

Section 3 – Politica Comparata

Chairs: Gianfranco Baldini, Elisabetta de Giorgi

Panel 3.2 Political regimes between performance and change

The nexus between a country's social and economic performance and its form of political regime has historically represented one of the main problems in comparative politics. The relationship however is complex and several questions remain unanswered.

For decades, based on modernization theory, socio-economic development has been seen as a prerequisite for the emergence and sustainability of democracy. Relatedly, autocracy has been sometimes indicated as a better interim solution to drive a country out of underdevelopment. Likewise, many early examples of welfare programmes have been launched by autocratic governments. More recently, research has highlighted that, more often than not, authoritarianism has failed to deliver, and that democratic reforms may have positive returns in terms of human development, economic growth and state administration. However, in the contemporary world we may easily find examples of both long-established and relatively new authoritarian regimes consolidating thanks to an improved political and economic performance, whereas several democracies are weakened by years of economic recession and austerity. At the same time, the political and socio-economic consequences of the recent processes of autocratization occurred all over the world are yet to be evaluated.

Accordingly, with a focus on the post-Cold War period, this panel invites proposals of papers that aim to shed new light on the regime-performance nexus. The research question that we are interested in include the following. Does democratization foster a country's economic, social and political performance? Is authoritarianism synonymous of predatory rule and corruption or do different institutional forms of non-democracy trigger different incentives for a government to promote a country's development? How effective is performance as a legitimation strategy in both democratic and non-democratic regimes and how does it translate into legitimacy? If a bad performance is a possible cause of regime breakdown, is regime change a possible solution?

Chairs: Andrea Cassani