



Three Paths to Constitutionalism – and their Authoritarian Alternatives

Bruce Ackerman

WZB Distinguished Lecture in Social Sciences

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Invitation

How do constitutions legitimate their claim to authority? In three different ways. The first path is pursued by revolutionary outsiders; the second, by established insiders; the third, by established insiders striking a deal with political elites previously excluded from the system. During the twentieth century, the revolutionary tradition is exemplified in places like India, South Africa, and postwar France and Italy; insider-constitutionalism, in the British Commonwealth; elite bargaining between insider and outsider elites, in the constitutions of Spain, Germany, Japan, and the European Union. Different pathways generate different legitimation problems. A failure to solve these problems opens the way to different kinds of authoritarianism – as the current world-wide struggle over constitutional legitimacy reveals.

Bruce Ackerman is Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science at Yale. His books have had a broad influence in political philosophy, constitutional law, and public policy. His major works include “Social Justice in the Liberal State” and his multivolume constitutional history, “We the People”.

To register, please reply by November 5, 2014 to Marie Unger: marie.unger@wzb.eu.