EVENTS & DEADLINES

**January 7th**, 2014
- Mustapha Nabli
- Special Event

**January 9th**, 2014
- Adam Cathcart
- Institute for Korean Studies Event; Co-sponsored by the Mershon Center and the Institute for Chinese Studies

**January 13th**, 2014
- John Mueller
- Director's Speaker Series

**January 15th**, 2014
- Richard Immerman
- Diplomatic History Series

**January 24th**, 2014
- Student Peace Conference and Peace Awards
- Special Event

ARCHIVED EVENTS

EVENTS CALENDAR

Institute for Korean Studies Event; Co-sponsored by the Mershon Center

**SHEENA CHESTNUT GREITENS**

"Coercive Institutions and State Violence under Authoritarianism"

Thursday, November 07, 2013, 12:30PM - 2:00PM
Mershon Center for International Security Studies
1501 Neil Ave. Columbus, OH 43201

Register for the event here.

Sheena Chestnut Greitens is an academy scholar at Harvard University’s Academy for International and Area Studies. She is also an associate in research at Harvard’s Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, and an assistant professor of political science at the University of Missouri (on leave 2013-14).

She received her Ph.D. from Harvard University’s Department of Government in spring 2013. Her research focuses on authoritarianism, state-society relations, and international security in East Asia.

Abstract

How do autocrats construct their coercive apparatus, and why do these institutions engage in different levels of violence and repression? Despite a wave of recent interest in authoritarian politics, the origins, design, and behavior of coercive institutions that embody the state’s monopoly on violence remain relatively unexamined.

This project examines the origins and operation of the coercive apparatus in three Cold War anticommunist authoritarian regimes -- Taiwan, the Philippines, and South Korea. I argue that autocrats face an organizational trade-off between designing their internal security apparatus to deal with a popular threat, or coup-proofing it to defend against elite rivals. Autocrats construct coercive institutions to deal with the threat they perceive to be dominant upon coming to power, and organizational characteristics then give rise to predictable patterns of state violence. A more fragmented, exclusive security apparatus -- associated with a high initial threat from fellow elites -- is likely to be more violent, both because it has stronger incentives to engage in violence and because it lacks the intelligence capacity to engage in discriminate, preemptive repression.

In contrast to existing threat-based explanations of repression, I demonstrate that autocrats who are deeply concerned about popular threats use less coercion rather than more, and do so because they mobilize organizations expressly designed for that purpose. The project draws on new archival and interview evidence to provide an unprecedented view into ‘secret police’ use of surveillance, coercion, and violence, and sheds light on the institutional and social foundations of authoritarian power.

Back