

ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY IN THE THIRD WORLD - An Empirical Enquiry

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the occurrence and performance of illiberal democracies in the Third World. We are predominately interested in finding out if illiberal regimes are distinctive empirical categories in a comparison with other regime types, and to what extent illiberal democracy might develop into a role model for Third World countries. Our results indicate that illiberal democracies are a growing phenomena and that they are relatively stable over time. However, illiberal democracy becomes an interesting feature only after making a conceptual distinction between illiberalism by design and illiberalism by default. The analysis of illiberal systems suggests that illiberalism is only one of several factors that may have an impact on the economic and social performance of specific countries. Hence, the attractiveness and ideological potential of illiberalism appears to be limited.

1. Introduction

A growing number of countries in the world seem to develop a kind of democracy that facilitate democratic procedures but fail to provide essential civil liberties. As such, this is not a new phenomenon, states with features like that are often referred to as semi-democratic, quasi-democratic, authoritarian or worse. This is no longer sufficient, a new catchword – *illiberal democracy* - has appeared on the scene (Zakaria 1997, Bell et al 1995). Also, the practice of allowing for political rights and denying civil liberties has become both ideology and theory. Ideology in the sense that political leaders in predominately Third World countries increasingly advocate “guarded” or “guided” democracy, rule by presidential decree despite functioning electoral assemblies and instigate new debates on the shortcomings of “western” perceptions of Human Rights (Foot 1997, McSherry 1998, Robison 1996). In the old days, politicians with an inclination towards authoritarian rule, simply denied accusations of human rights abuses. Today a new self-assured defence for restricted, *illiberal* democracy is on the rise, particularly among countries that have demonstrated an ability to combine illiberal measures with economic growth and social stability. Developmental alternatives with a record of continuous success are rare creatures in world politics. Hence, the use and misuse of illiberalism, may become an important ideological tool for a number of political agents involved with Third World affairs.

Theoretically, illiberal democracy is sometimes presented as a different case of democratisation that does not quite fit into standard versions of modernisation theory. The role of interests, social classes and ruling elites are said to be different compared to conventional histories of western democratisation (Brown and Jones 1995). Thus, the rise of illiberal democracy may challenge conventional wisdom, yet our knowledge of illiberal democracies is limited. When it comes to finding the roots of illiberalism, or discussing consequences of illiberal practice, not much is to

report. Since powerful ideologies and interesting theories have a tendency to reinforce each other, there are both political and theoretical reasons to look closer into the phenomena of illiberal democracies. While initiating such an endeavour, Fareed Zakaria (1997: 24) portrays the potential of illiberal democracy in a rather dramatic way:

Illiberal democracy is a growth industry. Seven years ago only 22 percent of democratizing countries could have been so categorized; five years ago that figure had risen to 35 percent. And to date few illiberal democracies have matured into liberal democracies; if anything, they are moving toward heightened illiberalism. Far from being a temporary or transitional stage, it appears that many countries are settling into a form of government that mixes a substantial degree of democracy with a substantial degree of illiberalism. Just as nations across the world have become comfortable with many variations of capitalism, they could well adopt and sustain varied forms of democracy. Western liberal democracy might prove to be not the final destination on the democratic road, but just one of many possible exits.

This paper is about the pretensions and potential of illiberal democracy. *First* we intend to establish the occurrence of illiberalism over time and to what extent illiberal systems are stable phenomena. *Second*, we are interested in finding the roots and demonstrating the performance of illiberal democracies in comparison with other regime types. *Third*, we propose to discuss some political and theoretical implications of the rise of illiberalism as a systemic alternative for Third World countries.

However, before this enquiry can take place, perhaps the notion of illiberalism is in need of some conceptual and contextual clarification.

It will come as no surprise that much of the debate on illiberalism originates from an East Asian context (Fukuyama 1995, 1997). It is in East Asia that new self-assured forms of political organisation are developing. Much of this has to do with the unprecedented economic growth of the area, but also from the fact that authoritarianism seems to co-exist with a lot of public consent (Bertrand 1998). Thus, ideas of “Asian Democracy”, “Guided Democracy” and “Asian forms of Human rights” are advocated by political leaders in predominantly Malaysia and Singapore (Emmerson 1995, Means 1996). These ideas focus on the necessity to restrict democracy, particularly civil liberties. In order to do so illiberal regimes tend to develop a whole range of different mechanisms for societal control. Dominant party systems, vote-buying, legal fine-tuning, ethnic affirmative action, co-option, restrictions on the right to organise, debate and voice opinions, emergency laws et c. In short, illiberal democracy is more about controlling people than the other way around (Tremewan 1994, Jesudason 1996, Case 1997).

But illiberalism is not only inspiring Asian politicians. A growing number of African, Asian and Latin American political elite’s have been looking towards East Asia for inspiration when it comes to matters of political, stability, economic development and ability to cope with internal and external crisis. The recent economic downturn in the area may have reduced the enthusiasm by which East Asian systems have been looked upon as role models, but it could also be the other way around. Despite an unprecedented economic crisis in terms of financial breakdowns, currency depreciation and a near collapse of equity markets, the political and economic systems seem on the whole to survive. With the exception of Indonesia, East Asian countries may emerge as stronger developmental alternatives, not only due to their economic record and other important achievements, but also because of the ways they have managed the financial crisis. An ability to produce positive economic and social development and at the same time

demonstrate a capacity towards managing political and economic crisis illustrates features rarely found in Third World or transition countries. This is why illiberalism may become a powerful ideology. How then should illiberalism be analysed?

Illiberal practice as it has been defined here, reflects a feature within liberal democracy itself – democracy may coexist with different degrees of liberalism and vice versa. It is entirely possible that a country develop a system of free and fair elections - political rights - and at the same time limit a number of civil liberties like the freedom of speech, assembly, religion and the right to private property. And a political system may allow civil liberties but restrict the democratic process. In the first case we are dealing with *illiberal democracies* and in the second with *liberal autocracy* (Zakaria 1997). Thus, both political rights and civil liberties are dimensions with a variety of possible combinations. Theoretically this means that it is not altogether easy to operationalise ‘illiberalism’. How much of political rights should be linked to how much civil liberty in order for a typology of illiberalism to be constructed? An empirical enquiry into the nature of illiberalism must be sensitive to the fact that:

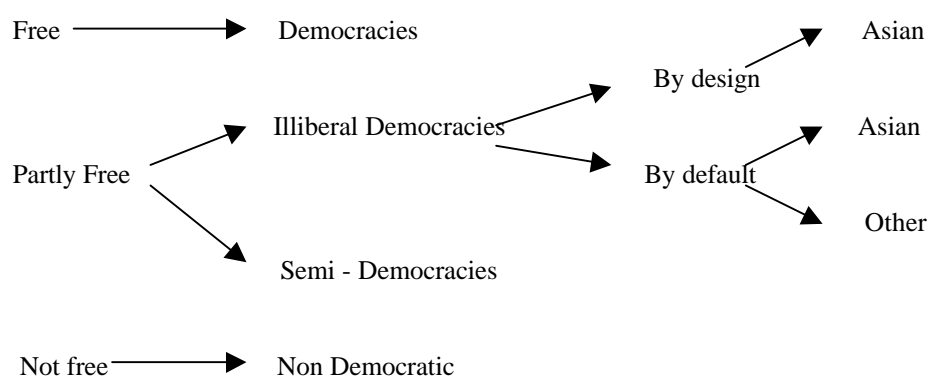
- a) Only countries with a recorded history of providing some rudimentary aspects of democracy may be included in the analysis. Democracy should not be altogether a facade in order for illiberal democracy to exist.
- b) Only countries that demonstrates a better performance on political rights than civil liberties may be referred to as illiberal.
- c) Only countries with some degree of continuity with respect to illiberalism would be of interest here.

In order to analyse roots and consequences of illiberal practice, it is necessary to relate illiberalism to characteristics of other political systems. If illiberal democracies are to become role models for other emerging countries, then their potential to master essential political, social and economic problems must be empirically demonstrated. This can only be achieved through system relevant comparisons with a focus on regime performance. In this case it seems natural to compare illiberal democracies with other semi-democratic regimes, with authoritarian regimes and with full-fledge democracies. Since we are predominantly interested in analysing the potential of illiberal politics for developing countries, only Third World countries will be included.

If illiberal democracies are defined as those who allow for political rights but systematically deprive citizens of important aspects of civil liberties, then it becomes important to make sense of the word ‘systematically’. There must be an important distinction to be made between systems that are illiberal by design or by (de)fault. Thus, getting a bad record on civil liberties could be achieved in two ways (albeit with all possible combinations): either as a result of deliberate actions, undertaken by political elites with an ambition to control people and political procedures; or as a consequence of failures, mismanagement, neglect, poverty, diseases, war or any such activity or non-activity that tend deprive people of opportunities to exercise civil liberties. In the first case illiberal politics is *designed* through an elaborate system of laws and regulations. In the second case illiberalism is a result of accumulated societal *(de)faults*.

It has been argued that illiberal practice in its modern configuration has East Asian roots. Because of that it would be of particular interest to study consequences of illiberalism in that context. In that way the ideological pretensions of certain political leaders would be given an empirical illustration.

The conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of this paper could be summarised as follows:



These deliberations are operationalised in the next section followed by an empirical analysis on the roots and performance of illiberal democracies.

2. Illiberal Democracy: operationalisation

Illiberal democracy is only one type of regime to be identified among the many regime typologies that have been suggested in the literature (Almond 1956, Lijphart 1968, Finer 1974, O'Donnell 1994). A regime may be identified as an illiberal democracy following the application of two criteria: degree of democracy and degree of (il)liberalism. Such a regime cannot be a full-fledged democracy nor can it be classified as an outright non-democracy, but rather somewhat in-between. How to do to identify this kind of regime, illiberal democracy, in the real world?

Quite a large number of indices or measures are available that attempts to map the worldwide variation of democracy at different periods of time (Bollen 1986, 1990, Banks 1992, and Beetham 1994a). One of the first systematically developed democracy indices was presented by Bollen (1980) which covered the years 1960 and 1965. Bollen (1993) has later updated this index for 1980. Humana (1983, 1987, and 1992) presented human

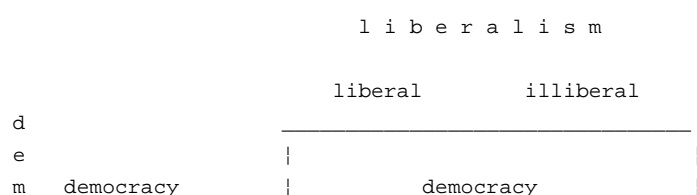
rights ratings, which could be used as proxies for a democracy index. Likewise, Gurr (1990) and Jagers and Gurr (1995) have made regime ratings available that can be transformed to democracy scores. One of the more commonly used democracy indices is based on regime ratings reported by Freedom House starting with 1972 (Gastil 1986, 1987, Freedom House 1990-1998, Karatnycky 1998). In addition there are a number of other similar indices (Vanhanen 1984, 1990, Hadenius 1992, Beetham 1994b). Based upon scores reported on in these indices it is possible to identify countries in the Third World and classify them according to their degree of democracy (Kurzman 1998).

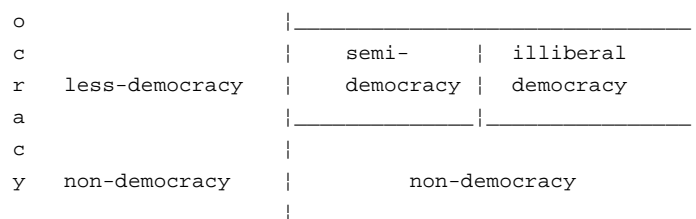
As far as we know there is no explicit systematic attempt made to differentiate between liberal and illiberal regimes. However, one way to distinguish liberal regimes from illiberal regimes is to make use of Freedom House ratings. They code regimes according to how they match certain criteria for political rights and civil liberties. Banks (1989) has shown that these two categories are highly correlated and that one of them therefore may be said to be redundant. However, it may still be meaningful to identify regimes as liberal when they respect political rights and civil liberties on an equal footing. Conversely, regimes where civil liberties are respected less than political rights could be classified as illiberal regimes. Our choice for an empirical operationalization of the concept of illiberal democracy is to rely on the ratings reported by the Freedom House. There are mainly two reasons for our choice: a) it is attractive to use since it gives us an access to an impressive time series with data starting in 1972 continuing up to the present; b) this is a rating which makes it possible to distinguish between liberal and illiberal regimes.

The classification of regimes where one entity will be illiberal democracies involves the following deliberations: 1) The democracy score (DEMO) is arrived at through adding the scores for political rights and civil liberties and normalising this added score so that the value of 10 illustrates the highest level of democracy, while the value of 0 represents an outright non-democracy. Based upon these transformed scores, we identify three sets of regimes according to their degree of democracy: regimes scoring between 7.5 and 10 are reported as democracies; regimes scoring 3.33 to 7.5 will be identified as less-democratic; and the rest are non-democracies scoring from 0 to 3.33. 2) The liberalism score (LIB) is arrived at through the subtraction: political rights minus civil liberties. Regimes with a liberalism score on 0 or more are classified as liberal regimes, while regimes scoring negative (less than 0) are identified as illiberal regimes.

Combining these two dimensions - democracy and liberalism - we may arrive at the following typology of regimes, where our focus will be on the illiberal democracy regime:

Diagram 1: Regime typology: democracy and liberalism





For each year between 1972 and 1997, as well as for the 1970s, the 1980s, the 1990s and the whole period 1972 – 1997, countries in the Third World have been classified according to this typology. When identifying countries in the Third World we have followed the listing used by Hadenius (1992: 61-3), with one exception: we do not classify Israel as a Third World country. The classification of regimes for each period is based upon the computed average scores for that period. The distribution of Third World countries according to this typology is displayed in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Distribution of regimes in the Third World 1972-1997

	Democracy	Illiberal democracy	Semi- democracy	Non- democracy	Total
1970s	6	10	19	57	92
1980s	9	19	12	56	96
1990s	10	28	17	43	98
1972-97	6	23	16	47	92

Sources: Classifications based upon data reported in Gastil 1986, 1987, Freedom House 1990 - 1998.

Most countries in the Third World are classified as non-democracies during this period, while only a small minority could be called democracies. The illiberal democracy regime type is more frequent in the 1990s than it was in the 1970s, and taking the whole period into consideration, close to 1/4 of the countries in the Third World would be counted as illiberal democracies. It seems as if there is support for the notion that illiberal democracy is a growing phenomenon. Now the question is, how valid and how stable over time are these observations?

Let us show how the classification of regime types for the various time periods co-vary and agree with each other. Table 3 presents a correlation matrix which shows how these regime classifications for four different time periods co-vary with each other, while Table 4 informs about the degree of agreement with respect to how countries have been classified as illiberal democracies for the defined time periods.

Table 3: Correlation matrix for regime typologies: 1970s to 1972-97

	typology 1970s	typology 1980s	typology 1990s	typology 1972-97
typology 1970s	1.00			
typology 1980s	.71	1.00		
typology 1990s	.62	.69	1.00	
typology 1972-97	.83	.84	.82	1.00

Note: Pearson's correlation coefficients on display

From Table 3 we may note that there is a relatively stable pattern over time with respect to the overall typology. Non-democracies in the 1970s tend also to be non-democracies in the 1990s. However, in this paper, our focus is on the illiberal democracy regimes. In Table 4 we present information about the agreement in classifications of regimes as illiberal democracies for the different time periods. The Table should be read like this: the second column of the first row says the following: 54.5% of those countries classified as illiberal regimes in the 1970s were classified in the same manner in the 1980s. The data in the Table is presented below:

Table 4: Agreements for classification of regimes as illiberal democracies: 1970s to 1972-97 (in %)

	illib demo 1970s	illib demo 1980s	illib demo 1990s	illib demo 1972-97
illib demo 1970s	100.0	54.5	72.7	81.8
illib demo 1980s	31.6	100.0	68.4	73.7
illib demo 1990s	27.6	44.8	100.0	62.1
illib demo 1972-97	39.1	60.9	78.3	100.0

From this Table we can see that there is no perfect matching of the classifications made of the illiberal democracies. It is, however, important to note that when we look at the overall classification (illiberal democracy 1972-97) we find quite a high rate of agreement for the 1970s and the 1980s as well as for the 1990s. This is, in our opinion, an indication that the illiberal democracy 1972-97 - measure may be used for our coming analysis of the roots and the performance of illiberal democracies in the post-colonial Third World.

Our focus is on illiberal democracy but we will also utilise some alternative classifications of illiberal democracy, as was outlined in the introductory section. In addition to the three basic regimes democracy, semi-democracy and non-democracy we will apply the distinction of illiberal democracy by default and by design. Among those identified as illiberal democracies by design we will distinguish a separate set of Southeast Asian illiberal democracies. Hence, we arrive at the following alternative regime typologies which we will make use of in the rest of the paper:

Table 5: Regime typologies to be applied in the empirical analysis: frequencies

Regime	frequencies
Non-democracies	47
Semi-democracies	16
Illiberal democracy: all	23
Other: default	13
Asian: all	10
Asian: default	6
Asian: design	4
Democracies	6

This means that when we enquire into the features of illiberal democratic regimes we will consider three different sets of regimes: a) illiberal democracies as a unique set as identified above; b) Asian and other illiberal democracies; c) among Asian illiberal democracies we will distinguish between Southeast Asian illiberal democracies by design and south Asian illiberal democracies by default. The alternative classifications of countries belonging to varieties of illiberal democracies are specified in Appendix 1.

3. Empirical enquiry: roots and performance of illiberal democracy

In this section of the paper we will enquire into possible roots of illiberal democratic regimes but also deal with consequences that may be associated with illiberal democracy, particularly public policies and socio-economic outcomes. However, first we will present an overview of the design and the methodology that will be employed in the empirical analysis.

3.1 Design and methodology

Although our focus is on illiberal democracies it is necessary to compare this regime type with other regime types. The design we will employ is to compare the means of different regime type characteristics, for instance: social structure, public policies and socio-economic outcomes. This implies that we will apply the methodology of one-way analysis of variance (see Blalock 1981: 336-52, Bohrnstedt and Knoke 1994: 120-49). The interesting question is whether illiberal democracies differ in their mean values compared to other regime types. Another way of framing this question is to ask to what extent these group characteristics - the regime types - have an impact on the dependent variable under scrutiny.

The empirical analysis is designed so that for each relevant factor introduced into the analysis, the means for the different regime set-ups will be displayed, accompanied with relevant eta squared scores and their respective level of significance. If we have reasonably high eta squared values and an associated significance level of .05 or lower we may identify an impact of regime type on the dependent variable. We will consider the impact of two different set-ups of regime types; a first set-up refers to the four major regime types (non-democracies, semi-democracies, illiberal democracies, democracies), i.e. $k=4$; a second set-up refers to a disaggregation of the illiberal democracy type (non-democracies, semi-democracies, illiberal democracies: other: default; illiberal democracies: Asian: default; illiberal democracies: Asian: design, democracies), i.e. $k=6$. The next step is to enquire into whether the set of illiberal democracies performs in an expected, or different, way from the other regime types; we are, of course, also interested in looking for differences among the alternative sets of illiberal democracies.

3.2 Roots of Illiberal Democracy

In this section we wish to establish to what extent the illiberal democracy regime type has common roots, or background factors, which distinguishes this regime type from other regime types. We are also interested to find out if illiberal democracies are more or less homogeneous with respect to background factors, or whether we have a major difference between illiberal democracies by design or those by default.

The background factors that we attempt to identify refers to proxies for colonial traditions, religious and ethnic structure, cultural orientations and traditions of wealth, i.e. measures of economic output per capita. However, let us start by presenting an overview of the geographical distribution of illiberal democracies and other regime types.

3.2.1 Geography

Breaking down the data set of 92 Third World states into eight macro-regions of the world (Table 6), we may note that the 23 illiberal democracies are mostly to be found either in Latin America or in Asia. The small number of democracies are to be found in the Americas and in Africa, while the more numerous non-democracies tend to be concentrated on the African continent. All this is displayed in detail in Table 6.

Table 6: Political regime types by eight macro-regions

		Eastern Europe	Central Americ	South Americ	NorthAf Mid Eas	Subsaha Africa	East Asia	South Asia	Oceania
Non-demo	(n=47)	0	2	0	11	25	7	2	0
Semi-demo	(n=16)	0	4	4	2	5	1	0	0
Illiberal	(n=23)	1	3	5	1	3	5	4	1
Other	(n=13)	1	3	5	1	3	0	0	0
Asian	(n=10)	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	1
Default	(n=6)	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1
Design	(n=4)	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Demo	(n=6)	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	0
Total	(n=92)	1	12	10	14	35	13	6	1

The geographical distribution of the illiberal democracy regime type in two major parts of the Third World suggests that this regime type is not a homogenous one. Introducing the distinction between illiberal democracy by default and by design we find that it fits the geographical division between Latin America and Asia quite well. Let us go on from geography to what we have called proxies of colonial traditions.

3.2.2 Colonial traditions

Here we are utilising two kinds of indicators as proxies for colonial traditions. First, we use the proportion of Christians in a country as an indicator of a western tradition: the more of Christians, the more of western penetration. In this case we rely on estimates as they have been reported on by Barrett (1982) and the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1996). Second, we rely on estimates of the use of the English language world-wide in the 1990s. Crystal (1997) distinguishes between the use of English as a first-language (Eng1) and the use of English as a second-language (Eng2). The implication is again obvious: the more use of the English language, the more of a British colonial tradition.

Now the question is: when comparing means between the different regime-types, is the illiberal regime-type distinguishing itself? Data are reported in full details in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Colonial traditions by political regimes: means

		Christians			Engl	Eng2
		1900	1970	1995		
Non-demo	(n=47)	7.5	26.5	24.8	0.3	5.9
Semi-demo	(n=16)	53.9	65.5	62.5	0.1	6.3
Illiberal	(n=23)	40.5	46.1	45.6	0.9	10.0
Other	(n=13)	63.5	72.2	69.3	0.7	3.4
Asian	(n=10)	10.5	12.3	14.7	1.2	18.7
Default	(n=6)	16.4	18.1	16.4	0.2	18.3
Design	(n=4)	1.7	3.6	12.0	3.0	19.2
Demo	(n=6)	67.6	72.0	63.3	31.7	41.2
eta-sq	by k=4	.42	.33	.31	.31	.19
sig		.00	.00	.00	.00	.03
eta-sq	by k=6	.30	.18	.18	.31	.16
sig		.00	.00	.00	.00	.00

Comparing the four major regime-types regarding colonial traditions we may note that there are significant variations. The illiberal regime-type is, however, not distinguishing itself by being associated with any minimum- or maximum values on these variables. The democratic regime-type displays the highest value for the proportion of Christians as well as those speaking English. It is only when separating between illiberal regimes by default and design that we may identify a particular pattern: the Southeast Asian set demonstrate the lowest value for Christians and quite high a rate of English-speaking.

3.2.3 Ethnic structure and cultural orientation

The next step is to enquire into the configuration of ethnic structure and cultural orientation. By ethnic structure we refer to the degree of homogeneity/heterogeneity of a society in terms of its ethno-linguistic structure. These structures tends to vary little over time and here we are making use of data for the 1990s as they are reported in the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1996). In addition, we also wish to map variations in cultural orientation among different cultures as they may be measured by more or less individualism/collectivism/egalitarianism. The idea being that more of individualism illustrates more of western influences. We know of no entirely satisfactory indicators of variation in individualism cross-nationally, but we have created such a measure, which relies on various scores on individualism reported in the literature (Hofstede 1991, Diener et al. 1995). Means for these two variables broken down for the different regime-types are reported in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Ethnic structure and cultural orientation by political regimes: means

		Ethnic structure: heterogeneity	Cultural orientation: individualism
Non-demo	(n=47)	.54	31.2
Semi-demo	(n=16)	.51	24.8
Illiberal	(n=23)	.47	31.1
Other	(n=13)	.45	33.7
Asian	(n=10)	.50	28.3
Default	(n=6)	.59	26.0
Design	(n=4)	.37	30.5

Demo	(n=6)	.46	22.0
eta-sq by k=4		.03	.10
sig		.71	.63
eta-sq by k=6		.01	.07
sig		.78	.48

We can identify no significant differences between the different regime types, because of the huge within-group variation. This is also true for the illiberal regime-type. It is, again, only when differentiating between Asian illiberal regimes by design and by default that we may establish some interesting findings: those by design are less heterogeneous than those by default, whereas the level of individualism is slightly lower among those by default than among those by design.

3.2.4 Traditions of wealth

Our final set of background factors refers to a variation in traditions of wealth as it is measured by economic output per capita during the early post-second world War period. Here we make use of estimates of real gdp per capita expressed in international US \$ (rgdpc) as they have been made available by the Penn World Tables, mark 5.6 (Summers and Heston 1994). Means for rgdpc for 1950 and 1960 are broken down for various regime types and displayed in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Traditions of wealth by political regimes: means

		Real gdp per capita	
		1950	1960
Non-demo	(n=47)	444	1019
Semi-demo	(n=16)	1386	1373
Illiberal	(n=23)	1432	1496
Other	(n=13)	1730	1854
Asian	(n=10)	777	1030
Default	(n=6)	757	896
Design	(n=4)	857	1231
Demo	(n=6)	3149	3205
eta-sq by k=4		.51	.28
sig		.00	.00
eta-sq by k=6		.43	.24
sig		.00	.00

It is obvious that there are significant differences between various regime types, independent of which regime set-up we use. The democratic regime type was the wealthiest one and the non-democratic regime types the poorest. The illiberal regime type is the second most affluent, and it is interesting to note that the Latin-American sub-set is wealthier than the Asian one.

3.2.5 Conclusion about roots

With the exception for ethnic structure and cultural orientation we do find significant differences between the four major regime-types with respect to their roots - or background factors. However, comparing the means we find no particular distinguishing pattern for the illiberal regime type. Rather it is the democratic regime type

which distinguishes itself from the other regime types: here we find more of Christians, more of English-speaking population, more of individualism and more of wealth. In some of these instances the illiberal regime type comes close to the democratic regime-type, while in other respects it approaches the semi-democratic regime type.

It is only when we break down the illiberal regime type into a Latin-American and an Asian subset, and (among the Asian subset) separate between illiberal regimes by default or by design, that we may note some interesting findings: the Latin-American subset has the highest rate of Christians and the lowest rate of English-speakers; in the Asian subset, illiberal by default displays the most heterogeneous ethnic structure as well as the poorest economy in the 1960s; the Asian subset, illiberal by design is associated with a low proportion of Christian population and also the most homogeneous ethnic structure. All in all, this suggests that it is not very meaningful to talk about *one* single regime type to be called illiberal democracy. Looking into its roots, we find that within this set of regime type there are different patterns.

3.3 The Performance of Illiberal Democracy

The question to be addressed in this section is whether we can associate any particular performance profiles with different regime types. There are five sets of performance profiles that we want to take a closer look at. First, we intend to study the distribution of what we call societal performance, illustrated by level of human development, rate of corruption and occurrence of violence and protest in different regime types. Second, we attempt to map institutional performance with reference to the state of the market economy and the position of unions in society. Third, we enquire into public policies or the variation in the size of the public sector. Fourth, we look into the economic outcomes of different regime types with respect to economic growth and inflation etc. Fifth, and finally, we enquire into some social outcomes like income distribution and female representation in parliament.

3.3.1 Societal performance

Societal performance comprises some indicators measuring human development, occurrences of violence and protest events as well as perception of corruption. A good societal performance profile would imply high scores on human development, few occurrences of violence and protest events and high scores on the corruption index (which indicates low levels of corruption). Our indicators are based on data reported by the Transparency International (1995, 1998) UNDP (1994, 1995), and Banks (1996). The performance profiles broken down as means for the various regime types are shown in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Societal performance by political regime: means

		Corruption		HDI		violence			protest		
		1980	1998	1970	1995	1970	1980	1990	1970	1980	1990
Non-demo	(n=47)	2.9	3.1	.26	.48	.75	.45	.98	.39	.45	.83
Semi-demo	(n=16)	4.0	3.4	.42	.63	.70	.73	1.28	.82	1.29	1.49
Illiberal	(n=23)	3.8	3.9	.44	.66	1.56	1.36	1.66	2.45	3.96	2.82
Other	(n=13)	4.2	3.5	.47	.67	1.78	1.46	1.88	2.30	2.66	2.41
Asian	(n=10)	3.5	4.4	.40	.64	1.29	1.23	1.37	2.64	5.65	3.35
Default	(n=6)	1.8	3.0	.31	.50	1.43	1.80	2.25	3.31	7.12	4.33
Design	(n=4)	5.3	5.4	.54	.85	1.08	.38	.04	1.63	3.45	1.88
Demo	(n=6)	3.2	4.6	.62	.82	.20	.03	.28	.28	.33	1.03
eta-sq by k=4		.23	.22	.43	.32	.11	.16	.10	.30	.29	.27
sig		.32	.06	.00	.00	.07	.01	.09	.00	.00	.00
eta-sq by k=6		.04	.09	.36	.25	.10	.12	.04	.27	.21	.21
sig		.84	.25	.00	.00	.03	.01	.21	.00	.00	.00

In most cases we find significant differences between the four major regime types; one may say that corruption in this respect is an exception. It is striking how often the degree of democracy co-varies with different performance profiles, with the democratic regime type displaying the "best" profile and the non-democratic regime type the "worst". We may also note that illiberal democracies distinguish themselves by showing the highest scores on violence and protest events.

However, disaggregating the illiberal regime type into the Asian subset we may note some sharp differences. Asian illiberalism by default displays the second lowest score on Human development in 1995, the lowest score on corruption perception in 1998 and the highest scores on violence and protest events in the 1990s. The opposite is true of Asian illiberalism by design: the highest scores on HDI, corruption and the lowest score on violence events in the 1990s. Thus we may conclude that various kinds of illiberal regimes may end up with radically different societal performance profiles.

3.3.2 Institutional performance

When testing the institutional performance of different regime types we include measures on the workings of the market economy as indicated by an index on economic freedom, as well as the position of the working class in a society, illustrated by trade union density. We rely on the economic freedom index developed by the Fraser Institute, which provides data from 1975 to 1995 (Gwartney et al. 1996, 1997); data on trade union density stems from the ILO (1997). Means for these performance variables for the different regime types are portrayed in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Institutional performance by political regime: means

		economic freedom			trade union density	
		1975	1985	1995	1985	1995
Non-demo	(n=47)	3.5	3.6	4.1	35.1	14.2
Semi-demo	(n=16)	4.8	4.4	5.5	26.9	16.4
Illiberal	(n=23)	3.9	4.2	5.6	14.8	13.0
Other	(n=13)	3.8	3.8	5.4	18.1	15.2
Asian	(n=10)	4.0	4.8	5.9	11.1	9.4
Default	(n=6)	3.2	3.8	4.9	11.7	9.5
Design	(n=4)	5.0	6.2	7.3	10.6	9.3
Demo	(n=6)	4.2	4.6	6.0	27.9	16.4
eta-sq by k=4		.21	.21	.41	.34	.05
sig		.01	.01	.00	.07	.78

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eta-sq by k=6      .13  .07  .31  .30  .02
sig                .04  .20  .00  .03  .80

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The variation in this performance profile is not consistently associated with the four major regime types. It is true that the democratic regime type has the highest scores both for economic freedom and trade union density, but the illiberal regime type displays the lowest trade union densities while the non-democratic regime type score lowest on economic freedom. Looking into one subset of the illiberal regime type it is noteworthy that the Asian subset illiberal by design has the highest scores for economic freedom for all three periods of time and at the same time it displays the opposite on trade union density. Again we find that this subset has a distinguishable performance profile.

3.3.3 Public policy performance

The third performance profile refers to the size of the public sector. Here we rely on two indicators, one measuring central government expenditures and the other social security benefit payments, both as percentages of the GDP. The central government expenditure data stems from the World Bank (1992, 1997) while the social security benefit payment data goes back to ILO (1992, 1998). The distribution of mean values on the various regime types is reported in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Public policies performance by political regime: means

		centr gov expend			soc sec benefit pay		
		1972	1980	1995	1975	1985	1995
Non-demo	(n=47)	22.1	25.9	23.5	1.4	1.2	1.4
Semi-demo	(n=16)	18.7	22.6	27.9	4.2	3.0	3.2
Illiberal	(n=23)	18.6	20.4	20.7	3.3	2.3	2.7
Other	(n=13)	20.8	21.2	21.5	3.9	2.5	3.5
Asian	(n=10)	16.3	19.4	19.7	2.1	2.0	2.0
Default	(n=6)	14.1	18.3	20.7	1.6	1.1	1.2
Design	(n=4)	19.5	31.1	18.6	2.9	3.6	3.0
Demo	(n=6)	21.8	29.5	29.2	3.8	2.6	3.1
eta-sq by k=4		.07	.10	.10	.30	.09	.10
sig		.58	.30	.44	.05	.37	.42
eta-sq by k=6		.03	.09	.09	.22	.06	.06
sig		.60	.12	.20	.05	.29	.35

Also in this case we find some differences between the major regime types. The largest public sector is to be found within the democratic regime type, while the smallest public sector is either among the illiberal regime type (central government expenditure) or the non-democratic regime type (social security payments). The Asian subset within the illiberal regime type is again distinguishing itself: the illiberal subset by default scores low on social security payments (1985 and 1995) while the subset by design score low on central government expenditure (1995).

3.3.4 Economic performance

In our attempt to capture the economic performance of various states we include three economic variables: economic growth, gross domestic investment growth and inflation rates. These three variables are measured for three different time periods and we rely on data reported by the World Bank (1975, 1983, 1992, 1996, 1997). In addition we also include a variable which captures the importance of trade for the national economy. Here we use a variable estimating the combined share of imports and exports as percentage of GDP, i.e. a measure of the openness of the economy. This variable has been collected from the Penn World Table, mark 5.6 (Summers and Heston 1994). The relevant data are reported in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Economic performance by political regime: means

	openness (impex)			ec growth			inflation			gross dom investm		
	1970	1980	1990	1960	1973	1985	1970	1980	1990	1960	1970	1980
				-73	-85	-94	-80	-90	-95	-70	-80	-93
Non-demo (n=47)	49.1	66.2	57.6	2.1	1.0	-0.8	14.2	17.6	124.6	5.2	7.2	0.1
Semi-demo (n=16)	45.0	69.7	65.9	2.5	0.4	-0.1	26.2	42.2	26.9	8.2	8.2	1.8
Illiberal (n=23)	44.8	64.0	65.2	2.7	1.0	2.3	21.3	63.7	65.7	9.1	6.2	2.9
Other (n=13)	38.0	43.1	43.0	2.3	-0.6	0.9	28.7	107.0	110.5	6.8	4.5	1.0
Asian (n=10)	53.8	91.3	97.3	3.2	3.2	4.2	11.6	7.4	7.3	12.5	8.7	5.6
Default (n=6)	26.8	41.1	41.9	1.5	2.0	2.2	12.2	10.2	9.3	8.4	7.6	3.0
Design (n=4)	94.2	166.6	166.4	5.7	5.0	7.2	10.6	3.2	4.4	17.6	10.0	8.8
Demo (n=6)	71.2	89.6	92.9	2.6	0.6	2.5	14.8	14.4	21.5	7.6	6.0	2.1
eta-sq by k=4	.21	.26	.35	.14	.21	.38	.07	.18	.01	.18	.05	.16
sig	.00	.00	.00	.05	.00	.00	.34	.02	.96	.02	.70	.06
eta-sq by k=6	.04	.01	.03	.02	.01	.22	.04	.07	.01	.07	.01	.05
sig	.29	.73	.50	.72	.88	.00	.41	.19	.86	.17	.85	.34

Not unexpectedly we find few traces of any systematic differences between the four major regime types with respect to economic performance. We say not unexpectedly, because why should regime type have any impact on economic performance, or economic growth in particular (Barro 1996)? Yet, we find that the performance profile of the democratic regime type is as impressive as for any of the other major regime types. The illiberal democracy regime type is not distinguishing itself, and it is only when disaggregating this regime type that we can report some noteworthy findings. It is the Asian subset, illiberal by design, which consistently displays the highest scores on each and every economic performance indicator.

3.3.5 Social performance

Finally, when enquiring into the social performance we have attempted to capture aspects of social equality and gender equality. Social equality stands for variables measuring income distribution in terms of the Gini-index as reported on by the World Bank and the ILO (Deininger and Squire 1997, Tabatabai 1996). Gender equality is captured through a variable measuring female representation in parliament as reported by the IPU (1995). Relevant distributions of data are presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Social performance by political regime: means

	gini-index			female parliam repr		
	1970	1980	1990	1970	1980	1990
Non-demo (n=47)	41.3	37.6	43.8	7.1	7.7	7.2
Semi-demo (n=16)	49.7	47.4	47.0	4.9	6.7	7.1
Illiberal (n=23)	44.6	42.9	43.6	3.6	5.0	7.6
Other (n=13)	49.5	48.9	48.0	3.6	4.4	8.7
Asian (n=10)	40.6	39.3	35.7	3.7	5.8	6.2

Default (n=6)	39.7	37.0	30.9	4.4	7.1	7.4
Design (n=4)	42.1	42.6	50.2	2.5	3.9	4.4
Demo (n=6)	45.6	44.9	43.6	5.6	9.2	10.4
eta-sq by k=4	.30	.34	.25	.09	.07	.05
sig	.07	.01	.10	.25	.37	.56
eta-sq by k=6	.11	.19	.03	.08	.05	.02
sig	.30	.03	.80	.10	.23	.58

Social performance is not systematically associated with regime type. It is not necessarily so that the more democratic a regime, the better the social performance. The illiberal regime type is not performing better, or for that matter worse, than any other regime type. In general Third World countries do not show any high rates of female parliamentary representation, and estimates of the Gini-index are often quite high. Disaggregating the illiberal democracy regime type we may again note that the Asian subset illiberal by design scores lowest on female representation, and display high scores on income distribution.

3.3.6 Conclusion about performance profiles

Having enquired into five-performance profile in some details, we may conclude that regime type has some impact. With the exception of the last profile - social performance - it is generally the case that the democratic regime type has a distinguished performance profile. In most cases, the democratic regime type seems to perform better than any other regime type. We find no similar performance profile for the illiberal democracy regime type as a whole; it is no doubt that the illiberal democracy regime type performs less well than the democratic regime type.

It is only when disaggregating illiberal democracy that we can establish certain distinctive performance profiles. This is most obvious in the case of the Asian subset illiberal by design; here we find high scores on human development, absence of corruption, economic freedom and economic performance indicators while low scores on violence events, trade union density, public sector size and female parliamentary representation. The other Asian subset - illiberal by default - displays some of the opposite characteristics: high scores on violence events; low scores on human development, high levels of corruption, lower openness of the economy, and poor income distribution (Gini-index).

Our focus has been on the illiberal democracy regime type, and we may safely conclude that this regime type per se is not displaying any distinct performance profile. Illiberalism by design and illiberalism by default are associated with differing performance profiles. The issue to be addressed in the next chapter is: has this to do with illiberalism or simply wealth?

4. Discussion

Our empirical analysis suggests that illiberal democracy is a growing phenomenon. More countries are illiberal in the 1990's than in the 1980's and 1970's. Also, illiberal democracies seem to be stable over time, at least as

stable as other regime types. How are these findings to be interpreted given the fact that much doubt can be raised about the usefulness of a concept such as ‘illiberal democracy’?

Saying that illiberal democracy is a “growth industry”, may simply indicate that more countries are becoming (more) democratic, and that in the process, they somehow fail to match political rights and civil liberties. This comes as no surprise. It appears relatively easy to construct a democratic constitution, given the amount of experts who are ready to provide their deep knowledge on the matter, but it is quite another thing to reconstruct a poor, corrupt, authoritarian social structure into something that resembles civil liberties. Therefore, political rights very often come first in contemporary processes of democratisation. (In the European history it was very often the other way around: first there were property rights and the rule of law, then came universal adult suffrage.) Also, in the modern world democratisation is often tied to various external pressures, like preferential trade status, possible EU/NATO –memberships, recognition of nationhood or conditions for foreign aid. Presenting something, as a facade of democracy (political rights) becomes a rational behaviour from the point of view of national elite’s who may have few other alternatives. Furthermore, the break-up of the Soviet Union may carry some importance here. Given the opportunity to once and for all dismantle the Soviet hegemon, the rest of the world gladly accepted most new post-soviet nationstates. In doing so, democracy or at least a viable road towards democracy was often stated as conditions for external acceptance. Our data-set do not cover former socialist countries (they have not been illiberal long enough, or they are not Third World) but the ramifications of the fall of communism is important also for an understanding of political change towards democracy in Asia, Latin America and Africa. More countries have had an opportunity to establish democracy – illiberal or not - due to the demise of the cold war. It appears however, that the growth of illiberal systems is associated with illiberalism by default, which again supports the idea that systems transformation is easier to accomplish at the level of political rights than civil liberties. The growth of illiberal systems cannot, according to our data, be explained by any specific set of country-based circumstances. Rather, it appears as if illiberalism as a regime type is one of many regime-alternatives closely related to changes in the international system of power and influence.

What then, about the stableness of illiberalism? If countries demonstrate a tendency to remain in the same regime type over time, is that not an interesting observation? A closer look at the data reveals that this tendency is also linked to the illiberalism by default category. The structural inequality, rate of corruption and malpractice in Latin American and South Asian countries (there are relatively few cases of illiberalism in Africa – but more of authoritarian regime types) makes it extremely difficult for these societies to climb the ladder of civil liberties. In some cases, illiberalism by default is explained not only by the existence of difficult structural barriers, but with the continuous practice of internal and/or external warfare (India, Pakistan, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Central America). Countries engaged in warfare have, for obvious reasons, a poor record of providing civil liberties. When trying to generalise about the causes of illiberal regime stability, one circumstance appears to be more important than others: the relative stable-ness (and growth) of illiberal systems is closely linked to Third World status. The provisioning of civil liberties may be a privilege of wealth.

This would lead us to conclude that illiberal regime types somehow would become more democratic when and if they become wealthier. Thus, illiberal systems would not be robust alternatives, but rather stages in a typical process of modernisation and democratisation. The only illiberal systems who can demonstrate sustained economic growth are the ones we have labelled illiberal by design. A closer look at this group reveals that it is indeed the case that some illiberal by design-countries have become more democratic (South Korea and Thailand). Thus the relative robustness of illiberal democracy is different depending on the design/default criteria.

What then, about the ideological potential of illiberalism? Are illiberal political systems attractive alternatives for Third World countries? From the point of view of (sincere) political leaders, the growth and robustness of illiberalism is of little importance. It is the ability of political regimes to provide economic growth and social achievements that matters. In that respect, this analysis would reveal some hope. It is only countries who have adopted an illiberal by design approach that can demonstrate positive social and economic performance. The problem is however to isolate illiberal politics from other factors that may explain the performance of particular countries (in our data set that would be Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and South Korea). It is not altogether obvious that achievements made by these countries are due to illiberalism. Much has been written about the East Asian Miracle and different analysts emphasise different aspects of the story. It is beyond the scope of this paper to give a detailed account of these discussions, suffice to say that more and more agreement tend to circulate around the notion of the *developmental state* as a way to describe East Asian achievements. In short a developmental state is characterised by the following features:

- an insulated and autonomous set of economic agencies with a strong capacity to implement economic policies and programmes
- an activist industry policy that develop competitive export oriented global industries
- an understanding of governance that places strong emphasis on the role of the state in securing economic development and security (Wade 1990, Jayasuriya1999)

A developmental state with these characteristics will be dependent on a high degree of societal control and ideological consensus/mainstreaming. Hence, it comes as no surprise that most developmental states in East Asia have rejected notions of a left – right ideological spectrum and settled for the less controversial idea of economic *growth* as a way to summarise national ambitions. In real terms, the developmental state strategy is about: land reforms and income distribution; state – controlled banking and finance systems; the manipulation of import substitution and export orientation; state controlled wage setting; special conditions for foreign investment, the insulation of interest formation and trade union activity and the securing of political power through various illiberal measures. The developmental state seems indeed to be closely connected to illiberal practice (by design) and this would suggest that the ideological pretensions of those who advocate illiberal democracy for the sake of economic growth and social achievements – perhaps have some argumentative leverage.

The problem with that argument is that there is more to the Asian miracle story than is revealed through its illiberal and developmental aspects (and the logic of the developmental state carry a close resemblance to West European welfare states). The East Asian economic and social achievements are also influenced to a very high degree by international politics and the specific regional systems of governance in the time period since the Second World War. The American security umbrella, the role of western powers in the reconstructing of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan and the general adoption of a growth –ideology explains to a high degree the *statist* orientation of economic and political affairs in the region. This becomes obvious when we contemplate on the specifics of developmental states. To manipulate with import substitution and export orientation at the same time would not be possible without an all-embracing state and overarching security consideration. Why would the western world accept Asian import restrictions and at the same time allow for Asian export to the west, if not for security (read: anti-Communist) reasons? These are circumstances very difficult to reconstruct for would-be illiberal states (by design) interested to follow in the path of the Asian miracle.

The developmental state alternative with its illiberal by design mechanisms is perhaps an anachronism also in other respects. The capacity of individual states to construct a scheme for development with a high emphasis on state control of industry, finance, trade, information and ideology seems to be a loosing formula. Globalisation of finance, investments and trade accompanied by the intensified exchange of information, suggests that those developmental schemes much more now than in the past will be an activity of transnational, international and regional actors than by paternalistic national illiberal elites. At least this seems to be a lesson learned from the East Asian financial crisis.

5. Conclusion

The practice of allowing for political rights and restricting civil liberties is indeed a growing phenomenon and such illiberal systems tend to be relatively stable over time. To that extent, Zakaria is right in his statement on illiberalism as a growth industry. It is however doubtful to suggest that this development is a matter of deliberate choice. So when Zakaria claims that a new exit on the democratic road has been found, as if countries made a deliberate decision about which form of illiberalism to adopt, this is probably to overstretch the implications of empirical observations. Most illiberal countries fall into the category of (are classified as) illiberalism because of general malpractice, war or as a side effect of being new to the democratic world. Empirically, illiberal democracy is not a very distinctive phenomenon. Not much can be found in terms of variation when it comes to analysing the roots and performance of illiberal systems. The really sharp difference between political regimes is the one between democracies and all other systems. Hence, using illiberal democracy as a theoretical construct is a doubtful enterprise. Unless of course illiberal practice is seen strictly as an ideological phenomena, then all sort of interesting comparisons could be made, for instance between varieties of neo-liberals in the western world and illiberals in East Asia. The tendency to liberate the market

economy from the impact of politics and at the same time impose new vertical patterns of loyalty in the work place, is something that might unite West and East in an illiberal effort – but that is a different story.

Appendix 1: Third world countries classified according to regime type:

Non-democracies: (N=47)

Afghanistan
 Algeria
 Benin
 Bhutan
 Burundi
 Cameroon
 Central African Republic
 Chad
 China
 Congo
 Cote d'Ivoire
 Cuba
 Egypt
 Ethiopia
 Gabon
 Ghana
 Guinea
 Haiti
 Indonesia
 Iran
 Iraq
 Jordan
 Cambodia
 Kenya
 Korea North
 Laos

Illiberal democracies: other: default: (N=13)

Argentina
 Bolivia
 Brazil
 Colombia
 Dominican Republic
 El Salvador
 Guatemala
 Madagascar
 Morocco
 South Africa
 Turkey
 Uruguay
 Zambia

Illiberal democracies: Asian: default: (N=6)

Bangladesh
 India
 Nepal
 Pakistan
 Philippines
 Sri Lanka

Illiberal democracies: Asian: design: (N=4)

Liberia	
Libya	Korea South
Malawi	Malaysia
Mali	Singapore
Mauritania	Thailand
Mongolia	
Myanmar	
Niger	
Oman	Democracies: (N=6)
Rwanda	
Saudi Arabia	Botswana
Sierra Leone	Costa Rica
Somalia	Jamaica
Sudan, The	Mauritius
Syria	Trinidad and Tobago
Tanzania	Venezuela
Togo	
Tunisia	
Uganda	
United Arab Emirates	
Zaire	

Semi-democracies: (N=16)

Burkina Faso
 Chile
 Ecuador
 Honduras
 Kuwait
 Lebanon
 Lesotho
 Mexico
 Nicaragua
 Nigeria
 Panama
 Paraguay
 Peru
 Senegal
 Taiwan
 Zimbabwe

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