated” or premature in contemporary Western societies, though perhaps not America. Predictably, the latter’s deviation is primarily attributed to neo-conservatism, including anti-Enlightenment, i.e. anti-liberal, anti-secular and anti-rational, religious fundamentalism of “Bible-Belt” and similar varieties. Not surprisingly, analysts identify American religious conservatism in the form of the “evangelist churches of the Bible-Belt”, along with their Islamic counterparts, as “proto-totalitarian” (Bauman 1997; Turner 2002) alternatives to human liberty and eventually life via a functionally equivalent penal system of executions for crimes and sins alike (equated) in America and theocratic Muslim countries (Jacobs et al. 2005).

Thus, leading contemporary sociologists suggest that the neo-conservative, as well as post-modernist, allegation of a post- or counter-Enlightenment³⁴ and so post- and non-liberalism “is anything but convincing” (Habermas 1989: 39), at least for Western European modernity, if not for America dominated by anti-liberal neo-conservatism. In this view, the alleged “birth” of the post-Enlightenment or post-liberalism as its own self-negation and eventual extinction “calls for the midwifery of neoconservatism” (Habermas 1989: 43). Alternatively, the allegation means that the rumored “death” of the Enlightenment or liberalism will be the “rebirth” of conservatism, as heralded and embodied by “born again” US religious fundamentalists, including medieval traditionalism and its survivals like despotism, fundamentalism, irrationalism and theocracy, from the “dead” (Dunn and Woodard 1996) as evidently happened in America during the 1980–2000s. This reaffirms that, especially American, neo-conservatism continues what fascism and other totalitarianism, just as proto-conservatism emerging from the darkness of medievalism, has done or attempted before. So, US anti-liberalism embarks again on a Divinely ordained “manifest mission” to “attack and destroy” Enlightenment-produced enemy civilizing forces, notably the latter’s original limitation and separation of state powers and humanization of social relations.

In historical terms, the post-Enlightenment outcome or scenario is *déjà vu* reenacted and replayed in America after its original enactment and play in Europe before. The Enlightenment and liberalism overall was declared or rumored by anti-Enlightenment forces “dead” immediately upon birth and arrival in the 18th century and ever since, with the rebirth or “rediscovery” (Nisbet 1966) of medievalism, including despotism, fundamentalism, irrationalism and theocracy, and romanticism in the form of Mannheim’s conservatism as “self-reflective” medieval traditionalism in deliberate anti-liberal antagonism. In this sense, the alleged “birth” of the anti-Enlightenment and anti-liberalism in Europe during the 18th century and later “called for the midwifery of proto-conservatism”, just as does that of the post-Enlightenment

³⁴ Brink (2000: 13) employs the term a “post-Enlightenment” but in the apparent sense of a renewed and modernized rather than exhausted and expired Enlightenment, so a neo-, not anti-, Enlightenment. For illustration, he stresses the post-Enlightenment’s “belief in the reasonableness of human beings”, and evidently this is not a “post” but both classical and modern idea of the Enlightenment.

and post-liberalism in America during the late and early 21st centuries for that of neo-conservatism.

If so, then the Western history of the Enlightenment versus conservatism as its perennial antagonist and supposed terminator really repeats itself in America under neo-conservatism either as an exact replay or futile “culture wars” farce of the original act in Europe in the wake of the proto-conservative, medieval-based anti-Enlightenment reaction. Thus, in spite or perhaps because of the moment that the “death” of the Enlightenment through the birth of the anti-Enlightenment *cum* medieval-inspired conservatism has proven inaccurate and premature since the 18th century, American neo-conservatism via its own rebirth from this old conservative tradition, declares and seeks to create the era of a post-Enlightenment and post-liberalism generally in America, just as fascism did in interwar Europe. Simply, American neo-conservatism attempts to perform the miracle of an anti-Enlightenment non-creative destruction that has proven elusive even for its ancestors, medieval conservatism and fascism, thus displaying a degree, perhaps the only form, of optimism that is extraordinary and atypical for a Puritanical-pessimistic, i.e. Calvinistic-gloomy ideology and social system.

In this respect, the modern Enlightenment in America – and perhaps the world through escalation by a preemptive anti-liberal war on “evil” and an “empire of liberty” in Clausewitz-like scenario – faces a new, conservative antagonist and would-be terminator that is perhaps stronger, more hostile, dangerous and persistent than any other during Western liberal modernity, from *caput mortuum* medievalism and its reincarnation in proto-conservatism to barbaric fascism. For instance, ever-recurring, intensifying and usually, though not invariably (e.g. 1992 and 2006 US elections), victorious conservative anti-liberal culture wars are perhaps a symptom and predictor of the triumph of the anti-Enlightenment, alternatively, the beginning of the post-Enlightenment and post-liberalism in America during the 1980–2000s. To that extent, the allegation of a post-Enlightenment while “anything but convincing” for modern Western society as a whole seems more or less valid for America under neo-conservatism, which presents the anti-Enlightenment and so anti-liberal facet of conservative-reproduced and celebrated American exceptionalism.

At this juncture, the admittedly “double-edged sword” (Lipset 1996) of American exceptionalism distinctly reveals itself as single-edged in the

direction of a salient deviation from and opposition to Enlightenment-based “rational, tolerant, trusting, and participatory” values by holding and perpetuating anti-Enlightenment and anti-liberal “absolute norms and values”, notably religious fundamentalism or traditionalism, rooted in and inherited from medieval-based conservatism. Crucially, if even the Hegelian dialectics of the “good” and “bad” Enlightenment is primarily or on balance liberty-promoting (“libertarian”), democratic, rationalist and humanist, and the anti-Enlightenment, from “die hard” medievalism and conservatism to fascism, by assumption the exact opposite, then this casts a sinister light or rather shadow on US neo-conservatism and its celebrated American exceptionalism in the form of the aim or practice of a post-Enlightenment.

To summarize, in comparative terms, the rumored “birth” of the counter- or post-Enlightenment and so anti-liberalism has been inaccurate and exaggerated in most modern Western societies because the “midwifery” of neo-conservatism was the *caput mortuum* of a “dead past”, “missing in action”, or weak, with the exception of America during neo-conservative dominance and to a lesser extent Great Britain under Thatcherism eventually displaced and discredited (Beck 2000; Giddens 2000; Hodgson 1999). Alternatively, the counter-Enlightenment or anti-liberalism was reborn in America precisely due to the rise, presence, strength and generous assistance of the “midwifery” of neo-conservatism, including “born again and again” religious conservatives.

In turn, this remarkable American deviation from modern Western liberal-secular society is in a way “path-dependent”, specifically on religious conservatism, notably Protestant fundamentalism (Baker and Inglehart 2000), so perhaps predictable for the foreseeable future, albeit not likely to persist indefinitely during the *long durée* (Braudel 1979) of liberal modernity in terms of centuries and millennia. This is so in light of the historical weakness, discredit and “bad reputation”, despite Jefferson et al.’s countervailing efforts, of the Enlightenment and liberalism overall as (as Reagan et al. allege) “un-American” and “foreign” by comparison and due to its immediate and subsequent antagonists. To recall, these antagonists include theocratic Puritanism with its New England theocracy, the Great Awakenings converting the old South in a bibliocracy, authoritarian proto-conservatism represented by Hamilton’s brand of Federalism (Dunn and Woodard 1996), “born again” religious fundamentalism and other neo-conservatism, including neo-fascism (a la “Christian” terrorist militia).

For instance, during the late 18th century, while most of Western Europe was immersed in the “age of Enlightenment” and so liberalism, America experienced the “Great Awakenings” as basically Puritan-driven counter-Enlightenment and anti-liberal revivals and expansions from New England to the rest of the country, notably the South. And, almost like in the 18th century, during the late 20th and early 21st century while most of Western Europe undergoes the process of liberalization, secularization and cultural modernization overall, so a sort of new Enlightenment, America once again finds itself in another counter-Enlightenment and anti-liberal awakening via fundamentalist religious revival and neo-conservative counter-revolution. As observers notice, “for many outside America, the US remains as much a foreign country in terms not only of its governing arrangements but also its values, as the rest of the world is to many Americans [e.g. capital punishment, the culture of guns and violence]” (Singh 2002: 8). It is simply so by political and cultural anti-liberalism *cum* ultra-conservatism and to that extent the counter-Enlightenment.

In general, the “midwifery” of conservatism generates and predicts the “birth” of the anti- and post-Enlightenment, so the “death” of the Enlightenment and liberalism, as exemplified in medieval-like conservative restorations, fascist nihilism and barbarism, and neo-conservative counter-revolutions. Hence, so long as the neo-conservative “midwifery” is a part, symptom or survival of the “dead hand of the past” (Harrod 1956), basically “dark” medievalism, as in most contemporary Western societies, then one can predict that these will usher in a neo- rather than post-Enlightenment and so a new liberalism, as some sociological studies indicate and predict (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart 2004; Munch 2001).

By contrast, in the opposite scenario of this “midwifery” being “born again” and even becoming predominant in the form of religious conservatism and epitomized in Protestant sectarianism (Lipset 1996), as happened in America during the 1980–2000s and most of its history, a different outcome or process can be expected. This is that American society will remain in or reenter the “brave new world” (as incidentally predicted by the author of this novel) of a post-Enlightenment *cum* neo-conservative theological and sociological “heaven” (Lemert 1999) in the image of the anti-liberal and theocratic “Bible Belt” as a kind of “Christian” counterpart or proxy of Islamic Iran (Bauman 1997).

In historical terms, the “midwifery” of neo-conservatism causes America to usher in the 21st century and perhaps beyond according to dominant millennial evangelicalism (Giddens 1984) in the almost same way medieval conservatism forced Europe during the “Dark Middle Ages”. This is the sociological “heaven” of anti-Enlightenment, i.e. a pre- and post-Enlightenment respectively. No wonder, some observers predict or even diagnose the return of the “Dark Middle Ages” (Bauman 2001; Berman 2000), so pre-Enlightenment times, to America on the basis of this rebirth, from the “dead past” of medievalist traditionalism and arch-conservatism, of the “midwifery” of neo-conservatism and its dominance during the 1980–2000s.

In essence, except for America, most Western societies enter into some kind of modern or renewed Enlightenment – a sort of another Renaissance in this respect – and so “new” liberalism and liberty (Dahrendorf 1975). This has been the result of the resilience and enduring impact of the original Enlightenment and liberalism, as well as the decline, if not, despite some recurring signs of life, near terminal condition (Eccleshall 2000) of religious-political conservatism and other anti-Enlightenment and anti-liberal forces (Infantino 2003), including fascism and even more communism.

Further, sociologists describe this new Enlightenment not only “as a political movement but simply as a way of life” (Berman 2000: 161) in modern Western liberal societies, predictably excluding at least in part America under neo-conservatism. That this modern liberal way of life is a neo- rather than post-, let alone anti-, Enlightenment is indicated by its “strong continuity with Enlightenment traditions of democracy and expanding intellectual inquiry, and a culture in which the arts, sciences, and literature play a central role in the lives of a very large percentage of the population [and] a civilization with strong humanistic values, in which business and cybertechnology play an ancillary role” (Berman 2000: 176). This argument envisions that “if the 22nd century brings with it a return to Enlightenment values, it will not be in the sense of coming full circle [but incorporating] the positive contribution of the postmodern assault. The Enlightenment vision of unlimited improvement, and total knowledge of the world, is no longer credible”³⁵ (Berman 2000: 176).

³⁵ Berman (2000: 177) suggests that a certain “détente is possible between the Enlightenment and postmodernism. Postmodernism rapidly degenerated into a terrible,

In the above sense, the neo-Enlightenment is a democratic, “libertarian”, rational-scientific, aesthetic, spiritual (but not necessarily “religious”) and humanistic lifestyle, in contrast to its counter- or post-Enlightenment alternatives such as the neo-conservative rendition of the “American way” defined precisely by more or less opposite, illiberal elements. Just as that between the Enlightenment and medieval-derived conservatism during the 18th century, the difference between new-Enlightenment and neo-conservative ways of life is not a matter of degree but of substance, one between “heaven and earth” in the sense of distance rather than evaluation. Sociologically it is the difference, as Mannheim (1936) implies, between a liberal-rationalist utopia based on the principles of hope, humanism and happiness within society and illiberal-irrational “heaven” (Lemert 1999) or sociological dystopia premised on the dogmas of Calvinist-Puritan “fall of man” pessimism, anti-humanism a la “humans exist for God” and transcendental bliss via salvation in paradise alone.

In particular, contemporary liberalism continues the Enlightenment and its legacy and is thus primarily responsible for modern Western societies ushering in the neo-Enlightenment. Thus, what contemporary liberals propose as modern critical moral liberalism “aims to retrieve and rehabilitate” the Enlightenment’s argument for moral universalism or universal moral liberalism, i.e. “the right of all human beings to freedom to direct their lives based on their possession of reason”³⁶ (Reiman 1997: 2). In this view, critical moral liberalism “shares both the Enlightenment’s emphasis on *reason* as our distinctive capacity, and the Enlightenment’s aspiration to moral *universality*”

narcissistic hubris; but stirred in with Enlightenment values, it might enable those of the New Enlightenment to cultivate humility with regard to fixed positions on the nature of truth”. In particular, the “old university, prior to postmodernism and political correctness, entertained Enlightenment goals that energized it. All this is gone now [as] postmodernism brought to the table not merely the denial of truth but also the denial of the *ideal* of truth” (Berman 2000: 51). A case in point: “When feminists [e.g. Susan McClary] can say that Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony is filled with “the throttling, murderous rage of a rapist incapable of attaining release,” we see how nakedly sick the deconstructive enterprise finally is. This is not merely intellectual failure; it is moral failure as well” (Berman 2000: 51). Berman (2000: 53) concludes that “it is one thing to see the limits of the Enlightenment tradition after you have studied it for a few decades. It’s another to reject it before you have ever been exposed to it.”

³⁶ Reiman (1997: 2) comments that such an Enlightenment argument “can withstand the criticisms of feminists and multiculturalists who think Enlightenment universalism is biased in favor of a male or a Western view of the world, as well the criticisms of postmodernists who deny generally the possibility of a universal moral ideal”.

(Reiman 1997: 3), including freedom of conscience, which in turn includes both freedom of and freedom from religion as well as secular worldviews. This is useful to underscore, because in contrast to modern liberalism and the Enlightenment, religious neo-conservatism, especially in America, advocates and promotes solely freedom of religion. Yet, it does not promote freedom *from* religion, but rather condemns and attacks such liberty or choice of non-belief as blasphemy, atheism or agnosticism, and to that extent acts as a counter-Enlightenment and illiberal force, as evidenced by the conservative moral-cultural exclusion of non-believers and agnostics as supremely “un-American” – i.e. sorts of “witches” in the sense of Puritanism (Putnam 2000) and McCarthyism (Plotke 2002), or “enemies” reminiscent of German fascism (Bähr 2002) – in American society (Edgell et al. 2006).

Overall, at the start of the 21st century contemporary liberalism shares and continues the Enlightenment’s ideals, so most Western societies, except for America under neo-conservative dominance, reenter the time of the neo-Enlightenment. In this respect, just as during the 15th and 18th centuries, liberalism and Western society experience a kind of second liberal Renaissance or Enlightenment, building on the liberalization of the 1960s and overcoming the neo-conservative anti-liberal reaction and “darkness” of the 1980s as the conservative version of the “Dark Middle Ages”, especially in America and Great Britain during Reaganism and Thatcherism. As noticed, this master process is documented by the global shifts toward liberal, including rational, secular, tolerant, egalitarian and democratic, values and away from their anti-liberal opposites in most Western and many other societies, with the predictable, yet likely not indefinite, deviation of America during neo-conservatism. In particular, they involve a shift from anti-egalitarian values and institutions like inequality, hierarchy, discrimination and exclusion to egalitarianism as the ideal and institutional practice of social equality and inclusion based on the Enlightenment’s “belief in the reasonableness of human beings” and its “liberal idea that all citizens have the fundamental right to be respected as free and reasonable persons” (Brink 2000: 13).

Strands and Instances of the Enlightenment

The original Enlightenment had, and is usually considered to have, two major strands and traditions: one, continental European, epitomized by German

and French ones; another, British, including English and especially Scottish. Historically, the origin of the continental European, specifically French, Enlightenment can probably be traced to Descartes and his rationalist natural and social philosophy, including mathematics. According to sociologists, Descartes' argument or proof of the "natural right of the rational subject to authority over [their] beliefs is the "light" in the Enlightenment" (Brink 2000: 9) compared to the "darkness" of pre-Enlightenment medieval times. Another founding figure or precursor of the continental European, specifically German, Enlightenment was Leibniz with his also rationalist philosophy and mathematics. This is what Simmel implies by quoting Leibniz's hyper-rationalist remark "I would even run after a deadly enemy if I could learn something from him". Still, Kant, in virtue of his social philosophy of moral universalism (Caldwell 1997; Habermas 2001; Munch 1981) condensed in the "categorical imperative" and political and civic liberalism, epitomized in his advocacy of free agency (Bauman 2001), is usually seen as the founder or the most prominent figure of what sociologists describe as the "somewhat pedantic tradition of the German Enlightenment" (Habermas 1989: 133). In this view, Kant defined social enlightenment as the "public use of reason" (Habermas 2001: 104), which defines a rational polity in Weber's sense of legal-rational authority, i.e. liberal democracy and rational-liberal society in general.

Similarly, the British tradition of the Enlightenment originated in the natural philosophy and mathematics of Newton and especially the rationalist social philosophy of Locke – more precisely, the English version in the first, and the Scottish in the second – as well as in Bacon's earlier scientific rationalism and empiricism. For example, the English Enlightenment is "often dated from the publication of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* in 1686 and John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Two Treatises on Government* three years later" (Bremer 1995: 225). Sociologists like Merton (1968) also suggest that Bacon³⁷ was another earlier founder or precursor of the British Enlightenment by virtue of his project for rational science and empirical method, just as would include Hume as well as Smith among its later representatives. Contemporary liberal theorists and critics pinpoint as well as contrast Locke's

³⁷ For example, Merton (1968: 57) credits Bacon, in virtue of his "middle axioms" and "latent process" (and "latent configuration"), for anticipating his empirically-based middle-range sociological theory and concept of latent functions, respectively.

and Kant's as "two great Enlightenment formulations", European-German and British-Scottish respectively, of classical liberalism (Reiman 1997: 5) and regard these philosophers as "early liberals" (Brink 2000: 13). A variation on this contrast is implicit in what are described as "two different enlightenment traditions" (DeLue 1999: xii) in Kant and Smith, given that the latter's social philosophy (e.g. *Theory of Moral Sentiments*) developed Locke's and Hume's ideas.

In turn, what US contemporary liberals denote America's "version of the Enlightenment" (Kloppenbergh 1998: 22) was essentially a derivative, product or extension to the new world of the original European, primarily British (Scottish), secondarily continental (French-German), type. In particular, they stress the significance of the British type, by emphasizing the "pervasiveness of Scottish common sense philosophy in the American Enlightenment"³⁸ (Kloppenbergh 1998: 26), with Philadelphia identified as the "heart" and Jefferson as the key figure of the latter (Patell 2001: 195). Generally, they emphasize American "democratic and enlightenment traditions"³⁹ (Cross 2000: 5), including "strong objectivity and universal rationality"⁴⁰ (Smith 2000: 193).

However, US contemporary liberals also identify or acknowledge the "peculiarities of the American version of the Enlightenment" (Kloppenbergh 1998: 105) in relation to the European, including Scottish-English, original. In essence, these peculiarities consisted, and still do, in that the American version of the Enlightenment was not only historically subsequent to, as well as less theoretically elaborate or more eclectic, but also less socially influential than the European. Notably, the crucial peculiarity was that the Enlightenment in America typically exerted less social influence and even left a weaker legacy,

³⁸ Kloppenbergh (1998: 26) adds that the "Scottish Enlightenment was dedicated to discovering methods by which a provincial culture could create forms of social virtue without having to rely on republican political institutions unavailable to a province that was, like America, uncomfortable with its status". Generally, he emphasizes the Enlightenment "faith in reason of the sort some late 20th century postmodernists find objectionable" (Kloppenbergh 1998: 26), as do, for that matter, US neo-conservatives, especially religious fundamentalists preferring instead Divine "intelligent design" to human intelligence and rationality.

³⁹ Cross (2000: 5) says that "both the cultural Right and Left shared the Enlightenment idea that adults must protect children from the adult world of limitless choice in order to prepare them to enter it with self-restraint."

⁴⁰ However, Smith (2000: 193) objects that in America and elsewhere, "despite lingering Enlightenment ideologies about strong objectivity and universal rationality, our lives remain fundamentally governed by the imaginative narratives of the historical traditions that encompass them".

compared with pre- or anti-Enlightenment forces such as Puritanism and Protestantism overall (Archer 2001), than in Europe, including Great Britain (Munch 2001; Zaret 1989). Despite Jefferson-Madison's remarkable, yet atypical, efforts and successes, the early Enlightenment did not, to paraphrase Mises (1950) and Schumpeter (1950), attack and achieve a "creative destruction" of the "Dark Middle Ages", either as a reality or a metaphor for religious and political extremism, fanaticism and oppression, in America – as illustrated by New England's Puritan theocracy and its "Salem with witches", the Great Awakenings and their subsequent "Monkey Trials" – in the same degree and way as it did in Europe, including Great Britain.

In a sense, the Enlightenment came to America from Europe, mostly Great Britain, "too late" or delayed, weak and diluted, if not distorted, in relation to sectarian Protestantism (Lipset 1996) like Puritanism as the main counter- or pre-Enlightenment force – and it remained in such a condition versus Protestant fundamentalism ever since, up to the early 21st century. This is what Dahrendorf (1979: 157) implies by describing the application of a major sociological work of the French Enlightenment (Montesquieu *L'Esprit des Lois*) to the American Revolution and Constitution as "a delayed and distorted effect." Also, other sociologists remark that the "basic enduring features of the political culture of the United States were formed under the influence of pre-Enlightenment doctrines", and "first and foremost among these was a particular brand of Protestantism" (Archer 2001: 275), specifically Puritanism since Winthrop and other Pilgrims (Munch 2001).

In particular, "Enlightenment ideology did favor secularism, but key elements of American political culture emerged before its influence was felt [which] was largely restricted to a section of the revolutionary elite" (Archer 2001: 277), first of all Jefferson and Madison. In this view, while the revolutionary federal Constitution incorporated and reflected such Enlightenment ideas "influencing American political thought" and its key figures such as Jefferson and Madison "were personally influenced by these ideas, it was not their personal preferences that were principally responsible for establishing what Jefferson later described as 'a wall of separation between Church and State'"⁴¹

⁴¹ Archer (2001: 277) adds that "those, like Jefferson and Madison, who were influenced by Enlightenment ideas, supported the separation of religion and politics for fear that religion would corrupt politics".

(Archer 2001: 275–6). And these figures, notably Paris connoisseur Jefferson, were “(atypically) Enlightenment-influenced” (Archer 2001: 228), and to that extent a sort of exceptions to the rule in America even at the time of the Revolution and the Constitution. As contemporary US conservatives comment, the Declaration of Independence “treats religion in a cool, Enlightenment sort of way [but] was an *ex post facto* justification of American beliefs” (Gelernter 2005). This then means that the Enlightenment arrived “too late” to America, from the angle of liberalism, notably secularism and secular democracy, to substitute or even rival Puritan Protestantism’s original and continuing “pre-dominance” (Lipset 1996; Munch 2001).

In essence, the Enlightenment, so liberalism, was and remained at best only partial and transient success and unfinished project against its immediate antagonist, religious conservatism, such as originally and persistently predominant Protestant sectarianism (Lipset 1996). By contrast, it was almost completely and enduringly triumphant in most Western Europe over both medieval Catholicism, as in France and even Italy, and conservative Protestantism, as in Germany and in part Great Britain. The finding of sociological research that even at the start of the 21st century America under neo-conservatism remains a “deviant case” from the global process of cultural liberalization, secularization and modernization precisely diagnoses this relative failure of the Enlightenment in America and its triumph in most other Western societies. And this exemplifies conservative-generated American exceptionalism as the double or even single illiberal edge “sword”. For contemporary, especially, reasonably patriotic or non-ethnocentric, US liberals this remarkable and persistent deviation from Enlightenment-based liberal values and processes represents or has a potential for a sociological “all-American tragedy” in Dreiser’s sense of returning to or reviving the theocratic “Dark Middle Ages”. The latter is understood either as a reality or a metaphor, ramified to and epitomized in America by what Weber calls the Puritan “theocracy of New England” and its “Salem with witches” (Putnam 2000). By contrast, following the pattern set by their admitted medieval models (Nisbet 1966), US conservatives promote and celebrate their counter-Enlightenment “normal pathology” (Gouldner 1970) as a supreme virtue, a “faith-based” society, a “bridge” to the new millennium and comparative advantage compared with disdained liberal-secular Europe and Canada, just as the fact that colonial New England was “inspired not by democratic Athens or republican Rome or Enlightenment philosophy

but by a Puritan preacher's interpretation of a verse in the Hebrew Bible"⁴² (Gelernter 2005).

Evidently, the battle between the Enlightenment and the anti-Enlightenment, so generally liberalism and conservatism, while mostly ended or mitigated in modern Europe, including Great Britain, with the triumph of the first over the second, continues and even expands and intensifies, through conservative anti-liberal culture wars, in America ushering in the third millennium. In this sense, owing to the neoconservative anti-Enlightenment reaction and counter-revolution via anti-liberal culture wars, America is once again forced by its conservative warriors to usher in a new, 21st century in the substantively identical or comparable spirit and substance, though not necessarily letter and form, as Europe entered, say, the 15th century due to Catholic medievalism as well as New England the 18th century courtesy of Puritan conservatism. It is in this sense and form of a neo-conservative "heaven" and sociological dystopia of anti-Enlightenment values and practices, as epitomized and symbolized by the fundamentalist recreation and vision of a "Bible Belt" – even after New England's "Biblical Commonwealth" was officially disestablished in the 1830s – that the "Dark Middle Ages" may return to America during the 21st century (Bauman 2001; Berman 2000). Or, as some analysts imply, they perhaps never ended (Munch 2001) in this counter-Enlightenment and anti-liberal "oasis", as indicated by such syndromes of darkness as Puritan "Salem with witches" in its historical ramifications and proxies from the illiberal "Great Awakenings" and their products irrational "Monkey Trials" to McCarthyism's witch-trials of "un-Americans" and neo-conservatism's culture wars on liberal enemies as sort of new "witches".

In comparative terms, this relapse into another anti-Enlightenment, if not "New Dark Ages", can escalate conservative-reproduced American triumphant exceptionalism (Bell 2002; Lipset 1996) to its ultimate limits of an irrational single-edged, thus self-destructive (Adorno 2001) "sword" resulting in total destruction and global nihilism inspired by and in the image of Judgment Day. This holds good given that in most Western societies counter-Enlightenment or extreme religious conservatism is Weber's *caput mortuum* or

⁴² For example, Gelernter (2005) approvingly contends that the "Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, often called the "first written constitution of modern democracy," were inspired not by democratic Athens or republican Rome or Enlightenment philosophy but by a Puritan preacher's interpretation of a verse in the Hebrew Bible".

in a terminal condition whose symptoms are revealed in the global shift from illiberal traditionalism to liberal-secular modernity (Inglehart 2004).

The Enlightenment, the French/American Revolution and Modern Liberalism

If the Enlightenment was an intellectual, cultural or spiritual revolution leading to or anticipating it, the French Revolution was its social-political product – i.e. as Pareto⁴³ comments, “daughter” – or version, realization and climax. In this regard, the Revolution was the Enlightenment evolved from what Marx would call philosophical contemplation into a revolutionary praxis to realize its principles and ideals via social revolution, radical change in society. As Marx would put it, the Enlightenment and pre-Enlightenment philosophers “have only interpreted the world in various ways”, while French (and other) revolutionaries tried and succeeded to “change it”. In this sense, the Enlightenment was Prime Act of or prelude to the French Revolution, and alternatively, the latter Final Act or “consummation” of the former at least and initially in France. Thus, the French Revolution was both historically and especially sociologically an integral part and phase of the Enlightenment in France and Europe, as was to a lesser extent the American in relation to the version of the latter in America.

In general, the French Revolution was a liberal revolution par excellence against an anti- and pre-liberal social system bequeathed by and perpetuating medievalism, including economic feudalism, anti-egalitarianism and serfdom, political despotism such as royal absolutism, as well as theocratic religion and coercion. It was, as Tocqueville⁴⁴ and other early and contemporary sociologists

⁴³ However, Pareto commenting that “it has been said that the Revolution was the daughter of Voltaire and of the Encyclopedists”, proposes that “this is true only to a small extent [so long as] humanitarian skepticism had weakened the [old] upper classes.”

⁴⁴ Like many other, in Parsons’ (1937: viii) words, “conservative” or “aristocratic” sociologists and philosophers in post-revolutionary France such as de Maistre and Bonald, plus Burke in England (Giddens 1998), including in part his contemporary Comte often classified among “liberals”, Tocqueville was skeptical, if not disdainful, of the ideals, claims or achievements of the 1789 liberal-bourgeois French Revolution. Still, Tocqueville, like Comte and other sociologists and historians such as Taine in France and beyond, acknowledges and emphasizes in his work *L’Ancien régime et la Révolution* that the French Revolution’s aim or outcome was the destruction of the *ancien régime* of feudalism and its replacement by a modern social system of liberal

emphasize, Schumpeter's like "creative destruction" of the medieval or feudal illiberal *ancien regime* and its substitution with a liberal, egalitarian and universalistic social system premised on the ideals of "liberty, equality and fraternity" or humanity in the sense of what Weber calls the "ethic of brotherhood" ("Universal Rights of Men"), albeit anti-liberal conservatives from Burke to Hitler (Giddens 2000; Habermas 2001) denounced them as empty or utopian dreams. Thus, Dahrendorf (1979: 100) notes that the French Revolution symbolized and promoted the "liberation of a new potential by modernization", notably "unheard-of progress of life chances for many people". In his view, it was an essential symbol and element of Western liberal modern ("dynamic") processes "which began with the rule of law [i.e.] the protected formal status of the citizen, and ended with the welfare state [i.e.] comprehensive and substantive citizenship rights" (Dahrendorf 1979: 100).

In comparative terms, if the preceding is correct, then the French Revolution converges with the American on the point of origin, the rule of law, but somewhat diverges from it in destination, the welfare state. In turn, this divergence is perhaps the extant historical source and explanation of European welfare egalitarian capitalism (Esping-Andersen 1994; Quadagno 1999; Trigilia 2002) and liberal-social democracy (Amenta et al. 2002) in the sense of "comprehensive and substantive citizenship rights" by contrast to its anti-welfare *laissez-faire*, albeit a concept historically "imported" from France, or "unfettered" and non-egalitarian version (Wolff 2002) in America. Generally, sociologists propose that, as promoted and symbolized by the French Revolution, the "growth of citizenship and the nation-state is a more significant dimension of modernization than the distributive inequalities underlying the formation of social classes"⁴⁵ (Bendix 1970: 313).

Also, contemporary sociologists emphasize that the French Revolution had "liberal [and bourgeois] features" (Skocpol 1979: 42) and to that extent was

democracy and equality. This holds true even if Tocqueville's personal preference may not be for liberal democracy, but as Parsons (1937: xiii-iv) suggests, for the aristocratic *ancien regime*, like that of Burke who also preferred medievalism to modernity.

⁴⁵ Bendix (1970: 250) comments that the common sense of the word "modern" encompasses the whole era since the 18 century when inventions provided the initial, technical basis for the industrialization of societies." However, he objects that the "invidious contrast between tradition and modernity is the master-theme which underlies a great diversity of topics and influences our understanding of modern society to this day" and attempts to "de-ideologize the conventional contrast of tradition and modernity" (Bendix 1970: 253-86).

a crucial historical stage and sociological constellation in the development of liberalism, including liberal-secular democracy and modern capitalism alike, since the Enlightenment. In a similar view, just as other so-called liberal-bourgeois revolutions or civil wars in the Western world like England and America, the French Revolution resulted in the “combination” of Western secular parliamentary democracy and capitalism (Moore⁴⁶ 1993). Arguably, the French Revolution, like its functional equivalents in other Western societies, including America, involved a “group in society with an independent economic base, which attacks obstacles to a democratic version of capitalism that have been inherited from the past” (Moore 1993: xxiii).

The above suggests that the French version of Western “liberal-bourgeois” revolutions was, positively, the revolution of both political and economic liberalism bequeathed from the Enlightenment. Negatively, it was a radical negation of medieval traditionalism, notably, as Tocqueville emphasizes with some regret, the “revolutionary assault on feudalism” (Markoff 1997; also Hechter⁴⁷ 2004). It was such an assault on feudal anti-egalitarianism (Carruthers and Ariovich 2004), despotism and religious repression or theocratic religion epitomized, in the Revolution’s definitions, both by Catholicism prevailing in France⁴⁸ and Protestantism as secondary (e.g. Calvinist Huguenots), yet prevalent elsewhere in Europe and beyond, as in Germany, Great Britain and America. This is also, especially in respect with feudal theocracy, what Pareto implies describing the French as a religious or rather, given its assault on conventional religion like Christianity, anti-religious revolution expressed in a “social, patriotic, revolutionary and also anti-Christian [secular] religion”

⁴⁶ Moore (1993) classifies the French Revolution into the category of “bourgeois revolution”, alongside the English Civil War (the Puritan Revolution) and the American Civil War, but, curiously, not the American anti-colonial Revolution.

⁴⁷ Hechter (2004: 407–8) notices that feudal Europe “rested on a system of indirect rule wherein central rulers delegated governance to traditional authorities in their localities. The push toward direct rule began very early [e.g. the 14th and 15th centuries] but it proceeded fitfully and took four or five centuries before culminating in its first peak, the French Revolution”.

⁴⁸ Carruthers and Ariovich (2004: 26) observe that the French Revolution’s “abolition” of feudal property was “clearly intended to alter the social distribution of wealth”, more precisely to make it more egalitarian in accordance with the general principle of egalitarianism by displacing “feudal exploiters” (Lachmann 1989). For example, “the Estates General in 1789 broke with the idea of representing the great divisions of medieval society; the 1791 constitution abolished what it called the “feudal system,” including the corporate-stratified legal system” (Jepperson 2002: 71).

or liberal ideology.⁴⁹ In his view, the French Revolution as defined was similar to the Protestant Reformation, with the presumably secondary, yet effectively decisive difference that in the early 16th century marking the rise of Protestantism like Lutheranism and Calvinism in central Europe the “religious reaction had a Christian form, in 1789, in France it took the form of a social, patriotic, revolutionary and also anti-Christian religion.”

The above difference is decisive in the present context, unlike that of Pareto focusing on the “waves” or “rhythms” of religious sentiment broadly understood to include both conventional and secular religion or ideology like “socialism”, “nationalism” and “liberalism”. It is so because it indicates that the French and perhaps American was a liberal-secular revolution, and the Protestant Reformation, including the subsequent Puritan Revolution in Great Britain and America like the “Great Awakenings”, the exact opposite as anti-liberalism or anti-secularism. As Pareto and Schumpeter might put it, the French Revolution arose and functioned as the “creative destruction” of society par excellence by destroying old pre-liberal and pre-democratic economic feudal, political despotic and cultural religious-theocratic, including Protestant and other “Christian”, Catholic, structures, and creating substantively new liberal, capitalist and democratic and secular, social institutions. As such, the Revolution acted in contrast and implied opposition to the Reformation as instead an attempt, as Pareto suggests, to restore or “reform” the *ancien regime*, notably the medieval Christian “Roman theocracy”, with predictable Machiavellian expedient adaptations such as replacing what he calls the old “theocratic classes” in Catholicism by the new religious elites in Protestantism embodied by what Comte identifies as Calvinist-Puritan saints as masters also with self-assigned “Divine Rights” to reign. Hence, in social-political terms, it was probably the critical historical phase and sociological constellation in the evolution of liberal modernity, just as was the Enlightenment in an intellectual sense. At least, it was more so than the Protestant Reformation and other supposedly “liberal” religious revolutions and movements, like the Calvinist-Puritan disciplinary Revolution in Europe and England and the evangelical “Great Awakenings” in America (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 1993; Zaret 1989).

⁴⁹ Pareto’s full statement is that the “French Revolution was a religious revolution, prepared by the higher classes and then carried out against them [handing] over the power to a new elite, the bourgeoisie.”

However, like the Enlightenment, the French Revolution via its attempted and eventual destruction of an anti-liberal pre-democratic social system and its creation of a new liberal-democratic society also acted as the generator or rather *agent provocateur* of authoritarian conservatism (Dunn and Woodard 1996) as the immediate and perennial antagonist of liberalism, emerging from medievalist traditionalism through its, in Mannheim's view, "self-reflection" and hostility vis-à-vis an emerging modernity. Thus, sociologists note that, just as the Enlightenment as its prelude, the French Revolution "led to the formation of a conservative strand in social and political thought", represented by de Maistre and de Bonald in France, Burke in England and Fichte in Germany, "polarized social thinkers in Europe into conservatives and liberals – the critics and defenders of modernity" (Delanty 2000: 29), alternatively, defenders and critics of pre-modernity, notably feudal, despotic or monarchic and theocratic medievalism. For instance, to complete the previous observation by US conservatives, Maistre "expressed authoritarian conservatism most clearly in response to the ideas" (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 88) of both the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, as did his "brothers in arms" like anti-egalitarian and aristocratic Burke in Great Britain and US post-revolutionary authoritarian conservatives (e.g. Hamilton and the Federalists).

Evidently, it was primarily, in conjunction with or sequence from the Enlightenment, the French Revolution that, as Mannheim (1986) suggests, regenerated or provoked conservatism in the form of medieval traditionalism becoming "self-reflective" or systematically hostile in the face of this liberal "creative destruction" or radical social change essentially doing away with medievalism, including feudalism, despotism and theocracy or oppressive religion. In this sense, it effectively begot or provoked political-religious conservatism as its unintended effect through medieval counter-reaction and even counterrevolution as restoration (Bourdieu 1998), as actually happened in France and elsewhere in Europe during the 19th century (Elias 1972). It did so, just as it resulted in or enhanced liberalism (Dahrendorf 1979), including liberal-secular democracy, bourgeois capitalism and free civil society, as its intended outcome or project. Predictably, since conservatism was originally traditionalism suddenly become "reflective" of itself as well as of liberalism via such a counter-reaction, it was, as Comte stresses, "retrograde" typically assuming a "reactionary form" (Moore 1993), attempting and occasionally succeeding to revive the "ghost" of medievalism, notably medieval "Christian"

theocracy from the “dead past”. In this sense, the French Revolution perhaps first and most glaringly revealed that the “true spirit” of conservatism originally was – and remained under different disguises since, up to the 21st century – the “ghost” of “presumed dead” medieval traditionalism, including political despotism and theocracy, thus revealing the conservative emperor’s true or rather lack of, “cloths”.

In other words, the French liberal Revolution provoked a conservative counter-revolution through the hostile reaction of traditionalism against its liberalism, notably political democracy, secular civil society and initially capitalism itself, and the attempted restoration, as during the 1820–30s, of the ancient, medieval system. Hence, this revolution probably set and epitomized a characteristic pattern and cycle. This involves, first, liberal revolutions as creative destructions of the old and new society; second, proto-conservative counter-revolutions *cum* restorations seeking to restore an *ex ante*, pre-liberal social state, usually medievalism as the perennial ideal of conservatism; third, other liberal revolutionary actions; and fourth, another neo-conservative counter-revolutionary reaction, and so on full circle.

Historically, the French Revolution and its conservative reaction therefore prefigured a recently observed cycle of liberalism and anti-liberalism. It consisted of, first, liberal political-cultural revolutions and liberalizations in Western societies during the 1960s; second, neo-conservative counter-revolutions through hostile anti-liberal reactions seeking to resurrect “traditional”, often medieval, social values, especially in America and to a lesser extent Great Britain from the 1980s; third, global trends to new liberalization, minus American exceptionalism (Inglehart 2004), in the late 1990s and early 2000s; and, fourth, still another reactive revival of counter-revolutionary “neo-neo” conservatism, including fundamentalism in the “Bible Belt”, Iran and other Islamic countries (Bauman 1997; Turner 2002) – and “*déjà vu* all over again.”

Further, the French Revolution acted as sort of extant agent provocateur of fascism as typically an extreme subtype or product and ally of reactionary conservatism, including medieval traditionalism that is also a venerable fascist, including Nazi, ideal of the “good” society and life (Nisbet 1966). Specifically, it was an indirect, latent and eventual provocation of modern fascism through directly, manifestly and immediately provoking reactionary conservatism to develop out of “self-conscious” and hostile medievalism, including feudalism, threatened with and eventually experiencing evolutionary extinction,

yet refusing to admit its clear ultimate defeat (the “bad loser”) but instead continuing its “mindless” or “holy”, depending on perspective, anti-liberal war. Thus, sociological studies show that since the medieval reaction against the French Revolution, the eventual outcome of conservative counter-revolutions, as types of “revolution from above”, “after a brief and unstable period of democracy was fascism” (Moore 1993: xxiii) described as both a “capitalist and reactionary form”.

At this point, fascism acts and appears as the ultimate, both historically and sociologically, conservative-based counter-revolution and antagonist, just as conservatism was the initial and immediate, against the French Revolution and so liberalism. In this respect, fascism is a kind of Act 2 or pathological, yet logical, escalation of the original conservative counter-revolution against the French Revolution, just as the Enlightenment overall. Conversely, conservatism was Act 1 of or prelude to modern fascist anti-liberal “revolutions” and restorations of traditionalism, including medievalism, as in Nazism during the 1930s (Bourdieu 1998). Reportedly, from its birth in hostile reaction to the French Revolution, conservatism “passed through reactionary political forms to culminate in fascism” (Moore 1993: xxiii). Fascism thus only continues and intensifies to the extreme through anti-liberalism conservatism’s original hostility to the French Revolution and liberalism, both seeking to restore the illiberal “Golden Past”, usually despotic medievalism, and destroy and reverse liberal society and modernity.

The preceding suggests that to better understand seemingly incomprehensible and irrational fascism, including Nazism, as the polar and ultimate anti-liberal opposite (Dahrendorf 1979) or “poison”, necessitates taking into account reactionary conservatism or resurrected medievalism as Mannheim’s “immediate antagonist” of the French Revolution and liberalism overall. In terms of *dramatis personae*, to understand modern fascists, including neo-Nazis, like Hitler et al. as well as their conservative allies and their joint destruction and reversal of liberal society and modernity may be instructive and even illuminating to go back to de Maistre, de Bonald, Burke and Fichte and their reactionary condemnation of the French Revolution as well as the Enlightenment and liberalism overall.

Despite their various personal, national, religious and ideological differences, these two groups essential reveal anti-liberal or anti-democratic continuities or affinities, thus those between fascism and conservatism, in an

evidently “holy” war or alliance against liberalism, from the French Revolution to Germany’s Weimar Republic to the liberalization of the 1960s and the new global liberalism during the 2000s (Inglehart 2004). For example, analysts identify what they describe as anti-liberal “authoritarian continuities” between Hitler and Bismarck (Blinkhorn 2003), exemplifying those of Nazism with traditional German conservatism also arising in hostile reaction to the French Revolution. Moreover, Mises (1950) observes that Germany “never really knew Liberalism”, precisely owing to the rise and historical dominance of German conservatism rooted in and inspired by medieval romanticism, from the conservative reaction to the French Revolution to its climax in and holy alliance with the Nazis (Blinkhorn 2003) as ultimate anti-liberalism.

The aforesaid of conservatism and fascism and their shared anti-liberalism in Germany and Europe, other things equal, also holds true of America during most of its history, for similar though not identical historical and sociological reasons. These reasons involve the admittedly historical and continuing, even expanding and intensifying, dominance (Lipset 1996) of religious conservatism, spanning from original Puritanism and its New England’s theocracy to, via the Puritan-based evangelical “Great Awakenings”, anti-liberal Protestant neo-fundamentalism, as in the “Bible-Belt” South, also “standing in the tradition of the Puritans” (Dunn and Woodard 1996), often in fusion, coalition or flirt with some sort of fascism (e.g. “Christian” neo-Nazi militias). Self-declared classical liberal Mises (cf. Hayek 1941) may add that the main reason why Germany and perhaps to a lesser extent America “never really knew Liberalism” as the dominant social factor in contrast to France and England was that both countries, due to their predominant conservatism, did not experience a liberal-type, “French-style” revolution, which is controversial for most US liberals who define the American Revolution as “liberal”, but not for conservatives invidiously distinguishing it as “non-liberal”. Actually, Mises (1950) states that England was the “home of Liberalism”, but he mostly refers to its economic version, the theory and system of capitalism or a free-market economy. Even in this limited respect, he overlooks what Keynes registers and emphasizes. Recall, this is that Keynes (1972: 278; also Hodgson 1999) finds that economic liberalism a la *laissez-faire* ideology historically originated, though perhaps not implemented, in France by, curiously, crediting the Enlightenment “political philosophers of the day” (e.g. d’Argenson in the 1750s) with its invention rather than “political economists” like Smith and

other early English economic theorists. In turn, neo-classical UK economist Sidgwick comments that in England, “from 1817 to 1830 the tide of Liberalism was rapidly rising, and the flavour, of the rising Liberalism was peculiarly bitter”, again mostly referring to its economic variant or *laissez-faire*.

Overall, the arch-conservative enemies of the French Revolution and classical liberalism a la the “great antiliberal polemicist” Joseph de Maistre (McCann 2000: 8), even supposedly “libertarian” and “individualistic” Edmund Burke (Hayek 1948: 4) sociologically, though not psychologically or nationally, act and appear as a sort of “brothers in arms”, “parents” or “bedfellows” of fascists and neo-fascists. They do so on the account of their shared anti-liberal continuities and affinities with fascists, as exemplified by those between Bismarck’s conservatism and Hitler’s fascism in Germany. At least, the distance in sociological, distinguished from historical and psychological, terms, liberty versus authoritarianism in society, between de Maistre, Burke, Fichte and other early conservative crusaders against the liberal French Revolution *and* Hitler and other fascist anti-liberals is not as great as it seems and usually supposed, especially by conservatives.

In Popper’s (1966) terms, both groups are basically enemies of liberal open society, which makes their various differences matters of “degree of un-freedom” rather than substance for liberalism (though he, like Hayek and other “libertarians”, would remove Burke, for example, from the list of such adversaries and place him into its “friends”). While this is evident and non-controversial for fascists, by attacking the French Revolution as an endeavor, irrespective of how immediately or retrospectively (un)successful, to create precisely such a liberal open society and a symbol of Western liberation and modernization (Dahrendorf 1979), early prominent conservatives like Maistre in France, Fichte in Germany, and Burke as the “founding father of conservatism in Britain” (Giddens 1998: 11) objectively acted as such “enemies”. This is what Popper and Mises imply, though denied and overlooked by Hayek (1948) et al. for some of them (especially supposedly “libertarian” Burke associated instead with “libertarianism” or “limited government” neo-conservatism a la Thatcherism and Reaganism).

In sum, the French Revolution – and in a lesser degree or a delayed effect American – was a social-political version, realization, “praxis” or culmination of early liberalism, notably the Enlightenment, as a philosophical movement. Thus, it was probably the most relevant historical phase and sociological

constellation in its evolution, more precisely the development of Western liberal society and modernity at least in Europe since the late 18th century. It was simply the first systematic and comprehensive endeavor to realize the ideals of the Enlightenment and liberalism overall via the “creative destruction” by destroying the old social system like the feudal *ancien regime* based on economic serfdom, political despotism and theocratic religion, and creating a new society on the basis of original liberal egalitarian, universalistic and humanistic principles like liberty, equality and humanity. Overall, the French Revolution was a critical sociological point in the genesis and evolution of liberalism by, first, destroying and superseding anti-liberal medievalism; second, creating, promoting or projecting liberal society and modernity; and third, provoking the birth of conservatism from the “dead past” of medieval traditionalism to become its immediate and perennial antagonist, eventually climaxing in fascism as the extreme conservative form of anti-liberalism and so un-freedom.

Hence, both contemporary Western liberal society and its conservative-fascist enemies in Popper’s sense cannot be fully understood and even “identified” without reconsidering the French Revolution against despotic medievalism as well as the hostile counter-reaction by medieval traditionalism to eventually develop into and thus perpetuate itself as conservatism. This is to realize that the French Revolution, while mostly terminated feudalism, (re)generated liberalism as both its philosophical source via the Enlightenment and its societal outcome, liberal society and modernity, just as post-medieval anti-liberal conservatism as its unintended and perverse (Boudon 1982; Merton 1968) effect and “immediate antagonist”. In this sense, Western liberal society and modernity really started with the French Revolution, just as the latter was the *agent provocateur* of immediate proto-conservative and eventually fascist, neo-conservative and neo-fascist anti-liberal antagonists in their salient authoritarian continuities and affinities, from de Maistre and Bismarck to Mussolini and Hitler, from Burke to Thatcher and Reagan.

Evidently, the battle has continued and continues between the French Revolution or early liberalism overall and its conservative counter-revolution ever since in various forms. These span from the temporary restoration of the *ancien regime* in France during the early 19th century to the fascist destruction of liberal democracy in interwar-Germany to neo-conservative culture and other wars against the liberalization of the 1960s in America from the 1980s to the

21st century. In this respect, anti-liberal neo-conservative culture and political or military wars literally force, through conservative warriors enforcing their own moral-religious values on all society (Lipset 1996), America usher in the 21st century, from the prism of liberalism, almost identically in substantive, though not formal-legal, terms, as France and the rest of Europe entered the 19th century when the French Revolution was attacked and even transiently reversed by reactionary conservatism, as during the Restoration.

In a sense, the transient proto-conservative restoration of the defunct medieval system in France and the rest of Europe during the 19th century was in a sense replicated or approached by, just as perhaps predicted, the neo-conservative more enduring counter-revolution and revival from the “dead” (Dunn and Woodard 1996) experienced in the liberal 1960s, in America during the 1980s–2000s. In this sense, from the stance of liberalism, during that period America has been under the regime of neo-conservative anti-liberal restoration (e.g. “revolution”), including another fundamentalist “great awakening”, just as was France and the rest of Europe in the 1820–30s and later times of the 19th century.

The historical and perhaps substantive sociological difference is two centuries, as the conservative restoration in the sense of a reversal of liberalism, epitomized by the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, has essentially ended in Western Europe long ago, perhaps with the rise of the welfare state in the late 19th century and especially the defeat of fascism in WW II (Giddens 1998; Habermas 2001). Yet, it evidently continued and even expanded and intensified, via perennial conservative culture and other wars, in America ushering in the 21st century. While two centuries are perhaps a minor moment in total human history and evolution, the difference is remarkable, even striking in the framework of Western modernity and liberal society. It reaffirms what sociologists identify as “American backwardness” or exceptionalism in political liberalism, notably liberal-secular democracy, as expressed in restricted voting rights, weak social-welfare policy, “faith-based” programs, during the 20th century and continuing into the next, primarily due to dominant anti-liberal conservatism (Amenta et al. 2001; Quadagno 1999).

If so, this neo-conservative restoration or historical backwardness reproduces American exceptionalism as a sort of restorationism, including perpetual religious revivals a la the “Great Awakenings”, of the never-existing “golden past”. It thus endows it with, within modern Western society, an

unparalleled reactionary, backward and illusionary or elusive (Tiryakian 1975), rather than progressive, forward or pragmatic, as usually supposed, content and form at the threshold of the third millennium. From the standpoint of liberalism, this conservative-generated American exceptionalism is a dangerous single-sided self-destructive “sword” threatening to return America to the anti-liberal, essentially medieval-despotic-theocratic, social condition that most of Western societies have historically passed and sociologically transcended mostly, but not only, inspired by and since the French Revolution long ago, while further moving in the direction of a liberal society during the 21st century (Inglehart 2004).

So long as this exceptionalism *cum* religious and other restorationism of the “dead past” persists in the foreseeable future, as it seems likely based on the past and current syndromes, for US contemporary liberals this is the scenario of a true American sociological tragedy within the context of Western liberal society and modernity. In turn, it is paralleled or deliberately rivaled only or mostly by functionally equivalent or similar outcomes, such as widespread use of Draconian punishments, including executions (Jacobs et al. 2005), in non-Christian theocracies like “Islamic [also] Republic of Iran” (Bauman 1997; Turner 2002). As a kind of historical path-dependence (Inglehart and Baker 2000), the French Revolution and the Enlightenment “over-determined” and predicted what US religious conservatives love to hate and dismiss as “old” liberal-secular Europe.

Conversely, the lack of such a liberal revolution and the weakness, if not absence, of the Enlightenment – and, alternatively, the original and perpetual predominance of religious conservatism (Lipset 1996) – in the “first new nation” over-determined an anti-liberal, “faith-based” and conservative-dominated American society. At least, it did so in respect to the “Southern Bible Belt” the historical reenactment of New England’s theocratic “Biblical Commonwealth” in colonial and early post-revolutionary America (Munch 2001), and even a functional “Christian” equivalent of Islamic Iran (Bauman 1997) in the early 21st century.

Chapter Four

Types of Liberalism

Classical Liberalism

In historical terms, liberalism is classified into classical or original and contemporary or derived, and in geographical terms into Western European and American and other. In turn, classical or original liberalism is considered European, and contemporary or derived liberalism American. This yields the dichotomy of classical, original, European and contemporary, derived, American liberalism.

Originally liberalism was a specifically Western, more precisely West-European, phenomenon since the Enlightenment and before, the Renaissance and classical civilization, distinguishing, Western society from the rest of the world or the Orient, as Weber implies in respect to societal rationalism, including modern capitalism, democracy and science. Thus, primarily referring to modern Western society since the Enlightenment, Mises (1950) states that liberalism is a “great system, in the construction of which the finest minds of all ages have collaborated [as] humanity becomes conscious of the powers which guide its development [and] begins to understand social life and allows it to develop consciously”. As contemporary analysts also suggest, liberalism “has become the dominant political ideology of the Western world [as] a general political outlook

that is shared by most citizens and political parties – whether they call themselves liberal or not” (Brink 2000: 9). In particular, others suggest that the “intellectual and political dominance of liberal ideas in the US and Britain is incontestable” (King 1999: 7), though the rise of anti-liberal neo-conservatism like Reaganism and Thatcherism in both countries since the 1980s has strongly contested and even, especially in America, reversed this situation.

For instance, Mill refers to “European liberalism” and Mannheim situates the origin and meaning of classical rationalistic and individualistic liberalism in early modern Western Europe to become an “explicitly dynamic” society in the aftermath of medievalist traditionalism. Most contemporary sociologists follow Mill, Weber and Mannheim, by distinguishing liberalism in its “original European meaning” as the “system of liberty” (Manent 1998: 226) from its derived non-European, especially expanded American, meanings. As hinted when discussing the forms of the Enlightenment, the “classical European sense of liberalism” (Razeeen 2002: 204) signifies and encompasses continental European, including German and especially French, and British liberalism.

British and Continental-European Original Liberalism

An exemplar of the original European meaning or type is what contemporary liberals describe as the “anxious liberalism” of Locke, Hume, Smith and Mill (Terchek 1997: 4) referring to Scottish-English original liberal ideas and representatives. In this view, “anxious liberals reject efforts by the state or monopoly churches to ‘save’ people from their own moral mistakes”, including salvation via repressive Puritanism, as did Locke and Mill, though they are far from “content to see people making errors simply because individuals are now free” (Terchek 1997: 9). This view identifies a difference between classical and modern liberalism in that, by holding that being free signifies that human actors are in “charge of themselves as moral persons”, these liberals differ from their contemporary counterparts “who tend to avoid the problematic nature of freedom and the need for moral standards for choice”¹ (Terchek 1997: 9).

¹ Terchek (1997: 236) comments that British “anxious liberals believe individuals have the moral capacities to challenge instincts, contingency, convention, and manipulation [so] agents are open to redefining themselves by their reflective choices. [Thus] moral agents can never evade responsibility for their choices”. However, he does

The above suggests that classical British liberals were both “libertarian” and “moralistic” reflecting their dual, Enlightenment and Protestant, either Puritan or Anglican, heritage, and their modern successors “libertarian” but not “moralistic” just as their predecessors in early German and French liberalism. Simply, Locke, Hume, Smith, Mill and other early British liberals were “libertarian”, yet morally “anxious”, if not moralistic. This was primarily because they were not only Enlightenment philosophers but also, as often described (e.g. Locke), “devout Christians” (Protestants) or relatively religious, albeit not theocentric (Wall 1998) in the sense of the “Puritan ideal of godly politics” (Zaret 1989) and Cromwell’s “holy wars” against “infidels” (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000). They hence differed from their contemporaries, Kant, Montesquieu, Condorcet, Rousseau, Voltaire and other classical liberals in continental Europe, who were mostly secular and even non-religious, as are their contemporary descendents in Western Europe and to a lesser extent America.

In this respect, the Enlightenment, and in part the Renaissance before, generated and predicted moral and other liberty, so “libertarianism” in classical, just as modern liberalism. By contrast, the religious, especially Protestant, though more Puritan-Calvinist than Anglican-Lutheran, background was generative and predictive of moralistic anxiety, anxious moralism in classical as well as modern liberalism. And as these “anxious” British liberals demonstrate, for example, Locke’s internal conflicts between Puritanism and secularism, it is often difficult, even impossible to fuse or reconcile moral liberty and anxiety, libertarianism and moralism, especially ethical relativism and absolutism. They express the historical difficulty or impossibility of fully blending and reconciling the Enlightenment and religious conservatism, including conservative Protestantism and Catholicism alike.

In a sense, moralist anxiety *cum* “moralism”, including by implication ethical absolutism (Habermas 2001; Munch 2001), was an extraneous anti- and pre-liberal, notably conservative-religious, Puritanical ingredient in classical, specifically British, liberalism defined instead by universal moral liberty, so libertarianism, in particular ethical relativism, rooted in and derived from the Enlightenment. This perhaps helps explain why most early European liberals

not make explicit or elaborate on the apparent or probable connection of this moral anxiety with these liberals’ religious Protestant background, just as the alternative link of their moral “libertarianism” with the secular Enlightenment.

like Kant, Condorcet, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Voltaire rejected or downplayed the religious-moralistic ingredient, while retaining and emphasizing the Enlightenment's legacy of moral liberty and ethical relativism, just as do their contemporary successors in Europe and beyond. Alternatively, classical European liberals were not or less morally "anxious" or moralistic than their British contemporaries in virtue of being less religious and "devout Christians", notably less "Puritanical" given that Puritanism was and remained a sort of non-entity or weaker in continental Europe than Britain compared to morally more moderate and liberal Lutheranism (Martin 2002; Munch 1981) and secularism.

In sum, classical British liberalism, from Locke to Hume and Smith and to Mill, was more morally "anxious" than its European as well as contemporary versions because it was more "religious" due to its stronger background in moralistic religion like Puritanism and other Protestantism, while adopting and developing the principle of individual moral and other liberty from the Enlightenment. This means that classical British morally anxious liberalism was still "libertarian" not because but rather in spite of its religious, Puritan-Victorian, background and ingredient, and alternatively, primarily in virtue of the opposite Enlightenment basis or element.

In turn, contemporary sociologists suggest that British classical, "old regime" liberalism engendered various spin-offs, notably America's "confederal capitalist liberalism" (Mann 1993; Jepperson 2002) at the time of the American Revolution and Constitution. Hence, in this sense, it was classical liberalism – both in the face of Jefferson et al. and in the sense of liberal European influences like Locke, Montesquieu and Rousseau – rather than conservatism that really "wrote the American Constitution" (Binmore 2001: 230), notably the constitutional separation of church and state as well as the concepts of the "pursuit of happiness", social equality, and "liberty and justice for all".

Moreover, some US sociologists contend, echoing Tocqueville, that America "remained through the 19th and early 20th centuries the closest example of a classically liberal society that rejected the assumptions of ascriptive elitism, of statism, of Tory/Bismarck/Disraeli *noblesse oblige*" (Lipset and Marks 2000). At this juncture, however, one may wonder what is wrong with the presence of *noblesse oblige* in the "old" Europe and what is the "blessing" of its absence in the "first new nation" (Lipset 1969) of America. The dilemma is particularly prompted by the observation that the lack or weakness of *noblesse oblige*

is one of the major historical and persisting reasons why America, in contrast to all other liberal, “capitalist” and democratic Western societies, has no national health system (Fuchs 1996), for example, with serious social pathologies acknowledged even by US anti-liberals like neo-conservatives, including tens of millions of people without basic medical insurance, comparatively high infant mortality, etc. If so, then at least in terms of lacking such a health system and a developed welfare state overall, the celebrated lack of disdained European *noblesse oblige* in America is far from being a comparative advantage but the opposite generating or sustaining what sociological studies identify as American “backwardness” (Amenta et al. 2001) in this and related respects among Western societies. In this sense, it makes America less or non Western, insofar as *noblesse oblige* and humanism overall are, as Weber implies, among those elements that precisely distinguish the “Occident” from the “Orient”, notably what he calls “Oriental despotism” (cf. also Wittfogel 1957) instead defined by its ignoble and anti-humanistic opposites. This curious instance confirms that anti-liberalism such as neo-conservatism, including its disdain for charity and welfare and its abhorrence for secular humanism overall, just as its ethnocentrism – *noblesse oblige* as foreign or “un-American” – tends to make America less Western in the sense of liberal modernity, and more non-Western (“third-world”) in cultural and political terms, as comparative research shows (Inglehart 2004).

Liberty in Society

In general, grounded on the Enlightenment’s libertarianism and ethical relativism, classical liberalism accentuates, as contemporary liberals propose, that “individual freedom is essential to the protection and enhancement of human life, and that government nonintervention in many areas of life is just as important as government intervention in other areas” (Pelton 1999: 9–10). Classical liberalism constitutes a “system of freedom” existing, enhanced and protected within and by society and its institutions, including liberal democracy and government.

Negatively, it is not, as Durkheim and even Mises (1966: 279), by stating in a Durkheimian vein that “only within the frame of a social system can a meaning be attached to the term freedom”, suggest, what US “libertarian” economists (Buchanan 1991) extol as Smith’s classical “system of natural liberty”.

It is not such a system so long as the latter exists within or results in an anti-social anarchic state of nature in the image of the jungle and the US “Wild West” (Hill 2002), where everyone is “free” to be in a Hobbesian-style “war with everyone else” and has the “freedom to bear arms”, including killing other humans predefined as immanent “evil” enemies. As sociologists remark in reference to America under neo-conservatism and its persisting Hobbesian tendencies exemplified in a gun culture (e.g. “concealed weapons” laws in the “Wild West” like Arizona and Texas), a “society in which each believes he can police other’s actions on his behalf by relying on the firepower on his own weapons is in danger of destroying its liberties, because everybody has to fear everybody else. Such a society is close to Hobbes’s state of nature” (Munch 1994: 69). Specifically, as other analysts suggest, it is closer and even reverts to US “Wild West politics” and “national madness” (Hill 2002: 149) than to Western liberal democracy and modernity.

In this sense, Smith’s classical liberal “system of natural liberty” is that of societal and institutional freedom rather than of liberties in “nature” in the form of Hobbesian anarchy – as approximated by American “unfettered” capitalism (Pryor 2002), emptied of virtually any social, including government, content and coordination – as opposed to human society. As contemporary liberals stress, classical liberalism “never conceived freedom on a *tabula rasa*” in the belief that such “natural” liberty is “destructive of ‘grown’ order in civil society and disintegrates into anarchy [sowing] the seeds of a totalitarianism that obliterates any semblance of freedom” (Razeen 2002: 23). The liberal concept is not about freedom in what UK neo-classical economist Edgeworth (1967: 115) calls Robinson Crusoe’s island and other “lonely islands” inhabited with “solitary couples”. Its liberty is not that of “Robinson Crusoe contracting with Friday”, for classical liberalism “does not assume that society is composed solely of anomic Crusoes” (Razeen 2002: 23).

In economic terms, contrary to “libertarian” economists’ opposite views (Buchanan 1991), this is *not* the system of laissez-faire if the latter is understood in the sense of Hobbesian anarchy in economy and markets characterized by near complete government non-intervention. Rather, it is the system of market and other freedoms institutionalized, enhanced and protected by societal institutions, including the state. Even “libertarian” Popper (1966: 109) admonishes that classical liberalism “has nothing to do with the *policy of strict non-intervention* (often, but not quite correctly, called ‘*laissez faire*’). Further,

he suggests that liberalism and state interference or government interventionism “are not opposed to each other. On the contrary, any kind of freedom is clearly impossible unless it is guaranteed by the state”. In this connection, Popper (1973: 140–1) invokes what he calls “democratic interventionism” by states in contemporary liberal societies, including Great Britain and America since the New Deal, notably Scandinavian social democracies, “led by Sweden, where the technology of democratic interventionism has reached its highest level so far.” He then distinguishes this liberal-democratic interventionism from its illiberal, undemocratic forms epitomized by the “fascist form of totalitarianism” (Popper 1973: 140–1), as well as Russian communism.

In turn, this is a distinction that his “libertarian” colleagues like Mises and Hayek fail to make or dismiss by lumping all these types of state interventionism, including the American “New Deal”, together into “socialism” and “the road of serfdom”, thus conflating modern liberalism and anti-liberalism like fascism and communism. For illustration, Mises (1966: 698–9) lumps the “New Deal of President Roosevelt” in the category of “socialism or interventionism” supposedly substituting for capitalism, together with “Italian Fascism and of German Nazism [sic!]” and other “interventionist doctrines”, from the “French royalists aiming at the restoration of the house of Bourbon-Orleans” to “the nationalists of Asia and Latin America.” This is perhaps one of those situations in which “no comment” is probably the best commentary that one can make of this “libertarian” anti-interventionist cacophony expressing rigid dogmatism and conceptual confusion. Also, Mises (1957: 318) alleges that “Great Britain would not have gone socialist [sic!] if the Conservatives, not to speak of the “Liberals,” had not virtually endorsed socialist ideas.”

And generally, if “classical liberal skepticism about the role of the state [was] based on economic arguments about the superior nature of markets” (Giddens 2000: 11), this holds true primarily of economic liberalism epitomized by orthodox political economy rather than liberalism as whole in the sense and origin of the Enlightenment in which market freedom was a special case of human liberty and even relatively secondary to political and civil liberties. In this connection, it is inaccurate, if not preposterous, to interpret, as “libertarian” economists do, the Enlightenment and so classical liberalism only or mostly in terms of “economic arguments about the superior nature of markets.”

As noted, the Enlightenment was a general philosophical-sociological vision of society rather than, or including as its special case, a narrow

economic theory of the “superior nature of markets”, so classical liberalism more than, or encompassing as its branch, simply “political economy”. At most, the market-economic doctrine of *laissez-faire* was a particular product or facet of the Enlightenment and liberalism overall. To reiterate, this is what Keynes (1972: 278) suggests by observing that liberal political philosophers’ individualism “pointed to *laissez-faire*” and that a French philosopher like Marquis d’Argenson in the mid 18th century rather than a British political economist actually invented the doctrine, notably in the general sociological rather than the narrow economic sense – i.e. as comprehensive societal liberty or non-interference rather than mere market freedom or non-intervention. Predictably, most subsequent economists since Smith have taken or emphasized the economic element of the doctrine through “arguments about the superior nature of markets” and government non-interference in the economy, and to that extent mutilated or distorted the original concept and meaning of “*laissez-faire*” originating in and derived from what Keynes describes as the Enlightenment’s “philosophical doctrine that government has no right to interfere”. Further, the Enlightenment and classical sociological liberalism overall is in a sense more plausibly interpreted as moral-social rather than market-economic “*laissez-faire*”, as non-government interference primarily in the realm of morality and private life (Razeeen 2002), just secondarily, though jointly, in the economy and markets, as Keynes, Popper and others suggest.

Consequently, contrary to most economists as well as economic conservatives, classical liberalism can be described in terms of *laissez-faire* only or more in the moral than economic sense. This is the system of individual freedom and human agency in morality and privacy, so civil society, defined by almost complete state non-intervention such that government “should not interfere in individuals’ delimited private sphere” (Razeeen 2002: 28). It is primarily personal morality, not necessarily economy, that operates according to the principle of *laissez-faire vis-à-vis* government and other coercive social institutions like church in classical liberalism. *Laissez-faire* in private morality is the hallmark of liberalism versus anti-liberalism that subordinates and sacrifices individual moral liberty and eventually human life to “greater than life” supra-human entities like God, race, nation and state, as do conservatism and fascism, or to “free markets”, as does economic “libertarianism”.

This is what, citing Bentham, Popper (1973: 236–8) contends by suggesting that the “‘higher’ values should very large be considered [government]

'non-agenda', and should be left to the realm of *laissez-faire*". Conversely, in contrast to his colleagues Mises, Hayek and other "libertarian" economists, he does not (as strongly) advocate this very policy in regard to "lower", economic values and markets. Moreover, he registers, with no great regret, that market *laissez-faire* "has disappeared from the face of the earth" (Popper 1973: 140). Particularly, Popper (1973: 335) proposes that "what Marx called 'capitalism' – i.e. unrestrained capitalism – has completely 'withered away' in the twentieth century", giving way to a new historical stage of "political interventionism" through the "economic interference of the state". He hence suggests that it is "utterly absurd" to identify economic systems in modern liberal democracies with the "system Marx called 'capitalism'", i.e. a *laissez-faire* capitalist economy² (Popper 1973: 141).

In addition, albeit from a different theoretical position, J. M. Keynes implicitly makes an argument for a sort of moral *laissez-faire*. He suggests, using Bentham's term too, that the "most important Agenda" of government relates "not to those activities which private individuals are already fulfilling, but to those functions which fall outside the sphere of the individual", so it is "not to do things which individuals are doing already", including both economic and social actions, market and moral behaviors (Keynes 1972: 288). Further, given his famous declaration of the "end" of economic *laissez-faire*, a diagnosis which Popper apparently embraces, Keynes makes a stronger case for Bentham's government "Non-Agenda" in the domain of personal morality and privacy, so civil society, than in that of the economy and markets. Generally, despite his critics' anti-individualist imputations or perceptions, Keynes (1960: 380) acknowledges that both moral and economic individualism is "the best safeguard" of personal liberty, by broadening the scope for the "exercise of political choice", as well as of the "variety of life." Moreover, as noted, he suggests that *laissez-faire* was originally the idea and practice of moral-social rather than market-economic economic liberalism by remarking that it was the French Enlightenment political philosophers, and not British classical economists, who invented or fully formulated the doctrine. This implies that

² Moreover, Popper (1973: 141) contends that the "development which led to this intervention started in Marx's own day, with British factory legislation. It made its first decisive advances with the introduction of the 48-hour week, and later with the introduction of unemployment insurance and other forms of social insurance."

at most originally market-economic *laissez-faire* was a particular outcome and form of societal liberalism, which most “libertarian” economists overlook or neglect by reducing the latter to the former (“free markets”), just as economics is what Keynes, following J. S. Mill, calls a special “branch” of moral-social science.

Hence, in the function of establishing, enhancing and protecting individual freedom, classical liberalism advocates government non-intervention primarily in the moral sphere, and secondarily in the economic domain, but does not rule out and restrain from state intervention in other spheres, including economy itself as well as polity. Smith’s classical “system of natural liberty” is moral rather or more than economic *laissez-faire*, a moment “naturally” overlooked by US “libertarian” economists (Buchanan 1991) with their penchant to reduce human freedom to “free markets” as well as religious conservatives condemning individual liberty in morality as “anarchy”, license” or “evil” in relation to supra-human entities like God, church, nation or state.

Also, as indicated, classical sociological and other liberalism postulates and balances both negative and positive liberty, “freedom from” government and other societal coercion and “freedom for” autonomous individual and collective action, in contrast to libertarianism with its revealed preference for the first type over the second, and conservatism with its acquired distaste and “trained incapacity” for both. As contemporary liberals point out, classical liberalism “defines individual freedom negatively, but it is also positive in that individuals use their freedom to do many different things in different ways” (Razeeen 2002: 17). On this account, classical liberalism is the theory and practice of integral liberty in the sense of a fusion of negative and positive, as well as economic and social, freedoms, rather than only or mainly of the first types, as in the case of libertarianism, let alone conservatism, including fascism, as the system of prevailing or “total” (fascist) elements and “signs of illiberty” (Dahrendorf 1979).

A System of Liberty, Equality and Justice

Furthermore, classical liberalism is not only an ideological and social system of freedom as such but a complex composite of liberty with equality and justice in positive dialectics and synergy. This is what Smith suggests by his “liberal plan” of freedom, equality and justice, a project that encompasses, and

thus is more comprehensive and complex than the “system of natural liberty” in society, let alone *laissez-faire* in economy and markets. Simply, classical liberalism is not only libertarian, but also egalitarian and equitable, although the first attribute is seen by many modern liberals and especially “libertarians” as more manifest, pertinent or accentuated³ than the second. As noted, a sociological exemplar of the classical liberal fusion and positive dialectic of liberty and equality is Spencer’s “law of equal freedom”, including its economic version in Senior’s law of “equal competition” in markets. By analogy, the French and American Revolutions’ principles of universal liberty and equality (and justice) provide a political case in point. In sum, classical liberalism primarily advocated and promoted what Weber and Dahrendorf (1979) call equal life chances, i.e. equality of opportunity, and institutional-legal treatment, secondarily or not at all equal results, equality of condition and ways of life seen as impossible or undesirable to attain.

Similarly, Smith’s view of justice as the primary condition for the existence of modern free society provides a conceptual exemplar of the classical-liberal fusion of libertarianism and equity qua fairness. By analogy, the American Revolution-Constitution’s Jeffersonian principle of “liberty and justice for all” represents a political instance of such a fusion. In Weber’s terms, classical liberalism advocated and promoted both formal and substantive justice, like equality and freedom as well as rationality, though his concept of legal-rational authority associated with modern liberal-democratic society implies an emphasis on the first type of equity, e.g. fairness of due process and procedure rather than equitable outcomes. In turn, this emphasis corresponds to or parallels that on equal chances, equality of treatment and opportunity in classical liberalism. As contemporary liberals remark, classical liberalism was “concerned not only with the justice of ends, but primarily with the justice of means, of process: the freedom of, and justice for, the individual must be maintained within the process” (Pelton 1999: 10). Evidently, this primary concern with the formal justice of means and procedure, epitomizing Weber’s legal-rational authority, relates to that with equality of treatment and opportunity primarily promoted, just as the secondary concerns with the substantive

³ Pelton (1999: 10) comments that in classical or traditional liberalism “freedom takes precedence over equality: there is a reluctance to impair individual freedom for the sake of increased equality of economic conditions.”

“justice of ends” relate to those with equal results that are only secondarily and proximately or not at all pursued.

Overall, its synthesis and synergy (Putterman et al. 1998) of libertarianism, egalitarianism and equity was expressed in that classical liberalism stipulated that the “individual must not be used as an instrument, as a means to an end, for this would violate the meanings of freedom, justice, and equality [and] must not be sacrificed for the group” (Pelton 1999: 10). In doing so, it incorporated into this synthesis individualism versus collectivism, moral universalism, inclusion and relativism, epitomized by Kant’s categorical imperative and free agency in morality, against ethical particularism, exclusion and absolutism typical of anti-liberalism, including “classical” conservatism and its extreme variant fascism.

In contrast to medieval and arch-conservative anti-humanism, this classical liberal synthesis also involved secular humanism in the sense of Kant’s suggestion for considering humans ends in themselves, rather than means to other ends, be they transcendental such as Providence and church in religious conservatism, collective like race, nation and state in fascism and personal, exemplified by power Machiavellianism and wealth in capitalist utilitarianism. To that extent, the classical liberal system and project of liberty, equality and justice à la Smith is, alongside libertarian, egalitarian and equitable, individualistic, morally universal, inclusive, relativist, humanistic and secular. Classical, just as modern, liberalism treats freedom, equality, justice, individualism, moral universalism and relativism, secular humanism and its other principles as entwined and mutually reinforcing in a synthesis/synergy rather than, as “libertarians” view freedom in relation to egalitarianism and equity, opposite and exclusive.

In sum, classical liberalism is more complex than what simplistic economists, following the letter but not the “spirit” of Smith extol as a “simple system of natural liberty” primarily in the economy and markets. It is a composite and what neo-classical economists like Schumpeter and others (Knight 1958; Tinbergen 1950; also Danziger 1999) would call (the process of) dynamic, moving equilibrium of freedom with equality and justice, libertarianism with egalitarianism, equity, moral universalism and relativism, individualism, rationalism and secular humanism. In turn, by myopically detecting, adopting and emphasizing mostly the first component of freedom, plus individualism, itself reductively conceived as “free market enterprise”, in the

classical liberal synthesis and synergy, “libertarianism” appears as extreme, spurious or incomplete rather than as “true” contemporary liberalism. Consequently, such original liberal principles as egalitarianism, “justice for all” and to a degree moral universalism and relativism, even secular humanism have miraculously disappeared or weakened in contemporary, especially American, “libertarianism” as the self-declared heir of classical liberalism, yet basically a “softer”, less morally and politically authoritarian, version of neo-conservatism.

Further, by essentially condemning and eventually suppressing all these liberal principles and institutions, including liberty, equality, humanism and secularism, from medieval traditionalism to European fascism and to American McCarthyism and neo-conservatism, conservatism operates as pre-meditated, methodical and uncompromising anti-liberalism, so as conservative authoritarianism or totalitarianism (e.g. Nazism). For example, religious conservatism, epitomized by traditional Catholicism and conservative Protestantism, as well as fundamentalist Islam, tends to function and be “born again” as, to paraphrase Weber, the “methodical doctrine [and practice] of sanctification” and “purification” of un-freedom through theocratic repression, a sort of “methodism” and “puritanism” in anti-liberalism, including anti-Enlightenment. (Weber specifically uses the expression “methodical doctrine of sanctification” to define Methodism seen as the “revival” and even “emotional intensification” of Puritanism in 18th century England and America, and alternatively an anti-liberal, notably counter-Enlightenment, reaction, at least initially.)

Classical Sociological Liberalism

In retrospect, contemporary sociologists suggest that Hobbes is to be or has been “seen as the first liberal, for his conception of government is based on the core tenet of liberal theory [i.e.] the state is not natural but is an artifact of society and necessary for the preservation of liberty. Moreover, for Hobbes and classical liberalism, political authority can be defended only as secular rule and as the instrumental pursuit of social order” (Delanty 2000: 25). Still, Hobbes is perhaps better viewed as a pre-liberal rather than classical liberal insofar as his solution to the problem of social order is coercive-authoritarian and to that extent illiberal in contrast to Locke’s rationalist and Rousseau’s

normative, so proto-liberal solutions (Wrong 1994: 9). In this respect, Locke qualifies, and is usually regarded, as the first and most pertinent classical British liberal, alongside his successor Hume, and Rousseau, more controversially, as a French and European equivalent, or “radical” in conservative adverse interpretations, along with Voltaire, Kant, and Hegel, perhaps preceded by Descartes, Bacon, Newton and Leibnitz, if not Copernicus, Galileo, De Vinci and Michelangelo on the account of their illuminating of the “Dark Middle Ages.”

Overall, the first and most prominent classical European liberals were the Enlightenment philosophers and their equivalents or successors in sociology, such as (alongside Rousseau) Montesquieu, Condorcet, Saint-Simon, Comte, Tocqueville (curiously included in both original liberalism or individualism and in early conservatism, cf. Hayek 1948; Lipset and Marks 2000), Spencer, Durkheim, Pareto and Weber (Alexander 1982) as well as in economics, including Smith, Say and Mill. Thus, Parsons (1937: viii) divides the French sociological tradition into the “ideals of the ‘liberals’” such as Rousseau, Saint Simon and Comte, and of the “conservatives” like De Maistre, Bonald and Tocqueville. In turn, contemporary sociologists suggest that in classical sociology “a tradition partly stemming from Comte and whose main representatives were Tocqueville, Spencer, and Durkheim formed the foundation of liberal social theory [with] a strong emphasis on modernity [i.e. modernization, societal differentiation, functionalist analysis, positivism]” (Delanty 2000: 34).

On this account, early sociology from Comte and even, as Parsons (1937) suggests by describing them as “liberals”, Saint Simon and Rousseau to Durkheim and Weber was part and parcel of classical liberalism, including the Enlightenment, rather than anti-liberal, including anti *laissez-faire*, medieval-based conservatism as often supposed by economists, even sociologists themselves (Nisbet 1966) in contrast to liberal, “libertarian” economics represented by Smith’s “system of natural liberty”. Thus, Parsons (1937: 453) comments that the view of modern liberal, “individualistic” society as based on commonly shared values like “freedom as an end in itself and as a condition of the expression of ethical qualities” is “very prominent” not only for Alfred Marshall within neo-classical economics, but also “essentially” Durkheim and Weber in classical sociology. Further, by assumption, Comtean and other classical sociological liberalism was more comprehensive and complex than the economic type, what Durkheim would call a “total social fact” in that it

encompassed society as a whole, including economy, but not limited to the latter, as in orthodox economics.

Sociological liberalism was a complete scientific theory and analysis of liberal society and modernity, including a market economy, democratic polity and free civil sphere. It thus substantively differs from its orthodox economic version typically reducing “liberalism” to “capitalism”,⁴ liberty to “free markets” and private property, due to the typical economic fallacy of reduction of society into “economy” and “marketplace” expressing what critics call economic determinism, notably market fundamentalism or absolutism (Barber 1995; Giddens 2000; Hodgson 1999). In classical sociology, liberal society and modernity is what Durkheim, Pareto and Parsons call a total social system and historical period, not just the market economy and the age of modern capitalism, as orthodox economists suppose, for originally the latter, as Weber emphasizes, was only a special facet or product of Western liberalism, rationalism and societal modernism. In short, it is admittedly the complex “classical liberal social order”⁵ (Buchanan 1991: 24–7) rather than Smith’s “simple system of natural liberty” in the economy, i.e. a Hayek-style “spontaneous” market order (Infantino 2003).

In respect of its holism, early liberal sociological theory since Comte and even what Durkheim calls forerunners of sociology like Montesquieu, Rousseau as well as Saint Simon and Condorcet, was equally as, if not more than, laissez-faire economics, the true specimen or heir of classical liberalism, especially its rationalism, secularism, humanism and modernism. Notably, like

⁴ Mises (1950) claims that classical or “older” liberalism is “based on classical political economy” and affirms “capitalist society based on private ownership of the means of production”. He adds that his modern Liberalism “agrees entirely with the older school”, unlike socialism, and that it sees the “only possible form of economic society in an order based on private ownership”. On this account, his colleague Hayek (1941) describes Mises’ economic and social theory or “praxeology” in terms of “classical liberalism”. Similarly, their contemporary disciples like (Boettke 1995) comment that classical economic liberalism stresses private property and a “limited government program”. Also, though less categorically and apologetically than Mises and Hayek, Knight (1964) states that during the later 18th and early 19th centuries, “under the influence of the ‘classical economists,’ of the Manchester liberals, of the political pressure of the rising bourgeoisie and the general force of circumstances, rapid progress was made toward the establishment of individual liberty in economic affairs.”

⁵ Buchanan (1991: 24–7) uses the expression the “classical liberal social order” but, like most “libertarian” economists, reductively conceives this free society as Smith’s “simple system of natural liberty” in economy or Hayek’s “spontaneous” market order.

liberal modernity overall, classical sociological liberalism was the “child” – just as, perhaps even more than, was laissez-faire economics – of the Enlightenment and its essentially holistic, proto-sociological liberal-rationalist and modernist thrust, as Saint Simon’s and Comte’s sociology particularly demonstrates in its acknowledged descent or inspiration from Condorcet, Montesquieu and in part Rousseau. Especially, liberal sociological theory conceives freedom as originating and existing in society rather than the anarchic “state of nature” (*tabula rasa*), and posits that human societies are not composed of “anomic Crusoes” (Razee 2002: 23). This is in sharp contrast to orthodox economics whose representatives, as Edgeworth (1967: 115) put it, “delight to place [solitary couples] in lonely islands” and so to effectively reduce liberty to “free enterprise” a la “Robinson Crusoe contracting with Friday.”

Critiques and Revisions of Classical Liberalism

Classical sociological and philosophical liberalism has been subject to various positive and negative critiques and revisions by contemporary sociologists and philosophers. Thus, some contemporary sociologists find that sociological liberalism in its classical, Durkheimian formulation is characterized by an unsatisfactory “dualism” between society and government (Bendix 1970: 230), the social and political system. Others criticize traditional sociological as well as philosophical liberalism for being “as insistent on formal rules for all sorts of social games as it is silent on the social condition of man”⁶ (Dahrendorf 1979: 23).

In Weber’s terms, this is a critique that liberalism emphasizes formal freedom or rationality, including the rule of law, legal rights and legal-rational authority, at the expense of its substantive type or factual liberty. It is a critique that Weber in a sense implies and anticipates for modern capitalism noting its emphasis on formal rationality via economic calculation, “quantitative speculation” or money accounting relative to substantive rationality premised on

⁶ In seeming reference to America and its “liberal” Constitution and the “pursuit of happiness”, Dahrendorf (1979: 23) warns about the “dangers of societies which are trying to create, or even guarantee, happiness for all and are quite likely to make people more unhappy than those which concentrate on more properly social objectives”. This thus echoes Merton’s (1968) diagnosis of a radical disjuncture between cultural ends and institutional means, the “American dream” of material success and the proper “rules of the game”, defining social “anomie” a la Durkheim.

“ultimate values”, ethical, political, or egalitarian. In particular, the critique refers to libertarianism as the presumed or self-declared true heir of classical liberalism in virtue of its almost exclusive focus on “equality before the law” (Infantino 2003: 133). In these critiques, also the liberal idea of freedom “is negative because it [is] resigned to, indeed pleased with existing conditions” (Dahrendorf 1979: 91–2). Yet, it is to be noted that this critique pertains to and is more valid for economic “libertarianism” à la Hayek et al. than classical sociological liberalism in the form and tradition of the Enlightenment with also its concept of positive liberty.

In addition to sociologists, other liberal contemporary social theorists subject classical sociological and philosophical liberalism to constructive criticism and revision. For example, according to a liberal, as opposed to anti-liberal, criticism of classical liberalism as an ideology, “(a) [it] effectively defends freedom by establishing rights against recognized forms of unjust coercion; (b) there exist putatively unjust social practices [property arrangements, racism, poverty] that limit people’s choices coercively, but which are not recognized as [such]; (c), because of (a) and (b), [it] ignores [so leaves unchallenged] these forms of coercion, which, then, simply work through the existing system of liberal rights” (Reiman 1997: 20). In this view, the “critique of liberalism as ideology is always a critique of an existing version of [it] as not doing enough to protect individual freedom, in light of unrecognized unjust coercion”⁷ (Reiman 1997: 22). Overall, such views characterize liberal-Marxian, “radical”, as different from religious-conservative, “communitarian”, fascist and in part post-modern, critiques of classical liberalism.

Moreover, contemporary sociologists diagnose and argue what is called the “tragedy of liberalism” in its classical or prevailing secular form. Arguably, liberalism’s “tragic predicament” occurs when and consists in that its universalistic-egalitarian doctrine “cannot make sense of its own ideals without

⁷ Reiman (1997: 23–5) adds that the “justice of a coercive social practice lies in whether it is limiting people’s freedom [only as] is needed to maximize everyone’s ability alike to live according to their own judgments [which] tests for the justice of coercion in light of the ideal of individual sovereignty [as] a universal liberal moral principle.” Prima facie, this seems more a critique of anti-liberal, notably neo-conservative, coercive social practices versus individuals and their liberties, as observed in America and elsewhere during the 1980–2000s, so to negations or distortions of, rather than to, liberalism as such premised precisely on the ideal of individual freedom and autonomy.

articulating a normative framework that lets some conceptions of a valuable and good life appear to be more valid than others” (Brink 2000: 1). This critique specifically objects that liberalism can lead to the “morally problematic exclusion of [e.g.] traditionalist and religious worldviews and social practices that seem to be of genuine value to some people” (Brink 2000: 1). In this view, the “tragic conflict” between universalistic and particularistic values or sympathies, seen as lying at the “heart” of liberalism, results from the “irreconcilability” of its highest ideals [such as], first, the “politically liberal aim for state neutrality toward various conceptions of the good life, second, the “necessity for liberalism to affirm – both in theory and in practice – the perfectionist values of personal autonomy and a pluralist social environment” (Brink 2000: 2).

The above critique contends that the liberal emphasis on the freedom of personal choice and autonomous self-determination “may be more controversial than it seems” on the ground that liberalism, by permitting such freedoms and grounding its principle of legitimation, in Weber’s sense, in the “hypothetical agreement” of all citizens to its basic ideas, “will have to presuppose that these values [will] be wholeheartedly embraced by all citizens” (Brink 2000: 23). Presumably, such a “highly demanding” legitimacy criterion is the “Achilles heel” of liberalism, since “not all citizens of liberal societies show the personality traits of the ideal liberal citizen”, citing orthodox Christians, Muslims and Jews as cases in point, and, one can add, neo-fascists. The preceding yields the inference that secular liberalism is “not an ethically neutral doctrine”⁸ (Brink 2000: 25–6).

This criticism is characteristic for or similar to religious-conservative critiques, from official Catholicism like the Vatican Church and Protestant

⁸ Brink (2000: 24) objects that liberalism “overlooks the very real possibility that those who do not fit easily into [it] might have important and valid reasons not to accept [it]”. In his view, liberalism “has a problem with pluralism [e.g.] acknowledging [a] empirical cases in which the limits of liberal tolerance [has] been reached, [b] the tension between general liberal principles of public autonomy, reasonableness, and state neutrality and nonpublic ideals of individual and collective self-realization is at the heart of liberalism” (Brink 2000: 25). Hence Brink (2000: 25) infers that the liberal ideal to “grant all citizens the equal right to lead a good life is – paradoxically – both rather unrealistic and highly valuable.” These objections apparently exemplify or resemble conservative-religious (“important and valid reasons” not to accept liberal values) as well as post-modern (“unrealistic” aims) critiques of classical and modern liberalism.

fundamentalism to radical Islam and orthodox Judaism (Habermas 2001), of classical and modern liberalism on the grounds of its secularism and perceived anti-religious “bias”, including secular democracy, civil society, liberal education, science and culture. A liberal counter-argument is that, like others, those citizens of liberal societies not displaying the “personality traits of the ideal liberal citizen” such as anti-liberal Christians and fundamentalist Muslims are actually allowed more “freedom of choice and autonomous self-determination” in liberalism as both a doctrine and society than in those anti-liberal settings in which they would presumably fit and feel perfectly like the “fish in the water”, though the “last creature in the world to discover water is a fish” (Smelser 1997: 11). Historically, such anti-liberal settings superseded or counteracted by liberal society and modernity span from the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages” in Europe to Protestant-Puritan theocracies in Great Britain and America and to contemporary Islamic theocratic states. Also, other anti-liberal groups like fascists, communists and neo-fascists are permitted more such freedom and self-determination within liberal society and modernity than in fascism and communism itself (minus their leaders and elites), as indicated by internal struggles and violent “purges” of fascist and communist sub-groups and factions. For example, religious pluralism, so the freedom and self-determination for anti-liberal Christians and fundamentalist Muslims, has always been stronger in Western liberal society since the 18th century Enlightenment than in pre-liberal societies and times like medievalism and Puritanism, and than in post-liberal ones such as the evangelical “Bible Belt” in America during the 1980–2000s and modern Islamic theocracies (Bauman 1997).

The above holds true of political pluralism and liberty, thus the freedom for fascists and communists, within liberal society compared with fascism and communism (again excluding their leaders), in which not only their liberties but their lives were often endangered and ended. It also holds true of the respective position of Catholicism and Protestantism within liberal society and modernity. While their theological disputes and political conflicts were “acrimonious” during pre-liberal periods, as since the 16th century, “Catholics and Protestants get along with each other these days [in most Western societies] *precisely because* they have been civilized by liberalism” (Dombrowski 2001: 7) in virtue of its religious pluralism, liberty and tolerance.

In this respect, the “tragedy of liberalism”, if it does, exists only from the prism of anti-liberalism, notably theocratic conservatism and its Divine design

to eliminate religious and all other pluralism and liberty by establishing theocracy as a “perfect fit” – yet ultimately more constraining than secular-liberal society and modernity – for conservative Christians, Muslims and other anti-liberal fundamentalist groups. It also does solely from the angle of fascism and communism, their projects and practices of pseudo-religious Italian, Spanish and other “godly” fascisms, “Christian” neo-fascism in America, largely non-religious Nazism or explicitly anti-religious communist totalitarianism.

Simply, since liberalism rules out or resolves theocratic as well as fascist-communist outcomes, it has a “tragic predicament” only or primarily for religious conservatism, including its Christian and Muslim versions, plus fascism and communism. Liberalism hence has become and remained the shared main “Public Enemy” of authoritarian conservatives and totalitarian fascists (and communists), everywhere and at all times. It thus prompted their anti-liberal, especially conservative-fascist, holy alliances, as indicated by inter-war Europe’s alliance between conservatism and fascism (Blinkhorn 2003) and US “Christian” terrorist militia, a sort of the world’s “enemies of liberty unite” against the liberal “evil”, a term religious conservatism and fascism (and communism) alike use to condemn and attack liberals. These and other critiques and adversaries of liberalism overall are addressed more fully later.

Contemporary Liberalism

In general, historically contemporary liberalism encompasses liberal ideas, institutions and societies in modern Western Europe, America and beyond during the 20th century, specifically the second half, and early 21st century. In particular, geographically and sociologically it is often understood in the sense of derivative and/or progressive American liberalism, as distinguished from its original European version.

Most sociologists identify and emphasize basic continuities or affinities between classical and contemporary, or European and American liberalism, though with differences in emphasis. For example, British sociologist Hobhouse (1964: 48) suggests a continuity as well as difference in emphasis by proposing what he calls the “new liberalism” defined as a theory and institutional practice “committed to reconciling social justice with individual freedom on liberal grounds” (Smith 1998: vii), apparently interpreting the old version as emphasizing more personal liberty than societal equity and equal-

ity. Echoing Hobhouse, contemporary sociologists notice that modern liberalism attributes special importance to social justice and equality on the grounds that society “must treat its members equally” as well as “addresses some of the inequalities resulting from market processes”, seen as shift from its classical version reflecting an “emphasis upon the rights considered inherent to the individual citizen in a liberal society” (King 1999: 8).

In turn, libertarian economists like Mises establishes an almost complete continuity or agreement between classical and modern liberalism, especially their economic versions. Thus, he states that modern (i.e. his own) economic liberalism “agrees entirely with the older school”, as both find the “only possible form of economic society in an order based on private ownership”, i.e. simply capitalism (Mises 1950). On this account, his disciple and colleague Hayek (1941) describes Mises’ brand of economics (“praxeology”) in terms of “classical liberalism”, though this description apparently holds good primarily in economic, capitalist terms. Further, US “libertarian” economists imply that a basic continuity exists between classical and contemporary liberalism in terms of political democracy by proposing that the “20th century liberal, like the 19th century liberal, favors parliamentary institutions, representative government, civil rights” (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 4).

Modern American Liberalism

Contemporary liberalism is particularly understood in the sense of modern “American liberalism” as differentiated from the classical and European, including its post-classical variant in Europe. This implies a geographic or sociological difference between two types of liberalism in different societies at the same or proximate period of time like the 20th and 21st century, rather than a historical distinction of different phases in its development, like the 18th and 21st centuries, as in the previous case. As US “libertarian” economists note with some disapproval, liberalism in America has obtained a “very different meaning than it did in the 19th century or does today [in] Europe” (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 4).

The probably main sociological, substantive difference in this respect is that American liberalism has been, at least since the Progressive Era of the late 19th century and the New Deal of the 1930s, and remained through the 2000s less laissez-faire and “unfettered” capitalistic, or more “activist” and

“interventionist”, in economic terms than its classical European predecessor, just as its “libertarian” and conservative antagonists, in America. This is what US economists imply when somewhat disapprovingly register that this difference is “more striking” in economic issues in the sense of economy-state relations (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 4–6).

In retrospect, such a difference is somewhat ironical, given that originally conservatism, as Mannheim (1986) and other sociologists in Europe (e.g. Lipset and Marks 2000; Nisbet 1966) and even America (e.g. on Puritanism, cf. Tawney 1962) register, opposed economic *laissez-faire*, free markets and even modern capitalism, just as liberal democracy, individualism and social liberalism, in favor of restoring, just as it originated from, what Weber calls economic traditionalism, including some version of feudalism and patrimonialism, plus political despotism and theocracy.

In turn, subsequent conservatism and then neo-conservatism such as Reaganomics and Thatcherism in America as well as Great Britain, have embraced and even further reinforced or escalated the doctrine and policy of economic *laissez-faire* in the form of “unfettered capitalism” and the “free enterprise system”, while, however, retaining the arch-conservative antagonism to liberal democracy and the preference for a medieval-style polity and culture pervaded by coercion and theocratic religion. Thus, some conservative US sociologists remark with approval that in America since the 1930s conservatives (clustered around the Republican Party) “remained anti-statist and pro *laissez-faire*” in the face of the Great Depression and New-Deal liberalism with the result of a “reemergence of the classical liberal ideology, i.e. what Americans call conservatism [sic!]” (Lipset and Marks 2000) during the post-war period. In short, this view implies that American conservatism, notably neo-conservatism like Reaganomics, has reinvented itself as reemerged classical economic liberalism a la *laissez-faire*. Such conservative views, first, conflate “liberalism” and “conservatism”, including both their classical and modern variants, as what Mannheim calls immediate and perennial antagonists in Europe and America, from the 18th to the 21st century. Second, they overlook that initially conservatism, as an adverse reaction (and “selection”) to liberalism, in both Europe and America attacked and rejected liberal society and modernity, including the free-market economy itself a la *laissez-faire* as either a policy or an ideal, in favor of medievalism, notably repressive feudalism or what Weber calls “political capitalism” as an economic system (Dunn

and Woodard 1996). This original anti-laissez-faire conservative position was exemplified by the anti-free trade ideas and policies of Franz List in Europe and Alexander Hamilton in America (with partial exceptions like Hayek's "role model" Edmund Burke in Great Britain). To that extent, from Hamilton et al. US paleo-conservatives could and did *not* remain "anti-statist and pro laissez-faire" because they were not so and instead the polar opposite in the first place, but rather became or reinvented themselves as such later on, notably as free-markets "neo-conservatives". (At most, the word "remained" can in part apply, as Hayek implies, only to Burke and other British "free-markets" arch-conservatives, but not to their counterparts in America like Hamilton et al.)

In this sense, by adopting a classical liberal principle, US and other conservatives imitate or emulate liberals, thus, as the proverb goes, giving the best compliment or flattery to the latter. Alas, these "pro-laissez-faire" conservatives, like libertarian economists, adopt and extol what economic liberalism has since discarded or altered beyond recognition as what Keynes (1972) and others diagnosed as the "dead hand of the past" (Harrod 1956) or mere fantasy (Kloppenber 1998), thus being somewhat "behind" (e.g. two centuries?) relative to a rapidly evolving modern liberal society, including the market economy beyond laissez-faire, ushering in the 21st century. The above reaffirms that conservatism, including fascism, typically seeks what Mannheim (1936: 108) describes as a "flight into the security of a dead past", in contrast with liberalism (like utopia) "oriented toward the future" and induced by what US conservatives disdain as the utopian "principle of hope" in favor of theological or theocratic "heaven" (Lemert 1999) in the form or image of the 17th century Puritan "Biblical Commonwealth" and its remake the 21st century evangelical "Bible Belt."

Third and most important to liberal society and its principle of liberty, these conservative views overlook or deny that American and European conservatism, while initially anti-liberal antagonist in every respect, subsequently adopted, or reinvented itself as, laissez-faire liberalism primarily as the effective Machiavellian instrument of establishing or maintaining its domination and conservation or restoration (as in the case of Burke and de Maistre) of the economic and societal, specifically medievalist, status quo. In particular, this holds true of American admittedly authoritarian conservatism (Dunn and Woodard 1996), which in reality did, or by assumption would, adopt laissez-faire

mainly as a strategy and means of its authoritarianism or conservation in economy and society overall. Generally, the above conservative claims overlook or deny what Mannheim (1986: 91) and other sociologists observe and emphasize as the defining and crucial element of conservatism. This is that conservatism inherently tends to attack and destroy the “principle of liberty” denounced as liberalism, including economic freedom itself, notably labor liberties and rights through pro-capital and anti-labor ideas, institutions and policies (Myles 1994). To that extent, the fact that conservatism, from Burke (at least according to libertarian interpretations in Hayek et al.) to Thatcherism and Reaganomics, has eventually adopted or flirted with, after its initial hostility to, liberal *laissez-faire* in the economy cannot deflect from the original and persistent pattern that it, as a rule, attacks and destroys the “principle of liberty”, including economic liberties for most actors (minus plutocracy), so operates as the anti-liberal conservation of the authoritarian status quo. US economically liberal “anti-statist and pro *laissez-faire*”, yet politically and socially authoritarian and anti-liberal, paleo- and neo-conservatives so cannot “fool” modern liberals and objective social analysts (though they apparently can most Americans judging by the ideological triumph of neo-conservatism during the 1980s–2000s).

Thus, critical contemporary sociologists (Bourdieu 1998: 50–55) suggest that the reason why American as well as British and other neo-conservatism embraces and extols *laissez-faire* is “because in general these tendencies conserve, and they need *laissez-faire* in order to conserve” and so maintain their typically authoritarian or anti-liberal dominance in society. This means that neo-conservatism has transformed *laissez-faire* and “free markets” from an original liberal-progressive invention or ideal versus medievalism, notably feudalism as an economic-political system, into the efficient instrument of its own aims of authoritarian domination, regression or preservation, thus revealing its typical authoritarianism and Machiavellianism. This signifies that conservatism adopts and exploits liberalism to eventually destroy it as the principle and system of integral liberty in economy and society by adopting and exploiting economic *laissez-faire* as the tactic and means of its inherent authoritarianism and conservation of the status quo. In turn, this is analogous to and intertwined with what Michels (1968: 8–9) identifies as the tendency for conservatism, including fascism, to tactically embrace and use, as the effective mechanism of establishing or maintaining its authoritar-

ian rule, liberal-secular democracy that, as he states, “must be eliminated” optimally “by the democratic way of the popular will” and sub-optimally (“second-best”) by any available means a la Machiavelli. Insofar as, as Michels (1968: 8) puts it, “even conservatism assumes at times a democratic form [as] it loves to change its disguise”, notably the “conservative spirit of the old master-caste is forced to assume, at least during times of election, a specious democratic mask” within liberal democracy to be eventually eliminated, then this holds true, with corresponding adaptations, of its adoption and celebration of laissez-faire or economic liberalism. As hinted, in respect with economic liberalism conservatism’s “disguise” or “specious democratic mask”, so laissez-faire hypocrisy, is revealed in its pro-capital and anti-labor institutions and policies, i.e. anarchy or “free enterprise” for plutocracy and Leviathan or repression (including imprisonment and execution) for the US population (Pryor 2002) via an anti-welfare, policing state. The neo-conservative policing state in America thereby reestablishes what sociologists identify as proximate, if not true, master-slave (Bourdieu 1998), feudal-style (Beck 2000) economic relations exemplified by slave-like work settings (Wacquant 2002) like “McJobs” (Hodgson 1999), sweat-shops, coerced prison labor and “union-free” companies a la Wal-Mart. To that extent, such a state afflicts, with some “all-American” adaptations, the “first new nation” with the despised European “conservative spirit of the old master-caste”, rather than overcoming it as it claims, while continuing to wear even more a “specious democratic mask.”

Hence, both in respect with market laissez-faire and liberal-secular democracy, American neo-conservatism adopts and exploits liberalism’s original ideals and institutions as Machiavellian strategies and instruments for its authoritarian domination and conservation of the status quo, thus in order to effectively destroy or subvert them beyond recognition, viz. what economists identify as an authoritarian, oligarchic economic-political system (Pryor 2002). In this sense, “pro-laissez-faire and anti-statist” US neo-conservatives adopt or imitate, so flatter to, liberalism only to ultimately “end it as we know it” – as the modicum of a liberal welfare state in America was described during the neo-conservative counter-revolution of the 1980s–90s – or pervert it, just as fascists, in a holy alliance with traditional conservatives, tactically adopted or imitated liberal-secular democracy in interwar Europe, notably Germany, in order to eventually eliminate it.

By contrast, as hinted, American liberalism has mitigated and even relinquished the presumably classical European doctrine and policy of economic *laissez-faire*, notably the state as a “night watchman”, since the Progressive Era and especially the New Deal, in favor of some degree of government activism and interventionism in the economy. In this sense, American liberalism during the 20th and 21st century is often described as “progressive”, “activist” and “interventionist”, epitomized by “New Deal liberalism”, in contrast to its classical European version attributed opposite features. As sociologists observe, in contrast to the classical liberal idea and practice of government economic and social non-intervention in Europe and at previous times in America, during the Progressive and New Deal times American liberalism “was formulated as an interventionist doctrine” (King 1999: 15) and policy, primarily in respect to the economy and “free markets”, not personal liberty and morality and so civil society.

In particular, for most contemporary US liberals, the activist, interventionist New Deal “constitutes the beginning point for any discussion of liberalism” (Chafe 2003: xii) in America. Specifically, this holds true of contemporary America economic, as distinguished from social, liberalism. For example, during the New Deal era, US President Franklin Roosevelt redefined and reconstructed liberalism thus understood to signify “a changed concept of the duty and responsibility of government toward economic life” (McCann 2000: 31). In this redefinition of liberalism, the central problem was identified as the balanced relationship between “activist government” in the economy and the “prerogatives of personal liberty”⁹ (McCann 2000: 32) in civil society or private morality. As a case in point, “with myriad new welfare measures [e.g. Social Security] a floor of government support for the basics of existence became a foundational pillar of liberalism” (Chafe 2003: xiv) since the New Deal.

On this account, New Deal liberalism relinquished or moderated classical political economy’s presumably *laissez-faire* concept of government as the “night watchman” in an economic sense in favor of government activism like Keynesianism in the economy, but retained the original liberal, Enlighten-

⁹ McCann (2000: 33) remarks that the “patent obsolescence of the traditional liberal theory of citizenship might suggest the need, not for state paternalism, but for a renewed and reinvigorated vision of participatory democracy”.

ment's emphasis on individual liberty in the moral-social sphere. This holds true of post-war American liberalism, though with modifications of the New Deal model of government economic activism. In some views, during the postwar liberal "realignment" around Keynesianism in America, especially federal government was envisioned not as the 'night watchman' of classical liberalism, nor the engineer envisioned by New Deal planners, nor the self-expression of an engaged public [but] as a "Broker State" intervening among various competing and organized interest groups" (McCann 2000: 34). This "realignment" has come to be known and criticized by critical liberals and other critics as "interest groups liberalism" in America.

Other analysts suggest that post-war American liberalism reached, especially during the Cold War period and conservative McCarthyism the 1950s, what Parsons (1951) calls and extols as consensus on basic societal, including economic and political, values and institutions. In this view, the post-war "liberal consensus" in America consisted in these elements: "capitalism, not socialism; capitalism and democracy worked together hand in hand; incremental reform rather than radical change; [through economic growth]; opposition to communism" (Chafe 2003: xi). If so, this means that American liberalism reached consensus by adopting not only certain classical liberal principles and institutions such as capitalism, democracy, and economic growth. It also embraced or flirted with some ideas and policies of conservatism like "incremental reform rather than radical change" if the first seeks to preserve the societal status quo as what Merton (1968) somewhat ironically call the "best of all possible worlds", which was precisely how his teacher and self-declared liberal Parsons redefined and celebrated post-war America, i.e. the culmination and so the end of Western and all social evolution¹⁰ (Giddens 1984).

Moreover, the above is perhaps better described, as Parsons would suggest, as liberal-conservative or universal consensus on what both US liberals and conservatives saw, and still do, as superior and universal American values and institutions in post- and cold-war America, thus sharing triumphant or superior American exceptionalism (Bell 2002; Lipset and Marks 2000). It did and does indicate, if not a fusion, a sort of historical reconciliation or compromise

¹⁰ Giddens (1984: 273–4) comments that Parsons' "view that half a million years of human history culminate in the social and political system of the United States would be more than faintly ridiculous if it did not conform quite neatly to his particular 'world-growth' story".

between American liberalism and conservatism in the face of a defined common enemy like communism or even socialism at a definite historical time to the point of overriding their various differences. At least in the last respect, the post-war liberal-conservative consensus in America has survived not only anti-liberal and proto-conservative McCarthyism with its Puritan-style witch-hunts and fascist-like attacks on “objective enemies” (Bähr 2002). It continued past the Cold War and the “end of history” in the 1990s, by extending into the 21st century, though collapsed or weakened in many other, notably moral-cultural, respects, as witnessed during the 1960s and the 1980–2000s.

Further, analysts (Singh 2002) suggest that the post-war liberal-conservative consensus in America pertained to and survived both a “bipartisan” nationalistic, bellicose (Tiryakian 2002) and even imperialistic (Steinmetz 2005), foreign policy through ultra-patriotic and exclusive “Americanism” (Turner 2002) *and* religiously based and sanctified “traditionalist cultural values”. If so, then American liberalism is not really or fully liberal, specifically pacifist or cosmopolitan, secular and modern, to the extent that it embraces typically conservative, so illiberal, values and policies. These are, first, nationalism, bellicosity, militarism and imperialism, as indicated by the “liberal” administration illegitimate attack on some countries (e.g. Yugoslavia) in the 1990s on admitted behalf of certain “ethnic terrorist” groups (Bauman 2001), second, moral-religious and cultural traditionalism. In essence, Americanism and non-secularism, in mutual conjunction and reinforcement symbolized by the idea of “manifest destiny”, starting with that between American nativism and Puritanism (Merton 1939; Munch 2001; also Gelernter 2005), make liberalism less “liberal” and more “conservative”, so almost an impossibility or self-contradiction.

Alternatively, liberalism is likely to be truly or more liberal – i.e. pacifist, cosmopolitan, secular and modern – and non or less conservative to the extent that it relinquishes or moderates a nationalist bellicose foreign policy and religious-cultural traditionalism, i.e. “Americanism” and non-secularism. Yet, during the post-war period, especially the Cold War and the conservative interlinked wars on terror and drugs, this likelihood has remained only a virtual but hardly fully realized possibility for American liberalism. This was witnessed by its adoption and support, for hyper-patriotic or Machiavellian reasons (or both), a “bipartisan” nationalistic, bellicose and militarist foreign policy to the point of what Spencer calls offensive wars (e.g. Yugoslavia, Iraq II),

and religiously based cultural traditionalism and its consequent “tough on crime” policies and attacks on moral liberty (e.g. “three strikes” laws, the death penalty, the “war on drugs”, alcohol prohibitions, etc.).

As hinted, sociological analyses suggest that the Cold-War and subsequent liberal-conservative consensus or “bipartisanship” on nationalism and non-secularism, and generally “repressive aspects” in American culture and society, are historically rooted in “two exceptional national characteristics” (Lipset 1996: 293). These are, first, the “utopian ideological content of the American Creed”, i.e. Americanism that redefines America by a civil religion and ideology; second, the original and persistent dominance of “Protestant sectarianism, a minority elsewhere in Christendom” (Lipset 1996: 293). Consequently, US conservatives and liberals, i.e. “Americans both on the right and the left”, embrace the “political emphasis on loyalty to Americanism” and “have exhibited Protestant sectarian bred propensities for crusades” (Lipset 1996: 176, 293).

Predictably, such near-universal consensus between American liberalism and anti-liberal conservatism during most of the post- or Cold-war period had a dark side and latent function (unintended outcome) in that it “limited the terms of political discourse [and] occurred within the context of embracing the American Dream” (Chafe 2003: xii). It indicates what Parsons (1951) has intimated and extolled. This is that the post-war liberal-conservative consensus was basically centered around triumphant “Americanism” (Bell 2002; Lipset 1996) in the sense of an American quasi-religious creed or ideology based on the sacred belief or ideological claim that America’s values and institutions are timeless, universal and superior to those in other Western, continental European and a fortiori non-Western, viz. Islamic and developing, societies. In this regard, the consensus between liberalism and conservatism went beyond super-patriotism or nationalism in times of a perceived external treat, expressed in the shared liberal-conservative opposition to Soviet communism, to encompass “American ethnocentrism” (Beck 2000: 72) and civil religion as a whole (Munch 2001). In particular, analysts emphasize that the Cold-War consensus with conservatism on anti-communism limited “the terms of political discourse” not only in American politics, but even in liberalism itself in that it “shaped the options perceived as possible within the liberal agenda, as well as how they might be pursued” (Chafe 2003: xiv). Moreover, in this view, the “predominance of a Cold War mentality [e.g. Vietnam] created

a new crisis for the viability of liberalism" (Chafe 2003: xiv) in America since the 1960s throughout the 1980s and beyond, up to the early 21st century.

Generally, the above implies that American liberalism tended to limit its, so America's, political options, even succumb to crisis, whenever adopting or flirting with conservative illiberal ideas and policies. These ranged from "incremental reform" of the "best of all possible worlds" to nationalistic particularism and "Americanism" to militarism, including offensive wars against Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Iraq in the 2000s, and even what sociologists identify as the reassertion of "American imperialism" (Steinmetz 2005). To that extent, it deviated from and neglected the legacy and lessons provided by classical European liberalism. This is that the latter precisely arose as an attempt, as by the Enlightenment, at "creative destruction" of anti-liberal ideas and practices as present in medieval traditionalism or proto-conservatism, viz. the feudal status quo, political despotism, parochialism and militarism, in favor of their opposites like radical economic-social change, democracy, cosmopolitanism and pacifism. For example, admittedly the "19th century liberal was a radical [i.e.] favoring major changes in social institutions" (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 6) in contrast to both medieval-based traditional conservatives and US neo-conservatives.

More specifically, in virtue of its willing or forced consensus with conservatism on a "Cold War mentality", expressed in the collective hysteria of anti-communism as another "red scare", "patriotism" and militarism extending into the 2000s via the "war on terror" and the "axis of evil", US liberalism deviated from the classical liberal attributes and legacies of political tolerance, universalism, cosmopolitanism and pacifism sacrificed to intolerant, particularistic and militant conservative-reproduced "ascriptive" Americanism (King 1999; Turner 2002). It neglected and "forgot" that, as contemporary US liberals remark, the liberal and republican citizen's attributes "are not the ties of race, blood, or religion"¹¹ (Dagger 1997: 195). This has been and remains a recurring problem and dilemma for liberalism in America – cosmopolitanism or "Americanism", universal human or particularistic "American" val-

¹¹ Dagger (1997: 196) adds that the liberal-republican citizen "respects individual rights, values autonomy, tolerates different opinions and beliefs, plays fair, cherishes civic memory, and takes an active part in the life of the community [sees] all persons [as] equally worthy of consideration; thus it is wrong to treat others as mere objects to be used for one's own purposes."

ues, humans or Americans, humanity or “race, blood, or religion.” And it has often “solved” this problem by succumbing to the particularistic, militaristic and imperialistic temptations of conservatism, as dramatically witnessed during the neo-conservative “war on terror” and the “axis of evil” (e.g. Iraq’s invasion and occupation).

In general sociological, as opposed to narrow economic, terms, this ever-recurring and basically imposed, by anti-liberalism, dilemma of American liberalism is more relevant and comprehensive and its solution more serious or dangerous for integral human liberty and even life than that between *laissez-faire* or government activism, including the welfare state, in the economy. It is particularly so insofar as American liberalism adopts or flirts with, as during its post-war consensus with conservatism, typically conservative authoritarian solutions, such as “patriotism”, militarism and “Americanism” generally, as during the Cold War, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, and Iraq II wars, rather than adopting their classical-liberal democratic alternatives, including cosmopolitanism, pacifism and universalism. It is whenever it becomes or looks more “conservative”, specifically ethnocentric and militant, than liberal, including cosmopolitan and pacifist, in the original sense, which indicates a sort of conservatism’s anti-liberal reversal and revenge in America, as climaxing during the 2000s. If, as contemporary sociologists remark, conservatism “has succeeded in appropriating the American faith that it is a unique country, the model of a universal civilization which all societies are fated to emulate”¹² (Beck 2000: 112), as the core of “American ethnocentrism” *cum* triumphant Americanism (Bell 2002), liberalism has ethnocentrically or opportunistically for political gain followed on rather than departed from the conservative ethnocentric and anti-cosmopolitan path. This is also implicit in the observation that US conservatism and liberalism (the right and the left) share the “political emphasis on loyalty to Americanism, the defining of deviants as ‘un-American’”, just as the “sectarian stress on personal morality” or “Protestant

¹² Beck (2000: 112) adds that “this conviction that the world can revive itself through the free market has become the unofficial creed of America’s civil religion. [i.e.] not many capitalisms but the American way of capitalism sets the goals and standards [for] other [societies]. The universal mission of the free market [is] America’s belief in itself [with] side-effects of this far from modern, indeed rather archaic ideology of the free market.” In this view, free-market conservatism “is not only a conservative utopia [but] the ‘programme of an economic and cultural counter-revolution’, pursued with the missionary zeal of America” (John Gray cited in Beck 2000: 114).

sectarian bred propensities for crusades" (Lipset 1996: 293). Moreover, in comparative terms, they are consequently "more moralistic, insistent on absolute standards than their ideological compeers elsewhere in the developed world" (Lipset 1996: 293).

Ultimately, however, if wishing to remain or become really liberal in the original or modern sense, American liberalism will have to make the choice between humanity as a whole, rather than reducing it to, and America as its part, between universalism or cosmopolitanism and narcissistic particularism or "Americanism", as well as secularism and religious sectarianism. At least, to do so, it will face likely the need of blending them, and thus distinguish itself from anti-liberalism with its typically opposite choice, as exemplified by "Reaganite conservatism and [its] small-town isolationism" (Singh 2002: 1). In the opposite case, it will remain or become a shadow of classical liberalism and an appendix or semi-grotesque emulation and imitation of anti-liberal conservatism, as in a sense happened in America during the 1980s–2000s (e.g. the 1992–2000 US "liberal-conservative" President). Yet, perhaps within a classical-liberal Kantian framework of cosmopolitan liberal society, modernity and democracy (Beck 2000; Habermas 2001; Munch 1981), American "liberalism" is an inner contradiction or impossibility insofar as it shares with anti-liberalism the religious-like creed of particularistic, ethnocentric and triumphant "Americanism" (Munch 2001), so anti-cosmopolitanism. In sum, if liberal ideology, society and modernity, is intrinsically or eventually cosmopolitan, then American "liberalism" *cum* "Americanism" may remain or become a self-negating oxymoron.

In historical terms, this scenario of liberal self-negation, if not euthanasia, albeit probably short of *long durée*, would and perhaps does mark the counter-revolution and revenge of proto-conservatism *cum* medieval traditionalism, once "presumed dead" in the "old" disdained Europe, yet resurrected and become dominant in the "first new [and superior] nation", within America. If so, then this would constitute true American exceptionalism as a self-destructive conservative-wielded anti-liberal "sword" (Lipset 1996).

In particular, this holds true of American liberalism in relation to what observers identify as the neo-conservative program of a global "economic and cultural counter-revolution, pursued with the missionary zeal of America" (Gray cited in Beck 2000: 114). The above suggests that US and other liberals only at their own peril are tempted by and "flirt" with – as during the Cold

War consensus and the “war on terror” and “evil” – the anti-liberal existence, persistence, tenacity and intensity of conservatism, or else under-estimate and “forget” its “seven lives”, as during the 1960–70s. The danger is failing to learn or forgetting the historical lesson of the mutation of medievalism into proto-conservatism, its climax into fascism, and then European and American neo-conservatism’s and neo-fascism’s “resurrection from the [conservative and fascist] dead” (Dunn and Woodard 1996).

The post-war liberal consensus suggests that contemporary American liberalism is “new”, changed, or innovated relative to its “old” European version not only in respect to mitigating and replacing economic laissez-faire by government activism in the economy. It is also, though less manifest and emphasized, in the sense of substituting triumphant “Americanism” as “American ethnocentrism” and particularism, including jingoistic patriotism, militarism and imperialism, for classical-liberal European Kantian global universalism (Habermas 2001; Munch 1981), notably cosmopolitanism and pacifism, or blending the first into the second. In sociological terms, by comparison to the first economic “innovation”, the second, non-economic as part of the post-war liberal-conservative consensus is more pertinent and comprehensive, so potentially dangerous to liberty and human life and even self-destructive to American liberalism itself by transforming it into or making it appear as an appendage and copy of authoritarian and militarist neo-conservatism, as during the 1980–2000s.

At any rate, what has been evident are changed meanings and images of contemporary American liberalism. First, as US libertarian economists emphasize with regret, compared with the 18th–19th centuries as well as modern Europe, contemporary American liberalism has a “very different meaning” or substantive difference that is most “striking” in economic terms, while acknowledging their liberal continuities in democracy, including parliamentary institutions, representative government, and civil rights¹³ (Friedman and

¹³ Friedman and Friedman (1982: 6) remark that in light of such liberal preferences the “views that formerly went as [Liberalism] are now often labeled conservatism. But this is not a satisfactory alternative. The 19th century liberal was a radical [i.e.] favoring major changes in social institutions”. As noted, these liberal views “now often labeled conservatism” primarily pertain to “free markets” or (presumably) laissez-faire, which would indicate the curious conservative embrace, after the initial medieval-based resistance to, of classical economic liberalism in the form of neo-conservatism, represented by Reaganism and Thatcherism.

Friedman 1982: 4–6). In this respect the contemporary or American meaning of liberalism is a “moderately left-of-center perspective” (Burns 1990, also Brint 1984) that abandons or alters laissez-faire ideas, institutions and policies. Alternatively, it redefines governmental economic activism as a “central feature of progressive liberalism” (Van Dyke 1995: 3), in addition to and synergy with individual liberty, equality, neutrality and tolerance, role of reason.

Second, in spite or rather because of these changes and differences, liberalism in America has acquired or been imputed, primarily by neo-conservatism, increasingly negative meanings and images, in contrast to Europe, Western and Eastern, and the rest of the world where it has retained its primarily positive connotation and image. Simply, what has almost always since the 18th century been and remains “good” in the sense of sociological definitions or constructions of reality for the virtually entire world (Inglehart 2004) has become something really “bad” or “evil” and “un-American” in the “exceptional nation” (Lipset 1996) as the “deviant case” in this respect, and conversely for anti-liberalism like conservatism. This indicates another intensification and escalation of perennial mostly conservative-reproduced American anti-liberal exceptionalism.

Moreover, sociologists notice that in the US predominantly conservative “political climate the word *liberal* (in the American sense) already poses a problem [and] neo-conservatives make use of it” (Bourdieu and Haacke 1995: 50). Others also register what is described as a “pejorative image of liberalism” (Schuparra 1998: 153) in contemporary America since the 1980s, e.g. the 1988 and 2004 presidential elections. For example, by the 1988 presidential elections the term “liberal” or “L-word” itself “had become almost a smear, with confusion once again rampant within those political circles that remained part of the New Deal legacy” (Chafe 2003: xv), perhaps reaching a climax during the 2000s elections. Predictably, in terms of party affiliation, contemporary US anti-liberals or extreme conservatives are usually identified as “Republicans” (Graham 2003: 304), just as were their ancestors as “Federalists” (e.g. Hamilton et al.) embodying admittedly authoritarian conservatism in America (Dunn and Woodard 1996; Heineman 1998). In this view, specifically, “liberal” or the “L-word” become during the 1980–2000s the “third rail of American politics, synonymous, in [conservative] rhetoric, with ACLU softness on crime, suspicion of the military, “tax and spend” economics, indifference to the values of

family and flag¹⁴ (Graham 2003: 311). In particular, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, “Big Government was back [through the conservative] administration. Republicans [created] a new narrative, the liberal as tax-and-spend moral idiot” (Graham 2003: 317).

The preceding intimates certain stages or branches of contemporary American liberalism since the late 19th century such as Progressive-Era, New-Deal and post-, including cold-, war liberalisms. Another taxonomy by contemporary US liberals comprises procedural, libertarian, and interest-groups liberalism (Terchek 1997: 5). Procedural liberalism (exemplified by Rawls’ liberal philosophy) is described as seeking to identify rules and institutions that “overcome narrow interests and aim at neutrality and impartiality” in the belief that the “most ominous threats come from the institutional practices of both the state and civil society, which have historically disabled particular groups from fully participating in society.” Libertarian liberalism is depicted as focusing on those rules and institutions that “protect an unrestricted market and a negative state.” In turn, what defines interest-groups liberalism is the belief that it has found “neutral rules, such as political competition and bargaining, for a pluralist democracy”. In this view, for each branch of contemporary American liberalism “individual choice is paramount” in that all “privilege freedom” (Terchek 1997: 6). Particularly, US procedural liberals try to regulate various aspects of civil society in order to promote liberty or design just institutions¹⁵ (Terchek 1997: 10). In Weber’s terms, procedural liberalism emphasizes the formal rationality and liberty of civil society and polity, plus economy, including legal-rational political authority based on definite rules and procedures.

¹⁴ Consequently, Graham (2003: 313) adds that America “seemed increasingly dividing into traditional-religious-nationalist versus cosmopolitan-secular-globalist camps. Republicans liked to oversimplify and exploit these alignments, since liberals, and the rest of the left, were entirely in the latter camp (along with staunch Republicans from the top echelons of business whose outlook was cosmopolitan and international). [By being] attuned to expanding group and individual rights, embracing an almost universal cultural tolerance liberalism seemed to many [people] one of the Great Disruption’s sponsors” (Graham 2003: 313).

¹⁵ Terchek (1997: 231) comments that liberalism “sometimes exaggerates what proceduralism can accomplish and is intolerant of goods other than rights”.

Table 6
Types of Liberalism

Historical phases and forms

- classical, original liberalism
- contemporary, derived liberalism (“neo-liberalism”)

Geographical forms

- (Western) European liberalism
- American liberalism
- Other, non-Western liberalism

Substantive types

- economic liberalism
 - modernized, moderate economic liberalism – welfare capitalism
 - archaic, extreme economic liberalism – laissez-faire capitalism (“libertarianism”)
- social liberalism
 - political liberalism – liberal-democratic ideology and polity
 - cultural liberalism – liberal culture and civil society
 - moral liberalism – liberty in personal morality
 - religious liberalism – freedom of and from religion
 - educational liberalism – academic and other intellectual freedom

Other classifications of Liberalism

- utilitarian, comprehensive and rights-oriented liberalism
 - rights-based and republican-communitarian liberalism
 - perfectionist and non-perfectionist (neutral) liberalism
-

Still another classification encompasses economic and social American liberalism. The first is exemplified in New Deal, prefigured by the Progressive Era, liberal economic policies involving government activism or interventionism in the economy, and the second in the social, including cultural and political, liberalization in America during the 1960s and later. In turn, the economic type can be subdivided into market, fiscal, labor and other liberalism in the economy, and the social into cultural, including moral, religious, and educational, plus political and other non-economic liberalism. Generally, Liberalism is usually on substantive grounds classified into economic and social as discussed next (see Table 6 for a summary of liberal stages and types).

Economic Liberalism

Unlike the previous historical or geographic distinctions, this is a sociological distinction of liberalism on the basis of its social realm of existence and operation, viz., in Weber’s words, economy and society, respectively. Like Weber,

Simmel suggests such a distinction by observing that liberalism tends to “penetrate” economic and political, cultural and other social relations and to that extent make “their shape depend on continual competitions”. Evidently, this distinction is identical or corresponds to the sociological classification involving economic and social liberty and competition, i.e. market freedom and political-civil liberties. Simmel adds that the larger extent to which liberalism “penetrates” economic and social relations the “more will their shape depend on continual competitions”, with their effects depending on the “interest, love, hope with which the competitors know how to arouse in different degrees in third parties [as] the centers of the competitive movements.” Apparently, he thinks that liberalism, so liberty, promotes competition in both economy and society, and perhaps conversely through feed-back effects.

By assumption, economic liberalism in general is the theory and institutional system of liberty, joined in a synergy with equality and justice, in the economy, including market freedom, though not necessarily *laissez-faire*, with some secondary differences in degree of emphasis between its classical and contemporary or American versions. In conventional views, this holds true solely or mostly of classical economic liberalism in contrast to its contemporary variant, as exemplified in the New Deal, substituting *laissez-faire*, the “night-watchman state”, with government activism and interventionism in the economy.

However, the contemporary liberal counterargument is or can be that such government activism and intervention aims precisely at protecting and enhancing, rather than, as “libertarian” economists or neo-conservatives impute or perceive, eliminating and suppressing, liberty, just as equality and justice, in economy and society as a whole. This is what Popper (1966) argues by stating that economic and other liberalism and state interference in economy and society overall “are not opposed to each other” and even that “any kind of freedom is clearly impossible unless it is guaranteed by the state.” In particular, US economic liberals, including self-declared “liberal” yet perceived “conservative” sociologists like Parsons, would invoke New-Deal liberalism, and their European counterparts Scandinavian and other social democracies, as a “proof” that government economic activism does or can promote not only equality and justice but also protect liberty in economy and society.

Moreover, such liberal activism and interventionism can aim at or result in more economic and other freedom, including political democracy, just as

equality and justice, than its absence a la classical laissez-faire and American “libertarian”, “unfettered”, radical and cynical¹⁶ (Bourdieu 1998) capitalism. This is what Popper (1973: 140–1) implicitly admits by recognizing that in European welfare states or liberal-social (“smaller”) democracies, with Sweden as their leader, the “technology of democratic interventionism has reached its highest level so far” (note the term “democratic”).

More explicitly, recall leading US economists concede with apparent discomfort that in the post-war time economically activist and interventionist (“regimented”) and egalitarian Scandinavia “was freer than my America” (Samuelson cited in Tillman 2001: 39) by most classical-liberal, Mill’s criteria of liberty. Contemporary US liberals, though not “libertarians”, would probably agree that this difference in “degrees of freedom” has continued, if not increased, since that time, climaxing precisely during radically reduced and opposed government economic activism and egalitarianism by conservatism, as evidenced by the political dominance of neo-conservatism from the 1980s to the 2000s. In this sense, contemporary economic liberalism in the form of sensible government activism in economy is “freer” or more “libertarian”, as well as egalitarian and equitable, than laissez-faire “libertarianism” or “free-market” capitalism itself.

The above particularly applies to contemporary economic liberalism in relation to what US economists identify or predict as pseudo-libertarian “Hobbesian anarchy” in the economy as well as neo-conservative “mafia capitalism” (Pryor 2002), epitomized by Enronism and “cowboy capitalists”, in America during the 1980–2000s. Perhaps only the most doctrinaire “libertarian” economists and the most authoritarian, Acton-style absolutely powerful-absolutely corrupt US neo-conservatives would claim that Hobbesian economic anarchy *cum* “free enterprise” and “mafia capitalism” a la Enronism are “freer” than economic liberalism in the contemporary sense of government activism promoting and protecting freedom, as well as justice and equality, within economy and society. In short, only they would allege that “archaic” (Beck 2000: 112)

¹⁶ Bourdieu (1998: 35) adds that US neo-conservatism returns to cynical or unfettered capitalism that has “no other law than that of maximum profit” and is “without any disguise, but rationalized, pushed to the limit of its economic efficacy by the introduction of modern forms of domination [plus] techniques of manipulation [e.g. advertising].”

laissez-faire, “unfettered” capitalism is more “libertarian” and “fair” than modern, activist welfare capitalism (Esping-Andersen 1994).

Alternatively, sociologists suggest that if the egalitarian welfare-capitalist economy in Scandinavia and beyond is “freer” than its anti-egalitarian, anti-welfare American version, then this is because capitalism “was tamed and civilized [by] institutional forms of conflict resolution [viz.] collective bargaining [and] the labor movement” (Beck 2000: 173) more in Europe owing to economic liberalism than America due to its dominant anti-liberal conservatism. In this view, in stark and dark contrast to Scandinavian and other European liberal-welfare capitalisms, in neo-conservative “unfettered” American and in extension, via its exportation, global capitalism “death sentences, torture, political imprisonment and other violations of civil and political human rights are seen as things that can be accepted, so long as they do not have an adverse effect on business” (Beck 2000: 177).

A salient case in point is the universal prohibition of the death penalty in modern Western civilization, notably European liberal-capitalist societies, and its persistent and widespread use solely in American “libertarian”, conservative capitalism, especially Southern “Bible-Belt” policing and theocratic states, as is overall penal minimalism in the first and maximalism to the point of “tough on crime” Draconian harshness (Patell 2001), including mass imprisonment, in the second. This contrast is so salient and persistent that contemporary sociologists (Jacobs et al. 2005) suggest that executions, and in extension other Draconian criminal-justice institutions and policies, in America during anti-liberalism are “functionally equivalent” to those in such non-Western authoritarian countries as Islamic theocracies, like Iran, and China rather than Western societies. In this and other repressive terms, the neo-conservative capitalist economic-political system in America displays or augurs an “inhuman face” (Pryor 2002) and is closer to authoritarian third-world than Western liberal-democratic welfare capitalism with its “human face” (Triglia 2002).

At the minimum, for contemporary economic liberals, contrary to “libertarian” economics with its free-markets fundamentalism (Hodgson 1999) as well as authoritarian neo-conservatism epitomized in Reaganomics and Thatcherism, welfare capitalism via liberal government activism is not inherently and necessarily antithetical to liberty in economy and society, including market freedom, on the contrary. This is because government economic activism

takes place within the institutional parameters of liberal political democracy and civil society, which are instituted to preclude its eventual escalation into what Hayek et al. call the “road to serfdom” represented by “socialism” or “communism” summarily equated, lumping together social-democratic Sweden and Scandinavia, even the American “New Deal”, and communist Soviet Union. Contemporary liberalism finds “libertarian” and neo-conservative accusations and fears that government economic activism *within* modern liberal democracy and civil society will destroy liberty in economy and “free markets” dubious and contradictory, even hypocritical. In a sense, J. M. Keynes, while registering the “end of laissez-faire” in modern liberal-democratic Western societies, addresses or preempts such allegations proposing that the “task of politics is to devise forms of government within a democracy which shall be capable of accomplishing the Agenda” in economy and society.

Alternatively, for contemporary economic liberalism, Hayek’s scenario of an economic and political “road to serfdom” will or can happen only insofar as government activism occurs *outside* of the framework of liberal democracy and civil society, in anti-liberal and undemocratic, including conservative, fascist and communist, political and social frameworks. A case in point is what has been identified or predicted in America during the 1980–2000s as “mafia capitalism” (Pryor 2002), exemplified by Enron-style business practices, “cowboy capitalists” or “good old boys”, and government “activism” in their exclusive favor within Acton’s dynamic of absolute power and corruption (Desai 2005). In turn, “mafia capitalism” is the particular instance and eventual result of a neo-conservative anti-democratic – i.e. oligopolistic economic and oligarchic political – system, so an antithesis to both a free-market economy and liberal democracy.

Another case in point is what has been referred to as Hobbesian economic anarchy as the primarily anti-liberal conservative or “libertarian” system and outcome in America (Pryor 2002). This is the system of degeneration of market freedom via unrestricted “free market enterprise” a la Enronism for capital or the “top heavy” (Wolff 2002). Yet, it is Leviathan for labor or the “rest” of Americans via the “Draconian severity” (Patell 2001) of coercion and repression, including penal maximalism (Rutherford 1994) and a policing state (Bourdieu 1998) with its gigantic prison complex as a highly profitable industry “producing” mass incarceration and often arbitrary executions for

the masses, yet, as leading US economists imply (Akerlof 2002) ultimately an irrational economic-political system.

Such an irrational system is expressed in ineffective Draconian laws and punishments such as “combating crime by deterrence: raise the stakes high enough, as California did with its “three strikes and you’re out” law, and the potential criminal will think twice. But the prisons are full and crime has not stopped” (Akerlof 2002: 426). In this view, the alternative explanation is by contrast “large negative externalities from incarceration may offset the short-run gains from deterring criminal activity through tougher incarceration policies” (Akerlof 2002: 426). Notably, this counterargument implies that the US conservative system of mass incarceration is self-defeating and so eventually both economically and socially irrational in observing that “prison itself is a school for countercultural identity, and thus the breeding ground for future crime” (Akerlof 2002: 426).

So, the quasi-Shakespearean question, rather than “either governmental economic activism or not” as a false dilemma or spurious alternative plaguing and forced by American “libertarianism” and neo-conservatism, is what kind of activism and in what political-social context. The liberal kind and political-social context of government economic activism invariably generates and predicts the protection and promotion of liberty, just as equality and justice, in economy and society, as demonstrated by the American “New Deal” and especially Scandinavian social democracies or welfare states as extolled even by mainstream US economists like Samuelson. In stark contrast, its illiberal, neo-conservative alternatives sustain, engender or endorse opposite and degenerate outcomes, such as (to paraphrase Buchanan 1975) Anarchy, unlimited freedom for capital and oligarchic elites, yet Leviathan, harsh repression for labor and the population, as happened or predicted to happen in America under neo-conservatism (Pryor 2002).

Classical Economic Liberalism

As noted, economic liberalism is usually subdivided into classical, original or European and contemporary, derived or American. For example, contemporary liberals distinguish classical or “night-watchman” liberalism from modern Keynesian or welfare economic liberalism, both seen as “variations of the service conception” of the state (Bird 1999: 196).

According to conventional wisdom, both apologetic and critical, classical economic liberalism, as presented by orthodox economics, is epitomized in the theory and advocacy of *laissez-faire* in the sense and form of government non-intervention in and non-interference with the economy, notably free markets and competition, or a “night watchman” state. However, as indicated, contemporary liberals like Popper (1966) and many economists cast doubt on this conventional wisdom by contending that classical and modern liberal philosophy or economics had “nothing to do with” *laissez faire cum* the doctrine and policy of “strict government non-intervention”, even that liberalism and state interference far from being mutually exclusive or opposed are complementary. The dilemma seems to be and recurring, even within contemporary economics, whether early economic liberalism, specifically classical political economy, was a species of *laissez-faire* theory and policy in economy, or not. In essence, the answer in respect with classical liberalism in general, notably the Enlightenment, was, as Popper (1966) implies, largely negative and in a sense inverse to what most economists expect – comprehensive social, notably moral, rather than narrow market *laissez-faire*. Still, the case with economic liberalism epitomized in classical political economy since Smith seems more equivocal or complex, though the affirmative solution has been conventional or prevalent.

This dilemma has been particularly present and recurring in economic theory and philosophy in respect to Smith’s political economy – market *laissez-faire* or not – though most economists seem to answer in the affirmative, with some exceptions from this conventional wisdom (e.g. Reisman 1998; Samuels 1990). In sociological and even broadly understood economic terms, the issue of either government intervention or non-intervention in economy has since Smith et al. become essentially a false dilemma, spurious alternative or simplistic irrelevant choice for contemporary liberals, except for libertarians as well as neo-conservatives, in light of the historical realization since at least Keynes that the state has done, does or can do both, what Weber calls action and inaction alike in definite relations or proximate balance, not exclusively one or the other.

Simply, it is not “government intervention or non-intervention”, but the extent and form of governmental activism in economy that is relevant for contemporary as well as classical economic liberalism. In this sense, what is relevant is not whether Smith’s and other classical political economy was, as

conventionally assumed, laissez-faire or not, as increasingly questioned, in market terms, in favor of unfettered capitalism (Myerson 1999). Moreover, as a sign of such questioning, some commentators (Tribe 1999: 627–30) suggest that Smith was a “critic of capitalism” and to that extent capitalist laissez-faire, and “not simply” of feudalism (and mercantilism), as expressed in the view that “feudal remnants had become obstacles to social progress”, as usually assumed in the economics literature.

However, what is pertinent in this context is rather that Smith and other classical political economy proposed and epitomized a liberal economic system, modern capitalism, as the particular element and expression of Enlightenment-based general liberalism: freedom in economy as part of integral liberty in liberal society and modernity. After all, as economists like Keynes (1972) emphasize, it was not even Smith and any other classical political economist that actually invented the doctrine of both market and moral laissez-faire as well as an “Invisible Hand”¹⁷ (Hirschman 1977), but their predecessors, French Enlightenment social philosophers, including Montesquieu and others, for whom economic considerations were largely secondary in relation to general societal, political and intellectual concerns.

While perhaps equated in classical political economy as well as “libertarian” economics, economic liberalism and market laissez-faire are not necessarily identical and interchangeable, as Popper, Keynes and others suggest. They imply that economic liberalism may or may *not* be laissez-faire, and conversely, the second is a special, though extreme and degenerate, case of the first. Simply, while laissez-faire is “liberal”, not all such liberalism in economy is “laissez-faire”. This is a variation on the theme that liberty in economy and beyond is not necessarily or ideally, except for anarchists and in part “libertarians”, absolute, unlimited freedom, license, anarchy in a Hobbesian state of nature (Munch 1994). Briefly, while anarchy may be a degenerate form and so ultimately self-destruction of freedom, not all liberty is “anarchy”, as both

¹⁷ Hirschman (1977: 10) remarks that “in fact, the idea of an ‘Invisible Hand’ – of a force that makes men pursuing their private passions conspire unknowingly toward the public good – was formulated in connection with the search for glory rather than with the desire for money by Montesquieu”, stressing the “power of feudal lords” Hirschman cites Montesquieu’s statement that the pursuit of honor in a monarchy “brings life to all the parts of the body politic [so] it turns out that everyone contributes to the general welfare while thinking that he works for his own interests”.

anarchists and their conservative adversaries claim. Market “laissez-faire” as understood and advocated by orthodox and “libertarian” economists is basically a type of Hobbesian anarchy in economy, often stirred with what economists call neo-conservative American “mafia capitalism” (Pryor 2002) like Enronism. It is to that extent the degeneration and ultimately destruction of economic and all human freedoms and even life via, as in America under neo-conservative “free-enterprise” anarchism, widespread and arbitrary executions of both guilty and innocent “objective enemies” (Bähr 2002) or “witches” (Putnam 2000) reenacting or evoking fascism and theocratic Puritanism.

Hence, to define and conceive economic liberalism exclusively in terms of market laissez-faire, as do “libertarian” economists, is to reduce, dissolve and degenerate the general to the particular – so human liberty to a sort of anarchy in economy – or escalate, metastasize and inject the second into the first. Thus, if one wants to provide an answer to and resolve the otherwise false question and spurious problem, it is that classical economic liberalism was laissez-faire in the sense of freedom in economy and markets, yet protected and regulated by some degree of government intervention, but not in the form of anarchy, complete government non-intervention and non-existence, a night watchman state. This holds true particularly of Smith’s political economy, as his contemporary disciples (e.g. Reisman 1998; also Tribe 1999) suggest by identifying his “sociological economics” and describing him as a “sociological economist” attentive to the reciprocal relations of “Market and State.”

Further, even if Smith’s political economy was and is interpreted as the “approbation” of *laissez faire* (Razeen 2002: 19) in the sense of unlimited economic freedom like Hobbesian anarchy in economy, it was a special ramification, application, exaggeration or degeneration, of the Enlightenment’s liberalism, just as the original invention of its political philosophers. More specifically, Smith’s economic *laissez faire* by (if) reducing human freedom to market anarchy could be interpreted as a narrow, reductive and degenerated or anarchic form of the principle of integral liberty of the Scottish Enlightenment, e.g. Hume, Locke (Razeen 2002: 20). But Smith himself would probably reject such purely *laissez faire cum* anarchistic interpretations of his economic theory, as contemporary economists also suggest (Reisman 1998; Samuels 1990).

At any rate, regardless of being *laissez faire*, as in conventional wisdom, or not, as in heterodox interpretations, as an impertinent and perhaps irre-

solvable issue, Smith's political economy provides one of the first and most influential formulations of classical economic liberalism thus understood. His most famous statement in this respect is that "according to the obvious and simple system of natural liberty, the sovereign has only three duties to attend to", such as, first, "protecting society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies"; second, "protecting every member of the society from the injustice or oppression of every other member of it" ("establishing an exact administration of justice"), third, "erecting and maintaining certain public works and certain public institutions".

Many economists, excluding "libertarians", would probably agree that this is a classical formulation of economic liberalism in general, but not of *laissez faire* in particular in the sense and form of total government non-intervention in economy and society, so absolute freedom in an anti-social "state of nature", Hobbesian anarchy. In this sense, Smith was a classical, moderate economic liberal, but hardly, as usually supposed, an extreme uncompromising *laissez faire* "libertarian" who would, as US "libertarians" are often described, "shut down government and proceed to extol private free enterprise", let alone an anarchist, as anarchists and anti-liberal conservative critics alike imply. It is primarily in this non-anarchic, non- or quasi-*laissez faire*, sense that Smith's classic economic liberalism is the "principal guise in which he has long been recognized by economists" (Tribe 1999: 609). As US "libertarian" economists (Buchanan 1991) admit, Smith's economic liberalism proposed neither economic Anarchy nor governmental Leviathan in economy and society, but transcended both extremes through combining market freedom and sensible state regulation (Reisman 1998).

Also, Smith's early disciples such as J. B. Say¹⁸ embrace and elaborate on his economic liberalism through advocating "liberal institutions", "liberal measures" or "more liberal and enlightened policy", including "liberal international intercourse", to ensure the "most perfect freedom". However, like Smith, they usually do not pass the threshold of Hobbesian anarchy in economy and to that extent fall short of unmitigated *laissez-faire*, though with some exceptions in classical (Ricardo, Senior), neo-classical (Walras) and

¹⁸ Say adds that the economic liberalism, described as the "fundamental position", of political economy was "first systematically developed, explained, and taught by the great father of the science, Dr. Adam Smith".

libertarian (Mises,¹⁹ Hayek) economics. Hence, classical economic liberalism overall is far from being, or only in exceptional cases, the doctrine and policy of unrestrained and unqualified *laissez-faire*, contrary to modern “libertarian” neo-classical and rational-choice economists’ interpretations of Smith as well as their own “free market” theories and policies. It differs from later, neo-classical economic liberalism, represented by marginalism and “libertarianism”, and rational-choice “liberalism”, exemplified by public choice theory as the ambitious and seductive, yet simplistic “economic approach to politics” (Mueller 1997).

Thus, analysts suggest that, despite its “normative core” consisting of the “approbation” of economic freedom or even *laissez faire* in the sense of Smith’s “obvious and simple system of natural liberty”, classical liberalism “does not implicitly assume that the economic order is freestanding or that it operates autonomously under its own laws” (Razeen 2002: 17–8). In particular, in this view, classical economic liberalism, in contrast to neo-classical economics and modern rational choice theory, “has a complex and realistic model of man in mind, emphatically not the fantastically unreal postulates of *homo oeconomicus*. Smith and Hume do not think of man as a rational utility-maximiser with perfect knowledge, nor does the leading exponent of classical liberalism in recent times, Hayek”²⁰ (Razeen 2002: 18).

By not assuming or not misconstruing the economy as a “freestanding” and fully “autonomous” system thus means that for Smith and other classical economic liberals, economy is not a Hobbesian state of nature. It is rather what Say and Mill call society’s or social economy existing within and regulated by social, including legal, institutions, so economic freedom is not anarchy as its degeneration and to that extent not unmitigated *laissez faire*. Admittedly,

¹⁹ Mises (1950) contends that the “only task of the strictly Liberal state is to secure life and property against attacks both from external and internal foes. It is a producer of security or a night watchman’s state [Wilhelm von Humboldt’s phrase].” In his view, liberalism “sees in the market economy the best, even the only possible, system of economic organization of society [due to] the visibly increasing productive capacity of the industrial system.” In particular, he argues that “tremendous technical progress and the resulting increase in wealth and welfare] were feasible only through pursuit of those liberal policies [that were the practical application of economics]” (Mises 1950). Mises’ disciple Hayek adopts and develops, with some dose of mitigation in content and especially form or terminology, these arguments, as do most contemporary libertarian economists (Friedman and Friedman 1982).

²⁰ Razeen (2002: 18) concludes, referring to Hume, that classical economic liberalism “takes man to be largely irrational, governed by his ‘passions’, not his ‘reason’.”

classical economic liberals reject what is called the “Nirvana” approach to the economy, as typical for neo-classical economics and rational choice, in favor of a “concrete and historical comparative method [centering on] real-life competition with its myriad institutional arrangements” (Razeeen 2002: 20). This statement thus sharply contrasts classical economic with neo-classical economics as well as modern economic liberalism subdivided into rational choice theory and neo-liberal institutionalism.²¹ In particular, classical economic liberalism or political economy since Smith is interpreted to “strongly believe[s] in “liberty under the law” and therefore a *qualified*, not an absolutist, *laissez faire*” (Razeeen 2002: 26) in contrast to “libertarian” economics as its putative heir or custodian.²² And a qualified *laissez faire* is by assumption non- or pseudo-*laissez faire* if the latter is understood to signify absolute, natural liberty in a Hobbesian meaning of anti-social anarchy, as distinguished from freedom “under the law” and society generally. In this view, classical economic liberalism posits a “complex amalgam of positive and negative functions of government, irreducible to the nightwatchman state” (Razeeen 2002: 28).

²¹ In Razeeen’s (2002: 11) view, classical liberalism differs from both rational choice theory by “eschewing rational utility-maximisation/perfect market models” and from neo-liberal institutionalism by being “skeptical of intergovernmental policy coordination and international organizations” (Razeeen 2002: 11). Notably, Razeeen (2002: 16) describes as “bloodless and unrealistic” the prevalent premise of “extreme individualism – the isolated Crusoe who acts egoistically and rationally, integral to the *homo oeconomicus* of neoclassical economics”. By contrast, classical liberalism since Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment to Mises/Hayek, is distinguished from “neoclassical economics and rational choice by eschewing unrealistic, hyperabstract assumptions of Economic Man and market order, favouring instead realistic assumptions and an evolutionary analysis of market process” (Razeeen 2002: 20). Thus, rational choice theory is described as adopting the “psychological assumptions of *homo oeconomicus*, the rational utility-maximising actor, to build a theory of economic and political markets” and classical liberalism as using “often diametrically opposed assumptions of man in his politico-economic environment” (Razeeen 2002: 177). Particularly, public choice as the neoclassical economics of politics “essentially transplants *homo oeconomicus* and the associated Walrasian theory of market organisation into the political sphere: the theory assumes that voters, taxpayers, bureaucrats and politicians are self-interested utility-maximisers” (Razeeen 2002: 179).

²² For example, putatively liberal philosopher/economist Michael Polanyi (1951: 77) describes “libertarian” economists as “custodians of the great liberal tradition out of which their discipline rose.”

In addition to Smith's specification of the economic and non-economic functions of government, Bentham's²³ governmental agenda and non-agenda in economy and society overall provides a case in point as well as inspiration for similar attempts by subsequent economists and social theorists, including Keynes and Popper. What these classical liberal specifications and agendas basically recognize is that economy, including the free market or competition, "does not exist in vacuo [but] presupposes a comprehensive framework of law and public policy, far removed from notions of extreme *laissez faire* and the nightwatchman state"²⁴ (Razeen 2002: 184). In particular, they acknowledge that "markets, the political processes that influence them, the legal framework and sociocultural factors, all emerge from the deep recesses of nation-states" (Razeen 2002: 185) and their conflict and competition such as the balance of power of the "great powers" in Europe, a moment sociologists like Weber recognize and analyze and emphasize. Admittedly, "institutional competition is nothing new; it has a long history. [Weber] attributes Europe's unique breakthrough to modernity to the competition between political authorities for ideas, skilled people and mobile capital" (Razeen 2002: 204).

Hence, by grounding market freedom in social institutions and generally "man in his politico-economic environment" (Razeen 2002: 177), in particular defining government as more than a "night-watchman state", classical economic liberalism is institutional, so sociological, and to that extent the inverse of *laissez-faire* in the absolute, pure sense of Hobbesian anarchy in economy. In this view, such institutionalism makes classical economic liberalism original and distinct in relation to its subsequent neo-classical, marginalist and rational choice variations both premised on the "bloodless and unrealistic" postulate of "extreme individualism" (Razeen 2002: 16).

²³ In turn, what Robbins (1957: 226) calls the "utilitarian criterion" of classical economic liberalism, exemplified in Bentham's "principle of utility", has influenced or ramified into neoclassical economics, especially Jevons' marginal utility theory, and contemporary rational choice theory, both premised on the idea of utility maximizing.

²⁴ In an apparently "libertarian" or economic interpretation, Razeen (2002: 184–5) comments that in classical liberalism law or justice, as "the glue that holds a complex society together, is conceived in procedural, 'rules of the game' terms [but] not a device of redistribution ['social justice']."

Contemporary Economic Liberalism

Contemporary or American economic liberalism even less defines itself and is perceived by non-liberals in terms of *laissez-faire* than its classical, European predecessor, exemplified in Smith's liberal political economy, as well as "libertarianism" as the latter's putative heir and custodian. Further, often contemporary American liberals, just as their "libertarian" critics, define economic liberalism more as a sort of "liberal interventionism"²⁵ through government activism in economy, including an interventionist egalitarian welfare state, than the doctrine and policy of *laissez-faire* or unfettered capitalism, thus as substantially different from "libertarianism". For its adherents, contemporary economic liberalism is not a negation of or substantial aberration from its classical ancestor, as "libertarian" economists accuse. It is rather its elaboration and extension in order to successfully adapt to subsequent relevant Mannheim's sociological constellations and historical developments, such as the emergence of the welfare state or social democracy in the late 19th century, the "pre-1914 period" of economic and political-cultural liberalization (Estevadeordal and Taylor 2002), WW I, the Great Depression, the New Deal in America, WW II, the civil rights movement and cultural liberalization of the 1960s, and so on.

By contrast, from the stance of contemporary economic liberalism, "libertarians" as well as neo-conservative politicians à la Reagan and Thatcher tend to overlook, downplay, nullify or erase all these new social processes and developments by turning the clock back through a return to some mythical "golden past" of market-economic *laissez-faire* as a set of "fantasies" (Kloppenbergs 1998: 16). This *laissez-faire* "golden past" or "paradise lost" hence, as the saying goes, "has never existed" not only in the sense of the proverb but historically, except in their minds and some classical and neo-classical economists since Smith.

²⁵ For example, Ruggie (1992) contends that in America, the "step-by-step growth of government regulation in a political atmosphere that endorses private enterprise and marketplace rate setting is the paradox of liberal intervention [so] the central tenet of a liberal Welfare State, the separation of the domains of state and society, is transgressed [i.e. the principle that the Welfare State is a limited adjunct to the market, serving to correct the outcomes but not to displace it]." In this view, a "second transgression violates the principle that the state should not be the architect of social order", citing Medicare and Medicaid government-based programs as "typical examples of liberal interventionism" (Ruggie 1992).

The aforesaid indicates that contemporary economic liberalism is more sociologically realistic, historically flexible or adaptive and forward-looking in regard to economy and society than are “libertarianism” and conservatism. The latter are in this respect utopian – or rather, as Mannheim (1936) observes for the second, counter-utopian and counter-revolutionary – in sociological terms, inflexible or non-adaptive and negligent in a historical sense, and backward-looking. For contemporary economic liberalism, the “good” economy, society and life overall is in the present or future, for “libertarianism” in the utopia, myth (Bird 1999), nirvana or archaism (Beck 2000) of the 18th century laissez-faire and economic individualism, and for conservatism, in addition and in non-economic terms, in feudal, despotic and religious-theocratic medievalism.

In this respect, contemporary economic liberalism is just the logical outcome of and necessary adaptation to the changes produced by the evolution of the economy and society within the Western world since Smith et al., so rational or adaptive continuation of rather than aberration from its classical version. It is simply Smith’s and other classical economic liberalism elaborated, extended and adapted to fit the new reality of economy and society since their times, in contrast to “libertarianism” as its frozen modern form oblivious of these changes, as well as conservatism as (also) a sort of medieval traditionalism perpetuated in and for post-medievalism, including the 21st century. In particular, contemporary or American economic liberalism can be described as the logical elaboration, adaptation and extension of Smith-Bentham’s specification of government functions/agenda in economy and society, in contrast to “libertarianism” as the “frozen” copy or even reduced version of these specifications, and US neo-conservatism (also) as their medieval-style authoritarian escalation in non-economic terms, such as political hierarchy, government repression, stringent social control, culture wars or theocratic “Bible Belt” projects.

Moreover, sociologists imply a degree of pseudo-laissez-faire liberal continuity in respect to the economy by stating that modern liberalism in America and Great Britain “favors government at ‘arm’s length’ in economic affairs” (Myles 1994), just as did its classical ancestor, in contrast to what is called French statism via “dirigisme” and indicative planning and German corporatism and partly Japanese capitalism. However, the statement seems to refer primarily to American and British neo-conservatism or “free-market” liber-

tarianism, represented by Reaganism and Thatcherism respectively, insofar as contemporary economic liberalism rejects or mitigates the quasi-laissez-faire principle of government at arm's length in economic processes, as indicated by Keynesianism and the New Deal. The same applies to the statement that since the 1980s "Anglo-American countries embarked on "ambitious programs of neoliberal economic restructuring that favored the growth of small enterprise" (Myles 1994). This clearly refers to or holds true more of neo-conservatism *cum* economic "neo-liberalism" than of contemporary economic liberalism in the tradition of Keynesian and New-Deal government activism. Overall, in this view, the "major divide in liberal economies is between the US and the UK, Australia, and New Zealand, with Canada in the middle", particularly contrasting "hegemonic power of financial capital" in Great Britain vs. "managerialism" in America (Myles 1994).

In terms of *dramatis personae*, then, F. D. Roosevelt, J. M. Keynes and others diagnosing the "end of laissez-faire" are, as Popper (1966) implies, more economic and social liberals in respect of the "spirit" or substance of classical liberalism than "libertarian" economists like Mises, Hayek and their followers tenaciously insisting on its "letter" or form, let alone US neo-conservatives a la Reagan with (also) their tenacious insistence on both the "ghost" and formula of medieval-style traditionalism like Winthrop's Puritan theocracy *cum* "a shining city upon a hill". For instance, as the theoretical founder or inspiration of contemporary economic liberalism, including the US "New Deal", Keynes, despite his misgivings about being labeled "liberal" in the classical sense, suggested to "discriminate" between, and further elaborated on and specified, what he cites as Bentham's Agenda and Non-Agenda of government in economy and society generally. He thus essentially continued and developed rather than blandly dismissed, as claimed by his "libertarian" detractors (Buchanan 1991) its classical or original version. Almost like Bentham as well as Smith, he suggests that the "most important Agenda of the State relates not to those activities which private individuals are already fulfilling, but to those functions which fall outside the sphere of the individual, to those decisions which are made by no one if the State does not make them."

In a sense, Keynes and other contemporary liberal economists write what Bentham, Smith and other classical economists would if they lived during this new economy and society, notably the welfare state or the Great Depression, just as FDR and other New-Dealers did what the 18th century supposedly

laissez-faire statesmen like Jefferson and Madison would if they happened to witness these novel sociological constellations and historical conjunctures in America, viz. the Gilded Age of concentration of economic-political power, the Progressive Era as the attempted remedy, the “crazy” 1920s, the “gloomy” 1930s, WW II, etc. This indicates a sharp contrast of Keynes and other contemporary liberals with self-declared “libertarian” economists like Mises, Hayek, Friedman et al. writing as if they lived in the 18th century, as well as neo-conservative US politicians acting as if they continued to exist in theocratic medievalism, at least its American version, extension or proxy such as New England’s Puritan theocracy and “Salem with witches”.

In this respect, contemporary, including neo-Keynesianism and New Deal-inspired, economic liberalism basically remains “liberalism” in the sense of a modern development, logical extension and necessary adaptation of its classical predecessor in view of the great evolutionary and revolutionary changes in economy and society since Smith’s 18th century. At the maximum and exceptionally such as its extreme, “libertarian” versions, it is the modern equivalent and basic continuation of classical economic liberalism in the sense of the idea and policy of government at “arm’s length” in economy and society. At the minimum and typically, it is Schumpeter’s style “creative destruction” of classical economic liberalism in the sense of destroying and replacing its old, unviable or “dead” elements like market anarchy and a “night-watchman state”, and creating the new ones to adapt and do justice to a radically changed economy and society. This process in turn makes contemporary liberalism substantively different from “libertarianism” as a sort of uncreative reproduction (“freezing”) and opposed to and by neo-conservatism as (also) nihilistic destruction, including neo-fascist nihilism, of liberal ideas, institutions and practices. In sum, economic liberalism today is “liberalism” evolved beyond its point of origin and early evolution, libertarianism archaic “liberalism” arrested or “frozen” in its development, and neo-conservatism “anti-liberalism”, notably medieval traditionalism, as Mises (1966) would put it, petrified in post-medievalism, including, especially in America, the early 21st century.

Economic Liberalism and Historical Stages of Capitalism

The phases or types of economic liberalism roughly correspond to or coincide with the historical stages and sociological forms of capitalism in Western societies. Classical economic liberalism corresponded to or coincided with what Marx identifies as liberal, competitive capitalism based on, as Weber also observes, free atomistic competition replacing status-group pre-capitalist monopolies in economic traditionalism, specifically feudalism. In particular, Marx and Weber imply that the historical evolution or revolution of feudalism into capitalism as respective non-liberal and liberal economic systems corresponded to or coincided with the “transition from mercantilism to liberalism” (Habermas 1989: 95) as successive market, including foreign-trade, doctrines and policies. By analogy, contemporary economic liberalism historically corresponded or adapted to what Marx and his followers diagnose or predict as monopoly capitalism, including imperialism, resting on, as Weber also remarks, capitalist monopolies substituting free market competition since the late 19th century.

Alternatively, what contemporary sociologists, following Marx and Weber, distinguish as liberal competitive capitalism of the 18th and 19th century vs. its later monopoly-based (Braudel 1979: 785) or organized, advanced and mature (Habermas 1975) version, as historical stages and sociological types, correspond to classical and modern phases and forms of economic liberalism, respectively. According to a recent sociological analysis, like liberalism and corresponding to or coinciding with its stages, capitalism has “distinct historical phases” such as competitive-liberal and non- or pseudo-competitive and non-liberal exemplified by Fordist and post-Fordist regimes (Somerville 2000: 112). In this view, the liberal-competitive phase of modern capitalism “took place roughly from the 17th century in England until the late 19th century” (Somerville 2000: 112). In a similar sociological account, specifically the “effectiveness of free competition at home and abroad, determined” liberal or competitive capitalism [but] this phase lasted only for one blissful moment in the long history of capitalist development; for it issued from a unique historical constellation in Great Britain at the close of the 18th century” (Habermas 1989: 78–9). In this view, apart from Great Britain, most other Western countries “did not actualize the principles of *laissez faire* in international trade without reserve, even in the middle of the 19th century when the liberal era was at its height” (Habermas 1989: 79).

In turn, the historical substitution of monopoly or oligopoly as a market configuration for atomistic free competition domestically and globally determined monopolistic or organized capitalism defined by concentration of economic and political power, exemplified by the Gilded Age and embodied by the capitalist “robber barons” in America, since the late 19th century. At this juncture, if freely competitive capitalism was an equivalent and realization of classical economic liberalism as the doctrine and policy of market freedom, including free competition, by assumption this did not hold true of monopolistic capitalism as the system of anti- or pseudo-competitive monopolies and oligopolies.

In this respect, monopolistic or organized capitalism negated or subverted rather than equaled and implemented classical as well as contemporary economic liberalism. Hence, it is more accurate, in contrast to the relationship between their respective competitive and classical phases and types, to say that advanced capitalism only historically and formally coincided with, but not sociologically or substantively corresponded to, contemporary economic liberalism. For example, a historical study shows that in America as late as the 1930s economic and political “liberalism has not displaced capitalism” legally predicated on and rationalized by the English common law of master-servant feudal relations and thus “belated feudalism” (Orren 1991), resulting in and justifying anti-labor, anti-union and pro-capital agendas and practices by US conservatism (Myles 1994).

The above indicates that economic liberalism as the theory and practice of freedom, as well as justice and equality, in economy and capitalism as a particular economic system are not necessarily equivalent and even linked, but sometimes different and opposite, contrary to the apologetic defense by US “libertarian celebrants” (Tillman 2001) of the capitalist status quo in America as the “best of all possible worlds” (Merton 1968). Specifically, it demonstrates that while economic liberalism constitutes, incorporates or results in a definite, liberal-competitive type of capitalism, “capitalism” as whole is not necessarily “liberalism” or what Smith calls the “system of natural liberty”, notably free competition, in economy and beyond. Simply, economic liberalism, classical and contemporary, is typically “capitalist” in the sense of “competitive” and “free competition”, but not all capitalism is necessarily “liberal”, but often anti-or pseudo-liberal in the meaning of “anti-competitive” such

as monopolistic and oligopolistic or oligarchic, as observed or predicted in America during neo-conservatism (Pryor 2002).

In this sense, classical and contemporary economic liberalism is really “capitalism”, yet not all historical phases and sociological types of capitalism are “liberalism” in the sense of liberty, plus justice and equality, “for all” in economy and society. Early competitive capitalism constituted and was considered a “liberal” system, so economic liberalism as defined, and its subsequent monopolistic version substituting free market competition with Weber’s capitalist monopolies “non-liberal” in the sense of non- or pseudo-competitive and to that extent anti-liberalism in economy and society.

Moreover, according to a sociological study, “much of modern social history can be understood in terms of ‘war’ between ‘citizenship rights’ (which are equal rights) and the ‘capitalist class system’” (Dahrendorf 1959: 61), and to that extent liberalism, i.e. liberal political democracy, and capitalism. Alternatively, the study finds that ruling capitalist classes or political parties embraced political liberalism or liberal democracy, just as its economic version or free competition, “only so long as it guaranteed their predominance” (Dahrendorf 1979: 108). And it is such historical and persistent liberal-capitalist divergences or oppositions that prompt the quoted proposition that the “marriage of liberalism and capitalism has to be dissolved” (Dahrendorf 1979: 101) by divorcing “liberal” from “capitalist”, viz. “class”, “monopolistic”, “oligopolistic”, in modern liberal Western societies.

Alternatively, most contemporary liberals would propose that such a marriage is to be maintained in the form of the “union” between liberalism and welfare capitalism, as in Scandinavian egalitarian societies extolled by Samuelson as “freer than my America” under an anti-liberal capitalist economic and political system reaching the point of a blended neo-conservative market oligopoly and government oligarchy (Pryor 2002) during the 2000s. However, even if the traditional yet historically contingent “marriage of liberalism and capitalism” does not, as most contemporary liberals imply, have to be dissolved but to continue in a new form or modified contract in the above sense, it demonstrates that “liberal” or “liberty” is not necessarily equivalent, related and limited to “capitalist” or “free enterprise, and conversely the second does not always epitomize, present or exhaust the first. This is instructive to reiterate and emphasize given that most economic and political “libertarians” from

Mises and Hayek to their disciples, especially in America, tend to simplistically equate, dissolve or confine liberalism to capitalism, liberty to market freedom, and alternatively, to conceive and present the second as the first as a whole, committing the reductive fallacy of misplaced concreteness (Tillman 2001).

Economic Liberalism and Sociological Types of Capitalism

The above also holds true of sociological types of capitalism, often overlapping or intersecting with its historical phases, in relation to economic and other liberalism. Thus, in a contemporary classification of its sociological types, democratic capitalism is by assumption economic as well as political liberalism as defined, but its authoritarian version or capitalist dictatorship is “anti-liberalism” via repression, inequality and injustice in economy and society (Hodgson 1999; Pryor 2001). While often both mistakenly or apologetically called by “libertarian” and other economists “liberal” in economic terms, of these two contemporary and co-existing types of capitalism, “one with a democratic government, the other with an authoritarian government [e.g. Chile under Pinochet]” (Pryor 2001: 10), only the first qualifies as “liberalism”, the system of liberty, justice and equality in economy and society versus the second as its antipode.

Moreover, the preceding holds true not only, as most economists think, in political and other non-economic respects – i.e. democratic vs. authoritarian government, free versus un-free civil society – but also in economic terms. Since (if) contemporary democratic capitalism is typically freely competitive in a market sense, and its authoritarian version non- or pseudo-competitive, specifically oligopolistic and monopolistic, to that extent the first is liberalism, and the second anti-liberalism even in economy, just as in polity and society overall. Modern Western European democratic, including Scandinavian and other welfare (Esping-Andersen 1994), capitalism is economic as well as political liberalism, both competitive and democratic, contrary to the dogmatic and ethnocentric claims to the opposite (“statism”, “socialism”, “collectivism”) by US “libertarian” economists (Friedman and Friedman 1982) and some sociologists (Lipset and Marks 2000). By contrast, contemporary authoritarian capitalism, exemplified in capitalist “developmental” dictatorships in Latin America, Asia and elsewhere (Centeno 1994; Habermas 2001), as well as neo-

conservative economic oligarchic authoritarianism (Pryor 2002) in America during the 1980–2000s, is anti-liberalism not only in a political sense but also in market terms of free competition itself.

For example, as indicated, some economists describe American capitalism under neo-conservatism as becoming or likely to become an authoritarian system, specifically oligopolistic economy and oligarchic polity, and to that extent as both economic and political anti-liberalism rather than liberalism. In this view, the US economic system has moved or will move from “a liberal market economy” defined by free competition, low governmental influence and high social solidarity toward an “oligarchic market economy” characterized by large corporations and little competition, subservient government, and low social solidarity (Pryor 2002: 10). In turn, only the most doctrinaire “libertarianism” and neo-conservatism would consider and describe this diagnosed or predicted authoritarian as well as “mafia capitalism” and Hobbesian anarchy in America as “libertarian”, “free” in economic and political terms, thus as “liberalism.” Also, only libertarians and neo-conservatives would claim, as they did (e.g. Hayek et al., Thatcher) in the past, that capitalist dictatorships like Chile under Pinochet, Singapore and others are or were economic and political “liberalism”, economically as well as politically “free, thus effectively supporting and justifying them on ideological grounds” (Tillman 2001).

The above is perhaps useful to emphasize because most “libertarian” economists and even some contemporary sociologists overlook all these complexities in the historical and actual relationship between economic liberalism and capitalism by committing a sort of fallacy of misplaced concreteness through reducing “liberal” to “capitalist” tout de court, and conversely inflating the second as the first. The historical development and contemporary reality are evidently infinitely more complex than these perhaps “natural” economic fallacies and simplifications by economists, by indicating that economic liberalism is freely competitive capitalism, but not all capitalisms, notably their monopolistic and/or authoritarian varieties, are liberalisms in economy and society overall.

Economic Liberalism and Comparative Capitalist Systems

In general, the aforesaid suggests not only the historical specificity and variability of what Durkheim would call the genesis and functioning of Western

capitalism, from its competitive to its, if Marx, Weber and Habermas are right, monopolistic or oligopolistic stages. It also suggests its sociological complexity and variation in the sense of co-existence and co-development of its various democratic and authoritarian types. Thus, contemporary economists observe and stress the “institutional and cultural variety within actually existing capitalism” (Hodgson 1999: 11) in a comparative and global context.

This is what modern economic liberalism especially realizes and emphasizes in contrast to “libertarianism” that usually denies or overlooks both the historical oligopolistic mutation and the politically authoritarian, including related oligarchic, form of capitalism. It also distinguishes liberalism from neo-conservatism that embraces, unlike medieval proto-conservatism, capitalism, even *laissez-faire*, just as it exploits liberal-secular democracy, primarily as the Machiavellian strategy and instrument of domination and conservation (Bourdieu 1998) in society and its revival, under a new name and dress, of medievalism in the form of what Weber would and some economists do describe as capitalist patrimonialism (Cohen 2003) with its extant roots in patrimonial feudalism.

The preceding implies and supports the contemporary liberal argument about sociological variations and varieties within global modern capitalism. Alternatively, it contradicts the claims by US “libertarians” and neo-conservatives that their “unfettered” or “free enterprise” capitalism, in spite or perhaps because of its diagnosed or predicted mutation into an oligopolistic economy and authoritarian-oligarchic polity (Pryor 2002), is not only the “best” ever but the only way and universal model in a standard display of the economic and other “triumphalist banner” (Bell 2002: 462) of American conservatism. It simply suggests not, as they claim, a single, universal or homogenous “American” capitalism in the singular, but rather a comparative “diversity of capitalisms” (Triglia 2002: 244–5) in the plural, including but not exhausted by America’s “unfettered”, “free enterprise” system as well as Western European welfare-egalitarian and other versions in developed and developing countries. Notably, as observed, “although not all capitalisms are equal in performance, the advantages or efficiencies of one type of capitalism over another are typically dependent on their historical path and context and thereby none can be said to be ultimately superior to all the others” (Hodgson 1999: 101).

The foregoing thus reaffirms liberal arguments about the historical specificity and path dependence and the sociological variation or framework of comparative capitalism and casts doubt on US anti-liberal absolutist, ethnocentric and sociologically or economically uninformed claims to the superiority and universality of the particular and peculiar American capitalist system compared to the supposedly inferior European and other versions. Recall, even leading US economists like Samuelson reluctantly admitted that the European, notably Scandinavian, egalitarian, welfare or social democratic version of capitalism was “freer”, by the classical Mill’s criteria of liberty in economy and society, than the superior American “libertarian” model during the post-war period.

Moreover, some contemporary economists and sociologists suggest that the American brand of capitalism, presumably based in or inspired by classical liberalism and individualism, is not invariably, as supposed and claimed by US “libertarian” economists, more efficient even in economic terms, let alone more socially egalitarian and equitable, than its European version (Trigilia 2002). In such views, European welfare and regulated capitalism “is both economically and socially more efficient” (cited in Trigilia 2002: 254) than the American anti-welfare and “unfettered” version. By implication, this is primarily because the first type of capitalism is premised on “liberalism” in the modern sense of a fusion of liberty with justice and equality in economy and society, and the second on neo-conservatism or “libertarianism” seeking to resurrect the dead or mythical past of “laissez-faire fantasies” (Kloppenber 1998: 16), stirred with inequality and injustice, via the “archaic ideology of the [absolutely] free market” (Beck 2000: 112) and a night-watchman or intrusive policing state (Bourdieu 1998).

In general, arguably the diversity of capitalisms “reflects a cultural legacy which was more highly influenced by liberalism and individualism in Anglo-Saxon [capitalism], while the more organized forms of capitalism were all influenced by cultural legacies that emphasize collective responsibility in shaping individual life chances” (Trigilia 2002: 244–5). Apparently, “liberalism” is understood in the classical sense of Smith et al., but this statement seems to make too a sharp disjuncture or opposition in this respect between “liberal” Anglo-Saxon and “non-liberal” continental European societies. After all, as the very “Anglo-Saxon” economist Keynes (1972: 278) stressed,

some continental European, French political philosophers – e.g. Marquis d’Argenson stating that *Laissez-faire, telle devrait être la devise de toute puissance publique, depuis que le monde est civilisé* – not British free-market political economists, including Smith, invented the doctrine of laissez-faire and in that sense original or exaggerated economic liberalism. Also, as Keynes remarks, it was a French merchant (Legendre) that coined the very phrase *nous laissez-faire* in an answer to Colbert’s question (*Que faut-il faire pour vous aider?* It may have been that France and other continental European societies have, as usually alleged by US (and UK) ethnocentric economists and politicians, moved since into the direction of supposed “socialism”, “statism” and “dirigisme” (Jepperson 2002; Lipset and Marks 2000) as the antipode of original or mythical laissez-faire, and Anglo-Saxon countries like Great Britain and America in that of “liberalism”. Yet, the historical origin of the liberal economic doctrine in the French and other European Enlightenment should not be easily overlooked. As Keynes (1972: 277) himself suggests, a “study of the history of opinion is a necessary preliminary to the emancipation of the mind.”

Specifically, observations suggest that the lower economic and social efficiency or rationality of American capitalism is indicated, for example, by the “fall in real wages, the growing inequality of incomes, and thus the increase in social polarization” (Triglia 2002: 247) during the political and societal dominance of anti-liberalism from the 1980s to the 2000s. In turn, only the most dogmatic “libertarian” economists as well as the most “patriotic” neo-conservatives in America would claim that the decline in real incomes – and, for that matter, the increase in poverty – for most Americans, excluding the “top heavy” (Wolff 2002), is an epitome of economic efficiency, growing income inequalities continue or realize venerable American egalitarianism, as described by Tocqueville and extolled by US sociologists (Lipset and Marks 2000), and increased social polarization is a “good thing” for a society. In short, only they would allege that such anti-liberal processes and outcomes make the new nation “both economically and socially more efficient” than the old and disdained Europe.

In particular, some economists warn or predict that, as the primary effect of anti-liberal policies and practices, “if widening income inequalities lead to heightened social tensions, the fear of anarchy might lead toward more extensive governmental security measures so that the US might arrive at a rotating authoritarian, interventionist economy” (Pryor 2002: 364). Even the

most dogmatic US “libertarian” economists, plus nationalistic neo-conservatives, would hardly consider this capitalist economy the paragon of superior economic efficiency, let alone freedom, equality and justice, compared to “inefficient” European welfare capitalism or “socialism” in their dismissive terminology. At most, even if the US neo-conservative capitalist system is or will be more efficient in strictly economic terms (higher growth and productivity, lower unemployment) than its European and any other, including Japanese, counterparts, it may not be necessarily so in the sense of social, non-economic efficacy, including freedom, equality, justice and humanity. This is what is suggested by the observation and prediction that this system has evolved or “will evolve in many different ways toward a capitalism with an inhuman face” (Pryor 2002: 367).

At this juncture, illiberal “capitalism with an inhuman face” operates as a mix of superior economic efficiency (high growth and productivity, low unemployment, occupational mobility) and free markets with inhumanity, including Draconian government repression and punishment, exclusion and injustice rationalized on various grounds like national moral-religious “revival” and “homeland security”. This is an efficient mixture that yet tends to become the ultimate and self-defeating form of social inefficiency, an economic hyper-rationality turned into irrationality (Elster 1989) from a sociological and liberal, as different from a narrow market and illiberal, perspective, a sort of realization of Huxley’s “Brave New World” dystopia of “happy slaves” afforded unlimited consumption yet denied basic human liberties and dignity. Recollect Smith’s warning that injustice can “utterly destroy” a society how matter how economically efficient or beneficent.

In this connection, neo-conservative “capitalism with an inhuman face” is a sort of nightmare scenario and denigration rather than affirmation and realization of Smith’s liberalism. At worst, “capitalism with an inhuman face” is self-destructive capitalist dictatorship blending inefficient slave-style (Wacquant 2002) work settings and conditions (e.g. sweat-shops, coerced prison labor in the US), an economy turned into an over-arching sweat-shop, with an inhuman society, a repressive, anti-egalitarian and inequitable polity and an un-free civil sphere made into an open prison of sinners, a monastery of Puritan-like “born again” religious saints. In this sense, such anti-liberal capitalism is not only, as relatively non-controversial, socially non-egalitarian, exclusive, especially in the South ruled by the plutocracy/

oligarchy of “good old boys” (Amenta et al. 2001; Cochran 2001), and inequitable, so ineffective or inhuman. It is also economically inefficient in the long run, even self-destructive on its own efficiency and free-market grounds, if Smith is right in his warning that no society, no matter how beneficent and efficient in purely economic terms, will survive if injustice and thus inhumanity prevails. In particular, this holds true of distributive injustice and economic inequality in America, including comparatively pervasive, and even unparalleled, and persisting poverty, during anti-liberalism since the 1980s. Thus, contemporary liberals admonish that a free or “enlarged” culture, “so essential to protecting the cooperative arrangement of society, cannot be sustained if there are serious social antagonisms caused by an absence of a commitment to provide the elements of essential material decency to all citizens” (DeLue 1999: 24).

The issue of comparative economic and social efficiency of the various types of modern capitalism is in itself of secondary concern in this context but only in relation to contemporary economic liberalism. What is of primary relevance is that, if these observations are correct, they indicate that contemporary economic liberalism generates and predicts both higher economic efficiency and greater social equality and justice than illiberal neo-conservatism, including its subtype or ally “libertarianism”. If European egalitarian welfare capitalism is economically or at least socially “more efficient” than the American anti-egalitarian “free enterprise” system this is primarily because the first is “liberal” in the evolved form of a blend of liberty with justice and equality in economy and society. Conversely, this is because the second is “conservative” and in the sense of Mises’ petrified conservatism anti-liberal, or pseudo-liberal in the meaning of arrested “libertarian” development, i.e. market-anarchic degeneration of classical liberalism.

Alternatively, if American capitalism is more inefficient as well as non-egalitarian and inequitable in economic and social terms, as indicated by the remarkable wastefulness, inequality and inequity of the health and criminal justice system, then this is mostly because under the dominance and impetus of neo-conservatism it has, as economists diagnose or predict, moved in the anti-liberal direction of an authoritarian system of the oligopolistic economy and oligarchic polity (Prior 2002) since the 1980s. In particular, this is so because the American capitalist “free enterprise” system, owing to conservative policies and institutions, has mutated, if not has always been, into what

is observed or predicted as “mafia capitalism” – as epitomized by Enronism and embodied by “cowboy capitalists” in turn prefigured and inspired by the “robber barons” – as the ultimate antipode of economic as well as political liberalism. As observed and predicted, under neo-conservatism, US liberal capitalism has been or is likely to be replaced by “mafia capitalism” and/or Hobbesian anarchy (Pryor 2002: 364). Only the most dogmatic “libertarian” economists and triumphal US neo-conservatives would consider or describe anti-liberal mafia capitalism a la Enronism and Hobbesian anarchy – both “sweetened” (Beck 2000) as the American “apple-pie” of free enterprise authoritarianism (Brouwer 1998) – as “superior” in economic efficiency and liberty (“freer”), plus social justice and equality, than its liberal, social-democratic opposites in Europe.

If the above is correct, then it yields the following working hypothesis or prediction. So long as European capitalism continues to represent or realize contemporary economic liberalism as a fusion of liberty with justice and equality in economy and society, and its American version instead remains rooted in conservatism and so anti-liberalism in this sense, the first will continue to be “both economically and socially more efficient” than the second in *long durée*, though with possible short-term variations, such as unemployment (Leijonhufvud 2004). Thus, labor unemployment was higher in Europe than America in the 1990–2000s, but lower during most of the post-war period. For instance, some economists (Leijonhufvud 2004: 815) observe that European unemployment “was lower than in the United States in the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s”. If so, opposite recent trends in unemployment are an exception in long terms, which is overlooked or downplayed by triumphant US libertarian economists and neo-conservatives extolling the economic and political superiority of their brand of capitalism *cum* anti-liberalism in economy and beyond. Sociologically more relevant, while US libertarian economists and conservative politicians like to dogmatically or ethnocentrically dismiss institutional structures in Europe as inferior, inefficient or rigid, such as “inflexible” labor markets, “these same institutions produced lower unemployment than in the United States before the early 1980s” (Leijonhufvud 2004: 815).

In sum, the point is not whether American or European capitalism is comparatively “freer”, more efficient economically and sociologically. It is rather that contemporary – i.e. evolving, adapting and modernizing – economic liberalism produces and predicts greater liberty, plus equality and justice

in economy and society alike than does petrified anti-liberalism like conservatism and arrested pseudo-liberalism *cum* “libertarianism”. Subtypes of contemporary economic liberalism, those evolved versus “arrested” in development, lead and correspond to comparative capitalist economic systems, specifically European liberal-welfare and American conservative capitalisms with different degrees of freedom, equality and justice, i.e. of economic and social efficiency. If European welfare capitalism was admittedly “freer”, economically and especially socially more “efficient” in the past (e.g. during the 1950–80s) than its American “free enterprise” version, then it will continue to be so in the future so long as the first remains based on economic liberalism evolved beyond the original point and the second on its arrested “libertarian” form or medieval-like anti-liberal traditionalism perpetuated and petrified as neo-conservatism (“new?”).

Alternatively, so long as this dual trend continues, American anti-liberal capitalism is likely to retain an “inhuman face” manifesting lower social efficacy in terms of equality, equity and basic humanity or solidarity, as well as an oligarchic or mafia-style economy and polity reflecting ultimately less economic efficiency, than its European liberal-welfare variant. Hence, the lack or failure of evolved, embedded (O’Riain 2000) and modernized economic liberalism perpetuates and predicts a “double jeopardy” of economic and social inefficiency for anti-liberal capitalism in America, and its presence or success comparative advantages for its liberal type in the long run. Such a duality can in a sense be described as the paradox, vice, or “curse” of economic liberalism “arrested” or “unreformed” in its development in the form of “free-market” libertarianism and neo-conservatism in America and Great Britain, and alternatively the virtue, advantage or “blessing” of its “evolved” type in the shape of welfare capitalism in Scandinavia and other Western Europe.

Social Liberalism

Political and Cultural Liberalism

As hinted, social non-economic liberalism has subtypes such as political and cultural or moral-religious liberalisms usually intertwined and mutually reinforcing. By analogy to its economic version, social liberalism is the theory and institutional system of liberty, joined with equality and justice in a synergy, in

society, including polity and culture or the civil sphere, alongside economy. This yields two subtypes, political liberalism as the theory and institutional system of liberal-secular democracy, and cultural liberalism as that of free culture or civil society. Thus, just as does liberal democracy in respect to the attempts to restore anti-liberal political systems like medievalism, proto-conservatism, fascism, communism and neo-conservatism, a free or “enlarged culture resists historical tendencies to reinstitute various forms of bigotry that threaten respect for diversity and undermine the search for a ‘better’ or ‘best’ way to maintain and protect it” (DeLue 1999: 24).

In short, political and cultural liberalisms constitute the doctrines and institutional systems of liberty, combined with equality and justice, in polity and culture, respectively. In some contemporary definitions, political liberalism is the “doctrine that certain choices are to be shielded from collective regulation”, and cultural liberalism implies the “liberal community of moral agents” (Frohock 1987: 3–11). Further, most modern liberals suggest and emphasize that these two types of social liberalism are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. This is suggested by the observation that “for the sake of an enlarged culture [one needs] a political agenda that makes as a central priority the provision of basic material goods in a way that secures a decent life for all citizens” (DeLue 1999: 24).

In turn, using Weber’s typology of rationality, political liberalism, like liberty, equality and justice, can be subdivided into formal and substantive. Formal political liberalism postulates and provides institutional rules and procedures (e.g. elections) for liberal-secular democracy, as epitomized in what Weber calls legal-rational authority seen as the democratic type of legitimate power or domination in contrast to its charismatic and traditional types as, in his view, illiberal, “authoritarian” principles of legitimacy. As contemporary sociologists observe in a Weberian vein, while legal-rational authority “is dominant only in modern secular societies” or liberal democracies, charismatic and traditional authorities, and so the authoritarian principle of domination, have been “present at one time or another in all of the older religiously based social formations [i.e. those with a basis in] Puritanism, Catholicism, ancient Judaism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam” (Lenski 1994: 8–9). Substantive political liberalism seeks to translate formal rules and procedures, including elections, of legal-rational authority into the substance of factual democracy or “real” liberties and rights in polity, according to what

Weber connotes as criteria of “ultimate values”, such as liberty, justice and equality.

Notably, Weber, Michels and contemporary sociologists (Habermas 2001) suggest that formal political liberalism, like liberty or rationality, is the necessary but not sufficient condition for its substantive version. In his view, legal-rational authority or freedom is indispensable but not in itself enough for actual liberal democracy or real freedom in polity, as demonstrated by the democratic insufficiency of many “free” elections, such as the Nazi victory in 1932, the 2000 US presidential election, and what modern liberals call liberal “banalities” like the “importance of a free and active press” (Beiner 1992: 185). Following Weber, Michels dramatizes the relationship between formal and substantive political liberty or liberalism by observing that the imperative of conservatism is that “democracy must be eliminated” even if “by the democratic way of the popular will”, including free elections, so through legal-rational means. He thus implies that anti-liberalism seizes and uses formal rules and procedures of liberal legal-rational legitimation as the Machiavellian strategy and instrument of destruction of substantive democracy or actual political liberty.

The above is hence the anti-liberal practice or syndrome of tactically adopting and using liberal democracy and its mechanisms for the sake of destroying or subverting it, as done by fascism in interwar Europe and conservatism overall before and afterwards, from Bismarck (Habermas 1989) to McCarthyism (Plotke 2002) and neo-conservatism like Thatcherism and Reaganism (Hodgson 1999). Alternatively, such specifying, including Michels’ dramatizing, of the relations between formal and substantive political liberty or liberalism avoids committing a sort of fallacy of misplaced legalistic concreteness, committed as perhaps an “occupational disease” (Merton 1968) by lawyers and most economists dissolving liberal democracy into Weber’s “legal-rational authority” or the “rule of law”, notably conservative-authoritarian “law and order” as an anti-democratic treat (Dahrendorf 1979).

Also, cultural liberalism as defined can be classified into moral, religious, educational, artistic, scientific and other liberalisms. Moral liberalism is the theory and institutional system of individual liberty or personal agency in the sphere of morality and private life, conceiving and protecting humans as free or agents in ethical and other terms and civil society as a “liberal community” of such human actors. It thus postulates and protects personal moral

autonomy and self-determination as well as universalism – both in the sense of liberty in morality “for all” and the liberal-universal rule of ethical action like Kant’s categorical imperative – and pluralism or “relativism” involving a diversity of conceptions of “right” and “wrong”. Hence, moral liberalism is different from and opposed to moralist absolutism claiming a single true conception of “right” and “wrong”, i.e. absolute truth, as typical for conservatism, including medievalist traditionalism or arch-conservatism, fascism, neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. If absolutism, as manifested in the “presumption of holding a ‘monopoly of the truth’ destroys all systems of liberty and is conducive to the revival of tribalism” (Infantino 2003: 133), liberalism is the necessary antidote, specifically a sensible version of sociological “relativism”, dreaded by all absolutist anti-liberals, from medievalists and arch-conservatives to fascists, neo-conservatives and neo-fascists.

In turn, religious liberalism is the doctrine and institutional system of individual liberty or personal agency in the realm of religion, faith or private belief. Far from being anti-religious (“atheist”) and even “secular” in personal, as different from social-political, terms, as imputed by Catholic medievalists, Protestant conservatives and their Islamic counterparts, modern liberalism postulates and promotes individual freedom of religion, faith, belief, or conscience, so religious pluralism. However, in contrast to anti-liberal Catholicism like the Vatican Church, conservative Protestantism such as American evangelicalism and Islamic fundamentalism, modern liberalism incorporates in and considers religious liberty not only, as religious conservatism does, freedom of religion, but also freedom from religion as such, especially its organized coercive form and church organization. This means that, just as moral liberalism does morality and ethical liberties belonging to free civil society, it treats religion as a private realm and its freedom as individual liberty and personal choice, not as a public sphere and the matter of government imposition, part of the state, a key factor in politics become its “servant”, as within conservatism, from European medievalism to US neo-conservatism.

In brief, religious liberalism recognizes, protects and promotes negative and positive religious freedoms alike, consistent with the liberal conception and institutional practice of integral liberty. It thus distinguishes itself from anti-liberalism like conservatism with its typically limited version of “freedom of religion” only; and even this is further delimited on sectarian and ethnic grounds as done by Protestant sectarianism in America, since 17th

century New England Puritanism through 21 century “Bible-Belt” fundamentalism. “Freedom of religion” only especially holds true of American neo-conservatism or libertarianism that is more religious than any other species of contemporary conservatism or libertarian “liberalism”, respectively. This is ironic and even paradoxical or contradictory. For example, US “free-market” neo-conservatives and libertarians emphasize negative economic and political freedoms “from” government or state, yet fail to acknowledge or protect their religious version in the form of freedom “from” religion or church. The flip-side of the paradox is that they de-emphasize positive economic and political freedoms “for” individual and especially collective action, yet stress their religious variant as freedom “of” religion and church organization.

In general, liberalism postulates, enhances and defends the religious liberties of believers and non-believers alike, consistent with its universalism, pluralism, egalitarianism and inclusion in religion, culture and society overall. This is in sharp contrast to anti-liberalism that does so exclusively either for believers, as do conservatism and fascism, or for non-believers, as with communism, thus being particularistic, monistic, anti-egalitarian and exclusionary in its “own” patented realm of religion, in which it, especially arch- and neo-conservatism, is supposed to “feel like fish in the water”.

Consequently, modern liberal societies have as a rule higher degrees of religious liberty “for all”, pluralism and “competition” than their anti-liberal “godly” conservative and fascist adversaries with their exclusive freedom for (certain) believers invidiously distinguished from non-believers subjected to exclusion and discrimination (Edgel et al. 2006) as in American fundamentalism, and even persecution and extermination, as in Anglo-Saxon Puritanism and European fascism. Needless to say, they also have more religious liberty than communism, specifically its Soviet and Chinese, as distinct from European, version, with its freedom solely or largely for non-believers, which repudiates conservative-fascist allegations that liberal societies are atheistic and anti-religious (Deutsch and Soffer 1987; Dunn and Woodard 1996), so like communist ones.

As noted, even the most religiously “illiberal” or “unreasonable” religious conceptions and groups like orthodox Christian and Muslims (Brink 2001), let alone those liberal and reasonable, were and are, contrary to opposite conservative assertions, “freer” and “better-off” within liberal societies such as modern Western Europe than in their own creations and “heavens” in the

past and present, viz. medieval and post-medieval Catholic, Protestant and Islamic theocracies, and the US evangelical “Bible Belt”. For example, this is what sociologists imply by observing that two “most anti-civil libertarian” religious groups in post-war America were and remained since traditional Catholics and “fundamentalist” Protestant sects (Lipset 1955), yet evidently tolerated and permitted to exist and operate within what US conservatives (Deutsch and Soffer 1987) love to condemn as the “moral crisis” of liberal-secular democracy and society, as are their political equivalents or proxies, fascists and neo-fascists.

Alternatively, neither of these two religious extremists would be “freer”, “happier” or “better off” in an anti-liberal political-social framework, such as Catholics within predominant Protestant sectarianism (Lipset 1996), and fundamentalist Protestants in a Catholic dominated society like the Vatican Church State and under the rule of what they abhor as “Papists”. This holds true of their political proxies, fascists and communists: they are “freer” or “better off” in liberal society and modernity that permits or tolerates them than in prohibitive or suppressive anti-liberal settings, viz. fascists under communism, communists under fascism.

And historically and actually, neither of these still (e.g. Northern Ireland) conflicting religious groups within Christianity and Western civilization was and is as a rule freer and better-off in any societal setting and historical period than in liberal society and modernity. Historical confirmations include early Protestants under Catholic late-medieval theocracies and countries (e.g. Huguenots in France), and Catholics under Protestant theocratic rule or dominance, such as Cromwell’s crusade-like persecution of the Irish and other “Papists” (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000), New England’s Puritan theocracy (Munch 2001) and its original and later generalized Protestant anti-Catholic sentiment and practices (Merton 1939) in America during the 19th and 20th centuries. For example, just as official Catholicism persecuted or condemned Protestantism in continental Europe in the wake of the Reformation, in America and elsewhere fundamentalist Protestant sects since New England’s and Cromwell’s Puritan theocracy “played a major role in stimulating religious bigotry” originally and primarily in the form of anti-Catholicism (Lipset 1955: 207) – and continued to do so, especially in the evangelical South, through the 21st century. Thus, somewhat ironically, while the purported sociological and theological heaven (Lemert 1999) or counter-utopia for religious conservatives

is in an anti-liberal societal setting, notably theocracy a la “God’s Kingdom on Earth” and “Bible Commonwealth”, their actual “paradise” on this world turns out to be a liberal pluralist society based on freedom of and from religion for all.

Generally, contemporary liberals remarks that since religious-political liberalism’s “overlapping consensus includes socialists and Aristotelians and Nietzscheans and Lutherans and Buddhists and hedonists it is not bothered by any of these individually, hence its view of the elective self remains intact” (Dombrowski 2001: 11).

Seemingly paradoxically but true, in accordance with its principle of universal individual liberty, self-determination (“elective self”) in religion, like morality, only religious liberalism truly permits and tolerates, though certainly does not generate or endorse, religious extremism or radicalism and its adherents, such as orthodox Catholics in Europe, fundamentalist Protestants in America, radical “jihadic” Muslims in both societies (Brink 2001; Habermas 2001; Turner 2002). By stark contrast, religious anti-liberalism creates, retains and imposes on society its own brand of extremism, while vanquishing or persecuting others and any competing religion like orthodox and other Catholicism under Protestant rule, notably Puritan theocracy in old and New England, sectarian and all Protestantism in Catholic medieval theocracy, and radical and moderate Islam under both, itself, as Weber notes, exterminating or subjugating them and Christianity overall.

In turn, while each of these special cases of religious extremism may prove, as often has proven, to be its own undoing or self-destruction, it is modern liberal society or cultural-political liberalism that solely permits and “guarantees” the co-existence and even survival of orthodox Catholicism, fundamentalist Protestantism, radical Islam and other “unreasonable” worldviews and groups, as witnessed in contemporary Western Europe and America, minus the “Bible Belt”. Moreover, in some contemporary formulations, liberalism “encourages one to see familiar comprehensive religious (or philosophical) doctrines as reasonable even if one would never seriously entertain the possibility of converting to them” (Dombrowski 2001: 10). In a similar view, liberal society and modernity promoting tolerance and diversity “made it possible for people with different philosophical and religious world-views to live together [based on] the egalitarian theory of reason and juridical-formal equality” (Infantino 2003: 148).

On this account, it is inaccurate and unfair to accuse, as do US and other conservatives, modern Western liberal society or religious liberalism for being “anti-religious”, “atheistic”, “too secular”, or “biased” against religion, faith or belief, including “anti-Christian” and “anti-Islamic”. Instead, seemingly contradictory but logically or empirically valid, religion as a whole, including religious extremism in its various (Christian, Islamic, Hindu and other) forms, historically did and actually does or can exist, survive and prosper in the long run only in modern liberal-secular and pluralist society primarily thanks to cultural-political liberalism and its principle of integral universal liberty. Alternatively, it did and can not in anti-liberalism, including conservatism that just substitutes one dominant religion or extremism for another – Christian for “pagan”, Catholic for Orthodox, Islamic for Christian, Protestant for Catholic, and vice versa – as well as fascism, in particular Nazism, and communism replacing sacred by secular radicalism like racism and atheism, respectively. In sum, religious liberalism is neither atheism, as religious conservatives have accused ever since the “Dark Middle Ages”, nor the rationalization of religion, as Marxists and communists impute, but a logical and consistent variation and application of “liberalism”, notably the Enlightenment, in the realm of “sacred” faith and private beliefs.

By analogy, educational, artistic, scientific and other cultural liberalism constitutes a conception and institutional system of liberty in education, art, science, philosophy and related segments of culture, respectively. What is described as liberal education, art, science, philosophy and culture overall is defined by educational, artistic, scientific, philosophical and other cultural liberty, of which academic freedom is an integral and institutionalized element with the rise of modern Western universities. As sociologists observe, a “modern university has its common basis in the liberal idea of independent inquiry, free discussion, and academic self-government” (Bendix 1970: 95). Predictably, “like other tenets of liberalism, this idea is subject to attack [notably] outside attacks of religious and political fundamentalists upon the inherent radicalism of free inquiry”²⁶ (Bendix 1970: 95).

²⁶ Bendix (1970: 95) suggests that the “liberal principle of academic freedom is a vantage point of [social science], however precarious it may be politically, [so] scholarly responsibilities are consonant with a liberal position”.

In this respect, liberalism is by assumption liberty, so libertarian, in the area of education, art, science, philosophy and other culture, just as in economy and polity. Thus, when classical liberals, including economists like Smith, Mill and Marshall, employ the term “liberal education” and culture they signify an educational and cultural system precisely premised on liberty, notably what Durkheim calls “freedom and independence of thought”, a use maintained in contemporary liberalism and society, including even America under neo-conservatism during the 1980–2000s. They simply suggest that education is in itself liberal/free, alternatively that illiberal, including conservative, “education” either does not make sense or is an aberration in this respect, as shown by religious and home anti-secular schooling (Darnell and Sherkat 1997) in America, especially the “Bible Belt”, under anti-liberalism. For classical and contemporary liberals, this holds true of science, including economics and sociology, just as art, philosophy and all culture, in contrast to their anti-liberal antagonists trying to create their own illiberal versions, from Catholic medieval geocentric theory to Protestant creationism and “intelligent design” and other “Christian science”, including self-styled “Christian Economists” (Iannaccone 1998), based on what Pareto points out as the “scientific errors of the Bible”, to fascist and communist “new” sciences and scientists.

Hence, liberalism acknowledges and protects education, science, philosophy, art and all secular culture as “born free” and its own “master” rather than in “servitude” and the “servant” of hostile forces like religion and politics, as under anti-liberalism, including the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages” (theology, theocracy), conservative Protestantism (“Christian science” a la creationism) fascism (“Arian scientists”), communism (Marxism), and US conservatism (Americanism). In Durkheim’s words, liberal education, science and all culture is the realm of human “freedom and independence of thought”, in spite or rather because of anti-liberal, notably conservative, attacks on and destruction of this liberty from, as he notes, the Holy Inquisition’s burning of the heretics for their libertarian “crimes” in medieval Europe to later and modern times, including Puritan “Salem with witches” (Putnam 2000) and similar irrational practices in America.

Durkheim’s statement is not only a diagnostic but also prophetic in light of continuing subsequent anti-liberal condemnations and destructions of intellectual liberty. These include the admittedly embarrassing fundamentalist “Monkey Trial” (Boles 1999) against evolution theory in the “Bible Belt”

(Tennessee in 1925), the fascist and communist harsh punishment of political dissent in interwar Europe, McCarthyism and its Puritan-like “witch-hunts in post-war America (prefigured by the conservative “red scare” of the 1920s), its sequel in US neo-conservatism’s renewed assaults on academic and other freedom, including biological evolutionism in a déjà vu replica and continuation of such trials, during the 1980s–2000s, and so on. For instance, analysts observe that “in America genuine academic freedom has never been the rule, and [scientists] were the principal victims of attacks” (Coats 1967: 724) invariably by anti-liberal, especially conservative-religious, forces. The immensely rich repertoire of such anti-liberal attacks evinces a remarkable historical continuity and consistency – a sort of “method in the madness” (Smith 2000) à la Weber’s methodical sanctification in Puritanism – spanning from New England’s Puritan witch-trials in the 17th century and the 1790s Sedition Laws to the 1925 “Monkey Trial” to the “red scare” and McCarthyism and “Americanism” to conservative crusade-style culture wars (Lipset 1996), and finally “homeland security”, and the “war on terror” and the “evil” world.

Alternatively, cultural-political liberalism acts as a countervailing force to such attacks, so in the absence of such liberal, “un-American” activities and persons, academic and other cultural freedom probably would have been or will be eliminated or perverted by anti-liberalism in the form of “Christian science” perpetuating Pareto’s “scientific errors of the Bible” in America and, via a conservative global war on “evil” or “empire of liberty”, the world. If there has been and exists at least some degree or modicum of academic and other freedom in America, despite these perennial and continuing anti-liberal attacks, it is precisely in virtue of educational and scientific liberalism, so not because, as often supposed, but in spite of religious and political conservatism, including Puritanism and Protestantism overall. For example, it was scientific liberalism that replaced and discredited the theological dogma of creationism, including its intelligent design²⁷ versions, in favor of evolutionism in biology

²⁷ Even a semi-official Vatican journal complained in the 2000s that US evangelical “creationists” through their “intelligent design” doctrine, cum camouflaged creationism rather than science, regressed the debate, “polluted by political positions”, on evolution theory to the “dogmatic” 1800s, which confirms the regressive or reactionary character of American religious conservatism. One can predict that if US religious conservatives prevail in these on-going culture wars over liberal countervailing forces, they will also regress Americans into the 19th century and the dogma of creationism versus evolutionism.

and America's educational system (Martin 2002), just as substituted, via the Enlightenment, or doubted, as by the heretics, the "geocentric theory" and other "Christian science" of the "Dark Middle Ages", as well as exposed as anti-scientific fascist and communist "new" sciences and scientists. To that extent, liberalism has promoted or defended academic freedom or "independence of thought" and other liberty in Western society and beyond, thus neutralizing and tempering anti-liberal attacks. This holds true of both classical and contemporary cultural-political liberalism, which indicates an essential continuity in this, just as other respects, as discussed next.

Classical and Contemporary Social Liberalism

As indicated, the continuity or what Parsons may call convergence of classical and contemporary social liberalism on a theory and institutional system of liberty, as well as equality and justice, in society is almost unbroken or complete, in any case more manifest or intense than that between their economic variants, at least in conventional wisdom. Contemporary liberalism remains true "liberalism" at least in respect of political freedoms and liberal democracy, social liberties and a free civil society, if not, as "libertarians" accuse, in terms of Smith's "simple system of natural [economic] liberty, "unfettered capitalism", "unregulated free markets", or simply laissez-faire, if ever advocated or existed in its classical version. Recall some US "libertarian" economists admit such remarkable continuities between classical and modern political-cultural liberalism in noting that, by contrast to their economic counterparts, the "20th century liberal, like the 19th century liberal, favors parliamentary institutions, representative government, civil rights" (Friedman and Friedman 1982: 4). Also, sociologists find that in post-war America, like its classical predecessor, modern non-economic liberalism promoted and endorsed political and civil liberties, as well as internationalism, just as its economic version supported labor movement or trade unions (Lipset 1955: 206).

In turn, "libertarian" and most other economists reveal a "natural" and consistent rational preference for economic over political and other social liberalism by treating liberty in economy, notably market freedom grounded in private property, as foundational, primary or determinative in relation to democracy and civil liberties seen as secondary and often reduced, subordinated or sacrificed to "free" enterprise and markets. Yes, as some dissenting

economists object, since its origin in Antiquity the idea or reality of liberty “was not always tied in with private property and markets” (Hodgson 1999: 62). This implies, that just as human freedom is not only or simply “free” market enterprise, social liberalism is not reducible or even necessarily coupled to its economic version. From the stance of social liberalism the “market freedom and private property is all you need” stated or implied premise (the “Singapore syndrome”) of economic “libertarianism” and neo-conservatism is not sufficient (as witnessed in the very case of Singapore celebrated by US “libertarians” as one of the world’s “freest” economies), though, as they and other economists stress, indispensable, to political-cultural liberties, i.e. liberal democracy and free civil society. For example, some economists (Fischer, Sahay and Vegh 1996) remark, citing Eastern Europe’s transitional economies, that “economic and political liberalization are positively correlated”, though, like most economists, view the first, i.e. free markets, as primary, determinative or conditioning, and the second or liberal democracy as secondary, determined or conditional.²⁸

Moreover, in many respects contemporary social liberalism has elaborated, extended and reinforced the classical liberal theory and institutional system of liberty, equality and justice in society, both political democracy and free civil society. It may have relinquished or mitigated via government sensible activism in economy the supposed market-economic *laissez-faire* of its classical predecessor, but has, as Popper (1966) suggests, retained and further developed its non-economic, notably moral-civic, *laissez-faire* through government non-activism and legal-penal minimalism in personal morality and privacy, so civil society.

In this sense, contemporary social liberalism is substantially distinct from “libertarianism” or neo-conservatism a la Thatcherism and Reaganomics with its consistently revealed preferences for a sort of *laissez-faire* in economy by “an unrestricted market and a negative state” and markets to non-market liberties and activist, “positive” government, as well as from traditional

²⁸ However, economist Chow (1997) questions the conventional economic free-markets-to-democracy connection by observing that “market economies have functioned with a limited amount of political freedom in China, Taiwan, Singapore, and Korea.” Specifically, Chow (1997) contends that “a one-party political system is consistent with a market economy, as evident from China, until recently Taiwan and Korea, and persistently Singapore, all of which practice a one-party system.”

conservatism which reveals a distaste and “trained incapacity” for both economic and non-economic freedoms. In particular, it is complete and genuine libertarianism in social, especially political-cultural – even, with these qualifications, economic – terms, while “libertarianism” is partial and spurious “liberalism” mostly, though not solely, in the market, distinguished from the non-market, sense. Curiously, neo-conservatism is also self-defined, considered or described as market-economic “liberalism” in the classical sense. This indicates a peculiar evolutionary formula: anti-market medieval traditionalism and proto-conservatism plus embraced, exaggerated or imitated liberal economic laissez-faire equals pro-market neo-conservatism a la Thatcherism and Reaganism.²⁹ Yet, unlike in part “libertarianism” as criticized by US religious conservatives (Dunn and Woodard 1996; Heineman 1998), neo-conservative Reaganism and Thatcherism (Giddens 2000; Hodgson 1999) has never completely and wholeheartedly embraced and emulated, or even simulated through its typical Puritan-style “vigorous hypocrisy” (Bremer 1995), the social, notably Popper’s moral, laissez-faire of classical liberalism. It instead adopted, continued and expanded the political and cultural anti-liberalism, including theocratic repression, of medieval traditionalism turned into proto-conservatism. Since most of the remainder of this book is devoted to social liberalism, the above section serves as a prelude in this respect.

Neo-Liberalism: “New” Liberalism or Neo-Conservatism?

The term “neo-liberalism” has been coined and increasingly used, especially in Europe and the rest of the world, except for or less in America, since the 1980s. At first glance, it would mean what Hobbhouse called about a century ago “new liberalism” or still another renewal of classical liberal theory and policy. However, given the different and even opposing, notably liberal versus conservative, connotations of “neo-liberalism”, often one wonders whether this is really a “new” liberalism or instead a “new” conservatism. In a sense, “neo-liberalism” is a sort of “liberal name” or rather misnomer for neo-conservatism, especially neo-conservative “free-market” ideas and eco-

²⁹ Van Dyke (1995: 4) comments that “a person who is [economic] *liberal* in the classical sense has more in common with the economic conservatives [like Reagan] than with progressive liberals.”

conomic policies, in America and Great Britain, as epitomized by Reaganism and Thatcherism. Geographically, what is in continental Europe and the rest of the world considered and described as “neo-liberalism” (Bockman and Eyal 2002; Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002) is deemed and denoted as “neo-conservatism” in America and Great Britain, and to that extent represents conservatism with a novel, yet paradoxical and contradictory, designation.

This is what some European sociologists suggest by identifying the “old conservatism” as the extant “neo-liberal” source in that neo-liberalism “dresses up the most classic presuppositions of conservative thought in economic rationalizations”, in particular through “a very smart and very modern repackaging of the oldest ideas of the oldest capitalists” (Bourdieu 1998: 30–4). In this view, neo-liberalism is actually ultra-conservatism, as the “conservative revolution calls itself neo-liberal thereby giving itself a scientific air and the capacity to act as a theory” and these neo-conservatives prefer laissez-faire to government activism “because in general these tendencies conserve, and they need laissez-faire in order to conserve” (Bourdieu 1998: 50–55). Hence, what is described as the neo-liberal utopia of a “pure, perfect market becoming a reality of unlimited exploitation” after the image of an “infernal machine” is regarded as (realizing) the “ultra-conservative utopia” as a sort of “lunacy [sic!]” (Bourdieu 1998: 94–101).

Moreover, the above argument considers neo-liberalism to be “a fatalistic discourse” seeking to transform “economic tendencies into destiny” or a worldview engendering or perpetuating “fatalism and submission”. It specifically involves or reproduces “work-market fatalism” (Beck (2000: 44) and submission, reflecting “democratic illiteracy”, and is to that extent anti-liberalism or the doctrine and policy of un-freedom, inequality and injustice in economy and society. Consequently, neo-liberalism is described as the “supreme form of sociodicy” or market-based dogmatic defense and justification of economic and social exploitation, submission and inequality. This is epitomized in social neo-Darwinism, as typical of American neo-conservatism and economic “libertarianism”, extolling competence as the rationalization of “winners and losers”, as well as the triumphant thesis of the end of ideology and history following the collapse of communism (Bourdieu 1998: 35).

Hence, when European sociologists refer to the “neo-liberal politics of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations” (King 1999: 302), they just use a different “liberal” designation for what is typically, both by these administrations

and their critics, considered and designated as “neo-conservative” economic and social, if any (Amenta et al. 2001), policies extolling “free markets”. Also, when observed that the “neoliberal revolution undermines its own foundations” and that in Great Britain and America “evidently neoliberals have not yet realized that the world has become democratic” (Beck (2000: 119), reference is made to neo-conservatism, Reaganism and Thatcherism respectively. According to these observations, neo-liberalism *cum* neo-conservatism “wherever it has been “successful” [the UK, the US] its effects have caused the political coalitions at its head to break apart and hand over power to the opposition” (Beck 2000: 119). For example, it is observed that the “reduction of unemployment with the help of radical neoliberal medicine generates new and sharper problems”, especially in the US during the 1980–2000s (Beck 2000: 44). On this account, Thatcherism and Reaganism in particular, “free market” and revived laissez-faire ideologies and policies overall, are “more generically” (Giddens 2000: 5) considered or designated as “neo-liberalism” in Europe, “neo-conservatism” in America and to a lesser extent Great Britain, yielding two different, liberal-conservative, terms for the same concept. Generally, the rise of “neo-liberal” ideology and policy that happened during the late 1970s and early 1980s (Guillen 2001: 237) was the growth of neo-conservative ideas and policies under new names and clothes, and “neoliberal revolutionaries” (Slater and Tonkiss 2001: 201) were actually neo-conservative counter-revolutionaries (Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998).

From the prism of contemporary economic liberalism as the theory and institutional system of liberty, in combination and synergy with justice and equality, promoted and protected through sensible or rational government activism, in economy, “neo-liberalism” as an attempted renewal of the mythical “golden” laissez-faire past that has never perhaps existed even in Smith’s times and writings, is a misnomer, so anti-liberal. Thus, contemporary sociologists remark that the laissez-faire notion of totally free, liberalizing” markets “seemed to belong to the past, to an era that had been superseded”, and yet from being widely regarded as “eccentric”, for example Hayek’s and other “neo-liberal” or “libertarian” ideas “suddenly became a force to be reckoned with” (Giddens 2000: 5) in the form of Thatcherism, Reaganism and neo-conservatism overall.

In this respect, “neo-liberalism” *cum* neo-conservatism is anachronistic or archaic (Beck 2000), still another, “new” conservative attempt to restore or

resurrect the “dead hand of the past” (Harrod 1956), specifically to reverse Keynes’ and other diagnoses (Popper 1966) of the “end of laissez-faire” as an ideology and policy long ago, as in the 1930s, if not before. In short, as economists point out, “neo-liberalism” thus understood is false name because it is “neither new nor liberal” (Elsner 2000: 412) in both contemporary and classical terms. In this view, it is not liberal even in the classical sense in that the “dark side of “neo-liberal” market theology [is] uncontrolled proliferating dirigisme, since “neo-liberalism” stands brightly in the ideological sphere but is not fit for a complex reality” (Elsner 2000: 420). If so, then “neo-liberalism” manifests itself as a sort of non-sequitur within the framework of both classical and contemporary economic liberalism.

At most, free-market “neo-liberalism”, as indicated in reference to “libertarianism”, is only economic liberalism “arrested”, “retarded” or “degenerated” in evolutionary development beyond the initial and mythical point of laissez-faire or Hobbesian anarchy in economy, while being a purported antidote to its contemporary evolved, embedded and adapted version such as welfare, Keynesian, New Deal liberalisms or capitalisms. Thus analysts suggest that neo-liberalism is just a myth or utopia of free markets by observing that the power of social myths in modern Western societies “has been especially evident in the neoliberal restructuring of advanced capitalist and transitional economies since the 1980s” (Slater and Tonkiss 2001: 9). In this view, the concept of market society conceiving the total social system as the marketplace of “free enterprise”, “is not a cogent characterization of any social order but the Jerusalem to be constructed by neoliberal revolutionaries” (Slater and Tonkiss 2001: 201). This implies that “neo-liberalism” does not really represent “liberalism” in the meaning of what Durkheim, Pareto and Parsons call a total social fact or complex “sociological system” encompassing liberty as well as justice and equality in economy, polity and culture alike, but only in a narrow, reductive or fragmented economic “free-market” form and sense reducing the liberal composite into one of its elements.

In sum, “neo-liberalism” is archaic “neo-conservatism” by restoring and conserving the “dead past” or myth of laissez-faire, and “libertarianism” or true “liberalism” only or mostly in the limited economic sense of market freedom extolled as primary and foundational to political and cultural freedoms as supposedly secondary or derived. Some contemporary economists suggest that neo-liberalism be understood in the meaning of “laissez-faire

conservatism or economic libertarianism" (Cohen 2003: 114), simply neo-conservatism, so different from and even opposite to modern liberalism in economy and society. In this view, it is to be understood particularly in virtue of generating or supporting the deregulation and diminution of labor unions as well as the increased "role of financial markets in the organization of production" (Cohen 2003: 51). Alternatively, the "new", contemporary economic and other liberalism, from Hobbhouse to Keynes in Great Britain to social democracies and welfare states in Western Europe, especially Scandinavia, and to the "New Deal" to the "Great Society" in America, is not "neo-liberalism" and its representatives are not "neo-liberals" in this respect.

Hence, "neo-liberalism" thus understood harbors and shares the "virtues and vices" of *laissez-faire* neo-conservatism or "free-markets" libertarianism rather than of contemporary and even classical, non-anarchic economic liberalism. Thus, contemporary sociologists comment that "neo-liberal" economic theory *à la* Friedman or Hayek "is positively idyllic" in overlooking that the "reality of modern economies is a system of mixed private-public property and oligocentric structures of decision", rather than purely private ownership and "perfect" market competition, particularly that the "corrupt government of public monopolies and cartels is as unsatisfactory as the secret government of those in the private sector" (Dahrendorf 1979: 99).

Other sociologists observe that the end of the 20th century in Europe and especially America was "marked by the revival of a socially reckless form of neoliberalism" (Habermas: 2001: 48) in the apparent form or sense of *laissez-faire* neo-conservatism or "free-markets" libertarianism rather than some "new" liberalism. In this view, "neo-liberalism" thus understood "touches on the old controversy over the relation between social justice and market efficiency", particularly, assuming the "burden of proof for the strong view that efficient markets will guarantee a just distribution of social goods"³⁰ (Habermas 2001: 92–3) almost *à la laissez-faire*.

³⁰ Habermas (2001: 92–3) adds that this "strong" neo-liberal economic argument, i.e. "efficient markets will guarantee a just distribution of social goods", is predicated on a "conception of just exchange borrowed from the procedural model of contract law". If so, one can comment "so much for the originality" of "neo-liberalism" cum economic libertarianism as well by implication of orthodox economics also based on this conception. In general, Carruthers and Babb (2000: 164) remark that neo-liberalism "assumes that markets function by themselves under political, cultural and social preconditions."

Notably, the “neo-liberal” reductive conception of human freedom *cum* “free markets” implies or relates to what is described as a “normatively diminished conception” of the actor as a “rational chooser” in market-economic terms, independent of the “moral person and the concept of citizen of a republic”, for the “legally requisite respect for private liberties that all competitors are equally entitled to is something very different from the equal respect for the human worth of each individual” (Habermas 2001: 94). This simply means that “neo-liberalism” emphasizes freedom in economy, but not or secondarily in polity and civil society, thus “diminishing” complex human actors to simple market agents and reducing their multiple and various liberties to single and homogenous “free enterprise”. To that extent, it is “libertarian” solely or primarily in narrow economic, not comprehensive sociological, terms. In particular, “neo-liberalism” reportedly conceives political democracy as only protecting private economic, and secondarily non-economic, liberties and rights like property and “free enterprise”, but not as promoting “political autonomy as a further dimension of freedom”, which explains the neo-liberal “particular lack of concern with questions of social justice” (Habermas 2001: 94).

The above confirms that “neo-liberalism” is, first, anachronistic seeking to revert modern democratic government into the old and mythical “night-watchman” expanded in a policing state (Bourdieu 1998) American-conservative “Bible-Belt” or vice-police style primarily protecting the private property, privilege and power of the ruling class *cum* plutocratic oligarchy (Pryor 2002) embodied and symbolized by “good old boys”, while repressing, imprisoning and executing the rest of the population. It is, second, non- or pseudo-democratic by denying and neglecting some forms of political freedom and rights, like the right of vote in the perennially under-democratized US South (Amenta et al. 2001), as well as justice and equality, and to that extent “anti-liberal” or “neo-conservative” both in economic and sociological terms.

For example, sociologists describe the US “neo-liberal” *cum* illiberal neo-conservative government as a “hyperactive police and penal state”, specifically a “carceral-assistential complex for the punitive management of the poor” (Wacquant 2002: 1471). In this view, what is called ambient neo-liberalism, especially in America, involves the “presumption of individual responsibility, the centrality of ‘values,’ and the sacralization of work” which legitimates the “*new division of labor of domestication of the poor*, distributed among a dictatorial business class, a disciplining welfare-workfare state,

and a hyperactive police and penal state [plus] a cosmetic philanthropic and private-foundation" (Wacquant 2002: 1521). *Prima facie*, "ambient neo-liberalism" as described is just another name for omnipresent, intrusive and repressive neo-conservatism, and its "tough-on-crime", Draconian criminal justice system and policy, or simply Reaganism and its variations in America during the 1980s–2000s.

Moreover, some observers describe neo-liberalism with its utopia of unfettered markets or capitalism as a "kind of democratic illiteracy [for] to gamble everything on the free market is to destroy, along with democracy, that whole economic mode" (Beck 2000: 4). This yields the inference that the "only powerful opponent of capitalism is profit-only capitalism" (Beck 2000: 4). To that extent, this indicates that neo-liberalism in the form of "profit-only capitalism" is not only economically utopian or unrealistic within the evolved post-laissez-faire framework of modern liberal societies but also politically un-democratic and ultimately self-defeating or failing on its own terms of free markets, efficiency and profits.

In comparative terms, this argument suggests that neo-liberalism tends unwittingly to transform or reshape contemporary Western liberal societies in the image of developing countries in the sense that the "unintended consequence of the neoliberal free market utopia is a Brazilianization of the West" (Beck 2000: 1) in economic as well as social-political terms. To that extent, neo-liberalism is retrogressive by "regressing" these societies to a prior point in time, the "presumed dead" or mythical past of economic anarchy, insecurity, exploitation and coercion mixed with repressive government and un-free civil society. The result of neo-liberalism is simply the involution rather than evolution of the West, particularly America, and the world as a whole – Anarchy in economy and Leviathan-like repression in society (Buchanan 1991).

In retrospect, this is a supreme irony because classical economic and sociological liberals since Smith as well as their critics like Marx expected that Western societies would show the "face" of the future (Lipset and Marks 2000) to their non-Western counterparts in the sense of both liberal capitalism and democracy and free civil society, as exemplified by Weber's theory and prediction of rationalization radiating from the West to the rest of the world. So, by doing or contributing precisely to the opposite "neo-liberalism" acts and appears as anti-liberalism even in respect to its classical and economic version from Smith onwards. Hence, it tends to be actually destructive to the

West and the entire world in sociological terms and ultimately self-defeating, for by assumption in a society under sociological “Brazilianization” as an anti-liberal process liberalism evaporates or vegetates. In short, neo-liberal free-market “utopianism is a kind of Marxism without Marx [as] it seeks to realize Marx’s prognosis of the division and destruction of society but without any hope of emancipation through socialism”³¹ (Beck 2000: 119).

Other contemporary sociologists (Giddens 2000) identify “two strands” in so-called neo-liberalism: the “main” conservative strand epitomized by the new right and the secondary “libertarian” in regard with primarily economic and secondarily moral issues. Predictably, the main, in both ideological and political terms, strand is championed by Reaganism, Thatcherism and neo-conservatism overall, and the secondary by economic “libertarianism” represented by Mises, Hayek and other economists.³² Notably, “neo-liberals” such as Thatcherite and Reaganite neo-conservatives are observed to “link unfettered market forces”, coupled with “antagonism to the welfare state”, with the defense of “traditional institutions”, including family, nation, state and church (Giddens 2000: 12–3). The first makes “neo-liberals” appear contemporary economic anti-liberals, or classical market “liberals” whose ideological and policy evolution has been suddenly “arrested”, “retarded” or “frozen” beyond the “kindergarten” stage or myth of laissez-faire anarchy in economy, and the second renders them political-cultural anti-liberals, authoritarians in polity and culture. Further, in this critique, “neo-liberalism” as in essence non-liberalism in the modern sense “is in trouble [and] the chief reason is that its two halves – market fundamentalism and conservatism – are in tension” (Giddens 2000: 15). The above yields the conclusion that neo-liberalism is a “deeply flawed” ideology and politics.³³

³¹ Beck (2000: 44) adds that neo-liberalism “is culturally blind, both in its view of its own historical origins and in its naïve belief in the universal validity of its ‘laws’.” In particular, Beck (2000: 174) warns that the neo-liberal “revolt aims to cut the state back to a minimum [yet] this can easily turn around into a militarization of conflicts between and within individual states”. Also, O’Riain (2000: 188) comments that neo-liberal economic policies “are not just neutral, technical responses to a given type of crisis; rather, they reflect a process of socialization and cognitive development”.

³² For example, Giddens (2000: 6) observes that “unlike Thatcherite [and Reaganite] conservatives, libertarians favour sexual freedom or the decriminalizing of drugs.”

³³ Giddens (2000: 32–42) suggests that neo-liberalism is a “deeply flawed approach to politics because it supposes no responsibility need to be taken for the social consequences of market-based decisions” and is usually “associated with the parties of

To summarize, what is really “new” in “neo-liberalism” in relation to modern economic liberalism since Keynesianism, European social democracies, and the American New Deal is its attempt to restore the supposedly original and historically mythical phase of a *laissez-faire* economy against government activism, especially the welfare state. Notably, its “newness” consists in that it seeks to resurrect from the “dead past”, or rather recreate *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) a sort of non-entity, something that has perhaps never actually existed, i.e. what even neo-classical economist Walras called the “hypothetical regime of absolutely free” markets and competition. Hence, this market absolutism makes “neo-liberalism”, just as economic “libertarianism”, hypothetical, “positively idyllic” (Dahrendorf 1979) and even, as critical economists object, utopian (Hodgson 1999), thus pseudo-liberalism at most.

In turn, “neo-liberalism” is remarkably “new” and “original” in relation to classical social liberalism, notably the Enlightenment and its secularism, in its “novel” efforts to return to traditionalism and proto-conservatism in political and cultural terms, essentially medieval despotism, inequality and theocracy (Beck 2000). For these reasons, in this work “neo-liberalism” as understood especially in Europe and outside of America is avoided as a non-sequitur – a false concept, misnomer, and liberal name and mask for anti-liberal neo-conservatism and pseudo-liberal “libertarianism” – or whenever used in the proper sense of evolved modernized liberalism, exemplified by Hobhouse’s new, Keynesian, welfare-state and New-Deal liberalisms.

Liberalism and Libertarianism

Like in the case of “neo-liberalism”, the preceding opens the question whether and to what extent “libertarianism” is liberalism or not. At first glance, “libertarianism” looks not only as liberalism but even as a sort of “super-liberalism” as suggested by the very term extolling liberty. Thus, the seemingly trivial terminological change from “liberal” into “libertarian” is suggestive, ambitious and pretentious in this respect, at least for “libertarians”, indicating, as if the idea of liberty were not manifest, evident and accentuated enough in “liber-

the right”. He cites the “social ratification of greed was fostered by the ideological climate of neoliberalism in the 1980s” (Giddens 2000: 119), referring to Thatcherite and Reaganite neo-conservatism.

alism", it needed "libertarianism" to do so. Both by its "new" name and its contentions and pretensions, "libertarianism" claims to pure, true, and even the only "liberalism" in the sense of what Hayek (1992) and other libertarians call the "ideal of liberty", notably the sole contemporary heir and custodian of classical liberal ideas and institutions, especially orthodox economic theory and policy. Simply, libertarians' claim to be the purists or "puritans" (Bird 1999: 182) of classical liberalism, especially of liberal economic individualism.

However, the preceding indicates that, though somewhat more liberal than "neo-liberalism" *cum* neo-conservatism, "libertarianism" is far from being true and sole "liberalism". At best, it is only partial and extreme market-economic liberalism in the classical meaning, while economic and social non- or pseudo-liberalism in a modern sense. This is what some analysts (Cohen 2003: 50) imply by remarking that the "new world of production is taken as a synonym for neo-liberalism, and cyber-world pioneers are frequently denounced for their collusion with it. The ideology of [Thatcher and Reagan] is put in the same sack as the libertarian utopia of information-age pioneers, the sources of which are at once anterior and quite distinct ideologically". Specifically, this implies that the sources of "libertarianism" are more "liberal" from the angle of classical liberalism than those of "neo-liberalism" *cum* neo-conservatism in the form of Thatcherism and Reaganism.

Partial and Extreme Economic "Liberalism"

First and foremost, libertarianism is partial and extreme, anarchic market-economic "liberalism" in the classical sense seeking to reestablish and reaffirm archaic or rather recreate ex nihilo (out of a myth) nebulous laissez-faire, Hobbesian-like anarchy in economy. In particular, like "neo-liberalism", it attempts to restore or rather recreate Walras' "hypothetical regime of absolutely free" markets, thus what has been a historical *déjà vu* or more likely, as "hypothetical" indicates, a non entity.

Hence, this restoration of market absolutism makes "libertarianism" archaic (Beck 2000), and the creation out of nothing (hypothesis) exposes it as metaphysical, hypothetical and even utopian (Hodgson 1999). "Libertarianism" not only overlooks or denies that laissez-faire is what Keynes and other economists diagnose as the "dead hand of the past" and even its friend Popper (1973: 140–1) recognizes, with no tears shed, as disappeared "from the face

of the earth". It also fails to realize or simply see that Walras' "hypothetical regime of absolutely free" markets is exactly what it signifies, hypothetical, so an empirical non-sequitur, thus failing to distinguish between hypothesis or utopia and reality, apparently blinded (Terchek 1997) by market absolutism. Simply, economic "libertarians" are unable or unwilling to realize or see that market absolutism, just as moral, religious and political absolutisms typical of anti-liberalism like conservatism and fascism, is both empirically unfounded or non-scientific and ultimately even non-libertarian.

At this juncture, to paraphrase Acton's link of absolute power and corruption, market absolutism has "corrupted" absolutely "libertarianism" into an archaic, utopian ("blind") brand of economic theory and policy a la Hayek and a near-anarchic and perverted-liberal political ideology, just as moral-religious and political absolutisms so corrupt anti-liberal conservatism and fascism. For example, contemporary economists comment that Hayek's "libertarian" doctrine that in "the long run the Great Depression would turn out to have been good medicine for the economy and that proponents of stimulative fiscal and monetary policies were shortsighted enemies of the public welfare" amounted to what "some cries of dissent" like Keynes et al. called the "equivalent of 'crying, Fire, Fire! In Noah's flood'" (De Long 1996: 48). Counterfactually, if Hayek et al.'s "libertarian" rather than Keynes' liberal-interventionist economic theory prevailed during the Great Depression and its solutions, notably the American "New Deal", then probably not much would have remained from the very capitalist economy and "spontaneous" market order that "libertarianism" posits and extols, even in America and England, as precisely happened in much of Europe, notably Germany, during the crisis in the early 1930s. If these "libertarian" do-nothing ideas and policies extolling a lethal economic crisis as the "good medicine" for economy and all society prevailed, then England's and America's free-markets capitalism and liberal democracy would have probably experienced the fascist destiny, notably what Weber would call the adverse fate of Germany's Weimar Republic (to whose constitution he contributed) liquidated by Nazism (Blinkhorn 2003) on the (putative) grounds of its failure to end the Great Depression.

The above indicates that "libertarianism" by conflating Walras' "hypothetical regime" and the real system of free markets tends to be not only empirically false or "blind" of political and other social reality (Terchek 1997). It also tends to be self-destructive in economic-political terms, eventually destroy-

ing both its own “libertarian” capitalism and liberal democracy (Beck 2000), which is yet a predictable outcome of its market absolutism and near-anarchism. This tendency to self-destructiveness implies that “libertarian” economists à la Hayek et al. overlook or deny what their liberal contemporaries, including their “shortsighted enemies” Keynes et al., realize and emphasize, i.e. any, including market, absolutism and anarchism are ultimately destructive to human liberty and life, so anti-libertarian and anti-human.

In this respect, libertarianism is classical economic liberalism, yet “arrested”, “fixed” or “retarded” in development, failing or refusing to move beyond the putative *laissez-faire* liberal genesis and early evolution during the late 18th and the early 19th century. Alternatively and perhaps more accurately in historical terms, it is classical economic liberalism, yet metaphysical, idyllic and utopian in theoretical evolution in that it fails or refuses to acknowledge and even see that Walras’ “regime of absolutely free” markets and hence *laissez-faire* as its defining element is simply “hypothetical”, and not real, thus to distinguish between nirvana-like hypothesis and fact. Only or primarily in the sense of economic *laissez-faire* and “absolutely free” markets, as some contemporary liberals remark, does “libertarianism” stem from classical liberalism, for example Spencer,³⁴ although Smith has been probably an earlier and more prominent source (Van Dyke 1995: 104). As dissenting contemporary economists suggest, “libertarianism” draws its primary “inspiration from the *laissez-faire* economic theories of the 18th century” (Frank 1999: 267).

On the other hand, libertarianism does not stem and is not inspired – or only secondarily so – from classical liberalism in the general or non-economic and original sense and form of the Enlightenment. Moreover, “libertarian” economists like Hayek (1955) vehemently reject the European Enlightenment, especially its French variant, epitomized or ramified in Comte’s positivism, on the account of its supposed “constructivist rationalism” or “abuse of reason” supposedly paving the path to socialism and so the “road to serfdom”, and to that extent what Mannheim (1986) calls rationalistic classical liberalism. Hayek-style “libertarianism” rejects Enlightenment-based rationalism

³⁴ Kumar (2001: 45) comments that Spencer, “despite his heroic efforts to construct a theory of the social system, notoriously ended up privileging the individual over society: a case perhaps of his liberal politics overwhelming his intellectual system, as was to happen with Hobhouse and other English Hegelians”.

and claims that instead the opposite, by emphasizing and even celebrating human ignorance and fallibility, “leads to an open society” (Infantino 2003: 8). On this account, Hayek’s version of “libertarianism”, though not Mises’ as more appreciative of the Enlightenment, objectively joins the medieval-conservative movement and theme of counter-Enlightenment and anti-liberalism overall (Habermas 1989; Nisbet 1966). In particular, it joins and shares the latter’s anti-rationalism that adopts or evokes the religious equation of ignorance or ignorant fallibility with bliss, and condemns and prohibits human knowledge, notably secular education, as in American Protestant fundamentalism (Darnell and Sherkat 1997, Martin 2002), as the “forbidden apple” and the reason for the “fall of man”. To that extent, such “libertarianism” effectively functions as anti-liberalism.

The above thus self-contradicts its adherents’ claim that “libertarianism” is the true heir and custodian of classical liberalism which they reject and suspect in its general rationalistic form (Hayek 1955) or misconstrue as and dissolve into narrow laissez-faire economic theory and policy of “natural liberty” in the economy and free markets (Buchanan 1991; Mises 1966). This reaffirms that the root of “libertarianism” as partial, extreme, anarchic and archaic economic liberalism and its “economistic fallacy” (Tillman 2001) lies in its laissez-faire misunderstanding and reduction of classical liberalism, notably conflating the Walrasian hypothesis and utopia of “absolutely free” markets with their history and reality. In short, it is in what critics call market absolutism and fundamentalism (Barber 1995; Giddens 2000; Hodgson 1999). “Libertarianism” is “liberal” only in the reductive, radical, or degenerated sense and form of archaic or hypothetical market laissez-faire, i.e. Hobbesian anarchy in the economy, but not in that of classical liberalism in general, notably rationalism and the Enlightenment.

Specifically, “libertarianism” is classical economic theory à la Smith et al. “arrested” into and misconstrued as its presumably original and foundational point of absolute market freedom. In this sense, it is more properly described in terms of narrow market primitivism, anarchism or archaism, i.e. economic determinism and monism, rather than classical liberalism in the general sense and form of the rationalist Enlightenment. Some of its contemporary advocates, following its early proponents like Mises and Hayek, propose that libertarianism “considers the market the source of freedom, because it is not only the place where goods are exchanged, but also the point of encounter for men

with different philosophical ideas and religious beliefs [acting] like a powerful acid that irreparably erodes the “privileged point of view on the world” (Infantino 2003: 2). Admittedly, libertarianism tends to reductively conceive a free social system as what Hayek et al. call a “spontaneous order” of freedom in markets, a “market society” in which economic liberty is the “basis of critical discussion and democracy” (Infantino 2003: 5–8). In short, it defines liberal society and modernity as a capitalist system and period, liberalism as capitalism. Thus, Hayek (1989) claims that human civilization “depends, not only for its origin but also for its preservation” on capitalism as a “spontaneous” and “extended” market-based order, thus almost equating “civilized” and “capitalist”, society and economy. This seems a historically and sociologically uninformed and dubious assertion overlooking that the rise of classical Greek civilization preceded Weberian capitalism in Western Europe by two millennia (Manent 1998).

The above essentially admits that “libertarianism” effectively reduces and subordinates modern liberal society as a whole to a market system or capitalism as just one of its elements, including the polity into a political “marketplace”. It hence reductively conceives human liberty as the freedom of “rational choice” in respect to private property, selling and buying goods on unfettered “free markets” to which political democracy and civil liberties are subordinated and eventually sacrificed or traded for as “opportunity costs” in the almost economic meaning of foregone “alternative value possibilities” (Davenport 1964). “Libertarianism” hence, wittingly or not, promises to transform Western liberal societies in a “Singapore”, “Hong Kong” or US “Bible Belt” in sociological terms. This is the libertarian alchemy of converting liberalism as the system of integral liberty, conjoined with justice and equality, into authoritarian capitalism or capitalist dictatorship blending laissez-faire Anarchy in Economy with tyrannical Leviathan in Society, in the image, if not form, of Weber’s “unexampled tyranny of Puritanism” in polity and culture.

In this sense, “libertarianism” commits or is plagued by at least two fallacies of what can be described as “misplaced sociological concreteness.” The first fallacy is what critics identify as the “narrowly economic and reductionist version” of human freedom as economic liberty a la “free market enterprise” and private capitalist property, which then render libertarians “unlikely to be advocates” of political freedoms, civil liberties, and human rights (Tillman 2001: 174). This is simply the fallacy of reducing liberal society and modernity

to a capitalist economic system and period, liberalism to capitalism as just one of its particular elements and stages. On this account, “libertarianism” is only the theory, blueprint and rationalization of capitalism as part of, but not liberalism in a general sociological sense.

The second fallacy is a sort of retrogression into an *ex ante* despotic state of affairs, given that the libertarian or neo-conservative “cocktail” (the “Singapore syndrome”) of economic “freedom” and social oppression was found in the old despotism mixing what Simmel identifies as “licentious private libertinism” in the economy with “disenfranchisement in the political sphere”. This is the fallacy of dissolving liberal society and modernity into an oppressive and anti-egalitarian political system blended with “free markets”, liberalism into medieval and post-medieval despotism or authoritarianism mixed with capitalism. “Libertarianism” thus boils down to a mix of market fundamentalism with authoritarian political conservatism reverting to what Simmel finds as the old despotic formula of license (primarily for masters and elites) in the economy and oppression in society.

To that extent, “libertarianism” is not only economistic in respect of human liberty and anarchistic, despite opposite claims, in market terms. It is also, as Comte would put, historically retrograde or archaic (Beck 2000) and sociologically illiberal and non-or quasi-democratic, and to that extent neo-conservatism rather than, as claimed, the true or new liberalism. Even if the intent and project of “libertarianism” is not restored and updated despotism à la Singapore and “Bible-Belt” authoritarian and theocratic capitalism, the unintended outcome or by-product often and eventually is.

The above outcome is indicated by “free markets” capitalist dictatorships ranging from this and other Asian countries at various points of time (e.g. Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, China) to Pinochet’s Chile as instances of “authoritarian state-directed capitalism” (Centeno 1994) to the US conservative authoritarian-oligarchic and mafia-style capitalism (Pryor 2002). Particularly, Chile’s “military authoritarianism” (Centeno 1994) through a mix of “free markets” or unfettered capitalism with a murderous neo-fascist dictatorship – openly or tacitly supported by “libertarian” economists like Hayek and effectively implemented by their “Chicago boys” – demonstrates that “libertarianism”, via its reduction of liberty to market freedom, can eventually be destructive to liberal society, thus ultimately anti-liberalism. The same can *ceteris paribus* be said of Singapore as the seemingly “softer” and less visible exemplar

of modern despotism in Simmel's sense and authoritarian capitalism which, like Chile's "harder" and most manifest case, US libertarians and neo-conservatives extol, alongside, of course, America under neo-conservatism, as the paragon of "economic freedom" and "free" economy and markets, while denying or overlooking its non-economic repression as a seeming irrelevance, nuisance or "collateral damage" of the promotion of capitalist liberty.

Alternatively, if they did not exist, Chile's, Singapore's and other capitalist dictatorships mixing "free markets" with despotic-style repression and regression should perhaps been invented to demonstrate that "libertarianism" with its market absolutism and anarchism a la slightly modified laissez-faire eventually creates what it supposedly (cf. Buchanan 1991) tries to avoid and resolve, an absurd mixture of anarchy in economy and tyrannical Leviathan in society. In Simmel's terms, they should have, in order to reveal how this "libertarian" market absolutism and anarchism ultimately makes contemporary liberal society regress into or evoke traditional despotism precisely defined by a paradoxical blend of Singapore-style "economic freedom" and social tyranny. Apparently, while, like classical and modern liberals, economic "libertarians" agree and warn that absolutism by claiming absolute truth "destroys all systems of liberty and is conducive to the revival of tribalism" (Infantino 2003: 133), they deny or overlook that its market version also does or can have illiberal consequences, thus contradicting their own assumption.

Hence, so long as "libertarianism" purports to turn the clock back to archaic or mythical laissez-faire expressing Hobbesian economic and other anarchy (Lipset and Marks 2000), then it objectively, albeit not necessarily wittingly, seeks to make America return to the "golden past" of Simmel's despotism though in an "all-American", apple-pie way of authoritarianism (Wagner 1997), such as New England's Puritan theocracy reenacted in a free-market, yet despotic "Bible Belt". At least, it seeks to remake America and all Western society in the image of an expanded and global "Singapore" as the perennial model of superior "economic freedom", in relation to which non-economic un-freedom and political-social oppression is "not worth mentioning", for libertarianism. This is precisely what its equivalent or ally neo-conservatism a la Reaganism has accomplished in America since the 1980s, notably in the South transformed once again after the "liberal" 1960s into a sociological-theological heaven (Lemert 1999) mixing "free markets" with an illiberal system of political oppression and religious fundamentalism, thus resembling more

Singapore, Iran or China (minus religion) than Western liberal-secular societies (Bauman 1997).

On this account, US economic libertarianism and/or neo-conservatism has been a sort of over-achiever within Western societies, since no other version, including British Thatcherism almost “presumed dead”, has succeeded to infuse society to such a degree with the “Singapore syndrome” of modern free-market despotism. If so, it is more accurate and realistic, given its typical hyper-patriotism, to say that US libertarianism will, in a holly alliance with extremely nationalistic neo-conservatism, seek to remake Western liberal society, including America itself, in the form or image of both a free-market and theocratic “Bible Belt” rather than Singapore as “foreign”, just as it has done in the past, with its celebration and support, if not creation, of Chile’s blend of “unfettered capitalism” with neo-fascism as the case in point. In this respect, it has proven to be partial, extreme economic liberalism *cum* laissez-faire Anarchy in economy. Yet it is non- or pseudo-liberalism in non-economic terms by, as critics object (Tillman 2001), endorsing, tolerating or turning a “blind eye” – e.g. fascist Chile, authoritarian Singapore, the theocratic “Bible Belt”, the anti-libertarian conservative “war on terror” – on oppressive Leviathan in polity and civil society. It has thus acted or appeared as a functional equivalent or ally with neo-conservatism rather than modern liberalism, so not a heir and custodian of its classical version. In addition to and conjunction with being partial and extreme market liberalism in the classical meaning, “libertarianism” is in many respects economic and social anti- or pseudo-liberalism understood in a modern sense.

Economic Non-Liberalism

First, “libertarianism” is anti- or quasi-liberalism in relation to contemporary economic liberalism as defined. In fact, it arose to a large extent in reaction and opposition to contemporary economic liberalism, as witnessed by the attacks of “libertarian” economists like Mises, Hayek and others (Buchanan 1991; Friedman and Friedman 1982) on the welfare state, liberal-social democracy construed as state “socialism”, Keynesianism, the US New Deal and other forms of government activism that, in their view, deviated from “true” classical liberal ideas and policies a la laissez-faire via Walras’ “regime of absolutely free” markets or “unfettered” capitalism. Modern, evolved economic

liberalism thus understood and perceived by these orthodox economists was probably the key reason why they and their disciples re-branded their version and ostensive rehabilitation of classical liberal ideas and policies such as Smith's "simple system of natural liberty" in the economy as "libertarianism", and not "liberalism" as one would expect.

In comparative terms, today's economic "libertarianism" was born out of strong dogmatic hostility to and has remained strategically positioned against the welfare state from the late 19th century and Keynesianism since the 1930s in Europe and their American diluted variations as epitomized in and starting with the New Deal and perhaps the Progressive Era, and continuing in the Great Society liberal programs of the 1960s. Thus, it was economic anti-liberalism at least vis-à-vis and in the sense of the European welfare state and the American New Deal defined and condemned by libertarian economists and arch-conservatives as "liberal" or "socialist" creations. Basically, orthodox economists, like conservatives, did and still do view and attack welfare capitalism, the New Deal and any form of evolved, reformed or activist economic liberalism as "socialism" or "too socialist", so as, in Mises-Hayek's view, a "road to serfdom", and hence designate and define their "libertarianism" in deliberate anti-liberal antagonism in this respect.

If, as Mannheim (1986) observes, early conservatism arose as medieval traditionalism that refused to disappear and become "self-conscious" and antagonistic in facing liberalism, notably the rationalistic Enlightenment, "libertarianism" emerged as traditionalist or conservative *laissez-faire*. For instance, Hayek (1941: 126) comments that, for example, Mises' major work *Human Action* "is a really imposing unified system of liberal social philosophy [but not] just a simple restatement of the *laissez-faire* views of [19th century Liberalism]". If this is true, many critics would by analogy describe it and libertarianism overall as a "complex or slightly modified restatement" of traditional *laissez-faire* ideas.

In particular, "libertarianism" arose as *laissez-faire* traditionalism or conservatism refusing or unwilling to accept what Keynes and even Popper diagnosed as its own "end" and becoming self-aware in the face of modern economic liberalism, including Keynesianism in Great Britain and the New Deal in America. In this sense, like conservatism, "libertarianism" was and remained since essentially an attempt to resurrect the "golden past" of Smith's "simple system of natural" economic liberty, including a night-watchman

state, which was, as most economists would admit, either a myth or at least transient and limited historical reality, as England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Hence, just as conservatism in relation to classical liberalism overall, “libertarianism” arose as and continued to be a reactionary or fundamentalist in a non-religious or market sense as well as a utopian antagonistic project against contemporary economic liberalism, seeking to go back to a “place which has never existed”. On this account, “libertarianism” is even more sociologically utopian, unrealistic or self-delusionary than proto-conservatism which at least tried to return to or restore what had already historically existed, medieval economic feudalism, political despotism and societal theocracy. At most, as indicated, “libertarianism” was and still remains as economic liberalism “arrested”, “fixed” or “stopped” in development beyond the primeval “golden past” of *laissez-faire*, and so “inflexible”, “tenacious” or “stubborn” in the face of its evolution, adaptation or modernization leading to its contemporary form, epitomized by European welfare capitalism and the American New Deal. But this is just another way to say that it is non- or at most pseudo-liberalism from the stance of contemporary economic liberalism by refusing to accept or adapt to this liberal evolution and maturation from early to mature forms.

Particularly, as hinted, “libertarianism” is anti- or pseudo-liberal because of its admitted and even celebrated economic and to a lesser extent other social anti-egalitarianism in contrast to modern liberalism, including its welfare-capitalist and New Deal varieties, characterized instead by egalitarianism in economy and society. This is what sociologists suggest by noticing that that economic “libertarianism” à la Hayek is anti- or quasi-liberalism in virtue of its “defense of the vested interests of the haves” (Dahrendorf 1979: 38) in contrast to contemporary liberalism that questions or balances these interests with those of the “have-nots”.

Other sociologists remark that “libertarianism” or neo-liberalism draws its “social force from the political and social strength of those whose interests it defends”, simply the rich and powerful (Bourdieu 1998: 96). In this view, such defense explains the libertarian “separation between the economy and social realities” and construction of an “economic system corresponding to a kind of logical machine which presents itself as a chain of constraints impelling the economic agents”. In this sense, like neo-liberalism, “libertarianism” acts as a form of “sociodicy” or the ideological rationalization and defense

of the vested interests of the haves or economic and other social inequalities, through, for instance, the end of ideology or history thesis and “social neo-Darwinism” extolling competence, “winners and losers” (Bourdieu 1998: 35). In short, it is seen as “extreme” liberalism in virtue of its “ideological semi-sanctification” of these interests and inequalities sanctified as the workings of the “free” market economy (Eisenstadt 1998: 219). In this respect, “libertarianism”, including its economic individualism, is prominent and resilient not “in virtue of its merits as a theoretical doctrine [but] is an ideological slogan” (Bird 1999: 182).

The above indicates that “libertarianism” acts or appears only or mostly – though even this is questionable given its pro-business and anti-labor tendencies – as Smith’s “simple system of natural liberty” in economy, but not or less of equality and justice as additional, complementary and evolving liberal principles. To that extent, it is anti-liberal, at most partially, pseudo-liberal and simplistic in relation to contemporary economic liberalism as the composite of all these elements. Briefly, it is non- or pseudo-liberal by reacting to and opposing the evolution and maturation of liberalism from this simple to a complex system of liberty as well as equality and justice in economy and society since the *laissez-faire* “golden” age.

From Smith’s own liberal stance, “libertarianism” is a continuous and tenacious failure to acknowledge or realize that not only “natural” economic liberty but also justice and equality are integral and intertwined and mutually reinforcing, rather than exclusive, elements of what he calls a “liberal plan” and so free society. Negatively, it is a monumental failure to recognize, realize and see that, as Smith prophetically admonishes, that injustice or inequality can “utterly destroy” society, and thus the very system of “natural” economic liberty and superior efficiency that “libertarianism” constructs and celebrates. As modern liberals remark, “libertarian” contemporary uses of Smith “are contrary to his own intentions, particularly his commitments to justice and moral autonomy [and] markets [as] an important means to these goals, not themselves the ends”³⁵ (Terchek 1997: 10). On this account, “libertarianism” appears as not only a reductive, simplistic, utopian, anarchic, reactionary and

³⁵ Terchek (1997: 10) adds that libertarians (plus interest-group liberals), in their “preoccupation” with free markets, “leave behind Smith’s expectations and requirements for the moral personality and his reliance on particular cultural standards and social practices to act as gatekeepers on self-interests”.

pseudo-democratic doctrine of human liberty *cum* market freedom, but a destructive economic policy and prescription for liberal society, so self-defeating on its own “free-markets” terms. Overall, contemporary liberals notice that it “fails on its own terms” in virtue of being an “unstable compound” (Bird 1999: 184) of conflicting ideas and accounts, market, private-property absolutism and “inviolable” individual liberties and rights against government coercion.

Social Non-Liberalism

Libertarianism is anti- or quasi-liberalism in relation to contemporary and even classical non-economic or social liberalism. As noted, contrary to its claims to the true heir or custodian of classical liberalism in general, libertarianism often turns out to be anti- or pseudo-liberal, in particular by virtue of attacking Enlightenment-based rationalism. This especially holds true of libertarian economists like Hayek et al., though, as noted, less or not of Mises who instead is more of a “liberal” in respect of rationalism and the Enlightenment. Thus, Hayek (1955) attacks what he labels “misunderstood rationalism” or “constructivist rationalism” seen as the “abuse of reason”, in particular, attacking the “objectivism of the scientific approach” as leading to the “counter-revolution of science”, objecting that the “rationalist” is unable to recognize “limitations of the powers of conscious reason”.

Predictably, the main target of Hayek and his libertarian disciples is the Enlightenment, especially its French version, as the identified creator or source of maligned “constructivist rationalism”, with “the founder of sociology”, Comte as the *bête noire* due to his positivism and objectivism and “collectivism”. Instead, Hayek and his “libertarian” disciples contend and extol that recognizing the limitations of “constructivist rationalism” or conscious reason, including human ignorance and fallibility, “leads to an open society” (Infantino 2003: 8).

To that extent, libertarianism in its Hayek’s, as distinguished from Mises’, formulation is anti-liberal, just as anti-socialist, in respect to rationalistic classical liberalism, at least its version in the French Enlightenment and its ramifications in Comte’s sociological positivism. In a sense, the seeming thrust and aim of Hayek’s attack on “constructivist rationalism” in the French Enlightenment was to discredit the idea and possibility of “socialism” or “communism”

usually equated, defined in terms of “central economic planning” rooted in such rationalism. To that extent, Hayek’s was a non-scientific but ideological and so misguided and self-defeating endeavor by ultimately throwing the “baby” of rationalism with the “water” of intrusive socialist (or other) government. In particular, it overlooks or denies that “constructivist rationalism” does not necessarily involve “central economic planning” and so lead to “socialism”, as well as that the latter or “communism” is usually the opposite or alternative rather than the result or form of rationalistic “liberalism”, as Mannheim (1986) notices and Marx and his disciples insist. Curiously, it also overlooks that modern rationalist capitalism is the major economic form or effect of Enlightenment-based “constructivist rationalism”, as Weber suggests by treating the capitalist economy based on formal market rationality as the exemplar and outcome of the general process of rationalization in society.

In addition, these libertarian attacks on rationalism are oblivious of the well-known fact that “socialism” or “communism” in the sense of Plato or Thomas Moore historically precedes Enlightenment-based rationalistic liberalism and to that extent modern capitalism as its principal economic element or product. If so, then to destroy or discredit “socialism” or “communism”, Hayek et al. do not really have to eliminate or attack “constructivist rationalism” and so classical Enlightenment-based liberalism, as “collateral damage” but unnecessary and more encompassing, even unlimited in scope, than relatively limited anti-socialist elimination. A salient exception in this respect is Hayek’s predecessor and teacher, Mises (1966), who by contrast, partly influenced by Weber, embraces and celebrates rationalism and the Enlightenment overall. On this account at least, only Mises, but not Hayek, can be and has been described as a “classical liberal”, while both being seen as such in purely economic terms of free markets, with the second perceived as somewhat more “moderate” or qualified in respect to traditional or mythical *laissez-faire*.

The above thus points to a curious paradox within modern libertarianism at least in Hayek’s version: it rejects rationalism in the sense and form of the Enlightenment, yet celebrates capitalism precisely in virtue of being a supremely rational and spontaneous economic order. Libertarians would and do “solve” paradox by simply saying that the first is “misunderstood” or “false” and the second “proper” or “true” rationalism or rationality. In Weber’s terms, the Hayek libertarian paradox and contradiction, if not “theatre of absurd”, is between dismissing Western rationalism or general societal

rationalization and yet embracing its particular, economic form in modern rational capitalism, i.e. between rejecting Enlightenment-based rationality or reason and still adopting its narrow, formal or market type of “monetary calculation.”

Hayek-style libertarianism thus commits a serious anti-rationalist fallacy or non sequitur in several respects. First, it overlooks that “constructivist” or other rationalism is not necessarily opposed to, but rather, as Popper and others suggest, constitutive of liberal open society. Second, it neglects that modern capitalism celebrated by “libertarianism” is, as Weber, Simmel and other sociologists propose and Schumpeter accepts, a particular, economic subtype, element or result of what it dismisses as Enlightenment-based “constructivist” and other rationalism or the overall process of rationalization in Western society.

Third, it overlooks that generally what Weber calls instrumental³⁶ action or formal economic rationality, epitomized in money-based calculation in capitalism, is just one ideal type in this respect, the other being value-based action or substantive rationality driven by “ultimate values”, including justice and equality, in economy and society. Fourth, by suspecting the powers and insisting on the limitations of human reason, knowledge or intelligence in favor of “ignorance” and “fallibility”, “libertarianism” reveals some degree of anti-humanism, thus resembling religious conservatism that favors supra-human “intelligent design”, as well as fascism and communism favoring collective “higher” causes, to humans and their rational capacities.

Fifth, as a corollary of the above, it appears as anti- or pseudo-rationalist, retrogressive, anti-human, conservative and authoritarian and to that extent anti-liberal. Simply, it is hardly logical, consistent and credible for “libertarianism” à la Hayek et al. to summarily dismiss “constructivist” rationalism or the emphasis on reason attributed to the Enlightenment and then claim to be the true heir or custodian of classical liberalism in contemporary society. For classical economic and social liberalism was not only “libertarian” as they understand it – i.e. in the sense of *laissez-faire* in the economy and free

³⁶ Archer and Tritter (2000: 2) object that the theoretical and political success of libertarianism or neo-liberalism is “parasitic upon forms of motivation which it cannot comprehend. [I.e.] the notion of instrumental rationality can neither embrace nor explain the altruism upon which it depends in practice”.

markets – but also, as Mannheim (1986), Popper (1966) and others (Delanty 2000) stress, rationalistic in the sense of an emphasis on and celebration of human reason versus both anti-liberal medieval irrationality and transcendental “intelligence”, just as egalitarian, equitable and humanistic.

Next, its prevailing concept of negative, as distinguished from positive, freedom makes “libertarianism” look anti- or quasi-liberal in relation to contemporary and even classical social liberalism which incorporates, balances or reconciles both concepts. As contemporary liberals notice, libertarians “uniformly adopt the negative conception of liberty” (Van Dyke 1995: 104), epitomized in “freedom from state coercion.” In this view, alternatively, they, if not reject, then neglect or downplay the positive conception of freedom in that they pay “little or no attention to the possibility that conditions may be such as to make liberty worthless [as] the sheep and the wolf [are equally free]” (Van Dyke 1995: 106).

In turn, the fact that “libertarianism” uniformly embraces the negative concept of liberty *cum* “freedom from state coercion” can probably be traced to its perennial advocacy of and obsession with *laissez-faire* in the sense of absolute market freedom or Hobbes-like economic anarchy unfettered by government intervention in economy and markets. Its negative ideal of liberty primarily means market-economic, and only secondarily non-economic, “freedom from state coercion”, as in “libertarianism” free markets are the “primary arena in which people exercise liberty [so] the heart of the system” (Van Dyke 1995: 105–6).

This preceding identifies at least two forms of the typical libertarian “fallacy of misplaced concreteness”: it reduces, first, human liberty to negative freedom, and second, the latter to market freedom from state coercion. In addition to this reduction of liberty, “libertarianism”, as indicated, commits a reductive fallacy in respect of anti-liberty denials or restrictions in society by effectively reducing all societal constraints on freedom to state coercion or government intervention. Simply, it is remarkably oblivious or negligent of the manifest and salient fact that state coercion is not the only form or mechanism of coercion or constraint on freedom in modern capitalist society. In particular, it seems to overlook or deny that liberty in society encompasses not only market and all “freedom from state coercion” but also that from other coercive social institutions, including “freedom from church coercion” or organized religion, even “from” what Weber calls the “iron cage” of modern

“capitalism” (Dahrendorf 1979) as the system of economic compulsion in a Weberian sense of the imperative of existential survival or the Marxian rendition of exploitation and “slave-like” settings (Wacquant 2002). In short, as contemporary liberals note, “libertarianism” tends to be “blind to nonpolitical forms of power” (Terchek 1997: 2).

Notably, by overlooking, denying or minimizing “freedom from church coercion” or organized religion as such, “libertarianism” become or comes closer to religious conservatism, from European medievalism to American neo-conservatism, than secular classical and modern liberalism. In the limiting case, by doing so it may result in, though as the probably unintended outcome, or approach a sort of “libertarian” theocracy precisely defined by market “freedom from state coercion” and yet no social freedoms “from church coercion”. This “libertarian” outcome or possibility was perhaps pre-figured by New England’s Puritan “Holy Commonwealth” blending Weber’s “spirit of capitalism”, embodied by Calvinist and moralist yet hypocritical Franklin, with theocratic repression and in part reenacted in the US “Bible Belt” through mixing “free-markets” and oppressive evangelicalism during 1980s–2000s.

In turn, by denying or overlooking “freedom from” capitalist and other market-economic coercion through making the economy the “factory of authoritarianism” for labor, yet anarchy for capital, “libertarianism” almost returns to or evokes Weber’s economic traditionalism, including feudalism, if not slavery, as the exemplary coercive economy rather than continuing classical and epitomizing modern liberalism. In this case or sense, like “socialism” that it condemns for the destruction of economic and all freedom, “libertarianism” itself paves or leads to Hayek’s “road to serfdom” and the anti-liberal past of feudalism with its masters and servants or “patrimonial capitalism” (Cohen 2003), not Smith’s “system of natural liberty” in economy and the liberal future of free and open capitalist society. This is what contemporary sociologists imply by observing that the libertarian or neo-liberal “ideology of competence” expressing social neo-Darwinism “serves very well to justify an opposition which is rather like that between masters and slaves” (Bourdieu 1998: 42).

In both cases, like conservatism, “libertarianism” is anti-liberal or authoritarian and retrogressive or reactionary in religious-social and even, perhaps for most readers surprisingly or implausibly, economic terms. To posit and

emphasize market freedom from state coercion and overlook or minimize other freedoms from both government *and* non-government, including religious-church and capitalist-economic, compulsion is not only theoretically simplistic and logically inconsistent but also sociologically destructive to or problematic for liberty and to that extent anti- or quasi-liberal. In other words, as contemporary liberals stress, a society in which, not only coercive government, but also other non-political processes “systematically induce”, through religious or ideological “delusion” as well as economic coercion, individuals to “choose non-self-directed lives is *not* a self-directed” (Bird 1999: 203) or free and individualistic one, contrary to “libertarian” claims that market freedom “from” the state is “all you need” for the pursuit of happiness, liberty and life”. Simply, for liberalism, it is not only political power or a coercive state, as “libertarianism” emphasizes, but also religious, cultural, economic and other non-political domination or coercion that is “non-libertarian” or “anti-individualistic”.

At this juncture, to summarize, “libertarianism” appears anti- or pseudo-liberalism vis-à-vis contemporary liberalism due to, first, a negative concept of human liberty, second, reducing negative freedom itself to its particular market form, third, reductively conceiving all social anti-liberty constraints as “state coercion”, and fourth, overlooking or downplaying non-economic liberties and non-government forms of societal compulsion alike, notably freedom “from” church or organized religion and “from” capitalism and economy.

Libertarianism versus Modernized Liberalism

The preceding indicates that “libertarianism” is opposite or contradictory rather than equivalent or even cognate to modernized economic and social liberalism. Curiously, both “libertarians” and liberals acknowledge and emphasize the differences in an apparent attempt to distance their own doctrines and policies from each other, though for different reasons. These reasons are, as hinted, restoration or revival for libertarianism, and development or improvement for contemporary liberalism in respect to its classical type.

Thus, some modern liberals notice that libertarians “endeavor to recover the liberalism” modern liberals have “discarded” while the latter purport to “improve” the liberal legacy (Terchek 1997: 1). Predictably, libertarians’ primary object of recovery is classical economic liberalism a la *laissez-faire*

in turn “discarded” or improved upon in its contemporary version since at least Keynes’ (1972) explicit diagnosing of its “end”, plus implicitly Parsons’ (1937) “Spencer is dead” diagnosis, during the 1920–30s and the New Deal. While “libertarians” find a problem in abandoning *laissez-faire* seen as one the “foundational principles” of liberalism, contending that modern democratic societies “have strayed from their liberal origins” – e.g. Smith’s negative state and free markets, Locke’s notion of private property – modern liberals “emphasize the rights-based features of their tradition [Kant, Locke] to establish the inviolability of the person and to deny that individual rights must first pass a morals-means test” (Terchek 1997: 1). This means that “libertarianism” is rigidly conservative, backward-looking and so regressive at least in economic terms in contrast to contemporary liberalism as open-ended, forward-looking and to that extent progressive in both economy and society. Hence, contemporary liberals “refuse to endorse libertarian claims to return to a past that [is] restrictive to autonomy and blind to nonpolitical forms of power” (Terchek 1997: 1–2). In particular, they reject “libertarian” economists’ “intransigent conclusions” against the Keynesian welfare state or income redistribution³⁷ (Bird 1999: 185–95) in favor of returning to such a past.

If so, the above suggests that “libertarianism” seeks to go back to or revive the “dead hand of the past” in respect to such restrictions and power rather than the “Golden Past” that apparently has never existed in terms of human autonomy or liberty in general, even if it has in the form and myth of transient and limited *laissez-faire* or unrestricted market freedom, e.g. England in the 18th and 19th century. At this juncture, it fails to recognize what contemporary liberalism realizes and emphasizes, viz. that *laissez-faire*, if and when and where existed, is not a necessary, let alone sufficient, condition for liberty overall, so an “unfettered” market system or capitalism is not indispensable to or enough for modern liberal society and liberalism. Even if, as most economists claim, market freedom, a free economy or capitalism is the necessary, though admittedly not sufficient (Friedman and Friedman 1982), condition of human liberty, liberal society or liberalism, it does not follow that *laissez-*

³⁷ Bird (1999: 194–5) adds that “renouncing the Keynesian welfare state might not imply a renunciation of the idea that the essential function of the state is to service individuals’ values”. In this view, “both Keynesian or welfare liberalism and night-watchman liberalism [are] variations of the service conception [of the state]” (Bird 1999: 196).

faire, economic anarchy or unfettered capitalist enterprise is, as shown by the less than “golden past” libertarianism seeks to recover from the “dead.” If this past, in spite or perhaps because of being supposedly economic *laissez-faire*, was restrictive to human liberty or autonomy overall and “blind” to non-political power and coercion, such as coercive religion and economic compulsion, then “libertarianism” by doing so it also recovers and perpetuates such “blindness”.

As noted, if not anti-liberalism *tout de court*, “libertarianism” is, as some contemporary sociologists describe it, “extreme” liberalism especially in economic terms as an “ideological semi-sanctification of the free market economy” (Eisenstadt 1998: 219), by seeking to resurrect from the dead the golden or mythical past of *laissez-faire* in economy or night-watchman state. In this respect, “libertarianism” is extreme, radical, or degenerate by representing a manifest and deliberate aberration from and even attack on what contemporary liberals call contemporary “mainstream” liberalism (Bird 1999: 14). In this view, “in extreme anarchist or libertarian forms of individualism, the state [plays] either a minimal or non-existent role in social life” (Bird 1999: 14), notably economy and markets. On this account, despite libertarians’ assertions (e.g. Friedman and Friedman 1982) to the contrary and their dislikes of anti-capitalist anarchists, libertarianism constitutes or resembles anarchism at least in the sense of economic anarchy *à la laissez-faire* or unfettered capitalism, and to that extent extremism and degeneration *vis-à-vis* modern mainstream liberalism.

Hence, libertarianism is extreme or degenerate “liberalism” by being market absolutism or fundamentalism expressed in the libertarian “central claim” that free markets represent the “only procedure able to meet” requirements for individual liberty and human rights, which overlooks that modern liberalism “just cannot have a theory which makes inviolability [of human rights] a function of property-rights in oneself” (Bird 1999: 183). Thus, libertarian economists are extreme or radical liberals by regarding and presenting themselves as the “puritans” of liberalism, notably liberal individualism misconstrued as the myth³⁸ of *laissez-faire* economic anarchy or Robinson Crusoe’s “free”

³⁸ Bird (1999: 183) comments that the idea of libertarian economic individualism *à la laissez-faire* is a “myth”. In this view, further liberal individualism, “in either its extreme libertarian or more moderate forms, is a myth because it represents a

economy, since, as Weber and Keynes emphasize, Puritanism in a religious or any other sense is extremism, radicalism or absolutism (Munch 2001). In particular, economic libertarianism represents what Keynes calls “financial purism”, rigid fiscal conservatism, and libertarian economists “financial purists”, so extremism and extremists or radicalism and radicals from the angle of contemporary mainstream liberalism. In sum, despite or rather because of its claims to liberal “purity” or continuity in the classical sense, “libertarianism” was “born” and remained “arrested” in development and extreme, reductive or economic, rather than mainstream, evolving, genuine or comprehensive liberalism.

Appendix: Other Classifications of Liberalism

Other contemporary, mainly philosophical, typologies of liberalism are sociologically secondary but complementary to the historical and sociological classification of classical and contemporary, economic and social liberalisms, respectively. A contemporary typology distinguishes utilitarian, comprehensive and rights-oriented political liberalism (Dombrowski 2001: ix). In this view, the first type is by implication represented by Bentham-Spencer’s utilitarianism and conventional economics since Smith, the second by the Enlightenment, and the third by libertarian and other modern versions (e.g. Rawls’). In particular, rights-oriented political liberalism is distinguished from the Enlightenment’s “comprehensive” type given the “fact that not everyone buys into” the latter, “just as reasonable pluralism is a given” in modern liberal society (Dombrowski 2001: 9). As indicated, contemporary liberals identify and stress personal autonomy, self-determination or freedom of choice as

doomed effort to assimilate the two incompatible doctrines” (Bird 1999: 191). These are, first, the doctrine that individuals “possess a morally privileged status that should be enshrined in and protected by certain inviolable rights against exploitation and coercion”; second, the doctrine that individual rights “reflect their comprehensive self-ownership” (Bird 1999: 182). In particular, libertarianism “fails on its own terms [as it] is an unstable compound of two conflicting, accounts”, notably by claiming the “market is the only procedure able to meet these two requirements”, thus overlooking that “we just cannot have a theory which makes inviolability [of human rights] a function of property-rights in oneself” (Bird 1999: 183–4). In genera, Bird (1999: 19) finds that the “secret of libertarianism’s recent success lies precisely in its appeal to an alliance between liberalism and individualism”. Also, he contends that individualism overall “does not perform this role in virtue of its merits as a theoretical doctrine [but] is an ideological slogan” (Bird 1999: 182).

the “fundamental right” in liberal societies, and views all other rights as either its derivatives or instances, in the belief that those who respect human rights “must also value autonomy” (Dagger 1997: 196). In short, for contemporary liberalism “how people choose to live surely matters; but that they be *able* to choose is a prior concern (Dagger 1997: 196).

Another frequent typology differentiates rights-based and republican or communitarian political liberalism, defined as promoting individual liberties and democratic participation or civic virtues, respectively. However, some modern liberals admonish against making too a “sharp distinction” between the first and republicanism or communitarianism (Dagger 1997: 4–5) on the grounds that concerns for individual liberties and human rights “need not be hostile to the desire to promote civic virtue.”³⁹ Moreover, in this view such concerns are “indeed compatible with community, duty, and virtue”, while “too much talk of rights, and too little of responsibilities, can lead to short-sighted individualism and intransigence”, and conversely, at the “heart” of republican liberalism is the appreciation of individual liberties and rights (Dagger 1997: 201).

Some contemporary (mostly philosophical) classifications differentiate what is described as perfectionist and anti-perfectionist or neutral political liberalism. In a definition, perfectionist liberalism “straightforwardly” acknowledges the value of definite, individualist, autonomous and pluralist, conceptions of the “good life” and present its “affirmation of public autonomy, reasonableness, and toleration” in terms of personal autonomy and pluralism (Brink 2000: 40). According to its modern adherents, perfectionism is “compatible” with liberalism, and even the “best perfectionist” theory is “liberal” and leads to a “better understanding of political morality than anti-perfectionism” (Wall 1998: 2–5) in the sense of neutralism. In this view, perfectionism does so in virtue of an argument about the value of individual autonomy

³⁹ Dagger (1997: 5–7) elaborates that republican liberalism republican liberalism “promises to strengthen the appeal of duty, community, and the common good while preserving the appeal of rights” and thus “promotes autonomy and solidarity – two goods any defensible version of cultural pluralism must also endorse – rather than homogeneity.” In his view, this is a type of liberalism “capable of overcoming the complaints of those who believe that liberals and liberal societies are obsessed with rights” (Dagger 1997: 8). Predictably, these complaints mostly, though not only, come from US and other neo-conservatives preoccupied instead with political as well as religious “duties and responsibilities”.

or self-determination as “an ideal of special importance for modern western societies [which] warrants a privileged position [so] political authorities in these societies have duties to create and maintain social conditions that best enable their subjects to lead autonomous lives” (Wall 1998: 6). Arguably, a “strong commitment to personal autonomy does not render impermissible perfectionist political action designed to favor valuable lifestyles, pursuits, options, etc. over base ones” (Wall 1998: 6).

Some other adherents of liberal perfectionism explicitly reject its neutral alternative by stating that the “neutralist” assumption – the “widely assumed if not absolutely prevailing view within contemporary liberal society is that there is no need to adjudicate between competing substantive conceptions of what is good” – is “clearly false”⁴⁰ (Beiner 1992: 8). In particular, the perfectionist counter-argument is that “to forgo a substantive theory of the human good in favor of consumer freedom is already to exclude an entire way of life postulated upon nonconsumerist conceptions of human fulfillment” (Beiner 1992: 8). In general, arguably liberalism – and “no less than” feudalism, conservatism, fascism, or socialism as its alternatives – is defined in terms of perfectionism, as a worldview (“global dispensation”) and a way of life that “excludes other ways of life” in that it conceives freedom, autonomy or choice as the “highest good”, contrary to the neutralist premise of the liberal state as “neutral between the diverse life-choices of individuals”⁴¹ (Beiner 1992: 24–5). This yields the inference that “liberalism at its [perfectionist] best is characterized by certain great virtues that no society ought to wish to forfeit” (Beiner 1992: 37). In this view, liberalism puts “liberty ahead of perfection” (Beiner

⁴⁰ According to Beiner (1992: 8), specifically the neutralist presumption is “false” because it “does not discriminate between substantive consumer choices, it does privilege the consumer model itself, and this is a particular conception of human life and society that is deeply partisan and has been intensely contested.”

⁴¹ Beiner (1992: 26–7) objects that liberalism overlooks that individuals are not only “self-determining” but also “brainwashed, manipulated in subtle and incalculable ways, and locked into forms of false consciousness by social forces, aside from the coercive powers of the state”, which presumably makes liberal neutralism a “mirage”. In this view, the problem with liberalism “is not that it treats individuals in complete abstraction from community, [since] liberal [or any] society [provides] a community of experience that identifies its members as inhabitants of the same social order. Nor is the problem that the liberal self is ahistorical and lacking in tradition, for liberal individualism itself constitutes a considerable tradition. The problem is quite simply that the liberal good, as defined by the bourgeois civilization of the last few centuries, is not good enough, and that liberal community defeats the possibility of a sense of meaningful collective purpose” (Beiner 1992: 36).

1992: 26), while defining the first in the meaning of freedom of choice as the highest good. Still, most adherents of perfectionist liberalism would add that it just aims at perfection *in* liberty or autonomy, i.e. perfect freedom of choice or perfectly autonomous individuals, with their critics objecting that this aim is unrealistic, and even worse.

However, other contemporary liberals view perfectionism as inadequate (“imperfect”) and instead adopt anti-perfectionism or neutral liberalism. In these views, perfectionist liberalism by creating its own “standards of excellence” fails to be “neutral” (Dagger 1997: 8) as a proper liberal desideratum. A specific critique is that the conception of liberalism as a “perfectionist” theory in “maximizing” terms is “mistaken”, for liberal ideology or society “seeks to *promote* and *cultivate*, but not to *maximize*, certain virtues [e.g.] autonomy [or] the ability to lead a self-governed life”,⁴² notably autonomy and civic virtue alike as “complementary ideals” (Dagger 1997: 194). Hence, non-perfectionist or neutral liberalism is defined by a vision of the good, but not perfect, society in which humans “will not become perfectly autonomous”, thus neither guaranteeing nor pursuing “absolute freedom, the end of conflict, or total harmony” (Dagger 1997: 200–1).

Other critics describe liberal perfectionism, in light of the “reality of modern politics”, as a “thought system of [Platonic] sort” which represents (or symbolizes) a “vision of a perfect intellectual order that fails to provide a practical basis for making political judgments” (DeLue 1999: xi). In this critique, the failure of perfectionism is due to the fact that “people think and act from diverse understandings of the significance of the major concepts of the political culture”,⁴³ including individualism and communalism, so when or if an extreme type of these conceptions was adopted, the “basic rights and liberties would be denied to all but the supporters of the triumphant and dominant strain” (DeLue 1999: xi–ii). Arguably, since perfectionism becomes a “threat

⁴² Dagger (1997: 194) adds that “there is a threshold beyond which increasing someone’s autonomy by widening the range of choices available [e.g. from a Mercedes-Benz to a Rolls-Royce] becomes less and less valuable. The idea is to promote autonomy by recognizing the right of autonomy, not to produce more and more autonomy for its own sake”.

⁴³ DeLue (1999: xi) further comments that “liberal citizens know that if they react to this fact of life of liberal society by pushing for a perfectionist view anyway they may undermine the society’s commitment to provide rights and liberties to all, and they may also undermine an authentic expression of the strain, individualist or communalist, that they support.”

to the basic character of a liberal regime, citizens do best when they base judgments pertaining to political issues upon an effort that seeks to narrow the differences among them" (DeLue 1999: xii). The preceding yields the suggestion that conceptually liberalism "can only be defended as a moderately perfectionist doctrine", while normatively perfectionism "sometimes appears as an intolerant doctrine which, therefore, should – if at all – be only very reluctantly accepted by liberals" (Brink 2000: 40).

Chapter Five

Liberal Democracy: Political Liberalism

Liberalism and Democracy

In political terms, liberalism is the principle and institutional system of liberty in polity or of liberal democracy. By assumption and in reality, liberal society and modernity, a liberal polity, state or government in particular, is democratic in contrast to its illiberal alternatives as typically anti-democratic such as medievalism, proto-conservatism, fascism, communism or under- and pseudo-democratic like neo-conservatism. In essence, liberal society or liberalism constitutes, generates and predicts democracy or a free polity, as indicated by what Mannheim (1936) calls "liberal-democratic" ideology and government (Zaret 1989), and anti-liberalism non-democratic outcomes, from medieval despotism in medievalism to traditional authoritarianism in proto-conservatism to totalitarianism in fascism to neo-authoritarianism in neo-conservatism. Liberal-secular society and modernity is intrinsically political democracy, though theoretically not all democracies may be "liberal-secular", but also, in their self-projections, non-liberal and non-secular: traditional and conservative, "faith-based" republics like America during most of its history, old and New England's Puritan theocracies and Iran's Islamic theocracy, communist "popular democracies", even fascist, such as Nazi plebiscitary "democracy" (Habermas 1989).

A paradigmatic or original exemplar is what modern liberals call the “Western liberal democratic model of the organization of the liberal state and the free market” (O’Riain 2000: 189). In this connection, some sociologists refer to “English-speaking nations with liberal political traditions” (Pampel 1995), and in particular comment that within British “liberal ideology and jurisprudence, in a dispute government is merely another party” (Jepperson 2002: 70) in contrast to what is described French and continental European statism. However, as seen, it is historically and sociologically inaccurate or imprecise to limit liberal ideology and democracy to “English-speaking” societies in view of the French Revolution, not to mention the European Enlightenment as represented by Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, Kant and other classical political liberals, alongside their English-Scottish colleagues, from Bacon and Locke to Hume and Smith and Mill and Spencer. At least in the sense or form of the Enlightenment, both Anglo-Saxon and continental European countries, such as France and to a lesser extent Germany, have “liberal political traditions”. Recall, as Keynes (1972) stressed, even economic liberalism a la the *laissez-faire* doctrine was invented by the French Enlightenment philosophers and then adopted by classical economists like Smith et al. in Great Britain and beyond. To that extent, the above conflates the origin of at least economic liberalism in the European Enlightenment with its subsequent adoption or expansion in “English-speaking nations” and its alternative abandonment or moderation in continental Europe, including *laissez-faire* France itself.

Liberal Democracy and its Adversaries

Alternatively, democracy within modern Western societies is almost invariably created, designed or understood as liberal, despite illiberal, including conservative and fascist, claims to their own democratic creations, designs or understandings. Historically, the ideal and institutional practice of modern political democracy was and remains the product and achievement of liberalism as democratic ideology, institution and politics par excellence, in particular of the Enlightenment and its practical revolutionary climax in the French and in part American liberal Revolution. The French, American and other liberal or “bourgeois” revolutions (Moore 1993) were by definition and in reality pro-democratic, and conversely, their anti-liberal reactions through conservative, including fascist, counter-revolutions (Bourdieu 1998;

Beck 2000) were and remained anti- and pre-democratic (Mannheim 1967), as witnessed during the 1820s monarchic *Restoration* in France, Nazism in interwar Germany, the neo-conservative counter-revolution and the partial revival of neo-fascism in Europe and America during the 1980–2000s. In general, liberalism results in a “democratic variety” of capitalism as well as “more liberal moderate or democratic versions of socialism” (Hodgson 1999: 2).

Conversely, democracy devoid of political liberalism is what Mises (1950) calls a “hollow form”, and instead fulfills its “social function” only within the framework of liberal values and institutions. Moreover, anti-liberalism typically constitutes or generates authoritarianism, as indicated by the incidence of “authoritarian, illiberal states” (Fung 2003: 519). These adversaries of liberal democracies range from medievalist, proto-conservative and theocratic, Christian, Islamic, Hindu and other, to fascist and communist and to neo-conservative political systems. These can still consider or designate themselves as “democracies” and “republics” like old and New England’s theocracies, America as a whole, Soviet communism, Iranian theocracy, yet never “liberal”. As sociologists observe, during the last century “closed corporatist and statist models of society were deeply stigmatized as having created two disastrous world wars, a great depression, and the horrors of genocide [and] decisively defeated in war, in large part by aggressively liberal, open, and individualist societies” (Schofer and Meyer 2005: 902).

Hence, the obverse or antithesis of liberal-democratic ideology, polity and government are hence “illiberal-authoritarian” ideologies, polities and states. As Mises (1950) emphasizes, political democracy “necessarily follows” from liberalism, just as liberal society and modernity “demands” and “desires” a democratic polity “always and everywhere”. Negatively or minimally, political non-dictatorship is one of the defining “features of a liberal society”, indicating the “compatibility” of democracy with liberalism within contemporary societies (Frohock 1987: 53–153).

The Liberal-Democratic Link and Its Detractors

The preceding is perhaps necessary to emphasize because this original, intrinsic and continuing link between liberalism and political democracy has often been questioned, downplayed or even severed and reversed in

those societies dominated by anti-liberalism, such as proto-conservatism in medieval Europe, England and American colonies in New England, fascism in interwar Italy, Germany and Spain, communism in Russia and Eastern Europe, neo-conservatism in Great Britain and America, with their respective claims to their own “superior” democracies. Thus, just as interwar fascism and post-war communism did, American neo-conservatism dominating the country during the 1980–2000s has vehemently, systematically and successfully reversed, severed and discredited the primary link between liberalism and political democracy in Western societies. It has done so to the point of convincing most Americans, at least those two thirds describing themselves as non-liberal in various surveys, effectively “brainwashed, manipulated” (Beiner 1992: 27) into believing, that “liberal” is, as McCarthy and Reagan et al. accused, “un-American”, “foreign”, “evil”, “secularist” and “ungodly”, so by imputation “un-democratic” and anti-individualistic a la “big government”, “collectivism”, “socialism”, thus succeeding to make liberalism a dreaded “L-word” in US politics and society.

The outcome of anti-liberalism’s dominance and discredit of liberalism in America has been a sort of paradoxical *déjà vu* conservative anti-liberal “authoritarian democracy” (Brouwer 1998) or “exclusionary democracy” (Centeno 1994). Thus, just as in America and Great Britain during much of the 19th century the “state had only to consider the wishes of 8% [or so] of the population” (Centeno 1994), so the US neo-conservative government *mutatis mutandis* primarily considers, as demonstrated by frantic tax privileges for the upper class, those of 10 (“rich”) and even 1 percent (“super-rich”), the “top heavy” (Wolff 2002) among Americans over the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Alternatively, as 19th century “authoritarian”, “exclusionary democracy” in America involved the “exclusion of the propertyless from full electoral participation” (Alexander 2001: 240), so its neo-conservative perpetuation or retrieval during the late 20th and early 21st centuries comprises functionally equivalent exclusive practices. Notably, they consist in excluding poor classes and other “un-American”, specifically minority groups and legal immigrants, also subject to a myriad of institutional discriminations, such as denying welfare benefits and even habeas corpus through indefinite detention for suspicion of terrorism, not to mention the total exclusion of former and current

prisoners, a practice unknown or unparalleled in Western liberal democracies (Uggen and Manza 2002), from the political process. They particularly involve denying and violating voting liberties and rights for these groups, most saliently and persistently in “under-democratized” South (Amenta et al. 2001), through a myriad of legal measures (registration requirements, laws for checking the citizenship status of voters) and practical obstructions (prevention from voting, intimidation). Evidently, these anti-liberal conservative practices of “exclusionary democracy”, including executions of “enemies”, are more typical of third-world dictatorships like theocratic Iran and communist China (Jacobs et al. 2005) than Western liberal democracies, and constitute a long-standing pattern or “method in the madness” perhaps climaxing during the 2000 Presidential election in the South (Hill 2002).

At this juncture and having in mind such exclusionary anti-liberal practices in America as well as in part Western Europe, some sociologists suggest “tell me how the rights of minorities, outcasts and foreigners are handled in your country [officially and informally] and I will tell you how democracy is faring in your country!” (Beck 2000: 128). This is simply the criterion and test of universalism or egalitarianism in modern democracy. Historically and currently, only liberal-secular democracy in Western Europe and when transiently established, as over the 1930–40s, 1960–70s, in America as a rule passes this test of universalism, albeit with some short-term variations, like occasional anti-minority and anti-immigrant paranoia even in some paragons of liberalism, pluralism, openness and tolerance, like Holland, Germany, and Denmark under the impact of xenophobic conservatism and neo-fascism. Alternatively, anti-liberal “authoritarian” or “exclusionary democracy” in America, at least the perennially undemocratic, racist, xenophobic and militaristic South (Cochran 2001), and elsewhere almost invariably fails this test of genuine, substantive and universalistic or comprehensive democracy.

If, as some sociologists put it, the “appetite for democracy comes with eating” (Beck 2000: 139) – which implies what economists may call the increasing marginal utility of democratic liberties and rights in contrast to money and commodities subject to its diminishing – the question is as to who is included in the room and feast, and who is not. To paraphrase Hemingway’s famous expression, if modern democracy is a “movable feast” a la Paris, in which

appetite and desire actually increases, rather than (as economists claim with their venerable, yet trivial and tautological, law of diminishing marginal utility) diminishes, with eating and participating in it, the problem is who is let in this democratic “Paris” or who is not. And both literally and figuratively, it is French and other political liberalism that primarily tends to include virtually everyone, including minorities, outcasts (e.g. ex-prisoners) and foreigners, in the “Paris of democracy” hence rendered the system of universal political liberty, equality and justice for, as its temporary American resident Jefferson would put it, “for all”.

Conversely, it is French and other political anti-liberalism like medieval-rooted conservatism that almost invariably both metaphorically and literally excludes and prevents, just as discriminates against, various groups, notably minorities, outcasts and foreigners, from coming to and remaining in this Paris of democracy thereby degenerated and perverted into “authoritarian” or “exclusionary democracy”. In this view, both European and American anti-liberal neo-conservatives evidently “have not yet realized that the world has become democratic” (Beck 2000: 119), this acting as the major adversary of and obstacle to the satisfaction of the “appetite for democracy” (Beck 2000: 119).

The above confirms that liberal democracy is either universalistic, all-inclusive in the sense of the French Revolution’s “Universal Rights of Man” and Jefferson’s “liberty and justice for all” – or is neither liberal nor true democracy. This is in sharp contrast to illiberal, notably conservative, democracies that are typically particularistic, exclusionary and authoritarian, so anything but democratic from the stance of liberalism. At first sight, what sociologists identify as “authoritarian” or “exclusionary democracy” in America under anti-liberalism is an inner contradiction, paradox or oxymoron, the polar opposite of a genuine, libertarian and universalistic political system projected and created by liberalism. Yet, it is the prevailing, even enthusiastically accepted, as in the South and other “red states”, reality for Americans, thus choosing or forced to usher in the 21st century, reminiscent of, if not identical to, how their ancestors entered 18th century New England under what supreme Puritan master Winthrop called a *mixt aristocracie* (Bremer 1995; Gould 1996) and theocratic “Holy Commonwealth” (Munch 2001) symbolized by “Salem with witches.”

In comparative-historical terms, anti-liberal “faith-based” democracy and its wide acceptance by (two-thirds of) Americans is a remarkable and striking,

perhaps even unprecedented and unrivaled achievement of the neo-conservative asymmetry and alchemy of political-moral dominance, rhetorics (Heckathorn 1990) and system of indoctrination, manipulation and propaganda (Adorno 2001) or, as Americans like to say, yet for foreign “totalitarian” countries, “brain-washing” (Baudrillard 1999; Beiner 1992).

Typically, this anti-liberal process and system reaches the point of what even proto-conservative philosopher Emerson describes as, referring to American conservatism, “universal seeming and treachery”, while Spencer admonishes that liberal society “cannot prosper by lies”, prophetic for what turned out to be various neo-conservative fabrications in the “war on terror”, from the link of the terrorists with the Iraq government and the latter’s “weapons of mass destruction”, which virtually all Americans were persuaded to accept as absolute truths. Predictably, Emerson and Spencer would include into these anti-liberal treacheries and “true lies” what Weber calls in reference to Calvinist-capitalist Franklin Puritan-like pure and vigorous hypocrisy (Bremer 1995) defining or typifying most US religious-political conservatives, especially fundamentalists, like Moral-Majority leaders, evangelical crusaders, joined with conservative politicians in Congress and beyond, and sustaining their high “asymmetry of moral rhetoric” (Heckathorn 1990) vis-à-vis their low behavior, proudly “standing in the tradition of the Puritans” (Dunn and Woodard 1996).

That American anti-liberalism’s system of indoctrination, manipulation, propaganda and deception is probably unprecedented, unrivaled and most effective within Western societies and beyond (Adorno 2001) holds true insofar as even Nazism and communism alike did not really succeed to convince the “qualified majority” of their respective societies in the “evilness” of anti-German and anti-Russian liberalism respectively, as indicated by their eventual collapse and discredit. In a sense, via its unrivaled, in size, scope and efficiency, indoctrination-propaganda machine, as demonstrated during the Cold War, war on drugs, homeland security, terror and “evil”, US anti-liberalism, notably Reaganism, has made most “normal” and sensible people in America (so far only) proud of what only political extremists and marginals, i.e. what Sen (1977) might call irrational “fools”, like medievalists, reactionary conservatives, fascists, communists and radical Islamists in Western societies since the 18th century were and are – being an “anti-liberal”.

For instance, sociologists register the “amazement that so many Americans could find Ronald Reagan’s [anti-liberal] rhetoric to be so persuasive when it

[seems] to be so patently full of rationalizations and deceptions" (Patell 2001: ix). Liberal analysts suggest that Americans did so not in spite but rather because of Reagan being a "second-rate" movie actor "radiating California's sunny expectations" (Graham 2003: 303–10) to become apparently a first-class conservative political actor in Machiavelli's or Shakespeare's sense and even supposedly the "best" and most admired President in recent times. In these views, such a movie *cum* political actor has come "ultimately to embody the new conservatism" (Heale 1998: 134) with his black-and-white, Manichean (Kloppenbergh 1998: 17) and/or cowboy-stile worldview in the sense of "someone who shot first and asked questions later" (Schuparra 1998: xvii), in turn inspired by McCarthyism (Plotke 2002) or its derivatives (e.g. Goldwater) and inspiring as an admired role model most subsequent, especially rigid and extremist, US neo-conservatives.

Hence, one superficial, semi-serious resolution to this puzzle of so many Americans finding Reagan's anti-liberal self-rationalizations and deceptions persuasive is that a second-class movie actor "radiating California's sunny expectations" can become a first-class political actor in Machiavelli or Shakespeare's sense of playing on the stage of politics, i.e. that ever minor skills from the first field can prove crucial in the second.¹ This holds good especially given that US neo-conservatism has in a way transformed America's polity and democracy in a sort of circus, theater, comedy or grotesque yet often mixed with tragedy.

Also, some economists, categorizing Reagan and his fanatical disciples (e.g. Gingrich) into the category of political "rigid extremists" (Blomberg and Harrington 2000), imply the amazement that so many Americans would

¹ Notably, a former US President from the same party reportedly described Reagan as "a great spokesman for attractive political objectives", ranging from balanced budgets to defeating communism, "but when it came to implementation, his record never matched his words." Moreover, Reagan was described as "probably the least well-informed on the details of running the government of any president," consequently "just a poor manager, and you can't be president and do a good job unless you manage." Yet, in spite or perhaps because of these striking disqualifications, Reagan is considered by most Americans as one of the "greatest" American presidents primarily due, as the above former US President suggested, to the highly efficient propaganda machinery of Reaganism. If the latter is correct, then the former President might add that Reagan et al. were actually "well-informed on the details of running the government" and successful, even perfect "managers" only in one respect: combined government-media "brain-washing" of most Americans apparently persuaded that an uninformed, ignorant second-rate actor and "poor manager can be a president and has done a great job."

find these politicians often more persuasive than “flexible moderates” within even their own political party like Bush I (recall his loss to the former and his “voodoo-economics” in presidential primaries) and beyond. To that extent, Reaganite and other US extremist neo-conservative have succeeded to make not only liberalism and liberals a pejorative label of “un-Americanism” and “un-American” a la McCarthy in the minds of most, “brainwashed, manipulated” (Beiner 1992) Americans but even flexibility and moderation within the “extended family” of neo-conservatism (e.g. the “big tent” of Republican Party) in favor of rigid and uncompromising conservative extremism that eventuates in, verges on or allies with neo-fascism (“Christian” terrorist militia).

At this juncture, Reagan et al.’s self-rationalizing, “sunny” and deceptive anti-liberal and generally extremist “asymmetry” of political-moral rhetoric really operates as the alchemy of anti-liberalism and extremism overall in politics. This is the alchemy which succeeds to convert anti-liberal and other extremist ideas, institutions and practices into the “gold” and “sun” of political power (and usually actual gold/wealth) for its practitioners at least in short terms, by apparently persuading most Americans that anti-liberals and “rigid extremists” overall are more “American” than liberals and even “flexible moderates” (including those within neo-conservatism itself), and conversely, the latter as more “un-American” in the sense and manner of McCarthyism than the former.

On this account, American neo-conservatism, especially persuasive, “sunny” and “likable”, yet basically deceptive, rigid and extremist, Reaganism, surpassed or proximately equaled fascism (Adorno 2001) and communism (Myrdal 1953) in the scope and “high-tech” effectiveness of anti-liberal indoctrination and authoritarian “brain-washing”, so being a sort of over-achiever within the extended family of anti-liberalism. Notwithstanding such remarkable success and persistence, this “all-American” over-achiever has not been, and perhaps will not be, able to achieve as the crown achievement what both fascist and communist anti-liberalism, plus medieval European proto-conservatism, have abysmally failed. This is to erase, discredit or reverse the original, inherent and persisting link of liberalism with democracy and modern free society overall.

In terms of *dramatis personae*, despite all their anti-liberal crusades and unrivaled indoctrination and public-impression successes sunny Reagan et al. and other US neo-conservatives, plus their British and European colleagues

Thatcherites and others relapsing in a “terminal condition” (Eccleshall 2000; Eisinga, Lammers and Peters 1991), are likely to repeat the abysmal failure of Burke, Maistre, Bonald, Bismarck and other European proto-conservatives, plus perpetual Vatican medievalists and papal struggles with liberalism (Burns 1990), as well as Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and Stalinists, to destroy liberalism and denigrate or reverse its intrinsic link with democracy and liberty. (Still, there is a certain difference between these anti-liberal “brothers in arms”. Medievalists, proto-conservatives, in part communitarians, and fascists attack liberalism for being “too democratic”, “free” and “individualistic”. By contrast, communists, post-modernists and “libertarian” neo-conservatives assail it for being falsely and not completely democratic, even “non-democratic” and “un-free” a la, as the latter accuse, “big government”. Both arch-conservatives and fascists on one hand, and “libertarian” neo-conservatives on the other then propose their own less and more “democratic” alternatives, respectively.) No wonder, Spencer, like other classical liberals, admonishes and predicts that modern democracy and free society “cannot prosper [or survive] on lies”, no matter how “noble” a la Plato (Dombrowski 2001) or “sweetened” (Beck 2000) by the all-American “apple pie of authoritarianism” (Wagner 1997).

These include the sweet and “true lies” of US neo-conservatives, just as European fascists, communists and proto-conservatives, about non- or pseudo-democratic, “big government” and “tax-and-spend” liberalism, and conversely “only-democratic” neo-conservatism and its supposed freedom or “libertarianism” through “small government, “free enterprise”, individual freedom and initiative. Indeed, these anti-liberal lies may be “true” and “sweet” to many people, as with the majority of Americans supporting these denunciations of and attacks on liberalism and secularism as “un-American” during the 1980–2000s, but eventually are likely to be proven “short” and “bitter”, and exposed as such. This duality was attested during the initially triumphant yet eventually failed propaganda of the neo-conservative “war on terror”, the “axis of evil” (e.g. Iraq’s alleged link to September 11 terrorism and never-found “weapons of mass destruction”), as well as the similar pattern in anti-liberal culture wars on, for example, drugs, alcohol, school prayer, indecency, abortion and evolutionism during the 2000s, plus their extant anticipation or inspiration Puritan “Salem with witches” and McCarthyism with its own witch-trial proxies. Like medievalist conservatism, fascism and commu-

nism in Europe, US anti-liberalism may, as the adage goes, lie to and “fool” – about liberalism in relation to democracy and human freedom – some or even most American people sometimes or most of the time, but not all of them and not always. (This was in part shown during the 2006 US congressional and state elections which can in a sense be interpreted as the majority Americans saying “enough is enough” of anti-liberal “sweet” and “true lies” fabricated by neo-conservatism since Reaganism after the model of McCarthyism as well as Puritanism.)

Liberalization and Democratization

Further, during the 1990s and 2000s intertwined and synergic social liberalization and political democratization (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart 2004), with the second as the special facet of the first, in most Western and other societies reaffirm and reinforce the original link between liberalism and democracy, and conversely that of anti-liberalism and un-democratic outcomes, with the predictable deviation of America under anti-liberalism from these global processes. Apparently, contemporary liberalism continues to guide the Western world to further political democracy and a free society overall, while anti-liberalism like conservatism, following a long conservative tradition, has perpetuated American exceptionalism by (re)making America a “deviant case” in respect of liberal-democratic trends and links at the start of the 21st century.

In short, the link of liberalism and democracy is confirmed and reinforced, positively, through intertwined liberalization and democratization in modern Western societies, negatively, via joint conservative political-religious revivals and authoritarian outcomes in America since the 1980s. Both trends reaffirm, realize or retrieve the liberal-democratic intrinsic and historical link that especially US neo-conservatives attempt to erase, reverse or discredit, in accordance with the long-standing conservative-fascist pattern of anti-liberalism and to that extent anti-democracy.

The question may arise as to why liberalism is democracy. Of course, most contemporary liberals adopt and even reinforce the classical argument that politically liberalism is the ideal and institution of democracy, that liberal society and modernity is democratic, as also acknowledged with condemnation and regret by medievalism, proto-conservatism and fascism, though

denied by communism, “libertarian” neo-conservatism and post-modernism. If the liberal-democratic equivalence or link is relatively non-controversial in the liberal and other sociological literature (Mannheim 1936; Zaret 1989), it leads to the question of why and how liberalism is the ideal and institutional system of democracy, liberal society and modernity is democratic and free overall.

As intimated, liberalism is the ideal and system of democracy in virtue of its principles, institutions and practices of political liberty, pluralism, egalitarianism, justice, universalism, secularism, rationalism and humanism, while its illiberal counterparts are either anti- or under-democratic due to their opposite attributes. Liberal society and modernity is democratic by being politically “libertarian” in a true sense – not in the meaning of “libertarianism” reducing political freedom to “free markets” – as well as, in a synergy, pluralist, egalitarian, equitable, universalistic, secular, rationalist and humanist, and its illiberal alternatives are not, by being the exact opposite. This defines liberal democracy in equivalent terms: integral political liberty, pluralism, egalitarianism, justice, universalism, secularism, rationalism and humanism (Table 7). The rest of this chapter addresses the above question by reconsidering these main political attributes and outcomes of liberalism.

Liberal Democracy and Political Liberty

By assumption, liberalism is, first and foremost, the ideal and system of democracy or liberal society and modernity democratic, because of the principle and institutional practice of political freedom as a constituent of integral human liberty. This yields the concept and reality of modern liberal democracy defined as the principle and institutional system of political liberty, a free polity, thus an essential constituent of societal liberalism or liberal society. By analogy to the latter as a whole, liberal democracy is defined by integral political liberty, including formal and substantive, positive and negative, individual and collective, freedoms in polity, as well as by democratic governance, as the two major classes of its dimensions or indicators² (Bollen and Paxton 1998).

² Bollen and Paxton (1998) classifies dimensions or indicators of liberal democracy into two classes: first, political liberties, involving freedom of broadcast media, freedom

Table 7
Elements of Liberal Democracy

<i>Integral political liberty</i>	formal and substantive political liberty positive and negative political liberty individual and collective political liberty
<i>Political pluralism</i>	formal and substantive political pluralism
<i>Political egalitarianism</i>	integral political equality
<i>Political justice</i>	integral political justice
<i>Political universalism</i>	liberal political universalism and inclusion universalistic political culture
<i>Political secularism</i>	formal secularism: a secular liberal state substantive secularism: secular liberal society
<i>Political rationalism</i>	political rationalism versus economic rationality public use of reason
<i>Political humanism</i>	liberal human liberties, rights and life liberal welfare state

Formal and Substantive Political Liberty

A dual component of integral political liberty incorporates formal and substantive freedoms in polity. In liberal democracy, political liberty or rationality is, using Weber's terms, both formal, procedural or legal, notably constitutional, and substantive, factual or effective, in contrast to anti-liberalism in which it is only or mostly the first but not the second, as in "libertarianism", or neither as with medievalist proto-conservatism, fascism, communism, neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. This signifies that liberalism is democratic by establishing, promoting and protecting both formal

of print media, civil liberties and freedom of group opposition; second, democratic rule, expressed in political rights, competitiveness in the nomination process, chief executive elected, and effectiveness of the elective legislative body.

and substantive, procedural and effective, legal and sociological or political and other liberties, not solely or mainly the first as in “libertarianism”, or none of them as in conservatism, fascism and communism. Comparatively, it suggests that it is fully libertarian-democratic or holistic political liberty and democracy vis-à-vis “libertarianism” as their partial version, and categorically democratic versus conservatism, fascism and communism as yet vigorously anti- or, in Mannheim’s (1967: 181) words, pre-democratic. Thus, classical and especially contemporary liberalism embraces and tries to integrate or proximately balance both political freedoms in the form of integral liberty in polity and society overall.

Liberalism does so because it recognizes and emphasizes that formal-legal political freedom, just as rationality, as Weber implies, is the necessary but not sufficient condition of substantive-effective liberty and rationality in a sociological sense. This is what his colleague Tönnies implies by observing that formal political freedom would be a “rather apathetic and ineffectual matter at least in terms of civil law”, just as was, negatively, what he calls “formal slavery” in Rome. Also, contemporary critical sociologists object that even if “everybody is guaranteed formal freedom” (Horkheimer and Adorno 1993) in modern liberal society, this is not enough, especially in the presence and operation of various subtle mechanisms of social control.³

Generally, liberalism thus avoids or resolves the legalistic “libertarian” fallacy committed by “libertarianism” as well as overcomes the total anti-libertarian attack on both fronts by medievalism, conservatism, fascism and communism. For illustration, it acknowledges and stresses that the formal, procedural, or constitutional protection and separation of political and religious liberty and power, state and church, is not invariably a sufficient or even necessary condition of their substantive, societal promotion and differentiation, and that between politics and religion in society.

For liberalism, a formally secular state legally protecting and separating political and religious freedoms and powers is not enough or even necessary for, let alone equivalent to, a substantively free or secularized polity and society. Sociologists suggest that this disjuncture of a secular state and non-secular

³ Horkheimer and Adorno (1993) object that in modern liberal society, “everybody is guaranteed formal freedom”, yet “everyone is enclosed at an early age in a system of churches, clubs, professional associations, and other such concerns, which constitute the most sensitive instrument of social control.”

society (Archer 2001) is observed in America over most of its history, especially under predominant religious conservatism, from early theocratic Puritanism to contemporary theocentric fundamentalism (Wall 1998), as epitomized by the evangelicalism of the “Bible Belt” (Bauman 1997). And conversely, a formally non-secular state lacking such legal protection or separation of freedoms is not necessarily an antipode or impediment to free and secularized polity and society in substantive terms, as witnessed in contemporary Great Britain (Archer 2001), even more Scandinavia, both officially “Anglican” and “Lutheran” respectively. Similarly, for liberalism, formal religious freedom, pluralism or competition, permitted by a secular state and manifested in the peaceful or competitive coexistence of various religions, churches and sects, is not always enough for substantive and even legal political liberty, pluralism or competition, as well as for effective freedoms of and notably “from” religion, as witnessed in most of American history up to the 21st century, especially the “Bible Belt”.

Also, legal political pluralism as a case of formal liberty in polity may be the necessary, but not invariably the sufficient condition for a substantively pluralistic and liberal democracy, contrary to the “libertarian” legalistic, formalist or constitutional fallacy suggesting the opposite.

Thus, an official multi-party system, while indispensable to, frequently is simply not enough for substantive or factual political and ideological pluralism and so liberal democracy, as indicated by various cases, ranging from European proto-conservative, fascist and communist societies to developing countries like Mexico and in part America under neo-conservatism during the 1980–2000s. For example, over the 1980s–2000s American politics was admittedly “dominated by two procapitalist political parties and defined by traditional, moralistic, sectarian religion, classical liberalism (*laissez faire*), and environmentalist and other post-materialist tendencies”⁴ (Lipset and Marks 2000). Namely, the US political, including electoral, system is based on what analysts describe as “two majorities”: first, a “majority preference for a tempered liberal economics”, second, “broadly traditionalist cultural values and nationalist foreign policy” (Singh 2002: 31), shared by these two dominant

⁴ Lipset and Marks (2000) add that since the 1980 and before in America the “parties of the Left have reconstituted themselves as liberals in the American sense (not the European). The Right is moving in varying degrees towards classical liberalism or libertarianism.”

and virtually all political parties and to that extent by those liberals and conservatives belonging to them. Thus, as a sort of sociological law of liberalism and party affiliation, in America “liberal candidates tend to run as Democrats while conservatives run as Republicans” (Levitt 1996). As most such tendencies, it holds true with some exceptions like ultra-conservative Democrats (“Dixicrats”) in the South, also contributing to making democracy in America “going South” and placing American politics under the anti-liberal “shadow of Dixie” (Cochran 2001), while “liberal Republicans” remain or increasingly become an extremely rare, if not extinct, species and an oxymoron.

Still, with these secondary exceptions or some “heretics” in their midst, both major US (and most other) political parties apparently coalesce around these anti- or quasi-liberal preferences, values or policies, notably “small government” *cum* a policing, non-welfare and warfare state through the vice police and the “war on terror”, nationalism *cum* Americanism, and moralist-religious traditionalism. In particular, the above reaffirms that ethnocentrism, either as overt nationalism or self-rationalized as patriotism *a la* Americanism, yet often both escalating into militarism and imperialism (Steinmetz 2005), more than perhaps anything else has been and remains the poison of contemporary American liberalism, including the political party (or parties) supposed to represent it, not to mention conservatism (and the respective party), in part “libertarianism”, as exemplary ethnocentric, nationalistic or “patriotic” ideology and policy.

The aforesaid holds true of national-based liberalism in general, from European liberals in and outside of parliaments supporting nationalistic WW I to many US liberals’ support for or resignation to McCarthyism (Tilman 2001), the Vietnam War, the attack on Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the war on “terror” and “evil” like Iraq’s brutal invasion and occupation during the 2000s, etc. It is this poison that generated and perpetuates non-Western experiences, definitions or perception of American and Western liberalism as “militarism” and “imperialism” couched in the rhetoric of human liberties and rights (Habermas 2001). Hence, this is the poison that makes American and other liberalism more “conservative” than “liberal” in the classical sense of cosmopolitanism or internationalism (Lipset 1955), i.e., to paraphrase Marx, it is liberals, more than anyone else, that have no particular country, state, nation or allegiance other than that of liberty, equality and justice, or simply are “citizens of the world” *a la* Kant and Condorcet (Beck 2000).

While seemingly too idealistic and utopian from a non-liberal or “pragmatic” stance, originally European and in part American, Jeffersonian liberalism and its advocates defined themselves in precisely such anti-national, cosmopolitan and global terms in contrast to their nationalist anti-liberal, notably conservative, counterparts inheriting medievalist localism, parochialism and ethnic prejudice (Gorski 2000). Overall, ethnocentrism and other shared anti- or quasi-liberal preferences of US political parties essentially point to effective ideological and religious monism or consensus, specifically what economists would call political monopoly or duopoly (Hill 2002), rather than market-style free competition or substantive pluralism and dissent, within a formally pluralistic or multi-party polity in America under neo-conservatism and before, as during the Cold War.

At this juncture, some economists (Chari, Jones and Marimon 1997: 958) contend, seemingly referring to the elections in 1996 as well as during the 1980s, that “voters in the US elect liberal representatives and conservative presidents to restrain them”, presumably in their “big-government” spending and taxation. This is curious and basically incorrect contention in several respects. First, it overlooks that during the 1990s–2000s, e.g. since the 1994 “Republican Revolution” taking control of Congress as well as state legislatures, the pattern has been precisely opposite, with both conservative representatives *and* presidents being elected often by large margins (e.g. 2000 and 2004, with a seemingly transient setback in 2006). Second, it reveals and perpetuates the neo-conservative pejorative definition or myth of liberalism embodied by “big-government” and “tax-and-spend” liberals (“L-word”) who hence need a prudent conservative president and perhaps an orthodox, monetarist (anti-Keynesian) economist to “restrain them”. Third, it fails to realize or envision that often conservative representatives and presidents themselves need to be restrained in this and other respects by liberals. This is shown by the imprudent, irrational and even irresponsible financial pattern, like frantic (almost Nazi-style) and exorbitant military spending, of the Reagan administration during the 1980s and “compassionate” presidential and congressional tax-cutting and budget-deficit-exploding neo-conservatism described by leading US economists (e.g. Stiglitz) as “fiscal madness” in the 2000s even by comparison with their “tax-and-spend” liberal counterparts like the democratic presidency of 1992–2000. Fourth, generally, it commits or reflects a typical economic fallacy of “misplaced concreteness” by

reductively misplacing liberal democracy as government taxation and expenditure, i.e. reducing democratic politics to rational fiscal-monetary policy, as just one of its elements and functions.

At any rate, in all of the abovenoted cases, the formally or constitutionally multi-party system functioned at most as a simulation (Baudrillard 1999), as in Mexico until the 1990s and in part America under neo-conservatism, at worst as grotesque ridicule, cynical abuse and ultimate elimination of political pluralism and so liberal democracy, as done by proto-conservatism, fascism and communism. Recall Dahrendorf (1979: 108) observes that historically ruling political parties and classes at best “welcomed democracy only so long as it guaranteed their predominance”, thus turning it into an effective Machiavellian instrument of their narrow ends. Further, in some views, a formally democratic, multi-party political system is not only in itself insufficient but “also not required” for the effective practice of human liberties and rights⁵ (Chow 1997). Similarly, sociologists comment, in apparent reference to America’s non-presidential electoral processes, that a formal or procedural democracy “with a 30% turnout at elections” is hardly substantive or genuine democracy (Beck 2000: 115).

Constitutional and Liberal Democracy

In particular, even a democratic written constitution permitting a multi-party system or formal political and religious pluralism does not always guarantee substantive ideological pluralism and freedom in politics and to that extent effective liberal-secular democracy. This casts doubt on US libertarians’ and conservatives’ sanctification of and seeming obsession with the Constitution as the “Bible” of American civil religion (Munch 2001). Indeed, despite its Jeffersonian liberal rendition and interpretation, the US Constitution provides a paradigmatic historical exemplar of a dualism or tension between formal political-religious freedom and substantive non-pluralism or un-freedom in polity in cases ranging from New England’s official Puritan theocracy, formally ending only in the 1830s, so half a century after the Revolution, to the slavery constitutionally stipulated and segregation legalized by the 1896

⁵ Chow (1997) remarks that “human rights have been practiced in Hong Kong under British rule, but there has been no democracy” and even contends that substantive democracy “can be practiced under a one-party rule”.

Supreme Court decision to the “red scare” and McCarthyism to neo-conservative ideological monism and culture wars during the 2000s. This holds true a fortiori of written constitutions in anti-liberal and un-democratic societies like Nazi Germany and Stalinist Soviet Union as well as “Islamic Republics” like Iran where they function as substantively empty declarations or “cheap talk” of political pluralism and freedom such that they are not worth the paper on which they were written.

Conversely, the lack of a written or official constitution as a legal formulation of political pluralism does not invariably rule out or weaken substantive ideological pluralism and freedom in polity and so liberal democracy, as evidenced by Great Britain, which contradicts the US libertarian legalistic-constitutional fallacy. To that extent, constitutionalism, like republicanism, in itself is not enough for effective political freedom or pluralism, and constitutional, procedural democracies in the form or sense of a written constitution and constitutional procedures are not sufficient for liberal democracy as the system of integral, formal and substantive alike, liberty in polity and society. This is partly implied in the observation that the constitutional “conception of democracy – even if it recognizes the fact that modern constitutional democratic regimes developed historically in close relation to liberal conceptions of the individual and freedom – does not necessarily equate democracy with any specific values”⁶ (Eisenstadt 1998: 219).

Specifically, these values involve what Weber would call substantive liberty, including individual liberties and rights, conjoined with equality and justice in a synergy, as an ultimate value in a liberal polity and society. Moreover, constitutional or procedural democracy has been not only liberal or substantively and formally free, but often anti-liberal, including conservative in Bismarck’s Germany, America during most of its history, especially during the 1980–2000s, fascist in inter-war Europe and communist in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. To that extent, it has been substantively or effectively an anti- and pre-democratic system exemplified by American conservative

⁶ Eisenstadt (1998: 219) adds that “it is only lately that these conceptions of democracy have been equated by various groups with extreme liberal, “libertarian” values and with an ideological semi-sanctification of the free market economy”. Also, he comments that constitutional democracy needs some “source of legitimation beyond the rules of the game [e.g.] liberal values concerning the rights of individuals” (Eisenstadt 1998: 220).

“authoritarian” as well as exclusionary and communist “popular” democracy. Alternatively, liberal democracy and government may, as in America, France and most Western societies, or may not, as in Great Britain, be constitutional political liberalism or procedural constitutionalism, depending on the presence or not of an officially binding written constitution.

Hence, American and other Western constitutional democracies are just special, even not necessary – though typically preferred by most contemporary US liberals just as “libertarians” – cases of liberal democracy or a free polity, so formal constitutionalism a particular, but not invariable, form of political liberalism. At this juncture, leading US liberal political philosophers (e.g. Rawls 1993) propose that “our exercise of political power is fully proper only when it is exercised in accordance with a constitution, the essentials of which all citizens as free and equal may be reasonably expected to endorse in the light of principles and ideals acceptable to their common human reason”. If it means the US written constitution, this statement somewhat ethnocentrically overlooks or downplays the fact that a “proper” democratic exercise of political power has been attained not only in America – if ever, liberal democracy being subverted into its authoritarian opposite especially under conservative predominance, from theocratic Puritanism to repressive neo-conservatism (Munch 2001) – but also, if not more, in countries like Great Britain with no such a legal framework. More plausibly, it should be restated or reinterpreted to connote both written, legal or formal, American-style and unwritten, conventional or sociological, British-type constitution. Yet, this extension in turn deviates from the strictly legal definition of a constitution as a written, “real” document or codified formal law, as different from unwritten customs and diffuse informal social conventions like English common law.

Overall, most US contemporary liberals as well as libertarians and neo-conservatives by “constitution” mean its written legal type, thus reflecting and limiting to – i.e. failing to go beyond – America’s own particular experience and boundaries, while overlooking or downplaying other constitutional types and possibilities elsewhere, including Great Britain. In terms of the equation of American constitutionalism with superior liberal or republican (including electoral-college) democracy, US contemporary political liberalism remains as ethnocentric or oblivious of non-American alternatives as “libertarianism”, let alone neo-conservatism. Also, some public choice theorists remark that the “liberal ideal assumes that rational individuals must recognize the mutual

gains from cooperative behavior, and reach contractual agreements on institutions that benefit all" (Mueller 1996: 343), yet implicitly admit that political liberalism is not exhausted by and so cannot be reduced to what is extolled as a constitutional convention and democracy as one of its constituent institutions.⁷ Admittedly, the "success of a constitutional democracy hinges on matching the right set of [liberal] political institutions to the right [sic!] set of people" (Mueller 1996: 343).

Thus, contemporary sociologists distinguish liberal democracy as the "most general class of society" from its concrete variants, including mass or constitutional democracy, along with "retrospective" democracy and civil society (Eisenstadt 1998: 222). In this view, like these other variants, constitutional democracy historically "was inseparable from the development of liberalism, especially in the emphasis on the rights of individuals as antecedent to the constitution of society. Whence the paradox that the constitutional conception of democracy often justifies adherence to the rules of the game in terms of some more fundamental conception of freedom, "negative" liberty, inalienable individual rights [etc.]" (Eisenstadt 1998: 220).

In consequence, what other contemporary sociologists describe as "liberal democratic states" (Habermas 2001: 49) can be classified into constitutional and non-constitutional sub-types in the above sense, exemplified respectively by America/France and Great Britain. To that extent, to equate political liberalism to constitutionalism, or liberal to constitutional or procedural democracy, as do some US contemporary liberals and above all "libertarians", is a non-sequitur or the fallacy of misplaced concreteness reducing the general to the particular or concrete. This equation hence commits the legalistic fallacy of equating or reducing the polity as a whole to constitutional law and procedures at its element, so substantive-sociological to formal-legal political liberties.

In short, official constitutionalism is far from being a panacea for political freedom and liberal-secular democracy in modern societies, contrary to libertarians' religious-like glorification of the US constitution as a civic "Bible" and so legal "cure-all" (Munch 2001). This is implicitly admitted even by

⁷ Mueller (1996: 347) proposes that the liberal idea that "government could and should be established by a constitutional contract among the individuals who would live under it has from its inception been radical and revolutionary. It remains so today."

some proponents of constitutionalism in the “suggestion that the political failings of the US might be corrected by a new set of political institutions, and that a new constitutional convention should be called to craft these institutions” (Mueller 1996: 343). Such suggestions admit that existing constitutional institutions in America and beyond are not necessary or sufficient for true liberal democracy in which such democratic “failings” by assumption would be non-existent and incompatible or minor and transient, thus that the US constitution itself is not perfect and timeless, so should not be seen, as by most conservatives and many liberals, as sacred whose replacement by another is a taboo and “un-American”.

Alternatively, if the US or any other written constitution reached such perfection, no need would exist for a “new set of political institutions” to correct the “political failings” of the old set via a “new constitutional convention”, so another constitution. Yet, in spite of such “failings”, so-called constitutional making and so institutional innovation in the form of liberal-democratic institutions in contemporary America, as well as Western Europe, is reportedly pervaded by “conservatism”⁸ (Mueller 1996: 347) sanctifying the existing US constitution as eternal and sacrosanct (Munch 2001) and the corresponding social-political system as the “best of all possible worlds” (Merton 1968).

At most, constitutionalism institutes formal and procedural political freedom or pluralism – what Weber calls legal-rational authority – but does not in itself generate or guarantee its substantive or effective type, as shown by the US constitution since its promulgation through the slavery and segregation to McCarthyism and neo-conservative authoritarian hegemony in the 2000s. At worst, constitutionalism is or may become the legal cover, disguise and rationalization for destruction of liberalism and liberal democracy, as witnessed in conservatism, fascism and communism. Since political liberalism or liberal-secular democracy is an integral of formal and substantive political liberties, of Weber’s legal-rational authority and effective freedom alike, constitutionalism in the sense of constitutional legalism and procedure in the best scenario

⁸ Mueller (1996: 347) predicts that the “suggestion that the political failings of the US might be corrected by a new set of political institutions, and that a new constitutional convention should be called to craft these institutions, would be opposed by many political scientists and other political observers. Constitutional making in Europe today is characterized by the same conservatism that exists in the US.” In turn, Mueller (1996: 347) contends that “contentment breeds conservatism” with respect to constitutional change in Western liberal democracies.

is just half of the liberal-democratic equation; in the worst case, it is no part of it or its disguise hiding a lack of substantive democracy. Thus, contemporary sociologists find that many “contradictory dimensions of formally democratic social systems did not, and do not, express themselves in a transparent way [but] hidden by constitutional principles and Enlightenment culture alike” (Alexander 2001: 241).

Positive and Negative Political Liberty

As indicated, political liberalism or liberal democracy is also an integral of negative or passive and positive or active political liberties, freedom “from” and freedom “for” politics, privacy, “peace of mind”, and agency in polity and society. Liberal democracy establishes, promotes and protects not only negative passive freedom “from” political or government, coercion, interference and control, but also active positive liberty “for” autonomous individual and collective action or agency in politics. This distinguishes it from anti-liberalism such as conservatism, fascism and communism suppressing both types of freedom and agency as well as from pseudo-liberalism or “libertarianism” centering on negative at the expense of the positive type.

In particular, liberal democracy combines and aims to balance freedom from compulsion and repression with liberty for change and reform – i.e. privacy and agency – in polity and all society. This is unlike anti-liberal conservatism, including fascism, that seeks to perpetuate political coercion and oppression and to prevent substantial changes and reforms through defining and conserving the status quo as the sacred and providentially designed (Bendix 1984) or the “best of all possible worlds” (Merton 1968) in the belief that simply “it does not get better than this”. In turn, these lyrics of a popular country song (“Jesus Christ and John Wayne”), a sort of anthem of “illiterate, barefoot hillbillies” (Heineman 1998: 263–4), in America (e.g. the South, Texas), while seemingly trivial and impertinent are sociologically indicative and relevant in that they, like most of this musical genre, reflect the perennial status-quo character and ethnocentric ignorance of American political-religious conservatism. The latter usually accuses and attacks liberalism for seeking radical, even revolutionary, change and cosmopolitan transformation in supposedly immutable, eternal and superior, yet particular (Munch 2001), native American values and institutions.

Predictably, if the conservative-authoritarian and ignorant “it does not get better than this” claim prevailed over the liberal-democratic principle of social change and freedom in, say, 1776, 1865, and the 1960s, the American Revolution, the abolition of slavery and of segregation would have never happened. Alternatively, whenever it did and liberalism was subdued, as during, for example, New England’s Puritan theocracy, the Puritan-incited Great Awakenings, the Southern system of segregation and “Monkey Trial[s]” (Boles 1999), McCarthyism, and the 1980–2000s, the outcome was what Mises (1950) calls the “piece of the cemetery” in the sense of social-institutional petrification, a sort of “deep freezing”, notably petrified un-freedom and the subversion of democracy, i.e. liberty and truth as the first casualty of conservative repression and global war, from the Cold War to the “war on terror”.

If not America as whole under neo-conservatism during the early 21st century, then at least the ultra-conservative, anti-liberal Southern Bible Belt and other “red” states can be described in terms of Mises’ “piece of the cemetery” or institutional petrified repression. Its syndromes and embodiments involve what observers detect as sleepy, dead- and desert-like (Baudrillard 1999) small Southern towns and mentalities (Singh 2002) inhabited and ruled by “born-again” self-righteous Puritan-style saints described as “moral absolutists and religious nuts” (Heineman 1998: 263–4) and “rigid extremists” (Blomberg and Harrington 2000), simply “lunatics” (Brennan 1995: 140), practicing “sadistic intolerance” to cultural differences (Bauman 2000) and/or by proudly self-described “red-necks” as an “all-American” species of proto- and neo-fascists⁹ or extreme anti-liberals. Specifically, Mises’ “piece of the cemetery” or institutional petrification of un-freedom in the Bible Belt assumes the form of what Mencken (1982) calls “Baptist and Methodist barbarism”, albeit primarily and increasingly the first, and secondarily and decreasingly the second. In Tocqueville’s context, this region can be described in terms of the tyr-

⁹ A certain comparative *differentia specifica* of Southern and other “all-American” “red-necks” is their greater degree of ignorance, even illiteracy a la “illiterate, barefoot hillbillies” (Heineman 1998: 263–4), and hence, in accordance with their fundamentalist equation, blissfulness than even European fascists, including Nazis, due to US religious conservatism’s hostility and disdain for secular education and knowledge. In this sense, their own Biblical “they do not know what they are doing” explanation helps explain and perhaps in part exonerate the peculiar “ways and means” of these ignorant and blissful “all American” counterparts of European fascists, so extreme anti-liberals.

anny of the “silent moral majority” or rather of the fundamentalist religious minority establishing and perpetuating, in accordance with fundamentalist medieval-rioted millennialism (Giddens 1984), the “piece of the cemetery” in the South and attempting and in part succeeding to place all America under this anti-liberal, undemocratic and theocratic, just as racist, “shadow of Dixie” (Cochran 2001).

In sharp contrast to American and other religious-political anti-liberalism, liberal democracy comprises not only freedom from what Mises (1950) would call the coercive “peace of the cemetery” as authoritarian status-quo, typically established and enforced by an anti-liberal, notably conservative-fascist, state. It also encompasses freedom/and agency for creating a dynamic democratic political-social system logically amenable and actually subject to modification and development rather than being fixed or frozen as in anti-liberalism and in part libertarianism in the form of an archaic and immutable laissez-faire economy.

In Schumpeter’s (1950) terms in reference to economic liberalism (capitalism), the complex and moving equilibrium of negative-positive liberty in liberal democracy is a process of “creative destruction” by destroying and superseding, or freeing people from, the old structures of anti-liberal, including medieval, conservative, fascist and communist, political coercion, and creating the new structure of, or freedom for, democratic values, institutions and actions. This Schumpeter-like fusion or double agency of destruction of coercion and innovation of liberty is what distinguishes liberal democracy from its anti-liberal alternatives. These are characterized instead by a mixture of un-creative conservation (neo-conservatism) or reactionary restoration (medievalism) of coercive political structures and of prevention (conservatism) or liquidation (fascism and communism) of their non-coercive types.

Liberal democracy’s destruction of coercion and creation of liberty also make it distinct from “libertarianism” preferring negative freedom from the “old” or tyranny over positive liberty for the “new” or democratic change, thus being conservative-libertarian in this sense. In short, liberal democracy embraces both the old negative and new positive freedom (Dahrendorf 1975), passive privacy and transformative agency, in a fusion, synergy or balance, while anti-liberalism does neither, and “libertarianism” mostly the first. In this, like other respects, liberal democracy is truly and completely libertarian by contrast to “libertarianism” as spuriously, quasi and partially libertarian

or non-agency, and anti-liberalism, including medievalism, conservatism, fascism and communism, as totally anti-libertarian, both anti-privacy and anti-agency.

Individual and Collective Political Liberty

As mentioned, liberal democracy is also an integral and moving equilibrium of individual and collective, personal and public liberties in politics. In conjunction with the previous integral, liberal democracy recognizes and comprises individual and collective liberty in polity and all society through its recognition, fusion and balance of the negative freedom of individuals and groups alike from state coercion and the positive liberty of both for autonomous political action, including change and reform. In particular, the second indicates that liberal democracy endows both individual and groups with agency, i.e. the capacity for freedom of political action, choice and change, thus treating them as agents or free actors in politics. Hence, political liberalism is far from being, as objected by anti-liberal “communitarian” conservatives and fascists, extreme individualism or atomism, but individualistic and collectivist alike in the sense and virtue of recognizing both individual and collective agency, personal and group liberties, rights and identities.

This dual element distinguishes political liberalism from “libertarianism” as well. The latter, due to its extreme “rugged” individualism and anti-collectivism, tends to attribute, if ever given its emphasis on negative liberty, political and any agency, yet restricted by excluding radical transformation, notably revolutionary change, and to that extent freedoms and rights only to individuals. In contrast to liberalism, it does so on the ground that, as Mises (1966) and Hayek (1948) claim, only individuals “act”, so are agents, free actors in polity and society, including economy, while groups are denied such active attributes and even passive or negative freedom from state coercion, and generally assumed away of existence as mysterious collective Hegellian non-entities (Buchanan 1991).

The integral and dynamic equilibrium between individual and collective agency and positive liberty makes liberal democracy truly and completely libertarian, just as inclusive, egalitarian and universalistic by comparison with “libertarianism” as pseudo-libertarian, non-inclusive, non-egalitarian and non-universalistic by excluding on dogmatic individualistic grounds class,

ethnic, religious and other collectivities, especially social minorities, except for the preferred and dominant collectivity, viz. the capitalist class (Fligstein 2001) or what minority Americans cynically call “WASP” (White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestants) in America (Munch 2001). The above indicates respectively liberal consistency and “libertarian” inconsistency in, even disdain or distrust for (Tillman 2001), democratic politics and society. Liberal democracy’s recognition of collective, just as individual, agency in the sense of group freedoms, rights and identities, expresses and realizes liberalism’s acknowledgment and protection of political and cultural pluralism or diversity. In turn, its disregard or devaluation of collective agency reflects libertarianism’s distrust or ambivalence, shared with neo-conservatism, vis-à-vis pluralist politics and culture, especially multiculturalism seen as a threat to America’s supposed eternal, superior and universal values, institutions, identity and “manifest destiny”.

The composite and dynamic equilibrium of individual and collective agency, liberties, rights and identities distinguishes even more liberal democracy from anti-liberalism. The latter denies, suppresses or fears both forms of agency and freedom, so is completely anti-libertarian in this respect, like others, as witnessed in a long-standing and consistent anti-liberal sequence from medievalism and proto-conservatism to fascism and communism and to neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. Liberalism recognizes both individualism and “collectivism”, person and group, in terms of freedom, agency or identity, while anti-liberalism fears or attacks both, individual and collective, including class, political, ideological, racial-ethnic, religious, liberties, actions and identities. In short, liberal democracy encompasses what Parsons (1951) calls self-orientation and collectivity orientation, private and collective interests alike, in contrast to anti-liberalism that denies both and “libertarianism” that sacrifices the second to the first on dogmatic grounds of “individualism” and anti-collectivism.

In sum, with respect to political liberty, liberal democracy and modernity is individualistic and “collectivist” alike by granting negative and positive liberties, rights and identities to both individuals and groups, while anti-liberalism, including neo-conservatism despite individualistic libertarian rhetoric, is anti-individualistic and anti-collectivist by denying all, and “libertarianism” hyper-individualistic by affording only or mostly individual freedom. This reaffirms that modern political liberalism, by encompassing individual and

group liberties alike, represents an integral and dynamically balanced principle and system of liberty in the form of liberal democracy. It also confirms that “libertarianism” is extreme individualism and degenerate “liberalism”, and conservative anti-liberalism, the ancient and new regime of authoritarian oppression and syndrome of illiberty in both respects, as demonstrated by European medieval conservatism and American neo-conservatism, respectively.

Liberal Democracy and Political Pluralism

Liberal society and modernity is also democratic because of its principle and practice of political and ideological pluralism or diversity as a species of its general pluralistic values, processes and institutions. Consequently, liberal democracy is by assumption and in reality a pluralistic polity or state predicated on the principle of political and ideological pluralism, just as free civil society is based on that of cultural diversity or multiculturalism, so a pluralist social sphere or culture, by contrast to its illiberal alternatives as anti-pluralist by resting on undemocratic monism.

Political Pluralism and Freedom

Political and cultural pluralism or diversity is a constitutive component of integral liberty in polity and society (Hirschman 1982), while monism is its antidote or rather poison. In particular, political pluralism comprises, reflects and recognizes collective or group freedoms, rights and identities in liberal democracy and civil society, while monism excludes and suppresses them. In this sense, political pluralism represents the necessary condition of such liberties within liberal democracy. Conversely, their recognition reflects a pluralistic polity and civil society, just as suppressing, as done by anti-liberalism, them or subordinating, as in libertarianism, them to their individual forms indicates some degree of authoritarian monism.

To that extent, the political contradiction between liberalism and liberty on one hand and anti-liberalism and un-freedom on the other manifests itself as that between pluralism recognizing and permitting competition and conflict and monism seeking and decreeing monopoly and “law and order” in polity, just as do their culture wars as those between cultural diversity and homoge-

neity. Thus, contemporary sociologists point out that the “struggle” between liberalism or freedom and anti-liberalism or totalitarianism is “one between different attitudes toward social conflict. Totalitarian monism is founded on the idea that conflict can and should be eliminated. The pluralism of free societies is based on the recognition and acceptance of social conflict” (Dahrendorf 1979: 314). This also implies that conflict within liberal democracy, in virtue of being recognized and institutionalized, is primarily, though not invariably, peaceful, civil¹⁰ (Almeida 2003) and constructive, while in totalitarian anti-liberalism, in spite or because of being unrecognized and suppressed, is usually violent, non-civil and destructive. In short, while political pluralism constitutes and establishes freedom, including collective liberties, rights and identities, in politics and so is necessary for liberal democracy, anti-liberal monism is a real “sign of illiberty” and thus undemocratic.

Formal and Substantive Political Pluralism

In Weber’s terms, by analogy to and in synergy with liberty and rationality, liberal democracy establishes, promotes and protects both formal and substantive pluralism in polity, as expressed in a multi-party system and plural political ideologies or worldviews, groups, interests and activities, respectively. In turn, liberal formal and substantive political pluralism comprises both party and ideological contest or competition in Simmel’s general meaning of a “sociological constellation” rather than the narrow economic sense like Schumpeter’s market-style definition of democracy or public choice theory’s concept of democratic politics in terms of free markets.

In formal, either legal-constitutional American or conventional British, terms, liberal democracy is invariably a multi-party political system in contrast to its illiberal opposites as one-party or quasi multi-party, fascist, communist and conservative systems. Liberalism is genuine pluralism in respect to parties – as defined by Weber and Michels, organized social groups, i.e. organizations seeking political power (Duverger 1957) within an institutional, including constitutional, framework (Eisenstadt 1998; Mueller 1996) – while

¹⁰ Almeida (2003: 350) remarks that “in accord with [a] liberalizing trend in state practices and the larger political environment, more nonviolent and civil forms of protest are predicted since institutional channels of conflict resolution are more available and legitimated”.

anti-liberalism is monism, as in the case of arch-conservatism, fascism, communism, and neo-fascism, or pseudo-pluralism as with American conservatism. In economic terms, albeit as an analogy rather than substantive equivalence like public choice theory, liberal democracy's pluralism involves free competition à la Schumpeter between multiple parties or organizations for political power or office via market-style actions like "advertising", "selling" and "buying" of ideas.

Alternatively, if liberal democracy is a freely competitive "market", illiberal anti-pluralism consists of what economists would connote political monopoly as single-party system, as in arch-conservatism, fascism and communism. At most, anti-pluralism is oligopoly, specifically duopoly as a two-party system that is substantively often ideological monism in Parsons' (1951) sense of consensus on basic values, as in American conservative-dominated politics (Hill 2002). The latter attains ideological monism or consensus through an authoritarian-oligarchic state engaging in ever harsher repression and sanction of the population (Pryor 2002), as well as typical "bipartisanship" on major issues like moral-religious traditionalism (Inglehart 2004) and nationalistic foreign policy (Singh 2002), i.e. ascriptive and militarist Americanism (King 1999; Turner 2002). As noted, such ideological monism in the form of liberal-conservative consensus, including "bipartisanship", was most pronounced during the Cold War as well as its sequels or residues like the war on terror and "evil" during the 2000s.

Sociologically and more plausibly, liberal pluralistic democracy involves and permits a plurality of political parties in power competition understood as Simmel's complex and total "sociological constellation" rather than the simple and partial market process in the manner of Schumpeter and Mises-Hayek, via Weberian legal-rational and "pacifist" non-market rules and procedures such as elections, parliaments, etc. In sociological terms, it is simply what Weber calls a set of "power constellations" involving and permitting multiple actors and ideologies, not a mere "political marketplace" of marketing and buying ideas and programs.

In a formal sense, liberal pluralist democracy is a subtype and expression of Weber's legal-rational political authority as a formally democratic principle of legitimacy or legitimate state. By contrast, its illiberal alternatives are the species and expressions of charismatic and traditional authority as what he calls the "authoritarian" principles of legitimation of power or domination, with

the first underscoring fascism, communism and neo-fascism, and the second, or both, medievalist conservatism and neo-conservatism. Recall, in historical terms, charismatic and traditional types of authority “have been present at one time or another in all of the older religiously based social formations. In contrast, the rational-legal mode is dominant only in modern secular societies” (Lenski 1994: 9), specifically Western liberal democracies. Thus, Weber finds that charismatic and traditional authority have been dominant in “Puritanism, Catholicism, ancient Judaism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam”, and the legal-rational in “modern secular rationalism” (Lenski 1994: 8–9) like Western democratic liberalism.

Moreover, contemporary liberals assert that the “association of free and equal legal persons is completed only with a democratic mode for legitimation of political authority [i.e.] liberal and political rights [guaranteeing] both private and public autonomy” (Habermas 2001: 65). In a sense, as Weber implies and modern liberals admit, legal-rational authority or a democratic mode of legitimation is not – as witnessed by free elections in Germany during the 1930s and America at various historical times like slavery, segregation and the 2000s – invariably sufficient for substantive political freedoms and rights. Nevertheless, in virtue of this principle of liberal democracy it is at least formally more democratic or pluralistic than illiberal, including fascist, communist, conservative and non-secular, Christian or Islamic, “democracies” resting instead on authoritarian charismatic leadership a la the *Führer* principle (Bähr 2002) and rigid sacred tradition, like medievalism with its Divine Rights of kings or theocrats in Catholic and Puritan theocracies in Europe and America, as well as its successor conservatism retaining this moral-religious traditionalism by the 21st century, notably the American variant (Inglehart 2004).

Yet, as noted, formal, legal or procedural political pluralism in the form of a multi-party system while necessary is not always sufficient for a substantively, effectively or ideologically pluralistic polity and so liberal democracy and civil society. For example, analysts suggest that a formally, legally or procedurally multi-party regime has coexisted with a non-pluralistic or oligarchic political, just as a non-competitive oligopolistic economic, system in substantive or ideological terms under American neo-conservatism since the 1980s (Hill 2002; Pryor 2002).

More important sociologically, liberal democracy also fosters and protects what Weber would call substantive political pluralism and liberty and

rationality in contrast to its illiberal opposites that, even when formally non-monistic, impose and sustain effective monism in polity. Thus contemporary sociologists point out that “social and ideological pluralism” (Habermas et al. 1998: 57) defines and distinguishes in substantive terms liberal democracy and civil society from illiberal, including conservative, fascist, communist and religiously based, Christian and Islamic “democracies” instead characterized by what Dahrendorf calls “totalitarian monism”. In collective terms, liberal democracy seeks and reaches “accommodation of social diversity through majority rule” (Kinloch 1981: 20–2). Alternatively, it avoids and substitutes Tocqueville’s “tyranny of the majority” over minority groups, as characteristic of anti-liberalism, especially fascism like Nazi majorities in interwar Germany, and American conservatism, such as the tyrannical “silent moral majority” in the “Bible Belt” during the 1980s–2000s and before.

In particular, liberal democracy and government accommodates and promotes ideological pluralism through what Parsons (1951) terms neutrality, as distinguished from “affectivity” in a pair of pattern variables, defined in terms of non-evaluation or impartiality, and tolerance toward plural ideologies and other “reasonable and sometimes “unreasonable” worldviews, religions and political groups, thus precluding or mitigating dogmatic bias, favoritism and intolerance in politics characterizing anti-liberalism. In Einstein’s words, liberal democracy and modernity adopts and applies a sort of relativity theory, what Mannheim calls (1936) sociological relativism in the sense of agnosticism and skepticism in respect to the truth claims of multiple ideologies and religions. Alternatively, it rejects and avoids absolutism typical, as he and other analysts (Habermas 2001; Infantino 2003; Munch 2001) suggest, of anti-liberalism, such as conservatism’s claim to absolute religious values and fascism’s and communism’s claims to pseudo- and non-religious ones, so to the monopoly of truth and moral “good”.

In turn, ideological and moral-religious “relativism”, vehemently attacked by anti-liberals like conservatives, including fascists, and sometimes deplored even by liberals (e.g. Patell 2001), results in and predicts neutrality, impartiality and tolerance to multiple ideologies and groups in liberal democracy, while anti-liberal absolutism leads to corresponding political and group bias, discrimination and intolerance in illiberal “democracies”. In this sense, sociological “relativism” is both the necessary theoretical condition and the

eventual outcome of liberal democracy and its substantive political pluralism whose antidote or poison is so absolutism as the determinant and effect alike of illiberal totalitarian monism.

The preceding indicates that liberal democracy and modernity can, as sometimes suggested, adopt or “flirt” with some sort of ideological “non-relativism” and non-neutrality at its own practical peril, not to mention a logical self-contradiction, so long as this may imply or engender absolutism and discrimination, so threaten its substantive political pluralism and ultimately human liberty and life, thus effectively degenerating in an illiberal “democracy”. For example, this is precisely what happened to interwar Germany’s Weimer Republic succumbing to the nationalist and imperialist absolutism of conservatism and Nazism in anti-liberal alliance (Blinkhorn 2003). It also holds true in part of America’s “liberal-secular democracy” imbued and contaminated with neo-conservatism’s absolutist ideological and moral-religious values a la “free market enterprise” and triumphant “Americanism” (Bell 2002; Lipset and Marks 2000), combined with “Deity, “piety”, “faith”, church, “morality”, etc. (Deutsch and Soffer 1987; Dunn and Woodard 1996; Heine-man 1998) since the 1980s.

In this sense specifically, liberal democracy is relativistic, agnostic and so neutral rather than absolutist, monopolist and discriminatory in ideological, moral-religious and group terms, which is an anathema for anti-liberalism, notably conservatism and fascism, due to its absolutism and monism, thus a sort of “compliment” for liberalism for its relativism that both generates and results from its substantive political pluralism and freedom. Hence, by accommodating diverse and opposing groups and ideologies via majority rule, neutrality and relativism, liberal democracy permits and protects collective liberties, rights and identities, including those of political or ideological minorities, just as of the majority. These are in contrast either legally prohibited, as in fascism, or effectively suppressed, as in conservatism, within anti-liberalism due to its tyranny of “silent moral”, conservative, fascist and communist majorities, non-neutrality, discrimination and absolutism.

In individual terms, liberal democracy “accommodates difference by protecting each person’s capacity to pursue his own good in his own way to the extent that is compatible with the similar pursuits of others” (Bellamy 1999: 1). Simply, it protects individual autonomy, liberty, dignity or self-determination in polity and all society, unlike illiberal “democracies” that overtly deny,

as in medievalist conservatism, fascism and communism, or covertly reduce and deflect, as in American and British neo-conservatism and in part libertarianism, personal freedoms to non-political realms like markets viewed non-threatening to the “powers that be” (Popper 1973) via “free enterprise is all you need”, yet mixed with authoritarian “law and order”, programs and slogans (Dahrendorf 1979). In particular, as Tönnies suggests, individual, “inner” morality is not a “direct concern” of liberal democracy or government but its “task is only to suppress and punish aggressive and anti-social behavior”. In his view, this moral non-interference is the result of liberal democracy’s realization that “dead morality and religion cannot be revived by coercion or education”, a revival typical of anti-liberalism, notably religious conservatism and partly fascism.

Hence, liberal democracy posits and respects what Durkheim¹¹ would call the sacredness of all individuals or, in a critical vein, the “cult of the individual”, in society as humans and the inviolability of their liberties, rights, dignity and life in virtue of their status as human agents. It thus distinguishes itself from anti-liberalism that denies or sacrifices human attributes, including life, to the supra-human, including Deity and church as in moral-religious conservatism, nation and state as (also) in fascism and communism, or attributes them only to a narrow subset like fascist, communist and conservative masters or leaders invidiously distinguished from masses *cum* servants and slave-like subjects (Bourdieu 1998; Wacquant 2002). This signifies that liberal democracy is inherently humanistic, egalitarian and universalistic toward individuals as well as groups, implementing liberalism’s secular humanism, egalitarianism and universalism and pluralism in politics. By contrast, illiberal, including conservative, fascist and religious – a la “Bible-Belt” and Islamic – “democracies” and “republics” are the exact opposite, enforcing anti-liberalism’s divine or profane non-humanism, particularism and monism in this realm.

In general, liberal democracy protects and fosters both individual and group substantive political pluralism, dignity and identity, in contrast to anti-liberal-

¹¹ Recall, Durkheim emphasizes the “sacredness with which the human being is now invested” in modern liberal society that “has consecrated him”, unlike traditional societies, including medievalism. Hence, he treats what he calls “moral individualism” or the “cult of the individual” as the “product” of modern liberal society.

ism that denies, suppresses or restricts both and “libertarianism” which, due to its extreme individualism, typically prefers the first to the second dismissed or feared as reflecting dreaded Hegellian collective non-entities (Buchanan 1991) as “libertarian equivalents” of medieval and Puritan “witches” and McCarthyism’s “un-American” values and enemies. At least, its substantive, just as formal, pluralism and freedom in individual and group terms is more genuine, unequivocal and comprehensive than that of anti-liberalism, including neo-conservatism, as well as “libertarianism”. To paraphrase Bentham et al., liberal democracy simply permits the greatest pluralism, so freedom and “happiness” for the “greatest number” of people, thus meeting the utilitarian criterion of a democratic polity and modern free and open society overall more fully than its anti-liberal fascist-conservative or pseudo-liberal “libertarian” substitutes.

In terms of the US liberal founders like Jefferson and Madison and the Constitution, liberal democracy by allowing greater substantive political pluralism and freedom, effectively affords and safeguards the “pursuit of happiness” for more individuals and groups, including ideological and other minorities, alike than authoritarian and anti-egalitarian conservatism that does neither, except for conservative masters, elites or saints, and extremely individualistic libertarianism ruling out or downplaying collective liberties and rights on dogmatic, market-fundamentalist grounds (Hodgson 1999). Alternatively, the utilitarian greatest “utility” (“pleasure”) and freedom for the “greatest number” of persons and peoples and America’s founding constitutional ideal of the “pursuit of happiness” and liberty has been and is likely to be impossible or difficult to fully achieve for both individuals and groups in the absence of functioning liberal democracy and its ideological-political pluralism, and alternatively in the presence of illiberal “democracies” and their “totalitarian monism”.

Speaking of *dramatis personae*, Bentham’s “greatest happiness for the greatest numbers” or Locke-Jefferson’s pursuit of liberty and life has been and can be attained only or primarily and systematically within Smith’s liberal-pluralist framework, plan and hope of freedom, justice and equality. Conversely, it cannot, or can just secondarily and accidentally, in anti-liberal monistic settings and plans, such as Maistre-Burke’s proto-conservative transcendental heaven, Reagan et al.’s neo-conservative Divine “intelligent design” reestablishing Winthrop’s theocratic “shining city upon a hill”, and Hitler’s and

Stalin's Orwellian ideological dystopia, just as Mussolini's attempted fusion of fascism, capitalism and Christian, Catholic-Vatican theocracy.¹²

The aforesaid yields the inference that liberal democracy acknowledges and protects formal and substantive, individual and group political pluralism as the condition, just as the outcome, of freedom and so an element of "happiness" in politics and society, while its illiberal, including conservative-fascist, opposites impose totalitarian monism and consequently inflict un-freedom and unhappiness on individuals and groups alike. It is pluralistic – i.e. relativist, neutral and tolerant – in these integral terms or is neither "liberal" and liberty nor "democracy" and equality for all, but instead degenerates into its anti-liberal conservative-fascist or pseudo-liberal "libertarian" antipodes attacking and fearing pluralism, egalitarianism and universalism.

Alternatively, as classical and contemporary liberals suggest alike, liberal democracy that permits and preserves ideological-political pluralism, just as culture diversity, is the optimal social setting for Locke's "pursuit of happiness, liberty and life" for individual and groups, i.e. personal and collective liberties, rights and identities, and for Bentham-Smith's greatest freedom for the "greatest numbers". In short, liberal democracy is both liberal/liberty and democracy/universal equality because it fosters political pluralism in formal-substantive and individual-group terms, and its illiberal alternatives are neither for the opposite reason of their totalitarian monism.

The above is necessary to emphasize given the persisting and even escalating open or veiled attacks by anti-liberal, including US neo-conservative and European neo-fascist, forces on ideological-political pluralism, just as cultural diversity, and its supposed and perceived excesses like "relativism" and "decline" of traditional values. They do so in an evident attempt to destroy, reverse and discredit modern liberal democracy alleged to be in the state of irreparable "moral crisis" (Deutsch and Soffer 1987) during the 1980–2000s. Thus, refraining from directly attacking liberal democracy on the account of liberty, equality and justice "for all" as "politically incorrect" or atavistic even for neo-fascists and extreme neo-conservatives like US fundamentalists and

¹² For instance, during the 1920s Mussolini's fascism created a law enforcing the "obligatory display of crucifixes" in Italian courts and state schools. Perhaps not surprisingly, then the Berlusconi mixed conservative-neo-fascist government reportedly enforced the same law during the 2000s.

their “brothers in arms” terrorist militia, they attack it insidiously by condemning its political pluralism and multiculturalism as the supposed root cause of dangerous, to sacred and secular absolute powers or truths, relativism, the “decline” of religious and other values, and “moral crisis”.

Unlike their older and “brutally honest” about their anti-democratic intentions and practices brethren like medievalist conservatives and fascists, contemporary US and other anti-liberal forces tactically couch their political and culture wars on liberal democracy’s liberty, equality and justice in the rhetoric and guise of national and cultural security and unity, including patriotism a la Americanism, appealing with success to the ideological and religious and ethnic majority such as what minority Americans lament as “WASP” and defining corresponding minorities as “threats to the nation” and making them scapegoats (Lipset 1996). Thus, sociologists observe that the “conservative interpretation takes the constitution to maintain the understanding of American citizenship in terms of white Protestant men of Anglo-Saxon origin and to justify the capitalist economy with all its consequences of discrimination regarding race, ethnicity, gender [etc.] and the production of great inequality with people in great wealth and other people in great poverty” (Munch 2001: 232).

At this juncture, modern Western liberal democracy stands or falls with political and cultural pluralism as the functional equivalent and imperative for individual and group liberties, rights and identities in polity and society, notably in societies where atavistic anti-liberalism like politically and even more culturally monistic neo-conservatism remains prominent or dominant, as in America and in part Great Britain during the 1980s-2000s. Insofar as to affirm pluralism and diversity, as does liberal democracy and modernity, is affirming liberty (Hirschman 1982) and humanity, then to condemn, discredit or destroy, as done by anti-liberalism, notably fascism and conservatism, the first is also to do the same to the second, despite neo-conservative denials, strategic mystifications and deceptions (“sweet lies”) in America and elsewhere.

The preceding yields the following likely expectation. So long as liberal democracy succeed to withstand or expose as anti-democratic, i.e. both anti-libertarian and anti-egalitarian, these anti-liberal attacks on its political and cultural pluralism, it will persist and consolidate, as in Western Europe as well as in part America and elsewhere like Canada and Australia during most

of the post WW II period. Conversely, if it does not, it will be undermined, subverted and threatened with extinction, as happened to Germany's liberal Weimar Republic in the 1920s–30s as well as partly in America under neo-conservatism over the 1980s–2000s. Hence, in historical terms, neo-conservatism, notably its extreme version of entwined religious fundamentalism and militia movement like “Christian” terrorist militia, poses or will pose the functionally equivalent or comparable threat to liberal democracy and its pluralism in America during the early 21st century as did Nazism and traditional conservatism to interwar Germany's Weimar Republic.

Moreover, the pattern of anti-liberal and anti-pluralist destruction, a kind of “system in the madness”, seems functionally equivalent or cognate. Just as Nazism, in an “unholy alliance” with medievalist conservatism, first discredited and then destroyed (Blinkhorn 2003) liberal democracy and political pluralism in Germany during the 1930s, so neo-conservatism, also allied or flirting with neo-fascism via militia movement and especially theocratic fundamentalism, has succeeded, via anti-pluralist and other attacks, initially to discredit as the pejorative “L-word” and eventually to replace and subvert its already diluted, viz. less secular and cosmopolitan, version in America since the 1980s. This process has perhaps reached its anti-liberal destructive climax in the 2000s, as indicated by syndromes like victorious conservative culture wars on personal liberty couched in the “apple pie of authoritarianism” (Wagner 1997), the prevalence of ultra-conservative “red” states, repressive and intrusive “homeland security”, the imperialist “war on terror” and the “evil” world (Steinmetz 2005).

In both cases, liberal democracy and its political-ideological pluralism has been systematically discredited, attacked and completely, as in Germany, or partially as in America, destroyed or subverted by conservative anti-liberalism, i.e. the alliance of Nazism with arch-conservatism in the first, and that of neo-conservatism with neo-fascism or fundamentalism in the second. Hence, from the stance of liberal democracy and its pluralism, American neo-conservatism, notably its extremist anti-pluralist fundamentalist and militia variant, is a functional equivalent or historical proxy of both European fascism defined by totalitarian monism and traditional authoritarian conservatism.

Liberal Democracy and Political Egalitarianism

Liberal ideology and society, is also democratic because of its principle and institutional practice of political egalitarianism as an integral element of its general egalitarian ideas and institutions. Thus, economists observe and predict that liberalism tends to result in an “egalitarian”, just as democratic-pluralist, version of modern capitalism (Hodgson 1999: 2). As noted, such a liberal, i.e. both egalitarian and democratic, version is considered and specified as welfare capitalism observed in Western Europe (Trigilia 2002), especially Scandinavia (Esping-Andersen 1994), in contrast to its anti-welfare “unfettered” American version and exceptionalism (Amenta et al. 2001; Quadagno 1999). As also mentioned, European welfare capitalism is not necessarily less “libertarian” or less free, as dogmatically and/or ethnocentrically claimed by US “libertarian” economists (Friedman and Friedman 1982) and even sociologists (Lipset and Marks 2000), than its anti-welfare American version; on the contrary, as leading economists like Samuelson suggest by describing Scandinavian egalitarian social democracies as “freer than my America” under anti-egalitarian “free enterprise” conservatism (Lipset and Marks 2000). In sum, liberal democracy is essentially egalitarian and inclusive premised on the idea of political and other equality and inclusion.

Integral Political Equality

By analogy to holistic liberty, the principle and practice of integral political and other equality and inclusion underpins liberal democracy and society, which is both “libertarian” and egalitarian or inclusive. Like liberty, political equality within liberal democracy is integral or holistic in the sense of involving, combining and balancing formal and substantive, as well as individual and collective and other, equalities in polity and society.

In general, within liberal democracy, liberty, as Mannheim (1986: 91) suggests, can solely or primarily be conceived, realized and sustained in conjunction with integral political equality as its complementary idea and practice. Hence, what Dahrendorf (1979) identifies as the “secular dialectics” of liberty and equality as admittedly “liberal values” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 6) holds true of their respective political varieties. At this juncture, liberal democracy constitutes and operates as a positive dialectic, i.e. dynamical interconnection and reciprocal reinforcement, simply synergy (Putterman et al. 1998),

between political liberty and equality, “libertarian” and egalitarian ideas and practices in politics. It therefore substantively distinguishes itself from its non- or pseudo-liberal alternatives that suppress both liberty and equality, as in conservatism and fascism, or invidiously oppose and prefer one to another such as freedom *cum* “free markets” to economic and other equalities, as in “libertarianism”.

The liberal-democratic dialectics/dynamics consists in both political liberty *and* equality and equity “for all” in Kant-Jefferson’s sense. This dialectics is different from and opposed to conservatism’s, including fascism’s, anti-liberal recipe and practice of some, rulers being freer and “more equal” than others as slave-like subjects a la Orwell’s “animal farm”, even though, as Michels (1968: 8) remarks, the “conservative spirit of the old master-caste is forced to assume [in liberal democracy] a specious democratic mask.” It also substantively differs from the pseudo-liberal “libertarian” dogmatic opposition and spurious trade-off between the two, including wealth-income inequality and economic growth. Thus, some economists object that “libertarian” economics’ “agonizing trade-off between equity and economic growth is far from compelling. There was never any solid theoretical support for the existence of this trade-off”, and even suggests that there is a “negative correlation” between wealth-income inequalities and economic growth (Frank 1999: 232–43; cf. also Aghion et al. 1999; De La Croix and Doepke 2003).

Hence, if liberal democracy tends to be both libertarian and egalitarian, its anti-liberal, notably conservative and fascist, alternatives are not only anti-libertarian but anti-egalitarian in political and other terms, as is its pseudo-liberal version in “libertarianism”, though primarily permeated with economic anti-egalitarianism on “free-market” and “efficiency” grounds. In sum, liberal democracy is the social-political “association of free and equal legal persons” (Habermas 2001: 65) alike, while its illiberal alternatives involve neither, as with conservatism and fascism, or separate, oppose and prefer freedom versus equality, as does spurious libertarianism.

The above reopens the issue of political-economic egalitarianism or anti-egalitarianism in relation to liberal democracy and society. If political egalitarianism in the sense of equality and inclusion “of all” individuals and groups in politics, like liberty, is the necessary condition of liberal democracy, then anti-egalitarianism is *prima facie* anti-democratic, including totalitarian in fascism or authoritarian in conservatism, and at best quasi- or reductively democratic,

as in spurious libertarianism. Thus, as noted, even “libertarian” Popper (1973: 268) emphasizes that political anti-equalitarianism “offers a justification of the attitude that different categories of people have different rights; that the master has the right to enslave the slave; that some men have the right to use others as their tools.” Moreover, he warns and predicts that “ultimately, it will be used to justify murder” and infers that anti-equalitarianism “in political life is just criminal”. An evident case in point is fascism, notably Nazism, with its extreme political and social anti-equalitarianism inherited, like its anti-libertarianism, from traditional conservatism, including medievalism, as anti-liberal “brothers in arm” allied in the liquidation (Blinkhorn 2003) of liberal democracy in interwar Europe and beyond and later.

The above means that political anti-egalitarianism and so anti-liberalism overall is criminal or murderous in the sense of totalitarian terror and murder (Arendt 1951; Bähr 2002), as epitomized by Nazism. It is generally so in the sense of authoritarian repression and control, exemplified by European, American and other conservatism, i.e. repressive government to the point of an intrusive, arbitrary and brutal policing state (Bourdieu 1998; Earl, McCarthy and Soule 2003; Wacquant 2002), including communist (e.g. Chinese), “Bible-Belt” and Islamic “vice-police” states, engaging, like fascism, in a sort of official terrorism and persecution (Gibbs 1989). For example, both US “Bible-Belt” and Iranian Islamic “vice-police” states via various “dumb laws”, official terrorism enforcing them and Draconian punishments for their violations prohibit or restrict free alcohol consumption, not to mention adultery, blasphemy and other moral-religious sins. On this account, just as the death penalty for sins like drug-war and other culture wars offenses and for crimes alike, the US “Bible-Belt” is the functional, fundamentalist Protestant equivalent of Iran under Islamic theocracy, both being “proto-totalitarian” destructions of liberal-secular democracy and human liberty and life overall (Bauman 1997), as well as of China with its repressive communist-capitalist mixture (Jacobs et al. 2005).

In general, as Popper (1973) warns, fascist racist and other anti-egalitarianism and anti-liberalism, aiming at and eventually succeeding to liquidate, in a holy alliance with traditional conservatism, liberal democracy in interwar Europe, was ultimately used to justify state terrorism and mass murder, including Nazi concentration camps and invasions, as the means, process or result of such liquidation (Blinkhorn 2003). In historical terms, fascism as an

extreme species and climax of Mannheim's medieval-rooted conservatism (Dahrendorf 1979; Moore 1993) only continued, epitomized or escalated long-standing conservative anti-egalitarianism and anti-liberalism thus climaxing into its fascist form, just as American neo-conservatism continues, albeit with some modifications, this anti-egalitarian conservative tradition.

Similarly, though not identically, US conservative anti-egalitarianism and anti-liberalism, also on a "Divine mission" to destroy, allied with theocratic fundamentalism and neo-fascism, liberal democracy in America, has ultimately been and continues to be used to sanctify, if not mass murder, then government repression and harsh, Draconian sanctions. The latter includes, but is not limited to, an arbitrary, intrusive and often brutal policing state, epitomized and symbolized by the "Bible-Belt" vice police, mass and comparatively unrivalled imprisonment for moral sins or petty crimes (the war on drugs, "three strikes laws"), and the death penalty usually applied to the poor, powerless and even innocent, not to mention persecuting and eliminating "ungodly" and "un-American" domestic "witches" as in Puritanism and McCarthyism, and "evil" foreign enemies as during the Cold War, the "war on terror" and the "axis of evil".

Hence, from the stance of liberal democracy and egalitarianism, fascist and conservative anti-egalitarianism are basically, though not perhaps equally, "criminal" in Popper's sense of totalitarian terror or authoritarian repression. For example, killing "inferior races" in the Nazi concentration camps (Bähr 2002) and executing poor, powerless and not seldom innocent people in neo-conservative death chambers, especially in US "Bible Belt" states (Texas, Florida, Georgia, Virginia), are alike state murders and so objective crimes for liberalism, yet apparently not for fascism and American neo-conservatism or theocratic fundamentalism. In a sense, just as Nazi mass murder in concentration camps and invasions was the logical outcome of or testimony to the murderous nature of fascist-conservative anti-egalitarianism and anti-liberalism, so was in part the persecution and execution of "un-American" enemies one of the anti-egalitarian ideas and practices of US conservatism, from Puritanism and its attempted extermination of native Americans and "Salem with witches" (Putnam 2000) in the 17th century to McCarthyism and its own witch-hunt proxies and to the death penalty system and the war on the "axis of evil" in the 20th and 21st centuries. Alternatively, if Popper is correct, it is difficult to fully understand both fascist totalitarian terror or murder

and conservative authoritarian repression or control without taking account of their underlying basis and justification in political anti-egalitarianism and anti-liberalism overall, i.e. their hostility to equality, liberty and inclusion in politics and all society.

In sum, if Popper is correct, the preceding basically predicts that fascist, conservative and other anti-egalitarianism seeks to reestablish and justify some version or proxy of master-servant relations in substantive, sociological or factual, if not formal, legal or procedural, terms, in polity and society, including economy, thus an extreme antipode of liberal democracy. In particular, medievalism with its feudal serfdom persists as the model (Nisbet 1966) and the “golden past” for fascist and conservative anti-egalitarianism and anti-liberalism, thus in contradiction or tension with liberalism and democracy.

Specifically, medieval political despotism remains the ideal for fascism and neo-fascism, theocracy for religious fundamentalism, and feudalism and aristocratic, oligarchic or patrimonial capitalism (Cohen 2003) for economic conservatism and even spurious libertarianism. For example, in 19th century England, “a feudal-aristocratic value pattern stood opposed” to liberalism, including utilitarianism, and democracy, and in America, a “tension existed between a widely held democratic value pattern and aristocratic thinking”¹³ (Schwinn 1998: 79) adopted by, with some adaptations to the supposedly new “non-aristocratic” or “non-feudal” nation (Lipset and Marks 2000), by American conservatism.

In another instance, a syndrome of American and other neo-conservatism, characterized by political as well as economic anti-egalitarianism, is diagnosed in its creating and justifying “slave-like” (Wacquant 2002) work settings or jobs like sweat-shops and coerced degrading prison labor imposed as Puritan-style punishment (Hudson and Coukos 2005) for (also) sins *cum* crimes a la drug-war (Reuters 2005) and other culture-wars (Wagner 1997) “crimes” by the US federal government and most, predictably, first and foremost, Bible-Belt, states. As economists observe and predict, neo-conservatism in America seeks to or will transform the US economy into an oligarchic system (Pryor 2002) in the image of a “factory of authoritarianism”, thus

¹³ Schwinn (1998: 79) adds that in England “the conjunction of a rigidly hierarchical class structure with an aristocratic-feudal value orientation enabled the concomitant interest groups to institute a school system that reproduced class differences.”

resembling more despotic, theocratic feudalism¹⁴ (Carruthers and Ariovich 2004; Lachmann (1990) than liberal-democratic capitalism. Generally, American and other neo-conservatism is observed and predicted to lead to an anti-egalitarian “neo-feudal service society tied to a particular location is a society that “serves”” (Beck 2000: 42). To that extent, American and other neo-conservatism perpetuates what Michels (1968: 8) identifies as the “conservative spirit of the old master-caste”, so is anything but “neo” (new) in relation to paleo-conservatism in Europe.

Alternatively, liberal democracy with its political equality as well as liberty is literally the most effective antidote to the murderous poison of anti-egalitarianism as, in Popper’s word, “criminal” in the sense of a basis and rationalization of totalitarian terrorism, as in fascism, or of authoritarian repression as in conservatism, within anti-liberalism. As contemporary liberals put it, in modern liberal democracy, the “purpose of just government is not only to protect individual freedom, but to promote equal opportunity for all” (Pelton 1999: 9).

The above leads to the issue of formal and substantive political equality. By analogy to liberty, equality within liberal democracy is integral, holistic in virtue of encompassing, in combination and proximate balance, both formal and substantive political equalities. Liberal political egalitarianism is not only, as Marxist and post-modern critics accuse and “libertarians” reductively claim, formal, legal or procedural through establishing equality before the law and in procedure, but also substantive, sociological or factual by promoting and protecting effective equalities in politics and society. Consequently, liberal democracy tends to be formally and substantively egalitarian, enhancing and defending equality of legal treatment or procedure and equal opportunities or life chances, in contrast to its anti- or pseudo-liberal alternatives that are and do neither, as with fascism and authoritarian conservatism, or the first mostly, as in the case of spurious libertarianism.

¹⁴ As well-known, “through a steady accumulation over centuries, the medieval Church became Europe’s biggest landowner” (Carruthers and Ariovich 2004: 26) in feudalism. Also, Lachmann (1990) suggests that “conflicts among feudal elites is the primary determinant of the form and extent of social structure change in three historical cases: Florence during the Renaissance, England in the century leading to the 1640 [Puritan] Revolution, and France from the 16th through the 18 centuries.”

Liberal integral equality is not only opposite to conservative-fascist inequality, but also differs from its spurious libertarian version that is partial or reductive focusing on its formal-legal and individualist, while rejecting, misconstruing or downplaying its substantive-sociological and group, dimensions. This is indicated by “libertarian” economists’ typical claims that classical liberalism has “never” sought anything else than “equality before the Law” (Mises 1950) and that “equality of the general rules of law and conduct” is the “only kind of equality conducive to liberty” (Hayek 1960: 85). In sum, liberal political egalitarianism, by being both formal and substantive, procedural and effective, as individual and collective, is complete and genuine relative to conservative-fascist “criminal” anti-egalitarianism and libertarian diluted or quasi-egalitarianism, which again makes “libertarianism” pseudo- or spurious liberalism.

The preceding intimates the question of universal and particularistic political equality. In formal and substantive, just as individual and group, terms, liberal democracy is universalistic. It is so through its legal and effective political equality “for all” individuals and groups, rather than only for some like Popper’s “masters” conceived and treated as “more equal than others” such as subjects, as in its anti-liberal medievalism, conservatism, fascism and communism, and in part pseudo-liberal libertarianism with its “free enterprise” for capital and repression or restriction for labor.

This egalitarian universalism is what decisively distinguishes liberal-secular democracy not only from strident total conservative-fascist and qualified partial libertarian anti-egalitarianism. It also makes it distinct from what Dahrendorf (1979) calls “deceptive” religious egalitarianism that is by assumption and in reality particularistic or sectarian in the sense of “equality” for church or sect members primarily, as exemplified by Protestant sectarianism in America (Lipset 1996), with the possible exception of intended but hardly ever realized ecumenism in Christianity like early Catholicism and other religions. In this view, liberal-secular political equality and inclusion is manifested in the universalistic and “progressive extension” of life chances, including citizenship rights, and the “effective domestication” of political power, as initiated and symbolized by the French Revolution.

In turn, such liberal equality substantially differs from what is described as the “deceptive egalitarianism of Christian faith” (Dahrendorf 1979: 124) seen, especially in its sectarian and fundamentalist versions, as less inclusive, as

when non-believers and agnostics are excluded, so to speak, “need not apply” in America under fundamentalism and sectarianism (Edgell et al. 2006), and non-democratic, by becoming or supporting authoritarian “powers that be” against the “reality of a liberal and pluralist society” (Munch 2001) or civil liberties.¹⁵

This is what some US conservative sociologists unwittingly admit by observing solemnly that America is “defined by traditional, moralistic, sectarian religion” (Lipset and Marks 2000), insofar as sectarianism is the equivalent or source of political and social exclusion on religious grounds. In a way, to say that America or any other society is defined by “sectarian religion” is to admit that the latter recreates the former as what other social analysts describe a “sectarian community” characterized by out-group exclusion and repression (and in-group loyalty), and exemplified or symbolized by “Salem with witches” (Putnam 2000: 354–5) reproduced by sectarianism like original Puritanism and contemporary Protestant fundamentalism.

Moreover, these conservatives claim that America is “setting a model for other developed countries” [sic!] precisely in virtue of its polity “defined by traditional, moralistic, sectarian religion”, alongside laissez faire (and “dominated by two procapitalist political parties”), with the result of being “no longer as exceptional politically as it once was” (Lipset and Marks 2000). As it stands, to propose and extol America as a model for other Western societies

¹⁵ For example, incredibly in the age of global liberalization and democratization (Inglehart 2004) but true in America under anti-liberalism, during the nomination process in the 2000s a US Supreme Court conservative Catholic judge was described and praised in precisely these terms, viz. consistent support of the “rights” [sic!] of secular and sacred power, i.e. government and implicitly church, at the expense of those of human individuals and their political and civil liberties. If so, one may wonder whatever happened to promoting and protecting the natural rights and liberties of humans (Americans and others), as the cardinal ideal of Jeffersonian liberalism and American democracy, notably what Tönnies call liberal-based natural law, compared with the preferred supposedly “Divine right” to rule by political and sacred powers in America (the US government, states and by implication churches). Liberals may comment that “only in America” under anti-liberal and anti-democratic conservatism such reversals, subversion, or, to use Merton’s (1968) word, perversities evoking, if not retrieving, the Catholic-Protestant Dark Middle Ages and Divine Rights of rulers against those of humans can and will happen. Historically, such seemingly impertinent episodes objectively revert, subvert or pervert, likely deliberately, Jefferson’s liberal ideals of liberty, equality and justice “for all” humans, while resurrecting the theocratic ghost of Winthrop (or in this case, the Vatican popes) “from the dead” (Dunn and Woodard 1996) as the perpetual “role model” for US conservatives, notably “rigid extremists” like Reagan et al. (Blomberg and Harrington 2000).

in virtue of its “sectarian religion”, specifically predominant Protestant sectarianism, so implicitly out-group exclusion and repression, a sort of “Salem with witches”, is striking, even perverse, reaffirming the dangers and what Merton (1968) calls “perversities” for objective (including non-patriotic) social science of hyper-patriotic ethnocentrism (Americanism) that as, in Cooley’s words, the “matter of a lack of knowledge” is oblivious of or blind to comparative-historical reality. One wonders how and who one can sensibly claim that “traditional, moralistic, sectarian” American could be a “model” for developed liberal-secular, increasingly non-religious Western European societies, notably what sociologists identify as “post-Christian” (Inglehart 2004: 17) Scandinavia, with secondary exceptions like Catholic Poland and Ireland. Comparative sociological research contradicts such claims by indicating the opposite, i.e. that America precisely by its “traditional, moralistic, sectarian religion” is an exceptional or “deviant case” among Western liberal-secular democracies, not their “model” (Inglehart and Baker 2000). For example, it finds that the “Swedes, the Dutch and the Australians are closer to the cutting edge of cultural change than the Americans” (Inglehart 2004: 16), and to that extent models for other modern Western societies.

In contrast to its illiberal substitutes, in liberal-secular democracy with its universalistic egalitarianism, defining a polity and society by “sectarian religion” like America by Protestant sectarianism (Lipset 1996) is an anti-liberal and anti-secular non sequitur, and so, at least as an ideal, is out-group political exclusion and repression on religious grounds – simply, “no witches, no Salem” (Putnam 2000: 354). As regards such political and social out-group exclusion and repression on religious, even sectarian grounds, in America under anti-liberalism, for illustration, such US anti-liberal Southern, “Bible Belt” (i.e. evangelical, specifically Baptist-dominated) states as Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, Virginia and Texas effectively prohibit or obstruct non-believers and agnostics in politics through various legal prohibitions and other insidious obstacles like “dumb laws” requiring the recognition of the “existence of Divinity” and other declarations of genuine faith as the ultimate qualification for political office or participation. Even the supposedly secular US federal government retains in the “books” some obscure laws effectively stipulating and enforcing the recognition of the “existence of Divinity” and punishing or condemning the denials as blasphemy in the way or as legacy of Puritanism and its theocracy as its apparently persistent

ideal as semi-grotesquely exemplified by Reagan et al.'s public adoration for Puritan master-theocrat Winthrop (Munch 2001) as their "role model". The predictable outcome has been that (too) secular and agnostic, let alone non-believing, Presidents and Congressman have become an anti-liberal non sequitur (big "No, No") in American politics, especially during the neo-conservative counter-revolution of the 1980–2000s.

While produced by the Bible Belt placing American politics under the theocratic or fundamentalist "shadow of Dixie" (Cochran 2001), this outcome has (re)made in comparative terms Tocqueville's democracy in America unlike and even contrary to virtually all modern Western liberal-secular democracies, an exceptional, if not perverse, result identified and deplored even by some moderate conservative US sociologists (Bell 2002; also Inglehart 2004), albeit ethnocentrically celebrated by others (Lipset 1996; Lipset and Marks 2000). At least in this respect, this anti-liberal subversion of democracy in America qualifies as another theocratic revival, following various religious awakenings in its history up to the 21st century, couched in "faith-based" politics and society as the supposedly supreme American value or legacy, and epitomized by Mencken's "Southern Bible Belt" as a sort of God's providential design for what Weber calls Calvinist-Baptist bibliocracy.

Generally, although not all political and other egalitarianism and universalism, viz. ecumenicalism, is rooted in liberalism, liberal democracy is typically more egalitarian in a universalistic sense than its illiberal or pseudo-liberal alternatives that can contain narrow factional in Madison's sense or sectarian "equality" yet not "for all" regardless of group religious, ethnic or ideological affiliation. In the framework of liberal democracy, like liberty, equality *not* "for all" individuals and groups – be it politically factional, as when conservative and fascist masters, "libertarian" capitalists and oligarchic politicians a la "good old boys" and "WASP" in America are "more equal than others", or religiously sectarian, as whenever fundamentalist "born-again" saints, the "elect" or faithful are – is its own denial and perversion, so factual inequality. Therefore, liberal democracy exposes and transcends Michels' illiberal, notably "conservative spirit of the old master-caste", in spite or perhaps because of its "specious democratic mask."

It follows that liberal democracy is either universally egalitarian in the formal and substantive sense or is not "egalitarian" and so "liberal" and "democracy" at all, but an inner contradiction and its own negation, non-uni-

versalistic, particularistic or factional “egalitarianism”. In virtue of its universalism or the ideal, though not always the institutional practice, of inclusion of “all” in politics and society, liberal democracy is the best and perhaps the only historically existent and viable social system for attaining and promoting true, systematic or universalistic, as distinguished from spurious, random or particularistic, political egalitarianism, despite contrary anti-liberal assertions within ecumenical Catholicism, world communism, Protestant and Islamic fundamentalism. In short, liberal democracy is truly egalitarian as well as libertarian because it is universalistic in the sense of equality, equity and liberty “for all”, and its anti-liberal alternatives are neither, for they are mostly not such but particularistic. At this juncture, liberal universalism thus understood is the necessary condition for genuine egalitarianism in politics and society, or integral formal and substantive political equality, just as freedom, as elaborated later.

The aforesaid introduces the problem of evolution or translation of legal into effective political equality within liberal democracy and modernity. As known, historical instances of liberal democracy’s universalistic political egalitarianism and genuine libertarianism include the French Revolution’s Declaration of “Universal Rights of Man” and the American Revolution’s Jeffersonian underlying principle of equality, liberty and justice “for all” – i.e. “all men are created equal”, minus the theological component – both inspired by the Enlightenment.

More precisely, these are examples of formal, though often joined with substantive, political equality, liberty and justice, in the sense of a legal-constitutional definition of equal human rights and liberties, within liberal democracy. Thus, the French Revolution’s Declaration of “Universal Rights of Man” formally stipulated what Dahrendorf (1979) calls equal life chances or citizenship rights for all, though he observes that these were to be, if ever as per critics, substantively achieved in reality only through and within an effectively functioning liberal democracy, especially a welfare state. Similarly, US contemporary liberals stress that the Declaration of Independence’s proclamation that all humans are entitled to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” was a “right to equal opportunity, [thus deriving] modern liberalism from classical liberalism” (Pelton 1999: 9), though again this equality was to be effectively attained or approximated only via liberal democracy, including a sort of welfare state like the New Deal, civil rights legislation and the Great Society. In

general, the “ideal of full and equal treatment” (Terchek 1997: 232) in legal, including both constitutional and judicial, terms epitomizes formal political equality and is for most liberals the “fundamental” (King 1999: 302) and universal or egalitarian (Van Dyke 1995: 3–83) entitlement, irrespective of what Simmel calls the “web of group affiliations”, in modern liberal democracy.

Typically or ideally, liberal democracy encompasses, integrates or balances both formal and substantive political equality and inclusion by “making opportunity equal and effective” (Van Dyke 1995: 3) alike. It does so, not only by legally proclaiming, as in the French and American Revolutions, but also effectively promoting or attaining, via a sort of welfare or egalitarian state, what Weber and Dahrendorf call life chances “for all” humans. It accords universal life chances and human rights regardless of humans’ religious, ideological, national or ethnic ascription, in contrast to American anti-liberalism with its ascriptive Americanism (King 1999; Turner 2002) favoring its members, at least elites, over non-Americans in virtually every possible respect, ranging from economic and educational to political, law-and-order and life-and-death issues, like institutional discrimination against legal immigrants in welfare benefits and habeas corpus via infinite detention for suspicion of terrorist or “un-American” activities a la McCarthyism.

In particular, concerning the institutional discrimination against legal, not to mention illegal, immigrants, as known, many liberals (or Democrats) joined US neo-conservatives (Republicans) in promulgating various “bipartisan” laws favoring Americans over non-Americans or discriminating against legal, let alone illegal, immigrants or foreigners. These laws include the Welfare Reform Act in the 1990s and “homeland security” and “war on terror” acts, including the law denying them habeas corpus and subjecting them to indefinite detention in the 2000s, a prospect and practice largely inconceivable for native-born or legally naturalized citizens, as well as unparalleled in other Western democracies, and only found in third-world dictatorships like Iran and China, which highlights what sociologists (Jacobs et al. 2005) find as “functionally equivalent” repressive practices (including executions) in these two countries and America during anti-liberalism. These recent tendencies only confirm what was also observed during the Cold War liberal-conservative consensus. This is that ascriptive, triumphant and militant Americanism (Bell 2002; King 1999), i.e. nationalistic ethnocentrism, is the conservative Trojan Horse and self-negation of American liberalism.

The latter consequently tends to dissolve and degenerate into a sort of soft or disguised conservatism personified by the “liberal-democratic” US President of 1992–2000, including bellicosity and militarism, as witnessed by the unprovoked and illegal (by UN rules) military attack on the former Yugoslavia in the late 1990s. For example, the “liberal-democratic” US administration – and within it the (Democratic) President and secretary of state even more than the relatively moderate conservative (Republican) defense chief – “violated simultaneously all forms of decency and the laws of war” (Bauman 2001: 208–9) in their illegal aggression, in the sense of lacking and even contemptuously, in a display of conservative American nativism, dismissing UN authorization, against Yugoslavia, incidentally an ally in both WW I and II. And as a sort of insult to injury and indiscriminate destruction, it did so on behalf of an admittedly, as the US first female remarkably bellicose secretary of state, to become a darling of extreme and militarist US conservatives in Congress and beyond, admitted, an “ethnic terrorist army” portrayed as the “Liberation Army” of “freedom fighters”, yet turned out, as some NATO British soldiers noted, to be “terrorists and we won their war for them” (cited in Bauman 2001: 208–9).

Overall, the above affirms that American liberalism is basically impossible or unviable when embracing or succumbing to the ultimately “fatal attraction” of conservative-reproduced Americanism at the expense of cosmopolitanism or just basic universal humanism. Notably, the latter includes what Mises calls and extols as pacifism properly understood to permit and justify only what Spencer calls defensive war against foreign aggression, so to prohibit and delegitimize offensive, “preemptive” Puritan-like holy wars or crusades against “evil”, as Clausewitz’s continuations of what some sociologists call jihadist politics shared by American and Muslim political conservatism alike (Turner 2002). Alternatively, the preceding confirms that only the emancipation from Americanism via cosmopolitan universalism, as well as through pacifism, makes American liberalism viable or possible in the long run in the sense of classical liberal, Kantian cosmopolitanism (Beck 2000; Habermas 2001).

Furthermore Weber implies and Dahrendorf argues that, like liberty and pluralism, formal political equality in the sense of equal legal treatment or procedure, while necessary, often is not the sufficient condition of substantive equalities or effective life chances for all individuals and groups in liberal democracy. Thus, referring to the libertarian claims by Mises and Hayek that classical liberalism has “never” sought anything else than “equality before

the Law”, Dahrendorf (1979: 124) proposes that legal equality “means little if the power to make law is confined to the few”. This statement implicitly identifies a sort of legalistic fallacy as well as anti-egalitarian or oligarchic bias in libertarianism, which at least makes the latter spurious, so pseudo-liberalism. Similarly, most modern liberals consider legal equality indispensable but not in itself enough for an effectively egalitarian liberal democracy¹⁶ (Brink 2000).

As noted, the integration or balance between legal and effective political equality is what distinguishes liberal democracy, not only from anti-egalitarian conservatism and fascism, but also from spurious libertarianism spuriously reducing egalitarianism in politics and society to formally “equal treatment” by the law. Modern liberal democracy transcends not only the conservative-fascist anti-egalitarian and eventually “criminal”, in Popper’s sense, claim and outcome that some individuals and groups “are more equal than others”, but also “libertarian” partial or formal-only egalitarianism, by promoting integral equality in polity and all society, including, but not limited to, equal legal treatment.

In particular, the foregoing indicates that liberal-secular integral political equality and inclusion is basically different from and even opposed to its religious or non-secular alternatives. The difference between liberal-secular and religious-theological political equality and inclusion is expressed in that between, for example, “all humans are equal as humans” and “all men are created equal by the Creator”. Liberal-secular ideology and democracy rejects or suspects the latter and similar statements, which indicates that even the founder and champion of American liberalism and humanism, Enlightenment-inspired Jefferson was not fully able to transcend in his political ideology his religious belief or overcome the historical hegemony of fundamentalist religion like sectarian Protestantism in America’s history (Lipset 1996; Munch 2001), including the time of the Revolution and its aftermath.¹⁷

¹⁶ Brink (2000: 13) suggests that the legal principle that “all citizens have equal rights” is “not enough [as] to really count as equals, [for] some citizens may require special attention”.

¹⁷ One can hazard the guess that probably Jefferson’s insertion of the “Creator” was less the expression of his theology and religious belief, and more a concession to and compromise with anti-liberalism and recognition of the hegemony of sectarian and fundamentalist religion, notably Puritanism (Munch 2001), in American history, from colonial to revolutionary and post-revolutionary times. Recall, Jefferson was

It does so because liberalism is, as Comte and others suggest, agnostic, positive or scientific in respect to – i.e. neither believing in (faith) nor categorically denying (atheistic) – the existence of super-human, non-empirical and transcendental entities like Divinity and “Satan”, including “witches”, and their supposed creation and corruption, respectively, of humans and the world, including society and polity. For liberalism, this is, to paraphrase Comte, a theological, metaphysical or unscientific, so un-testable, not a positive, sociological-empirical and scientific, thus testable or falsifiable proposition. Simply, it does and cannot know, because it is empirically impossible, whether or not “all men are created” by the Divine Creator and “corrupted” by equally transcendental “evil forces”, but only that within liberal-secular democracy they are or should be all equal and included in society and before its institutions, including laws and legal procedures. Hence, for liberalism, the supposed transcendental and original Divine act of creation of humans and their egalitarianism is outside its purview or irrelevant in relation to what Durkheim would call the genesis and functioning of egalitarian values and institutions within liberal democracy.

Alternatively, this egalitarian creationism does not produce effective egalitarianism and inclusion in society, including America, viz. slavery, segregation, exclusion, discrimination, xenophobia. Further, even if, as US religious fundamentalists insinuate and their neo-fascist allies like white supremacist “Christian” militia openly proclaim, not “all men are created equal”, but some as “more equal than others”, by the Divine Creator, this does not rule out the possibility that they have or may become so subsequently within liberal-secular democracy through the principle and practice of political and other equality and inclusion. If it does rule out it, then liberal democracy and human society overall falls into the anti-egalitarian fundamentalist-fascist or racist trap and becomes a hostage of religious fundamentalism and neo-fascism in America and elsewhere.

condemned and attacked as “colorless deist” (Weber’s description of Puritan Franklin) and even Enlightenment-inspired “atheist” by anti-liberals like the Federalists and other authoritarian conservatives though he was a sort of religious liberal and pluralist, so visionary ahead of his social environment and time, notably New England’s theocracy existing for more than half a century after the American Revolution (until the 1830s).

Hence, the transcendental creation of all humans as “equal”, though sometimes helpful as a theological-religious support, is neither necessary nor sufficient condition of actual political and other equality in liberal democracy. For the latter is an essentially different or secular and independent factor and realm of the genesis and operation of egalitarianism. Saying that “all men are created equal” by the Divine Creator, though may contribute to, does not necessarily say that they are actually so in their real political and all social life, as historically evidenced by slavery, serfdom, hierarchical estates, castes, sharp class divisions and related anti-egalitarian phenomena in Europe, America and other Christian or non-Christian societies.

In sociological, distinguished from theological, terms, it is liberal democracy as historically devised and practically acted on by humans, not some transcendental supra-human entity, that is primarily the creator or promoter of political and other equality, inclusion and hope in human society, as different from that what US conservatives emphasize as “heaven and hell” (Lemert 1999; Wuthnow 1998). So, modern egalitarian and secular liberal democracy can safely put aside the pseudo-theological statement – even if coming from Jefferson as the father and supreme symbol of American liberalism, rationalism, intellectualism and humanism – of a sort of divine creation of human equality, enshrined in the US constitution and celebrated by many liberals, plus most Americans.

For liberalism, the statement is sociologically extraneous and impertinent, if not with potentially theocratic and coercive religious implications (“do not undo what God has created”) as pervasive in the “Bible Belt” as a theocentric social system and period or providential design. In particular, in its anti-liberal, anti-Jeffersonian conservative-religious renditions and interpretations, the “all men are created equal by the Creator” assumption can be and has been used to substitute theological, metaphysical or non-empirical equality prior to (the “original sin”) and after (“heaven”) human society for empirical political and other societal egalitarianism. Thus, it can or has been exploited as what Simmel calls a “compensatory substitute”, rationalization or “consolation prize” for social inequality in reality, as witnessed in a long anti-liberal sequence ranging from medieval serfdom, despotism and rigid hierarchy in Europe to slavery, segregation and discrimination in America. In this anti-liberal rendition, theological egalitarianism, under the constitutional and other disguise, acts as a “Trojan horse” and “fatal attraction” for modern liberal democracy and its integral secular political equality.

Liberal Democracy and Justice

Related to equality, liberal ideology, society and modernity is further democratic because of its principle and institutional practice of political justice as a component of its general social equity or fairness. Hence, liberal democracy is essentially or ideally just, equitable or fair, as a corollary and expression of being egalitarian as well as libertarian, predicated on the ideal of political and social justice or equity in the sense of fairness.

Political Egalitarianism and Justice in Liberal Democracy

At this juncture, integral political equality, in dialectics and synergy with liberty, is the basis and condition of justice in liberal democracy. Alternatively, an anti-egalitarian political system is by assumption or in reality unjust or unfair, and even, as Popper (1973) suggests for authoritarian conservatism and its monster-child fascism, ultimately criminal and murderous. Thus, the US constitutional Jeffersonian principle of “justice and liberty for all” is logically predicated and conditional on that of universal equality à la “all men are created equal” (minus the theological syndrome), including equal opportunities, i.e. life chances. And alternatively, conservative anti-egalitarianism and exclusion in American politics and all society, including slavery, segregation, racism, discrimination and xenophobia – expressed in both anti-illegal immigration paranoia and mistreatment of legal immigrants or foreigners through denying habeas corpus and indefinite prison detention and torture – has subverted that liberal ideal in anti-liberal injustice or unfairness, plus standard repression and un-freedom.

In this respect, political egalitarianism in the sense of equal formal and substantive treatment of all equal individuals and groups in politics defines and determines justice or fairness in liberal democracy, while anti-egalitarianism results in what even Smith dreaded as self-destructive injustice, plus un-freedom, and so a sort of metaphorical sociological and even literal “crime” in Popper’s sense. In particular, equal political rights are, as contemporary liberals stress, the “prerequisite” for a just polity and society (Brink 2000: 186). Conversely, political-economic inequality, exclusion or domination, especially when, in Pareto’s words, “not intended to protect order and prosperity, but to defend privileges, to perpetuate robbery”, define and determine injustice and unjust repression in politics and society overall.

In this connection, it is to be noted that in liberal democracy and politics overall, only or mostly “equal treatment of the equal” defines and determines justice as fairness. Alternatively, while applicable to the economy, i.e. distribution according to contribution, the second definition of justice or fairness in terms of “unequal treatment of the unequal” does not make much sense, contrary to anti-liberal conservative assertions. It is even destructive in politics or at least liberal democracy insofar as, to paraphrase Jefferson, “all men are equal” in political or simply human, even if not in economic, terms.

For example, the anti-liberal “unequal treatment of the unequal” in politics can and does, as in the American South and beyond, destroy or subvert the elementary democratic principle of “one person, one vote”, resulting in anti-democratic outcomes like plutocracy embodied by the robber-barons and Enronism, oligarchy incarnated by “good old boys”, or theocracy in the “Bible Belt” design. Thus, most US conservatives and other anti-liberals, such as Southern fundamentalists and a Supreme Court judge elected in 2006, are observed to deny or disdain the “one person, one vote” principle. They thus enforce what they and “libertarians” like Hayek et al. may justify as “unequal treatment of the unequal” in terms of wealth or power and so “justice”, but which is effectively political injustice if “all men are created equal” in the non-economic sense, thus contradicting the American Jeffersonian ideal of equality and fairness. Simply, unlike in the economy, “unequal” individuals and groups, do not exist, despite anti-liberal attempts to create and perpetuate such inequality, in liberal politics and society, and consequently any unequal treatment becomes one of “equal” humans, so political and social injustice, if not crime in Popper’s sense.

In sum, while, as “libertarian” economists correctly stress, often being just/fair in the economy in terms of wealth distribution, “unequal treatment of the unequal” is, what they deny or overlook, invariably injustice/unfairness and to that extent undemocratic, even “criminal” in politics and liberal democracy. And, the libertarian “unequal treatment of the unequal” in the sense of economic rewards and contributions is no more than the negative, flip-side of the liberal positive “equal treatment of the equal” in general.

In comparative empirical terms, to recall, for example, US economist Samuelson suggests that politically and economically egalitarian liberal democracies like Scandinavian welfare states are both “freer” (Tilman 2001) and more just than their non- or less-egalitarian alternatives at least in economic terms

like America under anti-egalitarian conservatism, in accordance with J. S. Mill's classical criteria of liberty and justice. Conversely, Simmel implies that anti-egalitarian social systems like traditional despotism, mixing the "promotion of money economy" with political oppression, and its modern variations in capitalist dictatorships a la Chile's "free-market" fascist dictatorship and Singapore's authoritarian capitalism, both celebrated by US "libertarian" economists as the model of economic "liberty", are neither free nor just in the sense of liberal democracy and society.

The intrinsic link of political (in)equality and (in)equity is instructive to stress, because anti-liberalism like US neo-conservatism usually adopts and pursues what Popper (1973) calls anti-egalitarianism and exclusion in politics and all society, including economy and culture. In doing so, it yet claims to be "fair" and "libertarian" by declaratively, although not substantively, subscribing to "justice and liberty for all", which is an apparent logical contradiction of "anti-egalitarian fairness" or an empirical impossibility, as exemplified by slavery, segregation, racism, discrimination and xenophobia, within the framework of liberal democracy and society. It is also instructive to emphasize the above link because pseudo-liberalism like spurious libertarianism reduces and dissolves integral political equality to its narrow legal dimension, and yet claims to be true liberalism and the best theoretical basis of liberal democracy by celebrating "liberty and justice for all", thus denying or neglecting that substantive inequality and exclusion may generate or exacerbate both un-freedom and injustice instead.

In sum, liberal democracy tends to be just or equitable primarily because it is egalitarian in the sense of political-social equality and inclusion, although economy may be, as "libertarian" economists stress, "fair" despite being non-egalitarian in the sense of meritocratic, justifiable or deserved economic inequalities. To that extent, political egalitarianism generates and predicts justice or fairness in liberal democracy, and conversely, anti-egalitarianism injustice and other anti-democratic or "criminal" outcomes. Hence, liberal democracy by virtue of its link between political equality and justice as well as liberty distinguishes itself from anti- or pseudo-liberal "democracies" that either substantively reject both principles, as does authoritarian conservatism and fascism, or disassociate the second from the first, as in libertarianism while reducing them to their formal and economic dimensions like equal legal treatment and "just" distribution. In short, it is distinct by being premised

on and seeks to implement Smith's "liberal plan, Spencer's unison operation, Dahrendorf's positive dialectics, i.e. egalitarian-libertarian synergy (Putterman et al. 1998) of political justice, equality and liberty.

Integral Political Justice

By analogy to its unison, synergetic or complementary principles of liberty and equality, political justice in liberal democracy and modernity is integral, complete or holistic in virtue of being both formal and substantive, as well as individual and collective, equity qua fairness. This integration is what renders liberal democracy distinct from anti-liberal conservatism and fascism that destroy or suppress political justice in any formal and substantive dimension and meaning, as well as pseudo-liberal libertarianism that reductively construes it in primarily formalist and economic terms like legal fairness and "just" income distribution.

In its positive dialectics and synergy with liberty and equality, integral political justice, including but not limited to legal fairness, represents the essential condition, defining principle and constitutive element of liberal democracy and society. This is what Smith suggests proposing that justice, including the "propriety and fitness of punishment" and the protection of the "weak", is more "essential" to modern free society and its "liberal plan", so eventually economy itself and its "simple system of natural liberty", than is economic efficiency or generous "beneficence", contrary to libertarian economists' "free and efficient markets are all you need" interpretation (Buchanan 1991). As contemporary sociologists also stress, modern liberal democracy can function and persist only if it is based on the principle of "fundamental social justice" (Beck 2002: 40), in conjunction and synergy with those of liberty, equality and economic security.

Conversely, political injustice in the form or sense of the conservative-fascist unequal treatment of politically equal individual and groups in the meaning of the US constitution, or the spurious libertarian "meritocratic" unequal status of the supposedly unequal, in politics has been or is likely to be destructive to liberal democracy and society, so to liberty itself "libertarianism" celebrates. This is what exactly Smith implies by, to reiterate, warning that injustice, including what he calls the "consciousness of ill-desert", "necessarily tends to destroy" polity and society, including eventually economy itself, even though it may persist without economic "beneficence" and "libertarian"

efficient markets. Similarly, Spencer suggests that liberal democracy seeks to establish justice and eliminate or reduce injustice through “abolitions of grievances suffered by the people [i.e.] mitigations of evils which had directly or indirectly been felt by large classes of citizens, as causes of misery or as hindrances to happiness”. He infers that political justice, or its proxies like the “gaining of a popular good”, is what he denotes as the “eternal conspicuous trait”, alongside liberty, of liberalism and so liberal democracy in contrast to anti-liberal conservatism defined by opposite traits, including the authoritarian suppression and restraint of freedom.

In retrospect, Smith and Spencer, as modern liberals suggest, exemplify a long-standing proto-liberal pattern consisting in that “from time immemorial, philosophers have sought the structure of a *just* society, of a society that would benefit *all* of the individuals within it, and that would not benefit some through the exploitation of others”¹⁸ (Pelton 1999: 213). Like their classical forebears, contemporary liberals continue the “liberal concern with freedom and justice”, and try to integrate these concerns into the “democrat’s desire to ensure that citizens have an equal say in influencing and holding to account the rules and rulers governing them” (Bellamy 1999: 140).

The foregoing hints at formal and substantive political justice in liberal democracy and modernity. In liberal democracy, formal political justice consists in legal fairness and rights, including their conventional, Great Britain’s and constitutional, America-France’s formulation and protection. Thus, following Weber’s definition of liberty, formal political justice in liberal democracy can be redefined as fairness in the “legal sense” or the “possession of rights, actual and potential” defined and protected by law, including written or unwritten constitutions. By analogy to his definition of formal rationality, this type of political justice is a sort of legal “calculation” or constitutional “accounting” of rights and liberties for individuals and groups. He also implies that formal political justice, like liberty, is in general epitomized in legal-rational authority or what modern liberals and non-liberals alike call the “rule of law”, as a hallmark of liberal democracy versus its anti-liberal fascist and conservative alternatives characterized by authoritarian charismatic and

¹⁸ Pelton (1999: 213–5) adds that the “assurance of nondiscriminatory processes is a major obligation of a just society toward its individual members”.

traditional principles rationalized and couched as repressive “law and order” slogans (Dahrendorf 1979).

In particular, liberal democracy’s formal political justice is expressed and implemented in a fair criminal justice or penal system such as due legal process, judicial procedure in civil court, or habeas corpus. Predictably, these rules and procedures are eliminated and perverted by anti-liberalism, notably Germany fascism in its totalitarian terror (Bähr 2002) and American neo-conservatism in its repressive culture wars like the war on drugs, and notably the military “war on terror” via indefinite detention and torture of prisoners denied any legal status *cum* “enemy combatants”, both acting in violation of “all forms of decency and the laws of war” (Bauman 2001: 209), including those (the Geneva Convention) for treatment of prisoners that the US anti-liberal government has signed and is expected to respect.

In general, a liberal criminal-justice system is just or fair in virtue of being invariably enlightened, rational, minimalist and humane. This is in sharp contrast to its illiberal, notably fascist and conservative, versions as usually unfair due to their opposite traits of penal primitivism and irrationalism, if not barbarism, maximalism (Rutherford 1994) and inhumanity rationalized on various grounds like the “final solution” and extermination of “objective enemies” in German fascism (Bähr 2002) and “tough-on-crime” laws and policies, “homeland security”, the “war on terror” and “evil” in American neo-conservatism. Such a liberal system exemplifies and implements what contemporary sociologists call “liberal minimalism” in the sense that liberalism “prefers maximizing the realm of individual choice and minimizing coercive capacities to advance collective ends”¹⁹ (Fung 2003: 515–7).

¹⁹ Fung (2003: 517) comments that liberalism favors the “intrinsic value of freedom of association as a component of individual freedom generally [but rejects] many of the other contributions of associations because they may result in the expansion of state power and so compress the scope of liberty”. Fung (2003: 529) adds that liberalism “supports the freedom of individuals to associate with one another as a component of individual freedom [thus] the causal arrow points from democracy to association” (rather than conversely) and values the “intrinsic good of association and preservation of the freedom to associate so that individuals may join with others to pursue their self-chosen ends.” He suggests that liberal democracies “should respect a broad range of individual rights, and associations will result naturally from the exercise of these rights by individuals as they pursue their private and collective purposes” (Fung 2003: 529).

More specifically, a liberal criminal justice system is just because it is, as Smith implies and Durkheim suggests, premised on the “rule that the punishment should fit the crime”, which defines penal justice *cum* fairness. Curiously, Durkheim proposes that “there is no society where it is not the rule that the punishment should fit the crime”. For the present purpose, it is more accurate to say that no liberal, rather than any, society lacks such a rule insofar as illiberal, notably fascist, communist and conservative, societies are precisely defined by a misfit in this respect in the form of severe punishments usually out of proportion with the severity of crimes, i.e. a primitive Draconian penal system. The latter is exemplified by the Nazi-style extermination of “enemies” and US neo-conservative “get-tough-on-crime” policies enacted and symbolized by death camps and death rows or prisons, respectively, as well as their Islamic and communist counterparts in Iranian theocracy and Chinese “capitalist” communism (Jacobs et al. 2005).

Consequently, illiberal, fascist-conservative legal-penal systems are not just, precisely for the reason of severe Draconian punishments not fitting and disproportionate to any crimes and sins committed, thus violating the principle. On this account, the criminal justice system in liberal democracy and society constitutes or aims to be really the system of “justice” in penal and judicial terms, and that in its anti-liberal alternatives one of injustice and inequality, so effectively “criminal” in Popper’s sense of political anti-egalitarianism and so unfairness. Hence, the “criminal justice system” has the real meaning and existence only in liberal democracy and society. Yet, it is an inner contradiction, oxymoron or misnomer (“cruel joke”) in anti-liberalism, where it degenerates into a sort of *criminal* in Popper’s sense and *injustice* system in the form of a primitive, if not barbarian, and irrational Draconian penal code destroying Smith-Durkheim’s rational fit between crime and punishment via illiberal, fascist-conservative “tough” policies. In general, formal political justice in the sense of Weber’s legal-rational authority and “rule of law” and Smith-Durkheim’s principle of penal fairness is primarily attained and possible in liberal democracy, while destroyed and ultimately impossible in anti-liberal fascism and conservatism as well as simulated (“faked”) in pseudo-liberal libertarianism with its bias favoring the powers that be and the “haves”.

The aforesaid holds true of substantive political justice in liberal democracy and its anti-liberal alternatives. In liberal democracy, substantive political justice also consists in effective fairness, i.e. actual equity, in politics and society.

In Weber's terms, if its formal version is legal or procedural manifested in the constitutional definition, procedure and "possession of rights", substantive political justice is sociological expressed in their factual promotion, extension and exercise or "effective use" (Rawls 1993) by both individuals and groups in liberal democracy. In particular, he implies that substantive political justice in liberal democracy is defined by creating and extending real life chances for all individuals and groups. Building on Weber, contemporary sociologists like Dahrendorf (1979) define substantive justice/equity, just as liberty, in liberal democracy in terms of the creation and expansion of universal life chances or equal opportunities considered the necessary condition for a just and free society. In turn, both Weber and especially Dahrendorf suggest that the legal definition of rights or procedural "equality before the law", while being necessary, is not the sufficient condition for their effective exercise and so for actual life chances. They thus imply that formal "justice for all" is not enough for universal fairness in substantive terms, insofar as this defining or legislating of rights is performed by a narrow ruling group as in conservative and fascist and in part "libertarian" degenerations of liberal democracy.

In short, by analogy to its formal type as a legal value, norm or procedure, substantive political justice in liberal democracy is a case of what Weber calls "ultimate values", alongside and in reciprocity with equality and liberty, in politics and society. In legal terms, democratic positive and "natural" law define and epitomize formal and substantive political justice, respectively, in liberal democracy, as Weber and Tönnies suggest. Thus, Weber states that natural law with its "essential elements" of justice, equality and freedom epitomizes and defines what he calls the "substantive content" of just laws and political institutions in liberal democracy, just as does democratic positive law in relation to formal fairness. This is what also Tönnies implies stating that "natural law" postulates that all humans are "a priori equal" and "free agents", while positive law may, as in liberal democracy, or may not, as in its illiberal counterparts, adopt and reaffirm this postulate via a formal definition of justice, equality and freedom, including the constitutional procedure and "possession" of rights and liberties.

Also, for contemporary liberals, substantive political "justice as fairness" (Habermas et al. 1998: 67) in politics and society makes liberal democracy the "fair system of cooperation between free and equal citizens" (Rawls 1993: 166). In substantive terms, liberal democracy is just/fair in that it does or

would “benefit *all* of the individuals within it, and that would not benefit some through the exploitation of others” (Pelton 1999: 213). This universal justice in substantive terms of benefits for all individuals and groups is what distinguishes liberal democracy from its anti- or pseudo-liberal alternatives, in which some, seen as “more equal and freer than others”, benefit through either overt and unapologetic, as in conservatism and fascism, or covert and rationalized as in “libertarianism”, economic exploitation and other unjust, illegitimate and illegal methods.

Hence, for leading contemporary liberals, political fairness incorporates and presupposes some degree or modicum of economic justice in the sense that “all citizens have sufficient material means to make effective use of [their] basic rights” (Rawls 1993: 5, 157, 291). At the minimum, it necessitates that all individuals and groups are free or protected from exploitation or distributive injustice, discrimination, oppression and slave-style practices, such as sweatshops, coercive prison labor, anti-union coercion in America and elsewhere under anti-liberalism, by Popper’s “masters” or “powers that be” in economy and society. In this view, economic justice, particularly non-exploitation, non-discrimination and non-oppression in economy, constitutes the indispensable, albeit perhaps not sufficient, functional imperative or intrinsic link of substantive political fairness within liberal democracy.

Conversely, for liberalism, economic or distributive injustice in the sense and shape of “undeserved” material inequalities (Terchek 1997: 2) as the result of exploitation, oppression and other unjust or coercive processes in economy and society, acts as the antithesis, impediment or menace to effective political justice in liberal democracy. In this sense, economic injustice as unfairness tends to engender and aggravate substantive unfairness in politics and society. It does so through notably labor exploitation (Wright 2002), repression (Pryor 2002) and slave-like settings and practices (Wacquant 2002) in the economy, like coerced prison labor reducing prisoners – most of whom being sorts of sinners convicted for drug-war (Reuter 2005) and other temperance-wars (Wagner 1997) crimes rather than violent criminals – into near-slaves in America, especially Southern states, under conservatism, not to mention China and other third-world dictatorships. It thus undermines and even, as Smith warns, eventually destroys liberal democracy, so “free markets” themselves assumed, as per Hayek and “libertarians”, to be indifferent, if not opposed, to social justice that they dismiss as “spurious”.

In sum, the preceding indicates that substantive, effective political fairness in liberal democracy is intertwined and mutually reinforcing with formal or procedural justice, in contrast to conservative and fascist anti-liberalism that destroys both and libertarian pseudo-liberalism dissolving and subordinating the first to the second and “free markets”. It is also entwined with economic and other social justice in liberal democracy, as are the respective types of injustice in its anti- or pseudo-liberal counterparts, contrary to the conservative-fascist destruction of both and the libertarian separation of the first and liberty from the second basically “presumed dead”.

Liberal Democracy and Political Universalism

The preceding, especially pluralism and egalitarianism, indicates that liberalism in the sense of liberal ideology, society and modernity is democratic because of its principle and institutional practice of political universalism as a salient constituent of its general universalistic ideas and social institutions. Hence, liberal democracy is universalistic or all-inclusive in the political, including legal, sense, just as is its civil society in moral-cultural terms. Alternatively, liberal democracy and civil society reject political and moral-cultural particularism or exclusion as the antipode of universalism in polity and culture, and the typical attribute or outcome of anti-liberalism, especially conservatism, including fascism, racism and ethnocentrism.

Liberal Political Universalism and Inclusion vs. Illiberal Particularism and Exclusion

In Parsons' (1951) terms, generally liberal democracy can be described as a complex of political and social, including moral, universalism expressed in a “universalistic definition of the object” in the sense of Kant (Munch 1981) within politics and society overall, as differentiated from particularism in a pair of pattern variables, and conjoined with other attributes like economic achievement and neutrality versus ascription and “affectivity”.

In particular, contemporary post-war America provides Parsons' case in point, even the culminating stage of a long evolutionary development in the direction of liberal democracy and society (Giddens 1984). Predictably, induced or seduced (if not blinded) by his hyper-patriotism as well as his

“Puritan heritage” (Alexander 1983), Parsons (1951) reserves “universalism-achievement” for contemporary “liberal” – in his designation, yet “conservative”, in those of his critics and other authors – Protestant America as the pinnacle in his evolutionary scheme a la the Prussia state in Hegel’s dialectics. Also expectedly, he somewhat, to use Veblen’s term, invidiously distinguishes the American democratic “value system” from “universalism-ascription” supposedly characteristic for pre-Nazi Germany and Europe overall. No wonder, some contemporary sociologists (Giddens 1984: 273–4) comment that “Parsons’ view that half a million years of human history culminate in the social and political system of the United States would be more than faintly ridiculous if it did not conform quite neatly to his particular “world-growth” story.”

Thus, Parsons sociologically defines post-war liberal, especially New-Deal, democracy in America in terms of universalism, including “universally defined goals”, notably what Merton (1968) more critically connotes as “success-goal”, and universalistic norms, joined with achievement. This is done in contrast to other political systems in history defined by particularism like classical China and Spanish America, or a mix of universalism and ascription as in pre-Nazi Germany. By assumption, like the US founders and Tocqueville, Parsons implies that liberal democracy’s universalism in post-war America is epitomized in the constitutional principle and institutional practice of political and other “liberty and justice for all” and “all men are created equal”. As noted, another early historical exemplar par excellence of liberal political universalism is the French Revolution’s Declaration of “Universal Rights of Man”. Overall, as contemporary sociologists remark, liberal democracy/political liberalism is universalistic in that its key principle is “everyone is entitled to an equal system of basic liberties” [i.e.] the right to *equal* subjective liberties” (Habermas 2001: 71).

In turn, as Tocqueville and Parsons imply, this universalism is what distinguishes liberal democracy from illiberal alternatives. These, despite claiming to be universalistic and inclusive, are substantially particularistic, exclusive, factional or sectarian by a non-universalistic definition of the social object, individuals and groups, as shown by medieval traditionalism, conservatism and fascism, or pseudo-universalistic, as seen in “libertarianism” with its spurious pro-capital or plutocratic “universalism” and anti-labor and anti-egalitarian particularism. Simply, Jefferson’s “for all” in American and other Western liberal democracy, though with various historical and persisting

exceptions like slavery, segregation, discrimination and xenophobia, tends to ideally include every individual and group in a society. It does so regardless of Parsons' social objects' ascribed traits, including national ascription like German "Arian race" against non-Germans and ascriptive "Americanism" versus non-Americans, an anti-liberal invidious dichotomy defining Nazism and McCarthyism and other conservatism in America, and climaxing respectively in the Nazi-provoked WW II and the neo-conservative "war on terror", including indefinite detention, torture and indiscriminate murder of "foreigners", as a syndrome of what sociologists identify as conservative reasserted militarism and imperialism (Steinmetz 2005; Turner 2002). Minimally, liberal democracy incorporates Bentham's "greatest possible number of people" and citizens in either a legal or sociological sense.

At least, liberal democracy's universalistic ideal or scope, even when not really including "each and everyone", like immigrants, "aliens" and legal non-citizens in America and many other Western countries, it is more encompassing than are its anti- and pseudo-liberal alternatives. In these latter, "all", if ever, effectively means only "us" and insiders in religious-political terms, as within medievalism, conservatism and fascism, or an economic sense, as in libertarianism, versus "them" and outsiders excluded and eventually subjugated and oppressed, thus expressing anti- and spurious universalism respectively.

In Weber's terms, the "ethics of brotherhood", as a primeval variation of Kantian universalistic morality (Beck 2000; Caldwell 1997; Habermas 1989; Munch 1981), in liberal democracy applies to and includes ideally "all" or the "greatest number" of its members in Bentham's sense, but does not in anti-liberalism, specifically conservatism, including fascism. Anti-liberalism redefines "brothers" exclusively or narrowly – e.g. "faithful", "saints", "true believers", "Christians", "Muslims", "natives", "good old boys", "WASP", "Arians", etc., with those thus excluded redefined as "enemies" via what Weber identifies as the primitive or barbarian equation of "outsider" or "foreign" with "enemy" or "evil". Negatively, in liberal democracy Kant-Jefferson's "all" is at the minimum less religiously sectarian and politically factional in Madison's sense than is in anti-liberalism. The latter includes only either God's elect, chosen, saved with Divine Rights to rule, as does religious conservatism such as Puritanism and radical Islam, or "superior" races, nations, political leaders or elites, as do fascism, communism and neo-conservatism, while excluding

others, defined, oppressed and eventually exterminated as ungodly, reprobate and damned or “inferior” peoples, and masses.

To summarize, liberal democracy’s liberty, equality and justice “for all” tends to include more or at least exclude less people, i.e. individuals and groups, than any of its anti- or pseudo-liberal alternatives, from medievalism and arch-conservatism to fascism and communism and to neo-conservatism, neo-fascism and spurious libertarianism. While universalism in the pure sense has not been completely attained but remains an unfulfilled ideal and “dream” within modern liberal democracy, the latter has invariably been and remains the most effective and promising social-political system for attaining liberty, equality and justice “for all” compared with its anti- and pseudo-liberal alternatives. In short, both political libertarianism and genuine egalitarianism or fairness are attained and likely to be solely or primarily in liberal democracy due to its ideal and institutional practice of universalism contrasted to illiberal anti- and quasi-universalism.

Universalistic Political Culture

The above suggests that liberal democracy is based and dependent on, just as it sustains, what contemporary liberals describe as a universalistic political culture within which the democratic process is “embedded” (Habermas 2001: 76). In this view, modern democratic societies depend on a liberal political culture and its “universalistic self-understanding” (Habermas 2001: 50) traced to ethical universalism in classical, especially Kantian (also Beck 2000, Caldwell 1997), liberalism. Recall, this liberal universalism is expressed in conceiving and treating all human subjects as “free and equal” persons or agents endowed with both political and civil liberties and rights promoting public and private autonomy. Notably, in modern liberalism, civil or liberal and political liberties and rights are “inseparable”, stressing that what is denoted as the “co-originality of liberty rights and the rights of citizen is essential” (Habermas 2001: 118). If so, then this association distinguishes liberal democracy from its illiberal versions that deny and destroy both liberty and citizenship rights, as do conservatism and fascism, or separate them by either favoring the first, as does libertarianism, or the second, as with conservative republicanism or communitarianism with its “communitarian critique of liberalism” (Hirschman 1994: 204).

In essence, liberal democracy is both free, libertarian and “republican” in sociological terms, as epitomized by the extension of citizenship rights or life chances (Dahrendorf 1979), while anti-liberalism is neither, spurious libertarianism mostly the first, and non-liberal republicanism, the second. Thus, liberal democracy is not only universalistic by including “all” as “free and equal” subjects or agents. It is also comprehensive in the sense of blending universal political and civil liberties and rights, rather than separating them as in “libertarianism” and republicanism, viz. “conventional representation-cum-administration” (Fung 2003: 515), let alone suppressing both, as done by conservatism and fascism. This confirms that liberal democracy, due to its universalism intertwined with comprehensiveness, is the most effective and promising sociopolitical structure for attaining and sustaining “libertarian” freedom and republican equality and justice “for all” compared to its anti- or pseudo-liberal alternatives, including individualistic “libertarianism” and “communitarian” republicanism as incomplete, not to mention fascism and conservatism as antithetical, in this respect.

Predictably, the above has made and still does liberal democracy the target and often victim of anti-liberal attacks and subversions by conservatism and fascism on the account of both liberty and equality and justice “for all”, just as pseudo-liberal objections and discontents due to its supposedly permissive liberties and excessive individualism, as by non-liberal republicanism and communitarianism, or instead to its presumed collectivist egalitarianism and justice, as by individualistic “libertarianism”. In sum, liberal democracy is more universalistic and inclusive in the scope of liberty and justice for “all” and comprehensive or encompassing in terms of blending political and civil liberties than its anti- and pseudo-liberal would-be solutions to its supposed moral and other “crisis” that are, like conservatism and fascism, neither, or, as libertarianism and communitarian republicanism, just partially either.

Modern Liberal and Illiberal Democracies and Universalism

In comparative-historical terms, both casual observations and stylized evidence indicate that modern liberal democracies tend to be universalistic, as well as comprehensive, in terms of liberty, equality and justice, or more so than their illiberal or conservative counterparts. Thus, according to sociological studies, comparative estimated degrees of political universalism (Pampel

1998; also Amenta et al. 2001; Quadagno 1999) are higher in European liberal-social democracies, notably Scandinavian welfare states, than in their neo-conservative alternatives, especially America under Reaganism and Great Britain under Thatcherism since the 1980s. For example, scores of universalism (“collectivism”), including “universalism in public benefits” (Pampel 1998), are positive and the highest in such Western liberal-social democracies and welfare states as Norway (1.68), Sweden (1.51), Denmark (1.17), Holland (1.02), Switzerland (0.71), Finland (0.53), and Germany (0.06), while negative and the lowest in their illiberal and anti-welfare counterparts like the USA (-1.62) epitomizing the “New American Exceptionalism” (Quadagno 1999) during neo-conservatism, followed by the UK and its other former colonies.

These observations confirm that liberal-welfare European capitalism as a politico-economic system, by being more universalistic, egalitarian and to that extent democratic, just as not less economically efficient, contrary to US “libertarian” and neo-conservative imputations, is more effective in social and perhaps economic terms (Trigilia 2002) than its illiberal and anti-welfare “unfettered” American variant. In short, comparative sociological studies find that the more liberal in political as well as economic terms via a developed welfare state a modern Western democracy is, the more universalistic it is, and conversely (Amenta et al. 2001; Quadagno 1999). They thus reaffirm that political liberalism constitutes, generates and predicts universalism or inclusion of all groups in polity and society, and anti-liberalism does particularism or exclusion, as shown by anti-universalistic and exclusionary conservatism, at most pseudo-universalism or spurious inclusiveness, as seen in pro-capital and anti-labor “libertarianism” (Dahrendorf 1979).

The preceding reintroduces the classical Kantian project and institutional practice of cosmopolitan liberal democracy (Beck 2000; Habermas 2001). As hinted, true liberal democracy is universalistic and inclusive in virtue of being cosmopolitan, expressing the cosmopolitanism of both classical and modern liberalism. Positively, it is cosmopolitan in the sense of including not only nationals and legally defined citizens, as Parsons seems to imply in respect to American liberal universalism-achievement. It also includes non-nationals like immigrants and foreigners as citizens, regardless of their lack of invidious national ascriptions such as “German race” and “American” nationality, in substantive sociological, though not necessarily legal and procedural,

terms of treating them as humans and so endowed with, as classical liberals emphasize, natural basic human liberties, rights and dignity which no secular or even sacred power can legitimately deny and violate, including the US nationalist and “godly” Puritan-inspired government during its “war on terror” via its denials of prisoner status to “enemy combatants” and even habeas corpus to all “non-Americans”.

Liberal democracy and modernity is cosmopolitan and so universalistic in a global sense by affording and protecting liberty, equality and justice “for all” individuals and groups as human social objects present permanently or temporarily within its framework. It does so irrespective of what sociologists call national “blood and belonging” (Ignatieff 1994) like the conservative-Nazi racist imperative of German “blood and soil” (Habermas 2001) as well as neo-conservative nationalistic ascriptive Americanism (King 1999), as well as the legal citizenship status. In this sense, it is what they denote as post- and trans-national cosmopolitan rather than national or nationalist exclusionary political democracy (Beck 2000; Habermas 2001).

Liberal democracy tends to be universalistic in respect to virtually all humans, both legally defined national members and others sociologically considered political subjects or simply citizens in virtue of their human quality and existence within its institutional context, thus expressing its humanism. Negatively, it is so by not excluding, segregating and discriminating against non-national individuals and groups through denying them liberty, equality and justice on grounds of their improper national “blood and belonging” such as not fitting in the conservative-Nazi imperative of German “blood and soil” and neo-conservative ascriptive Americanism, and the lack of legal citizenship status. It thus sharply distances from its illiberal, notably fascist and conservative, counterparts typified by exclusion, segregation, discrimination and eventually persecution, extermination and execution of non-nationals or foreigners redefined, in accordance with the primitive-barbarian equation of “foreign” and “enemy”, as “objective enemies” (Bähr 2002) a la “non-Arian” and “un-American”, as in Nazism, McCarthyism and its generalization neo-conservatism (Plotke 2002; Turner 2002).

The above suggests that if it is not cosmopolitan in this minimal sense, liberal democracy is not truly but spuriously universalistic and inclusive, characterized by what Parsons might call universalism-national ascription. As noted, this is exemplified in what contemporary sociologists identify as

nationalist ascriptive Americanism (King 1999; Turner 2002) particularly reproduced and celebrated by conservatism (Lipset 1996), yet often, as during the Cold War and the “war on terror” and “the axis of evil”, seducing with its “fatal attraction” even liberalism, in America. By contrast to this déjà vu national “blood and/or belonging” reduction, genuine, extended liberal democracy constitutes a complex of universalism and cosmopolitanism, and so globalism.

In Parsons’ (1951) words, it is the democratic system of global universalism-achievement in the sense that its universalistic values and institutions are extended to encompass not only native-born and legally defined citizens like “all Americans” in his formulation. It also comprises and treats others as social subjects and simply humans with inherent, “natural” liberties and rights which even secular-sacred powers like the super-patriotic and “godly” US government in a holy alliance with theocratic fundamentalism cannot deny or violate and still remain democratic (Beck 2000), though it typically does so with impunity and irresponsibility, as witnessed during McCarthyism and the “war on terror.” If it does not, liberal universalism, so liberalism as a whole, degenerates into legally grounded nationalism and exclusionism, and “achievement” into what Merton (1939) may call nativist ascription like, as Parsons (1951) suggests, “Germanism” and what he blinded by his hyper-patriotism usually overlooks, “Americanism” (Lipset 1996).

At this juncture, Parsons’ (1951) pattern variable of Particularism versus Universalism entails polar opposites running “from nationalism to liberalism” (Hirschman 1993), just as Dahrendorf (1979: 96) places fascism, as conservatism’s extreme version, at “the opposite end of the scale of political attitudes from liberalism”. As known, a defining element of conservatism, in particular fascism such as Nazism, is nationalism, exemplified by the Nazi creation or project of a “newly compact [national community]” (Hirschman 1994) in opposition to and virulent attack on “unpatriotic” liberalism in Germany, as during the liberal Weimer Republic, and elsewhere. Hence, in this connection liberalism is either non-nationalistic, albeit not, as its detractors accuse, unpatriotic,²⁰

²⁰ Hirschman (1994: 203) remarks that “from 1945 on, all the patriotism that Germans were supposed to have was to be based on the consciousness – with perhaps, little by little, a bit of pride – that their country was now firmly built on a liberal constitution guaranteeing basic human and civil rights [i.e.] patriotism grounded on the Constitution”.

and otherwise universalistic *or* is not “liberal” and instead degenerates, as in a way happened in America during the Cold War and the “war on terror”, in nationalistic conservatism and even, as in part witnessed in interwar Germany and Europe overall, in chauvinistic fascism. By implication, liberalism is truly universalistic, specifically cosmopolitan, only if it entails a “minimalist kind of patriotism” (Hirschman 1994: 203; also Habermas 2001), as opposed to its maximalist type typifying conservatism-fascism, and degenerating into what Mises²¹ (1957) calls aggressive nationalism and militarism, including German conservative chauvinism and its child Nazi racism, and what Pareto connotes American “jingoism” and Merton (1939) “nativism”. In short, liberalism is either minimally – i.e. when absolutely necessary as during WW II – patriotic or is not universalistic and ultimately not democratic.

In this sense, liberal democracy and society is either cosmopolitan (Beck 2002), at least in the minimal sense of non-exclusion and discrimination against non-native political subjects in terms of liberty, equality and justice, or is neither truly universalistic nor even democratic. In the second case, it instead degenerates into an illiberal nationalist-conservative system, as in Europe prior to WW I and America during McCarthyism, the Cold War and the neo-conservative “war on terror”, and eventually fascism, as in Germany during the 1930s.

In particular, Tocqueville’s “democracy in America” will remain or become truly liberal and universal in Parsons’ sense only to that extent that it extends, as the founders, notably Jefferson and Madison, perhaps intended in a charitable-Kantian interpretation, “liberty and justice for all” or “all men are created equal” not only to “all” Americans in a seeming “human-American” equation, as done in nativist policies or interpretations, but “all” sociologically defined citizens and humans permanently or temporarily existing in its institutional domain. Conversely, it will degenerate into a sort of exclusionary and closed illiberal democracy permeated by ethnocentric ascriptive Americanism (King 1999: 26), including a “bipartisan” nationalistic foreign

²¹ Thus, according to Mises (1957: 318), the “success of Nazism in Germany in 1933 was due to the fact that the immense majority of the Germans, even of those voting the ticket of the Marxist parties, of the Catholic Centrum party, and of the various ‘bourgeois’ splinter parties, were committed to the ideas of radical aggressive nationalism, while the Nazis themselves had adopted the basic principles of the socialist program”.

policy (Singh 2002), which applies “liberty, equality and justice for all” only to Americans, while it makes others “need not apply” by being excluded and discriminated against, as are legal immigrants in welfare benefits and habeas corpus, and even physically mistreated and executed via indefinite detention, discriminatory executions of foreigners like Mexicans and others in Texas, torture and murder of non-American prisoners, etc. As well-known, this is precisely what has happened under American anti-liberalism during the Cold War, not to mention McCarthyism, and the “war on terror” and the “axis of evil”, etc.

In general, it is not simply Parsons’ (1951) universalism-achievement that defines and distinguishes American and other liberal democracy from its illiberal, notably conservative and fascist, opposites defined instead by particularism-ascription, but cosmopolitan universalism as originated in classical Kantian and other liberalism (Beck 2000; Habermas 2001). Hence, in historical terms, in virtue of this principle and attribute, modern liberal democracy only continues and implements a venerable legacy of classical liberalism, rather than moving into “dangerous waters” as fascists and conservative critics claim, or going beyond the “original” intent or mandate, as “libertarians” object in their economic pro-capitalist misinterpretations. For classical liberalism exemplified by Kant, Condorcet or Comte, even in part the Renaissance,²² political universalism has virtually no national-racial, geographic and sociological limits, or alternatively, the only limit is a global cosmopolitan society, and modern liberal democracy seeks to realize, though not always fully and coherently, and perhaps never will if critics are right, the original ideal of cosmopolitanism.

The above is useful to emphasize because Western liberal democracy at its own peril has often succumbed to the temptation and been seduced by the “fatal attraction” of illiberal, notably conservative and fascist, national

²² Caplan and Cowen (2004: 404) suggest that the “rise of medieval society and the Renaissance was, in large part, a process of re-globalization, as the West established significant contact with the Chinese and Islamic worlds”. Still, most historians and sociologists would agree that this holds true only or mostly of the Renaissance rather than medieval society that was, as Weber and others show, basically local, parochial and particularistic, just as traditionalistic. In fact, the cosmopolitan Renaissance was precisely an attempt to overcome the localism, parochialism and particularism, as well as traditionalism, of medievalism. Hence, modern liberalism and its cosmopolitanism, since the Enlightenment, has been continuous and compatible with Renaissance in particular, not with medieval or feudal society as a whole.

particularism and exclusion. This is evidenced by liberalism's embrace or "flirt" with European nationalism prior to and during WW I and other times, as well as the liberal-conservative consensus on Parsons' "basic values" of American nativism (Merton 1939) and jingoistic Americanism during the Cold War (Lipset 1955), including McCarthyism, and the "war on terror" and the "axis of evil".

A truly liberal democracy is Popper's open society in the sense of openness, universalism, inclusion and freedom in relation to both domestic and other political subjects, legal and sociological citizens, natives and non-natives in a cosmopolitan or non-nativist interpretation, viz. Germans and non-Germans as during the Weimar Republic, Americans and non-Americans as in Jefferson's ideal of "liberty and justice for all" or "all men are created equal". This sharply contrasts liberal democracy with its illiberal opposites "opening" towards and including domestic political subjects on fascist "blood" and conservative "soil" and national "belonging" grounds, as in the case of categories "Germans" in German conservatism and Nazism, "Americans" in McCarthyism and neo-conservatism.

No doubt, modern liberal democracy and society has repeatedly and even usually fallen short of and contradicted its own universal-cosmopolitan ideal. This is exemplified by European liberalism's succumbing to nationalism and imperialism prior WW I and its American version's seduction by or consensus and flirting with nativist Americanism and militarism during the Cold War and what sociologists identify as the "new U.S. imperialism" via the war on terror and "evil" (Steinmetz 2005). On the account of such failures, especially the discriminatory, even inhuman, treatment of legally defined non-citizen categories like immigrants and foreigners, probably no modern liberal democracy, including the "land of freedom and justice" for all and the "nation of immigration" America and universalistic Scandinavian social democracies, fully qualify, as post-modern and other critics object, as completely cosmopolitan (Beck 2002).

To that extent, none of them merits the designation truly "liberal" and "democracy" in the sense of classical liberalism and its cosmopolitanism à la Kant and Condorcet. As contemporary sociologists propose, "tell me how the rights of minorities, outcasts and foreigners are handled in your country [officially and informally] and I will tell you how democracy is faring in your country!" (Beck 2000: 128). This observation identifies what is described as

“protectionist double morality that distinguishes between desirable mobility and undesirable migration will lose its meaning [in a liberal society]” (Beck 2000: 32).

Yet, such failures, mainly due to illiberal fascist-conservative nationalist subversions, intrusions, temptations or seductions, do not mean, at least for modern liberals, that the cosmopolitan ideal of universalism is absolutely, as post-modernists and Marxists claim, unrealizable and utopian within liberal democracy and modernity, let alone dangerous to societies via a suspected “world government”, viz. anti-German and un-American, as per German fascists and US conservatives. Alternatively, if it is not open, free and universalistic in a cosmopolitan sense, liberal democracy eventually degenerates into what Popper and Parsons call a closed, un-free and particularistic society defined by non-recognition, non-inclusion and discrimination against, or even intolerant condemnation, sadistic persecution and extermination of, the non-native Other (Bauman 2000; Habermas et al. 1998).

In sum, cosmopolitanism is the logical, though historically, if post-modernist and other critics are right, hardly ever attained, outcome of liberal democracy/political liberalism and its inherent universalism. In a sense, cosmopolitan liberal democracy and society is likely to be the culmination of universalistic and egalitarian liberalism. Conversely, anti-liberalism like fascism, notably Nazism, in the historical form and meaning of a nationalistic-closed social system was the climax of traditional European conservatism (Moore 1993), and ascriptive Americanism (King 1999), as what Pareto calls jingoism, Merton exclusionary nativism and contemporary sociologists religiously grounded nationalism (Friedland 2001), one of American paleo- or neo-conservatism, from original Puritanism to contemporary Protestant sectarianism (Lipset 1996).

The above yields the expectation that so long as liberal democracy and modernity persists and expands, it will further move in the direction of cosmopolitan inclusion or “no-limits” post- or trans-national universalism, as in part indicated and predicted by Samuelson’s egalitarian and universalistic Scandinavian social democracies and welfare states. Conversely, so long as it is undermined or substituted by its illiberal, notably neo-conservative and neo-fascist, opposites, it will likely degenerate into anti-cosmopolitan exclusion and nationalist, “patriotic” “universalism-ascriptive” like ascriptive Americanism and its “liberty and justice for all Americans”, albeit “all” is

questionable even for many legally defined US ethnic and other minorities. It was witnessed in America under the political dominance of neo-conservatism during the 1980–2000s to the point of discrediting the very idea of cosmopolitanism, like liberalism, as “un-American”.

Generally, universalistic liberal democracy eventually constitutes, engenders and predicts cosmopolitanism, thus humanism and pacifism, and particularistic anti-liberalism, notably neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, does nationalism, so ultimately anti-humanism, militarism and permanent global war. In turn, like humanism and pacifism, cosmopolitanism as a classical ideal of liberalism, or perhaps a perennial dream of Comte’s humanity as a whole, is solely or primarily possible and complete in liberal democracy and modernity owing to its universalism, while being either impossible or incomplete and spurious in anti-liberalism like fascism and conservatism.

No wonder, a modicum or proxy of cosmopolitan universalism via legally recognized citizenship rights of non-nationals is more completely realized or approached in Samuelson’s Scandinavian and other European liberal-social, egalitarian and “freer” democracies than in their illiberal and non-egalitarian antipodes like American anti-liberal conservatism, as indicated by its institutional discrimination against legal immigrants, let alone “illegal aliens”, via denials of welfare benefits and habeas corpus, discriminatory judicial treatments, etc. during the 1980–2000s. In this sense, liberal democracy and modernity has been the necessary, though not always sufficient, condition for cosmopolitan inclusion and thus basic humanism within Western societies and beyond. And conversely, its illiberal alternatives have acted as the agents of anti-cosmopolitan exclusion and non-humanism through nationalist destruction, as in German fascism, or nativist subversion, as in US conservatism, of cosmopolitanism and so universalism degenerated into its antipodes or simulations like Parsons’ German universalism-ascription as well as ascriptive Americanism

Liberal Democracy and Secularism

Further, liberalism, i.e. liberal ideology, society and modernity, is democratic because of its principle and institutional practice of political secularism as a salient dimension of its secular ideas and institutions. Hence, liberal democracy and polity is secular, albeit not necessarily anti-religious and atheistic,

premised on the idea of political and other secularism. Alternatively, it supplants and transcends theocracy as its anti-secular antithesis, so the fusion, alliance or flirt between religion and politics, as characteristic of anti-liberalism, especially medievalism and conservatism, including in part fascism, though it does not involve official atheism or an anti-religion ideology in contrast to communism or undemocratic socialism. Liberal democracy is typically neither falsely secular and truly pro-religion, as Marxists object, nor officially atheistic and hostile to faith and Deity, as both European fascists a la Mussolini *and* the Vatican Church and US religious conservatives accuse.

In turn, liberal democracy and modernity is secular, just as not officially atheistic, on the premise, originating in classical liberalism, notably the Enlightenment, that politics or state is a public realm, and religion or church a private sphere, part of civil society. This liberal premise theoretically posits their societal differentiation or legal separation, so precludes their theocratic fusion or theocentric alliance in liberalism, unlike in anti-liberalism, notably medievalist and contemporary conservatism where they are fused or blurred and not strictly separated from each other, as in American Puritan-based paleo- and neo-conservatism (Munch 2001). The premise thus logically and practically rules out not only theocracy and religious over-determination in politics, contrary to Marxist and post-modernist opposite allegations. It also does, and what US and European religious conservatives like Protestant fundamentalists and the Vatican Church deny or overlook, official atheism and the fusion of government and *anti*-religion as an ideology or Pareto's "secular religion" within liberal democracy and modernity.

In contrast, the opposite anti-liberal assumption that politics and religion are or should be both "public" spheres and so subject to government control and coercion to *de*-differentiate them posits theocracy and religious over-determination in polity and society, as historically observed in Catholic European medievalism and Puritan-rooted American conservatism (Munch 2001). Alternatively, it involves official atheism and state anti-religion ideology, as witnessed in Soviet communism, albeit not in market and pseudo-democratic socialism as exemplified by the former Yugoslavia (Hodgson 1999) as a "highly successful economic system" (Schutz 2001: 12) and among Eastern European countries the pioneer of economic-political reforms alike that was centralized and so potentially atheistic "only for a few years" (Djankov and Murrell 2002: 741), during 1945–1950.

Liberal democracy and modernity entails a societal differentiation between religion and politics, including the legal separation of church and state, in contrast to anti-liberalism characterized by their *de*-differentiation in the form of theocracy or religious over-determination, as in medieval and American conservatism, and conversely official atheism or secular pseudo-religion, as in communism. In short, liberal democracy is both a legally secular state and sociologically secular political society, which implies formal and substantive secularism alike, as elaborated below.

Formal Secularism: A Secular Liberal State

Liberal democracy features formal political secularism in the sense and form of a secular state and legal system, including constitution, in relation to religion and church as sacred institutions and powers in Durkheim's meaning. In formal terms, then liberal democracy is secular in virtue and through a legal, either conventional or written-constitutional, separation of religion and politics, sacred and "profane" powers, church and state.

Comparatively, this formal separation is what distinguishes liberal democracy from its illiberal alternatives that are either non-secular and theocratic via the legal fusion of religion and politics, as in medievalism, Catholic, Puritan and Islamic religious conservatism, and Italian fascism, or pseudo-secular by blurring or disregarding their boundaries, as in US "faith-based" neo-conservatism and in part supposedly anti-religious Nazism. Yet, since this formal separation does not typically – historically hardly ever even in the wake of the French Revolution – amounts to official atheism or state anti-religion, in this respect liberal democracy also differs, contrary to conservative-religious accusations or misperceptions from communism or authoritarian socialism insofar as the latter is officially atheistic, as Soviet Union and communist China, but not, for example, "socialist" Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary.

This is instructive to reiterate and emphasize given that religious conservatism, ranging from Catholicism and Puritanism to modern American fundamentalism, as well as fascism like Mussolini's version, in part Hitler et al., tends to condemn, attack and destroy liberal democracy and modernity on the account of its formal and substantive secularism and imputed atheism. In turn, communism or authoritarian socialism does the same for the oppo-

site reason of, as Marx et al. imply, liberal democracy's supposed adoption of religion as the instrument of social control, repression and exploitation (the "opium for the masses"). At this juncture, liberal democracy's misconstrued and contradictory atheism and religious control unites religious conservatives and fascists with communists as "brothers in arms" and "bedfellows" in their anti-liberal crusades or revolutions, both groups uniting and acting on a cardinal misconception or misunderstanding of its formal and substantive secularism, albeit from different battle positions and for diverse aims.

In a way, liberal democracy's secularism thus misunderstood respectively has more united in history and continues to do so at the start of the 21st century religious conservatives, fascists and communists than perhaps any other formal and substantive principle, attribute or outcome, except for legal and effective liberty, of liberalism. It has produces a sort of, to use Marx's phrase in an opposite context, "anti-liberals of the world unite", e.g. Catholic Popes, Winthrop and other US Puritans and Protestant fundamentalists, Maistre, Burke, Reagan et al., Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin, radical Muslims and Hindus, etc.

Hence, by condemning and destroying its secularism, albeit on opposite grounds and perceptions, both religious conservatism and fascism and communism aim to discredit and destroy liberal democracy and modernity as a whole. For example, acting on the misperception of liberal secularism *cum* atheism and "ungodliness", European arch-conservatism as embodied in Burke, Maistre and others, along and objectively allied with medievalism such as Catholicism and radical Puritanism, fanatically condemned, discredited and almost destroyed via the Restoration the French Revolution and its secular legacy. Similarly, driven by such fears, German and Italian religious conservatives, in a "holy alliance", helped fascists like Mussolini and Hitler vanquish (Blinkhorn 2003) liberal-secular democracy in interwar Europe like the Weimar Republic, just as almost did US neo-conservatives, allied with fundamentalists and neo-fascist militia, in America during the 1980s–2000s, and fundamentalist Islam attempted and succeeded in countries like Turkey and Iran. Acting on the opposite, yet also erroneous and fanatical, perception of liberal democracy in terms of religion-based social control, oppression and exploitation, communism like Leninism and especially Stalinism attacked and often replaced liberal democracy and its proxies in Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia.

In both cases, liberal democracy and modernity has been and is likely to become again the victim or “collateral damage” of anti-liberal misconstructions of its secularism as “godless” atheism and inhuman religion respectively, and the consequent conservative-fascist religious and communist anti-religious fanaticism driving their respective crusades and revolutions. Classical and modern liberals would point out that such a unified anti-liberal front and war is unnecessary and the product of shared misconception, because liberal democracy typically is neither officially atheistic nor religiously oppressive, but formally, plus substantively, secular as defined; and this is not for liberalism the same as either atheism or religious oppression.

In particular, the above applies to the open or tacit coalition, mutual sympathy or flirt between religious neo-conservatism and neo-fascism like neo-fascist groups “Christian identity”, “Dragons of God” and other racist militias in America in their crusade-style culture wars against liberal-pluralist democracy and society (Munch 2001) for its formal secularism misconstrued and condemned as “Godlessness”, “anti-religious” or “lack of faith”, so “un-American” and “foreign”. In this respect, joint fundamentalist/neo-fascist anti-liberal culture wars in America are socially futile (Bell 2002), because they act on and are fanatically driven by erroneous “definitions of the situation” a la the Thomas sociological theorem (Merton 1995), “social constructions of reality” producing and perpetuating what Merton (1968) calls a “reign of error” and various “perversities” and perverse effects in respect of liberal democracy and its secularism. In his words, these wars constitute or reflect US religious conservatism’s and neo-fascism’s “tragic circle of fear, social disaster, and reinforced fear” (Merton 1968) of liberal democracy and its formal secularism or a secular state, falsely defined and construed as anti-religion or anti-faith “big” government, and so to condemned and destroyed, literally as by domestic “Christian” terrorists a la McVeigh et al., as “un-American”. If so, then the ultimate conservative-produced error, perversity or social disaster in America may be the destruction or subversion of at least formally secular liberal democracy, as in part accomplished or threatened and heralded by neo-conservatism during the 1980–2000s.

In historical terms, US neo-conservatism and its extreme product and ally neo-fascism, far from being “new” and “exceptional” relative to its European ancestor, only continues, with secondary adaptations, a long-standing pattern, system and “method in the madness” (Smith 2000) of anti-liberal un-

creative destruction, subversion or reversal of liberal democracy “s formal and substantive secularism misconstrued as “ungodliness”. Specifically, it follows and expands such practices as found in medieval and post-medieval religious conservatism in Europe and America like official Catholicism and theocratic Puritanism respectively, arch-conservatism and its attacks against the secular French Revolution and interwar, especially Vatican-allied Italian, fascism and its anti-secularism.

Substantive Secularism: Secular Liberal Society

Liberal democracy and modernity is also characterized by substantive secularism as expressed in a sociologically secular political system and secularized society overall. Thus, its substantive secularism consists in a substantive sociological or effective differentiation, as distinguished from a formal-legal or procedural separation, between politics and religion, state and church, sacred and “profane” powers and domains in Durkheim’s sense. Liberal democracy’s substantive differentiation between religion and politics indicates and reflects a secularized civil society or culture, just as their formal separation does a secular state or government.

As mentioned, formal secularism, while perhaps the necessary minimum, is not always a sufficient condition for substantive secularism in liberal democracy and modernity to the effect that a secular state is, even if indispensable, not invariably enough for secularized society. Thus, some sociologists stress that during most of its history America had a secular state through its constitutional separation from church but not a truly secularized society (Archer 2001) defined by a sociological differentiation of religion and non-religion, i.e. Durkheim’s sacred and profane realms, thus formal rather than substantive secularism. Moreover, other sociologists suggest that the constitutional separation of church and state in America has been not only insufficient for a substantive differentiation between religion and politics. It has also historically coexisted, and continues to do so by the 21st century, with the sociological de-differentiation (Munch 2001) or blurring (Jepperson 2002) between religion and politics or civil society, sacred and “profane” spheres, spiritual and social life. This implies that democracy in America has not been, contrary to conventional wisdom or triumphalist ethnocentrism (Lipset and Marks 2000), genuinely or completely secular and so liberal in the sense of a fusion

of formal and substantive secularism, a secular state and a secularized society, but spuriously or partially so in sociological terms, and by comparison with most Western democracies, including Great Britain.

In turn, these and other studies indicate that a key historical and persisting determinant of this salient and glorified American substantively non-secular and illiberal exceptionalism is the original and persistent relative weakness of liberalism, notably the Enlightenment and its legacy, as compared with most Western societies. Alternatively, they suggest that such striking weakness of liberalism in America has been due to the “predominance” of Protestant sectarianism (Lipset 1996), from New England Puritanism in the 17th century to Bible-Belt fundamentalism in the 21st century (Munch 2001) continuing the venerable Puritan tradition (Dunn and Woodard 1996).

At this juncture, the social influence or legacy of liberalism, notably the Enlightenment, engenders and predicts substantive as well as formal secularism, a truly secularized society, just as a secular state, and conversely. Seemingly, formal secularism via a secular state has been and remains the maximum liberal democracy in America could and do attain, given this comparatively secondary social relevance and legacy of political liberalism, particularly the Enlightenment, during most of American history up to the early 21st century. In a sense, a secular state is a sort of maximal, yet strategic-tactical and always transient and unstable, concession and compromise by predominant religious conservatism like Puritanism and its fundamentalist survivals, as tacitly done vis-à-vis Jefferson et al. during and after the partly Enlightenment-inspired American Revolution, e.g. the official disestablishment of New England’s Puritan Congregational theocracy in the early 1830s.

If the above is correct, this indicates that democracy in America qualifies as secular and so liberal primarily in formal and minimalist terms of a legal separation of church and state. However, it does not or less so in the substantive sense of a true societal differentiation between religion and politics or civil secular society, sacred and profane, spiritual and social, realms and life, in contrast to most modern Western societies. Moreover, even this formal or minimal liberal secularism, far from being, as many US liberals naively think evocative of German liberalism’s naïve dismissal or underestimate of Nazism, a “settled law of the land”, has been, virtually from its very institution during the revolutionary times, subjected to open or tacit attacks and subversions by anti-liberal religious forces, from the Great Awakenings, especially the

second of the 1800s, through most of the 19th and the 20th centuries, perhaps climaxing during the 2000s, especially in the theocentric “Bible Belt” as the “proto-totalitarian” analogue of Iran’s Islamic theocracy (Bauman 1997).

Consequently, liberal democracy and modernity, or its approximation, in America has been not only comparatively powerless or unsuccessful to establish and sustain a truly secularized civil society by a sociological differentiation between religion and politics. It also continuously had to defend the constitutional definition of a secular state and its formal separation from church, so basically to “fight for its own life”, from the 1800s and the second Great Awakening to the late 20th and early 21st century and another revival of theocratic religion in a sort of permanent anti-liberal religious counter-revolution in American history and society (Lipset 1996; Munch 2001).

In essence, the American experience or experiment indicates that formal secularism via a secular state, as a sort of legal minimum in liberal democracy and modernity, is not always a sufficient condition of substantive secularism through a truly secularized society defined by a factual differentiation of “religious” or sacred and “social” or worldly realms, institutions and powers. It also indicates that anti-liberalism, notably religious conservatism, at most permits and advocates, largely for Machiavellian strategic or survival reasons, a formal separation of church and state whenever having “no choice” but forced, as when facing classical liberalism in Great Britain and Europe, or counteracted, as by Jefferson, Madison and other liberals in America, as well as in what Comte calls opposition against another hegemonic or official religion, as in the case of Puritanism versus Anglicanism in Great Britain and Episcopalianism in the old US South. However, it hardly ever does so in respect with a substantive differentiation between religion and politics or society overall, sacred and secular power or life generally.

Further, the aforesaid suggests that anti-liberalism like religious conservatism, whenever and wherever given a “free rational choice” and being in, as Comte puts it, government or power, attacks, destroys or subverts not only the substantive differentiation between religion and politics in American and Western societies as “unthinkable”, “ungodly”, “un-American” or “anti-German”. It does so even in respect with the formal constitutional separation of church and state, which it strategically advocated and accepted a la Machiavelli before for its own political survival and ultimate victory. This is how Puritanism precisely behaved in order to survive and temporarily defeat

and supplant Anglicanism in Great Britain via the victorious, yet eventually failed, in Weber's view, Puritan Revolution of the 1640 (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000), and especially and permanently Episcopalianism in the old US South via the "Great Awakenings" of the 1740–1800s. To that extent, religious conservatism as epitomized by Puritanism and other Protestant fundamentalism, as well as fundamentalist Islam, prefigures and resembles, if not inspires, the fascist pattern of behavior within liberal-secular democracy with the effect of, as Michels points out, using the latter against itself to eventually destroy it by the "means of the popular will". This is what Mill intimates and predicts by observing that anti-liberal Puritan conservatism ultimately "put[s] down" virtually all, including cultural liberties and "amusements", due to its "fanatical intolerance" in morality and politics, whenever and wherever becoming "sufficiently powerful"; and by implication conversely, to demand them for *itself* when not such (Zaret 1989).

Hence, the above yields the corresponding historical lesson and perhaps prediction for liberal democracy and modernity. This is that its formal secularism is or will be insufficient for a truly secularized society as well as basically, though not always openly, attacked and destroyed by religious anti-liberalism, as precisely has happened during most of American history ever since theocratic Puritanism (Munch 2001) or likely to happen under certain conditions, as in America, notably the anti-liberal "Bible Belt" and other "red" regions, during the 1980–2000s.

In turn, as Weber and Durkheim imply in a sort of Parsonian convergence, the general reason for its insufficiency is that formal secularism, like liberty, is a legal-procedural, including constitutional, rule. By contrast, substantive secularism is a broader sociological category and complex social reality not necessarily or totally reflecting and conforming with, but more or less deviating from, this norm. In a sense, this difference is a variation on, but not equivalent to, that between positive laws formulated in a written legal code, including a constitution, and enacted through a definite procedure, and what Weber and Tönnies call natural law expressed instead in unwritten conventions, customs, ideals and other social rules or practices like English common law, insofar as the second is more substantive, general and complex in sociological terms. Yet, even when using a legal terminology, it is important to avoid committing what can be referred to as the legalistic fallacy of misplaced political-social concreteness. This fallacy conflates formal and substantive secularism

or differentiation of religion and politics by reducing a secularized society to a secular state or constitution, so liberal democracy to the “rule of law” or “law- and order” conservative-authoritarian slogans (Dahrendorf 1979), seen as self-sufficient in this sense. In short, a secular state and legal system may be the necessary minimum of secularism in liberal democracy and modernity, but not a sufficient guarantee for a truly secularized society.

Moreover, some sociologists argue that, conversely, the lack of an officially secular state does not necessarily prevent, contradict or eliminate an effectively secularized society, citing Great Britain with its official Anglican church (Archer 2001) and, one can add, Scandinavian countries with also officially established Lutheran churches. In this view, Great Britain as well as Scandinavian countries are nevertheless substantively secularized societies and even more so – as US religious conservatives both theologically deplore and ethnocentrically celebrate – than those societies with a formally secular state like America.

Alternatively, only the most dogmatic and ethnocentric US liberals would describe America as sociologically more secular and “liberal” overall in virtue of its celebrated constitutional separation of church and state than Great Britain and especially Scandinavian societies presumed to be less so, just as less “free”, precisely due to their lack of formal secularism, thus committing the legalistic fallacy, also characteristic of “law and order” authoritarian conservatives, fascists and communists. In contrast with America, these societies would not qualify as secular, as well as “republican”, liberal democracies in formal constitutional terms, yet they would do so in a substantive sociological sense despite an official church, just as monarchy. This seeming paradox or conundrum is resolved by realizing that a secularized society or culture is broader and more complex than a secular state or constitution.

Hence, as Weber implies, societal secularism is more comprehensive and essential than its legal type, a variation on the sociological theme of social life’s primacy over the law and legality as such, unless one claims the opposite committing the legalistic fallacy. In a sense, this is not a puzzle or anomaly but generalized normality for sociologists and most sociologically minded liberals, who focus on liberal democracy as a secularized political society or what Durkheim calls a “total social fact” and Pareto a “complicated sociological system” rather than merely a legal-constitutional entity formally secular, though it is for their more legalistic counterparts.

If the above is correct, then formal secularism is neither a functionally necessary nor sufficient and primary condition for substantive secularism in liberal democracy and modernity. (This is by analogy to the insufficiency and even non-necessity of a republican government for a democratic polity contrary to republicanism, from the ancient Roman Republic to Rousseau and the US founding and subsequent republicans. British, Scandinavian and other Western European monarchies are evidently positive cases in point, while Puritan, conservative, communist, fascist and Islamic undemocratic “republics” negative ones.) Following this argument, in functionalist terms, an official secular state, including a written constitution, is not in itself an indispensable institutional structure for an effectively secularized and liberal society, just as is not a republic per se for actual democracy, and conversely, a formally non-secular state may be its functional substitute or alternative in this respect.

Moreover, if a secular state is not necessarily associated with a more secularized society as in America, than is its non-secular variant exemplified by Great Britain and Scandinavia, then formal-legal secularism may act as or become a sort of simulation, compensation, safety valve, façade or décor for its substantive sociological variant, a variation on “form” and “substance”. Ultimately, it may hence fulfill the manifest or latent function of substituting for, precluding or subverting rather than, as one would expect, promoting and reinforcing effective societal secularism, so a truly secular society as “un-American”. This has been witnessed during most of American history, from the 18th century Great Awakenings to the 21st century fundamentalist revival. At least, for example, the formal separation of state and church, as initially demanded by Protestant conservatism when in opposition to dominant Episcopalianism during the Great Awakenings in the 18th century, has hardly contributed toward creating a truly secularized society in the US South but instead coincided with, if not facilitated, the curious anti-secular mutation of this region into a sort of polar opposite to a secular democracy and culture, through the theocratic design of a “Bible Belt”.

Nevertheless, ideally or typically, liberal democracy and modernity comprises both, as Weber implies, formal and substantive secularism, a secular state and society, though the presence or absence of a legal separation of politics and religion does not necessarily determine that of a substantive differentiation between the two, as indicated by America versus Great Britain and Scandinavia. Liberal democracy and modernity in the sense of Durkheim-

Pareto's complex sociological system and historical period, rather than the public-choice marketplace, tends to be secular both legally and sociologically, so to eventually integrate formal and substantive secularism or reconcile their divergences in one way as in Great Britain, or another as in America.

Thus, one can plausibly expect that liberal democracy and modernity will result in a more secular state in societies historically or currently lacking formal secularism like Great Britain and Scandinavia, as well as in a more secularized civil society in those such as America with relatively weak substantive secularism. This would continue a long-run historical trend of liberalism to creating a generally more secular state, i.e. less "Anglican" and "Lutheran", in officially non-secular Great Britain and Scandinavia, just as a more secularized civil society, notably less "Puritan" (Munch 2001) and sectarian (Lipset 1996), even in "faith-based" America. Alternatively, liberal democracy will likely overcome or transform a formally non-secular state, exemplified by British and Scandinavian "Anglican" and "Lutheran" states, and a substantively non-secularized society, epitomized by America's Puritan-based culture (Munch 2001), alike.

Liberal Democracy and Rationalism

As hinted, liberal ideology, society and modernity is democratic because of the principle and institutional practice of political rationalism or reasonableness as a facet of its rationalistic ideas and social institutions in general. Hence, liberal democracy is rationalist in the sense of a public emphasis on and use of human reason and a reasonable political system in accordance with the principles of classical rationalism, notably the Enlightenment, but not in the narrow economic meaning of "public choice" theory as the simplistic economics of politics mechanically extending the utility-maximizing principle from economy to polity and all society.

Alternatively, it aims to transcend anti-liberal political irrationalism and unreasonable politics, as expressed in the public depreciation and repudiation of human reason in favor of Divine Providence (Bendix 1984) or transcendental design as in European medievalism and American conservatism, and collective causes like race, nation and state as in fascism and communism. For example, some sociologists (Lipset and Raab 1978) imply that liberal democracy overcomes or counteracts the "politics of unreason" characteristic for the

“short happy life” of American and other conservatism during post-war times, as well as for fascism. In this respect, liberal democracy can be described as the “politics of reason” in the manner or sense of the Enlightenment and classical rationalism overall, but not in that of utility-maximizing as assumed in neo-classical economics and utilitarianism, and merely restated by “rational choice” theory in sociology and political science.

Political Rationalism versus Economic Rationality

While a rationalist democracy or reasonable polity, liberalism is not necessarily an economically rational “political marketplace” or efficient extension of free markets and competition. Positively, liberal democracy is what Pareto calls a complex “sociological system” resting on rationalism in the Enlightenment sense of public appreciation and use of human reason rather than a narrow economic sub-system driven by private utility maximization and cost-benefit calculus. Hence, it is a rationalistic political *society* in this sense, rather than a “rational-choice” appendix of the economy, notably an extension of free markets and competition. At this juncture, Schumpeter’s famous and often misunderstood and misapplied heuristic or metaphorical definition of liberal democracy as the market-like “free competition” for political power, leadership or office is too economic or reductive, so inadequate or misleading, at least in its public-choice stringent and literal renditions effectively dissolving politics as a whole into a sort of marketplace.

In terms of *dramatis personae*, liberal democracy is rational or reasonable in the general sociological sense of rationalism in Locke, Hume, Kant, Condorcet, Rousseau, or Montesquieu. Negatively, it is not rationalist, or less so, in the narrow economic meaning of utilitarianism, as just the subset of rationalism, a la Bentham’s “principle of utility”, of utilitarian marginalism in Jevons et al.’s utility maximization, and of Smith’s classical political economy’s material self-interest, contrary to public-choice assertions overlooking or dissolving the first type of rationality into the second as its particular form.

In short, liberal democracy is rational in Tocqueville’s sociological-political rather than the narrow economic, rational-choice sense. This is useful to reiterate and emphasize, given that public choice economics, in part inspired by Schumpeter’s free-market competition definition of liberal democracy, has become increasingly prominent and even paradigmatic in modern political science by reducing human rationality and reason in politics and all society to

utility maximization, cost-benefit calculus or rent-seeking. In general, liberal democracy and modernity is reasonable, rationalistic in the sense of classical rationalism in virtue of the public appreciation, promotion and use of human reason, formal and substantive political rationality, government neutrality, limitation and separation of powers, etc.

Public Use of Reason

In general, liberal democracy is reasonable, i.e. rationalistic by being premised on what classical liberals like Kant described as the public use of reason, the essential attribute and legacy of the Enlightenment as the Age of Reason. Recall, for Kant – “‘Dare to think!’ cried Immanuel Kant” (Berman 2000: 110) – and other classical liberal philosophers like Descartes, Bacon, Locke, Hume, Rousseau, Condorcet, and Voltaire, enlightenment in general consisted in the “public use of reason” (Habermas 1989: 104), distinguished from unreasonable reliance on religion, tradition and political authority.

Comparatively, the appreciation, promotion and use of human reason is what makes liberal democracy distinctly rationalistic by comparison with its illiberal alternatives instead appealing to religion, tradition or authority (Berman 2000: 110) and to that extent being irrational and authoritarian in the sense of the Enlightenment as well as Weber’s rationalism. In Weber’s terms, the political use of reason, rationalism in politics is epitomized and expressed in legal-rational authority constitutive of liberal-secular democracy (Lenski 1994), as are such uses of religion and tradition in religiously charismatic and traditional authority, as the authoritarian principles of legitimation, typical of its illiberal, especially conservative and fascist, counterparts. Liberal democracy manifests and implements in the political realm liberalism’s recognition of and confidence in human reason and so humanism, and its opposites anti-liberalism’s suspicion and depreciation of it in favor of supra-human intelligence and tradition, thus anti-humanism.

In a sense, liberal democracy and modernity is the aggregate socio-political outcome of liberalism’s appreciation and use of human reason and humanism, while illiberal authoritarian systems stem from anti-liberalism’s opposite tendency. At least in this sense, liberal rationalism is, as Weber implies and Mises (1966) and Popper (1973) argue, conducive to liberal democracy, as indicated by legal-rational authority’s formally, though not always substantively, democratic principle of legitimation. Conversely, anti-liberal, notably

conservative-fascist, irrationalism tends to be actually or potentially undemocratic, as indicated by its charismatic-traditional authority's authoritarian principle of legitimacy. What Mannheim (1986) calls rationalistic liberalism as a Weberian ideal type leads, with historical variations expressed in the "dialectic" of the "good" and "bad" Enlightenment (Habermas 2001; Horkheimer and Adorno 1993), to liberal democracy or, what Marxist and post-modern critics and Hayek et al. overlook, more so than its irrational antagonists like medievalism, conservatism, fascism, neo-conservatism and neo-fascism.

Alternatively, without rationalism expressed in the appreciation and use of human rather than supra-human design and tradition for making public choices – not necessarily in the sense of rational choice theory – including Weber's legal-rational authority, liberal democracy as a free political society is a sort of non sequitur. This is what post-modern critics and "libertarians" like Hayek et al. (Infantino 2003) overlook, yet authoritarian conservatives and fascists in Europe and America realize by attacking, eliminating or subverting democratic politics through condemning, assailing and destroying human reason, liberty and eventually life by mass execution of "witches" and "objective enemies", respectively.

In this sense, liberal democracy is either rationalist *cum* the realm of reason – not "rational choice" in economic terms – and reasonable politics or is neither "liberal" nor "democracy", in contrast to illiberal conservative "democracies" as usually both anti-rationalistic and authoritarian, with theocracy and fascism as exemplars within conservatism. If so, the point is not that rationalism tends to be more democratic, as Mises (1966), Popper (1973) and others argue, than does irrationalism, the Enlightenment more than the anti-Enlightenment, as relatively non-controversial even for the most compelling critics of "constructivist rationalism" (Hayek 1955) or the Janus-faced dialectic of Enlightenment (Habermas 2001; Horkheimer and Adorno 1993) and Western liberal modernity overall (Duverger 1972).

It is rather that liberal democracy is rationalistic in the original sense of the age and rule of human reason rather than supra- and anti-human entities like Divine providence and sacred repressive tradition. Modern liberals stress that it involves the "procedure of an argumentative praxis that proceeds under the demanding presuppositions of the 'public use of reason'", while recognizing and protecting the "pluralism of convictions and worldviews" (Habermas et al. 1998: 62), both secular and religious. In short, the use of reason for making

public arguments and choices is at the “heart” of liberal parliamentary democracy, just as the judicial system,²³ in Western society (Berman 2000: 110).

In particular, the public appreciation and use of reason in liberal democracy comprises constitutionalism, formal and substantive political rationality, government neutrality, limitation and separation of powers, both secular and sacred, and the like. Thus, liberal democracy usually contains “rational constitutional safeguards” (Kinloch 1981: 20–2), either in the form of a formal constitution, as in America, France and other Western democracies, or tacit democratic rules, conventions and culture as in Great Britain. As Weber implies, such constitutional protections express legal-rational authority and so Kant’s public use of reason and rationalism, while their absence reflect charismatic and traditional authority, thus non-liberal appeals to religion and tradition, so irrationalism, though a written constitution is in itself neither the sufficient nor necessary condition of effective freedom, justice and equality in liberal democracy.

Also, the public use of reason in liberal democracy consists in what Weber would call formal and substantive political rationalism, expressed in legal-rational authority and effective rationality in politics in accordance with ultimate values like justice, liberty and equality. Liberal democracy encompasses, combines or balances formal and substantive political rationalism alike in contrast to anti-liberal fascism and conservatism rejecting both types in favor of irrational and authoritarian appeals to charisma, tradition or transcendental design, and spurious libertarianism that prefers the first rationalist type, the “rule of law”, to the second reduced to a sort of formalist legalism, plus economism and market absolutism. By analogy to liberty, liberal democracy and modernity is thus holistically or integrally rationalistic in Weber’s sense, not as “rational choice” a la the economics of politics, while conservative-fascist anti-liberalism is totally or, as Mises and Popper may suggest, totalitarian anti-rationalistic, and “libertarian” pseudo-liberalism semi- or quasi-rationalistic politically, just as economically hyper-rational, so irrational (Elster 1989).

²³ Berman (2000: 110) says that “you have to *prove* what you say, rather than appeal to religion or authority, and this became the touchstone of the Enlightenment (‘Dare to think!’ cried Immanuel Kant) and of modernity in general. It lies at the heart of parliamentary democracy, the Western judicial system, and of our understanding of biological evolution and the physical world. Give that up, and we are, in fact, finished”.

As hinted, the public respect and use of reason in liberal democracy consists and results in government neutrality, impartiality and tolerance toward plural and often conflicting political groups, ideologies and convictions. Simply, within liberal democracy it is reasonable, rational, sensible, or prudent, just as fair, egalitarian, libertarian or humane, to be neutral, impartial and tolerant toward varying “reasonable” political subjects and worldviews, and conversely, non-neutrality or bias in this respect is unreasonable or irrational, just as undemocratic and ultimately inhumane. Moreover, it is in a sense reasonable or consistent for liberal democracy to be neutral, impartial and tolerant not only toward, as often assumed, “reasonable” (Habermas 2001) multiple and conflicting groups and ideas. It is even reasonable, as actually done, for it to be so toward those “unreasonable” and anti-democratic groups, exemplified by religious fundamentalists and fascists in Europe and America (Brink 2000), seeking its subversion or destruction, though such tolerance of the intolerant may be prove to be dangerous and even self-destructive, as shown in the past, as witnessed by the Nazi liquidation (Blinkhorn 2003) of the liberal Weimer Republic in the 1930s and the conservative-fundamentalist subversion (Plotke 2002), if not elimination, as of yet, of democracy in America during the 1980–2000s.

The above holds true especially insofar as the public promotion and use of reason through government neutrality and tolerance is the only or the primary and most effective liberal, civilized or peaceful procedure, as opposed to illiberal coercion and violence, for exposing and ultimately overriding the “politics of unreason” by anti-liberalism, from medievalism to fascism to neo-conservatism and neo-fascism (Lipset and Raub 1978). Historically, this was the probably original meaning and intent of its public use from the Age of Enlightenment: to face and overcome unreason and irrationalism, epitomized in the anti-rational “Dark Middle Ages” and their conservative legacy or revival, through human reason and rationalism in liberal democracy, not by another form of unreasonable intolerance and coercion.

No doubt, this “idealism” of liberalism has often proven risky and even self-destructive, from the arch-conservative restoration of the feudal *ancien regime* in France to the fascist destruction of Germany’s Weimer Republic and the neo-conservative anti-liberal or authoritarian “resurrection from the dead” (Dunn and Woodard 1996) in America during the late 20th and early 21st century. Still, the public use of reason to defeat “unreason” in politics and

society is probably more effective in long terms, so ultimately more rational and reasonable, just as distinctly appropriate, for liberal democracy than any other alternative, including intolerance and repression. Conversely, despite the Enlightenment's almost unlimited confidence in it, human reason and its public effectiveness may be, as anti-liberals claim, subject to limits and abuses in liberal democracy and modernity. Still, at least it has proven or is likely to be eventually less ineffective than any other functional substitute, including government repression, in facing the anti-liberal "politics of unreason".

In addition to and conjunction with the previous cases, the public use of reason in liberal democracy entails or leads to the limitation and separation of powers within polity and society. First, this involves the limitation and separation of political or secular powers via through their subdivision into separate and independent levels at least since Montesquieu's division of the modern democratic state into legislative, executive and judiciary branches. Liberal democracy thus seeks to prevent or restrain especially the arbitrary exercise of political power and authority. By contrast, its illiberal alternatives are characterized by the opposite tendency to a high degree of government arbitrariness and lack of restraint by the powers that be, as shown in medievalism, authoritarian conservatism, fascism, communism, neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. The above attribute of liberal democracy is conceptually grounded in that political liberalism is concerned with "checking and balancing political power" (Stanfield 1999).

Second, as discussed, liberal democracy, while restraining both in their exercise and scope, separates sacred and secular powers within polity through a formal and substantive differentiation between religion and politics, in contrast to anti-liberalism that either fuses and allies these powers, as in medievalism, and religious conservatism, or blurs and disregards their boundaries, as does fascism and neo-conservatism. By analogy, this attribute of liberal democracy is conceptually grounded in that political liberalism is concerned with formally and substantively differentiating sacred and secular political power.

Liberal Democracy and Humanism

Perhaps the most important from a humanistic perspective, liberalism, i.e. liberal society and modernity, is democratic because of its principle

and institutional practice of political humanism as an inner ingredient of its general humanist ideas and social institutions centering on humans. Consequently, liberal democracy is a humanist political system based on the ideal of especially secular humanism in polity and all society, focusing on humans and their liberty, rights, reason, dignity and life. Alternatively, it transcends anti-humanist political systems as characteristic for anti-liberalism. Anti-liberalism subordinates and sacrifices “mere” humans and their liberties, rights, capacities and eventually life to super-human and “greater than humans and life” Divine entities and their providential designs (Bendix 1984), as do European medievalism and American religious conservatism, and to non-human collectivities such as race, nation or state and collective causes like patriotism or nationalism, as with fascism, communism and neo-conservatism.

Historically, liberal democracy and modernity originally overcame the inhuman darkness of the “Dark Middle Ages”. Yet subsequently it was attacked and often destroyed, precisely in reason of its secular humanism, by conservatism as self-conscious medievalism, as during France’s Restoration, by fascism as the arch-conservative offspring destroying Germany’s Weimar Republic and by neo-conservatism as a revival of these anti-liberalisms in America and Great Britain since the 1980s.

Liberal democracy and modernity adopts, establishes and protects secular political and social humanism as an intrinsic and ultimate value, which anti-liberalism, notably religious conservatism, “abhors” (Van Dyke 1995) as “evil” denigrating Deity and piety (Deutsch and Soffer 1987). In this sense, “human” is the ultimate measure of value, end, standard or criterion in liberal democracy and modernity, in contrast to anti-liberalism where essentially “non-human” has such a place of pride, in the sense of transcendental, as in religious conservatism, collective, as in Nazism, or both, as in other, Italian, Spanish and American, fascism and neo-fascism. It is in this sense that, as Spencer proposes, liberal democracy and society exists and functions for the sake of humans and their liberty, life and “pursuit of happiness”, not conversely. However, this need not imply extreme individualism or atomism, as in Spencer-inspired spurious libertarianism and its analogue anarchism, let alone immoral Machiavellianism and “moral crisis” (Deutsch and Soffer 1987), as conservative and other critics accuse.

If so, then liberal democracy differs from and transcends anti-liberalism that dictates that humans exist for the sake of Divine entities and purposes,

as does religious conservatism or extremism like Calvinism and Puritanism (Bendix 1977; Munch 2001; Tawney 1962), and political powers and causes as in Nazism, or both, as do Catholic medievalism, arch- and neo-conservatism, and other fascism. In Kantian terms, within liberal democracy humans are ends in themselves, while in anti-liberalism, from medievalism and proto-conservatism to fascism and neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, they are the means to other supra- or anti-human purposes and designs. Alternatively, as Kant famously suggests, true liberal democracy, i.e. political liberalism, does or should “never” treat humans as means to other ends, private or collective, secular or transcendental, though, as many critics object, this Kantian humanism has been and remained an unfulfilled ideal rather than reality in Western democracies.

Moreover, to use Durkheim’s terms, the human person is in a way treated as “sacred” and inviolable in liberal democracy and modernity – albeit this need not represent what he calls the “cult of the individual” or extreme individualism – yet as “profane” and “sub-human” versus, and ultimately sacrificed to, supra- and anti-human religious and political forces in anti-liberalism. If anything, this sacred, inviolable and intrinsic worth of human subjects is what distinguishes secular liberal democracy and modernity from its illiberal alternatives which treat humans as either unworthy or “evil” in themselves, as does Calvinist Puritanism, and even sub-humans as does Nazism, or less worthy than these non-human forces, as do religious conservatism overall and other fascism.

In this sense, liberal democracy and modernity is the only democratic political system and historical period in the original and humanistic meaning of “democracy” as the rule of people as *humans* in contrast to illiberal “democracies” that basically degrade humans into sub-humans and sacrifice them to supra- or anti-humans. It is thus different from and opposed to theocracy as the rule of super-human Deities and their self-proclaimed earthly agents and representatives a la, as Mises (1957) puts it, the “Pope as the Vicar of Christ” and his Puritan counterparts Cromwell (Gorski 2000) as the self-declared “Lord of the Realm” and Winthrop (Munch 2001) as a claimed God-chosen theocratic master, endowed with Divine Rights. It is also in relation to oligarchy as the rule of anti-human narrow groups like conservative plutocrats a la “robber-barons” and oligarchs like Southern and other “good old boys” in historical and contemporary America (Pryor 2002) and fascist leaders and the *Führer* principle.

Conversely, liberal democracy and modernity that is not truly humanistic in both secular and libertarian terms is a non sequitur degenerating into or resembling a sort of “democratic” theocracy, as in religious fundamentalism exemplified by theocratic Iran and the US evangelical “Bible Belt” (Bauman 1997), and authoritarian oligarchy, as with political conservatism, including fascism. At any rate, elements and indicators of liberal-democratic humanism range from the appreciation, emphasis and use of human reason to the respect of human liberties, rights, dignity and life, including penal minimalism and humanity, as well as a comprehensive and generous welfare state and social democracy, considered below.

Liberal Democracy and Human Liberties, Rights and Life

Generally, liberal democracy and modernity manifests and realizes its humanism in its respect and protection of *human* liberties, rights, dignity and life, including “free speech, religious toleration, and free association” (Delanty 2000: 26) as well as penal minimalism and humanity expressed in a minimalist, Enlightened judicial system (Rutherford 1994). It is a humanistic social-political system and historical stage constructed by and for humans and their liberties, rights, dignity, happiness and life rather than supra- and anti-human entities and their designs or causes as in anti-liberalism, notably religious conservatism driven by an obsession with Divine Providence and Rights, and fascism obsessed (also) with nation, state and totalitarian leaders. In this sense, liberal democracy’s humanism is both secular and libertarian or freedom-enhancing, as distinct from non-secular and non-libertarian “humanisms” like “humanistic” Christianity or Islam and authoritarian paternalism, let alone illiberal conservative and fascist anti-humanism. This libertarian dimension of liberal humanism is to be emphasized because “libertarianism” often accuses contemporary political liberalism for not being “libertarian” enough, especially in respect to economic liberty as libertarians a la Hayek et al. understand it, viz. “free enterprise” for capital, repression for labor, just as neo-conservatism attacks it for being “secular” or “ungodly”.

In a sense, modern liberal-democratic humanism is either both libertarian and secular or not humanist in the sense of liberalism, but an anti- or pseudo-liberal degeneration or mutation. An instance of this degeneration involves authoritarian paternalism as characteristic of European medievalism as well

as what some early US sociologists (Ghent; cf. also Kloppenberg²⁴ 1998: 92) describe as American “*Benevolent Feudalism*” in which human liberty is suppressed as the price for “humane” treatment; hence classical liberalism’s “opposition to paternalism” (Reiman 1997: 3). Also, contemporary sociologists pinpoint what is described as the conservative mix of “potential authoritarianism” with “directive paternalism” as “anachronistic” in modern social policy (King 1999: 306–8). Another instance is religious “humanism” which, as does Calvinism and Puritanism in Weber’s interpretation, dictates that “humans exist for the sake of God”, and not conversely (Bendix 1977).

Such two-fold, full humanism is what distinguishes liberal democracy and modernity from anti-liberalism as either basically anti-humanistic, as are Puritanism, radical Islam and fascism, or humanistic in anti-secular terms, as is traditional Christianity or Catholicism, and in an anti-libertarian sense, as shown by paternalistic medievalism and conservatism. It also makes it essentially distinct from “libertarianism” whose “humanism” is pseudo- and even anti-secular in the sense of America as “one nation indivisible under God” (Giddens 2000: 131) and spuriously libertarian via a pro-capitalist and anti-labor agenda (Myles 1994) favoring “liberty” for the rich-powerful and their vested interests (Dahrendorf 1979).

In particular, spurious libertarianism is both anti-humanist and pseudo-libertarian *cum* the sociodicy or ideological rationalization of archaic-mythical laissez-faire capitalism (Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998), notably the capitalist status quo of oligopoly and oligarchy in America under neo-conservatism (Pryor 2002) as the “best of all possible worlds” (Merton 1968). This holds true especially insofar as, as sociologists like Dahrendorf (1959: 61) propose, “much of modern social history can be understood in terms of ‘war’ between ‘citizenship rights’ (which are equal rights) and the ‘capitalist class system’”. If this is correct, then it implies a historical conflict and tension between the liberal-democratic welfare state and anti-egalitarian and anti-liberal or authoritarian capitalism yet celebrated and attempted to resurrect from the “dead [or

²⁴ Kloppenberg (1998: 92) comments, curiously referring to Weber rather than Ghent, that in the early 20th century industrial America’s “benevolent feudalism”, as well as Germany’s or Bismarck’s welfare state, “in their separate ways threatened individual autonomy”.

mythical] hand of the past" (Harrod 1956) by spurious economic libertarianism a la Hayek et al.

It is at this point and for this reason that the historically frequent, yet contingent and convenient, primarily for the second, "marriage" between liberalism and anti-egalitarian capitalism is to be, as Dahrendorf (1979: 101) suggests, "dissolved". Yet spurious libertarianism seeks to perpetuate this "marriage" in which its preferred version of capitalism evidently abuses, distorts and makes unhappy liberal democracy in the form of a democratic welfare state, just as civil society's life-world²⁵ (Habermas 2001). Alternatively, its anti-labor agenda or bias makes "libertarianism" actually non-libertarian and atavistic on its own terms, so counter-liberal and undemocratic, to the extent that the "history of extending citizenship rights is almost identical with [that] of the labor movement" (Dahrendorf 1979: 108). This reaffirms that "libertarianism" is basically anti- or pseudo-liberalism, in virtue of its selective capitalist "humanism", quasi-liberty pro-capital, anti-labor style, and archaism a la the dead or mythical laissez-faire past and Hobbesian anarchy to be restored in the present and future.

Consequently, liberal democracy's true libertarianism is rooted in the humanism of liberalism, just as is illiberal authoritarianism in the anti-humanism of religious conservatism and fascism. Simply, liberal democracy and modernity respects and protects political liberties and rights because it is premised on and implements political liberalism's respect and protection of humans. By contrast, its illiberal alternatives do not, because they basically mistreat, including sacrifice, persecute and execute, humans as sub-humans versus Deity, as does religious extremism like Puritanism and radical Islam, or the political Leader, as in Nazism, or both, as do conservatism and other fascism, like Italian, Spanish, American McCarthyism or "Christian" militia movement.

In particular, liberal democracy and modernity tends to establish and maintain an "inviolable liberal sphere of individual freedom" (Stanfield 1999) because of political liberalism's status of human individuals as inviolable, and

²⁵ Habermas (2001: 153) comments that the balance becomes negative when capitalism as well as politics "spill over into the life-world's core areas" and that "social pathologies arise only as a consequence of an invasion of exchange relations and bureaucratic regulation of the communicative core areas of the private and public spheres of the life-world".

its illiberal conservative-fascist counterparts do not, due to the precisely opposite, anti-human treatment. At this juncture, liberal democracy and modernity faces and is menaced by both religious conservatives, from old and New England's theocratic Puritans to "Bible-Belt" and Islamic fundamentalists, and fascists, from Hitler and Mussolini to neo-fascists, united as anti-liberal "brothers in arms" denying and destroying political liberties, human rights, dignity and ultimately life – e.g. fascist concentration camps in Germany, neo-conservative death rows in America – basically driven and self-justified by anti-humanism.

For example, contemporary sociologists suggest "apply the moral yardstick of certain fundamental human rights to all forms of power and government, to Hitler, Stalin, Amin and Pinochet as to the government which are responsible for Northern Ireland, the Southern US and German "guest workers" [so as not] to call any government legitimate which violates these rights" (Dahrendorf 1979: 110). This confirms that from the prism of liberal democracy and modernity, fascism, notably Nazism, and religious conservatism, especially "Bible-Belt" fundamentalism along, and sometimes allied, with theocratic Islam (Bauman 1997), while different and opposed, function as functional equivalents by posing a substantively identical treat to its libertarian and secular humanism expressed in its respect and protection of human liberties, rights, dignity and life.

Liberal Humanism and the Welfare State

Liberal democracy and modernity is humanistic by seeking to promote and protect human well-being in general, in particular what economist Marshall (1961) calls its "material requisites" and his follower Pigou (1960) "economic welfare", through the concept and institutional practice of a welfare state and social democracy, not necessarily socialism (let alone repressive communism). In this connection, a welfare state or social democracy can be redefined as the liberal political system of human well-being, including its economic form, and to that extent a humanistic, egalitarian and universalistic type of polity and society rather than, as conservatism and spurious libertarianism allege, one of "big government", inefficiency and even "un-freedom". If the welfare state is, as in conservative and libertarian allegations, a liberal "big government" or "tax-and-spend" policy, it is primarily in the service of humans and their well-being, freedom, dignity and life. Negatively, it is

not against humans and in favor of “higher” supra- and anti-human entities and ends, either religious, as in European medievalism and American conservatism, or political, as in Nazism and communism, or else both, as in other fascism in Europe, viz. Italy and Spain, and “faith-based” repressive neo-conservatism in America.

Hence, the modern welfare state and social democracy is best understood and analyzed in within the framework of liberal humanism, specifically moral compassion (Bauman 2001), rather than in narrow and misleading “libertarian” and neo-conservative anti-egalitarian economic terms of government size and efficiency, spending, taxation, taxpayers’ money, market incentives. This is because such anti-liberal views misconstrue and downgrade liberal democracy and politics as mere fiscal-monetary policy defined by prudence and frugality, i.e. what Keynes (1936) would call financial puritanism (“purism”). However, US neo-conservatives like Reagan et al. have proven to be anything but “prudent”, “frugal” or “purist” in their virtually unlimited spending, even wasting of societal resources and taxpayers’ money on their preferred authoritarian activities and purposes ranging from domestic control, repression and culture wars like the war on drugs, alcohol and indecency via a policing state, notably the vice police, to militarism, imperialism and offensive wars.

In essence, the welfare state and polity is the political expression and realization of liberal and secular humanism. It is this humanist as well as egalitarian-universalistic dimension, equally as, if not even more than, its supposed “inefficiency”, “waste” and “big government”, that causes virulent anti-welfare reactions and attacks by conservatism and other anti-liberalism, including fascism. In turn, these attacks epitomize the general conservative, including fascist, hostility and abhorrence (Van Dyke 1995) for secular humanism in favor of “deceptive” (Dahrendorf 1979) theological, including traditional Christian, Catholic and Islamic, humanism and even sheer anti-humanism, as in Puritanism, radical Islam and fascism, thus being predictable syndromes of an underlying condition. This needs to be qualified for spurious libertarianism insofar as its equally virulent attacks on the welfare state are driven more by economic “efficiency”, “big government”, “free markets”, “individual freedom”, and other “libertarian”, pseudo-anarchistic considerations than by the conservative and fascist abhorrence and elimination of humanism.

The above suggests that liberal-secular humanism makes the welfare state both defensible in broader political and social-moral terms and vulnerable

to anti-humanist conservative, as well as economistic “libertarian”, attacks, reversals and destructions. Perhaps the welfare state, as its opponent allege, cannot be instituted, defended and justified but rather condemned, attacked and eliminated, on transcendental theological grounds, as does anti-humanist and anti-charity British and American Puritanism (Hudson and Coukos 2005; Tawney 1962; Tiryakian 2002) and “faith-based” neo-conservative institutions and policies in America (Jepperson 2002), and by economic rationality considerations, as alleged by “libertarian” economics (Friedman and Friedman 1982). Curiously, libertarian economics’ pro-capitalist rejection of the welfare state overlooks, in a remarkable display of its celebrated human ignorance (Infantino 2003), that the latter has been and remains, including that in Scandinavia like Sweden, almost invariably capitalist government, so an egalitarian-universalistic and liberal-democratic political dimension of capitalism, rather than, as imputed and misperceived, “socialistic” and a form of “socialism”.

In short, it overlooks that the welfare state is a political equivalent or complement of welfare capitalism (Esping-Andersen 1994; Korpi and Palme 1998; Quadagno 1999) that is not less economically efficient than its anti-welfare and non-egalitarian American version, and not of socialism, let alone communism. For example, US and other “libertarian” economists, like neo-conservatives, neglect or refuse to “consider that Sweden has a generous welfare state and is highly globalized, while the United States is less globalized and has a minimal welfare state” (Brady, Beckfield, Seeleib-Kaiser 2005: 925). Thus, they overlook or fail to realize the welfare state and liberal-social democracy, far from being antithetical to, is fully compatible with, and even more so than its anti-welfare American counterpart, global capitalism and globalization which “libertarianism” extols, and to that extent with economic and other freedom.

Also, US “libertarians” and neo-conservatives dogmatically and/or ethnocentrically neglect or deny the comparative evidence that even in terms of social mobility what they celebrate as “unfettered”, “open” and “meritocratic” anti-welfare American capitalism is found to be “noticeably more rigid than the countries with which it has been compared (mostly the Nordic countries)”²⁶

²⁶ Breen and Jonsson (2005: 232–3) register that empirical studies of father-to-son income mobility “show the United States to be noticeably more rigid than the countries with which it has been compared (mostly the Nordic countries).” For example, they report that in the United States (and Great Britain) father to-son income correlations (or elasticities) “are about 0.45; they are between 0.13 and 0.28 in Sweden and Finland, and 0.34 in Germany”.

(Breen and Jonsson 2005: 232–3; also Bjorkland and Janti 1997; Solon 2002), i.e. “less mobile” (Solon 2002: 63–4) than Scandinavian welfare states like Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. Conversely, they overlook or negate comparative empirical findings that welfare states and more egalitarian societies such as Finland, Sweden as well as Canada “are more mobile societies than is the United States” (Solon 2002: 63–4) just as also anti-welfare Great Britain under Thatcherism. For example, due to its dogmatic opposition or spurious trade-off (Frank 1999) of social mobility or efficiency and economic equality or equity, American “libertarianism”, like neo-conservatism, fails to realize that the “contrasts between Sweden and the United States in both inequality and intergenerational mobility may be related” (Solon 2002: 65; also Bjorkland and Janti 1997), i.e. that income inequalities (equalities) can impede (foster) the latter. So, if “growing inequalities in the distribution of wealth in the US in recent decades only reinforce the continuing relevance of Tocqueville’s fears about the emergence of a new aristocracy”²⁷ (Goldberg 2001: 310), then the libertarian-conservative contradiction between economic equality or a welfare state and social mobility or meritocratic capitalism may be a pure ideological fiction and dogmatic blindness.

Alternatively, if religious neo-conservatives, especially US Puritan-rooted Protestant fundamentalists (Hudson and Coukos 2005), and anti-welfare “libertarians” are correct in alleging its lack of both a transcendental or Divine and an economic or fiscal rationale, the welfare state’s sole or primary basis for its creation, defense and justification, as its defenders suggest (Bauman 2001), is secular-humanist and political-social. It is simply moral compassion in the idealistic sense of Weber’s primeval ethics of brotherhood, including what Sorokin (1970) calls “Christian love” in the original meaning in early Christianity as opposed to its subsequent mutation or perversion in anti-humanist Calvinism and Puritanism (Munch 2001; Tawney 1962).

In general, liberalism with its humanism and related attributes like egalitarianism and universalism generates and predicts the creation of a welfare

²⁷ Goldberg (2001: 303) adds that in America neo-conservative “proponents of an ‘authoritarian welfare state’ seek to restrict public assistance to worthy recipients who fulfill the social obligations of citizenship [e.g. obey the law and work]”. In his view, American neo-conservatism of the New Right seeks a less liberal or “more authoritarian welfare state [which] would impose work requirements and enforce other social obligations” (Goldberg 2001: 291).

state as part and parcel of liberal democracy, and anti-liberalism, notably neo-conservatism, with its opposite traits anti-welfare nihilism, also shared by “libertarianism” on grounds of economic inefficiency and “un-freedom”. In comparative terms, the welfare state has been originally established and subsequently most developed, humanistic or generous in societies where political liberalism was prevalent or liberal democracy firmly established forcing anti-liberal conservatism embodied by Bismarck et al. into concessions and compromises, such as Western Europe (DiPrete 2002; Hicks, Misra, and Ng 1995), notably Scandinavia (Esping-Andersen 1994; Korpi and Palme 1998), and in part Canada.

Conversely, it has been and remains absent or perennially undeveloped, under attack, “stingy” and endemically reversed in those with dominant anti-liberalism, notably conservatism and fascism, and so under conservative-authoritarian or fascist “democracies”. These include Great Britain and especially America with perennial American anti-welfare exceptionalism (Amenta et al. 2001; Quadagno 1999) under proto- and neo-conservatism, as well as Chile under military dictatorship after the recipe and with “little help” of “libertarian” economics and economists à la the Chicago School, etc.

At this juncture, admittedly a certain exception or contradiction to the posited connection of liberalism and the welfare state is, as implied, Bismarck’s and other conservative creations of a welfare state in Germany and Europe, expressing what US sociologists (Lipset and Marks 2000) disdainfully call European statism and collectivism, apparently “forgetting” *laissez-faire* and the Enlightenment, dismissed in favor of supposed American individualism and “liberalism”, yet to become “conservatism” later, during the late 19th century. (In doing so, like most US political neo-conservatives and libertarian economists, Lipset and Marks seem to claim or imply that the welfare state is basically “un-American”, i.e. a “foreign” European invention of statism.) However, as analysts, from Mises to Habermas, observe or imply Bismarck and other German conservatives effectively created and/or used the welfare state in an attempt to counteract and effectively “break the back” of liberalism, thus essentially pre-empting or borrowing what Bentham and Keynes (1972) might call the liberal agenda of modern democratic government.

That conservatism attempted to “break” liberalism by creating or adopting a modicum of the “welfare state” can be generalized to what sociologists classify as “conservative”, distinguished from liberal and/or social-democratic,

welfare states in Western Europe, including Germany (“demo-Christian”), in relation to liberal ideas and democracies. Thus, some sociologists (Hicks et al. 1995) differentiate three types or paths of the welfare state. These are, first, a Bismarckian path involving “strategic co-optive responses of patriarchal states and state elites to working class-mobilization”, second, a Liberal-Labor route characterized with “strategic incorporation of labor parties and/or unions into governing Liberal coalitions”, and a path via “reforms by Catholic parties governing patriarchal, unitary states confronting working-class challenges”. Similarly, other sociologists distinguish liberal, social-democratic and conservative welfare-state regimes (Amenta et al. 2001; Conley and Springer 2001; Esping-Andersen 1994; DiPrete 2002). In this view, “social-democratic regimes, in which the state plays the greatest role in income redistribution, lead to the most equality, whereas the liberal (or residual) welfare states produce the least equality. This is despite the fact that residual welfare states typically pursue policies that are more targeted to helping the poor. This is often called the ‘paradox of redistribution strategies’” (Conley and Springer 2001: 769).

Curiously, some US sociologists (Amenta et al. 2001: 214–7) suggest that post-war American social policy approximates or resembles the model of a residual liberal welfare state “because of its relatively low expenditures, its large share of private benefits for retirement and health, and its relatively large component of means-tested expenditures”, as well as the “recommodification or the dismantling of worker protections [as] the most visible goal”. They then contrast the US “liberal” model to the “social-democratic” regime premised on the principles of universalism and decommodification”, and the “conservative corporatist” upholding “status distinctions between groups” and the traditional family.

However, perhaps a better description of the US case is “neo-liberal” in the sense, as seen before, of “neo-conservative”, because of its typical conservative attempts to, first, precisely maintain “status distinctions between groups and the traditional family”, second, to “impose work requirements and enforce other social obligations” (Goldberg 2001: 291), and third the policy dominance of conservatism during the 1980–2000s and most of the post-war period. Thus, when sociologists describe the US model as an “authoritarian welfare state” (Goldberg 2001: 291), this means that it is anti-liberal, i.e. neo-conservative (“neo-liberal”), rather than liberal in the proper sense and democratic.

In turn, for the purpose at hand, the distinction between liberal and social-democratic welfare states is impertinent or secondary so long as both are premised on and express liberalism and its egalitarianism, universalism and humanism as well as libertarianism, in contrast to their illiberal conservative counterparts. Simply, it is because liberal and social-democratic welfare states are both democratic, thus differ from their paleo- and neo-conservative (or “neo-liberal”) versions as typically authoritarian (Goldberg 2001). Also, at least, “conservative”, including fascist, welfare states are typically observed to be less developed, comprehensive, generous or simply minimal, as well as, as are their communist versions, less free and democratic than their liberal or social-democratic counterparts. This thus supports the primary link of the welfare state with political and economic liberalism. Even if not all welfare states are “liberal”, but also conservative and fascist or communist, political liberalism via liberal democracy typically creates and incorporates a democratic welfare state, or more so than conservatism, including fascism, and other anti-liberalism, with the exception of communism.

The above connection between liberalism and the welfare state also holds true of the same country in historical terms. Thus, the welfare state was (re)created, most developed, comprehensive and generous when liberalism and liberal democracy was paramount, as in Great Britain and Keynesianism, America and the New Deal or the Great Society. Conversely, it has experienced opposite outcomes during anti-liberal political dominance such as Thatcherism and Reaganism in the 1980s respectively, with certain exceptions a la Bismarck et al.’s (Hicks et al. 1995) conservative-authoritarian “welfare state” (Goldberg 2001) seeking to uphold status group distinctions and the traditional family (Amenta et al. 2001: 215), thus effectively confirming the liberal “rule” and pattern.

This yields the prediction that the welfare state will continue, though with adaptations and modifications in light of global economic and social change, to be more developed and generous in Western, including Scandinavian, liberal democracies or times in the same country, than in anti-liberal political systems or periods. Contrary to “libertarian” and neo-conservative imputations and expectations, Western liberal democracies”, including Scandinavian welfare states”, adaptation to globalization and global capitalism has not been less but rather admittedly more successful than that of their supposedly superior American conservative and anti-welfare alternative. Recall, this is what

is suggested by the quoted observation that, for instance, “Sweden has a generous welfare state and is highly globalized, while the United States is less globalized and has a minimal welfare state” (Brady et al. 2005: 925). In turn, those anti-liberal political systems or periods include neo-conservative politics or “time” in America during the 1989–2000s as well as dictatorships in the “third-world”. At this juncture, under neo-conservatism America, in virtue of its perennial anti-welfare state antagonism, exceptionalism or backwardness (Amenta et al. 2001; Quadagno 1999) converges with or resembles more despised – by Americans, yet often supported by their conservative government (Munch 2001) – “third-world” dictatorships à la free-markets Chile and Singapore than modern Western liberal democracies. If so, then this makes conservative reproduced and celebrated American exceptionalism a distinctly double- or single-edged sword (Lipset 1996).

In general, the point is that political liberalism, i.e. liberal democracy is humanistic, egalitarian and universalistic through its creation of a welfare state and social democracy. It is in this sense that, as seen, its defenders (Bauman 2001) propose that the welfare state can primarily be established and justified on grounds of liberal-secular humanism, simply moral compassion, egalitarianism and universalism, and just secondarily by rational economic considerations, though, as noted, it is not necessarily less economically efficient and globalized than its anti-welfare, including American, counterparts.

Political Liberalism and the Welfare State

As noted, historically the welfare state or social democracy was primarily, though not solely, the creation or project of political liberalism and modernism starting with the French Revolution. As Dahrendorf 1979: 100) remarks, the “liberation of a new potential by modernization, symbolized by the French Revolution, meant unheard-of progress of life chances for many people. This was a dynamic process which began with the rule of law [i.e.] the protected formal status of the citizen, and ended with the welfare state [i.e.] comprehensive and substantive citizenship rights”. For example, during 1906–11 a liberal government reportedly laid down the “foundation of the British welfare state” (King 1999: 15) thus understood. In this view, the welfare state in the sense of citizenship rights and liberties is “constitutive of liberalism” (King 1999: 18).

Conversely, with some exceptions – e.g. traditional German conservatives like Bismarck and post-war “Christian Democrats” (Hicks et al. 1995) – anti-liberalism, notably conservatism, including fascism, has usually opposed and or suspected the welfare state in the form and sense of a political system of “comprehensive and substantive citizenship rights.” This especially holds true of Nazism within the extended family of European conservatism and of American neo-conservatism, including “libertarianism”. These objectively act or appear as allies, “brothers in arms”, in the persistent and ever-intensifying, most intensively in America since the 1980s, anti-liberal war against the welfare state and social rights condemned and eliminated, by US neo-conservatives and libertarians, as undeserving “entitlements”. Thus, in the early 21st century the following remark particularly applies to US neo-conservatives, including libertarians, just as neo-Nazis. Namely, “only the most anachronistic conservative would claim today that there is no such thing as social citizenship rights” (Dahrendorf 1979: 125) or, if one wishes, “entitlements” in the sense of Tönnies’ natural-law human right to dignity, equality, justice and liberty in society rather than, as construed by US anti-welfare neo-conservatives, unjustified privileges perpetuating defects in character (“welfare dependence”, “laziness”). An indicative symptom of this claim is the famous libertarian-economic trivial “law” and slogan that “there is no such thing as free lunch”, primarily applying to most US citizens or labor, but not to the elite or capital for which the entire America is literally a “free land” in the sense of “no cost”, as exemplified by Enronism and mafia capitalism overall (Pryor 2002).

Hence, at least in virtue of their joint opposition to and attack on the welfare state, both neo-conservatism and “libertarianism”, in turn shared with fascism, notably Nazism, constitute anti-liberalism in the sense of contemporary political-economic liberalism. This indicates what Merton (1968) may call the perverse logic or outcome of neo-conservatism and “libertarianism”. This is attacking and destroying the welfare state on various grounds, like conservative moral-religious and ethnic-racist purity, and libertarian “free-market” and economic efficiency, they objectively, though perhaps unwittingly, find themselves in the company of fascism as the ultimate enemy of liberal-social democracy (Dahrendorf 1979; Popper 1973). To paraphrase Merton (1968), “such are the anti-democratic perversities” of the anti-social and anti-human logic of conservatism and spurious libertarianism versus the welfare state and eventually liberalism.

In respect of citizenship rights and so Weberian life chances, the welfare state or social democracy is perhaps the highest point or most progressive achievement of liberalism and even Western society and modernity. Arguably, the “social-democratic consensus signifies the greatest progress which history has seen so far. Never before so many people had so many life chances”²⁸ (Dahrendorf 1979: 108–9). It means that liberal political progressivism as well as humanism, universalism and true libertarianism, including democratic government, have all culminated in the welfare state or social democracy (Habermas 2001). This is suggested by the observation that in inter-war Europe among alternative social systems or political movements like communism and authoritarian capitalism (corporatism) or fascism, it was only “social-democratic reformism” via the project of a social-welfare state that “has adopted as its own the legacy of the bourgeois emancipation movements, the democratic constitutional state” (Habermas 1989: 54).

To that extent the welfare state represents the logical consummation of progressive, humanistic, universalistic and liberty-enhancing liberalism since the Enlightenment, rather than a “non-liberal”, “socialist” creation as often supposed or objected, as done by US “libertarians”. Moreover, if the above argument is true, as the original and primary creation of liberalism the welfare state is more progressive, as well as humanistic, universalistic and even libertarian, in social-political terms within modern Western society and beyond than anything anti-liberalism has created through its illiberal counter-revolutions or designed via its supra- and anti-human providential designs, from despotic medievalism and proto-conservatism to fascism and neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. At this juncture, recall Samuelson’s “unpatriotic” admission that post-war Scandinavian seemingly “regimented” welfare states are actually “freer” and to that extent politically and socially more progressive than “my

²⁸ Still Dahrendorf (1979: 127) warns that “citizenship stretches beyond itself [however] if equality of opportunity becomes equality of results, and if equal life chances turn into equal lives”. This thus preempts and exposes as “laissez-faire fantasies” (Kloppenbergh 1998: 16) anti-liberal, notably US conservative-libertarian, accusations that the welfare state seeks to enforce “equality” of results or conditions and so represents or leads to, just as it reflects, statism or collectivism (Lipset and Marks 2000), notably coercive regimented “socialism” as the supreme “evil” for anti-liberal conservatism and pseudo-liberal “libertarianism” since Burke and Mises, respectively.

[conservative-libertarian] America" according to Mill's classical liberty criteria that his US economic libertarian colleges extol.

As noted, recent studies indicate that modern welfare states continue to be both more democratic (Bollen 1990) and more universalistic or humanistic (Amenta et al. 2001; Pampel 1998), so more progressive, liberal and efficient (Trigilia 2002) in political and social terms, than their anti-welfare counterparts, including America under neo-conservatism since the 1980s. For example, only Dahrendorf's most anachronistic and "hyper-patriotic" US neo-conservatives and "libertarians" would claim that social democracies like Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Holland or even Germany are really less "free", not to mention less economically efficient and globalized, than conservative America as the "land of freedom" and economic efficiency and globalization, due to its lacking or weak welfare, displaced by an intrusive arbitrary policing, if not police, state, of which the Puritan-style or Islamic-like vice police, as in the "Bible Belt" and other "red" states, is the largest and ever-growing component. In general, only they could allege that liberal welfare or well-being states *cum* "big governments" are *less* free, even "un-free", less democratic, so less politically progressive and economically efficient than the neo-conservative anti-welfare, notably policing (Bourdieu 1998), state in America under Reaganism, Great Britain during Thatcherism (Giddens 2000; Hodgson 1999) and elsewhere like Singapore or Chile under military dictatorship.

In contrast to the liberal welfare state, its conservative adversary is truly "limited" government in terms of enhancing human well-being such health, material security, education and other public services. However, it is virtually unlimited in respect of social control and repression at home and abroad, as indicated by the authoritarian and anti-humanistic pattern of budget spending, i.e. pro-military/war and pro-police, anti-welfare, anti-education, anti-health, under US neo-conservatism – which is virtually identical to that of fascism, notably Nazism – just as arbitrary law enforcement. For modern liberalism and its welfare state, such discretionary "police enforcement of serious laws is not justified in a free society. Freedom is threatened both by the overreach of the law and by arbitrariness in its enforcement" (Reiman 1997: 27).

At the minimum, the liberal welfare state/social democracy, while far from being perfect and a panacea but with various imperfections and paradoxes (Korpi and Palme 1998), signifies more political-social and often economic

progress, i.e. liberties and human rights and efficiency, in Western history, including America, than usually supposed and objected by anti-liberal forces, from arch-conservatives, fascists and communists to neo-conservatives, neo-fascists and spurious libertarians. As before, only Dahrendorf's most anachronistic and patriotic US neo-conservatives and "libertarian" economists "would claim today that there is no such thing as" political freedom and especially "free markets" and economic efficiency in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Canada and other despised liberal welfare *cum* "socialist" states. These claims are patently contradicted by both causal observations and stylized facts showing that these societies are not necessarily or significantly less "free", democratic and economically efficient than neo-conservative or anti-welfare America, but rather on the contrary (Hodgson 1999; Pryor 2002; Trigilia 2002).

In particular, contrary to neo-conservative and "libertarian" condemnations of the welfare state and social democracy as evil "socialism" versus the unmitigated good of "free markets", these and other countries, including Great Britain and France, as US modern liberals point out, "have demonstrated in recent years [that] alternatives to free-market panaceas no longer require formulaic returns to rigid forms of socialist orthodoxy" (Kloppen-berg 1998: 7–8). Overall, this view suggests that the "dissolution of the Soviet Union, the transformation of Eastern Europe, and the end of the cold war can make possible new forms of liberalism and social democracy attuned to the necessity of balancing commitments to liberty, equality, and fraternity with commitments to rights, security, and religious traditions" (Kloppen-berg 1998: 8). The latter also confirms that modern liberal-social democracy while secular is not necessarily anti-religious and atheistic, as Vatican, US and Islamic religious conservatives accuse and impute.

In general, whatever its observed, supposed or perceived, primarily economic, faults, imperfections and paradoxes emphasized by "libertarian" economists, the welfare state is the logical outcome and culmination of liberal progressivism and humanism, and probably, at least in its Scandinavian version recognized by Samuelson, the most progressive and humanist socio-political and economic system in modern, post-medieval Western history. Alternatively, its anti-welfare alternatives in the form of fascist totalitarian and conservative authoritarian or policing states have proven to be less progressive, humanistic and free, simply, to paraphrase a legendary conservative,

Churchill, “worse” than the seemingly politically regimented and/or economically inefficient and non-globalized welfare state and social democracy.

To that extent, if not being an unmitigated good and optimal, the liberal welfare state constitutes the “lesser evil” or the “second best” in terms of progressive human liberties, rights and life chances, even economic efficiency, as shown by countries like Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany and Canada (Brady et al. 2005; Solon 2002). It is especially so, if not by comparison with liberal ideals and projects, then when compared with its anti-liberal fascist and conservative opposites, from arch-conservatism to fascism and US neo-conservatism, as usually regressive and restrictive in this sense and even economically more inefficient, even self-destructive, in the long run, viz. fascist-conservative huge budget deficits due to exorbitant police and military spending. Simply, to cite Churchill, the liberal welfare state is the “worst” political-economic system, except for its conservative-fascist as well as communist alternatives.

For example, the liberal welfare state is the “lesser evil” in this sense by removing the “restrictive nature of a property qualification requirement for full citizenship” (Terchek 1997: 7), including the right to voting. As known, these restrictions have historically been and remain primarily characteristic for anti-liberalism. This is shown by European medievalism and, as Weber notices, New England’s Puritanism as a mixture of aristocracy and theocracy, and its heir authoritarian conservatism (Dunn and Woodard 1996; also Heineman 1998) that excluded, as in the US South, through such and related requirements (e.g. poll taxes, literacy tests, plus proof of citizenship) not only non-whites but what he denotes the “poor white trash” from full citizenship, including the voting process, let alone political office.

It is also evidenced by equally repressive neo-conservatism with its own functionally equivalent devices in this perennially under-democratized region and other “red states” in America during the early 21st century (e.g. the 2000 elections), such as the exclusion of former and current prisoners, a practice unparalleled in Western democracies (Uggen and Manza 2002), plus legal and illegal immigrants subjected to a myriad of exclusions, discriminations and mistreatments in terms of welfare benefits, court sentences, habeas corpus and other basic rights. Thus, sociologists note that anti-welfare and authoritarian capitalism, celebrated by “libertarian” economists and neo-conservatives, “encouraged the belief that failure in the market sphere

revealed a parallel incompetence in democratic life, hence the long-standing exclusion of the propertyless from full electoral participation and the polluting stereotypes about the irrationality and even animality of the ‘soot covered classes’” (Alexander 2001: 240).

At least, liberal social democracy, i.e. welfare democratic capitalism typically places less economic as well as non-economic, including racial, ethnic and nationality, restrictions on full citizenship than its anti-welfare conservative-fascist counterparts. This is exemplified, in addition to voting rights – granted to or relaxed for former, even current, prisoners and legal immigrants – by the right to welfare, viz. compare the universalism and “lax” conditions of public benefits in Scandinavian countries (Amenta et al. 2001; Pampel 1998) with their “stinginess” and harsh work requirements and social obligations (Goldberg 2001) in America under neo-conservatism. In short, the welfare state is more inclusive as well as more generous in respect of citizenship rights and liberties, including voting, welfare benefits and legal immigration, thus more humanistic and libertarian than its opposites, just as is liberalism compared with conservatism and fascism.

Relatedly, the liberal welfare state is the “lesser evil” or the “second best” in terms of human liberties and rights by eliminating or reducing unnecessary government coercion. As modern liberals stress, its “objective is to increase the facilitative capacities of government to protect and promote the well-being of all individuals within the society, while limiting the presumed need of its coercive capacities to do the same” (Pelton 1999: 215). This means that the liberal welfare state is a universalistic well-being state and so, as anti-liberals accuse, a sort of “big government” in the sense of protecting and promoting “human”, rather than a policing state as found in fascism and conservatism, so really a “small government” in terms of coercion and repression of humans. Conversely, the conservative-fascist state is typically “small government” in terms of human well-being, but invariably “big government” in respect of inhuman coercion and repression, including execution, through a Draconian penal system. The latter is exemplified by Nazism and US neo-conservatism, which thus act or appear as functional equivalents or proxies from the prism of the liberal welfare state. In this view, a “main rationale for limiting coercive social systems and for expanding preventive, welfare-promoting social systems is to maintain individual freedom as much as possible, to protect the individual from the tyranny of the state, and to generate constructive and beneficial options for individuals” (Pelton 1999: 216).

Hence, the welfare state practices government maximalism or activism in protecting and promoting the well-being of humans, yet minimalism or reasonable non-intervention in coercing and punishing them, especially for moral sins, if not crimes, in sharp contrast to its fascist and conservative alternatives as minimalist in the first and maximalist in the second case. In short, it combines and balances humanistic maximalism and penal minimalism via the mix of a helping government hand and an enlightened judicial system, thus continuing the legacy of classical liberal humanism and legal enlightenment.

Negatively, both a “do-nothing” government for human well-being and penal maximalism, manifested in a Draconian penal system lacking any rational Durkheimian fit between crimes or sins and punishments, are incompatible with and even destructive to the welfare state. In turn, they are fully consistent with and constitutive of its fascist-conservative alternatives, as indicated by Nazism (e.g. concentration camps) and US neo-conservatism (mass incarceration, the death penalty) with their shared “soft” on human welfare and “tough” on crime systems and policies.

For example, both a “hands-off” government in regard with human health and education and a vice police as the tragic-comic moralistic dimension of the police state are, by being anti-humanist and coercive, incompatible with the liberal welfare state, as shown by Scandinavian and other social democracies. Yet, they are perfectly compatible with and defining of anti-humanist, repressive fascist and conservative states. It is demonstrated by European fascism, including both Italian and German fascists, and US conservatism, notably Southern fundamentalism, allied in depreciating humans and harshly punishing their alleged “original sin” moral corruption and turpitude (the first term is usually used by Nazis, the second by “Bible-Belt” fundamentalists).

The preceding indicates that generally the liberal welfare state is free, democratic and politically progressive, or more so than its alternatives. It is not in spite, as often supposed, but rather precisely because of being “welfare” in the sense of an activist, comprehensive, “big” and generous wellbeing-promoting political system, combined with a minimalist or limited, “small” penal code. While perhaps contradictory or counterintuitive – “big government” and democracy – this is explained by the fact that liberal humanism and universalism, as expressed in promoting human well-being and rights, tends to be also freedom-enhancing and democratic.

On the other hand, anti-humanism is typically anti-freedom and undemocratic, as exemplified by medievalism, arch-conservatism, fascism,

neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. Simply, liberal humanism entails and engenders libertarianism and democracy as its special element and effect, just as vice versa. For example, if Scandinavian liberal-social democracies are, as Samuelson admits, “freer” and more democratic (Bollen 1990) than conservative America as the “land of freedom”, then this may be not in spite, as he and other economists imply, but because of their being “regimented” in the sense of government activism and universalism (Amenta et al. 2001; Pampel 1998) in protecting human well-being, i.e. simply welfare states. Alternatively, they are so because they are not policing, in particular vice-police, states in the way of US neo-conservatism, let alone interwar fascism and modern fundamentalist Islam.

Hence, the underlying liberal humanism and universalism of Scandinavian and other welfare states, expressed in well-being maximalism and penal minimalism, generates, explains and perhaps predicts for the future their greater political freedoms and human rights compared with their anti-welfare opposites, including the US neo-conservative government. Contrarily, anti-welfare and anti-liberal states’ anti-humanism, as analogously manifested in welfare minimalism and punishing maximalism, produces, accounts for and probably predicts undemocratic outcomes. Overall, contemporary sociologists stress that the welfare state, as defined by social democracy and citizenship rights, is “about the basic compact of liberty” (Dahrendorf 1990: 35) contrary to neo-conservative and “libertarian” denials and accusations of “un-freedom” and “socialism” or “communism”.

In sum, welfare “regimented” capitalism, as exemplified by Scandinavian liberal-social democracies, seems, first, more progressive in terms of political liberties and human rights, so more democratic than anti-welfare “unfettered” capitalism, celebrated by US conservatism and “libertarianism”. Second, it does so primarily because, not in spite, of its underlying liberal humanism and universalism by comparison with its anti-welfare alternatives to the effect that human-welfare capitalism is eventually more progressive or democratic than its non-humanist and non-inclusive versions like “capitalism with an inhuman face” (Pryor 2002) as observed or predicted in America under neo-conservatism. In this sense, in virtue of its humanism and universalism, liberalism entails, eventually results in and hence predicts welfare rather than laissez-faire capitalism, contrary to “libertarian” interpretations. Simply, if the welfare state is freer, more democratic than its alternatives, this is because it is more humanistic, universalistic and to that extent liberal than these.

In particular, it is so because it is the realization or legacy of the humanistic and universalistic Enlightenment rather than the anti-humanist and particularistic “Dark Middle Ages” inspiring or lurking beneath its conservative and fascist alternatives whose perennial ideal and inspiration is basically medievalism, including medieval inequality, hierarchy and despotic coercion (Nisbet 1966). This indicates that understanding the modern welfare state requires considering the original aims and subsequent legacy of the Enlightenment, so classical liberalism (King 1999), minus mythical *laissez-faire*, just as to understand its fascist and neo-conservative opposite requires taking account of anti-liberal medievalism and arch-conservatism.

Chapter Six

Liberal Civil Society and Culture: Socio-Cultural Liberalism

Liberalism and Civil Society

As hinted before, liberalism tends to create and promote civil society. Historically, civil society has been primarily the creation and project of liberalism or liberal modernity, especially the Enlightenment. As Spencer remarks, liberalism created and promoted civil society in that it “diminished compulsory co-operation throughout social life and increased voluntary cooperation [i.e.] diminished the range of governmental authority, and increased the area within which each citizen may act unchecked”. This is also what Veblen implies by identifying what he describes as the “liberal construction of the principles of self-direction and equality among men in their civil capacity and their personal relations”. As contemporary sociologists point out, civil society originally developed as the “sphere of private autonomy” during classical liberalism – i.e. liberal capitalism in the 18th–19th centuries – by separating and emancipating from the state or “public authority”, as the crucial moment of the “modernization process” (Habermas et al. 1998: 109) in the Western world. In short, liberalism creates and promotes civil society as a non-political sphere of freedom

Table 8
Elements of Liberal Civil Society

Enlightenment project

Social non-political liberty

Economic and non-economic liberties

Individual and group liberties, rights and identities

The “dark side” of liberal civil society
anti-liberal deformations and intrusions

to complement, reinforce, or help establish liberal democracy as a political system. This yields the concept and reality of liberal civil society, by analogy to liberal democracy or politics.

In particular, liberal civil society, like democracy, has been the original project, creation and legacy of the Enlightenment as the foundation of liberalism. Thus, contemporary analysts stress that for the “liberal Enlightenment thinkers, it was against [a] kind of proclaimed public authority of the absolute monarchy that the emerging civil society counteracted. Absolutism proclaimed a state-centered view of the constitution of political community whereas Enlightenment liberalism rejected it”¹ (Ku 2000: 219). In this respect, with its dichotomy between public/state/political and private/market/civil society Enlightenment liberalism represented the relativist “flip side” of pre-liberal, including medieval as well as Roman, absolutism (Ku 2000: 221).

In addition to being an Enlightenment project, creation and legacy, liberal civil society’s elements involve social non-political liberty in general, in particular economic and non-economic freedoms, individual and group liberties, rights and identities, as well as a “dark side” of anti-liberal deformations and intrusions, considered next in this order (Table 8).

¹ Ku (2000: 219) adds that the Enlightenment thinkers “identified the capitalist market as playing an essential part in the formation of such a civil society – a community that was capable of organizing itself independent of the specific direction of state power.” Also, it is suggested that since the public “signifies a domain of citizenship attached to both state and civil society [one should abandon] the Enlightenment dichotomy between public/state and private/market/civil society” (Ku 2000: 227).

Liberal Civil Society and Social Liberty

First and foremost, liberal civil society and modernity is basically the realm of social-cultural non-political liberties, rights and identities, and so a free socio-cultural system. Hence, civil society is the nonpolitical or social-cultural complement of liberal democracy as the free political system. For liberalism, liberal democracy is incomplete, if not impossible, without a free civil society, just as conversely, the second usually presupposes the first, or counteracts and mitigates an illiberal polity and coercive state, thus eventually being liberalizing and democratic. Hence, liberal democracy necessitates and eventually helps create and promote civil society as its non-political equivalent and complement for its completion, consolidation and reinforcement. For example, civil society “matters because it constitutes a basis for critical evaluation of policy and political choices” in liberal democracy (King 1999: 297). Liberal democracy and civil society together, alongside a free-market economy, notably democratic and egalitarian welfare capitalism, form and epitomize liberalism as Durkheim-Pareto-Parsons’ total social system and principle of liberty, equality and justice in a synergy.

In comparative terms, liberal civil society’s democratic, i.e. “non-authoritarian social integration” distinguishes itself from illiberal, including conservative or fascist, “authoritarian social control” (Sciulli 1986). Thus, while in liberal civil society individuals have a “recognized private sphere clearly distinct” (Hayek 1960: 207–8) from the public one, anti-liberalism, from medieval conservatism to fascism and communism and neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, usually does not recognize, or invades and restricts, a separate realm of privacy and individual liberties (Habermas 2001). For modern liberalism, a distinct private sphere or privacy “has value beyond such practical effects as protecting our reputations. It is a way of enacting a society’s belief that each individual is the owner of his own body. It is also a crucial element of the cultural training by which we shape selves who believe in their authority over their destinies and thus who are ready for life in a liberal [civil] society”² (Reiman 1997: 26).

² Reiman (1997: 26) admonishes that there are “moral risks posed by the threats to privacy from the new information technology”.

Economic and Non-Economic Liberties

Specifically, in the original definition and construction by liberalism, liberal civil society is the realm of both economic and non-economic liberties. Liberalism originally defined or constructed civil society as the nonpolitical or private sphere of market-economic and social-cultural liberties. This is what Hegel essentially meant by his original and influential definition of civil *cum* bourgeois society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*), while in its pre-Hegelian definitions, it “was simply another term for political association” (Dagger 1997: 198). It holds true insofar as, as Marx would admit, “bourgeois” is not only an economic category but also, even primarily in the initial meaning, a non-economic one or what Weber and Veblen call life style, ethos, ultimate values or culture, involving both production and consumption patterns of the “bourgeoisie”. As Weber suggests, “bourgeois” is not only an economic class with a basis in property and market position, but also a status group, or Veblen’s leisure class, defined by the “social estimation of honor” not invariably determined by wealth. And, Hegel used the expression bourgeois civil *society*, not a bourgeois or capitalist economy.

Alternatively, in a Hegelian framework, a bourgeois or capitalist economy is sociologically just an integral element, and for Marx the basis, of bourgeois civil society but not the latter *tout de court*, as Marxists and “libertarian” economists are prone to assume, a variation on the theme of capitalism as part of, but not, liberalism as a whole, as these groups suppose. To that extent, “bourgeois” economic freedom is a special case of “bourgeois” civic liberties, rather than conversely as “libertarian” economists assume by equating and reducing the latter to “free enterprise”, so civil society and liberal democracy to the market economy, cultural and political liberalism to capitalism, democratic or authoritarian. In short, Hegel’s civil society encompasses both what Tönnies calls in a Marxian vein “general commercial exchange” or market relations and Weberian-Veblenian life styles or cultures, i.e. economic classes and status groups alike.

Even Marx’s own definition of civil society involves both economic and social elements implicit in Hegel’s and made explicit by Weber, Veblen and others. Thus, he defines civil society as an economic system in the sense of the “whole material intercourse of individuals” within the bourgeois order, but also as a non-economic sphere, viz. the “social organization evolving out of

production and commerce” or the “idealist superstructure”. This dual definition may yet raise the question if civil society is the “material intercourse of individuals” or the “social organization evolving” from such economic relations, i.e. economy as the “base” or culture as the “idealist superstructure”. For the present purpose, this is not a pertinent issue, for civil society is originally defined as comprising both “material” and “social”, economy and culture, though subsequently primarily by the second element, thus making it equivalent to “social life” or the autonomous cultural sphere as the private “life-world” (Habermas et al. 1998; also Alexander 1998).

In sum, in Hegel-Marx’s definitions, civil society is a social-economic or private sphere, first, constructed by and complementing liberal democracy; second, distinct and emancipated from the public realm of politics. As contemporary sociologists comment, Marx-Hegel’s civil society is the “sector within which capital accumulation occurs, fuelled by the mechanisms of price, profit and investment in labor and commodity markets [and] a private sphere created by, but separated from and in tension with, the public sphere of the state” (Giddens 1984: 197). Also, Hayek (1960: 207–8) essentially adopts “non-libertarian” Hegel’s definition stating that in liberal civil society “each individual has a recognized private sphere clearly distinct from the public sphere, and the private individuals obey only the rules which are equally applicable to all”.

As hinted, liberal civil society is, in the subsequent, modern and prevalent definition and construction by liberalism, the realm of social-cultural liberties. In virtue of its social liberties, liberal civil society is an “association of equal, free, and accordingly responsible individuals” (Manent 1998: 217). Since Marx and Hegel, liberalism has increasingly defined and constructed civil society in non-economic or cultural rather than, as initially, market-economic terms. To indicate this curious shift in definition and meaning, contemporary sociologists define liberal civil society primarily by social liberties or Weberian life styles and cultures, only secondarily or not at all by economic freedom as their special case, i.e. the Marxian “material intercourse” and “commercial exchange”.

Thus, in a paradigmatic modern sociological definition, civil societies are defined as “life-worlds that are symbolically structured” and comprise the “normative structures”, i.e. cultural values and institutions, of a society (Habermas 1975: 4). The definition apparently adopts and evokes Weber’s

concept of life-styles or Marx's "social organization", rather than "material intercourse", as defining and constitutive of liberal civil society. Conversely, only the most dogmatic Marxists as well as "libertarian" economists would reductively conceive these "life-worlds", including life-styles, as instead economically structured and comprising economic structures as the "foundation", so reduce civil society or culture to economy or "free markets". Further, if liberal civil society is described as containing a "shared store of cultural knowledge, socialization patterns, values and norms" and representing the "source of enabling conditions for communicative action" (Habermas 1975: 152) as distinguished from economic or instrumental actions, then this description differentiates it from economy, just as politics, hence separated and virtually excused from, or incorporated as a subsidiary and extraneous element into, its realm. In short, civil society is defined as a private sphere of "social intercourse" and notably "individual liberties", permitting a "core of private autonomy" (Habermas et al. 1998: 109).

The above definition suggests that civil society, first, is defined by social relations and liberties rather than or not all economic exchanges and free markets; and only the most dogmatic Marxists and "libertarian" economists would conceive "social" *cum* "material intercourse" or "rational choice". Second, civil society permits "private autonomy", exemplifying "internally realized individual liberties", not only from the public sphere of politics or the coercive state as in Hegel's original definition, but also from the material constraints or systemic imperatives of the economy and market, contrary to dogmatic Marxists and "libertarian" economists condemning and celebrating "free markets", respectively. This is more explicit in the statement that "social pathologies arise only as a consequence of an invasion of exchange relations and bureaucratic regulation" of civil society, so the balance "tips to the negative" insofar as both political and economic power, states and markets as systems with different constraints and imperatives, "spill over" into the life-world as a non-political and non-economic or non-instrumental sphere (Habermas 1975: 153).

Also, other contemporary sociologists stress that civil society is an autonomous informal social order "not dominated by large-scale coercive structures but constructed through various forms of communication and reciprocity" (Alexander 1998: 221), while incorporating in these structures political and economic power or inequality. In this argument, specifically the "divisive

classes generated by economic life, the oligarchies generated by political and organizational power [plus], the demonology frequently legitimated by religious institutions, and the ethnic, regional and racial domination so often generated by the very construction of national civil states – such intrusions fragment and split civil society even while its very existence promises participation and restoration of the social whole” (Alexander 1998: 227). Arguably, the “qualities, relationships, and goods highly valued in these other spheres [economy, politics, religion] became translated into restrictive and exclusionary requisites for participation in civil society itself” (Alexander 2001: 240). These arguments suggest that the underlying reason for such processes is that modern civil society is the sphere of communicative, reciprocal or expressive action and individual liberties or private autonomy, in contrast to the state as the public realm of coercive activity, and the economy as the domain of instrumental and partly compulsory actions.

At any rate, the above indicates a remarkable shift or reversal within modern liberalism in defining and constructing civil society relative to the economy and markets from Hegel. From its defining and constituting element, the market-economic system becomes, especially in the form of class divisions, inequalities and exclusion, virtually its opposite by being a threat to and alien element of the life-world, alongside a coercive state or political hierarchy, as the initial antipode. In a sense, modern liberalism seeks to emancipate civil society from the economic system or the excessive power of wealth, just as its classical ancestor emancipated it from politics or the public and coercive authority of the state.

Hence, liberalism just extends its underlying principle of the illiberal or corrupting effects of unrestrained political and economic power or inequality to civil society. Thus, contemporary liberals suggest preventing any groups from “gaining enough power to become dominant [via Rousseau’s partial societies]” and “by contributing to a roughly equal distribution of power in civil society, measures such as these will also support the equal status – equality as citizens in the eyes of the law – that civil society presupposes and republican liberalism prescribes” (Dagger 1997: 200). And to that extent that even the market economy, just as democratic politics, is subject to Acton’s rule, then (absolute) economic, like political, power or domination (absolutely) “corrupts” or undermines freedom through wealth concentration, and thus is to be “excused” or “relaxed” from civil society as the sphere of social liberties

and private autonomy. As modern liberals warn, “preventing the concentration of wealth is also necessary, as are measures that ensure that a society does not split into two categories: the rich and the poor” (Dagger 1997: 200). Consequently, modern liberal society has become redefined and constructed as a sort of social residual, culture island or private oasis beyond both political power and wealth concentration, politics and economy, states and markets.

The preceding reaffirms that economic freedom, even if the necessary, is not the sufficient condition of social-cultural liberties, i.e. a market economy is not enough in itself for liberal civil society and democracy, capitalism for liberalism as a whole, contrary to “libertarian” economic implied assertions that “free markets is all you need for liberty and happiness”. Even if economic freedom is, as often seen, a special case of civic liberties, it does not exhaust them, which include but are not limited to “free markets” and “capitalist enterprise”, just as Hegel’s liberal civil society involves, yet is not confined to, bourgeois “commercial exchange” and capitalism.

Alternatively, this indicates the fallacy and even danger of reductively conceiving and constructing liberal civil society and democracy as Hayek’s (1991) “free” and “spontaneous” market order or capitalism, mixed with social-political repression, as witnessed in capitalist dictatorships (Pryor 2002) like Singapore and Chile under the military rule, which “libertarian” economists are prone to extol as models of “liberty”. While liberal civil society establishes individual liberties and comprises free individuals, they cannot simply be equated and reduced, as “libertarians” do, to “free enterprise” and economic agents a la “we are all capitalists now”, as per the US neo-conservative project of “ownership society”, so long as human actors, as many economists admit, are not merely *homo economicus* (Thaler 2000). In short, in modern liberalism civil society is a free social sphere or life-world distinct and emancipated not only, as originally, from political power or the coercive state but also from economic domination or class division and exclusion.

Individual and Group Liberties, Rights and Identities

In addition, liberal civil society is the realm of both individual and group liberties, rights and identities. Like liberal democracy, civil society is the sphere of individual and group liberties, privacy and civic associations. In liberal civil society not solely, as assumed by individualist “libertarians” like

Hayek, has each individual a “recognized private sphere clearly distinct from the public sphere”, but also ideally every group as a civic association does, so both private individuals and groups or associations “obey only the rules which are equally applicable to all”. In virtue of recognizing privacy, identity and so freedom to individuals and groups, or being free in personal and collective terms, liberal civil society is more essential and complex than a mere sum of its free elements or, as even Hayek (1948: 32) admits, “greater than the individual”. This proposition is thus in the spirit of Hayek’s assertion that civil society is “greater than the individual insofar as it is free”, though he primarily understands its “freedom” in individualistic and partial economic rather than group and holistic sociological terms.

In short, liberal civil society constitutes an “association of equal, free, and accordingly responsible” (Manent 1998: 217) individuals as well as groups with equivalent attributes. In the latter sense, civil society can in particular be described as a sort of “association of equal, free, and accordingly responsible” multiple civic associations, nonpolitical organizations or diverse culture groupings. In retrospect, this is essentially how Tocqueville defined civil society in early America, viz. as a complex of what he called “intellectual and moral associations”. Hence, in his sense of a set of voluntary civic associations or Rousseau’s “partial societies”, liberal civil society constitutes the sphere of group liberties and identities, which individualistic libertarian definitions overlook or downplay, just as of individual ones. To that extent, it is not a completely private sphere or fully privatized and individualized but an intermediate zone between pure privacy and individuation (e.g. personal and family life) and the public realm of the state. It is so a “civilized” society in the sense of existing between and overcoming both unrestrained, “rugged” atomistic individualism à la the Hobbesian anti-social “state of nature” and a coercive, often barbaric and terrorist, state, i.e. primitive Anarchy and tyrannical Leviathan alike (Buchanan 1991).

Thus, some contemporary liberals comment that Hegel’s civil society “designated an area between domestic life and the fully political order – an area in which commerce regulated by contracts and governed by the rule of law could take place [making it] civilized society” (Dagger 1997: 198). If so, then liberal civil *cum* civilized society, at least in Hegel’s and Tocqueville’s conceptions, is not identical, so cannot simply be reduced, to Hayek’s “private sphere” in the sense of atomistic individualism à la Robinson Crusoe or Hobbesian

anarchism, as “un-civilized” in this respect. Rather, in this view, liberal society encompasses “forms of association that blur the boundaries between private and public activity”³ (Dagger 1997: 198). In this sense, civil society “can best promote the public good when it serves as an intermediary between the official business of government and the personal affairs of the individual” through civic associations that “connect the private and public aspects of life” (Dagger 1997: 199), rather than disconnect and separate them, as in “libertarian” individualistic accounts invariably preferring the first over the second.

To that extent, the private sphere represents just half of the equation of rather than, as per Hayekian “libertarians”, civil society as a whole, the other half being Tocqueville’s set of civic associations linking individuals with public life and themselves, thus transforming them from Hobbesian anti-social and semi-barbaric creatures or atomistic Robinson Crusoes into socialized and civilized actors. In short, Hegel-Tocqueville’s civil society is “civil” or “civilized” primarily because it is a social realm in the sense of civic associations or Rousseau’s “partial societies”, and secondarily or not at all a “private sphere”, at least in its extremely individualistic “libertarian” or anarchistic rendition. After all, the initial, pre-Hegelian meaning of civil society was “political association” (Dagger 1997: 198) and so the realm of Aristotle’s “social animals” as different from Hobbesian anti-social private agents. Thus, even some libertarian economists would admit that the Hobbesian-style “private sphere” or individual liberty is “non-civil” or “uncivilized” in virtue being or resulting in anarchy (Buchanan 1991). Other neo-classical economists basically propose or imply the same for Robinson Crusoe’s type of “private sphere” and personal freedom (e.g. Hicks 1969, Robbins 1952).

The above indicates that civil society, rather than only being a private sphere, recognizes and promotes such privacy and individual liberty in connection with, and not complete isolation from, public life and freedom, like political autonomy (cf. Habermas 2001), through a complex of civic associations connecting these two spheres. In brief, liberal civil society, while distinct

³ Dagger (1997: 199) warns that the risk is that civil society “will degenerate into factionalism or interest-group liberalism as various groups compete to advance their interests by capturing or controlling [government]. One step is to increase the number and enhance the power of [civic associations] that connect the private and public aspects of life”. He also suggests that “to stave off corruption, money must not be allowed to exercise too great an influence on campaigns and elections” (Dagger 1997: 200).

and emancipated from the state, via such associations connects with and even depends for its existence on liberal democracy or democratic politics. For most modern liberals, civil society is distinct, as its activities are “private” in some sense, from, yet dependent on the state to the effect that “without the state to guarantee the rule of law, there could be no civil society” (Dagger 1997: 198). In particular, contemporary republican or communitarian liberalism, while wanting a vibrant civil society, including the “protection that it provides against the possibility of an overbearing state”, maintains that “there neither can nor should be a wall of separation between the public and the private realm, the state and civil society” (Dagger 1997: 198). Further, it proposes that, seemingly ironically, civil society “best protects us against the overwhelming power of the state by making the state familiar to us” (Dagger 1997: 200).

Consequently, modern liberalism redefines and reconstructs civil society as the sphere of both individual and group liberties or identities, private activities and civic associations that link personal and public life, in contrast to “libertarianism” reducing this duality and complexity to a single dimension of extreme individualism a la Hobbesian anarchy or Robinson Crusoe. In short, liberal civil society is both private, personal or individualized a la Spencer and civic, civilized or socialized in Aristotle’s sense, not only the first as in “libertarianism” or mostly the second as in extreme communitarianism. In this respect, contemporary liberalism adopts and joins Hegel’s “individualistic” and Tocqueville’s and Aristotle’s implied “communitarian” definitions of civil society in terms of a private sphere and civic associations, respectively or jointly. With its joint individualism and communitarianism, modern liberalism readily disposes with both libertarian charges of liberal “anti-individualism” or “collectivism” and opposite conservative, republican or communitarian, accusations of “individualistic” or “anti-communal”⁴ (Edwards and Foley 2001).

⁴ Edwards and Foley (2001: 230) observe that for US neo-conservatives “the source of our discontent lies neither in restructuring nor in globalization, nor in increasing inequality, nor in anything else related to the go-go economy of the 1900s. If social capital is America’s elixir for 21st century, conservatives of all stripes can take heart that its source lies in civil society, in private initiative and individual dispositions, not in public action and government regulation. A national remedy of civil society and social capital is clearly consistent with a policy agenda of privatization and devolution.”

The “Dark Side” of Liberal Civil Society and Anti-Liberalism

However, liberal civil society may degenerate into its opposite or fail to fulfill its promise primarily in consequence of and proportion to the intrusion of anti- and pseudo-liberal elements. This is what anti-liberal critics, including conservatives, fascists, Marxists and post-modernists, denounce as the “dark side” of liberal civil society and democracy. But they overlook or deny that this side, far from being intrinsic to it, is primarily due to and in the degree of intruding or invading forces (Alexander 1998; Habermas 2001) alien to and incompatible with liberalism and its civil society, ranging from conservatism and fascism on one extreme to “libertarianism” and anarchism on the other. Its supposed or observed “dark side” is the result of liberal civil society becoming illiberal or effectively eliminated through the invasion of conservative-fascist elements opposing and eliminating a sphere of civic and political liberties, and quasi-liberal or subverted beyond recognition via the intrusion of “libertarian” and anarchistic ingredients dissolving this realm to anti-social atomism. In other words, liberal civil society becomes un-free, uncivil or uncivilized when it is (to paraphrase Buchanan 1991) invaded and dominated by conservative-fascist Leviathan destroying liberty, civility and humanity as well as transformed into a sort of “libertarian” Anarchy dissolving freedom and civilization into the Hobbesian state of nature and humans into isolated Robinson Crusoes.

Alternatively, insofar as and to the extent that liberal civil society is devoid of such anti- or pseudo-liberal invasions, intrusions or contaminations, it has tended to eliminate or diminish its “dark side” and become or result in a true sphere of individual and group liberties or identities, private affairs and civic associations. Simply, it is not liberal civil society as such, but its anti- or pseudo-liberal invasion that is “dark”, un-free, restrictive, exclusionary, or “uncivil”, or, to cite a US president’s slogan in respect with the US neo-conservative economic system, “stupid”. For instance, due to pseudo-liberal “libertarian” or anarchistic deformations, civil society has or can become a “regime of doubt and confusion – one where individual freedom results not in spontaneous order, but in an anarchic war of all against all, in which everyone schemes, acts duplicitously, and is motivated only by squalid purposes or irrational passions” (McCann 2000: 8). And, conservative, including fascist, invasions and intrusions seek and often succeed to transform civil

society from a sphere of individual and group liberties into a regime of coercion, repression and intolerance, including theocracy as in Puritanism and radical Islam, and totalitarianism as with Nazism. In short, actually and metaphorically anti-liberalism subverts, and thus destroys, liberal civil society into religious-sectarian “Salem with witches” (Putnam 2000) and fascist open prison (Bähr 2002).

Thus, contemporary sociologists emphasize that non-civil, including political, economic and religious, forces “did not simply sit outside the boundaries of civil society and conduct with it a courteous and respectful exchange, as [classical] liberalism imagined and as contemporary conservatives would so much like to believe today [but] invaded civil society from its very inception, interpenetrating with it in systematic and fateful ways” (Alexander 2001: 240). As expected, paramount, though not sole, among these anti-liberal forces and invasions were and remain conservative, from medievalism and arch-conservatism to fascism and neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. In this view, those “qualities, relationships, and goods highly valued in these other spheres [that] became translated into restrictive and exclusionary requisites for participation in civil society” historically included, and often continue to do so, conservative or illiberal factors like familial patriarchy, the exclusion of low classes (the propertyless) from electoral participation and stereotypes about the irrationality and animality of “lower orders” (Alexander 2001: 240).

Predictably, religious conservatism in particular tended to invade and eventually destroy or restrict liberal civil society through theocratic, coercive or exclusionary religion excluding and even eliminating “outsiders” from the civic sphere. This was indicated by the “conversion of religious into civil competence [as] only members in good standing of certified and dominant confessions could possess the conscience, trust, and common sense required for civil society” (Alexander 2001: 240–1). Weber identifies a seemingly unexpected, given the prevalent “naïve assumptions” (Coffey 1998) or “mythology” (Gould 1996) of liberal-democratic Puritanism (yet see Munch 2001; Zaret 1989), case in point in New England’s Puritan theocracy. He observes that the latter effectively performed such an alchemic conversion of religious into civil competence by making Congregational church membership and non-membership the necessary condition for state citizenship and its denial, so civic inclusion and political exclusion, respectively.

Of course, such instances abound and are the rule rather than exceptions within religious conservatism, from medieval Catholicism to Puritanism and sectarian Protestantism (Lipset 1996) to radical Islam with their various theological-political affinities (Turner 2002) or historical similarities (Collins 2000), so it would require another chapter and even a book simply to register, let alone analyze, them. From this perspective, the “dark” history of liberal civil society appears as the history of attempts by religious conservatism to make religion the primary or necessary condition for civic and political inclusion and alternatively exclusion, which effectively or eventually leads to theocracy. Overall, conservatism, including fascism, has been and remains the primary, albeit not the only, antagonistic, “restrictive and exclusionary” force vis-à-vis liberal civil society.

In this view, the “utopian promises” of liberal civil society and modernity were also frustrated or “fractured for historical reasons” (Alexander 2001: 241), which are, predictably, primarily of conservative character. Arguably, modern civil societies “are not some abstract, free-floating space [but] exist in real historical time as part of political regimes that are founded by conquest, immigration, and revolution. The founders of societies manifest distinctive primary, or “primordial”, characteristics, qualities of race, language, religion, gender, sexuality, and national origins”⁵ (Alexander 2001: 241). If so, political and religious-cultural conservatism, including racism and ethnocentrism as eminently conservative attributes, has primarily, though not only, frustrated or fractured the “utopian promises” of liberal civil society rooted in Enlightenment culture and liberal-democratic ideals.⁶

⁵ Alexander (2001: 241) further observes that “in the historical construction of civil societies, therefore, one finds that the primordial qualities of these founders are established as the highest criteria of humanity, that they are represented as embodying a higher competence for civil society. Only people of a certain race, who speak a certain language, who practice a certain religion, and who have immigrated from a certain part of the globe – only these very special persons are believed to actually possess what it takes to be members of our ideal civil sphere [or] trusted to exhibit the sacred qualities for participation”.

⁶ Alexander (2001: 241) comments that the problem for liberalism and the “participants in these “actually existing civil societies”, is that these contradictory dimensions of formally democratic social systems did not, and do not, express themselves in a transparent way [but] hidden by constitutional principles and Enlightenment culture alike”.

Table 9
Elements of Liberal Culture

Enlightenment cultural values and legacies

Multiculturalism

Moral liberalism

moral liberty and individualism
liberal moral virtue
ethical universalism and humanism
ethical rationalism

Religious liberalism

liberal religious freedom
secular culture/civil society

Liberal Culture

Intertwined with those of liberal democracy and civil society, the main elements of liberal culture can be classified into the following: Enlightenment cultural values and legacies, multiculturalism, moral and religious liberalism, considered in this order next (Table 9).

Enlightenment Culture

As implied above, like civil society, liberal culture is essentially Enlightenment-based culture. Historically, Enlightenment-based ideas and values, combined with those of the Renaissance, defined and shaped liberal culture; alternatively, the latter expressed and sustained the former. Thus, modern liberal culture is the extant product or the continuing legacy of the Enlightenment and its cultural matrix, as well as of the Renaissance, particularly in artistic terms. This is what Smith intimates by pointing out what he describes as the “liberal expression of a more enlarged and enlightened mind”, arguably created or envisioned by the Enlightenment during the 18th century. In this sense, liberal culture is “enlarged” and “enlightened”, inclusive and rationalistic, albeit not in the economic sense of “rational choice”, the culture of inclusion, egalitarianism, universalism and human reason, knowledge, progress, just as freedom and autonomy.

To that extent, liberal culture, notably science, education and morality, “stands” or “falls” with Enlightenment-based ideals, values and norms, as

well as with the Renaissance, especially in respect to art. Hence, the historical salience and legacy of Enlightenment-based values engenders and predicts that of liberal culture, and conversely, just as the Renaissance does that of liberal art or aesthetics. Thus, the fact that Enlightenment-based values have historically been and continue to be more salient in Western Europe than in America (Archer 2001) helps explain the moment that liberal culture, including education and morality, has traditionally been and remains more prominent or enduring in the first region than the second. Similarly, the European Renaissance probably accounts for frequent observations, from Weber and Pareto to modern observers (e.g. Bendix 1977; Baudrillard 1999; Munch 2001), that liberal art or aesthetic culture has always been and remains by the 21st century more developed and sophisticated in Western, especially continental non-Puritan, Europe than in Puritan America.

Conversely, the historical and continuing weakness of Enlightenment-values relative to religious conservatism,⁷ epitomized by Puritanism (Munch 2001) and sectarian Protestantism (Lipset 1996) overall, in America compared with Western Europe provides an explanation for a traditionally and continuously weaker liberal culture in the first than in the second, as suggested by comparative sociological studies (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart 2004). They find that contrary to conventional wisdom à la Parsons et al. (cf. Giddens 1984) and ethnocentric claims, America “is not a prototype of cultural modernization for other societies to follow, as some postwar modernization writers assumed. In fact, the US is a deviant case, having a much more traditional value system than any other advanced industrial society. On the traditional/secular dimension, the U.S. ranks far below other rich societies, with levels of religiosity and national pride [nationalism] comparable to those found in some developing societies” (Inglehart 2004: 15).

These cultural deviations thus express and perpetuate the “phenomenon of American [anti-liberal] Exceptionalism” (Inglehart 2004: 15; also Lipset 1996). Recall, for example, reportedly the “Swedes, the Dutch and the Australians are closer to the cutting edge of cultural change than the Americans” (Inglehart 2004: 16). In particular, most Western societies are found to “support the

⁷ Like most US religious-social conservatives Dunn and Woodard (1996: 120) identify and emphasize what is called the “direct parentage between the [Puritan] American religious tradition and the conservative political legacy”.

secularization thesis", yet with such "striking deviant cases" as America (and Ireland) "showing a much more religious outlook than their economic levels would predict" (Inglehart 2004: 5). These significant historical and persisting differences in liberal culture, including secularism, between Western Europe and America primarily perpetuate and reflect those in Enlightenment-values (Archer 2001; Munch 2001) as well as the Renaissance between these two societies.

If the above diagnosis is correct, it yields the prediction that so long as Enlightenment-values or legacies continue to be stronger in the first than the second, liberal culture, including secular education and morality, let alone art, will remain more salient and developed in Western Europe than America, a trend perhaps culminating during the early 21st century (Inglehart 2004). In this sense, modern liberal culture continues to exhibit, directly in Western Europe and beyond, like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, inversely in America, a sort of historical path dependence primarily on original Enlightenment-values. Hence, at the start of the 21st century, positively the most effective way to reconstruct liberal culture is through reaffirming Enlightenment values, as in most of Western Europe since WW II.

Negatively, the "optimal" strategy to destroy or subvert it is by attacking and discrediting Enlightenment values, as precisely happened in America under anti-liberal political and cultural dominance during the 1980–2000s and before, since the Puritan-inspired Great Awakenings. For example, if in modern America reportedly suburbs represent a "spiritual wasteland; our city cores are a disgrace; our children are culturally illiterate" (Beiner 1992: 34), or simply liberal culture is nearly extinct or transformed into an "in-culture" or "desert" (Baudrillard 1999), this is primarily, though not solely, due to persistently weak Enlightenment secular values and legacies, plus the Renaissance, almost obliterated, subverted or diminished by dominant political-religious conservatism like Protestant fundamentalism (Lipset 1996) since the 1980s. Thus, at the start of the 21st century in America religious fundamentalism has become or remains a "growth industry [causing] the perceived decline of secular culture" (Dombrowski 2001: vii) in the sense, though not necessarily the form, of the Enlightenment as well as freedom⁸ (McCann 2000: 12).

⁸ McCann (2000: 12) cites the case of Mormons in Utah and elsewhere pointing to the "despotism of a patriarchal religious society, whose surface appearance of order,

The preceding yields the inference that liberal culture is essentially the culture of human freedom, creativity and life. In principle and reality, liberal culture, from the Enlightenment to modern times, is essentially the culture of liberty for individuals and groups alike. Originally, in cultural terms, the Enlightenment was the culture of human freedom and autonomy, just as of reason, i.e. a truly and completely libertarian, unlike “libertarianism” that dilutes cultural liberty into “free markets”, as well as a rationalist cultural pattern in the broader meaning than “rational choice” *cum* utility-maximizing. This was because for the Enlightenment and liberalism overall, as J. S. Mill puts it, “culture without freedom never made a large and liberal mind” and simply was not “culture” at all. In this sense, culture is inherently liberal or free, including, as Mill and Smith suggest, education, science and art, plus personal morality, while an illiberal, notably conservative-fascist, “culture”, education in particular, would be a self-denial or oxymoron, albeit a frequent historical reality or possibility in conservatism, fascism and other anti-liberalism.

In particular, Smith, Mill and other classical economic liberals like Malthus, Senior, Sismondi, Marshall and Edgeworth adopt and emphasize the concept of “liberal education”. They thus suggest that liberal education, including science, art or philosophy, is inherently the realm of liberty, specifically academic or intellectual freedom, just as is all culture. For example, Smith comments that during the reign of Charles II in Great Britain a high degree of liberty – i.e. “licentiousness”, condemned by conservatives like Puritans – “was deemed the characteristic of a liberal education”, as well as linked with “generosity, sincerity, magnanimity, loyalty, and proved that the person who acted in this manner, was a gentleman, and not a puritan”. Liberal education was so seen as characterized by what he calls the “spirit of freedom and independency”, just as “frankness, generosity, humanity, and politeness”, as

harmony, and prosperity is belied by the coercion on which it rests.” In this view, “although the Mormons build what seems an Edenic community in the Utah desert, that order depends on an “omniscient and omnipresent” system of enforcement that denies personal freedom and gives rise to rapacity and terror While the “secret society” of Mormon patriarchy was reassuringly distant from late Victorian England [Conan Doyle] each kind of clandestine utopian society exemplifies the danger of hidden power and violent coercion” (McCann 2000: 12–3). This yields the conclusion that “the Latter-Day Saints [are] outside the order of liberal society [and within] a premodern traditional culture [i.e.] the nightmarish world of Utah” (McCann 2000: 13).

opposed to “severity of manners” as well as “cant, cunning, hypocrisy, and low manners” deemed the characteristics of its Puritan opposites. If so, then liberal education is both free or libertarian and moral or humane, and more so than its illiberal conservative alternatives. Even conservative, Protestant minister Malthus, dismissed for his religiously based apologetic by Marx, suggests that “liberal education” features and generates both freedom and humanity or morality by being necessary, just as income, for associating in the “rank of gentlemen” as the supposed embodiments of these qualities, as distinguished from lower classes “where education ends and ignorance begins”.

Further, like culture overall, most classical liberals imply that education, i.e. science, art and philosophy, is and will be either “liberal”, free or is not and will not be, but a sort of anti-education, including anti-science. For example, Senior, another perceived conservative or apologetic classical economist (Samuelson 1998), simply uses the concept of education in the sense of “liberal education”. Similarly, Marshall considers the place that economic and social science “should hold in a liberal education” in the meaning of the educational system of a free and secular society.

Alternatively, they imply that illiberal, including conservative, education, i.e. science, philosophy and art, is the exact opposite and thus its own negation and self-contradiction. It is indicative that virtually none of these classical economists, including devout-moralistic Malthus and conservative Senior, used and proposed the alternative idea of “conservative education” or science, including religious schooling (Darnell and Sherkat 1997), as understood and practiced by US conservatives⁹ (Martin 2002; Massey 2002), from early Puritans to modern evangelicals, as well as traditional Catholics and Muslims.

In this respect, classical economic liberals suggest that “there is no really such thing” as illiberal, conservative or fascist, education understood as the sphere of intellectual freedom. This is by apparent analogy to their “libertarian” successors’ simplistic statement that “there is not such thing as free lunch” (Friedman and Friedman 1982), which while supposedly axiomatic in

⁹ Massey (2002: 21) notes that in America and elsewhere “one frequently hears the disparaging epithet “social engineering” applied to liberals who advocate using government power to redistribute resources in society. In truth the real social engineers are today’s political consultants. These individuals, mostly conservative, apply the methods of social science to manipulate the emotional brain and thus shape perceptions of political actors and ideas”.

terms of economics, is a strikingly sociologically uniformed and false claim in its being apparently oblivious of social stratification that, notably superior power, including exploitation, coercion and repression, effectively makes for the ruling class like feudal tyrants and modern US “top heavy” (Wolff 2002) capitalist plutocrats virtually any material good or service “free”, available regardless of its price. If/when reading Friedman’s “there is not such thing as free lunch”, feudal despots and their contemporary versions like fascist-communist dictators and US “robber barons” with their own modern mutants, i.e. the rich-powerful overall, would probably laugh at it (as they typically did/do) loud and complaisantly, laughing at and wondering how sociologically unrealistic, naïve or blind, so apologetic, “libertarian” economists can be.

More important to the present discussion, precisely in the truly libertarian (but not anarchistic) and rationalist meanings of liberty and human reason, liberal culture, including education, science and art, is “permissive” (Schuparra 1998: 150; Wagner 1997: 13), which is condemned as “evil” permissiveness indicating excessive freedom or moral anarchy in anti-liberalism, notably European fascism (and communism) and American neo-conservatism acting or appearing once again as allies in anti-liberal antagonism. In this meaning, “more permissive and pluralist” cultures or social settings “tolerate or encourage a great deal more agency and discretion [or] individualism and liberalism” (Van Dyke 1995: 31), simply individual liberty and privacy, than their non-permissive and non-pluralist counterparts.

Hence, the element of liberty distinguishes what contemporary sociologists (e.g. Habermas 2001) denote as “liberal-democratic” (Kamolnick 2001: 79), primarily Enlightenment-based, cultures or civilizations from their illiberal-undemocratic antipodes from medieval conservatism to fascism, communism, neo-conservatism and neo-fascism. In particular, liberal culture and civilization emphasizes individual self-determination (Habermas 2001) in cultural, including moral, terms and “respect for personal autonomy” or “self-ascription”¹⁰ (Brink 2000: 190). It thus complements and reinforces liberal democracy within the “total social system” of liberty or societal liberalism.

¹⁰ Brink (2000: 190) admits that liberalism emphasizes the “factor of [cultural] self-ascription because, out of respect for personal autonomy, [it] do[es] not want to treat people on the basis of assumed characteristics [they] do not wholeheartedly identify with.” Brink (2000: 190) also suggests that “out of respect for the capacity for personal

Liberal Multiculturalism

As implied, liberal culture and civilization is pluralist and diverse, so multicultural, as a special dimension of its freedom. For liberalism, like political pluralism, culture diversity is a constitutive element of human freedom (Hirschman 1982), unlike anti-liberalism, notably conservatism and fascism, that fears and suppresses cultural heterogeneity in favor of homogeneity or uniformity.

Hence, liberal culture/civilization is that of human freedom, creativity and life by constituting and promoting cultural diversity and identity, thus multiculturalism, just as liberal democracy does political pluralism, while illiberal cultures and civilizations are those of un-freedom, destruction and ultimately death, viz. mass executions of “witches” and “enemies”, representing or enforcing non-diversity or mono-culturalism, just as illiberal “democracies” operates as and enforce monism in politics. As observed, liberalism always tries to “respect citizens” needs for cultural belonging [though] naively assumed that cultural identity is an entirely private matter¹¹ (Brink 2000: 192). Hence, in cultural terms liberal societies tend to be or eventually become diverse and multi-cultural, as well as pluralistic in the political sense, in contrast to their illiberal, conservative and fascist counterparts usually being or seeking to become mono-cultural, just as politically monistic.

In some definitions, multicultural societies and civilizations are those in which “certain groups are perceived and often present themselves as cultures with distinct identities” or simply pluralism is “more visible” than in others, viz. the “(largely nonimmigrant) European societies in which liberalism originated” (Brink 2000: 181). Apparently, this locates modern multicultural societies in immigrant North-American and other countries contrasted to their European origins.

Still, the point is that liberalism constitutes and promotes cultural pluralism even in the presence and salience of homogeneous, nonimmigrant cultures

autonomy – liberal societies should not counteract cultural practices that do not harm the individual’s well-being.”

¹¹ Brink (2000: 192) objects that if liberalism “is a non-neutral doctrine with rich cultural presuppositions that sets demanding limits to the guidance of behavior, we can free ourselves of this naïveté [and] understand that multiculturalism does not so much confront liberalism with an entirely new question; it rather turns highly relevant once again an old liberal question: how to control, sustain, and foster cultural diversity within one non-neutral normative framework”.

as traditionally or presumably in Europe, while anti-liberalism does not but instead monism or homogeneity, precisely because of actual multiculturalism or heterogeneity in society. For example, by doing so liberalism has effectively transformed Western Europe from a culturally homogenous nonimmigrant into a heterogeneous, in part immigrant society against the vehement opposition of anti-liberal conservatism and neo-fascism since WW II. Also, in America liberalism recognizes, protects and promotes “cultures with distinct identities”, while conservatism suppresses, fears and often attacks them as a “threat” to American values and culture, so if America has been and remains a multicultural society this is primarily because of this liberal recognition and protection versus conservative suppressions.

If so, what defines multicultural societies or pluralistic cultures and civilizations is not only that “certain groups are perceived and often present themselves as cultures with distinct identities”, but also and primarily whether and to what extent these are recognized, tolerated and protected, as done by liberalism, or not, as by conservatism, including fascism. Thus, “just as members of the cultural majority in liberal societies need recognition of the social forms that are essential to their self-understanding, members of minority cultures need recognition of the social forms that underpin their feelings of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem” (Brink 2000: 191).

Liberal culture and freedom therefore primarily defines and sustains, and its illiberal or authoritarian versions attack and undermine, multicultural societies. If a “multicultural” society consists in the freedom, respect, promotion and even celebration of multiple cultures, not just their contingent or transient coexistence, then only liberal culture and civilization has proven to provide and protect such freedoms. After all, “cultures with distinct identities” contingently and transiently coexisted and still do in the US South, just as Nazi Germany and other fascist Europe, but hardly anyone, including extreme Southern conservatives and fascists, would describe these as truly “multicultural societies”, let alone liberal democracies. It is so precisely because religious conservatism and fascism respectively did not recognize and eventually suppressed or destroyed cultural pluralism in the absence or weakness of liberalism.

Generally, multicultural societies are only created, possible or viable in virtue of liberalism and its multiculturalism, and conversely, eventually destroyed or subverted by anti-liberal conservatism and fascism due to their

cultural monism. In short, multicultural societies are as a rule liberal in cultural as well as political terms, and vice versa, their monistic counterparts are usually anti-liberal, i.e. conservative and fascist. Admittedly, multiculturalism is a “question of the amount of cultural diversity and cultural authenticity a liberal society can allow of without undermining its own ideals of public justice and individual well-being”¹² (Brink 2000: 182). Alternatively, it is simply “out of question”, simulation and even a sort of taboo or forbidden apple in illiberal conservative and fascist, societies, exemplified by the US ante and post bellum fundamentalist South and Nazi Germany, and defined by suppressions of cultural diversity, identities and rights (Dahrendorf 1979).

Like democracy within liberalism, liberal culture or civil society tends to be intrinsically cosmopolitan, i.e. universalistic, all-inclusive in geographic and comparative sociological terms. Thus, this is what classical liberals like Kant suggest by proposing that “to think oneself as a compatible member of world civil society in accordance with the laws of citizenship is the most sublime idea that man can have of his destiny” (cited in Beck 2000: 124). Hence, in accordance with liberalism and its original ideal of, albeit hardly ever fully realized, “world civil society” expressing cosmopolitanism, liberal culture and its multiculturalism tends to be cosmopolitan or universalistic in comparative sociological terms rather than parochial and particularistic. This is what distinguishes liberal culture and multiculturalism from illiberal cultural “pluralism” instead permeated with ethnocentric particularism, nativism and exclusion. The latter comprises what Parsons (1951) identifies as conservative “ascription-universalism” in pre-Nazi Germany and contemporary sociologists as neo-conservative ascriptive Americanism (King 1999; Turner 2002) including only “American”, yet narrowly defined in respect to “native” minority groups, and excluding “un-American”, both foreign and stigmatized domestic, cultures and values, as witnessed in nativist and bellicose Puritanism (Merton 1939; Munch 2001), McCarthyism, neo-conservatism and supremacist neo-fascism.

¹² Brink (2000: 186) adds that liberals (i.e. progressives) and conservatives “largely agree that equal rights for all citizens are a prerequisite for a just society”, which seems curious in light of persistent anti-egalitarianism observed in neo-conservatism. Even if this is true in general, it may not hold in particular for US conservatives so long as they admittedly continue to be anti-egalitarian in cultural as well as political, let alone economic, terms (Dunn and Woodard 1996).

Hence, what contemporary liberals describe as “good” multiculturalism emphasizes “a cosmopolitan conception of pluralism: it instills a respect for difference, not out of the fear that often characterizes “pure pluralism” but rather out of respect and intellectual curiosity. It emphasizes diversity over division”¹³ (Patell 2001: 194). If so, then liberal culture and civilization constitutes or realizes cosmopolitanism as the ideal of liberalism and truly universalistic cultural pluralism and inclusion beyond narrow national-state boundaries. Cosmopolitan liberalism thus transcends exclusionary ethnocentrism seen as lurking behind non-cosmopolitan “professed universalism” (Patell 2001: 195).

Predictably, non-cosmopolitan “universalism” is exemplified by what sociologists describe as triumphant – “we-are-the-best” a la Reagan (Baudrillard 1999) – Americanism (Bell 2002) or “American ethnocentrism” (Beck 2000: 72) as America’s religious-like “faith” or “civil religion” (Munch 2001). Historically, the latter originated in Puritanism (Merton 1939; Munch 2001) – as the species of religious nativism or nationalism (Friedland 2001) and bellicosity in turn rooted in medievalism¹⁴ (Gorski 2000) – culminated in nativist McCarthyism (Plotke 2002), and self-perpetuated in imperialist, bellicose neo-conservatism¹⁵ (Steinmetz 2005; Tiryakian 2002).

This is what contemporary sociologists suggest by remarking that anti-liberal neo-conservatism in America “has succeeded in appropriating the

¹³ Patell (2001: 195) poses the rhetorical question “Do we want to embrace a multiculturalism that prevents us from being able to condemn slavery wherever and whenever it occurs on the grounds that we have no right to judge the culture of another?”. As the answer is apparently “no”, it suggests that relativist multiculturalism and liberal relativism overall is not acceptable.

¹⁴ Gorski (2000: 428) notices that early Puritan nationalist ideas and practices in England and in extension America “had medieval roots” and “were no less nationalistic than the nationalisms of the French Revolution.” For example, Gorski (2000: 453) describes the English Puritan Revolution as a “nationalist coup” and Cromwell’s campaigns as “religious crusades – wars against the infidels”. This description *ceteris paribus* also applies to early American Puritanism and Winthrop et al.” activities, such as the persecution of Indians and Quakers, with-hunts, etc., in New England (Munch 2001).

¹⁵ Tiryakian (2002: 1630) suggests that a “Puritan-based ethic – i.e. a strong normative culture of ‘instrumental activism’ with a focus on self-fulfillment and individual success” – “devoid of the norms of *caritas* and *compassion* that are in the lineage of the welfare state has [also] a very dark side [as] a ubiquitous and insidious codeterminant of American and British bellicose but moralistic foreign policy, including various old and new manifestations of imperialism and aggressive use of ‘smart’ weapons of mass destruction against demonized non-Western settings.”

American faith that it is a unique country, the model of a universal civilization which all societies are fated to emulate" (Beck 2000: 112). In this view, for US neo-conservatives, as well as "libertarians", there exist "not many capitalisms but the American way of capitalism sets the goals and standards" for all other societies and times, an apparently ethnocentric conviction becoming the "unofficial creed of America's civil religion" (Beck 2000: 112). At this juncture, even some former UK neo-conservatives describe American neo-conservatism as "not only a conservative utopia [but] the programme of an economic and cultural counter-revolution", pursued with the missionary zeal of America" (cited in Beck 2000: 114). These observations are instructive because they suggest what liberal culture and multiculturalism is *not*, i.e. non-cosmopolitan, ethnocentric and ascriptive, including German-conservative "ascription-universalism" and neo-conservative Americanism.

And, in virtue of its cosmopolitan pluralism or truly universalistic diversity, liberal culture becomes, as Mill implies, the realm of universal cultural liberty or autonomy "for all" individuals and groups regardless of native versus foreign ascription and definition. This is contrary to its illiberal counterparts as the spheres of total un-freedom, as with fascism, or at most partial and exclusionary freedom, as in conservatism, for preferred natives, viz. "white Protestant men of Anglo-Saxon origin" (Munch 2001: 232) in America versus foreigners and other disdained outsiders, including domestic non-Protestant and non "Anglo-Saxon" minorities, just as elites and capital are favored to masses and labor. Hence, liberal-cosmopolitan culture is a true culture, including science, education and art, so long as cultural, in particular scientific and artistic, phenomena are inherently universalistic transcending any particularistic geographic, national and political boundaries. Thus, liberal culture is either cosmopolitan or not "liberal" and "culture" at all, just as liberalism is cosmopolitanism or not "liberalism" in the proper sense. And, this is what precisely Kant and other cosmopolitan Enlightenment thinkers propose (Beck 2000; Habermas 2001), just as Mill suggests that culture without freedom is its own antithesis.

Moral Liberalism

Liberal Morality: Moral Liberty and Individualism

In general, moral liberalism is the principle and institutional system of liberty in morality. Moral liberalism recognizes and promotes individual freedom, autonomy and responsibility or self-determination in morality. This is what, to recall, Tönnies implies observing that “inner morality is hardly a direct concern” of the modern liberal state, whose function is instead “only to suppress and punish aggressive and anti-social behavior.” Notably, he suggests that this minimal concern follows the conclusion by the liberal state or moral liberalism that traditional or “dead morality and religion cannot be revived by coercion or education”. And this is the minimalism and realization that makes the liberal state or moral liberalism crucially distinct from its anti-liberal counterparts, notably conservative-fascist government and conservatism-fascism, with its ethical maximalism and absolutism. In stark contrast and systematic opposition a la Weber’s Puritan “methodical sanctification” to the liberal state and moral liberalism, conservative and fascist governments precisely treat individual morality as their “direct concern” by coercively imposing it on civil society, due to the fact that conservatism and fascism (and in part communism, like in China) fail or refuse to realize that “dead morality and religion cannot be revived by coercion”. This contrast is explicit in Mannheim’s (1936: 29) observation that antagonistic conservatism mandates that individual inner freedom in morality “must subordinate itself to the moral code which has been already defined”.

As contemporary liberals also point out, liberalism recognizes and promotes “moral-practical self-determination” or “moral sensibility”, as well as “expressive needs for self-realization” in the life/private world, as part of the “protection and extensive exercise of individual liberties and rights” (Habermas 1989: 30). Moral liberalism is hence the ethical equivalent and complement of political liberalism and an integral element of cultural liberalism. In virtue of being the system of moral liberty and choice, ethical liberalism sharply differs from conservatism, including fascism, as one of un-freedom, coercion and absolutism in morality.

The above indicates that liberal morality is the sphere of moral liberty or “democracy” in personal morals and behaviors. Ethical liberalism is the principle and system of moral liberty in the sense of individual autonomy or self-

determination in morality and private life, including what modern liberals describe as the freedom of “choice between virtue and vice” (Van Dyke 1995: 109). Moral liberty thus understood is admittedly the “overriding ethical principle for Western liberal society”¹⁶ (Buchanan and Tullock 1962).

Hence, liberal morality is the moral equivalent or complement of liberal democracy and a constitutive component of liberal civil society. Like liberal democracy as the realm of political agency and liberty, this is the sphere of what Durkheim calls “moral individualism” – and even the supposedly exaggerated “cult of the individual” as sacred and inviolable – and freedom, as the result of modern society. Contemporary liberals echo Durkheim by describing liberal morality in terms of “agency and discretion”, “individualism and liberalism” (Van Dyke 1995: 31) in moral-private life. In other words, moral liberalism is based on the “ideal of individual sovereignty” (Reiman 1997: 1), as is liberal democracy or republic on that of popular sovereignty, in contrast to anti-liberalism, notably conservatism, including fascism, which rejects or fears both ideals. In this view, the liberal ideal of individual sovereignty is that “all human beings are entitled to the maximum ability to live their lives according to their own judgments, subject to the conditions necessary to realize this for everyone [or] the right of all human beings to freedom to live as they see fit, as far as this is compatible with the same freedom for all” (Reiman 1997: 1).

This is the ideal of universal moral liberty “for all”, what Parsons (1951) and contemporary sociologists (Collins 1997) call ethical universalism and humanism in the sense of endowing humans *qua* humans with “special respect”, worthiness and even, as Durkheim states, sacredness. Notably, Durkheim suggests that humanism, as expressed in the “sacredness with which the

¹⁶ US public-choice theorists Buchanan and Tullock (1962) suggest that “Christian idealism, to be effective in leading to a more harmonious social order, must be tempered by an acceptance of the moral imperative of individualism, the rule of equal freedom. The acceptance of the right of the individual to do as he desires so long as his action does not infringe on the freedom of other individuals to do likewise must be a characteristic trait in any ‘good’ society. The precept ‘Love thy neighbor, but also let him alone when he desires to be let alone’ [is] the overriding ethical principle for Western liberal society.” If so, then this simply suggests that “Christian idealism” rather than being self-sufficient in ethical terms needs to be combined with moral liberalism, viz. the Golden Rule with the Kantian categorical imperative, including even the freedom “to act wrongly” or “choice between virtue and vice”. However, most, especially orthodox, Christian theologians, Catholic and Protestant alike, would probably reject this suggestion as “repulsive” and “sacrilegious.”

human being is now invested" by liberalism, grounds and underscores "moral individualism" or freedom in liberal morality. In historical terms, he stresses that it is modern liberal society that primarily "has consecrated" human individuals as free and inviolable moral actors or agents in an ethical sense. At this juncture, some contemporary sociologists (Collins 1997: 848) comment, apparently echoing Weber, Durkheim and Parsons, that "not only Christianity, but the universalism of all the great religions breaks down social barriers and enforces ethical universalism."

However, as indicated, such religiously based ethical universalism is usually different from, notably narrower in scope – a sort of "universalistic" sectarianism – than, its liberal-secular type, epitomized in the Enlightenment. This is what other sociologists like Habermas suggest by distinguishing the Kantian categorical imperative from the Christian Golden Rule. Specifically, he states that Kant's categorical imperative "goes beyond the egocentric character of the Golden Rule: 'Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you.' Whereas this rule calls for a universalization test from the viewpoint of a given individual, the categorical imperative requires that *all* those possibly affected be able to will a just maxim as a general rule" (Habermas et al. 1998: 57). If so, then simply Kant's categorical imperative is more universal and general than even the seemingly universalistic and comprehensive Golden Rule.

Generally, as Durkheim implies, moral individualism, as grounded in humanism, renders liberal morality or society overall historically distinct and novel relative to its precedents or alternatives. In other words, individual sovereignty, autonomy, agency or simply liberty is what distinguishes liberal morality from its illiberal counterparts, notably conservative, including fascist, ethics that by mandating that individual freedom "must subordinate itself to the moral code" pre-defined by conservatism effectively denies and erases moral liberty as a "choice between virtue and vice". (At least, anti-liberal conservatism, including fascism, denies that moral liberty is the freedom of "choice between virtue and vice", but a sort of "freedom" of subordination or sacrifice to a prior conservative-fascist moral system.) A case in point is modern liberalism's protection and American and other conservatism's denial, primarily on religious grounds, of the freedom or right of "choice between virtue and vice" in the realm of human procreation (contraception, abortion)

and intimacy¹⁷ (Terchek 1997). Generally, while conservative, including medieval, societies “elaborated their structures upward to the kings and gods”, their liberal modern counterparts “reach down and elaborate around the individual” (Frank and Meyer 2002: 90).

In retrospect, within classical liberalism, liberal morality is the sphere of what Smith in his ethics, as distinguished from economics, denotes “generous and liberal spirits” or the “liberal, generous, and spirited conduct of a man.” He implies that liberal morality or moral liberalism is, describing it as the “loose system”, the “system of natural liberty” by analogy to free markets. As noted, Popper (1973) makes this implication explicit by placing moral and other “higher” values in the “realm of laissez-faire” and the “non-agenda” of government, as also does Keynes (1972).

Notably, Smith distinguishes liberal morality or moral liberalism from its illiberal counterparts. Thus, he observes that in every civilized society, “where the distinction of ranks has once been completely established, there have been always two different schemes or systems of morality current at the same time; of which the one may be called the strict or austere; the other the liberal, or, if you will, the loose system. The former is generally admired and revered by the common people: the latter is commonly more esteemed and adopted by what are called people of fashion”. Despite his pseudo-Puritanical or religious residues (as indicated by the term “loose”), Smith’s differentiation between liberal and illiberal morality is in essence one of moral liberty or individual autonomy from illiberty in the sense of strictness and austerity in personal morals, as his followers like Mises and Hayek explicitly suggest and emphasize.

Thus, Mises (1957: 114) suggests that liberal morality is, like science and art, libertarian or democratic as well as relative warning that the “concept of absolute and eternal values is a necessary element” of illiberal totalitarian ideology. Negatively, liberal morality rejects or avoids moral absolutism characteristic of its illiberal counterparts, including conservative, fascist and

¹⁷ Terchek (1997: 244) comments, in reference to contemporary America, that the “intense disagreements between supporters of the right to choice and the right to life concern incommensurable moral positions about which rights-claim should be honored and which not.

communist, ethical systems based on claims to absolute truth (Infantino 2003). Further, Hayek (1960: 79–80) states what Smith implies – and Locke, Kant and other Enlightenment philosophers argue – viz. liberal morality entails that “moral esteem would be meaningless without freedom”.

Moreover, Hayek (1960: 79–80) proposes that human or civil liberty as the “condition of moral merit includes the freedom to act wrongly” in an ethical sense, given that the “sphere of individual freedom is also the sphere of individual responsibility”. He thus reinforces Smith, as well as Locke, Hume and Mill, whose pseudo-Puritan residues or moralistic “anxious liberalism” (Terchek 1997) precluded and mitigated the non-Puritan idea of legitimate morally “wrong” or “loose” acts, “sins”, “vices” and sinners versus virtues and saints. Hence, Hayek effectively adopts the classical and modern liberal principle, from the Enlightenment and Kant’s ethical universalism (Caldwell 1997; Habermas 2001), to the liberal revolution of the 1960s, that moral freedom involves a free “choice between virtue and vice”, a maxim that religious conservatism, including fascism, vehemently condemns and assails as “immoral” and/or “ungodly”. Notably, Hayek (1960: 79–80) suggests that it is solely moral liberalism that creates and promotes a “recognized private sphere clearly distinct from the public sphere”, i.e. civil society from state, warning that a “society that does not recognize that each individual has values of his own which he is entitled to follow can have no respect for the dignity of the individual and cannot really know freedom.”

The above is just another way to state that liberal morality is the moral facet of Smith’s “system of natural liberty”, and its illiberal, including conservative, fascist and communist, counterparts the exact opposite. As indicated, this is also what Popper (1973: 206) suggests by stating that moral liberalism rejects the “use of political means for imposing our scale of values upon others” as inadmissible on the premise that personal morality or privacy belongs to the “realm of *laissez-faire*”, not to what Bentham calls the “agenda of government”. So does more implicitly, from another theoretical position, Keynes (1972) who, also following Bentham, distinguishes between the agenda and non-agenda of government, and implies that individual morality or privacy is part of governmental non-interference rather than interference. As modern liberals also point out, moral liberalism advocates no or “less governmental intrusion in a realm of privacy” (Van Dyke 1995: 94). In such views, a cen-

tral modern liberal value is freedom from such interference sharing classical liberalism's "opposition to paternalism"¹⁸ (Reiman 1997: 3).

In sum, Smith and his followers as well as critics like Keynes agree that liberal morality is the sphere of moral liberty, including the freedom of "choice between virtue and vice", and so outside state control, and that its illiberal counterparts are the domain of un-freedom, strictness or austerity by denying or constraining such choices via government intrusions in privacy. Further, another early economist Rae implies what Smith, due to his moralistic "anxious liberalism" and quasi-Puritanism was reluctant or unable to recognize. This is that the distinction between liberal and illiberal morality is one between moral virtue and its antithesis, just as liberty and strictness or austerity, defined as virtues in Puritanism and other asceticism, as well as enlightening versus the opposite in the manner or image of the anti-liberal "Dark Middle Ages". Thus, Rae describes "liberal sentiment" in terms of a "virtuous spirit" or "common honesty", and refers to a "virtuous and liberal mind" as well as "men of liberal minds and enlarged views".

If so, then liberal morality is not only libertarian or "loose" in Smith's words, contrary to illiberal, especially conservative and fascist (and communist) attacks on moral liberalism as "immoral". It is also virtuous or honest in Rae's and Kant's sense of intrinsic virtue and self-sufficient honesty, though not in that of Puritan Franklin who, as Weber notes, influenced by his "strict Calvinistic father", reduced "virtues", as if they were insufficient or inefficient per se, to the utilitarian "best policy" and Machiavellian means for extrinsic ends like wealth a la virtue, like time, "is money" (e.g. credit).

¹⁸ Reiman (1997: 3) suggests that modern moral liberalism is "liberal, not libertarian [so] more active intervention will sometimes be needed, say to provide people with education, health, or security, without which they cannot effectively govern their lives by their own judgments." Also, Reiman (1997: 13) comments that liberal (or other) "moral requirements limit one's pursuit of one's self-interest [so] the universal interest is [not] an interest in happiness, since this is equivalent to self-interest." As noted, this makes moral liberalism and its morality different from utilitarianism a la Bentham's "principle of utility" and Franklin's honesty-cum-the best policy, not to mention Machiavellianism as its extreme amoral version or archetype.

Liberal Moral Virtue

The preceding suggests that liberal morality is simply the realm and exercise of moral virtue. Liberal morality is the sphere and exercise not only of individual liberty and self-determination. It is also, which its conservative, fascist and communist critics ignore or deny, of what Hayek calls moral merit or ethical virtue in the sense of the Enlightenment, notably Kant's categorical imperative: personal behavior serving as or expressing a general rule of conduct in society. Positively, liberal morality is ethically meritorious or virtuous, just as libertarian by, as Kant suggests, treating all humans as "ends in themselves"; negatively, by considering them "never as means" to other goals, individual or collective, secular or sacred ones.

In this sense, liberal morality is specifically the sphere of intrinsic self-sufficient moral merit in the sense of virtues, including honesty, for their own sake ("right") rather than as, in Franklin's utilitarian and Machiavelli's rendition, the "best policy" or the most efficient means instrumental in attaining extrinsic ends like wealth, power and status. In particular, for liberalism, honesty, like other moral values and virtues, is not the Machiavellian means to power, Bentham's instrument of the "utility principle" or even Franklin's utilitarian and hypocritical "best policy" for material success defining the "American Dream" (Merton 1968). Rather it is an end in itself, a categorical imperative in Kant's sense but not a "rational choice", a real and true ethical attribute – not, as Weber implies for Franklin, appearance or hypocrisy – just as inner commandment and self-determination, not an external dictate or utilitarian determinism.

Hence, liberal morality, at least in the original form of Kant's categorical imperative and Enlightenment humanism, rejects the Machiavellian and/or utilitarian underlying principle that, as Pareto and Merton (1968) remark, ends like power or utility *cum* pleasure or money "justify" or "consecrate" whatever means used for their attainment, including Franklin's seemingly benign formula "honesty is the best policy" to business success, as well as "time [and virtue] is money". As known, Kant posed the "fundamental question of morality" and solved it through the categorical imperative that "we ought to do what is equally good for all persons", yet all "in opposition to utilitarianism" (Habermas 1989: 49) a la Bentham and even Franklin, let alone Machiavellianism.

Further, as hinted, from the prism of liberalism and liberty, liberal morality is morally virtuous because or if moral decisions and actions are exercises and expressions of individual freedom, autonomy or self-determination and so responsibility. Simply, they are either free or not “moral” at all, autonomous or not “ethical”, self-determined or not morally genuine. This is what is suggested by the Kantian “principle of autonomy” (Habermas 1989: 49), equality and universality in morality, i.e. “Kant’s fundamental right to equal individual liberties” (Habermas 2001: 116). Hayek apparently follows Kant’s principle of ethical autonomy and universalism (Caldwell 1997) by stating that liberty, including the freedom to “act wrongly”, is the “condition of moral merit”, and conversely, the latter is eliminated or restricted by un-freedom for such acts. In general, like its classical type, modern moral liberalism “contends that living according to one’s own judgments is a necessary condition of the good life (Reiman 1997: 2).

Consequently, liberal morality is the sphere of moral virtue due not only to its humanism, expressed in the categorical imperative of humane conduct, but also its libertarianism exhibited in individual liberty or ethical self-determination. This means that moral liberalism is virtuous or “moral” because it is both humanistic and libertarian, as well as universalistic in its humanism and liberty. As contemporary liberals put it, moral liberalism “is *moral* because it claims to identify a universal good and a universal moral right [or freedom]” (Reiman 1997: 1), contrary to critics’ accusations of the “moral emptiness of liberal culture” (Beiner 1992: 29).

If liberal morality or moral liberalism constitutes or expresses what Rae calls a “virtuous” spirit and mind because of being humanistic and libertarian, its illiberal, especially conservative and fascist, counterparts represents or reflect the opposite, due to their anti-humanism and anti-libertarianism. Contemporary sociologists remark that the so-called new conservative morality, as the putative antipode to its condemned liberal version, is really the “mystification of the quest for political power by vague talk about the meaning of life [and would] reproduce along with the old structures the old contradictions and conflicts as well” (Dahrendorf 1979: 113). In this view, such a “reactionary” position makes the new, just as the old, conservative morality and culture overall a “strategy of confrontation” as well as imposition of moral values. By implication, the strategy of confrontation and imposition eventuates in or underscores neo-conservative moral and other cultural wars against liberal

morality and culture, as especially raging and perhaps climaxing in America during the 1980s–2000s and in most of its history (Lipset 1996). By contrast, liberal morality in virtue of being humanistic and libertarian rejects such confrontation and imposition, so moral-culture wars (Mouw and Sobel 2001), as destructive or threatening to human dignity, freedom and life, viz. the death penalty or life imprisonment for various “sins” like drug and similar offenses a la “three strikes” laws and other neo-conservative “tough-on-crime” policies in America.

In other words, liberal morality is the expression or outcome of the fact that reportedly “only the most sophisticated societies understand that imposing the values of the moral community on representative activities inevitably destroys their opportunities” (Dahrendorf 1979: 158), which is exactly what anti-liberalism, from medievalism to fascism and communism to neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, does. By assumption and in reality, it is only modern liberal societies that understand this seemingly, yet usually elusive, fact or possibility, as Enlightenment philosophers since Locke and Kant, as well as sociologists like Pareto, Simmel, Tönnies, Weber and even Durkheim, argued and stressed. Alternatively, illiberal, anti-humanist and anti-libertarian societies typically fail to understand or deny it by imposing moral values and thus destroying individual freedom and life chances. This is a long-standing tradition ranging from the medieval Catholic and Puritan imposition of “virtue” to what Pareto identified as the US conservative government’s perennial enforcing of “morality by law” since its very beginning (Lipset 1996; Munch 2001) through the early 21st century.

Ethical Universalism and Humanism

Predictably, moral liberalism or liberal morality tends to be universalistic. As noted, the liberal principle of individual sovereignty, by positing freedom for “all human beings” (Reiman 1997: 1), implies universal moral and other liberty and so ethical universalism. In this view, since “everyone has an interest in the ideal of individual sovereignty only [this] satisfies the necessary condition for being a universal human duty” (Reiman 1997: 14). In general, moral liberalism is universalism in that it establishes what contemporary sociologists call “universalist principles of morality” (Habermas 1989: 41). In this view, for example, Kant “posed the fundamental question of morality

in such a way that it admitted a rational answer: we ought to do what is equally good for all persons [i.e.] principle of autonomy [and] in opposition to utilitarianism" (Habermas 1989: 49). Moreover, as noted, arguably Kant's categorical imperative transcends the "egocentric character of the Golden Rule", by stipulating that all moral agents actually or potentially "affected be able to will a just maxim as a general rule" (Habermas 1989: 49). If so, this reaffirms that liberal-secular moral universalism is genuine, true, or general compared to, and so different from, its religious versions, notably that Enlightenment principles of morality universalize or generalize the ethical commandments of "universalistic" Christianity, like Catholic ecumenism.

Hence, ethical universalism, inclusion and tolerance of cultural otherness and the Other (Bauman 2001; Habermas et al. 1998) is what decisively distinguishes moral liberalism from anti-liberalism, including religious conservatism and fascism, characterized by what Parsons (1951) calls ethical particularism and exclusion. And, it is this universalism, notably universal moral liberty, that make moral liberalism really "virtuous" or "moral" (Reiman 1997: 1), and conversely, its illiberal antipodes are, due to the lack of such universalistic properties, "immoral".

In conjunction with its universalism, inclusion and tolerance of the human Other, moral liberalism or liberal morality is profoundly humanistic. Moral liberalism is humanism in that, by analogy to the previous, it establishes humanistic principles of morality since the Enlightenment. In ethical terms, the Enlightenment was the principle and system of moral humanism or humanistic morality, a case in point being Kant's categorical imperative, notably his liberal injunction that humans ought to be treated as ends in themselves rather than as means to other goals. As modern sociologists put it, the "universe of moral persons [is] Kant's 'kingdom of ends'" (Habermas 2001: 108).

In general, liberalism is humanistic in that it trusts and endows human actors with "a capacity for moral judgment, for distinguishing between good and bad, right and wrong" (Van Dyke 1995: 90). By contrast, anti-liberalism denies such capacities to humans in favor of some supra- and anti-human decision-making agency, either transcendental like Divinity and church in religious conservatism, or political such as nation and state in Nazism and communism, or both as in neo-conservatism, Vatican-allied Italian and Spanish fascism and neo-fascism. Simply, liberalism considers and appreciates all humans as moral agents or "morally autonomous" (Terchek 1997: 12) persons,

not passive, virtually sub-human tools of supra-human, Divine and Machiavellian forces and ends.

Hence, humanism, expressed in its trust in the human capacity for moral judgments and decisions, crucially differentiates moral liberalism from anti-liberalism, including medievalism, conservatism, fascism and neo-fascism, permeated by anti-humanism, distrust in such capacities. Thus, Simmel observes that during the proto-liberal Renaissance¹⁹ humanistic tendencies “broke down the medieval isolation of social groups and of estates” and the Humanists’ “adventurous spirit” was linked with the “independence of the intellect”, as the “central focus of their lives.” For example, he notes that, in contrast to medieval anti-humanism, anti-universalism and exclusion, universalistic liberal humanism “embraced the poor scholar and the monk, the powerful General and the brilliant Duchess in a single framework of intellectual interests.” Subsequently, however, as Mannheim implies, in its “self-reflective” hostility to liberalism and its ethical universalism, conservatism, including fascism, seeking to restore medievalism and its anti-humanism, decrees that humans and their freedom in morality “must” be subordinated and sacrificed to the “moral code which has been already defined” by coercive supra- and anti-human entities like Divinity, church, nation and state. Also, contemporary sociologists suggest that, by contrast to moral liberalism via Kant’s categorical imperative considering humans as ends, anti-humanist and non-liberal network theories turns “person” into an outcome or means, not a source or end, of social network activity (Fuchs 2001: 29).

Moral liberalism is humanistic and universalistic by demonstrating, just as demanding from political institutions, respect for all humans and their ethical decisions, liberties, dignity, and life. Thus, moral liberalism posits that, under certain conditions or terms, “individuals and their activities and choices are owed ‘respect’ by the state and by other citizens” (Bird 1999: 190). Consequently, what contemporary liberals call a moral society is “one in which human beings are treated with special respect [which] implies that a social arrangement designed to maximize the respect-worthiness of human beings

¹⁹ Simmel adds that “up to the Renaissance social differentiation and group formation had been based on criteria of self-interest (economic, military and political) or of emotion (religious) or of a mixture of both (familial). Now intellectual and rational interest came to form groups.”

will maximize the range in which individuals govern their own lives by their own judgments, compatible with a similar range for all" (Reiman 1997: 12). If so, only liberal society, by virtue of treating all human being with "special respect", can be moral and humanistic, and conversely, its illiberal counterparts, by denying such respect to humans in favor of supra-human entities are the opposite, contrary to anti-liberal, conservative and fascist accusations of liberalism for being "immoral", "amoral" or morally empty (Beiner 1992).

Particularly, the liberal ideal of individual sovereignty and autonomy is, and so makes a society, moral and humanistic by postulating that "human beings are worthy of special respect" (Reiman 1997: 12), rather than they being subordinated and eventually sacrificed to supra- and anti-human entities like Divinities and totalitarian states in conservatism and fascism. Simply, liberal morality and society is moral or virtuous in Rae's sense, because it is humanistic, and conversely, illiberal moralities and societies are "immoral" by being trans-humanistic in which "humans exist for the sake of God" (Bendix 1977), as with religious, viz. Catholic, Protestant and Islamic, conservatism, or sub-humanistic, animalistic, as is Nazism and all fascism (Bähr 2002).

At least for moral liberalism, the ultimate basis and criterion of morality is secular humanism in the sense of special respect for all humans, rather than trans-humanism exemplified by the link of Deity, piety and morality in religious conservatism, or anti-humanism expressed by a totalitarian state in Nazism, or else both as in medieval Catholicism, early Puritanism and Italian fascism. While anti-liberal critics may not deny, but disdainfully stress, that liberal morality is humanist in this sense, they, notably religious conservatives like orthodox Catholics, Protestant and Islamic fundamentalists, and fascists, vehemently reject the view that what they condemn as abhorrent secular humanism is essential to "moral" society seen as originating in supra-human forces and designs to the point of an equation of "human" and "immoral" versus the symbiosis of Deity, piety and totalitarian state with morality (Bähr 2002; Deutsch and Soffer 1987; Heineman 1998). In sum, moral liberalism and its morality is more humanistic and to that extent "moral" in secular or individual terms than its illiberal counterparts, from theocratic medievalism and religious conservatism to totalitarian fascism and neo-fascism.

Ethical Rationalism

In conjunction with its humanism and universalism, moral liberalism and its morality is positively rationalistic, negatively non-Machiavellian and/or non-utilitarian. Liberal morality is rationalistic in the Enlightenment sense of reasonable – but not of “rational choice” or maximizing utility in utilitarian economics and sociology – as well as free, pluralist, relativist, and tolerant. Thus, moral liberalism is rationalistic *cum* reasonable in that it recognizes the “autonomy and vulnerability of human beings, their capacity to act reasonably and morally, the sense of justice and good that comes with this capacity, and the purposes a just society serves – most notably the protection of personal and political freedom” (Brink 2000: 10). It recognizes humans as “rational individuals”²⁰ (Beiner 1992: 34) in moral terms, as reasonable and responsible agents in morality, not only or even primarily in an economic sense of rationality and agency, contrary to orthodox economics and its “rational choice” extensions in sociology. Humans are considered to be free and responsible social actors who make ethical decisions based on human reason/rationality and freedom of choice, so assume the consequences of their decision-making, rather than by supra-human injunctions, thus absolving themselves from personal responsibility, like Divine Design in medievalism and religious conservatism, State in fascism, or both in US neo-conservatism.²¹

Consequently, liberalism integrates individual moral rationalism with ethical freedom, pluralism and tolerance of ethical-cultural “otherness” (Bauman 2001) and diversity, so what contemporary sociologists (Habermas 2001) call

²⁰ Beiner (1992: 34) charges that moral liberalism’s “great mistake” is pretending that “modernity forces us to regard private morality as reigning supreme and public morality as limited to the business of negotiating ‘successful accommodation’ between ourselves as rational individuals”. This is a charge typical for conservatism, particularly religious conservatives like early Puritans and their descendants modern US evangelicals (Dunn and Woodard 1996), as well as conservative republicanism and communitarianism. In particular, Beiner (1992: 36) points to the US conservative-religious, specifically Puritan-inspired, critiques of what is seen as the “fragmentation and moral anarchy of a liberal-pluralist universe”.

²¹ Pescosolido and Georgianna (1989), elaborating on Durkheim, observe that while in medieval society, social networks “were concentric circles, with ties based on” what Simmel called “psychological and geographic factors”, in modern liberal society, they are “more rational, giving individuals greater freedom but more ‘psychological tensions’ and less emotional support.”

“non-generalizable” conceptions of the “good life” and human excellence. As even modern critics admit, moral liberalism “genuinely aims to combine the best of both worlds without compromising either”, viz. individual autonomy and reasonableness with pluralist or “non-generalizable ideas of human excellence” (Brink 2000: 20).

In particular, liberal morality is rational in the sense of Kant’s categorical imperative as the general moral rule of considering humans to be intrinsic ends rather than extrinsic means. It thus constitutes and expresses moral rationalism, including pluralism, relativism and tolerance. Negatively defined, liberal morality is *not*, as anti-Kantian utilitarian philosophers, “libertarian” economists and “rational choice” theorists impute, irrational in this sense, though perhaps it is in the narrow and perverted meaning of human rationality as utility-maximizing calculus (Stigler and Becker 1977). Neither is it relatedly monistic, absolute and intolerant to moral otherness and Others (Habermas et al. 1998), attributes instead defining its illiberal counterparts, including conservative, fascist and communist ethics. In short, liberal morality rejects and avoids moral-cultural irrationalism, including ethical monism, absolutism and intolerance.

In particular, in virtue of its overarching moral rule of treating humans as intrinsic ends, liberal morality is not Machiavellian, contrary to US religious neo-conservatives’ accusations (cf. Deutsch and Soffer 1987) nor even, as Kant and his followers stressed (Habermas 2001), utilitarian. This makes it decisively different from its conservative, fascist and communist alternatives precisely defined by Machiavellianism in Pareto-Merton’s sense of the means being justified and “consecrated” by the “noble” end, viz. power, material success respectively, and by utilitarianism overall. Since liberal or other “moral requirements limit one’s pursuit of one’s self-interest” (Reiman 1997: 13), moral liberalism substantially differs from utilitarianism exemplified in Bentham’s “principle of utility” and Franklin’s honesty/time-money alchemy embodying Weber’s Calvinist “spirit of capitalism”, let alone Machiavellianism. In short, it rejects not only immoral or amoral “ends justify and consecrate means” Machiavellianism but also, as Kant and his disciples emphasize, pseudo-moral “honesty and virtue *cum* the best utility principle and policy” utilitarianism. As modern liberal writers stress, for moral liberalism what is called rational self-governance, as a rational version of Heidegger’s authenticity, is the “sine qua non of the good life” or the “formal condition of

goodness" (Reiman 1997: 18), though not a sufficient and substantive condition in this respect.²²

Notably, liberalism since Kant and the Enlightenment constitutes and promotes moral or ethical pluralism, relativism and tolerance, which consequently makes liberal morality or ethics (in the sense of a philosophical and sociological theory of morality) pluralistic, relativist and tolerant. As modern critics admit, moral liberalism (liberal morality) and ethical pluralism "go hand in hand" (Brink 2000: 14), just as do their political equivalents, liberal democracy and pluralistic politics. At this juncture, a distinction, apparently following Habermas, is made between moral and ethical pluralism. In this view, Habermas' "ethical pluralism – [i.e.] one that springs from the incompatibility of non-generalizable [private] substantive ideals of personal excellence – need not really bother [liberalism]. For [liberalism], the moral is one, while the ethical is many [so] *the moral must be more real than the ethical*, [for] we all share the same capacities for moral deliberation, while we are deeply divided over questions of personal excellence" (Brink 2000: 19). The critique is that moral liberalism's key problem is presupposing a "schizophrenic" concept of individualism in expecting "citizens to be able to largely abstract from personal interests, attachments, and purposes in public life [but] encourages [them] to find their personal fulfillment in substantive and possibly controversial notions of the good in their private lives" (Brink 2000: 19–20). Presumably, the "problem is that some people indeed believe that they have valid moral reasons – reasons that they think everybody should accept – not to accept the liberal principle of autonomous and reasonable self-determination of citizens as the highest standard for a just ordering of society" (Brink 2000: 21). "Some people" apparently refers to religious conservatives and by implication fascists and other anti-liberals preferring what Weber and Durkheim would call collective, church and state, respectively, heteronomy to individual autonomy, irrational determinism to rational self-determination in morality and privacy, or simply coercion to moral freedom.²³ The critique infers

²² Reiman (1997: 18) adds that "since lives can be governed well or poorly, self-governance is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition, of a life's being good. A rationally self-governed life [so] meets the formal condition of goodness but still might be substantially bad."

²³ Overall, Brink (2000: 37) complains that liberalism "is not just a political doctrine but rather a cleverly disguised comprehensive moral doctrine with a purposive structure that both builds upon and fosters 'private' conceptions of the good with

that liberalism tragically “presupposes the value of specific conceptions of the good life – [i.e.] ideals of personal autonomy and the affirmation of ethical and moral pluralism – which necessarily discredit conceptions of the good that do not fit well in the liberal normative framework” (Brink 2000: 40).

In general, religious conservatism, as well as fascism, criticizes and attacks modern moral and political liberalism for the “tragedy” of excessive individual liberty condemned as “anarchism”, “permissiveness”, pluralism, or relativism to be substituted or counterbalanced by their opposites. However, what is a tragedy, poison or vice for religious conservatism, fascism and other anti-liberalism, as well as simulation for post-modernism, is the promise, cure or virtue, just as reality, for liberalism as the ideal, institutional system and historical time of freedom, i.e. for liberal ideology, society and modernity.

Still, even these conservative or post-modern critics admit that liberalism recognizes and promotes ethical pluralism expressed in the fact that humans in a society usually have moral views that are different and “critical to their identity and that give meaning to their being in the world [i.e.] distinct group identities and significant and morally relevant differences occur within one social setting” (Brink 2000: 18–9). Just as liberal democracy is politically rationalist in Weber’s sense of legal-rational legitimation by being pluralistic or non-absolutist via multi-party elections, moral liberalism is rationalistic in Kant’s meaning in virtue of its recognition and promotion of ethical pluralism and relativism. Alternatively, moral and political anti-liberalism, like conservatism and fascism, is irrational, because imposing ethical monism and absolutism on a morally and ideologically pluralist and “relativist” society and polity is unreasonable and ineffective in the long run, just as a “mono-causal

its ideals of personal autonomy and moral pluralism [which] is consequently biased toward the value of individual self-determination [and] generates serious ethical tensions that [are] tragic”. Notably, he argues that liberalism has, contrary to its claims to neutrality, a “non-neutral, purposive structure that promotes controversial ideals of personal excellence such as personal autonomy, individual self-realization, and the affirmation of ethical pluralism. [Hence] there are normative conflicts in which its aim to let the interests of *all* citizens in leading a good life matter equally [produce] tragic conflicts [which] undermines conceptions of the good life that it aims to tolerate” (Brink 2000: 38). Arguably, the “tragic predicament” of liberalism derives from its “explicit aim to promote moral unity [in] the use of public reason and public deliberation; and its implicit aim to promote key components for ‘private’ conceptions of the good life such as the ideal of personal autonomy and the affirmation of ethical pluralism” (Brink 2000: 38).

explanation for a multi-causal world" is a non-rational and "untenable" analytical strategy (Collins 1975).

In particular, this holds true of religious conservatism and sectarianism such as sectarian Protestantism predominant in America's history from the 17th century and Puritanism to the 21st century and Puritan-rooted evangelicalism (Munch 2001), thus acting as the main and persisting anti-liberal, notably the counter-Enlightenment, force in American society persistently engaging in what Pareto prophetically detects as its government imposition of "morality by law". As some conservative and patriotic US sociologists admit, religious and social conservatives in America "are much more aggressive in imposing their own morality on the body politic with respect to issues like the right to life than their ideological compeers elsewhere [including Great Britain, Italy, France, Germany]" (Lipset 1996: 293). This view traces such "repressive aspects" of American culture and civil society to two "exceptional", primarily conservative, social attributes: first, the "utopian ideological content of the American Creed" or Americanism defining the new nation by an ideology or civil religion; second, the historical and continuing predominance of "Protestant sectarianism, a minority elsewhere in Christendom" (Lipset 1996: 293). Notably, the product or legacy of such religious sectarianism is "Protestant sectarian bred propensities for crusades" (Lipset 1996: 293) within American conservatism via coercive imposition of morality.

As even these self-described conservative-patriotic US sociologists admit and warn, "the political emphasis on loyalty to Americanism, the defining of deviants as "un-American", and the sectarian stress on personal morality represent forms of behavior that are less prevalent in historically defined countries" (Lipset 1996: 293). Moreover, it is suggested that both US conservatives and liberals, i.e. the right and the left, "are more moralistic, insistent on absolute standards than their ideological compeers elsewhere in the developed world" (Lipset 1996: 293). It is admitted and illustrated that historically absolutist moralism is as "American as apply pie", by observing that "starting with the Alien and Sedition Acts of the 1790s, through various waves of xenophobia and of heightened nationalism (of which McCarthyism was the most recent) and including abolitionism, Prohibition, anti-war movements from 1812 through Vietnam, and most recently pro- and anti-choice advocacy and debates over the place of religion in the public schools, Americans both on the right and the left have exhibited Protestant sectarian bred propensities for

crusades" (Lipset 1996: 176). If this is correct for US liberals, somewhat inaccurately or dismissively identified with the "left", then it is, as hinted before, just another way to say what has been already said. This is that Americanism or "America first" ethnocentrism (Beck 2000), joined with sectarian religiosity like Protestant sectarianism, smuggled as "patriotism" and "faith respectively, is the conservative Trojan Horse, non sequitur and eventually poison of American liberalism, just as is nationalism and sectarian religion for all liberal society and modernity.

As implied and expected, from the prism of liberalism from the Enlightenment to contemporary liberals, "it is unreasonable to impose coercive laws on morally reflective members of another sect because one thinks that there is no salvation outside of one's own church. It [is] unreasonable to use political power to enforce our own comprehensive religious doctrine on others" (Dombrowski 2001: 6). Still, apparently what is for moral liberalism unreasonable, i.e. irrational and even, as Tönnies, Durkheim and Pareto suggest and predict, eventually ineffective, as proven by Prohibition and similar measures, has historically been and remains the primary activity, "favorite pastime" of American conservatism as well as European fascism, which dramatically exemplifies the gulf that separates liberal morality, culture and society from its conservative and fascist counterparts.

In historical terms, admittedly the singularly "great achievement" of modern liberalism is that, since the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries, in virtue of its ethical and religious pluralism and tolerance it "has pacified social strife by fostering modes of toleration that enable people to live peacefully together despite their moral and cultural differences" (Brink 2000: 16). To that extent, this outcome demonstrates liberalism's original and continuing moral-religious rationalism through its pluralism, non-absolutism and tolerance in morality and religion and its ensuing cultural pacifism broadly understood. It thus indicates that what Weber and Simmel would call the liberal diversification and pacification of moral and other social relations has been ultimately rational and effective for the survival and evolution of modern free society, rather than irrational and self-defeating as militant US neo-conservative and neo-fascist ("Christian" militia) groups accuse attacking liberals as "multicultural", "pacifist", so "unpatriotic" and "un-American", just as German and other European conservatives and fascists attacked them as "anti-German".

Religious Liberalism

Liberal Religious Freedom

As implied and expected, liberalism, i.e. liberal ideology, society and modernity, is also the principle, institutional system and historical period of religious liberty. In particular, religious liberalism is the ideal and practice of freedom in religion, faith or belief, just as its moral and political versions are such ideals and practices of liberty in morality and politics, respectively. The underlying rationale is that liberalism considers religion, just as morality, to be intrinsically a realm of individual freedom, personal choice or voluntary decision rather than trans-individual and supra-human coercion or imposition as in anti-liberalism, notably religious conservatism and fascism. Simply, liberalism is the principle and system of religious liberty because religion is defined as free, non-coerced, and conversely, un-free or coerced “religion” is its own negation. Hence, liberalism actually sustains rather than, as anti-liberals accuse, suppresses religion in general by establishing and defending religious liberty, pluralism and tolerance. Yet, in virtue of its neutrality, it does not favor any particular religions, theologies and churches, unlike religious conservatism or sectarianism and fascism characterized by such favoring and non-neutrality. At least in this sense, liberalism is not incompatible with religion defined as the realm and exercise of individual freedom and private choice, yet it is if religious faith is construed in opposite terms.

In this connection, some contemporary US liberals propose that “because liberalism emerged as an alternative to the ruinous wars of religion, both liberals and non-liberals often assume the incompatibility of liberalism and religion [but] that is a mistake” (Kloppenber 1998: 4). Moreover, it is argued that “central virtues of [especially American] liberalism descend directly from the cardinal virtues of early Christianity: prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice” (Kloppenber 1998: 5). For example, arguably, that “disposition to entertain criticism and accept change, a defining characteristic of liberalism, is itself grounded in the ancient Judeo-Christian virtue of humility” (Kloppenber 1998: 7). Notably, according to this argument, liberal ideas in America were “joined with ideas from the different traditions of Protestant Christianity and classical republicanism at two decisive moments [the Revolution and the Constitution] [but] the three streams have not always flowed together”

(Kloppenber 1998: 21). Recall, admittedly, “Madison and his allies repudiated the ideal of a ‘Christian Sparta’ and embraced commercial agriculture and economic growth as the salvation of the American republic” (Kloppenber 1998: 32).

Overall, to ground liberalism in and even link it with Christianity is admittedly questionable to most liberals as well as non-liberals, especially Christian conservatives, from Vatican theologians and popes to Puritans and their modern fundamentalist US descendents, who precisely all condemn liberal ideology, society and modernity as “anti-Christian” and “ungodly”. In short, Jefferson-Madison’s liberal-secular democracy with its separation of church and state is deeply or eventually incompatible with Samuel Adams’ “Christian Sparta” or Winthrop’s “Biblical Commonwealth” as perennial ideals and models for US conservatism.

In passing, it is remarkable that Samuel Adams was, along with Winthrop, both the original Puritan designer of America as anti-liberal “Christian Sparta” and the creator or underwriter of a brand of beer bearing his name and displaying his colonial clothes (assuming the same person) and widely considered (and aggressively advertised) as the “best” in America. *Prima facie*, “Christian Sparta”, especially its Puritan and other fundamentalist-Protestant (as distinguished from its Catholic) version, and beer or other alcohol do not go together, just as do not the latter and an “Islamic State”. This is historically indicated by Puritanism’s hostility to any alcohol, from 17th century New England through the Puritan-incited 18th–19th centuries Great Awakenings to 20th century Prohibition and 21st century US prohibitive, “dry” states (Merton 1968) and federal restrictions, as well as radical Islam’s equivalent, if not stricter, practices.

Hence, this relatively trivial case is indicative of what Weber and other analysts (Bremer 1995) detect as Puritan “pure” and “vigorous” hypocrisy couched in self-righteous moralism, unless one claims that American Puritanism has evolved beyond “Christian Sparta”, so extreme austerity, asceticism and moral absolutism, and thus effectively ended as “we know it”. Yet, such claims are contradicted by the observed persistence and even revival of Puritanism and its moral absolutism (Munch 2001) in America via the new Puritan-rooted temperance wars like the war on drugs (Reuters 2005; Wagner 1997) and Protestant sectarianism overall (Lipset 1996), notably in the anti-liberal, fundamentalist Bible Belt and its “dry” regions. Of course, moderate

US moral-religious conservatives would say, as would arch-Puritan Benjamin Franklin with his reported “no-so-Puritan” penchant for alcohol (not to mention McCarthy as even anti-Puritan in this respect), that Adams’ Puritan “Christian Sparta” and “Samuel Adams beer” may go together, as in post-Puritan New England, not to mention Catholic societies. However, this is an after-the-fact Pareto-type rationalization (Wrong 1994) or attempted reconciliation invalidated by most of America’s history and reality from the 17th to the 21st century, including Prohibition and its residues such as federal alcohol restrictions (e.g. the increased legal limit from 18 to 21 year, the highest in Western liberal societies) and the “dry” Bible-Belt. And if the two go hand in hand, then this is because Puritanism, so its design for “Christian Sparta”, has become a sort of *caput mortuum* (“virtually dead”), as in, alongside modern Great Britain, post- and even non-Puritan, specifically Catholic, New England since the official disestablishment of its Puritan theocracy in the 1830s through the early 21st century.

Further, if, as US conservatives object, classical liberalism and sociology entailed “dismissals of religion as a child’s play” (Lemert 1999: 257), at least it considered it a “free play”, in contrast to anti-liberal conservatism and fascism which denied it not only as “play”, but also as “free”, so religious freedom. Granted that classical liberalism and sociology, including Comte and Spencer, often considers religion, especially its coercive, theocratic, sectarian and fanatical – e.g. what the Vatican Church itself denounces as “fanaticism” – forms, to be a childish and irrational element within modern mature, rationalist and secular society permeated by Weberian rationalization and secularization, including the expansion of secular science and education (Inglehart 2004, Schofer and Meyer 2005). Yet, in spite or perhaps because of such consideration of religion as “a child’s play”, liberal society and modernity establishes and protects religious freedom, pluralism and tolerance, and more so than does anti-liberalism, including “godly” conservatism and fascism.

For example, classical sociologists Saint-Simon and Comte, like Vico before, conceive human history as a “progressive movement in ideologies from theism to rationalism – a theme that would be echoed later by Max Weber”²⁴

²⁴ According to Chirot (1985), Weber’s explanation of the development of Western rationalism and progress is the “best available.” Chirot (1985) adds that, alongside “geographic coincidence”, medieval class conflicts and the long political stalemate

(Lenski 1994: 8; also Chirot 1985), yet still seek to retain and protect religious freedom and tolerance. Also, Weber points to what calls the “childlikeness of religious feeling” which “strongly counteracted the influence of rationality in conduct”, but suggests it is liberal, secular and rational society and modernity ushered in by the Enlightenment that most fully respects and protects, perhaps for the first time in Western history since early Christianity, freedom in religion, compared to traditionalism and conservatism, especially medievalism.

Similarly, Tönnies observes that in modern liberal-capitalist society (*Gesellschaft*) religious faith or belief “is to be found essentially among the masses and the lower orders; it is liveliest among children and women”; yet he recognizes that according to liberalism and natural law, “all people [are] reasonable beings and free agents” in religion, morality, culture and all social relations. As noted, he remarks that the liberal state has realized that “dead” religion, like morality, “cannot be revived by coercion”, even education and persuasion, yet acknowledges that it is liberalism that endows humans with rationality and free agency in religious, moral and other cultural domains.

Hence, classical and modern liberalism recognizes and emphasizes not only, as illiberal critics protest, the perceived “childlikeness” and irrationality of religious sentiments and practices within modern rational society. It also does, what they overlook, their inner freedom or voluntary nature, so liberal “dismissals of religion as a child’s play” entail by no means dismissing its “free play” and so freedom, on the contrary. Alternatively, anti-liberalism, especially conservatism as well as fascism, perhaps excluding Nazism, defines and celebrates religion as what Durkheim calls a very “serious thing”.

However, in spite or perhaps because of this premise of the deadly seriousness and sacredness of religious feelings, practices and institutions ushering in theological heaven (Lemert 1999), anti-liberalism usually does not respect and protect their intrinsic freedom and voluntarism instead eliminated, subverted, or threatened. It does so via coercive imposition, including what Tönnies considers to be impossible revival of “dead” religion and morality by coercion, sectarianism and eventually theocracy, from medieval Catholicism and post-medieval Puritanism yet essentially rooted in medievalism (Gorski

between opposing forces in the Middle Ages and early modern Europe are the “key elements in the development of Western rationality”.

2000, Zaret 1989) to modern Protestant fundamentalism (Lipset 1996; Munch 2001). In short, it seems that for anti-liberalism religion is “too serious” to be left to humans and their personal freedom and choice but imposed on them for their own good, salvation of their souls, by coercion. To that extent, it is not liberalism, but anti-liberalism, notably religious conservatism and fascism, that actually treats humans as “children” or immature irresponsible creatures incapable of and not to be trusted with making free “rational” choices and reasonable decisions in respect of religion, just as morality, exemplifying the deep gulf between liberal humanism and conservative anti-humanism.

Hence, even if liberalism considers religion to be a “fading vestige of pre-scientific times” (Iannaccone 1998: 1466) and so irrational in Weber’s sense of “childishness”, it treats it as the sphere of inherent liberty and its actors as free agents, in contrast to conservatism defining and celebrating religious sentiments, practices and institutions as rational and serious, yet denying or restricting the freedom of them. Contrary to anti-liberal accusations, even if perhaps untenable (Iannaccone 1998), the classical liberal-rationalist dismissal of religion as a “child’s play” turns out to be, by letting “children play it freely”, respectful and protective of religious freedom and free actors, so ultimately religion itself. And it is more so than is the conservative glorification of it as a “very serious thing” and sacred (hence) not to be left to humans’ liberty and choice but coercively imposed on them thus effectively reduced to “children” or immature adults, like the neo-conservative (21-year) legal limit for alcohol consumption in America, the highest among Western societies, let alone Prohibition and its sequels like Southern “dry” states (Merton 1968). Evidently, the point is that liberalism considers religion an inherently “free game”, so a form of freely played “social games”²⁵ (Dahrendorf 1979: 23), in the sense of Mead, even game theory, rather than supposedly dismissing it as a “child’s play”.

Conversely, it is that conservatism and fascism deny or restrict religious freedoms, and not that they cherish the same phenomenon as an adult, mature, serious and sacred activity, though this treatment may result in and sanctify such denials. At this juncture, some economists (Iannaccone 1998: 1466) cite,

²⁵ However, (Dahrendorf 1979: 23) objects that “traditional liberalism is as insistent on formal rules for all sorts of social games as it is silent on the social condition of man.”

as testifying to the extolled “pervasive and continuing” relevance of religion in modern societies, the “resurgence of evangelical Christianity in the United States, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East, the explosive growth of Protestantism in Latin America, the religious ferment in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the role of religion in political and ethnic conflicts worldwide.” Notably, it is somewhat triumphantly registered that “American rates of church membership have actually risen throughout the past two centuries” (Iannaccone 1998: 1466).

However, from the stance of liberalism and secularism, so liberal-secular democracy, these cases, notably the “resurgence of evangelical Christianity” and the “rise of Islamic fundamentalism”, actually testify to the pervasiveness and continuity of anti-liberal and to that extent anti-democratic religions. They hence represent or generate religious, including theocratic, subversions of and treats to liberal civil society and secular culture as well as political democracy. In this respect, in particular the “resurgence of evangelical Christianity” in America and the “rise of Islamic fundamentalism” in Muslim societies are functionally equivalent or parallel processes in vehement opposition to liberal civil society, culture and secular democracy. In retrospect, the “resurgence of evangelical Christianity” in America and the “rise of Islamic fundamentalism” in Muslim societies are alike a sort of historical *déjà vu* continuing the antagonism of medieval religious conservatism to early liberalism. For both essentially seek to “resurrect from the dead” theocratic and despotic medievalism, viz. New England’s Puritan theocracy called the “Biblical Commonwealth” in America, notably the South turned into a “Bible Belt”, and extreme Islam in Iran and elsewhere (Bauman 1997).

Notably, liberalism is the principle and institutional system of integral religious liberty by establishing, sustaining and promoting freedom of and from religion alike. It institutes, protects and enhances complete and comprehensive religious liberty in the form of not only freedom for religion, but also freedom from religion. In other words, by analogy to political liberalism, it is the system of positive and negative religious liberties alike, expressed in freedoms for and from religion, respectively. In particular, freedom of religion is, as often emphasized by liberals, the equivalent or analogue or complement in religious liberalism to that for political action in liberal democracy. Also, freedom from religion is such an equivalent or analogue in religious liberalism to that from state coercion in liberal democracy, which is de-emphasized by

many US liberals, especially those sharing with conservatives “Protestant sectarianism” and its “sectarian stress on personal morality” (Lipset 1996), overlooked by “libertarians” à la Hayek, and vehemently denied and condemned by religious conservatives and fascists, perhaps minus German Nazis.

This is instructive to emphasize and reiterate because liberalism originally, in particular the Enlightenment, was designed to constitute the ideal, institutional system and historical time of not only freedom of religion. It was also, and perhaps more, one of freedom *from* religion in light of the Catholic and Protestant “Dark Middle Ages” denying and suppressing both religious liberties, especially the second, just as the first to outsiders *cum* infidels, viz. Protestants within Catholicism and Catholic “papists” within Protestantism (Dombrowski 2001; Gorski 2000), and non-Christians in both, including native Americans under theocratic Puritanism (Munch 2001). Thus, even some modern US liberals seem to gloss over this original liberal project in that they emphasize freedom of religion and patriotically extol America as the historical and world leader or haven in this respect (Kloppenbergh 1998). Alternatively, they somewhat de-emphasize and overlook freedom from religion as the integral element of liberalism, including its Jefferson-Madison’s rendition, perhaps because of the initial and continuing religious and/or “utopian ideological content” (Lipset 1996) of the “American experiment”, as epitomized by Winthrop’s Puritan theocratic “shining city upon the hill” or Adams’ “Christian Sparta” and its mutation into “Salem with witches” (Putnam 2000) and “Monkey Trial[s]” (Boles 1999), with their modern residues or revivals.

In turn, in America and beyond “libertarians” overlook, and religious neo-conservatives, deny that freedom from religion, especially its coercive and sectarian form, is an equivalent or analogue or complement in a free civil society to what both extol as freedom from state coercion in liberal democracy. Notably, they both, perhaps blinded or seduced by seductive ethnocentric exhortations about the “exceptional and superior” nation (Lipset 1996), neglect or negate that freedom from coercive state-enforced, promoted or encouraged religion is a special case and part of their celebrated freedom from government coercion, viz. liberty in respect with “one nation indivisible under God” (Giddens 2000) from McCarthyism onwards, “in God we trust”, school prayer, and “faith-based” policies in America under neo-conservatism. Contrary to spurious libertarianism and neo-conservatism, original liberalism during the Enlightenment included freedom from coercive – or, for that mat-

ter, any – religion into that from government coercion, thus establishing, protecting and promoting religious liberty in relation to both sacred and secular powers, church and state, theocrats and despots.

Alternatively, liberalism, in particular the Enlightenment, does not consider freedom from government coercion, state intrusion and repressive secular authority to stop, withdraw or resign with, as religious conservatives and theologians would put it, “humility” before religion, church and sacred powers. And this is what “libertarianism” and especially neo-conservatism, denouncing freedom from coercive and any religion or faith as “ungodly” and “un-American”, seem to imply and allege instead. In turn, liberalism considers freedoms from both coercive religion and state coercion, sacred and secular powers, to be special cases and elements of what Dahrendorf (1979) calls freedom from various societal constraints. Yet, “libertarianism” and neo-conservatism reductively misconstrue these constraints as governmental constraint on economic liberties à la mythical laissez-faire capitalism and “free markets” apparently deemed more fundamental and important than the liberty from government religious imposition or promotion.

Hence, by establishing, protecting and promoting both freedom for and freedom from religion, liberalism is the ideal, institutional system and historical period of holistic religious liberty. This holism is what distinguishes it from anti-liberal conservatism and fascism denying or suppressing both liberties, at least to non-members or “inferior” groups, and pseudo-liberal “libertarianism” that usually dissolves them into freedom of religion favored to that from religion. This is useful to reiterate because not only theocratic conservatism, from medieval Catholicism and post-medieval Puritanism to contemporary Christian and Islamic fundamentalism, but also most “libertarians” and many liberals, especially in America, overlook that religious liberty is not only about the freedom to choose, institute and practice a certain religion. It is also to be free from any, especially coercive and sectarian, religions, faiths or beliefs, though this freedom does not necessarily imply or lead to liberal atheism and anti-religion, contrary to anti-liberal claims.

For liberalism, the matter of individual freedom and private choice is then not only, as assumed especially by US “libertarians” and some liberals, what kind of religious faith, church or sect, but also, as overlooked or downplayed, “religion and church or no religion and church”. Conversely, it is not the matter of collective and political imposition, as in the guise of what Pareto

diagnoses and predicts as the US government's coercive enforcement of Puritan "morality by law", as typical of religious conservatism, including fascism, probably excepting "not so godly" Nazism.

Original and true religious liberalism hence recognizes and promotes both decisions as free choices. If it does neither it degenerates into or resembles anti-liberal conservatism like Protestant sectarianism in America, as happened especially during the "Cold War" consensus against "ungodly" communism, and if only the first, it mutates into spurious libertarianism a la free enterprise including economic freedom from state coercion, yet excluding or neglecting personal liberty from religion. Thus, so long as in America the "religious makeup of the religious community [is] along a liberal – to-conservative continuum" (Breault 1986), since the 1980s the first dimension has mutated into or become weaker than the second as predominant (Manza and Brooks 1997).

As hinted, the above is indicated by the predominance of Protestant sectarianism (Lipset 1996) in American history, from 17th century Puritanism to 20th and 21st century Puritan-rooted evangelicalism (Munch 2001). Concerning original Puritanism, as known, Tocqueville proposes that the "destiny of America [is] embodied in the first Puritan." However, he notes that the "zeal for regulation induces [US Puritans] to descend to the most fantastic and oppressive laws [reflecting] a narrow, sectarian spirit. The [US Puritan] legislator, entirely forgetting the great principles of religious toleration that he had himself demanded in Europe, makes attendance on divine service compulsory, and goes so far as to visit with severe punishment, and even with death, Christians who chose to worship God according to a ritual differing from his own." Also, US conservative sociologist Ross argues that America "is a lineal descendent" of Puritanism. Similarly, according to Tiryakian (1975: 30–1), "from the underlying cultural system of Puritanism [US] institutional life and values have emerged", in particular the "ambiguities [highly permissive-repressive, highly secular-religious] of [America] are related to those intrinsic to American Puritan culture".

Regarding Puritan-rooted evangelicalism, observers notice that even in the late 20th century there are "millions of North Americans passionately committed to a shared vision of a Christian evangelical community"²⁶ (Beiner

²⁶ Beiner (1992: 29) comments that "communitarianism of this [evangelical] sort is the consequence, not the cure, of the moral emptiness of liberal culture. If this is what

1992: 29), which indicates a salient degeneration or destruction of religious liberalism. In turn, some sociologists (Manza and Brooks 1997: 38) propose that in America the “magnitude of the religious cleavage remains substantial, but has declined during the [1960–1992] nine presidential elections.” In their view, the “single factor behind this decline is the reduction in support for Republican candidates among denominationally liberal Protestants, whose changing voting behavior is a function of their increasingly liberal views on social issues. The political alignments of Catholics and conservative Protestants [are] very stable relative [but] no evidence of increased political mobilization among conservative Protestants” (Manza and Brooks 1997: 38). However, what precisely happened in and even largely decided, i.e. “social issues”, the outcome of the presidential as well as congressional and other elections during the 2000s (e.g. 2000 and 2004) was an “increased political mobilization among conservative Protestants”. To that extent, religious cleavages and culture wars in America not only remained substantial, but further intensified and expanded at the start of the 21st century.

Notably, the preceding indicates that liberalism more fully and consistently protects and promotes liberty in religion than its illiberal alternatives. It suggests that liberalism by recognizing both freedoms for and from religion is the most integral, comprehensive and consistent principle and system of religious liberty by comparison to its anti- or pseudo-liberal alternatives, including conservatism as the foremost defender of “faith and freedom”, as well as “libertarianism” as the paradigm of all “liberties”.

Therefore, somewhat ironically, it is liberalism that best protects and promotes religion itself insofar as the latter, like morality, is the matter and sphere of individual freedom and private choice. It does this compared to religious conservatism and fascism treating religious faith as the problem of government imposition or a political determinant and criterion so effectively destroying it, at least for “ungodly” and “inferior” groups like non-Puritans

the situated self looks like, then, as liberal counter-critics argue, by all means give us back the ‘disencumbered self!’”. However, Davis and Robinson (1996) propose that US evangelical and other orthodox religious believers “are more liberal than moral progressives on many issues [racial and economic inequality] in part because they draw disproportionately on the disadvantaged of society”. In turn, Hout, Greeley and Wilde (2001: 471) find that in America “for white women [born before 1935] the cohort fertility of conservative Protestant women was 17% higher than that of women from moderate denominations and 37% higher than that of women from liberal denominations.”

under theocratic Puritanism (Munch 2001) and non-Germans in totalitarian Nazism (Bähr 2002). Thus, if genuine, integral and universal religious liberty is only fully protected, possible and viable in liberalism, so is religion or faith, just as morality, as a free and private choice and decision. And conversely, if the first is impossible or spurious in anti-liberalism, including conservatism and fascism, so is the second thus understood, distinguished from theocratic and coercive religions and beliefs.

Since the Enlightenment liberalism has considered religion, like morality, either free in the double sense of freedom for and from or not religion at all, but coercion through coercive theism and theocracy defining Comte's primitive theological age, including medievalism and its sequel conservatism, rather than liberal-democratic society and modernity. For example, modern liberals predict that Christianity [like Judaism, Islam, etc.] "in the long-run future will be spiritual or mystical or it will not be at all" (Dombrowski 2001: 159). This signifies that it will either be free, non-coercive, non-hegemonic and non-theocratic in cultural-political terms or not persist.

Consequently, supposedly non- or anti-religious liberalism actually enhances and sustains religious liberty, so religion as such, better than "faith-based" coercive conservatism, including medievalism, proto-conservatism, fascism, neo-conservatism and neo-fascism, as well as Mises' "freedom-loving" reductive libertarianism with its "all you need is free enterprise" assumption. Paradoxically, but true, secular liberalism is the best protector and "friend" of religious freedom and to that extent religion as a free choice in virtue of being the system of liberty, compared with anti-secular and theocratic conservatism and fascism precisely because these are systems of un-freedom, and spurious libertarianism as one of pseudo-liberty a la free markets. In this sense, religious liberty begins and flourishes, so does religion as defined, where liberalism enters and thrives, but it ends, at least for "ungodly" and "inferior" outsiders as in Puritanism and Nazism, or degenerates in sectarianism, coercive theism and theocracy where anti-liberalism, including anti-secular conservatism and fascism, does. This is both a historical-empirical generalization based on the past and present experience of modern Western and other society, and a prediction for the future of religious liberty, so religion itself, during the *long durée*.

Historically, it is only liberalism since the Enlightenment that has posited, established, defended or heralded true religious liberty as defined within

Western and other societies. In this sense, the relatively “short history” of religious liberty in modern Western and other society is in essence the history of liberalism since the 18th century Enlightenment. And conversely, the “long history” of un-freedom, intolerance and wars in religion overlaps with anti-liberalism, from pre-Christian times to the Christian, Catholic and Protestant “Dark Middle Ages”, including the Reformation contrary to the “naïve assumptions” (Coffey 1998) and “liberal mythology” (Gould 1996) of Protestantism, notably Puritanism, and freedom in the sociological and other literature, exemplified by Parsonian views (Parsons 1937; also Mayway 1984; for a critique Zaret 1989). At least, most of the historical times and societies prior to liberalism and the Enlightenment were, to paraphrase Marx, the pre-history of true and integral religious liberty, as exemplified by what Weber calls traditionalism ruled by theocratic religion and sacred tradition, including medieval theocracies, from their early Catholic to their Protestant, especially Calvinist-Puritan, variations.

In particular, the modern history of religious liberty, pluralism and tolerance truly begins or at least resumes primarily with the Enlightenment in Western Europe. In this connection, the Enlightenment historically defined and superseded the Middle Ages as “Dark” precisely because of their denial and suppression of religious liberty understood as freedom of and from religion for all. As indicated, it did so facing not only, as usually assumed, the traditional Catholic “Dark Middle Ages” exemplified by the Vatican theocracy and symbolized by the Inquisition, but also their attempted Protestant revival via the Reformation and its theocratic mutations into Calvinist-Puritan state churches.

On this account, for the Enlightenment, so early liberalism, both medieval Catholicism and post-medieval Protestantism, especially Calvinism and Puritanism, were simply “dark” times of religious and political un-freedom, intolerance and wars (Berman 2000), so just different historical stages or forms of Comte’s theological-theocratic age. Modern liberals identify a historical exemplar of religious and political freedom being denied or eliminated “when Calvin wanted to kill Servetus” (Dombrowski 2001: 5). This attempt set up a venerable pattern and “role model” adopted by post-Calvinists, including Anglo-American Puritans from Cromwell’s persecution of the “papists” and other “infidels” (Gorski 2000) and Winthrop et al.’s extermination of native Americans (Munch 2001) to modern Protestant fundamentalists

and “godly” terrorists (“Christian” neo-fascist militia a la McVeigh and abortion-clinics bombers) in America.

To that extent, the modern Western history and practice of religious freedom, pluralism and tolerance did not really begin, contrary to common “naïve assumptions”, with the Protestant Reformation, including supposedly liberal-democratic Anglo-American Puritanism despite some “fortuitous” developments in this direction (Zaret 1989), let alone Catholic medievalism. Rather, it did with the Enlightenment and its liberalism, secularism and rationalism. Counterfactually, if it did with Protestantism, as Parsons (1937) et al. (Mayway 1984) contend, the Enlightenment, so liberalism, secularism and rationalism, would have been functionally redundant and perhaps not emerged as an alternative both to the Protestant Reformation, notably Calvinism and theocratic Puritanism (e.g. Locke), and the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages” and the Vatican theocracy. This is by analogy, albeit not identity, to the counterfactual assumption that if ascetic Protestantism in Weber’s sense of an “elective affinity” with modern capitalism “had occurred two centuries earlier, it might have died out” (Inglehart 2004: 8).

Yet, the Enlightenment and liberalism overall precisely arose as such an alternative to medieval Catholicism and post-medieval Protestantism, including Catholic-Protestant “ruinous wars of religion” (Kloppenbergh 1998: 4) destroying or suppressing religious freedom, pluralism and toleration or dissent through persecution and other practices, like execution of dissenters as heretics by the Vatican Church and “witches” by American Puritanism. This is what Pareto in particular suggests for the Protestant Reformation by placing it, ironically, along with the founding of the Roman Empire, in the category of revolutions “made against” social-cultural and economic progress and change and to that extent religious and other freedom. In his view, the Protestant Reformation was a case of “movements tending to restore to the ruling classes” and their domination or solidarity (“residues of group-persistence”) “banished” by the countervailing forces “for change, for economic and social progress”, like the Renaissance. In particular, he emphasizes that the artistic, proto-liberal and humanistic Renaissance “only too soon was halted by the Protestant Reformation.”

Hence, Pareto suggests that hypothetically if the Protestant Reformation did not halt the Renaissance and was not a reactionary attack or counter-revolution against social progress, the Enlightenment or the French Revolution

and so modern liberalism as the progressive idea and movement par excellence, would have been functionally redundant or impertinent, so perhaps not happened. Indirectly, this is what he implies for the French Revolution by counter-factually predicting that during in the 18th century “had the French nobility living on income, and that part of the French bourgeoisie which was in the same situation, not succumbed to the lure of [liberal] humanitarian sentiments [the Enlightenment], they would not have prepared the ground for the Revolution that was to be their undoing.”

However, the Enlightenment and consequently the French Revolution as its “daughter”, and so liberalism, did happen, and not in spite but rather because of the Protestant Reformation, just as the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages”. Admittedly, the “light” of the Protestant Reformation, not only the “darkness” of the Catholic “Middle Ages”, was “overshadowed” by the Enlightenment, especially its scientific rationalism manifested in the “emerging new faith in science, which threatened any belief in the supernatural” (Dunn and Woodard 1996: 27), and subsequently by the French Revolution.

The above indicates that the Enlightenment or the French Revolution precisely redefined the Protestant Reformation, just as Catholic medievalism, as the antagonist of the Renaissance and progress, and so anti-liberal, including regressive and to that extent irrational, as well as anti-secular, repressive and militant. As conservative Le Bon implies, what he calls “contemporary democratic and social ideas” generated by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution supplanted “feudalism, [Catholic] Christianity, and Protestantism” alike. In sum, for most classical liberals, including Kant and Hegel, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution signified a radical “break” with both Catholic medievalism and the Protestant Reformation, yet a continuity with the Renaissance as the beginning of the “modern age” (Habermas 2001: 131).

At the minimum, the Enlightenment and liberalism fully attained and best articulated what the Protestant Reformation had promised, in its attack on theocratic Catholicism and what Pareto call the Roman theocracy, but usually failed, as indicated by Calvinist-Puritan theocracies or crusades against “infidels”, to attain in terms of religious freedom, pluralism and toleration. In particular, historical studies show that the “desire to shield religious dissenters from persecution helped launch liberalism in the first place, and those who long for religious homogeneity will always be uneasy with the toleration

of diversity that liberals champion" (Kloppenbergh 1998: 6). Hence, contemporary sociologists conclude that prevailing Parsonian and other assumptions of the Protestant and capitalist origins of liberal democracy and civil society, including religious and other freedoms, are "inconsistent and speculative" (Zaret 1996).

In particular, the Enlightenment with its liberal secularism, embodied by Locke, Kant, Rousseau and others, sought and often succeeded to supersede and transcend what Weber and early US conservative sociologist Ross²⁷ calls the "unexampled tyranny" of Puritanism and ascetic Protestantism overall (Bendix 1977) in religious-moral and political terms, just as the despotism of the Vatican Church and medieval Catholicism. First and foremost, recall, as Weber (and Mannheim) emphasizes, the Enlightenment with its "joy of life" and optimism, expressed in the harmony of interests concept, "appeared as the heir [antipode] of Protestant asceticism", pessimism and repression in economy, polity and culture, including morality and religion. In particular, Weber observed that religious liberty or toleration was actually "least strong" in societies or regions "dominated" by supposedly liberal-democratic, yet actual theocratic, repressive and intolerant Puritanism like early New and temporarily old England, so even lower than in those non-Puritan, thus contradicting the "naïve assumptions" of Puritan liberalism and freedom. He had probably in mind Puritan persecutions and executions of such non-Puritan *cum* "impure" and "ungodly" religious groups as the Native Americans, Quakers and others in New England (Baltzell 1979; Klausner 1998; Munch 2001), as well as the Catholic "papists" and Anglicans in Great Britain (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000).

Notably, anticipating Weber and Ross Tocqueville implies that the religious "tyranny" of Puritanism probably culminated in America, specifically

²⁷ During the late 19th century Ross warned about what he called "Puritan tyranny". Also, he stated that Puritanism and democracy "have worked together" with the effect of the latter providing what he called its own Puritan "antidote". Alternatively, from the prism of liberalism and its secularism, democracy and liberal society represent the "antidote" of Puritanism, and the latter or "Puritan tyranny" the anti-democratic and anti-liberal "poison". Thus, Coffey (1998: 962) remarks that US Puritans "longed for a godly [theocratic] rather than a liberal society, and sought not the freedom of the sinner, but the freedom of God Almighty [as in] naïve assumptions about Puritanism and liberty." Also, Bremer (1995: 90) acknowledges that New England's Puritans "rejected the concept of democratic government [and] denied the legitimacy of popular rule".

New England. He does so by citing a Puritan Code mandating that “whosoever shall worship any other God than the Lord shall surely be put to death.” Needless to say, from the prism of the Enlightenment and liberalism overall, such Puritan practices were an egregious denial and destruction of religious liberty, including freedom of religion, other than what Weber would call the God of Puritanism or Calvinism, let alone freedom from religion, thus in their effects substantively equivalent to and reviving “dark” Catholic medievalism supposedly supplanted by the Reformation. No wonder, Weber described these Puritan punishments as almost amounting to the medieval Inquisition, thus as the extreme instrument of destroying religious and other liberty and tolerance (also Tawney 1962), which by contrast the Enlightenment sought to establish and protect. At this point, the Enlightenment, so early liberalism, was simply an alternative and antidote to both the medieval Catholic Inquisition and its post-medieval Puritan functional substitute or proxy.

Hence, the Enlightenment and so liberalism was a negation and alternative, rather than, as often supposed, a continuation and true descendent of supposedly democratic-secular, yet actually repressive and theocratic Puritanism in Great Britain and America and its parent Calvinism and other ascetic Protestantism in Europe. In sum, since and through the Enlightenment’s alternative to the post-medieval “tyranny” of Puritanism and the medieval despotism of Catholicism, liberalism has superseded both the “Dark Middle Ages” and the Reformation, ushering in or at least most fully pursuing the “short history” of religious liberty, pluralism and tolerance within Western societies and beyond.

In consequence, historically and empirically, Western liberal societies have established, promoted and sustained most religious liberty as defined since the Enlightenment compared with their illiberal counterparts, from Catholic and Protestant conservatism to European fascism and American neo-conservatism or fundamentalism. Simply, more liberal-secular Western and other societies typically have also been freer in religious and other terms than their illiberal and anti-secular opposites. For example, Samuelson stating that Scandinavian social democracies are, according to classical libertarian criteria, “freer” than “free-enterprise” America implies that this is because, not in spite, of the first being more secular and liberal (and more “welfare”) or less conservative in religious and moral terms than the second.

The preceding generally holds true of America itself in historical terms. Typically, it has been religiously and otherwise “freer” whenever it has been more secular and liberal, as during the Revolution, Jefferson’s era, the New Deal, the 1960–70s, rather than non-secular and conservative, as during the Great Awakenings, the 1950s, the anti-liberal 1980s–2000s. The same can be said of liberal-secular US regions in particular, as indicated by their substantively greater degrees of religious and other freedom and tolerance than in the non-secular and conservative mainland, notably the theocratic “Bible Belt”, during the 1980s–2000s, viz. “blue” vs. “red” states. This is perhaps a historical legacy and intensification of such and other divergences of the North and the South before and since the Civil War, though with some variations or reversals in the direction of America, including Northern parts like the Dakotas, Nebraska, Montana, Idaho, etc., “going South” and being in the illiberal “shadow of Dixie” (Cochran 2001), thus forming a sort of Northern “Bible Belt”.

The preceding historical-empirical generalization yields a plausible prediction that those Western and other modern societies, just as regions within a society, that continue to be or become more liberal and secular than others will have more religious liberty, pluralism and tolerance, so less culture wars of religion, than their illiberal counterparts. Following Samuelson’s diagnosis, given the corresponding historical and recent trends, this predicts that so long as they remain secular and liberal, Scandinavian and other Western European social democracies (Inglehart 2004) will continue to be “freer” and more tolerant in religious and other, including moral and political, terms than America. Alternatively, this is likely if the latter remains dominated by anti-secular conservatism, which makes it a “deviant case” through a “much more traditional value system than any other advanced industrial society” (Inglehart 2004), and pervaded by its anti-liberal culture wars as “conflicts over issues that are rooted in nonnegotiable conceptions of cultural and moral order”²⁸ (Mouw and Sobel 2001: 915). And, so long as the dominance of US conservatism and its usually (though not invariably) victorious culture wars continue, this will attack or threaten more not only the “normative consensus” (Mouw and Sobel

²⁸ According to Mouw and Sobel (2001: 915), US culture wars stem from a “breakdown of the old denominational religious loyalties in America, with the traditional denominations splitting along a crosscutting conservative/liberal or orthodox/progressive divide that threatens the normative consensus.”

2001: 915) but also religious and other freedom in America than most Western Europe, notably Scandinavia, in which liberalism is dominant and such conflicts are an archaic *passé* or tempered (Munch 2001).

Secular Civil Society and Culture

As implied earlier, liberal ideology, society and modernity establishes, promotes and results in secularism. Liberalism constitutes or generates secularism in the sense and form of a substantive sociological differentiation between religion and secular society, including culture, like politics. Hence, a defining element of modern liberal and pluralist societies is a differentiation of secular culture and civil society, just as democratic politics, from religion (Munch 2001). As indicated, liberal society differentiates religion and secular politics in the view of the historical fact that, as Dahrendorf (1979: 44) puts it, merging the two “has rarely done societies any good”.

Thus, modern liberals admonish that politics and religion are a “dangerous mixture; combining them, even in an academic context, is likely to generate more heat than light” (Dombrowski 2001: vii), while conservative critics complain that liberalism involves the “radical “secularization” of the public domain” (Brink 2000: 37). According to these critics, a tension exists between the “ideal of the neutrality of the liberal state with respect to competing conceptions of the good life and the “secularized” concept of the liberal public domain that accompanies this ideal [conflicts over abortion, euthanasia]. In a liberal society, [such] conflicts are inescapable because they cannot be evaded” (Brink 2000: 5). Moreover, it is objected that, these conflicts “are tragic insofar as they confront liberalism with the dilemma that in trying to reach for its highest aim – letting the interests of all citizens in leading a good life matter equally – it sometimes undermine[s] this very aim”²⁹ (Brink

²⁹ Brink (2000: 6) charges that, in particular, “in reaching for its highest aim, liberalism inescapably and necessarily is biased against some conceptions of the good that in theory it aims to tolerate [cultural membership, orthodox religious belief, and traditional worldviews]. This tragic circumstance involves an experience of moral loss not only for members of [e.g.] indigenous cultures and orthodox religious groups, but also for liberals who take seriously the aim of guaranteeing equal opportunity for all”. He also admonishes that the “meaning and existential significance of orthodox religious beliefs and strong ties to an individual’s cultural community may not always be intelligible to the secular and cosmopolitan liberal” and concludes that if its “aim to protect citizens” interest in leading a good life sometimes necessarily results in the

2000: 6). As hinted, such critiques overlook or downplay some relevant historical facts, first, the conflicts between such orthodox religious beliefs and groups as Catholicism and Protestantism were “acrimonious” in pre-liberal times and societies like the 16th century; second, Catholics and Protestants “get along with each other these days [in most Western countries] *precisely because they have been civilized by liberalism*” (Dombrowski 2001: 7). Simply, they overlook that liberalism tends to civilize various religious groups and pacify their conflicts as well as those between them, including orthodox religion, and liberal-secular ideas.

In addition to and conjunction with the separation of church and state, liberal society and modernity differentiates religion and secular culture, notably science, education, technology and art, from theology, on identical grounds, viz. that merging theological and scientific conceptions (e.g. geocentric and heliocentric theories in astronomy, creationism and evolutionism in biology) is a “dangerous mixture”. For liberalism and in liberal societies, the “authority of the church is no longer normative for all of culture [which is] a positive development in that religious belief must now largely come from within, rather than from the pressure exerted on culture by a militant church”³⁰ (Dombrowski 2001: 158). In particular, liberal secularism makes church authority and theology no longer a “law”, i.e. obligatory and hegemonic, to secular science, education, art and academic settings by differentiating them into two separate spheres, as exemplified by that between creationism or “intelligent design” and biological evolution theory (Martin 2002). For example, sociological analyses suggest that “scientific evidence in contradiction [evolution] with the literal account of creation in Genesis created a potential problem for Christians of many types in the late 19th century”³¹ (Martin 2002: 872).

destruction of the not unreasonable conceptions of the good of at least some [religious] citizens, [then] liberalism is a tragic doctrine” (Brink 2000: 33–4).

³⁰ Dombrowski (2001: 158) adds that in particular within Western societies “religious integration or wholeness should be found in integrated, whole *individuals* in community with like-minded individuals rather than in the integrity of Christian *political institutions*”. He also comments that the “obvious danger in spiritual or interior religion, rather than in politically hegemonic religion, is self-absorption, but this is a bastardization of truly integrating interiority. Political liberals who are religious believers cultivate an inwardness that leads to the Other”. (Dombrowski 2001: 160).

³¹ Martin (2002: 872) observes “liberal Protestantism dealt with this by declaring that there were two realms of truth, one religious and one scientific, and that nothing in one realm could *imply* anything about the contents of the other. However, this resolution was only acceptable for those who could tolerate the idea of a cognitive

Historically, probably for the first time in Western Christian history, liberalism, notably the Enlightenment, fully and consistently differentiated and to that extent emancipated secular culture, including science, philosophy, education and the arts, from religion, church, theology and theocracy, thus completing the Renaissance's prior attempts, especially concerning art. At this juncture, the Enlightenment and liberalism overall arose precisely as secularism and secular humanism. It did so attempting and eventually succeeding to supersede the hegemonic authority of church over cultural phenomena, just as the state, including science, philosophy and art. It aimed to override the degrading status of culture, like politics, as the servant and appendix of culturally and politically hegemonic religion, theology and theocracy as the "master", which defined the Dark Middle Ages as "dark" in this respect. Thus, during the Enlightenment of the 18th century, "social philosophy in western Europe had begun to escape from the stifling control of theology established in the medieval period. Humanistic explanations of social and cultural phenomena were beginning to find expression once more. [Also] a foundation was slowly being laid for the development of what we today think of as modern science" (Lenski 1994: 3). For instance, what Giambattista Vico famously termed the "age of men", observed or assumed to succeed the prior "age of gods" and the "age of heroes", was in essence liberal society and modernity, notably the Age of Enlightenment and science³² (Lenski 1994: 4).

Hence, through its secularism, humanism and moral universalism the Enlightenment, especially its continental Kantian version (Bauman 2001; Beck 2000; Habermas 2001; Munch 1981), sought to substitute "light" for this cultural darkness of medievalism, just as trying, by its democratic ideology and practice, to replace medieval political despotism. While religious

authority "scientist" side by side with a different authority "pastor/theologian". Alternatively, "where the existence of such separate authority structures was denied, such a solution was impossible" (Martin 2002: 872–3).

³² According to Lenski (1994: 4), "perhaps the first modern writer to develop a broadly comprehensive and secular or humanistic taxonomy of societies was a professor of Latin Eloquence at the University of Naples, Giambattista Vico (1668–1744)." He refers to Vico's three-stage, proto-evolutionary or developmental taxonomy of societies: the age of gods, the age of heroes, and the age of men or humans. Lenski (1994: 4) comments that "in the first of these stages, societies were theocratic and laws and other social institutions were thought to have divine origins. In the second, societies were aristocratic commonwealths and ruled by the law of force, though the exercise of force was controlled by religious ideas. In the third stage, popular commonwealths prevailed and laws were the product of human reason."

conservatives, from medieval Catholics to post-medieval Protestants to US neo-conservatives, are hostile or skeptical to the Kantian and all Enlightenment, the latter produced the key principle of cultural liberalism. This is that secular culture is differentiated and free from religion or church hegemony, just as “moral and religious sentiments serve to bind a community of persons together as long as such higher-order sentiments are not imposed on others through the political process” (Dombrowski 2001: x).

In consequence, liberalism and its secularism is an alternative to religious dominance and conflict in society.³³ Historically, recall, liberalism and its secularism “emerged as an alternative to the ruinous wars of religion” (Kloppenber 1998: 4) in Western Europe and beyond. Especially it did so as an alternative to “acrimonious” theological-political disputes and conflicts between Catholics and Protestants since the 16th century³⁴ (Dombrowski 2001: 7). At least, “until the development of liberalism, the fair terms of cooperation among Catholics and Protestants were extremely narrow” (Dombrowski 2001: 6).

In particular, the Enlightenment arose as a liberal-secular alternative to the “Dark Middle Ages” and their various religious wars and conflicts, especially those between Catholicism and Protestantism in the aftermath of the Reformation and virtually ever since, up to the 21st century (e.g. Northern Ireland). Hence, the Enlightenment was a countervailing force and transcendence not only of traditional, medieval-based Catholicism, as usually assumed, but also nascent, post-medieval Protestantism, especially radical Calvinism and its offspring, theocratic Puritanism. Moreover, analysts suggest that in general the “need for liberalism became especially apparent due to the religious wars in the aftermath of the Reformation” (Dombrowski 2001: 3), i.e. the rise of Protestantism in opposition to and conflict with Catholicism.

Crucially, the Enlightenment purported to transcend both the Catholic dominated “Dark Middle Ages” and their Protestant continuation or revival

³³ Pareto implies that liberalism, like socialism and patriotism, is a sort of “religion”. In turn, Sorokin (1970: 47–8) uses the expression the “liberal Social Gospel”.

³⁴ Dombrowski (2001: 7) suggests that “theological debate between Catholics and Protestants does not necessarily imply incommensurate positions on the value of religion or the family”. This suggests that Catholicism and Protestantism differ less in this respect than either adherents seem to assume, so are what Parsons and Merton would call functional equivalents or substitutes from the stance of liberalism and its secularism or liberal-secular democracy, i.e. basically anti-liberal and anti-secular.

during and after the Reformation via what Weber call “Calvinistic state churches” in Europe and Puritan theocracies in Great Britain like Cromwell’s “Holy Commonwealth” of the mid 17th century (Gorski 2000) and in America such as New England’s “Biblical Commonwealths” of the 17th–19th centuries (Munch 2001). If so, counterfactually the Enlightenment and liberalism overall would perhaps have been unlikely to emerge in the absence of the Catholic and Protestant “Dark Middle Ages” and their theocracies and religious conflicts. Namely, “as a result of the Enlightenment, one way of responding to this problem [of incompatible comprehensive religious or philosophical doctrines] is to find a new *comprehensive* philosophical and secular doctrine that would provide a synoptic worldview to deal with all of life’s problems, would be suitable to the modern world, and would replace the supposedly outmoded faith of the Christian ages”³⁵ (Dombrowski 2001: 3). Then, to understand the genesis of liberalism, especially the Enlightenment, in Europe and its spreading elsewhere, including in part America, it is instructive to take into account medieval Catholicism and post-medieval Protestantism, notably their pursuit of absolute religious-political dominance in society, consequently their mutual “ruinous wars of religion” during and in the wake of the Reformation.

Furthermore, through the civilizing and pacifying influence of its secularism, religious freedom and tolerance, liberalism in its subsequent evolution has tended to stop or mitigate these wars and disputes between rival religions, churches and theologies, notably Catholicism and Protestantism in Europe. As modern liberals notice, “not all disputes between comprehensive doctrines need be as acrimonious as those between Catholics and Protestants [in the 16th century]: Catholics and Protestants get along with each other these days [Northern Ireland aside] *precisely because* they have been civilized by liberalism” (Dombrowski 2001: 7).

In this respect, by virtue of its secularism liberalism functions as the necessary and perhaps sufficient condition of religious liberty, pluralism and

³⁵ In Dombrowski’s (2001: 3) view, “if comprehensive religious (or philosophical) doctrines are to be justified or given foundations, it is on some nonpublic (not exactly private) basis [so] whatever ideas of the good are to be found in political liberalism have to be appropriately public. [I.e.] the truth or falsity of these comprehensive, nonpublic, religious (or philosophical) doctrines is not a matter for political liberalism to decide”.

tolerance, so the long-term coexistence of various religions, theological doctrines and churches and ultimately the survival of religion as such. For example, as in the case of America, “even if many religious believers are only nominally so [over 90% in the US claim religiosity] the political problems created by a clash of contrasting comprehensive doctrines would lead to disaster without something like political liberalism to ameliorate the disputes as they arise” (Dombrowski 2001: xi). Generally, without liberalism and its secularism, religious pluralism and tolerance modern societies “would be left with a comprehensive doctrine that could be maintained only by the oppressive state use of deception or power” (Dombrowski 2001: 5). If so, societies devoid of liberalism and its secularism would descend into medieval, Catholic and Puritan theocracies, sectarianism and fundamentalism – as has in part America, at least the “Bible Belt” (Bauman 1997), during the 2000s and most of its history (Lipset 1996; Munch 2001) – and fascism precisely defined by ideological monism and political oppression.

In particular, liberalism through its secularism is an alternative to theocracy and religious coercion and oppression in general. If liberalism “emerged as an alternative to the ruinous wars of religion”, it did because these wars were outcomes of established, or attempts at establishing, theocracies in Europe, America and elsewhere. Liberal secularism essentially arose as an attempt to overcome or mitigate theocracy either pre-established, as in the case of medieval Catholicism, or attempted to reestablish, as done by post-medieval Protestantism, particularly Calvinism in Europe and Puritanism in England and America. In this sense, liberalism “did not emerge simply as a response to the religious wars in that it emerged also as a response to the problem of how to replace a morality based on ecclesiastical authority” (Dombrowski 2001: 7), thus to supersede theocracy as the totalitarian system of moral-religious coercion and repression. In particular, the aim or eventual outcome of liberal secularism was what Veblen describes as the “supersession of feudalistic or theocratic principles of law by natural rights” and civil liberties.

Notably, the Enlightenment emerged as a liberal-secular project and movement for superseding medieval and post-medieval theocracies, i.e. the theocratic “Dark Middle Ages” and their continuation or revival through the Reformation. Specifically, it was initially and remained an alternative to both medieval Catholic and post-medieval Protestant theocracies, such as the official Vatican theocracy and Calvinist-Puritan state churches a la “Holy

Commonwealths" in Europe and America, persisting and consolidating during the 18th century.

Thus, if in particular the Enlightenment arose as an "alternative to the ruinous wars of religion" in Europe since the Reformation, this was primarily because these were basically, to use Clausewitz's definition of war, the continuation of the established medieval Catholic theocracy "by other means", i.e. the systematic effort to establish post-medieval Protestant, particularly Calvinist-Puritan, theocracies as supposedly, as Weber suggests, "purer", stricter, harsher and "godlier". For the Enlightenment and liberalism overall, these Catholic-Protestant wars of religion were anachronistic crusades for a particular brand of theocracy, i.e. a Vatican or Calvinist-Puritan state church, thus for religious coercion and oppression against "infidels", "heretics" and "papists", respectively.

Negatively, in this view, they were not struggles for political democracy and religious liberty and tolerance as claimed by Protestants and agreed by many Catholics, as well as assumed by most (Parsonian) sociologists in the "naïve" and "speculative" assumption and "mythology" (Coffey 1998; Gould 1996; Zaret 1996) of liberal-democratic, individualistic Protestantism (Parsons 1937) invidiously distinguished from illiberal, anti-democratic, collectivist Catholicism. Of course, the difference was that through such religious wars medieval Catholicism sought to maintain and consolidate its traditional Vatican theocracy, while post-medieval Protestantism, notably Calvinism and Puritanism, attempted to institute and expand "new" theocracies, i.e. state churches, replacing the old seen as, in Weber's words, "too lax", so falling short of a true "Kingdom of God on Earth".

Yet, for the Enlightenment and liberalism overall, both Catholic and Protestant theocratic projects and practices, climaxing in religious wars, were functionally equivalent in terms of their destructive effects on human liberty, dignity and life, as indicated by the Inquisition and Puritan persecutions alike sharing witch-trials, with the second following or emulating the first. At this juncture, "Salem with witches" (Putnam 2000) in New England's Puritan theocracy, established and dominated by Winthrop et al. as self-proclaimed Divinely ordained masters (Munch 2001), was a functional equivalent or substantively, albeit not formally, identical to the Holy Inquisition of the Vatican Church instituted and ruled by Catholic theocrats claiming to be God's agents. In this sense, the outcome, if not the initial aim, of the

Calvinist-Puritan Revolution in Great Britain (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000) and America (Munch 2001) and perhaps the Reformation overall was basically to substitute one form of Inquisition (at least as a metaphor for), theocracy and religious oppression generally for another, i.e. “Protestant” for “Catholic”, through an established religion, viz. the establishment of Puritanism or the Congregational Church in New England from the 1620s–830s. This is what Weber implies by observing that Calvinist State Churches, specially the Puritan “theocracy of New England”, practiced the “ecclesiastical supervision” of individuals which “almost amounted to an inquisition” and thus retarded the “liberation of individual powers”.

In general, elaborating on Weber contemporary sociologists also suggest that the “original political impulse of either Lutheranism or Calvinism was not in a “liberal” or democratic direction but rather in a more “totalistic” one [by] restricting autonomous activities in both the economic and the political field. Initially, the Reformation was not a “modernizing” movement; it aimed to establish a “purer” medieval socio-political and religious order” (Eisenstadt 1965: 671). If so, then it was simply to substitute a new, Protestant for the old, Catholic form of “totalistic” religious-political coercion and repression, i.e. medieval theocracy. This includes substituting the medieval Holy Inquisition actually or figuratively through Puritan “Salem with witches”, as well as embarrassing “Monkey Trial[s]” (Boles 1999) against scientific biology and in defense of theology (creationism) as near-functional equivalents in the “Bible Belt” of those against empirical astronomy (Copernicus, Galileo, Bruno) and in protection of the theological dogma during the “Dark Middle Ages” whose “darkness” was precisely due to such and other theocratic, anti-humanist and irrational practices. Insofar as the Reformation “aimed to establish a “purer” medieval political-social system, then it factually or metaphorically sought to recreate or restore, in a new Protestant form, the “Dark Middle Ages” as the “golden past”, if not “paradise lost”, for conservative Protestantism and Catholicism alike. And, it occasionally or transiently succeeded, as in Weber’s Puritan “theocracy of New England” with its “Salem with witches” and the old South turned into a theocratic “Bible Belt” (Mencken 1982) by the anti-liberal, evangelical Great Awakenings.

Hence, so long as the initial aim or eventual outcome of these ruinous religious wars between despotic Catholicism and “totalistic” Protestantism was theocracy or religious repression rather than democracy and liberty, it was

essentially irrelevant to the Enlightenment whether its Catholic or Protestant version – the Vatican or Puritanism, “papists” or Cromwell and Winthrop et al., “papal” or Puritan struggles with liberalism (Burns 1990) – would prevail in these “fraternal” theocratic crusades. And still it is so for modern liberalism, contrary to the naïve and speculative assumptions or the liberal mythology of Protestantism as freedom and secularism, and the opposite supposition and myth of Catholicism as un-freedom and anti-secularism. In short, for the Enlightenment and early liberalism “the more and less theocratic models of the high medieval period” (Jepperson 2002: 62) incorporated both Catholic and Protestant, notably Calvinist-Puritan, theocracies. This is indicated by the observation that in general liberalism through pluralism and secularism “made religious liberty possible rather than anything intended by the Catholic Church or Luther or Calvin” (Dombrowski 2001: 3).

Hence, liberalism, the Enlightenment in particular, emerged as an alternative to Catholic and Protestant theocracies in the sense of official establishment and enforcement of religion and state church, seeking to maintain, as by Catholicism, or attain, as by Protestantism, specifically Calvinism and Puritanism, theocratic dominance in society through destructive religious wars. Counterfactually, liberalism perhaps would have not emerged or the Enlightenment happened, if Catholicism and Protestantism both did not engage in a crusade for their own brand of “totalistic” theocracy thus understood. It would have not if the Catholic “Dark Middle Ages”, including the “Medieval Holy Empire” (Collins 1995), and post-Reformation Puritan theocracies alike did not exist at all, just as, as sociologists suggest, if the Protestant Ethic in Weber’s sense “had occurred two centuries earlier, it might have died out” (Inglehart 2004: 8). Alternatively, Voltaire might have added, if they, like his God, did not exist, Catholic and Protestant mutually hostile and warring theocracies should have been invented to indicate their destructive effects on human freedom, dignity, and life, so to cause the Enlightenment and liberalism overall to emerge as an alternative to theocracy and coercive establishment and enforcement of religion in general.

Liberalism is a secular alternative to theocracy and its destructive effects on freedom by insisting on, as modern liberals point out, the “disestablishment of religion, which led to a diminution of religious faith” (Van Dyke 1995: 231). For instance, during the hegemony of neo-conservatism in America, the “increase in ‘no religion’ responses was confined to political moderates and

liberals; the religious preferences of political conservatives did not change. This political part of the increase in ‘nones’ [is] a symbolic statement against the Religious Right”³⁶ (Hout and Fischer 2002: 165).

Still, this liberal increase in “no religion” or “diminution of religious faith” even in “faith-based” and “godly” America does not mean that liberalism is necessarily and officially atheistic and anti-religious, as anti-liberals, especially Catholic, Protestant and Islamic conservatives, as well as fascists, allege. Liberal secularism is the antidote of theocracy as the poison of secular democracy and liberty overall by disestablishing or transferring religion from politics or the public domain to civil society or the private sphere. However, it is not in itself atheism, the official doctrine and institutional practice of anti-religion, contrary to conservative and fascist accusations. For liberalism since the Enlightenment, “religious beliefs are a private choice” (Infantino 2003: 2), not a public or political realm, on the assumption that, as Weber stresses, a science of “good and evil” is impossible due to incommensurable values and value judgments.

If, as the Enlightenment postulates, “critical reasoning is born when [moral-religious and ideological] absolutism dies” (Infantino 2003: 129), liberal culture, democracy and modernity overall characterized by criticism and dissent begins and is created where theocracy, premised on absolute “truth” and total consensus, ends and is destroyed or disestablished. For instance, liberal-secular culture, democracy and modernity overall effectively began and was established in New England, if not America as a whole, only when, primarily owing to Jeffersonian liberalism and democratic secularism, Puritanism (the Congregational Church) was officially “disestablished” during the 1830s after long two centuries of its official theocratic rule or “establishment”. In a sense, this is what Schumpeter may describe as the process of creative destruction by liberal secularism destroying or disestablishing the old theocratic and

³⁶ Hout and Fischer (2002: 165–6) find that “in the 1990s many people who had weak attachments to religion and either moderate or liberal political views found themselves at odds with the conservative [theocratic] political agenda of the Christian Right and reacted by renouncing their weak attachment to organized religion”. Further, they predict that “if the identification of religious affiliation with political conservatism strengthens, then liberals’ alienation from organized religion may become, as it has in many other nations, fully institutionalized” (Hout and Fischer 2002: 189).

absolutist religious structures and creating or establishing new democratic and non-absolutist, albeit not necessarily atheistic, ones.

Schumpeter's liberal-secular "creative destruction" of theocracy and religious absolutism is democratic and libertarian insofar as theocratic and other "totalitarianism was born from the presumptuous science of Good and Evil and faith in a republic of the virtuous" (Infantino 2003: 150) à la Plato's utopia based on absolutist religion as a "noble lie". As known, apart from pre-Christian Sparta as the realization of Plato's utopia, historical instances of such a theocratic "republic of the virtuous" abound in Western and other societies.

Cases in point include Medieval Catholic monastic theocracies degenerating into the holy Inquisition, Puritan Cromwell's "Holy Commonwealth" ruled by a "Parliament of Saints" in Great Britain and Winthrop et al.'s "Biblical Community" and "Christian Sparta" governed by Protestant "religious virtuosi" in New England, the evangelical "moral majority" in the "Bible Belt", as well as Islamic theocrats in Iran (Bauman 1997). Incidentally, old and New England's Puritan theocracies and their Islamic counterparts in Iran and elsewhere, like communist atheistic dictatorships, are both designated as "republics", presumably the rule of the "virtuous" people à la Plato, opposed to "sinful", "corrupt" monarchies, monarchs and popes attacked by Calvinism in Europe, Puritanism in Great Britain and America, and (Iranian) Islam, just as by communism. Needless to say, all these Plato-style "virtuous republics", theocratic or atheistic, were anything but democratic and free, thus self-contradicting the implied equation of "republic" and "democracy" or "freedom" in English and American Puritanism and "republicanism", as well as Iranian Islam and Soviet communism.

In retrospect, "neither Plato's "noble lie" nor the Inquisition [and its Protestant proxies] were accidents in that the suppression of dissent or heresy were needed to preserve the regnant comprehensive [religious] doctrine" (Dombrowski 2001: 5) claiming moral-religious absolutism and absolute truth. And if theocracy and totalitarianism overall ultimately results from moral absolutism, postulated in the "science of Good and Evil" and realized through a "republic of the virtuous", then this provides a compelling rationale to liberalism for considering religious beliefs private, relative, so free choices in a liberal culture and civil society rather than public, absolute and coercive truths, as do its illiberal, conservative-fascist opposites.

Thus, both the classical and modern liberal assumption is that contemporary free societies “are ungrounded by tradition or religion [but] based solely on the free consent of individuals” (McCann 2000: 9). Hence, liberalism is secular, as well as non-traditionalist, by liberating civil society and culture from theocratic religion, tradition and coercive theism in Comte’s sense of the theological age, in contrast to conservatism and fascism, perhaps excluding in part Nazism, defined by religious absolutism to the point of theocracy and traditionalism in Weber’s sense. However, it is not nevertheless atheism because religious beliefs still exist as private choices and the matter of the “free consent of individuals” rather than being suppressed and prohibited. This is what distinguishes liberalism, contrary to conservative and fascist accusations, from officially atheistic or “godless” communism that suppresses religion, as in the Soviet Union, albeit not in the former Yugoslavia independent of it and even communist Poland and Hungary as its so-called satellites (within the Warsaw Pact).

In sum, liberalism transcends theocracy and religious absolutism, but does not necessarily represent or produce atheism, as religion remains respected and protected as a private non-political decision, free personal choice, yet ending as the matter of public imposition and theocratic coercion as the deadly poison of liberal-secular democracy and freedom. Hence, it is liberalism with its secularism, i.e. liberal-secular democracy, rather than anti-secular and coercive conservatism, that really does or is able and likely to do justice to the true nature of religion and any other belief or faith as an individual choice, so personal freedom.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

The birth of liberal society and modernity in the Western world during the 18th century, like its gestation earlier, was the act of liberation from feudalism, medievalism and traditionalism overall as proto-conservatism, including the “Dark Middle Ages” defined and dominated by theology, religion and theocracy. Perhaps the most vivid and graphic way to conceive and visualize the genesis of liberal society and modernity is as the act, process or endeavor of liberation from the Inquisition and the Vatican state-church and its functional substitutes in Protestantism such as New England’s Puritan theocracy, and the feudal master-servant hierarchy.

Also, the maturation and extension of liberal society and modernity in the Western world, except perhaps for America, and beyond at the threshold of the 21st century is the act, process or effort of liberation from neo-conservatism as the successor, revival or different designation of feudalism, medievalism and traditionalism generally. By analogy, the probably most vivid way to represent this maturation and expansion of liberal society and modernity during the 21st century is as the act, process or endeavor of liberation from what Americans call, either in the sense of “heaven” on earth (Lemert 1999; Wuthnow 1998) or anti-secular “hell” (Mencken 1982), the Southern “Bible Belt” (Bauman 1997; Putnam 2000).

Despite these opposite connotations in common discourse, in sociological and historical terms, the latter is an anti-liberal and anti-secular, i.e. fundamentalist-theocratic, reality or project seeking and occasionally succeeding to resurrect from the “dead past” and “darkness” the “Dark Middle Ages”, especially New England’s Puritan theocracy or “Biblical Commonwealth”, as well as a functional counterpart (Smelser 1997) of Islamic theocracies like Iran (Bauman 1997). Generally, at the threshold of the 21st century most contemporary Western societies, Protestant and Catholic alike, have liberated and emancipated themselves from their own versions and proxies of the American “Bible Belt” or what Weber calls “bibliocracy”, i.e. theocratic and other illiberal and undemocratic institutions and projects.

A relatively isolated salient exception or deviation (Baker and Inglehart 2000; Inglehart 2004) from liberal society and modernity among Western societies is probably contemporary America. This holds true since or insofar as this liberation from anti- and pre-liberalism has not been completed and even failed or reversed by counteracting fundamentalist-theocratic and other anti-secular and illiberal, notably neo-conservative, forces. Alternatively, the failed, incomplete or reversed liberation from the theocratic “Bible Belt”, as a reality, project and allegory alike, makes and designates American society as a non-liberal, neo-conservative society even at the start of the 21st century. It does so, just as the failure to fully liberate from the “Dark Middle Ages” and generally medieval traditionalism made Germany (Habermas 1989) a non-liberal, arch-conservative society and prefigured first its illiberal conservatism embodied by Bismarck and then its totalitarian fascism incarnated Hitler in their “authoritarian continuities” (Blinkhorn 2003) during the 19th and the 20th centuries. At this juncture, to paraphrase Weber, the “ability to free oneself from the common tradition”, in the form of medievalism and theocracy, as in early modern Europe, or conservatism and bibliocracy, as in historical and contemporary America, actually represents what he calls “liberal enlightenment” and generates or defines liberal society and modernity.

Generally, liberal society and modernity in the Western world and beyond cannot be fully understood and explained without considering its relationship to, notably its liberation from, feudalism and other traditionalism, especially medieval theocracy, in the 18th century as well as neo-conservatism, including resurrected fundamentalism and bibliocracy, during the 21st century. The birth and maturation of liberal society and modernity from the 18th to 21st

century also signify the “death” of feudal traditionalism and the demise or “terminal condition” of its contemporary, yet disguised, functional equivalent neo-conservatism, respectively. Conversely, the observed “resurrection from the dead” (Dunn and Woodard 1996) of conservatism, including medievalist traditionalism and theocratic fundamentalism, in the “new” form of neo-conservatism especially in America during the late the 20th and early 21st centuries can cause and signify the “death”, discredit of or threat to liberal society, modernity and ideology, i.e. liberalism as a social system, historical time and ideology. And, this is what actually happened in this country during that period of conservative resurrection (e.g. the pejorative “liberal” or “L-word”).

Liberal society and modernity is hence the aggregate outcome of the historical process of societal liberalization, especially enfolding in the Western world since the 18th century and its Enlightenment, and conjoined with related contemporaneous processes like Weberian cultural-economic rationalization and Durkheimian structural differentiation, including that between politics and religion. It is simply defined by cultural as well as economic rationalism, though not necessarily in the utilitarian sense of “rational choice” theories, and by structural-functional differentiation between *inter alia* sacred and secular domains, just as by liberty and liberation.

Alternatively, a lacking or weak liberal society and modernity is the eventual and likely result of absent or blocked (Smelser 1997) societal liberalization as well as rationalization and differentiation, including missing or blurred substantive differentiating (Munch 2001) between politics and religion, just as a formal separation of church and state. Thus, if America even at the start of the 21st century remains a salient exception or deviation in respect to Western liberal and secular society, this “doubled-edged exceptionalism” (Lipset 1996) is the ultimate and expected result of this country remaining a “deviant case” from the observed global process of societal liberalization, rationalization and modernization, including secularization, through its persisting and intensified religious and other conservatism and traditionalism (Baker and Inglehart 2000).

By contrast, cultural and political liberalization, including partial secularization, during the 1960s made America more of a liberal and secular society than probably ever before, excepting perhaps the 1930s New Deal and Jefferson’s era, and even after, as illiberal traditionalist forces under the guise of

neo-conservatism blocked and even reversed this process during the 1980–2000s. The evident result of this blocked or reversed liberalization and related rationalizing-modernizing social processes is that America has again become the probably least liberal-secular society, as indicated and symbolized by the persisting theocratic project for a “Bible Belt”, in the Western world ushering in the 21st century, just as perhaps was during the 18th century primarily owing to New England’s “Biblical Commonwealth”.

It remains to be seen whether and how long America, largely due to predominant neo-conservatism, including religious fundamentalism, will remain in the state of such a remarkable and celebrated exceptionalism and deviation from this, if not universal and irreversible, then “master trend” (Alexander and Colomy 1991) of Western and global societal liberalization and modernization. If Western modernity and history of which America is, as US neo-conservatives particularly insist, an integral part, is of guidance, even the persisting and growing predominance (Lipset 1996) of religious conservatism, despite its providential design and hope for a thousand-year “Kingdom of God on Earth”, is not likely to be able to perpetuate this exceptionalism into timeless infinity or historical *long durée* (Braudel 1979). Specifically, the fate of feudalism and other traditionalism, including medieval theocracy, versus liberalism, secularism and modernity in 18th century Europe probably augurs the same destiny for neo-conservatism as a kind of neo-feudalism and neo-traditionalism, including the “new” patrimonialism (Cohen 2003), in particular bibliocracy, vis-à-vis the reemerging or impending “reality of a liberal and pluralist society” (Munch 2001: 270) in America during the 21st century and beyond. Hence, this is a historically based prediction or extrapolation rather than an evolutionary projection or eschatological hope.

However, the above by no means suggests that the process of societal liberalization as well as rationalization, modernization and differentiation is universal and completely irreversible within the Western world in general, and particularly America, especially in terms short of *long durée*. This is indicated by the rise of European fascism and its persistence through neo-fascism as well as its functional equivalents or proxies in America like McCarthyism and authoritarian neo-conservatism generally, as essentially illiberal, irrational and anti-modern forces and “signs of illiberty” (Dahrendorf 1979). In light of these counter-liberal forces and tendencies, liberal society and modernity has

really been and remains an unfinished project and “all is not well” in contemporary liberal-democratic societies (Terchek 1997: 1).

Alternatively, in terms of the *long durée* of centuries (e.g. the 21st century and beyond) and even Kondratieff waves of several decades (50–60 years) and with various short-term exceptions, deviations and even reversals a la American exceptionalism, this process, while hardly ever becoming totally universal and irreversible due to such illiberal forces, is likely to continue to operate as the “master trend” in Western societies, including in part America itself. Put in historical perspective liberal society and modernity, i.e. societal liberalism, is not only the bygone past of the 18th and 19th centuries and faded legacy of the Enlightenment, the fragile and counteracted present of the 20th century. It is also the likely future in the 21st century for these societies and even the world as a whole, if the current global trends toward liberalization can be plausibly expected to continue.

In particular, from this perspective, if liberalism triumphed over and superseded first feudalism and traditionalism overall, then fascism in Western Europe, it is not quite implausible to expect that a “liberal and pluralist” society will also triumph and override their revivals, substitutes or proxies like neo-conservatism and religious fundamentalism in America in its *long durée* during the 21st century or beyond. Even if this scenario does not materialize, as most of America’s history, from New England’s Puritan theocracy to the anti-secular Great Awakenings and Southern bibliocracy, seemingly implies, such persisting American exceptionalism still will not prevent, short of a holy global war on the “evil” of liberalism, or invalidate the reality, idea or trend of liberal society and modernity within the Western world and beyond during *long durée*. It will cause American exceptionalism and its “double-edge” to become exceptional anti-liberalism and illiberal-edged, and to that extent a factor and syndrome of illiberty compared with other Western societies, in the specific form of a “Bible Belt” as a fundamentalist-theocratic “heaven” (Lemert 1999; Wuthnow 1998) contrasted with a disdained liberal-secularist Europe and world as a whole.

In retrospect, this illiberal exception would certainly make happy and proud of his descendents and admirers a la Reagan et al. Winthrop and other Puritan theocrats with their Divine design and (New England) creation of America as a “Christian Sparta” or “Holy Biblical Commonwealth” extolled as a “shining city on a hill”, but hardly such founders as Jefferson, Madison and other

Enlightenment-influenced liberals, secularists and modernizers, and in that sense is just partially “American”. Alternatively, liberal society and modernity, so liberalism, is not entirely “un-American”, “foreign” and “European”, as US conservatives allege, as did and do Nazis in respect with Germany (“anti-German”), in view of these and other prominent liberals during America’s founding and subsequent history.

In short, liberal society and modernity has been the relatively short past and is likely to be a future of contemporary societies in their *long durée*. Especially Western societies have evolved in the direction of liberal society and modernity, i.e. societal liberalism, since the 18th century, in particular under the impetus and legacy of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Also, most of them usher in the 21st century as liberal societies (Inglehart 2000), with the possible exception of America in consequence of the comparative weakness and even decline and discredit of liberalism versus and by conservatism. At the threshold of the third millennium, the “reality of a liberal and pluralist society” is prevailing within the Western world and beyond, despite certain exceptions and deviations like America and the reaction of counterforces such as neo-conservatism, including religious fundamentalism.

Historically, just as liberal society and modernity was born out of a struggle against and superseded feudalism and traditionalism generally, including medieval theocracy, during the 18th and 19th centuries and fascism in the 20th century, it tends to mature and expand through similar battles with and to supersede their illiberal successors and functional equivalents, including neo-conservatism, in particular theocratic fundamentalism, in Western and other societies, except in part for America, ushering in the 21st century. In this sense, the contemporary antinomy of liberal society and modernity versus neo-conservatism, notably religious fundamentalism, in America and elsewhere is in essence a continuation or reenactment of what Mannheim (1986) identifies as the “immediate” antagonism between early liberalism and feudalism or traditionalism as a whole, including medieval theocracy. So, to better understand the globally prevalent “reality of a liberal and pluralist society” counteracted by neo-conservatism and other illiberal forces in especially America during the 2000s, one should consider liberalism as opposed by medieval traditionalism and proto-conservatism in Europe over the period of the Enlightenment and later.

In this respect, while largely won or moderated by liberalism in Western Europe, the battle continues, even with an ever-increasing intensity, between liberal society and modernity and medieval traditionalism in the updated and renamed form of neo-conservatism in America ushering in the 21st century. By being more illiberal and/or conservative, contrary to conventional wisdom (Lipset and Marks 2000; Nisbet 1966), at the threshold of the third millennium, the supposed new and exceptional nation appears as even “older”, more traditionalistic, primitive and anachronistic than the “old” and “decadent” Europe, as usually branded and disdained by US conservatives. If anti-liberalism reflects traditionalism and even primitivism, America under neo-conservatism continues to be or becomes the “last remaining primitive” (Baudrillard 1999) and traditional society within modern Western societies.

The point is that this illiberal-edged and conservative-sustained American exceptionalism remains incomprehensible, a sort of Divine destiny, mission and mystery, as US conservatives, notably religious fundamentalists, claim, if not situated in a historical perspective, the initial and continuing antagonism of medieval theocratic traditionalism or arch-conservatism to liberalism in Western Europe. If this is done, then it appears simply as the result and symptom of reenacting, with some adaptations in décor and rhetoric, this antagonism against liberalism by the “old wine” of theocratic traditionalism in the “new bottle” of neo-conservatism. Within this historical framework, anti-liberal American exceptionalism is not really “exceptional” or “novel”, though it is at the start of the 21st century compared with Western liberal and secular societies.

Despite its actual or ostensive lack of mediaeval past (Lipset and Marks 2000), America’s liberal society and modernity, in virtue of its weakness or non-existence due to the dominance of neo-conservatism and other illiberal forces, actually remains the hostage, casualty or collateral damage of feudalism. This holds true of the latter in the sense of medieval traditionalism and proto-conservatism, including religion, theology and theocracy, in the “novel” adapted form of neo-conservatism, particularly religious fundamentalism and bibliocracy. It is in this sense that America has been part, as US neo-conservatives insist, of Western history – the battle between liberalism and traditionalism or conservatism – since the 18th century and before (e.g. 17th century New England’s theocracy). Yet, in the same sense, it is not

completely part of, but an exception and deviation from Western society as defined by liberalism and secularism ushering in the 21st century, as most US neo-conservatives and other illiberal forces proclaim with ethnocentric pride by invidiously distinguishing “conservative”, “faith-based” and “superior” America from “liberal”, “secular” and “inferior” or “decadent” Europe. Simply, America ushering in the 21st century is an almost exact replica of Europe during the 18th century in respect of these neo-conservative culture and other wars against liberal society and modernity, i.e. liberalism.

In this respect, medieval-style “crusades” as both an actual phenomenon and a metaphor against the “evil” of liberal society and modernity continue in America ushering the 21st century, just as they have never stopped during most of its history since New England’s Puritan “holy wars” on “infidels”, “impure”, “ungodly” and other “witches”. And, for US anti-liberal forces, especially religious conservatives, what they condemned and disdained since Winthrop et al. as a “vice” and “degeneracy” in the “old” and decadent Europe – i.e. the medieval order and Catholic theocracy – has become through a sort of alchemy and under the emperor “new clothes” a la the Puritan “Biblical Commonwealth” a supreme “virtue” and God’s “manifest destiny” in the “new nation.”

In sum, to understand the lack or weakness of liberal society and modernity in historical and contemporary America requires considering that the “holy war” of medieval traditionalism or proto-conservatism against liberalism, including secularism in the 18th century, has never ended, unlike in most of Western Europe, in this country even as it ushers in the 21st century. Rather, this war was perpetuated and intensified in the form of culture and violent Puritan-style wars or “crusades” by neo-conservatism against liberal-secular society and modernity, perhaps climaxing precisely during the early 21st century. It is this, perhaps more than anything else in the context of liberal society and modernity, that constitutes and defines conservative-reproduced and celebrated American exceptionalism compared to most other Western societies. It makes it the double- or single-edged dangerous sword of predominant anti-liberalism and anti-secularism inherited from and reminiscent of medievalism, including feudal theocracy, despite the actual or supposed lack of an institutional medieval past.

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