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Dr David White

Lecturer in Politics

Centre for Russian and East European Studies

Contact details

Telephone +44 (0)121 414 8237 (tel:+44 121 414 8237)

Fax +44 (0)121 414 3423

Email d.j.white.1@bham.ac.uk (mailto:d.j.white.1@bham.ac.uk)

Centre for Russian and East European Studies
School of Government and Society
Muirhead Tower
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham,
B15 2TT, United Kingdom

Qualifications

PhD Russian and East European Studies (Birmingham)

MA Political Science (Birmingham)

BA Politics and History (Wolverhampton)

Biography

I have been a member of CREES since 2000, formerly as a PhD student and, since 2003 as a member of the academic staff.

My broad research interests are in the dynamics between power and opposition in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes, democratisation in contemporary Europe and Russian domestic politics, particularly the evolution of the party system and specifically the development of the liberal-democratic and opposition forces.

My most recent research project, funded by the ESRC, analysed political opposition strategies to the Medvedev-Putin regime and involved two periods of fieldwork in Moscow involving interviews with leading opposition actors, party and civil society activists and political analysts. Given the unprecedented opposition protests in Russia following the parliamentary elections of December 2011, such research is certainly timely. In April 2013 I was awarded a small British Academy to continue this research.

Combined with my earlier PhD research on the Yabloko party I have developed a network of contacts with the Russian democratic opposition (broadly defined). Today's opposition, of course, may be tomorrow's political leaders, even in an electoral authoritarian system such as Russia!

Teaching

I am the convenor of the following modules:

- Twentieth Century Russian Politics (year 1)
- Contemporary Russian and East European Politics (years 2/3)
- Democracy and Democratisation in Contemporary Europe (year 3)
- Graduate Russian and Ukrainian Politics and International Relations (MA/MSc)

I also contribute to the postgraduate module, ‘Researching Russia and Eastern Europe’ (G1)

Postgraduate supervision

I have supervised doctoral students on topics relating to the role of the Catholic Church in Russia, the role of the party of power in Russia, pro-Kremlin youth movements, official discourse on Chechnya, the role of youth movements in Georgia and Ukraine, political developments in Belarus (all successfully completed).

I welcome enquiries from anyone interested in postgraduate research study in any of my areas of research (see below).

Research

Research Interests

- Power and opposition in (semi) authoritarian systems
- Democratisation
- Russian party politics
- The role of political opposition in Russia
- The relationship between political and civil society
- The 'lived experience' of electoral authoritarianism
- Humour and social protest
- Popular music and protest

Recent Projects

ESRC 2-year project on the Future of Political Opposition in Russia’s Managed Democracy (2009-2011). Award: £50,000

In 2011 I was awarded £2,250 in ASSC seed-corn funding for a project I am working on with Dr John Round (School of Geography, University of Birmingham and Higher School of Economics, Moscow) into the 'lived experience' of electoral authoriarianism in Russia. There has been some excellent research into atttitudes towards democracy and authoritarianism in Russia and support for authoritarian forms of rule. This research aims to dig a little deeper and investigate the impact of Russia's political system (best conceptualised as what Andreas Schedler refers to as 'electoral authoritarianism') on the daily lives of its people. Once the preliminary findings of the project (which has involved a series of interviews and focus groups in Moscow and Kazan) have been analysed John and I intend to apply for further funding.

In 2010 I organised a conference on 'Party Politics in Russia' which was held in Birmingham in June 2010. The papers given at the conference will be published in a special issue (which i am guest-editing) of East European Politics (formerly the Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics) in 2011. Contributors include Richard Sakwa, Neil Robinson, Paul Chaisty, Sean Roberts, Luke March, Derek Hutcheson, Edwin Bacon and Maya Atwal and myself.

In April 2013 I was awarded a British Academy small grant to carry out further research on Russian political opposition which will involve a visit to Moscow in September 2013 to meet with activists involved in the anti-Putin protest movement.

Other activities

I have a particular concern for teaching quality issues reflected in my activities as CREES Head of Academic Programmes (2006-2011) and latterly as CREES Director of Learning and Teaching.

I am a member the Birmingham UCU branch committee and am a BUCU caseworker.

Publications

- **Book**

White, D (2006) The Russian Democratic Party Yabloko: Opposition in a Managed Democracy, Ashgate

- **Journal Articles**

White, D (2013) 'Taking it to the streets: Raising the costs of electoral authoritarianism in Russia', *Perspectives on European Politics and Society,* 14:4

White, D (2013) 'Russian Liberalism in Crisis? Khodorkovskii Revisited', *Studies of Transition States and Societies,* 5:1

White, D (2012) Editor of special issue of *East European Politics* (formerly *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*), Party Politics in Russia, 28:3

White, D (2012) 'Reconceptualising Russian Party Politics', *East European Politics,* 28:2

White, D (2011) 'Dominant party systems: a framework for conceptualising opposition strategies in Russia', *Democratization,* 18:3

White, D (2007) 'Victims of a managed democracy? Explaining the electoral decline of the Yabloko Party, *Demokratizatsiya,* 15:2

White, D (2005) 'Going Their Own Way: Understanding the Yabloko Party's Opposition to Unification', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics,* 21:4

- **Other Public Output**

I contribute briefing papers regularly to Oxford Analytica and have written a number of articles for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the most recent being 'Russia's Opposition Still Faces a Hard Road' (www.rferl.org/content/commentary_russia_opposition/2231246.html)

Expertise

Russian politics, including: domestic politics, elections, political parties, opposition forces, democratisation, foreign policy

Alternative contact number available for this expert: **contact the press office (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx)**

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