

# DEMOCRACY AND POWER

A GLOBAL FORUM ON GOVERNANCE  
COURSE OF HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT



## DEMOCRACY: THEORY vs REALITY

DIFFERENT POLITICAL SYSTEMS  
WORLDWIDE and GLOBAL EVENTS  
SHAPING DEMOCRACY TODAY

**2025**  
CONFERENCE

## POLITICAL ELITES AND INEQUALITY

DOES DEMOCRACY CREATE  
FAIRNESS, or IS IT AN  
ILLUSION OF EQUALITY?



**Università  
degli Studi di  
Messina**

DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE  
POLITICHE E GIURIDICHE

**APRIL 8**  
**14:30 - 18:30**  
**Aula campagna**

Register via QR Code  
Organized by:  
University of Messina

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Students who participate in the conference will receive 0.25 CFU.

# DEMOCRACY & POWER

## A GLOBAL FORUM ON GOVERNANCE

8 April 2025

University of Messina | Department of Legal & Political Studies  
Piazza XX Settembre | Aula Campagna

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

*This year, within the course of History of Political Thought, we largely debated about democracy. We have explored fundamental questions such as: what is democracy, and how should it be defined? Is democratic a universal notion, or should it be adapted to the unique histories, traditions, and cultural contexts of different societies? And, perhaps most importantly, does democracy truly work in today's world?*

*These questions are more than theoretical—they shape the way societies govern, resolve conflicts, and pursue justice. While democracy is often upheld as the ideal political system, we must ask: is it always the best institutional arrangement and form of government? In practice, does it deliver on its promises of representation, equality, and stability? Or are there flaws in democratic governance that we must critically address?*

*To explore these issues, we have organized this Global Forum as a space for discussion and debate. We invite you to critically examine democracy—not just as a principle, but as a system in action. Let's challenge assumptions, consider alternatives, and rethink what governance should look like in our rapidly changing world.*

### CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

**14:30 – 15:00 | Opening**

*Conference Introductions:*

- Prof. Federico Tomasello (History of Political Thought)
- Sabina Jurayeva (Conference Organizer, Uzbekistan)

*Institutional addresses:*

- Prof. Alessandro Morelli - Director of the SCIPOG Department
- Prof. Salvatore Bottari –Coordinator of the BA degree in Political Science and International Relations

15:00 – 16:00 | Panel 1

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## Global perspectives on Democracy: non-Western traditions of governance

*Speakers:*

- Sabrina Jarfi (Morocco): *Postcolonial Political Theories, Edward Said's Orientalism, and perspectives on contemporary Morocco*
- Hana Fikadu Asrat (Ethiopia): *Indigenous Africa and Democracy*
- Iman Ghasemi Deligani (Iran): *Iranian Political Thought: A Journey Through Its Origins*
- Aylai Durmanova (Kyrgyzstan): *Confucius and the origins of Asian Political Theories*
- William Persichili (Italy): *Feminist peace and Democratic Confederalism in Kurdistan*
- Q&A (20 minutes)

*Key questions:* non-western forms of governance; historical alternatives to Western democracy

16:00 – 17:00 | Panel 2

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## Cultural & Historical Perspectives: Is Democracy Universal? How Culture & History Shape Governance?

- Introduction: Prof. Rossella Merlino (Contemporary History)
- Coordinator: Phuong Linh Lu (Vietnam)

*Speakers:*

- Cagla Alic (Turkey): *Democratic Backsliding: Challenges in a Hybrid Regime*
- Erica Jane Scarfi Medrano (Italy): *A History of Democracy: Italy's Strengths & Weaknesses*
- Nupur Kezia Robinson (India): *The world's Largest Democracy with Persistent Inequality*
- Nguyen Hoai Bac (Vietnam): *Democracy & One-Party Rule: Can They Coexist?*
- Nassim Hallajian (Iran): *Theocracy Versus Democracy in Iran*
- Q&A (20 minutes)

*Key questions:* Can democracy adapt to all cultures? Historical events shaping political institutions? Comparing democratic traditions global



17:00–18:00 PM | Panel 3

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**Political Elites & Fairness: Does Democracy Create Fairness, or Do Elites Control It?**

– Introduction: Prof. Eugenio Cusumano (Political Science)

– Coordinator: Erica Jane Scarfi Medrano (Italy)

*Speakers:*

- Alex R.S. Kavinga Karunanayaka (Sri Lanka): *Ethnic Conflicts & Democracy: Fair Representation?*
- Alisa Grigoreva (Russia): *Democracy or Authoritarianism? The Case of Russia*
- Penza Kateryna (Ukraine): *Democracy in Time of War: Challenges and Resilience*
- Elmir Rahimov (Crimea) *Political Change, Sovereignty, and Democracy in Crimean Peninsula*
- Q&A (20 minutes)

*Key questions:* If democracy is meant to serve the people, why do elite interests dominate policy-making in most democracies?

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18:00–18:30 PM | Panel 4

**Political Representation and Social Movements**

– Introduction: Prof. Lidia Lo Schiavo (General Sociology)

– Coordinator: Ayaulym Amerkenova (Kazakhstan)

*Speakers:*

- Daira Lucia Nadra Finochietto (Argentina): *The Influence of Social Movements on Democracy in Latin America*
- Sharlotta Khabibova (Uzbekistan): *Between Authoritarianism and Democratic Aspirations: Uzbekistan's Path to Reform*
- Ruben De Francesco (Italy): *State, Market, Inequality*
- Q&A (10 minutes)

*Key questions:* If democracy is meant to serve the people, why do elite interests dominate policymaking in most democracies?

6:30–6:40 PM | Closing summary of key insights

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**SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATION**

Federico Tomasello (coordinator), Phuong Linh Lu, Sabina Jurayeva