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Liberal Order in the Twenty-First Century: Searching for *Eunomia* Once Again

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Abstract

Adherents of economic and political liberty are again compelled to ask fundamental questions about the nature and prospects of good order (or *Eunomia*). This article: (1) offers a quaternary definition of the concept of "order;" (2) contends that *Eunomia* is essentially about the creation, adaptation, and protection of the conditions necessary for human beings to live lives that are free from fear so as to maximize each individual's unique potential for human flourishing; and (3) outlines an evolutionary understanding of *Eunomia*, whereby contemporary liberal orders represent the cumulative outcome of three sets of elite-selected "wins" over illiberal ones. To survive and thrive in the twenty-first century liberalism must once again contest and defeat rival orders.

JEL Codes: B52, F55, N40

1. Introduction

Eunomia, that cavorted but fickle Greek goddess of "good order" (or "governance according to good laws") appears to have, once again, slipped away from us as we slept. Smug, complacent, and more than a little naïve, we slumbered under the comfortable duvet of post-1989 triumphalism, confident that the end of history was nigh and that we were safely nestled in her warm bosom of liberal democracy, economic freedom, and American-underwritten perpetual peace.

Order, to adapt Nye's (1995, 90) fitting metaphor, is like oxygen in the air: you do not take notice of its existence until it begins to disappear. Yet once order begins to dissipate, human societies are compelled – sometimes gradually and soberly, but more typically in a state of frantic agitation – to search for *Eunomia* once again.

"The first of the soul's needs," as Simone Weil observed in the darkest days of the Second World War, "is order" (2002, 10). This is true at the individual, societal, and global levels. We are held together psychologically, as political communities, and as

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an international system by something abstruse but indispensable called order. It is our northern-star, our compass, and the path we follow. Without possessing a sense of order we find ourselves in what the Book of Genesis poetically calls "*tohu va-vohu*" – a primal state of terror-born-of-chaos and disorientation. It is in this state of dislocation and anxiety that we are most vulnerable to the allure of false prophets and the saccharine promises of simple solutions to complex human problems made by charismatic demagogues and would-be tyrants.

The human story is the story of repeated attempts to establish and maintain political order. Some of these attempts have been successful – at least for several decades or even centuries at a time – others abortive, others still disastrous (Kirk 2003; Kissinger 2014; Brands and Edel 2019). But the quest for order is ubiquitous and seemingly unavoidable. When we lose the sense of equilibrium and protective harmony that living in what we perceive to be a coherent, functioning order provides us – when human beings experience something analogous to the sacking of Rome, the loss of Christian unity, Tocqueville's discomfort at the coming age of industrial-age democracy, or our own era of democratic dysfunction, digital disruptions, demographic and climate concerns, the demise of *Pax Americana* and the ascendance of authoritarian China – we do not only become anxious or nostalgic, we grasp for alternatives. We seek to rejuvenate the old order or fashion a new one.

Conceptually, our present-day search for *Eunomia* involves three core tasks, which this article seeks to identify and briefly explore. First, the pursuit of good political order begins with a clear recognition of its constitutive elements. Section I, accordingly, offers a quaternary understanding of the concept – involving rules, coercive power, legitimacy, and what may be described as an ontological narrative (or a story of being).

Since *Eunomia* demands not just any old order, but the more particular and exacting standard of "good order," Section II makes a brief argument about the foundations of desirable political order. Human physical and ontological security, coupled with a historically-aware quest to deepen and expand individual human flourishing, it contends, are at the core of *Eunomia.* These are fundamentally liberal characteristics of political order. Good political order is essentially about the creation, adaptation, and protection of the material and ideational conditions necessary for all individual human beings to live lives that are free from fear so as to maximize each individual's unique potential for human flourishing. Physical and ontological wellbeing are the *sine qua non* of good political order.

Lastly, Section III sketches, in necessarily sparse and tentative terms, an argument about the evolutionary logic of liberal political order in the modern era. Building upon Owen's (2010) writings about the clash of ideas in world politics, it contends that contemporary liberal orders, domestic and international, can be usefully understood as *elite-driven solution-structures* prompted by fear and hope. Specifically, our present-day liberal orders represent the cumulative outcome of three sets of elite-selected "victories" over alternative illiberal ones; hard-won victories attained in three broad

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waves of contestation since the middle of the seventeenth-century. Contemporary liberal orders can be seen as the outcome of competitive, selective social evolution in two main ways: first, later liberal orders contain the successful political genome of their ancestors, and second, liberal orders are the outcome of repeated, competitive *selection*. The latter point is of special significance to the future prospects of liberal order in the twenty-first century. To survive and thrive, liberalism must once again adapt, contest, and "win" against competing ordering states and movements.

2. Order

The fundamental need for physical and ontological security has, for millennia, spurred human beings to form communities that transcend small kin-based circles of spontaneous sympathy in favor of more powerful and meaningful social structures. Our specie's deep "constitutional sociability" (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 119) provides us with the potential to construct complex orders, yet that potential is counterbalanced by powerful constraints that limit reciprocal trust and cooperation among strangers.

As Phillips (2011) contends, there are three distinct sets of constraints at play here: First, the hierarchical nature of hominoid social structures and the reality of material scarcity mean that human communities must contend with perpetual struggle between their members for prestige and wealth. Conflict and the potential for violence are perennial challenges to the construction of order. Second, there is the tricky issue of membership, as "attempts to enlarge the boundaries of solidarity among strangers are often endangered by agents' more parochial allegiances and their accompanying tendencies towards discriminatory sociability" (Phillips 2011, 2). Lastly, *homo sapiens*' need for ontological security means that orders must generate some compelling shared conception of the good, as well as the narrative, symbols, practices and habits necessary to inculcate that conception of the good in current and future generations of the community. Yet the very attempt to provide ontological security through the provision of a shared conception of the good invites difficult identity conflicts that both exacerbate intra-community tensions over membership and member-status, and tend to pitch the community (which become the "in-group") against one or more out-groups.

All political orders can thus be thought of attempts to reconcile humanity's inherent need for community and its competing propensity for conflict. Functioning orders solve this intrinsic tension via a quaternary package of elements, providing physical and ontological security through authoritative, coercive social arrangements that possess legitimacy by virtue of their perceived consonance with a shared vision of the good. Let us briefly unpack each of these four formative elements:

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2.1 Rules and Arrangements

Political orders are formed by a set of rules, principles, norms, and arrangements that guide the relationship between the various units in the social system the order is meant to establish and maintain. These rules and arrangements can be informal and diffuse, but as political orders have historically grown in scale and sophistication they have typically become more formally institutionalized, legalistic, and, since the middle to late eighteenth-century "constitutionalized." When the rules and arrangements of the order are broadly accepted, the order is stable; when they are seriously questioned the order becomes contested and its stability and even existence compromised (Margolis 2010; Bosley 2017).

The units in the social system that the order generates also vary from one type of order to another. For example, a modern unitary national-state order would typically possess millions of individual units called "citizens" who exist in a dense web of regulated relationships with one another and with the government that rules them. In ethnically or religiously divided states – like Belgium, Iraq, Lebanon, or Nigeria – the individual-unit basis of the order is supplemented, and in some respects superseded, by collective-group units with formal rights and responsibilities in the given social system. A federal state order, on the other hand, would possess many of the same elements of the unitary nation-state but contain one or more regulative layers – "states" in the American sense, *Länder* in the German, or a mix of states and territories in the Australian. And when it comes to modern regional or international orders – regulated by public international law – the basic units in the social system are not individuals or ethnic/religious communities, but sovereign states.

2.2 Coercive Power

The fundamental need for orders to provide physical and ontological security leads us to their second constitutive feature, namely the regulation of conflict and violence. Every functioning political order must possess a source of power, ultimately backed by coercive force. Force fulfils two distinct sets of functions in political order, which can be thought of as exogenous and endogenous. In its external function, coercive power acts to protect a given order from unwanted foreign intervention or attack. This function may be performed autonomously through the deterrence generated by the given order itself – as in a balance of power system defined by structural anarchy (Waltz 1979) – via alliances, or by contracting-out security to a protective hegemon (Lake 2009).

Coercive power is also essential for a variety of endogenous functions. It can solicit compliance with the order's rules and arrangements by punishing transgressors, co-opting potential defectors, and deterring would-be insurgents seeking to overturn the existing order. It can also serve the pedagogical purpose of inculcating rules and norms in the community, act as a restorative mechanism to correct wrongs committed by

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transgressors, mitigate blood-feuds, and uphold communally shared conceptions of fairness and justice. Last but not least, the threat of coercive power may ultimately be required to achieve controlled adaptation, as the order must evolve its membership, norms and institutions to successfully adjust to changing cultural, economic, technological, or geopolitical conditions (Margolis 2010).

2.3 Legitimacy

A source of forceful power is necessary but not in itself sufficient to establish, maintain, or adapt political order. A third critical ingredient is legitimacy: "the willing popular recognition of a political object as right" (*ibid.*, 335). The most difficult factor to accurately conceptualize, operationalize and measure, legitimacy (sometimes referred to as authority or *Herrschaft)* interacts with coercive power to provide physical and ontological security in functioning orders.

Even the most ruthless and brutal of tyrannies – such as Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Soviets, Mao's China, the Mullahs' Islamic Republic of Iran, or Kim Jong-un's North Korea – cannot rely on coercive power alone to maintain their odious forms of order, as evidenced by the enormous material and symbolic resources poured into educational, cultural, and media activities by all tyrannical regimes and designed to justify, indeed glorify, their rule. High levels of legitimacy reduce the need for costly recourse to coercion as a means of establishing, maintaining, or adapting a given order. To reduce compliance costs with their imposition of certain institutional and ethical constraints to manageable levels, in fact, all political orders – whether authoritarian or free – must be recognized as at least reasonably legitimate by their respective constitutive units (individuals, communities, or states, depending on the order in question).

Deep legitimacy prevails where the order's constitutive units inhabit what Habermas (1990, 135) terms a shared *Lebenswelt* – a coherent and cohesive "lifeworld" of assumed cultural givens that generate a harmonious worldview concordant with the prevailing order. Where that sense of legitimacy becomes widely questioned or breaks down – as a result, for example, of the widespread abandonment of the belief in rule by divine right, a succession crisis, internal economic collapse, or catastrophic loss in war – space opens for revisionist challengers to contest the existing order. Where loss of legitimacy is so serious and persistent that the existing order is unable to adjust – to effectively co-opt or suppress the challengers – it is unlikely to survive (Margolis 2010; Kissinger 2014).

2.4 Ontological Narrative

Ontological, and ultimately physical security too, are dependent on a fourth constitutive element shared by all political orders, namely an ontological narrative.

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The creation, maintenance, and successful adaptation of a given order, whether domestic or international, require some type of "story of being" which ties the inner order of the individual soul to the outer order of society (Kirk 2003, 6), situates the latter in the overall scheme of the cosmos, and provides the order's constitutive units with meaning across time.

Structurally, ontological narratives typically contain three distinct elements, though the particulars of their plot and chronology vary substantially across history and cultures. First, the ontological narrative possesses a founding myth, which may be the birth of universal order out of chaos – as in archetypal stories of creation found in Assyrian, Babylonian, Chinese, Egyptian, Greek or Hebraic mythology – or out of an earlier, related but now corrupted and unjust *ancien régime* – as in the birth of the United States, modern France, and many post-colonial states in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Supranational orders, such as the EU, NATO or the UN, are similarly positioned historically and legitimated by a founding myth.

Second, as Brands and Edel (2019) observe in a book-length study, ancient and modern political orders alike depend on a memory of tragedy for their long-term viability and capacity for self-preservation and renewal. From the Greek obsession with the public performance of tragedies that warned against complacency and hubris (*Oedipus Rex* and *The Eumenides*, for instance) to the plethora of architectural and artistic testimonials to the catastrophes of the Thirty Years, Napoleonic, First and Second World Wars, the enactment of the rituals of tragedy has proven indispensable to the preservation of political order. The ritualized memory of tragedy and sacrifice has repeatedly acted as a powerful spur for the construction of order after catastrophe, for imbuing new orders with sacred meaning and for strengthening ontological security through collective responsibility for holding the daemons of barbarism at bay. This is true of supranational political orders as well as national ones, most notably in the founding spirit of the United Nations (UN), Bretton Woods institutions, and of course the European Union (EU). Conversely, when historical amnesia sets in and the ritualized practices of memory lose their poignancy, the ontological narrative weakens and the order is imperiled (Kirk 2003; Brands and Edel 2019).

Lastly, the ontological narrative typically contains a story about the future; a story that may be cautionary, ecstatic, or both. In early ancient societies – where notions of non-cyclical temporality, the transformation of reality by human agency or progress were either unknown or taboo – that narrative would be one of ordained permanence and cosmic immutability. But with the emergence of what Nemo calls "the Judeo-Christian phenomenon," political orders begin to display "the spirit of rebellion against the normalcy of evil" (2004, 29). Over the centuries the terms of the forward-looking story mutate. Messianism, apocalypse and millennialism gradually make way to More's *Utopia*, followed by modern doctrines of the betterment of the world through experimental science and economic development.

Where a political order manages to generate a compelling, positive story about the future – a story in which it is thriving, widely accepted and proven to be "on the right

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side of history" – it is strengthened, not least because it is legitimated, made more resilient and is better able to adapt to internal demands and external conditions. Where a given order cannot articulate an inspiring, forward-looking narrative of future relevance, it loses a critical feature of its coherence and long-term viability. This, again, applies to supranational political orders as well as to national ones. The present failure of the EU to offer a coherent, cohesive and compelling vision for the future of the continent is both a feature and a catalyst of the Union's unfolding poly-crisis (Magen 2018b; Youngs 2018).

3. Liberal Order

Understood in political, rather than primarily economic or moral terms, the concept of "liberal order" is a sub-species of political order. Just as not all orders are liberal (in fact liberal order is the historical exception, not the norm) not all liberal ideas amount or are related to political order. To merit its name liberal order must possess both the quaternary package of elements constitutive of political order generally *and* certain characteristics that distinguish it as a particular type of order.

What are those distinguishing characteristics? Notwithstanding the valid complaint of Shklar (1989) and Bell (2014) – that the term is extraordinarily susceptible to conceptual-stretching, overuse and outright abuse – liberalism remains an analytically valid concept; one with sufficiently coherent ideational and institutional elements to possess valuable meaning.

In essence – to follow a genealogy of ideas extending back at least to Montesquieu but articulated more fully in Shklar's essay "The Liberalism of Fear" – "[l]iberalism has only one overriding aim: to secure the political conditions that are necessary for the exercise of personal freedom. Every adult should be able to make as many effective decisions without fear…" (1989, 21). Escaping fear and finding a place of safety and security has historically been, and remains, at the core of the liberal idea, and it is the defining feature of liberal order. As Kahan aptly puts it: "Securing the social and political conditions necessary to give people a feeling of security – the feeling that their person and their community is free – has historically been the core of liberalism" (2020, 1).

This contrasts sharply with illiberal conceptions of political order, where either *everyone* except the "Dear Leader" ought to be afraid, or *some* categories of people – those who belong to the wrong color, religion, gender, ethnicity, class, or nation – are excluded, as a normative and practical matter, from the community of physical and ontological security. The history of liberalism in this sense has been one of gradually expanding circles of inclusion in the security-community – to other religions, to women, blacks, people with disabilities, and sexual minorities.

A great many good ideas, institutions, and practices derive from the foundational liberal conviction that freedom from fear is the foundation of human freedom. These

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provide liberal orders – national, regional, and international – with many of their distinguishing features. They include the central liberal tenet of the universal, inalienable dignity of human life and the sovereign, responsible individual as the basic moral unit of society. They include the Lockean idea that it is the consent of the governed (and consent alone) that can imbue a political order with legitimacy. They include the doctrine of limited government under the rule of law and its international corollary – the historically extraordinary idea that the world ought to be organized around principles of self-determination and the fragmented, bounded power of equal and legitimate states, not all-devouring empires.

They also include the notion that international peace is promoted by economic openness, the spread of democracy, and international law (Russett and Oneal 2001; Buchan 2013). They extend to the idea of property rights as bulwarks against fear of want and dependency; to the ability of individuals to better their material security, social status, and the future prospects of their children by choosing their own vocation; and to free trade, entrepreneurship and innovation as enablers of human security and meaning. And they go on to think through the mechanisms by which political orders can best withstand internal change and exogenous shocks; tending to greatly prefer the politics of imperfection and incremental experimental adaptation over the hurried pursuit of utopian schemes via religious dogma or violent revolution.

At its core, liberal order is concerned with the establishment and maintenance of the material and ideational conditions necessary for (all) individual human beings to live lives that are free from fear. Yet that recognition alone is insufficient to capture the history and evolution of liberalism, nor to adequately frame the challenges it currently faces. Liberals have feared different things at different times and places and so have striven to create and adapt varying political orders to tackle a succession of changing fears. That responsive evolution is not merely of historical interest. We are currently in the midst of a new age of anxiety that ought to spur us to new efforts at liberal adaptation.

4. Order Contestation and Selection: Liberal Orders as Serial Solution-Structures

Reports of liberalism's imminent demise are once again *de rigueur* among both its detractors and avowed supporters. In the former camp, Russia's perennial president, Vladimir Putin, declared recently that the "liberal idea has become obsolete. It has come into conflict with the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population" (Financial Times 2019). Similarly, in his controversial 2018 book *Why Liberalism Failed*, Notre Dame political scientist Deneen condemns liberalism not only as a practical failure – "[n]early every one of the promises that were made by the architects and creators of liberalism has been shattered" – but, worse still, an ontological one.

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"Liberalism has failed," he argues, not because it fell short, but "because it was true to itself" (Deneen 2018, 2–3).

Other observers, equally formidable but more friendly to liberalism, now lament the erosion or outright downfall of various pillars of the liberal project – the loss of faith in liberal democracy (Mounk 2018; Diamond 2019; Runciman 2019); resurgence of economic protectionism (Lau 2019); western cultural and strategic decline (Emmott 2017; Lilla 2017; Murray 2017; Goldberg 2018; Kaplan 2018; Lukianoff and Haidt 2018); the fraying of liberal internationalism (Haas 2017; King 2017; Kagan 2019); or the coming extinction of the open society at the hands of Artificial Intelligence (Harari 2018), surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2019), and algorithmic governance (Danaher 2016).

Are the doomsayers correct in pointing to the growing frailty or even obsolescence of liberal ideas and institutions in the twenty-first century? Or are reports of liberalism's imminent death, to piggyback on Mark Twain's famous quip, once again greatly exaggerated?

The short answer is that we have no way of accurately forecasting the future of liberalism – or any other complex social phenomenon for that matter (Cederman and Weidmann 2017) – not least because that future is hardly predetermined. What can be said with a high degree of confidence, however, is that we must be extremely vigilant not to assume that liberal orders are somehow immune from, or inherently superior to, illiberal competitors. It is precisely because of our high level of normative attachment to liberalism that we must assiduously avoid the complacent expectation that it will somehow endure and triumph over its ideological adversaries. The arc of the moral universe *can* bend towards justice, but it certainly does not do so on its own volition.

Instead, our future-oriented working assumption needs to be that to survive, and hopefully thrive, liberal orders, domestic and international, must contest and "win." This means that they need to prove themselves superior forms of order – delivering better physical and ontological security than their competitors. Liberal democracies, for example, must maintain, and if possible further enhance, their relative superiority in avoiding wars, civil wars and terrorism (Jones and Lupu 2018; Magen 2018a). They must provide deeper, more vibrant sources of belonging and attachments, greater life-opportunities, and better outlets for creativity than those ostensibly offered by authoritarian capitalism or radical Islam. They must protect individual autonomy by fending off intrusive social surveillance. And they must prove themselves better at addressing the legitimate anxieties of ordinary people from uncontrolled migration, economic insecurity, climate fears, or redundancy at the hands of intelligent machines.

Liberal orders are historically the product of such competitive selection – of reproductive advantage where reproduction entails the competitive selection of particular types of rules, arrangements, and bases for legitimacy over others (Florini 1996; Wendt 1999) – and there is absolutely no reason to suspect that our own or future ages would somehow be exempt from this logic of selection.

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As John Owen (2010) demonstrates, over the past five hundred years, periodic bouts of transnational ideological polarization have generated repeated grand competitions over the nature of political order. Elites, and eventually wider populations, adopt new forms of political order – via adaptation or revolution – when the material and cultural environment alters sufficiently to pose serious anomalies to the *ancien régime* (also Margolis 2010; Bosley 2017). As long as enough elites maintain the belief that the old order can weather the challenge, a transnational struggle will ensue among elites over order-preference.

In the absence of a clear winner, such contestation will endure across time and space, sometimes for many years or decades. Eventually, however, one type of order proves best able "to meet the essential interests of elites in a stable and secure polity" (Owen 2010, 54). The winning regime is revealed "by the superior performance of its exemplary state – that is, their manifest superiority at prospering under the new social and material environment" (*ibid.*). Historically, these struggles have been confined to regions. Only since the twentieth-century has order contestation become truly global in scope.

The three waves Owen identifies are essentially as follows: The first (extending roughly from 1510 to 1688) involved contests over church-state relations, with the "old order" insisting on state enforcement of religious dogma, and a "new order" – which first emerges in the Netherlands in the 1570s but rises to prominence in England after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 – opting for *toleration* of religious differences. The toleration-model "won" and spread as England flourished after 1688 and elites in other parts of Europe defected from costly religious wars to the more successful toleration-model.

The second wave of struggle, waged (again in Europe) between absolute monarchy, constitutional monarchy, and then republicanism, is effectively decided in favor of some form of *consent-based constitutional government* by 1870. Again, it is Britain – joined from the 1830s onwards by the fledgling United States – that acts as the hefty vanguard whose early opting for limited government makes it better able to accommodate the enormous cultural and economic transformations of the second half of the nineteenth-century. When eventually France, Austria, and Prussia all switched to some variety of the constitutional, limited-government model (and even backward Russia signaled liberal reforms) absolutism lost much of its allure for European elites.

The third past wave of order-contestation is more recent and familiar. It takes place between bounded-state, market-based liberal democracy, and imperial fascism/Nazism and Communism, and is decided in two distinct phases. German Nazism, Italian fascism and Japanese imperialism are overwhelmingly defeated in 1944–45, but Soviet and Chinese Communism, and their acolytes, continued the order-contestation (global this time) until it became clear to their elites that their respective existing systems could not effectively complete with that of the United States and Western Europe. The watershed events of 1989–91, in turn, produced a wave of elite de-

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fections away from the Communist camp and towards liberal democracy (Diamond 2008; Simmons *et al.* 2008).

Owen is interested in how dominant state actors promote regime change in other countries during the historical waves of competition he identifies. Yet his analysis contains important tacit clues into the historical development of liberalism and its future prospects. Accepting the broad validity of the historical thread outlined above, in fact, leads us to a novel and useful interpretation of the evolution of liberal orders; one that also contains important lessons for their future prospects.

Viewed through this prism, contemporary liberal order is essentially a "triple-distilled" package of normative and institutional goods, accrued over centuries in a series of historical competitions where "the liberal solution" eventually emerged victorious having proved superior to its competitors at providing physical and ontological well-being. Our modern forms of liberal order – containing the genome of toleration, bounded-statehood, consent-based representative democracy, and the market-economy – are the outcome of repeated successful contestation and selection.

In the grand contest between the champions of liberal hope and the chamberlains – gleeful or sorrowful – of its extinction, the latter always enjoy a certain historical and psychological advantage. Certainly the Cassandras have the vast majority of recorded human history on their side, and the annals of evolutionary psychology too contain little evidence that our prehuman ancestors were inclined towards individual liberty, scientific rationality, or peaceful toleration of difference. Liberal orders are often seen as unnatural newcomers to the human condition and their "miraculous" origins, survival, and diffusion over the past two centuries or so (Gellner 1988; Simmons *et al.* 2008; Fox 2011; Goldberg 2018) remain the subject of great wonderment (Fukuyama 2011; Davies 2019).

Liberalism, according to this reading, represents a miraculous historical aberration and so tends to be perceived by many as inherently fragile and likely ephemeral. And yet, the perception of fragility misses the repeated selective success of what we now view as core liberal ideas and institutions. Liberal order has survived and proliferated because it has repeatedly proven superior in providing physical and ontological security. At the same time, the evolutionary logic is a cold one. Unless liberal orders are able to once again compete and demonstrate their superiority, we can expect order-contestation and elite defections to increase.

5. Conclusion

Liberalism can be thought of, *inter alia*, as a serial solution-structure – a by now deep and rich well of normative claims, rules, institutional modalities, and sources of legitimacy in support for particular kinds of economic, societal and political arrangements; a repository of arguments against tribal, collectivist or authoritarian ones.

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So for Adam Smith "the liberal plan of equality, liberty and justice" – in which individual autonomy and equality before the law mingled with sentiments of reciprocity, generosity, and civic sacrifice – was the moral and economic solution-structure necessary for a free, prosperous and ordered modern society. For Lafayette, Constant and de Staël, the path to ordered liberty for France around the turn of the nineteenth-century lay in the adoption and implementation of an American-inspired codified constitution guaranteeing limited government and respect for individual rights. And for the liberal internationalists of the twentieth-century, avoiding human annihilation by war depended on the establishment and enforcement of a global solution-structure built on the triage of free trade, the spread of democratic government, and the international rule of law (Russett and Oneal 2001; Buchan 2013; Hathaway and Shapiro 2017). All drew upon and appealed explicitly to liberalism as a means of constructing and legitimizing their desired order. In the twenty-first century those concerned to preserve liberalism will have to, once again, generate and struggle for liberal ideas and institutions that prove themselves superior over their competitors.

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