

What Goes Around Comes Around: Structural Analysis of Color Revolutions

Prospectus (first draft)

Abstract

A blueprint of political development in the post-soviet space emerged at the crossroad of institutionalized and street politics. Whereas stable democracies opted for evolutionary path, hybrid regimes swung between the evolutionary and revolutionary political changes. This paper aims at finding structural explanation to elite settlements during color revolutions. It is argued that although mass protests and street politics were very important during color revolutions, final outcomes were achieved through the negotiations between the incumbent and the opposition elites. Thus, the puzzle is why political contentious leads to negotiated outcomes in some cases and not in others? To answer this question the paper proposes comparative case study of Armenia and Georgia, two countries with similar conditions, but differential outcomes. In Georgia political contention powered by mass protests produced elite settlements and new equilibrium, whereas in Armenia similar processes strengthened already existing equilibrium. Applying network analysis as the theoretical foundation and research tool, this paper suggests that elite settlements should be understood as a competition between the government and the opposition networks. Theoretical discussion on structural approach is followed by a methodological framework for data collection and analysis. The data collection part describes methods of constructing one- and two-mode matrices for network analysis (organization-by-organization and individual-by-individual) and a snowballing technique to capture overlapping relations among the key political actors (organizational co-memberships, reputational links, advice networks, and friendship ties). The paper offers hypotheses to explain elite settlements with network properties. Specifically, elite settlement is expected in a network structure resembling to the Opinion Leader ideal type (most people with few connections, but few individuals with many ties). Also, networks featuring higher degree of reciprocation and abundance of structurally autonomous actors are hypothesized as having competitive advantage over the networks that do not possess these properties.