



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

# History, Memory, Politics in Democratisation Research: A Personal and Professional Journey

#LSELankina

## Speaker: Prof. Tomila Lankina

Tomila Lankina is Professor of Politics and International Relations in the Department of International Relations at LSE. Her current research focuses on comparative democracy and authoritarianism, mass protests and historical patterns of human capital and democratic reproduction in Russia and other states.

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*Hosted by: The Department of International Relations*



# History, Memory, Politics in Democratisation Research

Professor Tomila Lankina  
International Relations  
Department  
LSE







# Structure of the talk

Research context

The Russian Revolution:  
Debunking myths

The reproduction of social  
structure in Russia: Mechanisms

So what? Why it matters for  
democratic support,  
authoritarian resilience, cross-  
class alliances

# Research context

*Lankina book project on the reproduction of pre-communist social structure and implications for development, inequalities, democracy*

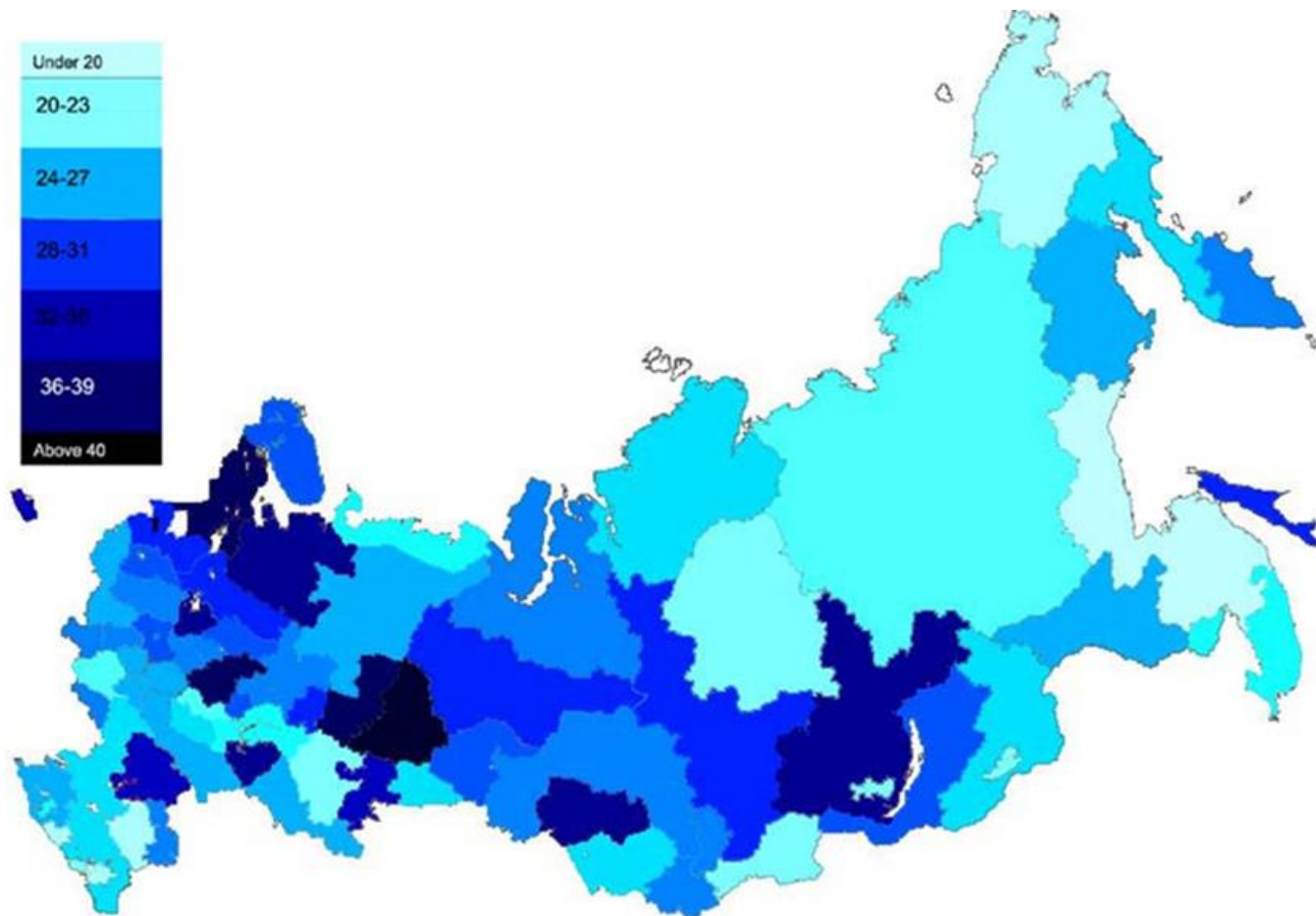
*The Adaptive Society*

## *Papers*

- Lankina, Tomila, Alexander Libman, and Anastassia Obydenkova. 2016. "Appropriation and Subversion: Pre-communist Literacy, Communist Party Saturation, and Post-Communist Democratic Outcomes." *World Politics* 68 (2):229-74.
- Lankina, Tomila and Alexander Libman, "The Jekyll and Hyde of Soviet Policies: Endogenous Modernization, the Gulag and Post-Communist Support for Democracy" (paper presented at APSA 2017)
- Lankina, Tomila and Alexander Libman, "From Imperial Bourgeoisie to Intelligentsia: Pre-Revolutionary Estates, Modernization and Political Contestation in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia" (working paper)

# Research context: Historical legacies research on democracy

- From “temporally shallow” to “temporally deep” explanations
- Cross-national and within-nation comparisons ([Acemoglu et al. 2001](#); [Ziblatt 2009](#); [Woodberry 2012](#); [Lankina et al. 2012](#); [Peisakhin 2015](#))
- Institutions
- Human capital
- Social structure: Social stratification; inequalities
- Post-communist states/ Russia research: The long reach of communist legacies ([Pop-Eleches et al. 2017](#); [Darden et al. 2006](#))



# The Revolutionary state-building paradigm

The Bolsheviks destroyed the old social order



A *new* soviet intelligentsia was constructed (from scratch)



New cities were built from scratch

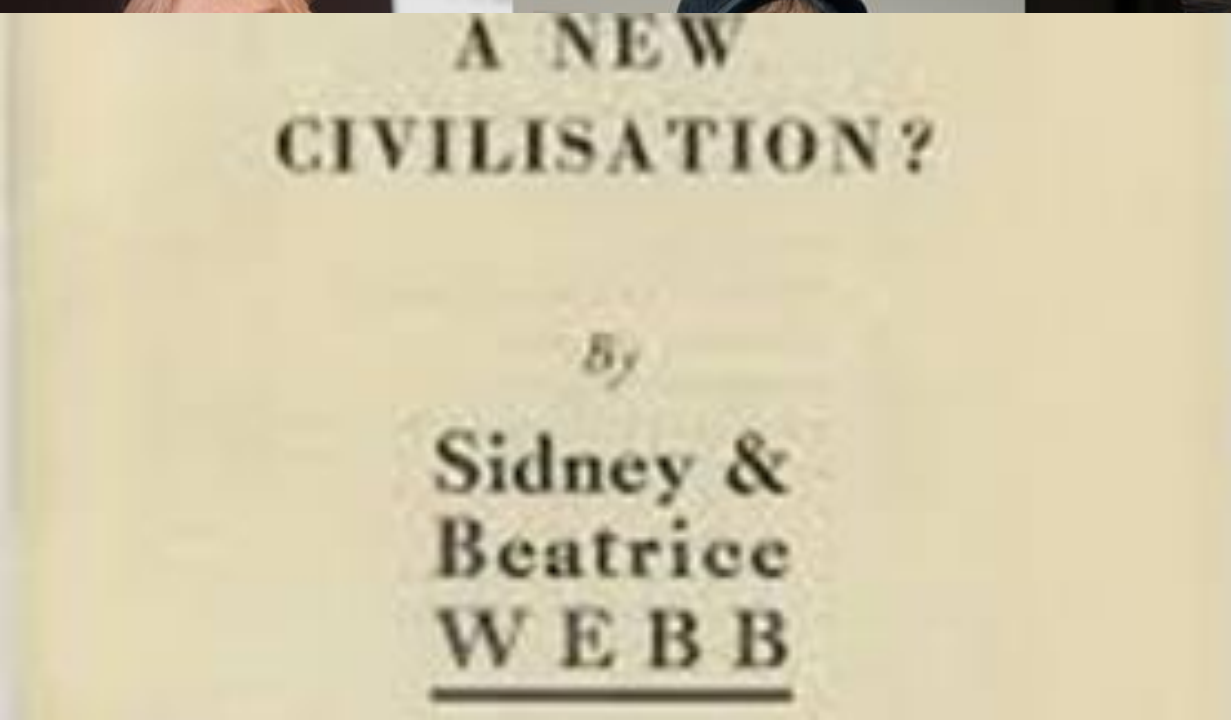
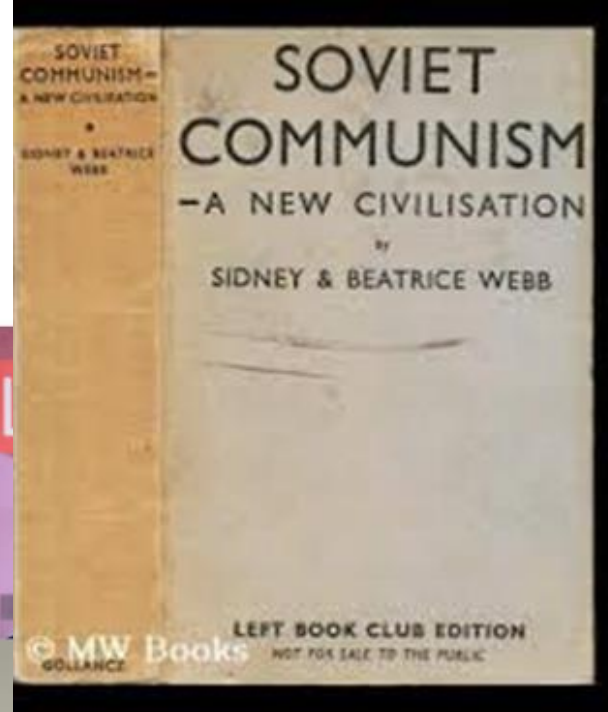
Repressions: Gulag; population displacement ("Quicksand")



Over time the *new* soviet intelligentsia demanded democracy as per modernization theory

Spatial developmental inequalities are explained with reference to uneven patterns of *Soviet* modernization



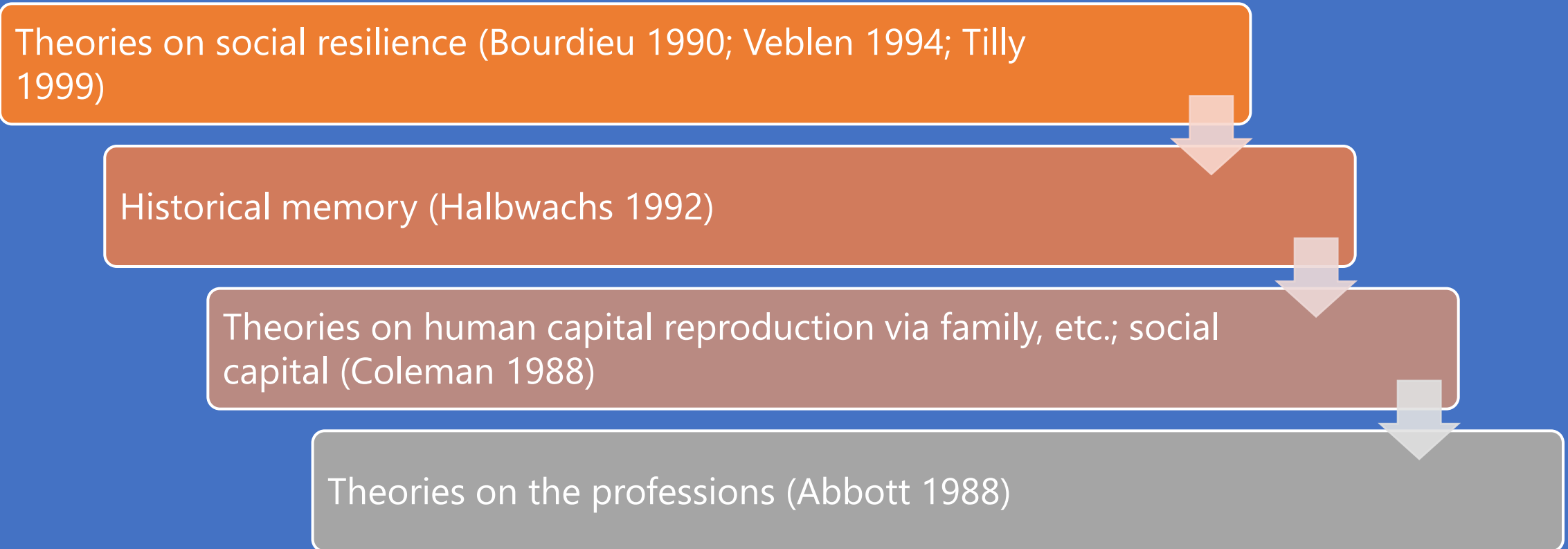


# Historical scholarship

- The mass promotion of former workers and peasants into the Soviet political and social elite" was an important consequence of the **"successful social revolution"** (1979) *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934*, p. 239.
- Expansion of "lower-class recruitment" of "workers" and "peasants" into "command" party positions, and not just "low-status white-collar jobs" as evidence of social mobility—indeed, of a **"feat of social engineering"** Fitzpatrick (1979)
- On the First Five-Year Plan: "Among the achievements was the creation of a new '**Soviet intelligentsia**,' largely recruited from the working class and the Communist party." Fitzpatrick, *Cultural Revolution as Class War* (1978)
- Nicholas Timasheff: The **"former upper classes, the State sector of the upper and lower middle classes, and the bulk of the society sectors of these classes fell to the very bottom of the social pyramid."** (Timasheff 1946)

# "Seeing like a [soviet] state" (James Scott) vs "social logics" resilient to revolutionary shocks

Theories on social resilience (Bourdieu 1990; Veblen 1994; Tilly 1999)



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graph TD; A["Theories on social resilience (Bourdieu 1990; Veblen 1994; Tilly 1999)"] --> B["Historical memory (Halbwachs 1992)"]; B --> C["Theories on human capital reproduction via family, etc.; social capital (Coleman 1988)"]; C --> D["Theories on the professions (Abbott 1988)"];
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Historical memory (Halbwachs 1992)

Theories on human capital reproduction via family, etc.; social capital (Coleman 1988)

Theories on the professions (Abbott 1988)

# Causal mechanisms: The reproduction of social stratification of Imperial Russia

- The reproduction of social structure derived from the system of estates:
  - *The public sphere*
    - (1) The professions (teachers, doctors, academics)
    - (2) Social refuge of high-status former gentry, aristocrats, professionals on the “margins of the public sphere” (museums, provincial art galleries, the jazz orchestra)
    - (3) The “pop up” society of “enlightenment” campaigns
  - *The private sphere*
    - (4) The family; social networks



# Imperial estates

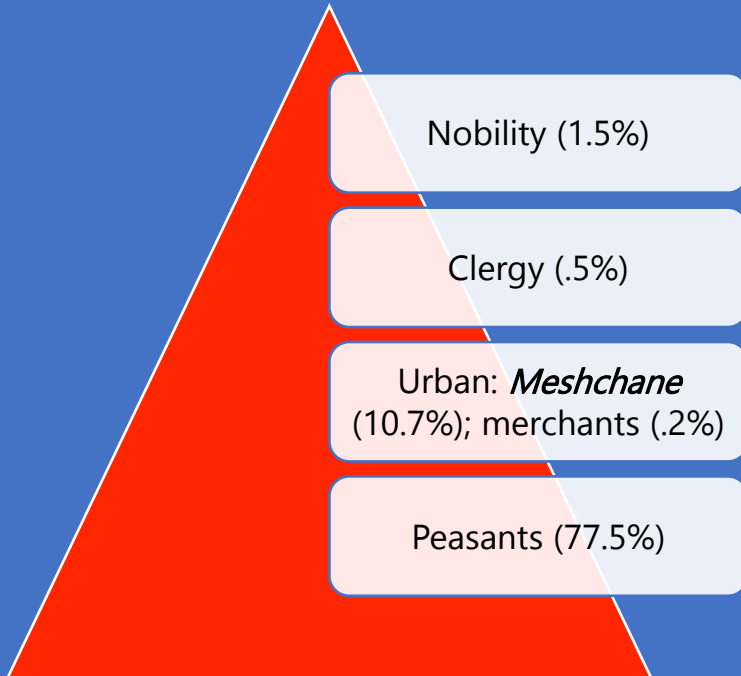
Estate (*sosloviye*) is “a juridically circumscribed group with hereditary rights and obligations” (Mironov 2003)

Russian society in 1917 combined elements of:

- (1) Social “order”—social groups, their rights and obligations towards the state are “officially hierarchised” and distinguished in legal terms;

and

- (2) A society in which groups/ social classes “have only a de facto, not a de jure, existence,” and possess equal citizenship and, at least in principle, the freedom to associate with another class group (Mousnier et al. 1995, 154).



	<i>1847</i>	<i>1857</i>	<i>1867</i>	<i>1877</i>	<i>1887</i>	<i>1897</i>	<i>1907</i>	<i>1917</i>
<i>Nobility</i>	76	77	80	82	84	86	88	90
<i>Clergy</i>	68	72	77	81	85	89	92	95
<i>„City estates“ (meshchane and merchants)</i>	30	37	39	44	48	54	59	64
<i>„Rural estates“ (peasants)</i>	10	12	14	18	21	27	30	36

Literacy across estates (%) and over time

Shares of different estates in the student body, 1914 (%)



# Social structure reproduction in reality, in fiction, in discourse

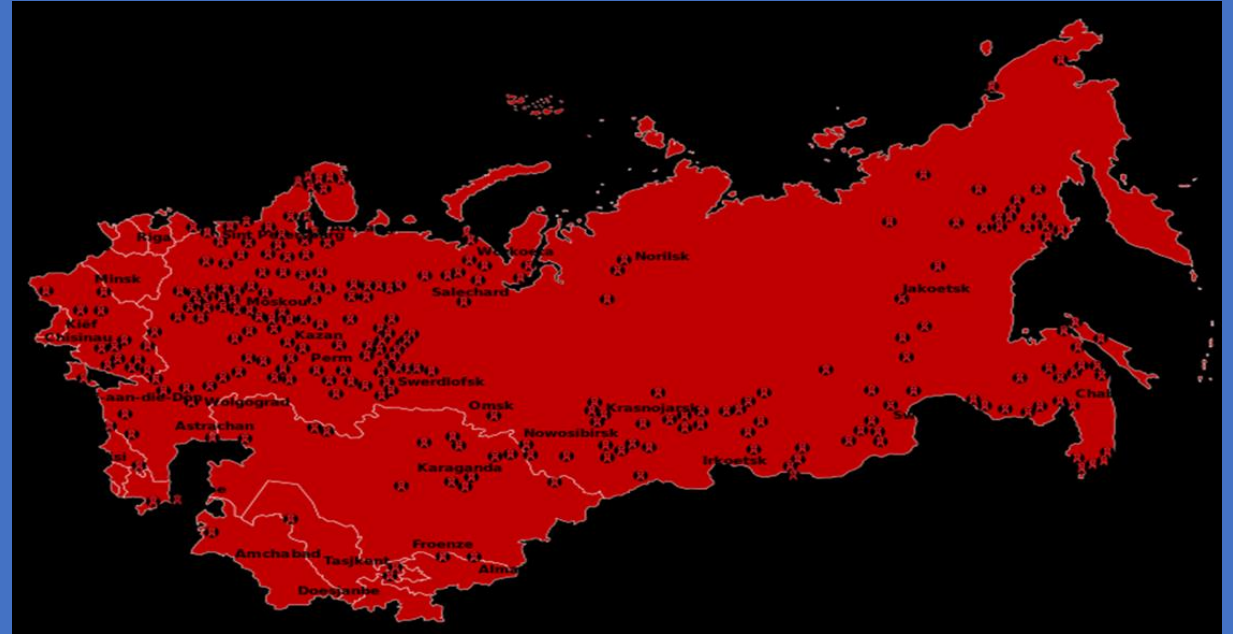
- “As for the content of the lectures, we will specify those later, . . . You will be given appropriate literature and a plan. No need to panic, *you are a cultured person—this is enough* (emphasis added) (A. Tolstoy *Road of Suffering Trilogy*)
- Collegium of the Middle Volga *kray* Department of Public Education:
- “In additional to mass explanatory work... vis-a-vis particularly evil people (*zlostnyye litsa*) not attending lessons or shying away from studies.... [*the directive is*] to use *punitive measures including fines and forcible works*, and to apply these measures to individuals responsible for sabotaging instruction.”







Social  
structure:  
Social  
network  
analysis



# The Jekyll and Hyde of Soviet Policies

# Causal mechanisms

- Two channels of reproduction of imperial modernization legacies in the communist period:
  - 1) The maintenance of physical infrastructure of modernization (the hardware): Universities, schools, hospitals, factories, etc.
  - 1) Development-sustaining human capital (software): Tsarist educated strata as Soviet workforce.

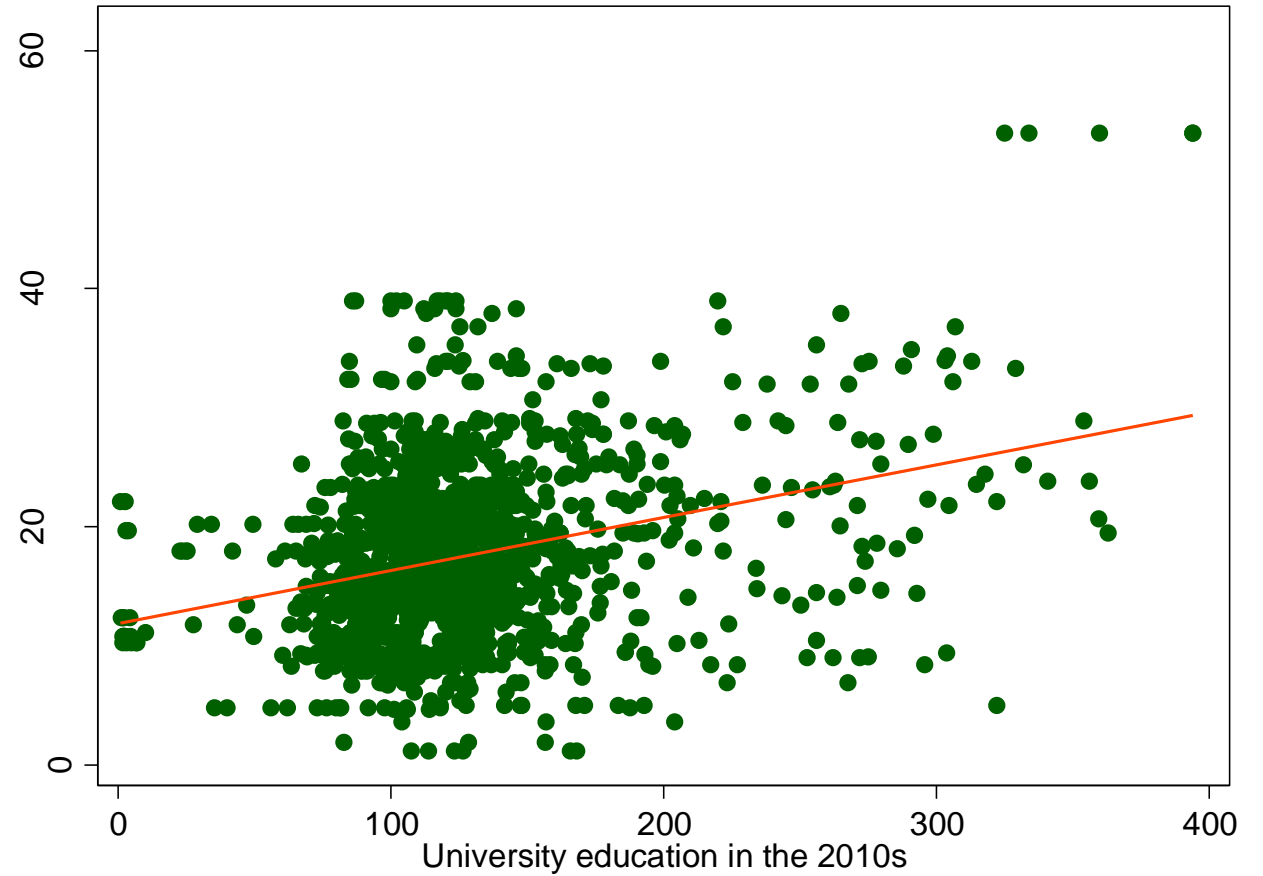
These legacies served as foundations for both cooptation and repression policies of the Soviet state



# New sub-national data for Imperial, Soviet and post-Soviet periods

- Most studies work with regional data for Russia (plus-minus 80 obs.)
- Some economic historians working with district data, but usually confined to European Russia (better data)
- Lankina matched all current districts (1800 observations) with historical districts using 1890s-1917 boundary divisions
- 1897 census data on estates, religion, literacy; Soviet and post-Soviet socio-economic data; Gulag camps data; and voting (1996; 2012 elections) district-level data

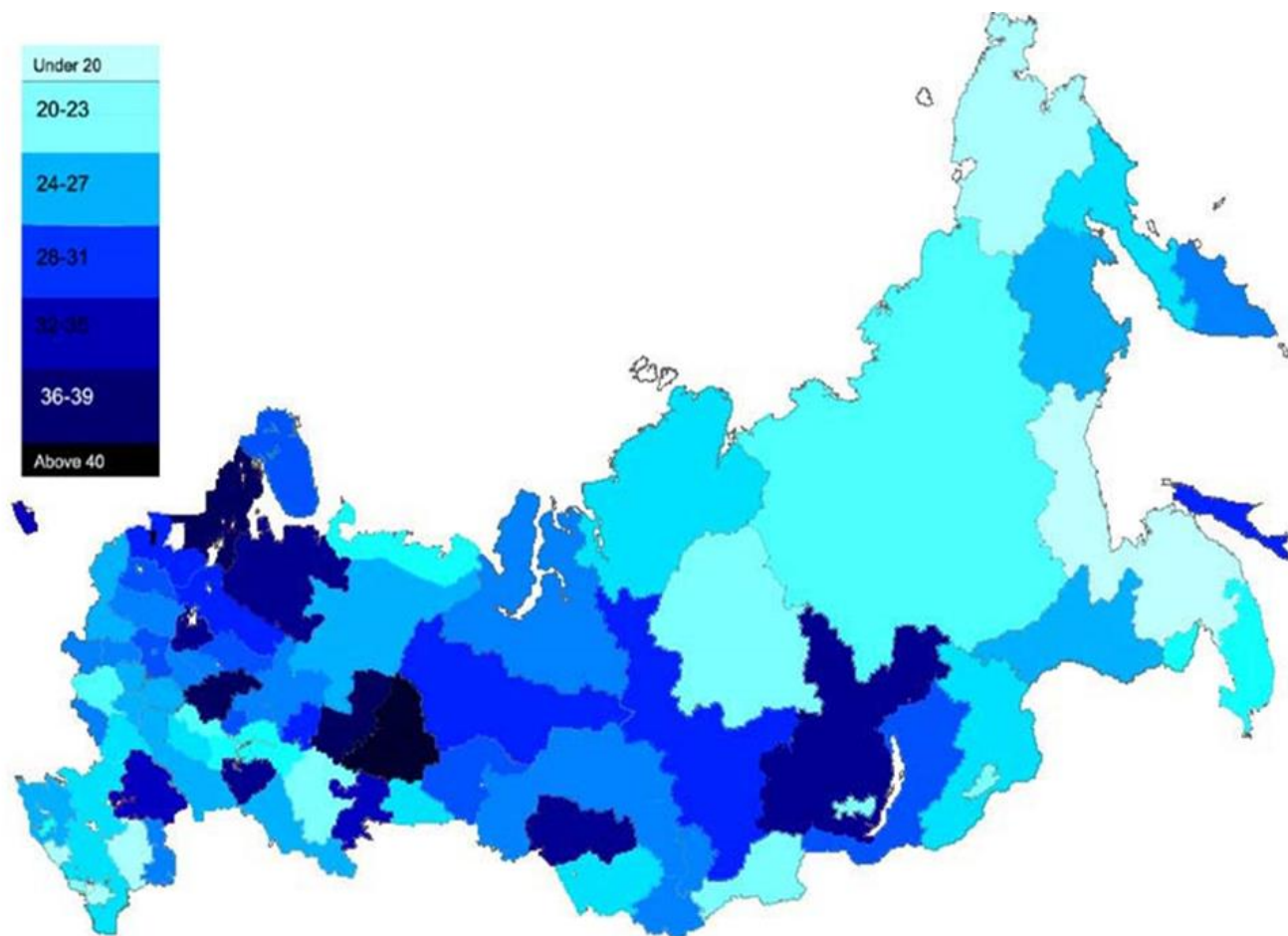
# Persistence of human capital: district-level analysis



# GULAG and pre-Communist modernization

	No GULAG	GULAG	
Literacy	17.949	19.476	**
Share of nobility	0.896	1.154	**
Share of clergy	0.501	0.599	***
Share of merchants	0.191	0.229	**
Share of meshchane	5.948	6.347	
Share of peasants	78.765	67.376	***
Share of foreigners	0.657	2.337	***





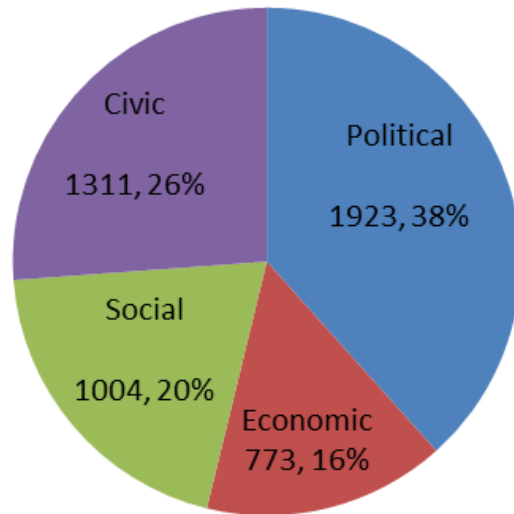
# Causal mechanisms: Explaining spatial variations in democratic support and resilience

- (1) Human capital of “proto-bourgeoisie” endogenous to Soviet spatial patterns of modernization (the public sphere channel of legacy transmission) (Fitzpatrick 2005; Inkeles 1950; Matthews 1979) (Broader theorizing: Bourdieu and Passeron 1990)
- (2) Familial/community channels of value transmission outside of the Soviet public realm (the private channel of value transmission) (Golitsyn 2016; Tchuikina 2006; **Kobozeva 2012**) (Broader theorizing: Coleman 1988; Verba et al. 2005; Vance 2016; Cohen et al. 1996)

# Effect of the Imperial literacy levels on political democracy in 1996 and 2012 (Lankina and Libman 2018)

Dep. var.:	Votes for Yeltsin, 1996	Vanhanen index, 1996	Effective number of candidates, 1996	Titkov index, 1996	Votes for Putin, 2012	Vanhanen index, 2012	Effective number of candidates, 2012	Titkov index, 2012
Literacy	0.195 (0.032)***	0.068 (0.034)**	0.004 (0.002)*	0.001 (0.000)**	-0.030 (0.025)	0.017 (0.014)	0.002 (0.001)*	0.001 (0.000)*
Urbanization	0.022 (0.006)***	0.028 (0.007)***	0.006 (0.000)***	0.001 (0.000)***	-0.056 (0.004)***	0.018 (0.003)***	0.003 (0.000)***	0.001 (0.000)***
Housing construction	0.000 (0.000)***	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Doctors per capita	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)**	-0.001 (0.000)***	0.001 (0.000)***	0.000 (0.000)***	0.000 (0.000)***
Latitude	0.584 (0.192)***	0.028 (0.173)	0.020 (0.014)	0.003 (0.002)**	0.131 (0.123)	-0.058 (0.074)	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.002 (0.002)
Longitude	-0.181 (0.087)**	0.057 (0.061)	0.014 (0.006)**	0.002 (0.001)**	0.074 (0.043)*	-0.105 (0.033)***	-0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)
Constant	26.470 (17.638)	31.005 (13.087)**	1.152 (1.266)	-0.053 (0.176)	47.934 (8.406)***	36.173 (5.043)***	2.962 (0.386)***	0.443 (0.142)***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.72	0.47	0.64	0.67	0.76	0.71	0.74	0.73
N	1,775	1,775	1,775	1,775	1,793	1,793	1,793	1,793

## 2007-2012, all protests



Spatial variations ("4 Russias") and *intra*-regional variations (social structure)

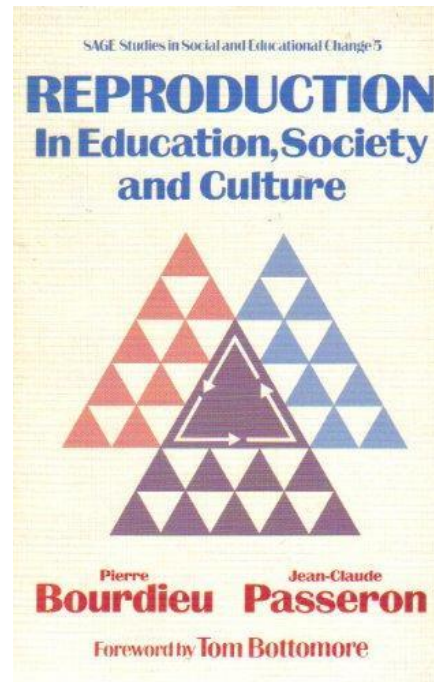
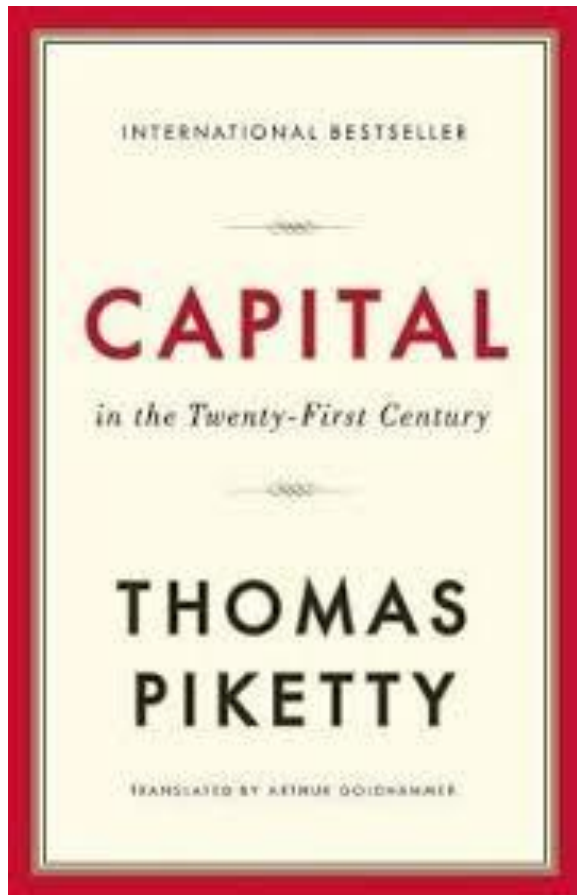
Who protests?

# Social structure: archival research and fieldwork in Samara, the haves and the have-nots

## Interview with Samara museum worker

- Researcher: "Please tell me, . . . , do you consider yourself a native Samarovite?"
- Respondent [hesitantly]: "More yes, than no, but I simply have this situation—I have always lived and continue to live on the outskirts of Samara"
- Researcher: "Specifically?"
- Respondent: "**Metallurg, Bezymyanny rayon**"
- Researcher: "Well, that is not an outlying district anymore"
- Respondent: "How so? It is the outskirts (*okraina*), because **after all there is a certain cultural identity there**, which is a bit, in my opinion, different from that in the center. That is, *there is historical Samara, one that emerges in people's imagination, that is, precisely the Samara we talk about in the Museum*, not that it doesn't have any relation whatsoever, but has quite an indirect relation to what one can see there. So yes, of course I am a native Samarovite, but my formative years as an urban dweller took place there, on the outskirts, so perhaps I possess somewhat different cultural roots than those who lived and grew up here in the center, so to speak." (Emphasis added)





## So what?

- Inequality associated with rising populism, socio-economic discontent, support for illiberal parties/ leaders
- Redistributive shocks (Piketty) versus
- “Durable” inequality (Tilly) – resilient to redistributive shocks (WWI, WWII, The Russian Revolution)

# Discussion

- Long-term drivers of democratic support
- Potential for cross-class alliances to challenge authoritarian rule?

