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## Conservatism and Capitalist Dictatorship: The Impact of Conservative Ideology and Politics on Capitalism and Democracy

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## Conservatism and Capitalist Dictatorship: The Impact of Conservative Ideology and Politics on Capitalism and Democracy

### Abstract

*ABSTRACT* The paper studies the relationship between conservatism to capitalist dictatorship. It argues that conservatism constitutes the prime ideological determinant and predictor of capitalist dictatorship, along with fascist and religious dictatorships. It establishes and specifies the connection of conservatism to capitalist dictatorship. It examines the historical emergence and evolution of conservatism in relation to capitalist dictatorship. In particular, it investigates the link of conservatism to capitalist dictatorship through anti-labor ideology. The paper concludes that conservatism comoves closely with capitalist dictatorship, just as with fascism and theocracy, and suggests further theoretical and empirical directions for further research. It aims to contribute to better understanding and explaining the links between conservatism and capitalist and similar dictatorship, including present trends in America post-2016 and via contagion or convergence other societies.

### Keywords

KEYWORDS capitalist dictatorship, conservatism, democracy, fascism, medievalism, plutocracy, theocracy

## Conservatism and Capitalist Dictatorship: The Impact of Conservative Ideology and Politics on Capitalism and Democracy

[When] the mechanisms devised by the bourgeoisie for carrying out the class struggle (e.g., parliamentarianism) prove insufficient [then] a dictatorship become possible [in capitalism]. Fascism is the exponent of bourgeois groups [that aims at] substituting one ruling group for another within the existing class arrangements--Karl Mannheim (1936:143-46).

### 1. Introduction

Capitalist and related dictatorship or dictatorial, authoritarian capitalism as well as hyper-capitalism (Piketty<sup>1</sup> 2020; also, Naidu, Rodrik, and Zucman 2020) has become a relatively established conception, proposition and even designation in the sociology, economics and related academic literature, as well as partly in political and other non-academic discourse. In the early sociology literature, excluding orthodox Marxism, capitalist dictatorship or its equivalent appears as an economic and social system of which capitalists are the 'natural lords and masters' and which develops for their 'sake' and functions as their 'tool' (Tönnies 1955:71). Specifically, they assume the form of the 'aristocracy of fortune', i.e., plutocracy as the 'ruling power' in capitalism such as the 'naked plutocracy' in America where 'mere money' effectively purchases power, thus as 'a plutocratic dictatorship' through the 'unrestricted power' and 'corruption' of capital (Michels 1968; Mosca 1939; Pareto 1935, Taine 1885; Weber 1946).

In the subsequent sociology literature this phenomenon, as the opening citation suggests, constitutes 'dictatorship' in capitalism becoming a possibility because of the insufficiency of capitalist democracy such as parliamentarianism and assuming the form of fascism as the 'exponent of bourgeois groups' (Mannheim 1936). Hence, such dictatorship arises as a 'fascist solution to the impasse' of *laissez-faire* capitalism through the 'process of the extirpation of all democratic institutions, both in the industrial and in the political realm', and as capitalism's culmination in fascism by passing via 'reactionary' political regimes (Moore 1993; Polanyi 1944). In the contemporary literature, this dictatorship manifests itself in various forms and ways. They include a set of 'constraints' of a capitalist society, the 'tyranny' or 'despotism' of capital and the market in the face, especially in America, of a 'dictatorial business class' in alliance with

'a hyperactive police and penal state', and a complex of 'workplace dictatorships' in 'authoritarian firms', 'inequalities of wealth' and the superior 'structural power of capital' exerting labor coercion and union suppression. (See Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998; Burawoy 2005; Dahrendorf 1979; Farber et al. 2021; Feagin 2001; Hung and Thompson 2016; Jae et al. 2019; Jäger, Schoefer and Heining 2021; Lamont 2018; Rosenfeld 2019; Tilly 2000; Wacquant 2002; Wodtke 2016; Wright 2013.)

In the early economics literature, capitalist dictatorship consists of 'capitalistic power and exploitation of workers' to the point of 'capitalistic despotism' combined with 'a lasting, physical and moral degradation of the proletarian strata', deriving from the 'despotic might of capital' that perverts economic freedom into 'economic oppression' and 'industrial despotism' and prevents 'industrial democracy' (Mitchell 1917; Web and Web 1902; Wieser 1967; for recent insights see Fligstein and Goldstein<sup>2</sup> 2022). In the later literature, it results from the capitalist 'type of democracy' surrendering to 'dictatorship' and represents a system of 'arbitrary' distribution of wealth and power and consequently of contraction of 'general social freedoms', specifically of the 'redistribution of wealth in favour of the wealthy and of power in favour of the powerful', simply a complex of 'noncommunist dictatorships' and "noncommunist dictators." (See Cohen and Blanchard 1988; Knight 1960; Lindbeck 1971; Mulligan, Gil and Sala-i-Martin 2004; Schumpeter 1950; Solow, Budd, and Weizsacker 1987.) Further, the more recent literature explicitly employs and formally invents the designation 'capitalist dictatorships' and proposes 'outgrowing' them, alongside their communist variants, suggesting that capitalism, like socialism, harbors a tendency to dictatorship as 'an extreme example' of the 'arbitrariness of power', specifically 'a dictatorship of the rich' through oligarchy or plutocracy. (See Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2018; Besley and Kudamatsu 2006; Hodgson 1999; McGuire and Olson 1996; Olson 2000; Pryor 2002; Rajan and Zingales 2004; Rodrik 1999; Sen 1995.)

In addition, in America's early political discourse capitalist, especially plutocratic, dictatorship arises through what Jefferson laments as the 'aristocracy of our monied corporations' challenging government to 'a trial of strength' and defying the 'laws of our country.' It also emerges out of what Theodore Roosevelt condemns as the 'tyranny of a plutocracy' as the 'least attractive and the most vulgar' of 'all forms of tyranny' due to

being the 'tyranny of mere wealth' that acquires power (as Weber also observes during his visit). Next, in some contemporary non-academic discourse capitalist dictatorship, specifically plutocracy, resurges through 'Plutonomy' which the power of the wealthy, along with 'massive income and wealth inequality' in their favor, defines and which the U.S., the UK, and Canada as the 'key Plutonomies' epitomize (Kapur, Macleod and Singh 2005; also, Frank 2007). Lastly, such dictatorship or plutocracy apparently persists and matters even for some "proud 'traitors'" to the capitalist class in the US (the 'Patriotic Millionaires') who characterize it--by voicing their 'concern' about--the 'destabilizing concentration of wealth and power in America'. Historically, this concentration is today reportedly comparable to that in Europe such as Britain and France<sup>3</sup> during the early 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Piketty 2020: 44). This has resulted in concerns about the 'disappearance of the middle class' in the US and manifesting 'noninclusive income growth' in favor of the top of the distribution mostly because of weak labor market institutions like low levels of union membership and collective bargaining coverage in America under conservatism since Reaganism (Beckert 2022; Carbonell-Nicolau and Llavador 2021; Parolin and Gornick 2021; Piketty 2020).

Overall, capitalist and related dictatorship becomes a legitimate conception, proposition and designation in the sociology, economics and related academic literature, as well as to some non-academic discourse. The concept, therefore, after being, along with similar ideas casting doubt on capitalism as the Panglossian 'best of all possible worlds', ceases to be a non-entity, Pandora's box and taboo especially in America during the Cold War (Baumol 2000; Habermas 2001; Merton 1968; Piketty 2014, 2020).

The academic literature and non-academic discourse hence open and dispel such Pandora's box and taboo by conceptualizing and designating a certain type of capitalism or economic-social system as 'capitalist dictatorship', including 'plutonomy', contrary to its 'apologists' in 'apologetic economics' such as Chicago and similar schools obsessing with dead communist dictatorships. (For an example see Lucas 2009; the term 'apologetic economics' is from Knight 1923; 'apologists' from Samuelson 1994.) Conceivably, only another Cold War or 'clash of civilizations' between capitalism and non-capitalism—or intensification of that between laissez-faire and welfare

capitalisms--would re-enclose 'capitalist dictatorship' in Pandora's box and make it a taboo<sup>4</sup> (Habermas 2001 Piketty 2020). However, this possibility seems less inconceivable in the light of the 2016 US Presidential elections producing a plutocratic and quasi-autocratic radical-right regime of a 'business genius' for some or 'lying demagogue' for others in this society and via global contagion or convergence other societies, from much of South America again to parts of Europe and beyond (Bursztyn, Egorov, and Fiorin. 2020; Caren, Andrews, and Lu 2020; Enke 2020; Hahl et al. 2018; Jouet 2017; Romero 2020; Shiller 2017). Precisely this specter of another suppression of ideas as 'un-American', 'anti-capitalist' or 'unpatriotic'--which the US 'Patriotic Millionaires' preempt--and these renewed trends to capitalist dictatorship or plutonomy in America and elsewhere provide a compelling empirical justification for investigating this phenomenon, just as its conceptual establishment in the literature providing atheoretical rationale for such an endeavor. Assuming that capitalist and related dictatorship such as autocracy, plutocracy or oligarchy within capitalism is a legitimate, even established conception, proposition and designation in the academic literature, the question arises as its origins or determinants. First, the pertinent economics literature assumes, investigates and focuses on the 'economic' origins of capitalist, as well as a fortiori non-capitalist, especially communist, dictatorships (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006a; Besley and Kudamatsu 2006; McGuire and Olson 1996; Olson 2000). This is seemingly a 'natural' treatment of the matter for economists, but the exclusive 'economic' origins approach to capitalist and other dictatorships is defective or insufficient within a broader sociological framework in formal and substantive terms.

Formally, it the above approach appears tautological involving circular analysis, explanation and reasoning so long as it aims to analyze and explain these dictatorships if considered primarily economic systems, namely nondemocracies in the economy, by strictly 'economic' factors (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006a; Autor et al. 2020; Colantone and Stanig 2019), moving in a circle of redundancy. At best, the approach is partial and mis-specified in formal terms consisting of an incomplete analysis and explanation if it considers such dictatorships also political regimes, nondemocracies in the polity, and explains them only by 'economic' factors as a proxy *deus ex machina*. In substantive terms, such an approach is too reductive and unrealistic by overstating the actual

impact of 'economic' factors on capitalist and other dictatorships as economic and/or political systems and understating or ignoring that of non-economic, including political and ideological, determinants (Margalit 2019). In this regard, the approach substantively suffers from the error of omission of important explanatory sociological variables—which theory and research suggests are consequential for these phenomena--or of their inadmissible dissolution into 'economic origins' (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006a; Autor et al. 2020). As a result, this approach commits what Samuelson (1993) deplors as the 'fallacy of composition' through composing or lumping together all these different and disparate factors into a single composite, as if the non-economic did not matter or exist. At best, this approach does justice only to half of the equation of capitalist and other dictatorships so long as their non-economic origins form the second half, thus being just a part of a holistic sociological theory of the phenomenon that takes account of both sets of variables (Bourdieu 1998; Habermas 2001; Lamont 2018).

The paper seeks to complement and complete the narrow, economic approach to dictatorships and thus to fill the void it leaves by investigating their non-economic origins, and especially identifying and analyzing their principal ideological and political origin the economics literature overlooks or downplays. To wit, this is conservatism (Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998; Caren et al. 2020; Lamont 2018; Williams 2021) as a type of ideology and politics which the economics literature has been unable or unwilling to identify explicitly and consistently as the Schumpeter-style prime non-economic mover of capitalist and related, including fascist and theocratic, dictatorships. The reason for this omission by economics consists in focusing on and overstating their 'economic origins' (for exceptions see Galbraith and Parker 2017; Lavador and Oxoby 2005; Mueller 2009). In this regard, the paper aims to contribute to the economics literature on dictatorships by identifying a powerful ideological and political origin and determinant and thus incorporating it into the full set of their economic and non-economic origins.

By contrast to that in economics, the sociology literature considers a variety of non-economic conditions of capitalist and related dictatorships, in conjunction and interaction with their 'economic origins' (Berezin 2019; Margalit 2019; Romero 2020). In this respect, the sociology literature tends to be more holistic or complete and hence realistic and satisfactory as an analysis and explanation of these phenomena by doing

full justice to their multiple and varied origins, thus expressing both halves of the equation of capitalist dictatorship. In view of this, the present paper grounds itself and builds on this rich sociological literature, but also improves on and to some extent goes beyond the latter as well as that from economics. It does this by identifying a powerful and indeed principal sociological origin and determinant of capitalist and related dictatorship that much of the sociological literature does not explicitly identify and systematically analyze as such a prime mover or only implies, with some rare explicit endeavors or implications (Bourdieu 1998; Feagin 2001; Mannheim 1936; Moore 1993).

Since this factor is conservatism as a social ideology and politics it is noteworthy that analyses of it abound in the sociology and related literature but investigations of its possible determination of or linkage with capitalist dictatorship are relatively rare or at most by implication, with some exceptions or anticipations (e.g., Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998; Burawoy 2005; Caren et al. 2020; Habermas 2001; Lamont 2018). Consequently, the paper aims to contribute to the sociology literature by explicitly and consistently incorporating conservatism into the set of non-economic origins and determinants of capitalist and related dictatorships and analyzing its impact. At the minimum, so long as conservatism's origins of capitalist dictatorship are present but implicit or under-elaborated in most of the sociological literature, the paper seeks to render them explicit and elaborate them. In this sense, it aims to reopen Pandora's box of conservatism and capitalist dictatorship in the sociology literature, which some previous sociologists, especially Mannheim and Michels, anticipate, imply and partly reveal during interwar times, while being seemingly closed during the postwar times, and others open more recently (Beck 2000; Feagin 2001; Lamont 2018; Romero 2020; Williams 2021).

With the above as the background, the remainder of the paper proceeds in the following manner. Section 2 establishes and specifies the connection of conservatism to capitalist dictatorship. Section 3 examines the historical emergence and evolution of conservatism in relation to capitalist dictatorship. Section 4 considers the opposition of conservatism to universal liberty and liberal democracy. Section 5 analyzes the link of conservatism to authoritarianism, totalitarianism and capitalist dictatorship. Section 6 examines conservatism as the ideology of aristocracy and plutocracy. Section 7



investigates the link of conservatism to capitalist dictatorship through anti-labor ideology. Section 8 provides conclusions and directions for further research.

## **2. From Conservatism To Capitalist Dictatorship**

As indicated, the cardinal ideological and political determinant and thus predictor of capitalist dictatorship and more broadly authoritarian capitalism consists of conservatism as a peculiar form of ideology and politics. (See Bourdieu 1998; Mannheim 1986; Moore 1993; also, Beck 2000; Burawoy 2005; Cohen 2003; Davis 1962; Feagin 2001; Galbraith and Parker 2017; Habermas 1989; Hung and Thompson 2016; Kumar 2001; Rajan and Zingales 2004; Lavador and Oxoby 2005; Miliband 1969; Wacquant 2002.)

In addition to and often in conjunction with grounding capitalist dictatorship, conservatism grounds and predicts ideologically and politically most other contemporary and historical, particularly fascist, neo-fascist and theocratic, dictatorships. (See Arendt 1951; Bénabou, Ticchi and Vindigni 2015; Bruce 2004; Dahrendorf 1979; Giddens 1979; Glaeser, Ponzetto, and Shapiro 2005; Habermas 2001; Mannheim 1936; Mueller 2009; also, Parsons 1949.) On this account, capitalist dictatorship or authoritarian capitalism tends to arise and function primarily, with secondary variations, as a conservative, 'right' regime in ideological and political terms, as do invariably fascism and theocracy as ultra-conservative, 'radical-right' and 'godly' regimes. (See Barnett and Woywode 2004; Bernstein 2014; Bonica et al. 2013; Collins 1993; Dahrendorf 1979; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Giddens 1979; Slater and Smith 2016.)

Alternatively, most, especially extremely, conservative regimes display the tendency to constitute or merge with capitalist, just as fascist and theocratic, dictatorships (Mueller 2009; Slater and Smith 2016). Most of these regimes so closely intertwine, fuse or ally that it is often difficult or nearly impossible to disentangle them and precisely differentiate capitalist from conservative, including fascist or neo-fascist populist and theocratic, dictatorships. For example, this holds for America after the 2016 elections and the resulting pro-capitalist/radical-right regime---and in extension since Reaganism and perhaps Puritanism--and through regional and global contagion or coincidence beyond to the rest of the world. (See Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Bénabou et al. 2015; Bonikowski 2016; Garrido 2017; Hung and Thompson 2016; Jacobs

and Dirlam 2016; Jouet 2017; Krasa and Polborn 2014; Piketty 2020; Shiller 2017; Solow et al.1987.) The latter setting encompasses much of Latin America (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Peru until 2022), sections of Europe (Austria, Hungary, Italy, Poland) and Great Britain post-Brexit, parts of Asia (the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore for long, etc.) and especially most Islamic countries (Turkey in recent times, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states).

In particular, one wonders how to precisely characterize and experience evangelical America, including the 'Bible Belt', post-2016 or since the 1980s—a capitalist/plutocratic or a conservative/theocratic dictatorship and generally regime, or rather both. (See Bonikowski 2016; Burris 2001; Clawson and Clawson 1999; Clawson and Neudstadt 1989; Hicks 2006; Hirsch, Michels, and Friedman 1990; Jouet 2017; King, Massoglia, and Uggen 2012; Manza and Brooks 1997; Munch 2001; Murray 2017; Neustadt and Clawson 1988; Quadagno 1999; Pontikes, Negro, and Rao 2010; Tilman 2001; Wagner 1997.) The same holds, with proper qualifications, for a number of other cases. They include South America and the Philippines, Catholic-dominated Poland, plus Austria, Hungary and Italy under right-wing populist governments, and Saudi Arabia, other Gulf States and Islamic-ruled Turkey—capitalist/oligarchic or conservative, including neo-fascist/populist and theocratic, dictatorships, or both (Acemoglu, Egorov, and Sonin 2012; Aksoy and Billari2018; Aksoy and Gambetta 2022; Garrido 2017; Guriev and Papaioannou 2022; Kuran 2018; Mueller 2009; Samuelson 1964).

The dual designation looks as the most accurate description because all these societies appear to combine and even fuse, in varying degrees and ways, elements of both regimes, simply appearing as intertwined capitalist-conservative, including plutocratic/oligarchic and neo-fascist populist/theocratic, dictatorships or regimes (Hung and Thompson 2016; Slater and Smith 2016). Hence, it appears that in contemporary societies conservatism and capitalist, as well as fascist and theocratic, dictatorship, including autocracy, oligarchy and plutocracy in capitalism, move closely together, virtually going hand in hand (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006a; Bourdieu 1998; Habermas 2001; Mueller 2009). They seem to rise, stand and fall together, with conservatism being the main ideological-political foundation on which capitalist and fascist dictatorship stands, and the second the economic-societal ground on which the first

rests (Bauman 2001; Galbraith and Parker 2017; Kumar 2001; Miliband 1969). Since conservatism represents an ideology and politics, i.e., an ideational and belief system and political movement, fundamentally distinct from and vehemently opposed to liberalism, this yields an inference or rises a suspicion accordingly. This is that conservatism may ideologically and politically over-determine or intimately associate with capitalist dictatorship and authoritarian capitalism overall, just as over-determining or associating with fascism and theocracy (Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998; Feagin 2001; Habermas 1989; Hung and Thompson 2016; Wacquant 2002).

Generally, while emerging as an ideological expression of pre-capitalist aristocracy and oligarchy, conservatism evolves into and constitutes a characteristic pro-capital, plutocratic ideology and an inherently anti-liberal, anti-individualistic, authoritarian and ultimately, as through fascism and theocracy, totalitarian and thus anti-democratic ideational and belief system. (See Bourdieu 1998; Dahrendorf 1979; Giddens 1979; Habermas 1989; Krasa and Polborn 2014; Mannheim 1936; Miller, Slomczynski, and Kohn 1987; Mueller 2009; Nisbet 1966.) Arising in vehement opposition to liberalism and democracy, the distinctiveness of conservatism as an ideology in relation to its precedent medieval traditionalism as what Mannheim (1986) deems a pre-ideology and pre-democracy coincides with the difference of capitalist dictatorship from pre-capitalist dictatorships in ideological or ideational terms (also, Kettler and Meja 1984; Kettler, Meja and Stehr 1992; Merton 1968).

Conservatism forms the primary ideological foundation and justification of capitalist dictatorship, including autocracy, oligarchy and plutocracy—plus fascism and theocracy—in contrast to traditionalism forming the pre-ideological basis of pre-capitalist dictatorships, including slavery, caste and master-servant feudalism (Mannheim 1986; also, Kettler and Meja 1984). This rules out equating the concepts of conservatism and traditionalism in the context of capitalist dictatorship, though not necessarily in that of religious dictatorships such as present evangelical (American), Catholic (Latin American, Polish) and Islamic theocracies (Mueller 2009; also, Bauman 1997; Bénabou et al. 2015; Oberschall 2004).

For illustration, Thatcherism, Reaganism and other neoconservatism--also not accurately termed 'neoliberalism' or 'libertarianism' as laissez-faire déjà vu reimposing

labor coercion--represents the main ideological basis and rationalization of capitalist dictatorship and more broadly authoritarian capitalism qua 'plutonomy' in Great Britain, the US and other Anglo-Saxon societies. (See Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998; Giddens 2000; Habermas 1989; Hicks 2006; Hodgson 1999; Hung and Thompson 2016; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Jouet 2017; Kristal 2010; Myles and Turegun 1994; Piven 2008; Quadagno 1999; Redbird and Grusky 2016; Somers and Block 2005; Solow et al. 1987; Stiglitz 2010; Wodtke 2016; Wright 2013.) By contrast, legal traditionalism such as feudal master-servant common law (reenacted via the Master and Servant Act in 19<sup>th</sup> century England) represented the major pre-ideological, customary root and justification of the master-servant economy in Great Britain and the US--in which capitalism hence functioned as 'belated feudalism'--until the 1870s and the New Deal, respectively (Acemoglu and Robinson 2015; Naidu and Yuchtman 2013; Orren 1991; Steinberg 2003; Steinfeld 2001).

In this sense, in these societies at present plutocratic conservatism functions in respect of capitalist dictatorship as an ideological equivalent of master-servant aristocratic common law and other forms of traditionalism functioning as the pre-ideological driving force in the feudal master-servant economy, slavery and caste during earlier times (Bourdieu 1998; Habermas 1989; Roemer and Trannoy 2016; Steinberg 2003). In a way, via Thatcherism and Reaganism with their emulations post-Brexit and after 2016 resurgent conservatism as ideologically over-determines capitalist dictatorship, including plutocracy, in Great Britain and the US presently as common law customarily over-determined the master-servant economy in these societies before. In passing, some economists exalt pre-capitalist common law as supplying the prime 'legal origins' of American-English capitalism and its presumed superiority, such as superior property-rights protection for capitalists (Glaeser and Shleifer 2002; La Porta, Lopez-De-Silanes, and Shleifer 2008). However, this claim obscures the fact that the same code protected the privileges of aristocratic masters in feudalism while denying rights to and indeed oppressing servants, thus offers a feudal instrument as a capitalist panacea (Acemoglu and Johnson 2005; Besley and Persson 2009; Roe and Siegel 2009).

In some cases, conservatism and traditionalism combine to provide a composite ideological and customary foundation and rationalization of capitalist dictatorship. An

exemplar is the dual laissez-faire and common-law grounding and justifying of capitalism's perpetuation of the repressive master-servant system in Great Britain and the US, as well as slavery in the American South, until the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, respectively (Galbraith and Parker 2017; Naidu and Yuchtman 2013; Orren 1991; Steinberg 2003). However, in longer terms, as since the abolition of slavery, the master-servant system, caste and other pre-capitalist despotism, conservatism as an ideology tends to substitute in both the economy and society, especially its polity, for traditionalism as a pre-ideology customary force. Conservatism hence becomes the primary ideological power or 'ideational authority' of not only fascist and theocratic dictatorships but also of capitalist dictatorship and generally repressive, anti-egalitarian capitalism, as observed for Great Britain and the US historically and recently (Baldassarri and Bearman 2007; Bourdieu 1998; Piven 2008; Somers and Block 2005; Wacquant 2002; Wright 2013).

Consequently, conservatism evolves from an ideological expression of pre-capitalist despotism into, with some variations, paraphrasing Mannheim (1936), the ideology and utopia of capitalist dictatorship, as well as fascism and theocracy, whereas religious traditionalism perpetuated and sanctified earlier theocracies during the (Christian and Islamic) Dark Middle Ages (Dombrowski 2001; Habermas 2001; Knight 1960; Mueller 2009). While the social-class point of origin of conservatism was the fervent apology à la Burke of feudal aristocracy and its despotic rule in revolt against liberalism and democracy, specifically the French Revolution, its destination is the apologetics of capitalist autocracy, oligarchy and plutocracy. The latter effectively constitutes what Pareto connotes the 'new aristocracy' of capital (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013; Giddens 2000; Formisano 2015). This apology includes conservatism, including 'libertarianism', 'defending the top one percent' representing oligarchy or plutocracy and a 'self-proclaimed business genius' embodying quasi-autocracy in the US since the 1980s and especially post-2016 (Mankiw 2013; Shiller 2017; also, Hahl, Minjae and Zuckerman 2018; Jouet 2017; Lamont 2018; Tilman 2001).

On this account, conservatism develops and remains as a coherent, uncompromising ideology of aristocracy, pre-capitalist and capitalist, including aristocracies of land and of capital, thus of aristocratic, elite rule. This holds as a

prevailing pattern, though conservatism, especially its American version, tends to disguise or embellish its ideology of aristocracy with anti-elite populist slogans to generate mixed capitalist-populist dictatorships, alliances and mobilizations, as in Great Britain during Thatcherism and Brexit and the US since Reaganism and post-2016 (Bonikowski 2016; Bonikowski, Feinstein, and Bock 2021; Brennan 2018; Fetzer 2019; Garrido 2017; Gauchat and Andrews 2018; Gorman and Seguin 2018; Guriev and Papaioannou 2022; Hung and Thompson 2016; Lamont 2018; Munch 2001). In turn, the manifest and strong ideological thrust of conservatism stands in contrast to traditionalism like medieval common law in Great Britain and its former colonies, operating as the pre-ideological, customary basis and justification of feudal aristocracy, specifically landed aristocracies (Acemoglu et al. 2011; Baland and Robinson 2008; Moore 1993; Roemer and Trannoy 2016). In Pareto's terms, conservatism arises and operates as the ideology of the 'circulation of elites'—as consequently does fascism—and paints social history as the 'graveyard of aristocracies', while traditionalism operating as a custom or what Durkheim calls a 'blind habit', Weber an unconscious 'habitation' and Parsons the 'law of inertia' in society (Mannheim 1936; also, Benhabib and Bisin 2018). Thus, in light of the frequent equation between the two, it is conservatism and capitalist, plus fascist and theocratic, dictatorship that 'go hand in hand', and not traditionalism in itself and the latter (Mueller 2009).

Even if conservatism replaces and surpasses pre-ideological traditionalism in that it becomes a prime social, specifically ideological, mover of capitalist, fascist and theocratic, dictatorships, it does not abandon and forget traditional ways and means of exerting and justifying coercion, oppression, subjugation and exploitation (Amengualand Bartley<sup>5</sup> 2022; Baudrillard 1998; Bourdieu 1998; Munch 2001; Sen 2009; Somerville 2000). Instead, it inherits, perpetuates and expands the traditional pattern of what Simmel (1950) describes and Durkheim (1964) implies as 'a ruling caste' and Michels (1968:11) denotes the 'conservative spirit of the old master-caste' and extreme inequality, coercion and oppression, including slave and servant master castes (Roemer and Trannoy 2016). The 'conservative spirit of the old master-caste' is another way to restate the argument that conservatism originates, develops and remains as the ideology and utopia of aristocracy, originally of that of land estate, as in late 18<sup>th</sup> and

early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe and the antebellum US South. Subsequently, it becomes the ideology or apology of the aristocracy of capital, thus of plutocracy or wealthy oligarchy, as in America virtually since its founding through the Gilded Age to the present, as Jefferson's condemnation of the 'aristocracy of our monied corporations' and Roosevelt's of the tyranny of plutocracy' reflect (Formisano 2015; Pryor 2002; Stiglitz 2012; Tilman 2001; also, Beckert 2022).

For instance, conservatism crucially contributed to capitalism inheriting and perpetuating a feudal-style master-servant economy and so 'belated feudalism' of which common law was the traditionalistic legal origin in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Great Britain and America, as well as slavery in the South, just as obstructed the formation and extension of democracy and political rights (Acemoglu and Robinson 2015; Steinberg 2003). After the official end of slavery conservatism established, perpetuated and sanctified, as Pareto (1935) classically observes, an apparent caste system in the postbellum American South that effectively continued the antebellum slave regime through severe 'labor repression' for long (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008). Relatedly, religious conservatism imposed and sanctified as 'God's design' a de facto (and de jure) evangelical Puritanical theocracy that proved even more obdurate by enduring up to the present in the form of a 'Bible Belt' (Bauman 1997; Mueller 2009; Putnam 2001).

Hence, by inheriting and perpetuating the ancient common law and economy of masters-servants within 'free labor' British and American capitalism, conservatism effectively inherited and perpetuated the coercive and oppressive the 'spirit of the old master-caste', specifically belated feudal and, as in the South, slave masters. More recently, Reaganism's ideological program and political implementation of the redistribution and concentration of wealth and proximate monopolization of power in the wealthy and powerful, thus plutocracy and oligarchy, in American capitalism resurrects this spirit of the master caste and extreme inequality<sup>6</sup> and oppression, as does the almost identical pattern of Thatcherism in Great Britain (Hodgson 1999; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Kristal 2010; Piketty 2020; Solow et al. 1987).

Consequently, through wealth concentration and power monopolization in the new master caste, aristocracy of capital, Thatcherite and Reaganite neoconservatism makes capitalism reappear effectively as neo-feudalism, new patrimonialism, a new

caste system and resembling slavery<sup>7</sup> (Bourdieu 1998; Cohen 2003; Formisano 2015). It therefore follows paleo-conservatism that made capitalism look through the master-servant law and labor repression a regime of castes, 'belated feudalism' and a de facto continuation of the slave economy (Binmore 2001; Orren 1991; Piketty 2020). Furthermore, resurgent conservatism in America during the extremist 'Tea Party' rise and post-2016 effectively revives the spirit of the master caste in an even more blatant dictatorial or populist form, ultimately through quasi-autocracy in the face of a 'self-proclaimed business genius' qua a would-be autocratic master (Bonikowski 2017; Garrido 2017; Jouet 2017; Murray 2017; Redbird and Grusky 2016; Schilke and Rossman 2018; Shiller 2017). The same holds, with secondary variations, for the surge of conservatism in Great Britain before, during and after the nationalistic and economically irrational Brexit rage (Brennan 2018; Colantone and Stanig 2019; Fetzer 2019; Lamont 2018). British conservatism apparently revives the spirit of the master caste by designing and sustaining a Thatcher-style nationalistic, repressive, plutocratic, and autocratic regime through its own would-be autocratic master mirroring, as do many others in especially third-world countries, that in post-2016 America (Shiller 2017).

To that extent, conservatism's predisposition to resurrect and indeed constitute the spirit of the master caste by being rooted in medieval traditionalism predisposes it to be the perfect candidate for a primary ideological determinant or ideational origin of capitalist dictatorship in contemporary societies. The latter include especially Brexit Great Britain and post-2016 America among Western societies and others in the non-Western world via global contagion or confluence, spanning from South America, including Brazil and Colombia until 2022 through Eastern Europe, especially Hungary and Poland, and Islamic countries practicing some form of capitalism, such as Saudi Arabia, other Gulf states, and Turkey (Aksoy and Gambetta 2022; Berezin 2019; Edwards 2019; Kaltwasser 2018; Soehl and Karim 2021). (Table 1 summarizes these contemporary instances or proxies of capitalist dictatorship.)

Relatedly, the master caste's tendency renders conservatism the ideological prime mover, the inherent belief-system of fascist and theocratic dictatorships in post-2016 evangelical America (e.g., the South) and elsewhere, ranging from much of South America through many parts of Eastern Europe and most Islamic countries. Virtually all



fascist or radical-right, theocratic or 'faith-based' dictatorships and other conservative ideologies and regimes constitute variations of the 'master caste', from the 'master race' in Nazism and fascism (Tetlock, Mellers, and Scoblic 2017) to 'white supremacy' in American neo-fascism or populism post-2016, from Calvinist mastery and masters in England/New England Puritan theocracy to 'American exceptionalism' and 'superiority' in evangelical and plutocratic America.

Evidently, the above predisposition renders conservatism an ideal ideological tour de force of capitalist, as well as fascist and theocratic, dictatorship because the latter essentially represents an oppressive system of a master caste and servants in substantive terms of effective mastery or domination and of subjugation or submission. In this regard, conservatism over-determines ideologically capitalist dictatorship by transplanting the spirit of the old master caste from pre-capitalism to capitalism in various ways. They involve maintaining the master-servant common law and economy in Great Britain and the US for long and the plutocratic concentration of wealth and the oligarchic monopolization of power in these societies (Naidu and Yuchtman 2013; Steinberg 2003). The latter process especially enfolds and persists during and since Thatcherism and Reaganism and their ramifications during Brexit and post-2016 and others via contagion in the non-Western world of Latin America, Africa, parts of Asia, Eastern Europe and Islamic states (Piketty 2020).

In sum, the spirit of the master caste such as slave and aristocratic masters-castes perfectly captures the essence, hard core and 'best kept secret' of conservatism, and hence predicts its ideological determination or rationalization of capitalist dictatorship, including plutocracy and autocracy, as well as of fascist and theocratic dictatorships. Accordingly, conservatism represents the necessary and often, *ceteris paribus*, sufficient ideological condition of capitalist dictatorship, as well as of fascism and residual theocracy, just as traditionalism was the indispensable customary prerequisite of pre-capitalist economic, political and religious despotism through the common law of master-servant regimes and the sacred tradition of older theocracies. For illustration, paleo-conservatism, combining the old economic, political and religious conservatism, reportedly was necessary and sufficient force to enact or maintain ideologically capitalist dictatorship via coercion and oppression in 19<sup>th</sup> century Great

Britain and America during the Gilded Age, and a fortiori Southern slavery. Similarly, neo-conservatism through Thatcherism, Reaganism and their variations has functioned as the necessary and sufficient ideological requisite of generating or sustaining capitalist dictatorship through 'plutonomy' in these and other Anglo-Saxon countries since the 1980s. Further, resurgent conservatism in Brexit Great Britain and post-2016 America functions as such a condition to the point of ideologically and politically enabling or rationalizing potential capitalist autocracy and would-be autocrats and generally illiberal, undemocratic and oligarchic politics (Naidu et al. 2020; Piketty 2020).

The preceding allows formulating an analogue to Michels' 'iron law' of oligarchy—whenever conservatism arises and prevails an ideology and politics, so does, *ceteris paribus*, capitalist dictatorship as an economic and social system, along with fascism and theocracy usually merged or allied with it. (For capitalism as a total social, including political, system see Acemoglu and Robinson 2006a; Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998; Braudel 1979; Burawoy 2005; Collins 1988; Dahrendorf 1979; Giddens 1981; MacIver 1964; Plven 2008; Wright 2013.) The law of conservatism and capitalist dictatorship seems to operate in contemporary society. Capitalist dictatorship via 'plutonomy' and proxy autocracy in America and Great Britain during Reaganism and post-2016 and Thatcherism and Brexit tends to be exclusively a conservative ideology through conservatism's ideological design and apologetics of coercion and oppression in American and British unrestrained and inegalitarian capitalism. (See Beck 2000; Bonikowski 2016; Bourdieu 1998; Frank 2007; Garrido 2017; Hodgson 1999; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Krasa and Polborn 2014; Kapur et al. 2005; Shiller 2017; Wodtke 2016; Wright 2013.) A variation of conservative-driven capitalist dictatorship such as plutocracy and oligarchy in these societies conservatism dominates represents the self-reliance 'libertarian' (Hayekian) 'nirvana' of concentrated wealth and monopolized power in capital as a social class and its domination and suppression of non-capital strata (Babb 2007; McFadden 2006; Piketty 2020; Solow et al. 1987; Spenkuch and Toniatti 2018; Tilman 2001).

A fortiori, the Michels-style 'iron law' of conservatism and capitalist dictatorship asserts itself in many non-Western societies that are effectively merged conservative-capitalist, including fascist/theocratic-plutocratic, oligarchic or autocratic, dictatorships.

The latter proliferate or intensify especially through the global contagion and emulation of or convergence with the US post-2016 radical-right regime and a would-be autocratic 'business genius' as their inspiration, model or ally (Berezin 2019; Shiller 2017; for 'radical conservative policies' on the US state level see Merriman and Pacewicz 2022). These third-world countries proliferate, expand and ally with the first and among themselves to become new allies in conservative-capitalist dictatorship and 'brothers in arms' against its alternatives, liberal democracy and democratic capitalism. Recall they include reemerging neo-fascist, radical-right regimes in South America like Brazil and Colombia until recently, those in Eastern Europe under or allied with oligarchic or hyper-capitalism<sup>8</sup>, repressive conservatism and theocracy, as in the Baltics, Hungary, Poland, and parts of Western Europe, such as former Nazi and fascist Austria and Italy. (Berezin 2019; Guriev and Papaioannou 2022; Shiller 2017; Soehl and Karim 2021). Additional cases involve populist and undemocratic governments in Asia, including India, the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore, and Islamic capitalist theocracies such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states (Aksoy and Gambetta 2022; Berezin 2019; Garrido 2017; Guriev and Papaioannou 2022; Soehl and Karim 2021).

In this regard, capitalist dictatorship couched as 'free enterprise' for capital exerting labor coercion continues, as has been since Reaganism as the principal cause of 'national partisan polarization' (Carlino et al. 2023), to be the main ideological interest and 'value' American conservatism post-2016 expands and exports to third-world countries from Brazil to Poland (Shiller 2017). This expansion proceeds in conjunction and reciprocal intensification with its exporting, as through imperial wars or aggressive missionary work, of religious dictatorship in the way of theocracy qua 'faith-based' government a la evangelical, Puritanical America (Abbott 2005; Mueller 2009; Munch 2001). Consequently, continuing the efforts of Reaganism and its precursors during the Cold War through imperialism and militarism, American conservatism during the post-2016 radical-right regime attempts and to some degree succeeds to create a kind of new axis of conservative-capitalist, including fascist/theocratic-oligarchic/autocratic, dictatorships. Moreover, what is common to and indeed unites all these dictatorships is their shared revolt against liberalism's project and system of liberal secular democracy

and democratic egalitarian capitalism (Berezin 2019; Colantone and Stanig 2019; Gethin, Martínez-Toledano and Piketty 2022).

To the extent, this opposition between American-led conservative-capitalist, including theocratic-plutocratic, dictatorship and the complex of Western European, notably Scandinavian, liberal democracy and democratic welfare capitalism becomes again--after its initiation by Nazi and other fascist-corporate dictatorships in WW II--the true 'clash of civilizations' post-2016, just as since Reaganism (Bénabou et al. 2015; Habermas 2001; Norris and Inglehart 2007; Krasa and Polborn 2014; Mueller 2009). If so, this opposition of dictatorship and democracy renews and intensifies the original and perpetual conflict since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century of conservatism as intrinsic authoritarianism rooted in medievalism and aristocracy with liberalism as the sole genuine ideal of liberty grounded in the Enlightenment and French Revolution (Mannheim 1986; also, Acemoglu et al. 2011).

The conservatism-liberalism conflict primarily in America via persistent and intense culture and ideological wars and in part other Western societies contradicts and supersedes the supposed 'clash of civilizations' through an open or covert war among societal cultures and religions, for example, 'democratic' Western Christianity versus 'undemocratic' non-Western religions, as nationalistic accounts allege (for criticisms<sup>9</sup> see Allen 2008; Cole 2005). Prima facie, the opposition of conservative-driven capitalist dictatorship versus liberal democracy in America appears stronger and more persistent, as US culture, ideological and other proxy civil wars testify, than the 'clash of civilizations' between American 'democratic' Christianity and non-Western 'undemocratic' religions like Islam. Moreover, the latter and evangelicalism turn out to be overt or tacit allies ('brothers in arms') in their shared 'holy' terror and cosmic war (crusade and jihad) against liberal secular democracy, individual liberty and scientific progress (Bauman 2001; Bénabou et al. 2015; Jouet 2017; Juergensmeyer 2003; Mueller 2009). This validates the 'clash of civilizations' in the present meaning of that between conservative-capitalist dictatorship and liberal democracy and to compromise that in the sense of wars among the world religions that reportedly all in certain varying degrees and ways are inherently theocratic and thus undemocratic (Habermas 2001).

Having argued the link between the two, the question opens as to how and why conservatism as an ideological and political force determines and thus predicts capitalist dictatorship as well as fascist/theocratic dictatorships, which the next section addresses.

### **3. The Emergence And Evolution Of Conservatism And Capitalist Dictatorship**

In general, conservatism determines and predicts ideologically and politically capitalist dictatorship and more broadly authoritarianism and even totalitarianism by virtue of at least two intrinsic conservative attributes and tendencies (Beck 2000; Hodgson 1999; Piven 2008; Wright 2013). The first is conservatism's emergence out and in defense of the ancient regime of coercion, oppression and aristocracy and its rule and privilege (Acemoglu et al. 2011; Burns 1990; Piketty 2015; Wimmer and Feinstein 2010). The second tendency is conservatism's evolution into, or becoming an ideological and political justification of, an equivalent repressive contemporary system, notably its ultimate transformation into or grounding of fascism and theocracy as invariably conservative, 'right' anti-liberal systems (Bénabou et al. 2015; Bourdieu 1998; Burawoy 2005; Dahrendorf 1979; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Giddens 1979; Mueller 2009; Riley and Fernández 2014).

Altogether, conservatism's point of origin in medieval despotism such as feudalism and aristocracy and its destination in modern authoritarianism via what Dahrendorf(1979) identifies as the 'conservative-authoritarian movement' and ultimately fascist and theocratic totalitarianism are predictive with respect to capitalist dictatorship. They predispose conservatism to operate as the ideological-political prime mover of capitalist dictatorship from personal autocracy to collective oligarchy and plutocracy as the new aristocracy of capital within capitalism (Besley and Kudamatsu 2006; Formisano 2015; Morck et al. 2005; Rajan2009).

More broadly, conservatism ideologically over-determines and predicts most other contemporary dictatorships and repressive regimes. These regimes comprise notably rising neo-fascist states and resurgent theocracies as its inherent and invariant creations in most non-Western countries and some Western societies, including America, above all the South and similar ultra-conservative and religious regions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013; Bauman 1997; Kranton and Sanders 2017; Mueller

2009). For example, among non-Western societies recent creations or linkages of conservatism are neo-fascist or extreme-right populist governments. The latter span from Hungary to Brazil and Colombia (until 2022) and the Philippines and theocracies or bogus theocratic 'democracies' ranging from Catholic-dominated Poland to Turkey under Islamic rule and Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states (Acemoglu et al. 2012; Aksoy and Billari 2018; Garrido 2017; Kuran 2018; Mueller 2009).

Furthermore, its creations among some Western societies encompass the factio theocracy of evangelical America (the 'Bible Belt') constantly and the radical-right authoritarian populist regime and proxy autocracy recently (Berezin 2019; Gethin et al. 2022; Mueller 2009). In addition, they include via global contagion Italy and Austria with merged conservative-fascist ('far-right') governing coalitions evoking the merger of conservatism and fascism of the 1920-30s in these and other states (Barnett and Woywode 2004; Bonikowski et al. 2021; Jouet 2017; Riley and Fernández 2014). Of course, conservatism's dictatorial creations and links exclude communist dictatorships as a non-conservative but near-extinct or growingly rare and marginal species of contemporary dictatorship contrary to 'libertarian' and other economists' obsession with these mostly dead or rarified non-capitalist regimes (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013; Burawoy 2005; Lucas 2009; Kornai 2000; Olson 2000).

### *Conservatism, Medievalism And Capitalist Dictatorship*

Conservatism tends to operate as a driving ideological force of capitalist dictatorship by, as Mannheim<sup>10</sup>(1936; 1986) classically demonstrates, emerging out of traditionalism that turned 'self-reflective' in encountering and revolting against emerging liberalism, thus the idea and practice of liberty and democracy, and generally modernity. (See also Burns 1990; Dahrendorf 1979; Dombrowski 2001; Habermas 2001; Kettler and Meja 1984; Kinloch 1981; Knight 1960; Laski 1936; Mueller 2009; Nisbet 1966.) Specifically, Mannheim specifies that conservatism emerges as the historical offspring and ideological mode of perpetuation of medievalism, including romanticism in Germany, and aristocracy in a vehement anti-liberal counter-revolutionary reaction against liberal modernity, while liberalism and modernism arising mostly as the product of the Enlightenment as the Age of Reason and liberty and the French Revolution. (See also

Mokyr 2014; Olick 1999; Mueller 2009; Phelps 2013; Piketty 2014; Sen 2009; Squicciarini and Voigtländer 2015; Squicciarini 2020.)

To paraphrase Clausewitz's famous definition of war, conservatism arises as the continuation of medievalism by other means to transform the pre-ideological traditionalist justification of pre-capitalist slavery, caste and feudal despotism and its master caste and aristocracy into the ideological rationalization of capitalist dictatorship and its oligarchy, plutocracy and, as in interwar Europe and post-2016 America, autocracy. This ideological transformation occurs, if not initially as during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century when conservatism remained what Mannheim characterizes as the ideology of nobility à la Burke, then subsequently, as in later 19<sup>th</sup>-century Great Britain and America (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013; Steinberg 2003).

Further, conservatism's transformation from the apology of pre-capitalist aristocracy into that of capitalist plutocracy ultimately materializes and completes itself. It does so through neoconservatism à la Thatcherism and Reaganism with their populist-plutocratic counterrevolutions and mobilizations, as well their sequels, including the post-2016 mobilization of this kind in the US and via contagion or convergence other countries mentioned previously (Hung and Thompson 2016; Slater and Smith 2016). As aristocracy subsequently joined and eventually merged with the capitalist class and the latter absorbed or allied with it especially in Great Britain, as well as France and the US South, conservatism consequently adapted accordingly. It transformed itself into the ideology of plutocracy as the new aristocracy of capital or money--as Jefferson already complains--and the next master caste and to that extent of capitalist dictatorship (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013; Collins 1993; Formisano 2015; Stiglitz 2012; Tilman 2001). This reaffirms that conservatism invariably develops, revives and functions as the ideology and justification of aristocracy or a master caste, that of land estate initially in adverse Burke-style reaction to the French Revolution, and of capital since the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, thus following the aristocratic trajectory from pre-capitalism to capitalism or early to subsequent phases of the latter (Piketty 2020).

Positively, as in Mannheim's and related accounts, conservatism arises in defense and attempting restoration of pre-capitalist, medieval despotism and feudal aristocracy (plus theocracy) as the precedent and indeed a model and inspiration for

capitalist dictatorship and plutocracy. This is what also Pareto (1963) implies by his theory of perpetuation of 'repression' and of 'circulation' of elites from pre-capitalism to capitalism and of history as the 'graveyard' of aristocracies as invariably plutocracies (also, Benhabib and Bisin 2018). Negatively, conservatism erupts as the anti-liberal, anti-individualistic and anti-democratic, as well as anti-secular, anti-rationalistic and anti-modern, ideology of feudal aristocracy. As such an ideology, it revolts against and attempts to reverse the complex of early liberalism it defines as its, in Mannheim (1936) words, 'immediate' and permanent antagonist, democracy, secularism and rationalism which caused the demise and superseded the despotic ancient regime (Acemoglu et al. 2011; Burns 1990; Hechter 2004; Knight 1960; Nisbet 1966; Wimmer and Feinstein 2010). Taken together, conservatism originating in and erupting out of medievalism and its despotism and expressing aristocratic rule emerges and acts as a counter-movement and counter-revolutionary opposition countering and reversing liberalism, democracy, rationalism and modernism into illiberty, authoritarianism, irrationalism and primitivism (Mannheim 1986; also, Kumar 2001; Llavador and Oxoby 2005; Mueller 2009; Slater and Smith 2016; Vasi and Strang 2009).

Especially, as a counter-revolution conservatism counters and seeks to reverse the Enlightenment as the epitome of liberalism, secularism, rationalism and modernism, indeed the producer and foundation of modernity as its 'child', and the French Revolution as the prototypical liberal-democratic form of radical societal change during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Acemoglu et al. 2011; Dahrendorf 1978; Habermas 2001; Knight 1967; Mokyr 2010; Moore 1993; Piketty 2014; Squicciarini and Voigtländer 2015). The probable father and role model of conservatism, including spurious 'libertarianism' a la Hayek, Edmund Burke in Great Britain represented a fervent defender of the feudal ancient regime and aristocratic rule and a vehement opponent of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, thus early liberalism and democracy (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013; Easterly 2008; Giddens 2000; Mueller 2007). The same holds for Burke's equivalents Bonald and Maistre in France, Fichte in Germany, and Hamilton et al. in early America (Nisbet 1966; Parsons 1967).

Generally, in doing so, conservatism attempts and succeeds--partly and transiently in France (the Restoration) and more fully and enduringly in Great Britain



and Germany since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the US from the 1980s--to reverse liberalism, democracy, rationalism and modernity into their opposites (Mannheim 1986; also, Dahrendorf 1978; Lipset 1955; Mueller 2009; Nisbet 1966). And it engineers such reversals through anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-rationalist and anti-modern counterrevolutions and mobilizations as restorations of the pre-liberal, pre-democratic and irrational 'golden' past (Bourdieu 1988; Habermas 2001). Paradigmatic exemplars are the conservative counterrevolutions of Nazism/fascism and American-British and other neoconservatism and neofascism, including the extremist 'Tea Party' and post-2016 authoritarian populist politics in the US and Brexit nationalism, including self-defeating economic protectionism. (See Amity, Redding, and Weinstein 2020; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014; Blee and Creasap 2010; Bonikowski 2016; Bourdieu 1998; Fajgelbaum et al. 2020; Fetzer 2019; Gross, Medvetz, and Russell 2011; Hung and Thompson 2016.)

In this regard, conservatism develops and invariably remains as what Mannheim (1936) describes an illusionary 'flight into the dead past', specifically medievalism and aristocracy. Conservatism does this by seeking to resurrect the 'dead hand of the past' (or to turn the clock back) through counter-revolutionary revolt against liberal, democratic, rationalist and modernist social change, including scientific progress (Bénabou et al. 2015; Harrod 1956; Lipset 1955). It follows that conservatism arises and functions as an invariantly reactionary, retrograde, specifically medieval and aristocratic type of ideology, politics and social control. This holds in spite of some modernist disguises and populist deceptions in American and British neoconservatism since Reaganism and Thatcherism through the post-2016 radical-right regime and Brexit (Bourdieu 1998; Dahrendorf 1979; Garrido 2017; Moore 1993; Nisbet 1966; Parsons 1949; Romero 2020; Skrentny 2006). Consequently, through conservative 'revolutions' as effective restorations à la Reaganism and Thatcherism and their post-2016 and Brexit replays conservatism tends to restore or perpetuate the ancient regime of medievalism, feudal despotism, 'holy' theocracy and the aristocratic rule of the master caste as its ideal and class ground, and in that sense the Dark Middle Ages (Bourdieu 1998; Hodgson 1999; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Krassa and Polborn 2014; Mueller 2009; Nisbet 1966; Piketty 2020; Solow et al. 1987).

To indicate that this restored societal darkness is far from being a hyperbole and metaphor, Pareto (1935) suggests that American paleo-conservatism effectively perpetuates the Dark Middle Ages in America through enacting ‘a mass of hypocritical laws for the enforcement of morality’ he characterizes as ‘replicas of laws of the European Middle Ages.’ As a consequence, Pareto (1935) observes ‘gross abuses’ and indeed the operation of ‘malignant power’ in the United States because of the government enforcing Puritanical ‘morality by law’—implying alcohol Prohibition and predicting the neoconservative ‘war on drugs’--which are ‘not observable’ in societies such as most of Western Europe without such moralistic, religion-driven suppressions. His contemporaries Mosca, Michels, Sombart, Scheler and Weber, along with the domestic critical observer of that period Mencken, make similar observations of the US (and other Anglo-Saxon) government’s Puritan-style repression, corruption and hypocrisy. For example, they all anticipated and some witnessed the latter’s grotesque culmination in Prohibition as the paramount exemplar of moralistic or paternalistic coercion and irrationalism during modern Western history (Andrews and Seguin 2015; Merton 1968; Mueller 2013; Roberts and Chen 2013; Simon 1976; Thaler 2018). For good measure, Pareto describes such proto-conservative suppression of individual freedom, including alcohol and related temperance movements and prohibitions, for example, the ‘female-led Temperance Crusade movement’<sup>11</sup> (García-Jimeno, Iglesias, and Yildirim 2022), in America as well as Great Britain as Puritan-style ‘insanity’ and the mix of sadism and masochism by ‘tormenting’ others and oneself due to Puritanism’s Calvinist equation of pleasures and sins with crimes and their Draconian sanctioning. Similarly, later and contemporary observers describe and experience these and neoconservative practices in America such as the Reagan ‘war on drugs’ as signs of extreme irrationality, including extraordinary economic inefficiency and exorbitant waste of societal resources and human lives (Akerlof 2002; Campbell and Schoenfeld 2013; Jacobs and Tope 2007; Mueller 2009; Sutton 2013).

More broadly than reenacting the moralistic ‘laws of the European Middle Ages’ of societal darkness conservatism’s restoration or perpetuation of medievalism involves restoring pre-capitalist despotism as a whole such as feudalism or the master-servant regime, caste, and variations or vestiges of slavery. And it performs such a restoration

in conjunction and mutual enforcement with retrieving medieval aristocracy, oligarchy and, as does especially American conservatism, theocracy (Mueller 2009). If, as Pareto (2000) observes, the anti-artistic, anti-humanistic and theocratic Protestant Reformation, especially the Calvinist/Puritan Revolution, 'halted' the artistic, proto-liberal and humanistic Renaissance in the countries in which that religion became victorious, then conservatism reverses or suppresses liberalism, democracy, secularism, and rationalism. It does this in the societies in which conservatism prevails, as in 19<sup>th</sup> century Great Britain and America or resurges via neoconservatism in these two societies since the 1980s through Brexit and post-2016 (Bell 2002; Berezin 2019; Gethin et al. 2022; MacLean 2018; Munch 2001; Piketty 2020; Rydgren 2007).

The probably most salient historical instances of such a conservative reversal among Western societies represent England and America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, since the 1980s and presently. This is because during the 19<sup>th</sup> century reportedly England was the capitalist master-servant economy and exclusionary pre-democracy and America a 'belated' feudal-style economic system of capitalism, not to mention slavery and its effective perpetuation in the South, during the Gilded Age and the 1920s until the Great Depression that conservatism's laissez-faire ideological and policy dogmas generated and enabled or rationalized economically the eruption of fascism and generally authoritarian rightism. (See Acemoglu and Robinson 2013; Autor et al. 2020; Eggertsson 2008; Isaac 2002; Kimeldorf 2013; Mann 2004; Mizruchi and Marshall 2016; Naidu and Yuchtman 2013; Orren 1991; Somers and Block 2005; Steinberg 2003.) Déjà vu, both countries become recent and current exemplars of conservative counterrevolutions and mobilizations since the 1980s through the present, Britain during Brexit and especially America after the 2016 elections resulting in authoritarian and exclusionary politics invariably typifying conservatism since its inception out of medievalism (Bonikowski 2016; Garrido 2017; Hodgson 1999; Hung and Thompson 2016; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Krasa and Polborn 2014; Piketty 2020). This represents a prevailing trend in both countries during last several decades, with certain liberal interruptions and indeed solutions to the grave economic and other crises conservatism generates or aggravates, such as the time and resolution of the Great Recession in the

US, just as the New Deal before, and the 'third way' in Britain (Beck 2000; Eggertsson 2008; Giddens 2000; Piketty 2014; Stiglitz 2016; Summers 2015).

Hence, consistent with and expressing its medieval genesis conservatism positively evolves, functions and remains as the ideological extension and perpetuation of medievalism, in Mannheim's (1986) words, as 'self-reflective', ideologically resurged traditionalism within the setting of liberal modernity. Negatively, it persists consequently as anti-liberalism, anti-individualism, anti-democracy, anti-secularism, anti-rationalism and anti-modernism, including the counter-Enlightenment, since its inception through present days, as via neoconservatism especially resurging and dominating in America and Great Britain (Dombrowski 2001; Habermas 2001; Mueller 2009; Nisbet 1966; Vasi and Strang 2009). This holds true as a general pattern, with conservatism's occasional variations and prudent adaptations. As Mannheim (1936) anticipates by describing conservatism as a species of 'absolutism' and the 'technique of domination' in the 'manner of Machiavellianism', these adaptations involve especially strategic Machiavellian adjustments to changed societal conditions and historical conjunctures, by acting according to the precept, as Pareto (2000) puts it, of the end justifying the means (see also, Bowles, Gintis and Osborne 2001; Cooney and Burt 2008; Merton 1968; Mulligan et al.2004). This is a predisposition British and especially American neoconservatism reportedly further escalates and intensifies through ever more numerous and overt Machiavellian means and tactics to gain and retain power from Thatcherism and Reaganism to Brexit and the post-2016 extreme-right autocratic regime of a 'business genius.' (See Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Bonikowski 2016; Garrido 2017; Habermas 1989; Hung and Thompson 2016; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Jouet 2017; Shiller 2017.)

Conservatism attempts to adapt to social changes and strategically wears a 'new cloth' of democracy and the welfare state, reason and science during the postwar period following its ideological discredit due to the military and political defeat of its creation and ally fascism, including Nazism, in WW II (Ferguson and Voth 2008; Giddens 2000; Moore 1993; Riley and Fernández 2014; Satyanath, Voigtländer, and Voth 2017). Conservatism does this unless and until it erupts in another overt anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-secular, anti-welfare state and anti-rationalistic, and particularly, as in

America, anti-science, counterrevolution or mobilization during post-WW II times, especially since Reaganism through post-2016 (Pfeffer, Fomby and Insolera<sup>12</sup> 2020). The latter outcome especially materializes via neoconservatism, including neo-fascism qua the 'new radical right' in Europe, America and Great Britain from the 1980s to post-2016 (Bell 2002; Blee and Creasap 2010; Caren et al. 2020; Gethin et al. 2022; Koopmans and Olzak 2004; Plotke 2002; Rydgren 2007).

Conservatism/rightism therefore replicates its previous pattern of anti-liberal, anti-democratic revolt and of culmination in or fusion with fascism in Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain and elsewhere during the 1920-30s (Acemoglu et al. 2022; Barnett and Woywode 2004; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Mann 2004; Moore 1993; Riley and Fernández 2014). In view of this striking authoritarian or rather totalitarian replication in about a century, Pareto (2000) might conclude that conservatism, in spite of all its Machiavellian, including 'libertarian', adaptations, disguises and tactics, always remains in terms of democracy and freedom an ideological equivalent of the 'wolf' from the fable or the anti-social malevolent predator from the Hobbesian state of nature (see also Cooney 1997; Eswaran and Neary 2014; Munch 1994; Pryor 2002; Tilman 2001). Conversely, he may infer that conservatism never becomes the 'sheep' from the fable and its 'silence of the lambs', as in Germany and Europe after the WW II defeat of its own created 'monster' or 'tiger' Nazism and fascism, invariably hides and ultimately becomes the howling of the neoconservative wolves and neofascist, radical-right tigers (Blinkhorn 2003; Paxton 2004). This is what essentially is happening in Brexit Great Britain and especially post-2016 America and via global contagion some former fascist European and other states listed above. The preceding therefore renders conservatism an ideologically and politically 'perfect storm' for designing, enacting and rationalizing capitalist dictatorship as well as fascist and theocratic dictatorships.

#### **4. Conservatism Versus Universal Liberty And Liberal Democracy**

While using the discourse of 'freedom', including 'capitalism and freedom' à la Milton Friedman (1982) and other deceptive 'libertarian' pro-capital, anti-labor ideologues, conservatism invariably opposes and suppresses what Mannheim (1986) denotes the 'principle of liberty.' The latter is in the sense of a universal and holistic value defining

liberalism and liberal democracy, along with its complement equality and by implication justice (also, Dahrendorf 1979, Habermas 2001; Mueller 2009; Vasi and Strang 2009). Especially American-British neoconservatism, including spurious 'libertarianism', utilizes 'freedom' as a formal rhetorical device to deny and eliminate freedom in the substantive sense of universal and holistic liberty 'for all' and in the whole society, including the economy, polity, civil society and culture. By so doing, it exposes itself as ideological absolutism, extremism and Machiavellianism (Centeno and Cohen 2012; Cooney and Burt 2007; Glaeser et al. 2005; Habermas 1989; Tilman 2001).

Conservatism, including both paleo- and neo-conservatism, disguises and embellishes this anti-liberty negativity as the positivity of a 'holy' war ('crusade', or 'jihad' in its Islamic version) and terror against its defined original and perpetual enemy liberalism, thus liberal democracy and in extension secularism, rationalism and modernism (Friedland 2001; Gross et al. 2011; Juergensmeyer 2003; Mueller 2009). It does this through conservative ideological and culture anti-liberal wars, including the new 'wars of religion', in America. It thereby makes the latter the exceptional stage of such warfare mostly resolved in Western society long ago, as during and after the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment as the creator of liberal modernity (Blee and Creasap 2010; Bell 2002; Hicks 2006; Jacobs and Tope 2007; Jouet 2017; King 2008).

Its implacable opposition to and ultimate elimination of the principle of universal and holistic liberty render conservatism a 'perfect storm' for imposing and rationalizing, indeed sanctifying capitalist and other dictatorship as a 'Divine plan' and its rulers as 'God's chosen'<sup>13</sup> and eventually through fascist or theocratic dictatorships totalitarianism as the extreme mode of anti-liberalism and anti-democracy (Adorno 2001; Arendt 1951; Dahrendorf 1979; Giddens 1979; Riley and Fernández 2014). For illustration, various observers detect the specter of totalitarianism or authoritarianism as well as extremism and radicalism through capitalist as well as neofascist and theocratic dictatorship in neoconservatism such as Thatcherism and Reaganism and their Brexit and post-2016 emulations (Beck 2000; Blomberg and Harrington 2000; Bonikowski 2016; Bourdieu 1998; Giddens 2000; Hodgson 1999; Jouet 2017; Krasa and Polborn 2014).

More broadly, like Mannheim, Michels (1968) observes that conservatism's prime and permanent ideological objective, a kind of compulsive mission is the elimination of

modern democracy in its liberal form by any available effective methods, strategies and tactics in the style of Machiavellianism that the end of power justifies the means. In Michels' (1968:9) and related accounts, these Machiavellian instruments of eliminating liberal democracy range from the use of violence and political terror to abusing the democratic process and in certain situations such as elections putting on a 'specious democratic mask' to deceive the electorate and achieve conservative victories—simply, for conservatism ultimately 'democracy must be eliminated by the democratic way of the popular will.' Michels notes that such a Machiavellian disguise help explain the puzzle that conservatism while being the perpetual ideology of aristocracy/oligarchy often gains mass election support, and even presciently predicts its striking electoral successes especially in America and Great Britain during most of their formal democratic history, notably since the 1980s through 2016 and Brexit. (See Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Bénabou and Tirole 2016; Berezin 2019; Besley and Persson 2009; Blee and Creasap 2010; Caren et al. 2020; Juergensmeyer 2003; Bonikowski 2016; DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007; Hung and Thompson 2016; Jouet 2017.) Michels adds, as noted, that beneath the conservative 'democratic mask' lies the pre- and anti-democratic 'spirit of the old master caste' such as aristocracy whose ideology conservatism originally represents and subsequently remains by extending into the apology of oligarchic plutocracy ('an oligarchy of plutocrats' )as the new aristocracy of capital, so the capitalist elite. Specifically, Michels (1968:188) suggests that conservatism while wearing a 'democratic mask' becomes the principal ideological and political support of what he identifies as the 'unrestricted power of capital' and consequently unlimited 'corruption' in America, as the defining feature and diagnostic syndrome of capitalist dictatorship and more broadly authoritarian, corrupt capitalism. (See also Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998; Burawoy 2005; Feagin 2001; Kristal 2010; Piven 2008; Pryor 2002; Wodtke 2016; Wright 2013.)

Ideological defense and indeed glorification of plutocracy qua capitalist aristocracy or aristocratic de facto dominant power, as in 19<sup>th</sup>-century and later England and the postbellum US South, crucially helps explain the puzzle of conservatism's historically ambivalent, hatred-and-love relation to laissez-faire capitalism (Acemoglu and Robinson<sup>14</sup> 2006b; Hicks 2006; Morck et al. 2005; Piketty 2014, 2020; Ruediger 2014).

Such defense provides an explanation of why conservatism, especially American and British neo-conservatism since Reaganism and Thatcherism and even paleo-conservatism during the Gilded Age and prior to the Great Depression, has moved from an early vehement opponent to a staunch defender of laissez-faire capitalism, as Pareto implicitly suggests and other sociologists and economists do more explicitly (e.g. Bénabou and Tirole 2006; Bourdieu 1998; Bowles and Gintis 2000; Hodgson 1999; Knight 1967; Piven 2008; Steinfeld 2001).

If conservatism comes to embrace and ideologically justify what economist Samuelson (1983) describes as the 'bourgeois penchant for laissez-faire', this is probably because it realizes that, as Pareto suggests, the bourgeoisie becomes the ruling class in capitalism and thus the new elite or aristocracy of capital. The latter incorporates or allies in Pareto's account with the old aristocracy of land estate within the historical 'circulation of elites' and the cumulative 'graveyard of aristocracies' (also, Benhabib and Bisin 2018). In this regard, conservatism's embrace and justification of laissez-faire capitalism and bourgeoisie is consistent with its being the pre- and anti-democratic ideology of aristocracy. The latter is understood in the broader Pareto sense of elite to include both pre-capitalist aristocracies in Europe and capitalist plutocracy or oligarchy in America, thus old European and new American elites alike (Acemoglu et al. 2011; Pryor 2002; Stiglitz 2012; Tilman 2001).

This consistency is a variation on Michels' theme that conservatism invariably embraces and sustains the spirit of the master caste, either landed master castes and their privileges in feudal Europe or the 'upper caste's continued accumulation' of wealth and power in capitalist America (Formisano 2015). So long as the core of conservatism is the spirit of the master caste and the idealization of aristocracy, it necessarily and eventually endorses laissez-faire capitalism and especially its ruling class as the new master caste or the aristocracy of capital.

To that extent, the spirit of the master caste essentially explains and predicts why conservatism moves from the hatred-to-love relation to laissez-faire capitalism and will remain such precisely when bourgeoisie develops and consolidates into the new master caste and incorporates the old castes to form the new aristocracy of capital. This is a process that historically unfolds in 19<sup>th</sup> century England and America during the Gilded



Age (Acemoglu and Autor 2012; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006a, Kimeldorf 2013; Mizruchi and Marshall 2016; Naidu and Yuchtman 2013; Steinberg 2003). That is mostly the pre-Great Depression period when British and American conservatism largely overcomes its initial repugnance and distaste and acquires its later attraction and taste, for bourgeois laissez-faire capitalism, along with its sociological twin social Darwinism, which neoconservatism through Reaganism and Thatcherism continues, escalates and intensifies (Bourdieu 1998; Galbraith and Parker 2017; Nelson and Sheffrin 1991; Samuelson 1993). For example, the old conservative Hoover administration, as Keynes (1960) deplors, embraced and implemented laissez-faire ideological and policy dogmas (à la Hayek and Friedman) resulting in the Great Depression and provoking the New Deal as the cure, just as its neoconservative variant pursued equivalent ideologies and policies leading to the Great Recession and its own remedy (Baumol 2000; Boulding 1958; Bowles and Gintis 2000; Eggertsson 2012; Redbird and Grusky 2016; Stiglitz 2010; Thaler 2018).

Most importantly, conservatism's ideological defense and political imposition of laissez-faire capitalism is essentially equivalent to defending and imposing capitalist dictatorship. This holds good so long as laissez-faire capitalism ultimately tends to degenerate in imposing capitalist dictatorship through capital's unconstrained systemic power and domination over non-capitalist strata in historical-empirical terms (Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Kimeldorf 2013; Martin and Dixon 2010; Perelman 2000; Wodtke 2016; Wright 2013). This process of degeneration of Smith's 'system of natural liberty' (Grampp 2000) into Mitchell's 'industrial despotism' due to the 'despotic might of capital' spans from 19<sup>th</sup> century England and Gilded-Age America to both countries since Reaganism and Thatcherism and post-2016 and Brexit to 'free market' dictatorships in conservative-ruled third-world countries. Conversely, hardly any known past instance and current proxy of laissez-faire capitalism represents or integrates with liberal and universalistic democracy and thus universal political, civil and individual liberties (Bowles and Gintis 2000; Habermas 2001; Hicks 2006; Hodgson 1999; Perelman 2000; Somers and Block 2005). Instead, laissez-faire capitalism typically represents or fuses with bogus illiberal and exclusionary 'democracy', including conservative autocracy, oligarchy, plutocracy and theocracy. This is what precisely all these cases show,

including 19<sup>th</sup> century, Thatcherite and Brexit England and Gilded-Age, Reaganite and post-2016 conservative America as effectively an oligarchic-theocratic regime and generally authoritarian polity (Bénabou et al. 2015; Bonikowskiet al. 2021; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Perelman 2000; Pryor 2002).

Conservatism disguises and embellishes its enforcing and rationalizing of capitalist dictatorship as establishing and defending laissez-faire, 'free enterprise' capitalism, occluding the latter's eventual mutation, *ceteris paribus*, into the former or its proxies in history and reality, including America during the Gilded Age, after 1980 or post-2016 (Piketty 2020). Conversely, by doing so, it obscures that laissez-faire capitalism whenever fully prevails, as in 19<sup>th</sup> century England and Gilded-Age America, or approximated, as in these countries since Reaganism and Thatcherism and post-2016, virtually never constitutes or integrates with genuine democracy (Naidu et al. 2020). This is liberal and universalistic democracy resting on Mannheim's (1986) 'principle of liberty' as the essence of liberalism and thus the antidote to conservative, including fascist and theocratic, anti- and pre-liberalism.

In sum, the core, heart and soul of conservatism has always been and remains its inherent abhorrence for, vehement antagonism to and forcible elimination of the 'principle of liberty' as instead the essence of liberalism in Mannheim's (1986) framework. It couches this tendency as a 'divine-right'<sup>15</sup> and/or 'patriotic' war against liberalism and modernity it condemns as 'godless' and 'foreign'--anti-Christian and anti-Islamic for Christian and Islamic fundamentalists, 'un-American' and 'non-German' for US and German conservatives, including neo-fascists and neo-Nazis. The 'principle of liberty', thus liberal democracy must be implacably opposed, tactically compromised and coercively eliminated—this is, as Michels (1968) observes and predicts, the perennial design and compulsive mission of all conservatism, including its 'exceptional' American variant, with minor exceptions due to its Machiavellian adaptations to circumstances. This is instructive to emphasize because it is hard to decipher conservatism, especially its 'all-American' version, as an ideology given its adept Machiavellian 'freedom' disguises, strategies and tactics<sup>16</sup> and to understand its primary ideological determination and rationalization of capitalist and other dictatorship unless considering its implacable perpetual antiliberal and so antidemocratic negativity (Blee

and Creasap 2010; Bourdieu 1998; Caren et al. 2020; Gross et al. 2011; Habermas 2001). This is its abhorrence for and antagonism to the 'principle of liberty' under the guise of opposing liberalism as an antagonist, 'un-American' project (Massey 2009).

### **5. Conservatism, Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism And Capitalist Dictatorship**

Furthermore, conservatism ideologically determines and predicts capitalist and related dictatorship in that it tends to evolve ultimately, indeed inevitably by its nature, operation and outcomes, into conservative societal totalitarianism (Adorno 2001; Bauman 1997; Beck 2000; Dessí 2008; Habermas 2001; Hodgson 1999; Riley and Fernández 2014). Conservatism hence escalates and intensifies its intrinsic conservative authoritarianism due to its birth out of despotic medievalism as the ancient regime of feudalism, aristocratic rule and theocracy (Dahrendorf 1979; Davis and Moore 1945; Mannheim 1986; Miller et al. 1987; Miliband 1969; Mueller 2009; Riley 2005).

More precisely, conservatism conditions and ushers in capitalist and similar dictatorship by mutating inexorably during its life-course into fascism, including Nazism, as the paradigmatic exemplar of conservative/right and relatedly religious totalitarianism (Adorno 2001; Arendt 1951; Bourdieu 1998; Dahrendorf 1979; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Olick 1999; Satyanath et al. 2017). Arguably, by its inherent tendency to evolve into right totalitarianism, in short fascism, intensifying built-in conservative authoritarianism, conservatism primarily causes capitalism to undergo a 'type of system degeneration' and particularly 'degenerations of power' (Burawoy 2005; Giddens 1979; Miliband 1969; Piketty 2020; Wieser 1967).

Such a mutation of conservatism as the ideological and political right into fascism as conservative totalitarianism was precisely what happened in Europe, including Germany, Austria, Italy, and Spain, during the interwar period (Acemoglu et al. 2022; Adena et al. 2015; Barnett and Woywode 2004; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Paxton 2004; Riley and Fernández 2014; Satyanath et al. 2017). The mutation continues, with some modifications, presently through conservative-fascist or populist regimes. These include Austria, Italy and other former fascist states like Hungary, plus Catholic-ruled theocratic Poland, America post-2016 and during McCarthyism and Reaganism, Brexit Great Britain and under Thatcherism, and via global contagion of the US model in other

societies, including especially Latin America such as Brazil, Colombia, and Peru until recently resurrecting the ghost of blended conservatism-fascism from the 1960-80s. For illustration, Hitler reportedly promised a 'broad coalition of the right' and thereby ensured conservatism's support to be appointed Chancellor, and all conservative parties, unlike the Social Democratic Party, voted in favor of the 'enabling law' that suspended the German constitution and enabled Nazi leadership to pass laws 'without parliamentary approval' (Ferguson and Voth 2008:105). More broadly, interwar Europe and beyond fascists belonged to the 'forward surge of a broader family of authoritarian rightists' and thus fascism was part of 'authoritarian rightism' or conservatism as an anti-democratic reactionary reaction to 'both general problems of modernity and particular social crises left by World War I' (Mann<sup>17</sup> 2004).

In general, not only Nazi Germany but also all these societies and periods mentioned above represent instances of merged conservative-fascist counterrevolutions and regimes as restorations of medieval-style despotism and pre-liberalism and pre-democracy overall (Bourdieu 1998; Dahrendorf 1979; Habermas 2001; Mann 2004; Slater and Smith 2016). Alternatively, all of them constitute systems of what Michels (1968) classically identifies as the unconstrained structural power and domination of capital over non-capital strata and to that extent, with some variations, capitalist and similar dictatorships (Kristal 2010; Wright 2013). Nazi Germany and interwar Italy and Spain constituted conservative-fascist and capitalist economic-corporate dictatorships, notably constituting the second precisely because of being the first (Adorno 2001; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Paxton 2004; Riley 2005; Riley and Fernández 2014).

Relatedly, these and all the above societies and times exemplify capitalist-populist mobilizations as invariably conservative and ultimately fascist movements, which Great Britain and the US under Thatcherism and Reaganism reportedly reinitiate and epitomize during postwar times (Hung and Thompson 2016). Further, the capitalist-populist mobilization in the US post-2016 and through the rise of the extremist 'Tea Party' earlier, along with that in Great Britain during Brexit nationalism, represents the latest dramatic exemplar via authoritarian and exclusionary politics (Caren et al. 2020). Moreover, such a mobilization inspires others via global contagion or convergence from South America to Europe and elsewhere (Garrido 2017; Murray 2017).

In this respect, the evolutionary trajectory of conservatism from medievalism to fascism is consistent with Durkheim (1982) implying that the 'genesis' of social institutions and 'collective representations' such as ideologies and religions determines and predicts, *ceteris paribus*, their evolution and 'functioning' as the institutionalist definition of the subject-matter of sociology and the paradigm of institutionalism (Parsons 1935). For instance, in the US South the origin of its oppressive, anti-egalitarian institutional arrangements in the 'legally codified inequality intrinsic to slavery' and the consequent greater wealth inequality co-determine the 'evolution' of institutions protecting the ruling class as a new American capitalist aristocracy in the wake of the abolition of slavery (Morck et al. 2005; also, Hicks 2006; Ruef 2014).

Therefore, consistent with the genesis-to-evolution of social institutions and ideologies, the point of origin of conservatism in medievalism and feudal despotism probably predestines, *ceteris paribus*, its functionally equivalent destination in fascism as a later despotic system even if surpassing its precursor in terms of intensity and totality of oppression (Adorno 2001; Arendt 1951). In this evolutionary path of conservatism, therefore medieval despotism and fascism develop and function as functional equivalents in that they form starting and end points of a historical sequence and sociological continuum of despotisms or tyrannies and species of totalitarianism (Burawoy 2005; Mumford 1967; Tabellini 2008; Tilly 2000). Indeed, fascism, including Nazism, arises and operates as a mode of restoration of or retrogression into medievalism and medieval despotism, for example romanticism in Germany, in its own right (Olick 1999; Parsons 1949). Pareto (1963) suggests this continuity of pre-modern and modern despotism by the 'circulation of elites' and the 'graveyard of aristocracies', while keeping in mind certain differences in degree, although less in substance, of oppression between pre-fascist and fascist dictatorships with the latter being more totalitarian (Arendt 1951; Bähr 2002; Benhabib and Bisin 2018).

It follows that its originating in despotism and consequently operating as inherent authoritarianism explains and predicts conservatism evolving in fascism, including Nazism, and hence rightist totalitarianism (Giddens 1979; Kaltwasser 2018; Lipset 1955; Mann 2004) after the model and image of Nazi terror, militarism and war. In this regard, fascism arises and persists through neo-fascism as the ultimate outcome, the

final destination and in that sense the 'end game' of conservatism's origin in medieval despotism and its consequent character and functioning as built-in authoritarianism (Kinloch 1981; Miller et al. 1987; Mueller 2009; Riley 2005). Alternatively, conservatism's evolutionary trajectory into fascism forms a frictionless, smooth and predictable movement from medieval despotism as its origin to classical authoritarianism as its nature and to right totalitarianism and terror as its destination. In sum, its genesis in and path-dependence on medieval despotism predisposes conservatism to evolve to and function as fascism, just as past religious institutions like the Protestant Reformation condition the 'shape of present-day institutions' such as state religions (Barro and McCleary 2005; Bénabou et al. 2015; Bruce 2004; Norris and Inglehart 2007).

Such a fascist destination or predisposition makes conservatism even more a 'perfect storm', ideological 'optimum' for designing, imposing and justifying capitalist and related dictatorships, because its creation fascism, including Nazism, essentially retains and then remodels capitalism after its totalitarian model and image. Hitler/Nazism with the promised conservative 'broad coalition of the right', like the 'broader family' of 'authoritarian rightism' elsewhere, fundamentally maintained capitalism and restructured it into a merged fascist-capitalist dictatorship by imposing the 'enabling law', such as suspending civil liberties, dissolving trade unions and other political parties, and imprisoning their members (Ferguson and Voth 2008). Notably, Nazism retained and privileged the German industrial sector with its major firms and industrialists from Krupp to Thyssen financing the 'Nazi party's rapid rise' and the stock market in which the majority of capitalist capitalists entertained 'close links with the Nazi movement' (Ferguson and Voth 2008; Huber 2021; Huber, Lindenthal and Waldinger 2021).

With some variations, such a Nazi-style merger of fascism and generally conservatism with capitalism to form compounded fascist-conservative-capitalist dictatorship typifies all societies and periods in which the 'broad coalition of the right', notably the 'broader family of authoritarian rightists', prevails or resurges via conservative movements, counterrevolutions and regimes. They include interwar Austria, Italy, Spain and other Europe—again in the first two at present, along with some others like Hungary and Poland--America during McCarthyism, its sequel Reaganism and post-2016, Great Britain under Thatcherism and during Brexit, most of

Latin America like Pinochet's Chile over the 1970-80s and déjà vu Brazil and Colombia recently. For example, conservative-fascist regimes in Italy and Spain reportedly represented capitalist economic-corporate dictatorships as anti-liberal regimes, with the first being a 'key empirical example of totalitarianism' and thus equivalent to Nazi Germany, and the second of 'authoritarianism' (Riley 2005; Riley and Fernández 2014).

Nazism and fascism overall arose, as its adherent proclaimed or implied, both as the 'new', 'true' conservatism and so anti-liberalism and as the disguised, slightly modified ideological and political defense of capitalism, as Hitler, Mussolini and most other fascist leaders and rank-and-file declared and acted, against communism or socialism. They thereby contradicted and revealed 'National Socialist' and similar labels as Machiavellian deceptions or delusions, coupled with the Nazi and fascist systematic persecution and suppression of traditional German and other socialists or social-democrats (Barnett and Woywode 2004; Burawoy 2005; Blinkhorn 2003).

In other words, fascism, including Nazism, erupted as both the new 'conservative revolution of nihilism' (Noakes 2003) and what Mannheim (1936) denotes the 'exponent of bourgeois groups', thus fascists revolting both as 'conservative revolutionaries' (Bourdieu 1998) and as defenders of capitalism against socialism. In this connection, Mannheim (1936) cites Mussolini's fascist glorification of capitalism as the 'choice of the fittest, equal opportunities for the most gifted, a more developed sense of individual responsibility'. Reportedly, the rise of Nazism implicated conservatism, along with religion, and the supposedly anti-capitalist Nazi ('National Socialist German Workers') movement enjoyed rapid ascent thanks to its financing by major German capitalist firms and capitalists à la Krupp et al. that also profited in the stock market by their 'political connections with the new party in power' (Ferguson and Voth 2008). In this respect, Nazism and fascism emerges as an instance of conservative/right revolution, with its members acting as 'conservative revolutionaries', 'right-wing' warriors, and of capitalist-populist mobilization. And it reemerges, with prudent adaptations and deceptions ('freedom party' in Austria, 'freedom caucus' in US Congress) as such during later times, including American conservatism's driven global neofascist qua new radical-right contagion post-2016 and before (Bell 2002; Berezein 2019; Blee and Creasap 2010; Caren et al. 2020; Garrido 2017; Lamont 2018; Rydgren 2007).

In sum, owing to its origin in premodern despotism and its consequent functioning as intrinsic authoritarianism conservatism ultimately evolves into fascism and more broadly merged fascist-capitalist dictatorship. Virtually all the above and other fascist dictatorships from Germany, Italy and Spain under Nazism and fascism to Chile and South America and beyond during neo-fascism, are also capitalist or corporate dictatorships, and conversely, the latter representing the former, with secondary variations. This is what an influential sociological-historical study (Moore 1993) suggests by observing that precisely by passing through conservatism as an ideology and polity ('reactionary political forms') capitalism culminates into fascism, thus by implication into fused capitalist-conservative dictatorship, as capitalism's undemocratic version. Moreover, as Mitchell implies building on Wieser's (1967) insights into 'capitalistic despotism', conservatism's point of origin in preindustrial despotism and sanctification of the tyrannical power of aristocracy Burke et al. glorified determines and predicts its substantively identical destination. This is 'industrial despotism' and the 'despotic might of capital' Mitchell (1917:108) identifies in American capitalism during the Gilded Age and other observers identify as the superior systemic power of capital through the present (Wodtke 2016; Wright 2013).

This continuity with pre-capitalism outlines a clear, direct and inescapable path to capitalist dictatorship through conservatism because of its origin in feudal despotism and its ideological expression of aristocratic rule, regardless of its ultimate mutation into or fusion with fascism, as Mannheim (1986) and other scholars show. Its genesis in despotism, medievalism and aristocracy, thus pre-capitalist dictatorship predestines or predispose conservatism to ideologically determine and sanctify capitalist dictatorship, and its ultimate destination in fascism while being the sufficient is not the necessary condition for the latter. As medievalist traditionalism turned ideologically self-conscious in adverse reaction against and by reversal of liberalism and democracy, conservatism is sufficient to generate or sustain capitalist and similar dictatorship from autocracy and dynasty to oligarchy and plutocracy (Piketty 2020), irrespective of whether mutating into fascism or rather without waiting for such an eventual fascist mutation to occur.



## 6. Ideology Of Aristocracy And Plutocracy

Especially conservatism operates as the direct and single main ideological generator and predictor of capitalist dictatorship in that it typically represents an ideology of capital in the sense of the capitalist class or plutocracy, while initially being the justification of pre-capitalist aristocracy and other master caste, just as the sanctification of theocracy (Davis and Moore 1945; Mueller 2009). This especially holds for conservatism's subsequent and contemporary versions following its emergence out of medievalism in revolt against liberalism and democracy to form the original ideology and expression of the feudal nobility and tradition (Mannheim 1986; Nisbet 1966; Roemer and Trannoy 2016). These versions particularly consist of the 'new' conservatism or neo-conservatism, also termed not very accurately 'neoliberalism' in the distorted, reduced sense of capital laissez-faire (Naidu et al. 2020). Conversely, 'neoliberalism' does not signify the new principle of social liberty in Mannheim's sense, but instead the new form of what Keynes (1972) considers Hobbesian-style 'economic anarchy' and anarchic capitalism déjà vu, including its academic rationalization by 'libertarian' Chicago and related apologetic economics (Naidu et al. 2020).

This new conservatism constitutes a strident ideology and thus apologetics of the unconstrained systemic power and domination of capital and in consequence of capitalist dictatorship or authoritarian anti-egalitarian capitalism qua 'plutonomy' as the novel name for plutocracy in America and other Anglo-Saxon countries (Frank 2007; Kapur et al. 2005). It does this through its ideological program, as with Reaganomics and Thatcherism, of concentration of wealth and monopolization of oppressive power in the capitalist class rendered the complex of plutocracy and oligarchy, an outcome it rationalizes and exalts as 'free market' capitalism (Piketty 2020).

Furthermore, especially American neoconservatism since Reaganism through the post-2016 radical-right regime compounds and mutually reinforces this program of inequality and oppression within the economy and society with that of militarism, constant offensive war and imperialism against 'enemy' societies. The latter usually include those, as in South America and elsewhere, that resist neoconservatism's program of capitalist dictatorship cum 'free markets' which instead conservative military and other dictatorships implement from Pinochet's Chile dictatorship installed and

sustained by US conservatism including both the government and Chicago economics to their present iterations in this and other regions. (See Acemoglu and Robinson 2013; Acemoglu and Yared 2010; Aidt, Albornoz, and Hauk 2021; Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; Persson and Tabellini 2006; Rodrik 2014; Steinmetz 2005; Weeden and Grusky 2012.)

Theoretically, this all-American neoconservative compound of capitalist dictatorship with world-scale militarism, aggressive wars and imperialism confirms Simmel's (1955) classical linkage and mutual reinforcement between internal societal despotism and external 'warlike tendencies' (also, Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016; Bonikowski et al. 2021; Go 2020; Savelsberg and King 2005). By contrast, the capitalist-militarist-imperialist compound contradicts Schumpeter's (1965) disjuncture and exoneration of capitalism from imperialism and militarism as supposedly pre-capitalist tendencies incompatible with its 'inner logic' (Berger et al. 2013; Chase-Dun 1992; Kentor and Boswell 2003; Dube, Kaplan, and Naidu 2011; Garrido 2017; Go 2020; Mallard and Sun<sup>18</sup>2022; Steinmetz 2005).

In general, if paleo-conservatism emerging out of medievalism represented the reactionary ideological dogma and political form of pre-capitalist aristocracy, neo-conservatism reemerging after and obscuring the WW II defeat of the conservative offspring fascism represents the ideology and politics of capitalist plutocracy or 'plutonomy'. Reaganism in the US and Thatcherism in Britain are demonstrable cases in point (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Kristal 2010; Piketty 2020). In both historical cases, conservatism represents the ideology and so apologetics of elite, thus effectively of aristocracy in Pareto's sense—i.e., approximately of the top 'one percent' in pre-capitalism and capitalism (Lenski 1984; Piketty, Postel-Vinay, and Rosenthal 2006; Piketty 2020). In this sense, conservatism's, including spurious libertarianism's, 'defending the one percent' (Mankiw 2013) in American capitalism defends Pareto's 'new aristocracy' of capital, simply plutocracy or oligarchy (Stiglitz 2012; Tilman 2001). And its defense of the 'one percent' means defending and glorifying the same or comparable share of the old and new aristocracy of total wealth in both European feudalism and American capitalism, approximately half (Lenski 1984; Saez and Zucman 2016).

While initially as the doctrine and glorification of the old aristocracy perpetuating feudal bondage, subsequently conservatism by becoming the ideology and utopia of the new aristocracy of capital perpetuates capitalist dictatorship or authoritarian capitalism in a Panglossian manner as the 'best of all possible worlds' (Merton 1968). American conservative 'libertarianism' sustains and celebrates capitalist dictatorship or plutocracy in America as an economic variation of 'heaven on earth' and achieved utopia, including the 'nirvana of self-reliance' a la Hayek and Chicago economics (McFadden 2006). In Mitchell-Roosevelt's words, Gilded-Age and postwar conservatism in its adapted form of neoconservatism qua 'libertarianism'—to obscure the discredit of its product fascism after WW II--reproduces 'industrial despotism' and 'oppression' and the 'tyranny' of capitalist plutocracy, just as in its old shape aristocratic representatives Burke et al. embody perpetuated feudal despotism and oppression and the 'tyranny' of aristocracy. The first type of conservatism justifies the 'despotic might' (Mitchell 1917) or unrestrained structural power of capital (Wright 2013) versus non-capital classes, just as the second glorified that of feudal aristocracy against non-aristocrats. Moreover, conservatism becomes ideologically instrumental in capital assuming the position of a master caste and reducing labor to the status of servant through perpetuating an economy of masters-servants enforced by feudal common law in 19<sup>th</sup>-century England and America until the New Deal, approaching master-slave or master-servant relations (Bourdieu 1998; Naidu and Yuchtman 2013; Steinberg 2003).

In this respect, contemporary conservatism sustains neo-feudalism or new patrimonialism in a new capitalist form such as master-servant or patrimonial, including inheritance-driven, capitalism (Binmore 2001; Bowles and Gintis 2000; Cohen 2003; Hamm, King, and Stuckler 2012; McDonnell 2017; Piketty 2014). Similarly, the old conservatism sustained feudalism, patrimonialism and a master-servant and slave economy in substantive (though not necessarily legal) terms of intense labor repression, as the postbellum US South shows for long and up to the present (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008; Kimeldorf 2013; Rao, Yue, and Ingram 2011). Conservatism, therefore, acts as a potent ideological weapon in the service of capital within the 'new patrimonial capitalism' exacting 'revenge' over non-capital strata in terms of wealth and power

concentration, as Reaganism demonstrates by its program of their distribution in favor of the capitalist class, as also does Thatcherism (Cohen 2003; Goldstein 2012).

Evidently, since its emergence from feudalism in antagonistic reaction to liberalism and democracy, conservatism develops and functions as the reactionary ideology and politics of despotism or authoritarianism and, via fascism and theocracy, right totalitarianism (Giddens 1979; Mann 2004; Skrentny 2006; Wright 2000). Taken together, it constitutes the apology of both pre-capitalist and capitalist dictatorship as 'Divinely ordained' or national 'destiny' and the defense of its ruling class endowed with 'Divine rights' or glorified as 'God's chosen, i.e., the aristocracy of land and of capital as the elite stratum or 'one percent' in demographic terms (Auclert and Rognlie 2017; Saez and Zucman 2020).

Notably, as Mannheim and Michels observe, capitalism is likely to become 'a dictatorship' in situations where bourgeoisie relinquishes the liberal-democratic mechanisms for conducting class struggles such as parliamentarianism as insufficient compared to the conservative-reactionary mechanism invariably effecting violent and militarized repression of other classes than aristocracy and plutocracy or oligarchy. Mannheim (1936:146) notes that such a dictatorship within capitalism assumes the form of fascism which he characterizes as the 'exponent of bourgeois groups' that therefore attempts merely to substitute 'one ruling (capitalist) group for another within the existing class arrangements.' Mannheim (1936, 146) suggests that fascism in Italy and by implication Germany and other European countries constituted a capitalist as well as conservative dictatorship, citing Mussolini's glorification of capitalism as 'not just a system of oppression—(but) the choice of the fittest, equal opportunities for the most gifted, a more developed sense of individual responsibility.' Also, Polanyi (1944:237) points to the 'fascist solution to the impasse' of *laissez-faire* capitalism through a totalitarian 'reform', and not elimination, of the latter through the 'process of the extirpation of all democratic institutions, both in the industrial and in the political realm.' In addition, Moore (1993:413) finds that capitalism historically culminates in fascism and thus dual capitalist-fascist dictatorship by precisely moving through 'reactionary political forms' such as conservatism. The latter arises as the exemplary mode of negative reaction to social change and progress by revolting against liberalization, secularization,

democratization, rationalization and modernization in defense of traditionalism, specifically feudalism, aristocracy, monarchy and theocracy (Dombrowski 2001; Habermas 2001; Mueller 2009; Nisbet 1966).

An evident case in point is interwar Germany. In this country during the 1930s, its major capitalists a la Krupp, Thyssen et al. precipitated capitalism and short-lived liberal democracy in the form of the Weimar Republic into fascism arising within the 'broader family' of 'authoritarian rightism' (Mann 2004; Paxton 2004). They did so by embracing the 'new', religion-based conservatism such as Hitler's 'broad coalition of the right' through Nazism by financing the Nazi movement's rapid ascent and benefiting from the latter once it seized power through the dictatorial 'enabling law' (Beck 2000; Blinkhorn 2003; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Satyanath et al. 2017). Expectedly, all the capitalist-conservative parties in the German Parliament supported—while only the socialist Social-Democratic Party opposed--Hitler's 'enabling law' (Ferguson and Voth 2008). They thus effectively enabled the consequent fascist dictatorship of totalitarian murder, terror and war, doing so probably, as with capitalists, in the pursuit of profit, including higher stock-market prices, and in the name of, as Pareto predicts, of the 'Divine master and nation' (Adena et al. 2015; Bähr 2002; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Ollick 1999). A similar, though not identical, pattern existed in interwar Italy and Spain, where capitalist economic-corporate dictatorships reportedly arose as conservative anti- or non-liberal quasi-democratic systems, more precisely totalitarian in the first case and authoritarian in the second (Riley 2005; Riley and Fernández 2014). In this distinction, like Germany 1933-45, Italy 1922-43 provides a 'key empirical example of totalitarianism', and Spain 1939-1975 one for authoritarianism, but regardless of this difference in degree of unfreedom or scale of oppression both regimes substantively represent conservative qua capitalist-fascist dictatorships and are thus structurally equivalent in substance (Riley and Fernández 2014).

Against this historical background, the neoconservative 'libertarian' ideological perpetuation and justification of capitalist dictatorship merely exemplifies within contemporary capitalism an 'iron' sociological law a la Michels or a long-standing historical pattern, with secondary variations or prudent adaptations. Since its birth as the ideological apology of aristocratic privilege and rule Burke et al. fervently defended as

eternal and 'divinely ordained', conservatism essentially remains—and its branch spurious 'libertarianism' becomes--the ideology and utopia of aristocracy both in its classic pre-capitalist form and its novel capitalist variant as plutocracy and its unconstrained, arbitrary structural power (Wright 2013).

Historically, conservatism evolves from the ideology of the old landed, feudal aristocracy into that of the new money, capitalist aristocracy, following the former's disappearance or rather transformation into or alliance with the latter and thus bourgeois plutocracy (Collins 1993; Moore 1993; Piven 2008). This happened especially in Great Britain since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century through the joint aristocratic-capitalist oppression and exclusion of labor by perpetuating a master-servant common law economy from feudalism for long and denying full voting and other political rights to working classes until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Somers and Block 2005; Steinberg 2003). (The self-perpetuating House of Lords remains as the emblem and vestige of joint aristocratic-capitalist domination in Great Britain, thus as 'anachronism' from the standpoint of democracy, cf., Giddens 2000; Piketty 2014.) This pattern replicated, with certain variations, itself in the US also via an aristocratic-rooted system of masters and servants up to the 1930s and the New Deal with its National Labor Relations Act, including the effective continuation of slavery through severe labor oppression after its legal abolition in the postbellum South (Kalleberg, Reskin and Hudson 2000).

As a prevailing ideology and politics and entwined with theocratic religion like evangelicalism, conservatism justified, indeed sanctified and thus perpetuated these practices of fused aristocratic-capitalist oppression and exclusion as 'natural', 'eternal', 'universal' based on common law, 'freedom', 'patriotic' and 'God's plan', as with slavery in the American South and the master-servant economy in Great Britain and the US. Continuing this old conservative pattern and precedent, neoconservatism rationalizes and reproduces identical or similar processes in these two countries from the 1980s via repressive Reaganism and Thatcherism to the 2010s and post-2016 through the extremist 'Tea Party' and the autocratic radical-right regime in the US with elements or symbols of fascism or authoritarian populism as well as Brexit irrational nationalism in Great Britain (Acemoglu et al. 2022; Berezin 2019; Caren et al. 2020; Colantone and Stanig 2019; Fetzer 2019; Gethin et al. 2022; Margalit 2019; Romero 2020).

Overall, conservatism consistently persists as the ideological apology and religion-style glorification of aristocratic power and dominance in the broad sense of Pareto's elite rule and in the form of initially feudal and subsequently industrial despotism and in that sense both of pre-capitalist and capitalist dictatorship. It continues to operate as the ideology of the aristocracy of land estates and thus aristocratic rule in pre-capitalism and of Pareto's new aristocracy of capital within capitalism, thus of capitalist unrestrained systemic power (Morgan and Prasad 2009; Piketty et al. 2006; Piketty 2020; Piven 2008).

The fact that conservatism emerges and remains as the ideology of aristocracy in Pareto's sense of elite, including subsequently that of capital, helps explain the perplexing puzzle of its historical evolution since its birth out of medieval traditionalism. The puzzle is why it moves from defending feudalism against emergent capitalism, as well as medieval despotism against nascent liberalism and democracy, to justifying and reproducing capitalism in its repressive form of subsequent capitalist dictatorship, just as embracing the 'bourgeois' laissez-faire doctrine as the ideological rationale for capital unconstrained power and concentrated wealth (Bourdieu 1998; Keynes 1972; Knight 1967; Piven 2008; Samuelson 1983). This justificatory pattern implicates conservatism in rationalizing and sustaining all variations of capitalist dictatorship. They span from capitalist autocracy, dynasty and (military and civilian) juntas to oligarchy, plutocracy and kleptocracy or 'mafia capitalism', as in third-world countries and the US after 2016 and under the resultant plutocratic, kleptocratic, autocratic and generally authoritarian government and a 'self-proclaimed business genius' (2005; Bonikowski 2016; Formisano 2015; Frank 2007; Kranton and Sanders 2017; Pryor 2002; Shiller 2017).

In this respect, conservatism remains fully self-consistent, systematic and methodical, albeit in the sense of a system or method to the 'madness' from the stance of liberalism and democracy, thus liberty and equality in the economy and society (Dombrowski 2001; Dahrendorf 1979; Habermas 2001; Mueller 2009). It does this by unconditionally defending, glorifying and thus perpetuating any ruling class of a (conservative) authoritarian or totalitarian regime, including fascism, theocracy and capitalist dictatorship, versus a liberal-democratic social system, thus exalting and sustaining essentially aristocracy in the broadest etymological sense. Conservatism

since Burke invariably displays an undying love for and total devotion to aristocracy as the rule and regime of the 'best' and wealthy such as the top 'one percent' (Mankiw 2013) in the US, which it prefers to democracy as supposedly the rule of the worst and poor (Acemoglu and Robinson 2013; Besley and Kudamatsu 2006; Mueller 2007; Nisbet 1966; Piven 2008; Wright 2013).

More specifically, conservatism defends, indeed glorifies 'aristocracy' in Pareto's (1963) broad sense of a governing class or elite--that is in his account invariably plutocracy or a wealthy stratum--even if in the new, slightly modified shape of the aristocracy of capital qua *nouveaux riches* within capitalism. It does this especially in America and Great Britain through the 'conservative revolution'<sup>19</sup> of Reagan and Thatcher and its post-2016 replay by the US radical-right regime and Brexit populist irrationalism (Bourdieu 1998; Jouet 2017; Krasa and Polborn 2014; Piketty 2020; Shiller 2017; Solow et al. 1987). Such a tendency is compatible with conservatism's intrinsic authoritarianism rooted in feudal despotism and eventuating via the extreme-right of fascism and theocracy into totalitarianism. It is hence consistent with its aristocratic, oligarchic origin it perpetuates by becoming the ideology of the new aristocracy and oligarchy of capital, simply the 'capitalist utopia' or the 'libertarian' nirvana of plutocratic self-reliance in capitalism (Hodgson 1999; McFadden 2006; Tilman 2001; Wright 2000).

Beneath its democratic mask and 'freedom' and 'liberty' parties, caucuses, slogans and universities, conservatism's fundamental ideological and political tendency originates as Michels' identified aristocratic, anti-democratic 'spirit of the old master caste' and remains so via neoconservatism. Consequently, such a spirit unambiguously predestines conservatism to rationalize ideologically and thus perpetuate the rule of a master caste and so aristocracy. This master caste involves its pre-capitalist prototype of slave masters and its capitalist variation of plutocracy and a reinvented master-servant economy in 19<sup>th</sup> century Great Britain and America until the New Deal and its National Labor Relations Act (Fishback 2017; Kalleberg et al. 2000; Roemer and Trannoy 2016). As a counterfactual but not unrealistic scenario, had not New-Deal liberalism granted basic rights to American labor for the first time in its history, the conservative-perpetuated common-law master-servant economy would have continued



indefinitely in the US, *ceteris paribus*, under conservatism, to the present in view of its ‘post–New Deal political backlash’ (Hirsch 2008; Kimeldorf 2013; Martin 2008).

Relatedly, the aristocratic spirit predisposes conservatism to embrace eventually—after its initial rejection or suspicion of—laissez-faire because the latter signifies, allows and reproduces Mitchel’s (1917) ‘despotic might’ and Michels’ (1968) ‘unrestrained power’ (and ‘corruption’) of capital or plutocracy as the ‘master caste’ or the equivalent of aristocracy within capitalism (Kimeldorf 2013; Wodtke 2016; Wright 2013). This spirit propels conservatism to adopt laissez-faire because the latter restores the ideal of unrestricted aristocratic ‘freedom’ to the point of oppressive license and Hobbesian anarchy, thus conserves the rule of the capitalist class as the new ‘master caste’ (Bourdieu 1998; Formisano 2015; Keynes 1960; Pryor 2002). To that extent, the aristocratic spirit of the master caste helps resolve the mystery of why conservatism, after initially opposing or suspecting, eventually embraces and glorifies laissez-faire capitalism as the Panglossian ‘best of all possible worlds’ through neoconservatism qua ‘neoliberalism’ such as Reaganism and Thatcherism (Beck 2000; Bowles and Gintis 2000; Kristal 2010; Naidu et al. 2020; Somers and Block 2005).

Behind the conservative mask of ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’, the doctrine of laissez-faire capitalism represents conservatism’s, including spurious libertarianism’s, ideological design and euphemism of capitalist dictatorship by justifying and sustaining the unrestrained power and unlimited aristocracy-style freedom (‘free enterprise’), simply the literal or figurative ‘license to kill’ for capital (Wright 2013). For example, capitalists effectively enjoyed such murderous and oppressive aristocratic license in Gilded-Age American capitalism with ‘brute force’ and the mobilization of violent capitalist militias against and mass killings of workers<sup>20</sup>, and still do since Reaganism and during the post-2016 plutocratic radical-right regime (Isaac 2002; Isaac et al. 2022; Kimeldorf 2013; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Jouet 2017; Krasa and Polborn 2014).

Hobbesian anarchy especially in America for the new master caste of capital combines with Leviathan against non-capital strata through the comprehensive systematic repression of labor (Fligstein and Goldstein 2022) to form and sustain capitalist dictatorship. Such dualism precisely typifies and identifies the latter, just as the unlimited freedom of the ruling class and the equally unrestricted oppression of

subordinate classes characterizes all dictatorships (McDonnell 2017; Pryor 2002; Reed 2017). This process unfolds in a historical sequence and notably sociological continuity. It spans from Mitchell's (1917) diagnosed 'despotism' and 'oppression' and Roosevelt's noted 'tyranny' of plutocracy in early American capitalism to the ever-growing 'repression of the population' through 'workplace dictatorships', 'authoritarian firms', 'a dictatorial business class', 'a hyperactive police and penal state' and 'authoritarian politics at its later and current stages (Bonikowski 2016; Bonikowski et al. 2021; Jouet 2017; Pryor 2002; Wacquant 2002; Wright 2013). Accordingly, conservatism operates through conservative counterrevolutions and mobilizations (Hung and Thompson 2016) in Great Britain and America as a primary ideological instrument of capitalist dictatorship or authoritarian capitalism. It does this by combining anarchy for capital and Leviathan against labor rather than, as 'libertarian' radical-right apologists (Buchanan 1975; for a critical account see MacLean 2018) allege, overcoming both Hobbesian extremes (Bourdieu 1998; Hodgson 1999; Kimeldorf 2013; Kristal 2013; Piketty 2014)

Consequently, an inner logic exists in, and a predictable outcome derives from, the seemingly perplexing trajectory of conservatism from the ideology of feudal aristocracy against emergent liberalism and democracy to that of capitalist plutocracy cum the 'new' especially 'all-American' aristocracy of capital versus liberal-secular democracy, thus from pre-capitalist to capitalist 'oppression' in Wieser-Mitchell's setting. The conservative innermost logic favors and indeed idealizes medievalism as the perpetual ideal for conservatism, including fascism and Nazism, along with idealizing aristocracy, pre-capitalist or capitalist alike that is invariably plutocracy in Pareto's account, as the rule and system of the 'best' (Bourdieu 1998; Habermas 2001; Kettler and Meja 1984; Knight 1960; Naidu and Yuchtman 2013; Nisbet 1966; Ollick 1999).

Conversely, this conservative logic revolts against and eliminates—as conservatism's imperative in Mannheim-Michels' accounts and first-hand experiences--democracy, emergent or mature, and its own ideological basis liberalism, classical or modern, secularism, rationalism, cosmopolitan universalism and modernism, substituting for them their opposites, from fascism to theocracy and irrationalism (Dahrendorf 1979; Dombrowski 2001; Habermas 2001; Mueller 2009). This logic explains and predicts why conservatism did and will operate as the ideology and utopia

of pre-capitalist aristocracy and capitalist plutocracy and ultimately of the latter such as the unrestrained power of capital from the Gilded Age to neoconservatism and the post-2016 radical-right, thus capitalist dictatorship that industrial oppression defines (Bonikowski et al. 2021; Jouet 2017; Shiller 2017; Wright 2013)

Conservatism rationalizes capital unconstrained power after the prototype and image of Hobbesian anarchy and the 'license to kill', as a new equivalent of that of aristocracy and hence as capitalist dictatorship perpetuating aristocratic rule under changed societal conditions and with slight modifications. To paraphrase Clausewitz's definition of war, conservatism's ideological program, such as that of Reaganism and its emulations in America from the 1980s to post-2016, of capitalist dictatorship or 'plutonomy' represents the continuation of the 'policy' of pre-capitalist despotism and aristocracy by other and even identical means (Frank 2007; Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Krasa and Polborn 2014; Solow et al. 1987). These means include formally free labor and moreover the same mechanism of coercion and oppression. An example is coerced, unfree labor in the common-law master-servant economy the English capitalist class perpetuated until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and its American counterpart up to the New Deal, along with Southern slavery Protestant evangelicals sanctified as 'Divinely ordained', as religious conservatives did other slave systems in history (Mueller 2009; Naidu and Yuchtman 2013; Orren 1991, Steinberg 2003). Accordingly, conservatism sustains through ideological rationalization capital unrestricted power and capitalist dictatorship as consistent with its origin and nature as the ideology of aristocracy in the Pareto sense of a ruling class and the defense of aristocratic rule. The latter means the power, wealth and status of approximately top 'one percent' of society in feudalism and American capitalism (Atkinson et al. 2011; Lenski 1984; Piketty et al. 2006; Saez and Zucman 2016).

The above helps resolve the seeming puzzle of why conservatism moves from opposing to endorsing capitalism, especially its authoritarian and relatedly laissez-faire version, primarily in the US, Great Britain and to some extent elsewhere, while remaining coherent and tenacious in its vehement opposition to liberalism, secularism, rationalism and modernism and in its subversion of liberal democracy. As a result, in spite of certain internal conflicts and tensions analogous to 'family feuds' between its

pre-capitalist and capitalist aristocratic factions of estate and money, the new aristocracy of capital and the rationalization of its power and wealth concentration remain the hard core of conservatism, especially its American version. It remains such along and even merged with medieval-like theocracy and the glorification of religion-driven moralistic repression and anti-science irrationalism (Bénabou et al. 2015).

Consequently, conservatism reemerges and operates as the primary ideological factor—what Schumpeter would call the ‘prime mover’ ideologically--of capitalist dictatorship in the US. Relatedly, it sanctifies the essentially theocratic ‘American regime’ of religion-motivated moralistic coercion and obstruction of scientific progress through the ‘Religious Right’ alliance between plutocracy and poor religious strata, especially in the ‘Bible Belt’ as the ‘protototalitarian’ revolt against individual liberty (Bauman 1997; Bénabou et al. 2015; McBride 2008). On this account, conservatism represents the double, encompassing ideology and thus justification of both capitalist dictatorship and evangelical theocracy as undemocratic regimes, simply of capitalist theocracy and ‘godliness’ or of theocratic ‘faith-based’ capitalism and politics. This is what essentially the conservative pole of America represents, and the ‘Bible Belt’ epitomizes by its ‘God and money’, ‘godly’ politics and pro-capital-anti-labor blend, as do Islamic capitalist countries like Saudi Arabia, other Gulf states and Turkey under religious rule (Bauman 2001; Lloyd 2012; Oberschall 2004). Hence, an exceptional ideological and political design and innovation of American conservatism, along with its Islamic analogue, is capitalist theocracy or theocratic capitalism in evangelical America, as well as some Muslim countries, with the ‘Bible Belt’ and Saudi Arabia (having the capitalist company with the highest stock-market valuation in the world) as exemplars.

Due to being multiple dictatorship through blending economic, political, religious, cultural and other social oppression, conservatism’s ideological design of capitalist theocracy or theocratic capitalism qualifies as a total, all-encompassing regime, indeed among the most totalitarian, along with fascism, in particular Nazism. In fact, Nazism and other fascism arises and operates as a functional equivalent of capitalist theocracy by almost invariably representing the compound of conservative right totalitarianism and corporate dictatorship with religious coercion, repression and sanctification (Satyanath et al. 2017). This pattern spans interwar Italy, Spain and Germany, South America

under postwar neo-fascist rule, the post-2016 resurgence of the proto-fascist radical right in alliance with theocratic evangelicalism in the US, and via contagion or confluence beyond, including former fascist and neo-fascist countries like Austria, Hungary, Italy, etc. In turn, such regimes coexist and indeed ally or cooperate with nominally non-fascist capitalist theocracies, such as Catholic-dominated Poland after the 1990s, Turkey under religious rule, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf and Islamic states perpetually, typically against liberal-secular democracy and liberalism and secularism in general (Bazzi, Koehler-Derrick, and Marx 2020).

### **7. Capitalist Dictatorship Through Conservative Anti-Labor Ideology**

Alternatively, conservatism, especially its American version since slavery and the Gilded Age through Reaganism and the post-2016 radical-right regime, functions as the driving ideological force of capitalist dictatorship due to being a stringent economic anti-labor<sup>21</sup>, including anti-union ideology (Centeno and Cohen 2012; Isaac and Christiansen 2002; Isaac et al. 2022; Stepan-Norris and Southworth 2010). The latter interconnects and mutually reinforces with a conservative vehement and eventually, as via fascism and theocracy, violent political anti-liberal and anti-democratic ideology through the compound of state repression, terror and violence within society and militarism, cruelty and war against other societies (Savelsberg and King 2005; Steinmetz 2005).

In this respect, conservatism poses a dual, entwined danger to labor collective (and individual) freedom and basic rights in the economy as well as to political and civil liberty and thus mounts a double jeopardy for economic and political democracy. American conservatism couches this as a 'holy', patriotic ideological war against 'un-American' labor/unions (Isaac 2002) and 'foreign' European liberalism US conservatives since McCarthyism and Reaganism through the post-2016 radical-right attack as 'un-American'. In the process, American conservatism embellishes such attacks as an 'all-American' crusade of anti-unionism and anti-liberalism, just as did Nazism with its 'broad coalition of the right' Hitler promised to assemble by attacking unionists and liberals, along with democratic socialists, as 'un-German' (Ferguson and Voth 2008).

By doing so, conservatism presents and seeks to implement the ideological program of both labor oppression by capital, so capitalist dictatorship, and of non-

democracy or bogus illiberal, notably theocratic 'godly', 'democracy'. Reported instances of the latter include the conservative 'American regime' of capitalist theocracy or theocratic capitalism through the Religious Right alliance between plutocracy and religious low classes against scientific progress and personal freedom, which the 'Bible Belt' and other evangelical US regions exemplify, along with its Islamic analogues in Saudi Arabia and Turkey (Bénabou et al. 2015). In short, especially American conservatism compounds and reinforces what Michels (1968) identifies as the 'danger of plutocracy' involving 'an oligarchy of plutocrats' oppressing labor and breeding corruption with that of theocracy persecuting 'infidels.'

Accordingly, an anti-labor ideology or political agenda expresses conservatism's negativity, indeed implacable antagonism to and oppression of labor and its collective organization and action through unions and worker parties, as well as its hostility to and authoritarian repression of the entire non-capitalist or non-plutocratic population (Wright 2013). This is an ideological tendency conservatism has displayed in America from the Gilded Age to present days in a display of continuity and consistency (Kimeldorf 2013; Mizruchi and Marshall 2016). Such an ideology shows that conservatism from its inception out of medievalism to its destination in fascism has invariably been the ideology and politics of what Simmel (1955) calls 'social hatred.' This is a pattern of 'social hatred' American religious conservatism from the Ku Klux Klan to evangelicalism epitomizes in a long continuity and materializes by hate crimes, contempt and mistreatment of laboring and other masses (Fryer and Levitt 2012; Simi et al. 2017). In turn, its anti-labor ideology connects and mutually reinforces with American conservatism's observed 'sadistic intolerance to cultural otherness' and more broadly societal diversity, including ideological and political pluralism (Bauman 2001).

The above holds even or precisely when conservatism deceives and manipulates working and other masses, especially the 'religious poor' through their 'Religious Right alliance' with plutocracy in the US, for strategic purposes (Bénabou et al. 2015). It does this by wearing, as Michels (1968) observes and predicts, a 'specious democratic mask' during elections and thus eliminating democracy by the 'democratic way of the popular will' in what Mannheim (1936) calls the classic 'manner of Machiavellianism'. Reportedly, this pattern of masking undemocratic aims and deceiving labor and other

non-capitalist strata is precisely how conservatism acted and succeeded to attain its aims during the 1980 ('Reagan Democrats'), 2000, 2004, and especially 2016 Presidential elections that demonstrate such grave consequences for democracy (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017; Bénabou and Tirole 2016; Bonikowski et al. 2021).

In a way, as Michels and Mannheim would expect, such a 'democratic mask' mostly explains conservatism's remarkable series of electoral victories and resulting political predominance in America since 1980 and even the late 1960s through 2016, especially in the South where it has attained proxy absolute power and total domination due to such a Machiavellian disguise as 'democracy' and 'freedom' (Lloyd 2012). This conservative disguise operates in combination and reciprocal intensification with conservatism's systematic suppression of voting rights and related Machiavellian methods (e.g., election subversion, gerrymandering) (Jouet 2017). The above holds particularly for the South whose ultra-conservative elites do not abandon and forgot the old Southern ways of subverting democracy and suppressing liberties, notably systematic labor repression and union and voter suppression since postbellum times and slavery (Amenta et al. 2001; Hicks 2006; Lloyd 2012).

In this regard, what Michels (1968) detects as its false democratic mask, along with its voter suppression, functions for American conservatism perfectly. It acts as an electoral and political alchemy transforming its anti-liberal and anti-democratic ideological designs into the gold of victory, including religious-poor and working-class support in 1980 and 2016, in elections and power in politics and eventually capitalist and other dictatorship, just as did for fascism, notably Nazism, as Michels (1968) anticipated, and Mannheim (1936) experienced first-hand. In fact, fascism as its creation or heir inherits conservatism's 'democratic mask' and assumes it during elections and other political constellations, as Nazism most successfully did in Germany during the 1993 election. It does this by masking its anti-democratic intentions, while appealing to working and middle classes, achieving unprecedented electoral success and soon becoming the ruling power (Beck 2000; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Satyanath et al. 2017). Furthermore, neo-fascism or the new populist radical-right continues this Nazi pattern of wearing a 'democratic mask' in Europe, including former fascist states Austria, Italy, Hungary, and parts of Germany, and America with the rise of the extremist

'Tea Party' and especially post-2016 (Berezin 2019; Margalit 2019; Romero 2020), just as does neo-conservatism through Reaganism and Thatcherism (Piketty 2020).

Therefore, both neo-fascism and neo-conservatism continue the original Machiavellian method of conservatism Michels detected and that of fascism Mannheim personally experienced (Paxton 2004; Rydgren 2007).

By wearing such a democratic mask in elections and related political occasions, conservatism, along with fascism, pretends to play by the rules of the democratic game and related non-violent 'social games' (Dahrendorf 1979). Yet, it eliminates or perverts these rules and thus democracy and enforces capitalist or right dictatorship as soon as it achieves election triumphs and captures state power, as does fascism (Gross et al. 2011; King 2008; Ortoleva and Snowberg 2015). This conservative-fascist pattern runs from the 1933 electoral success of Nazism as the 'new conservatism' to US conservatism's multiple victories in elections since Reaganism through the 2016 election resulting in an authoritarian autocratic regime reminiscent of the autocracies of the 1930s. In regional terms within the US, This is most notable in the South where ruling ultra-conservatives, including plutocrats and theocratic evangelicals, eliminate any semblance of functioning democracy and impose capitalist theocracy (the 'Bible Belt' of 'God and money') (Amenta et al. 2001; Hicks 2006; Lloyd 2012). On this account, the democratic mask of conservatism acts as the highly efficient Machiavellian instrument and indeed proven formula for enacting capitalist dictatorship, as well as fascist, radical-right dictatorships. It does so by deceiving and manipulating labor classes and especially religious poor strata into the 'holy' alliance with the wealthy in America, together with suppressing voting rights and related undemocratic methods such as Schumpeter's (1950) 'leadership' effectively selecting the electorate (by conservative redistricting, etc.) and reverting democracy into plutocratic oligarchy.

In turn, its negative anti-labor ideological program or anti-union political agenda complements and is compatible with conservatism's positive attribute of a plutocratic and more broadly aristocratic ideology in elitist terms a la Pareto (also, Benhabib and Bisin 2018). In other words, Leviathan and 'social hatred' for and committing 'hate crimes' against labor and related low social strata goes hand in hand with anarchy and preference for capital, plutocracy and aristocracy, just as conservatism does with



dictatorship, capitalist/plutocratic or fascist/radical-right (Jacobs and Tope 2007; King 2008; Mueller 2009). This conservative aristocratic ideology elevates plutocracy in capitalism, just as aristocracy in feudalism, into the master of laboring strata consigned to the status of its proxy slaves, servants, tools, or repressed subordinate subjects via pervasive and intense labor repression in the ultra-conservative, under-democratized American South even after the abolition of slavery (Amenta et al. 2001; Ruef 2014).

Such a glorification of plutocracy combines and mutually reinforces with exalting theocrats into heaven as 'divinely ordained' rulers of the 'godless.' The latter's life hence becomes, as Tawney (1923) observes, 'hell in this world' in the manner of Puritanism--as does their afterlife according to its Calvinist predestination dogma--in the capitalist-theocratic 'American regime' like evangelical America (Bénabou et al. 2015; King 2008). In some observations, since the Reagan-Thatcher counterrevolution conservatism renders the opposition between capital and labor within capitalism similar to that between masters and slaves in pre-capitalism, with chattel slavery expanding via capitalist expansion, though modern society abolishes its legal form as economically inefficient and inconsistent with political democracy and equality (Bourdieu 1998; Feagin 2001; Steinberg 2003; Wacquant 2002).

Therefore, modern conservatism reestablishes the pattern of American paleo-conservatism that supplied an ideological rationalization and religious sanctification of the effective 'continuation' of slavery in the South after the Civil War through continuing severe labor repression (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008; Morck et al. 2005). The latter persists through constant anti-labor actions by Southern states, including the perpetual legal prohibition of unions in the public sector such as education and their persistent suppression in private business (Hicks 2006; Lloyd 2012; Rao et al. 2011). If severe labor repression qualifies, as in the above account, as the substantive continuation of slavery, the South continues and expands beyond racial boundaries--to encompass what Weber(1968:391) calls the 'poor white trash' or the 'religious poor' of any race into--the latter, together and in mutual reinforcement with 'Bible Belt' proto-totalitarian, coercive evangelical theocracy (Bauman 1997; Jouet 2017; McBride 2008). Conservatism is primarily instrumental in reproducing this double outcome by representing a predominant ideological, political, religious and cultural force from

antebellum to present times and rationalizing slavery or its successor systematic labor repression as the Southern 'spirit', 'pride', 'way of life', indeed sanctifying it as 'God's design', together with theocracy as what Jefferson calls 'religious slavery' for 'infidels' (Amenta et al. 2001; Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Mueller 2009).

In this regard, conservatism develops, functions and persists—through neo-conservative counterrevolutions since Reaganism and Thatcherism, including fascist or populist mobilizations in the US and via contagion beyond after 2016—as the ideology of slavery, so the apology of enslavement in the broad and substantive sense (Feagin 2001; Steinberg 2003). The latter means effective persistent and severe coercion, oppression and subjugation of labor—as in the US postbellum South up to the present—and other social strata not born and belonging to aristocracy-capitalist or capitalist, as a ruling class in Mosca-Pareto's sense or a higher, master caste in the older meaning<sup>22</sup> (Bartling et al. 2015; Roemer and Trannoy 2016). This is what Michels essentially suggests by the cited observation that conservatism embraces and perpetuates the spirit of the master caste, thus including that of slave and similar masters (Budros 2004; Steinberg 2003). Relatedly, conservatism originates and remains as the ideological apology and political practice of servitude for non-aristocrats as the 'general populace' ('commons' in England), particularly non-plutocrats, so of bondage broadly understood as existing within and beyond feudalism, including capitalist dictatorship as its new form within capitalism (Bergemann 2017)

More precisely, conservatism emerges and initially operates as the ideology of feudal-style servitude that labor and other masses endure in the form of a master-servant economy composed of aristocratic masters and laboring servants, including peasants and other subordinate groups, coerced into compulsory, unfree labor (Moore 1993; Piven 2008). It not only perpetuates this master-servant system as 'divinely ordained' or 'natural', immutable and eternal within late feudalism, or sheds tears a la Burke et al. over its imminent demise in the face of liberalism and democracy seeking via the French Revolution to free laboring subjects from legal subjection and grant them equal rights (Dahrendorf 1979; Habermas 2001; Piketty 2014). Further, conservatism transfers and sustains the master-servant economy, thus coerced, unfree labor in early and developing capitalism, especially Great Britain and the US during the 19<sup>th</sup> and up to

the 1930s, with only the New Deal with the first-ever labor rights legislation superseding this coercive and oppressive economic system (Kimeldorf 2013). If a master-servant system within feudalism represented an exemplar, along with slavery, of pre-capitalist despotism or oppression, its transplanted and sustained version within capitalism represents its capitalist form. This is what Mitchell (1917) diagnoses as ‘industrial despotism’ or ‘industrial oppression’ due to the ‘despotic’ power of capital in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century America, and later observers do for its subsequent periods, especially during neo-conservatism and the post-2016 radical right regime perpetuating authoritarianism, extremism and exclusion (Blomberg and Harrington 2000; Bonikowski et al. 2021).

In this respect, conservatism proves to be, in fact, a dual and perpetual, not just a single and transient, ideological design of and a political path to servitude in the sense of coerced, unfree labor and a system of masters and servants or modern-day slaves due to coercion (Steinberg 2003). Through such a path conservatism perpetuates labor bondage by aristocracy in pre-capitalism, such as feudalism, as Burke and other proto-conservatives exemplify by their fervent defense and Panglossian glorification of the ancient feudal regime as the ‘best of all possible worlds’, ‘natural’, ‘divinely ordained’, and its aristocratic masters as the ‘rule of the best’ and possessing ‘divine rights’ (Giddens 2000; Nisbet 1966). Through another path conservatism transplants this old medieval system of oppression, so the Dark Middle Ages into capitalism by recreating a capitalist master-servant economy in Britain and America for long after the demise of feudalism with the democratic French Revolution or the Industrial Revolution resting on the Enlightenment (Dahrendorf 1979; Habermas 2001; Knight 1967; Mokyr 2010).

Moreover, conservatism proves to be a more obstinate, enduring and permanent ‘road to serfdom’ than what Hayek (1944) condemns as ‘socialism’ lumping together in a bewildering cacophony Soviet communism with the US New Deal and the liberal-democratic Scandinavian welfare state that enjoys, as Samuelson (1983) observes, freedom ‘second to none’. Reportedly, the New Deal counterbalanced the ‘despotic’ power of capital by (the Wagner Act, 1935) granting labor rights substantively for the first time in American history, and yet provoking the conservative ‘post–New Deal political backlash’ starting with the ‘anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act’ (Kalleberg 2009; Martin 2008; Stepan-Norris and Southworth 2010). On this account, conservatism has long

constituted the ideological and political driving force of both a feudal and capitalist master-servant economy as a successor of slavery and its aristocracy embodying the 'spirit of the old master caste'. In that sense, conservatism develops as the defense of European feudalism and American 'belated feudalism' (Orren 1991) through a system of feudal masters and servants and remains so by sustaining neo-feudalism and the 'new patrimonial capitalism' in the sense of an oppressive and anti-egalitarian system (Cohen 2003; Piketty 2014).

Further, conservatism often becomes the ideological blueprint and justification of slavery in the strict sense both in pre-capitalism and to some degree within capitalism (Piven 2008; Steinberg 2003). This is what American paleo-conservatism demonstrates by its defense and celebration of Southern slavery and slave masters as 'divinely ordained', 'eternal', 'natural', and the 'rule of the best' within pre-capitalism and early capitalism, and its effective continuation via persistent capitalist repression of labor long after its official abolition (Budros 2004; Ruef 2014; Savelsberg and King 2005).

In a way, American conservatism perpetuates substantively and covertly, even if not formally or overtly, the old slavery and more broadly oppressive and undemocratic, including theocratic, spirit of the master caste in the South and conservative America overall up to present days. It does this by redesigning ideologically and politically the US economy and polity after the Southern long-standing archetype of intense labor repression and expansive theocracy, simply 'Southernization' of America (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Hicks 2006; McBride 2008). This is what the effective, even if not legal, slave-like repressive condition or treatment of labor and other non-capital strata indicates in the anti-labor South and similar US regions (Kimeldorf 2013).

Such a condition is primarily the outcome of conservatism's ideological negation and political suppression of basic labor freedoms and rights, including collective organization, bargaining and action, by suppressing unions and codetermination in corporate governance (e.g., work councils), along with worker exploitation through perpetually low wages as the Southern way of spurious 'prosperity' and economic 'development' (Lloyd 2012; Rao et al. 2011). Hence, the proxy slave- or servant-like status of labor in the South results from what conservatism perpetuates and celebrates as the unique, glorious Southern caste-style plutocratic and theocratic method of

coercion, oppression and exploitation of non-plutocratic and ‘ungodly’ social strata, i.e., the pattern of a coercive economy and an undemocratic illiberal polity (Amenta et al. 2001; Hicks 2006; Kranton and Sanders 2017; McBride 2008). In so doing, conservatism makes and keeps the South the heart, soul and epicenter of the ‘American regime’ of capitalist plutocracy and theocracy through the Christian Right alliance of the rich with poor religious strata, especially Weber’s ‘poor white trash’, against individual liberty and scientific progress alike (Bénabou et al. 2015).

Overall, with minor variations, conservatism typically defends slavery both in its strict form and its broader forms or proxies such as servitude and other labor coercion and union suppression (Piketty 2020). This tendency spans from paleo-conservatism’s religion-based perpetuation of slave systems in the British and other colonies up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century--as even Spencer<sup>23</sup> (1970) deplores--to neo-conservatism’s reproduction of the slave-style oppressive condition and coercive treatment of labor in the US South and beyond, combined with the defense of plutocracy, in contemporary capitalism (Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Kimeldorf 2013). By its ‘libertarian’ rationalization of virtually any form of labor coercion and oppression by capital as ‘free enterprise’, neo-conservatism as laissez-faire ‘neoliberalism’ appears to be primarily instrumental in the observed resurgence and expansion of ‘chattel slavery’ and other oppressive economic regimes within globalized capitalism (Steinberg 2003; also, Naidu et al. 2020).

After its inception as the apology of feudal-style servitude, conservatism evolves into and functions as the primary ideological and political driver of the new slave-like subjugation or post-feudal servitude of labor and related non-capital populations within capitalism, so a capitalist type of coercion and oppression and in that sense dictatorship (Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Kimeldorf 2013). Conservatism continues to treat non-capital populations as analogous to factual slaves, plebeians, servants or the feudal populace, at most powerless subjects, to submit completely to aristocrats in the new face of capitalist plutocrats as their perpetual and all-encompassing masters (Formisano 2015). Such an adverse treatment is encompassing ranging from single undemocratic, repressive enterprises as sites of ‘workplace dictatorships’ to the entire economy and society (Bergemann 2017; Goldstein 2012; Dixon and Martin 2012; Wright 2013).

The preceding especially applies to plutocratic and populist conservatism. The latter, as Michels (1968) observes, resorts to a 'democratic' deception during elections and related political situations to deceive the electoral population, including labor and other classes like the US religious poor, and manipulate in the Machiavellian fashion the 'popular will', thus seeking to eliminate liberal democracy by effectively using it against itself by the 'democratic way'. Through conservative counterrevolutions or capitalist-populist mobilizations conservatism reaffirms the spirit of the master caste, including slave masters, by perpetuating the slave-like condition or feudal-style subjection of labor in merged capitalist-fascist dictatorship ensuing from such movements (Burawoy 2005; Hung and Thompson 2016; Slater and Smith 2016).

Conservatism ultimately reasserts the master caste of slavery in a substantive sense and servitude in that it eventuates in fascism, including Nazism, in interwar Europe (Mann 2004; Paxton 2004), and neo-fascism or extreme-right authoritarian, exclusionary populist regimes in the US post-2016 and via contagion beyond (Berezin 2019; Romero 2020). Therefore, conservatism reveals its origin in and core of the spirit of the master caste, while disguising it through what Michels (1968) detects as its 'democratic' deception when forced to operate within democracy. It does this eventually through its product, fascism that labor, non-capitalist strata experience as substantively a new proxy form of slavery or medieval despotism, as in Italian fascist totalitarianism and especially Nazism with its prohibition of unions and persecution of unionists and its attempted restoration of German medievalism qua romanticism (Acemoglu et al. 2022; Ferguson and Voth 2008; Habermas 2001; Ollick 1999).

In economic/class terms, all these fascist and neo-fascist, extreme-right regimes that conservatism eventually produces, from Nazism to their current versions, are essentially capitalist dictatorships--i.e., pro-capital and anti-labor repressive systems. These comprise autocracies as the dictatorship of the rich, dynasties, military juntas, oligarchies and plutocracies, including kleptocracies in third-world countries and 'mafia capitalism' and plutocracy cum plutonomy in America during neoconservatism and especially post-2016, along with the quasi-autocracy and dynasty of a 'business genius' (Acemoglu et al. 2018; Besley and Kudamatsu 2006; Formisano 2015; Frank 2007; Pryor 2002; Rajan 2009; Shiller 2017). For illustration, contemporary conservatism

perpetrates such a slave-like condition or treatment of non-capital strata by denying ideologically and suppressing coercively their basic liberties and rights such as the freedom of labor collective organization and action through unionization, collective bargaining, participation in corporate governance (e.g., work councils, company boards) and political assembly (Goldstein 2012; Martin and Dixon 2010; Rosenfeld 2019; Western and Rosenfeld 2011). Within the Western world, this especially applies to American and British conservatism that manifests itself and acts as a vehemently and often violently anti-labor and generally anti-democratic ideology. It includes both its older version perpetuating slavery and the master-servant system and the new qua neo-conservatism through Reaganism and Thatcherism and their sequels exerting systematic coercion and repression of labor (Jacobs and Dirlam 2016; Kristal 2013; Walker, Martin, and McCarthy 2008). Consequently, conservatism inflicts labor effectively with a proxy-slave treatment in the sense of denying to US workers on ideological grounds basic freedoms and rights and subjecting them via coercion to slave-like subsistence wages and working conditions (Wright 2013). An exemplar is conservative America since Reaganism and post-2016, notably the anti-union South in which ruling conservatism keeps the slavery and aristocratic spirit of the old master caste alive since postbellum times (Kimeldorf 2013; Lloyd 2012; Rao et al. 2011).

## **8. Conclusion**

All things considered, capitalist dictatorship from autocracy and dynasty to oligarchy and 'plutonomy' in contemporary and past societies is primarily and even exclusively the ideological design and political creation of conservatism, just as is relatedly fascism as right totalitarianism, along with theocracy as a religiously grounded dictatorial regime. This allows enunciating a proxy sociological 'iron' law as a typical historical pattern or demonstrated empirical generalization: whenever conservatism arises and prevails as a type of ideology and politics ultimately capitalist dictatorship results and persists, as does fascism as well as theocracy in conjunction and eventually fusion, *ceteris paribus*. By such a fusion, conservatism generates or perpetuates double capitalist-fascist and capitalist-theocratic dictatorships, even a triple capitalist-fascist-theocratic dictatorship.

Capitalist-fascist (economic-corporate) right-wing dictatorships arise and dominate in interwar Europe, including Germany and Austria under Nazism and Italy, Spain and many other European countries under fascism, just as persist in some of them (Portugal, Spain) after WW II, and reemerges in postwar South America, the most egregiously Chile with the crucial support of the US conservative government (and falsely 'libertarian' Chicago economics). Capitalist-theocratic dictatorships emerge in and pervade America with the resurgence and prevalence of theocratic evangelicalism from the 1980s and since its root Puritanism to the present, some post-socialist Eastern European countries like Poland under Catholic dominance since the 1990s, and Islamic-ruled Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Triple capitalist-fascist-theocratic dictatorships characterize interwar Italy, Spain and other countries with the alliance of Catholicism and fascism, postwar South America such as Chile's Catholic-supported dictatorship, as well as conservative-evangelical America since the rise of the extremist 'Tea Party' and under the post-2016 radical-right populist and 'faith-based' regime.

Furthermore, capitalist-fascist dictatorships reappear with certain modifications in, as one might expect, such former fascist countries as Austria, Italy, sections of Germany, and Hungary in Europe and ex-neofascist states in South America like Brazil during recent times, especially after 2016 under the impetus of the outcome of the US Presidential elections and the resulting radical-right government. Similarly, capitalist-theocratic dictatorships return in countries like post-socialist Catholic-dominated Poland and Turkey under restored Islamic rule, along with evangelical America in its theocratic continuity with Puritanism, while persist, indeed petrify in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Lastly, integral capitalist-fascist-theocratic or religion-supported dictatorships resurrect, with some adaptations, in Catholic settings like Italy under its Mussolini-inspired, most right-wing postwar government, Hungary during the 2010s and parts of Latin America recently, and especially evangelical America after the 2016 elections and during the post-2016 extreme-right and 'godly' regime.

Alternatively, all these capitalist and mixed dictatorships constitute conservative regimes, thus resting on conservatism as their shared ideological blueprint and justification as well as the common political agenda and movement, which is crucial with the respect to the present argument. They strongly corroborate the argument that



conservatism overdetermines ideologically capitalist dictatorship, just as it does fascist, theocratic and other radical-right dictatorships.

In theoretical terms, the analysis in this paper supports Michels', Mannheim's and related sociological and other theories that consider conservatism the primary ideological source and rationale of dictatorship and related repressive regimes within contemporary society. In relation to these theories, a partial theoretical innovation of this paper is that it extends their classical insights to identify conservatism as the ideology and utopia of a specific, capitalist variation of dictatorship, and not only of fascist, theocratic and other right dictatorships or nondemocracies. At the minimum, it innovates by making explicit such an implication or anticipation of conservative-driven capitalist dictatorship in these earlier sociological and other theories of conservatism and dictatorship or nondemocracy. In addition, this analysis confirms later, even if still rare, sociological theories that explicitly identify and dissect conservatism as the principal ideological determinant and predictor of capitalist dictatorship and similar regimes like plutonomy especially in America and Great Britain since Reaganism and Thatcherism (Beck 2000; Bourdieu 1998; Feagin 2001; Wacquant 2002). Further, the analysis reaffirms and relates to more recent and current theoretical considerations as well as empirical observations of this process after the US 2016 elections and the ensuing radical-right authoritarian and pseudo-autocratic regime in America and via confluence in Great Britain post-Brexit and through global impetus some non-Western countries (Aksoy and Gambetta 2022; Berezin 2019; Kaltwasser 2018; Soehl and Karim 2021).

Finally, the analysis and argument reaffirm the assumption and observation by some economists that conservatism--i.e., 'traditionalism' evolved from a pre-ideological inertia into an ideological blueprint in Mannheim's (1986) account--and dictatorship, especially its religious form through theocracy, move extremely close, 'hand in hand' (Mueller 2009). However, in contrast to these economic assumptions and observations, the argument elaborates that conservatism as an ideology goes 'hand in hand' not only with theocratic as well as fascist or radical-right dictatorships, but also with capitalist dictatorship and more broadly authoritarian capitalism. This elaboration qualifies as a partial theoretical innovation in relation to these theoretical assumptions so long as their assumed close co-movements ('hand holding') of conservatism and dictatorships do not

incorporate that between the first and capitalist dictatorship, which the present analysis incorporates or makes explicit and explicates more extensively. Such an elaboration builds on those sociological theories and observations that explicitly postulate, observe and explicate such a co-movement of conservatism and capitalist dictatorship or authoritarian capitalism by contrast to most of their counterparts from economics.

Directions for further research include both theoretical analyses and empirical studies. Future theoretical analyses should theorize systematically and explain the connection between conservatism and capitalist dictatorship and more broadly the latter's determinants and predictors overall. They should especially postulate and explicate the mechanisms through which conservatism determines and predicts capitalist dictatorship as well as those of its other determinants and predictors. For illustration, they should specifically consider whether and how conservatism's intrinsic authoritarianism rooted in its source medieval traditionalism and its tendency to eventuate in fascism and theocracy lead or relate to its ideological conditioning and rationalization of capitalist dictatorship, including its defense of aristocracy leading to its ideology of plutocracy as respective elites in pre-capitalism and capitalism.

Future empirical studies should investigate present trends in the actual or potential links of conservatism and capitalist dictatorship and similar regimes in both Western and non-Western societies. Especially, they should explore how the surge and triumph of conservatism in America and Great Britain after 2016, as well as since the 1980s, links with the resurgence or expansion and intensification of capitalist dictatorship and similar repressive regimes in these and via contagion, impetus or convergence many other settings. This global contagion would yield future empirical studies of conservatism and capitalist dictatorship both in Western and non-Western and third world societies. For example, they would encompass post-2016 America and Brexit Great Britain as the most promising fields for research within the Western world at present. Additional non-Western settings would include much of South America under far-right rule déjà vu until recently, authoritarian parts of Asia and Africa, Islamic capitalist-theocratic states and large sections of Eastern Europe from Hungary to Poland subjected to conservative dominance and coercion and to oligarchic capitalism.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Piketty (2020:8, 14) notes the ‘strong ties’ between the ideologies of slavery and colonialism and the ideologies of ‘ownership and hypercapitalism’, including ‘articles in praise of Anglo-American hypercapitalism in the Wall Street Journal [becoming Fox Press under the new ownership owning Fox News] or the Financial Times’ hence effectively acting as apologists and cheerleaders of capitalist dictatorship in Great Britain and America.

<sup>2</sup> Fligstein and Goldstein (2022:195) alert to the ‘labor-degrading managerial innovations’ in American ‘shareholder value capitalism’ during recent decades. Further, they observe that in America the ‘tactics of shareholder value capitalism have disproportionately raised the income and wealth of the top 1% of earners and is one of the main causes of changing inequality [while] a large part of the population found themselves with lower wages and reduced health and pension benefits’ (Fligstein and Goldstein 2022:195).

<sup>3</sup> Piketty (2020:44) proposes to ‘compare the concentration of wealth in the United States in 2018 with that of France in 1914 or Britain in 1800.’ Beckert (2022:234, 246) observes that the ‘United States stands at the extreme end of wealth inequality within the Global North’, and points to the ‘dynastic perpetuation of wealth’ and ‘an increasing fusion of wealth and political power’ in this and other Western societies, concluding that ‘new forms of social closure and privilege of the few develop that are seen as paralleling aristocratic societies or the gilded age.’

<sup>4</sup> Piketty (2020:34) registers that the ‘Cold War also created an ideological freeze, which discouraged new thinking about ways of transcending capitalism. The anticommunist euphoria that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall similarly discouraged fresh thinking right up to the Great Recession of 2008.’

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<sup>5</sup>Amengual and Bartley (2022:385) find that conservative ‘U.S. policy helped spread market fundamentalism but rarely intervened to address exploitation or environmental damage’ both within and via economic-political imperialism beyond America.

<sup>6</sup>Piketty (2020:1037) observes that the ‘conservative revolution of the 1980s (along with the fall of communism) ‘interrupted’ the process of the ‘significant reduction of inequality that took place in the mid-twentieth century was made possible by the construction of a social state based on relative educational equality and a number of radical innovations, such as co-management in the Germanic and Nordic countries and progressive taxation in the United States and United Kingdom.’

<sup>7</sup>Formisano (2015:11) observes that America’s ‘plutocracy continues to enjoy the fruits of years of government policy directed toward maintaining their inordinate political influence that, in turn, enables the upper caste’s continued accumulation of wealth at the expense of everyone else.’ Bourdieu (1998:42) charges that in the US the conservative and ‘libertarian’ economics’ ‘ideology of competence serves very well to justify an opposition [of capital and labor] which is rather like that between masters and slaves.’

<sup>8</sup>Piketty (2020:8) remarks that the ‘postcommunist societies of Russia, China, and to a certain extent Eastern Europe (despite their different historical trajectories) have become hypercapitalism’s staunchest allies.’

<sup>9</sup>Allen (2008:966-69) noting that ‘capitalists—not workers—were the gainers during the Industrial Revolution’ warns that ‘an economic history of the world [should not be] the counterpart to the clash of civilizations. Indeed, [the] biological arguments for the superiority of Anglo–American culture make the differences between the West and the Rest unbridgeable and a source of perpetual conflict.’ Cole (2005:491) reports that the ‘rate at which some non-Western countries have ratified human rights treaties actually increased after the cold war, clearly contradicting the clash of civilizations predictions.’

<sup>10</sup> Mannheim (1986:91) states that conservatism in the beginning is ‘nothing more than traditionalism become self-reflective’ and that, as the ‘counter-revolutionary opposition’, ‘does not attack ‘freedom’ itself, but rather the principle of liberty upon which it rests.’

<sup>11</sup>García-Jimeno, Iglesias, and Yildirim (2022:42) refer to the female-led Temperance Crusade movement spreading in the United States as ‘a wave of protest activity against liquor dealers between 1873 and 1874 [in which] shutting down local bars and saloons was the main aim of the crusading [religiously fanatical] women.’

<sup>12</sup>Pfeffer, Fomby and Insolera (2020:86) remark that launching the neo-conservative and evangelical warfare on science, ‘in 1981, President Reagan proposed to cut social science research at NSF by 75%.’

<sup>13</sup> US religious conservatives usually describe capitalist dictatorship and/or theocracy such as the Southern ‘Bible Belt’ as a ‘Divine plan’ and ultra-conservative US Presidents, from the 1980 through the 2000s and post-2016, as ‘chosen by God’, ‘biblical’, and the like.

<sup>14</sup> Acemoglu and Robinson (2006b:326) find that ‘although slavery as an economic institution was abolished, Southern elites still possessed considerable de facto power through their control over economic resources, their greater education, and their relative ability to engage in collective action’.

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<sup>15</sup> Mannheim (1986:56) remarks that with respect to the legitimation of social rule, conservatism favors ‘theological-mystical’ or ‘transcendental’ definitions such as ‘divine right’ versus liberalism’s emphasis on the ‘juristic plane’ through natural law.

<sup>16</sup> Mannheim (1936:230) writes that conservatism represents the ideology of absolutism (which) shows an outlook originally oriented towards the mastery of a life-situation, acquiring the tendency to reflect in a rather cold-blooded way on the technique of domination—[i.e.] Machiavellianism’.

<sup>17</sup> Mann (2004:177) notes that ‘like the Italian fascists, the Nazis actually seized that power with help from the country’s elites’ of major capitalists and traditional conservatism. More broadly, Mann (2004:237) observes that fascism in interwar Europe ‘diffused widely – not only as a distinct movement, but also as a corrosive radical force within more conservative authoritarian regimes. For authoritarians here remained through the interwar period as a fractious family whose reactionary (conservative), corporatist (capitalist), and fascist members struggled noisily for overall dominance.’

<sup>18</sup> Mallard and Sun (2022:147, 179-80) suggest that the American government through its sanctions law and global surveillance program ‘strengthens the hegemony of U.S. rule at the expense of the old model of multilateral rulemaking’ expressing economic-political imperialism and ‘founded on a logic governmentalism that is reminiscent of the 19th-century moral panics against populations deemed dangerous [and] weaken[s] the rule of law’.

<sup>19</sup> Piketty (2020:31) refers to the “conservative revolution” waged by the Republican Party under Ronald Reagan in the United States and the Conservative Party under Margaret Thatcher in Britain in the late 1970s and early 1980s.’

<sup>20</sup> Isaac et al. (2022:1602-03) recount that when ‘America’s first nationwide general strike erupted in summer 1877, newspapers expressed shock, horror, and anger and offered a host of forceful solutions to the emerging labor problem. Bold headlines and colorful columns in the New York Times drew parallels with the Paris Commune of 1871 and characterized strikers as communists, reds, ignorant rabble, and dangerous classes, among other terms of vilification.’ Notably, Isaac et al. (2022, 1603) recall that, ‘as these journalistic voices would have it, the uprising was eventually suppressed with armed force supplied by police, state and private militia, and U.S. Army troops, leaving more than 100 dead in the process.’

<sup>21</sup> Stepan-Norris and Southworth (2010:231) observe that in America during the 1950s two related events occurred: the passing of the ‘anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act (Labor Management Relations Act)’ and the taking hold of McCarthyism.

<sup>22</sup> In fact, Pareto (1935:624) suggests that the ‘distance between an American millionaire and a plain American is greater than the distance between a German nobleman and a German factory-hand. It is something like the distances between the castes in India, which is nothing like the distance between whites and blacks in the United States.’

<sup>23</sup> Spencer (1970:386) writes that British ‘Colonel D’Oyley, the first governor of Jamaica, that within a few days after having issued an order ‘for the distribution to the army of 1,701 Bibles’, he signed another order for the payment of “the summe of twenty pound sterling, out of the impost money, to pay for fifteen dogs brought by John Hoy, for the hunting of the (slave) Negroes.” The holding of slaves by [Southern] ministers of religion in America is a parallel fact.’