

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

-- *Research Workshop* --  
**Friday, 19 October 2018**  
*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** will invite papers from scholars, doctoral candidates as well as other guests, who are interested in comparing the processes and structures of democratic 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.

A special focal point for the workshop will involve examining comparative data on democratic and autocratic regime change available from the **Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)** dataset. V-Dem features comparative measurements of some 400 aspects (or variables) of democratic political order for more than 170 countries for the entire period 1900 to 2015. As such, V-Dem is the most comprehensive dataset currently available for not only evaluating, but also disaggregating patterns of political change – both democratic and autocratic.

The **keynote speaker** will be **Dr. Anna Lührmann**, post-doctoral research fellow at the V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenberg. Formerly a member of the German Bundestag, Dr. Lührmann will speak on “**Measuring Varieties of Autocracy with V-Dem Data**”.

We invite **paper proposals** (between 300-500 words) on all topics related to autocratization in the post-communist region. Proposals should be sent **by May 15** to:  
*Prof. Vello Pettai, Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu*  
[vello.pettai@ut.ee](mailto:vello.pettai@ut.ee)



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*There is no participation fee. Participation of researchers from Uppsala, Tartu and Kent – the UPTAKE partners – is fully funded by UPTAKE, subject to the eligibility criteria (this includes travel, meals and accommodation). External participants are warmly welcome, but will be expected to secure their own funding for travel, meals and accommodation. UPTAKE will host a joint dinner for all participants.*