



## **Workshop: “Why to fight against dictatorship at high personal costs? Studying political activism and its leadership in autocracies”**

**An EDP workshop organized by PD Dr. Sonja Grimm (U Konstanz/U Basel)  
in cooperation with PRIF, 17-18 January 2019, at PRIF, Frankfurt**

### **Contact**

PD Dr. Sonja Grimm, [sonja.grimm@uni-konstanz.de](mailto:sonja.grimm@uni-konstanz.de) (Academic program)  
Dr. Annika Elena Poppe, [poppe@hsfk.de](mailto:poppe@hsfk.de) (Conference logistics)

### **Venue, Hotel, Travelling**

*Workshop venue:* The workshop will take place on 17–18 January 2019 at the Peace Research Institute (PRIF), Basler Str. 27, D-60329 Frankfurt a.M. [<https://www.hsfk.de/en/>]

*Workshop hotel:* Participants with overnight stays are booked at: Hotel Favored Plaza, Esslinger Str. 8, D-60329 Frankfurt a.M. [<http://www.hotel-plaza-frankfurt.de>]. The hotel is three minutes walking distance from the workshop venue.

*Accommodation and its costs:* The accommodation is booked under your name. The costs for the accommodation including breakfast are covered by us directly. You need not pay for the bill upon checkout. Please kindly note: Costs for minibar or any other extra services need to be covered by yourself and paid prior to departure.

*Reimbursement of your travelling costs:* For the reimbursement of your travelling costs, please fill out the form that was sent to you via email, sign it, and attach all original receipts. Please send the complete package back to the following address immediately after the workshop, but no later than 31 January 2019:

Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF)  
Dr. Annika Elena Poppe  
Basler Str. 27  
D-60329 Frankfurt a.M.

*Please remember kindly:* As travel costs we can cover a regular flight in economy class and/or a train ticket in 2nd class as well as public transport to and from the airport and/or train station.

## Contents

Why do political activists (and especially their movement's leaders) fight against dictatorship and for political change even under high risk of imprisonment, torture or capital punishment? Given the repertoire of intimidation and repression available to authoritarian incumbents, fighting against their rule can come at a high cost, endangering the well-being of individual activists as well as that of their closest allies. The long-term detentions of leading opponents to authoritarian rule such as Nelson Mandela, or Aung San Suu Kyi and the recent death of the human rights activist and Nobel Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo provide striking examples.

In recent years, scholars from different disciplinary angles have increasingly turned their attention to political activism in autocracies. Studying the emergence, and endurance of political activism and social movements, scholars from sociology and political science focus on political opportunities such as regime structures, socio-economic context, and external support, as well as pre-existing social networks, previous protest experience, and existing communication channels to explain political activism. Anthropologists and ethnologists investigate political activism as a socio-cultural practice that is strongly rooted in local contexts while being also mobile beyond national borders. Researchers in the field of political psychology prefer to highlight personality traits such as values, attitudes, and self-attributed personality characteristics to study individual activism. This workshop intends to bring these different perspectives together in order to comprehensively analyse and explain the reasons, motivation and mobilization mechanisms of political activism and its leadership in autocracies.

This workshop calls upon researchers from the social sciences (e.g. political science, sociology, history, anthropology, ethnology, political psychology and related disciplines) to propose papers for presentation upon political activism and its leadership in autocracies. The focus is on political activism that challenges authoritarian incumbents (as for example anti-regime movements, resistance movements, dissident networks, human rights movements, or pro-democracy movements). Paper givers discuss theoretical frameworks, empirical research (large-n & small-n studies), and methodological advancement using a multitude of social science research methods.

The intended interdisciplinary dialogue shall shed new light upon reasons, motivation and mobilization mechanisms of political activism which challenges authoritarian rule. The workshop might serve as the starting point for creating an inter-disciplinary scholarly network on political activism in autocracies. During the workshop's discussions and a joint dinner, the participants will have time to explore the options of possibly creating a cooperative research project around the workshop's topics.

The workshop is organized by PD Dr. Sonja Grimm (U Konstanz/U Basel) and Dr. Annika Elena Poppe (PRIF) in cooperation with the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) and financially supported by the German Research Network External Democracy Promotion (EDP) funded by the Leibniz Association.

Updates about the program to be found at: [<https://www.external-democracy-promotion.eu/call-for-papers-why-to-fight-against-dictatorship-at-high-personal-costs/>]

## **Participants**

### *Paper givers*

Mr. Donnacha Ó Beacháin, Dublin City University, UK  
Mr. Bedrudin Brljavac, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Ms. Dina El-Sharnouby, FU Berlin, Germany  
Mr. Ivan Gomza, National University of Kyiv - Mohyla Academy, Ukraine  
Mr. Sebastian Hellmeier, University of Konstanz, Germany  
Mr. Leon N. Kunz, SOAS, University of London, UK  
Ms. Danijela Majstorović, University of Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Mr. Gift Mwonzora, Rhodes University, South Africa  
Mr. Murad Nasibov, Justus Liebig University of Giessen, Germany  
Ms. Olena Nikolayenko, Fordham University, New York, USA  
Mr. Abel Polese, Dublin City University, Ireland  
Mr. Anselm Rink, University of Konstanz, Germany  
Mr. Simon Rothers, Justus Liebig University of Giessen, Germany  
Mr. Ajan Shahini, Martin-Luther University Halle, Germany  
Ms. Tamar Tolordava, Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia  
Mr. Michal Vašečka, Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts, Slovakia  
Mr. Ankur Yadav, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India  
Ms. Viera Žúborová, Bratislava Policy Institute, Slovakia

### *Chairs & discussants*

Mr. Francis O'Connor, PRIF, Germany  
Ms. Sonja Grimm, U Konstanz, Germany  
Ms. Annika Elena Poppe, PRIF, Germany  
Mr. Jonas Wolff, PRIF, Germany

### *Organizational team*

Ms. Sonja Grimm, U Konstanz, Germany  
Ms. Annika Elena Poppe, PRIF, Germany  
Ms. Jana Baldus, PRIF, Germany  
Ms. Felicitas Fornefeld, U Konstanz, Germany  
Ms. Verena Grünhoff, U Konstanz, Germany

## **Papers & presentations**

Please submit your paper on 8 January 2019 at the latest to all workshop participants (simply hit the „reply to all“ button). We kindly ask you to prepare a presentation of max. 12 min allowing enough time for plenary discussion in each of the panels. The comments of the discussants should also not exceed 12 min for the complete panel. The visualization of your presentation through presentation slides is highly welcomed, but not a must. Beamer and laptop will be available to all presenters and discussants. In this case, please bring the final version of your presentation on a USB stick.

## **Program**

**Thursday, 17 January 2018**

**13:00**      *Arrival & light lunch*

**14:00 -14:15** *Welcome & introduction*

Sonja Grimm & Annika Elena Poppe

**14:15-15:30** *Panel 1: Pro-democracy activism and its leadership in autocracies*

Chair: Annika Elena Poppe

Sonja Grimm: Studying pro-democracy activism and its leadership in autocracies: workshop rationale and a research proposal

**16:00-17:30** *Panel 2: Mobilizing for democracy: causes and consequences*

Chair: Francis O'Connor

Discussant: Jonas Wolff

Sebastian Hellmeier: Demobilization or radicalization? The effect of pro-government mobilization on anti-government protest

Gift Mwonzora: For personal conviction or material benefits: mapping political activism of the post-2000 pro-democracy movement in Zimbabwe

Anselm Rink: Unemployment and rebellion: field experimental evidence from Zimbabwe (co-authored with Natalie A. Carlson)

**17:45-19:00 Panel 3: Revolutionary mobilization: colour revolutions and Arab spring**

Chair: Annika Poppe

Discussant: Sonja Grimm

Abel Polese & Donnacha Ó Beacháin: Opposition to authoritarian rule in post-communist spaces: a colour (and post-colour) revolution account

Ivan Gomza: The winter of our discontent: emotions and contentious politics in Ukraine during Euromaidan (co-authored with Nadiia Koval)

Olena Nikolayenko: Women's participation in a revolution: findings from the 2004 Orange Revolution and the 2013-2014 Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine

Dina El-Sharnouby: The 2011 Egyptian Uprising and the quest for citizenship rights and dignity: the political imaginaries of Egyptian revolutionary activists

**19:30 Dinner at the Molana Restaurant, Baseler Straße 21, D-60329 Frankfurt**

**Friday, 18 January 2018**

**9:00-9:15 Welcome & Wrap-up Day 1**

Sonja Grimm & Annika Elena Poppe

**9:15-10:45 Panel 4: Pro-democracy activism in Central and South Eastern Europe**

Chair: Annika Poppe

Discussant: Sonja Grimm

Michal Vašečka & Viera Žúborová: Naive activists: how decency changes power politics

Danijela Majstorović: Articulating direct democracy on the European periphery: politics of taking space and the post-socialist affect (co-authored with Zoran Vučkovic)

Bedrudin Brljavac: They see activism differently: Jajce high school students against ethnic segregation

Ajan Shahini: The impact of university on the student movement in Albania, 1990-1991

***11:15-12:45 Panel 5: Pro-democracy activism in Russia, China and Azerbaijan***

Chair: Jonas Wolff

Discussant: Francis O'Connor

Tamar Tolordava: Gender based and LGBTQ movements in Russia: state against activists and how its policy is shaping the political agenda in the post-Soviet countries

Ankur Yadav: Political activism and Russia's regime: Alexei Navalny's digital strategies

Leon N. Kunz: Between hope and despair: Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement and pro-democracy activism under Chinese rule

Murad Nasibov & Simon Rothers: Who and how fiercely punished? The case of Azerbaijan

***12:45-13:00 Conclusions***

***13:00 Light Lunch***

***14:00 Departure***