Religion and Anti-Authoritarian Resistance: Evidence from Communist Poland

Part of the IERES European Politics Series

with

Monika Nalepa, The University of Chicago

While scholars have noted the role of religion in supporting or undermining authoritarian regimes, debates about the underlying mechanisms continue to be inconclusive. In this talk, Professor Nalepa will explain how geography modified the effect Catholic Church attendance had on regime support/opposition in late-communist Poland. Surveys conducted between 1985 and 1989 show that frequent church attendance in traditionally Polish regions led to stronger anti-communist feelings than in former German areas that were resettled after the Yalta Treaty. Tracing the history of church-state and church-society relations, Professor Nalepa proposes different hypotheses for this variation. The first hypothesis is linked to the so-called Partitions that divided Poland among three empires (Habsburg, Prussia, and Russia) in the 18th and 19th centuries and resulted in the tolerance of Polish language and culture in the Habsburg Empire. The second hypothesis highlights the impact of massive population resettlements following WWII, as they undermined the ability of Catholic communities to transmit the dissident gospel and thereby facilitated the regime’s efforts to infiltrate church institutions.

Monika Nalepa is Associate Professor of Political Science at The University of Chicago. Her research interests include transitional justice, political parties and legislatures, post-communist Europe, and applications of formal models to comparative politics. Her work has been published in *Journal of Comparative Politics, World Politics, Journal of Conflict Resolution,* and *Journal of Theoretical Politics.* Her first book, *Skeletons in the Closet: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Europe,* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), received two Best Book award. She is currently preparing a new book on the emergence of programmatic parties in new democracies.

Monday, April 18, 2016
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm
Voesar Conference Room
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