

Democracy and development

[Prof. Giovanni Carbone](#) – [Third trimester](#)

Learning objectives

The study of political regimes is a key topic in contemporary political science. While democratic politics prevails in the West, in several other areas of the globe most countries adopt hybrid or authoritarian politico-institutional arrangements. Over time, both the number of democratic countries and that of autocratic countries have gone through ups and downs, with opposite trends alternating and essentially failing thus far to stabilize. In order to systematically examine these trends, what we mean by the terms 'democracy' and 'autocracy' needs clarifying via rigorous definitions. Clear definitions are the necessary ground for measuring democracy, and thus also to fully understand the different ways in which democracy has been measured so far. Democracy, however, has implications that go beyond political freedoms and equality. The bulk of the course focuses on the impact of different political regimes on development and on its different dimensions. Are authoritarian regimes better than democracies at promoting economic growth? Do different political regimes produce distinct effects on state consolidation and domestic political order? Do democracies have an inherent advantage in favouring a country's socio-economic advances, including poverty reduction and welfare improvements? Examining these issues offers an opportunity to fully assess the implications of adopting different political regimes.

Expected learning outcomes

At the end of the course, the student will have acquired both methodological skills and substantive knowledge. From a methodological perspective, learning concerns a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of what the comparative approach is, as well as of the various possible applications of the comparative method in the study of democracy and development. These tools will be useful so as to fully grasp the investigative strategies, the meaning and implications of various types of political inquiry that the student will be faced with, as well as in starting to use them directly to carry out analysis work or own research, in the political sphere and beyond. The possibility of making oral class presentations, in addition, will allow students to become familiar with the digital tools typically used for these purposes and to directly experience a situation in which they are required to prepare and communicate specific contents in front of an audience. From the perspective of substantive knowledge, the student will have acquired knowledge and understanding of democracy (notion, values and empirical content) and development (some key issues, including state building, economic growth, welfare policies, etc.), both in broad and comparative terms as well as, for those cases that examined and discussed in more depth, in terms of individual national systems and paths. The level of learning - that is, what has been learned by the student, with respect to the expected learning outcomes - will be verified and evaluated by means of one or more written tests, (possible) class presentations, attendance and participation, all aimed at assessing the student's acquired knowledge and tools as well as analytical skills.