Conference

Post-Soviet In/Securities: Theory and Practice

7-8 October 2005

The Mershon Center
The Ohio State University
1591 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210

Thanks to the generosity of the Mershon Center and the Center for Slavic and East European Studies and Office of International Affairs, CIRIT program, a conference on "Post-Soviet In/Securities: Theory and Practice," will take place at the Mershon Center on 7-8 October 2005.

Scholars from the United States, Canada, Ukraine, and Russia will gather to present papers on a broad range of topics. These include the development of civil society in the post-Soviet space; Russia’s electoral politics and political economy; ethnonational politics in Muslim regions of the former Soviet Union; relations between Russia, Ukraine, and Europe; and Russia and globalization.

Graduate students from Ohio State’s Political Science Department will serve as discussants for the collection of papers.

The Post-Soviet space is an area that is in flux politically and economically and one that is often characterized by uncertain transitions. A group of scholars from North America, Russia, and Ukraine met in the Mershon Center to discuss the current state of affairs inside President Vladimir Putin’s Russia and in other post-Soviet republics. Scholars from around the world, as well as graduate students from Ohio State’s Department of Political Science, offered comments on topics such as the state of civil society in Russia today, contemporary Russian electoral politics and political economy, relations between Russia and Europe, ethno-national developments in Russia and Central Asia, and globalization and the former Soviet space.

The first panel of the conference discussed the present Russian civil society, its historical trajectory and its Post-Soviet development, its relations with the Russian state under Putin’s leadership, and dynamics of the interaction between civil society and law enforcement today. Brian Taylor argued that despite the often bleak picture of the relationship between Russian civil society and law enforcement, there are some positive trends in contemporary Russia. In particular, he called attention to the direct engagement of civil society organizations and law enforcement, particularly police forces, in a joint effort to improve the administration of justice.

Ivan Kurilla drew contrasts between the Western and Russian models of civil society and argued against pessimistic views of civil society in Russia. He pointed out that the foundation money that was poured into Russian NGOs by the West was not as plentiful as it was expected to be, simply because certain features of Russian society are not amenable to Western approaches; but, he said, this does not negate the fact that civil society still exists in Russia.

Nikolay Petrov agreed, and argued that civic activism was revived in year 2004, perhaps unintentionally by the Kremlin. Though dormant for a long period, civic activism gained speed, inspired by actions of Russian authorities, influx of Western foundations and ideologies, and Russian grass roots activism.

James Richter spoke on the discrepancy between the words and actions of President Putin concerning civil society. While trumpeting the virtues of a strong civil society for enhancing the strength of state, Putin has tried to control and co-opt civil society. Nonetheless, Richter argued that the seemingly nonexistent strength of civil society today may help Putin control society, but ultimately will hinder his plans to modernize Russia as he will need to rely more on bureaucracy.

Panel Two focused on electoral politics in Russia. Volodya Gelman examined why the Russian political system swung from feeble pluralism in the 1990s to dominant power politics with very few parties in the 2000s. He argued that the transformation of the Russian party system resulted from the monopolist consolidation of its political market. Super-presidential powers and a zero-sum war over Yeltsin’s legacy contributed to this
monopolization of political power.

Regina Smyth discussed how uncertainty influences changes in electoral rules in post-communist countries. She argued that because of the kinds of uncertainty politicians face, regarding the distribution of voters’ preferences or the composition of future competition, they seek to change rules which have more predictable outcomes. Mikhail Alexeev discussed to what extent xenophobic voting is a public response to changes in ethnic composition within their state. In his analysis of the connection between immigration and xenophobic voting, Alexeev argued that the shifts in ethnic composition across Russian regions, not simply counts of immigrants, play an important role in the share of extremist vote.

The third panel was on ethnonational variations. Focusing to Kazakhstan, Henry Hale discussed why elites or masses of an ethnically distinct region would choose alien rule over national independence. The Kazakh desire to remain with the Soviet Union at the time of collapse is often attributed to lack of national consciousness or political motivations of the elite. But Hale argued that political economy considerations are the primary factor in decisions of separation.

Dmitri Gorenburg compared the language revival programs in Tatarstan and Spain to examine the ability of government-sponsored programs are able to establish a different majority language in a region in place of the national one. He argued that reverse language shifts were more successful in Catalonia than in Tatarstan because the economic incentives for learning Tatar Turkish are quite low and Tatar does not have the high social status Catalan benefits from in its region.

Matthew Evangelista compared the Chechen and Algerian Wars to answer the question of whether Putin may be considered a new de Gaulle. He argued that like the French president, Putin’s rise to power was closely associated with his promised decisiveness with regard to the Chechen conflict. However, unlike de Gaulle, who sought to extricate France from its colony, Putin does not have a clear plan for solution in Chechnya. A particular barrier to peaceful resolution of the conflict is the lack of a clear Chechen representative group to engage in dialogue with, but many competing ones.

Lastly, Mark Kramer discussed the domestic political context of Russia’s war in Chechnya. He argued that first, there has been so little public debate in Russia about the war and its costs, which stands in contrast to the first Chechen conflict in 1994. Secondly, the war and the consequent destabilization of the North Caucasus region have served as a pretext for changing the center-peripheral regions relations in favor of the former.

Other scholars looked at the relations between Russia, Ukraine and Europe. Andrey Makarychev argued that Russia defines her identity in relation to Europe, all the while arguing for its own exceptionality. But Europe’s permanent flux in terms of structure and future trajectory leads Russia to constantly reinvent itself with a number of different discourses. Sergei Medvedev discussed the implications of prevalent conspiracy theories for Russian foreign policy discourse. In response to the advance of the West, resistance to globalization and the trauma of the Soviet breakup, Russians have tended to see an anti-Russian conspiracy by the West and reacted with a siege mentality to construct the outside world.

Viatcheslav Morozov examined the Russian-EU energy dialogue. Though this dialogue is often seen as a success story in the thorny relations between Moscow and Brussels, Morozov argued it has political implications. In other words, the economic role of stable provision of energy depends on political and even cultural conditions. Finally, Ted Hopf discussed the legitimacy of Russian intervention in Abkhazia. Though Russian actions in Georgia in the 1990s was mostly seen as illegitimate, whether Russia itself deemed its behavior as illegitimate differed according to different Russian identities that existed; liberal, conservative, and centrist.

Panel five was on Russia and Globalization. Eric McILhinney discussed the consequences of the sources of aid for the internet in Central Asia for the regulatory environment. He argued that the Internet regulatory policy varies according to who provides the financial capital for ICT, where international organizations and NGOs provide capital and assistance for ICT infrastructure rather than domestic actors, the formal regulatory environment tends to be more open and permissive. Yoshiko Herrera discussed the internationalization of statistics in Russia. The Russian level of implementation of international system of national accounts since the collapse of Soviet Union has been remarkable for its achievements in a short time.

Herrera argued that the institutional reform was successful in this area due to conditional Soviet norms, which necessitated change in statistics in response to structural economic change. Juliet Johnson examined the dual deficit that is involved in post-communist central banking. In contrast to long-established democracies, central banks in post-communist countries owed their development to foreign actors and lacked strong domestic support. She argued that central banks can and should be incorporated into democratic politics without compromising the health of the national economy.

Finally, Doug Blum discussed the national youth identity policy in
the post-Soviet states. The young population has important implications for states’ legitimating efforts, as is also realized by state elites, not the least because it is a contested area of public policy. Blum argued that on the whole the youth policies in the post-Soviet space have been remarkably similar due to shared cultural propensities of post-Leninist states and shared institutional ties within the intergovernmental framework of CIS.

The sixth and final panel of the conferences was about economic performance in post-communist countries. Polterovich and Popov discussed whether democratization hinders economic growth and the progress towards other developmental goals. They argued that rule of law plays a critical role in this process because democratization under poor rule of law leads to the decay of state institutional capacity and makes it difficult to carry out prudent macroeconomic policy and export-oriented industrial strategy.

Andrew Barnes then discussed the role of oil in the Russian political economy. He examined whether Russia can avoid the negative consequences of oil wealth for political and economic development by overcoming the curse of rapid natural resource exploitation. He argued that while there are reasons to be pessimistic, the Russian economy is more complicated that simple dependence on oil. The state management of oil revenues has been far from disastrous for it does not spell the end of private business in Russia, as is commonly argued.

Finally, Timothy Frye discussed property rights in Russia. He asked whether property rights acquired through illegal means are forever unstable or alternatively, if right-holders can make their ill-gotten gain legitimate by good works. By means of a survey experiment, Frye argued that although property rights transferred through legally questionable means are still seen as illegitimate almost a decade after privatization in Russia, businessmen can nonetheless improve their image by investing in the firm as well as providing public goods for their respective region.

Friday, 7 October

9:15 a.m. Introductory remarks

9:30 - Noon (10:45 Coffee Break)

Panel One: Civil Society

Brian Taylor, Department of Political Science, Syracuse University
“Law Enforcement and Civil Society in Russia”

Ivan Kurilla, Department of History, Volgograd State University
“Russian Civil Society in History”

Nikolai Petrov, Center for Political-Geographic Research, Moscow
“The Development of Civil Society in the Post-Soviet Space”

James Richter, Department of Political Science, Bates College
“State and Society in Russia Under Putin”

Discussants:

Dane Imerman
Richard Arnold

1:30-3 p.m.

Panel Two: Electoral Politics in Russia

Volodya Gelman, Department of Politics and Sociology, European University-Saint Petersburg
“From ‘Fledgling Pluralism’ to ‘Dominant Power Politics?’ The Transformation of Russia’s Party System”

Regina Smyth, Department of Political Science, Penn State University
“Engineering Consolidation: Explaining Electoral System Innovation in Post-Communist Democracies”

Mikhail Alekseev, Department of Political Science, San Diego State University
“The ‘Number Game’: Sources of Public Support for Xenophobic Voting in Post-Soviet Russia”

Discussants:

Sarah Wilson
Danielle Langfield
3:15-5:15 p.m.

**Panel Three: Ethnonational Variations**

**Henry Hale**, Department of Political Science, George Washington University
"Cause Without a Rebel: Kazakhstan’s Unionist Nationalism and Theories of Secessionism and Post-Secession Foreign Policy"

**Dmitri Gorenburg**
"Language Revival Programs: Tatarstan and Spain"

**Matthew Evangelista**, Department of Government, Cornell University
"Is Putin the New DeGaulle? A Comparison of the Chechen and Algerian Wars"

**Mark Kramer**, Davis Center for Russian Studies, Harvard University
"The Domestic Political Context of the Russian-Chechen War"

**Discussants:**

**Bridget Coggins**

**Srdjan Vucetic**

**Saturday, 8 October**

9:15 - Noon

**Panel Four: Russia, Ukraine, and Europe**

**Andrei Makarychev**, Department of International Affairs, Nizhnii Novgorod Linguistic University
"Russia’s Discursive Construction of Europe and Herself: Towards a New Spatial Imagery"

**Sergei Medvedev**, Higher School of Economics, Moscow
"This was all conceived by Churchill back in 1918: Conspiracy Theory in Russian Foreign Policy Discourse"

**Viatlicheslav Morozov**, School of International Relations, Saint Petersburg State University
"Russia’s Role in a New Europe: The Russian-EU Energy Dialogue"

**Viatcheslav Morozov**, Department of International Relations, Odessa State University
"Ukraine And Europe: From Neighborhood to Membership?"

**Ted Hopf**, Department of Political Science, Ohio State University
"Identity, Legitimacy, and the Use of Military Force: Russia’s Great Power Identities and Military Intervention in Abkhazia"

**Discussants:**

**Michael Reese**

**Paul Fritz**

1:30-3:00 p.m.

**Panel Five: Russia and Globalization**

**Eric McGlinchey**, Department of Political Science, George Mason University
"International Aid, Domestic Patronage, and the Limits of Reform in Central Asia"

**Yoshiko Herrera**, Department of Government, Harvard University
"Conditional Norms: Bureaucratic Reform and the Internationalization of Statistics in Russia"

**Juliet Johnson**, Department of Political Science, McGill University
"A Dual ‘Democratic Deficit’? Internationalization and Accountability in Post-Communist Central Banking"

**Doug Blum**, Department of Political Science, Providence College

**Discussant:**

**Amanda Metskas**

**Amanda Rosen**
3:15-5 p.m.

Panel Six: Economic Performance

Vladimir Popov, New Economic School, Moscow
"Democracy and Growth Reconsidered: Why the Economic Performance of New Democracies is not Encouraging"

Andrew Barnes, Department of Political Science, Kent State University
"The Yukos Affair and the Political Economy of Oil in Russia"

Tim Frye, Department of Political Science, Ohio State University
"Original Sin, Good Works, and Property Rights in Russia: Evidence from a Survey Experiment"

Discussants:

Sarah Wilson

Quintin Beazer