



MARGARET PETERS

PROFESSOR,
POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

RESTRAINING THE HUDDLED MASSES: HOW AUTHORITARIAN LEADERS USE EMIGRATION POLICY TO BOLSTER THEIR RULE

Autocrats have used a wide range of emigration policies. Historically, Communist states strictly controlled their borders, only allowing a select few to exit their countries. In contrast, many other autocrats have tolerated and even encouraged emigration. What explains autocrats' decisions to restrict or promote emigration? In this book, we take up this neglected question. We argue that emigration is a double-edged sword for autocrats: emigration can stabilize regimes by selecting a more loyal population and attracting investment, trade, and remittances, yet allowing their citizens to be exposed to democracy abroad threatens autocratic leaders. Autocrats, then, must craft emigration policy carefully to ensure their continued rule. Emigration policy has become a major political issue in many autocracies, including China, Russia, and most of the Middle East. Understanding how autocrats manipulate emigration to craft their domestic citizenry provides insight into an essential tool of autocratic control and resilience. In addition, we show that emigration from autocracies has major effects on popular contestation, the global flow of norms, and the spread of democracy.

TIME

Monday, Nov. 27, 2023
12:10PM-1:20PM

LOCATION

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ZOOM DETAILS

Meeting ID: 934 1998 0110
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