



The Cross-National Diffusion of Popular Mobilizations Against Authoritarian Rulers: Comparing 1989, the Color Revolutions and the Arab Uprisings

Valerie Bunce, Cornell University

March 6, 2013, 5 - 7 p.m.
Room A 310

Invitation

Central to the analysis of diffusion is identifying what is being diffused and explaining why that innovation travels across units. In this talk, Valerie Bunce compares three cross-national waves of popular mobilizations against authoritarian rulers over the past quarter of a century – that is, 1989, the color revolutions and the Arab uprisings – in order to address precisely those questions.

What is striking about these three waves is, first, that the strategies used to challenge authoritarian rulers varied so much – not just among these waves, but also across them. In particular, we see four such strategies: popular protests, roundtables, electoral challenges and challenges that combined elections with post-election protests. She argues that two variables account for these four successful strategies: whether the authoritarian regime was competitive or non-competitive and whether the regime was hard-line or soft-line. Second, these waves featured two different drivers: demonstration effects and transnational networks. However, they also reveal the importance of a third factor – the movement of the challenge to authoritarian rulers early in the dynamic to a country that was, in contrast to the early riser, ideally-positioned to make the wave “a wave”. Here, she compares the role of East Germany in 1989; Serbia in the color revolutions and Egypt in the Arab uprisings.

Valerie Bunce is the Aaron Binenkorb Professor of International Studies and Professor of Government at Cornell University.

Please reply by March 5, 2013 to Marie Unger: marie.unger@wzb.eu.

In cooperation with



Social Science Research Center
Berlin
Reichpietschufer 50
D-10785 Berlin
Telefon +49 (30) 25491-0
Telefax +49 (30) 25491-684