Community in Liberal Thought

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COMMUNITY IN LIBERAL THOUGHT

by

Richard C. Brill

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Political Science

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
August 1997
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to begin by offering my heart-felt appreciation to my thesis committee members: Dr. Emily Hauptmann, Dr Alan Isaak, and Dr. William Ritchie. Their patience and insight were of great value toward the completion of this thesis. Special indebtedness goes to my committee chair Dr. Ritchie, it was his lectures that inspired my love for the field of political theory.

Secondly, I would like to thank my brothers Steve and Skott for their moral and technical support. It was nice to receive their empathy as they worked on their dissertations in English and Philosophy.

Lastly I would like to thank my wife, Nova, and my sons, Todd, Jackson, and Israel, for their faith that someday they would not have to share my time with the demands of this project. A special thanks to my father for his love and prayers throughout the process.

Richard C. Brill
COMMUNITY IN LIBERAL THOUGHT

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Western Michigan University, 1997

The aim of this thesis is to research the role of community in liberal thought. The problem that has initiated this research is the erosion of traditional communal bonds in contemporary liberal society. This problem has been the focus of the debate between communitarians and liberals for the past two decades. The research problem will be to discover workable definitions of community and liberalism which have been plagued with multiple interpretations throughout the debate.

The method of this thesis will be to first frame in the environment of the original problem. The second chapter will address the precedents set by the debate between liberals and communitarians. The third chapter will address the problem of finding a workable definition of community that is relevant to the original problem, and applicable to a liberal environment. Chapters IV, V and VI will search for the concept of community within three distinct periods of liberal history. These chapters will develop the principles of liberal thought consistent when addressing the idea of community.

Three major principles of liberal thought emerge from this research; the priority of the individual, the equality of individuals, and the goal of individual self-realization. It will be discovered that liberal thought holds community to be necessary to a liberal system; however, community is subordinate to the maximization of liberal principles and the general welfare of the larger community.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Somehow it would not seem contradictory to hold that citizens of modern democratic societies adhere to the general principles of liberalism, while still endorsing the idea of community. This would give the impression that these two ideas were compatible. Yet throughout liberal history and with increasing intensity today, these ideals have been placed in conflict, this later intensity heightened by the increasing awareness of deterioration of community in modern liberal society. This conflict has manifested itself in the debate of the liberal and communitarian for the last two decades without resolution. At stake are two desirable conditions whose forces seem opposed to many contemporary critics.

Communitarians hold that community is a social good which should elevate obligations to its realization above the observance of certain individual rights. That without this protection the hedonistic forces of individualism will eliminate community to the detriment of the individual. Some communitarians claim in essence that they are liberals criticizing the current interpretation of liberalism to better serve the individual. That the collective authority of individuals better protects the individual from desires bred from antisocial competition. Collective action allows the individual to do what cannot be done alone, often to protect oneself from oneself. To answer the criticism "why if community is desirable and natural is it that individuals have not voluntarily maintained it?" the communitarian would answer that the present liberal promotion of the individual right over collective authority has forced the individual to compete for limited materialistic rewards without the temper of higher moral obligations.
The liberal response has been that there is an inherent and illiberal danger in empowering a collective authority, that community is subordinate to the individual. Collectivities are best created out of a voluntary foundation for the self interest of those involved. Community is by the individual not for the individual, and should emerge from them. The liberal sees an inherent danger of community becoming an independent agent of coercion if empowered over the individual. Once more it is not that the liberal finds community unattractive, but rather the individual right more precious.

This stalemate of two desired notions presents the problem which becomes central to the task of this thesis. It is not a shallow debate for the communitarian voice has survived alongside the history of liberalism and has now literally consumed most of the theoretical debate within liberal circles. Resolution to the problem of loss of community seems to be mired in a metaphysical swamp where liberals and communitarians have sought to build their foundations in order to defend their claims to the role of community in relation to individual. The energy of the debate has been focused on the communitarian claim that the individual is a social animal and thus community should be prior to the individual. The communitarian charges that liberalism is in error in its assumption of the self prior to community and this has led to an unnatural individualism where social alienation will result in the eventual destruction of civil society. The liberal rebuttal has been focused on two counter criticisms of communitarianism. The first is that communitarians have failed to prove man as a social being, and while liberalism may have equal difficulty proving its metaphysical claim of individual origin, it is better to error on the side of the individual whose permanence of self consciousness is much stronger than community associations. The second claim is that the solutions offered by the communitarian foundation are illiberal.
Not only have liberals gained success in countering the communitarian claims as described above, but two other flaws have been revealed in the communitarian criticism. The first is, of the four major communitarians MacIntyre, Sandel, Taylor, and Walzer, there seems to be no great consensus on the problem, solution, and nature of community. Secondly, each tends to misrepresent liberalism in their criticisms. Not only is there a mistaken interpretation of historical liberal thought as culminated in the theories of John Rawls, but also there is the tendency to place liberalism to its rightist extreme as a libertarian doctrine of asocial individualism or to its leftist extreme as a centralized command system. Though the decades long debate has now exposed the weaknesses of the communitarian, the time and vigor that liberals have contributed to the debate suggest that the aspect of community in liberal thought may not have been well articulated. Having successfully foiled the charges of communitarians, the liberal must now search his/her own tradition for answers to the plight of community in post-industrial societies. What will be attempted in this thesis will be to arrive at a justification of community within liberal thought, and to situate the role of community more accurately in the liberal tradition. In order to proceed in this direction some qualification of both the substantive and research problem must be accomplished.

The Problem

Erosion of Community

The main requirement prior to embarking on this research is to substantiate that there is a problem present that needs attention. The substantive problem which underlies this thesis is the sense of deterioration of community in modern liberal systems. Certainly the vigor this debate has received reveals a sensitivity of both the liberal and communitarian to an erosion of communal attachments in modern society.
which may be detrimental to the individual. Though on the surface this problem may seem to reflect a nostalgic pining of the inevitable evolution from the gemeinschaft to gesellschaft, the debate has exposed deeper questions concerning the role of the political system has played in this "natural" evolution.

At the heart of the problem lie two interrelated conditions of modern society: the greater reliance upon the larger abstract community rather than the local community, and the increased sense of asocial competitive individualism among individuals. They are related in the sense that greater reliance on the abstract system for one's needs fosters a false sense of self-sufficiency since one feels no direct obligation to individuals in one's life. Communitarians tend to blame liberalism for the creation of the centralized bureaucratic state which they see as smothering the importance of local community, and for fostering competitive individualism at the expense of communal attachments. Some communitarians have suggested that the urgency of the debate has been brought on by the realization that centralization and asocial individualism caused by liberal policies is revealed by proof of more advanced deterioration to the more intimate levels of neighborhood, extended family to greater breakdown of the nuclear family.

However, the fears of greater centralization and asocial individualism do not only concern communitarians, who have made these points central to the foundation of their thought, but are concerns of liberals as well. Liberalism has always been critical of movement to greater bureaucratic centralization with its implications toward oligarchy. It has also viewed asocial individualism as a threat to the necessary collective obligations needed for the self realization of individuals. It may be stated at this level of the substantive problem, the deterioration of community, both liberal and communitarian are joined. It is the cause and the solution to the problem that disagreement is found. If communitarianism is disarmed of its validity to the cause and
solution of the problem in chapter one, then the task becomes the discovery of the liberal answer to the substantive problem. What may be discovered is not that liberalism is the cause of the problem, as communitarians claim, but rather that liberal principles concerning community may have been ignored by modern liberal societies.

**Defining Community**

In the task of discovering the role of community in liberal thought, definitions of both community and of liberalism must be arrived at. A plurality of concepts describing both has often muddied the liberal/communitarian debate. The problem in defining community is that the term conveys multiple meanings. By not clearly defining the parameters of community to be used, some theorists can flounder between concepts and choose at will the concept which best defends the point at hand thus adding to the vagueness of their results. Others, in assuming the reader shares their conception of community, can be misinterpreted if the term community lacks significant development. Therefore, in Chapter 2 a qualification of community will take place so the reader is aware of the nature of community that will be scrutinized within liberal thought.

There seems to be a dual nature in describing community. One description focuses on its territorial aspect and ranges from national community to local community. The other aspect is the interpersonal and deals with the interrelationships of the members of that community, and ranges from simple identification with the group to direct interdependencies. It is important to note that all territorial communities share some type of interpersonal quality however, not all interpersonal communities need be territorial. Examples of these exceptions would be associations and cultural groups. The problem this duality presents is when the relationship between collective authority and individual right are addressed. Certainly, a pure interpersonal community cannot
be grouped with a territorial community when assessing historic legal authority. Therefore this thesis will focus on territorial community since it provides the legal structure capable of implementing authority over citizens within a given area.

Within the range of territorial communities one may see a basic division of national, regional, and local community. Each of these types of community can present a different level of interpersonal relationship based on its physical qualities. Local community differs significantly from the other two in the sense that the relationships between members are direct rather than indirect. This has the potential to provide for a greater sense of ownership of and control than the more larger abstract systems. Though all can be capable of providing the basic needs of individuals, territorial communities has been dynamic since recent history has provided an evolution from the local to the national as the source of need fulfillment. The loss of the reliance on the need systems of local community has altered the interpersonal aspect of local community. This shift described as the movement from gemeinschaft to gesellschaft reflects an evolution from a more informal socio-economic system to a more formal political-legal system. For it will be argued in Chapter II that oneness of community was never one of social homogeneity, but rather oneness of mutual need and that the glue was not political-moral law, but rather socio-economic interdependence. This shift is the core of what has been considered the loss of community.

In Chapter II, sub-national communities will be the sites of community to be discussed. The term sub-national excludes referring to the the national society as a whole to mean community. It is important to note here that the focus upon internal communities should not be taken at the expense of the larger national society which is a necessary reality of modern systems. It is only that this national “community” does not seem to be the center of the liberal/communitarian debate. Instead communitarians have focused on a plurality of sub-national communities such as cultural and local
communities. Using these sub-national communities as the closest, not the only, site of community authority argued in the liberal/communitarian debate will provide for a more concrete definition of community in order to reference traditional liberal principles. The research problem is that community has had little specific development within liberal theory. Liberal theory was born in the awakening of the nation state and the realization of national society. References to community and the relationship of the individual to collective authority have tended to be articulated at that level. It is not that community lacked importance, but that its stability allowed it to be taken for granted. Relationships of collective authority to individual right were assumed to apply to all collectives. Therefore this thesis will extrapolate that liberal principles applied to the larger community must also be applied to the smaller community as well.

Even though historic liberal thought tends to take a broad and abstract view of community, specific attention will be paid to references of the role of local community within liberal thought which helps to further develop the concept of subsidiarity within liberalism. Local community is the definition of community most used by sociologists, and lends itself most efficiently to classic conceptual requirements of community. It is also the area where community has been considered most altered in modern times. However, the term "local" itself can be misconstrued. It will be defined here as a geographical area which is large enough to support the basic social needs of the group, yet small enough for reasonable knowledge of and direct contact with all other members within the area. Also important to this concept, in the same sense of what makes a house a home, the members of the area, or community, must identify themselves with that area. This implies that the area be recognizable through known landmarks and enhanced by memory. Therefore, local community need not be stereotyped as the rural village, but may also include in densely populated areas a borough, and in sparsely populated areas a form of township.
Defining Liberalism

Not only have multiple definitions of community often blurred the liberal/communitarian debate, but also divergent definitions of liberalism have done so as well. In order to arrive at the role of community in liberal thought, a set of liberal principles have to be established that have remained consistent and become definitive of liberalism. By taking a historic development of liberal thought a twofold purpose is accomplished. First it will reveal the core principles which have remained static and prove to be the litmus test of liberal belief. Second it reveals the dynamic nature of liberalism as application of these core principles adjust to a changing environment.

It will be discovered in Chapters III through VI that three basic principles remain consistent within liberal thought. These three concepts are: (1) the primacy of the individual, (2) the equality of individuals, and (3) the self-realization of the individual. “Rights” are not a core concept, but rather a dynamic expression of the core concepts when they are placed in the reality of social existence and changing environment. It is this latter expression of liberalism which gives it a sense of perpetual motion, since the environment in which it is set in is variable, it is always adapting to a new set of circumstances. Therefore to define it at this level is much like interpreting common law. To gain an understanding one must review its evolution compiling precedents into a comprehensible body of thought. This is the process which will be accomplished here in search of precedents which may be able to situate the role of local community within a liberal society. For this purpose liberalism will be divided into three distinctive evolutionary periods: early industrial, late industrial, and post-industrial.
Early Industrial Liberalism

An introduction to the early industrial period will mention the pre-industrial period which covered the 17th and 18th centuries. Thomas Hobbes will become the natural starting point. Even though he is not often spoken in the same breath as rights, his idea of the social contract broke traditional thought and laid the justification for the creation of rights by John Locke. Locke's influence would dominate this period. His rational empiricism was the appropriate answer for a society left in a vacuum caused by the decreasing authority of the church and throne. Locke's notoriety as the father of liberalism will no doubt signal the influence he has had in contemporary definitions of liberalism. This period will also provide a constructive critic of liberal political philosophy in the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. More democratic, emotional, and more collective than Locke, Rousseau's influence on the more individualistic and pragmatic anglo-american liberal thought has not been as dominant. However, Rousseau's ideas have provided a continual fountainhead which has kept the internal liberal debate alive. Most important to this thesis is the fact that Rousseau specifically elevates local community and his works have since provided a source of legitimacy for communitarians today. Two other critics of Lockean based liberalism are also worthy of mention in this period Edmund Burke and David Hume. Burke's contribution of Natural Law as opposed to Locke's law of nature stresses in a sense, like Rousseau, a more organic rather than a mechanical view of society. However, where Locke's moral discovery is empirical Burke's becomes historical. Hume's role in this period will be very similar to Hobbes as a breakaway and foundational philosophical force. Both men, highly criticized in their own time, would end up changing that time Hobbes ushering in the Lockean period of pre-industrial liberalism and Hume signaling its end with his skepticism. Hume's ideas will end up being the
foundation of Benthamite utilitarians which will dominate the next liberal period. It will also be useful to develop the contributions of Immanuel Kant in this transition period. Like Locke, Kant was a synthesizer of opposing ideas. His view on duality of self tried to bridge the differences between the transcendental knowledge of morality and the empirical knowledge of the material world in an effort to save morality from the void left with skepticism. In doing so he will provide a foundation for the individual by removing the individual from a purely organic existence. However, his ethical “categorical imperative” will later add equality to the liberal quotient. This period was the foundational basis for future interpretations of liberalism. Dominated by Locke’s defense of rights, this period soon gave way to a period of individualism - early industrial liberalism.

A second major shift in dominant liberal interpretation was found in the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham. Using the logic of Hume’s skepticism, Bentham developed his pleasure principle which became a more palatable application of skepticism to the increasingly scientific liberal society. It was to be the dominant liberal interpretation of this period. Though one of Bentham’s main objectives was an equality (opportunity) based liberalism aimed at the landed gentry, the direction of his philosophy was to be driven by the new middle class capitalists. Like Locke’s, Bentham’s ideas were ripe for their time. Integrated with the ideas of the economists Smith and Ricardo, Bentham’s liberalism was to take on a self-interest individualism which was to be later criticized as hedonistic if not inhumane. Leading the opposition within this liberal debate was a movement called Romanticism. Taking their torch from Rousseau were the chief critics of liberal utilitarianism, Samuel Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle. They emphasized the organic nature of the world, thus stressing more faith in the collective rather than in the individual. To the Romantics collective did not mean
government, but rather it meant “individuals” as a social group. However, these disciples of Rousseau’s ideas, due to their industrial environment, stressed Nature as their new sacred. They also were influenced by the individuality of their time. A glorification of the individual hero as a standard bearer for the greater collective became a common theme. The Romantic movement was considered conservative in the sense that they were less optimistic about industrialization, hence their admiration for Nature. However, European conservatives, unlike their American counterpart, were sympathetic to the working-class poor, whereas the liberal utilitarian movement found its base in the middle-class capitalists. Though the romantics remained the stepchild of the liberal movement, their influence was to be felt by the end of this period. John Stuart Mill, heavily steeped in the utilitarian doctrine, was to emerge by the end of this time as the dominant liberal. He did this by softening utilitarianism of its harsher implications through an almost Lockean moral rationalization of standards of behavior. Though Mill remained a true disciple of individualism, romantic influences led him to imply that there was something to life beyond pure mathematical utility. He was to be the stepping stone to the new liberalism of the later industrial period. However, the weakening Romantic movement was to be transformed as well. G.W.F. Hegel was, by the sheer volume of his works, to steal the thunder of the Rousseauean Romantic tradition. His scientific explanation of the monistic and organic nature of society would make him the icon of the time-honored collective approach. From Hegel would branch two main schools of thought; the social democrat and the socialist which will debut in the later industrial period.

**Late Industrial Liberalism**

The flashpoint signaling that a new liberal period had evolved was found in the lectures of Thomas Hill Green. His words reflected what most concerned most citizens
of liberal society in the wake of the industrial period, that the highly individualistic liberalism had created its own moral dilemma. The free market authorized by utilitarianism had created a new barbarian in mankind. The dilemma was that science had rendered the old moral authority bankrupt, yet this new science had nothing to replace it with. Green offered philosophy as the new moral authority. His aim was to incorporate two rival traditions into one; a Hegelian Liberal. His idealism based on an organic and monistic view of society was tempered with Kant’s ethics based in the categorical imperative i.e., the moral equality of humanity. Criticizing J.S. Mill for not going far enough, Green envisioned a highly democratic collective pursuing a common good limited only by historically held understandings which protected the natural equality of individuals. What was to be the dynamic precedent set by Green was the view of government in an active (positive) role to foster social liberty. This was to be the defining element of the later industrial period. Green’s idealism, more based in the moral than economic, was not strong enough itself to survive on its own. The increase of economic inequality and the shock of World War I brought about a realism which all but extinguished the flicker of hope in idealism. Leonard Hobhouse and John Hobson extracted the sense of Kantian equality and positive government from Green but downplayed the Hegelian influences which were at the time blamed for the nationalism which consumed the world in war. Their brand of humanism based on dignity as a right of mankind viewed government not as tyrant but protector and ushered in the welfare state liberal to the twentieth century. Herbert Spencer became the defender of the now traditional individualist movement. Though Spencer’s use of Darwin’s theory of natural selection was to stress the moral nature of individualism in the larger society, it did this by using a more Hegelian organic basis. At this same time, the Pluralists, most notably Earnst Barker and Harold Laski, were stressing the need of associations and their protection within the modern liberal state. They feared that individuals
would remain powerless in mass society unless there were associations present to empower them. This new renunciation of collective right also forewarned a new dilemma of the liberal state; pluralism. Perhaps the stepping off point into the post-industrial state lies with John Dewey. Dewey, an American, appropriately infuses liberalism at this time with a long held American cultured pragmatism. Dewey's social-liberalism continued the new liberal platform and incorporated the ideas of education and progression as necessary promotions of a liberal system. For Dewey, history represented an educational tool, not a moral dictate. His pragmatism focused on the clear assessment of the status quo and a process of continual adjustment to maintain maximum social liberty. Both assessment and adjustment requiring dissemination of knowledge, in order that a monopoly of information or spread of misinformation is not used for individual benefit over others. Dewey's pragmatism of liberalism would become an important ingredient in the post-industrial period.

Post-Industrial Liberalism

Building upon a more pragmatic assessment of moral restraints and acknowledging the problems of plurality first defined by the pluralists and later in this period elaborated by Robert Dahl, John Rawls' liberalism became the measuring stick of the post-industrial period. His uneasiness with the lack of morality of utilitarianism, yet his fear of the subjective morality of intuitionism caused him to develop a post-Kantian liberal faith based on equal liberty. His moral foundation was drawn not from a belief in the existence of a social contract but rather the need to form a hypothetical one. His view of Liberalism based on a procedural “justice” as opposed to the traditional rights, utility, or equality. Still stressing a primacy of rights, Rawls envisioned an original position which could produce the moral legitimacy for his difference principle, a principle aimed at providing justice within a pluralistic society.
Rawls used justice as the maximum arrangements of rights and equality in a liberal society. As Rawls established a new and dominant liberal ground within liberal thought, two other voices proceeded to uphold renovated versions of the historical liberal debate. To the one side of Rawls is the libertarian voice of Robert Nozick. Nozick's liberalism claimed heritage to Lockean and utilitarian tradition. Nozick's direction was to pull liberalism away from its path of positive government, and restate the qualities of individualism and property entitlement. On the other side of Rawls were the Communitarians. The communitarian movement found its strength in the tradition of Rousseau. Its direction was not only to restate the collectivist position of the common good and its requirement of obligation, but also to justify this by reintroducing local community and the morality of sentiment. The authors of this communitarian position are found in Charles Taylor, Michael Sandel, Michael Walzer, and Alistair MacIntyre. Though different in their justifications and vision of communitarianism, there is a common thread which binds them to a movement they themselves have not admitted membership to.

**Method**

By qualifying the use of community to imply sub-national communities, and stressing both the static nature and dynamic expression of liberal thought within this introduction, the research of this thesis will be to search for the justification of community within liberal thought. To accomplish this, chapter two will focus on the communitarian criticism and the liberal rebuttal which serves as the stepping off point for the research at hand. The communitarian criticism reflects a sensitivity to an issue of community which, due to the vigor the liberal has afforded it, reflects a challenge of modern liberal societies. The liberal rebuttal, however, serves to disarm the
communitarian solution and leave open the question on how liberalism views community.

Chapter III will define and defend the use of sub-national communities as an entities to be researched in liberal thought. It will address these questions concerning community; what is its structure?, why might it be desirable and beneficial to the individual of a liberal society?, and what would be its relationship to the realities of the larger state?. These questions will help frame the notion of community to be found in liberalism that is considered in peril within modern liberal societies.

In Chapters IV, V and VI the defined notion of community will be applied to the four periods of liberalism defined previously. This will be done in search of justification of local community through the various interpretations of liberalism. Three questions will be asked of each period. The first question will inquire about the role of local community as a structure in liberal thought. The second question will inquire about the limits of collective authority within liberal thought. The third, and highly complex question, will inquire about the neutrality of “progress” (for lack of a better word), and the role of the collective authority in relation to it. For if progress, technological advancement, plays a role in the deterioration of community in modern liberal states, then does a community have the authority to protect itself against the effects of progress. The assessment of this research will then be summarized in the final chapter.
Endnotes


3 Walzer, 6.


5 Bell, 4-6.


7 Mulhall and Swift, 196.


10 Walzer, 16-7.


12 Bell, 175.


14 Alan Ryan, “Communitarianism” Dissent v36 (summer 1989), 351.

15 Davis, 20-1.

16 Ibid., 64.

17 Walzer, 20.

19 Ibid., 545.

20 Ibid., 614.


22 Ibid., 199-200.

23 Sabine and Thorson, 623.

24 Ibid., 632.

25 Stromberg, 224.

26 Ibid., 242.

27 Ibid., 243.


29 Sabine and Thorson, 656.


31 Stromberg, 285.

32 Thakurdas, 90.


35 Bell, 13-5.

CHAPTER II

THE LIBERAL/COMMUNITARIAN DEBATE

The liberal communitarian debate serves as a good point to start since it has provided the momentum which brings the task of this thesis at hand. This chapter will first begin with the general communitarian charge which has been significant enough to draw the attention of liberals over the past two decades. While liberals do not deny the decline of civic identity in contemporary liberal states, they do balk at the communitarian claim that liberalism is at fault. This charge is important in that it not only brought the idea of community to the table, but that it also has forced many liberal theorists to define more clearly liberalism apart from its collective left and individualistic right. The second part of the chapter will focus on the liberal criticism of communitarianism. This will serve the purpose of disarming the communitarian criticism of liberalism as the problem and communitarian principles as the answer to the erosion of community. This will set the stage for developing the liberal position on community which could address the original problem of community.

On the surface the communitarian charge appears to be aimed at two distinct forces; these are the greater reliance on the larger national collective authority whose dictates seem to require a greater uniformity among citizens, and a sense of greater asocial individualism where self-satisfaction tends to override self-interest. The brunt of the communitarian charge is that liberalism has fostered this progression at the expense of the individual whom liberals claim to protect. The communitarians leveling this charge have been Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, Alisdair MacIntyre and Michael Walzer. However, it must be noted here that the reference to “communitarian” does not
carry the same weight as the term "liberal". First, as will be elaborated on shortly, all four main communitarian theorists lack consensus on their approach to the problem and solution of community. In fact, the label "communitarian" was simply used to rope in their general direction of criticism, not one consciously adopted by any one of the theorists. Secondly, communitarian thought has been largely a criticism not a construction of a comprehensive political theory. Certainly it has lacked the historical and philosophical development of liberal thought. A more accurate portrayal of communitarianism would be to treat it as part of a dialectical force, drawing attention to a perceived weakness of the dominant liberal expression of the time. In this way, it has played a similar role to the influences of Rousseau and the Romantic movement upon the liberal doctrine of an earlier time. While both of these movements articulated a concern for the individual, their fragmented and illiberal implications only allowed them to be corrective forces instead of replacement philosophies. It is based on this assessment that one cannot simply treat the liberal/communitarian debate as choosing one position over the other, for as this thesis argues, one can fruitfully look toward liberalism as the soil which will produce community. However, the communitarian criticism is not unwarranted, since critical movements usually expose inherent flaws in certain specific contemporary interpretations which ultimately affect future interpretations. So the purpose of this chapter will be to both expose the merits of the communitarian claim which is the sensitivity to the problems of community which initiates the research of this thesis, and to expose the shallowness of the communitarian alternative, both conclusions establishing the importance of positive reexamination of liberalism and community.

As stated earlier, the most evident contribution of the communitarian was to advance the idea of community as the focus of extensive debate. It could also be assumed by the impact the debate has had, that both liberals and communitarians had
perceived a quickening of the erosion process of traditional community relationships in modern liberal societies. It could be said that the communitarian movement forced liberals to address the idea of community. The spark of the movement may be traced to Amitai Etzioni, a sociologist who has been given credit for the term “communitarian”. It was his warning from research on the impact of loss of community that added a credibility for political debate on the subject. Strengthening his research was the greater awareness of the socio-psychological impact on the identity of self held by modern science. This not only forced liberals to reassess community and its importance, but it also forced liberals to reassess the individual who now appears more determined by environment and less autonomous. Therefore, the contribution of the communitarian was to reawaken the liberal to the interpretation of self and community. Since community authority is dependent on the definition of self, the debate was largely consumed by disagreements over the metaphysical conception of self. Herein lies the greatest weakness of the communitarian, who as the challenger of the doctrinal status quo has the burden of proof at this metaphysical level in order to further pursue the sources of community authority.

At this metaphysical level, there is some agreement among Sandel, MacIntyre, and Taylor which has bound them together as communitarians. Walzer tends to engage the debate more on the question of universality of morality, and will be treated separately. Of the three communitarians previously mentioned agreement seems to center on the issues of the conception of self, the error of asocial individualism, subjectivism, and the issues of antiperfectionism versus neutrality. However, as will be developed here, even this very broad agreement on principles lacks consensus on the significant details of interpretation. It should further be noted that their attack on liberalism when applying these principles may not reflect an accurate interpretation of liberalism.
Though the recipient of the communitarian criticism may be liberalism in general, some communitarians, most notably Sandel, have focused on the leading contemporary interpretation of liberalism as found in John Rawls. A more extensive interpretation of Rawls will be found in chapter six, but for now a brief understanding of Rawls is helpful in order to understand the communitarian charge. Very briefly, Rawls holds "justice" as the highest good of liberal thought. In a pragmatic stance, he realizes that the contemporary environment is heir to many inequalities which lead to the unequal self-realization of individuals. However, holding true to liberal principles, traditional corrective measures to redistribute opportunities are in themselves illiberal. Faced with this dilemma, Rawls seeks to offer and justify a working principle that will bring liberalism back to maximum equality of liberty specific to an environment, without forsaking the time honored principles of liberalism. He has established the "difference principle" to accomplish this. This states that when a collective makes a decision it should be based on the principle that inequalities of distribution are to occur only when it benefit the least advantaged group within a society. With this principle, Rawls hopes for an eventual evolution of society toward a just distribution of goods that is also efficient. This efficiency arises from Rawls's rule that there will be inequalities of distribution, but only those inequalities which enhance the equal maximum self-realization of all are justifiable and that maximizing self-realization yields greater efficiency. In order to justify the difference principle, Rawls relies on his conception of the "original position".

The original position serves as the moral framework for the difference principle. Here Rawls states that since there is no ascertainable evidence of the metaphysical properties of the individual, then a logical and hypothetical framework can be assumed to give foundation to liberal principles. In the original position individuals are situated behind a "veil of ignorance". Due to the fact that individuals
inherit natural talents and social positions, self-interest would bias any deliberative arrival of principles since those inherent features would create inequality of voice in formation of those principles. Therefore, Rawls asks individuals to put themselves in a hypothetical situation of not knowing one's natural and social inheritance, and asks them to create principles of distribution logically based on one's self-interest in this altered state. Rawls believes the difference principle would be the logical choice of the individual denied accurate knowledge of one's actual social status. It is the idea of the original position that Sandel attacks when developing the conception of self. 

The Communitarian Claim

The conception of the person is the initial point of debate that communitarians engage liberals. This concept seeks to explain how the idea of “self” is manifested. It is the major foundational basis of the debate since its focus is to determine which is prior the individual or the community. The communitarian claim is that identity and behavior of the self is primarily created by the society one inhabits. This is similar to Cooley’s looking-glass theory, where who we are is determined on how we perceive ourselves through others. This leads the communitarian to hold that society, not the individual, creates the self. Therefore, the communitarian will claim, if the individual is largely determined by society, should not more importance be placed on the “proper” cultivation of the individual by community rather than the false free will veto of the deviant individual? Communitarians will not only state that it is impossible to imagine human origin as void of social interaction for any purpose, but that it is through social interaction which makes human beings “human” instead of simply actors with animal desires. However, it is important to note here that there is some degree of distortion as communitarians paint the picture of the liberal as de-void of any knowledge of social interaction in the claim of the individual as prior. This view of liberalism is positioned
to the far right of contemporary interpretations of liberalism, and has some illiberal implications within it.

Sandel, more than the other two communitarians, directs the force of his argument mainly upon Rawls instead of liberalism in general. He claims not so much that Rawls's liberalism is undesirable, but rather that its metaphysical foundation is flawed. He views Rawls's original position as being in error by placing individuals behind the veil of ignorance isolated from their social essences. Sandel claims that individuals behind the veil of ignorance would not be "similarly" situated but rather "identically" situated. He claims that there would be no bargaining in the original position because differences would not exist, that there would be no voluntary agreement but only cognitive knowing. He also argues that this veil would not even allow individuals any knowledge of the possible natural and social outcomes on which to base their decisions. Therefore, Sandel believes the original metaphysical state to be communal existence since no contract could be established without knowledge or voluntary consent. He believes Rawls was forced to conceive of prior self existence in order to justify the difference principle from criticism from the liberal right, specifically Robert Nozick. Sandel believes that in order to prove the lack of desert concerning natural and social acquisition, Rawls had to develop a Kantian intersubjectivity in the original state. Sandel argues that self is constituted by the social and political community one inhabits, and that society is prior to the individual identity of self. He argues that the individual is encumbered by a thick embeddedness of social influences that one cannot extract. He does believe that it may be possible for an individual to engage in a process of self assessment in order to gain knowledge of one's own personal encumbrances however, it becomes impossible to view any self beyond that threshold. This would allow individuals to step back in a limited sense,
and allows Sandel to differ from other communitarians by stating that self identity can be partially created by the individual.  

MacIntyre takes a more pessimistic and hostile view of liberal tradition than the other two communitarians. He sees little hope for communal goods at the nation state level as they are presently constituted, yet sees liberalism as the only reasonable option when addressing the plurality of the national society. He faults liberalism in general for its conception of the individual as prior to community. He states that individual identity is gained through social phenomena such as practices and traditions, and that individuals cannot escape the moral wiring of communal attachments. His view of self-identity is often labeled as Neo-Aristotelian because it places weight upon identity through traditions. He sees the construction of identity through historic evolution of social roles and their expectations. MacIntyre claims that the key to identity is to stand within roles not outside them, for the human being does not exist outside of them.

Taylor, like MacIntyre, is more critical of liberalism as a whole than of Rawls specifically in fact, Taylor barely refers to Rawls in his work. Where MacIntyre is hostile towards liberalism and Sandel tries to limit it, Taylor seeks to correct it. His view of a conception of self is based in the idea of the linguistic community. He believes humans are self-interpreting beings in whom their community structure supplies the language to give identity to the individual. Taylor sees the distortion of self-realization through liberal principles that foster the myth of the unencumbered self. He sees this as the cause of a modern identity crisis. Taylor states that the liberal notion of the individual is an empty one because institutions and language give meaning to self, not some intersubjective voice which claims some a priori knowledge. He believes that individuals need “authoritative horizons” to give meaning to will. To be free without reference of direction is mere action for the sake of action.
The second claim of the communitarians deals with the concept of asocial individualism. The charge here is that liberalism is in error by assuming individuals to be by nature asocial, and that they choose only voluntarily to associate, which communitarians claim is the basis of the social contract theory. Communitarians have claimed that individuals have always been a part of communal entities, and that it would be impossible to imagine a prior existence of solitary individuals. Sandel differs from MacIntyre and Taylor in that he believes that the liberal view of conception of self has fostered the idea of the asocial self, whereas MacIntyre and Taylor see the opposite relationship that the promoted asocial behavior of the individual forced the development of the theory that the self is prior. Sandel criticizes Rawls for assuming that it is useful to postulate a hypothetical contractual event. He claims that this has fostered the priority of individual freedom over social equality, therefore stunting the idea of fraternity in liberal thought.

MacIntyre claims that Rawls's original position is actually a social contract in which individuals voluntarily decide to join without any priority toward community goods. Like Sandel, MacIntyre holds that an individual's identity is known only through the social matrix, and that it would be impossible to gain a conception of the individual without it. He claims that the liberal development of the social contract theory, based on the conception of the asocial individual, doomed community to erosion by competitive egoistic whims which were placed at a higher order than community. He charges that it was enlightenment liberalism whose asocial principles have since waged assault on the concept of traditions so crucial to communal attachments, and whose authority upheld social virtues. He claims that liberal policies have allowed virtue to exist, but did so by roping it off to voluntaristic private sectors. MacIntyre believes that the asocial conception of self has led to the notion that cooperation with others is an option and has created a decrease in civility.
Taylor once again uses the idea of language to support his criticism of the asocial individual. He believes that here could not exist an individual prior to the contract due to the fact that the individual would lack expression if the linguistic community was not formed. He is much more sympathetic to the idea of political asocialism which is learned than of philosophical asocialism which is inherent. To be truly asocial he believes one must be totally autonomous and self-sufficient, and this has not been the historical precedent.

Communitarians also charge liberalism with subjectivity. Subjectivity is the idea that individuals determine their own conception of good independent of society. The communitarian criticism is that liberals see individuals as arbitrarily choosing their own preference of the good. This is not to say that individuals do not have the power of choice; rather, communitarians claim that the individual's choice has been affected by socialization. This relates to the idea that the individual preferences are not prewired but are cultivated by society. Sandel claims that this has created the priority of the right over the good in liberal thought. He states that Rawls allows choices of the individual to be mere personal preferences with no commitment toward communal good, and that the self freely choosing ends are ends not formed by communal attachments but by some abstract self. Sandel claims that due to the fact that individual identity is socially “thick” rather than “thin”, the good is heavily objective (formed by community), and therefore the good is teleological rather than arbitrary. He states that the good must be prior to the right, for if the right was prior what motive would guide it. For Sandel, the self is constituted by its ends but its boundaries are fluid we discover our identity and our good through shared meanings.

MacIntyre blames liberal subjectivity for the existence of the emotive self who seeks self-interest through manipulation of others. He sees liberalism as a subjective doctrine doomed to unresolvable conflict of personal pluralistic preferences. He states
that subjectivism has allowed a situation where there is a lack of an authority, an overarching framework, needed for conflict resolution. MacIntyre requires nested social matrices to promote deliberation about morality, and the discovery within the small local community of an objective good. Taylor, however, argues for "landmarks of good" in order to judge ourselves. He states that objective morality is needed to create identity for the individual. It not only gives meaning to "where are we going", but also to "who we are". Taylor develops the idea of the "hypergood" in which reasoning and experience replace old hypergoods. He claims we are constantly ranking conflicting goods in search of an improved hypergood. Taylor believes that the subjective being is simply a creation of liberal thought, and fears that if subjectivism is dominant only Nietzschean nihilism would exist, causing freedom to be reduced to power. Taylor feels the good life should be debated among intellectuals which would preserve such traditional found goods not to be in error. He states that civil society would be the corrective maintenance of the objective good instead of liberal reliance on the cultural marketplace.

The last of the concepts which tie the communitarian front together is the concept of anti-perfectionism and neutrality. The idea addressed under this compound heading concerns itself with the role of the state to remain neutral in both the identification of and intervention for the social good. Communitarians claim that it the neutral stance that liberals have taken on these two points which has helped break the cohesion of communal attachments. Sandel specifically accuses Rawls of remaining neutral and exclusionary in choices of competing social goods. Rawls has made the distinction between comprehensive, political, and private areas of social-political action. In the comprehensive area Rawls has stated that the state should remain neutral. In the political area he has allowed the state to intervene for only thin goods and maintenance of a rational consensus of a well-ordered state. In the private area the
individual should be able to operate without interference of the state. Sandel argues that Rawls can not remain neutral at the comprehensive level. He states that the idea of mutual respect within Rawlsian liberalism actually needs an authority to carry it out. He believes that Rawls fails to appreciate the thick nature of common good in liberal thought at the comprehensive level, and if the comprehensive level becomes perfectionist then the political level becomes tainted by it. The charge by Sandel is that Kantian equality at the comprehensive level and the exclusionary principle at the private level keeps Rawls from his own neutrality claim.

MacIntyre and Taylor join Sandel on the common criticism that liberalism is not neutral as a philosophy. MacIntyre claims that the anti-traditions principle of early liberalism has been swapped for the anti-communal principle of modern liberalism, and that this shift reveals a conscious changing of goods within liberalism. Like Sandel, he states that separation of public and private goods and the stance on individual priority all reflect a break with neutrality. MacIntyre conceives the authority of the small community as the only hope to pursue traditional virtue and provide for the adequate authority horizon in which to pursue shared ends. The fear is that if the liberal nation state is perfectionist, it would be impossible to maintain a non-coercive moral consensus given modern pluralism. Taylor also feels the liberal tradition is based in thick identity of the good because it must account for "why" when acting on a political level. He feels that the assumed neutrality of liberalism has fostered a growing danger of lack of authority, neutralizing the authority society requires to check the negative forces of self-interest. Like MacIntyre, he envisions the local community as the only structure which could bracket the good effectively.

Though diverse in their justifications, these four concepts provide the rallying point of the communitarian front. Communitarians see the individual as organically
tied to community prior to the realization of self and the creation of the political community. They fault liberalism for creating an unrecognizable solitary self-equipped individual with transcendental knowledge of self and a specific good genuine to that self. They all believe moral authority needs to be strengthened, and that this is only possible within sub-national communities where a shared tradition and environment can articulate a clearer consensus of the good with less coercion than the larger pluralistic community can. They fault liberalism's claim to be neutral, by claiming that its failure to promote a good is a promoting a secular amorality. There are also two other claims which may be joined here. As was referred to earlier, Michael Walzer also attacks liberalism on another front not as heavily tread as the other communitarians which is the idea of universality. Here Walzer charges that liberalism claims universality which means that liberal principles are applicable through time and place. He holds that this makes liberalism appear to claim a truth which would certainly place it as being a non-neutral doctrine. However, if liberalism would deny its universal claims then it must allow communities who differ on views of the good the autonomy to follow their own perception of the good. Finally, the solution all of these communitarians seem to offer, though there is no great consensus on specifics, is that community which is within the national system and identifiable by shared meaning, traditions, and interest should have the moral authority to protect itself from forces that break its cohesion from the inside or outside.

The Liberal Rebuttal

The liberal rebuttal has concentrated on addressing the four charges of the communitarians with a counterclaim that not only are some of the communitarian claims illiberal, but that some claims distort the liberal tradition to the advantage of the communitarian. On the first idea of the conception of the self, communitarians have
tended to put more weight on the liberal idea of the metaphysical state than liberals have been willing to grant. Liberalism as a tradition has tried to avoid metaphysical claims because of their intuitive and normative implications. Liberalism since Locke has claimed a basis in the empirical, and as a philosophy has allowed individuals the choice of metaphysical conceptions rather than the philosophy itself choosing a particular one. Instead of the descriptive conception of an unrecognizable ghostly and solitary self, as communitarians have often portrayed the liberal conception of self, the liberal response has been that since society cannot comprehend the metaphysical then let the benefit of the doubt lie with the individual whose self-consciousness remains the strongest experience of truth when approaching the metaphysical. In essence liberals do not claim a metaphysical self, but rather base the priority of the individual on present experience. This is to say that the individual priority is based empirically on what is known rather than assumption on what is not known. Contrary to communitarian claims, liberals do not reject the strong claims that individual identity is more socially wired then had been previously understood. However, the liberal rebuttal is that within the encumbered individual is still the decision making process of a conscious individual whose consciousness is a real and powerful experience compared to the abstract concept of community consciousness.

The Rawlsian interpretation of self has also been misrepresented by communitarian critics. Rawls had intended to use the idea of the self in the original position as a hypothetical tool to form a logical principle of justice within modern liberal society, not as a metaphysical assumption of individual origin. The unencumbered self in the original position was meant to extract, by use of disinterested selves, the principles of equality and self-realization within liberal thought which could not be arrived at by real selves tainted by inequalities. Rawls's motive is not to
convince individuals of the existence of the self behind the veil of ignorance, but to invoke empathy in order to provide understanding to liberal principles.

The idea of the asocial individual is also within the metaphysical area in to which contemporary liberals do not wish to tread. The communitarian criticism here is that liberals perceive a social contract in which the solitary and unencumbered individual, perceived in the last concept, voluntarily decides to engage. The main idea here is that the individual at one point decides to become social. The liberal rebuttal here is that communitarians have narrowed liberal thought to a Lockean interpretation of the social contract which has long been abandoned by mainstream liberalism. Current interpretations of the Lockean contract are still held by elements of the right of liberal thought, such as Robert Nozick and the libertarian movement, but these interpretations have illiberal implications that most liberals reject. Though liberals tend not to speculate at the metaphysical level, the idea of a communal origin is not necessarily incompatible with liberalism. However, this does not negate the individual's priority within liberalism since an assumption of social wiring does not remove the reality of self-consciousness of an individual within a social setting. In fact, the liberal conception of the social contract, historical or hypothetical, stresses the reality and importance of communal cooperation not a fostering of asocial individualism.

On the third concept of subjectivity communitarians claim that liberals perceive the individual as capable of formation and pursuit of a subjective good, rather than the objective view that there is one conception of the good and the individual gains knowledge of this through social learning. The liberal rebuttal here has been to accept the communitarian charge but to defend it by further qualification. The communitarian claim of liberal subjectivism led one to assume that liberals hold no conception of a good besides an individual's choice of their own personal preferences. This statement
gives the impression of amoralism where any action is good if the individual believes it to be. The liberal responds to this misperception at two levels. The first is that there are three spheres in which the good may be applied, the interaction of the individual with the state, the interaction of the individual with other individuals, and the individual’s private actions. In the last category liberals have held a strong subjective stance in that individuals in their private beliefs should be free to formulate and pursue their own conception of the good. However, in the two public spheres liberals allow minimal use of an objective good to avoid a conflict of goods which would render a well-ordered state impossible. The second level of interpretation qualifies the subjective and minimal objective reasoning. Liberals hold dominantly to the subjective interpretation when possible due to the fact that there are differing conceptions of the good. To choose one without consensus would create an illiberal situation where a normative good of some could be forced on others. This is not to say that liberals do not entertain the idea that some goods have been proven to be better than others, that a present perception of an objective good may seem to exist. However, liberalism has opted that government maintain the environment for the individual to realize the good rather than to force the good upon the individual. Since the liberal denies the possibility of knowledge of total truth, it is better to allow perceptions of the good to be subject to the scrutiny of the dynamic marketplace of ideas, rather than locked in the self-ordained authority of traditions.

The last claim of the communitarian is the claim of anti-perfectionism and neutrality which states that liberalism refuses belief in the existence of an objective good so therefore does not allow the state to promote any conception of good. On the first claim of anti-perfectionism this charge is not sufficient since there have been claims of perfectionism in the liberal ideas of Thomas Hill Green and most recently Joseph Raz. However, their perfectionism is limited in the sense that it tends to
function as operational ideals. The idea here is that there may be an existence of a pure good but total knowledge of it is impossible therefore, the state should not interpret it but only foster its discovery. The dominant liberal interpretation, however, refuses to entertain metaphysical questions of an objective good though this does not mean that it must remain totally neutral. Most liberals will claim that there has never been a totally neutral state, that in order to serve its dominant purpose of maintaining order through the distribution of limited resources it is forced to concede to a limited conception of what is good. However, this is not a reflection of an objective good but rather a reflection of what current opinion holds to be the proper rules, gained through experience, to provide for the maximization of self-realization. It is here that liberals will deny that they allow government to remain neutral, but that they do so in order to provide the means to the individual not the ends.

The purpose of this chapter, as was stated earlier, is twofold. Its first purpose was to introduce the communitarian criticism which has recently forced the liberal to engage the subject of community. Here, the communitarian has brought to the table the concepts of erosion of community and the greater awareness of the social impact on self that had lacked greater development within liberal thought. The weight of these queries have stirred debate within liberal thought enough that some have said motivated John Rawls to alter his position, and has supplied the problem this thesis will entertain. The second purpose was to expose the weaknesses of the communitarian criticism of liberalism. It has been developed that all the communitarians, with possible exception of MacIntyre, have made their main goal to change liberal interpretations, not to replace liberalism with a new philosophy. The development of their criticisms and solutions have also revealed that communitarianism may not only be historically shallow, but also lacks adequate consensus to provide a well-defined solution to the problem they
initiate. Finally their criticisms of liberalism as the fault of the problem has been disarmed by the fact, as has been developed above, that they have not only have misinterpreted liberal positions, but they have also offered illiberal propositions in its place. This neutralizing of the communitarian criticism is important to this thesis in that it frames liberalism as the environment for discovery of communal principles which may address the original problem.

Since the liberal/communitarian has introduced the problem (the fate of community) and its resolution has provided the environment (liberalism), the task at hand will be to research the role of community within liberal thought. In order to proceed through liberal history in search of precedents which can be constructed into a principle of community, it becomes necessary to place some reasonable limits on what is meant by community. This will become the task of the next chapter which will limit the concept of community by its relationship to the original problem addressed and to recognizable socio-political structures in order to stay within the limitations of this thesis.
Endnotes


5 Ibid., 160.


7 Mulhall and Swift, 162.

8 Ibid., 55.

9 Ibid., 160.

10 Ibid., 14.

11 Ibid., 65-6.

12 Kukathas and Pettit, 102.

13 Mulhall and Swift, 66.

14 Ibid., 162.

15 Ibid., 164.

16 Ibid., 99.

17 Ibid., 161-2.


19 Mulhall and Swift, 71.
20 Ibid., 161.

21 Kukathas and Pettit, 113.

22 Kymlicka, 209.

23 Mulhall and Swift, 68-71.

24 Ibid., 93-7.


26 Mulhall and Swift, 42.

27 Kukathas and Pettit, 104.

28 Kymlicka, 213.

29 Ibid., 75.

30 Mulhall and Swift, 115.

31 Kymlicka, 208.

32 Ibid., 218.

33 Mulhall and Swift, 195-6.

34 Ibid., 53.


37 Kukathas and Pettit, 114.

38 Mulhall and Swift, 159.

39 Kymlicka, 225.

40 Mulhall and Swift, 18-20.

41 Ibid., 215.

42 Kymlicka, 63-4.

43 Ibid., 60.

45 Mulhall and Swift, 219.


47 Caney, 280.

48 Mulhall and Swift, 219.

49 Schwarzenbach, 555-6.
CHAPTER III
THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

Not only have communitarians lacked consensus on their criticisms of liberalism as the reason for erosion of community; they have also lacked consensus on the nature of the community in question. Since definitions of community can be numerous, this has only added to the cloudiness of the communitarian charge. While all communitarians seem to be alluding to a communal structure below the national society level, they all seem to lack consensus on the identity of this community. MacIntyre envisions a type of small city-state; Taylor would allow the community to exist also as a cultural identity lacking fixed borders; Sandel and Walzer stress the plurality of communal attachments both horizontally and vertically and focus more on the loss of fraternity within them. 1 What seems to have been the order that originally motivated communitarians into their position is: (a) the sense of loss of fraternity within modern societies, a charge liberals will not necessarily deny. Then (b) in assessing the cause of the problem communitarians have pointed to a greater intrusion of the larger liberal state which has assentedly promoted asocial individualism and usurped the autonomy of sub-communities intailing the weakening of communal bonds. This has then led to (c) their solution, which is the justification for the empowerment of communal moral authority in order to reestablish the oneness of community. Since the accuracy of points (b) and (c), is problematic, this still leaves point (a), the problem. If liberal solutions to this problem are to be entertained, the site of the community in danger should have some definable parameters. In order to accomplish this task, this chapter will first develop a recognizable site for the
community in question; then it will develop the characteristics of this site which may prove it important to a liberal system. Lastly, it will place this concept of community in relation to the larger national community. If a workable form of community is developed here, there will then be a greater coherence when applying community to liberal thought in the following chapters.

If communitarians are in agreement that the community they each wish to defend has been significantly eroded by the application of certain liberal principles, the first requirement in focusing on a common site for community should be that it is presently endangered. Present perception of loss of community has been more commonly viewed to be at the local and subculture levels. Both of these areas also tend to be the dominant topics of discussion from communitarian writings. This would seem to weaken the focus on the national society since the extent of national communal bonds, "nationalism", has remained fairly static with minor fluctuations in both directions in times of threat and well being. This would also seem to exclude associations, whose membership appears to have merely transferred to different types of associations. Therefore, if community was to be defined by its significant loss of robust communal attachments, traditional local communities may emerge as the closest definition. Communitarians, however, seem to declare that communities defined by place (territorial), common history (cultural), and direct interaction (local) are all endangered. The idea, dominant in communitarian thought, that individuals are members of many different communities establishes multiple sites for community. However, as communitarians combine various forms of community under one broad concept, the important differences of their structures leads to problems when applying principles regarding authority.

The second requirement is that the community in question possess traditional territorial borders. Without identifiable borders of political authority, propositions on
collective authority present not only unfeasible but possibly illiberal solutions. It would be hard to imagine members of an ethnic subgroup dispersed throughout a nation living under a different authority than their fellow citizens. This would then exclude subcultures as the site of community, leaving the concept of localities. However, there is another reason why subcultures may fail to conform to the requirements of traditional community in question.

The third requirement holds that a community must have the potential to provide for the basic social and economic needs of its members. This requirement is necessary on both functional and historic grounds. Functionally, if what is sought is greater autonomy of communities, surely their authority would be compromised if they were not relatively self-sufficient. Historically this requirement is one that has been used to define community by sociologists. This has also been a major flaw in the communitarian definition and solution to the problem. The tendency by communitarians to stress community origin as moral oneness rather than socio-economic dependencies has distorted realities. History actually reveals community motivation is substantially based on mutual socio-economic need, that the moral oneness of past communities had emerged out of social influences and cooperation. The past does not provide evidence of conflictless communities within liberal states. Instead, the oneness communitarians may be referring to is a sense of voluntary social conformity tempered by the realities of socio-economic dependencies for survival not found in modern communities of scales which no longer solely provide these needs. Therefore, to restore the communal bonds which fostered cooperation, greater economic self-sufficiency of communities might be entertained rather than illiberal notions of greater moral authority.
This third requirement also reveals another insight into the communitarian perception of the problem. Although the nation state is often excluded as the site of the desired community here it cannot be necessarily excluded. The evolution from local to national community as the provider of basic social and economic needs has changed the nature of social interaction among individuals. This change in the way people interact with one another has been intertwined in the charge communitarians voice as the loss of the "robust" nature of community. It is due to the indirect nature of community at the national level and the probability of greater diversity that communitarians hold that robust community cannot be achieved. This has flavored the communitarian position as one which seeks to reestablish the closed gemeinschaft, a claim liberals hold is in error for not perceiving existential realities. This is an important point in that robust community at the national level may be impossible due to its structure. However, it opens up the question, which will surface later, how much of the evolution toward greater national reliance is natural and inevitable and how much could be political?

Questions of siting aside, it is necessary to examine the attributes of community as it provides the foundations for examining their presence in liberal thought. Perhaps the single most consistent principle of community is the liberal idea of subsidiarity. This concept is based on the principle that the existence of small democratic collectives can enhance the individual's choice and control over his/her environment in some areas of decision making better than larger systems can. Therefore, if more local control strengthens liberal principles, its existence becomes crucial to a liberal system. The premise here is that not all local and regional problems of concern affect the larger system, and such decisions are best left to those individuals who would be affected by them. The overriding concept here is not that local community has a right of existence, but rather that liberal systems should gravitate toward structures that will strengthen individual choice.
Whereas the idea of subsidiarity develops a structural/functional basis for local community within liberal systems, the idea of direct individual interaction between members of a community can add another dynamic to be assessed. This is important since it is a relationship which can only be experienced at the local level. The benefit to liberalism here is psychological and educational. A key criticism by communitarians has been that alienation, or asocialism, altering this direct relationship due to a greater intrusion by the larger national system. This communal alienation may be compared to Marx’s concept of worker alienation. Whereas Marx’s worker lost identity and concern for his product due to loss of control to a larger indirect system, the individuals of a community have lost identification with and concern for other members of the community since they no longer maintain a share and control of their environment. Where it may be true that the coercion of “need” was the bond of direct community, the reliance on the larger system did not eliminate need but only relocated it. The benefit of the more direct system to liberalism may be psychological and educational in the sense that it may be easier to comprehend the social and economic dependencies at a more direct level where they can be experienced, than at an abstract level where they can only be imagined. Reliance on the larger system has tended to psychologically cloak economic interdependencies and foster a false sense of self-sufficient individualism. It has been a common liberal theme to view small direct communities as an educational tool in which one is able to perceive and act directly in a political environment. The directness of the situation also provides the sense of ownership and identity which fosters greater concern and less apathy toward the system. It should be stated here again this benefit of the direct system should not be perceived as a replacement for regional and national systems, for liberal thought holds these larger systems as capable of correcting the inadequacies of the smaller ones.
The last concept to be discussed here is the necessary relationship of the larger national system to the local community. Any discussion of the role of local community within liberal thought cannot be taken outside of the context of the national system. This reality is due to two important requirements of the nation state within liberal thought which will be developed further in the following chapters. The first concept deals with the Hobbsean reality of the nation state as necessary evolutionary form for security. This expression states that the nation state has a natural and primary function to protect its inhabitants from outside invasion.

The evolution of larger and larger forms of collective authority to grant this security is a reality witnessed by the evolution from the feudal state to the nation state. The nation state is the culmination of this evolution and has existed from the inception of liberal thought to the present. This is an undisputed role of the nation state as a political system. However, the role of the nation state as a liberal system provides another requirement at the national level, which is the role as custodian for the maximization of self realization within that nation. This task is not to create “rights”, but to allow the environment for equal rights to be maintained. Both of these roles of the nation state are not to be limited by subsystems within it. This is the reality in which local governments of liberal systems must operate within. The chore of the research for community within liberal thought will be to try to extract the role of local community from within these realities of the nation state. The problem becomes separating and justifying the overlapping roles of authority between individual, community, and nation.

Part of this problem lies in the historic interpretations of the idea of sovereignty. Whereas in liberal thought the idea of sovereignty was to rest ultimately with the individual, there has been debate on the delegation of sovereign power to national and local governments. The prevailing liberal notion is that the individual retains sovereignty through the expression of “the people”, and that the “people” are
considered the national society whose vehicle of expression is the national government. The United States liberal system reflects this idea where local community has been considered only a "creation" of the state government sovereignty whose sovereignty may be limited by the "people" or national government. This idea of local government as only creations of the state, an American precedent referred to as Dillon's Rule, denied any prior expression of sovereignty with this direct form of government. Certain liberal critics of Dillon's Rule have maintained that local community was prior to state and national systems. They hold that where local communities were voluntarily formed of individuals seeking to secure their own individual sovereignty, so were states formed of communities each seeking to maintain their own sovereignty. They believe that while both the individual and the community in each circumstance surrendered some authority, they did not surrender it all but only what was necessary to enhance their situation. The claim here is not that the nation state should be subordinate to local communities, but rather that there exists a certain reserved area of the local community that national government must observe.  

In the next four chapters there will be an examination of the history of liberal thought in order to assess the role of community in it. The purpose of this chapter was to give a workable shape to the concept of community which will assist in the assessment of community within liberalism. Three questions will be advanced through the progression of liberal theory in search of precedents for the role of community. The first question will try to discover how community has been perceived as an entity. The second question will focus on the liberal stance on the authority of a collective (community) in relation to the individual. The third question will inquire about the liberal perception of "progress" as a neutral force. Where the first and second questions will hope to arrive at the nature of community, the third question is aimed at the forces which may be affecting communal bonds. Since it has been agreed upon by
most sociological researchers that it has been the technological impact on the environment that has been the source of changing community, not the absence of moral authority charged by communitarians, one may question the nature of progress in liberal thought. If changes due to technological advancement are conceived as a intrinsically good, then this would imply a positive moral stance and dictate government neutrality toward change upon the environment. This position would lead one to view the erosion of traditional community as natural, inevitable, and desireable. However, if the effects of change could be considered negative as well as positive and affected by political influence then liberals must assume a positive role for government since their decisions are the creators of its direction. This position, which allows government intervention, forces government to assess the importance of traditional community to liberal principles if it is to protect it. The following case study will be helpful in developing the problems which enter into the search for community's role.

In February of 1996, ABC's television program Nightline in a segment titled "Just Plain Folks" exposed a situation concerning the dynamics of community authority. In this situation a small town in New Hampshire was fighting the construction of a national chain drug store in their community. The fear by the majority of the town was that this addition would change the nature of the town. The town had prided itself in remaining free of influences from outside interests. This had allowed the town to become a type of gemeinschaft haven for those who live there as well as an attraction to visitors from the outside. Research had revealed that when this national chain had entered other communities it was only a matter of time before its discount prices would drive other competing local concerns out of business. Citizens feared not only a loss of individual character of their town but also a loss of control to outside economic interests and the bureaucratic personality it suggested. The question this case study implies which will continually surface in this thesis is whether a community
collective can protect itself from the free trade of the larger national system without exerting a moral influence on the members of that community or restricting the liberty of those wishing to enter the community. It also implies that other than economic and political demands of community, there may also be esthetic demands. The obvious solution to this problem which does not restrict individual choice would be to allow the national chain to enter and if the citizens wish the chain to leave, they simply should not shop there. However, past experience may reveal that individuals would shop there even though as a collective they did not support its existence. This exposes a concept dominant in liberal thought concerning the role of collectives. The belief here is that the role of a collective is that it serves as a disciplinary tool for individuals to protect themselves from the temptation of their own lower level motives which conflict with higher level motives they desire. An example would be the legal framework provided by liberal systems concerning monogamous marriage. The existence of this framework helps to deter individuals from engaging in multiple sexual relationships and helps to sustain the lifestyle of the traditional nuclear family. Without this added legal incentive, the temptation to pursue multiple relationships would increase since the experience itself is not necessarily an undesirable one for individuals, and some may claim is an attractive one. However, individuals may also desire the familiarity and security of the traditional monogamous relationship. Since the free choice action to engage in multiple partners appears to be biological and its satisfaction short term, it is considered a lower case motive. Since the desire to form monogamous relationships appears to be one of logical organization with long term implications, not to mention moral socialization, it is deemed higher order. Because the lower order impulses play on the weaknesses of the individual, individuals empower collectives to remove those temptations when they can present an alternative which is also desirable to human reason. The implication of this example is to show that collectives have been asked to do more than provide an
efficient method of satisfying basic individual needs. The following chapter will embark on the development of liberal theory, which will hopefully provide some of the answers to the question of role of community.
Endnotes


3 Ibid., 109.


7 Kukathas and Pettit, 232.


11 Ibid., 57-60.

12 Kukathas and Pettit, 101.
CHAPTER IV

EARLY INDUSTRIAL LIBERALISM

Before embarking on the early industrial period it is important to mention the foundations of liberalism established in the 17th and 18th Centuries which preceded this period. A brief synopsis of this pre-industrial period will add a greater continuity to development of liberal principles within this thesis, and help to achieve a better understanding of the influences on liberal thought in the early industrial period. The reason this pre-industrial period is not being developed in full is due to the fact that the idea of community in liberal thought was not fully developed at this time. The main priority of this time was justification for the liberation of the individual from traditional authoritarian control, and community was not considered an endangered entity. Though Locke emerges as the dominant liberal interpretation leading into the early industrial period, the works of Hobbes, Rousseau, Burke, Hume and Kant have all had an impact on the development of liberal theory.

Pre-Industrial Liberalism

Though Thomas Hobbes is often associated with the theory for the justification of authoritarian rule, his long-standing contribution to liberal thought was the conception of the social contract. Hobbes employed a method of rational, rather than empirical, cause and effect relationships to validate his theory. His theory uses a state of nature as its foundation. This state of nature assumes that the individual is autonomous. This was a radical departure from the organic view of society which was dominant, and becomes the seed of individualism which will envelop liberalism.
Hobbes saw community not as organic, but rather a voluntary association to serve self-interests. Recognition of the autonomous individual established by the social contract would be furthered by Locke to become the groundwork of liberalism.

John Locke, now witness to the reduction of power of the monarchy in the quiet revolution of 1688 and its recognition of religious toleration, set about like Hobbes to justify the vacuum left by weakening authority. Building on Hobbes' conception of the state of nature, Locke, through more empirical reasoning, developed what was to be the dominant liberal interpretation of the period. Locke realized the lack of morality in Hobbes' state of nature. Influenced by Hooker yet tempered by a new religious toleration, Locke established through a common sense approach a foundation of prior morality within the state of nature. This created an individual who desired more than simple power. In fact, Locke's rational individual was not necessarily asocial but cared for the well-being of others. It is important to note that Locke assumes that the rational individual will freely choose basic Christian moral principles as guides of behavior in the state of nature. Locke's individual, equipped with his/her moral wiring, possesses God given unalienable rights. The individual, armed with these rights, then enters into a relationship with a collective authority to protect these rights. Locke's contributions to liberal theory helped make individual rights a working concept, and establish the individual as prior to political entities.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau offered an alternative view of the state of nature which led him to place the collective will of individuals above the will of the lone individual. He believed the individual in the state of nature to be pure and that promotion of individualism has caused selfish desires to corrupt the original harmonious existence of society. Rousseau's belief in an organic relationship between the individual and the community led him to establish the idea of a common good. The articulation of this good would be the General Will and the General Will would be expressed by popular
democracy. Though both Locke and Rousseau both desired to free individuals from traditional authoritarian control, their solutions exposed the difference between democracy and liberalism. Though Rousseau offered a more democratic solution than Locke, Rousseau solution would be considered illiberal in that it does not provide the individual the protection from a tyranny of the majority. However, Rousseau realized the plurality of a nation state and saw greater potential in smaller entities in obtaining a sense of the common good. The basic foundational differences between Rousseau and Locke would continue to the contemporary liberal/communitarian debate.

Edmund Burke's criticism of liberalism's revolutionary nature questioned the role that "order" plays in liberal thought. Although Burke's criticism of the self-destructive nature of liberal theory labeled him as the father of conservatism, it would be deceptive to label him as authoritarian. As a member of the British Parliament, he was a strong proponent of rights for Americans, Irishmen, and Indians. Burke's vision of rights had a new prerequisite; order. He believed that rights could not survive without an environment of order. Prudence was notably the central theme of Burke's theory. He viewed institutions and traditions as the stabilizing forces upon the environment that would allow for the further realization of rights. Burke's criticisms tended to soften the earlier revolutionary tones of liberalism.

David Hume's ideas, much like Hobbes', did not receive immediate acceptance. Both had ideas which appeared too atheistic and scientific for the status quo mentality. However, Hume's works were aimed at the destruction of the social contract theory that Hobbes had initiated. Hume's "skepticism" challenged the validity of the social contract by claiming it to be unprovable by measurable standards. He believed that there is no way of empirically proving the existence of anything beyond sensory perception. Though he declared that morality was simply a emotional response to pain
and pleasure, he held value in time-honored customs which have proven to be useful to individuals. He held that communities were simply a creation of human utility and gained their value in that respect. Hume would not only contribute to the contemporary liberal tendency to avoid metaphysical assumptions, but he also advanced the idea of utility which will be built upon later by the utilitarians.

Immanuel Kant became the synthesizer, like Locke, of the dilemmas of religion and science, and the individual and authority. Kant's motivation for his theory was to answer the moral void left by Hume's skepticism. Kant did this by creating a theory of duality of existence. He believed that the mind has both active and passive capabilities. The passive mind simply records sense perception of the physical world and the active mind can draw on a priori knowledge from the spiritual world of God. This created a bridge between the empirical strength of Hume's physical world and the moral wiring of Locke's individual in the state of nature. The important impact Kant left on liberal thought was that individual free will would be held to ethical standards. His development of the categorical imperative placed a general moral prerequisite on the expression of rights. This morality not only conveys the idea of equality of individuals, but also that individual actions may impact the liberty of others. Finally, Kant's development of the individual as a recipient of a priori knowledge places greater authority on the individual to pursue his/her conception of the good. This stronger faith in individual also helped to strengthen individualism in the early industrial period.

Bentham

Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism will symbolize this period just as Locke's social contract had dominated the last period. In fact, Bentham's utilitarian direction would continue to influence liberal thought as late as the 1920's. Though his liberal
interpretation was to be considered more of a Lockean individual approach rather than
the more collective approach of Rousseau, he flatly denied Locke's metaphysical and
historical basis of rights. More in line with Hobbes and Hume, Bentham perceived a
positivistic existence of man, that cause/effect and experience has shaped the present
state of affairs, not a predetermined claim of right gained through historical
rationalization. In fact, Bentham held great contempt for historical foundations of
rights claiming that it has been used to justify unequal wealth and power for the self-
interest of a few. The few to whom Bentham was referring were the landed aristocracy
who had gained a monopoly of economic and political power in the wake of further
reductions of power of the monarchy. Bentham's enemy was different than Locke's
which called for a different focus on the individual. Where Locke needed history to
empower the individual with rights, Bentham needed to do away with historical rights
(legal entitlements) to free individuals from other individuals.11

In order to accomplish this task, Bentham builds on Hume's utility function to
state that the state of man is experience and reaction. This emphasizes the focus of the
individual as center, and utility as the driving force of action. Then to fill the void of
enlightened purpose left by Hume, Bentham added the Happiness Principle. This
principle was built on the idea that it is the primary motivation of humans to seek
pleasure and avoid pain. Therefore the "good" of a society is pleasure or happiness,
and a collective of individuals should always act to maximize the happiness of its
members. The method to accomplish happiness is reform, and the tool to implement
reform would be legislation.12 Bentham would base reform on the practical rather than
rational. A society must always ask the question, "Is there a better way available to
maximize the aggregate individual happiness?". Burke's tradition and incrementalism
would not be sacred. Bentham would spare no tradition to the idea of increased
happiness of the status quo. The vehicle of reform was the law which was to be
enacted by a legislative body representative of the diversity of interests of the collective. This is where Bentham had great criticism of Locke's implication of natural entitlements and, specifically, Blackstone's justifications of common law. Bentham's legal reforms would not honor what he termed habits of the past, but rather would limit legislation to provable welfare improvements. These improvements would be subject to a mathematical calculation of units of individual happiness and their increase of happiness relative to the status quo. The idea of pleasure being prior to rights has always labeled the utilitarian interpretation of liberalism as a hedonistic philosophy. It is historically evident that Bentham's utilitarianism created the highly individualistic elements found in some contemporary liberal interpretations and profoundly adopted by recent libertarians.

Bentham, like Hume, viewed community as a fictitious entity lacking any intrinsic qualities beside practical utility for the individual. He tended to speak of community at the national level and make no great distinctions below that level. The good of community to Bentham was that it was a practical invention of man, not necessarily of metaphysical origin. However, in an interesting turn of philosophy, it could be said that Bentham did not value liberty above individual happiness; rather, he tied individual happiness to the maximization of happiness of the majority of a given society. It could be concluded from Bentham's approach that the collective association of individuals was a given. This was a necessary environment for his legislative reform to take place. Unlike Jacobian revolutionary change, Bentham still preferred to leap from the status quo, not destroy it. Therefore, the community, though it was not naturally empowered, was to be practically empowered in Bentham's state. If it was to be congruent with his idea of a minimal state, a case could be made that the smaller community may have better served Bentham's happiness principle.
Bentham's individualism did not necessarily derive from the theory that the state lose its authority, but rather that the authority be geared solely to individual happiness. Though he saw this state as a minimal state, the state had gained authority in an area it had not operated in before. It would be fair to say that he promoted a state that would definitely lack the overall areas of authority it controlled in the past. By reducing these limitations on human behavior, Bentham is seen as placing greater liberties in the hands of individuals. However, where he reduces the scope of power of the collective, he also creates a new power of the collective in empowering a legislature to monitor the relative happiness of the status quo, and when proven viable, enforce reform measures to increase aggregate individual happiness. To soften the effect of this collective force, Bentham required government be a reflection of the individual elements of the community. Representation to Bentham was to be more inclusive than many of his liberal predecessors or his utilitarian followers. He envisioned a larger parliament with interests that reflect the diversity of the population, and with a strong one person one vote requirement. The precedent set here is that Bentham perceived a collective force as necessary and legitimate tool for furthering the collective welfare other than order and protection. In order for Bentham to challenge the individual advantage of the Tory based status quo, he needed to not only disprove historical entitlements, but also disable the power of the deviant individual's claim to happiness before the group. In essence, Bentham did not fear a tyranny of the majority situation, though his check on the majority limited it to action only if it increased aggregate happiness.

It is interesting, however, that Bentham did not perceive a direct relationship between the political and the economic areas of individual life. This allowed him to justify a state which was neutral in economic exchange between individuals. This created a unique and powerful association of this time. The rapid industrialization of
the time in concert with Bentham's political utilitarianism and Smith and Ricardo's economic theories produced a movement called philosophical radicalism, the liberation of individuals in the economic sphere from the legal constraints of the past. It is in this area that Bentham's individualism appeared more libertarian and less populist. However, Bentham did not use the premise, like Smith and Ricardo, that the economic sphere is "natural", but rather that it should be left alone for the better actualization of individual happiness. It could therefore be drawn that Bentham saw the effects of progress as it affected community, something that could be limited but only if it increased happiness. Happiness would be measured by tests of how intense, long, certain, and remote the actual experience of aggregate individual happiness would be. The idea of community or the idea of progress would be subservient to individual happiness.

Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, poet and philosopher, was to represent the dominant force opposing Bentham's utilitarianism in the early industrial liberal period. In fact, J. S. Mill, who would inherit the dominant liberal position by the end of this period, claimed Coleridge and Bentham to be the two opposing figures of the 19th Century. Coleridge's position is drawn from the vein of political philosophy stemming from Rousseau and filtered through Kant and his followers. As this philosophy spread through Europe and America, it became known as Romanticism. Building on the ideas of Rousseau, Coleridge believed in the organic nature of existence. He utilized the organic view to create a pantheistic view of universe which would later lead to the idealistic movement. Like Kant, Coleridge believed the mind to be active not passive. This active nature allowed man to gain knowledge "transcendentally" from his organic world, to which he was linked to spiritually not scientifically. Different from
Rousseau and Kant, Coleridge stressed the ideas of Nature and the Hero. Coleridge’s Romanticism was in great part a reaction to industrialization as it was toward individualism. Technology, as much as it had threatened nature also tended to tame its threatening character. Nature provided to Coleridge a necessary spiritual bond as well as a link to transcendental knowledge. Due to this organic relationship, an intrinsic equality and interdependence was assumed between individuals. The awareness of individuals and their universe as one interdependent organism with a spiritual obligation to respect and provide for the welfare of each other, was to be morally superior to individual hedonism. However, the Romantic movement was affected by the freeing of the individual noticeable in this period and seized upon this popular notion to justify the “Hero”.  

Though Coleridge believed in Kant’s categorical imperative to stress a natural equality of individuals, he also stressed that individual talents were not necessarily equal. In fact, he believed that nature provides some individuals talents greater than others, and that it is the obligation of those more talented to act for the benefit for the whole. The goal of the hero was to protect the emotional beauty which bonded the whole.  

Coleridge revolted heavily against the scientific method initiated by Locke which he believed to be grossly distorted by the Bentham’s happiness calculation. To Coleridge, poetry was superior not equal to pushpin, for it revealed the emotional bonds of reality, not the contrived and unemotional calculative method. To Coleridge, utilitarian liberalism not only shattered the harmony of the whole, but it also leveled the richness of society by reducing it to practicality.  

Coleridge, like Burke, had a great respect for the historic development of institutions. He tended to favor Rousseau’s preference for a rural community as opposed to the larger industrial or statist community. He envisioned a rural squirearchy knit together by a common memory of identity. His identification with the
local community was not in that it provided a greater democratic forum, but rather
ironically it enhanced individual identity by sustaining the emotional ties of individuals
to each other which were dulled by focus on the bureaucratic nature of the larger
community. In essence, the problems enforcement of communal obligations would be
largely avoided if intimate relationships rather than legal relationships existed.

Unlike Rousseau, Coleridge did not see direct democracy as the adequate
protector of the natural state. He believed the welfare of society to be greater concern
than the desires of the deviant individual, but feared popular democracy as too
dangerous for the individuals within it. Coleridge spelled out that there were now three
classes in modern democratic states; the aristocracy, the capitalists, and the laborers.
He saw the laborers as powerless due to both economic and educational deprivation.
This then created a natural power struggle between the aristocracy and the capitalists.
He saw the capitalists, the new industrial middle-class associated with Bentham’s
utilitarianism, as the reason for the misery of the laborer. Further expansion of political
power to the capitalist class would empower this group over the other two, and lead to
a hedonistic material world and eventual class warfare. He saw the aristocracy as the
paternal force which would protect humanity from its self-destruction by providing the
moral guidance necessary. Though vague and shallow on the procedures and
institutions of this political authority, there are strong implications of a Platonic
philosopher king paternalism manifested in the practice of a system of limited
democracy.

Coleridge's condemnation of the growing force of industrialization and its
ensuing hedonism placed him in a position to view the progress of society non-
neutrally. To Coleridge, the protection of ways of life was superior to individual
contributions which could alter those ways. Due to his more organic construction of
society, Coleridge did not see the economic system as separate from the political or
social system. Progress would be judged on its contribution to social harmony rather than to individual happiness, progress could be limited in the economic sphere as well as the political. As stated earlier, Coleridge sensed a shift of philosophy in the wake of the industrial revolution, man could now control nature rather than fear it. To Coleridge, it was to be man in harmony with nature, a new equality which seemed threatened by the capitalist's minimal state which did not recognize the full nature of man by creating a new unnatural environment of asocial individual competition.

J. S. Mill

John Stuart Mill would end up reforming utilitarian thought by tempering it with the criticisms of Coleridge. In many ways, he would join Locke as one of the dominant liberal interpreters of Anglo-American liberalism. Mill would leave upon the 20th Century the desired nature of individualism. He did this by placing liberty above happiness as the dominant good of liberal thought. To Mill, happiness is not an end but a process, and that process depends upon the liberty to pursue it. Under severe indoctrination of Utilitarian thought by his father James Mill, a primary disciple of Bentham, Mill did not begin to challenge strict utilitarianism until his father's death. It has been noted that what helped him recover from a nervous breakdown due to this strict utilitarian indoctrinization was the reading of poetry and philosophy, which was scorned by utilitarian beliefs. This is where Mill became influenced by Coleridge and Comte, and formed a friendship with Carlyle who was noted Romantic of Coleridge's weight. It is with these later associations that Mill had judged utilitarianism as deficient in assessing the true nature of the individual, who was both rational and emotional. It was Mill's reaction to his one-sided schooling and his Catholicism, which sought the good in everything, that created his high personal regard for "open mindedness" and influenced him to synthesize utilitarianism and romanticism. However, his stronger
utilitarian influences created a type of self-imposed guilt which would not allow him to stray too far from its foundations. Later critics have assessed that Mill did not go as far as he had wanted to. What he did contribute was to add humanism to a barren utilitarian philosophy, which inevitably created a distinct new liberal interpretation.

It could be said that Mill’s liberalism was to become the most individualistic stance created, since it implied a diversity or pluralism of individual ends. Mill’s criticism was not of government but rather of civil society, which could not only control government but could also act outside of its authority. What Mill was promoting was individual rights, but enforced in a positivistic rather than on a Lockean naturalistic foundation. Due to the assumption that individuals find different avenues for happiness, the majority should never limit the deviant’s interpretation or fulfillment of that happiness unless it creates a “direct” danger to the liberty or life of others. This interpretation is an evident influence on American constitutional interpretation of rights as seen in the Clear and Present Danger Doctrine. To Mill, the free individual was noble, and the liberal society necessary for a liberal government was one that respected free expression, tolerance, and nonconformity. To Mill, the deviant was necessary to maintain intellectual stimulation.

Mill was responsible for shifting the focus of debate toward community as an entity to be seriously weighed in the relationship of an individual and his/her government. Though he made no specific description of community, his examples conveyed the limitations placed on individuals by more local communities. His focus on the desired nature of a liberal community reflected individuals who interact directly. As previously mentioned, Mill did not entertain the idea of liberal structure as much as he had developed liberal attitude of the community. In his strongest references to the entity of community, Mill stated that it was the community's role to socialize youth to the moral standards agreed on by the community, and furthered this
by saying that no community has the right to force another community to adopt its moral standards. Though much weaker in its explanation, Mill also implied an economic interdependency of community members which denoted certain obligations limiting rights.

Where Bentham saw evil in a collective minority exercising power over a collective majority, Mill saw evil in the collective majority exercising power over the individual. To Mill, authority should not be geared toward a collective happiness, but rather to the individual to choose his or her own happiness. However, this did not imply a minimalist state, but rather one active in protecting the environment necessary to promote individual liberty. However, this protection did not extend to creation of a social good; i.e., a paternal sense of what is good for the individual, but rather protection of individual choice of the good. Government was to stop what is evil rather than enforce what is good, and what was evil was the limitation of individual choice without endangering others. Mill desired a collective authority limited by the principles of individual liberty, but comprised of unequal representation of the population. He feared the tyranny of the majority and though he promoted open public dialogue, he reserved decision making to those with superior education.

Besides the impact left by Mill’s liberty priority, his application of this principle through government was vague and at times conflicting. As his writings progressed, he tended to be affected by the changes in the environment around him. In his later writings, he was much more tolerant to limitations by a community. His skeptical view of the role of religion was transformed into a human need for spirituality. His early promotion of individualist capitalism became more limited, in which some now say he was the predecessor of Fabian socialism. He did not see the economic system as natural and would allow legislation of it for humanitarian reasons. Though he held strongly to individual right to production, he wavered on the right of distribution.
Probably affected by the ugly turn of the industrial revolution, Mill doubted whether technology had truly benefited the lot of mankind, realizing the non-neutral effects it could produce. This latter fear of Mill's, was to become a dominant concern of future liberal philosophers.

Hegel

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was to become the counterweight to Mill's liberalism, and in synthesizing the Rousseau's "General Will" and Burke's respect of history with the objective idealism of the Romantic movement, would impact political theory into the modern age. The sheer volume of his work and the massive system building far exceeded theories of the past which were more based on critical analysis. Hegel attempted to reverse the process initiated by Descartes of focusing on the parts rather than the whole. The expansive nature of his philosophy often left it vulnerable to contradictions and vagueness, though it could be distilled down to two main ideas: the nature of history, and the relationship of the state and the individual. Following the lead of Burke, Hegel saw in history the unfolding of human purpose. Due to the radical changes of political history he recorded, Hegel saw logical patterns emerge. Hegel felt that for the first time man has been able to "stand back" and view human history from afar. It was not the surface cause and effect reactions of short-term history, but rather the time-honored history that revealed truths of human purpose. This purpose, to Hegel, was the divine purpose of God or what Hegel saw as logic. The tool which exposed the logic was the dialectical method. The dialectical method allowed Hegel to do what Burke, Rousseau, and even Locke were unable to do, and that was to justify a type of natural law without being accused of pure intuitionism. Through the use of the method Hegel now had "proof" that history was a logical progression of idea "A", challenged by idea "B" exposing the inherent danger in "A"
which causes a synthesis to "C" which creates temporary equilibrium until idea "D" uses the inherent weaknesses of "C" to create a synthesis which is "E". Progress is seen as a constant correction of the status quo. The significance of progress is the gradual revelation of the purpose of Mankind, or God's Will. The importance of this exercise is based on the organic nature of existence. The key to Hegel's claim is that the state and the individual are only components to a greater universal purpose.

Hegel's historical interpretation removes the individual as the author of history. Instead, the individual becomes the tool of the motivation of world (God) forces. Individuals act off the cues provided by the environment. To Hegel, the evolution of history has provided an insight into the desired political system. He saw the fairly recent evolution of the nation state out of the feudal period as a step toward political perfection. Hegel's philosophy concerning the elevation of the nation state as the highest form of political perfection may be in part due to the status of the German states in which he existed. In comparison to France and England, Germany was highly decentralized and less economically developed. Hegel envied the strength of nations, and Germany would languish behind; yet he worried that the rights movements within France and England would eventually erode the unity which made them strong. Hegel was liberal in the sense that he saw the nation state as the true protector of individual liberties. However, he saw that to preserve rights a strong state was needed, and there must be a balance of rights to obligations to empower a strong state. Therefore, in Hegel's hierarchy the state must be prior to rights, for without the state there are no rights. In reference to individual freedom, Hegel believed that freedom is a mental creation of a society. He separated freedom from biological needs, which are non-volunteeristic. He associated freedom with wants or motives of action which are not controlled by the individual but values reflective of the social environment. True freedom to Hegel was the freedom to knowledge. Hegel was confident that knowledge
would provide individual’s realization of the world force, and the freedom to contribute toward it. Hegel was confident that knowledge would frame liberty to only purposeful action. Therefore, collective action was of greater significance than individual action. Hegel was in fact promoting “social liberty”, which haunted Mill in his sparing limitations of individual liberty.

Hegel’s use of community was rather loose. His comment that the greatest entity of mankind is the community manifested through the state (nation) has some of the same confusion as Rousseau’s General Will. This could be due to the meshing of the particular and the general in his development of the organic theory. Hegel’s entities would start with the individual, who lacks authority alone due to the fact that freedom is socially created and promoted by the aggregate individual will. The next step of assimilation would be the levels family, neighborhood, associations, local community and society. To Hegel, these were creators of the social, economic and cultural identities of the system. However, Hegel believed this level could not sustain the order needed for security, rights and progression without the moral direction and authority of the political nation state. To Hegel, although the state was sovereign, its role was not to create the economic and social arrangements, that was the role of the community; the state, however, had the power to check the arrangements to the moral standards of the whole through use of constitutional law.

Though highly statist, Hegel’s would allow the authority of local community to be superior to individual right if it did not encroach upon rights granted by the nation state. His faith that a collective authority is superior to the decision making of the individual is evident. Hegel holds strict requirements for this collective in that he feared both the extremes of anarchy and tyranny which would erode individual self realization. He reserved political authority only to the educated class, and went further to maintain that this class must be insulated from self or special interests so as to allow
its decisions to be based purely on the general welfare and moral purpose of the state. Like Plato, Hegel envisioned a philosopher king. The belief in a monarchy is based on the fact that a strong monarchy became the bridge from feudalism to the nation state for England and France. However, Hegel saw the monarch as more of a necessary focus or figurehead of state will than an actual political authority. The real essence of state power would be endowed upon the state ministers. The ministers would be drawn from the “ruling class” mentioned above. They would be protectors of constitutional law, very similar in authority to the U.S. Supreme Court. The ministers would be advised by a elected legislative body represented by functions of society rather than population or geography. The significance of Hegel’s empowerment of collective authority is based first in the idea of an agreed upon rule of law, and secondly that an educated and insulated collective authority is far more productive for the individuals of a state than authority based on the majority decision of the dominant self-interest or the lack of a collective authority allowing for directionless competition of self-interests.

Hegel’s development of history and collective authority hinge upon the premise of predetermined purposeful direction of mankind. However, trying to relate Hegel’s view of the collective authority and its relationship to progress can be confusing. Hegel’s progress has no knowable destination, since it is a process of revelation. Therefore, the state would seem to have to take a neutral stance toward innovations which change social arrangements since it requires a distant stance from that change to assess its impact. Yet, the protective authority of the state could impede some innovations which do not align with the moral course of the state. Hegel would probably answer this problem with the dialectic by stating that change would only occur if the old idea failed by being unable to compete with the view of the new synthesis. It is important to note that change does not occur from old idea to new idea, but rather from old idea to synthesis of old and new. This stresses Hegel’s belief in an
evolutionary rather than a revolutionary change. Hegel might state that some technological forces in a society may be fought against if they are viewed as morally destructive; however if they are destined to occur, due to divine will, they will succeed and only future observation will detect their ultimate benefit.
Endnotes


3 Stromberg, 83-5.

4 Ibid., 134-7.

5 Sabine and Thorson, 539-41.

6 Ibid., 560-1.

7 Stromberg, 150-1.

8 Sabine and Thorson, 555-7.

9 Stromberg, 199-204.

10 Ibid., 231.

11 Sabine and Thorson, 614.


13 Sabine and Thorson, 614-7.

14 Stromberg, 232.

15 Ibid., 231.

16 Schultz, 4.

17 Sabine and Thorson, 629.

18 Ibid., 630.

19 Ibid., 625.

20 Stromberg, 224.

21 Ibid., 218-9.
22 Ibid., 212-3.
23 Ibid., 214.
24 Ibid., 215.
25 Ibid., 229-30.
26 Ibid., 224.
27 Ibid., 225.
28 Sabine and Thorson, 641.
29 Stromberg, 260.
30 Ibid., 263.
32 Sabine and Thorson, 642-3.
33 Caney, 277.
35 Sabine and Thorson, 645.
36 Ibid., 641.
37 Ibid., 644.
38 Stromberg, 242-3.
40 Sabine and Thorson, 243-5.
41 Schwarzenbach, 550.
42 Sabine and Thorson, 589-91.
43 Schwarzenbach, 546.
44 Stromberg, 246-8.

45 Sabine and Thorson, 594-5.

46 Ibid., 595-600.

47 Ibid., 600-2.

48 Schwarzenbach, 544.
CHAPTER V

LATE INDUSTRIAL LIBERALISM

This period, which covers the twilight of the 19th Century through the dawn of the 20th Century, is marked with a pessimism born of the exposure to the inhumane experiences of the workplace and battlefield, of capitalism and nationalism. Both these ideals, which were considered positive forces to the liberation of the individual, now seemed to enslave individuals to their competitive desires. In almost a Hegelian dialectic, both ideals had exposed their seeds of destruction. However, the synthesis of ideas through this period will reconstruct both ideas and allow them to flourish. This period will witness both the end of the monarchy and the domination of capitalism. It will bestow upon the liberal tradition the ideas of the positive state and of equal liberty.

Green

Thomas Hill Green has been recognized as the initiator of what will later be called New Liberalism. His liberal philosophy, categorized as “Oxford Idealism”, would become the dominant liberal interpretation of the late 19th Century. Green had felt that Mill had not gone far enough in softening the harsh hedonism of Bentham’s utilitarianism. Continuing Mill’s respect for the individual, Green imported the ideas of German idealism in an attempt to construct moral ethics into individualism, which he had considered was barren in dominant British empiricism. Green’s motivation was his personal fear that virtue was in peril. On the one hand he saw the church, with its
ridged dogma, rapidly losing its influence to an increasingly scientific world. Yet the only alternative for individuals was amoral hedonism promoted by the utilitarian liberal. Like Hegel, Green saw philosophy as the new moral compass for a new scientific age.

Green, often called a Hegelian Liberal, used Hegel's monistic idealism as the metaphysical basis for liberalism. Green followed more the organic tradition of Rousseau, the Romantics, and the German Idealists. His idealism focused on an objective and monistic “good”, which was more in tune with Hegel than Kant. It was objective in the sense that it exists independently of the mind of the individual, yet monistic in that there is one source for it. Rather than Hegel's more abstract “logic”, Green envisioned this source to be God. However important to Green's construction of liberalism, the essence of God was to be understood more in the pantheistic quality of Spinoza where God is found in all that exists. Green then works off this construction to foster a perfectionist perspective. This is to say that since God is in all then the individual has the potential to tap what is within oneself, to understand all and arrive at perfection. This is also similar to the transcendentalism of the Romantic movement. However, Green's perfectionism denied the possibility of ever reaching perfection, but rather focused on the struggle towards it. What Green hoped to arrive at through his metaphysical foundation was a moral foundation for liberalism. His metaphysical foundation would imply a common good.

Building upon this metaphysical foundation, Green would introduce a highly democratic and individualistic procedural system that would classify him as the new liberal. His procedural system is highly driven by an ethical assumption which is closer to Kant than Hegel. Blending his pantheistic assumption with Kant's categorical imperative, Green laid the basis for the ultimate respect for the individual often found in Mill's writings. Though Green based his liberalism on a common good, the common good could only be known through self-realization and self-realization could only be
experienced voluntarily by the individual, not coerced. However, Green viewed individual will as a much more complex process than Mill had. To Green, the “pure good” existed as total knowledge of all or the mind of God, which is unobtainable because of man’s imperfections in the face of a constantly changing environment. Then there was the “common good” which is the closest realization of the pure good by the collective intelligence of a given community. Though the common good is partial, it reflects the knowledge that is accrued to that point in history that all agree is good. Green is quick to warn, though, that the common good is imperfect because it lacks total knowledge, and must be monitored and debated to make it responsive to new knowledge and a changing environment. It must not become dogmatic, though in its imperfect form it still reflects the basic roots of the pure good. This partial pure good therefore becomes the moral yeast of the common good. Green states that collective intelligence is more apt to frame the common good since it gains access to greater minds, it contains debate, and it reduces self-interest. As stated above, Green also believed that the individual, through self-realization or “knowledge”, would agree with fellow individuals on the monistic common good. This statement relies heavily on the individual good, Green’s third and last “good”. Unlike Hegel, Green believed that it was individuals, not an exterior life force that motivated progress towards the good. Green bracketed individual freedom by two major premises. The first, similar to Locke, is that free action should be logical action, and logical in the sense that it is not harmful to the individual. The second premise is that the individual cannot be perceived as separated from community, or other individuals. To Green, the logical and only known existence of the individual is in context of the community. His view of an abstract social contract could only be between the community and government not between individual and government. Therefore government is not generated for the impossible task of protecting “singular” individual self-interest, but rather individual,
"common" interest. The common interest or common good then limits individual freedom to action which does not harm the rational action of others. Rational action is defined as action aimed at self-realization by the individual. The increased self-realization by the individual will ultimately lead to awareness of the pure good which will reveal the individual's common interest with others which becomes the common good. In essence, Green saw the pure good, common good, and individual good to be of the same origin yet they each represent a different capacity for understanding.

Green saw the individual good as the perception of the good capable by the individual alone, though it is generally a less reliable indicator of the pure good than the common good due to personal limits on knowledge and strong competition with personal self-interest. Green placed high importance on this internal debate of lower and higher level interests within the individual. First, Green would remove certain involuntary action of individuals from the realm of individual choice/freedom. These would be certain biological drives which overpower conscious decisionmaking. These are rational instincts which if consciously fought would be detrimental to the health of the individual, i.e., nourishment or sleep.

In the realm of voluntary action Green sees the core of the liberal debate in the "possible" conflict between self-interest and the known common good. Green's individual good is the self-realization that one's self-interest is also the common good. However, what is most important here is the possibility of a situation where the individual "has" a choice between one's perceived self-interest and knowledge of the common good. This notion of choice is crucial to Green's status as a liberal. The situation would arise when an individual is faced with a choice of action between a lower level voluntary action, one whose motivation is purely self-indulgent with known negative consequences to oneself or others, against higher level voluntary action which is the knowledge of the common good, or the right action considering the
well-being of oneself and others. Green believes that all mentally competent individuals possess at least a general sense of the common good which can be referred to as simply acting empathetically toward others; its aggregate progress is measured by the degree of "civilization" of a society. However, an individual can choose lower level actions over what one perceives as proper actions. In fact, it takes much more mental discipline to choose the common good over immediate self-pleasure. This is where Green puts emphasis on "obligation" within a civil society. He believed it would be easier for citizens to choose the common good, and voluntarily follow obligation, if knowledge of the common good's relationship to the individual's good is revealed. To Green this is what is meant by self-realization. The role of the state is to promote not coerce the common good, and to provide the environment necessary to the process of self-realization. Since the common good is dynamic in nature, and since it is to be reflective of all individuals, not a tyranny of minority or majority self-interest, the state should remain highly democratic and the individual's choice of acceptance of the good should remain voluntary. This retains the liberal nature of Green's philosophy which in many ways appears more liberal than the paternal republicanism of earlier liberal interpretations. However, Green's foundation and promotion of the common good broke previous liberal tradition by implying the existence of the positive state, a state which plays an active role in the education and welfare of the individual to promote greater freedom. This embraces the idea of social liberty where a state can limit individual liberty in order to provide greater aggregate liberty. It is important to note here that Green's philosophy would actually perceive that an individual liberty that is in conflict with greater group liberty is not actually a liberty at all. However, Green perceived that this positive role of the state would be used sparingly, mainly to educate and protect an educative environment which fosters self-realization.
Green's liberal theory, though not highly descriptive of community, used the idea of community as the residence of the common good. Similar to liberal theorists before him, Green tended to merge the ideas of state and community. The idea of the nation state was the focus of the liberal debate since Lockean times and merely reflects the reality of its sovereign nature. However, it is important to note Green's views towards local community. Since the basis of Green's liberalism originated with the individual and one's self-realization of the good, he stated that all individuals are at different levels of realization. Building upon this sense of diversity, Green also held that different local communities also at different levels of progression and definitions of the common good. Therefore, the common good arrived at by a small interactive community has a greater chance of grounding itself with the individuals who shares the same experiences and environment. This means a greater chance of voluntary obligation and less coercion than a larger regional authority who must resolve conflicts among a greater diversity of interests. While the larger state may offer a greater pool of knowledge to access the good, the smaller community offers more direct cause/effect logic toward citizenship. Green used Rousseau's defense of the local community as the logical instrument of the general will and made parallel assumptions concerning the common good. Green's own personal life reflected a strong commitment to local citizenship which he claimed to be the logical starting point to understanding the concept of the common good. He saw the nation state as sovereign in reference to the basic protections necessary for individual self-realization. This might be considered to be just short of a constitutional democracy. However, he would also envision the protection of the autonomy of local governments in the creation of the good as long as it did not conflict with the basic assumptions of the state. For to allow the community freedom of arriving at a common good is one step closer to allowing the individual the
freedom to arrive at it. Green did not fear this temporary diversity since all evolution was to arrive at the same point.  

When assessing Green's relationship of the individual and the collective authority, one can see an uneasy balance of Mill's individual expression with Rousseau's general will that relies heavily upon his idealistic metaphysical assumptions to make it logical. Green envisioned the collective authority to be highly democratic. This was to allow the common good to remain highly progressive and dynamic so as not to become mired in an interest-based dogma. To check a tyranny of the majority, he would limit this authority to a promotion not coercion of the common good. This would protect individual choice and allow challenges to the flaws of the present common good to exist. Though limited in its powers of coercion, which seems to denote a negative state, Green would allow authority to become a tool of the collective in altering the environment of the state to promote greater individual self-realization. In other words, Green saw the state as a tool created to accomplish what individuals could not voluntarily do themselves. Though he justified the positive state, Green was quick to qualify its use. The state would be used to further increase the individual's rational decision making, not to make the choice for the individual. For instance, rather than create laws that provide for a more equitable division of profits for workers, the state should provide education and reduce the effects of poverty that will allow workers the tools to demand greater equity of employers.  

Progress to Green was not measured by technological advancement, but rather in the advancement of individuals toward knowledge of the pure good. Signs of progress would be seen in the lessening of self-interest individualism and greater voluntary actions toward the collective good. Basically, two factors shaped Green's adoption of his liberal idealism. The first being the fear that the church was no longer effective in providing moral guidance, and British empiricism, which disabled it,
offered no moral guidance in its place. This then becomes the motivation of Green's idealistic foundations: to provide an ethical foundation for liberal society. Secondly, Green's experience at Oxford came at a time when higher education was becoming available to individuals of the middle class based on merit which was a break from the past restrictions which allowed only those of the landed class to enter. Green's peers were of a new highly educated middle class which distinguished itself not only from the working class below it and the landed class above it, but also from the capitalist class of the same level. From this unique new vantage point, the idealists could see the class interests which fostered individual hedonism and its conflict. The cure was to provide to all the very elixir which had allowed the idealists to see so clearly—education.

Hobhouse

Leonard T. Hobhouse signifies the next evolution of the new positive state liberalism initiated by Green. However, Hobhouse disagreed with the direction Green's idealist followers had taken, particularly with Bosanquet who had inflated Green's importance of the state to Hegelian status. Hobhouse was one of the first "new liberals" to be influenced by the experience of the First World War, a war Hobhouse blamed on the influences of Hegelian nationalism. This caused Hobhouse's liberalism to be not only weary of hedonistic individualism, but also of the excesses of the collective mindset. What will also mark Hobhouse's liberalism is that he becomes the first liberal philosopher to state that the economic system is not natural and thus is open to state intervention in pursuit of greater liberty for individuals.

In many respects, Hobhouse reaffirms the concepts established by Green. He first of all agrees that political systems are of social rather than individual origin. This then lays the foundation, similar to Green, that rights are a creation of society, not
something with which people are naturally endowed. Since they are created, they are balanced with obligations, which in essence are the protectors of those rights. Therefore, a right can never be an action at the expense of another individual, but must be complimentary to the free action of others. Like Green, Hobhouse states that when the good of the individual and the good of the community are the same, the common good is realized. To Hobhouse, the common good was to be the only context of real liberty. Unlike Mill, Hobhouse did not see a large separation between public and private liberties. He would be quick to point out that there are very few actions which do not indirectly affect others. This then reinforces the idea of liberty as a social concept. Finally, in concert with Green, Hobhouse fosters a positive state which actively promotes and protects the common good which is defined as the maximization of individual self-realization. The role of the positive state is to create, even if it limits the individual action of some, the environment where “real” opportunity exists for all, not to guarantee outcomes. However, this is were the similarities to Green end and Hobhouse’s specific justifications of liberalism begin.

More in line with traditional British empiricism, Hobhouse removed the idealist label from his defense of new liberalism. Idealism tended to lose its appeal as a new pessimism arose out of the spectacle of inhumanity witnessed in the First World War. Not seeking to fathom the depths of Green’s metaphysical foundations of the good or Locke’s natural rights, Hobhouse would settle for the foundation that it is inconceivable to imagine man not existing in a social context. In another important deviation from Green, Hobhouse viewed the common good not the realization of similarity of individuals, but the understanding and toleration of differences. The end result would be unity, not uniformity. This is a significant move, for it implies the idea of the pluralistic nature of society which will become a dominant trait of future liberal philosophies. To Hobhouse, the common good promoted by the state was to be
“harmony”, much as Bentham promoted “happiness”. Finally, Hobhouse would go much further than Green in allowing the positive state to regulate the economic system. He believed that political freedom without economic freedom is not freedom at all.

Similarly to Green, Hobhouse did not see the positive state as the dispenser of charity, but rather the eliminator of barriers to self-realization. However, Hobhouse’s view of the nature of the economic system differed from Green’s. He did not see the economic system as independent of the political system; instead he saw it as a creation of the political system. Since the economic system is under the jurisdiction of the state, it becomes the responsibility of the state to assure that it is a “just” system. His rule was that a liberty used at the expense of another is not a liberty. Hobhouse would contend that there will be economic differences between individuals assessed on principles of comparable worth. However, no one shall be under-paid or overpaid which is is justice. Any excess profits should be returned to state to contribute to maximizing the equal liberties of all. Hobhouse believed the state should not house, feed, and clothe the poor, but rather eliminate the environment which causes poverty; empower the individual. The liberal state should enforce the “right to work” and the “right to a living wage” just as strongly as the right to property. In essence, the right to run a business is balanced by obligations to others involved.

Though Hobhouse promoted a greater role for national government, it is limited to the promotion of greater equal liberties. While he is confident that the national state is the only level with enough power to alter environments to promote liberty, he is equally fearful of placing other powers in the hands of a central government. He forewarned the problems of mass society with its bureaucratic alienation. He stressed that community has similar rights as the individual, and that greater autonomy should be created at the local levels.
Hobhouse's view of the relationship between a collective authority and the individual seems blurred due to the interdependencies between both. Since he believed that there existed an organic rather than mechanical relationship between the individual and the community, liberty was a social concept and focuses on the group rather than the lone individual. Hobhouse would frame liberty as legitimate (a) only if it is equally enjoyed by all, and (b) only if it is congruent with the good of the community.

On the first point dealing with equal enjoyment, Hobhouse was not implying that the collective enforce equality of outcome. Instead, he is promoting the idea that liberty cannot be enforced so therefore protection of the individual's choice of self-realization must become a prerequisite to true liberty. However, due to the plurality of self-interests and the interactive nature of society, liberation of individual choice does not assume a negative liberty because a liberty of one may produce a limitation of choice on the part of the other. Equal enjoyment of liberty involves a positive stance from the collective. Equal enjoyment of liberty first assumes opportunity of action to be real and not the principled facade it appears to be in modern liberal states. This is to say it stops becoming an abstract right and becomes a working reality to be enforced by the state. Here, Hobhouse demands a liberal positive state to be much more manipulative of the environment to ensure real individual choice. Equal enjoyment of liberty also implies that individual action is "limited" to action which does not reduce the opportunity of "real" choice of others. Therefore liberty, which is a meaningless term outside of a social context, cannot exist without constraints. Government then becomes necessary to liberty by representing society's enforcement of constraints on individual action which in turn creates liberty.

On the second condition of liberty, the good of the community, Hobhouse is limiting individual action to action which does not endanger the community. It is here that he claims a right of a community similar to a right of an individual. Since the
community is not only natural but also the safeguard of liberty, its existence is vital to the individual. Therefore, individual action is limited if it endangers the community. This would not imply that individual action would be limited by protection of an non-liberal community. This is where Hobhouse sees that the individual as the source of liberty and the precious focus of his entire theory. However, it could be stated that illiberal action by the individual does not deserve any greater sympathy than a despotic collective.²⁶

Since Hobhouse views community as organic, and its composition as pluralistic and interdependent, the positive state becomes a requirement, not an option. Hobhouse also adds another dimension which empowers the positive state. This would be the dynamic nature of the environment and the ensuing question of progress. Hobhouse is perhaps the first liberal theorist to include into the debate between the individual and the collective a third variable; the environment. Different than the historic world view progression of Hegel, Hobhouse focused more on the immediate environment surrounding individuals. This physical, political, social, and economic environment could not be removed from the equation of individual liberty. This environment was also dynamic in the sense that individual action upon any of the above areas could cause a change in the environment which ultimately would impact individual freedoms.²⁷ This interrelation between the individual and the environment reduced the objective quality given to the environment in the past. Now the environment was viewed more subjectively in the sense that it could be either manipulated consciously for the self interest of some, or that it could be impacted naively in the sense that the impact of the action is not known. The key of the subjectivity lying in the fact that the course of progress is not some how predestined, but rather only reflective of casual choices. This assumption then places greater justification of the community to control the environment rather than be its passive passenger. This then allows Hobhouse to
view government as a tool to intercede into social, and economic areas not previously entertained by liberal theories. However, to combat totalitarian tendencies of this assumption, it is remembered that collective action upon the environment must only be used to increase individual liberty as Hobhouse defined it.\(^{28}\) The stronger positive role of government would seem to create a more subjective role for government concerning progress. To Hobhouse, progress was not mechanical, but rather spiritual. As mentioned earlier, it was not to be based on the ability to add pleasure or happiness to self-indulgences, but rather to increase the aggregate's vision of choice and the environment which allows the possible realization of the chosen. Progress would be marked by greater group liberty with less coercion.\(^{29}\)

Barker

Earnest Barker, a noted historian of liberal democratic philosophy, contributed to liberal thought a strong sensitivity to pluralism and the importance of groups. His general conditions of liberalism bear striking resemblance to Hobhouse's which definately labels him as a "New Liberal".\(^{30}\) It is Barker's development of certain procedural aspects of New Liberalism which becomes his legacy to liberal thought.

Two major ideas stand out clearly in his assessment of New Liberalism. The first is the recognition of the importance of plurality to a liberal society, and the importance of the autonomy of sub-groups in relation to that pluralism. The second is to cast New Liberalism as a evolutionary rather than revolutionary or static condition.

On the first point, Barker, like Hobhouse, would concede that the heart of liberal thought resides in the basic moral assumptions articulated by Kant and J.S. Mill: Kant's basis of individual equality and Mill's protection of individual expression.\(^{31}\) Also like Hobhouse, Barker would conclude that this Kant/Millian individual would be endowed with moral freedom, not unlimited freedom.\(^{32}\) Moral freedom presupposes
obligations or limited behavior, and reality dictates a positive rather than negative state to protect moral freedom. However, Barker, reflecting on the collective movements of Nazism and Communism, and Italian fascism began to see the dangers of the positive state equal those of the negative state.  

Wanting to protect New Liberalism, which he saw the positive state as the only possibility of greater freedom, he needed to look inward and find the mechanisms of the positive state which would prevent it from illiberal totalitarian tendencies. He saw the greatest danger in the Hegelian merger of state, society, community and individual. However, he also saw that dominant liberal thought, from Locke to the New Liberals, guilty of ignoring the distinctions between collective entities. Though the national state is necessary in the sense that it is the only real collective powerful enough to maintain basic rights in an interactive nation, centralization promotes bureaucracy which in turn promotes oligarchy. Barker saw the New Liberal movement as moving dangerously close to the usurping of sub-groups into the national system. Unless these sub-groups were allowed identity and limited autonomy, alienation and apathy would erode the checks necessary to maintain an environment of individual growth. Barker contends that there are two types of collective: the social and the legal. The social groups are ones that are formed naturally by coincidence and their obligations are more of a voluntary nature. In descending size and intimacy they would include: national culture, regional culture, local community, associations, neighborhood, extended family, nuclear family. The legal groups are ones that are formed more purposely from social groups and in which obligations become enforceable. These are the institutionalized authorities known as governments. These entities have seemed to coincide historically with national, regional, and local level of authority. Barker would maintain that associations can at times overlap into legal authority. Barker's fear here then is twofold. First is the concern that if distinctions of social and legal are blurred, the overriding authority of a Platonic or
Burkean city/state will exist. The fear here is that the legal authority, which is the most organized of the two, is soon perceived as the social group. This creates the situation where the legal authority defines the identity of the social group, rather than the social group defining the legal authority. Secondly, compounding the first idea, is Barker's fear of liberalism's evolution toward greater national government intrusion into the affairs of sub-national systems. He sees the individual acceptance of national sovereignty as a far cry from individual sovereignty which was manifested in collective local authority directly touching their lives. Barker points to modern totalitarian systems and their perceptions of local particularisms as a threat to be a clear warning to liberal systems. In fact, Barker sees the national aside from its vital role of protecting the basic human liberty from infringement from individual, group or environment, as a force which creates conformity by reducing individual diversity by its majoritarian or oligarchical tendencies. Therefore, Barker's solution is both horizontal and vertical in nature. It is horizontal by the necessity to distinguish between social and legal entities, and to realize that the social system is creator of the legal system. It is vertical by maintaining limited autonomy within the levels of government.

Building upon his theory of social group primacy, Barker's second major contribution to liberal theory was his insistence on its evolutionary nature. Though Barker would disagree with Hegel's nationalist implications, he shared a Hegelian sense of organic evolution. To Barker, legal authority is prone to act, in regards to the status quo, either by revolution or by artificially maintaining its status. Society, however, moves at an incremental and evolutionary pace. Therefore, radical and reactionary movements are a sign of legal rather than social control of a liberal system. Besides the illiberal implications of legal control, Barker sees direct social problems associated with revolutionary or reactionary movement. Sounding similar to Burke, Barker finds revolutionary change uprooting the natural stability of a social system.
Traditional institutions should evolve by the gradual pressure of social change, not proceed ahead of it. However, nor should change be halted. Barker believed existence to be dynamic, where environment and individuals were constantly changing. To hold back change would be a sure sign that a particular self-interest would be involved. Similarly to Hobhouse, Barker perceived government’s role to be constantly monitoring and adjusting to the maximization of aggregate liberty. It would then stand to reason that continual monitoring of revolutionary change would be a ridiculous concept. It would also stand that if society is naturally dynamic, to resist change would stunt the realization of maximum liberties.

Barker states that the case for a strong system of local government is almost clear beyond discussion. He perceives the main check on the mass society implications of New Liberalism is the recognition and empowerment of sub-national level groups. The individual as a voice is definitely lost in the realities of mass democracy. However empowerment of groups at a more local level creates a check to the smothering aspect of national dominance. As long as groups, legal or social, comply with the basic rights established by the national government, decisions are much more efficient and representative if implemented at the local level. The local focus, however, must be bracketed by the fact that its system is controlled by the social and not the legal group. Here, Barker may envision a highly democratic local government limited only in action by basic human liberty principles established by the national society. Both national and local governments in their respective roles are empowered to protect not only the political and religious, but also economic freedom of choice of their members, remembering that choice entails actions not limiting the “real” choices of others. Diversity would lie in the “home rule” choices of local groups. The progress of national society to be judged by monitoring correctly environmental realities, and adjusting to those realities to further maximize individual growth. The progress of the
local society would be to create the environment, relative to their situation, which supports their mutual needs while remaining in line with the basic human rights arrived at by the national government.

Dewey

John Dewey's influence on liberal construction signals the first time an American has been used here to define its course. This Atlantic shift parallels the emergence of the United States as the dominant liberal democratic state during the first half of the 20th Century. It may also reflect the victorious challenge of American "pragmatism" to the dominant philosophical schools of Europe. Pragmatism seemed to put into a word the historic and almost non-ideological creed of American thought. Dewey, along with Pierce and James, successfully waged attack on Continental idealism, and Britian's analytical school. Dewey, more than the other two, saw the opportunity to apply philosophical pragmatism to political and social theory. His criticism of the idealistic school was that it was too metaphysically dependent. It tended to cause a smokescreen or painkiller to the real problems faced by societies. Its insubstantial foundations were susceptible to self-interested interpretation and indoctrination. On the other hand, Dewey felt the analytical movement in Britian so dissected reality as to make it unreal or unintelligible to real actors within a social system. Dewey's pragmatism seemed to blend the organic/historic nature of idealism with the scientific experimentation of the empiricist. The force of pragmatism relied heavily upon assessment of "present" conditions. Its epistemology would be heavily contextual. Assessment of the present could not exclude the inheritance of the past. This past gives meaning to the present situation. Dewey would criticize the analytical empiricist on the same grounds as he would criticize the idealist. He claimed that to expound on reality on inductive method runs into the same metaphysical abyss as one
who travels the deductive method. Therefore, heavy reliance on “real” or “ideal” meanings do not provide the type of knowledge to understand and direct present situations. To understand society and effectively impact it is to view its components in their vernacular meaning. History becomes important not in itself, but rather in its relationship to understanding the present. Progression is constant, and is directed by reaction to perceptions of present realities. The significance of this philosophical assessment toward political theory is twofold. First, reactionary or radical movements within a society are signs of coercive political authority. Reactionary movements suggest a return to a past condition which denies that any growth has occurred since. To make this movement feasible, one would have to deny witness to change and capture a past nievity. This may also include status quo maintenance, since progression is dynamic; to artificially halt change requires control. Radical movements which break the continuity of the past would in fact have to wipe away any memory of the past to be at all feasible realities. Both situations imply an illiberal force necessary to create this mock reality. Secondly, since progression is natural; a clear assessment of the present is vital to motivation of actions of society. Informed individuals will make more intellectual rational decisions which will create the new reality in their favor. Therefore, awareness (education) of present conditions, which are then scrutinized by the historically developed moral environment, initiates action which alters that environment to a new condition and requires a new assessment. If then progression is natural, an individual is best served with a system that promotes education and evolution.

Dewey laments that modern liberalism has become ineffective. It has lost its original dynamic nature, and has settled on the maintenance of a legal and an economic framework. It maintains a legal system which offers equal opportunity for self-realization, while at the same time maintains an economic system whose inequality
denies that opportunity. In Dewey's estimation, modern liberal states are liberal only by a historical or ideological label. In reality, they do not actively promote self-realization of individuals, but rather self-preservation of vested interests. As stated above, absence of growth indicates coercion. Dewey sees the legal system as the force which maintains the status quo. He also sees individual awareness of present conditions as both concealed and distorted. Knowledge is concealed in the sense that no active effort is being made to expose and condemn inequalities that stifle individual growth. It is distorted in the sense that liberalism is being promoted as a past accomplishment which resists change. Present liberalism appeared reactionary by preserving centuries old Philosophical Radical Liberalism which had gained a sacred nature due to its lengthy and protected existence. However, as sovereignty was transferred to the governmental structure as liberal guardian, the dynamic nature of liberalism became stifled by the self-interest of those in power. Dewey blames this occurrence on the position of liberalism as the out system from Locke to Bentham, where its nature had to be radical, to its emergence as the system in control after Bentham. Once in control, liberalism failed to adjust to its new position. Instead of the environment being able to be manipulated toward greater self-realization of all, as Philosophical Radicalism had viewed it, the new environment was perceived as an end to itself and must be preserved. Yet the perception of the individual's relationship to the system did not change. Even though the new system was liberal and was to be preserved, the role of the individual was not perceived as acting cooperatively with others to use it to maintain greater liberty for all. Instead, maintaining the characteristics of the individual pulling away from an authoritarian rule, the individual's role was one of autonomy which viewed collective action as a threat. To Dewey, this stunted liberalism's original intent. Dewey claimed that liberalism has a comprehensive requirement prior to the individual's choice of the good which is the
maximization of self-realization for all individuals. This is based on the reciprocal relationship that society is created by individuals, and that individuals are created (identity) by society. Therefore, the roots of liberalism are social. The role of liberal society is to educate individuals to achieve an accurate sense of present realities, and cooperatively act to maximize individual liberties. Dewey viewed the state as the liberator of local associations from past coercive groups to voluntary groups. Dewey saw the state as not freeing individuals, but rather freeing associations of individuals. The expression and self-realization of the individual is in a social context. The state's role is to monitor the environment to best actualize individual self-realization; however, it is local associations which create the reality, since different groups may experience different realities.

Dewey justifies the power of a collective authority over an individual if the actions of the individual reduced the self-realization of another. He does not see the state as promoting a common good, besides the maximization of individual liberty. Communities establish common goods, not the nation state, due to the fact that communities are voluntary and the state is not. Crucial to collective individual action becomes the role of the society to disseminate information concerning the present condition and its affects on individuals. Dewey sees the isolation of intelligence to an individual property as a misconception which has justified inequality of desert as well as the competitive rather than cooperative use of information. Since knowledge is cumulative it is not owned by any one individual. Its benefits are deserved by all members of society.

Dewey viewed change as a natural and inevitable process. Progress was to be marked by a change which increases the self-realization of all individuals. Dewey makes a strong point to differentiate between scientific/technological progress, and progress which increase liberal self-realization. At times both may be interrelated, and
at other occasions they may be in conflict. To Dewey, if a society is not changing or
aware of changes, it begins to lack its liberal qualities.
Endnotes


2 Ibid., 167-9.

3 T. H. Green, Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation, 62-8.

4 Richter, 283-6.

5 Ibid., 196-205.

6 Ibid., 226-9.

7 Green, 22-5.

8 Richter, 250-3.

9 Ibid., 283-4.


11 Richter, 215.

12 Ibid., 248-50.

13 Ibid., 274.

14 Ibid., 215-6.

15 Ibid., 220.


19 Thakurdas, 61-2.

20 Ibid., 32-6.
21 Ibid., 35.
22 Ibid., 86.
23 Hobhouse, 103-5.
24 Thakurdas, 22.
25 Ibid., 28.
26 Ibid., 35.
27 Sabine and Thorson, 679.
28 Thakurdas, 61-2.
29 Hobhouse, 101.
30 Thakurdas, 89.
31 Ibid., 106.
33 Ibid., 144.
34 Thakurdas, 90.
35 Barker, 20-4.
36 Thakurdas, 152-3.
37 Barker, 24.
38 Thakurdas, 149-51.
41 Ibid., 61-4.
42 Ibid., 37-40.


46 Ibid., 75.
CHAPTER VI

POST-INDUSTRIAL LIBERALISM

The post-industrial time period covers the evolution of liberal thought after the acceptance of New Liberalism in the post-World War II environment. More specifically, it describes the period of 1971 to the present. This period is initiated with the publication of John Rawls' work *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls' book tended to set the norm of the new liberal philosophy by which others, critics and allies, judged their work. It is important to note here that liberalism, in its mainstream form, had been continuously flanked through the industrial period by criticisms from the left and right. These critics through their persistence had developed by this post-industrial period a legitimacy of their own. Both groups of critics, libertarians and neo-antifederalists, and democratic socialists, claim to be the true direction of liberal thought which was perceived to have lost its way. The right is represented by the reactionary elements within liberal thought which by this point in time have been labeled Libertarians. This critical voice finds its roots in Locke's natural rights theory of pre-industrial liberalism, then incorporates the individualism of Philosophical Radicalism of Bentham and Smith in early liberalism, moves to further justification of the negative state with Spencer's natural progression theory of the late industrial period, and finally culminates in the works of Frederick Hayek and Robert Nozick in the post-industrial period. This voice is highly critical of the incorporation of more social liberty and positive government from the New Liberal influences into dominant liberal interpretation. The voices on the left, however, see mainstream liberal belief as not going far enough toward protecting individuals from the illiberal and unjust affects
of capitalism. This group claims that a democratic socialist state is the ideal liberal system and are often called Social Democrats. This group sees its philosophical goals accomplished in the further progression of New Liberalism. A third group of critics called the communitarians seem to avoid the convenient reference points of right or left. They might be referred to at first glance as populists. They are critical of the right for its stress on individualism, and critical of the left for its centralization. They are critical of mainstream liberalism for protecting both ideas. Their philosophical support tends to come from what might be called the "shadow liberalism" of Rousseau and the Romantics to Jefferson; also with some, notably Taylor there is a domesticated Hegelianism.

These critical voices become the parameters of liberal thought in the post-industrial period. It is within these parameters, and due to their force, that John Rawls crafted his liberal theory. He addresses the concerns of the post-industrial democratic welfare state. It is a society in which technology has made it possible to meet the needs of all; yet this same technology appears to have stunted this possibility by fostering individual competition by its continual creation of new wants. It is a society in which bureaucratic centralization has created an economic safety net, yet has dulled the democratic spirit in the process. It is an interdependant society were self-reliance means one uses others instead of them using you; where basic need fulfillment shifts from local to national and individualism means self-imposed alienation rather than self-realization. It is also a society which has long conquered Nature, yet is now beginning to realize its own finite nature.

Due to the fact that this period is in its early stage, John Rawls stands as the signature representative of liberal thought from 1971 to the present. This chapter will concentrate on his interpretation of liberalism as he applies the traditional principles of liberalism to the environment he observes. Though the concentration here is on one
liberal theorist, there are actually two Ralwsian interpretations of liberalism: the first is his ideas conveyed in *A Theory of Justice* (1971), secondly is his evolution based on criticism from the left and right in *Political Liberalism* (1993). While maintaining the basic principles constructed in a *A Theory of Justice*, his latter work represents a significant shift from philosophical foundations to more pragmatic political foundations.

The basic motivation for *A Theory of Justice* was Rawls' attempt to provide for a justification for means to realize liberal principles which he claimed distorted in contemporary society. Rawls maintained as liberal principles the idea of individual priority (liberty) as established by Locke, the idea of individual equality stressed by Kant, and the idea of individual self-realization as best articulated by J.S. Mill. He rejected utilitarian and intuitionist foundations for liberal thought for their distributive and other negative consequences. In line with Dewey, Rawls reinforced the pragmatic direction of liberal thought by refusing to entertain metaphysical notions for the defense of liberal principles. Instead of focusing on the justification of liberal principles, Rawls focused his work on the issue of just distribution, a social good often neglected by liberalism. His main criticism was the application of the concept of equal opportunity in contemporary liberal states. He viewed the modern interpretation of this concept as a barrier to further self-realization of the individual and as a lack of sensitivity to what is truly meant by a free and equal inheritance of individuals. To do this Rawls establishes “justice” as the highest order good in the procedural application of liberalism.

In order to energize liberal principles, Rawls offers the “difference principle” as the corrective force for modern liberalism. This principle is based on the assumption that there had never existed a social contract which individuals entered on a level playing field with de facto equality of opportunity. The claim here is that historic
evidence does not support a situation where social position or natural talents among individuals were considered equal, therefore, individuals would not possess equal bargaining power when the agreements are struck. This poisons the waters of the traditional conception of the social contract by assuming distribution of resources to be the accurate reflection of individual choice. Rawls views inheritance as the reflection of distribution of resources much more than individual choice. The problem with unequal distribution of resources is that it prohibits the equal self-realization of individuals, and if this distribution is not based on choice is its foundation illiberal. In order to avoid the dilemma of placing liberal goods of liberty and equality in conflict, Rawls synthesizes these concepts into a concept of justice. This concept would prioritize distribution accordingly: (a) equal liberty, (b) equal opportunity, and (c) equal resources. Rawls holds liberty as the traditional priority, yet distances himself from the liberal Right by stressing positive liberty rather than negative liberty. Since distribution of resources can affect opportunity for equal liberty, differences of distribution should not only be deserved but should also not reduce the equality of liberty established in the first priority which is the basis of Rawls's difference principle. The difference principle also reveals why the equal distribution of resources would be ranked third. Given the present realities of unequal distribution, Rawls views attempts by the liberal Left to hold equal or contribution based distribution above liberty as illiberal in their consequences. Though he would concede that greater equalization of resources would create greater equal liberties, Rawls views total equal distribution as not only being unrealistic, but also undesirable. His difference principle states that, given the present inequalities, future discrepancies of distribution should be based on the principle that that difference is to the advantage of the least favored groups within that society. The hope here is that this would create an
evolution from the present state of inequalities towards a greater equal liberty implied in liberal thought.\(^6\)

In order to justify his difference principle, Rawls had to replace the foundation of the traditional social contract. Rather than discover truths at the metaphysical level, Rawls preferred to work at the comprehensive level. The comprehensive level involves the development of general truths based on experience rather than intuition found at the metaphysical level. It also differs from the political level in that it suggests universality rather than relativity. Instead of construction of a metaphysical contract, Rawls constructs a hypothetical contract drawn from the comprehensive level. This contract, called the "original position" was not meant to detail a prior metaphysical existence, but rather to serve as a tool in which individuals could logically conceive the motive of liberal principles based on comprehensive knowledge and was explicitly addressed to the issue of distribution, not aggregate good. In the original position, Rawls asks the individual to put themselves in a hypothetical position behind a veil of ignorance. This "veil of ignorance" would not allow the individual to be knowledgeable of one's social position or natural talents. In this state the individual's formation of the contract would not be tainted by competitive forces of self-interest, but tends to represent a disinterestedness which individuals enter in with like concerns. The individual behind the veil, while knowledgeable of the social lottery which could provide for differences and is in possession of certain economic and social principles, is not aware of his/her fate. This creates a situation where the individual and the collective merge, where identical situations and unknown consequences lead to a logical consensus of principles which maximize benefits and minimize risks of the individual. It is within this hypothetical state that Rawls concludes that the difference principle would be established by rational risk minimizers. While Rawls admits that it is not feasible to imagine this situation ever
existed, nonetheless it is feasible that individuals could logically empathize with it and draw principles from it. 

Through an understanding of Rawls' principles it becomes possible to deflect some of the communitarian charges, especially those aimed at his adherence to the Lockean model of social contract and the absence of sensitivity of communal attachments. These charges may be more accurately aimed at critics to the right of Rawls. Though his negation of the social contract may be obvious, his sensitivity to communal attachments, especially the collective achievement of justice, underlies his theory. Rawls does not deny his giving priority to the individual which is a dominant liberal prerequisite. However, his entire theory views communal attachments necessary in order for the idea of equal liberties to be manifested. His requirements for liberal societies to have a love of mankind and a natural duty to sacrifice for greater equality due to finite resources does not appear to represent the self-interested Rawlsian individual communitarians have developed. The idea of equal liberties without the coercion of state action could only be possible with a concern of individuals toward each other.

Rawls does not perceive the necessity of communal attachments as an objective common good to be enforced by the state, but rather sees it as a common aim realized by the individual with the help of the conception of the original position. He sees the conception of the good at the metaphysical level as not only unknowable, but also subject to manipulation which could create totalitarian consequences. The only knowable good to Rawls would be those principles which provide an overlapping consensus. This consensus is described as the ideas shared by both private and public morality and across principal interests. It is within this realm that collective principles of justice must be entertained. It is the general consensus shared by all of what comprises leading a good life realizing the finite limitation of resources.
There may be a shift in Rawls's position in the recent Political Liberalism, a move regretted by some contemporary liberal philosophers of the Left, his seeming movement of consensus from the comprehensive social to the political level. Though maintaining the basic principles established in A Theory of Justice, Rawls's shift at this level threatens his interpretation of those principles established in A Theory of Justice. Sensitive to the criticism from communitarians and libertarians and responding to the increasing incoherence of pluralist societies, Rawls opted to establish a more defensible position. Instead of assuming universality of liberal conceptions at the comprehensive level, he held that these conceptions of the good could only be justified given the specific environment in which they were nurtured; to do otherwise would be to import a subjective good into liberal thought. The environment was reduced to the unique development of a nation state, and the consensus was to be reflected in the specific political constitution of that state. This reflects the modern progression of liberal thought to remove itself further from assuming knowledge of universal morality. Stressing the increasing plurality of modern nation states, Rawls now demands a greater neutrality of the state in assuming a comprehensive moral consensus. Rather than the state assisting individuals in comprehending comprehensive principles as implied in A Theory of Justice, Political Liberalism questions comprehensive principles as socially influenced, and sees the state's role as providing citizens with the knowledge to understand their own social influences. This understanding termed "full publicity", reflects a more pragmatic method of arrival to the original position. While Rawls still articulates the ideas of liberty and opportunity within this new interpretation, the idea of the difference principle apparently becomes subordinated to the constitutional interpretations of a specific society. Rawls specifies that his principles may only be grounded in American liberalism rather than liberalism in general.
In both of his works, Rawls maintains the dominant liberal concept that community originates voluntarily. This statement should not be taken to mean that community is unnecessary, as communitarians have taken it, but rather that community not be placed above the free expression of individuals. As stated earlier, Rawls sees community as a means and not an end of individual self-realization. His distinction between public and private spheres of community would allow private or non-governmental communities the liberty to pursue conceptions of the good as long as they did not limit the individual protections established by the national constitution. Public communities, such as local government, must remain neutral due to their coercive and pluralistic nature. However, it is implied here that this neutrality could allow specific objective goods relative to that specific environment to exist if they do not conflict with constitutional protections. This latter concept reflects the idea of subsidiarity, which can be interpreted in Rawls' shift to the political from the comprehensive. Therefore, the strict limitations on the local community would be the pursuit of a subjective good or the pursuit of an objective good which is in conflict with constitutional protections. It is here that Rawls holds the national community as the most desirable entity capable of articulating and protecting individual liberty. The guardian of rights becomes the role of the national collective; sub-national collectives must operate within the parameters of national authority when concerning conception of the good. The administrative task of governments could provide for a greater role for local systems based on the idea of subsidiarity but confined by constitutional requirements.

The indications of positive government as expressed by the idea of the difference principle reveals some insight into how Rawls might perceive the concept of progress. Though he has not been specific on the conception of neutrality of progress as technological advancement, he has been specific on the progression
toward expanded equal liberty. It could be extrapolated from this that Rawls would consider restrictions on some area of technological advancement if it produced a disadvantage to the liberty of the least favored group.
Endnotes


3 Kymlicka, 50.

4 Ibid., 55-7.


6 Kymlicka, 54.

7 Ibid., 58-60.

8 Kukathas and Pettit, 18-21.


10 Mulhall and Swift, 195-6.

11 Ibid., 217.

12 Kukathas and Pettit, 135-41.

13 Mulhall and Swift, 195-6.

14 Ibid., 200-1.

15 Ibid., 203.
CHAPTER VII

ASSESSMENT

The past four chapters have served to expose consistent ideas concerning the role of community in liberal thought, the objective of this research. This final chapter will analyze these common points in hopes of formulating a liberal position on the role of community. It may then be a topic of further research whether this position could protect the nature of endangered community which was the problem established in the first two chapters. Reviewing the history of liberal intellectual thought has revealed two important contributions toward the objective of this project. It has first exposed consistent liberal principles which serve to identify and stabilize the liberal position. Secondly, it reveals the dynamic nature of liberalism through the various interpretations of writers each reflecting the environment and experiences which have surrounded them. This reinforces the idea of John Dewey in his claim that liberalism can never be a position which protects the status quo but must always be adapting to the changing environment. This plurality of interpretation should not however be misrepresented as plurality of principle; this has remained consistent from Locke to Rawls. The three major principles of liberal thought which become obvious through historical exploration are: (1) the individual as being prior to collective authority, (2) the equality of individuals, and (3) the goal of self-realization for individuals.

The idea of the individual as being prior to collective entities relates the idea that the individual is the highest priority of political decision making. This concept is based on the assumption that the individual was free prior to creation of political entities. This position was originally grounded in the reasoning of the Lockean social
contract and individual rights. As advancing science added greater skepticism to metaphysical ponderings, a more psychological basis was used as the foundation for the individual as prior. However, it should be noted that this basis only used psychology as available reasoning, not as a statement of truth. The liberal tradition since Hume has embraced the idea of skepticism by claiming it impossible to gain empirical knowledge of total truth. In order to gain foundations of principles within this skeptical framework liberals allow empirical reasoning to perform the task. This not only allows liberalism to be dynamic since science pushes empirical evidence, but it also causes liberalism to be suspicious of intuitionist theories. The contemporary basis for upholding individual sovereignty would claim that since we do not have evidence of this prior existence, let the benefit of the doubt rest with the individual. This position affords the greatest protection of individual choice.

The concept of equality of individuals stresses that the intrinsic worth of all individuals is the same, that all individuals are born with identical unalienable rights. This implies the idea that a government observe equal rights of individuals. The original motivation was Locke's intention to remove the burdens of an imposed caste system of his time. However, the idea of equality has been a loaded concept for liberalism. Equality had never intended to mean that individuals are equal in natural talents, nor that all individuals are of equal worth, so that stations in life should be the same. Instead, equality meant that government should maintain a situation where individual free choice determines an individual's position, not legal dictates, signifying the idea of a level playing field. Kant added another dimension to the concept, by holding that equality implies a moral concept which would not allow the treatment of an individual to drop below a certain threshold of dignity. The social implications Kant added complicated the concept of equality by bringing in the environment as a
component. Realization that equal opportunity rights did not guarantee equal outcomes of liberty exposed to the New Liberal movement a view of the environment as a not-so-level playing field. The concern of legal rights as not providing equal opportunity has provided the qualification of desert when addressing inequalities of outcome. This has led to the articulation of liberal equality, as stated by Rawls, as the maximization of equal liberty of individuals where the desert of inequalities are justified by their contribution to further equal liberty by raising status of the least well-off. The reasoning behind this conception of equality is driven by the third and final principle developed here - individual self-realization.

The idea of self-realization conveys the concept that the individuals should be “free” to follow their own conception of the good. Since the individual is prior to any conceptions of the good and since all individuals have equal right to claim the good, then the good should originate with the individual and the liberal state has the duty to maintain the circumstances to pursue it. John Stuart Mill best articulates this concept in his defense of self-expression and protection of the deviant within liberal systems. This concept does not entertain absolute individual freedom, for if equal self-realization is to be possible, conflicts of freedom in a social context must be regulated. The intention is that this regulation is minimal and applied equally. This concept was further advanced by T.H. Green, who brought about the awareness that self-realization can be stunted by lack of knowledge an individual may have concerning perception of self and environment. This causes a situation where free will is subjugated to manipulation by socialization or knowledge of choices. This advancement has placed liberalism into a position of viewing the liberal state in the positive role as educator for greater self-realization. These three liberal principles then become requirements for any conception of community role.
The first inquiry into the role of community in liberal thought was to search for references of the community as an entity. The dominant expression of community is that it is a voluntary union of individuals for mutual economic and social self-interest. Liberals hold that while it is logical that community may have preceded the development of the legal system (government), it cannot assumed to be prior to the individual. The first liberal principle will always place community as subordinate to the individual. Besides the specific development by Rousseau and Jefferson of the advantages of local community, liberals have tended to treat community as a unspecified concept. The idea of subsidiarity may best reflect the idea of necessity of local systems within liberal states. This idea, which states that local problems are best handled by local solutions, places the individual in closer control of their own environment. However the idea of subsidiarity cannot be mistaken for devolution. Liberalism has increasingly relied on national government to advance ideas of liberty and equality which local systems have proved incapable of providing. The only other dominant role of local systems in which Green, Dewey, and the Pluralists have stated is that they become educational tools in which individuals learn hands-on lessons of participation and obligation. As an entity, liberals have generally concluded that community holds no authority other than its contractually made obligations to its voluntary members. Community is generally described as the socio-economic bonding of individuals outside of the legal requirements of the political system and suggests multiple sites of community.

On the second inquiry, which is the limits of collective authority, liberals will grant collectives authority but authority limited to the desires of the citizens and constraints of liberal principles. The idea of government by consent denies the collective authority power of its own. It is also worth mentioning here that the idea of democracy and that of liberalism are not necessarily compatible. The fear of a
situation of tyranny of the majority would place liberal principles above the democratic powers of collectives, as expressed in the power of judicial review. This is not to imply that collectives are subject to a deviant's veto, but rather that the collective cannot intrude upon established liberal principles. There are contractual obligations which individuals joining collectives must be willing to abide by democratic decisions. However, these obligations serve administrative roles in order to provide for a functioning system. The pursuit of the good is left to the individual, not the collective. Individual choice is the glue of moral oneness, not political coercion.

The last inquiry asks how liberalism perceives progress. The significance of this statement is that if the community endangered is the traditional direct interactions of local groups and if certain changes in the socio-economic environment are seen as detrimental to community, then if a liberal system considers these changes natural, it must remain neutral. However, if there is a view that changes could be good or bad, then could a liberal system actively protect “community” as an advantage to a liberal system? The development of liberalism through the stages of industrialization and the change from Philosophical Radicalism to New Liberalism reflects a changing view on this concept. Early liberalism viewed progress as inevitable and good - a reflection of unleashed human potential and a force to ease the hardships of life. After the experience of the consequences of the industrial revolution, liberal thought perceived that not all technological advancements had positive effects on individual liberty. The dominant position was for the state to remain neutral since these advancements reflected individual expression within an open market economy. The evolution of this position, however, was toward government involvement as regulator since individual expression through technological means could alter the liberty of others. However, due to the principle of self-realization, this positive role of government has concentrated more on informing individuals of potential harm rather than serving to remove the harm for
individuals. Therefore, if a local community is being eroded by technological advancements, the liberal collective has a duty to inform those citizens of the potential danger but not necessarily the authority to halt those changes. This reinforces that the individual is the site for conception of the good, not the collective. The collective is allowed to help provide the tools for individuals to make informed decisions but the individual must make these decisions.

In conclusion, liberal thought holds that community in its broadest sense as national community is simply a term to define the collective association of individuals related by their identity to the nation state. There is no substantial proof that there has been significant erosion to this largest aspect of community. As a national community is the United States significantly more pluralistic than during its great immigration period, or is there less unity towards national identity today than during the Civil War period? In fact, the socio-economic interdependencies within the national community are perhaps more active now than at any time in the past. The interrelationships of its members have always been indirect and its composition pluralistic, yet increased mobility, interdependencies, and communication have increased the interrelationships of the national community. This is the site of community in which liberal systems have placed their greatest priority. The focus of liberal writers has been the relationship of national community to the individual and the state. Since the liberal state must secure the equal liberties of “all” individuals in which laws must be applied uniformly, the authority of sub-systems must be curtailed. The national community (nation state) is not the community communitarians claim is in danger; in fact they see the demands of this community as smothering the unique environments of internal ones. Liberals would reserve the site of community the authority to control administrative functions which directly relate to that environment but which do not conflict with administrative functions of the larger community.
The focus of this research had been initiated by communitarians who had deposited the problem of deteriorating traditional bonds of community on the doorstep of liberalism. Since communitarian claims were found to misrepresent liberalism, this thesis embarked on a search for the liberal position on the role of community. The research has revealed that, according to liberals, there is little authority that sub-national systems possess to protect themselves as an entity. Though liberal thought has maintained that these communities are necessary, it has delegated higher levels of priority to the individual and the national community. To answer the question of whether this is enough residual authority to protect traditional communal bonds from the corrosive forces of change is a complex question that would require an equally complex answer. Communitarians have advanced the idea that erosion of the community in question is due to a breakdown of moral oneness and to strengthen community requires greater protection of the moral authority of sub-national communities. It has been shown that a liberal system cannot allow communities greater moral authority; however, communitarians may also be in error in assessing the loss of moral authority as cause of community breakdown. If instead community erosion is due to loss of economic autonomy of the unit, could liberal systems allow greater economic self-sufficiency of community without compromising the principles and security of the larger liberal system? In order for a liberal system to become positively involved in the maintenance of an environment which would preserve traditional communal bonds, these bonds would have to be proven as valuable to the realization of liberal principles.

Perhaps the strongest liberal defense of community lies in the motivation that underlies liberal principles themselves. To locate this motivation one may ask what inspired liberals such as Locke, Mill, and Rawls to defend the autonomy, equality, and self-realization of individuals? What seems to be revealed is a sincere concern for the
well-being of "all" individuals. Their concern is not for freedom to act regardless of consequences, nor the happiness of immediate self-satisfaction at the expense of others. Instead their motivation seems to reveal a love for mankind, an equal concern for the precious status of each individual, and a faith that full self-realization will provide the knowledge to ground this love and concern within all individuals. These underlying moral premises of Locke, Mill and Rawls would definitely require a healthy communal framework. In this respect liberals would find community a necessary element toward the fulfillment of liberal principles. However, liberals would shy away from further description of community other than the voluntary bonds of individuals formed by their mutual needs. Further description of community would begin to establish a subjective good or a specific view of the community to be required for individual membership which could not be promoted by a liberal state. Therefore, a liberal state cannot act paternally to create or define community, its role is to provide the information and environment for individuals to join and maintain communities of their choice.
Endnotes


4 Stromberg, 263.


6, Stromberg, 261.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


