

# Steak

August 22, 2025

## Self-defense of democracy. How to save liberal democracy?

In the afternoon program Pihvi, we choose one essential news story and find out what it really says. Today, we discuss with an Oxford University professor how liberal democracy can be saved.



29 minutes

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**August 22, 2025**

29 minutes 7 65 62

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**PROFESSOR.** Giovanni Capoccia, Professor of Comparative Politics at the University of Oxford, visited Helsinki. Photo: Ella Kiviniemi

There is a temporal contradiction in defending liberal democracy. When undemocratic forces are not yet in power and could be stopped most effectively, there is not enough evidence of their danger. Then, when extremist movements come to power, their anti-democratic nature and attempts to undermine the rule of law become clear, but stopping politicians who hold onto power becomes increasingly difficult.

There is no clear cure for this contradiction, says **Giovanni Capoccia** in an interview with Pihvi today.

Capoccia is a professor of comparative politics at the University of Oxford who is currently researching the challenges of countering undemocratic and illiberal forces in democracies. According to his research, there are three ways to defend liberal democracy: formally, informally, and by mobilizing people. He has divided the defensive struggle into three stages, depending on how close to power these undemocratic forces are: prevention, containment, and resistance. Different defensive strategies work in different ways at these different stages.

The defense of liberal democracy therefore requires the involvement of different sectors of society. Capoccia cites Israel as an example, where lawyers, business

representatives, and reservists publicly declared in 2023 that they opposed the erosion of the rule of law. At that time, Netanyahu had no choice but to listen.

In addition to demonstrations and public resistance, for example, the right points of comparison matter. Intimidation, like in Hungary, only gets people on the streets in countries whose starting points are otherwise considered to be sufficiently similar to Hungary's. In the United States, exceptionalism ruins the usefulness of this strategy, according to Capoccia.

Today in Pihvi, Capoccia goes through a variety of different ways in which liberal democracy can be defended. It is clear that even prosperous or established democracies cannot automatically trust the resilience of their democracy and institutions. However, the longer a country has a tradition of various practices that promote liberal democracy, the easier the fight will be.

## **This is what else happened today:**

### **Foreign Minister Valtonen: Israel's plans are contrary to international law**

Israel's plan to expand the settlement area is contrary to international law. This is what Foreign Minister **Elina Valtonen of the National Coalition Party** writes in the short message service X.

Finland has published a statement on the subject with 21 countries and the European Union.

Israel on Wednesday approved a plan to build thousands of new homes for settlers in the occupied West Bank.

According to Israeli Finance Minister **Bezalel Smotrich**, the project will result in no Palestinian state remaining that can be recognized as a state. If successful, the plan could destroy the idea of a two-state solution, which Finland also promotes.

### **Doctoral research: There is a lot of unnecessary treatment in Finnish healthcare**

Patients should be encouraged to ask whether the treatments proposed to them are necessary, according to a press release by **Aleksi Raudasoja**, a doctoral researcher

at the University of Helsinki .

According to Raudasoja, approximately 20-30 percent of healthcare resources in Finland are used for unnecessary treatment.

In her doctoral research, Raudasoja found that over 80 percent of primary care physicians assessed overtreatment and overdiagnosis as at least a moderate problem in healthcare. The physicians felt that lack of time, fear of errors, and, for example, the patient's wishes prevented them from eliminating unnecessary treatment.

## **In the new story today:**

Not in our name. The Israeli peace movement has become radicalized.

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Have a nice weekend!

Best regards

**Patrik Haverinen**

Supplier

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