Abstract for Yale Workshop

Autocratic Politics and Public Opinion: Lessons from Russia

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The new politics of autocracy highlights the important role of public opinion. In many instances, autocrats find it cheaper to shape public opinion than to rely on coercion to achieve their goals. Yet, because public opinion polls are rarely reliable in autocracies, there is still much that we do not know about this topic. With its relatively high quality public opinion polls, Russia is well placed to contribute to a broader discussion on state society relations under autocracy. This paper explores recent research on presidential approval, sanctions, and elections to draw more general insights into the broader literature on autocratic politics.