# THE MACHINERY FOR CHANGE:
# A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROOTS OF
# LIBERAL-REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY - A CRITICAL
# APPROACH TOWARDS FORCED DEMOCRATIZATIONS, AND AN
# OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF THE LIBERAL ORDER

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**Abstract:**

In the present article I display the ideological foundations of the current system of representative democracy and question the liberal core beliefs that it is *per definitionem* superior to other political systems and that material causation will lead to a world of liberal democracies (or to a liberal democratic world state) because of this. The argument is developed in three steps. First, the creative power of ideas and ideologies is displayed. Secondly, an analysis of the historical growth of the liberal democracy regime is employed. Lastly, internal contradictions and problems are extracted from the structure displayed. The paper ultimately derives three conclusions. First, the foundations of the liberal-democratic system are ideological and thus relative. There have been alternative forms of public participation in political decision-making processes. Secondly, the system is bound by its ideological roots to turn imperialist but will fail in contexts that do not share its historical development. Thirdly, the nearer future will see an increasing tension between the old elites of the system and forces for change driven by advances in ICT. Instead of the liberal world state, the liberal order might thus evolve internally into a new mode of knowledge production and rule administration based on mass participation rather than on the election of representatives.

**Keywords:** democracy, liberal order, political ideology, political theory, democracy discourse

## 1. Introduction

Ideological governed mechanisms of perception are clearly a driving force behind epistemic patterns of knowledge production. However, how do they shape political

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rule administration and can they create systemic change? Before something can become an established *world view* that creates discourses, which are applied in the perception of foreign entities in 'othering' processes, ideology has to emerge. Consequently, there must be the emergence of an *idea* before it can evolve and grow into an ideology that supports the becoming of a collective. Admitting this, however, it becomes obvious that the ideational stage is not stagnant. If it was, political entities would never fade once established if it was not for conquest, which is basically the classical realist picture that ignores ideational impacts altogether (e.g. Hilz, 2007; Hobbes, Tuck, Geuss, & Skinner, 1996; Jahn, 1999; Korab-Karpowicz, 2010; Paul, Wirtz, & Fortmann, 2004; Walt, 1987; Waltz, 2010). Moreover, they would not evolve. In fact, there could thus be neither different norms nor entities in the world beyond Machiavellian princes struggling for resources (Machiavelli, 1992).

Regarding this picture to be obviously nonsensical, hardly anyone generally argues that ideas drive change on the most general level; even in the study of International Relations (IR). Even rationalist theorists today tend to admit that there is some sort of influence of norms and ideologies on international politics and many attempt to incorporate this factor by modifying the traditional theory (e.g. Al-Rodhan, 2013). Furthermore, there are contemporary currents that regard them to be the primary forces for change like the English school, practice theory etc. (e.g. Adler, 1997; Baylis, Smith, & Owens, 2017; Guzzini, 2000; Klotz & Lynch, 2014; Kubálková, 2015; Philpott, July 2010; Walt, 1998; Wendt, 1992; Williams, 2004). Even though 'constructivism,' which can be regarded as an umbrella term for all of them, is still occasionally described to have emerged rather recently, it actually goes back in its modern form undisputedly to at least Alexander Wendt's 1992 classic article "Anarchy is what States Make of it," which makes modern "idealism" in IR, as Snyder prefers to call it, a movement with a history of already more than a 'generation' of scholars producing texts in the field by now, even by conservative measures (Fierke & Jorgensen, 2015; Snyder, 2004; Wendt, 1992). It is not recent any more. The theory has its own journals–most notably the *European Journal of International Relations*–and countless institutes dedicated to its promotion and further development.

Building up on the constructivist picture of state formation, the present article attempts to trace the roots of the contemporary liberal order in "Western" democracies discursively. I will go through an analytical approach of core concepts and into historical developments of ideas of state formation. The constructivist thesis is that theories of the political world form, rather than describe, the political reality of their times. A critical note will look at the risks of enforcing one's own ideological system upon places not sharing the growth of its ideas historically. The paper will conclude with an outlook on the possible future evolution of the system.
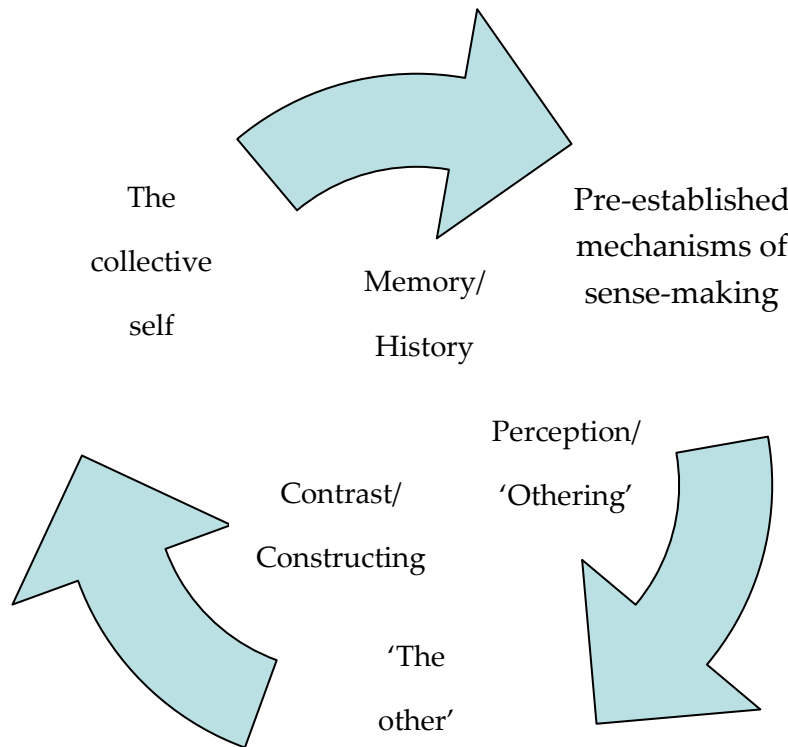
The
collective
self

Pre-established
mechanisms of
sense-making

Memory/
History

Perception/
'Othering'

Contrast/
Constructing

'The
other'

**Figure 1:** Discursive formation of collective structures built upon ideas & ideology

## 2. War against Disorder

Despite of the not so recent rise of constructivism, it is still just to say that a large part of mainstream theorists still refrains from fully embracing the role of 'soft factors' like ideas when theorizing collectivity mechanisms and the international stage, as long-time *International Organization* editor Stephen D. Krasner concluded in the 70th anniversary special collection of the same journal two decades ago (Katzenstein, Keohane, & Krasner, 1998). The reason for this, I believe, lies in the infamous "clock and cloud" dichotomy of the social and natural sciences (Almond & Genco, 1977). Material, utilitarian factors and the 'billiard ball' analogy of states are temptingly easy to calculate and make the study of IR allegedly 'clocky,' while discourse and ideology blur collectivity into a 'cloudy' mess of immeasurable factors beyond mathematical or statistical evaluations of military strength, statements by politicians, and conflict-risk assessments. This extended mass of factors can strictly speaking not even be called an 'international stage' any more, as states themselves are degraded to being merely one factor among many in the structure of human collectivity.

Indeed, the 'nation' itself is such an *idea*, and it changed the construction of individual identities in fundamental ways. As a matter of fact, the concept was unknown in Europe until the 18th century. For Europe, there have been many studies on the historical importance of ideas in forging the current system (e.g. Philpott, July 2010).

In China, it was only in the early 20th century that the concept of a Chinese nation 中国 emerged through European ideational influences and against European material influences, which nicely demonstrates the divergence between the two (Tang & Darr, 2012). Interestingly, the preceding episteme of an earthly unity 天下 saw countries divided not geographically but temporally, with a Great Empire of the Qing 大清国 preceded by a Great Empire of the Ming 大明国 according to dynastical rule of an undivided world mirroring the heavenly order. The beginning construction of individual identities according to 'nationality' following from the abstract idea of 'nations' and 'peoples,' then, changed the political world and first created what many realists take to be an unchangeable status quo: the international stage itself. If one accepts the idea that the epistemic concept of the Chinese political world transformed into something working to entirely foreign structural principles at the beginning of the 20th century, one might ask if the concept that we have of our political reality today might be just as relative as the extinct Chinese concept? Might there be emerging and fading collective patterns of sense making, a battle between new and old ideas in between the lines of national collectivity today, as well?

One should keep in mind here, also, that individual identities are always constructed by the *diverse* collectives that individuals belong to (Halbwachs, 2006). The *borderless-ness* phenomenon of undermining ideas might have been displayed most famously in IR by the use of various examples in Keck and Sikkink's *Activists beyond Borders* (Keck & Sikkink, 2014). Originally, the concept goes back to Nietzsche though. Nietzsche mentions three peoples of superior intellect in *Zur Genealogie der Moral [On the Genealogy of Morals]*: the Chinese, the Germans, and the Jews (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 266f). Compared to seize and strength of respectively the Chinese or the German empire, it strikes one as remarkable that Nietzsche would include on this elaborate list a people, who did not even have a state on their own in Nietzsche's time. As if this fact was not odd enough already, he then goes on to claim that among these three, the Jews are the strongest (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 266f). The reason he cites for this is simple: four Jews–Jesus, Peter, Paul, and Maria–were all it took to conquer the mighty Roman Empire, Nietzsche explains (Nietzsche, 2006, pp. 266f). The example displays how revolutionary Nietzsche was for his times. Obviously, he was not talking about a military conquest but stressed the primacy of ideas in the construction of political entities over who takes or holds which hill.

## 2.1 Spiritual Thirst from Deserts far away

Following Nietzsche's example, I will try to make a point for the power of ideas by the use of two intentionally contradictory historical examples, one ancient and one recent. In the ancient example, I will tread Christianity, or teleological monotheism, as an idea that spread all over the then known world in people's minds, eventually forming states and institutions. The ideas of a, presumably, poor carpenter and a likely rather small number of disciples living in the Roman-occupied Middle East 2000 years ago changed the world and its political structure more effectively than the mighty occupier did at the

time. Indeed, these thoughts changed the occupying empire *from the inside*, as Nietzsche theorized, which seems to be a supreme example for the power of idealism.

The more recent example is radical Islam and Osama Bin Laden, rebel against established political entities, whose radical thoughts spread all over the US-American occupied Middle East and shaped material, political reality at the very least from 2001 on. Constructivists like, for instance, Marc Lynch have explicitly observed the unaccountability of al-Qaeda on rationalist terms (Hülsse & Spencer, 2008; Lynch, 2006). Like in the former example, structure tends to follow from thought, as could be seen in vast al-Qaeda and ISIS held territories in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and the Sinai Peninsula until very recently and, though in diminished parts, until today.

Notwithstanding the question whether material reality leads to all ideas in the first place, material structure in certain cases obviously tends to form through a bottom-up process spreading from cellular think tanks as small as an individual's mind–at least in contexts where representation of particular ideas for transformation is restricted within political structures on the state level. Political actors and active forces for change on the international stage, hence, are not only states or political decision makers. Oftentimes, ideas themselves transformed into movements are driving forces on the international stage (e.g. the 'Hippie' movement). However, let us observe the difference between those individuals within the machine of political decision-making and those without it here. Individual political decision makers are being considered the smallest unit in IR (Rourke, 2003). However, they are incorporated in the system of the basic realist unit: the state (Rourke, 2003). Their thoughts and decisions are directly linked to the internal processes of decision making taking place within the state unit. They lead the way because they are acting as fixed parts of the machinery. They are being followed because of their positions and because their followers are parts of the same machinery. They are not being followed because they are the individuals they are or because of the ingenuity of their beliefs; even though charisma certainly helps, as the recent election of Donald Trump sadly displayed. Followers of Jesus or Osama Bin Laden, on the other hand, follow the ideas that those individuals put forward. There is, or was, no structure in these instances, which obligates them to do so yet; even though charisma, once again, certainly helps.

As a matter of fact, often enough the idea in these cases becomes entirely detached from the individual with whom it originated. Let us look at the examples in more detail. Jesus died a convicted criminal humiliated by the masses he had possibly tried to lead against the Roman occupation of the Middle East. From this perspective, the fact that the idea he put forward ended up transforming the Roman Empire itself on a massive scale almost seems ironic. Of course, this is only if we accept the debated theory that his original intention was to stir up a rebellion against Roman occupation among the local population (Horsley, 1993). However, Bin Laden, on the more violent opposite, likewise did not live to see the big days of al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Muslim extremism. However, the assassination of its original cell should fail to eliminate the idea. Indeed, the logic of decentralized terrorism itself proves the primacy of the idea

over the, however charismatic, individual. The infamous 'terror cells' of international terrorism seem to grow like cancer–everywhere, entirely unconnected, void of hierarchy and lacking active command structure. These individual cells do not know their superiors. Indeed, they do not even have superiors. They are willing to fight for and in many cases are even willing to sacrifice themselves for an idea and not because they are ordered to do so by their superiors within a clearly defined command structure.

Hence, it is with some justification to say that the idea itself is what acts on the international stage here, not the individual of the individual level of analysis known from IR theory. The examples displayed in this chapter, of course, are far from arbitrarily chosen. While scientists and researchers likely would not care, some individuals might take offense to the indirect comparison of Christianity and international terrorism. One might tend to think, then, that the point here was to display that ideas can be both *evil* and *good*. However, this was not the intention. The fact of the matter is that ISIS, al-Qaeda, and Osama do not think of themselves as the *evil-doers*. Evil empires so evil that they call the terrorists who fight them 'rebels' rather than 'terrorists' in order to avoid confusions as to who's who do not exist outside of *Star Wars*. In real life, *good* and *evil* seem to be arbitrary and relative.
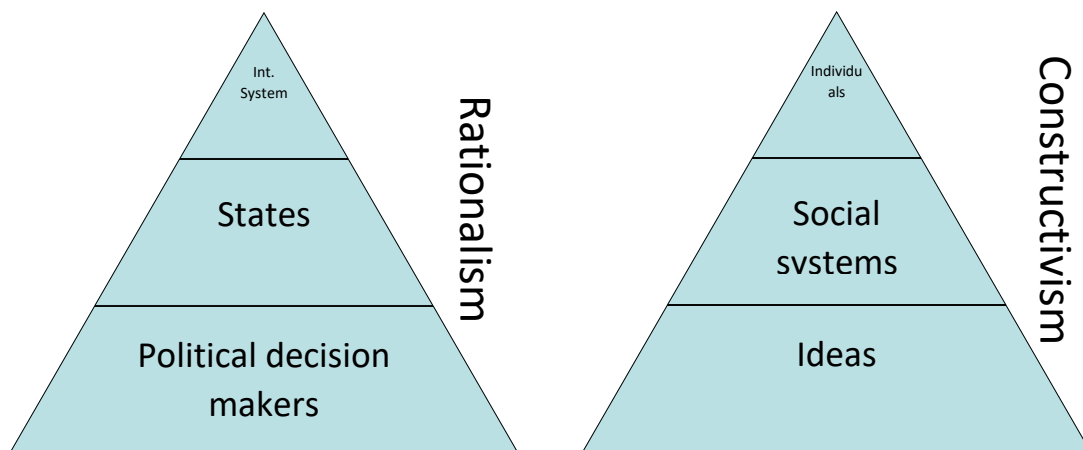


**Figure 2:** Rationalist levels of analysis (interpreted according to Thomas Hobbes) and constructivist levels of construction (interpreted according to Maurice Halbwachs)

## 2.2 Democracy is coming

The question that might be raised at this point is: are political entities stronger when their internal mechanisms are able to incorporate the broadest variety of ideas? The logic behind this assumption seems convincing. Ideas, as logic dictates, only spread outside of established political structures if the system they originate in restricts their representation. Hence, a political system that owns an ideology that allows for the full scale of representation–both on the individual and on the collective scale–should be immune to the growth of beliefs operating outside of its structure. Theorists of political

science and IR like Francis Fukuyama have therefore argued that liberal democracies are *per definitionem* more stable internally than competing forms of government are (Fukuyama, 1989).[ii]

Resulting theories span a wide range of convictions. These include 'Democratic Peace theory' and most other liberal notions of teleological materialism (Wendt, 2003). Liberalism thus does not contradict materialism, it merely derives conclusions other than realism's inevitable *state of war* (e.g. Wiebrecht, 2013). To give this article a postcolonial turn, however, I will argue that the liberal notions of teleological democratization or *Westernization* are discursive in nature (as opposed to inherently logical). Postcolonial studies researcher and Hong Kong professor Daniel Vukovich, for instance, termed the liberal creed the "US-West's becoming the same logic" in his 2012 study on Western knowledge production *China and Orientalism* (Vukovich, 2012). This "logic," according to Vukovich, is applied in "knowledge production" whenever "US-Western" scholars approach different systems theoretically. He shows in his work how the producer of knowledge from one certain cultural background consciously or subconsciously analyses "the other" following the logic of discursive patterns of sense making. "Discursive" in this context means that the other is thought in terms of unquestioned evaluative attributes following established dichotomist lines that are not being questioned in the process. Indeed, they cannot be questioned, as they provide the linguistic basis for any sort of argumentation in the first place ("good" and "evil"). For the present theoretical purpose, I will specifically mention his deconstruction of the "US-Western" interpretation of the Chinese Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (无产阶级文化革命) of 1966-1976 (Vukovich, 2012).

According to Vukovich, the "US-West's" standard perception of Chinese masses forced by an insane dictator is misguided. Following his reinterpretation, the phenomenon must be seen as an "alternate form of democracy" based on mass participation, ongoing revolution, and bottom-up processes of social transition (Vukovich, 2012). Thus, "US-Western" democracy seems to be only one *form* of democracy. However, when political theorists talk about democracy today they mean *liberal* and *representative* democracy. In the following, I will approach the "US-Western" particular form of democracy in a critical way.

## 2.3 The Cradle of the Best and of the Worst
The most long-lasting system within the ideology of constant, ongoing enlightenment is the United States of America. From the early beginnings of the nation on, streams dissenting from the US-American mainstream, or from the political establishment, have been incorporated into the system ideologically by fighting the system on its own terms. The sharpest critics of US-America, in other words, have mostly been US-American patriots attacking the current government, and not the nation or system of government.

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[ii] Of course, the assumption has actually been challenged many times. Most famously, see Huntington (1993).

However, there are also examples for revolutionary approaches. For the present purpose, I want to focus on the predominant form of critic, which stays within the ideological system though. The ideological system, however, is not to be confused with the legal system, except for Supreme Court appeals. For instance, both slavery and segregation were formally legal until overturned by the 13th amendment and *Oliver Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* respectively. The point here is thus ideology and the claim to constitutionality, not legality.

The line of argumentation in these predominant cases of disobedience has hence always been that the current government was acting against the principles of the "founding fathers" of the nation, and thus against the principles stated in the founding documents of the nation, or at least against what implicitly follows from what is stated in these documents (Boyer, Clark, Halttunen, Kett, & Salisbury, 2013). In none of these cases, the disobedient individual has questioned the "founding fathers" themselves or thus *individualist materialism* as the state's founding philosophy. In other words, this kind of historically dominant disobedience never aimed at overthrowing the system. It always aimed at *incorporating* neglected parts into the system. These parts, so the line of argumentation usually went, should have been incorporated in the first place according to the founding principles of the nation. The perhaps most famous example for this pattern is modern US-America's great idol Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. His claim was to "cash the check" that had been given to his people, and indeed to everybody, by Thomas Jefferson in the *Declaration of Independence* (Jefferson, 2002; King & Rev. Martin Luther Jr., 1963).

This document, in turn, is in large parts a copy-and-paste work taken from John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government (Locke & Laslett, 1988).*[iii][iv] Let us look briefly at the obvious difference between author and text here. Locke personally was neither supporting women's rights, nor the rights of any ethnic minority, nor the abolition of slavery (Welchman, 1995). In fact, he wrote the first constitution for the back then not yet separated state of Carolina; a deep southern center of slavery (Hinshelwood, 2013). Furthermore, Locke did not even support the rights of servants, craftsmen, or indeed anybody who was not a wealthy, white and male land owner. The same holds true for Thomas Jefferson. Obviously, Jefferson and Locke as role models of flesh and blood were exhausted soon.

However, the implications of Locke's, and more generally enlightened, philosophy should remain helpful for attacking US-America on its founding grounds until today. The *Declaration of Independence* famously states that "*all men are created*

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[iii] It is certain that Jefferson had read the *Second Treatise* and that he was referring to it when drafting the *Declaration*. The *Norton Anthology of American Literature* even claims that he used the original Lockean definition of property in his original draft. However, responding to the doubts of several members of the revolutionary committee, he changed "estate" to "the pursuit of happiness" in the final version. See Levine, Elliott, Gustafson, Hungerford, and Loeffelholz (2017).

[iv] For a more unorthodox position tracing Jefferson's *Declaration* back to the Scottish Common Sense Enlightenment, see Wills (2018).

*equal"* (Jefferson, 2002). Though referring to male, white land-owners only, the philosophical implications of the theory reach far beyond the ends for which the "founding fathers" of the nation meant to utilize the theory back then. This includes John Locke, who in his 18th century mind set was both unable and unwilling to see the implications of his own thoughts (Welchman, 1995). In other words, the theoretical foundation of the newly founded first modern, liberal and representative democracy (excluding minor examples of more direct democracy like Geneva, Switzerland etc.) was opening a road for a future state living up to its principles *yet to be created*.

In its historical context, the *Declaration* referred to a lack of representation of the US-American colonies in the British parliament while this parliament was simultaneously taxing the colonies to pay off its war debt: "*No taxation without representation!*" (Gladney, 2014) Locke's *Second Treatise,* in turn and quite ironically, was supporting parliament in England (Locke & Laslett, 1988). However, these material grounds were somewhat soon forgotten. After independence and until today, the promise of representation stayed and gradually became the struggle for universal, individual rights of representation *for everyone* within the political system. Little should have 18th century minds like Locke and Jefferson expected this.

## 3. The Brave, the Bold, and the Battered

There is one more point found in Locke that is of importance here, which is to be found in the theory of mind as put forward in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. The infant human's mind when born, according to Locke, is a *"tabula rasa,"* or a blank sheet of paper that is to be programmed by impregnation coming from the outside (Locke, 1796). We do not have to go into the details of the theory to see its implications: according to its impregnation *any* human mind in total equality can be made to comprehend the world in the same way according to established norms and principles. As this of course includes the role of the self in the world, the theory already accounts for the *potential* equality of slaves, women, etc. The consciousness machine (the human mind) will act, feel, and perceive strictly according to the outer input provided. Hence, the alleged mental inferiority of African American slaves observed by Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* can be explained in terms of their *socialization* (Jefferson, 2007). Consequently, the *nature* argument becomes substituted by a *nurture* argument.

Former slave Frederick Douglass thus famously described this phenomenon as "man transformed into a brute" in his famous narration. Indeed, the *Life of Frederick Douglass* really is a study of behaviorism in-between the lines, at least in parts (Douglass, 2000). Douglass thereby forestalled the theory of socially enforced reduction of the mind and thus the way this mind perceives its role in the world, which should become famous as Pavlovian "conditioning" or Orwellian "mind control" in the 20th century (Gormezano, Prokasy, & Thompson, 2014; Orwell, 2008). Thus, Douglass could even be seen as a link between Jefferson and King. However, it is to be stated again that

the entire line from Jefferson, through Douglas, to King, and finally to Obama, the first African American president, runs within US-American ideology.

However, in Locke and in enlightened thought we likewise see the limitations of US-American democracy to one particular form of democracy: (1) liberal and (2) representative democracy. Ironically, this limitation is also to be seen as the root for the endurance of the system, at least partly. The fundamental starting point of Lockean philosophy and hence of the *Declaration of Independence* is the emphasis on individual, "inalienable rights" (Jefferson, 2002; Locke & Laslett, 1988). Importantly, these rights are *god-given* and rely on a supernatural entity in their validity (Tuckness, 2005). Any system that becomes abusive to its end to protect these rights can rightfully be overthrown. Consequently, the mechanism of majority rule is very limited from the onset of US-American democracy on. Basically, it follows from this starting definition that even majority rule decisions are not permitted to violate the individual, equal, and inalienable rights of *any* person or *any* minority group of persons. Of course, late 18th and 19th century US-American reality with chattel slavery, the 'trail of tears', lacking women's rights etc. looked very different from this implicit ideal (Boyer et al., 2013).

What I want to argue here, however, is that exactly this divergence of ideology and reality provided for the stability of the US-American system. The first basic point providing for internal stability was the merging of the belief in individual rights and of the belief in representation with the right of every individual to political representation. Later, the right to representation increasingly shifted to the right to *the means of political representation* (e.g. in protests against 'institutional racism' or 'structural racism' etc.). It is only at this point that we can really speak of the advent of what we today define as 'liberal democracy' (Dunleavy & O'leary, 1987). In any case, the argument I intend to put forward here is that it was exactly *the divergence of implied but unrealized constitutional promises* the made the US-American system so stable for so long. As long as the emphasis on individual rights is kept, there is an almost infinite range of options to attack the system's representatives without attacking the system itself. As such, lacking enforcement of promises made by Locke and Jefferson (King's famous "check") were an easy way out to call for enforcement of constitutionality without having to call for revolution.

However, there is a fundamental problem with this state ideology. Ultimately, it is *expansive* and *imperialist* in its intrinsic logic and aggressive towards other actors on the international stage. In this ideology, all people have the same, and, very importantly, according to Locke god-given, inalienable rights. Consequently, the call for enforcement must not end at a particular's countries borders. The final verdict of liberal democracy is to guarantee the just treatment of *all* individuals according to their inalienable rights. Obviously, this includes people abroad. Hence, the system's policies must turn expansive eventually. In other words, the strong emphasis on the individual's rights must by needs overrule the respect for sovereignty rights of other states if the two concepts conflict. This dictate can apply before internal constitutionality is fully realized. However, it applies increasingly as internal conflict

lessens. Perceiving liberal democracy as an ideology, not as a universal truth, this process becomes problematic. If liberal democracy is a culturally constructed, historically grown way of perceiving the world, it cannot successfully be implemented in contexts that are lacking its intellectual history.

### 3.1 Not exactly real or real but not exactly there?

An important aspect of US-America's founding ideology is its *constructional inconsistency*. The most crucial creed of liberalism in this context is its emphasis on individual freedom and the individual's free development. In the political sphere, these rights become a right to representation. However, the enlightenment's emphasis on a naturalistic, physically determined world order causes theoretical problems here. Ultimately, physical determination and individual freedom do not go hand in hand very well.

First, the individual has to be enabled to political thinking in order to be part of the democratic decision making process. As has been displayed in the previous chapter, the human mind can be reduced to a mere "brute" in a corresponding environment, as Frederick Douglass put it (Douglass, 2000). Decision, therefore, is *informed judgment*. If the mind has no knowledge about the political world through education and information, its ability to enact its freedom according to the free evaluation of different options of action is void. If all individuals have the same right to political representation, however, it is the state's duty to enable them to make use of this right to the same degree. This is where universal education comes in. To tolerate circumstances that keep individuals from making use of this right is structural, or institutional, racism (Bourne, 2001). However, the right to education conflicts with the individual's right to bring up her offspring in the way the individual thinks proper. Accordingly, the state violates either the individual's rights or the individual's offspring's rights. Education in the state's institutions is for the sake of the individuals' freedom and individual free thinking. However, at the same time it leads to a high degree of ideological uniformity, which in turn makes *free political choice* problematic as a concept. To put it clearly, the more *informed* a choice is, the more *determined* it is by the mechanisms that provide the information as well. In current Western democracies, ideological foundations are provided by the institution and current information is delivered by traditional mass media.

On the one hand, universal education is a crucial mandatory to enable individuals to make use of their inalienable freedom rights, especially in the context of political representation. On the other hand, educational systems always teach ideology; involuntarily in their most fundamental modes of *knowledge production* and *epistemology*. In a way, universal education is by needs general *indoctrination*, also. Despite the fact that schools in ideal cases should long to teach critical thinking, there are certain fundamental assumptions that need to get transferred to provide the foundation for any sort of critical thinking. It is primarily for this reason that the Middle Ages lasted for as long as they did: if certain unquestionable assumptions are taken as a natural given

almost every new phenomenon can get incorporated into the pre-established system ("cognitive consistency"). In a way, hence, today's schooling fulfills the same function as medieval preaching. In the historical dynamic of liberal democracy, this point is crucially important.

According to Michel Foucault's famous 1978 lectures, the state thus underwent a historical transformation from an usurper to territory to an usurper of minds in 16th century Europe (Bueger & Gadinger, 2018, p. 47). This process continued to tighten ever after. The most important "institution" in this context, as has been said, is education. In the classroom, one learns to sit in silence for the longest part of the day. One learns, as Foucault argued, that one is socially healthy only when one is able to sit down and keep one's mouth shut (Foucault, 1975, ©1973). Without this knowledge, the individual would not be able to function in society after its release from the institution. In other words, the schooled individual is ready to contribute to the public good through sitting in an office all day. Our alienated and rearranged nature in the social state of being is essentially that of socialized state of nature agents. Seen in this light, it seems hardly surprising that those individuals that will sit longest each day must go to school longest as well: the university professor never really leaves the institution, while the construction worker merely learns the hierarchical basics of obedience until he is allowed, and indeed expected, to move again. Schooling thus enables individuals to politically informed decisions. At the same time, it ensures that opinions do not diverge beyond what stays within the ideological system:

1) Being 'educated' means to be able to think in collective instead of individual knowledge production, which in the social state entitles individuals to evolutionary advantages through the Bourdieusian trinity of "*cultural, social, and economic capital*" (Bourdieu, 2011); somewhat in the same way in which brute force and physical strength entitles the $\alpha$-Chimpanzee. Education thus enables individuals to think in a common epistemic reference frame and to send their thoughts back into the public sphere. The educated have a voice. Through the development of a collective sphere of knowledge production and rule administration, it thereby increasingly becomes the collective that thinks through thought-acts that are merely performed by individuals.

2) Through education individuals get utilized by social structures like tools. The external alteration of the human environment from the natural to the social state thus alienates individual nature towards a cellular kind of connectivity in a twofold way:

   a) The sanctioning environment of institutions enables individual units to get educated (sit and listen!) or receive signals.

   b) Through this process they are enabled to function in highly normalized social positions afterwards (sit and work!) or send signals into the sphere in return.

This is the reason why the pressure level is at its maximum pitch in school. Afterwards, the individual is socially conditioned. Accordingly, pressure levels can be reduced and sanctioning can be largely abolished. Historically, the more educated

individuals were, the higher was their status in society. Being part of the more educated was hence fundamentally tied to being part of the more *collectivized*. In the historical enforcement process of liberal democracy, only thus collectivized individuals gained the right to political representation (the right to vote). This privilege got extended to the lower classes only along growing inclusion of the lower classes into the state's institution.

Apart from the right to political presentation, it is equally important how limited and exclusive the right to be a political representative was and practically still is until today. The liberal aspect of the current US-Western system of democracy has been much elaborated upon. However, the representative aspect is equally important for its stability and possibly even more so than the liberal aspect. One has to be aware of the fact that a large-scale *direct democracy* with immediate votes on political measures that every adult citizen can partake in would be technologically feasible today. In an age in which bank transactions can be conducted online safely, decision making procedures employing the same kind of technology are entirely conceivable (with a 'citizen account' for casting one's votes on direct measures at leisure for instance). However, the fact of the matter is that the representative-liberal system is resistant against too much democracy. Thus, political representatives today are still almost exclusively from the elites that historically had access to the institution first. They still have privileged access to highest ranking education through family wealth and status stemming from an advantage in terms of Bourdieuian capital and further reinforcing this structural advantage (Christodoulou, 2010). Oxford, Yale, and Stanford, underneath their social surface, are essentially exclusive clubs of money and power elites (Binder, Davis, & Bloom, 2016; Granfield, 1991). The restricted but gradually extending right to political representation is thus further checked through a system of representatives that opens up with a significant delay to the voting system. Furthermore, the relationship driven party politics system further complicates the rise to political power of individuals from outside of the societal elites (Beyme, 1996).[v]

However, the reluctance to open up the system to the technological means available today is not entirely unjustified. Lately, one can observe political decisions in direct votes that go against all of the old elites representing the people in parliament. Likewise, they went against the old system's mass media outlets that have been dictating what is to be taken as appropriate political opinions all throughout the second half of the 20th century ("political correctness"). One can identify the Internet as a force of public empowerment here (e.g. Brexit, Trump, etc.). However, the apparent irrationality of some of these public votes seems to make a point in favor of the representative system's prevention of the general public's political sovereignty. Crowds act irrational and emotional, and seldom wise. However, the liberal system will

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[v] Ironically, the famous *Federalist Papers* argued that political parties sabotage democracy in political representation models. See Boyer, Clark, Halttunen, Kett, and Salisbury (2013).

likewise have to open up to more means of popular decisional autonomy, as traditional mass media increasingly loses its grip on public opinion.

## 4. Conclusion

To sum up the points displayed, one has to observe that the US-Western system of liberal-representative democracy grew organically over centuries and, in an absolute sense, is much less free then it is often taken to be. There are other forms of democracy, which, in an absolute sense, are freer than the restricted US-Western model. US-Western liberal-representative democracy is the particular kind of democracy that derives its legitimacy from the belief in an inalienable human soul. This soul is god-given and must not be violated. Therefore, revolutionary democracy based on collective action rather than on institutional deliberation is not part of the scope of legitimate opinion. This does not merely apply in law, but furthermore and possibly more importantly in the political correctness (PC) discourses of traditional mass media (TV, newspapers, etc.). The US-Western ideology is hence something that has grown historically over a lengthy period of time, and carries spiritual doctrines stemming from a pre-modern, spiritualist system of sense making. These epistemic norms have been internalized over time to a degree that they are unwittingly accepted today.

This ideological norm-internalization process is imprinted upon every generation anew by the *institution* (schooling). Individuals without access to the institution have historically not been politically represented through the right to vote. As the soul-belief underlying liberal democracy emphasizes human equality in theory though, marginalized groups have historically claimed their right to partake and access to the institution got extended. With their inclusion into the institution these groups gained the right to political representation, as they were seen fit to partake without changing too much now. Calling for *universal suffrage and universal liberal rights* according to its internal, ideological core convictions, the system is bound to turn imperialist, though it is also keeps on tightening inclusion levels at home. However, it is bound to fail in contexts that do not share the same history of intellectual development.

Therefore, 'state forming' is problematic, as could be seen indeed in the Bush administration's failed attempts to do so in Afghanistan, where the radical Islamist Taliban have regained control over most of the country, and Iraq, where the radical Islamist terror organization ISIS managed to establish a caliphate before the country got bombed to ashes once more. While disagreeing with its imperialist past today seems to be one of the central convictions of US-Western discourse, the system thus turned normative imperialist in its cultural and military export of norms of *good* and *evil* into parts of the world, which do not share the historical development of the concept. These norms, thus, seem to be somewhat arbitrary rather than absolute. Thus, they are constructed, rather than discovered.

For the stability of the US-Western system, however, the representative aspect might be even more important than the liberal aspect. Marginalized groups gradually

gained the right to vote. However, representing is still largely left to a small and very exclusive club of wealth and power holders supported by the party system. The top-level institutions that individuals have to attend in order to make the connections required to become a representative remain largely exclusive to the offspring of families that already have these connections. Thus, the access to political decision making in US-Western democracies is checked against systemic change in a twofold way. Firstly, the state ideology is not called into question by the institutionalized individuals endowed with the right to representation. Secondly, actual decisions are made by those who represent. These representatives come from mostly the same background of political establishment even when on opposite sides of the legitimate political spectrum (e.g. Boris Johnson and James Cameron went to Cambridge University together), which efficiently prevents systemic change.

Today, forms of *direct democracy* making the people the direct sovereign of political rule administration are technologically feasible on a national (and even on an international) scale though. This fact will increase voices calling for more participation. Equally, the traditional mass media of PC discourse is losing its grip on individuals to the Internet's grass-roots discourses, which could be observed lately with popular decisions against the established elites of political representation. It is thus to be expected that the nearer future will see more extreme positions and an increase in friction between the traditional mass media & political elites and new, Internet-based & more radical forces.

**About the Author**

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