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Seminari A
Fac. de Sociologia,
UAB



Registration:
<https://rb.gy/bmxc1>

Authoritarian and democratic imprinting: The long-term impact of education on democratic support

What are the long-term effects of authoritarian and democratic education on support for democracy? Here we argue and demonstrate that education is the mechanism that explains why people who lived through dictatorships to be more skeptical with democracy than those who spent their formative years in a democracy. To test this proposition, we present an innovative identification strategy, using the German Democratic Republic's school system to estimate the causal effect of education on long-term democratic support. We further ask whether this gap in democratic support is due to authoritarian education, which has the capacity to undermine democratic values even beyond the existence of these regimes or whether it is rather because of the civic education delivered in democracies, which boosts long-term democratic support among cohorts socialized in those school systems. Relying on original expert-coded data on the content of school education, combined with individual-level data from 92 countries, we confirm the latter. The results show that democratic education has a lasting positive impact on citizens' support for democracy, while education content in autocracies – whether authoritarian or including some democratic elements – does not affect citizens' democratic values. Our findings on the vital role of education have important implications for our understanding of democratic consolidation and democratic stability more generally.

