

Beyond self-righteousness: Neoliberalism, democratic deficit, and the global rise of the far-right

March 15, 2024

Building from my previous work on "right-wing intersectionality" (Ravecca et al, 2023) and the politics of innocence (Ravecca and Dauphinee, 2022) this talk will explore the question of what it means to study the far-right beyond self-righteousness. Both journalistic commentary and scholarship largely understand the far-right as an abnormality, that is, as the radical-other of democracy, liberalism, the liberal order, globalization, and modernity. This move not only mimics the "populist" scapegoating that is so adamantly rejected by liberals and progressives, but also carries a plethora of historical and intellectual inaccuracies. Against the grain of complacency, I argue that the rise of the far-right constitutes a powerful opportunity to exercise critique and self-critique. I look at how relevant aspects of liberalism, neoliberalism, political science's conventional concept of democracy, and identity politics are appropriated, transformed (if necessary) and weaponized by the far-right. Furthermore, these reactionary forces have already been able to reshape mainstream conversations about important topics such as immigration, inequality, minority rights and more. Snapshots from the leadership and discourse of current Argentinian President Javier Milei will be used to illustrate the ways in which the far-right is redefining democracy and our contemporaneity in real time.

When: Friday, March 15th from 12pm to 1:30pm

Where: Room 7-152, Prince George Campus

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