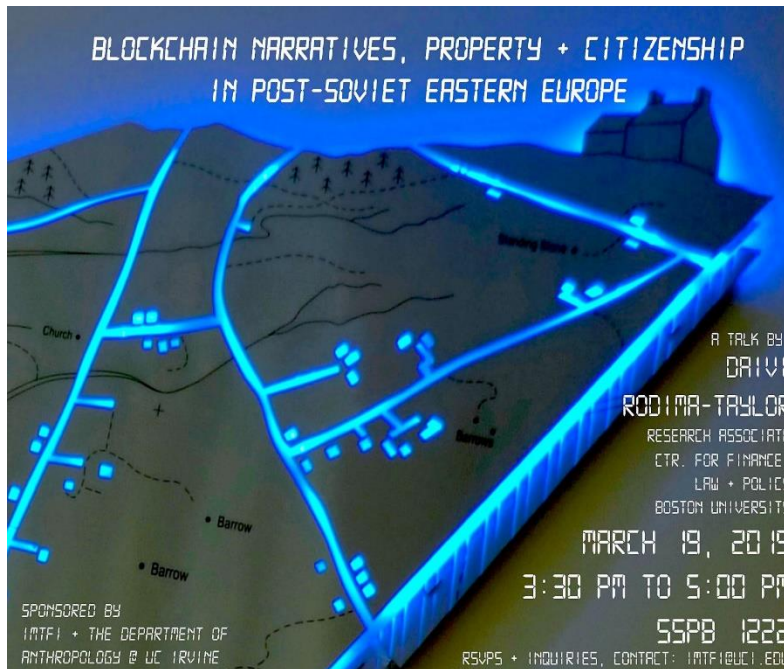


COLLOQUIUM

BLOCKCHAIN NARRATIVES, PROPERTY + CITIZENSHIP IN POST-SOVIET EASTERN EUROPE

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Digital technologies for property and identity management are increasingly viewed as central in building transparent and inclusive societies in many parts of the world. Blockchain technologies have emerged as one alternative to empower distributed public record systems and land registries. Several recent applications of these emerging technologies involve post-socialist societies of Eastern Europe – offering interesting perspectives into evolving narratives and practices of property and citizenship. Blockchain has been touted in development and financial industry circles as a key enabler of property formalization – with sparse evidence to support such claims so

far. Facilitating novel public-private partnerships in public administration projects, blockchain technologies also raise new concerns about data ownership and commoditization, and introduce risky financial practices. The presentation examines blockchain-related public administration initiatives in two post-Soviet states, Estonia and Georgia. It explores the imaginaries of new types of participatory collectivities and connective spaces that render governments accountable, and make legible the ambiguous post-socialist expanse of ‘recombinant’ property forms. The East European experience highlights the embeddedness of such digital infrastructures in local histories and epistemological struggles, as people strive to manage the environments of chronic uncertainty through inventive practices of ‘toiling ingenuity’ (Guyer 2016).

Dr. Daivi Rodima-Taylor is research associate and lecturer at the Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies, Boston University. Her research focuses on fiduciary culture and financial inclusion, informal economies, migration and diaspora, land tenure, and post-conflict and post-authoritarian transitions. She has been leading Boston University’s interdisciplinary Pardee Center Task Force on migrant remittances and post-conflict development, leads the African Studies Center’s Diaspora Studies Initiative, and co-chairs Land Mortgage Working Group with prof. Parker Shipton. Daivi has conducted longitudinal ethnographic research in Africa, taught anthropology and development studies, and published in academic and policy-oriented journals. Her undergraduate degree is from Tartu University, Estonia, and doctorate from Brandeis University.