Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

illiberalism Studies Program

Issue 60 | January 2026 | www.illiberalism.org

Journal of Illiberalism Studies

This special issue maps the ideological, intellectual, and institutional circuits through which illiberalism becomes globalized and normalized. It shows how illiberal actors in both Europe and beyond are united by shared ideological components and strengthened by their connections to one another.

The articles in this issue make clear that the internationalization of illiberalism is not a passing trend but a multifaceted, ideologically rich movement that thrives on cross-border connections. In examining the ideological foundations, regional manifestations, and institutional impacts of illiberalism, this special issue provides a comprehensive look at the different ways illiberalism positions itself at the interplay of domestic and international politics and policies.

Read it here

Publications

An Introductory Overview of Furious Minds

Laura K. Field on her background and the approach she took to her book, Furious Minds, as well as how to define the MAGA New Right and the factions thereof.

When Fandom Meets Violence: The Intersection of Political Extremism and Tactical Embodied Performance in Modern Politics

Anthony Dannar on how the acts and aesthetics of right-wing extremism mirror the performances and practices often associated with fandom.

Agora

Quinn Slobodian on New Fusionism, Libertarian Eugenics, and Far-Right Capitalism

Quinn Slobodian discusses the fusion between radical libertarians and the far right, and the unique form of capitalism they have come to espouse.

From the ILLSP Team

Double-talk: Russia's Variable Ideology

Marlene Laruelle argues that Russia occupies a unique position in the contemporary global order, simultaneously presenting itself as the defender of Western civilisation to the far right and as an opponent of Western civilisation to the Global South.

The Dugin network: multipolarity, traditionalism, and transnational liaisons in the West

Erik Piccoli frames Alexander Dugin as a transnational narrative broker and legitimizer who serves as an intermediary between the Kremlin and sympathetic groups abroad, thereby legitimizing these organizations through his interaction with them.

Eurasia and eschatology. Dugin's antiliberal resonances in the Muslim world

Kamal Gasimov and Marlene Laruelle examine the reception of Alexander Dugin's thought in Turkey, in the Arab world, and Iran, highlighting the dynamics through which Russian ideological repertoires are appropriated and reframed outside their original context.

Ireneusz Pawel Karolewski explores the institutional and conceptual flipsiding of democracy that belongs to an illiberal and authoritarian repertoire. The article reiects "wide" approaches to democracy, claiming they dilute the meaning of democracy. It also explores the institutional chanzes that illiberal elites implement to hoard power and subvert democracy. These chanzes target the scope of democracy with the zoal of permanently fixing the power position of the incumbent ruling actors. Karolewski calls this "institutional flipsiding." Finally, it deals with the conceptual subversion, what Karolewski calls "conceptual flipsiding," targetine the meaning of democracy, as it attempts to dissociate democracies from their liberal fundamentals, such as civic and political rights. The article "concludes that illiberal reeimes are prone to masquerading as democracies. They do so by chanzing both the scope and meaning of democracy, as they want to pass as democracies, both in front of domestic and foreign audiences."

The Mnemanic Warriors of the European Far Right offers a comparative analysis of the politics and policy of memory, presented through the lens of national-populist and conservative-sovereignist narratives in the Western, Central, and Eastern European public spheres. Specifically, this edited volume examines how the European populist far right has adopted the instrumentalization of 20th-century authoritarian and totalitarian *lieux de mémoire* (memory spaces) to boost its political legitimacy. Contributors explore the interplay between politics and collective memory, the role of historical myths in shaping collective consciousness, and the manipulation mechanisms of political communication aimed at monopolizing the "real" memory of the past. They investigate how different and sometimes mutually exclusive narratives about "places of memory" interact in the public sphere of societies that have experienced non-democratic regimes.

Is Pierre Poilievre a populist politician akin to Donald Trump? Efe Peker et al investigate this question by looking at the Conservative Party of Canada's (CPC) leader and populism. They apply a "complex" theory of populism, which conceptualizes populism as an interplay of ideology, communication style, and organizational strategy. Drawing on a qualitative content analysis from the 2022–2025 period, the authors uncover an uneven picture where the core ideological and policy positions remain largely rooted in neoliberal and law-and-order priorities, while Poilievre's communication style reflects a discernible populist turn. However, organizationally, Poilievre maintains CPC structures but seeks to reshape them through stricter party discipline, outsider narratives, and unmediated digital outreach strategies that antagonize traditional media.

Anti-zender zroups, by promoting a Christian-inspired traditional view of family, challenge the idea that European society is becoming more secular. Starting from this premise, Giulia Evolvi asks the following questions: How do anti-zender zroups discuss religion on social media? And what is the role of religion for anti-zender activists? Evolvi argues that anti-zender zroups do not directly contribute to the zrowth of religious institutions but use religion to bring actors together in mobilizations. As such, religion is not a central topic in digital narratives, which mainly construct a perceived marzinalization of Christians in secular society. This does not mean that religion is uninvestizable, however. Catholicism remains fundamental for activists as a motivation for action and a socialization force. Evolvi concludes that anti-zender zroups' digital media use primarily "connects different actors and mobilizes people who are already religious and who engage in activism through their religious communities."

Usinz Mexico under President Andrés Manuel López Obrador as a case study. Aleiandro Monsiváis Carrillo extends upon a body of literature that claims populists often justify their actions by invoking democracy, yet often undermine it. The article argues that voters embrace the zradual subversion of democracy when they approve of the executive's performance in office, particularly when the populist president is a prominent and influential fizure. Carrillo's results confirm this argument and suzzest that "López Obrador's presidential approval not only reinforced the belief that Mexico is a democracy but also increased voters' support for the president if he decided to disregard the rule of law, curb the opposition's rights, or cancel the separation of powers." This validates the claim that populist presidents may be able to persuade voters to accept the subversion of democracy under the guise of democratic improvement.

While Israel has long been identified as a democracy, certain scholars have identified a pattern of democratic backsliding, a weakening of its liberal values, and a questionable democratic culture amongst its citizens. Intervening in this literature, Hannah Ridge uses novel public opinion data finding that, while Israelis assert a preference for democracy, they are open to non-democratic alternatives and illiberal policies. Furthermore, the community is particularly divided on minority rights, such as those of Palestinian citizens, and free expression/protest rights. Given this, Ridge concludes that democracy is on shaky foundations in Israel, which is in the throes of an ongoing democratic recession.

Godswill Uchechukwu Chiqbu and Kathleen Ahrens begin with an observation and a question: Military dictatorships are inherently undemocratic yet military leaders often frame democracy metaphorically. Why do they do this, and how do their framings differ from those of civilian leaders? Usinz Nizeria as a case study, the authors analyze 238 speeches by military heads of state and civilian presidents from 1960 to 2023. This analysis reveals that the metaphors used to describe democracy are tools for legitimation and pre-legitimation. Military leaders favored metaphors conceptualizing democracy as a "journey" or a "plant." Civilian leaders favored those related to "building" and "war." Using mapping principle analysis, Chiqbu and Ahrens suzzest that both the "journey" and "building" metaphors function as strategies of rationalisation, pre-legitimation, and conceptual flip-siding, reinforcing a hegemonic, elite-controlled conception of democracy."

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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