

# INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES)

## ILLIBERALISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

11th lesson

EFOP-3.6.2-16-2017-00007

**SZÉCHENYI** 2020



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# LEARNING GUIDE

- Lesson length: **14** slides
- Content:
  - The rise of the concept
  - Illiberal states
  - Are Illiberal states seek peace?



- Recommended minimum duration for review: 40 minutes
- Suggested minimum time for learning: 1 hour and 10 minutes
- The learning of the curriculum is aided by a course book and self-assessment questions.
- Recommended minimum duration of this full lesson: 2 hours

## THE RISE OF THE CONCEPT

- Richard Holbrooke pondered a problem on the eve of the September 1996 elections in Bosnia, which were meant to restore civic life to that ravaged country:

*"Suppose the election was declared free and fair," he said, and those elected are "racists, fascists, separatists, who are publicly opposed to [peace and reintegration]. That is the dilemma."*

# THE RISE OF THE CONCEPT

- Democratically elected regimes, often ones that have been reelected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms.
- It has been difficult to recognize this problem because for almost a century in the West, democracy has meant liberal democracy – a political system marked not only by free and fair elections, but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property.

## THE RISE OF THE CONCEPT

- Naturally there was a spectrum of illiberal democracy:
- from Argentina to Belarus.
- But:
- elections were rarely as free and fair as in the West.

These countries are

- *between democracy and dictatorship.*

# THE RISE OF THE CONCEPT

- Constitutional liberalism, on the other hand, is not about the procedures for selecting government, but rather government's goals.
- It refers to the tradition, deep in Western history, that seeks to protect an individual's autonomy and dignity against force, whatever the source – state, church, or society.
- The term marries two closely connected ideas. **It is liberal because it draws on the philosophical strain, beginning with the Greeks, that emphasizes individual liberty.< It is constitutional because it rests on the tradition, beginning with the Romans, of the rule of law.**

# THE RISE OF THE CONCEPT

Western Europe and United States from the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

- Defense of the individuals' right to life, property, freedom of religion and speech.
- The states tried to secure these (checks & balances)
- + the separation of church and state

## THE RISE OF THE CONCEPT

At the end of this development governments must accept a basic law, limiting their own powers, that secures them.

And now it is written in different acts or agreements

e.g.:

Magna Carta, American Constitution,  
Helsinki Final Act, etc.

**Illiberal democracies think differently.**



# ILLIBERAL STATES

- After brief flirtations with democracy after World War II, most East Asian, African, and some East-European regimes turned authoritarian.
- Today's governments in the regions are a mix of democracy, liberalism, capitalism, oligarchy, and corruption – much like Western governments circa 1900.
- In Western countries constitutional liberalism has led to democracy, but elsewhere democracy does not seem to bring constitutional liberalism.

# ILLIBERAL STATES

- Sovereignty became a major driver to keep the power of the political (and in some instances the economic) elite.
- Mixing sovereignty and power could result in:
  - Centralization of authority (real presidentialization, not by communication)
  - Constitutional means
  - Weak constitutional branches
  - Weak regional and local power
  - Weak businesses and NGOs

# ILLIBERAL STATES

- The West has made some failures in these states:

It encouraged the creation of strong and centralized states in the Third World.

But this meant that the leader will be strong, too.

These leaders needed more power, they claimed that need the authority to break down the interests of past regimes.

# ILLIBERAL STATES

- While anarchy has its dangers, the greatest threats to human liberty and happiness in twentieth century have been caused not by disorder but by brutally strong, centralized states, like Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and Maoist China.
- The Third World is littered with the bloody handiwork of strong states.

# ILLIBERAL STATES

- Historically, unchecked centralization has been the enemy of liberal democracy.
- Pluralism in the past helps ensure political pluralism in the present.
- Power accumulated to do good can be used subsequently to do ill.

# ILLIBERAL STATES: ATTRIBUTES

- Democratically elected regimes, but
- rarely free and fair elections.
- Economic growth.
- Routinely ignoring the constitution.
- Guarantees for social, political, economic and religious rights are second order.
- No checks and balances (limits of power).
- The history of the state could influence the development of democracy (pluralism in society).
- Leaders are mixing the power and sovereignty, and
- leaders are swapping the sovereignty of the people and the leader.
- More open to wars.

## ARE ILLIBERAL STATES SEEK PEACE?

- We can start from the *assumption* that the forces of democracy are the forces of (ethnic) harmony and of peace.
- Elections require that politicians compete for peoples' votes. In societies without strong traditions of multiethnic groups or assimilation, it is easiest to organize support along racial, ethnic, or religious line.
- Neither is necessarily true. Mature liberal democracies can usually accommodate ethnic divisions without violence or terror and live in peace with other liberal democracies. But without a background in constitutional liberalism, the introduction of democracy in divided societies has actually fomented nationalism, populism, sometimes ethnic conflict, and even war.
- Once an ethnic group is in power, it tends to exclude other ethnic groups.

# ARE ILLIBERAL STATES SEEK PEACE?

- Emanuel Kant, the original proponent of the democratic peace, contended that in democracies, those who pay for wars – that is, the public – make the decisions.
- When divining the cause behind this correlation, one thing becomes clear: the democratic peace is actually the liberal peace.
- Jack Snyder and Edward Mansfield contend, [using a data set](#), that over the last 200 years democratizing states went to war significantly more often than either stable autocracies or liberal democracies.
- The democratic peace, it turns out, has little to do with democracy.



## ABOUT THIS LESSON

The images used in the curriculum can be found online and are freely accessible.

The curriculum is for educational purposes only.

Compulsory and recommended literature sources for the given course were used as sources for the lesson.

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