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Uppsala University

Around the Corner? Female Empowerment, Security, and Elite Mind-sets in Georgia

In this paper, the question in focus is if Georgia's dynamic development in the areas of economy and state reformation starting with the Rose revolution 2003 has increased the possibility of future gender equality in the country. To find an answer, the chapter investigates the way the elite think about gender equality today, drawing on material from a recent and unique elite survey. By contrasting the Georgian elite culture to that of neighboring Armenia, the chapter provides a reasonable point of reference for assessing cultural change. The findings, of an ongoing cultural change in Georgia towards female empowerment, gives hope for further human development and for better relations to Russia.

Yulia Gradszkova
Mälardalen University

Gendered Subject of Postsocialism: State Socialist Legacies, Global Challenges and (Re)Building of Tradition

The panel is aimed for presentation of the main ideas of the book "Gendering Postsocialism. Old Legacies and New Hierarchies (Routledge, 2018, edited by Y.Gradszkova and I.Asztalos Morell). Among the questions discussed by the contributors are: How are gender expectations shaped in the conflict between impulses towards more gender equality versus the re-naturalisation/re-traditionalisation of gender norms, and how are the new gender norms entangled with the neoliberal economic demands, precarities, "multifaceted injustice", new forms of socio-economic differentiation, and insecurities? How can the analysis of gender norms and expectations in the space of former state socialism contribute to a study of global developments in gender relationships?

Harri Melin
University of Tampere

Russian working life and the myth of precarity

In recent decades Russian work life and the Russian labour market have been characterized simultaneously by change and stability. There have been some changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but the progress has been slow and many Soviet era-customs still persist (Puffer & McCarthy 2011). The Russian labour markets are facing increasing challenges with the quality of the labour force. Specialists of top qualifications lack behavioural skills. They cannot solve job tasks on their own and show initiative. They have problems in planning and organizing their time and they have to improve their ability to work with clients. In conclusion, our results indicate that Russian work life does not differ significantly from what is considered the normal European way of organizing wage labour. Russian business practices, workplace relations and employees' attitudes to work are closely aligned with other European nations.

Ann-Mari Sätre (Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University), Leo Granberg (Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University), Alla Varyzgina (Lobachevsky state University of Nizhny Novgorod, Russia)

Poverty and civil society

In earlier research of the project team it became clear that large-scale poverty in Russia has been the cause for a series of political measures aiming to stimulate economic and social development, even if poverty as such is not the explicit goal for any strong direct measures. During the long growth-period in Russian economy in 2000-2008, poverty decreased with the help of national political programmes, however, also local agency complemented political measures. The focus of the paper is on the reactions in civil society on the local level, related to poverty problems. Theoretically the paper is utilising the frame of institutional economics while adding an orientation to agency as the changing factor. Poverty can be understood as an objective or a subjective phenomenon, or like Amartya Sen as a capability deprivation, inability to achieve a collection of functioning. In this presentation, interpretations are based on qualitative study data. First the typical family level vicious and virtuous circles in development of poverty are discussed and secondly the answers of civil society to poverty are analysed. This includes among others preliminary answers on the questions, 'what kind of changes and new forms has civil society experienced, while answering the challenge of poverty and its ramifications?', and 'how are civic actors adapting into the political harnesses?' The paper is based on interviews from years 2002-2016, of local people, especially of representants of local groups and associations, which are of several different types.

Noah Buckley
New York University Abu Dhabi

Verticals and Horizontals: Networks of Power under Consolidating Authoritarianism

This paper examines patterns of personal connections in Putin-era Russia's political elites. Using a comprehensive, original biographical database, I build a series of quantitative social networks of connections between 1086 members of Russian government structures from 2000-2012. In particular, this paper uses this information on career trajectories and coalitions among mid- and high-level officials, along with new data on personal income, to illuminate prominent groups and individuals within the Putin regime. I then use this data to show how coalitions have changed over time, to study patterns of authority within and between these groups through the use of measures of network characteristics, and to show features of the network that are important for attaining status within the regime. This paper draws conclusions with general implications for our understanding of loyalty and competence, regime durability, and authoritarian consolidation of authority.

Ivana Polic
University of California, San Diego

(Re)educating the Youngest: Changes in Croatian Elementary Schooling after Independence

The violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, which lasted for almost a decade, saw the emergence of an independent Croatian state with a strong nationalist leadership. While histories of ethnonationalist conflicts and postwar transitions largely focus on adult actors, this project highlights the centrality of the youngest generations to the post-communist nation building in Croatia. It looks at the changes implemented in the elementary school system, with a special focus on the so-called national subjects, such as history, geography, and nature and society. My main argument links elementary school education to the most conspicuous strategies of nation building in independent Croatia, especially the manipulation of national history and different kinds of discrimination or exclusion of other ethnic groups in the state. Therefore, this research perspective provides an insight into the importance of elementary school education as a tool for nation building in Southeastern Europe after the collapse of communism on the brink of the twenty first century, and the role it played in the political leadership's striving to integrate Croatia into the European community.

Kiryl Kascian

International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity Studies

Constitutional identity in the post-Soviet Eastern Europe: Soviet basis and nationalizing superstructure

The paper focuses on the maintenance of constitutional identity in six post-Soviet countries: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova and Ukraine. Having experienced the Soviet rule, these countries have demonstrated different paths of development. The EU membership of the three Baltic States means per se a consistence of their legislation with the *acquis communautaire*. Moreover, the membership of all the countries in question (except Belarus) in the Council of Europe means that the acts pertinent to their constitutional identity must also comply with the CoE binding legal instruments pertinent to human rights. The experiences of the listed countries prompt a discussion about individual states' limits and capabilities for adopting or amending a domestic legislation under an external supervision and the effects of path dependency.

Usually included in constitutional preambles, some outlining provisions offer an official view on the country's "history behind the constitution's enactment, as well as the nation's core principles and values" (Orgad, 2010). These historical references have both legal and social functions (*ibid*). They can be characterized by non-legalistic language (Bayir, 2013) and a hybrid specification of national identity markers (Meyer Resende, 2015). The paper addresses the current perceptions of nationhood in the constitutional law of the three Baltic States as well as Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. The author analyzes the ruptures and linkages between the Soviet official approaches and the current frameworks.

Brian Kuns Oane Visser
Stockholm University

A critical, comparative history of agroholding farming in Russia and Ukraine

The dominant agricultural trend in Russia and Ukraine has been the rise of large corporate agroholdings. This paper will examine the rise of these companies, exploring the different strategies and corporate governance practices they employ and tracing how they have changed over the last 15 years. Among other things, this paper will focus on how companies and investors have attempted to manage uncertainty and turmoil, arising from both agriculturally related and non-agriculturally related factors. The companies in focus in this study are publicly traded companies. There is not much data about the inner workings of large farm companies in this region in the public domain with the exception of the public companies. Such companies are a minority of the large farm sector, but play an outsized role, and therefore investigation of their strategies, activities and challenges is indicative of the sector in general. We systematically examine corporate documents and presentations and interview corporate managers from the public companies to better understand how the companies themselves frame their strategies and challenges. Also, aggregated data is presented from corporate financial and operational reports. This paper argues that the remaining large arable companies, after many difficult years, may be on the road to profitability, while arguing that the more consistently profitable vertically integrated holdings developed under conditions that are unlikely to repeat themselves.

Alexandra Yatsyk
University of Uppsala

Russian and Polish conservatism: a biopolitical perspective

This paper addresses Polish and Russian national identity projects as they are being developed by Putin and the ruling PiS party since they came into power in 2012 and 2015 correspondingly. I understand both discourses as biopolitically and illiberally conservative due to their emphasis on traditional and religious values in relation to body-constrain policy on family planning, gender and sexual issues, migrants, workforce, etc. Such policy measures are produced by the governments' concerned about fostering life of the population through various institutions and practices to produce a disciplinary and consolidated society, aggregated into a single collective body. Seen from the biopolitical perspective, a set of these regulatory mechanisms, applied to the whole population, contains a great deal of totalizing effect, which one could realize in radicalization of far-right and nationalist forces in Poland and amplification of militarist rhetoric in Russia. In my paper I compare Russian and Polish biopolitical policies raising questions about nodal points of Poland's and Russia's collective identities and their "points of suturing" into European normative order. In particular, I address different types of contemporary Polish discourses on the national identity in 2015-2017 as exemplified by debate on memory (the case of the "Smolensk tragedy" in 2010), the refugee crisis of 2015, and gender and body issues (the anti-abortion campaign). In case of Russia I focus on recent public debates about family, (homo)sexuality, education and others.

Florian Peters

The Institute for Contemporary History (Munich-Berlin)

In search of “socialist Thatcherism”. Reforming the economy in late socialist Poland

Polish communists' approaches to economic reform were necessarily heterodox throughout the 1980s: Faced with the breakdown of the national economy and the unprecedented political challenge by the Solidarity movement in 1980-1981, they staged a Stalinist-style „war on speculation”. In order to rebuild private economic initiative during Martial Law, they invited western capitalists to open up Polonia enterprises, while at the same time denouncing workers' self-government as “cryptocapitalist”. After half-hearted attempts to reform the planned economy had failed around the middle of the decade, the communist government opened up for real market reforms and tried to build popular support for a transition that promised individual economic freedom not as a first step towards democracy – but as its substitute. The latter approach was considered “socialist Thatcherism” by Moscow analysts. This paper traces the evolution of Polish concepts of economic reform during the 1980s and situates them in the context of similar endeavours in other countries of the socialist bloc. Based on research in party and government archives as well as on contemporary debates in the official and samizdat press, it analyses how neoliberal belief in free markets trickled into the Polish reform discourse way before the 1989 shock therapy, and how this shifted the stalemate between the communist government and the opposition movement. Thus, the paper aims to understand the Polish “transformation before transformation” in the broader context of systemic change in the last quarter of the 20th century.

David Szakonyi, Ora John Reuter
George Washington University

Elite Defection under Autocracy: Evidence from Russia

Elite cohesion is a fundamental pillar of authoritarian stability. High-level defections can signal weakness, embolden the opposition and, sometimes, lead to regime collapse. Using a dataset of 4,313 ruling party candidates in Russia, this paper develops and tests hypotheses about the integrity of elite coalitions under autocracy. Our theory predicts that elites defect when there is greater uncertainty about the willingness and/or ability of the regime to provide benefits and career advancement. Regimes that share power with the opposition, limit access to spoils, and lack formal institutions see more defections. Co-opting the opposition assuages outside threats, but leaves regime insiders disgruntled and prone to defect. Those with personal followings and business connections defect first, since they can pursue their political goals independently of the regime. Taken together, our results highlight important tradeoffs among authoritarian survival strategies. Many of the steps autocrats take to repel challenges simultaneously heighten the risk of defections.

Niklas Kossow
Hertie School of Governance

Collective action against corruption: monitoring public procurement in Ukraine

In recent years, an increasing amount of research has confirmed the growing role of information and communication technology (ICT) in the fight against corruption. Thereby it was argued that e-government tools and open data can help to increase oversight and social accountability by removing direct contact points between citizens and government officials, and by making public service delivery more efficient and transparent.

This paper builds on these arguments, by looking at the use of the electronic procurement system ProZorro in Ukraine. The system that was introduced as a civil society initiative in 2015, is now used by almost all procuring bodies in Ukraine. It is supplement by an online monitoring system called Dozorro that stipulates collective action against corruption and helps civil society organisations (CSOs) to fulfil their role as watchdog organisations. The paper assesses to what extent CSOs are successful in monitoring procurement and leading to a reduction of corruption within the procurement sector. It focusses on the mobilisation of collective action by NGOs and within the business community through the Dozorro system, but will also take into account other factors that affect the success and failure of these efforts. By comparing efforts in monitoring procurement in different regions in Ukraine, the paper is exploring the role of technology in this process and to what extent it contributed to a reduction in procurement. In its analysis the paper will rely on public procurement data, data on citizen engagement in this context, and supplement these data sources through qualitative interviews.