

Martin Acheampong, David Kuehn, Mariana Llanos, Thomas Richter, Esther Song  
(German Institute for Global and Area Studies, GIGA)

## The Personalization of Executive Power: Conceptual, Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives

Workshop of the research project [“COVID-19 and Executive Personalization in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the MENA Region”](#)

25–27 June 2023 | GIGA, Neuer Jungfernstieg 21, Hamburg

This workshop examines the personalization of executive power, understood as a process in which political leaders increase their concentration of power at the expense of other actors. The workshop is based on the premise that personalization of executive power is of increasing empirical relevance for all political regimes and world regions. Its main goal is to bring together international scholars working on different perspectives and facets of this phenomenon and facilitate discussion across sub-disciplinary divides and analytical and geographical perspectives.

The workshop is guided by three main questions:

1. What is personalization of executive power? How can we operationalize and identify it empirically across regime types?
2. Under which conditions do personalization processes take place? Through which mechanisms do chief executives personalize their power?
3. What is the impact of personalization on the political regime and political outcomes?

The workshop will answer these questions by discussing processes of executive personalization across regime types and world regions. As such, the workshop will make conceptual, theoretical, and empirical contributions.

The format of the workshop consists of an intensive exchange between all participants. We therefore refrain from presentations by the authors. Instead, each paper will be discussed in a session of 55 minutes between all participants. As a prelude to each session, the discussant will take 10 minutes to summarise the content, the main argument and the main findings of the respective paper and then highlight its strengths and weaknesses. The author(s) will then be given the opportunity to respond. After that we will move on to a general discussion. In order to implement this format, please send us your draft paper by 19 June.

During the final session on Tuesday we will discuss options to submit the revised papers as part of a special issue.

The venue of the workshop is the main building of the GIGA in Hamburg at Neuer Jungfernstieg 21 in room 550. There will be signs in the building to help you find the room. Additional logistical information is given at the end of this program.

Upon invitation, the latest workshop program and all accompanying material are accessible through this sharepoint folder:

<https://gigahh.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/ExecutivePersonalization/EnnxnKx4UJdCpMFNUZFIsp8B4auMSDDKDoGCsxOO6YNhdA>

## Programme

### Sunday, 25 June 2023

During the day	Arrival of participants in Hamburg, individual transfer from airport or train station to hotel “Alster Hof” <a href="https://goo.gl/maps/t8uEj2jC6mZ7pEFC9">https://goo.gl/maps/t8uEj2jC6mZ7pEFC9</a>
6:45 p.m.	Meeting in the foyer of the hotel Alster Hof
7:00 p.m.	Welcome dinner at Restaurant Franziskaner <a href="https://goo.gl/maps/gmJvKKg7hDjZc3GA">https://goo.gl/maps/gmJvKKg7hDjZc3GA</a>

### Monday, 26 June 2023 | GIGA, room 550

9:00–9:15 a.m.	Registration and coffee
9:15–9:45 a.m.	<b>Introduction and welcome</b> by David Kuehn, Mariana Llanos and Thomas Richter

#### Session 1:

[The Concept and Operationalization of Executive Personalization](#), chaired by Mariana Llanos

9:45–10:45 a.m.	<b>The Personalization of Executive Power: Concept, Index and Comparative Analysis</b> by <b>Fortunato Musella</b> and <b>Luigi Rullo</b> , University of Naples Federico II Discussant: John Polga-Hecimovich
10:45–11:00 a.m.	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon	<b>Measurement of Executive Personalization in Latin America through Executive Decrees</b> by <b>John Polga-Hecimovich</b> , United States Naval Academy; and <b>Rodrigo Rodrigues-Silveira</b> , Universidad de Salamanca Discussants: Fortunato Musella
12:00 noon–1:00 p.m.	<b>Personnel, Institutions, and Political Power: Revisiting the Concept of Executive Personalization</b> by <b>Mariana Llanos</b> , <b>David Kuehn</b> , <b>Thomas Richter</b> , <b>Martin Acheampong</b> , <b>Esther Song</b> , and <b>Emilia Arellano</b> , German Institute for Global and Area Studies Discussant: Alexander Baturo
1:00–2:00 p.m.	<i>Lunch break</i> at the GIGA in room 546

## Session 2:

Mechanisms, Transitions, and Origins of Personalization, chaired by David Kuehn

- 2:00–3:00 p.m.                    **Purges or Reshuffles? Elite Management Strategies, Personalisation, and Autocratic Survival**  
by **Alexander Baturo**, Dublin City University; and **Roman Olar**, Dublin City University  
Discussant: Abel Escribà-Folch
- 3:00–4:00 p.m.                    **The Personalization of Power: Mechanisms and Measurement**  
**Xavier Márquez**, Victoria University of Wellington  
Discussant: Katjana Gattermann
- 4:00–4:15 p.m.                    *Coffee break*
- 4:15–5:15 p.m.                    GIGA Research Programme 1 “Democratic Erosion Series”  
Lecture  
**The origins of Elected Strongmen: How Personalists Parties Destroy Democracy from within**  
by **Erica Frantz**, Michigan State University; **Andrea Kendall-Taylor**, Center for a New American Security; and **Joseph Wright**, Pennsylvania State University  
All member of the GIGA Research Programme 1 “Accountability and Participation” are invited to this lecture.
- 7:00 p.m.                            Meeting in the foyer of the hotel Alster Hof
- 7:30 p.m.                            Dinner at restaurant Stricker’s Kehr Wieder Spitze  
<https://goo.gl/maps/GAsiuCDmizxpsyY97>

## Tuesday, 27 June 2023 | GIGA, room 550

- 9:45–10:00 a.m.                    Registration and coffee

## Session 3:

Parties, Elite Networks, and Personalization, chaired by Thomas Richter

- 10:00–11:00 a.m.                    **Who are the losers? Attribution of responsibility for election result in the age of personalized politics**  
by **Katjana Gattermann**, University of Amsterdam; and **Thomas M. Meyer**, University of Vienna  
Discussant: Mariana Llanos
- 11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon                    **Elite networks, personalized power, and family dynasties in African countries**

by **Anja Osei**, Free University Berlin

Discussant: Martin Acheampong

12:00 noon–1:00 p.m. *Lunch break*

#### Session 4:

The Consequences of Personalization, chaired by Martin Acheampong

1:00–2:00 p.m.

#### **The Trajectories of Personalization: How Do Dictators Concentrate Power in Dictatorships?**

by **Joan C. Timoneda**, Purdue University; **Abel Escribà-Folch**, Pompeu Fabra University; and **Kyle Haynes**, Purdue University

Discussant: David Kuehn

2:00–3:00 p.m.

#### **The Ends justify (studying) the Means: Policy and Personalization in Contemporary Saudi Arabia**

by **Andrew Leber**, Tulane University

Discussant: Esther Song

3:00–3:15 p.m.

*Coffee break*

3:15–3:45 p.m.

**Concluding discussion and next steps**

6:45 p.m.

Meeting in the foyer of the hotel Alster Hof

7:00 p.m.

Farewell dinner at restaurant HELO

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