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Call for Applications

Second UPTAKE Training School

**Scrutinizing the Story of Good and Bad Institutions:  
Post-Communism and Beyond**

August 20-27, 2017

Tartu – Narva -- Tallinn (Estonia)

Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) have famously argued that the success or failure of nations depends, above all, on the kind of institutions that have been put in place: inclusive institutions promote innovation and prosperity while extractive institutions block socio-economic development, making sustained growth impossible.<sup>1</sup>

This training school examines Acemoglu and Robinson's thesis in the context of diverse institutions, regime trajectories and policy outcomes of post-communist Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Can the successes and failures of post-communist transition be explained in terms of inclusive and extractive institutions – rather than initial conditions, geography, resources, culture or the agendas of specific actors? Why did some countries develop inclusive and others exploitative institutions? Do extractive institutions in fact lead to failure, or can such regimes enjoy long periods of stability, economic growth and high levels of popular support? What are the patterns of institutional change in the region, both revolutionary and evolutionary? How can bad habits be broken, and how to protect inclusive institutions against take-over by vested interests?

Acemoglu and Robinson focus solely on domestic sources of success and failure, ignoring the international dimension of the issue. Domestic institutions are affected by such phenomena as imperialism and colonialism, differences between core and periphery and geopolitical competition. International institutions can change the structure of domestic incentives as well as normative predispositions. How, and with what results, do domestic, regional and international institutions interact?

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<sup>1</sup> Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*, New York: Crown Publishers, 2012.

We invite **PhD students and postdoctoral fellows** of different scholarly backgrounds (including but not limited to Politics, History, Sociology, Law, Economics and Cultural Studies) to submit paper abstracts addressing these and related questions.

The Training School provides opportunities for in-depth discussion around submitted papers, with the best papers published in the format of online conference proceedings. Each presenter will receive 45 minutes of speaking and question time. The discussion sessions will be supplemented by specialist lectures, study trips and social activities.

The opening lecture of the summer school will be given by Prof. **Rein Taagepera** (University of Tartu/University of California, Irvine), recipient of the 2016 Karl Deutsch award presented by the International Political Science Association, and of the 2008 Johan Skytte Prize, an honour considered one of the highest in the field of political science. Other confirmed speakers include **Stefan Hedlund**, Professor and Research Director at the Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University, Prof. **Leonid Polishchuk** (University of Uppsala/National Research University Higher School of Economics), and Dr **Allan Sikk** (University College London SSEES).

The first four days of the summer school will be held on the premises of the University of Tartu. The fifth day will be spent in Narva, Estonia's third largest city located on the country's border with Russia. The final day entails meetings, visits to state institutions and sightseeing in Tallinn.

Places are limited to a maximum of 25 participants. Participants affiliated with the universities of Uppsala, Tartu and Kent are fully funded by the UPTAKE consortium ([www.uptake.ut.ee](http://www.uptake.ut.ee)). The funding covers travel, accommodation and selected meals. **External participants are welcome** but are expected to cover their own travel and accommodation costs (with the exception of travel between Tartu, Narva and Tallinn which is covered by the organizers). There is no participation fee.

In order to apply, please fill in the attached form and return it to Kristel Vits ([kristel.vits@ut.ee](mailto:kristel.vits@ut.ee)) by **May 23, 2017**. Accepted participants are expected to submit full papers by **August 10** to ensure a guaranteed place at the Training School.

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