

Mugged by Reality Again?

The Survival of Neoconservative Anti-Liberal Rhetoric Into the 21st Century



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Introduction

I no longer had to pretend to believe - what in my hart I could no longer believe - that liberals were wrong because they subscribe to this or that erroneous opinion on this or that topic. No - liberals were wrong, liberals are wrong, because they are liberals. What is wrong with liberalism is liberalism - a metaphysics and mythology that is woefully blind to human and political reality¹

Irving Kristol, 1993

This is how Irving Kristol, known as the godfather of neoconservatism, in 1993 looked back on his conversion from liberalism to neoconservatism halfway through the 1960s. Kristol, and many other newfound neoconservatives, became displeased with how the liberal President Johnson tried to solve the social problems, concerning racism, segregation, and emancipation, that ran through the American society after the Second World War. During the 1950s and early 1960s these neoconservatives, back then still liberals, supported the idea that a solution for these social issues had to be found. Finally the liberal ideas became a political reality when President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act (1964), the Voting Rights Act (1965), and the Immigration Act (1965) into law, and thereby created what later on would be known as *The Great Society*. However, Kristol and many other liberals were not pleased with the way Johnson tried to solve these problems. From this unrest in the liberal camp emerged a group that wanted to come up with a proper solution to solve America's social issues. This group came be known as the neoconservatives.

So liberalism is an important aspect in the genesis of neoconservatism. To put it in Kristol's words: "A neoconservative is a liberal who has been mugged by reality."² Neoconservatives saw that liberalism had failed and it was up to them to find a more humane, a more practical, and truly liberal way to politically solve social issues.³ However, the liberal past of the neoconservatives remained an important aspect of their identity. The newborn neoconservatives also started to use the word "liberal" as an insult to the left wing politicians who supported the surreal policies of the Johnson administration. The construct of the word liberal by neoconservatives will be the focus of this thesis.

Analyzing the use of the word liberal will be done by studying two important ages of neoconservatism. The first age is the one that is already briefly discussed, the first years of neoconservative existence shortly after the Johnson reforms. Scholar Justin Vaïsse defines this age as follows: "First-age neoconservatism was in essence a reaction against the perceived drift of liberalism in the 1960s, against the challenge that America's children had thrown down to their society and its system, and against the systematic denigration of America that accompanied the protests of the New

¹ D. Murray. *Neoconservatism: Why We Need It* (New York: Encounter books, 2006), 78.

² Ibid, 86.

³ Ibid, 88.

Left.”⁴ For this thesis this period will start in 1964 with the start of the Great Society and will end in 1975. Around that time both neoconservatism as an independent movement and the construction of the word liberal as an insult were firmly established. The second period that this thesis will investigate is shortly after the most recent period of neoconservative dominance in national politics, the period after the presidency of George W. Bush. Many scholars argue that the, in the eye of many, failed foreign policy of Bush, who was surrounded by neoconservative secretaries and advisors during his presidency, meant that the neoconservative influence in national politics had come to an end. This thesis will investigate if the construct of the word liberal, as a vital part of the neoconservative emergence during the first age, has survived the problematic years of the Bush administration.

The thesis question that emerges from this context is the following: How did the neoconservative construction of the word “liberal”, as created during the late 1960s and early 1970s, continue into the post-George W. Bush era? When answering this question it is important to keep in mind the variety of topics that can be related to neoconservatism. While the founding of neoconservatism was based on domestic social issues, nowadays it is mostly known for its hawkish stance on foreign policy concerning America’s role regarding global security and counter-terrorism. Even though this *good vs. evil* view did not dominate the neoconservative mind during its start up phase, there is a strong connection with this 21st century view on international relations and early neoconservatism. Therefore, the analysis of neoconservative media during the period 1964-1975 will mainly focus on domestic issues. This in contradiction to the analysis of 21st century neoconservative media which will include much more foreign policy issues. While it is important to keep this in mind, it will create no further obstacles for comparing the rhetoric of both eras.

Ever since neoconservatives have rejected the ideas of the liberal wing of the American political spectrum, they have been the topic of many academic and public debates. Important debates concern the roots of the movement, the dominance of Jewish intellectuals, and the neoconservative reaction to the American policies regarding the Vietnam war. Throughout the last decades the gap between the different answers concerning these questions are closing and contemporary scholarship has therefore shifted its focus to neoconservatism during the 21st century. The reaction of the Bush administration, with its many neoconservative influences, to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 has been the main topic of debate for roughly the past decade.

From the field of American Studies many scholars have heavily criticized the outcome of the neoconservative influence in the foreign policy of George W. Bush. One of the earliest and most dominant scholars criticizing Bush’s foreign policy is former president of the American Studies Association Amy Kaplan. In her presidential address in 2003, she warns for the way in which Bush, and his neoconservative ministers and advisors, have shaped the American view on the world. She states that Bush has brought back the *good vs. evil* world view of the Cold War and that the field of international relations is too complex to divide the world into two camps.⁵ When studying the core of

⁴ J. Vaisse, *Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 278-279.

⁵ A. Kaplan, ‘Presidential Address to the American Studies Association: Violent Belongings and the Question of Empire Today’, *American Quarterly* 56, No. 1 (October 2003), 2.

her argument, and therefore neglecting the sketchy comparison she makes between Bush's foreign policy and rape⁶, one can argue that this train of thought has been adopted by an increasing amount of scholars ever since. Several scholars compare Bush's foreign policy with the Cold War and to some extent agree that Bush's ideas were the wrong path to take when dealing with international problems during the 21st century. Scholar and former Colonel in the U.S. army Andrew J. Bacevich also states that the *good vs. evil* way of thinking has resurrected. He quotes Bush who states that in this War on Terror you are "either with us or with the terrorists."⁷ Even though Bacevich sees the "jingoistic neoconservatives" as core figures in Bush's policies, he does not want to solely blame them for the problems that have emerged with America's foreign policy after 9/11.⁸ That the neoconservative contribution did not improve on the situation is however no question.

Another important aspect of debating neoconservatives, a debate that has been going on for many years, is defining neoconservatives. A relevant contribution to the debate about the contribution of neoconservatives to the War on Terror is Brian C. Rathburn's article "Does One Right Make a realist? Conservatism, Neoconservatism, and Isolationism in the Foreign Policy Ideology of American Elites".⁹ In this article Rathburn explores the differences in foreign policy ideologies within the American conservative branch. He states that the way in which neoconservatives differ from 'regular' conservatives when it comes to foreign policy is their nationalistic ideology. According to Rathburn, conservatives use a *Realpolitik* approach. They make narrow definitions of what is directly in America's material interest and focus on these specific aspects. Neoconservatives deal with foreign policy with the idea of American exceptionalism and superiority in mind. With the current Republican electoral crisis and the recent emergence of the Tea Party, it is more relevant than ever to define the several branches of the right wing of the American political spectrum.

The main question that this thesis will answer will contribute to the discussion regarding the viability of neoconservatism after the heydays of the ideology during the presidency of George W. Bush. Did the neoconservatives, after their first reality check during the 1960s, survive the second mugging by reality during the first decade of the 21st century? David Farber states in *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short History*¹⁰ that the heydays of neoconservatism are probably over:

Maybe modern conservatism - born in the fight against the New Deal; strengthened in the anticommunist struggle; its ranks greatly expanded by those Americans who opposed the claims made by people of color, feminists and gay activists who demanded equal rights; and provided intellectual legitimacy in the 1970s by the failures of the liberal economic policy - has outlasted

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ A.J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 226.

⁸ A.J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2009) 5.

⁹ B.C. Rathburn, "Does One Right Make a Realist? Conservatism, Neoconservatism, and Isolationism in the Foreign Policy Ideology of American Elites." *Political Science Quarterly* 123, No. 2. (2008): 271-299.

¹⁰ D. Farber, *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

its historic purpose in Americans' continuing political struggle to find social order and individual meaning in the world's most dynamic and diverse nation.¹¹

Farber blames the neoconservative Bush administration for the downfall of conservatism in 2008.¹²

In *They Knew They Were Right: The Rise of the Neocons*¹³ Jacob Heilbrunn agrees with Farber on the idea that the end of the presidency of Bush jr. marked the end of the dominance of neoconservatism inside the Beltway. He is however more optimistic about the role neoconservatism will play in the future. The core of Heilbrunn's argument is summed up by a quote by Steven C. Clemons (a fellow at think tank *the New America Foundation*): "They're gone, but they're not gone."¹⁴ Heilbrunn believes that in the future neoconservatives will remain active in the intellectual circuit by writing books, giving lectures and winning awards for their intellectual contributions. In line with Heilbrunn's train of thought is Justin Vaïsse's *Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement*. Vaïsse also focusses on the contribution of the neoconservatives to the public intellectual sphere in the future, because the influence in national politics has sharply declined after 2008. He states: "Although it will always remain a minority school of thought, it resonates with certain deep currents in the American psyche, has a simple and powerful message, and is borne by a historical vision that justifies it in the eye who want to believe. In short, neoconservatism has a future."¹⁵ Of all the actors in the debate, Douglas Murray is with his *Neoconservatism: Why We Need It* by far the most optimistic about the future of neoconservatism in U.S. national politics. Murray states in the introduction of his book: "It is my belief that the solution to many, if not all, of our problems lay in neoconservatism - not just because it provides an optimistic and emboldened conservatism, but because neoconservatism provides a conservatism that is specifically attuned, and attractive, to people today."¹⁶ Despite the mistakes that have been made in the past in the name of neoconservatism, Murray states that neoconservatism provides all the answers the U.S. needs for a prosperous future.

This thesis will not test if neoconservatism indeed can provide the answers America is looking for, as Murray suggests. Nor will it provide proof that it has "outlasted its historic purpose in Americans' continuing political struggle", in order to confirm Farber. This thesis will focus on the moderate optimistic arguments of Heilbrunn and Vaïsse by analyzing if the rhetoric, and especially the use of the word liberal, of the early neoconservatives, has survived into the second decade of the 21st century. The question is if the language the neoconservative intellectuals of the late 1960s and 1970s has survived in the intellectual conservative rhetoric of today. The *a priori* element in the thesis question is the implication that an anti-liberal rhetoric still exists in (neo)conservative thought. However, listening to Bill O'Reilly or Rush Limbaugh suggests that anti-liberalism is this alive today.

¹¹ Farber, *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism*, 262.

¹² Ibid, 256.

¹³ J. Heilbrunn, *They Knew They Were Right: The Rise of the Neocons* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

¹⁴ Ibid, 284.

¹⁵ Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism*.

¹⁶ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

The question for this thesis will be whether this anti-liberalism echoes the anti-liberal rhetoric as created by neoconservatives during the 1960s and 1970s.

Answering the thesis question will be executed in three steps with a new chapter for each step. The first step will be mostly based on defining the anti-liberal sentiment during the first age of neoconservatism. The first chapter will analyze the reaction of future neoconservatives on the political reforms by Johnson. After the concerns with liberalism have become clear, the second step will be to analyze how the neoconservative public intellectuals have constructed the word liberal during the 1960s and 1970s. The third step will analyze how the neoconservative public intellectuals have used the word liberal in publications after the presidency of G.W. Bush. Finding the answer for the thesis question will be done by comparing the second and third chapter. Doing this will show the differences and similarities between the rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s, and the rhetoric of the 21st century. Analyzing the differences and similarities of these two eras will produce a definitive answer to the thesis question.

The merit for answering the thesis question will be found in a combination of secondary literature and primary sources. The secondary literature will consist of scholarship regarding conservatism and neoconservatism since the 1960s. The primary sources are several (neo)conservative newspapers and magazines, and a few books, that have been publishing since the 1950s. Important media are the magazines *Commentary*, *The Public Interest*, and *The Weekly Standard*. Especially *Commentary* will be an importance source since this magazine also made the shift from liberal to neoconservative after the civil rights revolution of the mid-1960s. The secondary literature will be primarily used in the first chapter. Primary sources will be the foundation of the second and third chapter. By doing so this thesis will make the neoconservative voice resonate in the ears of the reader.

1. Liberals With a Reality Check

No one may be denied the right to political participation, to education, to jobs because of an ethnic status, nor may anyone be given better access to political appointments or election, or to jobs, or education because of ethnic status.¹⁷

Nathan Glazer, 1975

This sentence, quoted from *Affirmative Discrimination: Ethnic Inequality and Public Policy* (1975) by Nathan Glazer, perfectly summarizes the *raison d'être* of the early neoconservatives of the late 1960s and 1970s. Before the comma, the liberal ideals about discrimination, segregation and equality are mentioned. After the comma Glazer mentions the addition that neoconservatives made in the second half of the 1960s to this liberal ideal. This chapter will start out by explaining these liberal ideals that were the driving force behind President Johnson's Great Society and why the neoconservatives needed that additional sentence in order for them to make this new society properly equal and liberal. The focus of this chapter will be to analyze the emergence of the neoconservatives during the 1960s.

1.1 Building a Great Society

Where the First World War meant the great emancipator for women, ethnic minorities had to wait until after the Second World War before their call for emancipation was heard. Especially among the political Left feelings of sympathy started to emerge. For example, a symposium regarding America's social issues concerning race and segregation was held at Columbia University, New York. Leading sociologists and historians got together in order to propose solutions to overcome America's major social issues. Many of the scholars proposed solutions that emphasized finding unity, a set of common values, between all the different economic and racial social groups. Columbia sociologist Robert M. Maciver stated that "of all nations, of all countries, ours depends more than any on the cultivation of co-operativeness and good will between groups."¹⁸ In order to achieve that it was important to integrate "the Negro into our economic, political, and social organization."¹⁹ During the symposium a Jewish rabbi stated the following:

But the more thoughtful in each group will realize that beyond these diverse interests, there are centripetal interests, shared by opposing groups. The prosperity of an industry often has more effect on the lives the employees and employers than the results of the struggle against one another. The prosperity and wellbeing of the South as a whole is more

¹⁷ N. Glazer, *Affirmative Discrimination: Ethnic Inequality and Public Policy*, (Cambridge: Basic Books, 1975), 28.

¹⁸ W.L. Wall, *Inventing the "American Way": The Politics of Consensus From the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 165-166.

¹⁹ Ibid.

significant in the lives of both whites and Negroes then in their relative position in the struggle for power.²⁰

The minds of the white left elite became increasingly dominated with the idea that racial segregation was not only a problem for black people, not only for people in the South, but a problem for everyone in the entire country because it counteracted the (economic) prosperity of the entire country.

Many future neoconservatives started out by supporting these liberal thoughts. An important liberal intellectual movement that would later on transfer these liberal ideas into the neoconservative discourse was that of the New York intellectuals, also known as the New York family. Irving Kristol was a prominent member of these liberal Jewish New York based intellectuals. Other well known members of the leftist New York intellectuals who, like Kristol, came to be associated with neoconservatism are Lionel Abel, Saul Bellow, Melvin J. Lasky, and Seymour Martin Lipset.²¹ These Jews were proponents of the kind of multiculturalism that was promoted during the Progressive era, as summarized by the first part of Glazer's quote. This multiculturalism was based on the idea that combining all ethnicities and social classes would bring forth the best society. For the future neoconservatives the liberal aspect of equality was the core element in this multiculturalism. No race should be discriminated, negative nor positive.

In the initially liberal Jewish magazine *Commentary* authors discussed liberal ideas about racial equality and segregation. In 1959 Herbert Hill wrote about institutionalized racism in labor unions and the negative effect it has on the opportunities for blacks on the labor market. Hill writes: "Many unions have a long history of racial discrimination - and it is this tradition of discrimination which is responsible, at least in part, for the marginal status that Negro wage earners have today in key sectors of the American economy."²² In the South, he states, unionizing lead even to excluding blacks from entire industries by separating "negro jobs" from "white men's work".²³ Also the readers of *Commentary* liked to express their discontent with the ongoing segregation in the American society. In 1962 Harry Fleischman, Director National Labor Service in New York City, wrote a letter to the editors wanting to contribute to finding a solution for the civil rights issues by stating the following: "In a pluralistic society such as ours there is need *both* for the *push* of Negro groups demanding speedier action on civil rights and the *pull* of idealism through praise for labor groups that make progress in ending discrimination."²⁴

In addition to what African-Americans can do for themselves to increase the level of social acceptance and integration, Harold R. Isaacs writes that it is important for African-Americans to define their own identity before they can be an integral part of U.S. society. He states: "The struggle for first-

²⁰ Wall, *Inventing the "American Way"*, 166.

²¹ A.M. Wald. *New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987). 7.

²² H. Hill. "Labor Unions and the Negro: The Record of Discrimination." *Commentary* (01-1959).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ H. Fleischman, "To the editor: Labor and Civil Rights." *Commentary* (01-01-1962).

class citizenship for Negroes is but the first paragraph of the first chapter of a long story that has yet to unfold. Sluggishly or swiftly, now or soon, painfully but irresistible, Negroes are moving up and out of their conditions of their secondclassness, and this upward motions brings them face to face with new questions about themselves.”²⁵

So *Commentary* became the voice of left Jewish intellectuals during the 1950s and early 1960s. The ideas proposed in *Commentary* are based on the classical liberal ideals of equality and individual participation. Society and the government should provide a level playing field for ethnic groups to participate, it is however the responsibility of these ethnic groups to provide matter that can make a contribution.

With the election of President Johnson in 1963 and a liberal majority in Congress the American Left finally had the power to turn their ideology into a political reality. This political reality came to be known as the Great Society and was primarily based on the creation of three news laws: the Civil Rights Act (1964), the Voting Rights Act (1965), and the Immigration Act (1965). The idea behind the acts was to create a color-blind framework for a color-blind society.

Starting in reversed chronological order, the Immigration Act was a compromise of two different philosophies on immigration. One side emphasized humanitarian values and the idea that everyone should be able to move to the U.S. Thus without for example the numerical limit that was set on eastern Asian immigrants. The other philosophy propagated the conservation of American culture and therefore a limited immigration policy.²⁶ The Act represents a compromise between these two sides in the forms of two new reforms. The first main aspect of this act was a limitation on the total number of immigrants. The numerical limitation consisted of a maximum of 170.000 immigrants form non-Western Hemisphere countries, based on the 'first come, first serve' principle and without the former quota for every specific country. The second important aspect was the new emphasize on migration related to family reunification. This meant that parents of U.S. citizens over the age of 21 were not subjected to numerical limitations and the several preference categories were adjusted in benefit of family reunification.²⁷ It seems that the early neoconservatives this compromise considered as a fail deal, because in their magazines did not speak much about this specific act.

Of the three acts, the Voting Rights Act is probably the one that is most important today. Law scholar Richard H. Pildes writes about the Voting Rights Act that it is "undoubtedly the most important and most effective civil rights statute ever enacted"²⁸ and that it represented the "purification" and "maturation" of the American political system.²⁹ In short, the act prohibited the legal loopholes in the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1870) at state and local level, that prevented African-American from casting their vote. The African-American minority became therefore an equal part of

²⁵ H.R. Isaacs, "Integration & the Negro Mood." *Commentary* (12-01-1962).

²⁶ C.B. Keely, "Effects of the Immigration Act of 1965 on Selected Population Characteristics of Immigrants to the United States", *Demography* 8, No. 2 (1971) 158.

²⁷ Keely, "Effect of the Immigration Act", 159.

²⁸ R.H. Pildes, "Why the Center Does Not Hold: The Causes of Hyperpolarized Democracy in America." *California Law Review* 99, Issue 2 (2011) 287.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 290.

the American political society. Nevertheless, even as we speak, the Voting Rights Act remains the judicial embodiment of an for many Americans unfinished process: the political emancipation of African Americans. However, for the neoconservatives it is more than enough.

When studying the neoconservative criticism on Johnson's Great Society the most important act to take into account is the Civil Rights Act. Scholars Donald Tomaskovic-Devey and Kevin Stainback summarize the goal and content of the Civil Rights Act as follows:

The Civil Rights Act went on to outlaw segregation and discrimination by race, ethnicity, and religion in public education; public accommodations; voting; and federal assistance. Title VII of the Act also extended the equal opportunity principle to employment and for the first time explicitly mentioned sex as a protected category.³⁰

Of all the different sectors in society that are mentioned, the labor market was one of the most important and most debated aspects of the Act.³¹ Title VII of the Civil Rights Act dealt with the War on Poverty and equal opportunities on the labor market.³² This part of the Act provided for the founding of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a federal commission that would create legislation and supervision to prevent discrimination on the labor market. Title VII was also the part of the Act that was debated the most during the composition phase of the Act. Another important part of the Civil Rights Act was education and the continuation of desegregation in educational institutions after the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* that forbade segregation at school as imposed by state level authorities.³³ To do so the Act provided more legal opportunities to provide schools that struggled with the desegregation process with governmental support and gave the Attorney General the means to represent black plaintiffs fighting segregation more effectively. The future neoconservatives did not criticize the theory of the new acts. The level playing field that seemed to be created was comparable with the classical liberal ideal of equality. It was however the execution of the acts that, according to them, crossed the lines of liberalism.

1.2 Liberalism Gone Wrong

So which practices made this theoretical liberal utopia turn into a real neoconservative distopia? Where did liberalism go wrong? This blame should be assigned to the affirmative action component of the Great Society Acts. The idea behind this policy was to actively improve the employment and educational opportunities of ethnic minorities and women. Hugh D. Graham defines two phases of

³⁰ D. Tomaskovic-Devey, K. Stainback, "Discrimination and Desegregation: Equal Opportunity Progress in U.S. Private Sector Workplaces Since the Civil Rights Act." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 609 (2007), 49-50.

³¹ J.T. Patterson, *The Eve of Destruction: How 1965 Changed America*, (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 204.

³² H.D. Graham, "The Origins of Affirmative Action: Civil Rights and the Regulatory State", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 523 (1992), 55-56.

³³ F. Brown, "The First Serious implementation of Brown: The 1964 Civil Rights Act and Beyond." *The Journal of Negro Education* 73, No. 3 (2004), 182.

affirmative action. The first phase emphasized non-discrimination for the benefit of a color-blind society and was shaped by the presidency and Congress in 1964 and 1965. During the second phase, which started in the late 1960s and flourished during Nixon's presidency, was shaped by federal agencies and courts and emphasized minority preferences.³⁴ Members of the civil rights coalition were enthused by the development and strengthened their economic and political base. However, the minority preferences weakened the public support for the reforms, especially among neoconservatives.

While many of Johnson's new policies became widely accepted and part of standard U.S. domestic policy, affirmative action has been a controversial policy ever since. This policy was applied to many governmental programs concerning for example the labor market, education and housing. Graham writes that affirmative action for the labor market "meant that government employers and contractors had to recruit aggressively to bring minorities into the applicant pool. Decisions on hiring, promotions, and appointments, however, would continue to be governed by traditional criteria of merit selection."³⁵ Affirmative action in education meant that white and black children had to be equally distributed among schools, also known as busing. All schools in the country must have both a significant number of white and black students so that the two different races would be forced to cooperate without one of them being a significant minority group. It was necessary for the proper execution of affirmative action to register the ethnicity of all U.S. citizens. After registration it was easier for government officials to balance the racial scale at schools and on the labor market. However, by doing so the government was also contradicting the initial goal of creating a color-blind society. It was the neoconservatives who took the lead in making the American public aware of this paradox.

It is this affirmative action that went a bridge too far for many future neoconservatives. Affirmative Action contradicts the second part of Glazer's quote at the beginning of this chapter. Minorities were given better access to jobs, education and housing, because of their ethnic status and the history that is related to their ethnic identity. According to Glazer transforming negative discrimination into positive discrimination brings a society not a single step closer to the liberal utopian ideal of equality. Graham states that "Minority preferences conflict with the historical commitment of liberals to nondiscrimination."³⁶ True liberalism fights for a color-blind society and Johnson's policies were, in the eyes of neoconservatives, doing the exact opposite by interfering in the racial distribution of the American society.

The foundation for this criticism can already be found in an article by Nathan Glazer in *Commentary* in 1953. In his article called "The Study of Man: America's Ethnic Pattern" Glazer describes various views on integration and multiculturalism and how these have been implemented in U.S. society throughout history. Glazer states that in the past, especially during the First and Second World War, the U.S. government has made the mistake of using the "melting pot" in trying to integrate immigrants in the American society. Government programs were used to mold immigrants into one

³⁴ Graham, "The Origins of Affirmative Action," 50.

³⁵ Ibid, 54.

³⁶ Ibid, 61.

cultural shape, a shape that had been created by the white Anglo-Saxon protestants. He writes about the following about the melting pot: "This was not democracy, but the crushing of a natural right to be different. America's model should be Switzerland, were the loyalty of every national element to the Swiss state was beyond question - yet were each maintained its individuality and its national culture."³⁷ Already in 1953 Glazer starts defining ideas that decades later on would be called post-ethnicity or meta-ethnicity. There is no room for governments that discriminate by race and ethnicity in a post-ethnic society and that therefore "the problem of assimilation is no longer a political one in any significant sense."

In *Affirmative Discrimination*, Glazer states that affirmative action is not only harmful to people who are not part of a ethnic minority, but also to the minorities themselves. What President Johnson had created was according to Glazer an "The Orwellian nightmare" in which "... all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others, ..." ³⁸ By using affirmative action, the U.S. government created fixed ethnic-racial categories that negatively influenced the integration. Instead of removing boundaries between different ethnic groups, these policies were going to sharpen them. Glazer writes: "Individuals find subtle pressure to make use of their group affiliation not necessarily because of any desire to be associated with a group but because groups become the basis of rights, and those who want to claim certain rights must do so as a member of an affected or protected class."³⁹ Glazer also questions the different protected racial categories that the Department of Labor had created: "Negroes, Spanish-surnamed Americans, Native Americans, and Orientals."⁴⁰ He understands that African-Americans and Native-Americans are granted more governmental protection, because "they have been the subjects of state discrimination." However he continues by asking: "Why Spanish immigrants? In what sense have they been treated worse than immigrants from Italy or Greece?", "Why not the Portuguese from New England, and the French Canadians?"⁴¹ Glazer argues that categorizing U.S. citizens in different groups with on the one hand groups that do get government benefits and others that do not will only create more social tension. This tension will be caused because the ruling liberals did not stick to the equality principles of their ancestors of the Enlightenment. And the victims of this tension are not only the white elite, but also the ethnic minorities.

More recently, In 2013, Harvey Mansfield, former professor at Harvard University and teacher of William Kristol (Irving Kristol's son) and Francis Fukuyama, discovered another negative effect of affirmative action on education. He stated in his controversial article "Grade Inflation: It's to Face the Facts."⁴² that affirmative action led to the inflation of grades at universities and has therefore negatively influenced the quality of education. In an interview with the Boston Globe in December 2013 Mansfeld said that "when grade inflation got started in, in the late 60's and early 70's, white

³⁷ N. Glazer, "The Study of Man: America's Ethnic Pattern." Commentary, 4 January 1953.

³⁸ Glazer, *Affirmative Discrimination*, 75.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 74.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² H.C. Mansfield, "Grade Inflation: It's Time to Face the Facts." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2001).

professors, imbibing the spirit of affirmative action, stopped giving low or average grades to black students and, to justify or conceal it, stopped giving those grades to white students as well."⁴³ Mansfield argues that because of this grade inflation he is pressured by his colleagues and students to give half of his students a grade of at least an A-, even though most of them do not deserve such a high grade. So even decades after the implementing affirmative action into domestic policies the debate about the effectiveness of the policy continues.

So liberalism went wrong with the execution of the equality principles. Neoconservatives argued that equality is the core of liberalism and that the policies of President Johnson contradict this liberal principle. For neoconservatives positive discrimination is just as bad as negative discrimination. Already in the 1950s future neoconservatives argued that the government should not intervene in the multicultural society. Nevertheless, affirmative action policy made racial discrimination organized by the federal government a reality and remained a topic of discussion ever since.

1.3 Defining Those Who Left

So far the context of the emergence of neoconservatism in the political and public intellectual discourse has been described. From now on it is possible to speak of neoconservatism as an independent movement. However, It remains difficult to give an exact definition of the political movement or to give an exact overview of their ideology. Murray states that "neoconservatives are perhaps more than usually likely to disagree with each other whenever two or three gather together."⁴⁴ The term neoconservative was given to this group of intellectuals by the socialist writer Michael Harrington to define those who this move to the political right. ⁴⁵ Even though neoconservative was meant as an insult, Irving Kristol was one of the first to happily adopt the name, as long as it would erase the label "liberal" that had become a major burden.⁴⁶ In addition, not all neoconservatives considered themselves being part of the political Right. While many neoconservatives, especially in the 21st century, are part of the Republican party, some of them, like the highly influential Nathan Glazer, remained a Democrat.

Jacob Heilbrunn distinguishes three schools of thought on defining neoconservatives. The first is the "heroes" school which comes with a definition that neoconservatives gave themselves. According to them, they are the heroes that tried to save liberalism from descending into Nazism or Soviet communism. The individual freedom of all citizens needed to be saved from the growing power of the federal government as imposed by the liberal Democrats of the 1960s.⁴⁷ With the following statement Murray uses this "heroes" definition to define neoconservatism, and therefore his own political ideology: "Neoconservatism is not a political party or social set, but a way of looking at the world. It is

⁴³ Mansfield.

⁴⁴ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

⁴⁵ J. Mowbray, "Political writer Irving Kristol dies at 89." *The Washington Times*, 19 February 2009.

⁴⁶ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

⁴⁷ Heilbrunn, *They Knew They Were Right*, 7.

a deeply rooted and relevant philosophy which only seems to be out of kilter with modern thought because there is so little modern thought."⁴⁸ Murray sees the neoconservative ideology as the intellectual light at the end of the dark tunnel that is modern (political) thought.

The two other schools of thought are less positive about the neoconservatives which has everything to do with the "decision" of the neoconservatives to leave the liberal camp. Liberals define neoconservatives therefore as "renegades", the ones "who have abandoned the true faith."⁴⁹ Leftist journalist Peter Steinfels called neoconservatism in 1979 a group of "antibodies" that "can destroy the organism."⁵⁰ Also conservatives are not pleased with the outcome of the neoconservative political twist. They see their new partners in the GOP as "traitors" because of their liberal roots. This point of view is clearly articulated by conservative Stephen J. Tonsor in 1986:

It has always struck me as odd, even perverse, that former Marxists have been permitted, yes invited, to play such a leading role in the Conservative movement of the twentieth century. It is splendid when the town whore gets religion and joins the church. Now and then she makes a good choir director, but when she begins to tell the minister what he ought to say in his Sunday sermons, matters have been carried to far.⁵¹

So from the left neoconservatives are defined as the ones that have abandoned the true faith and from the right as the sinners that have found the true faith. What all three definitions have in common is that the switch from left to right in the political spectrum is essential for the identity of neoconservatism. Defining neoconservatives comes down to telling the story of their *genesis*, not their intellectual content. This thesis is mostly related to the "heroes" definition of neoconservatism because it focusses on the neoconservative point of view, just as this definition does.

When thinking about 21st century neoconservatism, and thus about the third chapter of this thesis, the critique on domestic social issues is not the first thing that comes to mind. During the 21st century neoconservatives were known for their hawkish stance on foreign policy instead of domestic policy. This thesis is framed by the idea that a clear neoconservative intellectual movement and identity emerged during the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson. This is true for neoconservatism as an independent intellectual movement, however some leading figures within this movement have a longer history of conflict with mainstream leftism.⁵² This aspect of the history of neoconservatism is important to understand because it explains the history of the hawkish foreign policy of neoconservatives during the presidency of Bush jr. This *good vs. evil* foreign policy of 21st century neoconservatives has a history that dates back to the anti-Stalinist liberals of the 1950s and 1950s. Whereas during the 1960s the neoconservatives became separated from the liberal wing of the

⁴⁸ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

⁴⁹ Heilbrunn, *They Knew They Were Right*, 8.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵² Wald, *New York Intellectuals*, 352.

American political spectrum, during the anti-Stalinist phase, earlier known as the Trotskyist phase, they were a separate branch within American liberalism that regarding foreign policy differed from mainstream liberals. So even though it was the domestic policies that launched the neoconservative movement, the history regarding foreign policy precedes that.

The earlier mentioned New York intellectuals were also part of this Cold War liberalism. Their polarized world view was, just like their views on domestic social issues, based on their multicultural ideals. According to Kristol, who was already a prominent public intellectual, communism was "the most powerful existing institution which opposes and reforms as liberalism proposes."⁵³ He, and other New York intellectuals, could therefore not understand that there were liberals who were not actively opposed to Stalinist communism. They therefore acted against the monocultural experiments of Hitler's national-socialism, Stalin's communism and the prosecution of Jews in Eastern Europe, the birthplace of many Jewish New Yorkers.⁵⁴ The refusal of liberals to condemn Stalin's communism the same way Hitler was condemned a decade earlier frustrated the New York intellectuals.

So neoconservatism encompasses a wide range of thoughts, differing in scale from the ethnic composition of local schools to combatting the Soviet Union. In an attempt to bring some order in this chaos scholar Jean-François Drolet has narrowed the neoconservative ideology down to three essential terms: capitalism, nationalism, and imperialism. By capitalism he means the restoration or maintenance of corporate power instead of the governmental involvement in the economy as created by affirmative action, Bretton Woods and Keynesianism.⁵⁵ Capitalism does not judge people based on their ancestry, ethnicity or race and is therefore the economic system that represents most the neoconservative ideals of equality. Nationalism is related to both domestic and foreign policy because neoconservatives believe that a strong common homogeneous national identity, based on civic nationalistic ideals, can strengthen the country from within and will make it more powerful when operating on a global scale. Nationalism strengthens the third term, imperialism, which is directly related to the anti-Stalinism aspect of neoconservatism. Drolet argues that neoconservatives believe in the "consolidation, maintenance and deepening of America's economic, political, cultural and global military supremacy."⁵⁶

As stated before, not all neoconservatives adopted the label 'conservative'. So how does neoconservatism differ from regular conservatism? An important difference is the neoconservative view on the future, a view that contradicts the word conservatism. Regular conservatism is filled with nostalgia and tries to conservative the past and present by trying to block progressive ideas. Neoconservatism is free of nostalgia and foresees a future that is different from the past and present. It is also an optimistic movement that believes that their ideas can become a reality.⁵⁷

⁵³ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

⁵⁴ Wald, *New York Intellectuals*, 5.

⁵⁵ J.-F. Drolet. *American Neoconservatism: The Politics and Culture of a Reactionary Idealism*. (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2011), 16.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 5.

An interesting debate about defining neoconservatism is about how *realpolitik* fits their ideology. Kristol himself called neoconservatives "liberals who has been mugged by reality", clearly a statement that neoconservatives have a much more realistic world view than those 'dreamers on the left'. Murray follows this thought by stating that "While certainly more liberal in the classical sense of the term, than most conservatives, neoconservatives are more than usually likely to look at the world with an *realpolitik* honesty." He continues by stating that they "see the world as it is, but all the time acting in the world to fashion it as we would like it to be."⁵⁸ It is this last part of Murray's view that makes his statement contradicting Rathbun's theory. Rathbun states that because neoconservatives believe that they shape the world to their views they are ideologically driven and do therefore not fit the definition of *realpolitik*. It are regular conservatives who use foreign policy by the rules of *realpolitik*, because they only 'take what they need' in a very materialistic fashion without the idea that they need to help other governments to make them democratic and capitalistic as well. Neoconservatives believe that the spread of their ideology can steer the world in the right direction of capitalism and democracy.⁵⁹ Examples of this teleological aspect of neoconservatism are the *The End of History and the Last Man* by Francis Fukuyama and the already mentioned *Neoconservatism: Why We Need It* by Douglas Murray.

So these early neoconservatives were a group of former liberals who got displeased with how the liberal ideology was made a political reality by the liberal policymakers of the 1960s. In the next chapter it will become clear that neoconservatives clearly wanted to differentiate themselves from the liberals that had turned the U.S. into an, for them, almost inhospitable country. It is however important to take into account that the original liberal ideology remained an important factor in their beliefs. Kristol also stated that he was not the one who was moving to the right within the political spectrum and abandoned true liberalism. The remaining liberals were the ones who moved liberalism further to the left, and thereby betraying this noble ideology.⁶⁰ According to Drolet, neoconservatives see themselves as the true heirs to the liberal tradition in the U.S.⁶¹ They are the true sons of the Enlightenment. Mansfield states the following about the the neoconservative attack on liberals: "The so-called liberals are being defeated by their enemies, but liberalism is being saved."⁶² Neoconservatives defining themselves as pure liberals is not something that will emerge from the texts that will be discussed in the next two chapters, but it is an important paradox to keep in mind when reading about neoconservatives using the word "liberal".

⁵⁸ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

⁵⁹ Rathbun, "Does One Right Make A Realist?" 273.

⁶⁰ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

⁶¹ Drolet, *American Neoconservatism* 3.

⁶² Ibid.

2. A Change of Tone

Liberalism, as it was known for a generation, died in November 1964. Whether it will be reborn remains to be seen.⁶³

Michael Harrington, 1967

The first chapter discussed how neoconservatism emerged as a reaction on the social issues and the related liberal policies of the 1960s. The second chapter will discuss more directly the main thesis by analyzing how neoconservatives started to construct the word liberal as an insult in order to accuse liberal politicians who were responsible for the, in their eyes, failed policies of the Great Society during the period 1964 - 1975. Before analyzing how the word liberal changed in tone during these ten years, the first section of this chapter will discuss two other forms in which the words liberal and liberalism were used. This is because not every time these terms were used it was to refer to the persons who were behind the liberal policies. In the second section the process of demonizing the liberals will be discussed. The chapter will end with a short discussion on the effect of this rhetorical style on the relationship of neoconservatives with their past love.

2.1 The Use of the Word Liberal

The first chapter already mentioned the paradox that haunts the relationship of neoconservatives with liberalism. On the one hand Irving Kristol did not want to be related to the label "liberal" anymore while on the other hand he saw himself as the true heir to liberalism. This paradox becomes more clear when the studying the different ways in which the word liberal is used in neoconservative media. The word liberal is used in three different contexts. The first is directly related to the bipartisanship in American politics in which the word liberal is used to define the left flank and therefore the opposite of the right conservative flank. The second is referring to the political ideology liberalism as created during Enlightenment of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The third is used to describe the people who supported and executed the liberal policies of the 1960s. This section will analyze the first two ways in which the words liberal and liberalism were used. The third way, which is the most important for this thesis, will be analyzed in the second section of this chapter.

Frequently the word liberal is used to define the opposite of conservative in order to explain the different political ideologies in the American political spectrum. It is interesting to question, while reading an article by an early neoconservative author that uses the word liberal when defining America's political spectrum, where he or she positions him or herself in this bipartisan situation. In the beginning neoconservatives did consider themselves left nor right. What can be said about their political preference is that liberalism is far more often the main subject of articles in magazines and newspapers than conservatism. It seems that, while floating between the two opposing ideologies, the

⁶³ M. Harrington, "Liberalism According to Galbraith." *Commentary*, 10 January 1967).

ties with the liberals were on the one hand loosening, but on the other hand still very much alive. The connections with the conservatives was still under construction during this first period.

Discussing liberalism in this sense of the word is often done in the present tense and relates to how the author views the current political situation. Martin Diamond goes into the dungeons of American politics to explain the structural differences between the two political ideologies. In his article "Conservatives, Liberals and the Constitution", published in the very first issues of *The Public Interest* in the fall of 1965, he discusses the view the two political ideologies have on the Constitution. The conclusion he draws from his comparison is the following: "In a sense the Liberal is the intelligent foe of the Constitution and the Conservative its foolish partisan."⁶⁴ With this statement Diamond is clearly positioning himself as proponent of the liberal view on politics and is still far away from the conservative views that are related to neoconservatism in the 21st century. Also *Commentary* published articles that viewed liberalism as the victor of the battle between the two sides of American politics. In 1966 John K. Galbraith wrote about the social progress that has been made during the 1960s that "For this we can all be grateful for the practical liberalism of Lyndon Johnson." and that "a liberal stance on issues is synonymous with a sound and intelligent position."⁶⁵ These articles discuss no other views than the conservative view which was seen as simply wrong.

Important to remember here is the difference that is made by the neoconservative intellectuals between liberalism as an ideology and the politicians that executed the, in their eyes, liberal policies. This difference will be analyzed more thoroughly further in this chapter.

So initially the liberal side of the political spectrum was still favored, even after the Acts that created the Great Society were signed. Nevertheless, the gap was widening and while the gap was widening, the neoconservatives stopped favoring the liberal point of view without trying to join the conservative side. When discussing the two dominant ideologies the neoconservatives kept a fairly neutral position. Only with the emergence of Ronald Reagan neoconservatism became firmly established in the political right wing. Using this neutral version of the word liberal is done frequently in both *Commentary* and *The Public Interest* by several authors.

Not all contributors to the magazines saw politics as a two-ideology system, some have a more nuanced view. It is this more nuanced view that is important to take into account when judging who was to blame for 'anti-liberal' policies of President Johnson. On the right wing nothing changed, this remains the area of the conservatives. On the left wing however, some authors mention a difference between the more moderate "liberals" and the more extreme "radicals" or "New Left". Irving Kristol even writes about the "militants of the New Left."⁶⁶ Kristol uses this rhetoric in an article called "New Left, New Right" that he starts with an anecdote about a friend who lived in California and was a moderate liberal and active member Democratic party. The core message of the anecdote is that the moderate liberals who used to dominate the Democratic party feel uncomfortable with the increasing presence of this new radical left flank. These radicals did not seem to have "anything like a coherent

⁶⁴ M. Diamond. "Liberals, Conservatives, and the Constitution." *The Public Interest* (1965), 109.

⁶⁵ J.K. Galbraith, "An Agenda for American Liberals." *Commentary* (6 January 1966).

⁶⁶ I. Kristol, "New Left, New Right." *The Public Interest* (1966), 3.

program"⁶⁷, Kristol writes. Michael Harrington wrote in *Commentary* in 1968 also about the differences on the left flank:

There are indeed corporate liberals who, having learned from Marie Antoinette, are happy to 'social engineer' some bread for the masses so that the elite can keep its cake. But there are also liberals whose main concern is reform, not the system reform is supposed to ameliorate. These are the ones that stood firm against McCarthyism and defended the rights of the Communists, who struggled for the social changes which allowed so many of the New Leftists to go to college, who risked their lives in the civil-rights struggle, and so on.⁶⁸

So in the beginning some authors tried to distinguish between several political factions on the left flank in order to make a distinction between the ones that were behind Johnson's policies and the ones who were not. However, as time progressed the different factions on the left flank of politics became intertwined in the eyes of the neoconservative intellectuals. The differences between the radical New Left and more moderate liberals were seen as a distinction without a difference.

When someone sees him or herself as a true heir to something, in this case liberalism, it is important to know the content of the inheritance. Therefore many articles include an often brief and sometimes more extensive description of the liberal roots of American society, politics, and economy. How liberalism is described as a factor in politics and economics, deriving from the Enlightenment, should be studied separately from the liberalism that was used to describe one half of two-party system as described earlier and is therefore the second way in which the word liberal is used. When neoconservatives wrote about liberalism in this first sense it was frequently related to the roots of the American political system and the capitalistic economic system that gave the U.S. its economic prosperity. It is therefore not related to how the two parties during the 1960s and 1970s divided the political spectrum. When the word liberal is used in this sense of the word a historical approach is used, opposing the contemporary approach as used when describing the political system. The present situation is only used to point out the anti-liberal policies of President Johnson. When used in the historical context, the neoconservatives use the word liberal or liberalism exclusively as a positive contribution to the American nation.

William Pfaff writes in 1969 in *Commentary* in the article "The Decline of Liberal Politics"⁶⁹ about the importance of liberalism for the U.S. "this country is above all a creation of the Enlightenment and of the liberal tradition."⁷⁰ From a European perspective liberalism can be regarded as one of the many political views that are expressed in the House of Commons, or the Bundestag. According to Pfaff this is different in the U.S.:

⁶⁷ Kristol, "New Left, New Right," 3.

⁶⁸ M. Harrington, "Voting the Lesser Evil." *Commentary* (1968).

⁶⁹ W. Pfaff, "The Decline of Liberal Politics." *Commentary* (1969).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Individual identity is tied to political identity as in no other country, so that America cannot experience a political crisis that does not effect the national sense of meaning and value. To be an American is, primarily, to acknowledge a political commitment, not a national or cultural identification. [...] We simply have no resources for survival outside of politics.⁷¹

The problem with the Johnson-style liberals was not the roots of the ideology that they believed to represent, nor was it the idea that liberals were the opposite of conservatives. Neoconservatives were not always to fond of conservatives either. Murray states the following about the position of neoconservatives in the American political spectrum:

In the United States it was by no means inevitable that neoconservatism would find its home within the Republican party. In neoconservatism formative years, the Democrats also provided provided a good and solid home for some neoconservative thinking. Yet today, neoconservatism's natural home is the Republican party. This is perhaps most obvious on issues of foreign policy.⁷²

Early neoconservatives never wrote about the idea of leaving the Democratic party and joining the GOP. It was only until halfway the 1970s that the term "neoconservative" was introduced. The classic liberal foundation of the Democratic party was not the problem. What actually was seen as the problem with liberals and liberalism is described by Kristol in 1975 as follows:

In the past decade, however, it has experienced a transmutation of ideological substance while preserving most of the traditional historical wrappings. That is because it embraced, during these years, a couple of other political traditions, European in tradition, so that what we still call "liberalism" in the United States is now something quite different from the liberalism of the older "Progressive-reform impulse". It is so different, indeed, as to have created a cleavage as to those who think of themselves as "old-liberals" - and are now often redesigned as "neo-conservatives" - and the new liberals who are in truth men and women of "the Left" in the European sense of that term.⁷³

According to Kristol, the core of the problem lays in the question which political ideology is allowed to wear the label "liberalism". Some liberals adopted new political ideas from Europe during the first half of the twentieth century and judged that the liberals who did not adopt these new ideas had to be considered conservative or neoconservatives. Kristol turns this train of thought around by stating that

⁷¹ Pfaff, "The Decline of Liberal Politics".

⁷² Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

⁷³ Kristol, I. "On corporate capitalism in America." *The Public Interest* (1975), 131.

the liberals who did adopt these new European ideas took the left exit from the road to liberalism and should not have been considered liberals anymore.

A core aspect of national politics is economic policy, an aspect that since the New Deal maybe even more important is than ever in U.S. politics. It is especially Irving Kristol who in his own magazine *The Public Interest* wants to discuss the economic equivalent of liberalism: capitalism. Early neoconservatives saw capitalism, as the economic branch of liberalism, as one of the most important contributions of liberalism to the American society and economic prosperity. For Kristol capitalism was more than just one of many ways to organize an economy, it was the only economic system fit to encompass and build America's economic prosperity and has had that role for hundreds of years. In *The Public Interest* he argued in 1975 the following: "The point is, rather, that the Founding Fathers *intended* this nation to be capitalist and regarded it as the *only* set of economic arrangements consistent with the liberal democracy they had established."⁷⁴ Later on, in the same article, he states that "in the United States, where liberal democracy is not merely a form of government but also a 'way of life,' capitalism and democracy have been organically linked."⁷⁵ The three were important components of the American society and without one of these components, the other two would not function.

The enemy of Kristol's capitalism, and therefore the enemy of America's welfare, was 'the planned economy' as part of 'the planned society', as favored by leftist movements. The knights who took the lead in battling the planned economy were according to Kristol scholars Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. Kristol writes about Friedman:

No other thinker of our time has so brilliantly exposed and publicized the perversities that can be that can be engendered by governmental intervention in the economic life of a nation. Whereas Hayek demonstrated why large-scale, centralized planning does not have the wonderful results it is supposed to, Friedman shows us how governmental rules and regulations so frequently get results that are the opposite of those intended.⁷⁶

According to Kristol government intervention in the economy not at all favorable for the U.S. economy. Even the New Deal programs of the 1930s and early 1950s are being portrayed as useless for economic prosperity.⁷⁷ The policies of Adam Smith are the ones that should be implemented in government policies, and not policies like affirmative action. When reading articles about capitalism by Kristol it becomes clear that it is the 'individual liberty' aspect of liberalism that has made the U.S. the economic prosperous country as he knew it at that time. The problem with liberalism was not that it was the opposing force of conservatism, because neoconservatives did not consider themselves right wing yet. The foundation of Enlightenment liberalism was also not the problem, on the contrary, it was the

⁷⁴ Kristol, "On corporate capitalism in America," 124.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 124.

⁷⁶ I. Kristol, "Capitalism, socialism, nihilism," *The Public Interest* (1973), 4.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 4.

solution. It were the big-government policies of president Johnson that were damaging the holy trinity of liberalism, democracy, and capitalism of the American nation.

2.2 The Process of Demonization

It can be safely stated that the demonization process of liberals was not a linear process. *Commentary* and *The Public Interest* are magazines that publish(ed) opinionated articles by many different authors. Some of the authors began right after the reforms of President Johnson with cursing the liberals. Others saw that liberals were diverting from their own liberal ideals but were hoping that this process could be stopped. These authors were therefore critical on the actions of the liberals but did initially not use a hostile tone when writing about them. A magazine could publish heavy criticism and a few issues in a row and then suddenly print a much more nuanced view in the next one, or the other way around. There is also a difference in tone between the two magazines. Even though *The Public Interest* was founded at the moment the ideological controversy started, *Commentary* was more hostile towards liberals during the first years after the reforms. Nevertheless, studying the magazines from a proper distance shows that a process of demonization was definitely taking place throughout the late 1960s and 1970s.

The change in attitude towards liberals gets even more clear when comparing a quote from an article in *Commentary* from 1966 to a quote by Irving Kristol used at the beginning of the introduction of this thesis. In 1966 Tom Kahn wrote in the article "The Problem of the New Left" about how members of the New left looked at the fragmentation on the political left wing. According to them, all the different groups (communist, socialist, and liberals), besides the New Leftist, were all making negative contributions to the unity of the political left. The communists were too much leaning towards the Soviet Union while the socialists were too much against. And according to the New Leftist "liberals, of course, were wrong because they were liberals."⁷⁸ Kahn criticizes this approach and argues that it only creates more problems than it solves. Irving Kristol, the godfather of neoconservatism, however, who uses in 1993 the exact same approach by stating that "liberals were wrong, liberals are wrong, because they are liberals."⁷⁹ Apparently in 1966 simple being liberal was not enough to be seen as wrong, while in 1993 the label "liberal" was all it had to take to be classified as wrong.

Many changes occurred during these almost 30 years and the basis for this attitude change towards liberals in 1993 lays in the first decade after the reforms of the Great Society. Even though *Commentary* and *The Public Interest* were never without a negative statement about Johnson's policies, during the first years authors sometimes tried to offer solutions to improve on the social policies. Robert A. Levine writes in 1968 in *The Public Interest* that he is concerned that governmental institutions are not fit to execute such large-scale reforms. He suggests that it would be better when "a substantial portion of the *operation* of the Great Society program could be turned over to private

⁷⁸ T. Kahn, 'The Problem of the New Left', *Commentary* (07 January 1966).

⁷⁹ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

organizations and local communities.”⁸⁰ A year earlier in *Commentary* Michael Harrington discusses the book *The New Industrial State* by J.K. Galbraith. In the beginning of the article Harrington questions whether liberalism can revive itself after the political consensus of 1964 (see the opening quote of this chapter). He argues that liberalism became the new mainstream in American politics, but it worries him that liberalism is applied more in principle than in practice. After reading Galbraith’s work he is convinced that there is a light at the end of the tunnel after all. He ends the article by stating that “It is Galbraith’s achievement” that he offered “American liberalism a new beginning.”⁸¹

Nevertheless, besides these optimistic views, some authors were already losing their liberal faith. One of the earliest extensive publications that started demonizing the contemporary liberal policies is *The End of Liberalism* by Theodore J. Lowi, published in 1969.⁸² This book offers the reader a good impression of the author’s anti-liberal point of view. The book is divided into four parts of which one is called “Why liberal governments cannot plan” and another “Why liberal governments cannot achieve justice”. Even though Lowi is not explicitly related to neoconservatism, his criticism follows the neoconservative train of thought by stating that since the presidents Kennedy and Johnson have introduced a new sort of liberal politics that renounces and contradicts the older ideals of liberalism. The core of his criticism towards the liberal government of the 1960s was the following:

In some instances it will appear as a gigantic prehistoric beast, all power and no efficiency. In other instances it will appear as another Casey at the Bat, power with purpose but without definition, finesse, discrimination, ending in disappointment. Together the two images capture the essence of contemporary liberal government.⁸³

This sort of criticism is still frequently used among current anti-statist libertarians and fiscal conservatives all over the world to criticize the leftist governments. Nowadays Lowi is best known for introducing the term ‘interest group liberalism’. He uses this term to define lobby groups in American politics. He argued that such groups get their point across in federal politics because of their extensive resources and not because they morally have the best position. According to Lowi liberalism has suffered from lobby groups that were part of the Civil Rights Movement, the New Left, and other leftist groups.

As explained in the first chapter, the intermingling of the federal government via programs such as affirmative action was one of the core problems neoconservatives had with President Johnson’s policies. Also much of Lowi’s critique is based on the effects of this new liberalism on the economy. Lowi argues that modern liberalism turns the American economy into a marxist system with disastrous governmental regulation. A governmentally regulated economy is against the core American economics: “The United States is a child of the Industrial Revolution. Its godfather is capitalism and its

⁸⁰ R.A. Levine, “Rethinking our social strategies,” *The Public Interest* (1968): 86.

⁸¹ Harrington, “Voting the Lesser Evil”.

⁸² T.J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism: ideology, policy, and the crisis of public authority*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969).

⁸³ *Ibid*, X.

guardian is Providence, otherwise known as the 'invisible hand'" he argues.⁸⁴ Liberal politics used to be the guardian of Adam Smith's invisible hand and therefore true political counterpart of the capitalism that has brought the U.S. its welfare and prosperity. Lowi writes the following while comparing Marx with Smith: "Karl Marx as economist is an amateur an imitator in comparison to Adam Smith."⁸⁵ Irving Kristol is also not amused by the effects that governmental intervention can have on the economy. Kristol wrote in *The Public Interest* in 1975:

The Founders were convinced that economics was the sphere of human activity where government intervention was, as a general rule, least likely to be productive, and that 'the system of natural liberty' in economic affairs was the complement to our system of constitutional liberty in political and civil affairs. They surely would have agreed with Hayek that paternalistic government favored by modern liberalism led down the 'road to serfdom.'⁸⁶

Irving Kristol wrote by far the most about liberal capitalism of all neoconservative authors. Earlier in this chapter is already discussed that he, like Lowi, saw liberal capitalism as an important factor in America's economic prosperity. Arguing how "modern liberalism" will lead "down the road to serfdom" shows how Kristol's view has changed during this first phase of neoconservatism.

B. Bruce-Briggs writes in *The Public Interest* in 1975 an article about mass transportation and economic factors behind mass transportation. He transfers the classical liberal ideal of individual freedom on the use of transportation. Bruce-Briggs states that the willingness of the modern liberal government to fight a "war against to auto" in order to make public transport possible for the in general less wealthy ethnic minorities damages the private car owner. There are two views on private transportation in American politics: a proper conservative one, and, of course, a wrong liberal one: "The conservatives, thus, would permit the workingman to won a flashy car and drive it a few miles a week if he can scrape the money together; the liberals would drive him off the road altogether."⁸⁷

This attitude towards liberals is not only based on the opinion of a white intellectual elite who felt threatened by the new opportunities for African-Americans. In *The Public Interest* from 1966 is an article published by Earl Raab who claims to base his findings on the opinions of African-Americans. He states that the solutions the Johnson administration bring to fight the War on Poverty are ineffective because they address the wrong problem. That these solutions will not work is "apparent even to the less sophisticated" people in society. It are however the liberals who seem to be socially blindfolded.⁸⁸ Raab writes about a "one young Negro, addressing himself to a congregation of liberals"

⁸⁴ Lowi, *The End of Liberalism*, 3.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 4.

⁸⁶ Kristol, "On Corporate Capitalism in America," 125.

⁸⁷ B. Bruce-Briggs, "Mass transportation and minority transportation," *The Public Interest* (1975): 73.

⁸⁸ E. Raab, "What war and which poverty?," *The Public Interest* (1966): 47.

and speaking how these liberals are getting it wrong in trying to solve the problems of the African-American community.

More fierce criticism from an African-American view is offered by the black scholar Orlando Patterson in an issue of *The Public Interest* from 1973. He criticizes the way in which white liberals try to solve black problems. Like Nathan Glazer in *Affirmative Discrimination* Patterson disapproves of the positive discrimination that is used by liberal policymakers. He writes the following about this way of using discrimination:

Liberals, incidentally, do exactly the same thing but for entirely different and often less honest reasons. I think it is wrong to call a liberal "racist" for engaging in this kind of double dealing, but it is understandable that many black scholars, including myself, find the practice intensely annoying. The proper criticism of such liberals is that they're being unspeakably dishonest.⁸⁹

Patterson continues by stating that this form of discrimination will only strengthen the idea of the white liberal elite as being the moral superior force of the nation:

Why should the man who has enslaved and exploited you respond to your cry unless, far from being an immoral tyrant, he has more than a spark of magnanimity? Indeed, the greater appeal or the demand for redress from the oppressor, the greater the implied concession of the moral superiority of the oppressor. For the latter has nothing to gain and everything to lose by releasing his constraints on the ability of this he has oppressed to compete with him equally.

There is something inherently demeaning about begging for help from your offender. It gives the offender the moral status of a god. The victim who cries, "Help me! You have crippled me, now make me whole again," is simply contemptible.⁹⁰

It is in this 'making the blacks whole again' that another degrading attitude towards African-Americans of white liberals emerges. Patterson writes that "There is hardly an article written these days about Blacks which does not describe the members of the group as "proud" or "dignified," and white liberals were the main source which makes them come across as patronizing and degrading.⁹¹ So according to Patterson the efforts of the white liberals to lift blacks up to the social status of whites should be considered degrading by the African-American community. In Patterson's article, which is with its 27 pages relatively long, the word liberal is used often and almost all the time in a negative context. As presented in the earlier mentioned quotes, liberals are blamed for using positive discrimination which is also perceived by the black community as negative discrimination, only in a reversed, and sometimes

⁸⁹ O. Patterson, "The moral crisis of the black American." *The Public Interest* (1973): 51.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 52.

⁹¹ Ibid, 56.

dishonest, approach. Examples of other uses of the word liberal by Patterson are "sentimental liberal apologists", and "the stranglehold of liberal and racist determinism."

It is interesting to see such heavy criticism from members of the ethnic group that the liberal political elite tried to defend with their policies. In addition to that, it is remarkable that Patterson as a black scholar used *The Public Interest*, a magazine that represented a white social elite, to express his anger towards members of a white elite. It shows the broad support that neoconservatives had with their ideas on social issues, even though they were often portrayed as racist by leftist politicians.

Within ten years time the attitude of neoconservatives towards liberals turned completely around. At the beginning of this period the views on this 'new' liberalism differed. Some authors saw Johnson's policies as a temporary setback and were proposing changes that would bring liberalism back on the right Course. Others already gave up their hope on liberalism more quickly and published only fierce criticism. The numbers of public intellectuals that chose the latter side kept increasing and halfway through the 1970s the different views on modern liberalism were aligned. It was during this period that the neoconservative anti-liberal rhetoric became firmly established.

2.3 Giving Up on Liberalism?

Kristol argued that to become a neoconservative did not require much effort, "all you had to do was stand in place."⁹² When applying the ideological spectrum as discussed in chapter 2.1, with two player on the left flank, it seems that there was enough space on the right side of the left flank for the classical pragmatic liberalism that the neoconservatives promoted. Maybe they fell victim to the two-party system of U.S. politics and would suit a three-party system, like in the United Kingdom, them better. That way they could have created their own version of the British Liberal-Democrats instead of joining the conservatives. So why did the neoconservatives not solely attack the New Left instead or everyone on the left flank, instead of just the liberals? By attacking only the liberals they were eventually rejected by the liberal camp and lost the opportunity to reform the American left into true liberals and were forced to join the conservatives.

The answers to such questions are not directly given by the neoconservative intellectuals of the 1960s and 1970s. However, the answer may be found by using the three definitions of neoconservatism by Heilbrunn. According to his analysis, leftist liberals see neoconservatives as renegades because they were once supporting the proper ideology but deserted this ideology by becoming conservatives. Turning this definition around defines the view of neoconservatives on leftist liberals: they were the ones that drifted off from the righteous path by moving to the left. In the eyes of neoconservatives liberals are the renegades, they were the ones that abandoned the truth. The radicals of the New Left have never been related to proper liberalism and could therefore not be blamed for changing their minds. The more moderate liberals were the ones that took a turn for the worst. So the core of the criticism lays in the rejection of 'proper' liberalism and not in idea that had replaced it. As shown in the first chapter, defining neoconservatives comes down to defining their *genesis*. The criticism of neoconservatives on liberals comes down to the same principle: the problem was not so

⁹² Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

much the new, more leftist, ideology, it was the idea that they switched from the truth to the lie that made them subject to criticism. The New Left was never on the right track, so they are less criticized. Rejecting the truth was worse than not knowing at all.

A problematic side effect that emerged during this period is caused by neoconservatives often using quotation marks when they used the word liberal. The neoconservative intellectuals most often used quotation marks when they described policies or ideals that are portrayed by the user of the policy or ideal as liberal, but were according to the neoconservative writer not in line with their own more classical liberal ideas. The quotation marks are used when the word liberal is used to mask the word socialists or leftist. Murray has also noticed the use of quotation marks with the word liberal. Murray is also displeased about the use of the quotation marks and writes the following to address his concerns:

But we live in confusing times, and the word "liberal" is almost as polluted as "right-wing". In America "liberal" is the term used to describe what people in Britain would call "socialists." They are those with the greatest propensity towards believing the state make everyone happy if it only was giving enough clout to do so. T. S. Eliot described such people in 1934, when he wrote of those who spend their days "dreaming of systems so perfect that no-one will need to be good." And of course, the matter is not helped by the omnipresent tendency of conservatives, or those proudly opposed to the "left", to sneer at "liberals" without using inverted commas. The iconic air quotation marks which should be rightly surround any such use of the word "liberal" have long ago been dropped. It is a problematic and saddening abuse of a great word. While it may be true that people often intend inverted commas when they refer to meddlers in their affairs and woolly thinkers, the result of nucleating to spell out this punctuational detail is that the badge of liberalism has been appropriated, by a group of people with the least right to wear it.⁹³

Kristol, Glazer, and their fellow neoconservatives must have agreed with Murray stating that "It is a problematic and saddening abuse of a great word." Relating this rhetorical battle to Heilbrunn's 'heroes' definition of neoconservatism, it can be argued that the neoconservatives have lost this battle, maybe even because of rhetorical suicide. Neoconservatives saw themselves as the heroes and defenders of the true liberal ideology. But instead of using the label "liberal" to define their, correct, political ideas and therefore purifying the label, they acknowledged the idea that American liberalism was converted into (a moderate version of) European socialism. It did not stop there, the rhetorical style that Kristol disapproved of, using liberalism as a synonym for socialism, was intensified by the neoconservatives. Why did Kristol not fight for the purification of liberalism instead of wanting to get rid of the label as soon as possible, even by adopting the term "neoconservative" even though he did not agree with this definition of his ideology?

⁹³ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

In conclusion, shortly after the reforms of the Johnson administration future neoconservatives started to express their disagreements with the new policies. And one thing became quickly clear: it were the liberals who were to blame for these discriminating policies. During a period of ten years the word liberal was reconstructed. Neoconservatives began to use the word liberal to label all left-wing politics and politicians that they believed were harmful to the American society because of an unrealistic approach to finding a solution to cope with America's political issues. The new definition of liberal contained elements of dishonesty, racism, creators of demeaning policies, and the inability to govern or achieve justice. Neoconservatives did not forget that liberalism was also the ideology that was intertwined with the prosperity of the U.S. and its leading political, military, and economic position in the world. However, discussing this form of liberalism was parts of a history lesson. The new version of liberalism that early neoconservatives were confronted with had no room for optimistic anecdotes about how liberal capitalism had generated much economic growth in the U.S. No, this new form of liberalism was not the foundation for anything positive in the future.

3. After Bush

Some elements of liberalism are inherent to American democracy, then, but the compound, the peculiar combination that is contemporary liberalism, is not.⁹⁴

Charles R. Kesler, 2013

The previous chapter showed that during the late 1960s and early 1970s neoconservatives have changed the underlying tone related to the word liberal. Backed by the popularity of for example President F.D. Roosevelt, liberals used to be the representation of universal equality, and progressive politics, during the Great Society they became the unreasonable, unrealistic opponents of equality and thereby the opponents of the liberal values that had been the core of America's increasing wealth and power for hundreds of years. After dealing with the historical context in chapter 1 and the early neoconservative construct of the word liberal in chapter 2, this thesis is ready to construct the answer to the thesis question: How did the neoconservative construction of the word "liberal", as created during the late 1960s, survive into the post-George W. Bush era? This chapter will analyze the use of the word liberal by neoconservatives and conservatives since the election of Barack Obama as president in november 2008. Did the neoconservative rhetoric survive the Bush era? Did it survive the reality check it got from being the architects of the, in the eyes of many, failed foreign policy in the Middle East? The reason both neoconservative and conservative sources will be used is because since the full integration of neoconservative in the right wing of the American political spectrum some elements that the different ideologies have in common are being shared. For example the liberals as a common enemy. Because of this integration it is also harder to distinguish the different conservative ideologies than it was during the 1960s when neoconservatism was not yet a full cousin of conservatism. Nevertheless, this chapter will show that neoconservatives have brought their anti-liberal rhetoric into the rhetoric of America's 21st century political right wing.

3.1 The Past Is Present

While early neoconservatives renounced their liberal roots and started a entire new movement, neoconservatives of the 21st century see a strong connection with their past. Many articles by present-day neoconservative intellectuals refer to the intellectual foundations of their political movement. As stated before, during the 21st century neoconservatives are mostly related to the hawkish foreign policy of George W. Bush and not to domestic social issues that originally started the movement. The anti-Stalinist aspect of 1960s neoconservatism is more dominant than their 'true liberal' domestic agenda. Nevertheless, neoconservative media have not forgotten the roots of their political movement. Especially when discussing their liberal opponents in Congress, the social issues of the 1960s are commonly mentioned. The main reason for going back in time is to discuss the period in which classical liberalism got infected with racism, big government totalitarianism and socialism. Some

⁹⁴ C.R. Kesler, *I Am Change: Barack Obama and the Future of Liberalism* (New York. Broadside Books 2013).

authors also use the 1960s to give a historical example of a Democratic president whose policies, like the policies of the current President Obama, had a negative effect on the domestic affairs of the U.S. In referring back to the 1960s the hawkish anti-Stalinist elements of neoconservatism are hardly mentioned.

Authors who make this connection are Fred Siegel and Peter Cove in their article "Moynihan: The Moment Lost", published in *Commentary* in 2010.⁹⁵ The first sentence of the article is a true representation of bridging the chronological gap: "The stunning collapse of American liberalism in 22 months since the United States elected its first African-American president is, in part, a replay of the comparable breakdown of Lyndon Johnson's presidency in 1965 and 1966." The problem was that, "Then as now, open discussion of some pressing issues was shut down in deference of racial sensitivities."⁹⁶ Liberals, then and now, saw an expansion of government tasks as the solution for the domestic problems. Siegel and Cove write about the neoconservative approach to these liberal plans as follows: "The defining quality of neoconservatives when it comes to domestic policy was a newly rueful skepticism about the efficacy of massive government programs."⁹⁷ The authors use former senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan as an example for their statement. This senator was a one of the early 'liberals turned neoconservatives.' Paradoxically Moynihan stated that "new liberalism couldn't cope with the truth", even though he was one of the creators of the affirmative action policy.⁹⁸ This paradox shows the difficult relationship that neoconservatism and liberalism have. Returning to 2010 Siegel and Cove see nothing more than "the failure of 45 years generously funded state-sponsored efforts to close the gap between black and white. So for them liberals today are the same unrealistic, ignorant policy makers they have been for almost half a century.

Even less enthusiastic about the liberal contribution to racial equality in the U.S. is (neo)conservative author Jonah Goldberg. In his book *Liberal Fascism* Goldberg argues that American liberalism is a different side from the same coin as fascism in Germany and Italy during the 1930s and 1940s.⁹⁹ And instead of Hitler and Mussolini, Johnson and Hillary Clinton are the fierce leaders. 21st century liberals see the 1960s as the heydays of their political ideology. That is because they have, according to Goldberg, been lying about the successes of Johnson's policies:

They believe in the Sorelian myth of the 1960s as an age when the "good guys" overturned a corrupt system, rebelled against their "square" parents, and ushered in an age of enlightenment and decency, now under threat from oppressive conservatives who want to roll back its utopian gains. Liberal baby boomers have smeared the lens of memory with

⁹⁵ F. Siegel and P. Cove, "Moynihan: The Moment Lost", *Commentary* (12 January 2010).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ J. Goldberg, *Liberal Fascism* (New York: Doubleday, 2009).

Vaseline, depicting the would-be revolutionaries as champions of peace and love - *free* love at that!¹⁰⁰

Around thirty pages further in the book Goldberg continues this train of thought by stating that: "Today the liberal left's version of the 1960s makes about as much sense as it does to remember Hitler as the 'man of peace' described by Neville Chamberlain."¹⁰¹ A 100 pages further on, Goldberg continues his argument: "Hillary Clinton and her friends" are according to Goldberg direct descendants from the "suit-and-tie radical of the 1960s" who "used this terror to expand the power and scope of the state and above all to change the public attitude toward the state as the agent of social progress and universal caring and compassion."¹⁰² Even though Goldberg is also badmouthing pre-1960s liberalism, for example the presidencies of Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, it are the 1960s that laid the foundation for the apogee of 21st century evil: Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and their fellow liberals. Goldberg's book is an accumulation of critique on liberals and liberalism. The comparison between Clinton and Hitler is of course meant to provoke and to make the reader critical towards liberal policies instead of letting the reader think that a new Holocaust is approaching. Nevertheless, this rhetorical style is important when it comes to studying anti-liberal rhetoric.

However, the way in which Goldberg describes 20th-century liberalism is not completely in line with the neoconservative school of thought. Goldberg disapproves of liberalism as it has been present in American politics since the beginning of the 20th century, with the 1960s functioning as accelerator of bad policies. On the one hand, Goldberg has the same neoconservative analysis of the 1960s as being a period in which liberalism took a turn for the worst and negatively influenced the American society in a way that still can be experienced today. On the other hand, however, he disapproves of liberalism during the first half of the 20th century, which contradicts the neoconservative view on liberalism. Neoconservatives argued that during the first half of the last century liberals were still on the right track. This makes him less 'neo' and more 'conservative'. It is however interesting to see that the use of the word liberal is in line with neoconservative rhetoric and that the neoconservative cause of the 1960s remains an important factor in creating this idiom.

More directly in line with the neoconservative discourse is Conrad Black. The subtitle of his article "The Decline of Liberalism" says it all: "A history of past great at home and abroad, and, since 1960, of growing weakness, hubris, and failure."¹⁰³ Black gives an historical overview of the development of liberalism in the U.S. since the end of the nineteenth century and is while doing so especially positive about New Deal liberalism. He is happy with the fact that in twelve years time the GDP double and that the unemployment rate declined drastically. Black also supports the political consensus that was created during the Second World War and survived even the switch from the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 169-170.

¹⁰¹ Goldberg, 199.

¹⁰² Ibid, 299.

¹⁰³ C. Black, "The Decline of Liberalism," *The American Spectator* (February 2011).

Democrat Truman to the Republican Eisenhower. However, like more neoconservatives, he argues that during the presidency of Johnson some wrong decisions have been made in the name of liberalism:

The long Roosevelt-Truman-Eisenhower consensus frayed badly when Johnson, who had been a congressman during the New Deal years, determined to take it a long step further and proposed a policy extravaganza that promised to buy the end of poverty through social investment. As all the world knows, it was a disaster that destroyed the African American family and severely aggravated the welfare and entitlement crises.¹⁰⁴

In Black's criticism neoconservative thought of the 1960s and 1970s is clearly represented. The idea that the policies of the Great Society harms African-Americans was also thoroughly addressed in Nathan Glazer's *Affirmative Discrimination*.

The same neoconservative vision on liberalism, marking the 1960s as a turning point from *good to evil*, is presented in *I am Change: Barack Obama and the Future of Liberalism* by Charles R. Kesler.¹⁰⁵ In this book the author uses the policies of Johnson, together with his Democratic predecessors F.D. Roosevelt and W. Wilson, to contextualize and analyze the liberal policies of President Obama. The reforms of the Great Society play an important role in how America's first black president shaped his political role: "As 'the child of a mixed marriage,' his opportunities would have been 'entirely foreclosed' without the 'social upheavals' of those years."¹⁰⁶ Kesler argues that not only Obama, due to his personal history, is a product of the 1960s, but also, that contemporary liberalism is shaped during the years of President Johnson. During this period a new sort of liberalism has begun: "Liberalism now had to turn its attention to improving 'the quality of our American civilization.'" The Age of *qualitative* liberalism had begun."¹⁰⁷ With that came "the fall of the old liberal order" and it is this fall that is the important connection between the 1960s and the second decennium of the 21st century. Kesler argues that Johnson began this new liberalism, it is Obama that will finish it.

The frequent references to the 1960s give neoconservatives a validation of the political movement. It is a way to give the reader the impression that they are on the right side of history. Referring back to this era is done to give an historical context of where the current liberal policies derive from and why liberalism is the wrong ideology for America. This shows that their intellectual ancestors were right about 'leaving' liberalism and portraying it as a wrongful political ideology. This research project revealed no contemporary neoconservative texts that disapproved of the construct of the word liberal as constructed during the 1960s and 1970s. All texts explicitly or implicitly confirmed, or even expanded on, badmouthing liberals as was done 50 years ago. The continuation of badmouthing liberals legitimates the existence of neoconservatism. Or as the title of Heilbrunn's book would say: *They Knew They Were Right*.

¹⁰⁴ Black.

¹⁰⁵ Kesler, *I Am Change*.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

3.2 An Un-American Decline

In *That Used to be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back*¹⁰⁸ Thomas L. Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum argue that since the end of the Cold War the U.S. is in a steady decline from being the global superpower it used to be at the end of the 1980s. To describe the problem the authors quote Timothy Shiver, chairman of the Special Olympics and nephew of former President John F. Kennedy: "It's as though we just slip a little each year and shrug it off to circumstances beyond our control — an economic downturn here, a social problem there, he political mess this year. We're losing a step a day and no one's saying, Stop!"¹⁰⁹ The solution for this problem may, according to Friedman and Mandelbaum, be found in the merit of Jeffrey Immelt, former CEO of General Electric: "What we lack in the U.S. today is the confidence that is generated by solving one big, hard problem — together."¹¹⁰ The battle against the Soviet Union was the one big, hard problem that united the United States, but ever since the Cold War the feeling of the need to stand together has faded away among the American public. The authors argue that what needs to be done is to: "What world are we living in, and what exactly do we need to do to thrive in this world?"¹¹¹

These are questions that many neoconservative public intellectuals are also asking. Neoconservative foreign policy is also based on the idea that the U.S. needs to face "one big problem" in order to unite the country. With the neoconservative *good vs. evil* worldview in mind, the problem that the U.S., as a *good* country, faces is how it can defeat the *evil* ones. During the Cold War there was a lot of fuel to fire the anti-Stalinist side of neoconservatism. For many Americans the end of the Cold War meant the victory of the *good* over the *evil*. Neoconservatives, however, soon found another source of *evil* to replace the Soviet Union: Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East. So neoconservatives have found their big problem that the U.S. can conquer to make the world a better place and the nation more united than ever before. It are however the liberals that prevent the U.S. from acting as the 'good guy' in global politics. John Goldberg writes the following in the conservative magazine *National Review* in 2009:

Today, the typical liberal idealist's highest priority is for the United States to become a "member in good standing in the international community" — noting but a euphemism for acquiescence and subservience to the mores and dictates of the European Union, The Hague, the United Nations, and what we've recently seen, the selection committee for the Nobel Peace Prize. And the conventional liberal realist's idea of clear-eyed realpolitik for America to do — the exact same thing.

¹⁰⁸ T.L. Friedman and M. Mandelbaum, *That Used to be Us: How American Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back* (New York. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

That in the progressive mind the U.N. has replace the U.S. as the legitimate engine for global progress is hardly a new insight. Over the last decade, liberals have increasingly embraced the propositions that unilateralism — more properly: unilateralism by the United States — is necessarily a grave transgression against all that is right and good and that is often better to do wrong in a very large group than to do right alone.¹¹²

Goldberg argues that liberals in the U.S. voluntarily want to give up America's leading position in the world in order to share its power with international institutions. For Goldberg, and many neoconservative and conservatives with him, America's policies come with a simple equation: policies should emphasize the idea that power must be multiplied and not divided. So for many Americans the questions are simple, for neoconservatives even the answers are simple. However, it are liberals that choose to lead America into a decline instead of responding to this questions with an further ascent.

Conservative public intellectual Charles Krauthammer also does not hesitate to blame the liberals for the current decline in American global power. In his article "Decline Is a Choice: The New Liberalism and the end of American ascendancy" Krauthammer even argues that liberals have created this decline on purpose.¹¹³ Like the title of the article says, decline is a choice and according to Krauthammer liberals have made the choice to let the U.S. abdicate as hegemon of the (western) world: "The current liberal ascendancy in the United States — controlling the executive and both houses in Congress [in 2009], dominating the media and the elite culture — has set us on a course for decline."¹¹⁴ So it is not the rising power of other countries or continents such as China, Russia, or the European Union, that causes this decline, it is America's own decision to take a step back. During the Clinton years, during the early years of the unipolar world that was created after the end of the Cold War, the policymakers started to dislike the idea of America's hegemony. Clinton started to sign treaties so that other countries also could have piece of the power cake. This idea behind this is that power corrupts, so it can better be shared with allies. Nevertheless, the U.S. remained the *primes inter pares*. However, the problem with the Obama administration when compared to Clinton's administration is that "it is not center-left, but left-liberal."¹¹⁵ And "For New Liberalism, it is not just that power corrupts. It is that America itself is corrupt — in a sense of being deeply flawed". So Krauthammer states that Obama and his fellow liberals do not find the U.S. worthy of being a global leader, because it is a deeply flawed country.

For Krauthammer the problems with liberal policies can easily explained by simple math. Both high military security and social security cost a lot of money and the U.S. has only enough to have one of the two. Europe chose to spend their money on social welfare and because of that it is now dependent "on the U.S. navy for open seas and on the U.S. Air Force for airlift." Since their is no force on

¹¹² J. Goldberg, "Realism Minus Reality, Idealism Minus Ideals - The Left's foreign policy waxes stupid and mean," *National Review* (2 November 2009).

¹¹³ C. Krauthammer, "Decline Is a Choice: The New Liberalism and the end of American ascendancy," *The Weekly Standard* (19 October 2009).

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

which the U.S. can rely on for military support, its allies rather have social security than military security, the U.S. does not have the luxury of large scale investments in social security. The liberal view on reality is blurred because of the current economic crisis, and because of that the ruling Democrats are experimenting with un-American behavior: "A crisis is a terrible thing to exploit when it is taken by New Liberalism as a mandate for massive expansion of the state and national debt — threatening the dollar, the entire economy, and consequently our superpower status abroad."¹¹⁶ So even though the math is simple, according to Krauthammer liberals have a wrong solution for the equation. Krauthammer sums up his argument as follows:

Domestic policy, of course, is not *designed* to curb our power abroad. But what it lacks in intent, it makes up in effect. Decline will be an unintended, but powerful, side effect of the New Liberalism's ambition of moving from America from its traditional dynamic individualism to the more equitable but static of European social democracy.¹¹⁷

So according to contemporary (neo)conservatives the focus of liberals on domestic issues can harm America's interest in international issues. However, the domestic issues that liberals focus on are not being solved either, or, are even worsened by the intervention of the big government. The title of an article by David A. Clarke Jr. in *The Washington Times* in March 2014 says it all: "Social liberalism, the new racism; White worship of big government has destroyed the black family."¹¹⁸ In this article Clarke writes about how liberal policies since the 1960s have torn African-American families apart, even though supporting such families was one of the core purposes of the Great Society:

Every attempt liberals have made to help black people, with their reliance on government-centered public-policy ideas, has worsened their lot in life. The family structure, once a foundation of the black community pre-1960, is in shambles. More black children grow up without a stable father in their lives as black men have been estranged from their children and emasculated by welfare policies. On top of that, more black people are living in poverty than ever before, our kids are chained to failing urban schools and more young black men are unemployed and in jail and prison. Liberal public policies and ideology have fostered this. Daniel Patrick Moynihan predicted it more than 50 years ago in his well-publicized report, "The Negro Family." Fifty years later, the situation is worse than even he predicted.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Krauthammer, "Decline Is a Choice"

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ D.A. Clarke Jr., "Social liberalism, the new racism; White worship of big government has destroyed the black family," *The Washington Times* (25 March 2014).

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

In this quote Clarke defines liberals as the ones that destroys African-American families, even though they were the politicians that got elected to guide this group of people into a better future during the 1960s. The author even states that liberals are using the suffering black families:

These kids suffer from a lot of emotional baggage spawned by ineffective parenting, which is worsened by white bleeding-heart liberals who use these troubled kids for their liberal agenda. Social liberalism is a sadistic ideology. White liberal social policies have become the new racism in America.¹²⁰

A few paragraphs further he continues with:

Liberals call their ideology compassionate. I call it hateful. You would have to absolutely loathe black people to want to keep them mired in generational poverty and ignorance, living in ghettos with high unemployment, with their kids shackled to failing K-12 urban school systems and crime-ridden neighborhoods just to secure a permanent voting majority and to hang onto political power. This is borderline sociopathic behavior.¹²¹

Of all the articles that were read while doing research for this thesis, this article by Clarke in *The Washington Times* is one with one of the most angry or even hateful tone towards liberals. When comparing his tone to the tone of writing of early neoconservatives a continuation of the badmouthing of liberals, in the way neoconservatives initiated, can definitely be seen. Accusing liberals and their policies of being racist and unhelpful for creating social equality in line with early neoconservative rhetoric. Accusations of being "sadistic" or "borderline sociopathic" may be more provocative than the terms Nathan Glazer or Irvine Kristol would use, but the train of thought is comparable. Early neoconservatives also argued that liberal policies only worsen the social inequality by using political intervention. So the fierce tone of Clarke should be considered the result of the accumulation of 50 years of accusations on behalf of liberals and is therefore a good example of the survival of neoconservative rhetoric after the presidency of G.W. Bush.

In summary, neoconservatives have the feeling that the U.S. is losing its global power since the end of the Cold War and are blaming liberals for taking political decisions that will accelerate the decline of America's former hegemony. Therefore, while discussing the theme of the decline of American global dominance liberals are portrayed as the ones that ruin the American hegemony that the U.S. has been trying to build since the First World War. The main mistake liberals make, according to neoconservative thinkers, is that they do not give priority to dealing with foreign threats before dealing with domestic affairs. In this neoconservative thought the traces of anti-Stalinism of the 1950s is this very much alive. The U.S. cannot become a state with liberals ideals such as universal healthcare, high social security, or cheap education, if the country is under attack by foreign military forces. Besides being unable to prioritize correctly, liberals also fail in trying to fulfill the promises that got

¹²⁰ Clarke.

¹²¹ Ibid.

them elected in office. David Clarke Jr. argues that the influence of liberalism in domestic policies has only made the situation worse for the ones that they initially wanted to help. Clarke even states that liberals take advantage of the troubled situation that African-American families find themselves in and that liberals must "loathe" blacks for letting them live like that.

3.3 The End of Liberalism, Again?

A returning theme in discussing liberals and their politics by (neo)conservative public intellectuals is the potential, or to some authors definite, decline of modern liberalism as a relevant political ideology. Many neoconservatives believe that the heydays of modern American liberalism are over because of the mistakes that are being made as described in the previous section of this chapter.

It is however not the first time that the end of liberalism was forecasted. The previous chapter discussed the anti-liberal sentiment in *The End of Liberalism* by Theodor J. Lowi. Two sections of the book were called "Why liberal governments cannot plan" and "Why liberal governments cannot achieve justice". Lowi argued that during the presidency of Johnson liberalism has come to an end because all its core values were thrown overboard. Almost 50 years after the publication of Lowi's book Ramesh Ponnuru continues this train of thought in the *National Review*. The name of the article is a direct reference to the rhetorical style Lowi used to strengthen his anti-liberal message: "The Dead End of Liberalism - Why progressive's can't govern."¹²² However in this case it is Obama who is responsible for the "Dead End of Liberalism." In the article Ponnuru gives several examples of, in his eyes, failed policies by the Democratic Obama administration. Ponnuru's arguments comes down to the following: "Contemporary liberalism both presupposes and desires a government that is flexible, competent, energetic. [...] Yet in operation, it weighs down the government with interest groups that first make it inefficient and inflexible and then make it impossible to reform."¹²³ Ponnuru feels that with the ascendancy of Obama modern liberalism, as created during the 1960s, will come to an end. Lowi had the same prediction almost 50 years earlier. Lowi was on the one hand wrong because liberalism did survive. On the other hand he was right because of the major changes that that occurred within the liberal discourse. The liberalism as he knew it died. If during the 21st century the end of liberalism, this time predicted by Ponnuru, will definitely come remains the question, maybe it will change again. Important for this thesis is the fact that the anti-liberal sentiment of the 1960s, especially when it comes to rhetoric, still echoes in the post-Bush era.

In *I am Change* Kesler makes the same predictions as Ponnuru and Lowi. Kesler states that *the Future of Liberalism* can only lead to one thing: the end of current liberalism: "Liberalism can't go on as it is, not for very long. It faces difficulties both philosophical and fiscal that will compel it either to go out of business or to become something quite different from what it has been."¹²⁴ The philosophical problem comes down to the idea that modern day liberals lost their goal, the utopian view that they

¹²² R. Ponnuru, "The Dead End of Liberalism — Why progressives can't govern," *National Review* (5 April 2010).

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Kesler, *I Am Change*.

want to progress to. Kesler writes: "Avant-garde liberalism used to be about progress; now it's about nothingness."¹²⁵ The author suggests, as to be expected from a proper conservative, that the solution for this philosophical emptiness may be found in the past. It is however unthinkable for progressive liberals to search for a solution in the past: "Liberalism is in a bad way when it has lost confidence in its own truth, and it's an odd sort of 'progress' to go back to a name it surrendered eighty years ago."¹²⁶ The liberal ideology is also losing their academic backup. Liberals used to have a "monopoly on the social sciences" but recently in political science, economics, and other fields conservative scholars are getting more dominant. Kesler specifically refers to work of Friedrich Hayek, an Austrian economist, political philosopher and Nobel laureate, who "demonstrated why socialist economic planning, lacking free-market pricing information, could not succeed. In a side-by-side experiment, West-Germany far outpaced East Germany in economic development, and all people escaping across the Wall travelled from east to west, leaving their workers paradise behind."¹²⁷ It seems that Kesler also brings back the philosophical crisis of modern liberalism to the idea that they have been 'mugged by reality', and now they do not know what to do next.

The fiscal crisis Kesler writes about is twofold. First, liberal governments spend too much money, and second, they do not provide a proper method of generating income. The spending problem comes for the Obama administration especially down to the costs of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare:

Finally, we come to the fiscal embarrassment confronting contemporary liberals. Again, Obamacare is wonderfully emblematic. President Obama's solution to the problem of the two health care entitlement programs quickly going bankrupt — Medicare and Medicaid — is to add a third? Perhaps it's a stratagem, as we discussed before. More likely it is the simply reflexive liberal solution to any social problem: spend more.¹²⁸

Spending a lot of money is no problem when the income is sufficient. Murray states that neoconservatives are not against the government providing social security: "neoconservatives are the only conservatives who formally recognize there are limits to what can be achieved without the state."¹²⁹ Taking care of the poorest citizens of the nation is one of them. It is however important to not lose sight of how the money to provide for this social security should be obtained. For (neo)conservative thinkers there is only one economic model that is responsible for the economic prosperity of the U.S.: capitalism. Paradoxically, liberals, the ones that want to spend the most money, are the ones who reject this model of generating welfare. Kesler writes that "Obama is the first liberal to suggest that even capitalism cannot pay for all the benefits promised by the American welfare state,

¹²⁵ Kesler, *I Am Change*.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

particularly regarding healthcare.”¹³⁰ That leaves for conservatives the question: if capitalism cannot effort it, how is it ever possible to create this welfare state? Liberals have no valid answer to this question yet, and, if you have to believe (neo)conservative thinkers, will never be able to in the future. Adding to the idea of liberals being responsible for the ‘decline of America’, Kesler states, while referring to research of the Congressional Budget Office, that by 2025 the current social security programs (even without Obamacare) and the federal debt will consume all the revenue of the federal government. By that time there will be no money left for other expenses, like national security.¹³¹ This amount of spending combined with the rejection of the income model of capitalism will according to Kesler, and many other conservative thinkers alike, lead to the downfall of liberalism and the U.S. This analysis makes Kesler, of course, positive about the future of American politics:

If the bankruptcy of the entitlement programs were handled just the right way, with world-class cynicism and opportunism, in an emergency demanding quick, painful actions lest grandma descend into a irreversible coma, then liberalism might succeed in maneuvering America into a Scandinavian-style überwelfare state, fueled by massive and regressive taxes cheerfully accepted by the citizenry. But odds are we stand, instead, at the twilight of the liberal welfare state. As it sinks, a new, more conservative system will likely rise.¹³²

Conrad Black is betting on the same odds as Kesler. In the first section of this chapter Black’s article “The Decline of Liberalism” was already used to show the significance of the 1960s for modern day neoconservatism. In the same article Black states, like Kesler, that the American voters are fed up with the liberal nanny-state:

Americans are worried about debts and tax increases, distrustful of government regulations, concerned at extreme income disparity and the loss of huge chunks of business, including energy supplies, to foreigners and they associate liberalism with extravagance, the use of welfare system to buy the votes of the underperforming (wether with a legitimate excuse or not), the belittling of America in the world, and a general erosion of cherished values. And the last liberal leader people really liked was John F. Kennedy, and in that they were largely buying a public relations confidence trick. amplified by horrible tragedy of his premature death.¹³³

In order to make Americans again believe in the government as being the messiah who brings welfare, equality, and justice the following needs to be done: “Liberalism will revive, as conservatism did, when it redefines itself as something that is new, looks likely to succeed, favors economic growth, and is no

¹³⁰ Kesler, *I Am Change*.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Black, “The Decline of Liberalism”.

longer tainted by envy, hypocrisy, and the more bribery of voting blocs.”¹³⁴ However, integrating Kesler’s arguments into Blacks analysis shows why liberals may be unfit to fulfill this task and why they may become an end to their history: “Today liberalism looks increasingly, well, elderly. Hard of hearing, irascible, enamored of past glories, prone to repeat the same stories over and over — it isn’t the youthful voice of tomorrow it once imagined itself to be.”¹³⁵

There is no doubt left in the minds of (neo)conservative intellectuals: liberalism has to reinvent itself or else it is going to disappear from national politics. During the 1960s modern liberalism, with Johnson as its leader, was welcomed into the political discourse as the new voice of the American left. However, modern liberalism has overstayed its welcome. While discussing this topic (neo)conservative authors portray liberals as the representatives of the losing side of history. By increasing the role of the government they try to implement their backwards ideology in the American society which will only lead to their downfall. Liberals are portrayed as elderly people whose time has come to take a step back after a long life of ups and downs. Liberals are not capable anymore of bringing welfare and prosperity the the U.S. By connecting liberals to that image, America’s opposing ideology, conservatism, is portrayed as the vital, and refreshing option to choose during next elections. This is especially important since the preparations for the 2016 presidential elections have already started. However, the end of liberalism has been predicted before and it is still the conservatives biggest rival.

3.4 William Kristol: Embodying the 1960s Legacy

Discussing 21st century neoconservatism cannot be done without discussing one of the most prominent neoconservatives of our time William Kristol. He is the son of the godfather of neoconservatism, Irving Kristol and prominent neoconservative intellectual Gertrude Himmelfarb. He is also the founder and editor of the neoconservative political magazine *The Weekly Standard*. When reading articles by Kristol in *The Weekly Standard* in which he, for example, discusses the policies of the Obama administration, one can definitely argue that the rhetorical legacy of his father has survived the Bush’s years.

Irving Kristol’s most famous quote about liberals getting mugged by reality is also still used by his son. And again it is used in reference to domestic policy. In this case it is not the affirmative action but Obamacare that made liberals come to their senses. Kristol’s article “But What Is the Reality of It” discusses reactions of New Yorkers on Obamacare. For one of the contributors, Ms. Sweeney, Obamacare did not go as expected: “Now, ms Sweeney realizes (sort of) that she’s been mugged by reality. But she is not quite ready to come to grips with reality. She is not quite ready to press charges against Obama, or against liberalism.”¹³⁶ Also in the frustration about the Democratic presidential administration giving wrong priorities in the new policies you can hear the echo of Irving Kristol. Like his father and his fellow early neoconservatives, William Kristol argues that the domestic policies have

¹³⁴ Black, “The Decline of Liberalism”.

¹³⁵ Kesler, *I Am Change*.

¹³⁶ W. Kristol, “But What is the Reality of It?,” *The Weekly Standard* (6 January 2014).

no priority over foreign policies because there is an external threat trying to attack the United States: "Today's liberals are pleased to use the power of the state to nudge not to say bully their fellow Americans, while shunning the exercise of power abroad. preferring to accommodate not to say appease the nation's enemies."¹³⁷ Halfway through the 20th century Irving Kristol argued that the U.S. government was not doing enough to fight Stalin, 60 years later William says the same about Obama and Islamic terrorism. Both father and son want the federal government to not intervene in domestic issues and intervene more in international issues. The liberal governments of both the 1960s and in the 21st century are both doing the exact opposite. Father and son Kristol are however doing exactly the same.

It bothers Kristol that the Obama administration is expanding its activities in the wrong sectors. Expansion of government activities, he argues, should increase the security of U.S. citizens against external threats instead of government intervention in their personal life, like Obamacare. All the policies of Obama like "Obamacare and other horrors of big-government liberalism"¹³⁸ have lead according to Bill Kristol to the following: "In sum you find what you so often find when you observe modern liberalism: the sorry spectacle of justice without a sword or of justice unable to use the sword."¹³⁹ By implementing new policies the government has been limiting the freedom of the American citizens while it should be limiting the freedom of Islamic terrorists in the Middle East.

Whereas neoconservatives during the 1960s and 1970s were floating between the liberals on the left and the conservatives on the right, during the 21st century neoconservatism is firmly established within the conservative Republican party. While drifting of from the Democrats during the 1960s neoconservatives published articles that accused liberals of doing the American society wrong, but sometimes also saw that liberals still had the opportunity to change their faulty behavior. Nowadays this attitude has changed and it is not up to the liberals anymore to change, the ball is in the conservatives court. William Kristol argues that it is now up to the Republicans to make an end to the liberal policies:

And it's the job of conservatives and Republicans to press charges. It's their job to make the case against Obamacare on the broadest possible terms, as the example of the unintended-consequences-producing, rule-of-law-undermining, freedom-denying, big-government, liberal social-engineering. It's the job of conservatives and Republicans to make it liberalism's fatal overreach.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ W. Kristol, "The Republican Task: No Obamacare, No Iran Nukes," *The Weekly Standard* (18 November 2013).

¹³⁸ W. Kristol, "Memo to House GOP," *The Weekly Standard* (3 February 2014).

¹³⁹ W. Kristol, "All Tweet, No Action," *The Weekly Standard* (19 May 2014).

¹⁴⁰ Kristol, "The Republican Task".

Kristol also sees the opportunity to attract new voters to the GOP:

[Republicans] need to make clear they share young people's healthy aversion to moralistic nannies and self-important experts who seek to nudge, badger, and coerce us to do things for our own alleged good (welcome to modern liberalism!) ¹⁴¹

Kristol is positive about the future. Even though the future may contain the 'sum of all fears', Hillary Clinton, Kristol believes that there are many more Americans sick of the flaws that modern "nanny-state liberalism"¹⁴² represent.

Every poll shows the American public, by about two to one, thinks the nation is on a wrong track. That's the track of contemporary liberalism. It's the track Hillary Clinton has diligently chugged along for her entire adult life. As president, she'd be dutiful of further American decline. The American people deserve better. If given a real choice between invigorated conservatism of decadent liberalism, voters might well make the right decision. Will they be given that choice in 2016?¹⁴³

So William Kristol has definitely continued the process of the demonization of liberals that his father and his neoconservative companions have created during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Sometimes it feels as if time has been standing still between the two generations Kristol. It is as if William has used a Mad Libs book that was created by his father. The blanks that he needed to fill in are the policies and policy makers, the rest of the sentences are the same. At the core of William Kristol's arguments lay also the same anti-liberal arguments by arguing that the government is unnecessarily expanding on domestic policies while losing sight of the real problems that occur on the other side of the Atlantic. On the one hand one could argue that William Kristol is therefore not very innovative in his criticism. On the other hand this may show the power of the anti-liberal rhetoric that Irving Kristol and the neoconservatives of his generation have constructed.

This third and last chapter analyzed how neoconservative intellectuals used the word liberal during the years after the presidency of G.W. Bush. A short conclusion to this analysis is, unsurprisingly, that present-day neoconservatives are fed up with how liberal policies have shaped 21st century America. Neoconservatives are displeased with the current health of the American state and it are the liberals that have created this unhealthy situation. The core of the problem is that the priority of the Obama administration are domestic issues instead of the problems the U.S. faces because of external military oppression. Neoconservatives argue that the U.S. first has to deal with its foreign enemies before domestic issues can be solved. Krauthammer even states that liberals choose to the decline of

¹⁴¹ W. Kristol, "Dear Barack," *The Weekly Standard* (16 December 2013).

¹⁴² Kristol, "The Republican Task".

¹⁴³ W. Kristol, "2014 ? 2016," *The Weekly Standard* (28 April 2014).

American prosperity. In addition to that, liberals are also accused of tearing down America's power by giving away to intergovernmental institutions like the International Criminal Court and the United Nations. In this context liberals are portrayed as weaklings that voluntarily give up America's global hegemony. In this train of thought the anti-Stalinism aspect of early neoconservatism is clearly. Even though anti-Stalinism was also present during the 1960s and 1970s, it was less discussed than the domestic issues. During the 21st century this important element of neoconservatism is definitely back on the table.

The person who is the core representative of these ideas is William Kristol. He too argues that currently the core task of the government is to protect the American citizens from external threats. However, he is more than just an ambassador of neoconservative thoughts, he is the embodiment of the neoconservative legacy into the 21st century. It is remarkable to what extent the voice of Irving Kristol echoes in the articles by his son William. William Kristol not only continues the train of thought of his father during the Obama administration, he also portrays liberals in the same way as his father did. In doing so he even uses the words. The phrase being "mugged by reality" is after so many years still used in the neoconservative discourse. In case of William Kristol one can argue that it is just the continuation of family heritage. This would however underestimate the value of the neoconservative intellectual heritage from the 1960s. Even today many articles by neoconservatives refer to the 1960s as a revolutionary time for American society and politics. This period is still seen as a turning point for liberalism. It is the conformation that their intellectual ancestors were wright when they turned their back on liberalism during the presidency of Johnson. They were also right when it comes to anti-liberal rhetoric. Liberals are, just as during the 1960s and 1970s portrayed as people with an unrealistic view on problem solving. A view that will harm American's, even the ones that the liberal government was said out to defend (read: African-Americans). William Kristol probably one of the few who are biologically speaking part of this inheritance, however, his fellow neoconservatives are getting very close.

Conclusion

How does a radical — a mild radical, it is true, but still someone who felt closer to radical than to liberal writers and politicians in the late 1950s — end up by the early 1970s as a conservative, a mild conservative, but still closer to those who now call themselves conservative than to those who call themselves liberal? I seem to have moved from a position in which I was a bit embarrassed to be considered liberal (surely I was a degree further on the Left than that!) to a position to be again embarrassed, but from the other side: surely I am not so "Establishmentarian" as that!¹⁴⁴

Nathan Glazer, 1970

As this quote by Nathan Glazer makes clear, neoconservatism and liberalism have always had a history of dialectic. A contradiction fueled by the differences between love and hate. On the one hand early neoconservatives were the ones that fought for liberalism during the 1950s and 1950s. Many of them were Jews who had witnessed the anti-liberal, repressive forces in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century. They moved to the U.S. because they saw that country as the zenith of liberalism, a state where everyone could be free and without a government that would judge people based on their ethnical, cultural, or religious background. On the other hand, they felt that this liberalism, the ideology that made the U.S. the country they loved, started to betray its foundations during the the presidency of Johnson halfway the 1960s. They saw the Great Society as the first American society that institutionalized racism since the end of the Civil War. And again were these Jews the victims of governmentally institutionalized racism. For these neoconservatives liberalism was a former lover. A lover who they once shared all hopes and believes with but all of a sudden turned its back on them. This switch made neoconservatives turn their love for liberalism into feelings of loathing towards their former lover.

The first chapter discussed the historical context behind the attitude change towards liberalism. Since Lyndon B. Johnson got elected as president in november 1963 he tried to build the legislate foundation that was necessary to provide the American society with the social political reforms that left-wing civil rights activists had been promoting since the end of the Second World War. During this *post bellum* phase future neoconservatives still supported the ideas behind these left-wing reform movements. However, the three acts that would create the Great Society, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act and the Immigration Act, promoted positive discrimination in oder to accelerate the equalization process for ethnic minorities, especially African-Americans. The integration of this positive discrimination, or affirmative action, became the basis for the emergence of neoconservatism. Or as Douglas Murray stated: "The negative policy of 'positive discrimination' is — and has always been — absolute anathema to neoconservatism"¹⁴⁵ Neoconservatives argues that a true liberal would never discriminate, not even in a positive sense. That is why neoconservatives saw themselves as the true

¹⁴⁴ N. Glazer, "On Being Deradicalized," *Commentary* (10 January 1970).

¹⁴⁵ Murray, *Neoconservatism*.

heirs to liberalism. However, instead of fighting for the survival of the, in their eyes, form of liberalism, they started to reject the ideology as it was reconstructed during this phase.

As stated in the introduction, the second chapter laid the foundation for the analysis of the anti-liberal rhetoric to which the third chapter will be compared in order to see how the anti-liberal rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s continued into the 21st century. The analysis showed that the creation of anti-liberal rhetoric was not a linear process, nor was the anger immediately present. During the first years after the political reforms many neoconservative intellectuals still had faith in liberalism. Authors expressed their discontent with the reforms that were made in the name of liberalism, but also offered solutions to how the social issues could be solved without the betrayal of classical liberal beliefs. For example, in 1967 Michael Harrington wrote that he believed in a new future for liberalism. At the same time there were already authors, like Lowi, who had already given up on liberalism. Nevertheless, the change of tone had definitely taken off and the meaning of the word liberal was descending into a pool of negativity. Halfway through the 1970s liberals and liberalism came to be associated with dishonesty, racism, creators of demeaning policies, and the inability to govern or achieve justice.

In order to give a definitive answer to the thesis question: How did the neoconservative construction of the word "liberal", as created during the late 1960s and late 1970s, continue into the post-George W. Bush era?" the third chapter analyzed how the word liberal was used by neoconservatives after the presidency of G.W. Bush. Analyzing articles and books by present-day neoconservatives reveals that the anti-liberal rhetoric of the early neoconservatism has continued in the same way into the 21st as it was established during the 1970s. The rhetorical style that is used by present-day neoconservatives like William Kristol and Charles Krauthammer has many similarities with the rhetoric of their intellectual predecessors like Irving Kristol and Nathan Glazer. The only difference that is noticeable is that the negative connotation has become even more fierce than during the early phase. The most dominant idea about liberals, in both time periods, is that they have an unrealistic view on the issues that the U.S. is faced with. The phrase that neoconservatives are being "mugged by reality" keeps resonating in the articles and books. It are the neoconservatives who have a proper view on reality and it are the liberals who are voluntarily bringing the U.S. into a decline with their unrealistic policies. In order to express their discontent with the unrealistic views of liberals neoconservatives use words as "hateful," "sociopathic," and "fascists." Liberalism is in their eyes a self-destroying and un-American ideology that harms American interests the domestic sphere as well as abroad.

In reference to the academic debate as discussed in the introduction this conclusion contributes to the statements of Heilbrunn and Vaïsse who both argue that neoconservatism remains a strong voice in the public intellectual discourse. When it comes to the continuation of the anti-liberal rhetoric of the 1960s and 1970s into the post G.W. Bush era, neoconservatives are not being mugged by reality again. There are still authors who feel that they need early neoconservative rhetoric to describe their ideas, there are still publishers that want to print this neoconservative rhetoric in order to sell their product, and there are still people who want to buy these product in order to read this neoconservative rhetoric. The survival of neoconservatism in American politics is not covered by the

research that has been done by this thesis. To expand on this topic additional research can be done on how politicians use the word liberal in recent years. Is the neoconservative anti-liberal rhetoric that is omnipresent in the public discourse also present inside the Beltway? Answering this question can make further contributions to the thesis of Heilbrunn and Vaisse.

Further investigation on the survival of neoconservatism is also becoming more important since the current change of events in the Middle East and speculations about a new Cold War with Russia based on the military conflict in Ukraine. Since a few months neoconservatives are becoming more prominent in the public and political debate. For example William Kristol and Dick Cheney have openly criticized president Obama on his foreign policy regarding these external military forces. The Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* even wrote about the revival of neoconervatism: "The neoconservatives are back: Obama is guilty of the chaos in Iraq. Not them."¹⁴⁶ In this article the author refers to the many articles that recently been written by prominent neoconservatives defending their hawkish military and foreign policy for the first time that publicly since the presidency of Obama. The neoconservatives are proposing another invasion on the Iraqi soil to stop ISIS and the Iranian army that is also planning to invade the country. The debate about the effectiveness of the first 'neoconservative invasion' in Iraq in 2003 is still going strong, so if a second one will follow soon remains debatable. It is however unquestionable that these current events fuels the fire of anti-Stalinist neoconservatism.

¹⁴⁶ G. Valk, "Bush-adepten halen hun gelijk," *NRC Handelsblad* (18 June 2014).

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