FORECASTING POLITICAL SYSTEM FUTURES

Use of Anticipations Data from two Elite Groups (Turkish and Japanese University Students and Legislators) for Forecasting System Futures

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Georgetown University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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The principal hypothesis of the present study is that anticipations of the future of critically placed social actors determine political behavior and political system outcomes. In this study, the anticipations of samples of Turkish and Japanese legislators and university students towards 35 possible political system futures are examined. Frequency tables, the Spearman correlation and factor analysis are used to reduce, describe and analyze the data.

The underlying assumption of this study is that any political system may be characterized or mapped in terms of alternative "outcomes" or "futures" and that the anticipations of critically placed respondent groups towards such "futures" governs their behavior and, in turn, determines political system outcomes. Therefore, a study of anticipations towards such "futures" is believed to provide a novel basis for predicting political behavior and political system "futures".

In the present study, the author has: (a) developed a set of possible "futures" for the Turkish political system and for the international system; (b) analyzed the anticipations of legislators and university students towards these "futures"; (c) developed a theoretical framework and implemented a methodology for collecting and analyzing anticipations data and for empirically determining their relation to actual political system outcomes.

Two types of data are considered necessary for this study: (a) time series data on individual anticipations of political system "futures"; (b) time series data on political system outcomes. Through analysis of these data, the major hypothesis of this dissertation is testable. This dissertation offers only limited evidence in the empirical substantiation of this hypothesis.

The operational variables through which anticipations of alternative system "futures" were measured are: (a) the likelihood (probability) of each future, which is defined as how likely the respondent believes particular futures to be; (b) the desirability (preference) of each future, which is defined as how desirable particular futures are to the respondent. The results of the present study include:

(a) Development of a model through which the relationship of anticipations to behavior and system futures may be determined;
(b) Development of a methodology with which the anticipations of any types of respondents towards any kind of possible system futures may be examined;

(c) Analysis of appropriate data and demonstration of an empirical test of the hypothesis that anticipations determine (and predict) political system futures;

(d) Predictions of the probability of various futures for the Turkish political system and

(e) Predictions of the likely impact of various anticipation patterns on these futures.

The results of the present study indicate that further research into political systems and behavior using the anticipations approach will (a) produce valuable political data; (b) develop a "futures forecasting" capability in political science; (c) provide empirical evidence on the predictive power and empirical relationship of anticipations to political system outcomes.