

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910450914203321
Titolo	Fighting for political freedom : comparative studies of the legal complex and political liberalism / edited by Terence C. Halliday, Lucien Karpik and Malcolm M. Feeley
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Oxford ; Portland, Ore., : Hart Publishing, 2007
ISBN	1-4725-6017-5 1-281-35731-6 9786611357238 1-84731-402-3
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (520 p.)
Collana	Onati international series in law and society
Disciplina	320.51/3
Soggetti	Liberalism Civil rights Law - Political aspects Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index
Nota di contenuto	The legal complex and struggles for political liberalism / Terence C. Halliday, Lucien Karpik and Malcolm M. Feeley -- Law and the liberal transformation of the Northeast Asian legal complex in Korea and Taiwan / Tom Ginsburg -- Birth of a liberal moment? Looking through a one-way mirror at lawyers' defence of criminal defendants in China / Terence C. Halliday and Sida Liu -- 'Dissolving the people' : capitalism, law and democracy in Hong Kong / Carol Jones -- The state, civil society, and the legal complex in modern Japan : continuity and change / Malcolm M. Feeley and Setsuo Miyazawa -- Mobilising the law in an authoritarian state : the legal complex in contemporary Egypt / Tamir Moustafa -- Reluctantly sailing towards political liberalism : the political role of the judiciary in Turkey / Zuhtu Arslan -- The ambivalent language of lawyers in Israel : liberal politics, economic liberalism, silence and dissent / Gad Barzilai -- The legal complex and the response to police violence in South America / Daniel M. Brinks -- When the 'political complex' takes the lead : the configuration of

moderate state in Chile / Javier A. Couso -- Lawyers and political liberalism in Venezuela / Rogelio Perez Perdomo -- Contesting legality in the United States after September 11 / Richard L. Abel -- Politicising law to liberalise politics : anti-Francoist judges and prosecutors in Spain's democratic transition / Lisa Hilbink -- Lawyers and statist liberalism in Italy / Carlo Guarnieri -- Political lawyers / Lucien Karpik

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Sommario/riassunto

Across the world political liberalism is being fought for, consolidated and defended. That is the case for nations that have never enjoyed a liberal political society, for nations that have advanced towards and then retreated from political liberalism, for nations that have recently shifted from authoritarian to liberal political systems, and for mature democracies facing terrorism and domestic conflict. This book tests for the contemporary world the proposition that lawyers are active agents in the construction of liberal political regimes. It examines the efficacy of a framework that postulates that legal professions not only orient themselves to a market for their services but can frequently be seen in the forefront of actors seeking to institutionalise political liberalism. On the basis of some 16 case studies from across the world, the authors present a theoretical link between lawyers and political liberalism having wide-ranging application over radically diverse situations in Asia and the Middle East, North and South America, and Europe. They argue that it is not the politics of lawyers alone but the politics of a 'legal complex' of legally trained occupations, centred on lawyers and judges, that drives advances or retreats from political liberalism, that political liberalism itself is everywhere in play, in countries with established democracies and those without liberal politics and that it is now clear that the legal arena is a central field of struggle over the shape of political power. The case studies presented here provide powerful evidence that the nexus of bar and bench in transitions towards or away from political liberalism is a force which has universal application
