

THE NATIONAL EUROPE CENTRE
RESEARCH SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES, ANU,
PRESENTS:



PUBLIC SEMINAR

SEMI-PRESIDENTIALISM AND DEMOCRATISATION IN POLAND

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at the National Europe Centre and the Research School of Social
Sciences, Australian National University



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ANU National Europe Centre, 1 Liversidge St [67C], The Australian National
University. Light refreshments will follow the seminar. Parking available in Balmain
Lane, opposite University House. This lecture is free and open to the public. RSVP
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Polish semi-presidentialism evolved from a pacted transition between the leadership of the communist regime and the Solidarity opposition movement. The mechanics of semi-presidentialism, as well as its effect on democratisation, depend upon the constitution, the party system and the personality of the president. Poland has had three semi-presidential constitutions, a variety of relationships between president and government as well as government and parliament, and three very different presidents. In the early years, the absence of the conditions for stable semi-presidentialism had a negative effect on democratisation. Later on, conditions were more supportive, and semi-presidentialism began to play a more positive role. Before the introduction of semi-presidentialism in November 1990, Polish elites had already established a firm consensus on democracy, which was buttressed by consensus on the economic system and international relations. Therefore, the conflicting legitimacies generated by semi-presidentialism delayed, but did not prevent or seriously threaten, democratic consolidation in Poland.

Iain McMenamin is a lecturer in the School of Law and Government, Dublin City University and a Visiting Fellow at the National Europe Centre and the Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University. His articles on various aspects of comparative politics have appeared in the European Journal of Political Research, the British Journal of Political Science, Political Studies and other journals.

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