

Review of: "Neoliberalism, Strong State and Democracy"

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The paper is a very thorough and erudite discussion of the relationship between neoliberal economic policies and its conception of state and democracy. In my opinion, the paper's main contribution, and a very important one, is stated in the conclusion: "The guiding principle of neoliberalism is not the *minimal state*, but the *minimal democracy* in economic, social, and administrative policy issues."

There are comments and suggestions that I think could improve the paper. First, it seems to me that the author should make more clear the paper's original contribution, already in the beginning. The author asks to make three points, and he himself states that Crouch has already made the first one, and there is a corpus of literature that has argued the second one. Concerning the third, there is also research on the ways in which neoliberalism depoliticizes decision-making and socio-economic policies. Thus, it seems to me that the author should make clearer which are his specific contributions to the literature.

Second, it seems to me that he should consider to refer to the works of Philip Mirowski (The Road to Mount Pelerin and "Never let a serious crisis go to waste"), who makes similar claims concerning the evolution of neoliberal thought and its relationship to classical liberalism.

Third, I am not fully convinced on the author's interpretation of Schmitt. If I understand him correctly, the author argues that Schmitt was critical of democracy and argued for an authoritarian liberalism. But in his works The Concept of the Political and The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy, Schmitt is much more critical of liberalism than of democracy. You could even read him as putting forward a conception of populist democracy (in which the leader can represent fully the will of the people) as against liberal democracy.

Fourth: the author makes a very interesting point in comparing Hayek's claim that the economy is unfathomable, with Keynes' claim about uncertainty. This is a very interesting claim, and I would like to see it more developed.

Fifth: The author argues that *homo economicus* "plays no or at best a secondary role in neoliberal schools". What about Gary Becker's works? (See for example: Kramer, Arthur. "Gary Becker: homo economicus et néolibéralisme. Contribution au séminaire de philosophie politique à l'ENS de Lyon organisé par la direction d'Arnaud Milanese et de Nathanael Colin-Jäger." (2019)., and Urbina, Dante A., and Alberto Ruiz-Villaverde. "A critical review of homo economicus from five approaches." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 78.1 (2019): 63-93.)

Sixth: The author mentions Hayek's support for Augusto Pinochet (Milton Friedman, another central neo-liberal thinker was

an advisor of Pinochet's economic policy), arguing that "he prefers a liberal dictator to a democratic government that lacks liberalism". I would like to see a more detailed discussion of this point. On one hand, liberal thinkers such as Isaiah Berlin already voiced their preference for political liberalism (that defends negative liberties) over democratic illiberalism. But Pinochet was not a political liberal. So, as the author argues, Hayek's claim must refer only to economic liberalism (or should it be neoliberalism). But how does this claim matches Hayek's view that economic freedom and political freedom could not exist the one without the other?

Seventh: I would eliminate the references to Arendt, since they are not really discussed, and it seems to me that deviate the reader's attention from the paper's main direction.

In sum, I very much enjoyed the paper and learned from it a lot, and my comments are only suggestions that it seems to me could improve it.