

Hayek's Inspirations: Spontaneous Order

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Abstract: Friedrich August von Hayek, a brilliant thinker in his own right, received inspiration from many scholars and, in turn, provided inspiration to numerous scholars. He contributed mightily to the scientific advancement in the economics discipline from the Austrian School of Economics perspective. Hayek analyzed previous theoretical contributions, synthesized established scholarship, and formulated a new and better understanding of the forces that contribute to national economic systems. This paper presents the scholars and their scholarship who formed the foundations for Hayek's development of his notable contributions with respect to spontaneous order.

Keywords: Hayek, spontaneous order, Mandeville, Hume, Smith, Menger, Mises

Friedrich August von Hayek's career choice and ultimate profession was influenced by his family. Ebenstein (2001) chronicled the academic careers of his family. August von Hayek, his father, was a medical doctor and part-time university professor. Franz von Juraschek, Hayek's maternal grandfather, was a prominent economist and statistician who considered Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk a close friend. Böhm-Bawerk was an influential founding member of the Austrian School of Economics. Janik (2019) wrote that Gustav Edler von Hayek, Hayek's paternal grandfather, taught natural sciences. Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein, an Austro-British philosopher, was a maternal second cousin. Unsurprisingly, Hayek pursued an academic career which led him, ultimately, to a leading role within the Austrian School of Economic thought and a co-recipient of the 1974 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.

Hayek is recognized for his scholarly efforts and contributions in the study and understanding of spontaneous order. He was a voracious reader perusing an untold number of sources to develop his deep and penetrating understanding of the subject. It is impossible to identify, definitively, each scholar who inspired Hayek as he advanced the understanding of spontaneous order. However, Hayek cited certain scholars in his writing, and those individuals will be featured in this paper. Hayek's writing addressing spontaneous order benefited greatly from the work of Bernard Mandeville, David Hume, Adam Smith, Carl Menger, and Ludwig von Mises.

The following section, *Hayek's Inspirations: Spontaneous Order*, will offer a detailed presentation of the scholars and their scholarship that inspired Hayek to develop his views and present them not only to the academic world but also to such government leaders as Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and President Ronald Reagan. The last narrative section, *Concluding Remarks*, will offer a statement regarding Hayek's intellectual work. The *Reference List* will be offered for those individuals who wish to read further concerning the material presented in this paper which interests them.

HAYEK'S INSPIRATIONS: SPONTANEOUS ORDER

Spontaneous order, as a subject, possesses an ancient origin story. The existence of the concept was recognized approximately 23 centuries ago, well before the subject possessed its current name. Rothbard (1995), an esteemed adherent of the Austrian School of Economics, credited Zhuangzi (alternative spelling: Chuang-tzu) (369-286 BC), a Chinese Taoist philosopher critical of the prevailing authoritarian Confucian philosophy, as the first individual to present the subject of the yet to be named spontaneous order. Zhuangzi asserted that the successful governing of society had never occurred. Adam Ferguson (1767), a scholar considered to be a member of the Scottish Enlightenment, described society as the “result of human action, but not the execution of any human design” (p. 205). Societal good order occurred spontaneously without government intervention. Jacobs (1997, 1999, 2000) credited Michael Polanyi for introducing the term spontaneous order for the phenomenon. Polanyi (M.D. University of Budapest, 1913 and Ph.D., Chemistry, Royal University of Pest, 1919) served as a medical officer in the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I and later as a research chemist before becoming a highly regarded philosopher. Polanyi first wrote about spontaneous order in 1941, refined his presentation in 1948, and wrote an essay for his book published in 1951. Hayek acknowledged Polanyi’s contribution and popularized the term.

Hayek’s inspirations regarding spontaneous order may be attributed, in large part, to five scholars: Bernard Mandeville, David Hume, Adam Smith, Carl Menger, and Ludwig Mises, as he developed an advanced understanding of the subject. These individuals offered important, published writings regarding spontaneous order in the context of individual freedom and liberty. An individual, today, can only speculate concerning Hayek’s undocumented thinking. However, his previous writing presented a common and dominant goal: that of achieving and maintaining individual freedom and liberty. Spontaneous order facilitates the goal, as central planning and hierarchal dictates do not. It may be speculative, but it is reasonable to offer that Hayek’s intense interest in spontaneous order was because it is the means to the end of freeing society from tyranny. That is why it may be asserted that his review of previous scholars’ writing regarding spontaneous order led him to expand his writing about the topic to include its effect on freedom and liberty.

Hayek (1973) developed further the concept of spontaneous order and described it as “orderly structures which are the product of the action of many men but not of human design” (p. 370). The subject’s existence was recognized during the time of Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment. Smith’s invisible hand was the recognition that outcomes are neither the direct result of consciously developed decisions nor intentions. Adam Ferguson (1767/1782), a Scottish philosopher during the Scottish Enlightenment, declared that the price system was “the result of human action but not of human design”. Hayek extended understanding of the subject of spontaneous order. His position was that the price system, absent government intervention, developed spontaneously because market forces manifested by the self-interest, but cooperative interaction of many individuals exists.

Lombardo (2025) reported that the subject of spontaneous order may be defined as a self-ordering system whereby the components are arranged in an ethically neutral process that when participants observe behavioral rules, outcomes may arise regardless of any one actor’s intentions. An intelligent administrator in a spontaneously ordered system makes decisions restricted to process issues and does not address outcome issues. The firm is modeled as a design order, not as a spontaneous or emergent order. Firms must operate in, and should be designed to operate in, spontaneously evolving orders, particularly the economy and the legal-institutional environments. For example, bank regulation differs from one country to the next. This reality has obvious implications for the locus of control and functions allowed or designated for various employees and administrators within the bank’s hierarchy. The bank will be designed to operate in its environment. Perhaps less obviously, these differences in function should tend to influence or affect how the bank is organized.

Spontaneous order is found in complex systems whereby constituent members have freedom of action provided they observe the general rules related to process. A review of the writings of Mises, Hayek, and

their adherents indicates that general rules are developed because of coincidence and members' interactions responding to endogenous and exogenous influences while pursuing their individual objectives. This situation represents a dynamic milieu in that complex systems operate in an imperfect world (where agents are imperfectly informed and lack omniscience and prescience), thus resulting in an organic and gradual evolutionary change. Given the reality of human design fallibility, an administrator's effort to design or intensively manage a complex system in terms of effectiveness and efficiency is delusional.

diZerega (2008) claimed that the terms emergent order and spontaneous order are offered interchangeably; but fail to have the same exact meaning. He considered emergent order as the overall outcome resulting from the interactions of related components. The outcome may occur based either on a random informal process or a hierarchal planned process. A spontaneous order is not the result of a hierarchal planned process but rather the result of the cooperation of individuals lacking formal authority. According to diZerega, hierarchal fiat neither directs the process nor determines the outcome. He offers pricing in markets, votes in a democracy, and peer review in science as examples. In other words, human actions and not human design determine the outcomes.

The following subsections: The Pre Scottish Enlightenment Period (Mandeville), The Scottish Enlightenment Period (Hume and Smith) and The Austrian School of Economics (Menger and Mises) are provided below. These subsections offer the five scholars' writings as well as the inspirations that Hayek received from reviewing their work.

THE PRE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD

Bernard de Mandeville

Hayek credited Mandeville (Philosophy and Medical degrees from the University of Leiden, 1691) as being the first to present the relationship between uncoordinated individual decision making and community results. Hayek's interpretation of Mandeville's writing was that an outcome results from self-interested, individual human action rather than human design; and such an outcome provides societal benefits. In other words, unintentional individual actions may create beneficial societal outcomes that are unintended consequences of the individuals' self-interested actions.

Mandeville (1714) wrote *The Fable of the Bees*, subtitled *Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, which consisted of a preface, the text of *The Grumbling Hive*, an "Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue", and "Remarks". He used the metaphor of bees in the hive to present his thinking regarding individual human self-interest and its impact on human society.

Hayek (1973-1979) lauded Mandeville's ideas and his view that tradition and not deliberate reason influences rules of conduct. Hayek (1989) admired Mandeville's thinking, crediting him as providing the genealogical origins of *laissez-faire* economic theory. Mandeville asserted individuals, without external coordination, interact in their self-interest providing a community benefit as the outcome; thus, social order results. Hayek presented Mandeville as one of the first to put forward the concept of "spontaneous order". Hayek recognized that Mandeville provided a framework for subsequent scholarly inquiry.

Hayek's (1966), "Dr. Bernard Mandeville", the annual Master-Mind lecture, was subsequently published (1967a) and appeared in Hayek's essay collection, *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics and the History of Ideas* (1978). The substance of the lecture included Mandeville's perspective that hierarchical design does not result in complex market structures; rather, the structures result from the unintended consequences of individual decision making. The lecture and subsequent publications of the lecture were influential, bringing Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees* to a wider audience. Mandeville was supportive of the concept of anti-rationalism, a perspective shared by David Hume.

THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD

The Scottish Enlightenment was a period of tremendous intellectual activity from approximately the mid-1720s to 1820. This notable period of scholarly enquiry was characterized by an attempt to apply empirical analysis to study social sciences. Francis Hutcheson, an Irishman, was a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow. He wrote, notably, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725 [2004]) and *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728) ushering in the Scottish Enlightenment. Hutcheson was known for teaching that people had a “moral sense” and creating the phrase “the greatest happiness for the greatest number”. He (1694-1746) influenced David Hume (1711–1776), Adam Smith (1723–1790), and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826).

David Hume, a philosopher, bought recognition to the Scottish Enlightenment with his writing even though his book (1739/1740), *A Treatise of Human Nature*, was not widely acclaimed when first published. Adam Smith (1776), an economist, wrote, *The Wealth of Nations*, a hugely influential book that offered the “invisible hand” as a symbol of free market trade without government intervention. Francis Hutcheson (philosopher), Thomas Reid (1710–1796, philosopher), Adam Ferguson (1723-1816, sociologist), and James Hutton (1726–1797, geologist) were other well-known Scottish Enlightenment scholars.

Hayek (1946/1948) drew from Mandeville and the Scottish Enlightenment, especially Hume and Smith, to present his thinking regarding the subject, “True Individualism”. He credited the subject of spontaneous order as emphasizing limits to human knowledge and, in contrast, noted the lack of efficacy of a hierarchal rationalist design process which relies on the assumption of perfect knowledge.

David Hume

Hayek used Hume’s writings as a foundation for developing the concept of spontaneous order. Hayek believed that although human action, or decision making, occurred to achieve a particular outcome, the actual outcome was not the result of human design. Hume’s writings encompassed three distinct areas: history, philosophy, and economics.

Hume questioned the concept of causality, doubting the relationship between cause and effect. Hume’s *A Treatise of Human Nature* consisted of Book 1: Of the Understanding, Book 2: Of the Passions, and Book 3: Of Morals. The first volume (1739) presented his considered views concerning how people think, form ideas and understand causality. The second volume (1739) examined human emotions and desires. The third volume (1740) addressed ideas of virtue, vice, and right or wrong.

Hume’s skepticism caught Hayek’s attention; his perspective conformed with the anti-rationalism tradition. Hume’s partiality to the concept of “anti-rationalism” led him to the view that human decision-making experienced limitations; individuals could not design a perfect society. Hayek considered Hume’s perspective when presenting his own critique of central planning. Hayek was faithful to the fundamental tenet of the spontaneous order of economic markets. That is, outcomes are the result of human action, but not human design.

Hume’s thinking was that human reasoning cannot fathom, *a priori*, the requirements for optimizing societal benefits. Another way to consider the market economy is to recognize that it is a dynamic phenomenon and guidance from humans must be continuous based upon information collected every second, analyzed steadily, and decided upon instantaneously to achieve perfect outcomes. This situation is unrealistic. Hayek (1989), while considering Hume’s thinking, presented his opposition to central planning when considering the spontaneous order precepts.

Hayek embraced Hume’s writing along three dimensions: an anti-rationalist tradition, cultural evolution, and knowledge limitations. Hume favored an anti-rationalist tradition, using epistemological arguments to critique the “constructivist rationalism” concept. The concept fostered the thinking that a perfect society can be designed by the application of human reasoning; Hayek (1989) supported Hume’s critique.

Hume thought that human reason was limited in terms of understanding complex moral or legal norms. Cultural evolution was a function of experience and habit, rather than hierarchal direction. Such experience and habit were the impetus for the emerging rules of justice and property. Societal rules evolve to maintain their relevance. Hume opined that one individual alone experienced limits to his or her knowledge base lacking the ability to know what is needed to plan a society. However, many individuals, each possessing limited knowledge, resulted in dispersed knowledge. The dispersed knowledge is combined by many individuals who take self-interested actions or decisions resulting in a coordination that achieves an outcome spontaneously. The collective action of many self-interested buyers and sellers is an example of how goods are priced by spontaneous order without a hierarchal, central planning process.

Hayek (1944) presented Hume's statement that "*It is seldom that liberty of any kind is lost all at once*" and emphasized Hume's position that centralized planning inexorably results in the loss of individual freedoms. Hayek (1948) praised Hume's philosophical thinking in *Individualism and Economic Order*. He gave a lecture (1963) about Hume and his contribution to the understanding of spontaneous order to the Mont Pèlerin Society. The lecture (1964a) was published eventually in English. Chappell (1966), also, eventually published the lecture. Hayek attributed the view to Hume that the law derives from the spontaneous evolution of legal systems in *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (1973-1979).

Adam Smith

Adam Smith attended the University of Glasgow and Balliol College, Oxford. He was an integral figure in the Scottish Enlightenment. Smith, famously, coined the term, invisible hand, to describe the self-interested actions of many individuals resulting in beneficial societal outcomes. Smith addressed the concept in his highly regarded, impressive book, *The Wealth of Nations*, originally published in 1776. His writing laid the cornerstone for a market economy structure that is familiarly called capitalism.

Adam Smith, influenced by Hume's conceptual thinking, applied his understanding to the economics dimension, considering specifically the invisible hand. He wrote about the invisible hand in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759/2002) and *The Wealth of Nations* (1776/2008). The former publication addressed issues related to human morality and sympathy; the later profoundly influential publication provided a presentation of a market economy and the division of labor. The two publications are essential reference books, presenting the theoretical core for a classical free-market economy. The invisible hand presents the understanding that individual benefits derived by the decisions of so many people exercising their self-interest resulted in the collective benefits derived by society. The societal benefits were not considered as part of the design by the individuals when making their decisions.

Smith's writings influenced Hayek in multiple areas: the societal effects of individual self-interest, voluntary collaboration among individuals, and the spontaneous order of economic markets. Although some individuals may conflate "invisible hand" and "spontaneous order", a distinction exists. Smith considered the invisible hand as the efficient allocation of resources applied through the buyers' and sellers' bargaining power to establish prices for finished goods. Their self-interested actions ultimately produce the right amount of goods sold at fair prices. Hayek considered, beyond the economic marketplace, that society is incomprehensible to any one person or government entity. Thus, to issue decrees that understand and manage societal activities is misguided if an expected desired outcome is to unfold. Order occurs when self-interested people confront evolving societal rules and institutions. Despite the distinction, the two subjects are similar in that they both provide explanations regarding how complex social and economic systems benefit from the actions of many self-interested individuals. Individuals who argue in favor of the invisible hand and spontaneous order do not believe that social benefits are derived from hierarchal central planning or a tyrant's dictates.

The terminology "invisible hand" should be considered a specific example of "spontaneous order" in that it applies to the regulation of the marketplace; whereas spontaneous order applies to all human endeavors to regulate itself. Adam Ferguson (1767/1995) coined the phrase "the result of human action, but

not the execution of any human design” when considering the term “invisible hand”. Hayek, approximately two centuries later, used the same phrase to describe “spontaneous order”.

Hayek’s (1960) book, *The Constitution of Liberty*, presented the economic, legal, and political dimensions of spontaneous order and the resultant impact on individual freedom and the constitutional limits constraining government. He cited Smith’s intellectual assertions embracing and expanding the concepts in his own works. Smith’s writing about individual liberty and the division of labor were cited. Hayek used Smith’s contribution when he developed his classical liberalism perspective. Hayek’s (1973) *Rules and Order* acknowledged Smith as the first scholar to promote the occurrence of efficient free markets absent central planning. Hayek’s essay (1948) and lecture (1968) presented the “invisible hand” when discussing competition as a discovery procedure. He argued that competition as well as all evolutionary events were acts of discovery whereby individuals react to novel situations gradually and increase efficiency incrementally. His view was that market competition was spontaneous in nature.

Hayek (1964b) presented his thinking opposing central planning, arguing that it is impossible to predict the future. National economic systems are so large and complicated that individuals and computer systems cannot fully comprehend the present intricacies and nuances of these systems let alone forecast their future states. Hayek’s understanding of Smith’s “invisible hand” led his thinking beyond spontaneous order when writing *The Fatal Conceit* (1989). Hayek relied heavily on Smith and the thinking of the Scottish Enlightenment scholars to declare that socialism and central planning were the antitheses of individual freedom and liberty. Hayek considered Hume’s and Smith’s views, built upon the current thinking, and developed and presented his own views that central planning had severe limitations. Hayek specified that decentralized free markets would be a welcome alternative in terms of economic effectiveness.

THE AUSTRIAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

As the previous passages showed, Hayek found inspiration from Mandeville and the Scottish Enlightenment scholars’ thinking, notably Hume and Smith. Their scholarship intrigued Hayek, who not only advanced understanding of spontaneous order but also addressed and presented his concerns for individual freedom and liberty.

The Austrian School of Economics traces its lineage to Carl Menger. He disagreed with the classical economists who proposed the cost-of-production theories of value. Friedrich von Weiser (1889/1893, 1914/1927) and Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk (1884, 1889, 1909-1912) were sympathetic to Menger’s views becoming adherents of the Austrian economics viewpoint. Both scholars were major contributors to the Austrian School of economic thought. Second generation scholars who joined the Austrian School of Economics included Ludwig von Mises (1912/1981) who continued Böhm-Bawerk’s work and Hans Mayer who continued Weiser’s work. Böhm-Bawerk and Mises were strong influences on Hayek, with Mises being considered Hayek’s mentor. Hayek was part of the third generation of scholars who joined the Austrian School of Economics.

Mises and Hayek continued the Austrian School traditions of scholarship inquiry that includes an emphasis on (Lombardo, 2025):

- neoclassical marginalist economics;
- alternative cost pricing influenced by consumer desires;
- a time-theoretic approach to capital and interest;
- monetary overinvestment theory;
- opposition to the monetarist’s perspective;
- information uncertainty; and
- competitive, free markets with government *laissez-faire* economic policy.

The Austrian School considers spontaneous order as a fundamental tenet defending and advocating for free markets, completely absent of any government involvement. Carl Menger and, in the following section, Ludwig von Mises were scholars whose writings inspired Hayek.

Carl Menger Edler von Wolfensgrün

Carl Menger (1840-1921), Dr. jur., Jagiellonian University in Kraków, was the founding member of the Austrian School of Economics. He was joined by Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk and Friedrich von Wieser, former students and subsequently colleagues. Menger disagreed with the classical economists who proposed the cost-of-production theories of value. Menger was an early adherent to the Marginalist Revolution that included William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882) and Léon Walras (1834-1910).

The three scholars (Menger, Jevons, and Walras) developed the marginal theory of value independently. Walras, a French economist identified with the Lausanne School of economic thought consistent with the neoclassical economics perspective. He went on to offer the general theory of equilibrium. The marginal theory of value is the recognition that consumers' decision behaviors are based on the concept that the purchase of an extra unit of either a good or service should bring the buyer additional utility. This orientation separates classical economics, that is the work of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, from modern economics.

Menger is credited as the originator of the "subjective theory of value" concept. His view is that pricing for a good or service is based on the consumer's desire for the object and not on its scarcity or production cost. Thus, while one consumer is willing to pay a particular price for a good, collectively consumers are willing to pay a varying array of sale prices for the good. Friedrich von Wieser expanded Menger's theory of imputation in production.

Menger (1871) declared that money was the result of spontaneous order and not a government invention. A barter economy existed using highly desirable commodities such as salt or cattle which became the exchange medium before the use of money. Menger (1883) explained his philosophy of social institutions, as well as money and language, as "organic" emerging from the unintended consequences of individuals attempting to redress their own problems. Menger (1892) provided a detailed explanation regarding the spontaneous order process in the case of self-interested individuals, without the benefit of any central planning, developing, over time, indirect exchange protocols. Indirect exchange occurs in a non-monetary trading process whereby a good is exchanged for a nondesired good which, in turn, is then exchanged for a desired good.

Hayek was inspired greatly by Menger (1883) who wrote *Investigations into the Method of the Social Sciences*. Menger's book advanced Smith's thinking by introducing a theoretical construct regarding the nature of organically emerging social institutions, i.e., money, law, and language, absent central planning. Hayek's writing concerning spontaneous order referenced Menger's previous work. He even went so far as to write an introduction and edit Menger's published works (1933-1936). His introduction emphasized Menger's writing regarding the spontaneous origin of money and social institutions. Hayek (1967b) also credits Menger for explaining that indispensable social institutions, e.g., markets, language, and law, develop by organic emergence rather than formal planning. An institution's profile results from the unintended consequence of the self-interested decisions of innumerable individuals.

Hayek (1973) relied on Menger's investigations when building his theory of decentralized "grown" orders, a term he coined, commonly known as spontaneous order. Hayek considered that the concept of spontaneous order was the evolving composite entity that includes:

- dispersed knowledge (local resource shortages, shifting consumer preferences, and individual skills) not possessed by a centralized command structure;
- interplay between *Cosmos* ("grown orders") and *Taxis* ("made" orders);
- the price mechanism as a decentralized communication system; and

- emergent markets, legal systems, and languages institutions.

Hayek (1988) agreed with Menger's cultural evolution theories advocating that individuals adapted to spontaneous social norms rather than hierarchical fiats.

Ludwig Heinrich Edler von Mises

Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973) (Dr. jur., University of Vienna, 1906), was a doctoral student advised by Böhm-Bawerk. He was a monetary theorist affiliated with the Austrian School of Economics. Mises (1922/1936) wrote a critique of socialism. He mentored Hayek who attended Mises's private seminars in Vienna, known as *Privatseminar*, which were offered to a select group of economists. Mises, after emigrating to the United States, continued the seminars in New York City.

Mises's highly regarded publication, *Human Action* (1949), presented his views on the topic of praxeology, which is the study of human decision making, allocation of resources, and the action taken to achieve the goal. This subject matter is the basis for understanding the spontaneous order concept as it applies to social institutions or structures, such as markets, language, and law. These social institutions typically emerge naturally from either the interplay of self-interested decisions by many individuals or by centrally planned fiat. Mises also wrote another highly regarded book, *Socialism* (1922/1936/1951), that inspired Hayek passionately. Hayek repeatedly acknowledged Mises's contribution to his professional development.

Unsurprisingly, Hayek readily cites Mises, his mentor, as he develops his theoretical arguments. However, Hayek's brilliance went far beyond merely citing his mentor; he considered Mises's scholarly work along with the work of other researchers to advance theories that became accepted by so many scholars.

Hayek considered Mises's scholarly arguments in *Human Action* as he formulated a comprehensive theory of evolutionary spontaneous order consistent with Mises's thinking that society evolves from its members' self-interested decision making rather than by executive directives. Mises introduced the "socialist calculation debate" examining if a centrally planned economy could allocate resources appropriately without a market price process. Both Mises and Hayek opined that it could not. As in most cases, Hayek expanded the understanding of the subject matter.

Hayek (1933) first addressed, consistent with Mises's approach, spontaneous order. Subsequently, Hayek, while writing *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960) and citing Mises's previous writing (1922/1936/1951), explored how freedom empowers spontaneous social and economic processes. Hayek (1973) presented his developed spontaneous order theory citing Mises's considerable contributions from various sources including *Human Action* (1949). Hayek, in *The Fatal Conceit* (1988), cited Mises on multiple occasions explaining that "socialist calculation" is inaccurate and cannot be relied upon when compared to spontaneous market processes. The book emphasized his view that societal prosperity may be attributable to individual cooperation and private property.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Three points are worth noting regarding the sources of Hayek's inspirations identified in this paper. One, some inspirations undeniably exist; Hayek supplied the evidence when he cites the work of other individuals in his published writings. An inexhaustible search for citations was not done. Thus, in all likelihood, Hayek experienced additional inspiration. Inspirations may be transmitted in other ways, but the process may not necessarily be documented. Two, Hayek had innumerable informal conversations with countless people. A person may have said something which was not documented subsequently that inspired Hayek. Three, Hayek may have experienced what many people experience. A person is told something by another individual; time elapses, memory fades, and the conveyed information resurfaces as one's own. The first

type of inspiration is the only one reported in this writing. Thus, it is possible and may be likely that Hayek was inspired by sources beyond what has been offered in this article.

Hayek (1960) considered that individual liberty, i.e., importance of individual rights and the limitations of government power, is precious and must be safeguarded. He viewed spontaneous order as the foundational process to protect individual liberty. Hayek was fully committed to the spontaneous order process as a safeguard from tyranny. The process of self-interested individuals making decisions that affect their lives rather than a government fiat process was of paramount importance. Hayek's (1960) book referenced not only the work of the Scottish Enlightenment scholars but also that of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

Hayek's thinking aligned very well with Tocqueville's (1835-1840/2004) observations and resultant commentary during his May 1831 to February 1832 tour of the United States. Both Tocqueville and Hayek thought that the spontaneous order process was diametrically opposed to central planning tyranny. Spontaneous order provided an opposing force to resist government fiats, thus maintaining democracy and limiting government control. Hayek included Tocqueville with Hume and Smith in his "true individualism" category.

Tocqueville's commentary that the American society forms voluntary associations to achieve an objective, e.g., aid the poor members of society, without government involvement resonated with Hayek's thought that civil society develops without government directives. Hayek heeded Tocqueville's comments that "soft despotism" develops when government repeatedly interferes with the spontaneous order process.

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