

Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Economies: Historical Legacies, Institutional Practices and Policy Perspectives

International Academic Workshop
21 - 24 September 2022, Tbilisi, Georgia

Funded by the **German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)**

Convener: Alexander Ebner (Goethe University Frankfurt).
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Schedule: Wednesday, **21 September**, 9:00 am to Saturday, **24 September**, 10:30 am.

Location: Accommodation is provided at **Rooms Hotel**, close to Rustaveli Metro Station.
Address: **14 M. Kostava Str.**, Tbilisi, Georgia, <https://roomshotels.com/hotel/tbilisi/>.
Contact: Tel.: +995 32 2020099, Email: tbilisi@roomshotels.com. Rooms also houses our workshop venue: the **“Central Room”** on the 1st floor of the hotel.

Arrival and Departure: Tbilisi Airport. We cannot reimburse costs for taxis. On ground transportation see: <https://www.tbilisiairport.com/en-EN/to-from-the-airport>. Recommended is a ride with bus No. 337 to the city center. Exit at bus stop “Philharmony”.

Programme: We might have an informal get-together already on 20 September after 20:00 – the location is yet to be confirmed. 21, 22 and 23 September are reserved for workshop proceedings from 9:00 onward. Additionally, on 23 September, Abel Polese will host a special session on academic publishing. Also on 23 September at 19:30, we will meet for a casual reception at Rooms. The workshop will conclude on 24 September at 10:30. Breakfast and lunch will be provided for you, whereas dinner needs to be covered individually.

Papers and Presentations: First drafts of papers have been made available by E-mail. We do not provide prints of the papers: please, bring your own copies in print or digital files. Presentations should be prepared in the form of Powerpoint-slides or Pdf-files. Please, bring the files stored on USB-sticks to the venue. Otherwise, you are free to send them to me by E-mail. Time slots for all the presented papers are 45 minutes. Presentations should take about 20-25 minutes, followed by questions and discussions.

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Thematic Overview

Three decades after the breakdown of Soviet communism, the historically unique challenge of transforming administrative command economies to market economies has resulted in diverse institutional patterns of economic, social, and political affairs. Following complex historical processes of institutional change, post-communist emerging economies exhibit substantial variations in the prevailing sets of formal and informal institutions, covering a wide domain of legal rules and market regulations as well as social norms and cultural values. These institutional varieties form the actual context of entrepreneurship.

In this setting, entrepreneurship in the operation of firms may be defined by diverse functions that cover a range from the discovery of market opportunities to the introduction of technological novelty. Likewise, entrepreneurship comes in diverse forms. It ranges from local family businesses in traditional industries via large oligopolistic and oligarchic industrial and service conglomerates to vibrant knowledge-intensive start-ups.

Crucially, in view of this diversity of entrepreneurial activities and their institutional settings, we would like to inquire whether there is a distinct quality of entrepreneurship in these post-communist emerging economies. Three key issues stand out in requiring further exploration:

- Historical legacies and their impact on entrepreneurship and its institutional context.
- Institutional practices of entrepreneurship in market and policy environments.
- Policy perspectives on the governance and regulation of entrepreneurship.

The matter of historical legacies points at the interplay of rupture and persistence in institutional change. Key topics are historically rooted patterns of cultural values, habits, and modes of behaviour, as well as economic structures, modes of economic organization, and government-business-relations, all of which might stem from the Soviet era or even Pre-Soviet traditions. Historical legacies are expected to prevail over decades or even longer, even though the legal foundations of economic and political systems may be subject rapid and disruptive change.

The matter of institutional practices refers to the circumstance that the establishment of market systems in political-economic transformation involves not only the introduction of price-regulated markets but also the establishment of a moral order of competition and commodification that may conflict with weak legal underpinnings and market-averse value orientations. This tension impacts the efficiency of market structures both regarding the top-down design by government and bottom-up spontaneous ordering by local actors.

The matter of policy perspectives refers to specific patterns in the governance and regulation of entrepreneurial affairs. Entrepreneurship requires an effective role of the state in governing markets, involving the promotion of good governance and the rule of law, paralleled by redistributive policy schemes of taxation and subsidies. In many post-communist emerging economies, however, the prevailing empirical reality is often marked by governmental inefficiency, rent-seeking, and corruption, framed by oligarchic influences and patronage networks that obstruct entrepreneurial activities.

In exploring these issues, the workshop “Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Economies: Historical Legacies, Institutional Practices and Policy Perspectives” discusses papers that address theoretical or empirical perspectives applied to post-communist economies in the South Caucasus region as well as Russia and other former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In disciplinary terms, institutional analyses from all fields of the social sciences are set to be addressed, involving sociology, political science, economics, business, history, anthropology, and geography.

Accordingly, the papers presented at the workshop cover a wide range of topics, which are nonetheless related with each other in that they address the institutional underpinnings of post-communist entrepreneurship. Topics that are addressed involve the matter of culture, religion, and trust in entrepreneurial affairs of post-communist economies, which goes together with the aspect of informal institutions and informal practices of entrepreneurial actors in diverse settings of markets, industries, and polities. Related topics address types of entrepreneurial innovation in the post-communist context. Policy aspects are introduced in terms of regulatory, legal, and governance issues. Social dimensions of entrepreneurial activities relate to these contextual issues.

Taking stock of research on post-communist entrepreneurship uncovers a comprehensive set of determinants and patterns of entrepreneurial activities in diverse socio-economic, cultural, and political settings. Looking ahead towards the future of these kinds of studies, however, might pose the question whether the labels of “post-communist” – or even more specifically in the European-Asian context: “post-Soviet” – types of economies, societies, cultures, and corresponding entrepreneurial activities still hold analytical value. If so, which aspects of entrepreneurship are still to be explored under the label of “post-communism”, and which patterns and commonalities justify the use of this label? If not, which kinds of differentiation have been observed, and which concepts and notions are meant to replace the concern with post-communist structures and legacies?

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Programme

20 September 2022

20:00 Casual Get-Together (to be confirmed)

21 September 2022

9:00-9:30

Welcome, Introduction, and Overview

9:30-10:30

Alexander Ebner (Goethe University Frankfurt)

Introductory Remarks "Exploring Varieties of Entrepreneurship in Varieties of Capitalism:
The Challenge of the Post-Communist Economies"

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30

Rano Turaeva (Ludwig Maximilian University Munich)

"The Genealogy of Post-Soviet Entrepreneurship: Trust and Religion in Regulating Informal
Economies"

Yuri Veselov (State University Saint Petersburg)

"Entrepreneurial Trust in Economy and Society in Transition"

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:00

Tobias Köllner (University Witten-Herdecke)

"Entrepreneurship, Politics, and Religion in Contemporary Russia: An Anthropology
Perspective"

Maksim Belitski (University Reading, with S. Zemtsov and Y. Tsareva)

"Geography and Persistence of Entrepreneurship in Russia"

15:00-15:30 Coffee Break

15:30-16:15

Plenary Discussion: Labelling Long-Run Transformations in the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia: “Post-Communist”, “Post-Soviet”, ... or something completely different?

22 September 2022

9:00-10:30

Abel Polese (Tallinn University)

Keynote Lecture: “Mapping Informality in Post-Socialist Spaces and Beyond: Is There a Framework That Brings Them All (Informalities) Together?”

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30

Markus Sattler (Leibniz Institute for Area Studies, University Greifswald, with L. Stephan)

“Thinking, Doing and Relating Innovation in Armenia and Georgia”

Salome Svanadze (Ilia State University, Tbilisi, with J. Espinoza)

“Entrepreneur-Led Development: Impact Investors’ Perspective for Providing Risk Capital”

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:00

Mariam Matiashvili (Ilia State University, Tbilisi)

“Local or Systemic Entrepreneurship? The Case of Georgia”

Mirgul Nizaeva (Regional Institute of Central Asia, Bishkek)

“Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Central Asia: Regulatory and Institutional Factors as a Growth Determinant of Small Firms”

15:00-15:30 Coffee Break

15:30-16:15

Diana Lezhava (Center for Social Sciences, Tbilisi State University)

“Education vs Informal Practices: What Hinders the Development of Knowledge-based Economy in Georgia?”

23 September 2022

9:00-10:30

Hannepes Taychayev (American University Bishkek)

“Privatization of Justice in Kyrgyzstan as Means for Improving Good Governance”

Marine Gevorgyan (Yerevan State University)

“Agrarian Reforms in the Third Republic of Armenia, 1991-2000”

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30

Iza Gigauri (Saint Andrews Georgian University Tbilisi)

“Perspectives of Social Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Georgia”

Viachaslau Filimonau (University Surrey, UK, Urgench University, Uzbekistan, Kyzyl Orda University, Kazakhstan, with U. Matyakubov, M. Matniyozov, A. Shaken, M. Mika)

“Female Entrepreneurship in Tourism as a Driver of Regional Revitalisation and Poverty Alleviation in Post-Soviet States: The Case of the Aral Sea Region in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan”

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:00

Olga Nikiforova (State University Saint Petersburg)

“The Entrepreneurial Climate in St. Petersburg: Lessons from the Pandemic”

Stéphane Kouassi (Goethe University Frankfurt)

“Entrepreneurship and Informality in Post-Communist Developing Economies: The Case of Benin”

15:00-15:30 Coffee Break

15:30-17:00

Abel Polese (Tallinn University)

Information and Training Session on Publishing and Academic Performance

19:30 Workshop Reception

24 September 2022

9:00-10:30

Wrap-Up, Outlook on Publication, Farewell

List of Participants

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