

Petru Culeac

EASTERN EUROPEAN POST-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENTS: BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIANISM

Project description

"threats to democracy will come not from coups or revolutions but from groups of individuals who win elections, take power and then manipulate the democracy..."

S. P. Huntington



New Eastern European democracies are threatened by inner flaws that these democracies have inherited from their former political systems. One of these flaws is contained in the electoral politics and party systems of these countries.

The project intends to analyze the abnormalities of post-socialist democracy building process in Eastern Europe. Specifically it focuses on studying the causes of establishment of authoritarian and/or hybrid governments in post-socialist states by analyzing the development of political parties and citizens' electoral behavior in countries of Eastern Europe after the dismantlement of Soviet Union.

- The project consists of a comparative study of several states from Eastern European former socialist states (i.e. both from former Soviet Union as well as from among Warsaw pact countries) - Moldova, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

- The central object of study will be the electoral process, with a focus on the governing political actors and the electorate in the selected states.

Hypothesis

- The main question of the research is **"what are the causes of the establishment of hybrid governments in former socialist countries?"**

Concepts

The research envisages the analysis of:

- political parties' development
- characteristics of citizens' political behavior.

The research will use such concepts as:

- Hybrid governments,
- civil society
- legitimacy of post-socialist political actors,
- citizens' cultural characteristics influencing their political behavior,
- electorate ignorance,
- models of democratic transition and regime change.

Theoretical background

- Democratic development theories,
- Political cleavages theories (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967),
- Voter ignorance theories (Converse and Roy Pierce 1986; Neumann 1986; Benett 1988; Carpini & Keeter 1996),
- Voters behavior theories (Marquette, Hinckley, 1988).

Methodology

- Interviews with the leaders (or top members) of the major political parties in the selected states.

- With regard to the electoral behavior I will use the data of various surveys conducted in the selected countries by independent civil society institutions such as the Institute for Public Policies (in Slovakia and Moldova).

The researcher



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