

## Matthew Blackburn

**MA Hons (Edin), Int. M. (Glas), DPhil (Glas)** Senior Researcher, The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), Oslo. [matthew.blackburn@nupi.no](mailto:matthew.blackburn@nupi.no)

Affiliated Researcher, Institute of Russian and Eurasian Studies (IRES), Uppsala University, [matthew.blackburn@ires.uu.se](mailto:matthew.blackburn@ires.uu.se),

personal email: [matthew.blackburn@btinternet.com](mailto:matthew.blackburn@btinternet.com)

Nationality: British

Languages: English (native), Russian (C2), Spanish (B1), Norwegian (A1)

Orchid ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0188-4074>

### PROFILE

*Senior Researcher in NUPI's [Research Group on Russia, Asia and International Trade](#). Affiliated researcher at [the Institute of Russian and Eurasian Studies](#) at Uppsala University. Research mainly focuses on the politics of contemporary Russia, including both domestic political systems and interstate relations. Engaged in research on Iran-Russia-China cooperation for the [Norwegian Geopolitics Centre](#) and as research coordinator for the [Civilizationalism Project](#) at Stanford University.*

### EDUCATION

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 2013 to 2018 | <b>PhD</b> , School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow. Awarded: June 2018<br>Thesis: <i>National Identity, Nationalist Discourse and the Imagined Nation in Post-Soviet Russia</i><br>Supervisor: Prof. Geoffrey Swain  |
| 2011 to 2013 | <b>International Masters in Russian and Eastern European Studies, with Distinction</b> , University of Glasgow and KIMEP University (Masters in International Relations. Almaty, Kazakhstan)<br>Thesis: <i>Russian-speakers in Kazakhstan: A Case Study in Identity Formation</i><br>Supervisor: Nargis Kassenova |
| 2001 to 2005 | <b>M.A. in History (2.1)</b> , University of Edinburgh<br>Thesis: <i>Stalin's Formative Years: Crafting a Propaganda Narrative</i>  |

### CURRENT POSITION AND PREVIOUS POSITIONS

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Sept 2023 - now | <b>Senior Researcher</b> , Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Member of Research Group: Russia, International Trade and Asia</li><li>• Writing research applications to Norwegian Research Council and European Research Council</li><li>• Engaged in the <a href="#">Norwegian Centre for Geopolitics</a> to study new relations of Iran, Russia and China.</li><li>• Researching Russia's perception of NATO expansion in the Nordic states in the <a href="#">FLANKS2 project</a></li></ul> |
| 2021 – now      | <b>Affiliated Researcher</b> , Institute of Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular lecturer on master's courses in Russian and Eurasian Studies, contribute to course evaluation and revision work;</li></ul>   |

- Sept 2021 to Sep 2023 **Ulam NAWA fellowship holder**, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Warsaw
- six articles submitted, four accepted for publication
  - New research on Russian regional politics initiated (workshop funding won, desk research completed, grant application submitted)
- 2018 to 2021 **Postdoctoral researcher**, IRES, University of Uppsala
- Published five peer-reviewed articles
  - Active participant and organiser of research seminars and applications for external funding for institutional events
  - Three months of fieldwork in Novosibirsk (Summer 2019)
  - Established research group ‘Geopolitics and civilizationalism in contemporary Russia’ with Prof. Mark Bassin
- 2013 to 2018 **PhD Student**, University of Glasgow
- One year of EU-funded (ERASMUS MUNDUS) fieldwork resulting in over 120 interviews in Russian from Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, St. Petersburg.
- 2015 to 2017 **Research Assistant**, SSAMIS University of Glasgow
- Worked on large-scale project on Eastern European migrant adaptation to UK life. Provided support with translation, transcription, anonymisation of data and conference organisation
- 2011 to 2013 **Graduate Student (Masters)**, University of Glasgow
- Conducted 20 semi-structured interviews in Russian in two cities in Kazakhstan

### TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- Autumn 2020-24 **Institute of Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University**  
Course co-creator and co-convenor for *Problems of Nationalism*, Elective Master’s level course (Sept 2020/21)  
Co-convenor and creator of *Research Methods in Russian Studies*
- Sept 2019-24 Contributing Lecturer to Master’s course  
(i) *History, Culture, and Society of Russia and the Soviet Union* and (ii) *Post-Soviet Transformations*
- Oct 2024. **The University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent**  
Guest lecturer on BA International Relations and MA World Politics
- April 2022 **Ilia State University, Tbilisi**  
Guest lecturer to MA courses on “Russian Politics” and “State-building in the Post-Soviet Space”
- Sept 2017 to Sept 2018 **Department of Politics, Stirling University**  
Graduate Teaching Assistant  
*Introduction to International Relations*
- July 2017 to Sept 2018 **INTO, Stirling University**  
Academic Skills Teacher for Pre-sessional Master’s Courses
- Sept 2015 to Jan 2018 **CEES, Glasgow University**  
Graduate Teaching Assistant  
CEES 1A and 1B - *the History and Politics of Eastern Europe and Russia from 1917-1991*.

*Qualitative Methods in Social Research (Honours)*

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 2023 to now **Stanford University, The Civilizationalism Project**  
*Research coordinator of Working Group “State-Civilizations”*
- Coordinated zoom meetings and reading group
  - Helped create project website
  - Planning workshops and academic outputs for 2024-25
- 2020 to 2021 **IRES, Uppsala University**  
*Temporary Assistant to Research Director*
- Organised Semester Series, welcomed guest speakers
  - Led revamping of IRES website
  - Creation of research methods internal sessions
  - coordinated CBSE conference 2021
  - ran online IRES seminars, selecting topic, finding speakers and chairing sessions (Sept-May 2021)
- 2013 to 2022 **The Journal of Social Policy Studies**  
**Higher School of Economics, Moscow**  
*Literary Editor and Translator*
- Translation of articles from Russian to English
  - editing of all texts in English
- 2015 to 2017 **School of Social and Political Sciences**  
**Glasgow University**  
*CEES Rep for Department TA Committee*
- Ensured TA concerns were relayed back
  - negotiated more equitable payment for class preparation and marking

**MEMBERSHIPS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES**

- British Association of Slavic and Eastern European Studies (2020 to present)  
Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies (2018 to present)  
Association for the Study of Nationalities (2019 to present)  
The Higher Education Academy (2016 to present).

**MOBILITY**

- 2014 to 2015 Eranet Mundus Plus Academic Mobility  
Doctorate Scholarship (10 months, 15,000 Euro award)
- 2020 to 2022 Ulam NAWA Research Programme, (24 months, 64,000 Euros)

**ORGANISATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES**

- Jan-Sept 2021 Member of steering committee for the 14th Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe (CBSE) “Rights and Recognition in the Baltic Context”. 1–4 September 2021, Uppsala University, Sweden. Held in person, 150 participants.
- Sept 2021 Co-organiser of two-day conference: “Collective Memory in Contemporary Russia: The Soviet Past in Post-Soviet Context(s).”  
Uppsala University

Dec 2021	Sole organiser of workshop “Civilizational Politics in Europe and Eurasia”. Uppsala University
Sept 2022	Co-organiser of one-day Symposium “Ideology and the Putin System”, Uppsala University. Uppsala University
Sept 2022	Sole organiser of two-day conference “Russian Regional Politics and Regime Longevity” Uppsala University

## PUBLICATIONS

### *Published Articles*

Blackburn, M. (2024). The morphology of Putinism: the arrangement of political concepts into a coherent ideology. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2024.2431864>

Blackburn, M. Hutcheson, (2024) Pragmatism and Protest: Russia’s Communist Party through Covid-19 and beyond, *European Political Science* <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41304-024-00486-5>

Blackburn, M., Klimenko, K. (2024) Under Communism’s Shadow: The Memory of the Violent Past in Present Day Russia. Introduction to Special issue for *Communist and Post- Communist Studies* <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2024.2332820>

Blackburn, M., Khlevnyuk, D. (2023) Escaping the Long shadow of Homo Sovieticus? Reassessing Stalin’s Popularity and Communist Legacies in Post-Soviet Russia. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cpcs.2023.1817401>

Blackburn, M. (2023). Cheering and Jeering on the Escalator to Hell: One Year of UK Media Coverage on the War in Ukraine. *Russian Politics*, 8(2), 206-229. <https://doi.org/10.30965/24518921-00802006>

Blackburn, M. (2023) Regime Stability and Waging War in Ukraine: Continuity and Change in Russian Politics. *History Reconstructions* 5: 19-30

Blackburn, M., Hutcheson, D. Petersson, B. Tsumarova, E. (2022) Covid-19 and the Russian Regional Response: Blame Diffusion and Attitudes to Pandemic Governance. Part of Special issue to the *Canadian Journal of European and Russian Studies*

Blackburn, M. (2021) The Persistence of the Civic-Ethnic binary: Competing Visions of the Nation and Civilisation in Western Central and Eastern Europe. *National Identities* DOI: [10.1080/14608944.2021.2006169](https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2021.2006169)

Blackburn, M. Petersson, B. (2021) Parade, Plebiscite, Pandemic: Legitimation Efforts in Putin’s Fourth Term. *Post-Soviet Affairs* DOI: [10.1080/1060586X.2021.2020575](https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2021.2020575)

Blackburn, M. (2020) Political Legitimacy in Contemporary Russia ‘from Below’: ‘Pro-Putin’ Stances, the Normative Split and Imagining Two Russias. *Russian Politics* 5: 52-80.

Blackburn, M. (2020) Mainstream Russian Nationalism and the “State-

Civilization” Identity: Perspectives “from below”. *Nationalities Papers*  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2020.8>

Blackburn, M., Soldatkin, A. (2020) Institutional Changes in State Authorities Collaborating with NGOs *Journal of Social Policy Studies* (18) 3: 523-538.

Blackburn, M. (2019) Discourses of Russian-speaking youth in Nazarbayev’s Kazakhstan: Soviet Legacies and Responses to Nation-building. *Central Asian Survey* 38:2, 217-236.

Blackburn, M. (2018) Myths in the Russian Collective Memory: The “Golden Era” of Pre-Revolutionary Russia and the “Disaster of 1917”. *Scando-Slavica*, (2018) 64:1, 31-46.

Blackburn, M. (2017) Natsionalisticheskiye mify v kollektivnoy pamyati Rossii [Nationalist Myths in Russia’s Collective Memory] *Neprikosnovennyy zapas* 116 (6): 190-206.  
[https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/neprikosnovennyy\\_zapas/116/article/19486/](https://www.nlobooks.ru/magazines/neprikosnovennyy_zapas/116/article/19486/)

*Book Chapter*

Blackburn, M. (2019) ‘Being “Proficient” and “Competent” in Ethnographic Fieldwork’. In: R. Gibb, A. Tremlett, Iglesias, J. (eds.) *Learning and Using Languages in Ethnographic Fieldwork*, Multilingual Matters: 164-176.

*Submitted*

Coping with a geopolitical setback: Russia’s responses to NATO expansion in Sweden and Finland (under review) *The European Journal of International Security*

Wartime Putinism and the renewal of regime legitimacy: Soft patriotism and the new state-society relationship (under review) *Political Studies Review*

Critical Patriots: The framing of wartime dissent and official responses in wartime Russia (under review) *Nationalities Papers*

From Sovereign Democracy to State-Civilization: Continuity and Change in the Kremlin’s Legitimation Strategies (Under review) (Chapter in edited volume *Languages of Autocracy: Ancient and Modern*)

*In preparation*

Between appearance and action: Mapping and understanding Russian, Chinese and Iranian interactions from bilateral to multilateral settings (co-author, Hans Jørgen Gåsemyr)

Putinism as an “imagined community”: shifting discourses of civilizationalism, statism and nationalism before and after Feb 2022

Defending the “Civilization-State” and creating a “fair” global order: Russia’s evolving civilizational imaginary at home and abroad (chapter for edited volume, Cambridge University Press)

*Book Proposal.*

Holding the Fort: Patriotism, the Imagined Nation and Identity Politics in Putin’s Russia

## Commentary

- United Russia's Hollow Victory? Managing Outcomes and Retaining the Status Quo in the 2021 Duma Elections, *Baltic Worlds*. Sept 2021  
<http://balticworlds.com/united-russias-hollow-victory/>
- “Wagner’s retreat and the consequences for the Russian military”, VG, [June 2023](#)
- “Prigozhin’s mysterious mutiny and Putin’s panic”, [Aftenposten](#), June 2023
- “The dangers of Europe’s blindness to a long war in Ukraine”, [Responsible Statecraft](#) June 2023
- “Forever we stand with Ukraine”, [Circus Bazaar Magazine](#) Oct 2023
- “The distant frozen Peace in Ukraine”. *I Ukraina er en «frossen fred» langt unna. Derfor bør forhandlingene begynne nå.* [Aftenposten](#) Nov 2023
- “Ukraine War: Selling Stalemate and Prolonging Pain”. [The National Interest](#) Nov 2023
- “Where West No Longer Meets East: The Dilemmas of Russian Journalism in Exile”. [Russia Post](#) Nov 2023
- “Imminent Risk of Failure: A war of miscalculations enters its next phase”. *En krig preget av feilvurderinger beveger seg inn i sin neste fase.* [KlasseKampen](#). 23 March 2024
- “The Looming Ukraine Debacle”, [The National Interest](#), April 4, 2024
- “ISW: Defeatist propaganda keeping ‘us’ from a Ukraine military victory” [Responsible Statecraft](#), April 21 2024
- “Sleepwalking into World War Three” *Som søvngjengere inn i tredje verdenskrig* [Aftenposten](#), July 8 2024
- “Zelensky’s Victory Plan” *Zelenskyjs seiersplan* [KlasseKampen](#) Sept 25 2024
- “He who escalates loses” *Den som øker innsatsen, taper* [KlasseKampen](#) Nov 22 2024
- “Long-Range Strikes Won’t Deter Putin”, [National Interest](#) Nov 21 2024

## Podcasts

- CEURUSa Podcast series by the Centre for Eurasian and Russian Studies. Episode 14: Russia. Processes behind the Legitimation of Power (Россия. Процессы легитимизации власти. (in Russian)  
<https://anchor.fm/ceurus/episodes/14-e18k483>

## Book Reviews

- (2022) *The Red Mirror. Putin’s Leadership and Russia’s Insecure Identity; Between Two Fires. Truth, Ambition, and Compromise in Putin’s Russia* *Europe-Asia Studies* DOI: 10.1080/09668136.2022.2066894
- (2021) *Toward Nationalizing Regimes. Region: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia* 10(2), 311-314.  
doi:10.1353/reg.2021.0019.
- (2020) *Chronicles in Stone. Preservation, Patriotism, and Identity in Northwest Russia* *Europe-Asia Studies* DOI:10.1080/09668136.2020.1847856.
- (2016) *Systemic and Non-Systemic Opposition in the Russian Federation. Civil Society Awakens?* *Europe-Asia Studies* 68 (6): 1077-107.
- (2016) *On Stalin’s Team. The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics.* *Europe-Asia Studies*. 68 (9): 1608-160.

## PRIZES AND AWARDS

2014 to 2015	Eranet Mundus Plus Academic Mobility Doctoral Scholarship
2013 to 2016	Europe-Asia Studies PhD Scholarship
2017	Associate Fellow Award: Recognizing Excellence in Teaching
2019	Uppsala Forum Funding for 2020 Workshop Civilizational Identity and Politics in Europe and Eurasia, (60,000 SEK).
2020	Riksbankens Jubileumsfond: Research Initiation Funding: Collective Memory in Contemporary Russia: The Soviet Past in Post-Soviet Context(s): 120,000 SEK
2021	Riksbankens Jubileumsfond: Research Initiation Funding: Russian Regional Politics: The Kremlin, Regional Actors and Regime Longevity: 160,000 SEK

### RESEARCH GRANTS APPLIED FOR

2023	(PI: Mark Bassin) “Post-Soviet Authoritarian Regimes and the Politics of Identity”, submitted to Baltic Sea Foundation “Grand Project”, submitted, Feb 3 2023, 25,000,000 SEK (final round interview)
2023	(PI: Joakim Ekman) “Authoritarian Consolidation in Eurasia: Normalisation, Stabilisation and Transference, submitted to Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, 31 Jan 2023, 37,000,000 SEK (not funded)
2021/22	Marie Curie Postdoc applications – Tromso University 2021 (88.4% not funded), Oslo University 2022 (89.4 % not funded) (EU seal of excellence)

### INVITED TALKS

Dec 2022	<b>CBEES Roundtable, Södertörn University</b> : Where is Russia going? Managing Stability and Waging War: inner-elite unity and delivering normality before and after mobilisation
May 2022	<b>CEES/CRCEES Seminar, Glasgow University</b> : Structures and Elites: Identity Politics and Foreign Relations in Russian Politics
May 2022	<b>Institute of Anthropology, Polish Academy of Science</b> : Exorcising the Ghost of Homo Sovieticus: Reassessing Stalin’s popularity and Memory Politics in Post-Soviet Russia
May 2022	<b>NORMEMO Guest Lecture, Tromsø University</b> : Imagined Communities of Centre and Periphery in Russia
May 2022	<b>Guest Lecture, Oslo University</b> : The Transformation of Russia’s Political System 2012-2022
March 2022	<b>CBEES Advanced Seminar, Södertörn University</b> : Escaping the long shadow of Homo Sovieticus: Attitudes to Stalin in contemporary Russia.
Nov 2020	<b>CRRC, ARISC and American Councils Work-in-Progress Series (online)</b> Imagining the Nation in Putin’s Russia: Unifying Discourses, National Identity and Patriotism
May 2020	<b>RSCPR Research Seminar (online), The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø</b> The Imagined Nation in Putin’s Russia: Identity, Discourses and Spaces
Apr 2019	<b>IRES Advanced Seminar, Uppsala University</b> : Mainstream Russian Nationalism: Soviet imagery, the Post-Imperial consciousness and “State-Civilization”

### RECENT CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PAPERS

Oct 2024	Conference: Civilizationism, Sovereignty and Democracy: Global Perspectives, Stanford University, Defending the “Civilization-State” and breaking the “liberal” global order: The impact of war on Russia’s civilizational imaginary
June 2024	Tartu Conference on East European and Eurasian Studies. M. Blackburn:

- Responding to a geopolitical setback: Russia's evolving discursive and policy responses to NATO expansion in Scandinavia*
- June 2024 Conference: War, Emerging Tensions and Strategic Stability in Eurasia, Södertörn University. M. Blackburn: *The China-Russia-Iran Strategic Triangle after the Invasions of Ukraine and Gaza: Geopolitical Dreams and Realities*
- May 2024 Workshop: Citizens and the State During and After Crises. Södertörn University, M. Blackburn, O. Zhuralev. *Wartime Putinism and the changing state-society relationship: a new basis for regime legitimacy*
- Apr 2024 BASEES Conference 2024, Cambridge University, M. Blackburn: *Securing the "Civilization-State" and a "fair" global order: Russia's evolving civilizational imaginary at home and abroad*
- Nov 2023 CBEES Conference 2023, Södertörn University, M. Blackburn: *Aggressor, Patron, or Partner? Reception of Russia and China in Central Asia after February 2022*
- Nov 2023 Conference: "Conflict and conflict transformation in the Ukrainian-Russian Context", Bern University. M. Blackburn: *The consensus for war in the West*
- June 2023 Conference: "Contextualising New Civilizationalisms of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", University of Göttingen, M. Blackburn: *Russia: A Civilization-State at War*
- June 2023 ZOiS Conference "Crossing Borders", Berlin. M. Blackburn: *The End of the Post-Soviet: the Transnational Study of Identity Formation and Migration*
- June 2023 Conference "The Language of Autocracy: Ancient and Modern", Aalborg University, M. Blackburn: *From Sovereign Democracy to Fortress Russia: Shifting Legitimation Strategies in Putin's Russia*
- March 2023 BASEES Conference 2023, Glasgow University, M. Blackburn: *Crossing the Rubicon: Continuity and Change in Kremlin Legitimation Strategies (2020-22)*
- Oct 2022 Aleksanteri Conference 2022: The New Era of Insecurity, Helsinki University, M. Blackburn: *Balancing Loyalty and Voice: Responses to the War among Russian Political Actors*
- Sept 2022 Ideology and the Putin System, Uppsala University, M. Blackburn *The Evolving Grammar of Political Loyalty and Belonging*
- Sept 2022 Russian Regional Politics: The Kremlin, Regional Actors and Regime Longevity Fortress, Uppsala University. M. Blackburn *Russia and the Politics of Loyalty: Ideological Hardening and the Securitisation of Patriotism*
- Jun 2022 Post-Imperial and Post-Socialist Legacies in Today's Populisms, GWZO, Leipzig. M. Blackburn: *A Deadly Dance on the Carcass of Empire: Statism, Populism and Nationalism in contemporary Russia (2012–2022)*
- May 2022 Voters and Political Parties During the Pandemic, Södertörn University. M. Blackburn and S. Hutcheson: *COVID-19 Governance and electoral gains for the Communist Party.*
- Dec 2021 Civilizational Identity and Politics in Europe and Eurasia, Uppsala University. M. Blackburn: *Civilizational Identity as both Umbrella Term and 'Solution' to Russian post-Soviet identity Crisis?*
- Sept 2021 Collective Memory in Contemporary Russia: Uppsala University M. Blackburn: *Popular Memory Narratives: European Russia Compared to Siberia*
- July 2021 MSA Conference (online): Warsaw University M. Blackburn: *Micro-Narratives on Stalin on the Level of the Individual: Socialising Discourse and Competing Myths on the Nation's Past*
- June 2021 IPSA Convention (online): Lisbon. M. Blackburn: *The Hegemonic Geopolitical Vision in Russia and Rise and Fall of the post-Crimean Consensus (2014-2021)*
- May 2021 ASN Convention (online): Columbia University *Tracking the Variation and* M. Blackburn: *Salience of Civilizational Identity: Polling Data, Discourses and Contexts*
- April 2021 ISA Convention (online): Las Vegas, Nevada M. Blackburn: *Russian Soft*

- Nov 2020 *Power: Illiberal Sovereignty and Civilisational Politics*  
RUCARR Conference (online): Roundtable ‘Putin’s Constructional Coup’  
M. Blackburn: *Plebiscite, parade and plague: Shoring up System Stability*
- Nov 2019 The ASEES Convention, San Francisco  
M. Blackburn: *Tracing discourses on the Russian nation ‘from above’ and ‘from below’: The interplay between Soviet legacies, civilizational identity and geopolitical visions.*
- Nov 2019 CBEES Conference, Södertörn University, Sweden M. Blackburn: *The ‘Soviet’ in Popular Historical Memory in Russia: An Unusable Past?*
- May 2019 ASN World Convention: Columbia University M. Blackburn: *Domestic Political Legitimacy in Contemporary Russia: Uncovering Cracks within the Putin Consensus*
- June 2018 Workshop: Thirty Years Later: Ethnic Conflict in the Former Soviet Union. Birmingham University M. Blackburn: *The Ethnic Factor in Mainstream Russian Nationalism*
- May 2018 Workshop: Moving beyond the binaries of Nationalism Studies Edinburgh University. M. Blackburn: *Characterising ‘Mainstream’ Nationalism in Contemporary Russia: The Difficulties in Applying Nationalism Typologies.*
- March 2018 ASEN Conference: The New Nationalism: Populism, Authoritarianism and anti-globalisation. LSE, London. M. Blackburn: *Putin’s “Populist Nationalism”: The View ‘from below’*