DEMOCRACY IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES

Central European University
MA Course, Winter Semester 2015

Instructor
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Classes
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11.00-12.40.

Office hours
TBA

Credits
4 CEU credits, 8 ECTS credits

Course description
What are the particular challenges that divided societies pose to democracy and how can they be met? This is the leading question guiding the examination of democracy in divided societies. The course will have an empirical focus and review the experience with consociational and integrative majoritarian institutions around the world, familiarizing students with the main cases and paying particular attention to democracy and social peace in post-conflict societies. The course will also address normative and theoretical issues in the form of two leading questions that are formulated deliberately provocatively to reflect a deep dissensus in political science on these matters. First, do we need a theory of ethnic conflict to design the “right” institutions? Second, are the “right” institutions also “just”?

Course requirements
No prior knowledge is assumed. Students are expected to be present at all seminars and to come prepared. If you are unable to attend class, you should notify me via e-mail prior to the session. Please feel free to send me questions, suggestions, and comments in preparation of our meetings.

Assessment
- One group presentation (two students presenting together) (30%)
- One position paper (20%)
- Active seminar participation (10%)
- Final essay (40%)

The starting point for each presentation is the reading for that week. In thinking about the kind of presentation you want to do, it may be helpful to consider the following four formats: 1) a critique, in which you critically evaluate the premises, argumentation, facts, sources, and/or conclusions of
the reading and point out (potential) problems; 2) a supplement, in which you
build on the reading to provide additional relevant information, for example by
reviewing what other authors have said on this topic, the experience in other
countries or other times, etc.; 3) a deepening, in which you select one
particular point of the reading and treat this more fully than is done in the
paper itself, by developing the particular argument started in the paper and
exploring its possibilities and limitations; 4) a case study, in which you
highlight the facets of the theme dealt with in the paper through the selection
and discussion of an illuminating empirical case or a fictitious problem that
sharpens our thinking. Presentations should take no more than fifteen
minutes. Presentations will be evaluated and graded using the presentation
assessment sheet introduced in the first session. We will sign up for
presentations in the first two weeks of the semester. You are strongly advised
to consult with the instructor in choosing your topic and preparing your
presentation.

The position paper (800 words) should consist of a summary (two-
thirds) of the reading complemented by your own thoughts on the matter (one-
third). You decide for which week you want to prepare a position paper, but
please send it to the instructor by that Monday.

Active class participation is expected and graded. Some guidelines:
participate regularly, make informed contributions, focus on the main points,
formulate clearly, respond to others in the discussion, demonstrate critical
engagement.

The final essay (3000 words) should be on the topic of democracy in
divided societies. We will discuss the details of this assignment and the
deadline in the first class.

Learning outcomes
At the end of the course the student should be able to:

- Understand the specific challenges posed by socio-cultural divisions to
democracy;
- Reflect critically on the notions of ethnicity and ethnic conflict;
- Do independent research on a chosen topic related to democracy in
divided societies;
- Work together to present on a particular aspect of democracy in divided
societies;
- Summarize arguments and formulate an informed position;
- Appreciate the normative dimension of empirical questions about
institutional design.

Reading material
All the course material is available in electronic form. The syllabus only
contains the required reading. At the end of each week, suggestions for
further reading will be discussed in class.

Week 1 Introduction
The first session provides you with an overview of the main options in the menu of conflict management in divided societies.

Reading:

Week 2 Self-Determination versus Pre-Determination
Who shares power? Who determines who shares power? Who are the “self” in “self-determination” and “self-rule”? This session looks at the two ways to regulate access to power-sharing arrangements and examines their empirical record.


Week 3 Ethnic Democracy
No term better captures the tension between ethnicity and democracy than the concept of “ethnic democracy”. In this session we re-examine the case of Israel and scrutinize the wider applicability of the notion.

Reading:

Week 4 Ethnic Conflict
When following the news, one often gets the impression that the world is full of “ethnic conflicts”. But what makes a conflict an ethnic conflict and when does ethnicity result in ethnic conflict?

Reading:
University Press, pp.376-410.  

**Week 5 Ethnic conflict, part II**  
This session builds on the previous one and takes a critical at the notion of ethnic conflict.

Reading:  

**Week 6 Debating Northern Ireland**  
In the contemporary literature on consociationalism, no case is more hotly debated than Northern Ireland following the Good Friday agreement. The two main questions are: is Northern Ireland really a consociational democracy and, even if so, is this desirable?

Reading:  

**Week 7 Partition**  
Partition is a controversial solution to civil war, even though the right to autonomy is well-established. How can this discrepancy be reconciled and what does the empirical evidence tell us?

Reading:  
Wolff, Stefan and Marc Weller (2005) Self-Determination and Autonomy: A


**Week 8 Non-territorial autonomy**

When scholars and policy makers think about autonomy, they usually think of (ethno-)federalism, forgetting that autonomy can also be personal or functional.

Reading:


**Week 9 Deliberation in Deeply Divided Societies**

Deliberative democracy is the cutting edge of democratic theory and some scholars have sought to explore its potential for divided societies.


**Week 10 Courts and Consociations**

There is surprisingly little literature on the role that (supreme, constitutional, or international) courts play in consociational democracies. Here we take a closer look at one recent study.

Reading:

**Week 11 Consociational Parties**

In many countries, power sharing takes place between parties that each represent a well-defined community, but in some the representation and accommodation of diversity occurs within one party: the ruling party. How does that work?
Reading:

**Week 12 Post-Conflict Societies**
Democracy in divided societies is difficult enough: how is democracy possible in post-conflict societies? The literature on power sharing provides some answers.

Reading: