

Neoliberalism and Doublespeak

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Date 30th Dec 2021

Abstract

A strawman argument of Milton Friedman's position on liberalism has been promoted as representing the concept of "greed is good" to attack the concept of a decentralised free-market approach to political regulation and control and the ability for markets to change with the needs of society organically. Instead, neoliberalism represents a system and structure of increasing government centralisation at the expense of small to medium businesses and individuals. The attack on the writings and ideology of Milton Friedman exposes the Orwellian doublespeak that underlies many of the leftist attacks on truth and the early Scottish Enlightenment values that led to the growth of liberal capitalism and markets and the increase in freedom throughout society.

1. The History of Neoliberalism.

Just as capitalism was developed as a word to insult and diminish the alternative to the mercantilist concepts Adam Smith fought against, the term neoliberalism has developed as a means of diminishing and misrepresenting a strawman argument of certain types of an economic system.¹ The concept surrounding the idea of economic freedom and traditional liberalism will be compared and contrasted against the ideas of neoliberalism and the historical changes that have led to widespread misrepresentation of the term.

Milton Friedman was a classical liberal like more traditional free-market thinkers, including Adam Smith, Frédéric Bastiat and Ludwig von Mises.² Milton Friedman would have claimed to be a neoliberal based on the assertion that this represented classical liberalism with improved concepts of economic theory. As will be demonstrated in this paper, the notion of classical liberalism has changed from one of freedom to one of centralised government and administrative oversight.³ Most critically, “[t]he possibility of coordination through voluntary cooperation rests on the elementary—yet frequently denied—proposition that both parties to an economic transaction benefit from it, *provided the transaction is bilaterally voluntary and informed*.”⁴ That is, exchange occurs without coercion. This creation of coordination through a voluntary exchange is the heart of what Friedman saw as competitive capitalism.

¹ Wrenn, M.V., 2015. Agency and neoliberalism. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 39(5), pp.1231-1243.

² Raico, R., 2012. *Classical liberalism and the Austrian School*. Ludwig von Mises Institute.

³ Clarke, S., 2005. The neoliberal theory of society. *Neoliberalism: A critical reader*, 50, p.59.

⁴ Friedman, M., 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. University of Chicago press. pp. 51-52.

In writing about the problems with mercantilist systems and the capture of markets, Adam Smith stated, “People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the publick”.⁵ Unfortunately, the often falsely reported aspect of Smith’s work that is overlooked is how Smith was not looking into protecting large industries but how to best benefit the consumer. Unfortunately, the neoliberal capture of free-market economics has undermined the definitions creating a new meaning of liberalism.⁶

When Mises wrote on liberalism, he defined the word from its Latin roots of the term *liber*, which meant “freedom”.⁷ To capture and subvert the term liberalism, modern neo-liberalist supporters of big government programs have redefined the term to mean something completely different from the original and have created a strawman argument of those presented by supporters of free markets such as Milton Friedman of a system of “greed is good” “capitalism” that never truly existed as an aim of those seeking free-markets.⁸

2. The Death of Traditional Liberalism

The origins of liberalism and hence the poor stepchild of neoliberalism that has developed evolved through the process of the Enlightenment.⁹ These ideas and

⁵ Smith, A., 1791. *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations: By Adam Smith...* (Vol. 1). JJ Tourneisen; and JL Legrand. p. 54.

⁶ Cerny, P.G., 2008. Embedding neoliberalism: the evolution of a hegemonic paradigm. *The journal of international trade and diplomacy*, 2(1), pp.1-46.

⁷ Von Mises, L., 2012. *Liberalism*. Liberty Fund.

⁸ Snowdon, C. (2014). Selfishness, greed and capitalism: Debunking myths about the free market. *Selfishness, Greed and Capitalism: Debunking Myths About the Free Market, Institute of Economic Affairs Monographs, Hobart Paper, 177*.

⁹ Smith, W.D., 1991. *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany, 1840-1920*. Oxford University Press on Demand.

values led to the transformed ideas of individuals such as John Dewey.¹⁰ Taking the concepts of a blank slate or *Tabula Rasa* as a concept that has been falsely attributed to originate from Locke and embracing a progressivist concept based on Plato's concept of being able to recreate man, many late 19th-century liberals sought a methodology to recreate culture and society.¹¹ In this, these individuals abandoned the very foundations of liberal freedom.

As with other followers of Saint-Simon and Hegel, such as Marx, Western post-enlightenment teaching sought to discover both the science of humanity as David Hume had sought to conceive and to integrate the science of history in "historism" in a manner analogous to what Hayek would refer to as "scientism".¹² U.S. President Woodrow Wilson embraced these concepts of progress, seeing them as a way to use academic knowledge and the ideas of an intellectual elite to create a system that would propel society forward.¹³

¹⁰ Rockefeller, S.C., 1989. John Dewey, spiritual democracy, and the human future. *CrossCurrents*, 39(3), pp.300-321.; Dewey, J., 1963. *Liberalism and social action* (Vol. 74). New York: Capricorn books.

¹¹ The essay by Locke did not refer to a child is a formless blank slate in a way that has been commonly misrepresented and taken by subsequent authors such as Brill. Rather, critical attacks on Locke's work by Leibniz reference to these terms in a manner that both misrepresents Locke and falsely attributes this undefined term to misrepresent Locke's characterisation that all learning is inscribed from the senses. William Molyneux correspondence with Locke used the terminology *Tabula Rasa* in documenting a translated understanding of Aristotle.

; Locke, J., 1847. *An essay concerning human understanding*. Kay & Troutman; Brill, A.A., 1985. *Basic principles of psychoanalysis*. University Press of America.; Leibniz, G.W. and von Leibniz, G.W.F., 1996. *Leibniz: New essays on human understanding*. Cambridge University Press.; De Beer, E.S., 1971. The Correspondence of John Locke. *Notes and Queries*, 18(9), pp.344-a.

¹² Adcock, R. and Bevir, M., 1880. The remaking of political theory. *Modern political science: Anglo-American exchanges since*, pp.209-33.; Stuchey, B., 1800. Literature, Liberty and Life of the Nation. *Writing National Histories: Western Europe since*.; Hayek, F.V., 1942. Scientism and the study of society. Part I. *Economica*, 9(35), pp.267-291.; Hayek, F.V., 1943. Scientism and the study of society. Part II. *Economica*, 10(37), pp.34-63.; Hayek, F.V., 1944. Scientism and the study of society. Part III. *Economica*, 11(41), pp.27-39.

¹³ Pestritto, R.J., 2005. *Woodrow Wilson and the roots of modern liberalism*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

It was the introduction of German philosophical concepts designed to “fix society” using methodologies such as Bismarck state socialism that promoted the concept of a “third way” in a manner that Milton Keynes would later promote.¹⁴ In addition, the economic concept of “progressivism” was promoted as a methodology that would remove the predations of laissez-faire capitalism and stop the control of individuals in a plutocracy.¹⁵ Unlike de Tocqueville, the progressivist movement saw the state replacing the local communities and individually founded civic organisations with “coercive philanthropy”.¹⁶

R.T. Ely managed to extend his ideas through the indoctrination of Thomas Woodrow Wilson during his tenure as a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University.¹⁷ Wilson took German political theory and concepts of bureaucratic administration and developed them into a framework for a new progressive attack on individual liberty and property rights.¹⁸ Emulating the concepts of Ely in promoting “the state as an educational and ethical agency whose positive aid is an indispensable condition of human progress”, Wilson and the early proponents of neoliberalism sought to integrate scientific methods and techniques that would aid in controlling the government, the people and society.¹⁹

¹⁴ Begg, C., 2002. *The ‘third way’ in action: Inclusion at a cost* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Queensland, Australia).; Castles, F.G., Leibfried, S., Lewis, J., Obinger, H. and Pierson, C. eds., 2012. *The Oxford handbook of the welfare state*. OUP Oxford.

¹⁵ Nelson, R.H., 2021. *Economics as religion*. Penn State University Press.

¹⁶ De Tocqueville, A., 1896. *The recollections of Alexis de Tocqueville*. Macmillan.; Ely, R.T., 2010. III. Philanthropy. In *Social Aspects of Christianity* (pp. 83-112). Gorgias Press.

¹⁷ Thies, C.F. and Pecquet, G.M., 2010. The Shaping of a Future President's Economic Thought: Richard T. Ely and Woodrow Wilson at "The Hopkins". *The Independent Review*, 15(2), pp.257-277.

¹⁸ Rosser, C., 2010. Woodrow Wilson's administrative thought and German political theory. *Public Administration Review*, 70(4), pp.547-556.; Ely, J.W., 2012. The Progressive ERA Assault on Individualism and Property Rights a. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 29(2), pp.255-282.

¹⁹ Ely quoted in: Laughlin, J.L., 1892. The study of political economy in the United States. *Journal of Political Economy*, 1(1), pp.1-19.

Unfortunately, the progressive idea saw the average person as “generally either selfish, ignorant, timid, or a fool”.²⁰ As with many adherence to the German schools of philosophy in the 19th-century, the Wilsonian doctrine maintained a Platonic distaste of democracy and the common person.²¹ With these concepts of a Hegelian and Platonic concept of rule by the intellectual elite, Wilson sought to integrate and greatly extend the German concept of the professional bureaucratic mechanism initially implemented by President Grant and later by President Arthur.²²

3. The Wilsonian Era and the Creation of the Fed

The birth of neoliberalism started with the politicisation of business and capital between the first and second world wars. The introduction of political scientism and the belief that all social systems can be measured and the behaviours analysed through objectively scientific principles has led to the concept of a redefined version of corporate governance and created a concept of stakeholder governance that promotes a highly distorted idea of Milton Friedman’s concept of shareholder value.²³

²⁰ “The Study of Administration ” by Woodrow Wilson quoted in: Brooks, R.P., 1925. Prepresidential Days. *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 9(3), pp.246-252.

²¹ Frederickson, H.G., 2015. *Social equity and public administration: Origins, developments, and applications*. Routledge.; Emerson, B., 2015. The democratic reconstruction of the Hegelian State in American progressive political thought. *The Review of Politics*, 77(4), pp.545-574.; Murray, J.C., 1954. Leo XIII: Two Concepts of Government: II. Government and the Order of Culture. *Theological Studies*, 15(1), pp.1-33.

²² Brooks, T., 2006. Plato, Hegel, and democracy. *Hegel Bulletin*, 27(1-2), pp.24-50.; Barzelay, M., 2001. *The new public management*. University of California Press.; Van Riper, P.P., 1983. The American administrative state: Wilson and the founders-An unorthodox view. *Public Administration Review*, pp.477-490.

²³ Mintzberg, H., Simons, R. and Basu, K., 2002. Beyond selfishness. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 44(1), p.67.; Schwartz, M.S. and Saiia, D., 2012. Should Firms Go “Beyond Profits”? Milton Friedman versus Broad CSR 1. *Business and Society Review*, 117(1), pp.1-31.

In implementing such a system, the widespread concept being promoted is aligned strongly to the pseudoscientific principles of Karl Marx.²⁴

Marx argued that scientifically managed bureaucratic processes would allow the government to manage society with far less waste than in an emergent system from market capitalism. Instead, the growing bureaucracy and scope of government services have led to a system that is in many ways self-contradictory and anti-liberal in that it seeks to repress many aspects of human nature. In detailing the free market, Freedman noted that the problem with a free market is that it is so difficult for people, including government officials, to shape it to their own will.²⁵ as Freedman noted, “[the market] gives people what they want instead of what a particular group thinks they ought to want.”²⁶

Friedman foresaw a radical difference in the nineteenth and twentieth-century liberal. In particular, he argues how the twentieth-century liberal replaced a belief in voluntary arrangements with a reliance upon the state.²⁷ Hence, the Wilsonian doctrine of “administrative questions are not political questions” where the bureaucracy should be removed from politics is one that Friedman argued against, noting that “economic arrangements play a dual role in the promotion of a free society. On the one hand, ‘freedom’ in economic arrangements is itself a component of freedom broadly understood, so ‘economic freedom’ is an end in itself to a believer in

²⁴ Ladyman, J., 2013. 3. Toward a Demarcation of Science from Pseudoscience. In *Philosophy of pseudoscience* (pp. 45-60). University of Chicago Press.; White, H., 1982. Karl Marx, Romantic Irony, and the Proletariat: The Mythopoetic Origins of Marxism.

²⁵ Friedman, M., 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. University of Chicago press.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 19.

²⁷ Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*.

freedom. In the second place, economic freedom is also an indispensable means toward the achievement of political freedom”.²⁸

Friedman saw the growing power of the state and how many functions of the bureaucracy had been taken out of the political process. Whilst the size of government remained limited until after World War II; it has been the base of the administrative system outside of direct political control or democratic consensus that Friedman would see as the biggest threat to liberalism and freedom. The administrative system promoted by Waldo and others saw a distinction between value and fact. In this, removing the politicisation of bureaucratic functions left the concepts of value to be decided outside of the range of a democratic process. Instead, public administration became “active, informed, politically savvy agents of change”.²⁹

The publication and review of the administrative state by Dwight Waldo demonstrated the flaw in ignoring the intertwined nature of politics and bureaucracy.³⁰ Unfortunately, many progressive reformers have missed the message concerning the intertwined administrations of government functions and how these cannot be conducted in a purely scientific manner.³¹ These professional administrators of the state assumed the role of many political functions that would have been left in a democratic system to the voter or the market and free choice. Waldo did not object to

²⁸ Martin, D.W., 1988. The fading legacy of Woodrow Wilson. *Public Administration Review*, pp.631-636.; Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. p. 46.

²⁹ Appe, S., Rubaii, N. and Whigham, K., 2021. Expanding the Reach of Representativeness, Discretion, and Collaboration: The Unrealized Potential of Public Administration Research in Atrocity Prevention. *Public Administration Review*, 81(1), pp.81-90.

³⁰ Waldo, D., 1965. The administrative state revisited. *Public Administration Review*, 25(1), pp.5-30.; Svara, J.H., 2008. Beyond dichotomy: Dwight Waldo and the intertwined politics–administration relationship. *Public Administration Review*, 68(1), pp.46-52.

³¹ Cook, B.J., 2014. *Bureaucracy and self-government: Reconsidering the role of public administration in American politics*. JHU Press.

the notion of professional administrative control but rather saw an objection in calling this process “scientific”.³²

The creation and growth of the Federal Reserve Bank was another intervention that acted in the slow erosion of 19th-century liberal freedoms. For all of the claims of independence, the notion of presidential power was recognised from the start of the Federal Reserve.³³ As Forder notes, the Federal Reserve was not intended to be outside political control.³⁴ Rather, independence was from banking interests, not the government. It was during the Reagan presidency that a gradual development of independence followed, removing some of the acquired power

Wilson had argued that the Federal Reserve must be a system based on centralised control in the hands of the government that was “public, not private, must be vested in the government itself, not the masters of business”.³⁵ Through this, the argument for freedom is played against a hypocritical move to centralise power in the hands of the political elite. Conversely, the proposal by Milton Friedman was to remove political power from the Federal Reserve.³⁶ Equally, the mere fact that Friedman sought to define monetary policy placed them in opposition to many more radical libertarians.³⁷

³² Waldo, D., 1952. Development of theory of democratic administration. *American Political Science Review*, 46(1), pp.81-103.

³³ Willis, H.P., 1925. Politics and the Federal Reserve System. *Bankers' Magazine* (1896-1943), 110(1), p.13.

³⁴ Forder, J., 2003. ‘Independence’ and the Founding of the Federal Reserve. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 50(3), pp.297-310.

³⁵ Abrams, R.M., 1956. Woodrow Wilson and the Southern Congressmen, 1913-1916. *The Journal of Southern History*, 22(4), pp.417-437. Forder, J., 1996. On the assessment and implementation of ‘institutional’ remedies. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 48(1), pp.39-51.

³⁶ Friedman, M., 1985. The case for overhauling the Federal Reserve. *Challenge*, 28(3), pp.4-12.

³⁷ Rothbard, M.N., 2002. Milton Friedman Unraveled. *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, 16(4; SEAS AUT), pp.37-54.

As with Hayek and Mises before him, Friedman did not see monetary policy outside political control. Rather, these economists saw the importance of allowing democratic processes to interact and select how the monetary policy and functions of the government operate.³⁸ However, as Mises noted, the word liberalism and neoliberalism has come to represent government intervention and welfare state programs.³⁹ United States Senator Joseph Clark Jr. stated this reversal in the meaning of how the word liberalism had changed:

*“To lay a ghost at the outset and to dismiss semantics, a liberal is here defined as one who believes in utilizing the full force of government for the advancement of social, political, and economic justice at the municipal, state, national, and international levels. This concept is an extension of Webster's dictionary definition of a liberal as "A member of a party claiming to advocate progress or reform; not conservative." A liberal believes government is a proper tool to use in the development of a society which attempts to carry Christian principles of conduct into practical effect. Needless to say, however, there are many devout Christians among the conservatives.”*⁴⁰

Classical liberalism has been altered into something different from neoliberalism through this process, as Mises and Friedman espoused.⁴¹ Through this, we see the subversion of liberalism through the introduction of state power in the guise of

³⁸ Friedman, M., 2007. The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. In *Corporate ethics and corporate governance* (pp. 173-178). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.

³⁹ Von Mises, L., 2012. *Liberalism*. Liberty Fund.

⁴⁰ Clark Jr., J., 1953. *Can the Liberals Rally?*. [online] The Atlantic. Available at: <<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1953/07/can-the-liberals-rally/376242/>> [Accessed 23 December 2021].

⁴¹ Brennan, J. and Tomasi, J., 2012. *Classical liberalism* (pp. 115-132). New York: Oxford University Press.; Barry, N., 1987. *On classical liberalism and libertarianism*. Springer.

“coercive philanthropy”.⁴² As Butler notes, the concepts behind classical liberalism may be traced back to Anglo-Saxon England and largely developed through concepts such as the common law, the setting of rules through legal processes including juries and widespread trust in common knowledge and “the people”.⁴³

Bureaucracy and systems that become entrenched

Friedman demonstrated that bureaucracy becomes entrenched and continues to operate well beyond its need while equally providing solutions to this dilemma.⁴⁴ Following researchers such as Drucker, it has been demonstrated that bureaucratic functions of government consolidate power past the need for departmental function.⁴⁵ From this, it becomes important to remember how power corrupts.⁴⁶ The difficulty in this method results from the Wilsonian and separation of administrative functions of government and the political power structure that may be voted in and out in a democratic system.

While Tilman accepts that bureaucracies are unlikely to relinquish power, the author argues that Friedman is inconsistent in creating a utopia characterised through the removal of government intervention.⁴⁷ The argument presented is that no government will naturally relinquish power in a modern economy, and hence Friedman’s concepts can never be achieved. However, while systems such as “school choice” and voucher systems that were introduced as a concept by Friedman have

⁴² Ely, 2010. *Philanthropy*. pp. 83-112. Gorgias Press.

⁴³ Butler, E., 2015. *Classical Liberalism—A Primer*. London Publishing Partnership.

⁴⁴ Hess, F.M., 2010. Does school choice “work”. *National Affairs*, 5(1), pp.35-53.

⁴⁵ Shkop, E.M., 2003. Educational Vouchers: In Confrontation with Bureaucracy. *Journal of Jewish Education*, 69(1), pp.8-22.

⁴⁶ Acton, L., 1887. Power tends to corrupt. *a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton*, April, 3.

⁴⁷ Tilman, R., 1976. Ideology & Utopia in the Political Economy of Milton Friedman. *Polity*, 8(3), pp.422-442.

been demonstrated to work well, other authors have noted that political constraints limit the ability for these solutions to be introduced.⁴⁸

Innovation and change

One of the biggest ironies that had accompanied the change in nomenclature that is associated with neoliberalism now from the time when Milton Friedman stated that he was a new type of classical liberal is the move away from small government as a prime reconceptualisation of freedom into the embedding of government into the common discourse on liberalism. As Friedman argued, the move away from authoritarian government and economic control and the introduction of more laissez-faire economic policy led to “an enormous increase in the well-being of the masses”.⁴⁹ However, the outcome of the two world wars saw an increasing intervention of government and economic affairs and a move towards collectivist ideals.⁵⁰

Welfare replaced freedom as the dominant position in democratic governments as the separation of administrative and political functions increased. Naturally, this led to a number of reactions, such as the publication of “The Road to Serfdom” by Hayek and the objectivist movement by Ayn Rand.⁵¹ However, even at this early point, authors such as Drob responded to the works of Hayek and others, noting that they believed that democracy needed planning.⁵² But, of course, with the

⁴⁸ Viteritti, J.P., 2010. School choice and market failure: How politics trumps economics in education and elsewhere.

⁴⁹ Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. p. 49.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Hayek, F.A. and Caldwell, B., 2014. *The road to serfdom: Text and documents: The definitive edition*. Routledge.; Rand, A., 1990. *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology: Expanded Second Edition*. Penguin.

⁵² Drob, J., 1945. Democracy is not doomed!: An answer to Friedrich Hayek.

growing separation of the bureaucratic and political functions, the planners would not be subjected to political control. Instead, in true Wilsonian form, the people would be given a patina of democratic control and power whilst the true administrative power and the system would be taken out of the hands of the 'hoi polloi'.

Whilst respondents to Hayek noted how the systems of socialism in the United Soviet Socialist Republics and other Communist countries were not truly Socialist in an argument of no true Scotsman form, Friedman had stated that “democratic socialism” is at best a “contradiction in terms” based on “intimate connection between economic arrangements and political arrangements, and that only certain combinations are possible”.⁵³ In this, Friedman argued that the control of the economy and the separation of administrative power in the government from political ends leads to the decay of the free society. But, importantly, it is the freedom in economic arrangements, and the indispensable means that this provides that is necessary to achieve political freedom.⁵⁴

The difficulty of separating government bureaucratic control from the developed political system involves the lack of checks and controls within a capitalist commercial structure. In the laissez-faire system promoted by Friedman, failing corporations are not bailed out when they have economic problems leading to a scenario where the extreme risk-taking within the later twentieth century is disincentivised.⁵⁵ The bureaucratic link between large corporations that are too big to fail and a bureaucracy that is taken out of the political structure is more reminiscent of

⁵³ Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. p. 45.

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 45-46.

⁵⁵ Lindsey, B. and Teles, S.M., 2017. *The captured economy: How the powerful enrich themselves, slow down growth, and increase inequality*. Oxford University Press.

a mercantilist system in the form that Adam Smith wrote against than a capitalist structure promoted by liberal reformers.⁵⁶

The growth of new mercantilism noted by Robinson and others was slowly renamed into being referred to as neoliberalism.⁵⁷ Through the erosion of political controls over the government functions, bureaucratic systems were able to grow beyond the initial need into a system that persisted and would not ever fail in the form of a capitalist business when it became obsolete or would not diminish in size as public servants fight to maintain their budgets. Consequently, government departments operate without the necessity for innovation or change and, in many cases, are implemented to ensure the change does not occur.⁵⁸

4. The Early Mont Pèlerin Society

The Guardian quoted Milton Friedman saying that “I believe a relatively free economy is a necessary condition for freedom. But there is evidence that a democratic society, once established, destroys a free economy”.⁵⁹ While widely reported, the quote differs substantially from the official interview transcripts and the statement in Friedman’s work, “Capitalism and Freedom”.⁶⁰ Friedman had promoted the concept of differentiating political and economic power and, through this process, noted that

⁵⁶ Tame, C.R., 1978. Against the New Mercantilism: The Relevance of Adam Smith. *Il Politico*, pp.766-775.

⁵⁷ Robinson, J., 1966. *The new mercantilism: An inaugural lecture*. CUP Archive.

⁵⁸ Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. p. 6.

⁵⁹ Slobodian, Q., 2019. *Democracy doesn’t matter to the defenders of ‘economic freedom’* | Quinn Slobodian. [online] The Guardian.

⁶⁰ Friedman, M., 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. University of Chicago press.; Note also that the quote differs from that presented in a variety of other texts and sources including Friedman, M., 2017. *Milton Friedman on freedom: Selections from the collected works of Milton Friedman*. Hoover Press.

political power remained a zero-sum game. In contrast, economic power and wealth may be expanded.

Milton Freedman demonstrated how the progressivist tradition that President Wilson heavily promoted became the heart of neoliberalism and replaced the concept of freedom with one of beneficent government oversight.

*“When the question arises at what level of government something should be done, the twentieth-century liberal is likely to resolve any doubt in favor of the more centralized level—the state instead of the city, the federal government instead of the state, a world organization instead of a federal government. The nineteenth-century liberal is likely to resolve any doubt in the other direction and to emphasize a decentralization of power.”*⁶¹

Cornelissen argued that the Mont Pèlerin Society (MPS) acted in the second half of the twentieth century to fight against democratic policy that aided interventions within the economy and destroyed the market mechanism.⁶² As with other scholars, Cornelissen contends that the MPS was acting against the democratic rule and the rights of the people. However, as has been noted above, the members of the MPS saw the growing divisions between the administrative and political structures and sort rather find a solution in constitutional reform that would place limits on the ability for bureaucratic functions to gain excessive power. In this, it could be argued that the MPS was not fighting democracy but rather seeking a means to stop populist

⁶¹ Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. p. 42.

⁶² Cornelissen, L., 2017. ‘How can the people be restricted?’: the Mont Pèlerin society and the problem of democracy, 1947–1998. *History of European Ideas*, 43(5), pp.507-524.

demagoguery from undermining the very system that gave them power in the first place.

Plato noted that limits must exist to stop the rise of the populist leader in the form of a demagogue.⁶³ The constitutional limits discussed by the MPS reflect the classical limitations noted by Aristotle and implemented within the foundation of the Republican system within the United States.⁶⁴ Yet, some intellectuals seeking to portray the discussions of individuals, including Friedman, in the light of a collectivist conscience have painted the limitations of the system and the limits imposed upon a demagogue in a negative light.⁶⁵ Simultaneously, these authors have put the issues of repression in dictatorships in the light of a problem caused by economic freedoms.⁶⁶

The growing influence of Keynes and the Wilsonian agenda was promoted by many in government as this increased the power and control within government.⁶⁷ As Bjerre-Poulsen notes, this opposition to the growing power of political elites promoting central planning put the MPS into the role of the liberal counter-establishment.⁶⁸ In each argument for liberalism, the opposition is the collectivist ideal of the growing power of governing elites not controlled through the democratic process.

⁶³ Landauer, M., 2019. 6. Demagoguery and the Limits of Expert Advice in Plato's Gorgias. In *Dangerous Counsel* (pp. 149-178). University of Chicago Press.

⁶⁴ Galston, M., 1994. Taking Aristotle seriously: Republican-oriented legal theory and the moral foundation of deliberative democracy. *Cal L. Rev.*, 82, p.329.

⁶⁵ Mirowski, P. and Plehwe, D. eds., 2015. *The road from Mont Pèlerin: The making of the neoliberal thought collective, with a new preface*. Harvard University Press.

⁶⁶ Phillips-Fein, K., 2015. 8. Business Conservatives and the Mont Pèlerin Society. In *The Road from Mont Pèlerin* (pp. 280-302). Harvard University Press.

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⁶⁸ Bjerre-Poulsen, N., 2014. The Mont Pèlerin society and the rise of a postwar classical liberal counter-establishment. In *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War* (pp. 201-217). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

While Fischer provides a polemic against Friedman and his role in reforming the Chilean society and economy, few note the changes that occurred in the regime.⁶⁹ First, the introduction of free-market policies shifted the role of the people in government within Chile.⁷⁰ The repressive policies of the punisher government predate the implementation of economic reforms by more than a decade. Consequently, the common argument to blame neoliberal policies on the difficulties of the Chilean political scenario is causally unsound. Rather, the changes that occurred within Chile through the implementation of classical liberal market structures led to the reforms and clinical objections that themselves toppled the Pinochet government and introduced democratic reform.⁷¹

Many of these reforms continued in other countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States, introducing market reforms and privatisation of many entrenched systems.⁷² But, as Friedman notes, the promise of freedom embodied within the United States Constitution gives the framework that protects the people against the predations of government and even the predations of the majority.⁷³ Importantly, Friedman notes that “the scope of government must be limited. Its major function must be to protect our freedom both from the enemies outside our gates and from our fellow citizens”.⁷⁴ The position taken by Friedman and other members of the MPS was not contradictory, as Cornelissen contends.⁷⁵ Rather, Friedman saw that the

⁶⁹ Fischer, K., 2009. 9. The Influence of Neoliberals in Chile before, during, and after Pinochet. In *The road from mont pelerin* (pp. 305-346). Harvard University Press.

⁷⁰ Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. p. 16.

⁷¹ Barr-Melej, P., 2002. *Reforming Chile: cultural politics, nationalism, and the rise of the middle class*. Univ of North Carolina Press.

⁷² Ip, G. and Whitehouse, M., 2006. How Milton Friedman changed economics, policy and markets. *The Wall Street Journal*, 17.

⁷³ Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. p. 38-39.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Cornelissen, 2017. ‘How can the people be restricted?’. *History of European Ideas*, pp.507-524.

role of government was to place limits on the ability of the majority to oppress the minority in a population.⁷⁶

The members of the MPS held a view that was analogous to the framers of the original United States Constitution and its alignment with the values of the Scottish Enlightenment.⁷⁷ In such a system, economists such as Friedman recognised that no vision exists between *homo politicus* and *homo economicus*. Instead, in a series of political and market constraints, only *homo sapiens* exists.⁷⁸ The caricature of Friedman and other Liberal economists as heartless competitors promoting greed at all cost is a strawman argument.⁷⁹ In promoting a limited form of democracy controlled by a constitution, Friedman and others sought to ensure that the resentment of individuals who felt left out would not lead to the minority being exploited by the majority.

As Brennan demonstrates, the market is a better coordination system, even given a (falsely assumed) perfect human nature and morality than anything in central planning and socialism.⁸⁰ Bregman argues that the ideology of liberalism is dying.⁸¹ In some ways, the move towards a post-truth society where it is more important not to offend people than to ensure that free speech and traditional enlightenment values of truth and integrity are maintained is undermining the enlightenment experiment in freedom. The argued view that neoliberalism promoted selfishness and a cynical view

⁷⁶ Smith, E.J., 1991. Ethnic identity development: Toward the development of a theory within the context of majority/minority status. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 70(1), pp.181-188.

⁷⁷ McGinnis, J.O., 1997. The original Constitution and its decline: a public choice perspective. *Harv. JL & Pub. Pol'y*, 21, p.195.

⁷⁸ McGinnis, J.O., 1997. The human constitution and constitutive law: A prolegomenon. *J. Contemp. Legal Issues*, 8, p.211.

⁷⁹ Snowden, 2014. Selfishness, greed and capitalism *Institute of Economic Affairs Monographs, Hobart Paper*, 177.

⁸⁰ Brennan, J., 2014. *Why not capitalism?*. Routledge.

⁸¹ Bregman, R., 2020. The neoliberal era is ending. What comes next?. *The Correspondent*, 14.

of human nature led to growing inequality is not supported by the arguments of Friedman and others who did not see human nature as self-centred but rather focused on family and our immediate social groups.⁸²

Friedman would, in many ways, support the assertions of Putnam concerning the decline of civil society and would not argue that the decline is based on human selfishness but rather the assumption of many decentralised roles of clubs and groups that individuals used for social connections and in increasing associations with others by the state.⁸³ The dream of economists such as Friedman or Hayek was for a system of small decentralised spheres of government and not an increasingly powerful central government.⁸⁴

In arguing that capitalism is equivalent to mercantilist systems, many authors have equated the exploitation of vulnerable people, such as that by Leopold II in the Congo, with capitalism.⁸⁵ Foucault would argue that the growth in economic power diminished the political power of people.⁸⁶ Yet, as Friedman demonstrated, political power acts under a zero-sum game, whereas economic power can be expanded and created without limit.⁸⁷ More critically, Friedman demonstrates that economic power acts as a limit to political power.⁸⁸ Despite this and the arguments presented on a

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Putnam, R.D., 2000. Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. In *Culture and politics* (pp. 223-234). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

⁸⁴ Worth, O., 2017. Reviving Hayek's dream. *Globalizations*, 14(1), pp.104-109.

⁸⁵ Friedman, H.H., Friedman, L.W. and Adel, S., 2017. Conscious capitalism vs. rapacious capitalism: Lessons from King Leopold II. *Friedman, Hershey H., Friedman, Linda W., & Edris, Sarah (2017). Conscious Capitalism vs. Rapacious Capitalism: Lessons from King Leopold II. Business Quest*, pp.1-20.

⁸⁶ Zamora, D. and Behrent, M.C. eds., 2016. *Foucault and neoliberalism*. John Wiley & Sons.

⁸⁷ Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. p. 55-56.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 55.

Thatcher or Reagan government seemingly decreasing the size of the bureaucracy, the government expanded during each of these political regimes.⁸⁹

5. Conclusion

The assault on democracy and Milton Friedman is noted as a doctrine that “market exchanges an ethic itself”.⁹⁰ However, such a perspective creates a strawman argument of individuals such as Friedman, who argued that the market forms an impersonal mechanism to separate the economic activities of individuals from their personal characteristics such as race or gender.⁹¹ It is this separation of economic activity and political activity that promotes both personal freedom and political freedom. Nevertheless, the purported function and structure of political economies noted by authors such as Harvey are diametrically at odds with the descriptions of neoliberalism presented by Friedman.⁹²

The introduction of neoliberalism as a state-managed welfare structure is Orwellian doublespeak in the best traditions of this term.⁹³ The difficulty with approaching the issues of how Friedman would perceive neoliberalism in the context of his adherence to constitutional controls over an unrestricted democracy, comes from the distinctions and whether the analysis was conducted against a liberal system of small government or a system of welfare economics. Friedman and others from the Mont Pèlerin Society saw a constitutional democracy as an essential component of

⁸⁹ Borchering, T.E. and Lee, D., 2002. *The growth of the relative size of government* (No. 2002-05). Claremont Colleges Working Papers.

⁹⁰ Harvey, D., 2007. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, USA.

⁹¹ Friedman, 2020. *Capitalism and freedom*. p. 237.

⁹² Harvey, 2007. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, p. 161.

⁹³ Bhabha, H.K., 2010. Doublespeak and the Minority of One. In *On Nineteen Eighty-Four* (pp. 29-37). Princeton University Press.

freedom. Friedman, with other members of the MPS, understood that a pure democracy could be subverted through populist politics and the tyranny of the majority.⁹⁴

Consequently, Freeman and others saw the same requirements as the framers of the United States Constitution in ensuring that constitutional controls would be implemented to minimise the power of the majority to oppress the minority in a society. The ability for populist demagogues to use differences in economic power to gain political power underlies the necessity for constitutional protections to be enabled to protect the freedom and rights of individuals to hold property and maintain liberty. Unfortunately, the subversion of the term liberalism has changed the nature and understanding of the system from one of freedom to one of welfare.

Word Count: 4,061.

⁹⁴ Volk, K.G., 2009. The Perils of "Pure Democracy": Minority Rights, Liquor Politics, and Popular Sovereignty in Antebellum America. *Journal of the Early Republic*, 29(4), pp.641-679.

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