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This year, the Program on New Approaches to Research and Security in Eurasia (PONARS Eurasia) celebrates its twenty-year anniversary. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to our policy memo authors, conference participants, readership, staff, The George Washington University, and Carnegie Corporation of New York. Thank you!

Because this is an anniversary event, we have invited as many of our members as we could muster even though not all will have time to present their policy memos on a panel. We hope, though, that you will seek out the non-presenting authors for conversation at the meeting's ample coffee breaks. To facilitate such conversations, and to highlight forthcoming memos, we have included abstracts for the non-presented as well as the presented policy memos in this booklet. We invite you to browse through them to see what is on offer; the entries are organized alphabetically by author's last name. And of course, please be on the lookout for all of the new policy memos on the PONARS Eurasia website as we publish the final versions in the weeks ahead.

Putin's Renationalization Campaign: Fighting Corruption or Forcing Officials' Loyalty?

~ **Hilary Appel (and Wendy Chuyi Sheng)**

The recent Alexei Navalny-linked exposé of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev highlighted high-level corruption in Russia once again. Medvedev survived the accusations (and large street protests), but perceptions of corruption of a leader so close to the president himself may be more than the Kremlin will tolerate. It is unclear whether the recent accusations will spur another government anti-corruption campaign. If so, it is likely that it will (again) take the patriotic form of a repatriation campaign and limitations on civil servants. This approach serves multiple ends: defusing public anger toward the political establishment, diminishing capital outflows, and sounding the alarm that disloyalty won't be tolerated, while leaving the biggest (and most loyal) corrupt elite offenders largely untouched.



Hilary Appel is Professor of Government and George R. Roberts Fellow at Claremont McKenna College. She has published numerous books and articles on the politics of economic reform in Russia and Eastern Europe in leading scholarly journals. Her forthcoming book, co-authored with Mitchell Orenstein, is entitled Competing for Capital: How Neoliberalism Prevailed in Post-Communist Countries (Cambridge, 2018). She has been awarded national fellowships from the Social Science Research Council, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Fulbright Foundation, the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Harriman Institute at Columbia University, and the Institute for the Study of World Politics. Her areas of expertise are: political economy, comparative politics, East Europe, international political economy, Russia, Central Europe, and German reunification.

Russia's Entanglement in Syria as a Protracted Extreme Stress Factor for the Russian Navy

~ **Pavel Baev**

Russia's open-ended Syrian intervention allows Russia to demonstrate new power-projection capabilities but it has put the Russian Navy under substantial pressure. Russia's deployment of its aircraft carrier *Admiral Kuznetsov* was not a very successful exercise, but its missile strikes came across as rather impressive. According to Russia's 2025 Armament Program, the Russian Navy is going to see painful cuts, which may mean a shift to smaller naval platforms.



Pavel K. Baev is Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Norway, and Senior Non-Resident Fellow at the Brookings Institution. His current research projects focus on Russian military reform, Russia's conflict management in the Caucasus, energy interests in Russia's foreign and security policy, Russia's Arctic policy, and Russia's relations with Europe and NATO. He writes a weekly column in the Eurasia Daily Monitor. He is the author of Russian Energy Policy and Military Power: Putin's Quest for Greatness (Routledge, 2008). His areas of expertise are: Russia, military reform, Caucasus, Arctic issues, energy, and NATO.

Russian Information Warfare: A Key Force Multiplier for Achieving Military Objectives

~ **Deborah Ball**

Russia employs information warfare (IW)—also referred to as information operations—to achieve President Vladimir Putin’s twin goals of great power status and regime preservation. IW is used across all domains and at all levels (strategic, operational, and tactical) to enable Russia to win on and off the battlefield, preferably before force is even used. Russia’s Chief of the General Staff, General Valery Gerasimov, asserts that “the very ‘rules of war’ have changed.” He notes that the role of nonmilitary means has increased and “in some cases, they have exceeded the use of force in their effectiveness.” The West has developed a better understanding of Russian IW since the 2014 Euromaidan revolution, but could derive further advantage from a deeper awareness of how IW is used across all phases of conflict development, particularly prior to the use of force.



Deborah Yarsike Ball is Associate Program Leader in the Counterproliferation Analysis and Planning System (CAPS) Program at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Her recent publication, Protecting Falsehoods With a Bodyguard of Lies: Putin’s Use of Information Warfare (NATO Defense College, 2017), was researched while a Visiting Scholar at the NATO Defense College’s Research Division in Rome in the summer 2016. Her areas of expertise include: military doctrine, security studies, political-military issues, nonproliferation, and network analysis.

Central Asia’s Borders: The Next 25 Years

~ **George Gavrilis**

Central Asia’s states have been managing (or mismanaging) their own borders for a quarter century. During this time, they received substantial sums from international donors to improve their border management and foster boundaries that are both open and secure. This memo shifts focus away from questions about whether this aid was squandered or put to good use; instead, it looks to the future and gives international policymakers and the donor community rules of thumb to follow if they are to make better use of ever smaller sums of development and security assistance. These rules of thumb include understanding why some local communities prefer closed borders and how to help Central Asian border and customs authorities perform particularly critical tasks at their borders.



*George Gavrilis is an independent consultant specializing in international relations, foreign policy, higher education, and oral history. He previously served as the Executive Director of the Hollings Center for International Dialogue and taught international relations and comparative politics in the Department of Government at the University of Texas-Austin. He is the author of The Dynamics of Interstate Boundaries (Cambridge, 2008) and has published articles in *Foreign Affairs*, *The Washington Quarterly*, and *The New York Times* on Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Israel, and the West Bank. His areas of expertise are: Middle East and Central Asia.*

Politics versus Policy: Technocratic Traps of Post-Soviet Reforms

~ *Vladimir Gel'man*

A number of policy reforms in post-Soviet countries (and beyond) have been conducted within the framework of the technocratic model. Policy proposals have been developed and to some extent implemented by teams of professionals appointed by political leaders. The leaders, in turn, have tended to monopolize policy adoption and evaluation and to insulate the substance of reforms from public opinion. This memo will offer a critical reassessment of the technocratic model of policy-making in the context of the post-Soviet changes of the 1990s–2010s. The focus is on the political and institutional constraints of policymaking resulting from the influence of interest groups and the poor quality of governance within the state apparatus. The rent-seeking aspirations of major actors create significant barriers for reforms, while the insulation of policy-making, although beneficial to technocrats themselves, has resulted in an increase to the social costs of reforms and distorted their substantive outcomes. Several alternatives to the technocratic model are provided.



Vladimir Gel'man is Professor of Political Science and Sociology at the European University of St. Petersburg and Finland Distinguished Professor at the Aleksanteri Institute at the University of Helsinki. He is the author or editor of more than twenty books in Russian and English, including *Authoritarian Russia: Analyzing Post-Soviet Regime Changes* (Pittsburgh, 2015) and *Reexamining Economic and Political Reforms in Russia, 1985–2000* (Lexington, 2014). He has published numerous articles in *Europe-Asia Studies*, *International Political Science Review*, *Democratization*, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, and more. His areas of expertise are: Russia, comparative politics, authoritarianism, governance, and political institutions.

Housing, the Middle Class, and Civic Engagement in Four Post-Soviet Countries

~ *Theodore P. Gerber (and Jane Zavisca)*

Recent protests over the planned demolition of Soviet-era housing blocks in Moscow illustrate the potential of housing issues for inciting contentious politics in former Soviet countries. Housing may drive protest activity because of its particular potency as a grievance in the post-Soviet context. But homeownership and high-quality housing may also be the basis for higher levels of civic and political activism, as scholars have maintained in reference to Western societies. Our memo reports the main results of a study of how housing and other markers of middle class status relate to three dimensions of civic engagement—civic participation, political activism, and voting—in Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan, using data from the Comparative Housing Experiences and Social Stability (CHESS) survey, which we conducted in 2015. Our results provide empirical support for the proposition that homeownership is broadly associated with higher levels of civic engagement. We discuss the implications of this relationship for the possibility of contentious politics emerging in the former Soviet space.



Theodore P. Gerber is Director of the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia and Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research examines social inequality, economic change, public opinion, migration, and family processes in contemporary Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, and other post-Soviet states. He has authored or co-authored 45 articles on these topics that have appeared in journals including *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces*. His areas of expertise are: sociology, statistics, demography, migration, and contemporary Russian society.

Could It Happen Here? How to Think About Ethnic Conflict in Ukraine

~ *Elise Giuliano*

Could Ukraine become another site where, like in Bosnia, citizens of different ethnicities who have lived together peaceably for decades suddenly turn against each other? Have Russia's annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas politicized ethnic identity in Ukraine such that ethnic Russians and ethnic Ukrainians express increasingly polarized political views? This memo explains what political science can tell us about the relationship between ethnic identity and conflict in order to provide insight into recent Ukrainian politics. I first outline the varieties of ethnic identity in Ukraine, suggesting that the country's ethnic topography is more complex than a simple dichotomy between Russians and Ukrainians suggests. Next, I discuss the relationship between political attitudes and ethnic identity. For example, do ethnic Russians and Ukrainians maintain opposing political views about key issues such as separatism, the role of Russia, and Ukraine's orientation toward Europe? Finally, I consider the role of Ukraine's political leaders and the prospect that their discourse and policies could generate ethnic polarization and conflict.



Elise Giuliano is Lecturer in Political Science at Columbia University. Her areas of interest are: comparative politics, politics in Russia's regions, politics of identity, ethnic politics, Islam in Russia, and crisis in East Ukraine. She is the author of Constructing Grievance: Ethnic Nationalism in Russia's Republics (Cornell, 2011). Her areas of expertise are: Russia, ethnic nationalism, Islam, and political mobilization in Russia.

China-Kazakhstan-Russia Triangle: Cooperation, Contradictions, and Accommodation

~ *Sergei Golunov*

Triangular interactions between China, Kazakhstan, and Russia are ambiguous. On the one hand, pooling Chinese, Kazakh, and Russian efforts together promises some important political and economic advantages. On the other hand, there are a number of important contradictions that are not emphasized in official discourses. Still, the triangle proved able to accommodate bilateral contradictions even in cases when not all "sides" are interested in doing so. For instance: Russia has had to accommodate rapidly intensifying Kazakh-Chinese cooperation and Kazakhstan's key role in China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) project; China has had to accommodate restrictions on its economic presence in Kazakhstan imposed by the Eurasian Economic Union; and Kazakhstan has had to accept limitations on its cooperation with the West imposed by Russian and Chinese geopolitical interests.



Sergei Golunov is Professor at the Center for Asia-Pacific Future Studies at Kyushu University, Japan. His current research interests include Russian border issues, Russian relations with neighboring Asia-Pacific states, and conspiracy theorizing in Russia. He has authored about 150 research works including The Elephant in the Room: Corruption and Cheating in Russian Universities (Ibidem, 2014) and EU-Russian Border Security: Challenges, (Mis)perceptions, and Responses (Routledge, 2012). His areas of expertise are: security, migration, higher education, EU, and borders.

Russia's Military Modernization Plans: 2018-2025

~ **Dmitry Gorenburg**

What do we know so far about Russia's State Armament Program for 2018-2025? We can draw certain conclusions about the types of armaments that have been announced as being procured for the Russian military in the next eight years, forming a basis for assessing the likelihood that the Russian government will be able to meet these commitments. Key questions here include whether Russia has the financial wherewithal to meet its procurement commitments and whether Russia's defense industry actually has the capacity to produce the weapons and systems that have been announced. These plans have important implications for Russia's military capabilities as well as regional security.



Dmitry Gorenburg is Senior Research Scientist at the Center for Strategic Studies, CNA Corporation, and Associate at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University. He is editor of Russian Politics and Law and Problems of Post-Communism. His focus areas include Russian military reform, foreign policy, regional security, and ethnic politics and identity in the post-Soviet region. He is the author of Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation (Cambridge, 2003). His areas of expertise are Russian military and foreign policy, Eurasian security issues, Russian politics, ethnic identity and conflict, and the Baltic States.

What is the Region? Making Sense of Russia, the Former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia

~ **Yoshiko Herrera (and Dmitrii Kofanov and Anton Shirikov)**

Since the fall of communism and end of the Soviet Union, the question of what to call the region or regions of countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union has vexed scholars as well as regional-studies programs and centers. Is the region merely geographic, as in east of Paris, west of Alaska, and north of Cairo – somewhere between Europe and Asia and hence summed up in the name “Eurasia?” Or are even the geographic differences too great for one “region” and hence we should divide the area between, say, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia? But where does that leave Russia – the world’s largest country? Maybe it is its own region? Rather than trying to persuade audiences of why a single region or multiple regional designations are appropriate, we take an empirical approach and ask how much the 29 countries of the lands known by some as Eurasia and others as Eastern Europe and the former Soviet States had or have in common in political, economic, and social terms. To foreshadow our argument, we find little evidence of a single Eurasian region, nor of a simple east-west divide.



Yoshiko M. Herrera is Professor of Political Science at University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Director of the UW-Madison Partnership with Nazarbayev University (Kazakhstan). Her research interests are in U.S.-Russian relations, politics in Russia and the former Soviet states, social identities and norms, nationalism and ethnic politics, and constructivist political economy. Her recent books include Mirrors of The Economy: National Accounts And International Norms in Russia and Beyond (Cornell University, 2010), Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists (Cambridge University Press, 2009), and Imagined Economies: The Sources of Russian Regionalism (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Indigenously Funded Russian Civil Society

~ **Debra Javeline (and Sarah Lindemann-Komarova)**

Most reports on Russian civil society focus on government efforts to restrict Western funding to Russian NGOs with legislation on foreign agents and undesirable organizations. The legislation has created legal, bureaucratic, social, and financial hardships for NGOs, and many Russia observers have inferred from the hardships that Russian organizations are ceasing to be independent and that Russian civil society is collapsing. We challenge these inferences with evidence from interviews and participant observation at conferences, training events, and community activities in 2016 and 2017 and from databases of registered NGOs and foreign agents. The laws on foreign agents and undesirable organizations have had negative effects, and Russian civil society continues to be resource-poor. However, most organizations were never financed by Western donors in the first place (a high of 7 percent in 2009), and in the last half-decade, they have benefitted from tremendous growth in domestic funding opportunities. Russia observers seeking to understand the future of Russian civil society would do well to pay attention to developments in the indigenous funding environment.



Debra Javeline is Associate Professor at the University of Notre Dame. She is a Fellow at Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, and Nanovic Institute for European Studies. Her research and teaching interests are in mass political behavior, survey research, Russian politics, sustainability, environmental politics, and climate change.

Democratic Attitudes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

~ **Barbara Junisbai**

If Kazakhstan is home to post-Soviet Eurasia's longest serving dictator, Kyrgyzstan is ranked among the region's most democratic (or least authoritarian) polities. Do differences in political context translate into differences in political attitudes, specifically democratic attitudes? Are Kyrgyzstanis, as might be surmised from their recent history of political contestation and constitutional reform, more likely to exhibit attitudes associated with democratic culture? Are Kazakhstanis—ruled since 1986 by the same powerful, constitutionally enshrined, and by many accounts popular executive—less likely to do so? The results of nationally representative surveys carried out in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in fall 2012 are surprising. Kazakhstanis are significantly more likely than Kyrgyzstanis to both trust government institutions and express support for democratic principles, such as the value of an active citizenry and a watchdog role for media. When we dig deeper to find out which groups in each country are more trusting in institutions and supportive of democracy, we find further contradiction. Although Kazakhstanis generally exhibit stronger democratic attitudes when compared to Kyrgyzstanis, young people in Kazakhstan are far less democratic than young people in Kyrgyzstan.



Barbara Junisbai is Assistant Professor of Organizational Studies at Pitzer College. Her research focuses on comparative political organizations and institutions, authoritarianism, democratization, post-Soviet politics and society, learning-centered pedagogy, and academic assessment. She recently authored the article "Two Countries, Five Years: Islam in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan through the Lens of Public Opinion Surveys" (Central Asian Affairs, 2017).

Russia's Borderization Strategy in Georgia: What Is at Stake?

~ **Kornely Kakachia**

Georgia expects the international community to respond robustly to attempts by Russia and the breakaway region of South Ossetia to encroach on its administrative boundary by shifting border markers. This so-called borderization of a previously vague administrative boundary area has created political headaches for the Georgian government, which seems intimidated and confused by the situation. The details of these fencing maneuvers are important to understand within the context of Georgian and South Caucasian regional security.



Kornely Kakachia is Professor of Political Science at Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University and Director of the Tbilisi-based think-tank Georgian Institute of Politics. His current research focuses on Georgian domestic and foreign policy, security issues of the wider Black Sea area, and comparative party politics. He has received IREX and OSI fellowships, and was a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University's Black Sea Security program, at the Harriman Institute at Columbia University, and at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. His areas of expertise are: Caucasus, Russia, Turkey, EU, security, and politics.

Qatar in Central Asia: What's at Stake in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan?

~ **Natalie Koch**

Relations between Central Asian states and the Gulf Arab monarchies have expanded rapidly over the past decade. With one of the most outward-looking foreign policy agendas of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, Qatar's leadership has increasingly entertained bilateral cooperation with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. This memo examines the growing political and economic ties between Qatar and Central Asia, asking: what is at stake for Qatari leaders and their counterparts in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan? And what do expanding relations mean for the ever-shifting geopolitical landscape in Central Asia? These questions are important in themselves, but the regional blockade of Qatar that began in June 2017 has cast them in a new light—both for the lessons they offer to international observers and to the leaders of Central Asia who have looked on with no small degree of admiration at the small country's ambitious "soft power" agenda.



*Natalie Koch is Associate Professor and O'Hanley Faculty Scholar in the Department of Geography at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. She specializes in political geography, with a focus on authoritarian state-making, nationalism, and geopolitics in Central Asia and the Arabian Peninsula. She has published in journals including *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, *Political Geography*, *Urban Geography*, *Central Asian Affairs*, and the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, and is the author of *The geopolitics of spectacle: Space, synecdoche, and the new capitals of Asia* (Cornell University Press, 2018). Her areas of expertise are: Central Asia, authoritarianism, geopolitics, nationalism, urban geography, sport, and environmental politics.*

Extrajudicial Violence in Donbas and Its Consequences for Ukraine

~ *Sergiy Kudelia*

In the last three years, violence practiced by government agents has reached the highest level in Ukraine's history. Drawing on evidence from UN OHCHR reports, this memo examines how enforced disappearance, torture, and summary executions of alleged pro-Russian separatists have been perpetuated largely with impunity in government-controlled areas of Donbas. The new operational autonomy of security agents in repressing alleged separatist collaborators allows for repressive tactics against regime opponents in civil society and politics. The memo suggests that apart from violating international obligations, extrajudicial violence by Ukraine's security services poses broader risks to the integrity of the country's democratic process and its national cohesion. It also creates insurmountable obstacles for resolving the armed conflict in Donbas and establishing sustainable peace in the region.



Sergiy Kudelia is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Baylor University. His research interests include state formation, political regimes, revolutions, civil wars, and political violence with a geographic focus on the post-communist world. He has written articles in leading publications including *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *Problems of Post-Communism*, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, and *Demokratizatsiya*. He co-authored the book *The Strategy of Campaigning: Lessons from Ronald Reagan and Boris Yeltsin* (Michigan, 2007) with Kiron Skinner, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Condoleezza Rice.

History and Memory in Russia at the 100th Anniversary of a Great Revolution

~ *Ivan Kurilla*

Since the beginning of this year, the Russian state has been silent about the 100th anniversary of the Russian revolution. In its attempt to keep control over historical narratives, it seems to have abandoned many historical domains and only focused on the Second World War. At the same time, there have been recent developments that speak to other perceptions, such as the emergence of the Immortal Regiment movement, the investigation of Denis Karagodin (who published the names of the 1938 Tomsk NKVD executioners who murdered his great-grandfather), and Memorial's publication of NKVD operatives during the Time of Terror. There are two possible approaches that add clarity to these developments. The first one postulates that the history of the mid-Twentieth century represents an "instant past" that is still alive (Hartog and Russo). The second approach sees history in Russia as playing the role of "the language of politics." Through such lenses, we see that the state is trying to keep the "language" clear and linear. The Immortal Regiment, for example, can be explained as an attempt by society to use this "language" to manifest its own ownership of history. If this hypothesis is valid, the Immortal Regiment was the largest political movement in recent Russian history.



Ivan K. Kurilla is Professor and Director of the Partnership Centers Development Program at the European University at St. Petersburg. He is a founding member of the organization of professional historians *Volnoe Istoricheskoe Obschestvo* (Free Historical Society). Among his most recent books are *Istoria ili Proshloe v nastoyaschem* (History or Past in Present) (EUPress, 2017) and *Russian/Soviet Studies in the United States, Amerikanistika in Russia: Mutual Representations in Academic Projects* (Lexington, 2015; co-edited with Victoria I. Zhuravleva).

The Kremlin's Ecosystems: Equilibrium and Movement

~ **Marlene Laruelle**

Western pundits tend to use the term “Kremlin” in an undefined way that may refer to different entities: the Russian government, presidential administration, or Putin’s inner circles. In this policy memo, I define “the Kremlin” by using “ecosystem” as a metaphor. An ecosystem is a living organism: it can evolve, adapt, and disappear; it interacts with other ecosystems, and can absorb or be absorbed by them. It has its own boundaries, but they are plastic and flexible, with lines of connection, back and forth, to and from other ecosystems. I see the “Kremlin” as a grouping of several ecosystems, each of them forming a specific world made of institutions, funders and patrons, identifiable symbolic references, ideological entrepreneurs, and media platforms. Three ecosystems are identified—the presidential administration, the military-industrial complex, and the Orthodox realm—and they are in permanent movement and readjustment to maintain their equilibrium. Since Sergey Kirienko became First Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration, this balancing game has been evolving in a more complex way, confirming the Kremlin’s adaptability-to-context skills.



Marlene Laruelle is Research Professor, Associate Director of IERES, Director of the Central Asia Program, and Co-Director of PONARS Eurasia at the George Washington University. She is the author of Russia's Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North (M.E. Sharpe, 2014) and Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire (Woodrow Wilson/Johns Hopkins University, 2008, 2012) She recently edited Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship (Lexington, 2015). Her areas of expertise are: Russia, Central Asia, national identity and nationalism, migration, and Arctic issues.

How Stable is Ukraine's Post-Revolutionary Regime?

~ **Yuriy Matsiyevsky**

The ability to withstand both internal and external pressures is critical for the survival of any regime. This is even more salient for Ukraine’s post-revolutionary government, which has been facing the threat of mass public protests—“a third Euromaidan”—for the past three years. On the external side is Vladimir Putin’s hybrid warfare strategy, which, among other aspects, seeks to destabilize Ukraine internally. How serious are these challenges to the new Ukrainian government and how stable is Petro Poroshenko’s regime compared to Viktor Yanukovich’s?



Yuriy Matsiyevsky is Associate professor at the National University of Ostroh Academy, Ukraine. From 2004-2009, he was Chair of the Ostroh Academy’s Department of Political Science and since 2010 he has been Head of the Academy’s Center for Political Research. He is the author of Trapped in Hybridity: Zigzags of Ukraine's Regime Transformations (1991-2014) (Chernivtsi, 2016). His areas of expertise are: comparative democratization, comparative politics, and Ukraine’s informal politics.

Mass Culture and Official Conservatism in Russia: A Study of Common Sense through the Prism of Women's Fiction

~ *Viatcheslav Morozov (and Elena Pavlova)*

The high levels of popular support enjoyed by the authoritarian regime in Russia have often been interpreted as an indication of the predominantly reactionary, anti-liberal character of Russian mass consciousness. We question this view by adopting a critical neo-Gramscian perspective on such concepts as popular culture and common sense. Gramsci and his followers see mass common sense as necessarily protean, combining incongruous beliefs and ideological elements, which are selectively activated by political forces struggling to achieve or maintain hegemony. To substantiate this interpretation, we offer a case study of Russian women's fiction as a key component of popular culture which is, arguably, representative of mass common sense. Our study finds that, contrary to the canons of the genre, authors of Russian women's fiction do bring up political issues and often clearly display their own political preferences. These can be both pro-government and oppositional, which, given the wide appeal of this literature, suggests that Russian mass common sense is far from being politically uniform and combines authoritarian as well as liberal attitudes.



Viatcheslav Morozov is Professor and Chair of the Council of the Centre for EU–Russia Studies (CEURUS) at the University of Tartu. Before moving to Estonia in 2010, he taught for over a decade at St. Petersburg State University. His current research explores how Russia's political and social development has been conditioned by the country's position in the international system, as seen in his monograph Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World (Palgrave, 2015), with the comparative dimension explored in Decentering the West: The Idea of Democracy and the Struggle for Hegemony (Ashgate, 2013). His areas of expertise are: democracy, identity and nationalism, ideology and discourses, and EU-Russian relations.

Does It Make Sense to Expect a “Color Revolution” in Belarus?

~ *Arkady Moshes*

Recent large-scale protests in Belarus have raised the question of whether a successful movement for societal and/or political transformation can occur there. I argue that such an outcome is unlikely for the time being. The population at large remains fearful of radical political shifts that might follow the model of Ukraine's Maidan and is not ready to embrace a liberal economic model. The regime is internally consolidated and does not hesitate to use repression, while the opposition is weak and cannot find a common platform. Russia, despite disagreements with Minsk, is certain to provide Belarus with necessary life-support, whereas the West seems to be willing to continue its policy of engaging the regime in appraisal of “stability.” In the long run however, paternalistic and egalitarian moods may eventually lead to destabilization, especially if the regime fails to address socio-economic challenges. For now, the West ought to conduct a principled conditionality policy toward Belarus that would promote the economic and political liberalization of the regime, even if slowly.



Arkady Moshes is Program Director for the EU Eastern Neighborhood and Russia research program at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. He has authored numerous academic and analytical publications and is a frequent media commentator. He co-edited Russia as a Network State: What Works in Russia When State Institutions Do Not (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and co-authored Not Another Transnistria: How Sustainable is Separatism in Eastern Ukraine? (FIIA, 2014). His areas of expertise are: Russian-European relations, and the domestic and foreign policies of Ukraine and Belarus.

Beyond Economic Contagion: Regional Consequences of Russia's Economic Recession

~ *Mariya Omelicheva*

In 2014, Russia was hit by a triple whammy of low oil prices, Western sanctions, and Moscow's counter-sanctions. Economic shocks absorbed by the Russian economy in 2015 spread to states connected to Russia through economic, demographic, and political ties. While a curse for the surrounding states, the crisis has afforded Russia and Kremlin-led regional organizations an opportunity to gain more clout across Eurasia. The crisis has robbed the regional authoritarian governments of the primary base of their legitimacy; several states in the region that entered "austerity" saw a rise in dissent. The region's precarious security situation and the rising risks of political instability combined with the EU's internal divisions and the US's neglect of these countries are likely to force the members of the Collective Security Treaty Organizations (CSTO) and EEU to cooperate more closely with Moscow. Even if the practical impact of these organizations will remain limited, they will serve Moscow's broader effort at heightening its influence throughout its periphery.



Mariya Omelicheva is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Kansas. Her research and teaching interests include counterterrorism and human rights, democracy promotion in the post-Soviet territory, Russian foreign policy, and the terrorism-crime nexus in Eurasia. She is the author of *Counterterrorism Policies in Central Asia* (Routledge, 2011) and *Democracy in Central Asia: Competing Perspectives and Alternate Strategies* (Kentucky, 2015), and editor of *Nationalism and Identity Construction in Central Asia: Dimensions, Dynamics, and Directions* (Lexington, 2015). Her areas of expertise are Russia, Central Asia, Georgia, foreign policy, critical geopolitics, counterterrorism, trafficking-terrorism nexus, and human rights.

Russia on the Eve of Presidential Elections and Prospects for the Next Term

~ *Nikolay Petrov*

The Russian political regime, which looks rather stable, faces internal risks of increasing instability in the near future. First, Russia's political institutions, both formal and informal, have become extremely weak; Putin (and his popularity) is now the single base for stability. Second, the system has decreasing resources, financial and political, and therefore needs to make serious moves before the 2018 presidential elections. Third, the system is designed to remain motionless (maintaining the status quo) and does not have mechanisms to provide for improvement regardless of policy direction. The external reasons for instability, not fully covered in this memo, add to the mix of challenges.



Nikolay Petrov is Professor of Political Science at the Higher School of Economics (Russia). He was previously Chair of the Carnegie Moscow Center's Society and Regions Program. From 1982-2006, he worked at the Institute of Geography at the Russian Academy of Sciences. His recent publications include *Putin's Downfall: The Coming Crisis of the Russian Regime* (ECFR, 2016) and *The State of Russia: What Comes Next* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; co-edited with Maria Lipman). His areas of expertise are: Russia, politics, elites, elections, regions, and geography.

Does Russia Need the Inflow of Foreign Capital, or Should It Rely on an Export-Oriented Model of Growth Based on Domestic Savings?

~ *Vladimir Popov*

Countries that managed to achieve high growth rates were mostly net creditors not net borrowers—their current accounts were positive (they save more than they invest). Even controlling for the level of development, looking at PPP GDP per capita in the middle of the period, 1975, the relationship between current account surpluses and growth rates is still positive and significant. In view of this evidence, attempts by developing countries to rely on external financing is ironic. It is also ironic that while development economists are preoccupied by “capital flowing uphill” (from developing to developed countries), the best growth record is exhibited by countries with positive current accounts and large reserve accumulations, which generates the uphill movement of capital. How does the Russian model of economic growth look from this point of view and how does it compare with the Chinese model?



Vladimir Popov is a Research Director at the Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute in Berlin. He is also a Principal Researcher in the Central Economics and Mathematics Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor Emeritus at the New Economic School in Moscow, and an Adjunct Research Professor at the Institute of European and Russian Studies at Carleton University in Ottawa. In 2009-15, he worked at DESA, UN, as a Senior Economic Affairs Officer and Inter-regional Adviser. He has published extensively on world economy and development issues and his books and articles have been published in Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish. His most recent book is Mixed Fortunes: An Economic History of China, Russia, and the West (Oxford, 2014).

Who Cares about Conspiracy Theories? Evidence from a New Survey of Georgia and Kazakhstan

~ *Scott Radnitz*

Conspiracy theories are an important aspect of politics in the former Soviet Union. They are often seen as a cause and a consequence of authoritarianism, distrust, and geopolitical tensions, among other phenomena. Yet there is scant evidence of the extent to which people believe conspiracy theories, what kinds of theories are most popular, and what attributes are associated with conspiracy belief. This memo analyzes a new original survey of belief in conspiracy theories in two post-Soviet states, Georgia and Kazakhstan. It investigates the influence of macro-level factors such as geopolitical orientation and regime type on belief, along with individual-level variables such as trust, social capital, and political participation.



*Scott Radnitz is Associate Professor in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies and Director of the Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies at the University of Washington. His current research focuses on the political uses of conspiracy theories in the post-Soviet region. He is author of Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia (Cornell, 2010) and has contributed to journals including *Comparative Politics*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, and *Post-Soviet Affairs*. His areas of expertise are: protests, authoritarianism, informal networks, and identity.*

Uzbekistan’s Revolution from Above: A Post-Soviet Model for Liberalization or a Transition to Softer Authoritarianism?

~ *Sean Roberts*

Since the death late last year of Uzbekistan’s first president, Islam Karimov, the country has been undergoing a process of gradual, measured, but substantive reform, which is largely based in liberal ideals. Unlike most of the other post-Soviet states that have embarked on liberalism-inspired whole-scale reforms in recent years, change has not come to Uzbekistan via a revolution sparked by popular protests or forced regime change. Rather, Uzbekistan’s revolution has been almost exclusively led by Karimov’s successor, former Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev. As such, the country’s reform process appears to be more planned, gradual, and politically willful than liberal reforms carried out elsewhere in the former Soviet space where sudden regime change created an urgent need for structural changes. The question is whether structural reforms undertaken by a single leader may be more capable of facilitating sustainable liberalization in the post-Soviet context than efforts spurred by popular demand. This memo assesses whether the ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan are actually leading toward sustainable liberalization or merely softening the existing authoritarian system to bring the country closer to the hybrid regime models seen in such post-Soviet countries as Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan.



Sean R. Roberts is Associate Professor and Director of the International Development Studies Program at the George Washington University. His academic research focuses on the Central Asian region, where he has spent years doing fieldwork and working on international development projects. He produced *Waiting for Uighurstan*, a documentary film on the cross-border interactions of the Uyghur people between Central Asia and China. He is the author of *The Roberts Report*, a blog on current events in Central Asia. His areas of expertise are: politics of nationalism, religion, and localism as well as the study of international development efforts, particularly democracy assistance.

Scrutinizing School Textbooks: Reforming Armenia in a Progressive Manner

~ *Nona Shahnazarian (and Ruzanna Tsaturyan)*

This memo investigates contemporary Armenian school textbooks to analyze gender gaps and biases. The 2009 Armenian Law on Education outlines “the democratic and secular nature of education” and seeks to promote gender equality as an important part of the country’s modernization agenda, but its effects are not clear. Moreover, gender issues have ceased being a priority in Armenia’s domestic policy sphere and, in general, they are usually perceived as something introduced from the West and not relevant for Armenian society. Analyzed are the impacts of the EU, World Bank, Open Society (Soros Foundation), and other transnational organization projects on domestic education reform. A particular focus is given to the instruments deployed by the EU and how they do or do not modify key Armenian actors and reform processes.



Nona Shahnazarian is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Archaeology and Ethnography at the Armenian National Academy of Sciences. She has published articles describing the transformations in Nagorno Karabakh, police reform in Armenia, and ethnicity issues in the “Russian Riviera,” among other topics. Her areas of expertise are: ethnographic methods, migration and refugees, gender studies, Russia, Caucasus, and anthropology.

The Politics of Dual Citizenship in the Post-Soviet States

~ *Oxana Shevel*

This policy memo examines dual citizenship rules in post-Soviet states and analyzes the reasons behind these states' decisions on whether to allow or oppose (or even criminalize) dual citizenship. A particular focus is on the comparative politics of these decisions, situating the post-Soviet region within the global context of a growing tolerance of dual/multiple citizenship. The memo argues that in the post-Soviet region many of the factors that have contributed to greater acceptance of dual citizenship in Western democracies are not (yet) present, and that instead dual citizenship policy is determined to a larger extent by sovereignty concerns and perception of geopolitical threats. Most recently, as the examples of Vladimir Putin's Russia and Petro Poroshenko's Ukraine demonstrate, ruling elites' drive for power maximization also makes dual citizenship rules a tool for punishing and weakening the political opposition. This trend is moving dual citizenship regimes in countries of the region away from the democratic West and closer to authoritarian models found in African and Asian states.



Oxana Shevel is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Tufts University. Her research and teaching focus on the post-Soviet region and issues such as nation- and state-building and the influence of international institutions on democratization. She is the author of *Migration, Refugee Policy, and State Building in Postcommunist Europe* (Cambridge 2011), which received the 2012 American Association of Ukrainian Studies (AAUS) book prize. Currently, she is working on a new book project: a comparative study of the sources of citizenship policies in new post-Communist states. Her areas of expertise are Russia, Ukraine, migration, refugees, state building, citizenship, international institutions, and democratization.

“Doctor Strangelove” or Russia’s Nuclear Weapons By 2020

~ *Polina Sinovets*

In spite of international sanctions, political isolation, and obvious economic problems, Russia seems to be reaching its military development (and propaganda) aims. In the US, the mass media have been posting increasingly alarmist comments about the growing capabilities of Russia's nuclear arsenal and its new apocalyptic types of weapons under development. Two aspects of the reviving Russian nuclear complex are analyzed: first, the ideological framework, which establishes nuclear deterrence as a cornerstone of Russian military and political influence; and second, the strong and weak points of Russia's nuclear arsenal, taking into consideration Russia's rearmament program as well as state information campaigns on the matter. In addition, several ways to involve Russia in a new arms control dialogue are explored.



Polina Sinovets is Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations at Mechnikov National University, Odessa, Ukraine. She was Senior Research Associate at Ukraine's National Institute for Strategic Studies and a Fellow at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (2006) and the NATO Defense College in Rome (2015). She has published articles in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *Russia in Global Politics*, and *NATO Defense College Research Papers*, among others. Since 2015, she has been Head of the Odessa Center for Nonproliferation (OdCNP) at Odessa National University (ONU). Her areas of expertise are: nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons policy, Ukraine, Russia, Iran, and politics.

Authoritarian Responsiveness: Managing Popular Demands in the Lead-Up to March 2018

~ *Regina Smyth*

Almost a year prior to the March 2018 Presidential elections, the Russian government announced its electoral goal: 70 percent of the vote with 70 percent turnout. On its face, raising popular expectations about the electoral outcome appears risky. Societal opposition and protest is increasing across Russian society and there are signs that discontent has spread beyond the urban elite. Yet, since 2011, the Putin regime has developed innovative new tools of authoritarian responsiveness and electoral management that could marginalize opposition and achieve the 70/70 goal. This memo outlines the use of housing policy to divide the existing anti-corruption movement without provoking significant opportunity for a new independent protest movement to arise.



Regina Smyth is Associate Professor of Political Science and Faculty Affiliate of the Russian and East European Center and the Ostrom Workshop at Indiana University. Smyth's research focuses on the causes and consequences of authoritarian protest in Russia, Hong Kong, and Ukraine. Her work, based on original data collection, contributes to debates on the role of leadership, economic crisis, and social media in protest mobilization, the link between protest participation and subsequent political engagement, and processes of autocratic consolidation. Her research also explores the meaning of non-participation in authoritarian protest and its effect on regime stability. Her areas of expertise are: Russia, Eurasia, elections, political parties and party systems, and power centers.

Monopolies Rising: Consolidation in the Russian Economy

~ *David Szakonyi*

Over the last decade, the Russian economy has undergone a pronounced turn toward consolidation and renationalization. The state has dramatically expanded its share of GDP by expanding into new markets and then driving out private companies. The resultant low levels of competition impede attempts to increase labor productivity and hold back economic growth. Moreover, the emergence of monopolies in many sectors has bestowed immense political power on just a few economic actors. Large companies face fewer obstacles to achieving preferential state treatment and wield numerous levers to block modernizing reforms that might undermine their hold on markets. Russia's renewed experiments with import substitution and protectionism mainly serve these entrenched interests over the national one.



David Szakonyi is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the George Washington University and Academy Scholar at Harvard University. His research is devoted to understanding how elites translate economic power into political influence and skew policy toward their own private interests. His primary focus is on Russia and the former Soviet Union, but he is also engaged in work on Brazil and the United States. One of his current book projects examines why businesspeople run for elected political office worldwide, how their firms perform as a result, and whether individuals with private sector experience make better politicians. Other research projects look at employers mobilizing voters, the role of family ties under authoritarian rule, and sources of bureaucratic effectiveness. His areas of expertise are: political economy, business-government relations, post-Soviet politics, corruption, authoritarianism, and clientelism.

Constructive Ambiguity as a Facilitator in US-Russia Security Negotiations

~ *Mikhail Troitskiy*

Russia and the United States appear to be in strong disagreement over the sources of instability and disorder both globally and in specific regions of the world. If agreeing on premises and assumptions is difficult while distrust is at an all-times high, it is hard to see how the US and Russia could agree on the outcomes of any processes that they set in motion. Each side will suspect its counterpart of hidden agendas and plans to gear the pre-determined end-results of their joint efforts to parochial needs. In such a situation, only uncertainty about the outcomes of negotiated agreements could enable substantive U.S.-Russian negotiations on matters of mutual interest. When preferences about outcomes are diametrically opposed, demonstrating commitment to the process is easier than finding clear-cut solutions. Conflicting parties may be advised to avoid seeking full certainty in an agreement and to allow for reasonable differences in its interpretation. This memo provides insight into the opportunities for achieving common understanding and initiating cooperation in a number of key areas between Moscow and Washington based on “constructive ambiguity” in negotiated solutions.



Mikhail Troitskiy is Associate Professor and Director of the School of Government and International Affairs at MGIMO University in Moscow, and IMARES Program Professor at the European University at St. Petersburg. In 2009-2015, he was Deputy Director at the Moscow office of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. His research interests include international relations and negotiation theory, Eurasian security, and Russia’s relations with the United States, NATO, and the EU. His current book project is Tug of War: Negotiating Security in Eurasia (co-edited, forthcoming in 2017). He is a frequent contributor to the Russian and international media. His areas of expertise are: international security, negotiation, Russia, EU, U.S.-Russia relations, NATO, and conflicts in Eurasia.

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