

Section 3 – Politica Comparata

Chairs: Gianfranco Baldini, Elisabetta de Giorgi

Panel 3.3 Comparing non-democratic regimes' survival, emergence and replacement

After decades in which comparative political regime studies have mainly focused on democracies and democratic transitions, non-democratic regimes have recently regained the centre of the public and academic debate.

The renewed interest toward non-democratic politics has several justifications. By the end of the 1990s, the so-called third wave of democratization has lost impetus. Meanwhile, a grey zone has expanded, populated by various hybrid forms of political regime that differ from traditional forms of autocracy but fall short of democratic standards. Most importantly, the recent political developments in countries such as Venezuela, Turkey, Hungary and several others across the world suggest that authoritarian rule is experiencing resurgence.

During the past few years, scholars have mainly investigated the institutional features of contemporary non-democratic regimes – e.g. the benefits deriving from the institutionalization of ruling parties and legislatures, the several functions that elections may fulfil and their ambiguous implications in terms of regime stability.

To contribute to this rapidly expanding literature, and with a focus on the XXI century, the proposed panel seeks papers that deal with three main topics. First, the mechanisms and the strategies through which non-democratic regimes “upgrade” their domination and try to consolidate their power, deter the challenges coming from opposition forces, and resist the pressures emanating from international actors. Second, how and why non-democratic regimes can be defeated, taking into consideration both elite-pacted transitions and mass-based uprisings. Third, the different ways in which autocracy may emerge (or be re-installed) in a country, including both gradual processes of autocratization and violent ruptures of democratic (or almost democratic) rule, and in which autocratization can be halted or reversed.

Chairs: Gianni del Panta