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REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

Title of Session: The Relevance of the classics for post-1989 transformation processes

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Comments: -

Session Abstract (up to 250 words): That market culture in cities provides a seedbed for proto-capitalism is a Weberian notion. Weber is ethnocentric but nevertheless a point of reference for recent multi-Modernities discourse. "Transition" is a teleological term indicating a rite de passage to a known goal. "Transformation" lacks the implication that the outcome is known. Stage models such as Rokkan's, based on a number of North-West European cases, seem to have some general value, but do not exclude "exceptionalisms" concerning the design of modern nations. Various classical scholars are relevant. Schumpeter has a double relevance, about capitalism overburdening itself and the historical tendency of demos to define itself. Carl Schmitt, Norbert Elias, and Parsons are difficult to ignore. Myrdal's institutionalist approach, e.g. his ideas about the soft state, vicious and virtuous circles and cumulative causation, remains relevant; for pan-European problems in the era of EU-enlargement. Friedrich List is an institutionalist pioneer, bringing the state into political economy. Samuel Pufendorf is as a theoretician of civil society avant la lettre a peacemaker between religions, just as Axel Hägerström later on is a peacemaker between secular religions (ideologies), in the post-Enlightenment predicament of value-incommensurability. Secular Scottish-Enlightenment four stages theories (Ferguson, Adam Smith) are pivotal. Marx remains relevant. Many classic authors carry straws to the same stack, promoting secularized Modernity.

Which contributions are still relevant? And where? We cannot answer this question on behalf of post-Communist societies. Perhaps we can help the classics serve as sparring partners.

General information

During each afternoon of the congress, there will be room for a large number of parallel regular sessions. Each session is 90 minutes long and consists of an oral presentation of 4 to 6 papers. Session conveners are expected to administer and chair their session at the 2009 IIS World Congress.

Starting in mid-December, calls for papers to participate in approved sessions will be posted on the website. Interested participants will contact the session convener (you) directly with an abstract no later than February 28, 2009. The session convener should take in all submissions and select the best 4 to 6 papers to be presented and forward this information, including e-mail addresses of accepted authors, to the IIS Secretariat no later than March 15, 2009.