Munira Aminova will defend her Ph.D. on Friday September 16th 2011

The public defence of the Ph.D. in Political Science for Munira Aminova will take place on Friday September 16th at 2 pm on the Etterbeek-campus of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels in Building D, level 0, room 08.

The Ph.D. thesis is called "Essays on the Analysis of Trends Affecting Governance in Transition Countries" (Promoter: Prof. dr. Amelia Hadfield)

Please confirm your attendance by Wednesday September 14th to Munira Aminova: Munira.Aminova@vub.ac.be

The Analysis of Trends Affecting Governance in Transition Countries

Abstract

The thesis explores the ‘big questions’ which are attempted by all policy researchers: whether a policy works or it doesn’t; why and under which circumstances it works; does the policy normally produce the intended results and which forms of institutions are better for accomplishing public purposes (Hill and Lynn, 2001). Each chapter thoroughly analyzes one of the above questions in one of the three domains of governance: public, private and civil society (UNDP, 1997). In parallel to the main direction of analysis we also explore how governance occurs in the interplay between social and governmental action. The local cultures, cultural artifacts and values impacting day-to-day governance of public and private entities are also scrutinized.

The research goal is to uncover the mechanisms of governance in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries by performing systematic research in different areas, to open the ‘black box’ and to find out why ‘tried and tested’ governance models do not always work in countries in transition.

The research logic of this thesis follows a specific taxonomy in moving from general to very specific questions, both in terms of scope and geographic spread.

The chapters are:
1) Why corporate governance differs in different countries.
2) Comparative analysis of e-governance strategies of CIS countries.
4) Informal structures and governance processes in transition economies: The Case of Uzbekistan

The first chapter examines all countries for which data was available, the second chapter narrows its focus to CIS countries and the third and forth chapters employ an even stricter selection process by choosing to conduct empirical research on only one country (Uzbekistan), in order to narrowly model problems of governance in light of data limitations. Small-scale research is also considered a better option for the last chapters, so as to provide for more careful interpretations of findings, rather than making generalizations that would lack empirical validity.
The thesis produces chapter specific results and findings. At the same time the results make it possible to formulate policy suggestions to the donor community with the region of Central Asia as a target area.

Results show that even if, under donor or international influence, governments of transition countries may have accepted Western theories, in practice, they are still dominated by existing formal and informal structures. While formal structures and institutions are difficult to change since many transition countries have inherited bureaucratic and inflexible structures with little desire or even capability to change; informal structures are even more ‘locked in place’, due to their status as an instrumental subset of society. In addition, said structures are neither well researched, nor understood and are generally ignored in favor of (more) formal structures