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From European Liberalism to the Languages of Liberalisms:

THE SEMANTICS OF *LIBERALISM* IN EUROPEAN COMPARISON

Within the mainstream analyses of the European variations of bourgeois society, much intensified during the last ten years by comparative research projects, approaches developed by social history clearly dominated the field of research.[1] Yet in the last few years we have observed a shift towards more coverage of the cultural aspects of bourgeois societies in 19th-century Europe, part of which is the analysis of ideological language and political discourse.[2] A comparative history of concepts examines the transformations, value and validity, coherence and connections of basic concepts in order to reconstruct the long-term transition of the old European social order into modern bourgeois societies on the level of political discourse. The comparative analysis aims at finding the specific ambivalences, turning-points, con-temporaneity and non-contemporaneity within this European transformation by contrasting the different histories of the same concept in different countries. The premise of this approach results from the idea of specific historical experiences and expectations which determined the semantic structure of any socio-political concept.[3]

This paper tries to apply a semantic analysis to the comparative analyses of European liberalism.[4] It is obvious that many results of comparative analyses dealing with Germany and Britain question the traditional roles of the English pioneer and the *Sonderweg* of Germany in view of political, social and economic modernization.[5] Nevertheless these prejudices gave rise to many studies comparing English and German Liberalism: Whereas the English model showed an apparent harmony of political, social and economic modernization, the German disharmony between a delayed social and economic development on the one hand and constitutional and political backwardness on the other apparently predestined the failure of German liberalism. But these retrospective categories of winners and losers in history do not take into consideration a fundamental question that seems to be essential for any comparative analysis, namely the different contemporary meanings of such basic concepts as *liberal* in different historical contexts.[6] The neglect of this semantic aspect results in what I call the trap of semantic nominalism, that means the unconsidered transfer of a concept from the contemporary political language of one country to the political discourse of another. The implicit equating of contemporary meanings in different contexts conceals an important focus of specific experiences and expectations, in other words the possibility of replacing the category of a universal European Liberalism with a spectrum of different histories of contemporary meanings of *liberal*.[7]

The study of the history of concept is, as a result of different intellectual traditions, not the same in different countries. In Britain and the United States we still find, among other trends, the traditional history of political ideas. The so-called *Cambridge School* which seems to offer the most advanced theoretical position is associated with so famous scholars like John Pocock and Quentin Skinner, Terence Ball and John Dunn. Its methods are mainly based on philological traditions, often accompanied by systematic and normative approaches and closely linked with political theory and philosophy.[8] In France the quantitative analysis of political vocabularies has led to a technically advanced branch of linguistic computer-research.[9] In Germany the history of concept has been a well established discipline in the field of historical research since the early 1970s. It was motivated by the observation that the language of the sources

was insufficient to express the modern perspective on the past. The structural approach by Werner Conze and Reinhard Koselleck found its expression in the *"Historical Basic Concepts. Dictionary of the Political and Social Language in Germany"*, published between 1972 and 1992, now consisting of seven volumes with 120 articles in almost 7,000 pages.[10] It is an interesting perspective of scientific development to see the German approach theoretically adapted in the United States and that there is at least a beginning discourse of methods between the different schools.[11]

The theoretical approach presented in this paper follows the history of concept and tries to develop it further on the level of a comparative research. It can be sketched shortly by the following four premises:[12]

(1) Although the semantic relation between words and things is fixed in any speech-act, it changes in time. The semantic transformation of political and social concepts is not congruent with the transformation of political and social structures. Therefore it is a task of historical investigation to find out the specific relation between language and historical reality.

(2) There is no proper or fixed description of the past. As a historian one is always confronted with two faces of the past: We try to reconstruct the changing meaning of concepts in the language of the sources to learn about the contemporary point of view, and by using our modern terminology we subsume the past under our own modern categories and interests. The historian has to be aware of both aspects and the hermeneutic differences: Through an analysis of the contemporary language we may be able to reconstruct mental dispositions and their change in the past, but we also need the modern language to fit the past into our own understanding of the world. It is even more important to be aware of the historical dimension of political semantics as such. Political language is a matter of transition and transformation, thus indicating different experiences and expectations in specific contexts.

(3) Concepts are at the same time indicators and factors of historical reality. They describe the past but they also act in the world. Although one might distinguish different theoretical levels in a philosophical analysis, in terms of a historical analysis political concepts as indicator and factor are mixed together.

(4) Political concepts are not the same in different countries. Different contexts, different mental dispositions are reflected in apparently equal concepts. This leads to the necessary expansion of the history of concept on a comparative level.

The following outline, part of a much larger project which compares the history of the concept *liberal/liberalism* in 19th-century Britain, Germany, France and Italy in order to examine the semantic analysis as a category for a comparative history of European *liberalisms*,[13] first focuses on *liberal* in the English political discourse up to 1830, and then puts this analysis into a comparative perspective by looking at trends of semantic transformation in Germany at the beginning of the 19th century.[14]

Liberal *in English Political Discourse:* From a Whig Attribute to a Utilitarian Reform Concept

Any analysis of the semantic transformation of the adjective *liberal* in English political discourse until the beginning of the 1830s presupposes an understanding of the pre-political meaning of *liberal* during the 17th and 18th centuries. In contrast to the continent, *liberal* in Britain described much more a social quality than in Germany or France, where it stood for an enlightened attitude, especially since the late 1750s. The *Liberal arts*, in opposition to the *servile* or *mechanical arts,* since the early Middle Ages were an attribute of the *free man* and pointed to the private sphere of a *gentleman.* In a society which, in comparison with Germany or France, was much less characterized by formal criteria, the notion *"as a gentleman be liberal"* signified a social distance defined by cultural criteria:[15] Munificence and tolerance presupposed economic independence and a classical education. The persistence of this aristocratic meaning of *liberal* cannot be overestimated: It dominated the pre-political meaning of the concept *liberal* for a long time, and even when a new political meaning was imported from the continent in response to the consequences of the French revolution, the traditional pre-

political meaning of *liberal* as a social attribute of an educated gentleman was never totally eliminated.

Even in 1818 a contemporary dictionary attributed *"liberal habits"* to *"persons of good birth"*. The expression *liberal attitude* rather indicated an individual quality than a political program. It depended on tolerance, an open and unprejudiced state of mind and the will to take responsibility for one's own opinion in public. On the other hand, this private and aristocratic context of the adjective *liberal* could easily be transformed into a political one. Since 1815 *liberal measures, liberal principles* and *liberal pursuits* were more than mere pre-political concepts.[16] Without already being a party denomination, *liberal* in these expressions catered for specific political and social expectations by integrating new meanings into an adjective that already existed: The complex overlapping of pre-political and political aspects marks the first stage of the semantic transformation.

The link between the originally un-political adjective *liberal* and a distinct Whig identity was strengthened during the 18th century. This did not already mean a political adaptation of *liberal*. But for the Whig aristocracy a *liberal education* was an essential part of their own distinct sphere, a necessary step if one wanted to belong to an aristocratic political and social elite. In this sense Lord Holland in 1830 spoke of *"good liberal, nay I should say, Whig principles"*, thus signifying the connection between both concepts.[17] Even then neither *Whig* nor *liberal* could be reduced to a mere political meaning. In this context they rather represented a cultivation of the private. Being confronted with a radically new concept of political and social liberty in the course of the French Revolution, which no longer originated from an organic concept of liberty but from the *principes* of the French Enlightenment which claimed natural rights for all men, thus refusing to accept any historical, religious or social prejudices or privileges, Edmund Burke, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, opposed a revolutionary understanding of the concept *liberality*. For him, the idea of necessary political change was deprived, through this new meaning of *liberality,* of historical continuity in the face of abstract principles. Criticizing the confiscation of private property by the French revolutionary government, Burke pointed to similar measures during the reign of Henry VIII and continued ironically:

> Had fate reserved him to our time, four technical terms would have done his business, and saved him all his trouble; he needed nothing more than one short form of incantation – 'Philosophy, Light, Liberality, the Rights of Men'.[18]

In contrast to the Whig understanding of *liberality* as a characteristic mark of the noble, free-minded, munificent gentleman, this new *liberality* was nothing but a result of Jacobin and revolutionary principles and thus a great danger to the political system in Britain.

Though one might argue that, during the 18th century, the differences between the traditional concepts *Whig* and *Tory* regarding the social and political system of Britain were more and more reduced because both political groups identified with the principle of private property as the basis of the political and social system, it was nevertheless possible for the Whigs to resume their historical role as *friends of liberty*.[19] It is obvious that the ideological conflicts and discussions, caused by the French revolution, served as a catalyst for a new kind of semantic segregation between *Whig* and *Tory* and a reformulation of Whig political identity. In 1815, James Mackintosh wrote:

> The precise difference between a moderate Tory and a moderate Whig, is, we conceive, this – That a Tory is more influenced by loyalty, and a Whig by the love of liberty – that a Tory considers liberty as the second interest of society, while a Whig regards it as the first.[20]

Henry Brougham, in 1824, pointed out that *"the principles of high Toryism are working in favour of ... the conspiracy ... against the liberties of mankind"* whereas the Whigs seemed to be and to have been their natural defenders, thus also fulfilling the duty of maintaining the British constitutional system.[21] The new adjective *liberal* became part of this specific identification of *Whig*, in contrast to the Tories as the *"High Church party"* who had been *"always the most bitter enemies of liberty, and indeed of all improvements"*. So Brougham characterized Lord Clarendon as *"the most liberal and the least enemy of freedom"*. *Liberal principles* were now easily attributed to a special Whig-identity and a universal fight for political liberty. The *Edinburgh Review* for example praised Lafayette and pointed out that *"... no friend of liberal*

principles can feel anything but sympathy and pride in following the progress of this great patriot through the United States".[22]

The origin of the political meaning of *liberal* as a party denomination comes from the first Spanish constitution of 1812. The adherents of this new constitution called themselves *liberales* and spoke of their opponents who supported the absolute monarchy as *serviles*.[23] It was with regard to the political situation in Spain that the new political adjective *liberal* found its way into the English political vocabulary. It is significant, that this import was a negative semantic adaptation. Lord Castlereagh, in 1816, thought rather of a purely revolutionary party in the tradition of the French Jacobins when speaking of the *liberales* although their origin was the fight against French occupation during Napoleon's reign. Castlereagh was afraid of any danger to political stability abroad but he did not think of any political group at home which deserved the new party name:

> The 'Liberales' though in a military point of view an anti-French party, were politically a French party of the very worst description. They had declared that they would not admit Ferdinand's right to the throne, unless he put his seal to the principles which they laid down, and among the rest to that of the sovereignty being in the people. The 'Liberales' were a perfectly Jacobinical party, in point of principle.[24]

Until 1818/19 English authors made use of the new political concept *liberal* very often in the foreign spelling to describe the interior political situation on the continent, thus also underlining the un-English origin of the new political concept. In march 1817, Francis Jeffrey spoke of the adherents of the constitution in Spain: *"The Liberales are habitually sneered at and the Constitutionalists made a name of mockery".*[25] Henry Brougham described his traveling companion in Genoa as *"a distinguished Liberale, of a very high birth, who has just refused an archbishopric from principle".*[26] But when speaking of British politics, authors referred to the historical party names *Whig* and *Tory* or *radical* which characterized the extra-parliamentary opposition and their demand for parliamentary reform, equal representation, the end of corruption and elections on the basis of a disproportionate system. The continental context dominated the meaning of *liberal* when being used in English political texts for a considerably long period. Only

very reluctantly did *liberal* appear after 1815 indicating a changing tone in British politics. Robert Southey, in 1816, spoke for the first time of the *"British 'liberales'"*, thus mixing the Spanish spelling of the party name with an application to the English political scenario in order to point a negative picture of the political opponent.[27] As late as 1826 Walter Scott was using the French spelling of *liberal* to point to the reformers in parliament when speaking of *"Canning, Huskisson, and a mitigated party libéraux"*.[28] For many Tory authors, *liberal* simply served as a negative label that was clearly related to continental revolutionary experiments, be it French, Spanish, Italian or Greek.[29] For them *liberal* represented Jacobin terror and Napoleonic despotism under the guise of an apparently progressive label. *Liberal* seemed to be essentially un-English and defined the border between continental political instability in the course of 1789 and the British model of political and social stability. In this sense *liberal* was an easy semantic tool to stigmatize the political opponent by relating him to political revolution and social upheaval.

In August 1819 the conservative *Courier* took up *liberal* in the English spelling in an article dealing with the Peterloo massacre, attributing the negative meaning of the un-English concept to the supporters of extra-parliamentary reform at a time when the authorities still seemed to guarantee political order and social stability:

> As we predicted, the liberals are beginning to ring their doleful changes upon the transactions that occurred at Manchester on Monday ... The liberals of course attribute this peaceable and orderly conduct to the lamblike and gentle dispositions of the Reformers themselves ... We have to high a respect for the noble qualities of British jurisprudence to imitate our Liberals.[30]

This semantic opposition between *liberal* and the Tory government dominated the 1820s and served at the same time as a catalyst for the application of the term *Liberal party*, criticized by the Tories but subsequently accepted by certain Whigs to denote their progressive position. In 1821 E. Ward wrote in a letter to Lord Castlereagh from Lisbon:

> The Cortes ... are ... a little afraid of England, and of England only. But they think the Liberal party is so strong amongst us that the Ministry,

however they may love despotism and legitimacy, cannot act against them.[31]

Another important catalyst for the semantic adaptation and integration of *liberal* into the English political vocabulary was the founding of the short-lived but influential literary journal of the Byron-circle *"The Liberal, or Verse and Prose from the South"* by Leigh Hunt in 1822. It contained articles by Byron, Shelly and others, often in a critical if not opposing tone, not only dealing with the political developments in the south of Europe but also criticizing the politics of George III and Lord Castlereagh. The title already anticipated the program: The south of Europe with the many revolutionary movements demanding independence and political freedom, such as in Greece, constituted the background, but Leigh Hunt, in the preface of the first edition, also pointed to the traditional meaning of *liberal* in the context of classical education, thus relating the political implications with the ideal of Roman and Greek literature as the framework of humanity and political freedom.[32] It is significant that in the public controversy about the new journal critics reacted to the title to formulate a satirical antidote: *"The Illiberal, or Verse and Prose from the North"*.[33]

The enthusiasm for the Greek movement for national independence from Turkish despotism and an advanced political constitution found many supporters in England. The *London Greek Committee* organized a special loan to help the Greeks and many popular radical reformers like Bentham appeared in the subscribers' lists.[34] These circles with their pamphlets and tracts were at the same time avenues for the diffusion of the term *liberal*. In contrast to the negative meaning dominating the Tory use of the concept, they attributed advanced political opinions and a desire for constitutional change to the adjective. Bentham contributed his *Constitutional Code* of 1822 to Greece *"for the use of All Nations and all Governments professing Liberal Opinions"* which for him stood for universal suffrage, representative democracy and freedom of speech.[35] Edward Blaquiere, a leading member of the London Greek movement and a close friend of Bentham, after a long journey in the Mediterranean countries developed the idea *"to promote a closer union and clearer understanding between the liberal thinkers throughout Europe"*.[36] Already at the

beginning of the 1820s it became clear that *liberal* was not only coined in regard to the Greek or Spanish political movements but was more and more applied to the English Philhellenes themselves. Thus Leicester Stanhope, who in 1825 stressed the *"liberal course in politics"* of the leading Greek politicians,[37] appeared to be *"champion of liberal opinions"* in the British public.[38] The English Philhellene circles first integrated the imported concept *liberal* in order to denote the popular movements in Greece, Spain and Italy before they were called or called themselves *liberals* to indicate their advanced political opinions. Stanhope in 1857 stated with regard to his support for the Greeks that he had been *"a liberal in politics all my life"*.[39] William Hazlitt described Byron *"in his politics"* as *"a liberal"*. Hazlitt's view on *"Lord Byron's preposterous liberalism"* already reflected the ambivalence between Byron's aristocratic origin and his romantic enthusiasm for national independence and political freedom.[40]

The end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 also marked the end of the internal political abstinence in British politics. The blocking of any public reform debate, defended until 1815 because of the necessary concentration of the national forces in the fight against France, ceased and the shift from foreign affairs to home affairs produced to a certain extent the nutriment in which the semantic transformation of the political adjective *liberal* from an un-English adjective with revolutionary implications into an integral concept of the English political language took place. The changing atmosphere of public opinion, now considered an important factor in the political life of the nation, was reflected by the slow adaptation of the imported concept *liberal*. A quotation from Robert Peel's letter to John Wilson Croker in 1820 exactly marks this state of the semantic process:

> Do not you think that the tone of England – of that great compound of folly, weakness, prejudice, wrong feeling, right feeling, obstinacy, and newspaper paragraphs, which is called public opinion – is more liberal – to use an odious but intelligible phrase, than the policy of the Government? Do not you think that there is a feeling, becoming daily more general and more confined – that is independent of the pressure of taxation, or any immediate cause – in favour of some undefined change in the mode of governing the country? [41]

Although *liberal* for other Tories stood for the import of revolutionary experiments into British politics, Robert Peel believed it to be the right expression to indicate the changing *"tone of England"*. Public opinion for him was no longer divided along the traditional party names *Whig* and *Tory*. The line of demarcation was marked by those who were in favour of maintaining the political status quo and those who supported *"some undefined change"*. For him, the dissatisfaction of the public opinion was evident and pointed to the necessity of political reforms. Peel's use of *liberal* in this context indicates the point of transition between the imported invective and the adaptation of *liberal* as the political concept denoting the growing demand for reform, a process closely connected both with a polarization and an intensified ideologization of the political language at the beginning of the 1820s.

In 1827, Henry Brougham, a leading member of the moderate Whigs among the Edinburgh Reviewers, reflected on the *"State of parties"* since the beginning of the 1820s. He made extensive use of *liberal* to denote a new principle in British politics. Behind the progress of *liberal opinions* he identified a new course of foreign policy, advocating national independence abroad and thus opposing the restorative objects of the Holy Alliance:

> The progress of liberal opinions was immediately and rapidly accelerated by the conduct, and still more by the language of the Government in 1823 and the subsequent years. In a few months the disgraceful connexion with the Holy Alliance was at an end ... The recognition of the new commonwealths in South America, and the establishment of political as well as mercantile relations with them, very soon followed ... and the most decisive steps were taken to defend Portugal, harassed by the intrigues, and menaced by the arms of Spain, for the crime of having accepted a Constitutional Government.[42]

Because for Brougham as for other Edinburgh Reviewers, *liberal* no longer implied a revolutionary tone in politics, it was now not only possible for the Whig reformers to apply the term when speaking of a new political concept, but also to use it as a self-indication. However, the semantic application and integration of *liberal* did not develop along clearly defined demarcation lines between government and opposition or between *Tory* and *Whig*. *Liberal* was not yet a party

denomination, but rather represented those groups in Parliament that demanded reforms. Brougham consequently spoke of the *"Liberal Parties on both sides of the House"*. They should stand for an advanced and progressive, but moderate reform-policy *"for the good of the country"*, which – according to Brougham – also included members of the government:

> it was to the 'Liberal part of the Government' that they [the Whigs' opposition] lent their aid; it was to them they looked for the reform of abuses; it was in their sound principles that they reposed confidence for the future. To give them encouragement in their wise and honourable course, became an object of importance for the good of the country; and aware how their opponents in the Cabinet endeavoured to hinder their progress, the Opposition employed all means for comforting and strengthening their hands, and enabling them to overcome the common enemy.[43]

It is a fundamental function of any analysis of the history of concepts to find semantic indicators that anticipate historical changes, transitions and turning points on the level of political language before the consequences of these changes become obvious on the level of political actions. Already before the transformation of the traditional party names *Whig* and *Tory* into the new concepts *liberal* and *conservative* – a long-term semantic process that ended in the late 1830s – and before these new denominations became widespread and popular, Brougham came to the conclusion that the main ideological antagonism in British politics was no longer expressed by the traditional concepts. These party names originated either in the 17th century and thus reflected the factions of the civil war (*Court* versus *Country*), the political antagonists of the Glorious Revolution (*Whig* versus *Tory*) or they indicated the aspirations of the Stuarts (*Loyalist* versus *Jacobin*) during the 18th century if not the new party names coined in the course of the French Revolution. *Liberal* as a post-revolutionary concept in England cannot be interpreted but with regard to the ideological polarization since the experiment of absolutism during the 17th century. This was reproduced in the subsequent party-names that did not have any equivalent on the continent:

> A new casting also of political sects has taken place; the distinctions, and almost the names, of Loyalist and Jacobin, Whig and Tory, Court and Country Faction, are fast wearing away. Two great divisions of the community will, in all likelihood, soon be far more generally known; the Liberal and the Illiberal, who will divide, but we may be sure most unequally, the suffrages of the Nation.[44]

For Brougham, the concept *Liberal party* did not only stand for a coalition of reformers in parliament but for a national movement, united in the demand for advanced and progressive reform but equally united in the desire for stability and order:

> Nor is it the name only that this arrangement will be new; the people will be differently distributed; the coalition, which has been gradually forming among the public men whose personal respect and mutual confidence has brought about so fortunate a union, extends to the community at large. Some of the older questions, by which Tory and Whig were wont to be divided, retain all their importance; but upon these, the Liberal party, of whatever denomination, are well agreed.[45]

This *Liberal party* had to be open to all those who advocated reforms as long as they followed a gradual and not a revolutionary strategy. Indirectly this included a leading position for the Whigs and their self-defined role as historical and natural *friends of reform and liberty:*

> Extremes will be avoided; alterations in our system will be gradual; and the only risk which the existence, or the measures of a Liberal Government could run, will be avoided, – that of a reaction against them, – when it is distinctly perceived by all men, that we are governed by individuals, whose great parts are under the control of sound discretion, and whose conduct is, in all things, tempered with the moderation of practical wisdom.[46]

As long as *liberal* did not stand for a party denomination it was also possible for moderate Tories to use the term in order to point to the advanced character of their policy. George Canning, who at the end of the 1820s saw Britain *"on the brink of a great struggle between property and population"*, believed that such a social and political conflict could only be avoided *"by the mildest and most liberal legislation"*.[47] A *liberal legislation* included, for instance, the eman-cipation of the Catholics

and dissenters and diplomatic support for constitutional and national movements abroad. This policy was warmly welcomed by the reform oriented Whigs as examples of

> sound, enlightened, liberal, and truly English principles – principles worthy of our best times and of our most distinguished statesman – which now govern this country in her foreign policy.[48]

The change of government in 1830 emphasized how much *liberal* had become an attribute of Whig reform policy. It is obvious that the Whig ideal dominated the meaning of what *liberal* stood for: Francis Baring defined both the terms *Whigs* and *liberals* as

> a body of men connected with high rank and property, bound together by hereditary feeling and party ties, as well as higher motives, who in bad times keep alive the sacred flames of freedom, and when the people are roused, stand between the constitution and revolution, and go with the people, but not to extremities.[49]

This was a classic definition of a Whig identity, now transferred into the semantics of the concept *liberal*. But in spite of this application it is not possible to reduce its semantic spectrum to a mere Whig notion. The *Edinburgh Review* continued to use *liberal* not only to label the moderate Whigs' campaign for the Reform Bill but also to characterize the political position of Robert Peel regarding the emancipation of the Catholics or the Corn Law question in opposition to Wellington's and Aberdeen's course:

> He has become a distinguished and most valuable votary of liberal principles. He had taken ... to reform the criminal law; he has heartily supported the reformers of our civil jurisprudence. He is a friend of a liberal policy in commercial matters; and, probably, no adherent to the false views of arbitrary power, cherished by the Wellingtons and the Aberdeens in respect to foreign affairs ... That such conduct has justly recommended him to the chiefs of the liberal party, is as certain as that it has destroyed his whole personal weight in the country.[50]

The Edinburgh Reviewers made a clear difference between the high Tories who were also called *ultras* in parallel to the French conservatives, and the *"liberal Tories":*

> When we speak of Tories, – we use the name for shortness, and to express the ultra principles of that party ... We are far, indeed, from holding that the liberal Tories and their views are in the same disrepute among us.[51]

Liberal, in contrast to the semantic structure of continental political language, did not constitute a deep polarization based on a different *Weltanschauung* between ministry and opposition, or *Tory* and *Whig*. Since there was no such antagonism between state and society like, for instance, in Germany, *liberal* did not easily serve as a semantic weapon against the government. Nevertheless the take-over by the Whigs intensified the use of *liberal* in public discourse. Contemporaries were now used to speak of *liberal views* or the *Liberal Ministry* of the Whigs,[52] of stating a *liberal policy, liberal principles, liberal opinions* or *liberal colours.*[53] *Liberal party,* too, became a common concept in the political public,[54] but it did not easily replace the expression *Whig*.

On the other hand the persistence of the Whig definition of *liberal* must not be overemphasized. The small but ideologically influential group of the Philosophic Radicals, especially the young John Stuart Mill, developed a different definition of the reform-label *liberal*. In comparison with the pragmatic application of *liberal* by the moderate Whigs, Mill gave *liberal* and *liberalism* a much more anthropological dimension. For him, *Toryism* meant *"that it is good for man to be ruled; to submit both his body & mind to the guidance of a higher intelligence & virtue." Liberalism*, on the other hand, seemed the incarnation of the responsible individual:

> [Toryism] is therefore the direct antithesis of liberalism, which is for making every man his own guide & sovereign master, & letting him think for himself & do exactly as he judges best for himself, giving other men leave to persuade him if they can by evidence, but forbidding him to give way to authority; and still less allowing him to constrain him more than the existence & tolerable security of every man's person and property renders indispensably necessary.[55]

Mill's definition of *liberalism* went far beyond the Whigs' historical meaning of the concept: Whereas *liberal* for the Whigs seemed as an additive concept to prove their advanced reform-strategy, to renew the semantic agenda of their self-styled political identity as *friends of*

liberty, Mill focused on the individual and his natural rights that could only be restricted by the equal right of security and property of others – a classic notion of the Enlightenment.

The slow adaptation of *liberal* up to the beginning of the 1830s led to the long-term replacement of the term *Whig* until the 1840s. *Whig* became a concept denoting a more anachronistic political opinion within the *Liberal party.* Nevertheless this replacement, indicating the shift from an aristocratic definition of party to a middle-class concept, was not a sudden change but a long-term semantic transformation that is reflected in the history of *liberal*. The change from the revolutionary import into the Tory invective of the 1820s did not stop with the political self-definition of the reform-oriented Whigs. The disappointment of the Philosophical Radicals with the Whigs' policy after the First Reform Bill found its expression in a criticism of the concept *Whig* that appeared more and more outdated. It made a definition of *liberal* necessary, now being no longer the attribute of progressive Whigs but of a middle-class oriented radical reform-policy. In 1836, Mill stated, that the Whigs were

> ... a coterie, not a party; a set, confined to London and Edinburgh, who commanded a certain number of seats in Parliament, and a certain portion of the press, and were accepted by the Reformers as leaders, because they offered themselves, and because there was nobody else.[56]

In contrast to the Whigs who appeared to be of no principle than that of maintaining power under all circumstances, who aimed at dominating public opinion only by seemingly confessing *liberal opinions*, Mill characterized the *liberals of the empire* as thorough reformers, motivated by the *public good* and the ideal of *good government*. That meant a policy against aristocratic interest and prejudice or the privileged classes and required a new sort of politician open-minded enough to carry on the reform-projects:

> This position [of the Whigs] the Liberals of the empire have never chosen to participate. They did not repudiate the Whigs; but as little did they repudiate what the Whigs repudiated. They were neither Whigs nor Radicals; they were Reformers. They had not predetermined how far parliamentary reform should go; but they were disposed to carry it as

> far as, on trial, should be found necessary for obtaining good government. They were not for the ballot, or annual parliaments, because the opinion did not generally prevail among them that nothing less would suffice; but they had no prejudice against either, if an extension of the suffrage, with septennial or triennial parliaments, should fail to give them a government of which the pervading spirit should be a regard to the public good.[57]

Mill identified the *liberals* no longer with the Whigs, but with a new kind of *movement party* led by the Philosophic Radicals and articulating the new demands of the Middle Classes growing both in mere numbers and political influence. The semantic transformation of *liberal* from the Whig reform label into the political Middle-class attribute accompanied the complex transition from the *Whig* to the *Liberal party* in 19th-century Britain on the level of political language.

Towards a Comparative History of the Semantics of *Liberalism*

Both in Germany and in Britain there existed pre-political meanings of the concept *liberal* before the beginning of the 19th century. But whereas *liberal* in England had either a more aristocratic connotation in expressions like *liberal gentleman* or *liberal education* or was used in the religious sphere, *liberal* in Germany indicated, at least since the late 1750s, an individual quality of an advanced enlightened *Gesinnung*, a concept which is difficult to translate because of its various overlapping implications: it does not only mean a cast of mind or a basic conviction, but also denotes a moral quality. *Liberale Gesinnung* pointed to the fundamental idea of the responsible individual who was of higher moral and ethical value on account of his unprejudiced state of mind. This semantic structure persisted in the later history of the political concept *liberal*. It is obvious that the moral quality of the *liberale Gesinnung* or *Liberalität* goes far beyond mere political denominations. Kant's difference between *liberalitas sumptuosa*, mere munificence in the tradition of the Roman emperors' *liberalitas*, and *liberalitas moralis* as an unprejudiced state of mind

and independence of one's own opinion, deeply influenced the later history of *liberale Gesinnung* in Germany.[58]

A *liberal* in Germany was, according to contemporary definitions, someone who thought and acted in accordance with the natural progress of history and reason.[59] If history was nothing but the progress of reason, the reasonable man as a *liberal* represented at the same time the avant-garde of history as such. Moral quality, mental maturity and the self-esteem to act in accordance with the progressive forces in history came together in the label *liberal*. In the light of this idea it becomes clear why many definitions claimed that every man, guided by reason and enlightenment, would quite naturally become a *liberal*. *Liberal* stood for an unbroken belief in the power of history which was understood as a continual and progressive path towards the realization of reason and humanity, thus fulfilling the secular *Heilsgeschichte* of the Enlightenment.[60]

Whereas the English denomination of parties originated in the 17th century and made it possible to slowly integrate the new concept *liberal* into an already existing political nomenclature, in Germany the semantic import of *liberal* coined by the French revolution and Napoleon was essential. The *idées libérales*, first developed by Bonaparte in his proclamation of the 18th Brumaire 1799,[61] were, after 1815, translated into *liberale Ideen*, now indicating the overall demand for both national unity and constitutional progress in Germany.[62] A similar development took place in Italy.[63] For Metternich this concept could be nothing but a revolutionary label. The public confidence in the "*Liberalität der Regierung*", the government's liberality, became more and more reduced after the change in the political atmosphere after 1819/20.[64] When it became clear that there would be no further constitutional compromises offered by the German governments, *liberal* became an opposition-label, defining the progressive and backward forces in society.[65] The use of the term reflected the deep gap between state and society, for which there is no equivalent in the history of the English concept *liberal*. At the end of the 1820s, *liberalism* in Germany signified the uncontested belief in the progress of reason while the restorative governments represented nothing but backwardness and out-dated forces in history. The *liberal party* could be nothing but a *movement party,* symbol of natural progress in history.[66]

In contrast to this ideological optimism, the early definitions of *liberal/liberalism* in Germany reflected a specific uncertainty with regard to the political and social implications of a concrete program. *Wahrer Liberalismus*, true liberalism, had to be defended against radical forces in the tradition of the *terreur* of the French Revolution.[67] At least until the July Revolution in France, the history of *liberal* in Germany is at the same time a history of the interpretation of the French Revolution, whereas in England the import of the new concept cannot be understood without an understanding of the experiences of the 17th century. On the continent, the Napoleonic occupation led to a direct confrontation with the French *idées libérales* as Napoleon's programmatic formula of the results of 1789. Napoleon's invention of the *idées libérales* became part of the short-lived but influential imperial ideology. As the *"héro des idées libérales"* he proclaimed to be both the only legitimate heir and the only one who could guarantee the positive results of 1789, thus fulfilling the legitimate objects of the French Revolution.[68] This imperial understanding of 1789 was coined in the *idées libérales*, and the concept even survived the emperor's defeat in 1815.

In contrast to Germany or Italy, where the direct import of the *idées libérales* resulted in a translation and direct application of the French concept to express the demands for national unity and constitutional reforms after 1815, the confrontation with the new concept in England was rather indirect. With regard to the Spanish *liberales* or the French *libéraux*, the new political adjective was used to describe the political situation in the continental countries. Both the Torys' use of it as a derogatory label for their political opponents and the Philhellene movement contributed to the diffusion of *liberal*. However, for a considerably long period of time *liberal* retained an un-English tone because it represented political movements and groups in countries other than Britain. Only when the reform-oriented Whigs of the *Edinburgh Review* accepted *liberal* as a term with which to label their own position and political strategy, *liberal* for the first time became a positive and progressive semantic indicator in English political language, replacing the traditional semantic oppositions between *Court/Country, Whig/Tory* and *Jacobin/Loyalist*. But whereas the label in Germany reflected the deepening gap between a restorative state and the growing opposition movements and served as a

polarizing *Weltanschauung*, a *Gesinnung*, in England it was also possible to denote progressive and reform-oriented Tories like Peel as *liberals*. The concept did not mark a clearly defined border between ministry and opposition but reflected the difference between reform-oriented forces in the public and the political status quo. The Whigs' adaptation of *liberal*, by linking the traditional pre-political meaning with a new political understanding, finally provoked the opposition of the Philosophic Radicals. Mill's definition no longer reflected an aristocratic but, rather, a new middle class understanding. For him the *Liberal party* in contrast to the old *Whig party* was based on middle class interests.

Nevertheless, *liberal* in English political discourse lacked the ideological polarization of its German equivalent, including the moral disqualification of the *illiberal* opponent who did not act in accordance with reason and the progressive forces in history. The adaptation of *liberal* by the moderate Whigs underlined a gradual evolutionary reform strategy and until 1832 delayed the development of far reaching ideological conflict lines in political discourse that was so significant for the use of *liberal* in Germany. The uncertainty of what *liberal* stood for, led to an inflation of definitions of *wahrer* and *falscher Liberalismus,* true and false liberalism until 1848. Ideological frontiers were anticipated by the history of concept. But in spite of the growing demand for reliable definitions, the semantic half-life of such definitions became shorter, underlining the dynamicism of political discourse in pre-March Germany.[69]

The battle of concepts in Germany, between *liberal* and *radical*, at the same time compensated for the lack of concrete political participation and led to a fight between different *Weltanschauungen*, which served as political religions, whereas in England the semantic adaptation of *liberal* took place in the context of already existing channels of political participation. *Liberal* implied reform within the existing political and social system. It did not indicate an insurmountable blocking of reform or a fundamental opposition between political forces and government. In Germany *liberal* also stood for an enlightened *Gesinnung*, a moral quality deeply connected with academic education and serving the identity of the *Bildungsbürgertum* on the one hand and a more and more heterogeneous opposition movement on the other, including radical groups that

were critical towards a mere parliamentary reform strategy. The impact of the July Revolution in Germany laid open these different opposition strategies, stretching from *Honoratioren* in the existing state parliaments like Baden, Hesse or Bavaria to much more radical circles in the context of the Hambach Festival of 1832.

All these different groups could be labeled as *liberal* or called themselves *liberals*, but the definitions varied and made blurred the concept for many contemporaries. On the one hand it represented the broad cultural criteria of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, coined in the ideal of *liberale Gesinnung* that could not be linked to the idea of an organized party, but stressed the independent individual with his own opinion, the social network of *Honoratioren*, with equal experiences in education, university and associations. On the other hand, *liberal* stood for political opposition directed against restorative governments, which included different strategies in order to end the blocking of political and social reforms. The broad connotation of *liberal* as movement and progress in history allowed the integration of these different meanings for a certain period of time. But the lack of real political participation, the antagonism between state and society in pre-March Germany, reinforced by the federal structure of the Confederation, led to a disintegration of the meaning of *liberal*. The strategies and social forces that stood behind the label became too heterogeneous to be integrated by a single concept. The political landscape was marked by new denominations, for instance *radical* or *conservativ*.

The ideological explosives that characterized the debates about the concept in Germany were a consequence of the fight for political institutions that were about to be reformed in England at the same time. In Germany the discussion about *liberal* and *liberalism* went with the foundation of a political landscape with different political groups that later would become political parties whereas in England this landscape already existed, though marked by traditional party denominations. The evolutionary transition of this landscape was anticipated by the transformation from *Whig* to *liberal*, announced by Mill's antagonism between an aristocratic Whig and an utilitarian middle class understanding of *liberal*. In Germany, on the other hand, the attempt to hold on to the concept *liberal* as the expression of reasonable reform in spite of revolutionary action overshadowed the

real split of the opposition movement. The lack of political participation postponed the outbreak of this conflict until 1848, but the semantic border line between *liberal* and *radical* already anticipated the different strategies. In spite of the optimistic meaning of *liberal* at the end of the 1820s, it was no longer possible to integrate all political interests of a society in transition under this label. The *Weltanschauung* of progress in history and political reason as an enlightened response to 1789 did not fill the widening gap between political and social interests. This led to a far reaching ambivalence in the history of the concept in Germany: Enlightened optimism and the belief in natural progress on the one hand and the actual defense of *liberal/liberalism* in the face of conservative and radical groups on the other were overlapping.

This simultaneous overlapping of non-contemporaneous semantic aspects crystallized the transformation of political language and the zones of faction within this process in pre-March Germany.[70] The history of the concept *liberal* thus reflected the developing pluralism of interests and the subsequent conflicts in modern bourgeois society. Ideologies, Clifford Geertz has written, are cognitive maps *"of problematic social reality"*.[71] The European variations of the history of the concept *liberal* in different historical contexts offer, like a map, a representation of different historical landscapes, based on specific experiences of the past and expectations of the future. The fascination of such a semantic map lies in the chance to perceive the change of historical meanings in time, something of a third dimension that invites travel. It presupposes a concept which contains and unites in itself all semantic transformations. Such a concept evades any definition. Or, as Nietzsche put it: *"definable is anything that has no history"*.[72]

Notes

1 From the viewpoint of German historical research see *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. Jürgen Kocka, 3 vols. (Munich 1988) and the selection of essays in English translation *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Jürgen Kocka / Allan Mitchel (1993).

2 See *Geschichte und Vergleich. Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung,* ed. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt / Jürgen Kocka (Frankfurt/Main / New York 1996), pp. 9-45 and John Breuilly, *Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Essays in Comparative History* (Manchester / New York 1992).

3 See Reinhart Koselleck / Ulrike Spree / Willibald Steinmetz, 'Drei bürgerliche Welten. Zur vergleichenden Semantik der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft in Deutschland, England und Frankreich', in *Bürger in der Gesellschaft der Neuzeit*, ed. H.-J. Puhle (Göttingen 1991), pp. 14-58 and the essays in *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. I. Hampsher-Monk / K. Tilmans / F. van Vree (1998).

4 See *Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. Dieter Langewiesche (Göttingen 1988), and Rudolf Muhs, 'Deutscher und britischer Liberalismus im Vergleich. Trägerschichten, Zielvorstellungen und Rahmenbedingungen, ca. 1830-1870', in ibid., pp. 223-59.

5 See Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Britain and Germany 1800 to 1914. Two Developmental Paths towards Industrial Society* (London 1986); see also the discussion about the character of the unique British development in comparison with the continent in Hans-Christoph Schröder, 'Der englische "Sonderweg" im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', in *Englische und deutsche Geschichte in den Schülbüchern beider Länder*, ed. K. E. Jeismann / H. Schissler (Braunschweig 1982), pp. 27-44; Hans-Christoph Schröder, *Die Revolutionen Englands im 17. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/Main 1986), p. 8; Bernd Weisbrod, 'Der englische "Sonderweg" in der neueren Geschichte', in *Geschiche und Gesellschaft* xvi (1990), pp. 233-52; current discussion about the *Sonderweg*-paradigm and a critique on Geoff Eley's theses is Hans-Ulrich Wehler, '"Deutscher Sonderweg" oder allgemeine Probleme des westlichen Kapitalismus', in id., *Politik in der Geschichte. Essays* (Munich 1998), pp. 78-92.

6 See Hartmut Berghoff / Dieter Ziegler, 'Pionier oder Nachzügler. Kategorien für den deutsch-britischen Vergleich?', in *Vergleichende Studien zur Geschichte Großbritanniens und Deutschlands im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung. Festschrift für Sidney Pollard zum 70. Geburtstag,* ed. Hartmut Berghoff / Dieter Ziegler (Bochum 1995), pp. 15-28.

7 For empirical proof of this thesis see Jörn Leonhard, *"An odious but intelligible phrase"* – Liberal *im politischen Diskurs Deutschlands und Englands bis 1830/32*, in *Jahrbuch zur Liberalismus-Forschung* viii (1996), pp. 11-41 and id., 'Von den *idées libérales* zu den *liberalen Ideen*: Historisch-semantischer Kulturtransfer zwischen Übersetzung, Adaption und Integration', in *Kulturtransfer im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Marc Schalenberg (Berlin 1998), pp. S. 13-45.

8 See J.G.A. Pocock, 'Verbalizing a Political Act: Towards a Politics of Speech', in *Language and Politics,* ed. Michael J. Shapiro (Oxford 1984), pp. 25-43; J.G.A. Pocock / Quentin Skinner, 'What is Intellectual History', in *History Today* xxxv (1985), pp. 46-54; J.G.A. Pocock, 'The Varieties of Whiggery', in id., *Virtue, Commerce and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge 1985), pp. 215-310; Quentin Skinner, 'Language and Social Change', in *The State of the Language,* ed. L. Michaels / C. Ricks (Berkeley 1980), pp. 562-78; for a good survey of approaches and empirical evidence see *Conceptional Change and the Constitution*, ed. Terence Ball / J.G.A. Pocock (Lawrence/Kansas 1988); Terence Ball, *Transforming Political Discourse: Political Theory and Critical Conceptional History* (Oxford 1988) and *Political innovation and conceptional change*, ed. Terence Ball / James Farr / Russell L. Hanson (Cambridge 1989).

9 For France see Régine Robin, *Histoire et linguistique* (Paris 1973) and M. Pecheux / R. Robin, 'Les historiens devant le champ linguistique', in *Dix-huitième Siècle* v (1973), pp. 111-18.

10 *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. Otto Brunner / Werner Conze / Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart 1972-97); for the French political vocabulary until 1820 see *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich 1680-1820,* ed. Rolf Reichardt / Eberhard Schmitt / Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Munich 1985 [beginn of publication]).

11 See *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts. New Studies on 'Begriffsgeschichte',* ed. Hartmut Lehmann / Melvin Richter (Washington 1996) and Melvin Richter, 'Opening a Dialogue and Recognizing an Achievement. A Washington Conference on the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe'*, *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* xxxix (1996), pp. 19-26; id., 'Conceptional History *(Begriffsgeschichte)* and Political Theory', *Political Theory* xiv (1986), pp. 604-37; id., 'Pocock, Skinner, and the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe', History and Theory* xix (1990), pp. 38-70; id., *The History of Political and Social Concepts. A Critical Introduction* (New York / Oxford 1995).

12 For a short but comprehensive account on the theoretical basis see also Lucian Hölscher, 'The theoretical foundations of *Begriffsgeschichte* (History of Concepts)', in *Cultura. Revista de História e Teoria das Ideias* viii (2.a Série Lisboa 1995), pp. 23-38; for detailed study see the essays in *Historische Semantik und Begriffsgeschichte,* ed. Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart 1979), and id., *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge/Mass. 1985).

13 See Jörn Leonhard, *Liberalismus. Zur historischen Semantik eines europäischen Deutungsmusters*, Munich 2001 and most recently id., 'Semantische Deplazierung und Entwertung – Deutsche Deutungen von

liberal und *Liberalismus* nach 1850 im europäischen Vergleich', in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft,* xxix/i (2003), pp. 5-39.

14 For a survey of the historical semantics of *whig* and *liberal* in the English political discourse see Hans Petersen, 'Liberal im britischen Englisch. Eine Fallstudie zur historischen Semantik und Begriffsgeschichte', in *Englischer Liberalismus im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert,* ed. Karl Rohe (Bochum 1987), pp. 101-32; Ian Bradley, *The Optimists. Themes and Personalities in Victorian Liberalism* (London/Boston 1980); Robert Willman, 'The Origins of "whig" and "tory" in English Political Language', *Historical Journal* xvii (1974), pp. 247-64; John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge 1976), pp. 39-54 and Andreas Wirsching, 'Popularität als Raison d'être: Identitätskrise und Parteiideologie der Whigs in England im frühen 19. Jahrhundert', *Francia* xvii (1990), pp. 1-14.

15 For this and the following quotations see *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition, prepared by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, vol. VIII (Oxford 1989), pp. 881-83.

16 See Francis Jeffrey in an article for the *Edinburgh Review* in 1808, in id., *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review* (London 1853), p. 245: *"... neither liberal nor gainful pursuits can be carried out with advantage where there is no political freedom."*

17 Quoted in Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform. Whigs and Liberals, 1830-1852* (Oxford 1990), p. 63.

18 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London relative to that Event* (1790), ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (London 1968), p. 218.

19 See Jörn Leonhard, *"'True English Guelphs and Gibelines":* Zum historischen Bedeutungs- und Funktionswandel von *whig* und *tory* im englischen Politikdiskurs seit dem 17. Jahrhundert', in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte,* lxxxiv/i (2002), pp. 175-213.

20 [James Mackintosh] 'Godwin's Lives of Milton's Nephews', *Edinburgh Review* xxv (1815), p. 500.

21 [Henry Brougham] 'High Tory Principles', *Edinburgh Review* xli (1824), p. 30.

22 Ibid., pp. 2, 20-1, 25.

23 See J. Marichal, 'España y las raíces semánticas del liberalismo', in *Cuadernos. Congresso per la libertad de la cultura* (March/April 1955), pp. 53-60 and L. Diez del Corral, *El liberalismo doctrinario. Institudo de Estudios Políticos*, (Madrid, second edition 1956), p. 423.

24 *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time*, published unter the Superintendence of T.C. Hansard. First Series (1803-1820), vol. XXXVII, p. 602.

25 [Francis Jeffrey] 'Wat Tyler and Mr. Southey', *Edinburgh Review* xxviii (1817), p. 168.
26 *The Life and Times of Henry, Lord Brougham*, vol. II (London 1871), p. 325.
27 See for example *Quarterly Review* xv (1816), p. 69.
28 J.G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. IV, chapter XI, quoted in Elie Halévy, *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, *vol. II, The Liberal Awakening* (London 1949), p. 82.
29 See the letter of F. Lambs to Lord Castlereagh from Munich (4th January 1820), *Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh*, vol. XII, ed. C. Vane (London 1853), p. 169; see also *Annual Register* (1819), pp. 171-2, 178 and ibid. (1820), pp. 221, 239.
30 Quoted in Halévy, *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. II, p. 82.
31 *Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh*, vol. XI, p. 438.
32 [Leigh Hunt] 'Preface', in *The Liberal, or Verse and Prose from the South* i (1822), pp. VIII-IX.
33 [William Gifford] *The Illiberal! Verse and Prose from the North!! Dedicated to My Lord Byron in the South!! To be continued occasionally!! As a supplement to each number of 'The Liberal'* (London [1822]).
34 See Frederick Rosen, *Bentham, Byron and Greece. Constitutionalism, Nationalism, and Early Liberal Political Thought* (Oxford 1992), pp. 229-43.
35 Jeremy Bentham, *Constitutional Code* (1822), vol. I., ed. F. Rosen / J.H. Burns (Oxford 1983), p. 1.
36 Blaquiere in a letter to Dumont (November 1820), *The Iberian Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. I, ed. P. Schwartz (London / Madrid 1979), p. 358.
37 Leicester Stanhope, *Greece, in 1823 and 1824; being a Series of Letters, and Other Documents, on the Greek Revolution, Written during a Visit to that Country* (New Edition, London 1825), p. 134.
38 William Parry, *The Last Days of Lord Byron* (London 1825), p. 84.
39 Leicester Stanhope, *The Earl of Harrington on the Maine-Law; on the Law of Libel, as Opposed to the Declaration of Truth and the Defence of Character; and Other Subjects* (Derby and London 1858), p. 22.
40 William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age, or Contemporary Portraits* (1832), ed. E.D. Mackerness (London 1969), pp. 115-6, 125; see also Malcolm Kelsall, *Byron's Politics* (Brighton 1987), p. 195.
41 Letter from Peel to John Wilson Croker (23rd March 1820), *The Correspondence and Diaries of the Late Right Honourable John Wilson Croker*, vol. I, ed. Lewis J. Jennings (New York 1884), pp. 155-6.

42 [Henry Brougham] 'State of Parties', *Edinburgh Review* xlvi (1827), p. 418.
43 Ibid., p. 421.
44 Ibid., p. 431; Lord Holland, who identified himself with the Whigs of the 18th century, in a letter to Lord Grey dated 21st December 1826 described how the traditional Whig-concept was more and more overshadowed by new conflict-lines dominated by new political and economic antagonisms: *"Political parties are no more. Whig and Tory, Foxite and Pittite, Ministers and Opposition have ceased to be distinctions, but the divisions of classes and great interests are arrayed against each other – grower and consumer, lands and funds, Irish and English, Catholic and Protestant"*, quoted in Keith Graham Feiling, *The Second Tory Party 1714-1832* (London 1938), pp. 401-2.
45 Brougham, 'State of Parties', p. 431.
46 Ibid., p. 432.
47 *Some Official Correspondence of George Canning*, vol. II, ed. E.J. Stapleton (London 1887), p. 321.
48 Quoted in Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement 1783-1867* (London / New York 1979), p. 219.
49 Quoted in Thomas George, *Earl of Northbrook: A Memoir,* ed. Bernard Mallet (London 1906), pp. 32-3.
50 [Henry Brougham] 'The Ministry, and the State of Parties', *Edinburgh Review* li (1830), p. 576.
51 [Henry Brougham] 'The Last Session of Parliament', *Edinburgh Review* lx (1834), p. 252.
52 Ibid., pp. 231-2.
53 Ibid., pp. 248, 230; see also [Henry Brougham] 'Last Session of Parliament – House of Lords', *Edinburgh Review* lxii (1835), pp. 196, 187.
54 Ibid., p. 185.
55 Letter from John Stuart Mill to John Sterling (20th/22nd October 1831), in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, vol. XII, The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill 1812-1848*, ed. Francis E. Mineka (Toronto 1963), p. 84.
56 [John Stuart Mill] 'Tories, Whigs, and Radicals', *Westminster Review* xxv (1836). p. 293.
57 Ibid.
58 Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysik der Sitten. Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre. I. Ethische Elementarlehre*, in *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. VI (Berlin 1907), p. 434; see also id., *Kritik der Urtheilskraft. 1. Theil: Kritik der ästhetischen Urtheilskraft*, in *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, vol. V (Berlin 1913), p. 268.

59 See the influential [F.A. Brockhaus] *Allgemeine deutsche Real-Encyclopädie für die gebildeten Stände. Conversations-Lexicon*, vol. V, (fourth edition, Leipzig 1817), pp. 674-5.

60 See the first detailed definition of the new political term [Johann Christoph Freiherr von Aretin] 'Was heißt Liberal? Zum Theil mit Benützung eines französischen Aufsatzes in dem *Nouvelliste Français', Neue Allemannia* i (1816), pp. 163-75.

61 See Bonaparte's proclamation of the 18th Brumaire 1799: *Les idées conservatrices, tutélaires, libérales, sont rentrées dans leurs droits par la dispersion des factieux qui opprimaient les conseils, et qui, pour être devenus les plus odieux des hommes, n'ont pas cessé d'être les plus méprisables.* Proclamation du général en chef Bonaparte, le 19 brumaire, 11 heures du soir, *Le Diplomate* xvi (13th Nov. 1799); also quoted in P.J.B. Buchez / P.C. Roux, *Histoire parlementaire de la Révolution française ou journal des assemblées nationales depuis 1789 jusqu'en 1815,* vol. XXXVIII (Paris 1838), pp. 255-57.

62 See Jörn Leonhard, *'"1789 fait la ligne de démarcation"*: Von den napoleonischen *idées libérales* zum ideologischen Richtungsbegriff *libéralisme* in Frankreich bis 1850', in: *Jahrbuch zur Liberalismus-Forschung,* xi (1999), pp. 67-105.

63 See Jörn Leonhard, '*Italia liberale* und *Italia cattolica:* Historisch-semantische Ursprünge eines ideologischen Antagonismus im frühen italienischen Risorgimento', in: *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken,* lxxx (2000), pp. 495-542.

64 'Über Völkerbestimmung', *Allemannia* vii (1816), pp. 51-2.

65 For the adaptation of liberalism during the 1820s' political discourse see Wilhelm Traugott Krug, *Geschichtliche Darstellung des Liberalismus alter und neuer Zeit. Ein historischer Versuch* (Leipzig 1823) and the subsequent critical response *Liberalismus – Antiliberalismus: oder ein Wort über die Schrift des Herrn Professor Krug in Leipzig* (Neustadt 1824); see also 'Über Ultraismus und Liberalismus', *Neue Monatsschrift für Deutschland, historisch-politischen Inhalts* xv (1824), pp. 112-28.

66 See for example Wolfgang Menzel, *Die deutsche Literatur. 2 Theile* (Stuttgart 1828), quoted in Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Schriften, vol. I: Schriften 1817-1840,* ed. Klaus Briegleb (Frankfurt/Main / Berlin 1981), p. 450: *"Die liberale Partei ist diejenige, die den politischen Charakter der neueren Zeit bestimmt, während die sogenannte servile Partei noch wesentlich im Charakter des Mittelalters handelt. Der Liberalismus schreitet daher in demselben Maße fort, wie die Zeit selbst, oder ist in dem Maße gehemmt, wie die Vergangenheit noch in die Gegenwart herüber dauert."*; see also Theodor Mundt, *Moderne Lebenswirren* (Leipzig 1834), p. 33: *"Der Liberalismus will nichts als die Zukunft der Geschichte."*

67 See Wilhelm Traugott Krug, *Der falsche Liberalismus unserer Zeit. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Liberalismus und eine Mahnung für künftige Volksvertreter* (Leipzig 1832).

68 *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne, ministre d'état; sur Napoléon, le directoire, le consulat, l'empire et la restauration*, vol. III (Paris 1829), p. 28.

69 This became also true for one of the most influential definitions of *Liberalismus* in pre-March Germany, see Paul Pfizer, 'Liberalismus', in *Staats-Lexicon oder Encyclopädie der Staatswissenschaften, in Verbindung mit vielen der angesehensten Publicisten Deutschlands,* ed. Carl von Rotteck / Carl Theodor Welcker, vol. IX (Altona 1840), pp. 713-30; for early socialist and communist definitions see Arnold Ruge, 'Selbstkritik des Liberalismus', in *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (1843), ed. Arnold Ruge / E. Th. Echtermeyer, pp. 1-12; and Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels, *Die deutsche Ideologie* (1845/46), in id., *Werke*, vol. III, ed. Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED (Berlin 1981).

70 For the significance of this analytical approach for the study of 19th and 20th-century German History see Wolfgang Hardtwig, 'Der deutsche Weg in die Moderne. Die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen als Grundproblem der deutschen Geschichte 1789-1871', in *Deutschlands Weg in die Moderne. Politik, Gesellschaft und Kultur im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Wolfgang Hardtwig / Harm-Hinrich Brandt (Munich 1993), pp. 9-31.

71 Clifford Geertz, 'Ideology as a Cultural System', in id., *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York 1973), p. 220.

72 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift*, in id., *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Einzelbänden*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, vol. V (Munich 1988), p. 317.

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