

# A Democratic Right to Political Strikes

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- a rationale for political strikes

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- and a moral defense

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- a rationale for political strikes
- and a moral defense
- and some considerations for regulation

# Realist Democracy

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- elite capture: winners keep winning
- this can be shown in empirical studies
  - policy generally is only weakly responsive to public opinion
  - rich people wield disproportionate influence
- in the extreme: objectionable rule!

# Realist Democracy II

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- not more participation!
- not less formal rules!
- better ways for regular people to exercise influence
- in order to defend themselves against infringements on their democratic rights



# One Possibility: Political Strikes



Figure 1: The recent General Strike in Israel

# What's a Political Strike?

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- “quitting work but not the job” (Gourevitch)
- with political demands
- in a direct conflict with the state, not the employers

# Arguing for a Right to Political Strikes

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  - a right to political strikes has a valuable function

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  - because rights conventionally come with permission to defend them
- ② political strikes as a valuable democratic institution
  - a right to political strikes has a valuable function
  - put a limit on elite capture

# Arguing for a Right to Political Strikes II

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- defensive means have to be:
  - effective

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- empirically we find some effectiveness

# Necessity

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  - are there any less invasive means available?
- the realist assessment puts conventional means in doubt
- elite capture blocks democratic paths
- but, still, some other means should have been tried first

# Proportionality

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- proportional to the threat to democratic rights?
- does it involve harms of similar gravity?
- depends on what we think about the threat
- and thus the risk of undue escalation



# Undue escalation?



Figure 2: Cooperative ants

# Undue escalation?



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- sure, this is more antagonistic
- but be realistic about the point of comparison
  - its efficiency
  - in how far it realizes democratic values
- then the more antagonistic version is not unattractive!

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- target those liable for the threat?
- the wrong people seem to bear the costs of resistance in this instance
- employers are harmed by the political strike
- but they are not the addressees of the demands
- isn't this unjustifiable?

# Liability: the Defensive Ethics View

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- and then it's justifiable to harm them
- otherwise it seems impermissible

# Liability: a Comparative View

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- think about the distribution of harms in a democratic system
- capture burdens those who are not well-resourced and organized
- but that is burdening those who are already worse-off!
- political strikes largely burden the better off
- it seems justifiable to let strong shoulders bear democratic burdens

# Regulating Political Strikes

- ensure *ultima ratio* status

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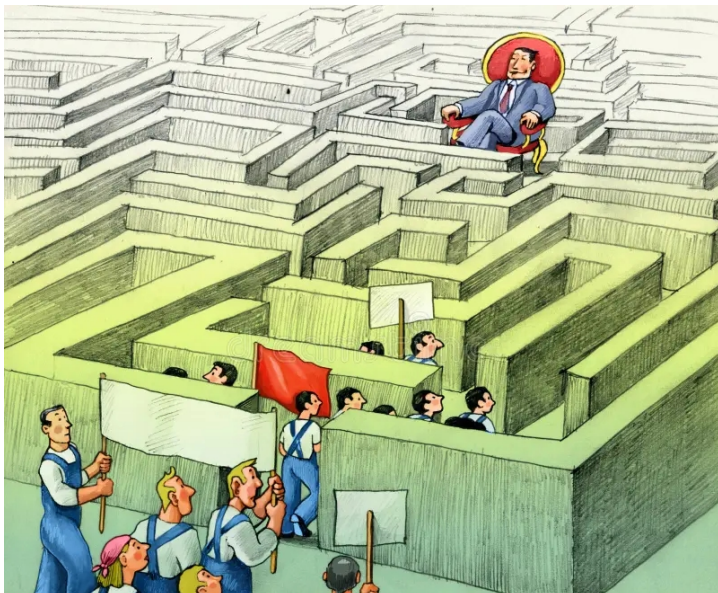
- ensure *ultima ratio* status
- ensure proportionality



# Regulating Political Strikes

- ensure *ultima ratio* status
- ensure proportionality
- distribute harms properly

# Regulating Political Strikes II



# Recap

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- a way for regular people to exercise influence: political strike
- a defensive mechanism
- should follow proportionality and necessity
- but difficult to properly regulate
- a fair distribution of the costs of democracy



# The end

Thank you for your attention.