



SWEDISH
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REGULAR SESSION INFORMATION

Session: The Quality of New Democracies: Plebiscitarian and Republican Regimes

Session Convener(s): Carlos H. Waisman, University of California, San Diego

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Carlos H. Waisman, University of California, San Diego

II) The Quality of Post-Soviet Democratization

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Antonello Canzano, University Gabriele D'Annunzio, Chieti-Pescara

ABSTRACTS

Session description

The political transitions in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America in the past 30 years have had heterogeneous outcomes, and the same could be expected of the processes under way in the Arab world, if their conclusion is the generation of democratic regimes.

The main objective of the transitions in the 1980s and 1990s was the establishment of Western-style democracies in societies whose previous regimes had been authoritarian (in almost all of Latin America) and post-totalitarian (in Central and Eastern Europe). A few societies, such as Chile and Uruguay in Latin America, and the Czech Republic or Poland in Central Europe, have polities whose governments are democratically elected, rule democratically (by tolerating opposition and upholding civil and political rights), and have institutionalized basic civil and political rights for their citizens. At the other extreme, Belarus is a pseudo-democracy, and Russia and Venezuela are plebiscitarian regimes with strong authoritarian traits. A large proportion of the remaining countries have low-quality democracies, in which there may be elections and oppositions, but in which other aspects of democratic governance may be weakly established or lacking altogether.

The purpose of this panel will be to examine the quality of the new democracies based on a dimension: the concentration of political power in the hands of the executive. Plebiscitarian democracy is one extreme of this dimension: In such a regime (still a democracy, based on the standard Dahlian criteria), the executive exercises power without institutional limitations: the parliament, the judiciary, and the civil service are in its absolute control. Republican democracy represents the opposite pole: In this regime, the executive exercises limited power, because there are strong and autonomous parliament, judiciary, and independent agencies in the public administration. In addition, when democracy is parliamentary, the tenure of the executive depends on parliamentary support.

I will welcome papers that discuss the degree of concentration of power in specific countries or groups of countries, as well as more theoretical contributions that conceptualize types of contemporary democracies based on their quality.

Papers

I) Toward a Conceptualization of Political Institutions in New Democracies: Republican and Plebiscitarian Regimes

Carlos H. Waisman, University of California, San Diego

This paper has two objectives. First, it presents a conceptualization of the quality of democracy in post-authoritarian and post-totalitarian regimes, based on two axes: degree of concentration of power and prevalence or not of a civic form of articulation in the relationship between state and society. The republican and plebiscitarian types are the polar opposites of a continuum that includes several other regimes. Second, the paper makes the argument that there is an elective affinity between a dual society and a plebiscitarian democracy. The mechanisms that explain this relationship have to do with the incentives and constraints that regulate the behavior of politicians and government officials on the one hand, and of the citizens in the marginal pole of society on the other.

II) The Quality of Post-Soviet Democratization

Ashot Alexanyan, Yerevan State University

Democratic reforms and processes of democratic development of the XXI century from the state, civil society and business demand civilizational standards, changing value systems and institutions, increasing transparency of social

and political life, the expansion of freedom of speech and action. Democratic political process in post-Soviet countries is often expressed in qualitative and quantitative changes in the political system. These changes reflect the development of democratic political system. Evolutionary mode of development of the political process can solve the political problems as they arise, and, most importantly, avoiding the violence and destruction that have not yet obsolete. The main indicator of postSoviet political crisis - loss of power structures control the development of extremely aggravated conflicts, characterized by imbalance in political institutions, poor handling of economic and other spheres, the growth of discontent of the people, etc. The reasons for the political crisis mainly lie in the field of economic and social relations. Therefore, to overcome the political crisis, the need for reforms in various spheres of public life, as the crisis in post-Soviet society initiated the process of achieving political and economic stability. This leads to the following factors: 1) the emergence and implementation of political interests, and 2) the creation of new political institutions and political actors, and 3) reorganization of government resources, functions and structures, changes in the system of separation of powers, 4) support the existing political power, the organization measures its legitimating, and 5) changes in socio-political environment and conditions.

III) *"Preemnik" as a Model of Power Succession in Contemporary Plebiscitarian Regimes: Post-Soviet and Latin American Countries*

Petr Panov, Perm State University

Oleg Podvintsev, Perm State University

The paper is devoted to the issue of power succession in contemporary semi-democratic and non-democratic regimes. The starting point of the discussion is the case of transfer of the presidential position from Putin to Medvedev in Russia. The case was called as "preemnik". Taking into account that similar practices are revealed in other countries ("dedazo" in Mexico is the most well-known example), it is possible to hypothesize that these cases have to be considered as a special model of power succession, not isolate incidents. The fundamental features of this model are rooted in the nature of relationship between state and society and in basic features of political authority. Traditional authority produces the model of inheritance: there is no 'decision-maker' concerning the successor, since all participants follow sacral tradition. Rational authority, in opposite, assumes more or less active participation of people in the act of power succession that is usually expressed in democratic election. Here both political elite and people are 'decision-makers'. Nevertheless, modern political regimes demonstrate such practices of power succession which are something medium between ideal types of inheritance and elections. On the one hand, they are not just following the sacral tradition; there are actors, who make 'decisions'. On the other hand, voters are not actual "decision-makers", since they vote for the candidate who was nominated by executive. Consequently, the executive actually becomes the only 'decision-maker', whereas people just formalize their decisions procedurally. Factually, it means that such plebiscitarian leaders concentrate not only executive power, but also the power to transfer their power, i.e. to define their own 'preemnik'. The paper will present the results of research project that aims at the identification all cases of 'preemnik model' in Post-Soviet and Latin American countries for the last decades. These cases have been systematized and analyzed in comparative perspectives. It allows highlighting some common features of 'preemniks' and defining variables that result in differences that are revealed in activity of 'preemniks'.

IV) *A Comparative Analysis of Politics and Secularism in Turkey and India*

Aysel Madra, New School for Social Research, New York

Despite varying configurations of institutional arrangements, historical legacies, and religious compositions, both Turkey and India are constitutionally defined as secular states. Moreover, in both, secularism is closely linked to the

project of building an independent sovereign nation-state and has ideological implications for national identity and democracy. In this paper, I propose to study the adoption of secularism in Turkey and India through an analysis of the debates that took place in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (1920-1927) and the Constituent Assembly of India (1946-1949). An examination of these debates shows that neither the dominant ideologies nor the institutional-structural arrangements fully intended to separate religion and the state in the first place. Although the separation of religion and the state—which would eventually decrease the significance of religion in the political and public spheres in line with modernization theories—was an aspect of both secularisms, each also contained a strand that sought to establish state control over religion. In both instances, the intervention of the state in the majority religion—Islam in Turkey and Hinduism in India—is sanctioned for the sake of “reforming” and “rationalizing” these religions in accordance with the imperative of creating a modern nation-state.

V) *Fundamentalist Movements and their Consequences for the Development of Democracy*

Antonello Canzano, University Gabriele D'Annunzio, Chieti-Pescara

Considering as a premise the difficulty that the democratization process meets in some areas of the world, above all in the Middle-East and East, and the impossibility to export democracy in these areas with the only use of strength, the paper investigates the incidence of the culture and the religion on the nature of the political systems. The religious and cultural factors represent, in fact, unavoidable components influencing the political trials inside and outside the systems themselves. In this perspective the fact that fundamentalisms movements have been put forward on the world scene as reaction to the processes of secularization, globalization and market, besides representing a threat for our democratic societies, actually they do practice a wider and wider political and social influence on local and regional contexts. And it could be possible that it will happen even in the countries of North-Africa destabilized by recent revolution. This contributes to determine the failure of attempts of democratization, giving strength to a consolidation of authoritarianism. By sharing the empirical results of the research on the religious fundamentalisms by Almond, Appleby and Sivan (2003), we will deepen the analysis taking into consideration the different cases in terms of gender, species, structures and dimensions and analyzing the uniting characters and its strategies. To the light of such empirical research, we will try to deepen the influence of the fundamentalisms to transnational level, not so much as potential clash among the different civilizations, but between the democratic regimes and the neoauthoritarian ones, in which the cultural and the religious factors determine the nature and the quality of the social order and of the political power.