

SARAH WILSON SOKHEY

Ph.D. candidate

Department of Political Science

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Education

Ph.D. in Political Science, The Ohio State University, anticipated in Fall 2009

Fields : Comparative Politics, Political Economy, Public Policy, Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Honors : Graduate Fellow, September 2003 to August 2004

Study Abroad: Moscow State University's Center for International Education (Summers 2004, 2005)

Dissertation Abstract

The Politics of Policy Reform: The Role of Private Business in Post-Communist Pension Reform

Debates over post-communist pension reform activated a wide array of groups with competing interests in the overhaul of a long-standing system of social support. Accounts of these reforms, however, have largely overlooked one of the most important players—the private investment sector. Privatizing pensions would be financially beneficial for this sector as it promised to increase domestic savings by allowing mandatory retirement contributions to be privately managed and invested. What role, if any, did the investment sector play in the design and adoption of private pension systems in the post-communist countries? Cross-national empirical analysis based on the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia confirms that the private investment sector was influential, but indicates that its influence depended on the domestic political and economic context. By leveraging differences across three distinct periods of Russian politics, I lay out more precisely when and why the private investment sector had an impact on pension policy outcomes. The central finding is that resources and organizational capacity do not always directly translate into policy outcomes, and that success is contingent on factors such as the level of democracy, the presence or absence of international organizations, and the pressure posed by ageing populations. Furthermore, I argue that it is critical to consider the role of interest groups in all three components of the policy process—problems, policies, and politics—to understand when and whether they are influential (Kingdon 1984 [2003]). The private investment sector, for instance, was influential in generating and selecting proposals, although it was not a key player in problem recognition and was less influential in subsequent political battles over implementation. By clarifying our theoretical understanding of who governs and why, this research offers important theoretical insights into the role of interest groups in the politics of policy reform.

Committee: Sarah Brooks (co-chair), Timothy Frye (Columbia University; co-chair)
Marcus Kurtz, Irfan Nooruddin

M.A. in Political Science, The Ohio State University, December 2005

B.A. in Politics, Magna Cum Laude, The Catholic University of America, May 2003

Concentration in World Politics

Honors Thesis: The Battle for Moscow's Land: Land Privatization in Russia's Capital

Study Abroad: International University of Moscow (August 2002-December 2002)

Research

Publications

Book chapter, "Political Development and Modernization," (Forthcoming), In SAGE Reference Project: *21st Century Political Science: A Reference Handbook*, John Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning, SAGE Publications, Inc.

"The Rise of Islamic Militancy in Central Asia: Causes and Consequences." *Islam Briefing Notes*, Vol. 4, (September 2001): Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"The New Dynamics of Russia in Central Asia: Implications for U.S. Policy," *Prospectus*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer 2001): Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Working Papers

Nooruddin, Irfan, and Sarah Wilson Sokhey. 2009. "Credible Certification of Child Labor Free Production: A Case Study of Rugmark versus the Foul Ball Campaign". Prepared for inclusion in *Beyond Virtue: Evaluating NGO Monitoring of Social Norms*, edited by Peter Gourevitch and Janice Gross Stein.

"The Influence of Private Business on the Welfare State: Post-Communist Pension Reform,"

"Financial Windfalls & Social Spending in Post-Communist Countries" (with Irfan Nooruddin and Quintin Beazer)

"Institutional Legacies in Post-Communist Pension Reform: Global Perspectives and Prospects for Consolidation" (with Sarah Brooks)

"International Migration and the Diffusion of Democracy: Friends or Foes?" (with Yoon-Ah Oh)

Conferences & Presentations

"The Influence of Private Business on the Welfare State: Post-Communist Pension Reform," Presented at the American Political Science Association, Toronto, Canada, September 2009.

"Credible Certification of Child Free Labor Production," with Irfan Nooruddin, Presented at the American Political Science Association, Toronto, Canada, September, 2009.

"Private Actors & Market-Oriented Reforms: Education and Housing Policy in the Post-Communist Countries," Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 2009.

"Institutional Legacies in Post-Communist Pension Reform: Global Perspectives and Prospects for Consolidation" (with Sarah Brooks), Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 2009.

"International Migration and the Diffusion of Democracy: Friends or Foes?" (with Yoon-Ah Oh), Presented at International Studies Association, New York, NY, February 2009 and at the American Political Science Association, Toronto, Canada, September 200.

"An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups: Business Influence on Market-Oriented Reforms," Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 2008.

Discussant, "International Causes of Democratization," Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, April 2008.

Discussant & Chair, “Parties and Elections in Eastern Europe” and “Comparative Political Values” Southern Political Science Association Conference, New Orleans, LA, January 2008.

“Non-Complementary Reform Packages: The Transformation of Social Policies in Post-Communist Countries,” Presented at the Southern Political Science Association Conference, New Orleans, January 2008.

“Event History Analysis of Market Reforms in Post-Communist Countries,” Presented at the Center for Financial and Economic Research (CEFIR), Moscow, Russia, October 24, 2007.

Discussant, “Political Economy of Development,” Panel at the American Political Science Association Conference, Chicago, IL, September 2007.

“Financial Windfalls & Social Spending in Post-Communist Countries,” Presented at the Midwest Political Science Conference (with Quintin Beazer and Irfan Nooruddin), Chicago, IL, April 2007.

“The Bureaucracy and Social Policy: The Case of Russian Healthcare and Pensions,” Presented at the Midwest Political Science Conference, Chicago, IL, April 2007.

Chair, “Institutions and Institutional Change in Post-Communist Countries,” at the Midwest Political Science Conference, Chicago, IL, April 2007.

“Bargaining for Money: Economic Growth and Regional Leverage in Federal Systems,” Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, Atlanta, GA, January 2005 and the Midwest Slavic Conference at The Ohio State University, March 2006.

Discussant, Post-Soviet In/Securities: Theory and Practice, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, Columbus, Ohio, October 7-8, 2005.

Discussant, Social Protection Workshop, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, Columbus, Ohio, October 2004.

“The New Dynamics of Russia in Central Asia,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, Spring 2001.

Grants, Awards & Honors

IREX short-term grant for dissertation field research, \$6492, Summer 2008

Alumni Grant for Graduate Research Support (Ohio State University), \$2500, September-December, 2007

Office of International Affairs travel grant (Ohio State University), \$2000, September-December, 2007.

Mershon Center Travel Grant (for field research in Russia), \$3500, Summer 2006.

Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Grant, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, Russian language, September 2005-June 2006.

Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Eurasia Program Fellow, \$7000, June-September 2005

Mershon Center Travel Grant (for field research in Russia), \$2500, Summer 2005.

Office of International Affairs, The Ohio State University, Graduate Student International Dissertation/MA Thesis Research Travel Grant (for field research in Russia), \$2000, Declined, 2005.

Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Grant, Moscow State University, Center for International Education, Russian language, Declined, Summer 2005.

Graduate Fellow at The Ohio State University, September 2003-August 2004.

Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Grant, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, Russian language, Declined, September 2003-June 2004.

Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Grant, Summer 2003, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, Summer Workshop for Slavic and East European Languages, Russian language.

Professional Experience

- 2004-2005 **The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, *Graduate Research Assistant:***
Research assistance for Professor Timothy Frye regarding political polarization and economic reform in Russia and Eastern Europe.
- Spring 2003 **Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Washington DC, *Research Assistant:***
Conducted research on current issues involving nonproliferation and nuclear safety around the world
- Spring 2001/
Summer 2002 **Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C. ,**
Research Assistant (Summer 2002; Spring and Summer 2001): Conducted research for Dr. Shireen Hunter on “Islam and the West” project including book published in 2003 entitled *Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security*
- Spring 2002 **Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars , Washington D.C.,**
Research Assistant: Conducted research for Dr. Joel Barkan on project entitled “Early Elections in Transitional Polities” requiring in-depth research on developing democracies worldwide and prepared report entitled, “Early Elections in Transitional Polities: The Russian Federation”.

Memberships

American Political Science Association
Southern Political Science Association
Midwest Political Science Association

Languages

Russian (advanced listening, speaking and reading)
French (basic speaking skills, intermediate reading comprehension)

Teaching Interests

Introduction to Comparative Politics
Public Policy Analysis
Comparative Public Policy
Post-Communist Politics (including East European Politics and Russian Politics)
State & Market