

***Political Sociology for a Globalizing World* by Michael S. Drake**

Reviewed by Ganna Grebennikova

In his book *Political Science for a Globalizing World*, Michael S. Drake calls for a political sociology which will be critical to concepts inherited from modernity, and responsive to current transformations in politics and society. Drake's research interests in political and historical sociology, politics and culture, war studies, and collective memory establish a vivid interdisciplinary ground for this introductory book: the author's broad knowledge of contemporary social theory, his careful observations of political events, and sociological imagination to link the two are clearly evident throughout the work.

Drake skillfully uses parallels from fiction, such as Jose Saramago's *Seeing* (2007). In this novel, a dominant majority of citizens cast blank votes for parliamentary elections, without any previous agreements, while the state attempts to 'normalize' this democratic process. In truth, this idea appears to be closer to reality than many modern sociological theories. The narratives of both Drake and Saramago develop the same idea: conceptual and institutional separation of the political and the social should be overcome, since actual social transformations challenge the formal institutional settings of politics.

For Drake, there are three major processes that link politics, society and political sociology in the 21st century: postmodernization, as decentralization in production of meaning; globalization, as the challenge to nation-states' sovereignty; and securitization, as redefinition of politics in terms of security. Drake believes that political sociology should reevaluate or even abandon the "zombie concepts" of ideology, class, nation-state, sovereignty, citizenship, civil society and public sphere. Political history of 20th century has proved these concepts to be irrelevant and misleading, and social scientists can no longer blindly accept them as sociological realities. Nevertheless, the crisis of modern institutions and their articulation in ideologies does not mean 'depolitization,' but rather the relocation of the politics of power 'from below,' in everyday life.

Ideology is a particularly good starting point to demonstrate the shift from modern politics to postmodernity. The author clearly shows how the distribution of goods and services became the paradigm of modern politics, and why it brought national-states and class-based mass parties into existence. In general, classical ideologies were expected to function only in this peculiar combination of a rigid class structure, the national system of distribution, and nationalism.

Major social transformations in the late 20th century, however, proved the modern paradigm and its ideologies to be short-lived abnormalities. Ideologies lost their institutional base due to economic globalization; Drake notes weaker states, fragmented nationalisms, the rise of new economies, and massive economic restructuring. On the social side, the dissolution of classes, individualization of political consumption, and new forms of political action made ideologies unusable and rigid. Identity and the self, as opposed to classes, are becoming crucial mediators of politics and policies. Modern ideologies and nationalism survive as fragments of meaning that are reconstructed depending on needs: national cuisines, political rituals, or 'white working class' identity are all good examples of postmodernization.

At the same time, ideologies are further scattered by transformations in policy-making. Social distribution has been supplanted by representation as the ruling principle. Power is now exercised by defining subjectivities and meanings, rather than through the distribution of goods and services. Drake ingeniously connects the identity shift in mass politics with transformations in policy-making. He believes that the requirement for states to deal with identities has developed an unprecedented rationalization and expert objectivity in governmental institutions.

Correspondingly, massive preoccupation with identities and freedom of expression has increased the state's security concerns: 'securitization' generalizes the way in which states protect their sovereignty from the new, loosely organized political forms. This allows states to cunningly redefine politics in terms of security rather than equality, "making fear and suspicion into existential civic virtues" (p. 209). Additionally, it establishes close links between the police, the military, and various states of emergency.

Drake's account of securitization shows how ideologies give way to discourses in the politics of representation: the latter are not merely sets of ideas, but fields of expertise, and modes of knowledge production to differentiate, define and divide. If developed by formal institutions like states or corporations, however, expert discourses tend to restrict new political forms and non-institutional political initiatives, thus becoming a part of the problem.

In a similar fashion, Drake addresses other major concepts of modern political sociology. His comments on conceptualizations of power are crucial for understanding his political preferences. It is clear to him that classical theoretical conceptualizations of power fail to address contemporary issues in all their complexity: they prove to be one-sided and rigid. Elite theory's 'power of possession' survives only because it has no essential social foundation: elites are always loosely organized groups. Weber's instrumental conception, based on legitimacy, tends to end up in faulty "normative progressivist modernization theory," and the modern state becomes the "ultimate form of political development" (p. 32). Finally, structural explanations of power in Marxism prove to be simplistic in contemporary societies where dominant ideology can no longer provide a totalizing picture of the world.

Drake reasonably develops a multidimensional framework to analyze decentralized power in the contemporary world. The concepts of power that he introduces are 'constituted' and 'constitutive' power, demonstrating the gap between formal institutionalized politics, and new forms of political action. The author explicitly prefers constitutive power as a creative de-centered action 'from below' that challenges modern institutions and proves them irrelevant.

Drake might sound somewhat normative in his appraisal of constitutive power, but the tension between the two modes of power serves as an effective organizing principle for his work. Social movements and the politics of everyday life clearly stand as constitutive, while institutions such as the nation-state, civil society, public sphere, citizenship and police - all modern by design - work to preserve their consistency.

Social movements (SM) are of primary importance in the book's narrative; for Drake, they almost become the symbol of politics to come. Nevertheless, he manages to address their historical and structural accounts fairly. Through the 20th century, SM developed from sharing sources of legitimation with the modern state, to challenging expert discourses and hegemonies. While Enlightenment and tradition inspired social movements in the politics of distribution, the politics of representation encounters heterogeneity of identities and social settings.

Obviously for Drake, 'new social movements' are the source of social creativity, making use of new ideas about power and inventing new modes of action. They also stimulate theoretical developments based on their activities, with Foucault and Bourdieu as popular examples. What is most notable about new SM, is that they are not simply representations of fixed identities, but also instances of diversity and contestability within larger identity groups: "Daily life becomes a political theatre, in which given identities and practices become contested" (p. 149). According to Drake, a similar process evolves in subcultures and radical political groups; they may no longer be rigidly organized, but "...personal experience articulates [ideological] linkages" (p. 153). So, though social movements are loosely organized, they are articulated through experience, performance and everyday life.

As Drake elegantly states, "new ways of living confront the control imperative as risks, as ontological threats to security itself" (p. 155). The modern state is the first to be challenged; because it is no longer the sole source of sovereignty, it is an agent of global economic processes, and thus, it must develop new heterogeneous forms of control over its citizens and resources. At the same time, globalization does not make states weaker, but rather reassembles and reorients the properties of the modern nation-state.

First, the previously mentioned concept of 'securitization' authorizes states to have wider access to individual privacy. Drake reviews Beck's 'risk society' and Giddens' 'reflexive modernisation' to claim that people become more aware of new risks and possibilities, but, at the same time, governments use this awareness as a reason to extend security programs. Ultimately,

once neutral, discourse of security penetrates into all formal institutions, creating a completely new phenomenon. For this reason, there is nothing radical about Drake's claim that states are in constant war with their societies, as diversity of individual lifestyles and life politics has made the social invisible to all formal institutions. As in Jose Saramago's novel, the state of emergency is becoming the basic way for states to ensure their sovereignty, and the discourse of politics transforms into the discourse of control.

Second, the institutions that formerly operated at a critical distance from the modern state ultimately became incorporated into the state. According to Drake, states continually reconstruct new connections between the public and private. Universal citizenship can no longer deal with diversity, and multicultural citizenship creates more problems than it solves. Citizenship is thus transformed into a political strategy of governing through culture. States begin to control and stimulate individual participation through people's identification with a community or mode of consumption. At the same time, national identity as a 'real' fantasy provides comfortable illusions of coherence and ontological security, where citizenship fails to do so.

Similarly, Drake shows how the public sphere and civil society may themselves become the 'media of control' (p. 133), driven by surveillance and fear of exclusion. This becomes possible when civil society institutionalizes and loses its moral opposition to the state. The public sphere becomes corrupt when it opens itself to private interests and commercialization.

Still, these two modern concepts may be useful, if social scientists are able to redefine them as connectors of the political and the social. As an example, Drake proposes that one accept the public sphere widely as a space of symbolic exchange, and thus view street demonstrations, political humor, graffiti or even egg throwing as manifestations thereof, similar to text or speech.

In the end, Drake draws a picture of political sociology as a constitutive force in political discourse; along with social movements, it should become an 'imperative for existing power' (p. 172). However, this is only possible if social science chooses a conscious and cautious direction away from old concepts, toward a radically different understanding informed by new political practices.

Nevertheless, for students who expect to find a consistent and brief introduction to political sociology, this book may prove to be disappointing. Apart from his conceptualization of power, Drake exerts little effort in keeping his narrative integrated; the variety of theories used deserves more solid conclusions. The work seems to lack thorough theoretical synthesis; Drake's attempt to identify current transformations in politics never extends beyond reviews of his contemporaries and observations of political practice. His reliance on the chaotic social as the "key ... from the iron cage of modernity" (p. 209) may seem precocious and even millenarian for serious-minded readers.

In conclusion, the shortcomings of this work can easily become advantages for those who value theory informed by practice. Indeed, this multifaceted book is, at its best, an argument starter; Drake wishes that it will be "...discussed, contested, challenged, and... tested against the everyday reality of political events at every level..." (p. 1). For independent-minded observers, this book is a good starting point for critical reflection on current transformations in politics.

Drake, Michael S. (2010) *Political Sociology for a Globalizing World*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Saramago, Jose (2007) *Seeing*. London, Vintage Books.