

'Vodka nation: alcohol problems and policy formation in contemporary Russia'

Anna Bailey, PhD candidate, School of Slavonic & East European Studies, UCL

PhD Project Summary

Main research question: **What are the determinants of federal alcohol policy in contemporary Russia?**

- Explaining the initiative to lower alcohol consumption that began under President Medvedev in 2009.
- How the 'alcohol problem' is constructed as a 'social problem' in contemporary Russia.
- Explaining the formation of the Federal Agency for Regulation of the Alcohol Market (Rosalkogol'regulirovaniye) in 2009. Who lobbied for its formation? Whose interest does it represent?
- Assessing the role played by the state-controlled joint-stock alcohol company Rosspirtprom.
- The role of the Governmental Commission for Regulation of the Alcohol Market, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Zubkov (who is also on the Rosspirtprom board of directors).
- Influence of lobbyists and vested interests? Competition between vodka and beer manufacturers as a possible determinant of federal alcohol policy.

Supervisor: Prof. Alena Ledeneva



Contacts: anna.bailey@ucl.ac.uk
+44 (0)7914 272587

Methodology

- Political science & sociological methodologies
- The 'alcohol problem' as a socially-constructed 'social problem' (Gusfield).
- Policy formation resulting from the interaction between policy stakeholders, who have competing interests and thus definitions of 'the problem'.
- This includes competition between individual government departments and agencies, who try to shape policy so as to maximise their own power and prestige (Downs 1967).
- Concepts of 'state capture' and 'business capture' in the study of Russian economic policy (Yakovlev 2006).



Research methods

Qualitative methods:

- Analysis of government documents and legislation.
- Analysis of events provided by contemporary news articles (using the EastView database).
- In-depth semi-structured interviews with policy actors and experts (to be conducted Winter 2011/12 in Moscow).



Research Outputs

'Gorbachev's and Medvedev's anti-alcohol campaigns: Some initial comparisons'. Paper to be published as part of collected volume from the international conference 'Alcohol in Russia', Ivanovo, Russia, October 2010. Publication due Summer 2011.

