

SABANCI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
POLS 455 Rise and Fall of Democracy

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10.30-12.30
Class Hours: M 1.40-3.40
 W 2.40-4.30

Introduction

The phenomenal rise in the number of democratic transitions during the Third Wave has recently come to a halt. As the initial optimism of early post-Cold War had subsided, we witnessed the global rise of hybrid regimes that merge elements of democratic and authoritarian systems. In the past decade, for instance, the Freedom House has recorded no expansion in the number of electoral democracies around the globe. One major reason for this trend is the widespread retreat of democratic regimes that had not yet consolidated. While some cases reverted to autocracy due to military coups as in Thailand or executive power grabs as in Venezuela and Russia, still others witnessed an incremental but sustained democratic backsliding facilitated by executive aggrandizement at the hands of leaders who initially came to power through the ballot box. This global transformation of political regimes over the last three decades will be the primary topic of inquiry in this course. The course offers a survey of the field through an in-depth analysis of cases that have experienced democratic backsliding in recent years.

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the scholarship on the rise and fall of democratic regimes across the globe. It is designed to give the student an understanding of the democratic regime as well as the ways in which open political systems have come under attack in the contemporary period. The course offers an introduction to the conflicting definitions of the term and studies the phenomenal rise of electoral democracies during the Third Wave and the subsequent proliferation of 'democracy with adjectives'. It then reviews those factors and mechanisms that have gradually eroded democratic institutions and facilitated democratic backsliding and breakdown, particularly during the last decade. In particular, we will explore when, why and how democracies die. The course also takes advantage of applied learning methods offered by an international cross-university effort that aims to develop a comparative understanding of democratic backsliding around the globe. You can find more information about this project at www.democratic-erosion.com.

REQUIREMENTS

Required readings

The assigned readings for each week are listed in the course schedule below. You are expected to do the required readings before class each week and then participate to class discussion.

Blog Post

Each student is required to write a post to the Democratic Erosion blog site (<https://www.democratic-erosion.com/blog>). This post will describe and analyse a contemporary political event that occurred in a case that has experienced democratic backsliding. Please note that this will not be an academic text but rather a short informative piece for the wider audience.

Video Assignment

Each student is expected to prepare a short video clip that describes a democratic transition case. For this assignment, you will describe why the authoritarian regime ended and how the case transitioned to a democratic regime based on the different typologies that will be discussed in the first few weeks of this course. You are free to choose this case from any country and any period. Ideally, this 5-minute-long video clip will summarize all the essential details of that case. The assignment is envisioned as a fun project that will be easy to complete during the pandemic.

Case Study Paper

A significant portion of your grade will come from a case study that focuses on an example of democratic erosion or autocratic consolidation in the 21st century. While references to previous events for historical context should be included, analysis should primarily focus on events since 2000. For this assignment, student will review the democratic roots of their case, offer a timeline of events and discuss resistance against this process in the country. While a historical overview can be shortly added to the text, the assignment should focus on recent developments (post-2000). Feel free to consult me on your topic and I would be happy to direct you to the relevant literature at any time during the semester, preferably sooner rather than later. You have the option to co-author this research paper with one of your classmates.

GRADING

1. Class Participation & WhatsApp assignment & Attendance: 20 %
2. Case study 40 % (January 9)
3. Blog Post 15 % (November 27)
4. Video Assignment: 20 % (November 13)
5. Peer review: 5 % (January 15)

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course and thus penalized accordingly. Students need to submit the work that they do without outside help. Please make sure to cite your sources properly. Persons who commit or attempt to commit plagiarism will be penalized in accordance with the rules of Sabancı University.

Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1. What is Democracy? Concepts, Processes and Trends

Mancur Olson, "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (September 1993): 567-576

Schmitter, Philippe C., and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is... and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 3 (summer 1991): 75-88.

Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, 13-40

Dahl, Robert A. 1971. *Polyarchy*. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press (Ch.1)

Week 2. Democratic Consolidation

Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2019. *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty*. New York, NY: Penguin. TBA

Svolik, M. (2008). Authoritarian reversals and democratic consolidation. *American Political Science Review*, 153-168.

Schedler, A. (1998). What is democratic consolidation? *Journal of democracy*, 9(2), 91-107.

Özbudun, E. (1996). Democratization in the Middle East: Turkey-How Far from Consolidation? *Journal of Democracy*, 7(3), 123-138.

Week 3: Democracy with Adjectives

Carothers, Thomas, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (Jan. 2002): 5-21.

Diamond, Larry. 2002. "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2):21-35.

Collier, D., & Levitsky, S. (1997). Democracy with adjectives: Conceptual innovation in comparative research. *World politics*, 49(3), 430-451.

Week 4: Democratic Transitions: Structure vs Agency

Munck, Gerardo L. 2018. "Modernization Theory as a Case of Failed Knowledge Production." *Comparative Democratization (APSA-CD)* 16(3): 37-41.

Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2016). *Dictators and democrats: Masses, elites, and regime change*. Princeton University Press. Ch. 1

Bunce, Valerie J. and Sharon L. Wolchik (2010). "Defeating dictators: Electoral change and stability in competitive authoritarian regimes". *World Politics* 62 (1). 43-86.

Carothers, T. (2007). How democracies emerge: The "sequencing" fallacy. *Journal of democracy*, 18(1), 12-27.

Week 5: Democratic Transitions: Popular Movements/Protests

Brancati, D., & Lucardi, A. (2019). Why democracy protests do not diffuse. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(10), 2354-2389.

Brancati, Dawn. 2014. "Pocketbook Protests: Explaining the Emergence of Pro-Democracy Protests Worldwide." *Comparative Political Studies* 47, no. 11: 1503-1530.

Tucker, Joshua A. 2007. "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions." *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3 (September): 535-551.

Wood, E. J. (2001). An insurgent path to democracy: Popular mobilization, economic interests, and regime transition in South Africa and El Salvador. *Comparative Political Studies*, 34(8), 862-888.

Week 6: Democratic Transitions: Democracy Promotion and the International Regime

von Borzyskowski, I. (2019). The risks of election observation: International condemnation and post-election violence. *International Studies Quarterly*, 63(3), 654-667.

Muftuler-Bac, M. (2019). Backsliding in judicial reforms: domestic political costs as limits to EU's political conditionality in Turkey. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 27(1), 61-76.

Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2016). *Dictators and democrats: Masses, elites, and regime change*. Princeton University Press, pp.. 142-156

Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way, "International Linkage and Democratization," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 3 (July 2005): 20-34.

Week 7: Democratic Breakdown and Authoritarian Regimes

Svolik, M. W. (2012). *The politics of authoritarian rule*. Cambridge University Press. pp 1-17, 22-32

Geddes, B., Wright, J. G., Wright, J., & Frantz, E. (2018). *How dictatorships work: Power, personalization, and collapse*. Cambridge University Press. pp 25-43

Slater, D., Smith, B., & Nair, G. (2014). Economic origins of democratic breakdown? The redistributive model and the postcolonial state. *Perspectives on Politics*, 353-374.

Esen, B., & Gumuscu, S. (2020). Why did Turkish democracy collapse? A political economy account of AKP's authoritarianism. *Party Politics*, 1354068820923722

Week 8: Democratic Erosion/Backsliding

Kaufman, R. R., & Haggard, S. (2019). Democratic decline in the United States: What can we learn from middle-income backsliding?. *Perspectives on Politics*, 17(2), 417-432.

Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. (2018). *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown. Chapter 1.

Bermeo, Nancy. (2016). "On Democratic Backsliding," *Journal of Democracy* 27(1): 5-19

Esen, B., & Gumuscu, S. (2016). Rising competitive authoritarianism in Turkey. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(9), 1581-1606.

Week 9: Populism, demagoguery and fake news

Weyland, K. (2020). Populism's Threat to Democracy: Comparative Lessons for the United States. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(2), 389-406.

Rogenhofer, J. M., & Panievsky, A. (2020). Antidemocratic populism in power: comparing Erdoğan's Turkey with Modi's India and Netanyahu's Israel. *Democratization*, 1-19.

Esen, Berk, and Şebnem Yardımcı-Geyikçi. (2019). "An Alternative Account of the Populist Backlash in the United States: A Perspective from Turkey," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 52(3): 445-450.

Kaltwasser, C. R. (2014). The responses of populism to Dahl's democratic dilemmas. *Political Studies*, 62(3), 470-487.

Week 10: Polarization

Svolik, Milan W. (2019). "Polarization Versus Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 30(3): 20-32.

Aydın-Düzgüt, S., & Balta, E. (2019). When elites polarize over polarization: Framing the polarization debate in Turkey. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 60, 153-176.

McCoy, Jennifer, Tahmina Rahman, and Murat Somer. (2018). "Polarization and the Global Crisis of Democracy: Common Patterns, Dynamics and Pernicious Consequences for Democratic Polities," *American Behavioral Scientist* 62(1): 16-42.

Week 11: Military coups, repression and autogolpes

Geddes, B., Wright, J. G., Wright, J., & Frantz, E. (2018). *How dictatorships work: Power, personalization, and collapse*. Cambridge University Press. ch. 3

Varol, O. O. (2012). The democratic coup d'état. *Harv. Int'l LJ*, 53, 291.

Quinlivan, J. T. (1999). Coup-proofing: Its practice and consequences in the Middle East. *International Security*, 24(2), 131-165.

Cameron, M. A. (1998). Self-Coups: Peru, Guatemala, and Russia. *Journal of Democracy*, 9(1), 125-139.

Week 12: Authoritarian Durability

Tansey, Oisín, Kevin Koehler, and Alexander Schmotz. (2017). "Ties to the Rest: Autocratic Linkages and Regime Survival," *Comparative Political Studies* 50(9): 1221-1254.

Bellin, Eva. 2012. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics* 44, no. 2 (January): 127- 149.

Gandhi, Jennifer, and Przeworski, Adam. 2007. "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats." *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 11: 1279–301

Week 13: Turkish Democracy in Comparative Perspective

Wuthrich, F. M., & Ingleby, M. (2020). The Pushback Against Populism: Running on "Radical Love" in Turkey. *Journal of Democracy*, 31(2), 24-40.

Arslanalp, M., & Deniz Erkmen, T. (2020). Mobile emergency rule in Turkey: legal repression of protests during authoritarian transformation. *Democratization*, 1-23.

Selçuk, O., & Hekimci, D. (2020). The rise of the democracy–authoritarianism cleavage and opposition coordination in Turkey (2014–2019). *Democratization*, 1-19.

Yardımcı-Geyikçi, Ş., & Yavuziyilmaz, H. (2020). Party (de) institutionalization in times of political uncertainty: The case of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey. *Party Politics*, 1354068820960010.

Week 14: Future of Democracy?

Stasavage, D. Democracy, Autocracy, and Emergency Threats: Lessons for COVID-19 From the Last Thousand Years. *International Organization*, 1-17.

Diamond, L. (2020). Breaking Out of the Democratic Slump. *Journal of Democracy*, 31(1), 36-50.

Lührmann, A., & Lindberg, S. I. (2019). A third wave of autocratization is here: what is new about it?. *Democratization*, 26(7), 1095-1113.