



Cambridge Review of International Affairs

Volume 21 Number 2

INDIVIDUAL ARTICLES

The global importance of 'illiberal moderates', an exchange: partners in peace to precede a concert of democracies
Amitai Etzioni, Amir Hussain, Mohammad H Fadel, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Stephen Schwartz and Joergen Oerstroem Moeller

159

Salience and sanctions: a principal-agent analysis of domestic win-sets in two-level games—the case of British European policy under the Blair government
Kai Oppermann

179

'Non-lethal' weapons and the occupation of Iraq: technology, ethics and law
Christian Enemark

199

A (short) history of the clash of civilizations
Arshin Adib-Moghaddam

217

Power and morality: a misleading dichotomy
Ralph Pettman

235

Border management in the Mediterranean: internal, external and ethical challenges
Sarah Wolff

253

BOOK REVIEWS

Daniel H Deudney, *Bounding power: republican security theory from the polis to the global village*
Charles Jones

273

Philippe Legrain, *Immigrants: your country needs them*
Rinus Penninx

275

Peter Clarke, *The last thousand days of the British Empire*
Ted R Bromund

276

Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The politics of secularism in international relations*
Stacey Gutkowski

278

The global importance of 'illiberal moderates', an exchange: partners in peace to precede a concert of democracies

Amitai Etzioni
George Washington University

Amir Hussain
Loyola Marymount University

Mohammad H Fadel
University of Toronto

Jean Bethke Elshtain
University of Chicago

Stephen Schwartz
Center for Islamic Pluralism

Joergen Oerstroem Moeller
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Abstract *The following is an exchange concerning the concept of 'illiberal moderates' and its implications for a new global architecture as well as for a worldview that sees the evolution of a global core of shared values which favour domestic and international security, in sharp contrast to the 'clash of civilizations' thesis. The original statement was published in the Cambridge Review of International Affairs (Etzioni 2006). A more extensive treatment can be found in Part III of Security first: for a muscular, moral foreign policy (Etzioni 2007b), which examines texts of four religious and two secular belief systems as well as review of relevant public opinion polls and 'traveller notes'. Here follows a brief summary of the main thesis, followed by comments from prominent scholars and Etzioni's response to these comments.*

Opening move—Amitai Etzioni

As social analysis suffers from an over-abundance of terms, the introduction of any new term necessarily calls for justification. After a few lines concerning matters of definition, we shall see that the term 'illiberal moderates' serves to highlight a profound difference in one's view of the world, points to a major shift in the direction of foreign policy, and speaks volumes as to the question of what makes a good citizen. It serves to highlight that although large segments of the people of the world, Muslims included, do not favour western-style liberal-democratic regimes,

they abhor the use of force, terrorism and war. It calls attention to the deep difference between a foreign policy that seeks to rely on military force to democratize nations ('regime change') and which views all illiberals as a threat to global stability and national security, and a foreign policy that views all those who swear off terrorism and war as at least potential allies, as 'Partners in Peace' even if they are not ready to join a 'Concert of Democracies', thereby allowing gradual and largely home-grown democratization to follow.

A new term, matters of definition

I define 'illiberal moderates' as those who disavow violence (under most circumstances) but who do not favour a liberal-democratic regime or the full plethora of human rights (Etzioni 2006, 369; Etzioni 2007b, Part III). These illiberals are *moderate* not because they often hold intermediate beliefs, or hold them with limited certitude but—by definition—because they reject the use of force to impose their beliefs. True, those who hold strong beliefs—one-sided and unencumbered by doubt—are also prone to embrace the use of force to promote their beliefs, but the correlation is far from high. Thus many millions of evangelical Christians in the United States (US), sometimes called fundamentalists, subscribe to strong religious beliefs but do not support bombing abortion clinics, stoning homosexuals or driving them out of town, nor other acts of violence to impose their norms. Many ultra-orthodox Jews do not favour violent acts against Palestinians or Jewish atheists. The same holds for hundreds of millions of Muslims in nations such as Bangladesh and Indonesia. The widely used terms 'extremist' and 'radical' confuse the matter because they are sometimes used to refer to those who have strong beliefs and sometimes to those who are willing to apply force. The importance of highlighting the difference between these two orientations justifies the introduction of a new term: the contrast between 'moderates' and 'immoderates'.

Many moderates are '*illiberal*' in the political science sense of the term, not to be confused with the term 'liberal' as used in public parlance, which is employed by many in the US to refer to progressive people and by many in Europe to *laissez-faire* conservatives. Illiberals do not consider Westminster democracy the preferred political system, nor do they favour many human rights, such as freedom of speech and women's rights.¹

Other treatments

A brief examination of two texts highlights the workload the term 'illiberal moderates' can carry. Amr Hamzawy writes that some Arab groups 'embrace

¹ When asked by those who conduct public opinion polls, some of those who state that they favour democracy and human rights, when probed, reveal that they would deny jobs and cut all social ties with Muslims who have converted to Christianity, would ban the sales of Salman Rushdie's *The satanic verses*, would refuse the publication of cartoons offending the Prophet and would require their wives and daughters to stay in the back of the house when guests are visiting. When these illiberals state that they do subscribe to democracy, their notion of what it entails is often quite non-western. Thus, David Brooks quotes a member of a prominent Egyptian family who argues that the meaning of democracy is obedience to the word of God (Brooks 2006).

nonviolence, pragmatism and democratic procedures' and adds that 'Islamist movements in these countries now see the wisdom of competing peacefully for shares of political power and working within existing institutions to promote gradual democratic openings' (2005, 1). Hamzawy's words, like scores of other such statements, combine the commitment to non-violence with a commitment to democratic procedures, contrasting them with those who favour violence and oppose democratic procedures, an opposition that obscures what I claim to be a very major third group which favours neither, namely, the 'illiberal moderates'.

Similarly, an often-cited RAND report, 'Building moderate Muslim networks' (Rabasa et al 2007), sees the challenge the west faces as being posed by 'radical' Islam, which relies on 'dogmatic' interpretations. It is contrasted with moderate Muslims, defined as those who share 'key dimensions of democratic culture' (13). This is a legitimate distinction but it harks back to the thesis that only democratic regimes are reliable Partners in Peace and that all dogmatic religious interpretations endanger our security. This, I argue, is not the case. Saudi Arabia and Yemen, for instance, are not threatening US security in the usual sense of the term.²

One may ask how our concept of 'illiberal moderates' differs from Fareed Zakaria's concept of 'illiberal democracy'. Zakaria considers democratic regimes to be those that hold free and fair elections and where the rule of the people prevails. But by his definition such a regime could include one in which there is an extreme tyranny of the majority (Zakaria 1997; 2003). Individual rights, the rights enshrined in the constitution that are not subject to voting, rights which cannot be set aside by the majority of the elected representatives, are defined by Zakaria as liberal. In his view there are illiberal democracies and liberal regimes that are not democratic. However, many other scholars consider a regime to be democratic only if it is also framed by a constitution that defends individual rights, arguing that all *bona fide* democracies are liberal ones. In any case, the line I draw is not between liberals and democrats—but between liberal democrats and those who reject both the democratic form of government and many individual rights. My main point is that it is a profound intellectual mistake, a morally dubious judgement and a gross foreign policy error to assume that all or even most illiberals also favour the exercise of violence and hence are dangerous jihadists.

Remapping the world

In the past, there was a strong tendency to lump 'illiberal moderates' with those who favour violence because it was assumed that only liberals could be reliable Partners in Peace. Regime change was considered essential to ensure that illiberal nations would not bring war to other nations, harbour or support terrorists, or violently oppress their citizens. Often it was implicitly assumed that religious people tend to be fanatics and that fanatics tend to be violent people. Hence the 'separation of state and mosque' has been promoted by the US and its allies as a key element of the new Iraqi and Afghani constitutions. Moreover, it was assumed

²One may argue that their authoritarian regimes prepare the ground for future anti-western attacks, but so do attempts to democratize these nations by outsiders when these outsiders use force.

that the world is rapidly liberalizing and that the remaining illiberal groups could be marginalized if not altogether ignored.

In contrast, the term 'illiberal moderate' calls attention to the fact that billions of people, including hundreds of millions of Muslims, are not liberals, are not about to become liberals and that there is no way to make their governments into liberal democracies in the foreseeable future, while at the same time most of them do not favour terrorism and pose no threat to western security nor to world peace. The political and ideological trends in many countries show at least as much of an increase in fundamentalism and Islamist following as they do for liberalism. This is not to suggest that Islam is in principle incompatible with liberal democracy, but only that many Muslims who reject terrorism *currently and in the foreseeable future* do not favour democratization. If this observation is a valid one, lumping these 'illiberal moderates' with those who are pro-violence grossly misguides foreign policy. It vastly increases the ranks of those whom the US and its allies view as the foe, and pushes potential allies in the war against terrorism into the camp of those with whom we must contend.

At least a global swing vote

Polls suggest that large segments of the Muslim populations of North Africa, Turkey, Mali, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia and India hold illiberal, moderate beliefs (Etzioni 2007b, 140). Though it should be noted that none of these polls were designed to assess the size of the illiberal moderate camp, and hence at best only allow an estimate of the numbers involved. If one adds non-statistical sources, such as observations by seasoned reporters, social scientists and travellers, one reaches the same conclusion I reached, namely that the majority of the citizens of the world, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, are 'illiberal moderates' (Etzioni 2007b, 134).

Assuming this observation is a valid one, it stresses the importance of focusing, for now, on dealing with the immoderate violent minority and not treating 'illiberal moderates' as a part of that camp. However, even if 'illiberal moderates' should constitute a minority, they are clearly the equivalent of the global swing vote between the liberals and the immoderates and as such are better courted than rejected.

Comments—Amir Hussain

I appreciate Professor Etzioni's opening sentence as I agree that there is too much jargon in social analysis. That said, he makes an excellent case for the use of the term 'illiberal moderates', and I support him in this usage. I appreciate his distinction between those who hold strong religious beliefs and those who are committed to violence because of those beliefs. This is much better than the common terms of 'extremist' or 'radical'. I also appreciate his observation that we need to get away from the idea that we can only make peace with 'liberals'.

In the case of America, I might push his observations further about the illiberal views held by many Americans to include scientific research guided by religious principles rather than by scientific theory (I am here thinking about stem cell

support Wahhabi terror in Iraq or to defend Al-Qaeda. Nobody sane calls for an externally directed regime change in the Saudi kingdom. Some notable Shia Muslim leaders, such as Moqtada al-Sadr, have acted as 'illiberal moderates', but his record is one of defiance of the law from the outset. Other Iraqi Shia leaders have radical pasts but there is no clear historical record on their attitude towards permanent repudiation of settled law in the land.

An example from Jewish history is instructive: the Stalinist communists and Zionist revisionists—both of which, at various stages in their history, could be described as 'illiberal moderates'—were excluded from participation in the leadership of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. They were neither respected nor trusted, even though their members and weapons would have been useful in a life-and-death struggle.

Contempt for law and dedication to force as the main weapon of politics is not the same as radicalism *per se* or even revolutionism. Many revolutionaries defended law; for example, the liberal partisans of the Spanish Republic, or the supporters of José Figueres in Costa Rica in 1948–1949.

The art of politics is that of making distinctions, not confusing them. In my view the very term 'illiberal moderate' badly confuses political distinctions that today are matters of life and death for the whole planet.

Response to Stephen Schwartz—Amitai Etzioni

Dr Schwartz, like many an intellectual, is in the tree business; I am dealing with forests. He is right that one can draw all kinds of additional distinctions, ultimately not only among different belief sub-systems, but also among individuals. My goal is to call attention to the difference between those who champion violence and those who reject it under all but very limited conditions. I tried to show that this line is of great moral and political import and divides the 'pie' rather differently than the line that separates liberal democrats from all others. Most significantly, such a line leaves most Muslims on the side of peace, while the liberal democracy litmus test, I fear, leaves many more on the other, wrong side, of the divide.

To turn to some of the 'trees', the Basques and the Irish nationalists—and of course Hitler and Stalin—to which Schwartz refers, all legitimated violence; hence they do not confuse the issue. They are not 'illiberal moderates', but illiberal terrorists. I hope Schwartz will reconsider his opposition to talking with people where 'there is a history of violence'. Otherwise there are going to be very few people to talk to or with.

Comments—Joergen Oerstroem Moeller

First observation

Tolerance and respect used to sit on the front seat among values governing our societies. This is not any longer so. We see the rise of self-righteousness not only inside Islam, but also in many western cultural circles. People are so convinced that their view is the only one and everybody else is wrong; that they have the right, and in some cases the obligation, to impose their view upon others, if necessary by force.

Extremists go to the extreme, invoke God as inspiration, and even take the stand that God has given them the right and asked them to persecute and if necessary kill people who advocate alternative beliefs. These extremists go for the jugular, taking the destruction of other cultures, civilizations and communities as their mission.

The problem now is that globalization can only survive with a certain amount of respect and tolerance for others and their chosen values. The conflict is aggravated as minorities originating in one culture migrate to countries with another culture. They do so to reap an economic benefit, but refuse to adapt to the culture of the country where they have chosen to live. A gap opens up between economic behaviour and cultural values. This problem may not be so visible in the US, but is prominent in Europe and is beginning to arise in parts of Asia.

Migration is the trigger for religious freedom and adaptation to societal values. People migrating to make a living in another country may bring along their religion and societal values. They may be much more in tune with the religion and society from which they come than where they now live. The size of migration into established countries and societies, temporary residence reducing the incentive to adapt, and modern means of communication opening the door for continuous contact with the home country and its culture all permit constant comparisons between differences in cultural behaviour and values.

The stumbling block will rarely be religious freedom since such freedom is accepted in most countries, apart from countries primarily in the Muslim world with an adverse policy to immigration, and indeed is frequently written into constitutions. The problem arises when adaptation to new societal values is rejected by a minority preferring values other than the prevalent ones. A minority exposed to cultural pressure, even cultural imperialism, may often feel the need to enhance their own self esteem and choose symbols to signal where they belong. But the inescapable effect is that they distance themselves from the majority, closing ranks within their own caucus. The reaction among the majority is predictable; they take this closing of ranks as an affront, a signal that the minorities have decided not to adapt, that the minorities deem the dominating culture to be not good enough. This explains the debate in Europe about the headscarf. It does not matter in itself. It is rarely seen as a religious symbol, but it is frequently perceived as a cultural signal.

Europe is the place where the dilemma between religious freedom and societal values is playing out. The agonizing choice that the Europeans now face is whether they want to cement the traditional European identity or adapt to make room for cultural minorities with the inevitable imperative to adjust traditional European values. Will the majority of the Europeans rally behind a more multicultural Europe?

Second observation

The decisive point will be whether the right balance can be struck between acknowledging religious freedom and European societal values. Can some kind of congruity be found between Islam, a traditional theocratic religion, and secular European societies?

At the present junction the world is focused primarily, but not exclusively, upon Islamic religious extremism. But there is an interesting parallel to what happened about a hundred years ago with socialism and Bolshevism. Bolsheviks constituted

a small, even very small, minority inside the socialist movement. Both groups adhered to the same overall goal and political philosophy. The socialists looked for a peaceful way to get there; the Bolsheviks opted for armed struggle in the form of terrorism. By superior intellectual force, cunning and organizational skills, combined with a ruthless and uncompromising belief in a historic mission, the Bolsheviks managed to use socialism as a vehicle for taking control of Russia.

Something similar seems to characterize religious sentiment and in particular Islam. An overwhelming portion of Muslims do not support armed conflict or terrorism. They want to improve their lot, as was the case for the socialists. But a tiny group of extremists work inside the organization and use it for their purpose, which is total power. These elite are well-organized, intellectual, with a high level of education and often masquerade as ordinary citizens. They are the general staff officers of the terror movement while the ordinary citizens are the conscripts.

The main risk for society is unawareness of this. Apparently, *bona fide* organizations may serve as a blind for much more sinister forces without a large number of members knowing that they are being used for a cause that is not theirs. Al-Qaeda may play the same role inside Islam that Bolshevism played inside the socialist movement.

Third observation

The danger for countries and societies protecting themselves is that measures against the hard core of fundamentalists or extremists may antagonize the rank and file of the larger organization. The challenge is to strike the right balance and dichotomize the extremists from the rank and file instead of turning them into a propitious recruiting ground.

Concluding remarks

The threat against the globalized, high-tech and sophisticated society has nothing in common with conventional conflict focusing on control of territory. It is about our societies' ability to function and to withstand disruptive attacks. Traditional armed forces do not play a significant role. The citizens do. Unless an overwhelming majority is comfortable with societal values, room will open up for a disruptive attack by small groups of extremists. The analysis must unveil not who the potential enemy is, but how we rally a majority around societal values regardless of religion, ethnicity and original nationality. As a first step we need to clarify what our societal values actually are.

Response to Joergen Oerstroem Moeller—Amitai Etzioni

Professor Oerstroem Moeller correctly points out, to use my terms, that 'illiberal moderates' are more likely to legitimize violence and thus lose their moderate status than liberal moderates. True believers, especially when not curbed by strong beliefs in individual rights and political freedoms, are more prone to favour violence than those who hold their views with a greater degree of doubt, self-examination and see value in the beliefs of others. However, this correlation is

much lower than is often assumed, especially by liberal, secular, progressive thinkers. Most 'illiberal moderates' forswear violence. Hence it is an empirical mistake, which leads to wrong-headed policies, to hold that the west cannot and should not ally itself with true believers, especially of the religious kind.

Next, Oerstroem Moeller raises the same issue within the context of immigration to western societies, especially to Europe. He correctly observes that many of the immigrants initially are, and quite a few remain over time, illiberal. The question arises to what extent must they become not only moderates but also liberals? In my judgement, the right answer here is going to be different from the one applied so far both to international relations and to newly forming regimes in previously violent nations. Societies that have established liberal democratic regimes did so over centuries, after establishing domestic peace following civil wars (such as the US, United Kingdom and Switzerland, among others), religious wars (as in much of Europe) and nation-building wars (for example Germany and Italy). The political development in these nations moved beyond the security-building stage to the building of thicker shared values, which in these cases are liberal ones. Immigrants who seek to become citizens of these nations and members of these civil societies can be expected to accept these framing values. This does not mean that they must assimilate in the sense of giving up their sub-cultures, but they must give up those rituals and policies that violate rights and democratic processes, for instance, honour-killings and forced marriages.¹⁶

Comparing violence-legitimizing Muslims to those socialists who legitimated violence is a fair analogy.¹⁷ However, it highlights the same thesis I seek to flag. The proper response to such socialist threats was not to attempt to ban or suppress all forms of socialism, which includes many democratic and above all non-violent, moderate expressions, but instead to focus on the violent ones. It seems that a highly effective antidote to Stalinism were the teachings of social democrats, because they appealed to a similar set of basic values. Similarly, an effective antidote to those who promote a violent version of Islam is to ally ourselves with moderate Muslims rather than branding all Muslims as terrorists or try to repress a major religion and its followers. These moderates can be Partners in Peace, whether or not they are also liberal democrats.

Conclusion

I am indebted to my colleagues for many excellent and profound comments on a conception that I hold to be of much import to our empirical, political and moral considerations in dealing with foreign policy. I share the quest for a world of democratic nations, respecting rights, working together to fashion a just world. However, given the harsh international reality, one should not allow such visions to stand in the way of asking which steps must come first; how can one build the widest and most reliable base for world peace, as one works for a still better world?

Evidence shows that a focus on security will find most people as at least potential Partners in Peace, even as many are far from ready to join a Concert of

¹⁶ The same may not be true for asylum seekers (see Etzioni 2007a).

¹⁷ For more on this analogy see Etzioni (2007b, Part III).

Democracies. Moreover, in sharp contrast to the thesis that democratization is the only reliable way to make a nation into a peace-loving one and that democratization can be readily achieved, I hold that democratization requires first the provision of basic security and then considerable effort and time, especially by those directly involved.

References

- bin Laden, Osama (1996) 'Declaration of war against the Americans occupying the land of the two holy places', <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/international/fatwa_1996.html>, accessed 5 December 2007
- bin Laden, Osama (1998) 'Declaration of the world Islamic front for jihad against the Jews and the crusaders', <<http://www.mideastweb.org/osamabinladen2.htm>>, accessed 12 December 2007
- Brooks, David (2006) 'Keeping faith in democracy', *New York Times*, 26 February
- Burnham, Gilbert, Riyadh Lafta, Shannon Doocy and Les Roberts (2006) 'Mortality after the 2003 invasion of Iraq: a cross-sectional cluster sample survey', *The Lancet*, 11 October, <<http://www.thelancet.com/webfiles/images/journals/lancet/s0140673606694919.pdf>>, accessed 4 January 2008
- Bush, George W (2005) 'President discusses war on terror and upcoming Iraqi elections', Speech delivered at Park Hyatt Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 12 December, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/12/20051212-4.html>>, accessed 4 January 2008
- Cavanaugh, William T (1998) *Torture and the eucharist: theology, politics, and the body of Christ* (New York: Blackwell Publishing)
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke (2007) 'Liberty and security for all?', *New York Sun*, 29 August
- Etzioni, Amitai (2006) 'The global importance of illiberal moderates', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 19:3, 369–385
- Etzioni, Amitai (2007a) 'Community deficit', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 45:1, 23–42
- Etzioni, Amitai (2007b) *Security first* (New Haven: Yale University Press)
- Fukuyama, Francis (1989) 'The end of history?', *National Interest*, 16, 3–18
- Galston, William (1991) *Liberal purposes* (New York: Cambridge University Press)
- Hamzawy, Amr (2005) 'The key to Arab reform: moderate Islamists', Carnegie Endowment Policy Brief 40, Washington, DC
- Lemaire, Jean (2005) 'The cost of firearm deaths in the United States: reduced life expectancies and increased insurance costs', *Journal of Risk and Insurance*, 72:3, 359–374
- Luther, Martin (1528) 'On the war against the Turk', trans. Robert C. Schultz (1967) in *ibid.* (ed) *Luther's works, vol. 46, The christian in society* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press), 157–205
- McCarthy, Julie (2007) 'Priest's indictment reopens wounds in Chile', *Weekend Edition Saturday*, National Public Radio, 20 October
- Milbank, Dana and Robin Wright (2004) 'Off the mark on cost of war, reception by Iraqis', *Washington Post*, 19 March
- Muravchik, Joshua (2002) 'Democracy's quiet victory', *New York Times*, 19 August
- Neal, Patrick (1990) 'Justice as fairness: political or metaphysical', *Political Theory*, 18:1, 24–50
- Pei, Minxin and Sara, Kasper (2003) 'Lessons from the past: the American record on nation building', Carnegie Endowment Policy Brief 24, Washington, DC
- Pew Research Center (2007) 'A rising tide lifts moods in the developing world: sharp decline in support for suicide bombing in Muslim countries', Pew Global Attitudes Project, 24 July, <<http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=257>>, accessed 5 December 2007
- Rabasa, Angel, Cheryl Benard, Lowell H Schwartz and Peter Sickle (2007) *Building moderate Muslim networks* (Washington: RAND Corporation)
- Rawls, John (1996) *Political liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press)
- Sachs, Jeffrey (1992) 'The economic transformation of Eastern Europe: the case of Poland', *American Economist*, 36:2, 3–11