

Call for Papers

For a **Conference in Hamburg** (Germany) from **18th to 20th of March 2015** and a Special Issue of the German Scientific Journal "Politische Vierteljahresschrift" on the subject:

'Democracy' beyond the West: Theories, Discourses, Attitudes

All over the world, and not only in the Western hemisphere, people are thinking and discussing about democracy. Theoreticians, politicians, and interested citizens are concerned with democracy's central issues and problems in large parts of the world. For this reason, the still existing concentration of political science to the Western world reaches conceptually, normatively, and empirically its limits. Increasing migration of persons and ideas, new cases of successful and -less democratization (like in the 'Arab Spring'), and the emergence of global perspectives in the humanities and social sciences justify the claim that especially the research on democracy should adopt itself to non-Western theories and realities. This claim concerns all dimensions of theoretical and empirical research on democracy: from approaches to global history and history of ideas of democracy, over the confrontation of democratic theory with non-Western realities, and the investigation of non-Western cultural traditions in respect of their affinity and compatibility with democracy and, at the same time their potential to reformulate and enlarge the concepts of the research on democracy, up to global empirical comparisons of attitudes toward democracy and the implications and consequences for measuring democracy.

Sophia Schubert (Free University of Berlin) and Alexander Weiß (University of Hamburg) are organizing a **conference** on this topic which will take place **at the University of Hamburg from 18th - 20th of March in 2015** under the title: 'Democracy' beyond the West: Theories, Discourses, Attitudes. After an external review process, the contributions are considered for publication in the special issue 2016 of the "Politische Vierteljahresschrift" (www.pvs.nomos.de/index.php?id=1657&L=1), a high ranked German journal. Contributions to the conference and the publication in English are very welcome.

The guiding question for the project is: How is democracy conceptualized and justified beyond the West? The concept of democracy will be the central issue in the contributions. As first orientation we propose a working definition of democracy as participation of citizens in the sense of people's sovereignty. Under 'non-Western' we preliminary subsume countries outside Mid- and Western Europe and North America (so that, e.g., Eastern Europe, or Japan intentionally are counted as non-Western).

The call is addressed particularly but not exclusively to scholars in political theory, comparative politics (especially with research on political culture), and area specialists, since these three branches of political science share our subject but bring in different thematic and methodic priorities: While political theory and history of ideas usually discusses concepts of democracy on the theoretic and reflexive level, discourses on democracy in civil society or politics are a subject of research in area studies. Comparative research on political cultures again is focused on democratic attitudes. For the special issue we intend to provide a constructive and fruitful dialogue between the mentioned sub-disciplinary fields. This will also be supported by

questions on democratic conceptions beyond the West that should be considered by the contributions:

Theories: In which theories outside of the Western world can democratic elements be found? What about those theories with the label 'democratic'? How, e.g., is the relation between democracy and Islam conceived (e.g. in texts by Mohammed Abed Al-Jabri or Abdolkarim Soroush), or between Confucianism and democracy (Tu Weiming, Daniel A. Bell)? Given the global plurality of theories, how can democracy be conceptualized and justified? From the program of 'Comparative Political Theory' since and beyond Fred Dallmayr up to new approaches to the history and history of ideas of democracy from Amartya Sen to John Keane and Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell the beginning of this research can be identified.

In this field we expect contributions to non-Western history of ideas of democracy as well as to non-Western contemporary theories of democracy. Besides this, cross-cultural perspectives and intercultural comparisons should be applied and / or problematized.

Discourses: Which discourses on democracy among political elites or agents within civil society can be found in non-Western countries? What are the differences and similarities, and what are possible causes for this? Which findings from research on processes of democratization help us to call into question putative certainties on democracy?

In this field, area specialists can bring in their particular expertise – be it with case studies or with comparative analyses. The contributions should investigate discourses on democracy in civil society (or societies) and appropriate agents like political elites, intellectuals, political parties, etc.

Attitudes: While findings from standardized empirical research show that democracy is highly *valued* by populations around the world, their *definitions* and *concepts* of democracy are just beginning to be explored by empirical research (Dalton/Shin/Chu 2007, Braizat 2010, Bratton 2010, Chu/Huang 2010, Diamond 2010, Shi/Lu 2010). Which meanings associate citizens of non-Western countries with 'democracy'? Which differences can be seen in comparisons among countries or regions? How can they be explained? To which extent do cultural and philosophical traditions influence and frame current definitions of democracy? Are the various concepts of democracy sufficiently similar so that measurements for cross-cultural comparisons can be derived from them?

In the contributions to this field we encourage authors to prepare or apply research on concepts and legitimacy of democracy in the minds of citizens in non-Western contexts.

The contributions can be of theoretical (conceptual, concerning history of ideas, normative, analytic) or empirical nature (quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods). Proposals from female as well as young academics are particularly welcome. Besides that we would like to encourage scholars to hand in proposals combining the subject of the call and gender perspectives.

Please send your proposal for contribution (1 to maximal 2 pages) to the editors of the special issue **Sophia Schubert** (sophia.schubert@fu-berlin.de) and **Alexander Weiß** (alexander.weiss@wiso.uni-hamburg.de) until the **31st of July 2014**.