

Notes to R.G. Peffer's "Modern and Contemporary Political Philosophers in Theoretical Space"

1. The major modern political philosophers (from the 17th through the 19th Centuries) who are in bold and larger type – **Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Burke, Hegel, and Rousseau** – are basically listed in chronological order (going from the top down) except, of course, that Rousseau was before Kant, Hegel, and Burke.
2. I have placed Rousseau inside the central chevron area of the diagram because – despite his general will theory – I believe that he advocated both liberal and egalitarian values in his political philosophy. Moreover, I think that once his general will theory is properly interpreted, his overall political philosophy does not lend itself to authoritarianism or a “tyranny of the majority” (as J.S. Mill called it) since I believe that Rousseau scholars like John Noone are correct in asserting that the general will in Rousseau’s theory is not to be identified with the will of the majority (or even the will of all actually existing citizens) but rather with the correct set of normative (moral) principles that a society must embody in order to be just (and justified) and, finally, that these values (or principles) are both liberal and egalitarian. (See John B. Noone, Jr., *Rousseau’s Social Contract*, University of Georgia Press, 1980.)
3. I have placed Locke on the border of the Deontological circle because while some people argue that his emphasis on rights – indeed, natural rights – means he is a deontological theorist, others argue that he is ultimately a utilitarian, with natural rights being justified on the basis that they promote the greatest utility over the long run. Although I think it is clear that, for the most part, Locke’s political philosophy is based on deontological moral principles – particularly, the natural rights he defends – one part of Locke’s theory that may lend some credence to the second interpretation is when he abandons most of his provisos concerning the ownership of property – such as leaving “as much and as good for others” (which may be naturally interpreted as a deontological principle) – once societies have developed into market economies. Locke’s implicit argument for abandoning his famous provisos on the ownership of property seems to be that market (capitalist) societies will be so much more productive than previous socioeconomic systems that anyone disadvantaged by the elimination of these provisos can, in effect, be compensated for this because the much greater wealth in these societies can trickle down to them.
4. Not all the figures in the central chevron area of the chart identify themselves as social contract theorists but I am using this expression (“Social Contract Tradition”) in a broader sense to include all theorists who believe that intersubjective consensus among rational and reasonable persons is an important concept and goal in political philosophy.
5. Some may be shocked that I have included Michael Sandel in the central chevron area since he is a self-identified communitarian (as opposed to a liberal egalitarian) but despite his methodological criticisms of the liberal tradition and his concern with how to get people to accept (and implement) justice in the real world (which he seems to think can only be accomplished as an adjunct to community or group identities), almost all of his substantive views in moral, social, and political philosophy seem to be squarely within the liberal egalitarian sphere.
6. Some will be even more shocked that towards the bottom of the chart I list Marx in the Liberal-Socialist Egalitarian category (that is, I place him to the right of the vertical hash mark dividing Liberal Egalitarians from Liberal-Socialist Egalitarians. Many would argue that Marx’s stringent critique of liberalism in his works means that it is impossible to classify him as any kind of a liberal. But, as I have argued elsewhere, the kind of liberalism that Marx criticized was defined (in those days) as a political philosophy that held that only capitalist societies can be justified. But today progressive liberals (or what I am calling Liberal Egalitarians) such as John do not automatically (or

necessarily) see capitalism (as opposed to socialism) as the only kind of socioeconomic system that can be justified. Recent and contemporary progressive liberals argue that whether capitalism or socialism is justified depends on empirical, social-scientific facts (and theories) perhaps including the historical circumstances of particular societies. In addition, as he makes clear in “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” Marx clearly thought that such “liberal” values as freedom of speech and freedom of the press would exist in well-developed socialist societies and, as he makes clear in “The Civil War in France” – his analysis of the Paris Commune of 1871 – he also highly valued political democracy ... especially participatory political democracy. Thus, I do not believe that it is a mistake to classify Marx as being in the Liberal-Socialist Egalitarian category ... at least given how I am defining this tradition.

7. Those figures I have placed on the vertical hash mark separating Liberal Egalitarians from Liberal-Socialist Egalitarians – including Rawls and Habermas – either are officially neutral between capitalist and socialist systems (believing that either might be justified in certain historical conditions) or do not express a clear preference for one system or the other.
8. As I have argued elsewhere, the theoretical differences between Liberal Egalitarians (to the left of the vertical hash-marked line) and Liberal-Socialist Egalitarians (to the right of the vertical hash-marked line) are not primarily due to differences in the moral principles or principles of social justice they accept but, rather, by their empirical, social-scientific views about the nature of capitalist socioeconomic systems and the potential for humane and just socialist socioeconomic systems. (See my “Rawlsian Theory, Contemporary Marxism, and the Difference Principle,” *Edinburgh Handbook on Liberalism*, Mark Evans (ed.), University of Edinburgh Press, 2001). Liberal Egalitarians either don’t view capitalist systems as being fatally and inherently flawed and/or don’t think that socialist systems can do better (in terms of meeting correct moral principles or principles of social justice). On the other hand, Liberal-Socialist Egalitarians believe that capitalist systems are fatally and inherently flawed (dysfunctional) and believe that socialist systems can do a better job ... at least under favorable social, economic, and historical conditions.

It is partially on this basis that I argue for a Great Convergence Thesis stating that there are grounds for arguing for a convergence among almost all progressive and left-wing theoretical perspectives that at this point in history we should agree on the practical goal of creating a world composed entirely of some combination of democratic market socialist societies and non-aggressive social-democratic capitalist societies (if such systems can exist without suffering the major recessions and other dysfunctions of capitalist economic systems and without being militarily aggressive, which might be possible if such social-democratic capitalist societies existing within a global economy dominated by market socialist systems). But, of course, this convergence would require those who aim for a “higher stage” of communism (which, in theory, would be both classless and stateless) to accept socialist systems that have states and market economies as (at least) a justified transitional stage of world history (from their perspective). This yearning for a higher stage of communism is common among both orthodox Marxists and most socialist anarchists.

9. I have placed the later J.S. Mill on the Liberal-Socialist Egalitarian part of the spectrum because starting with the second edition (1848) of his famous work *Principles of Political Economy* he came out in favor of an economic system based on workers-owned cooperatives which, in essence, seems to be the first proposed form of market socialism. More controversial, perhaps, I have not put the later J.S. Mill in italics meaning that I don’t view him as a utilitarian (or consequentialist) in his later works. This is because, as I write in *Marxism, Morality, and Social Justice* (Princeton University Press, 1990, p. 84), I view him as a “mixed deontologist in utilitarian clothing” on the basis that I believe that he would not have given up his strong commitment to individual liberty, for example, even if had come to believe that it wouldn’t promote the greatest aggregate utility over the long run. Thus, just as it has become common to claim that Marx had a commitment to social justice even

though he didn't realize it, so it may be argued that J.S. Mill was a mixed deontological theorist even though he didn't realize this.