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The Business of State Capture and the Rise of Authoritarianism in Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia



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[« Previous Article](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Article »](#)

[Abstract](#)

[Full Text](#)

[Media](#)

[References\(91\)](#)

[Cited By \(0\)](#)

[Metrics](#)

This paper will discuss the rise of authoritarian tendencies in the political systems of Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. In these countries, certain parties and political elites have become entrenched in the political system, and have been able to maintain their position often beyond, and in some cases through, constitutional frameworks. It will discuss how forms of state capture have allowed these actors to position themselves in a situation in which they not only control the political decision-making institutions, but also

the economic and social systems of these systems in transitional states. By extending their networks of patronage, opponents, and holding strong control over media and the judiciary, these elites have been able to develop semi-utilise democratic elections to confirm their long-term dominance, veiling them in a veneer of legitimacy. This rise and in turn illiberal democracy – is not only linked to the political actions of certain parties and elites, but also rest economic changes that the countries under investigation have faced in recent years. What is more, the so-called transition integration has failed to hinder or deter the rise of these new authoritarian regimes. The paper will progress in the theoretical framework will be introduced, by focusing on theories of democratization and authoritarian back-sliding. countries under investigation will be discussed in more detail, to highlight why there has been an increase in authoritarianism in four countries. This section will also discuss how these authoritarian tendencies play out in practice and how they hinder the consolidation of liberal democracy. Finally, in the conclusion it will be discussed what the European Union (EU) can do to support those forces that focus on democratic governance in these countries, and make the accession process truly

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