

A. Russia and Poland Compared (Dr Harald Wydra) MT 2022

Introduction

This course introduces students into central selected themes of Russian and Polish politics. The premise of the course is that historical trajectories of leadership and state-formation have been fundamental for understanding post-communist regime transformation, the evolution of republican government structures, and trajectories towards democracy and dictatorship. It applies historical, political, and sociological methods in order to elucidate ideological patterns, the evolution of nationalism and nationhood, the impact of communism on the modernisation of states and societies, as well as the more recent transformations of regimes. This course will develop conceptual tools that help understanding numerous family resemblances related to similar patterns of social development and state tradition but also highlight fundamental differences in political cultures, political identities, traditions of government, leadership, and commitments to different regime types.

Essential reading:

Davies, Norman (2005) *God's Playground: A History of Poland*. Vol. 2. New York: Columbia University Press.

An indispensable historical account for understanding the challenges of state-formation, ideological structures, and imaginaries of the Polish nation.

Hosking, Geoffrey (1998) *Russia. People and Empire 1552-1917*. London: Fontana Press.

This is an excellent account of the empire-building in Russia throughout the centuries with particular focus on the interaction between the Tsarist states and its multi-national and multi-ethnic subjects.

Michlin-Shapir, Vera (2021) *Fluid Russia. Between the Global and the National in the Post-Soviet Era*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

An excellent account of national identity and discourses regarding Russia's status in the world from a perspective of challenges of identification in a globalising modernity. It ties Russia's authoritarian politics to the disruptions and contradictions inherent in globalisation.

Plokhyy, Serhii (2017) *Lost Kingdom: A History of Russian Nationalism from Ivan the Great to Vladimir Putin* (New York: Basic books)

A very readable and recent history of Russian nationalism with specific focus on the new meanings of nationhood in the Russian federation.

Sakwa, Richard (2020) *Russian Politics and Society*. 5th edition. London: Routledge.

An indispensable and very readable guide to understanding the political frameworks, processes, and structures of the politics of the Russian Federation.

Schoepflin, George (1993) *Politics in Eastern Europe 1945-1992*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Although quite dated, this book is still a very good guide to the unique political geographies of the post-imperial regions that constitutes 'Eastern Europe'. It deals with structural challenges in the region by examining social, political, legal, and economic traditions.

Urban, Michael (2010) *Cultures of Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book provides a discourse analysis that examines the workings of networks of political elites that have dominated Russia ever since the late 1990s.

Wydra, Harald (2007) *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book explores the social and political sources of democratization processes prior to regimes transformations in 1989/91 and the challenges for new regime types in the first decades of post-communist transitions.

Zubrzycki, Geneviève (2006) *The Crosses of Auschwitz. Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

This book provides a historical sociology of Polish nationalism and the unique and central role of the Catholic Church in Polish politics. It also covers the challenges of the role to Polish nationalism in post-communist Poland.

Mikhail Zygar (2017) *All the Kremlin's Men, Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin*, Reprint Edition, Public Affairs.

A very readable and gripping account by a foremost Russian journalist, portraying the rise of Vladimir Putin and the consolidation of his power through the prism of the networks of political elites that have shaped the last two decades of Russian politics

Lecture 1: State traditions and state formation

This lecture looks at problems of territorial sovereignty, the rationales of centralised rule, and the fluidity of borders, which were characteristic for the 'Eastern' type of state-formation. Whilst there are common patterns of state development, this lecture also highlights the fundamentally different trajectories of state-building, in particular the imperial expansion of Russian statehood versus the statelessness and foreign domination in Poland.

Davies, Norman (2005) *God's Playground. A History of Poland*. Vol. 2, chaps 1, 18, 21.

Kharkhordin, Oleg (2005) *Main Concepts in Russian Politics*, chapter 1.

Koyama, Satoshi. 2008. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a Political Space: Its Unity and Complexity. *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 15:137-152.

Sakwa, Richard (2007) *Russian Politics and Society*, part III.

Schoepflin, George (1993) *Politics in Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Szuecs, Jenő, 'Three Historical Regions of Europe', in John Keane (ed.) *Civil Society and the State*. London: Verso, 291-332.

Lecture 2: Nationalism and Nation-Building

This lecture explores paths of nation-building, variants of nationalism, and meanings of nationhood. It attempts to make sense of the paradoxical trajectories of Poland as a 'nation without a state' and the Russian empire as a 'state without a nation'. Crucially, it also relates nationalism in both countries to their perceptions of and self-assessments with regard to western 'models'.

Beissinger, Mark (2002) *Nationalism and Nationalist Mobilisation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 8.

Brock, Peter (1994) 'Polish Nationalism', in Peter Sugar and Ivo Lederer (eds) *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*. Third printing. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 310-72.

Marlene Laruelle (2018) *Russian nationalism: Imaginaries, Doctrines, and Political Battlefields*. London: Routledge, introduction and Part I (chaps 1-3)

Sugar, Peter and Ivo Lederer (eds) *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 3-54.

Brubaker, Rogers (1996) *Nationalism Reframed*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapters 2 and 4.

Richard Sakwa (2020) *Russian Politics and Society*, part III.

Tolz, Vera 'Forging the Nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Russia, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.50, No.6, 993-1022.

Zubrzycki, Genevieve (2006) *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post - Communist Poland*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, Introduction, chaps 1,2,5.

Lecture 3: Leadership and Ideological Traditions

This lectures examines key concepts of leadership and the attendant ideological traditions in both countries. Given the differences in state capacity, regime type, and religious-cultural traditions, the focus will on forms of political messianism, oriented towards the reconstitution of an independent state in Poland, and towards imperial expansion in the case of the Russian empire and the Soviet Union, as well as the

renewed attempts to neo-imperialism under state-led nationalism in the Russian Federation.

Casanova, José (1994) 'Poland: From Church of the Nation to Civil Society' in *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 92-113.

Curry, Jane, 'Poland: The Politics of God's Playground', in Wolchik, Sharon L. and Curry, Jane (2008) (eds) *Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 165-89.

Mark Galeotti (2019) *We need to talk about Putin: How the West gets him wrong*. Ebury Press, Introduction, chaps 1, 3, 5, 7

Jasiewiczzy, Krzysztof (1997) 'Walesa's Legacy to the Presidency', in Taras, Ray (ed.) *Postcommunist Presidents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 130-167.

Sakwa, Richard (2007) *Putin. Russia's Choice*. London and New York: Routledge.

Shevtsova, Lilia (2010) *Putin's Russia*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, chaps 3 and 4.

Wydra, Harald (2001) *Continuities in Poland's Permanent Transition*, chapters 2-4.

Lecture 4: Communism: Modernising States and Shaping Political Cultures

Whilst both Russia and Poland shared the experience of communism as a fundamental period of state modernisation during the twentieth century, this lecture identifies the different modalities of its implementation, key institutional characteristics, and modes of resistance against communist power.

Ash, Timothy G. (1991) *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity*. London: Granta Books.

Kotkin, Stephen (2001) *Armageddon Averted*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kubik, Jan (1994) *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power. Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland*. Penn State University Press.

Rothschild, Joseph (1993) *Return to Diversity. A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Service, Robert (2007) *Comrades. A History of Communism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Wydra, Harald (2008) 'Revolution and Democracy: The European Experience', in Foran, John/ Lane, David/Zivkovic, Andreja, *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World*. London and New York: Routledge, 27-44.

Wydra, Harald, *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy*, chapters 3 and 5.

Lecture 5: Regime Transformation

This lecture explores different trajectories and meanings of democratisation in both countries. It embeds accounts of regime transitions into the different political cultures of each nation, illustrating how republican traditions and discourses dominated in Poland, whereas political transformations in Russia were dominated by centralized authoritarian legacies and state-oriented discourses. The focus of this lecture is on the elements that helped Poland to create a parliamentary multi-party system, whilst the Russian Federation developed a super-presidential system, a managed state democracy, and, eventually, a repressive dictatorship.

Rupnik, Jacques and Jan Zielonka (2013), 'Introduction: The State of Democracy 20 Years on: Domestic and External Factors', *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 3-25.

Bernhard, Michael (1993) 'Civil Society and Democratic Transition in East Central Europe', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 108, No. 2. (Summer, 1993), pp. 307-326.

Blokker, Paul (2008) 'Multiple Democracies': political culture and democratic variety in post-enlargement Europe', *Contemporary Politics* Vol.14, No. 2, 161-78.

Dryzek, John and Holmes, Leslie (2002) *Post-Communist Democratisation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 1, 6, 14, 16.

Fish, Steven (2003) 'Conclusion: Democracy and Russian Politics', Barany and Moser (eds) *Russian Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 215-51.

Kubik, Jan (2003) 'Cultural Legacies of State Socialism: History Making and Cultural Political Entrepreneurship in Postcommunist Poland and Russia', in Ekiert, G. and Hanson, S. (2003) *Capitalism and democracy in Central and eastern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sanford, George (2002) *Democratic Government in Poland: Constitutional Politics Since 1989*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, chaps 1, 3, 4.

Michta, Andrew (1997) 'Democratic Consolidation in Poland after 1989', in Dawisha, Karen and Parrot, Bruce (eds) *The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 66-108.

Shevtsova, Lilia (2010) *Putin's Russia*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, chapters 1 and 11.

Urban, Michael et al. (1997) *The Rebirth of Politics in Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 1.

Jerzy Szacki (1995) *Liberalism after Communism*. Budapest: Central European University Press.

Weigle, Marcia (2000) *Russia's Liberal Project. State-Society Relations in the Transition from Communism*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 382-459.

Wydra, Harald (2008), 'Democratisation as Meaning-Formation – Insights from the Communist Experience', *International Political Anthropology* Vol. 1, No. 1, 113-32.

Wydra, Harald (2007) *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chapter 8-9.

Lecture 6: Paths to Democracy and Dictatorship

This lectures assesses the fundamental differences in the democratic credentials of both systems and, more importantly perhaps, the divergent international anchorage of each country in different geo-political alliances. Outlining key elements of paths to democracy and to dictatorship, it looks at the internal controversies and dilemmas that accompanied Poland's trajectory towards a fully-fledged representative democracy within the European Union. It then explores key stages of the transformation of Russian Federation from a super-presidential regime into an increasingly authoritarian 'dual' state and, eventually, into a repressive dictatorship. For this purpose, it also takes into account the positioning of both countries in international politics.

Brier, Robert (2009) 'The Roots of the Fourth Republic': Solidarity's Cultural Legacy to Polish Politics', *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 63-85.

Zarycki, Tomasz (2000) 'Politics in the Periphery: Political Cleavages in Poland Interpreted in Their Historical and International Context', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (Jul., 2000), pp. 851-873.

Sakwa, Richard (2013) 'The cold peace: Russo-Western relations as a mimetic cold war', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 26:1, 203-224.

Zuba, Krzysztof (2010), 'The Political Strategies of the Catholic Church in Poland', *Religion, State, and Society*, 38(2), 115-134.

Koczanowicz, Leszek (2016), 'The Polish Case: Community and Democracy under the PiS' *New Left Review* 102, 77-96.

Kubik, Jan and Amy Lynch (2006) 'The Original Sin of Poland's Third Republic: Discontinuing Solidarity and its Consequences for Political Reconciliation', *Polish Sociological Review*, Vol. 153, No. 1, 9-38.

Lukin, Alexander (2009) 'Russia's New Authoritarianism and the Post-Soviet Ideal', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 66-92.

Petrov, Nikolai/Maria Lipman, Henry E. Hale (2014) 'Three dilemmas of hybrid regime governance: Russia from Putin to Putin', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 1-26.

Stanley Bill and Ben Stanley (2020) 'Whose Poland is it to be? PiS and the struggle between monism and pluralism', *East European Politics*, Vol. 36, no. 3, 378-94.

Sakwa, Richard (2021), 'Greater Russia: Is Moscow out to subvert the West?', *International Politics*, 58, 334–362.

Sakwa, Richard (2010) 'The Dual State in Russia', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 26, No. 3 185-206.

Supervision essay questions:

Is there an Eastern European model of nationalism?

How did communist legacies influence democratisation processes in Eastern Europe?

Do transition processes weaken or strengthen state power?

How has nationalism shaped state traditions in Eastern Europe?

Was authoritarian rule in Eastern Europe dependent on national particularities?

Can legacies of the past explain the evolution of post-communist democracies?