

Welcome back to our last article in this series on the values of liberalism.

So where are we now? In the last 09 articles you have heard so much about liberalism, liberal thinkers, and the eight liberal values. Together we explored the stereotypes about liberals and did some myth-busting.

REMINDER: Liberals do not only care about money, markets, party, and drinking! You Should certainly be a liberal by now, right?

Well, let's see.

Hopefully, there are some amongst you that find liberalism interesting, plausible, or even something to fight for. But there might also be others might still want to learn more about it. BTW: We have created a resource page for you with helpful books and articles. And there might also be those, who are not yet convinced. Some of you might not only challenge some of the values of liberalism...but actually disagree with them.

For example, you might think that equality should be \*the\* core value of your ideology (you might want to consider social democracy or any other form of egalitarianism). Or that the respect for traditions, customs, and practices should be on top of the list (you might find conservatism interesting). And that is totally okay.

The aim of this series is not to turn you into liberals. If that happened, great! Of course, this would make us happy. But we do not try to brainwash anyone. That's not the goal. Political education and article series like these are not there to convert and recruit. We want to inform and start discussions. And hopefully, we achieved this by

presenting a full view on what liberalism means and does not mean in today's world. But you might wonder: If your goal is not to recruit new liberals. What is the point of putting out this long series on articles.

Why all the effort?

Well, that is indeed a good question. Why do we bother with this?

We do so because democracies need good democrats. And to get good democrats, we need empowered and informed citizens. Citizens that do not only know when and where to vote. But citizens that care and understand what is going on in their country. Citizens that \*know\* what they are voting for. So what is this idea of democratic citizenship and why does it matter? Remember one of our first article on the idea of liberty? We said that at its essence, liberty is about becoming the master of your very own path of life. Or in other words, to become the self-author of one's very own book of life.

Well, citizenship is similar. Because during our lives, we do not only write into the pages of our own book of life. We also write in the books of life of others in our communities and countries. When we take political decisions, we take these decisions together jointly. Our choices affect each other. And that's why it matters which choices we make in politics. Sometimes people think that democracy only is about voting. And surely, voting is an important part of the democratic process. But it is so much more.

Democratic citizenship starts way before casting one's vote on election day. It is about understanding our political system. It is about engaging with politicians, parties, and their ideas. It is about reaching out to civil society and to listen to their concerns and understand the struggles of different groups in our society. It is about letting others

speaking their mind. It is about respecting other opinions. So, we said that being a good and responsible citizen does not start or end with voting.

But voting definitely matters a big deal. So, we want to close this article by urging you to make use of your right to participate in democratic elections, to cast your vote, and to make your voice, your opinions, and of course your values heard. But go beyond that. Engage in discussions with your family, friends, and neighbours. By The Way, why not organize public discussions directly? FNF can help you with that! Speak to parties and candidates. Ask them tough questions about their policies and plans for Sri Lanka. Read and write on what is going on. And ultimately, share this article. Because only informed citizens can be responsible citizens.

Thank you very much!