

Standing group on „Transcultural and comparative political theory“ (DVPW)

CfP for the Panel

"A threat to security? Discursive (de-)legitimations of democratic transition"

Congress of the German Political Science Association (DVPW): „Vorsicht Sicherheit! Legitimationsprobleme der Ordnung von Freiheit“, September 21–25 2015, Duisburg/Essen, Germany

In general, established authoritarian regimes have often associated democratic change with chaos and anarchy. This correlation corresponds with the feelings that processes of democratic transitions (in a non-linear, broad sense, cf. Carothers 2002) can generate: actors may feel to face a trade-off between *freedom* and *security*. This trade-off can be exploited rhetorically and strategically: Protests against authoritarian regimes challenge security and may lead – given the population’s fear and uncertainty – to a restoration of the regime’s legitimacy so that it may now appear to be entitled to restore law and public order (Oxhorn 1994, 52). For that reason, proponents of democratization have to position themselves with regard to this trade-off. However, security is not necessarily instrumentalized as a counterweight to claims for freedom, and public order may also be addressed as an element of democratic government: In this sense, referring to security is ambivalent in itself because it may – for example – be used to foster freedom of speech or to establish constraints to actions in the public (Zeghal 2013, 268). Apart from that, ‚security‘ and ‚public order‘ may also be scrutinized as cynical concepts of the current government’s hegemonial project – even more so as the boundaries between security, public order and national interest may become blurred (Agrama 2010, 509). Finally, violent actions or even terrorist attacks may be employed to unmask the state’s incapacity to sustain security.

Papers should address the way public discourses on freedom and security (or equivalent concepts) are framed in the context of democratic transition, how they are made salient by the actors and by means of which (material and ideal) resources those actors put forward their claims. What is the discourse’s structure (Mills 1997, 7), what are the actor’s rhetorical strategies, who succeeds in making his point and how are political events interfering in the discourse?

The papers will be presented on Friday, 25 September 2015. It is planned to publish the papers conjoined in a renowned German political science journal in 2016.

Please send an abstract (English or German) of no more than 250 words to Dr. Holger Zapf (hzapf1@gwdg.de) by *Monday, 1 December 2014*.

For further information on the standing group, you may visit

<http://www.dvpw.de/index.php?id=639&L=1>

References

Agrama, Hussein Ali (2010). Secularism, Sovereignty, Indeterminacy: Is Egypt a Secular or a Religious State?, in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 52 (3), 495-523.

Carothers, Thomas (2002). The End of the Transition Paradigm, in: *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (1), 5-21.

Mills, Sara (1997). *Discourse*, London [et al.].

Oxhorn, Philip (1994). Where Did All the Protesters Go? Popular Mobilization and the Transition to Democracy in Chile, in: *Latin American Perspectives*, 21 (3), 49-68.

Zeghal, Malika (2013). Competing Ways of Life: Islamism, Secularism, and Public Order in the Tunisian Transition, *Constellations*, 20 (2), 254-74.