Democracy in Reverse: Patterns of Autocratization in Eastern Europe and Eurasia

-- Research Workshop --
Friday, 19 October 2018
Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies
University of Tartu, Estonia

In what ways can we compare and better understand patterns of autocratization in the post-communist world? Autocratization can be seen as a process, in which democratic institutions, rights and practices are curtailed or undermined – to the point, of course, where an autocratic regime takes hold. However, because this phenomenon is defined as a continuum, it may also involve only incremental steps away from democratic rule, therefore allowing us to view this phenomenon in greater detail.

This one-day workshop features papers from scholars interested in comparing the processes and structures of autocratic decline in the post-communist region. It is designed to look at both the more visible pathways of autocratization in areas such as Central Asia, Russia or Belarus as well as more recent cases in countries like Hungary and Poland. While many of the temporal and contextual factors driving these processes may be different, there is clearly a growing need within the study of post-communist politics to understand how democratic orders can be weakened and how increasingly impervious autocratic regimes are built up in their place.

Workshop venue: Social Sciences building, Lossi street 36, auditorium 214.

*** Program ***

8:30 Registration and coffee

9:15 Introductory Welcome
Vello Pettai, Director, V-Dem Regional Center for Eastern Europe and Russia
Piret Ehin, Coordinator, UPTAKE Consortium

9:30 KEYNOTE PRESENTATION
Anna Lührmann (V-Dem Institute, University of Gothenburg), “Measuring Varieties of Autocracy with V-Dem Data”

10:45 Coffee break

11:00 Panel 1: Regional analyses
Vello Pettai (University of Tartu), “Varieties of Autocratization in Eastern Europe and Eurasia”
Leonid Polishchuk, Kharis Sokolov (Uppsala), “Post-Communist Transition as a Critical Juncture: Political Origins of Institutional and Cultural Bifurcation”
Kazushige Kobayashi (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva), “People’s Autocracy? The Democratic Drivers of Autocratization in Post-Communist Europe”
Clara Moder and Joachim Pranzl (University of Vienna), “Civil Society and the State in Times of Populist Authoritarianism”

Discussant: Katrin Uba (University of Tartu)
12:30  **LUNCH, University café, Ülikooli 20, 2nd floor**

**14:00  Panel 2: Poland & Hungary**
Klaudia Hanisch (Institut für Demokratieforschung, University of Göttingen), “Populist Mobilization and Partisan Polarization in Poland”
Baiba Witajewska-Baltvilka (Institute for Structural Research, Warsaw), “Can Political and Economic Inequality Explain the Backlash of Democracy in Hungary and Poland?”

*Discussant: Zselyke Csaky (Nations in Transit, Freedom House)*

**15:30  Coffee break**

**15:45  Panel 3: Eurasia**
Evgeny Ivanov, Semen Ulasevich (HSE Moscow) “Common patterns of old and new incarnations of post-Soviet autocratization: cases of Belarus and Poland”
Alexandra Yatsyk (Warsaw) “Biopolitics of ‘illiberal democracies’ in Europe and beyond: the cases of Poland and Russia”
Maryna Rabinovych (Odessa National University) “The EU Neighbourhood Policy Under The Crisis Of International Liberal Order: Implications For Democracy-Autocracy Dichotomy In Ukraine, Moldova And Georgia”
Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen (University of Helsinki) “The Conservative turn and nature – Climate denialism and ‘hydrocarbon culture’ in Russia”

*Discussant: Fernando Casal Bértola (University of Nottingham)*

**17:30  Coffee break**

**17:45  CONCLUDING PANEL: Are we in a new era of autocratization?**
-  Nate Schenkkan, Nations in Transit, Freedom House
-  Anna Lührmann, V-Dem Institute, University of Gothenburg
-  Andrey Makarychev, Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu

*Moderator: Piret Ehin*

**18:30  Workshop close**

**19:30  Workshop dinner (Café Werner, Ülikooli 11, 2nd floor)**

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