

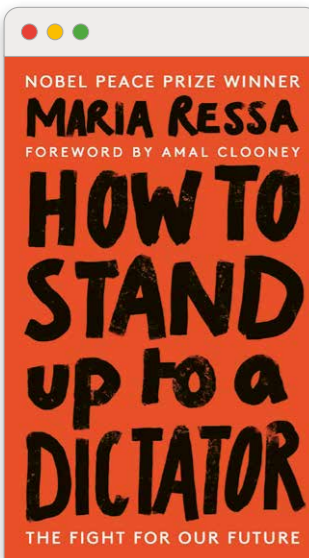
# TRIGGER POINTS

"Trigger points: Consensus and Conflict in Contemporary Society" by **Linus Westheuser and Steffen Mau** is a fascinating analysis of current social dynamics, in which seemingly small "trigger points" can set off major conflicts. "Social conflicts are never just there, they are also socially manufactured: ignited, fuelled, triggered." There is increasing talk of polarisation and division in society, with seemingly irreconcilable factions facing each other. The authors' analysis shows that there is a surprising amount of consensus on many of the major social issues or "arenas of inequality": poverty and wealth, migration, diversity and gender, climate protection. When certain trigger points are pressed, however, tensions can escalate.

# HOW TO STAND UP TO A DICTATOR



Books



In 2021, Philippine journalist **Maria Ressa** won not only the UNESCO Press Freedom Award but also the Nobel Peace Prize together with Russia's Novaya Gazeta editor-in-chief Dmitry Muratov. They were the first journalists to be recognised by the Nobel committee since 1936. Back then, the German reporter Carl von Ossietzky was unable to accept his award due to being imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp. Today, Ressa, the chief executive and co-founder of the online news platform Rappler, praised for exposing abuses of power and growing authoritarianism under the Philippine president, Rodrigo Duterte, is facing charges that could result in a 100-year prison sentence. Ressa was the target of a misinformation campaign, amplified by "patriotic troll armies", who flooded the discourse so that facts were contested, honest brokers bullied into silence, and regular, disinterested citizens were no longer able to separate facts from falsehood. In her book *How to Stand Up to a Dictator*, she describes these events and the path leading up to them. She also levels serious accusations at social media giants such as Facebook and at the way "our information ecosystem is corrupted." Nothing, she points out, has been done by these organisations to protect civil society as "the incentive structure of our information ecosystem rewards lying." And at the root of it all, she argues, is the elemental truth that lies are simply more interesting than facts.



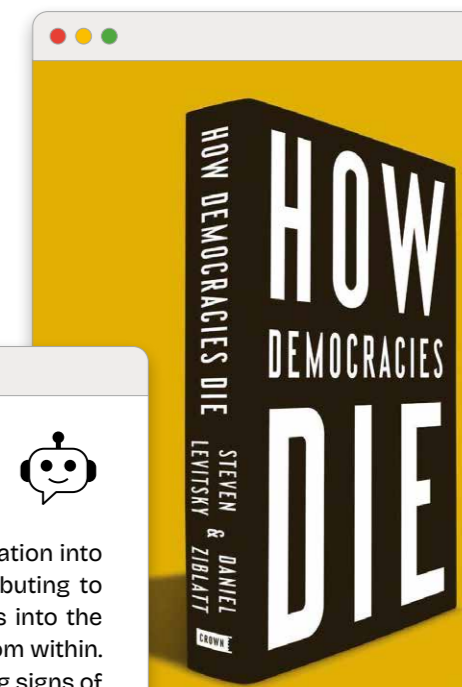
Books

# DYING DEMOCRACIES

"Democracy no longer ends with a bang—in a revolution or military coup—but with a whimper: the slow, steady weakening of critical institutions, such as the judiciary and the press, and the gradual erosion of long-standing political norms."



"How Democracies Die" by **Steven Levitsky** is a captivating exploration into the vulnerabilities of democratic systems and the factors contributing to their downfall. Levitsky, alongside co-author **Daniel Ziblatt**, delves into the global landscape to unravel how democratic regimes can erode from within. Through analysis and case studies, the book illuminates the warning signs of democratic decay, from the erosion of political norms to the rise of authoritarian leaders. Levitsky argues that democracy's demise often occurs not through sudden upheaval but through a gradual erosion of democratic institutions and norms. With its timely insights, "How Democracies Die" serves as a wake-up call, urging readers to confront the threats facing democracies worldwide and to actively safeguard the principles of liberty and equality.



## Reluctant Audiences for Journalism

"Avoiding the News" is a deep-dive into the complicated reasons behind people distrusting the news. Since 2016, media scientists **Benjamin Toff, Ruth Palmer, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen** have been investigating why and how a growing number of people in many countries consistently avoids the news—despite an unprecedented abundance and convenient access. According to the authors, many people feel that they do not have time for it, believe it not to be worth the effort, find it irrelevant or emotionally draining, or do not trust the media, among other reasons. The authors find answers to questions such as which groups are more and less reluctant to follow the news, respectively, and in what ways news avoidance constitutes a problem.



## AVOIDING THE NEWS RELUCTANT AUDIENCES FOR JOURNALISM

BENJAMIN TOFF, RUTH PALMER, AND RASMUS KLEIS NIELSEN

