



# EDP Interactions

Newsletter #8

## Fighting the Pandemic - Dangerous Times for Democracy and Civic Freedoms?

Dear readers,

since our last newsletter, the world changed drastically: the Coronavirus spread and developed within a few weeks into a global pandemic. Until now, COVID-19 took hundreds of thousands of lives and seriously impacts societies and economies. Since March, in an unprecedented move to control the spread of the virus as far as possible and to relieve partially overwhelmed healthcare systems, governments radically restricted civil liberties. The measures varied, ranging from strict lockdowns (except essential trips or physical activity) as in France, to total lockdowns like in India (where even outside sport was banned), to rather soft measures like those in Sweden (visits to old people's homes and public gatherings of more than 50 people were prohibited). The unprecedented policies raise questions concerning proportionality, legitimacy, and the impact on democratic structures and freedoms. In our Newsletter #8, we present you a series of EDP Wire articles exploring these questions:

In "[COVID-19 as a Threat to Civic Spaces Around the World](#)", **Jonas Wolff** and **Felix Bethke** argue that COVID-19 could give another substantial boost to a global trend that has been unfolding since the early 2000s: a wave of restrictions that constrain civil society actors. Further, **Julia Leininger** illustrates the crisis in "[Tackling the pandemic without doing away with democracy](#)"



as a catalyst for democracy's demise, as autocrats seize the opportunity to weaken parliamentary scrutiny and restrict civic freedoms, while repressions against oppositions are on the rise.

In "[Internal Threats to EU's External Democracy Support in Times of a Pandemic?](#)", **Rebecca Wagner** analyses how the Coronavirus crisis affects the EU's ability to address internal threats to democracy and thus it's external credibility to implement the new EU Council Conclusions on Democracy. Solutions to a Corona related election delay in Ethiopia are discussed by **Jalale G. Birru** in "[Normative Jurisprudence](#)", and in the podcast "[COVID-19 Pandemic and Conflict Management](#)", **Solveig Richter** is interviewed about the impact and consequences of the pandemic on conflicts.

Finally, our web editor Nora Berger-Kern says goodbye and a big thank you to the readers and awesome colleagues for 3 ½ wonderful and exciting years at PRIF and EDP! We hope you enjoy the newsletter - and keep updated on [Twitter @edp\\_network!](#)

**Stay safe and best wishes from the PRIF EDP Team**

Nora and Rebecca

## NEWS



EDP Network meeting at DIE in Bonn - February 2020

F.l.t.r.: Johannes Gerschewski, Sonja Grimm, Jonas Wolff, Tina Freyburg, Julia Leininger, Rebecca Wagner, and Solveig Richter (Missing: Karina Mross).

4. March 2020 | EDP Network meeting at DIE in Bonn: a new research agenda for challenges to democracy support. [»](#)

12. February 2020 | Presenting our latest addition to the EDP Network: Welcome, Karina Mross! [»](#)

4. February 2020 | Workshop at the Federal Foreign Office on democracy promotion. [»](#)

17. January 2020 | EDP member Solveig Richter receives Heisenberg grant for outstanding researchers. [»](#)

16. December 2019 | EDP Network meeting at Willy Brandt School in Erfurt: Future focus and a new member. [»](#)

Read all **News** [here](#).





## PUBLICATIONS

JONAS WOLFF, FELIX BETHKE, SOPHIA BIRCHINGER, BEN CHRISTIAN, MELANIE CONI-ZIMMER, JULIAN JUNK, ANTON PEEZ, SIMONE SCHNABEL, JENS STAP-PENBECK, ANTONIA WITT | 2020

**Peace and Development 2020. An Analysis of Recent Experiences and Findings.** Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt.

JONAS WOLFF | 2020

**Democracy.** In: Olaf Kaltmeier/Anne Tit-tor/Daniel Hawkins/Eleonora Rohland (Hg.): The Routledge Handbook to the Political Economy and Governance of the Americas, London: Routledge, 341-349.

JULIA LEININGER, KARINA MROSS, CHARLOTTE FIEDLER, JÖRN GRÄVING-HOLT | 2020

**Gradual, Cooperative, Coordinated: Effective Support for Peace and Democracy in Conflict-Affected States.** In: International Studies Perspectives 21 (1), 54-77.

JULIA LEININGER, ANNA LÜHRMANN, RACHEL SIGMAN | 2019

**The Relevance of Social Policies for Democracy – Preventing Autocratisation through Synergies between SDG 10 and SDG 16.** In: DIE Discussion Paper 7/2019.

KARINA MROSS | 2019

**First Peace, then Democracy? Evaluating Strategies of International Support at Critical Junctures after Civil War.** In: International Peacekeeping (2019), 26:2,190-215, online first.

See all Publications [here](#).

## EDP WIRE

JONAS WOLFF, FELIX BETHKE

### COVID-19 as a Threat to Civic Spaces Around the World

As countries across the globe are desperately trying to control the COVID-19 pandemic, a rapidly increasing number of governments have started to impose severe restrictions on core civic freedoms.

[Read more »](#)

JULIA LEININGER

### Tackling the pandemic without doing away with democracy

This EDP Wire is part of a German Development Institute (DIE) special series that explores the developmental and socioeconomic consequences of the Corona crisis.

[Read more »](#)

REBECCA WAGNER

### Internal Threats to EU's External Democracy Support in Times of a Pandemic?

In the course of the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, this EDP-Wire analyses whether the new EU policy on democracy has any change to be implemented when globally the crisis seems to play into the hands of "strong leaders".

[Read more »](#)

JALALE GETACHEW BIRRU

### Normative Jurisprudence—the 2020 General Election in Ethiopia

The general election in Ethiopia has been postponed due to Corona. This EDP Wire discusses solutions to the constitutional impasse caused by the postponement using the principle of normative jurisprudence. [Read more »](#)

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Johannes Gerschewski is the Academic Coordinator of the Theory Network at the Cluster of Excellence "Contestations of the Liberal Script (SCRIPTS)" at Freie Universität Berlin. The Network mirrors the plurivocality of the Cluster, serving as its hub for bridging epistemological approaches, integrating theoretical traditions, and synthesizing empirical results. Simultaneously, Johannes is a research

fellow at the Global Governance Unit of the WZB Berlin Social Science Center. Before taking up these positions, Johannes worked as a lecturer at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Technical University Munich, and was a pre- and post-doctoral fellow at the WZB. He works at the intersection of Comparative Politics and Political Theory and is particularly interested in questions of regime legitimacy, comparative democratization, democratic and autocratic theory, as well as political ideologies.

More about Johannes Gerschewski [here](#).

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