Political sociology

Throughout the semester, you have seen various ways the different rights of individuals (citizenship, social and political) within countries have been hurt either through direct state policy, control by the elite or groups of individuals against the expansion of rights to other groups. You will apply this knowledge to write an editorial article (intended for the general public who read newspapers) in which you explore why a country of your choice has seen its level of democracy (or how much rights citizens have) decline in recent years.

GENERAL SOURCES: To help you choose a country, you can use Freedom House’s freedom in the world score and its reports:

https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2022/global-expansion-authoritarian-rule

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom\_in\_the\_World

To have some general background about the country, you can explore the above Freedomhouse website, but also use the CIA fact book:

https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/

For the academic source, use jstor, Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, One Search or a database you feel comfortable with to do a search. Use the name of the country with keywords such as democracy, citizenship rights, authoritarianism etc…You only need one well-written academic source.

You are also expected to use at least 2 sources from our course. Even if they are not directly about your country they will help give a general framework.

**STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE EDITORIAL**

1) Summarize the information that you found about the country to a general public by, for instance, touching on issues of whose rights are being violated, why has democracy been hurt in recent years etc… (About one page)

2) Explain to the reader (1) how some of the perspectives we have seen and the additional source you will have found can help explain the changes in rights (about two pages) (2) how the new source you found further highlights the usefulness of this framework.

3) Offer a solution, based on your analysis, of how this can be improved. Are there political elites who should be pressured by the international community? Are there groups who should be protected? Can there be social changes brought so that the country is more equal?

Tips for each section:

1) For section 1. Remember, you do not want to bore the reader with too much information, but you also want to share some information with someone who does not have access to the same information. Instead of saying COUNTRY A’s freedom house score decreased, try to give two figures that show that it is low or has decreased. You can further give a vivid example of how someone or a group has been impacted by the change.

2) For section 2, make sure that you give enough background to understand the perspectives we have seen without getting into too much detail. For instance you can say something like

Quadagno (a sociologist) has demonstrated that state policy hurts policy rights or something like

Mann has shown that struggle over economic resources has led to violence between groups

etc…to then link to a description of what is going on today.

3) For section 3. Think about what kinds of solutions would be easy to implement. It could be

programs to help minorities, ways to provide incentives to the political elite to change their ways

etc…

General tips

Familiarize yourselves with the tone of a newspaper editorial written by experts. For instance, you can

create a free NYtimes account through the library website or consult other news outlets like

https://theconversation.com/us. Do not forget that you are writing for an audience that might need

information to understand what you are talking about, give enough information (do not assume you are

writing for me who already knows the topic). Use the ASA citation guide to reference sources and the

information you provide. Your argument should be clear, make sure that you have enough time at the end

of the semester to edit your work, to ask a friend to reread it or to go to the writing center.

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