**The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes**

Introduction to the course and objectives

This course offers a coherent analytical framework for the political, economic and social phenomena that shape the development and dynamics of post-communist regimes. Its objective is to familiarize students with new perspectives beyond the mainstream hybrid-regimes approach, and to call attention to details that distinguish regimes with different levels of separation of spheres of social action. The course also builds on the Eurasian literature on Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, Soviet Central Asia, and China, and the students are introduced to the intricacies of empirically complex and theoretically challenging tendencies in democracies, autocracies and dictatorships. The lectures follow the structure of the book under the same title (Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020.).

Course requirements

The students are expected to participate in class actively and to prepare and hold a presentation during one of the last two lectures. In the presentation, the students must choose a country and (a) either analyze it by the analytical framework of the course or (b) explain why the framework is inadequate for the country (economy, political system etc.) of their choice. Indeed, the students are encouraged to select countries from outside the post-communist region, and show how the framework may be used for countries in regions like Africa, Latin America or Southeast Asia (a post-communist country may be selected only if it has not been analyzed in *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*). Course grading will depend on class participation (40%) and the quality of presentation (60%) in terms of conceptual clarity and creativity in using the framework for the country of their choice.

Outline for the course

(Readings with an asterisk \* are optional)

**1. Current approaches: trapped in the language of democratization**

How have post-communist regimes been studied? How has comparative regime theory developed through the phases of transitology and hybridology, and how can it develop further? In what ways do post-communist regimes different from Western ones at their very fundaments, and what does this mean for future research? Are concepts like “illiberal democracy,” “neo-feudalism” or “crony capitalism” applicable to countries like Russia and Hungary?

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 1-25.

Hale, Henry E. *Patronal Politics – Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. pp. 1-38.

\* Bozóki, András, and Dániel Hegedűs. “Democracy, Dictatorship and Hybrid Regimes: Concepts and Approaches.” In *Illiberal and Authoritarian Tendencies in Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe*, edited by Magdalena Solska, Florian Bieber, and Dane Taleski, 21–49. Bern: Peter Lang, 2018.

\* Cassani, Andrea. “Hybrid What? Partial Consensus and Persistent Divergences in the Analysis of Hybrid Regimes.” *International Political Science Review* 35, no. 5 (0 1, 2014): 542–58.

**2. Stubborn structures: an explanation of the development of post-communist regimes**

Let us take a closer look at the fundaments of post-communist regimes. How can they explain the divergent outcomes of transformation after 1989? Why does democracy work in Estonia, but not in Russia? How can the reasons be originated from pre-communist times—and civilizational belonging? Answering these questions, we lay the ground for the analytical framework.

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 29-67.

Szelényi, Iván. “Capitalisms After Communism.” *New Left Review*, II, no. 96 (2015): 39–51.

\* Fisun, Oleksandr. 2012. “Rethinking Post-Soviet Politics from a Neopatrimonial Perspective.” SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 2645304. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network.

\* Kornai, János. “The System Paradigm Revisited: Clarification and Additions in the Light Of Experiences in the Post-Communist Region.” In *Stubborn Structures: Reconceptualizing Post-Communist Regimes*, edited by Bálint Magyar, 21–74. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2019.

**3. Basic concepts: informality, patronalism, and the types of state**

The lack of separation of spheres of social action results in informal and patronal relations dominating. What does this mean for the conceptualization of the state? How do existing state concepts apply to post-communist regimes—and to what features they actually refer to? Answering these questions, we may compare the state in liberal democracy and patronal autocracy: the constitutional state and the mafia state.

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 71-112.

Guliyev, Farid. “Personal Rule, Neopatrimonialism, and Regime Typologies: Integrating Dahlian and Weberian Approaches to Regime Studies.” *Democratization* 18, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 575–601.

\* Aliyev, Huseyn. “Post-Soviet Informality: Towards Theory-Building.” *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 35, no. 3–4 (2015): 182–98.

\* Kononenko, Vadim. “Introduction.” In *Russia as a Network State: What Works in Russia When State Institutions Do Not?*, edited by V. Kononenko and A. Moshes, 1–18. Springer, 2011.

**4. Ruling elites: the adopted political family as a *sui generis* form in patronal regimes**

The lack of separation of spheres of social action manifests in a specific form of ruling elite: the adopted political family, a political-economic clan. We examine the main actors who belong to such an elite (chief patron, oligarchs and poligarchs), its anthropological character, and the ways the chief patron disposes over status and wealth—of both his clients and enemies.

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 131-5, 162-78, 190-211.

Petrov, Nikolay. “Putin’s Neo-Nomenklatura System and Its Evolution.” In *Stubborn Structures: Reconceptualizing Post-Communist Regimes*, 179–215. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2019.

\* Collins, Kathleen. 2004. “The Logic of Clan Politics: Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories.” *World Politics* 56 (2): 224–61.

\* Minakov, Mikhail. “Republic of Clans: The Evolution of the Ukrainian Political System.” In *Stubborn Structures: Reconceptualizing Post-Communist Regimes*, edited by Bálint Magyar, 217–45. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2019.

**5. Politics of stability: public deliberation and the ways it is neutralized**

Modern states and the ruling elites rest upon civil legitimacy—in both democracies and autocracies. What are the differences? How does a chief patron interpret civil legitimacy, and what does he do with its institutions? Mapping out the so-called public deliberation process, we will systematically reveal how the media, demonstrations, opposition parties, elections, legislatures and courts are neutralized and/or integrated in the single-pyramid patronal network.

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 229-317.

\* Dukalskis, Alexander, and Johannes Gerschewski. “What Autocracies Say (and What Citizens Hear): Proposing Four Mechanisms of Autocratic Legitimation.” *Contemporary Politics* 23, no. 3 (2017): 251–68.

\* Popova, Maria. “Putin-Style ‘Rule of Law’ & the Prospects for Change.” *Dædalus - Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences* 146, no. 2 (2017): 64–75.

\* Schedler, Andreas. “Authoritarianism’s Last Line of Defense.” *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 1 (2010): 69–80.

**6. Politics of instability: defensive mechanisms, color revolutions, and the forms of reversing autocratic change**

Ideal type regimes are stable, self-sustaining systems. What challenges do they face—and how do they fight them off? We will analyze three regimes: liberal democracy, patronal democracy and patronal autocracy to answer this question. The danger and containment of autocratic tendencies in liberal democracies is well known, but we will also see how successful color revolutions serve the stability of patronal democracy, and how autocratic consolidation can be achieved. But what does democratic consolidation mean—after reversing an autocratic change?

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 317-57.

Way, Lucan. *Pluralism by Default: Weak Autocrats and the Rise of Competitive Politics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016. pp. 1-31.

\* Bunce, Valerie J., and Sharon L. Wolchik. *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. pp. 35-50

\* Hale, Henry E. “Formal Constitutions in Informal Politics: Institutions and Democratization in Post-Soviet Eurasia.” *World Politics* 63, no. 4 (2011): 581–617.

**7. Relational economics: forms of corruption and state intervention**

Patronalization of the political sphere goes hand in hand with economic patronalization. This is typically interpreted in the framework of corruption, “crony capitalism” or “state capture.” A typology of corruption will be offered, showing how a corrupt state—where bureaucrats will work only for bribe—differs from a criminal state—where bureaucrats are servers in a top-down imposed patronal system. We will discuss the forms of state intervention as well, and make distinctions between interest group lobbying and the influence of informal patronal networks.

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 361-445.

\* Innes, Abby. “Corporate State Capture in Open Societies: The Emergence of Corporate Brokerage Party Systems.” *East European Politics and Societies* 30, no. 3 (2016): 594–620.

\* Frye, Timothy. *Property Rights and Property Wrongs: How Power, Institutions, and Norms Shape Economic Conflict in Russia*. Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017. pp. 38-81

\* Wedel, Janine R. “Corruption and Organized Crime in Post-Communist States: New Ways of Manifesting Old Patterns.” *Trends in Organized Crime* 7, no. 1 (2001): 3–61.

**8. Comparative economic systems: how do Russia and China work?**

Economic patronalization by an informal patronal network constitutes a relational economy. What are the dominant and subordinate mechanisms in such a system—and what are they in market-exploiting dictatorships? First, the phenomenon of predation, as present in patronal autocracies like Russia, will be examined, then we move on to the paradigmatic case of market-exploiting dictatorship: China. We will see how, after a model change from communist dictatorship, a dynamic balance of three economic mechanisms can be maintained—and what challenges this setting meets, like the tendency of “mafiafication” of the party state.

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 480-535.

Lanskoy, Miriam, and Dylan Myles-Primakoff. “Power and Plunder in Putin’s Russia.” *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 1 (2018): 76–85.

\* Csanádi, Mária. “China in Between Varieties of Capitalism and Communism.” Discussion Paper; Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2016. <http://www.mtakti.hu/file/download/mtdp/MTDP1604.pdf>.

\* Ledeneva, Alena V. *How Russia Really Works: The Informal Practices That Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2006. pp. 142-163.

**9. “The people:” clientage society and populism as an ideological instrument**

The process of patronalization is complete as all three spheres are patronalized: political and economic patronalization is followed by societal patronalization. Such society may not be analyzed by standard sociological approaches—instead of classes, one is invited to talk about clientages, analyzing social groups by their dependences on the adopted political family. Dependence is also one of the factors that make people vote for such a regime—just like ideology. How is ideology used by patronal populists—and how they differ from Western populists?

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 541-610.

\* Baez-Camargo, Claudia, and Alena V. Ledeneva. “Where Does Informality Stop and Corruption Begin? Informal Governance and the Public/Private Crossover in Mexico, Russia and Tanzania.” *Slavonic & East European Review* 95, no. 1 (2017): 49–75.

\* Li, Peter Ping. “Social Tie, Social Capital, and Social Behavior: Toward an Integrative Model of Informal Exchange.” *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* 24, no. 2 (2007): 227–46.

\* Makarenko, Boris. “Populism and Political Institutions: A Comparative Perspective.” In *Populism as a Common Challenge*, edited by Claudia Crawford, Boris Makarenko, and Nikolay Petrov, 27–36. Moscow: Political encyclopedia, 2018.

**10. Regime trajectories: regime change, democratic backsliding, and regime cycles**

The conceptual framework defines six regimes: liberal and patronal democracy, conservative and patronal autocracy, and communist and market-exploiting dictatorship. Which post-communist country is close to which regime type, and how have they moved from one type to another? Spanning a triangular conceptual space, we can model post-communist regime trajectories, including primary trajectories—leaving communist dictatorship for different target regimes—and secondary trajectories—such as democratic backsliding. Twelve post-communist countries will be used to illustrate the variety of trajectories.

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 621-72.

\* Daly, Tom Gerald. “Democratic Decay: Conceptualising an Emerging Research Field.” *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, February 19, 2019.

\* Hale, Henry E. *Patronal Politics – Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. pp. 133-162.

\* Saakashvili, Mikheil, and Kahka Bendukidze. “Georgia: The Most Radical Catch-Up Reforms.” In *The Great Rebirth: Lessons from the Victory of Capitalism over Communism*, edited by Anders Åslund and Simeon Djankov, 149–63. Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2014.

**11. Beyond regime specificities: country-, policy-, and era-specific features**

In the previous classes, we focused mainly on regime-specific features, meaning the conditions of power and autonomy in democracies and autocracies. Yet regime trajectories reveal that other features play an important role like ethnic cleavages, country size, resource abundance, or geopolitics. How do such features fit into our framework? How is regime functioning influenced by such factors? Does the framework enable us to analyze policies and policy outcomes, a major part of social sciences? And finally: what does the future hold for post-communist regimes?

*Readings:*

Magyar, Bálint, and Bálint Madlovics. *The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework*. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. pp. 672-738.

\* Bozóki, András, and Dániel Hegedűs. “An Externally Constrained Hybrid Regime: Hungary in the European Union.” *Democratization*, April 13, 2018, 1173–89.

\* Chayes, Sarah. “The Structure of Corruption: A Systemic Analysis.” In *Stubborn Structures: Reconceptualizing Post-Communist Regimes*, edited by Bálint Magyar, 507–30. Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2019.

\* Qiang, Xiao. “President Xi’s Surveillance State.” *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 1 (January 9, 2019): 53–67.

**12-14. Student lectures**