

**Contextualizing Democracy: Culture, Capitalism, Inequalities
Academic Workshop, June 9-10, 2016
University of Zurich**

International guest and discussant: Alex Demirovic (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Internal discussants: Silja Häusermann (UZH), Urs Marti (UZH), Stefanie Walter (UZH)

Speakers: 10

Description

Democratic ideals and norms need to be substantially defined, interpreted, and adapted to actual contexts. Compromises between different actors, and between ideals and practices thus become necessary. This highlights the importance of context for democratic politics: Democracy is always bound to specific cultures, forms of economic organization, and power structures. This observation raises diverse and interrelated questions: Are there contexts in which democratic ideals cannot be realized? Does the realization of democracy require specific shared cultural values? To what extent do democratic norms of self-governance conflict with other norms and ways of life in real-existing democracies? Is a certain level of wealth required for democracy to function? If so, is it only achievable through a capitalist economy, or does capitalist economic freedom conflict with democratic freedom? What is the relationship between economic and political (in)equality? How much inequality can a democratic society bear? Can democracies cope with the challenges created by non-democratic norms, economic globalization, and growing inequalities – and how?

These questions, far from being settled, have important implications for real-existing democracies and processes of democratization. Our assumption is that appropriate answers should rely both on the most recent developments in social sciences and in normative political theory. The overarching aim of this interdisciplinary workshop is thus to bridge the gap between democratic ideals and practices by enhancing the dialogue between political theory and empirical political science.

Abstracts of the presentations

Panel 1: Democratization processes (Discussant: A. Demirovic)

1. Karin Esposito, Allard School of Law, UBC Vancouver

'Defining Legal Democratization for Preventing Human Suffering'

This paper will examine models for democratization that continue to be utilized by the main global democratizing agents, including the United States, the United Nations, and some international democracy assistance organizations. I will juxtapose democracy (first identifying and clarifying what precisely 'democracy' means in the relevant contexts) with a set of laws and normative principles that are both being advocated globally and in local contexts adopted and incorporated into domestic acts. "Democracy as Law," although not a novel concept, has not been thoroughly examined in the global political context, particularly in post-conflict and war-torn country settings. In these fragile situations, the priorities of the international community dominate local preferences though focus on urgently adopting new democracy formulations, particularly through "legal democratization." This research will not address the backsliding or de-democratization of certain countries, which have for example faced military coups.

By critiquing democracy as a legal concept or an "entrenchment of principle," which in some senses has become restricted by the limits of neoliberalism's ideology underpinning current laws and defining regulations, the normative nature of the predominant legal democratization process will become more apparent. Through examining the "ideal" legal framework of democracy, there must also be recognition of the connected macro or political/societal level of analysis. The political cannot, therefore, be disregarded in favor of an excessively simple analysis of the legal frameworks/regulations being adopted. Adopting a macro analysis, with respect to understanding the effects of legal democratization on human welfare and poverty, will help illuminate the local consequences of the adopted laws and norms.

This research will examine the potential substantive merits underpinning legal democratization in the move away from war/conflict. Rather than viewing democracy as a way to ensure political/economic

stability or mere representation of citizens in government, this research will examine movement towards a more substantive, egalitarian, and local vision of democracy as law that can help provide for the minimum guarantees of human welfare. By critiquing the precept that an effective democracy can be imported/exported through the current basket of legal measures, particularly as concerns elections, the formation of political parties, and model constitution-building, this research examines constitutional and procedural conceptions that can be re-worked to prioritize human welfare. Legal democratization's actual outputs, therefore, will be analyzed from a re-shaping of 'democracy laws' in post-conflict settings.

2. Oliver Schlenkrich, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

'Post-democracy and the measurement of democracy: Can we combine these research fields?'

Recently, democratic theorists like Colin Crouch (2005) have diagnosed a crisis of established democracies: in the post-democratic age, neoliberal politics gave rise to social inequalities, which in turn led to political inequality. As the lower socio-economic classes abstained from politics, economic elites gained power. Even though this trend can be empirically illustrated for some countries, an overall comparative validation of this theory and its implications is still lacking.

In contrast, while newer measurements of democracy (Democracy Barometer, V-Dem, SGI) focus on the democratic quality of established democracies producing a lot of empirical data, they often fail to discover the trends proposed by the post-democratic theory. Do these negative developments of the quality of established democracies not exist or are these newer instruments failing to capture the reality due to the lack of a detailed concept of social inequality and its effects on the quality of democracy? Thus, can we combine the post-democracy debate and the measurement of democracy? Further research is needed to close this important gap.

To address this research desideratum, we use a third-step process: first, we theorize about the relationship of the quality of democracy and social inequality. Is social inequality a part of the quality of democracy itself or instead can we consider it as a contextual factor which can reduce the quality of democracy under some circumstances? Second, using the 15-Field-Matrix by Lauth (2004, 2015) which distinguishes between five essential democratic institutions (procedures of decision, regulation of the intermediate sphere, public communication, guarantee of rights and rules settlement/implementation) and three dimensions (political freedom, political equality and political and judicial control) as a baseline concept of the quality of democracy, we show which institutions and dimensions get directly and indirectly affected by social inequalities. Third, these theoretical explications enable us to evaluate current measurements of the quality of democracy with regard to the inclusion of effects of social inequalities.

3. Kai Striebinger, Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf

'The Missing Link: Culture and the Effectiveness of International Democracy Promotion'

In the study of democracy promotion, conventional wisdom holds that international actors will achieve more democratic change the bigger the material incentives are. This finding is especially strong in Europeanization studies (Schimmelfennig und Sedelmeier 2007). In extension of this finding, the influence of the EU on democracy seems to be decreasing when strong positive material incentives (like the accession) and negative incentives (like the legal power of the European Court of Justice) are missing (van Hüllen 2015). In situations of democracy promotion in so-called developing countries, the main conclusion is similar: The extent of power asymmetries (in terms of economic, military, and political power) favoring the EU, the US, or Germany at the expense of so-called developing countries would indicate the likelihood for democratization (Levitsky und Way 2010).

The influence of material incentives of democratization has, however, been highly uneven. There are cases of high power asymmetry where no democratization has occurred. There are also cases of little use of material incentives where democratization happened. This is true even if relevant domestic conditions are held constant.

I argue that the limited impact of international actors on democracy in third countries is due to the fact that the instruments to further democracy were developed in one specific cultural context, which is not necessarily compatible with the cultural context where the democratization process occurs.

So far, cultural universality has been assumed in the analysis of the instruments of democracy promotion. However, the instruments of democracy promotion, be it material and immaterial incentives or processes of persuasion make specific assumptions about the culture of actors and their behavior. For example, in order for a positive incentive to work, both the 'sender' as well as the 'target' have to have a similar understanding what kind of life is valuable. Although in the cultures of the democracy promoters like the EU or the US values of material well-being are widespread, these are not shared around the world. In other cultures, surveys show that less material motivations for actor behavior are more prevalent. The instruments international actors use to promote democracy are thus not universal but context specific. This has not been reflected in the study of democracy promotion so far.

This paper supplements existing literature on democracy promotion by (1) conceptually showing how different cultures can be integrated into the analysis of democracy promotion and by (2) providing first empirical evidence how this integration of cultures can provide novel insights into the effectiveness of democracy promotion.

4. Valentina Petrovic, University of Zurich

'A Structuralist Perspective on the Regime Outcome in the Middle East'

This master's thesis analyzes the regime outcome in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region since their independence from colonial power by applying a structuralist approach. The aim of this thesis is to test the propositions made by Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens in their book *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Using Qualitative Comparative Analysis as a method, the analysis answers the question how a structuralist perspective helps to understand the different regime outcomes in the region and to what extent the middle and working class influence the democratization process. The preliminary results are insofar consistent with the theoretical framework of Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens and Stephens, as landowning elites were especially conducive to authoritarian systems at the time of the country's independence and in several instances, pressure from peasants and workers led to political liberalization efforts. More, the preliminary empirical results indicate that if a strong state exists (which hinders an active and independent civil society) and there is substantial pressure from the subordinate classes and no effective representation of the elites, the country will remain autocratic, due to the threat perception by the elites of the pressure by subordinated classes.

Panel 2: Culture and Democracy (Discussant: Urs Marti)

5. Daniel Weyermann, University of Turku

'Political Legitimacy and Ethnocultural Justice'

In this paper, I claim that a legitimate and just constitutional democracy needs to account for the established ethnocultural marks of its basic political and social framework. The ethnocultural marks of the polity should thus be publicly justified to its diverse citizens, holding different views on what is good in life and coming from various cultural backgrounds. I then indicate a strategy to publicly justify the ethnocultural marks of democratic policy, one that relies on the idea of so-called public cultural reasons. To argue for this claim and strategy, I draw on the basic outline of a legitimate constitutional democracy as developed in a Rawlsian political liberalism (Rawls 2005), relying heavily on the ideal of public reason and its duty of civility, as well as on the insights of theories of multiculturalism, such as the theory of minority rights developed by Will Kymlicka (Kymlicka 1995). The argument proceeds in three steps. First, I argue for the cultural establishment view. This view is widely adopted in liberal theories of multiculturalism and holds that functioning constitutional democracies necessarily bear certain ethnocultural marks of the underlying societal culture (such as a certain language, a view on the polity's history, a territory with certain boundaries, and certain

long-standing or traditional political practices that shape concrete political institutions and procedures). Second, I argue that these ethnocultural marks, in a constitutional democracy that aspires to be legitimate and just, trigger the need for public justification and raise issues of ethnocultural justice.

Third, I hold that there are certain cultural reasons, presented in public justifications for the political establishment of certain cultural marks that are public. Cultural reasons are public if they are based on the necessarily established cultural marks of a functioning constitutional democracy. These cultural public reasons can be reasonably accepted by the citizens inhabiting a functioning constitutional democracy. In a further step, I argue that cultural establishment touches on social bases of the crucial primary good of citizens' self-respect. The social basis of self-respect of citizens indicates why citizens have a moral-political right to the establishment of their societal culture.

The arguments in this essay underpin, and help to spell out, moral-political rights of indigenous and national minorities (displaying more or less complete societal-cultural features) as formulated in international legal documents, such as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples or the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Note: The essay is based on the findings of my dissertation that was defended on March 19, 2016 at the University of Turku, Finland. The dissertation (entitled "Political Legitimacy and Ethnocultural Justice. Essays on Public Reason, Democratic Citizenship, and the Rights of Cultural Minorities") is available online at the following address: <https://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/120541>

6. Camille Pascal, University of Toronto / Université Jean Moulin

'Democracy and Locality: Citizenship with and without border'

Democracy and cosmopolitanism are complementary ideas. A democracy is a form of government in which all the citizens of a state are involved in making decisions about its affairs. Cosmopolitan means to be a citizen of the world without borders. Thus, in a global world marked by migration of people between states and over their borders, it appears that democracy and cosmopolitanism must go hand in hand with one another. Both are needed to capture a full conception of citizenship.

However, despite the current movements of populations between states, citizenship is currently only understood through the lens of borders: migrants are denied citizenship, or denied full citizenship; that is, political agency as members of the "demos" in their host state. Citizenship is conceived as a unique status that is valid in one's state of origin only. The phenomenon of migration poses crucial political problems for this reason. An increasing number of noncitizens arises within states of destination and creates political inequalities. Migrants may be citizens in their state of origin, but once they have crossed borders they are disenfranchised.

This inconsistency does not necessarily mean a failure of the democratic ideal, but signifies rather a failure to approach citizenship through its cosmopolitan component. The current state-based way of thinking democracy shows its conceptual limits. The challenge is then to conceive a complementary cosmopolitan view of citizenship that includes both migrants and residents.

My paper focuses on two Kantian theories of cosmopolitanism, Kant's own theory and that of Isabelle Delpla. My aim is to show that these theories fail to offer an adequate solution to the political exclusion of migrants from citizenship. Kant's cosmopolitan law grants migrants the right of visitation but not of residence. Migrants are temporarily allowed to access other states and are protected as long as they remain visitors. But they cannot settle in a new state or become citizens of this host state. Delpla's internationalism grants double-citizenship to migrants who move from one state to another. Migrants are allowed to settle in several countries and keep their citizenship in all of these states as long as they reside on a long-term basis in those countries. Such double-citizenship takes into account a portion of the migrants who were excluded from Kant's cosmopolitanism: economic migrants who choose to move to a new state to work there and refugees who are forced to flee their state of origin. Delpla's internationalism however, fails to eliminate the political exclusion of all migrants. For example, people living near the border of one state and working in the other state are refused rights in the country of their working life, despite their contributions to its

economical functioning. Migration concerns any movement from one place to another and migrants are implicated in the political decisions of states other than those in which they reside. Both Kant and Delpla's cosmopolitanisms reduce citizenship to residence. I offer a new paradigm for democracy: citizenship or political participation independent of locality and based instead on political decisions that affects us. This account is derived from John Dewey's notion of public, as applied to a cosmopolitan view of citizenship and democracy.

7. Lukas Peter, University of Zurich

'Markets, Democracy and the Commons: With and beyond the Ostroms'

At least since the finance crisis of 2008, an increased discontent with both "capitalism" and "liberal-democratic nation-states" has been expressed by diverse political activists, journalists and intellectuals in the western world. Out of this dissatisfaction, Elinor and Vincent Ostrom's work on the democratic governance of common goods has become quite popular as an alternative "beyond markets and states". In order to be able to assess this "solution", this paper will examine whether – and if so, how – can the Ostroms' concept of the commons strengthen democratic institutions by countervailing the negative socio-economic, political and ecological effects of capitalist markets. In order to answer this very broad question, I will firstly recapitulate the tragedy of the commons as a form of market failure. After this, I will turn to the Ostroms' answers to this problem. Instead of speaking of the market or the state, the Ostroms differentiate between monocentric and polycentric orders as possible solutions to the tragedy. After outlining their critique of monocentric orders, I will attempt to outline their concept of democratic polycentricity and its relation to common pool resources and public goods. In a final step, I will focus on three serious problems in their theory of democratic social order: the role of the state as a monopoly on violence, the destructive mechanisms of capitalist markets and the normative question of property rights. I will argue that in order to overcome tragedy, their concept of polycentricity must be critically reflected and in certain cases fundamentally reformulated in reference to these three issues.

Panel 3: Economic and Democratic Spheres (Discussants: S. Walter and S. Häusermann)

8. Dani Marinova, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

'Does the Economic Vote Pay Off? Electoral Accountability and Economic Policy'

Does a robust mass-elite linkage in elections provide officeholders with sufficient incentives to pursue good economic policies after the election? Research on political-economic cycles offers a partial response to this question. Since the classic writings of Nordhaus (1975), research has sought to uncover regularities in how the timing of elections affects macroeconomic policy. The boom-and-bust cycles of economic expansion and contraction are thought to occur in relation to election cycles, such that governments stimulate the economy prior to elections and pay the price afterward. Economic policy, then, does respond to elections—or at least their timing. This literature has paid much less attention to the quality of electoral signals, however. The unstated assumption has been that all elections are equal—that their sheer presence generates about equal incentives for politicians to (mis)manage the economy.

Elections vary in the degree to which voters hold politicians accountable and hence in the degree to which they ought to incentivize good stewardship of the economy. This insight comes from research on electoral accountability which documents systematic variation in the extent to which citizens hold incumbents accountable for economic performance (e.g., Powell & Whitten 1993). Institutional differences across countries help explain this variation; some institutional set-ups facilitate accountability by making it clearer to voters who is responsible for managing the economy.

The present paper contributes to these two strands of research with an empirical analysis of how governments respond to changes in public welfare during their tenure (based on a sample of twenty OECD democracies, 1972-2012). Governments that are regularly held to accounts in elections should have greater incentives to be responsive to their constituents; hence, they will be more likely to allocate resources appropriately when economic needs surge. When levels of unemployment increase drastically, for example, governments respond with higher spending on labor market

policies or overall increases in public spending on unemployment (Jakobsson & Kumlin 2016; Mechtell & Potrafke 2013). The paper examines whether these trends vary systematically with the strength of accountability in elections.

Gauging the impact of electoral accountability on policy outcomes is not empirically straightforward. To limit endogeneity between voters' preferences for welfare redistribution and welfare spending, I operationalize accountability with a string of institutional variables that are strongly correlated with the probability that voters hold incumbents to account (Powell & Whitten 1993; Powell 2000). The analyses control for a number of potential confounders, including government partisanship, trade and financial openness of the national economy and corporatist wage bargaining, among others. I model the time-series cross-sectional data with OLS panel corrected standard errors, a differenced dependent variable and a lag of the dependent variable.

9. Christoph Mohamad-Klotzbach, University of Würzburg

'Conceptions of market economy and their influence on democratic values'

Do direct democratic institutions fail to implement political equality, one of the essential features of democratic regimes? In purely representative democracies, political equality is guaranteed by the 'one person, one vote' principle: A strict egalitarian distribution of the votes guarantees the equal influence of every citizen in elections, and is also taken as a sign of equal respect including all the citizens equally in the political community (Arneson 2003). Direct democratic ballots on specific issues also implement the same principle. However, empirical research on Swiss politics has shown that the presence of direct democratic institutions in representative systems informally modifies the distribution of political power among the population at other stages of the decision-making process. Some researchers argue that these changes improve the implementation of the equal influence principle. By providing opportunities to minority groups to launch referendum or initiative procedures, direct democratic institutions would indeed offer them a chance to exert influence in the decision-making process – either by launching, campaigning for, and winning a popular vote or by participating to the pre-parliamentary phase of preparation of new laws (Papadopoulos 2001; Sciarini and Trechsel 1996; Giugni 1991). Others however claim that direct democratic mechanisms produce inequalities and reinforce existing ones. First, only already powerful and resourceful groups would have the opportunity to launch referendum or initiative processes. Second, only these groups would be taken seriously enough to be included in negotiations in the law-making process (Germann 1990; Sciarini and Trechsel 1996; Paoletti 2001). Third, direct democratic institutions would encourage the research of consensus and hence "protect entrenched interests" (Papadopoulos 2001, 43). And finally, it would undermine alternative mobilization strategies (such as protests) used by less resourceful groups (Epple-Gass 1991; Papadopoulos 1995).

The objective of this paper is twofold. First, I clarify the challenges to political equality posed by direct democratic mechanisms highlighted in the empirical literature on the Swiss case. Second, I ask whether direct democratic institutions violate political equality, or if they promote another, non-strictly egalitarian notion of it. I question whether semi-direct democracies could be seen as promoting a conception of political equality similar to the "proportionality principle" defended by Harry Brighouse and Marc Fleurbaey (Brighouse and Fleurbaey 2010). I conclude by arguing that, linked to some necessary institutional and social preconditions, direct democratic institutions could indeed promote a 'self-selected proportionality principle' view of political equality.

10. Michele Fenzl, University of Essex

'Income Inequality and Party Polarisation in Comparative Perspective'

Scholars of American politics report a close relationship between income inequality and the polarisation of political parties. This analysis extends this perspective to 16 established democracies from 1963 to 2009, and, conversely, finds that increasing inequality depolarises political parties outside of the United States. This occurs because the core constituencies of the Left change as a consequence of inequality. In particular, inequality depresses low-income voters' participation, pushing the Left toward middleclass and moderate voters. At the same time, inequality does not

create strong incentives for Right parties to adopt extreme positions. Therefore, growing income inequality can lead to a depolarisation of party systems.

The empirical results provide supporting evidence on the depolarising effect of inequality on non-American party systems, also contributing to an understanding of the puzzling redistributive differences that exist among established democracies. Furthermore, the findings help explaining why established democracies have failed in curbing rising inequality, and suggest a linkage between economic and political inequality.