

The lecture of Dr Matthew Blackburn

Imagining the Nation and holding the fort in Putin's Russia: Unifying Discourses, National Identity and Patriotism



*In contrast to the ideological regimes of the last century, a key factor in the stability of 21st century electoral autocracies is the successful promotion of **hegemonic national identity discourses**. Combining analysis of state discourses on the nation with over 120 interviews from ordinary Russians from four cities, my monograph examines how certain visions of the Russian nation are promoted 'from above' and where and how they resonate 'from below'. Unpacking how **discourses on nation, patriotism and belonging** work on the micro-level, I examine four areas: (i) collective memory and the salience of a Statist-illiberal cyclical *longue-durée*; (ii) the State-Civilization identity project as a 'solution' to Russia's post-Soviet identity crisis; (iii) the President-State-Society imaginary and delegative democracy; (iv) the centrality of geopolitics and 'holding the fort' as a unifying discourse. In each section I also consider the main discursive alternatives to a pro-Kremlin stance. I finish by examining the reasons for the breakdown of the post-Crimean consensus (2014-2018) and reduced potency of patriotic mobilisation, I argue serious divisions in political values are increasingly concealed behind inaccurate polling, censorship, electoral manipulation and an authoritarian spiral of silence.*

The time and venue of the talk:

Monday, November 8, time: 6.00-7.30 pm
Room 219, Collegium Politicum