

## Audio file

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## Transcript

00:00:25 Speaker 1

Hello and welcome to the Code podcast, a podcast by the quality of Government Institute at the University of Gothenburg.

00:00:33 Speaker 1

In this podcast, we have conversations with well known experts to try to make sense of politics and governments worldwide hosting this show is professor.

00:00:43 Speaker 1

Hector la puente.

00:00:44 Speaker 1

And in this episode he will talk to Tamila Lancina, professor of international Relations at London School of Economics and Political Science.

00:00:54 Speaker 1

And one of the greatest experts on current Russia, thanks to her knowledge of Russian history, Tamilla has worked on democracy and authority, mass protests and historical drivers of human capital and political regime change in Russia.

00:01:06 Speaker 1

And in other countries, she has also analyzed the propaganda and this information campaign in the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea and aggression in Ukraine.

00:01:17 Speaker 1

In this episode, Victor and Tamila discuss Tamilla's latest book, The Estate Origins of Democracy in Russia, from Imperial Burgos to post communist middle cloth to try to understand the war resistance within Russia Today. Looking at both history and the current day, we hope you enjoyed the episode.

00:01:37 Speaker 1

And don't forget to like, share and subscribe if you do.

00:01:47 Speaker 2

Welcome to the podcast of the Quality of Government Institute, where we have conversations with well known experts and try to make sense of politics and governments all over the world.

00:01:56 Speaker 2

My name is Victor appointment today in the podcast with our privilege to have Tamila Lancina, professor of International relations at the London School of Economics.

00:02:04 Speaker 2

She got her PhD from the University of Oxford and studied in Uzbekistan and Staff University in the US.

00:02:11 Speaker 2

She has had academic appointments at the Humboldt University in Berlin, Stanford University, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC.

00:02:20 Speaker 2

The Mumford University in Lancaster, and now in London, welcome to Mila.

00:02:25 Speaker 2

It's great to have you here.

00:02:27 Speaker 3

Thank you for having me.

00:02:29 Speaker 2

When the war in Ukraine started, a lot of the.

00:02:32 Speaker 2

Focus went to the passel, trying to understand the behavior of Putin.

00:02:36 Speaker 2

But I always thought that more puzzling was the behavior of the thousands of Russians who resisted Putin's decisions, who demonstrated in the streets, who were in prison than and early on, I always found that.

00:02:51 Speaker 2

More puzzling that the behavior of Putin is the behavior of Navalny.

00:02:55 Speaker 2

And opposition leaders like him, you are poisoned by the regime.

00:03:00 Speaker 2

You you survive miraculously.

00:03:02 Speaker 2

And you come back to to your own country, to be jailed by the despot.

00:03:07 Speaker 2

And then I discovered tommila lankenau's work. First, her paper and the American Political science review with Alexander Liebman in.

00:03:15 Speaker 2

In 2021 and then these fantastic and original book that I would like to recommend you today, the state origins of democracy in Russia, from Imperial Bourgeois to post communist middle class.

00:03:29 Speaker 2

Where she draws the long.

00:03:31 Speaker 2

Term patterns of reproduction of social structure in Russia, in particular the middle class, the professional class, the doctors, the teachers, the lawyers from the saris times to the present, and why these legacies matter for democracy, development and social inequalities.

00:03:47 Speaker 2

One of the reasons to have her in the podcast.

00:03:49 Speaker 2

That everyone nowadays try to explain the beliefs, values and actions of of 1 single Putin but.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

Here I am with a person who is explaining the beliefs, values and actions of the thousands of let's say sorry for the simplification navalis or people who believe in in democracy and and I think that the the villion tree has not allowed us to see the forest of heroes that are in Russia and I.

00:04:14 Speaker 2

Think your your book?

00:04:16 Speaker 2

That's their focus on those heroes I am making.

00:04:19 Speaker 2

Obviously an oversimplification of your work, but you try to explain and like many other people who are more focusing on the submission of the Russian people to their leaders, you.

00:04:30 Speaker 2

Explaining the resilient minority or not, so minority, the resilience of of the Russians.

00:04:35 Speaker 2

Why did you want to study this resilience of the Russian people in the in the first place?

00:04:41 Speaker 3

Thank you very much.

00:04:42 Speaker 3

First of all, thank you very much for a very refreshing question, because I and and rather angle on on the question.

00:04:48 Speaker 3

I do also find it frustrating.

00:04:51 Speaker 3

This focus on Putin, the persona of lead.

00:04:55 Speaker 3

And indeed, even if there is a kind of social emphasis on on societal basis of support, there is a lot of behavioral work where we kind of work with conventional socioeconomic categories of occupation, university education, gender, etcetera.

00:05:14 Speaker 3

To understand the basis of support to the Putin regime or challenges to to the autocracy, I find it frustrating because I think we are missing a very, very important part of the story and I look.

00:05:28 Speaker 3

It's this small sort of minority of the middle class or the activist segment of Russian society in the historical legacies of the construction of, you know, the proto, middle class and and the bourgeoisie, which take us back to really the imperial period, the pre Communist period.

00:05:49 Speaker 3

And contrary to sort of the conventional paradigm, which tells us that the.

00:05:54 Speaker 3

Both of the revolution was the great new Revolutionary New Dawn and and rupture with the past.

00:06:00 Speaker 3

I actually see significant element of continuity in the reproduction of social structure from before the revolution, and that's the paradigm and I can go into that that has not really we haven't seen much of that.

00:06:15 Speaker 3

For a variety of reasons, because we have from the communist period, we are socialized in this paradigm or notion of the communism as ushering in a new society.

00:06:26 Speaker 3

Which of course with its own set of social structures and social inequalities but focused on the institutions of the communist regime, whereas I take us back to the institution of Salvia in English, it's translated as as.

00:06:40 Speaker 3

Me a lot of people are puzzled when they hear his state.

00:06:44 Speaker 3

They don't quite understand.

00:06:45 Speaker 3

What it is and.

00:06:45 Speaker 3

I hope that.

00:06:46 Speaker 3

With my book, we'll have an introduction of this very, very important and neglected institution of social stratification and late Imperial Russia and its significance, and the kind of social divisions that we observe.

00:07:01 Speaker 3

Now, whether we talk about support for Putin or support for or challenge to the war in Ukraine, I see very much the same cleavage that we observed in late Imperial society on the eve of the revolution, where we had about maybe 1520% of what I call educated is.

00:07:20 Speaker 3

States and the vast majority of illiterate peasantry, and as I argue and demonstrate in my book, with a lot of senses, qualitative, archival and other data, this is a chasm that never quite disappeared.

00:07:34 Speaker 2

I think this is a very novel view because everybody tries to understand contemporary Russia or many people at least looking at history.

00:07:43 Speaker 2

But as you say, they look at the history of power, they look at how the sportic Russian rulers have been from Ivan the Terrible in the 16th century up to Putin, they have.

00:07:54 Speaker 2

Had mindset of expansionist imperialism and colonialization, and so on.

00:07:59 Speaker 2

They are looking at this dark side, but you look at the bright side, you look at the not at the seats of putinism in in Imperial Russia, but also the seats of.

00:08:09 Speaker 2

Of democracy or democratic resistance?

00:08:11 Speaker 2

And as you have just said, now Imperial, that is the society in Russia was not like we depicted.

00:08:20 Speaker 2

Normally, and they were quite large group of educated people with let's say, liberal liberal values, just to to simplify that.

00:08:30 Speaker 2

The question is like, how would that society compared to Western counterpart at that time?

00:08:38 Speaker 2

Because I think that a lot of the.

00:08:40 Speaker 2

Literature has focused on the Netherlands and Britain as kind of a societies in which democratic values started to spread and from there to the rest of of Europe, and the rest would be more backward society.

00:08:56 Speaker 2

It is maybe that's an Anglo-Saxon bias in that sense of the researchers and Anglo-Saxon, or that researchers or people who knew a lot about the Netherlands were the first ones, or have been the dominant figures on on this period.

00:09:12 Speaker 2

And and maybe we have a biased, but I would like to ask you, which would be the?

00:09:16 Speaker 2

Equivalent in the West of the Russian society, let's say of the 19th century that you describe in your book.

00:09:24 Speaker 3

Thank you again for asking very, very important question.

00:09:27 Speaker 3

So in my book I draw on the work of revisionist historians.

00:09:33 Speaker 3

For instance, Baris Miruna, who is a very, very prominent well known also in the West Historian who have challenged these narratives and notions of the backwardness of.

00:09:43 Speaker 3

Of Russian society in the late imperial period, and he and I won't be able to quote these statistics now, but he provides quite compelling evidence that Russia was very comparable to perhaps not, not England.

00:09:56 Speaker 3

Although even if we look at schooling, for instance, there were significant gaps in the quality of schooling.

00:10:03 Speaker 3

And the the years of schooling between the different social classes, which was actually quite similar in a lot of ways to what we observed in Russia, where only a small minority of people really had access to, for instance, secondary education.

00:10:19 Speaker 3

And in Russia, we had prestigious sort of secondary schools called gymnasium, which provided absolutely excellent education.

00:10:28 Speaker 3

So I think countries like Spain, France and southern European countries emerge as or Italy, for instance, different parts of Italy emerge as very comparable.

00:10:38 Speaker 3

To rush, if we look at statistics for education and also the social.

00:10:43 Speaker 3

Distinctions between groups of people who had access to secondary or university education, by the way, was only accessible to small minority of people.

00:10:55 Speaker 3

If we talk about 19th century, even in the in the developed more developed parts of countries of Western Europe, so Russia was in some ways.

00:11:03 Speaker 3

Quite comparable and was really catching up in fact.

00:11:07 Speaker 3

There were discussions.

00:11:08 Speaker 3

About introducing universal public schooling that would be accessible.

00:11:13 Speaker 3

To all free of charge. That never happened before the revolution, but they were excellent schools that catered to these groups that I called the educated estates, and they were aristocracy, which comprised less than 2% of the Russian population and personal nobles. They were the clergy.

00:11:33 Speaker 3

The other estate.

00:11:35 Speaker 3

Which was comparable to the nobility, in fact, higher, even more educated, 95% of the those in the clergy estate on the eve of the revolution were fully literate and about 90% of aristocracy and personal nobles were. And then you have the merchants who were the bourgeoisie, the.

00:11:55 Speaker 3

People with newly acquired rather than hereditary wealth, often very entrepreneurial, who were becoming professionals in a modern sense.

00:12:04 Speaker 3

They wanted their children.

00:12:06 Speaker 3

To acquire education in the modern professions and they were able to afford these expensive elite gymnasia which habitually were attended by aristocracy.

00:12:19 Speaker 3

So we see this expansion of access to falling by not just which had been accessible to aristocracy.

00:12:26 Speaker 3

But also it's becoming more accessible to these urban.

00:12:29 Speaker 3

And groups and the other mysterious urban group, which people have really not talked very much about.

00:12:35 Speaker 3

But in my analysis emerges as the kind of core of the modern middle class and the bourgeois I see in the imperial period is the so-called mishani.

00:12:45 Speaker 3

It's very difficult to translate this term.

00:12:48 Speaker 3

It has been translated.

00:12:50 Speaker 3

Petit bourgeoisie under the Soviets it acquired, can be derogatory connotations of a group that's mired in cats and bad taste, and is only concerned about money.

00:13:02 Speaker 3

But these were.

00:13:03 Speaker 3

Actually, traders, artisans.

00:13:06 Speaker 3

Exactly the groups that from the comparative politics literature emerges.

00:13:10 Speaker 3

So the the bourgeoisie that often sides with those elements in in society that do want enfranchisement and do want greater liberties and self governance.

00:13:22 Speaker 3

And that is.

00:13:23 Speaker 3

Also, what I find in my work?



00:13:25 Speaker 3

Cheney were more than 10% of the Imperial population, second only to peasants who were the largest, nearly 80%.

00:13:34 Speaker 3

The state of presence of the imperial population and remained overwhelmingly illiterate. It must be said, even in 1917, and I think, and I traced the significance of those cleavages, for understanding both the kind of impulses of democratic support and opposition to democracy in present day.

00:13:55 Speaker 2

I think a great idea of yours is to keep that term both in your article and your book the machine, in order to show and to to show the possibilities that this term also might have to be to understand other puzzling, democratizing movements in other parts of Europe, especially parts like you have mentioned in southern and continental Europe.

00:14:17 Speaker 2

Where they had legacies of these feudal states.

00:14:22 Speaker 2

And how they did not play maybe the backward role that we normally associate with them, but quite the opposite.

00:14:28 Speaker 2

They could be promoting these liberal values.

00:14:30 Speaker 2

I think also a qualitative evidence that the Russia was highly educated during the 19th centuries, that it's I cannot find any other nation who created greater writers than than Russia and Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dostoyevsky and and so on.

00:14:48 Speaker 2

Actually, some of them do.

00:14:50 Speaker 2

Right in in your box.

00:14:51 Speaker 2

So there should be certain mass of educated people, not only a person touch of literacy, but also some intangible quality in the values transmitted among those people to produce these great novels and literature of Russian realism, someone said that.

00:15:12 Speaker 2

From the Jewish Bible, probably there has not been.

00:15:16 Speaker 2

Group of books with the same ability to penetrate in the human soul as the collective work of the Russian realist, and I tend to agree as a big fan of that of that literature.

00:15:29 Speaker 2

So I am really happy to find not only an explanation for the naval units, but also an explanation for the TOLSTOYS in.

00:15:36 Speaker 2

Chekhov from Dostoyevsky, ina.

00:15:38 Speaker 2

So-called for many backward society.

00:15:42 Speaker 2

But let's talk about one precise moment in the in the 19th century, the the reforms of Russia in 1860s. Why are they so important in your narrative, actually?

00:15:55 Speaker 2

Some senses may be more important that that that the overlooking comparison, at least to the over studied Russian Revolution of 1917.

00:16:05 Speaker 3

Absolutely. The 1860s reforms were extremely important and and are important in my analysis, but for slightly different reasons for which most people sort of highlight their role.

00:16:18 Speaker 3

So most people are aware that there was emancipation of the serfs. That's the most important element of these, so-called great reform.

00:16:26 Speaker 3

Some other aspect that people talk about is the seems to one that is the reforms of local self governments where whereby in new institutions of self government were were set up in rural areas.

00:16:39 Speaker 3

In particular what people often forget is the secondary byproduct of emancipation meant.

00:16:46 Speaker 3

That the landed aristocracy will losing and that is captured very well in some of those classic novels of Russian literary grades that you.

00:16:56 Speaker 3

So they were losing the material foundations of their established leisurely existence.

00:17:03 Speaker 3

And what I trace in my work is the transition of these, and that is also the misconception, to argue that they were idlers.

00:17:12 Speaker 3

They were not, because habitually, aristocratic titles also came with an expectation of service.

00:17:18 Speaker 3

So the source and service came with an expectation of superb education, for which children from the ages of six or seven were attending preparatory school tutors.

00:17:29 Speaker 3

In the home.

00:17:30 Speaker 3

And the exam to enter these aristocratic schools were very, very rigorous.

00:17:36 Speaker 3

So habitually aristocrats were in service to the Tsar, to the, to the crown.

00:17:42 Speaker 3

They were essentially control to professionals in that sense, highly educated public civil servants, and not all of them, of course.

00:17:50 Speaker 3

But what I'm also observing is this movement towards professionalization.

00:17:55 Speaker 3

Of aristocracy and other habitually high status groups like clergy for instance, which also had superior rights compared to, for instance, the urban groups, and certainly the peasants.

00:18:08 Speaker 3

So what we observe is these habitually educated groups, as especially aristocrats, who were now in need of burial and new.

00:18:15 Speaker 3

Sources of material substance and by the way, I observed the same processes in Hungary.

00:18:20 Speaker 3

One of the cases I compared the in in the final chapter of my book is is with Hungary.

00:18:25 Speaker 3

Very similar process of professionalization of aristocracy.

00:18:30 Speaker 3

So they were becoming doctors.

00:18:32 Speaker 3

They were.

00:18:33 Speaker 3

Teachers, they were entering these and in the case of clergy veterinarians, why veterinarians?

00:18:41 Speaker 3

Well, because the clergy in rural areas especially were expected to perform many of the services of the state because Russian state, contrary to widespread myths.

00:18:52 Speaker 3

That it was.

00:18:53 Speaker 3

Normally present or actually very extremely.

00:18:57 Speaker 3

Reaching into the provinces so provinces like this region of Samara, which I focused very much on in my book, were essentially very highly self governed.

00:19:08 Speaker 3

And so you have these kind of remnants of feudal state and feudal governance in the form of fiefdoms or estates.

00:19:17 Speaker 3

And transitioning into the modern professional class. So the 1860s reforms were very, very important because they created these additional incentives for them habitually we.

00:19:30 Speaker 3

Movie to acquire kind of gainful employment in the modern professions.

00:19:35 Speaker 3

And then you also have the entrepreneurial class, the *mishani* and the merchants who are trying elbowing their way into the schools that used to be colonized by the aristocracy and clergy, by the way.

00:19:48 Speaker 3

Also they had their own seminaries which became.

00:19:51 Speaker 3

Also kind of incubators of the modern professions and medicine veterinary.

00:19:57 Speaker 3

Sciences and the like.

00:19:58 Speaker 3

So these reforms were very important because they ushered in this modernity very similar, in fact, to processes that were occurring elsewhere in Europe, perhaps slightly earlier.

00:20:11 Speaker 3

But Russia was certainly catching up.

00:20:16 Speaker 2

One of the interesting things of your book is that you also debunk this myth that tends to see the Russian church as extremely conservative and authoritarian, and obviously something like that is going on.

00:20:30 Speaker 2

And we can see that in the association between the putting and the Patriarch Kirill and so on.

00:20:35 Speaker 2

And but you.

00:20:36 Speaker 2

Are making a a nuanced distinction in as you have been mentioning now about the role of the clergy and how they some of their members could actually be in this in the other side in let's say in the Proto Bonjour proto Democratic side.

00:20:51 Speaker 2

But any way which would be your response to this general?

00:20:55 Speaker 2

View of one of the reasons why Eastern Europe in general and and the lands that were on the influence of the Eastern Church instead of the Western Church, had been more authoritarian, basically because in the in the West, in Western Europe we had this separation between the Church and the state.

00:21:14 Speaker 2

Quite clearly, while in Eastern Europe and in Russia, what we have seen historically is a stronger links between the the state and the Orthodox Church that have remained until nowadays and even until recently people were saying that there were many KGB agents among in the church and and so on and.

00:21:34 Speaker 2

So which is the role of the church in general and or these different groups that you are exploring your?

00:21:40 Speaker 3

So the church, my analysis does not intrinsically does not really weigh so much into these debates about the significance of Orthodoxy as traditionally understood.

00:21:53 Speaker 3

And the church.

00:21:55 Speaker 3

It highlights more when it comes to.

00:21:56 Speaker 3

The Orthodox Church.

00:21:58 Speaker 3

The significance that the estate of clergy which habitually they were supposed to wear, the sort of the mantle of the priest.

00:22:06 Speaker 3

You were if you your father was a priest, you were born into that estates as all the of the clergy.

00:22:12 Speaker 3

But many were abandoning those robes and drops because they want to.

00:22:15 Speaker 3

They didn't want to follow in their fathers falling, and in fact many were also joining the revolutionary movement of the left kind.

00:22:23 Speaker 3

Many were also becoming the kind of more traditional bourgeois.

00:22:26 Speaker 3

Professionals, that is the ask that I highlight.

00:22:29 Speaker 3

But I also drew attention.

00:22:32 Speaker 3

To in the literature, perhaps slightly neglected, facet of the plurality of different faiths and denominations, and there is a book called something like Russia's lost reformation or forgotten reformation or something like that. So they were pro proto Protestant or native.

00:22:52 Speaker 3

Quasi Protestant groups, for instance, like the Molokans, the so-called milk drinkers.

00:22:58 Speaker 3

This is a fact where my own family comes comes from on on my paternal.

00:23:02 Speaker 3

Died and they were sort of often heretics.

00:23:05 Speaker 3

They were called sects in the Russian imperial designation and they moved to the in frontier areas, where they often have the status of freer peasants compared to the serfs in other.

00:23:18 Speaker 3

Yeah, sort of black earth areas of of central.

00:23:22 Speaker 3

Russia, they had, they had greater freedoms.

00:23:25 Speaker 3

Because they were encouraged or pushed out into the frontier, there were also Old Believers who were there was a there was a schism with the Russian Orthodox Church that went back centuries and eventually, although they were accepted by the church, they were very different for one reason or another, they were considered to be very entrepreneurial.

00:23:45 Speaker 3

In the region of Samara that investigating, I came across a fascinating archive.

00:23:50 Speaker 3

Of all, believe our families, and they essentially ran the grain trade in this cities of Samara, which was called the Chicago on the wall.

00:24:00 Speaker 3

It was a booming provincial region, so and then there were Jews, of course, with the establishment of the railway, there was a lot of movement and a lot of trade.

00:24:10 Speaker 3

That kind of linked different parts of the Russian Empire with different poles, Polish exile.

00:24:16 Speaker 3

With Jewish community Germans, there were German settlers as well in the various regions.

00:24:22 Speaker 3

So and together with the educated Russian Orthodox traditionally high status groups, whether aristocrats or clergy they formed together.

00:24:33 Speaker 3

This kind of very nebulous but at the same time.

00:24:37 Speaker 3

Definable group of the Proto, middle class and proto bourgeoisie.

00:24:41 Speaker 3

There was this kind of very exciting process.

00:24:44 Speaker 3

In the final quarter of the 19th century and towards leading up to the Bolshevik revolution that was really brewing in the consolidation of this new middle class vested with liberal ideas and, you know, supportive of different kind of democratic impulses within.

00:25:04 Speaker 3

The late Imperial Russia and what I then show in the book that it just it didn't disappear. It's a big myth that these groups were simply obliterated and and lost all relevance after 1917.

00:25:18 Speaker 2

Yeah, one of the most intriguing things from your book is precisely this the role of the religious minorities.

00:25:22 Speaker 2

You have mentioned the Protestant communities and the and the Jewish community.

00:25:26 Speaker 2

And one of the things that I was wondering is which is the mechanism through which these minorities are playing a role is through the Max Weber mechanism of OK.

00:25:38 Speaker 2

Have a through religious dogma, they were fostering kind of the spirit of capitalism, or quite the opposite is more like and I think.

00:25:47 Speaker 2

That is, I don't know if that is what you are citing, but at least it emerged that you also give importance to this idea that not actually, it's it's a more materialist or explanation along the lines of the modernization theory that they actually had economic development.

00:26:03 Speaker 2

And that is what foster their their role.

00:26:05 Speaker 2

So it's their, it's their values.

00:26:07 Speaker 2

Or or their money would would played a role here or there?

00:26:12 Speaker 3

It's certainly a combination of all three and we trace some of these distinct we we're able to trace to a certain extent with our in.

00:26:20 Speaker 3

Our paper apps.

00:26:21 Speaker 3

Our paper with Alexander, even where we, for instance, discern the preservation of entrepreneurial values, which we we can trace back to the merchant and mishani mechanism.

00:26:32 Speaker 3

Ohh yeah.

00:26:33 Speaker 3



In particular, for instance, there is some data that we used looking at the Lake, Soviet and post Soviet ability to or willingness to establish one's own business, and we link that to the presence or the the share of these michiganian merchant communities in late Imperial Russia. But we also of course.

00:26:54 Speaker 3

The the values are important in a variant sense.

00:26:57 Speaker 3

For instance the the different.

00:27:00 Speaker 3

Quasi Protestant communities that that I discussed or allude to in my book, they were very much very similar to the the Protestant sort of is how similar values in the vegetarian sense and also let's not forget that German settlers whom Catherine the great invited in the late 18th century.

00:27:21 Speaker 3

To settle in different parts of the Volga, they also diffuse their way of life and the way of life of course, came from their religion.

00:27:29 Speaker 3

They didn't indulge in conspicuous consumption.

00:27:32 Speaker 3

They didn't drink very much.

00:27:34 Speaker 3

They were model farmers.

00:27:36 Speaker 3

They saved, they prospered, and they lived good lives and and and that sort of diffuse to the communities around.

00:27:44 Speaker 3

And because of their emphasis on reading of the Bible for both girls and boys, they were habitually littered and that we also observed with some old believer families to a certain extent.

00:27:56 Speaker 3

And whom in the Bavarian sense also they appear in some discussions of, you know.

00:28:01 Speaker 3

Were they like the Protestants and and and the bearing work or not?

00:28:05 Speaker 3

Old Believers, there is some debate about that, but certainly there were similarities between their emphasis on thrift education as well and that offensively played a role.

00:28:17 Speaker 3

So there it's a mix of.

00:28:19 Speaker 3

Education as well, which doesn't come necessarily from religious values because in my analysis we talking about estates that include both the clergy and the the urban entrepreneurial groups for whom acquiring the trappings of education was simply an elevation of status and bringing them closer to this.

00:28:40 Speaker 3

Higher echelon of, you know, aristocrats and personal nobles, so it was very much the story as well of to a certain extent of modernization.

00:28:48 Speaker 3

One, but also with combined with some of these religious entrepreneurial values that also kind of are nurtured and engendered within particular communities and within families and for the Jewish populations.

00:29:02 Speaker 3

We know of the kind of the discrimination that they faced in the Russian Empire and that too incentivized them to.

00:29:09 Speaker 3

Doing the merchant estate, for instance, for which you had to pay Guild fees and and acquire higher education by way of kind of social advancement as well.

00:29:19 Speaker 3

To deal with this kind of social stigma and discrimination as a kind of compensatory mechanism.

00:29:25 Speaker 3

So that was also a bland.

00:29:26 Speaker 3

I'm looking at the combination rather than having a simplistic picture.

00:29:30 Speaker 3

That tells us.

00:29:31 Speaker 3

That one particular group was the engine.

00:29:33 Speaker 3

Of the creation of the middle class, I'm looking at this kind of mishmash of processes that all came together to also create a kind of very vibrant public sphere, which we don't talk about very much.

00:29:46 Speaker 3

And we, you know, in in the Russian case, we would have thought that the schools, these gymnasium, elite secondary schools, they were.

00:29:53 Speaker 3

Are very important part of the public sphere, and debate and discussion, and they were linked with all kinds of civic groups and societies in the provinces, not just in the capitals or imperial metropolis.

00:30:08 Speaker 2

And then over that vibrant society comes the volcanic revolution and the usual interpretation is that the Soviets completely destroyed the society.

00:30:17 Speaker 2

They created a sort of a tabula rasa blank slate.

00:30:21 Speaker 2

They change everything but you in your book argue that that is not the case, that there are things that.

00:30:27 Speaker 2

They did not change and which are those things that that they were not able to change.

00:30:35 Speaker 3

So what they were not able to change was due to the force of circumstances.

00:30:40 Speaker 3

They very quickly realized that the Bolsheviks that to fulfill the kind of fantastical proclamations about.

00:30:46 Speaker 3

Building a new.

00:30:46 Speaker 3

Society from scratch upon the ashes of the old.

00:30:50 Speaker 3

Modernizing it.

00:30:52 Speaker 3

You know, electrification, the space project.

00:30:55 Speaker 3

And all those things the rail projects are simply unachievable without reliance on these same groups that they were trying to exterminate according to the kind of Marxist Leninist dogma.

00:31:08 Speaker 3

So this bourgeoisie, what they call bourgeoisie, where exactly those educated states plus chunks of, well, the peasantry.

00:31:15 Speaker 3

Who were also kind of on route to becoming some of them, the most entrepreneurial ones were enroute to joining these urban bourgeois groups.

00:31:24 Speaker 3

And so they were the ones who were the were the professionals.

00:31:28 Speaker 3

So when we it's a big it's a myth to consider.

00:31:32 Speaker 3

The rapid creation of a new Soviet middle class, because if we look at the literacy statistics, including in the so-called 1937 Stalin census, which was held with great fanfare and and then the results came in, and the Stalin and his henchman were absolutely aghast at the results.

00:31:52 Speaker 3

Because it will reveal the country steeped in the same social divisions that they were before.

00:31:58 Speaker 3

And by the way, with Protestants continuing to be more literate than the old.

00:32:03 Speaker 3

Christians and you know some of the same patterns that we observed in late Imperial society, especially women, highly literate.

00:32:10 Speaker 3

So this kind of small minority of educated groups, who were, you know, entrepreneurs or professionals, they were the ones who were invited in some way, sometimes at gun point, to become the the teachers and the Soviet schools and the engineers and participate in the space project sometimes.

00:32:29 Speaker 3

In the Gula, what do I also observe and that is, and I'm drawing on the revisionist historiography of scholars who've worked with archives that have opened since the fall of the Soviet Union, to demonstrate what was happening in the gulag. What is the gulag we are actually rethinking now, and we also know from Solzhenitsyn's work that.

00:32:49 Speaker 3

They were the so-called chirashi, those places where.

00:32:52 Speaker 3

Working scientists would work and enjoy relatively good food rations, and we're in relatively privileged position.

00:33:00 Speaker 3

I say relatively privileged because we're talking about the gulag.

00:33:04 Speaker 3

This is basically slave labor, but still there were these hierarchies and if you were a doctor in the gulag, that's what considered to that was considered to be highly desirable.

00:33:14 Speaker 3

Thing to do because you were spared the break back, you know, label felling trees etcetera because they needed somebody to treat people to preserve this this label.

00:33:24 Speaker 3

So all these higher in some ways were preserved. And then when people ask me, well, what about you looking at a period of 100 years?

00:33:33 Speaker 3

And of course, 70 years from the revolution, what are the causal mechanisms?

00:33:38 Speaker 3

Surely the people were repressed, they were moved around and deported and.

00:33:44 Speaker 3

Here I bring in the role of the families in this kind of intergenerational transmission of values, aspirations and in some ways even material capital, because we we you know, I unearth new evidence of remittances from Western.

00:34:02 Speaker 3

All the way through the 1920s, nineteen 30s and even 1940s during the war, who were sending packages and small currency infusions to their relatives back in the Soviet Union?

00:34:15 Speaker 2

These new social hierarchies that you are nominating in your book, some of them are quite novel, and to me it was quite puzzled by this distinction that you make within the middle class.

00:34:26 Speaker 2

You talk that there are two types, 2 prongs of middle class, one created by the state by the.

00:34:32 Speaker 2

It and the other that this one that has survived across time from the Imperial Tsarist.

00:34:38 Speaker 2

And which are the differences between these two types of middle classes, and why this matters to understand the fate of democracy in in Russia?

00:34:48 Speaker 3

So in making this argument, I draw on Alexander Gerson Krone.

00:34:52 Speaker 3

We know that this concept of late developing States and some.

00:34:56 Speaker 3

Other scholars, like Brynn Rosenfeld, she also talked about the kind of how autocracies create the state dependent middle class.

00:35:05 Speaker 3

And I kind of pick those or pick up those arguments and take them forward and say, well, we forget about this other old middle class.

00:35:14 Speaker 3

So in looking at the significance.

00:35:16 Speaker 3

Of the communist state or present day states like China or in developing countries, the states that take the lead in advancing modernization of Hitler, the countries that had been left behind.

00:35:31 Speaker 3

In their develop.

00:35:32 Speaker 3

So their argument is that these states, because they take lead in in the developmental agenda they create large industrial conglomerates.

00:35:40 Speaker 3

They create large bloated.

00:35:41 Speaker 3

Bureaucracies and they rapidly create this kind of new middle class, often of peasant origin, and that is very much the story in the Soviet Union. Indeed, so that is the so-called.

00:35:52 Speaker 3

New middle class.

00:35:53 Speaker 3

But when we look at that side of the picture, we'll forget that there are also these so-called old.

00:35:59 Speaker 3

Middle class groups.

00:35:59 Speaker 3

And of course I use it in a stylized way, because of course there was intermarriage and intermixing and the process is very complex and very fluid.

00:36:08 Speaker 3

Like the old privileged groups who were.

00:36:11 Speaker 3

Might have lost.

00:36:12 Speaker 3

Everything in a material sense after their revolution, but they they were highly educated and they transmitted that to their children.

00:36:20 Speaker 3

And if you trace in a kind of genealogical sense what their grandchildren great grandchildren are doing now, we can trace.

00:36:28 Speaker 3

The kind of progression from, let's say, the machino Michael got into the school teacher in the Soviet period, then into the professoriate, and then in the present day, you know, they might be the descendants, might be PR people, thinkers, creatives, profit.

00:36:44 Speaker 3

To worry it, they're not the kind of underprivileged semi precarious groups that we see now.

00:36:52 Speaker 3

For instance, fighting in Ukraine, the OR people who are now in the National Guard in, you know, harassing protesters in in Russia, these, these, these individuals who join these kind of state dependent.

00:37:05 Speaker 3

Pretty institutions, they sort of highly dependent on state pensions and parks, etcetera.

00:37:12 Speaker 3

They do not have the human capital to join the what I call the autonomous professions that have greater autonomy, lawyers, doctors, engineers or do not have human capital to to to join these.

00:37:26 Speaker 3

And creative, or even to creative the creative class, or indeed now to.

00:37:32 Speaker 3

You know, emigrate and move to European countries.

00:37:35 Speaker 3

In the case of real, in this situation of massive repression.

00:37:39 Speaker 2

So your hypothesis would be that the cheerleaders of Putin that fill the rallies favor of Putin with colorful dresses and the policemen in dark suits that repress the democratic opposition members in the streets.

00:37:53 Speaker 2

These people would come more from this state driven middle class or.

00:37:59 Speaker 2

From the lower classes.

00:38:00 Speaker 2

Let's say while the vast majority of the people who would be the in the opposition or would be in favor of democracy in Russia, would come from this genealogically would come from those families, middle class materials.

00:38:14 Speaker 2

Sorry, Russia.

00:38:16 Speaker 3

So in a way, yes, it sounds like it's.

00:38:19 Speaker 3

At the risk of.

00:38:20 Speaker 3

Simplifying, we do find if we look at the regional data and this is a the kind of angle that allows my co-author and me Alexander Liebman.

00:38:30 Speaker 3

And to analyze and tease out these variations. So we find we have census data for from the 1897 late Imperial Russian census.

00:38:40 Speaker 3

This is the most comprehensive census that covered the entire period.

00:38:43 Speaker 3

The entire territory of the present day Russian Federation, and we link those data to, for instance, there are some measures.

00:38:50 Speaker 3

Of demand for and supply.

00:38:52 Speaker 3

Way of independent media in the regions. Granted that we have data for free media for 1999, this is well before the kind of the Putin era.

00:39:03 Speaker 3

But still these data allow us to show that there are some even in 99, which is almost 10 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, we could still trace the links.



00:39:13 Speaker 3

Between the presence of the bourgeoisie in the regions in the Bulgarian districts of Imperial Russia and the present day, or in in late 1990s, demand for and supply.

00:39:26 Speaker 3

Free media, which means that there are more people who are running or creating these kind of independent media outlets and a greater readership and greater demand for media.

00:39:38 Speaker 3

And there are also all kinds of other measures, for instance, propensity to protest, and I've gathered data over the years on protests.

00:39:45 Speaker 3

How things go together, there are particularly liberal Russian regions that have habitually, whether we look at measures of civil society or measures of free media, etcetera, or support for democracy, etcetera, very particular region.

00:40:00 Speaker 3

Samara is one of them.

00:40:01 Speaker 3

So it's not just Moscow and Saint Peter.

00:40:03 Speaker 3

Very just like beer, never see beards, which in the imperial period right there particular areas of Russia that had urban centers with the developed trading of perhaps hubs particularly some are some are is a very good example for region on the Volga that was linked well before the revolution with railways.

00:40:23 Speaker 3

To other major cities.

00:40:25 Speaker 3

So that's the kind of story I think in in a very simplistic, stylized way, we could or argument we could make, and certainly the people who come to pro Putin rallies, they are often from these large public sector organizations.

00:40:41 Speaker 3

Often school teachers are asked to come and participate in this sham.

00:40:46 Speaker 3

Expressions of support for autocracy, because otherwise they're threatened of with dismissal from their jobs, whereas the more high status professionals don't.

00:40:57 Speaker 3

Don't have those same dependencies on the state and and people self select into these kind of more autonomous profession.

00:41:05 Speaker 3

So it's also.

00:41:06 Speaker 3

A story of how one is able to channel ones human capital into areas of professional life where one could be more autonomous and we're still certainly seeing that.

00:41:17 Speaker 3

With the kind of liberal creative groups in Russia.

00:41:20 Speaker 2

Actually, journalistic Western journalistic accounts of the.

00:41:24 Speaker 2

Right for the May 9th celebration of the victory in World War.

00:41:29 Speaker 2

Two of Russia over.

00:41:30 Speaker 2

Over the Nazi and the the thousands of people in Moscow, in the streets, at least according to the journalistic account from the West, many of the people there were actually the people that you are describing people working in, in public sector jobs, whose bosses.

00:41:44 Speaker 2

Were forcing pushing them to attend the demonstration.

00:41:48 Speaker 2

If they want, didn't want to lose their job in the the public sector or semi public sector, I think one of the beauties of your work, not only the book but.

00:41:56 Speaker 2

Also the The articles is that you you just don't only launch a counterintuitive and provocative hypothesis, but you support it with rigorous data, especially at regional level.

00:42:07 Speaker 2

And here is what I.

00:42:08 Speaker 2

Would like to ask you because during.

00:42:11 Speaker 2

Last two decades, there have been quite some substantial work trying to explain Russian regional differences in economic growth and entrepreneurial mentality, or small and well sized firms economic grow.

00:42:27 Speaker 2

And so on.

00:42:28 Speaker 2

But most of the explanations, at least, and the ones that we are conducting here at the quality of government Institute in Gothenburg, emphasize precisely the quality of government, the impartiality of the institutions, the role of meritocracy in the in the bureaucracy and this kind of arguments, let's call it institutionalist.

00:42:48 Speaker 2

But you are providing more a societ explanation of that.

00:42:52 Speaker 2

So who what would you say to the people who argue that actually what explains Russian differences is that in some places they.

00:43:00 Speaker 2

Have some regions have better institutions, higher quality of government, higher quality of governance than than others.

00:43:10 Speaker 3

So what I would say, I would respond with a great title or I think it was part of a title of a paper from 20 odd years ago by Kopstein and Riley explaining the why of the Why.

00:43:22 Speaker 3

We tend to, for instance, say, well, the institutions function well in particular regions because for particular institutional configuration or demand for for certain good public services.

00:43:35 Speaker 3

But we don't step back and and ask why is it that there is in this particular region.

00:43:41 Speaker 3

Higher demand for, you know, more transparent institutions, for instance, or or why is there greater or lesser trust for Putin?

00:43:50 Speaker 3

So if we're saying that people who trust believe in a strong leader, for instance, they.

00:43:56 Speaker 3

As some recent public opinion surveys will tell us, they tend to endorse the modern autocracy.

00:44:02 Speaker 3

So I'm trying to step, encourage us to step back and ask what is it that makes for a liberal in Russia?

00:44:09 Speaker 3

What is it that makes a region that tends to have those kinds of institutions beyond the kind of temporary?

00:44:18 Speaker 3

Approximate variables that we tend to work on and.

00:44:21 Speaker 3

My account is very.

00:44:23 Speaker 3

Yes, social structure as you as you point out, it takes us to these long term mechanisms of reproduction that then account for a lot of these different variations that whether it's economists or economists or political scientists are now grappling with.

00:44:39 Speaker 3

But I take us one step back, of course we have to know when to stop in history.

00:44:44 Speaker 3

But certainly this kind of late 19th century period is, I think, a very, very important one to study in terms of the origin of this kind of deep societal and regional divisions that we observe Russia now.

00:44:58 Speaker 3

And in some ways give that allow give us some.

00:45:00 Speaker 3

Hope about the future of democracy in Russia, but.

00:45:05 Speaker 3

Also kind of give.

00:45:06 Speaker 3

Us reasons for perhaps being not very optimistic.

00:45:10 Speaker 3

Because if you look at the other side of the store, we're talking about a deeply divided society divisions that never disappeared.

00:45:19 Speaker 2

And let's conclude our discussion precisely.

00:45:22 Speaker 2

Talking about this other side.

00:45:25 Speaker 2

And we're gonna step a little bit outside your book just a little bit because in your book you talk about the comparison between Hungary and Russia and of course, in the minds of all of us is the similarities between Victor Orban and Vladimir Putin.

00:45:40 Speaker 2

And during your book they picked very nicely how this Russian minority from decades ago has been.

00:45:46 Speaker 2

Keeping alive the flame of liberty in the country.

00:45:49 Speaker 2

But we need to see also the minority of the majority that has kept alive the flame of autocracy.

00:45:56 Speaker 2

And of course, we cannot forget that they are extreme cases, even if they are not comparable or ban and Putin.

00:46:03 Speaker 2

But we can see a kind of national populist backlash in all democracies.

00:46:10 Speaker 2

How do you think your your book, your insight on the importance of history might?

00:46:16 Speaker 2

Help us to understand this development that we see in democracies, this kind of churn of autocratic leaders or authoritarianism, or a kind of diminishment or tiredness, or I don't know how to call it, crisis of of, of democratic values.

00:46:36 Speaker 3

So I think this is a really extremely important question.

00:46:40 Speaker 3

I think my book is a story about democracy and autocracy, but it's also a story of inequality.

00:46:47 Speaker 3

And Hungary is a good.

00:46:50 Speaker 3

Case of what I call bimodal societies, and I think Latin American countries we can.

00:46:55 Speaker 3

Think of certainly.

00:46:56 Speaker 3

Some very deeply divided societies, historically so and and Hungary, and even though Britain, where I live now or you know I'm, I've been here for a good few years and the class system that I'm I'm familiar with.

00:47:11 Speaker 3

All of these things in a particular.

00:47:14 Speaker 3

Historical period in time might trigger the kind of processes that you are describing.

00:47:19 Speaker 3

You know the support for populism and that is in turn to be partly explained, or at least a significant part of the story is in the historical patterns of inequalities in these societies, and certainly Hungary.

00:47:34 Speaker 3

For me, was a very revelatory case because we thought of Hungary in the 19 late 1980s as kind of one of those liberalizing communist states that received a lot of EU aid. There was a lot of euphoria, but if you read the work of.

00:47:49 Speaker 3

The political scientist and historian Andrew Janos. He was writing in the 1980s, almost anticipating the rise of urbanism because he described those historical inequalities. A large peasant society with significant deference to the landed aristocracy and landed elements in Hungarian.

00:48:09 Speaker 3

Decided and these things didn't disappear with communism and hungry.

00:48:13 Speaker 3

So we need to sort of look beyond the assumptions that we have, whether it's in communist society or indeed in Western democracies.

00:48:22 Speaker 3

And look at the deep social divisions that never disappeared even with the advent.

00:48:27 Speaker 3

Of the welfare state.

00:48:28 Speaker 3

Right and that are now kind of resurfacing in this new political and global environment and we need to go back to history to really unpack those deep social divisions.

00:48:39 Speaker 2

I think this is a great way of finishing this discussion.

00:48:43 Speaker 2

We have to look at history to try to understand the most present issues has been a pleasure talking to you tamila.

00:48:49 Speaker 2

Thank you very much.

00:48:50 Speaker 3

Thank you very much.