IPSA RC 36, partner organization of APSA, for the annual meeting of APSA in Philadelphia, September 5-8, 2024

***Panel Theme: Power and Democracy: Retrenchment, Renovation, or Reimagination***

The past decade has exhibited considerable political turmoil in democracies across the world. Democratic institutions have been challenged with nativist and authoritarian incursions across the world. Indeed the configuration of political power has been in flux, even in nations with the longest standing democratic cultures. Being immersed in the historical moment, ascertaining a clear systemic picture of this democratic crisis proves difficult for scholars. Is democracy withering, transitioning or just being reimagined? We invite papers that speak to this issue of democratic crisis.

***Organizer: Giulio M. Gallarotti, Columbia University and Wesleyan University***

***Chair: Renee Marlin-Bennett, Johns Hopkins University***

***Discussant: J.P. Singh, George Mason University***

***Papers***

***Welcoming Foreigners: the Foundation to Soft Power Influence***

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If democratic countries are often soft power leaders, not so much because their political system is attractive, but instead because their societies are open and welcoming to outsiders, then rising nativist movements in democracies may in the long run undermine these countries’ soft power influence in the world. The Soft Power Rubric uses observable activity – the number of social interactions people have with foreigners – to identify which countries in the world have the most soft power. This includes immigration, international students, foreign visitors, and movies. Global rankings based on these data align roughly with other rankings based mainly on public opinion data. While democracies top the Soft Power Rubric rankings list, not all democracies rank highly. This suggests arenas usually considered domestic policy such as immigration, education, tourism, and culture, have significant and enduring impact on a country’s standing in the world.

***Democracies and Soft Power***

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Soft power literature has suggested that it is the liberal democracies that end up relying on soft power tools and not the non-democracies. The underlying theory suggests that soft power is an American concept that was created to support the democratization of other countries and spread the liberal ideology. This paper compares two groups of 28 countries to test where the democracies use more soft power than non-democracies. The time-frame is 1995-2010. The findings indicate that non-democracies use a surprising amount of soft power. China uses 87% of soft power compared to the USA’s 83% and Russia’s 81%. Therefore, the findings indicate that all countries use soft power, not just the liberal democracies.

***Analysis of the Relationship Between Grand Strategy, Policy and Reality in Public Diplomacy: Who Says What and Does What***

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Public diplomacy policies designed according to grand strategy are generally based on an ideological background. However, concrete public diplomacy actions are conveyed through more humane and universal discourses. This situation creates a structural paradox. Public diplomacy is based on a positivist perspective. The ultimate purpose of public diplomacy actions is to achieve the country's interest. This reality should be taken into consideration in public diplomacy. Public diplomacy literature does not adequately analyze the impact of ideology and politics on the results of action. The main aim of this project is to analyze the impact of grand narratives and ideological background on public diplomacy actions. In other words, it is to address the equation between grand narrative, ideology and reality in public diplomacy actions. The project basically seeks answers to the following questions. *Is a public diplomacy free from ideology possible?, If a public diplomacy free from ideology is possible, how is the effectiveness of action without ideology?, What is the effectiveness and impact of the grand narrative on public diplomacy?*

The research is based on literature and content analysis methods. The sample group of the project includes six countries divided into big, medium and small-sized powers depending on their political and economic influence. The USA and China will represent big-sized states, Turkey and South Korea will represent medium-sized states, and Qatar and Estonia will represent small-sized states. Each of these countries has different institutional structures, objectives, discourses and philosophies in public diplomacy. These differences and small similarities in some areas will make important contributions to questioning the hypotheses of the project. Specific public diplomacy actions of these countries will be analyzed and compared with each other. Content analysis will be categorized according to the following three basic parameters:

a) Grand narratives, ideological perspectives and public diplomacy policies of countries,

b) Structural characteristics of public diplomacy activities (discourses, tools, target audiences, etc.),

c) International agenda and national agenda

The effects of the above three parameters on public diplomacy and each other will be analyzed. I think that the research results will contribute to the public diplomacy literature, policy makers and experts. I think the balance between discourse and practice will be even more important in the age of artificial intelligence. Even if public diplomacy is machine-centered, humans as policy makers are still a dominant and effective factor.