

The collapse of the Soviet Union fueled hopes for democratization in the former republics and for the emergence of a peaceful post-Cold War international order. The war in Ukraine of 2022 has definitely shown how fragile both expectations were. National and international factors have played a role in such outcomes.

The domestic dynamics have often led to a regime change that was the result of a combination of pressures from below and elite pacts, seemingly following the patterns of state-building and democratic change in Central Eastern Europe since 1989. However, only the Baltic republics succeeded in achieving at the same time independence and democratization, with the eventual integration in the EU. A more turbulent dynamic of 'failed revolutions' characterized the other former Soviet republics, moving towards hybrid regimes characterized by oligarchic power, political instability, weak rule of law, widespread corruption and nationalism as an instrument of legitimacy. The expectations that "coloured" revolutions could bring about democratic developments as well as peaceful mobilization for fair elections were not really met.

Putin's ascendancy in Russia created the model of a "sovereign democracy" with authoritarian rule, repression of any independent actor and a return to imperial forms of influence in the post-Soviet space. Russian nationalism grew in parallel to the enlargement of NATO and the Eastern expansion of the EU. Tensions between Russia and the West concentrated over Ukraine, since the pressure from below towards the Europeanization of the country was seen as a geopolitical threat in Moscow. The conflict of 2014 created a fracture between Russia and Ukraine that was not really sealed by the Minsk agreements.

The conference aims at investigating the international and domestic developments in the post-Soviet space, in light of the war launched by Russia in Ukraine in February 2022. Presentations and papers at the conference will address the broad historical paths of these areas, the emergence of nationalisms and ethnic politics, the mobilisation for democracy and the activism of civil societies, the relevance of economic structures, the evolution of political and military power, the international and domestic conflicts, and the possible ways of peaceful resolution in a stable international order.



In the shadow of collapse


Imperial legacies, failed democratization, civil society and nationalism in the post-Soviet space

Organizers:
Donatella della Porta
Silvio Pons
Scuola Normale Superiore

May 11 h 2-7pm

Join us on [TEAMS](#) 

May 12 10am-6pm

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May 11-12, 2023

Scuola Normale Superiore
"Altana" Conference Hall
5° floor
Piazza Strozzi, Florence

May 11, 2023

14:00-14:30

Welcome addresses

Luigi Ambrosio, Mario Pianta, Donatella della Porta, Silvio Pons
Scuola Normale Superiore

14:30-15:30

Keynote lecture

Rethinking regime trajectories in light of the war in Ukraine

Mark Beissinger, Princeton University

Pause

16:00-19:00

Civil society and social movements in the post-Soviet space

Where did the revolution go? Some notes on (the failure of) 'electoral democratization'

Donatella della Porta, Scuola Normale Superiore

Resolving or reproducing the post-Soviet hegemony crisis? The case of Euromaidan revolution in Ukraine

Volodymyr Ishchenko, Free University, Berlin

The protests and movements in Russia 2011-2022: democratization and political crisis

Oleg Zhuravlev, Scuola Normale Superiore

Vernaculars of power and powerlessness in wartime Russia

Samuel Greene, King's College London

The double-helix entanglements of transnational advocacy: moral conservative resistance to LGBT rights

Phil Ayoub, University College London
Kristina Stoeckl, Luiss Guido Carli, Roma

Discussants

Maria Chiara Franceschelli, Andriy Maliuk, Scuola Normale Superiore

May 12, 2023

10:00-13:00

Russia and the post-Soviet space

Putin's visions of world order

Silvio Pons, Scuola Normale Superiore

'Territorial integrity': Post-Soviet unification as a geographic ideology

Alberto Masoero, Università di Torino

The failure of liberal democracy in Russia

Riccardo Cucciolla, Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale

The policies of the Russian Federation towards Russian-speaking communities in the post-Soviet space

Carolina De Stefano, Luiss Guido Carli, Roma

Discussants

Adriano Roccucci, Università Roma Tre

Vanessa Voisin, Università di Bologna

Pause

15:00-17:00

Roundtable

Mark Beissinger, Princeton University,

Andrea Graziosi, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

Guglielmo Meardi, Scuola Normale Superiore

Mario Pianta, Scuola Normale Superiore

Angela Romano, Università di Bologna

Francesco Strazzari, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna Pisa

Pause

17:30-18:00

Conclusions

Donatella della Porta, Silvio Pons, Scuola Normale Superiore