

Backsliding into Authoritarianism

(MA course, Spring 2020)

Instructor

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Classes

February 3 through April 27 (details to follow)

Course Description

Introduction

The period of universal acceptance of democracy as the most preferred political regime type is certainly over. Several dozen countries in the world today are considered by major ranking institutions as not free. A new – a decade or so - phenomenon seems rightly to attract our attention. Increasing number of 'partly free' countries indicates that we witness decline in the quality of democracy in many countries or even its outright breakdowns. The course offers an in-depth look at these new phenomena and aims at evaluating the scope and intensity of these developments. It combines theoretical approaches with speculative-analytical works and purely empirical analyses. It starts with a brief overview of what constitutes democracies, its liberal type in particular, next we move to discuss its problems and challenges and then focus on non-democratic and authoritarian developments, its causes, manifestations and consequences. Detailed attention on populism, its multiple manifestations as well as the features of new authoritarianism is justified because of a clear (ab-)use of the former concept. We conclude with a very up-to-date debates about the quality of democracy and democratic citizens.

Learning outcomes

As a result of the course, students are expected to understand and be able to interpret on their own the complex developments of contemporary regime changes around the world. The reading assignments should allow students to generate rational, methodologically sound arguments, enabling them to openly discuss, compare and defend their ultimate opinions and knowledge about the phenomena covered. The class activity, in particular students' presentations of the selected readings should train them in effective appearances in public. Finally, the ultimate choice of the topic and the final essay itself are expected to enhance students' ability to correctly choose literature, deliberate methodological issues and also improve their ability to use abstract concepts in socio-political reality.

Course Requirements and Assessment

- (1) Active class participation, which means: intellectual presence at the class meetings - comments, questions – 20% of the grade
- (2) Class presentation of a selected topic(s), selected by students and sent to the instructor and course participants no later than 24 hours before class presentation – 30%
- (3) Final paper; topic of the final paper to be agreed with the instructor at least three weeks prior to its final submission – 50%

Topics

Topic 01: Liberal democracy: its "travelling capacity" problems and challenges

- Merkel, Wolfgang (2004): Embedded and defective democracies. *Democratization*, vol. 11, issue 5, pp. 33-58
- Beetham, David. 1992. 'Liberal Democracy and the Limits of Democratization', *Political Studies*, 40: 40-53

Topic 02: Economic foundations of Democracies

- Olson, Mancur. 1993. 'Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development'. *The American Political Science Review*, 87(3): 567-576.
- Acemoglu, Daron & Robinson, James A. 2005. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 15-87

Topic 03: Parties and Voters in the age of Populism

- Akkermann, Agnes, Cas Mudde & Andrej Zaslove. 2014. 'How Populist are the People? Measuring populist Attitudes in Voters'. *Comparative Political Studies* 47(9): 1324-53
- Bischof, Daniel & Roman Senninger. 2017. 'Simple politics for the people? Complexity in campaign messages and political knowledge'. *European Journal of Political Research*. [DOI: 10.1111/1475-6765.12235]

Topic 04: Non-Democratic Political Regimes. Orthodoxy and Innovations

- Linz, Juan & Alfred Stepan. 1996. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*. Baltimore – London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 38-65
- .Levitsky, Steven and Lucian Way. 2002. 'The rise of competitive authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2): 51-65.
- Diamond, Larry. 2002. 'Thinking about hybrid regimes', *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2): 21-35

Topic 05: In between – democratic exit: fate or choice?

- Erdmann, Gero. 2011. 'Transition from Democracy. Loss of Quality, Hybridization and Breakdown of Democracy', *GIGA Working Paper*, no.161
- Slater. Dan. 2013. 'Democratic Careening', *World Politics*, 65 (4): 729-63

Topic 06: Populism – conceptual overstretch

- Mudde, Cas. 2010. 'The Populist Radical Right: A Pathological Normalcy', *West European Politics*, 33 (6): 1167-1186
- Pappas, Takis. 2016. 'Distinguishing Liberal Democracy's Challengers', *Journal of Democracy*, 27 (4): 22-35
- Galston, William A. 2017. 'The Populist Moment', *Journal of Democracy*, 28 (2) 21-33

Topic 07: The role of religion

- Marzouki, Nadia, Duncan McDonnell & Oliver Roy, eds. 2016. *Saving the People: How Populists Hijack Religion*. London: Hurst & Co., (chapters 1, 5, 6, 12/ pp. 1-12; 61-77; 79-93; 185-201
- Fish, M.S. 2002. 'Islam and Authoritarianism', *World Politics*, 55: 4-37

Topic 08: New Authoritarianism or Authoritarian Clientelism?

- Dresden, Jennifer & Marc Morje Howard. 2016. 'Authoritarian backsliding and the concentration of political power', *Democratization*, 23 (7): 1122-1143
- Krastev, Ivan. 2011. 'Paradoxes of the new Authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy*, 22(2): 5-16

Topic 09: Threat to democracy? Citizens perspective

- Foa, Roberto & Yascha Mounk. 2016. 'The democratic disconnect', *Journal of Democracy*, 27(3): 5-14
- Foa, Roberto & Yascha Mounk. 2017. 'The signs of deconsolidation', *Journal of Democracy*, 28 (1): 5-15
- Alexander, Amy & Christian Welzel. 2017. 'The Myth of Deconsolidation: Rising Liberalism and the Populist Reaction', *Journal of Democracy*, web exchange

Topic 10: Threat to democracy? Concluding remarks

- Voeten, Erik. 2017. 'Are people really turning away from democracy?' *Journal of Democracy*, web exchange
- Levitsky, Steven & Lucan Way. 2015. 'The myth of democratic recession'. *Journal of Democracy*, 25(1): 45-58

Additional (Recommended) readings:

- Brooker, Paul (2000): *Non-Democratic Regimes: Theory, Government and Politics*. Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan
- Doorenspleet, Renske (2005): *Democratic Transitions: Exploring the Structural Sources of the Fourth Wave*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna (2007): *Rebuilding Leviathan: Party Competition and State Exploitation in Post-Communist Democracies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Dalton, Russel. 2007. *Democratic Challenges. Democratic Choices*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Saward, Michael, ed.2007. *Democracy: Critical Concepts in Political Science*. London – New York: Routledge
- Soroka, Stuart & Christopher Wlezien. 2010. *Degrees of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Roberts, Andrew, 2010. *The Quality of Democracy in Eastern Europe. Public Preferences and Policy Reforms*. Cambridge: CUP
- Schmitter, Philippe & Alexander Trechsel. 2004. *The Future of Democracy in Europe: Trends, Analyses, and Reforms*. A Green paper for the Council of Europe.
- Magyar, Balint. 2016. *Post-Communist Mafia State. The Case of Hungary*. Budapest: CEU Press
- Epstein, E. C. 1984. 'Legitimacy, Institutionalization, and Opposition in Exclusionary Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Regimes: The Situation of the 1980s. *Comparative Politics*, 17(1), 1984, pp. 37-54.
- Geddes, Barbara & John Zaller 1989. 'Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes'. *American Journal of Political Science*, 33(2), 1989, pp. 319-347.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo/Vargas Cullell, Jorge/Iazzetta, Osvaldo M. (eds.) (2004): *The Quality of Democracy: Theory and Applications*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press
- Ottaway, Marina (2003): *Democracy Challenged: the Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*. Washington, D.C: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Schedler, Andreas (ed.) (2006): *Electoral Authoritarianism. the Dynamics of Unfree Competition*. Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers