



המחלקה למדע המדינה
סמינר מחלקתי

יום רביעי, 7.6.2017
14:15-15:45

חדר סמינרים

THE DEMOCRACY LEGITIMACY CRISIS: MYTH
VERSUS REALITY

Prof. Rudy B. Andeweg, Professor of Political Science,
Leiden University
Chair, European Consortium for Political Research

Abstract: The election of Donald Trump in the US, the Brexit referendum in the UK, and rising support for populist parties on the extreme right and left of the ideological spectrum in Europe seem to indicate a decline of the legitimacy of representative democracy. Several observers have linked such a crisis of political legitimacy to a perceived decline of political parties. In the footsteps of Schattschneider, they argue that political parties link the mass electorate to the political system, and when that linkage mechanism falters, so does the system. There is a deep concern that representative democracy is sliding either into instability or into authoritarian leadership.

However, a closer look at the (admittedly imperfect) indicators questions the empirical foundation and underlying rationale of this line of reasoning. Both the decline of parties and the decline of legitimacy are not universal and structural patterns. Political parties link citizens to the system in at least two very different ways with different consequences for legitimacy. And whether the direction of causality is from weakening parties to eroding legitimacy or the other way around is not as clear-cut as is often assumed.
