

Liberalism: history, ideologies, justification essay



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As of today, liberalism-related discourses incorporate a vast variety of liberalism's definitions, which in its turn; can be explained by the fact that the very concept of liberalism never ceased being the subject of an ongoing social, cultural and scientific progress. For example, Bellamy (1999) defines liberalism as political philosophy, dialectically predetermined by objectively existing laws of history: " Liberalism is philosophical commitment to individual autonomy that draws support from a historicist faith in the progress of society" (1).

Nevertheless, in order for us to be able to effectively discuss the implications of liberalism in consequential parts of this paper, we will have to provide readers with concept's classical definition. This definition can be articulated as follows: Liberalism is philosophical, political and economic theory, based upon the premise that, while existing as an integral part of society, an individual is being at liberty to exercise a full sovereignty over its own life and its material possessions. The ideal liberal society is the society that features legally limited governmental authority, the supremacy of an impersonal law and the absence of governmentally endorsed politically/religiously oppressive ideology, where society's members are being in position of actively utilizing their constitutionally guaranteed civil rights and freedoms.

Thus, the provided definition of liberalism implies this socio-political philosophy being deeply embedded in essentially Western values of individualism and secularism, which explains liberalism's close affiliation with the concept of free-market economy. What it means is that there are good reasons to think of liberalism as spatially limited ideology – as practice

shows; it is only in Western countries, where the majority of citizens appear to share the values of liberalism; whereas, in countries of Third World, liberal ideas are being often disregarded as quite irrelevant to the realities of local living.

In its turn, this provides us with another important insight into conceptual premise of liberalism – the practical application of this socio-political philosophy can only benefit those people that are being inheritably predisposed towards acting in socially productive mode. As it was rightly pointed out by Warren (1988): “ Liberalism... has potential both to create and to manifest the responsibility and dignity of individuals in an increasingly secularized world” (31). Therefore, the significance of liberalism cannot only be discussed within the context of a political science, but also within the context of evolutionary theory. In concluding parts of our paper, we will refer to this suggestion at length.

Given the fact that liberal ideas reflect the workings of a Western psyche, it comes as no particular surprise that the history of liberalism is being solely concerned with the history of Western civilization freeing itself from clerical/aristocratic oppression. Even though the roots of modern liberalism can be traced to English Civil War and to the works of one of its most famous spokesman John Locke, it is namely during the course of French Revolution (1789–1799) that socially relevant tenets of classical liberalism have been fully conceptualized.

The Revolution’s very slogan (Liberty, equality, fraternity) can be thought as liberalism’s condensed conceptual essence, although affected by clearly

Enlightenment-related undertones. Nevertheless, the consequential development of liberalism, as socio-political theory, has been fueled by predominantly Anglo-Saxons/Germans that professed semi-religious values of Protestantism – Adam Smith, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Thomas Huxley, Georg Hegel. Even today, Smith's book *Wealth of Nations* stands as a hallmark of classical liberalism, because in it, author was able to expose free-market economy as self-sustaining mechanism, which cannot be 'governed' by definition.

Such Smith's theorization substantiated liberalism's theoretical premise as to the fact that allowing citizens to explore their individualistic industriousness, often at the expense of denying the same opportunity to less industrious members of society, cannot be thought of as being socially counterproductive, in the long run. Therefore, Smith's motto could have well been: Liberty from equality and fraternity. This is exactly the idea behind 19th century's classical concept of liberalism, as we know it.

Nevertheless, the thirties of 20th century saw the emergence of another kind of liberalism, which later came to be known as social liberalism. Its main proponents, such as David Harvey and John Keynes, used to promote the idea that government should be allowed to meddle with economy's functioning, especially when increasing the extent of citizens' 'equality' is being concerned. Such theoretical activities, on the part of these individuals, have led to creation of a situation when, as of today, the very concept of social liberalism had ceased being correlative with classical liberalism and simply became a better sounding euphemism for the concept of socialism.

Defining the essence of liberal ideologies represents a particular challenge, simply because many proponents of these ideologies themselves provide rather vague insights into conceptual sounding of their liberalism-related theories. Nevertheless, it is still possible to outline three foremost theoretical approaches to liberalism.

As we have pointed out earlier, it is namely Adam Smith that should be credited with creating theoretical framework of classical liberalism.

According to Smith – under no circumstances should the government be allowed to exercise authoritative control over economy's functioning, as government never ceases to act as economy's subject itself. According to Smith, the extent of citizens' personal liberties is being reflected by the extent of economic liberties, enjoyed by these citizens in a particular society. The most notable theoreticians of classical liberalism are Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo.

During the course of thirties, when the agents of foreign influence (Communists) began infiltrating Western governments, more and more people were being instilled with an irrational belief that it is quite possible to achieve a complete 'social equality' in capitalist societies. The earlier statement provides us with clue as to social liberalism's origins and as to what this concept stands for. According to the advocates of social liberalism, such as John Keynes, H. H. Asquith and Friedrich Hayek, the role of a government in capitalist countries should not be as much concerned with establishing preconditions for the proper functioning of free-market economy, as it should be concerned with redistributing national wealth among the 'underprivileged' members of society – a clearly socialist idea.

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The proponents of this idea go as far as implying that Western countries should also be held responsible for the poverty in the Third World. According to Beitz (1999): “ The agents of international justice are states or societies, and its object is to establish a political equality of states(!), each committed to and capable of satisfying the legitimate interests of its own people” (518). Thus, it would not be much of an exaggeration to suggest that social liberalism relates to the spirit of classical liberalism in the same manner as elephants relate to the concept of nuclear physics.

Ever since the concept of multiculturalism had obtained the status of officially endorsed policy in Western countries, it started to become increasingly clear to more and more citizens that governmental policies, aimed at enforcing ‘ equality’, are being essentially counter-productive, as they defy objectively predetermined laws of evolution. Therefore, the proponents of neo-classical liberalism, such as Roderick Long and David Boaz, used to suggest that, in order for Western societies to regain back its existential vitality, policy-makers should embrace the spirit of classical liberalism, concerned with endorsing quality above the equality.

Hence, libertarians’ insistence that government should withdraw from trying to regulate the functioning of free-market economy by imposing additional taxes onto working people, so that the armies of uneducated and unemployed social parasites (very often immigrants from Third World) could enjoy tolerable standards of living, without being required to contribute to society’s overall well-being. As it was pointed out by Perry (1997): “ Libertarianism is a theory about what individuals are entitled to, and one of the things to which they are said to be entitled is the fruits of their labor”

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(351). Thus, Libertarianism is best defined as essentially classical liberalism, adapted to the realities of post-industrial living.

When it comes to discussing the qualitative essence of old liberalism vs. new liberalism, it is important to understand that the very term ‘ new liberalism’ is largely misleading as it usually refers to social liberalism and, as we have shown earlier, social liberalism is nothing but essentially socialism, masked under pretense that it shares liberal values. Old liberalism is best described as socially, politically, economically and culturally defined extrapolation of Western existential values, which directly derive out of the fact that, on the ladder of biological evolution, the descendants of those who had created Western civilization are being placed much higher, as compared to highly ‘ spiritual’ but culturally and technologically backward populations of the Third World.

This is exactly the reason why, even though old liberalism is a secular philosophy, it nevertheless features a variety of ethical/moral overtones, while being firmly based upon the premise that people who share the values of this philosophy, can simultaneously do both: go about enriching themselves and benefiting societies to which they belong. According to Galston (1982): “ Liberalism, rests on the worth of the Faustian (Western) vision – a life of self-mastery, self-expression, active pursuit of knowledge, unhesitating acceptance of moral responsibility” (621). In other words, old liberalism is the philosophy of educated and responsible individuals, who never allow their animalistic urges to define the qualitative nature of their existential mode.

New liberalism (specifically social liberalism) is nothing but an odd collection of unmistakably socialist ideas, the advocates of which do not even comprehend the anti-scientific essence of their beliefs in 'equality'. All that the 'new liberals' (read socialists) are being concerned with is providing 'underprivileged' members of society with even more special rights and privileges – hence, winning their votes at the expense of killing the economy. Consequently, governmental bureaucracy assumes more and more authoritative powers, when it becomes only the matter of time before it finds itself in position of imposing ideological dictatorship upon ordinary citizens.

For example, in such European neo-liberal countries as Germany, France or Britain, one can easily be sentenced to 1-3 years in jail for publically stating that allowing the hordes of Muslim immigrants to settle there might not necessarily be beneficial for these countries' well-being – this can be classified as a 'hate speech'. Therefore, as we have stated earlier, the confrontation between old liberalism and new liberalism should be discussed in terms of capitalism vs. socialism. And, as we are well aware from the lessons of history, socialism can never win, due to being nothing but the by-product of its promoters' mental inadequacy.

What has been said earlier in the paper, points out to the fact that application of liberalism cannot be justified in all political communities, but only in communities that consist of individuals capable of utilizing their sense of rationale, while facing life's challenges. As Beiner (1992) had put it: "The liberal vision of the individual as the autonomous chooser of his or her own purposes presupposes that the chooser is sufficiently sovereign over, and

therefore distanced from, the choices that compose his or her identity that none of them must be regarded as binding” (16).

And, as we are well aware of, the extent of one’s self-autonomy is being largely defined by the rate of his or her Intellectual Quotidian (IQ), which in its turn, is being biologically rather than environmentally predetermined. In their book, Lynn and Vanhanen (1992) have shown that in Africa, citizens’ average rate of IQ accounts for 70. In its turn, this explains why, no matter how liberally and democratically sounding the names of African countries might be (People’s Republic of Liberia, for example), the citizens of these countries will never be able to profess liberal values – the rate of their IQ presupposes their inability to even understand what the concept of liberalism stands for.

On the other hand, despite the fact that people in such European countries as Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Spain and Netherlands have traditionally been taking pride in being endowed with the sense of monarchic loyalty, it never prevented them from professing the values of liberalism – one’s ability/inability to affiliate itself with liberalism is the matter of biology, not the matter of education alone, as socialistically-minded ‘ new liberals’ would like us to believe. Therefore, liberalism is only justified in White communities – trying to impose liberalism upon people endowed with tribal mentality, due to the low rate of their IQ, will have the same effect as allowing monkey to play with a loaded handgun.

The pros of having liberalized society can be outlined as follows:

The cons of having liberalized society can also be defined with ease:

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