

Upcoming event

Populism and Other Types of Democracy: A Conceptual and Empirical Simplification

Wednesday
November 16, 2022
12:00 - 1:00 PM (EST)



Takis S. Pappas



Register

Event recording

New Research in Illiberalism: Illiberal Practices with Marlies Glasius, Steven Feldstein, and Nausica Palazzo

Publications

From Heidegger to Dugin and Back



From Heidegger to Dugin and Back

Edited by Marlene Lamelle with contributions from Emmanuel Faye, Michael Matitsky and Richard Wolin, this volume looks at the legacy of Heidegger's *Black Notebooks* and their reception in Russia.

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Meloni's Allies

David Broder on the fascist past of Meloni's allies, and potential cabinet appointees of an expected Meloni government.

The Illiberal Right Moves Beyond Critique

Julian G. Waller explores the diverse and disparate expressions of the illiberal Right in America and how they have found their footing and are moving towards substantive projects.



Maladapted Liberalism: A Review of Francis Fukuyama's Liberalism and its Discontents

Aaron Irion on Francis Fukuyama's latest book, *Liberalism and its Discontents*, and the optimistic outlook it offers readers for achieving a better form of liberalism.



Fascists vs. Anti-Fascists or Self-Righteous Cosmopolitans vs. Left-Behind Communitarians? Reflections on Political and Cultural Polarization Today

Floris Biskamp on framing contemporary polarization and the far right.

"Reproductive Rights in Danger"? Reflections from the Semi-Periphery

Through the lens of the United States and Hungary, Lidia Balogh details the contested politics of abortion worldwide.



The EDI Opponents of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Alice Sullivan and Judith Suissa on equality, diversity, and inclusion initiatives and their intersection with academic freedom.

Learning from "The East": Transnational Anti-Gender Mobilization and the West/East Divide

Katja Kahlina on the transnational networks of anti-LGBTQ and anti-gender movements and how they bridge the East/West divide.



Online Trolls and Their Attacks on the LGBTQ Community in Uzbekistan

Ryan Schweitzer on the dangers faced by Uzbekistan's LGBTQ community and the societal and governmental obstacles to LGBTQ equality in the country.



Culture Wars as a Dictatorship of Form

Ondřej Slaček on how to escape culture wars and the dangers of moral panic mechanisms.



Agora



Charlotte McDonald-Gibson on Alienation, Radicalization, and Extremism

Charlotte McDonald on how understanding the preconditions for, and dynamics of, radical extremism can improve deradicalization strategies.

Natalie Koch on Authoritarianism and Cults of Personality

Natalie Koch on specializing authoritarianism, orientalized coverage of authoritarian regimes, and the formation of cults of personality.



RESOURCE HUB

Using Germany as a case study, Marcel Lewandowski and Michael Jankowski advance a novel understanding of when, and which, voters support or oppose liberal democracy. They show that voters of all stripes trade-off "policy congruence" against liberal democracy, i.e. voters support illiberal politicians if they agree with their policy platform, even if the voters themselves favor liberal democracy. The authors show that this tendency is especially pronounced in voters who are already skeptical of liberal democracy, and are therefore more willing to trade off liberal democracy for policy representation.

Petra Guasti and Lenka Bastikova challenge the notion that the Covid-19 pandemic undermined European democracies. Instead, they demonstrate that democratic decay can be attributed to "illiberal inertia." Thus, democratic backsliding occurred during the pandemic but was not due to it. Rather, it was the result of pre-existing illiberal regimes seizing an opportunity to continue undermining democracy.

Olga Reznikova unpacks the concept of the "ordinary person" vis-à-vis the Russian invasion of Ukraine. She argues that prolonged processes of depoliticization in Russia and the degradation of forums for collective action, culminating in and around the Russian financial crisis of 2015-2016, left only one collective identity unscathed: "the ordinary person," constructed along ethnonationalist lines. She calls these processes the "fascistisation of society," helping to explain the broad support amongst the Russian public for the war in Ukraine.

Nikolay Milkov contextualizes the "illiberal turn" in world politics, from 2014-2016, by fleshing out its historical antecedents in the Cold War and the failure of the post-Cold War order in living up to its promises.

Weronika Grzebalaska complicates the narrative that Poland's liberal Law and Justice party, in its crusade against "gender ideology," is backsliding on women's rights. Through a study of the Polish defense sector, Grzebalaska demonstrates the pragmatic side of Law and Justice, showing how "women's interests are pursued within a more conservative framework" under the illiberal regime, but ultimately gender norms are "simultaneously upheld and destabilized" as the state balances between "national integrity and structural pressures for change."

Through an analysis of Slovakian parliamentary discourse, Ľubomír Zvada illustrates the emerging differences between illiberal, anti-gender politicians. While some frame their anti-gender politics as a defense of traditional, Christian values, others use anti-gender politics as a vehicle for promoting sovereignty and Euroscepticism, arguing that gender politics emanate from institutions like the Istanbul Convention and are therefore imposed and illegitimate.

Zuzana Maďarová and Pavol Harďoš call into question the idea that Slovakia's "dismantling of public human rights institutions and gender equality policies" is a result of a transnational anti-gender movement. Rather, the authors suggest that it is part of an illiberal turn, characterized by the discursive shift towards a new political subject, conservative people, and their demands: cultural recognition, material redistribution, and political representation. The authors stress that these demands demonstrate that the illiberal turn, and anti-gender politics, cannot be understood solely as a struggle for traditional values, but also must be seen as "embedded in broader socioeconomic processes."

Michael Ignatieff asks the vital question "What is democracy for?" In doing so, he recounts various conceptions of democracy, noting that "democracy itself is not just an unvarying contest for power, but also the site of an ongoing debate about what democracy is or should be," making it not a more procedural mechanism, but "a site invested with 'sacred' meaning." Ignatieff argues that democracy's sanctity is also a critical vulnerability, as people are prone to resort to violence to defend 'sacred' things. He stresses that a key challenge for democracy is converting this tendency towards violence, of which many democracies are born, into ordinary politics.

Looking at the Romanian party Alliance for the Union of Romanians, Alina Dragolea describes how political discourse on gender evolves. She proposes a novel three-stage framework to explain how mere gender traditionalism evolves into full-throated illiberalism over time.

Law and Illiberalism, edited by Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas, and Martha Merrill Umphrey, explains how failures in the relationship between the law and liberalism can produce the conditions for illiberalism. The volume's contributing authors unpack everything from the weaponization of "free speech" to conspiracy, to the anti-liberalism of neoliberalism. In doing so, they provide a unique account of why illiberals and authoritarians are coming to power across the world.

Francesco Melito pushes back on the "enormous attention devoted to populism" as a framework for analyzing the turn towards illiberalism in Central-Eastern Europe. Instead, Melito proposes an innovative theory of illiberalism that centers neo-traditionalism and anti-colonialism, rather than populism. In his conception, illiberals frame the "foreign liberal West" as a colonizing power imposing progressive modernizing values on Central and Eastern Europeans' "authentic way of life." Melito's theory adds to the scholarship on populism by showing that illiberals oppose elites not only because they're isolated from the 'pure people' but because they are colonizers.

In the *Handbook of Economic Nationalism*, contributing authors contextualize the recent trend towards economic nationalism by tracing its trajectory through early industrialization, globalization, and post-globalization. To that end, the authors provide an interesting new account of economic nationalism that not only focuses on its economic dimensions but also its socio-cultural ones, as economic nationalism is shown to be used as a way of protecting local cultures from "unwanted external influences."

Tom van der Meer and Bastiaan Rijkman illustrate the relationship between electoral system design and the risk of democratic backsliding. They show that measures taken to protect liberal democracies, most notably the "minority to majority effect," i.e. assigning majoritarian power to political minorities, can have the counterproductive effect of increasing the risk of democratic backsliding. Through this lens, the authors critique the "limitations of institutional engineering" more broadly.

For resources on illiberal, populist, and authoritarian trends across the globe, consult our growing *Resource Hub* aggregating hundreds of published academic articles on illiberalism and other topics relating to illiberal movements. From security and international affairs, to democratic backsliding and public policy, this center of longstanding and recently-published literature continues to document ongoing global trends of growing illiberal movements around the world.

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