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Change, continuity and power in the Russian political economy in comparative BRICs perspective

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Conclusion

This dissertation provides novel insights into the development of Russia's particular form of capitalism over the past two and a half decades. It sheds new light on the working and origins of capitalism in Russia, finding that after a decade of liberalisation in the 1990s, Russia moved into a direction of increased statism and, notably, patrimonialism. Patrimonialism is a form of socio-economic organisation strongly based on clientelism and patronage. By incorporating patrimonialism into the analysis next to liberalism and statism, I uncover an indispensable yet underestimated third dimension without which the Russian trajectory cannot adequately be grasped. Patrimonialism subverted first Russia's attempt at liberalisation in the 1990s, turning privatisation largely into a sale of state property to well-connected insiders, and then Russia's move to increased statism in the 2000s, turning nationalisation of assets into a re-privatisation at the benefit of the bureaucratic elites. As a result, by roughly the mid-2000s, Russia developed its current variety of political economy dubbed 'statist-patrimonial capitalism'. The country thereby moved in the opposite direction from the other BRIC countries, defying a global trend towards liberalisation in the 2000s.

Shifting the focus from a description of the overall development of the political economy to an explanation of its functioning and emergence, the dissertation focuses on the role of small businesses in Russia's highly patrimonial environment. One finding is that this environment accommodated a dynamic and developing small business sector despite the rise of state predation. A crucial and somewhat counterintuitive finding is that small companies were active (though often inadvertent) contributors to the highly patrimonial system and provided sustenance to it from below. This contribution occurred through informal practices and, I suggest, through the mechanism of the informality trap, by which informal behaviour becomes a vicious circle.

By the same token, this analysis also reveals that small businesses played an active role in the emergence of Russia's form of capitalism. Far from being mere victims of state predation and unfavourable business climate, small firms facilitated the rise of the current Russian politico-economic

system through informal behaviour choices in the 1990s that allowed the state later to exploit them and push companies into the informality trap. In this way, informal strategies that companies used to employ as an adaptation tool and even a source of power in the first phase of Russia's development doomed these companies as the room for manoeuvre narrowed under President Putin's rule.

Summing up, on the higher level of abstraction the guiding question of the dissertation - *How can we grasp the changing political economies of emerging countries using the example of Russia, and what are the drivers of continuity and change?* - can be answered as follows: To understand change in emerging economies we need to account for the continuity of patrimonialism and the bottom-up forces in society which help create and sustain it.

This concluding section proposes directions for further research, reflects on the broader theoretical implications of the study and offers policy recommendations.

Directions for further research

Continuity and change in emerging economies is a vast topic that could not be dealt with exhaustively in this dissertation. Several questions remain unanswered and may provide avenues for future research. The issue of similarities and differences between the development trajectories of the BRICs stands out as one of the most interesting ones. While the dissertation reveals and describes those differences, their causes and the drivers of change in Brazil, China and India remain to be examined in future research. What role did the small business sector play in the developments of the other BRICs countries? Are informal business strategies as widespread in these countries as in Russia, and do companies there also fall into the informality trap? This would be an interesting topic for comparative research given the fact that Brazil's, India's and China's patrimonialism decreased in the timeframe considered. Perhaps firms in those countries found ways to gradually escape the informality trap, or other factors mitigated the negative implications of informality.

This relates to a more general question about implications of patrimonialism (and informality in particular) for development goals, that could not be addressed in this dissertation. It appears that certain levels of patrimonialism are detrimental for economic development as it may compromise property rights, decrease predictability and hamper investment. However, successful examples of highly patrimonial countries such as China or the so-called Asian Tigers suggest that patrimonialism may co-exist with economic development. In some ways informality may even facilitate economic processes and compensate for the shortcomings of the formal system, for instance if it helps companies to overcome red tape. More comparative research is needed to establish 'thresholds' of 'facilitating' and 'detrimental' patrimonialism and to understand which factors (such as governance type, resource dependence, small firms' strategies, presence of international capital) mitigate the negative impact of patrimonialism on development.

I would like to offer several hunches based on the existing literature and to be explored in future research. One regards different cultural roots of informality. A survey of managers of 35 countries finds that informal practices in Russia are rooted in an individualistic culture (understood as a prime orientation to the self) and tend to be exclusive, opportunistic and exploitative. Conversely, in Brazil, India and China informal practices are rooted in a communitarian culture (understood as a prime orientation to common goals) and are therefore less instrumental and less prone to manipulation (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1998 cited in Ledeneva 2008: 130). For example, the Chinese practice of *guanxi* is based on kinship ethics and Confucian tradition with its emphasis on individual as part of a bigger system, long-term relationships and avoidance of 'losing one's face'. This makes *guanxi* more predictable and less prone to manipulation as compared to the Russian use of personal connections (Ledeneva 2008: 127-30, McNally 2012).

Another factor that may be partly responsible for the differences in the extent and impact of patrimonialism in the BRICs regards different incentives of state officials. Michael Rochlitz and colleagues find that while regional officials in China are promoted based on the economic performance of their region, and thus have a stake in its economic development, the most important promotion criterion for Russian regional

officials is political loyalty in the form of election outcomes for the ruling party (Rochlitz et al. 2015). The highly centralised tax system in Russia (only a small percentage of taxes collected locally remain in the region) may be a further disincentive for Russian governors to show initiative in economic affairs of their region.

Finally, external pressures and developments on the global market may matter, too, particularly in highly patrimonial rent-dependent economies like Russia or Brazil. The decrease of prices for natural commodities may prompt competition for dwindling resources among the elites and promote predatory behaviour and detrimental aspects of patrimonialism. Massive corruption scandals that engulfed Brazilian politics and lead to the displacement of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 as well as the tightening of bureaucratic pressure on business in Russia since the onset of the economic slump in 2014 may be indicative in this respect. However, legal institutions, which are stronger in Brazil than in Russia, may play a mitigating role.

Against this backdrop the question of long-term stability and change of highly patrimonial systems is intriguing. What are the conditions and impediments for reform? The ambiguous nature of patrimonialism may offer a clue. For instance, for modernising its economy Russia faces a challenge to reform its highly informal network-based system of governance that Ledeneva (2013) calls 'sistema'. However, reforming 'sistema' and curbing its dysfunctional implications is hard without losing its functional potential and weakening 'various kinds of social cohesion that enable Russian society to function' (Ledeneva 2013: 2). Just like the reproduction of patrimonialism, discussed in the third chapter of the dissertation, its reform appears to be a matter of the will and capacity of the political elites but also of the bottom-up forces of society at large. These issues will be taken up in the following policy recommendations.

In any case, more research needs to be done to better grasp patrimonialism in empirical terms. We need quantitative data beyond corruption proxies or the residual category used in this dissertation in order to be more precise in quantifying the extent of patrimonialism. We also need more qualitative data to understand the specificities of each case. For instance, interviews with state bureaucrats and with more

companies, including larger ones, would be desirable in future comparative research.

As for the Russian case, this dissertation was preoccupied with providing a distinct perspective on its development and thus presented only a few - so far largely overlooked - pieces of a larger puzzle. To give a comprehensive answer to the question of why a statist-patrimonial politico-economic form got entrenched in Russia, further studies need to incorporate more factors, among them the failure of the rule of law, the role of big companies, and the impact of oil wealth. How have large companies contributed to the rise of statist-patrimonial capitalism? Are they involved in informal activity similar to small firms, and does the mechanism of the informality trap apply to them too? Moreover, further research is required to analyse the impact of natural resource wealth and large resource corporations on Russia's capitalism, a topic treated only cursory in the dissertation. Mechanisms such as resource curse and Dutch disease may have played an important role in the origins of statist-patrimonial capitalism and need to be accounted for in future studies.

Broader theoretical implications

The finding about the bottom-up contribution of firms to the functioning and origins of Russian political economy may affect the way we think about capitalism: it is not just about what governments do and how institutions work (i.e., the focus of the traditional Varieties of Capitalism framework) but also about business and their myriad choices, which may shape the variety of capitalism. Business is one important pillar and its behaviour matters.

This connects to the discussion of drivers of social change. The findings imply that the bottom-up agency of actors can be viewed as a complementary factor to top-down forces of the state. Socio-cultural factors guiding these actors' decisions are important in this regard too, as the examination of the 'normality of informality' suggests. Furthermore, an important yet overlooked source of social change may be the unintended consequences of action, as certain behaviour choices sometimes have an impact beyond the initial intentions. Thus Russian

firms using informal shortcuts and 'navigation strategies' in the hostile business environment actually acted to their own detriment: securing property rights informally undermined them in the long run. Generally, unintended consequences of action matter because of collective action problems, the lack of foresight and vicious circles that are hard to escape.

To be sure, structural constraints and institutional contexts also play an important role in the process of societal change along with actors' agency. In this respect the findings of this dissertation connect to the broader state-society debate in social sciences. While I do not attempt to establish the relative importance of structural or actor-related factors and thus cannot resolve the perennial debate, I make a strong case that both structure and agency matter. This contribution comes at a time when the focus of the debate has shifted towards the analysis of institutions and state-related factors (Schmidt 2009, Evans et al. 1985), and is made on the example of a case – Russia - that has been traditionally analysed from the state- and legacy-centred perspective given its long history of state domination over society. Having found that the Russian citizenry has been not only a passive bystander of developments shaped by the state and large oligarchic companies, but also actively contributed to these developments, this dissertation provides a conceptual counterbalance to a debate which is typically tilted towards institutions and the state. Even if we adopt a more sceptical view of the impact of agency, seeing it merely as an effect of the pre-existing politico-economic order rather than its cause, the activity of economic agents can be seen nevertheless as one link in the causal chain that has a recursive effect on the stability and origins of a political-economic form.

In conceptual terms the dissertation contributes to the Varieties of Capitalism literature by presenting patrimonialism as a competing logic of socio-economic organisation and including it as an additional ideal type of capitalism rather than treating it as a mere aberration. This allows us to better understand political economies of emerging countries (and, given Trump's election, perhaps some industrialised, too) and provide a more fine-grained analysis of continuity and change. Viewed from a normative perspective, this approach may make us question the negative connotation often automatically attached to informal aspects of economic interactions (the laden notion of 'corruption' exemplifies this stance).

Policy implications

Viewed from a practical policy perspective, harnessing 'facilitating' aspects of informality and containing the 'detrimental' ones becomes a pertinent political task, in which both active state policies and firms' behaviour matter. The following policy recommendations target conditions for getting out of the informality trap in Russia against the background of current government policies towards the SME sector. Some of the recommendations may be relevant for other emerging economies like Brazil, which might be at risk of succumbing to 'detrimental' aspects of patrimonialism, like indicated by the recent revelation of a grand corruption scheme around the oil giant Petrobras involving top political elites.

Current situation

On paper, development of small and medium-sized firms and elimination of bureaucratic pressure on them is a priority of the Russian government. However, reality often looks different. Many of the recently introduced policies to support SMEs are of questionable effectiveness due to their limited scope, sabotage at the local level or contradictions with other restrictive policies. For example, the welcome three-year ban on inspections for firms that have a clean record concerns only planned but not unplanned inspections. The adopted tax freeze 2015-2018 and tax breaks for new companies do not compensate for the strong rise of the tax burden in 2013-2014, given the increase of social security contributions, the introduction of a retail levy in large cities and a reassessment of the land tax, which implies much higher costs for owning or renting premises, as well as numerous possibilities for bureaucratic manipulation. Moreover, regional governments seldom grant tax breaks, being not interested in losing revenue. The new simplified taxation regimes for small companies are routinely misused by larger firms that artificially break up their companies into several smaller ones. Through a similar technique, big companies or firms affiliated with the bureaucrats exploit the public procurement benefits intended for small firms (Nikitin 2015).

The measures to improve entrepreneurs' rights, such as creation of the office of a federal Business Ombudsman (2012), appear as mere window-dressing and expose the weakness of the rule of law. The office of the

Business Ombudsman deals with property rights abuses in the familiar mode of 'manual steering', making the flaws of the legal protection of property rights obvious. The same regards the new high-profile Working Group on Monitoring and Analysis of Law Enforcement in the Area of Entrepreneurship, which President Putin established as a consultative body in the presidential administration in 2016 to reduce violent pressure on business (Kornya 2015). Due to its consultative character the Working Group can be viewed as at best an informal alternative to the dysfunctional legal control over the *siloviki*.

Some recent policies have been in outright contradiction with the proclaimed goal to make life of small business easier. For example, the period during which back taxes can be demanded was recently extended from one to three years, expanding the authority of law enforcers to probe firms (Vinokurov 2015). Recent amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences tightened penalties for firms (up to liquidation of the business) and increased fines by several orders of magnitude, for instance for violations concerning security standards, sanitary norms and consumer rights. The latter measure affects the majority of SMEs, 40% of which are in retail trade and 35% in services (Rosstat 2012).

Last but not least, the formal 'tightening of the screws' is exacerbated by the reinforcement of informal bureaucratic pressure, palpable since the advent of the economic downturn that has been unfolding in Russia since the end of 2014, when the global oil price lost half of its value and caused the Russian GDP to contract 3.7% the following year. While previously bureaucrats had expected to draw 'dividends' from their informal control over cash flow from private property for many years, in crisis they seem to have been trying to extract maximum resources as quickly as possible and 'fleece entrepreneurs as if it was their last chance'. Under these circumstances the well-established informal practice of 'coming to an arrangement' does not seem to work as reciprocally as previously. For instance, law enforcement agents are extorting increasing sums of money from 'grey' businesses without providing protection or services in return (author's private correspondence; cf. Yakovlev 2014). As a result, businesses is pushed further into informality: the share of the shadow economy grew from 18% of employment in 2006 to 19% in 2012 and 20.5% in 2015. In absolute terms this means that about 2 million people

entered informal employment just in the past five years (Rosstat 2016: 94). Going into the shadows may be viewed as a tried and tested crisis adaptation mechanism that helps firms to weather the storm, but at the same time may push firms into the informality trap and ultimately render property rights insecure.

Recommendations

Escaping the informality trap and curbing predatory aspects of patrimonialism such as state threats to property rights is difficult in practice. Both state actors and business actors should be involved in the process. Provided the Russian state is committed to changing the situation, it should try to tackle the structural drivers of patrimonialism and make the business environment less hostile and more predictable, as well as provide incentives for business for going out of the shadows. Such reform is essential given Russia's bleak economic situation, with low oil prices, unlikely to rise in the near future, sluggish GDP growth, decreased living standard, low investment and Western economic sanctions. Conversely, business should try to opt for legal compliance whenever possible and thus escape situations leading into the informality trap. Here are specific recommendations for a better state policy:

First, the state should reduce the regulatory burden on firms and streamline the contradictory regulations. Cutting red tape will reduce inadvertent non-compliance and perhaps violations and help release at least some companies from the informality trap. For example, if contradictory regulations are eliminated and some unrealisable Soviet-era technical standards are scrapped, more firms will be able to be in legal compliance and will not face 'suspended punishment'. The government should also decriminalise economic law and soften the Criminal Code (chapter on economic crimes) in accordance with the principle 'economic penalties for economic offences'. This measure may help to empty state prisons and bring money into state coffers. Additionally, the disproportionate increases in fines in the amended Code on Administrative Offences should be reversed because these are likely to increase corruption rather than discourage violations, unless the overall regulatory burden on firms is reduced radically.

Second, the state should try to tackle informal bureaucratic pressure on firms by a combination of incentives for lawful conduct (for example, promotional, monetary) and tougher controls and sanctions. To this end, corruption and its concrete manifestations should be specified in the Criminal Code beyond bribery. Extortionists should be suspended from service and face high fines. It is further advisable to bridge the gap between on-paper initiatives and their actual implementation. Good policies (for example, an inspections break for 'prudent' SMEs) may work in practice by pushing back the covert resistance at middle and low levels of bureaucratic hierarchy, for instance by changing promotion criteria from loyalty-oriented to economic performance-oriented.

Third, the state is well-advised to decrease the influence of those factions in the political elite who are keen to toughen regulations and promote firmer control and supervision, in particular the *siloviki*. To this end, the state should genuinely commit to developing business beyond lip service and strengthen the role of the 'economic block' of the government through appointments, for example in high-level bodies such as the Working Group on Monitoring and Analysis of Law Enforcement in the Area of Entrepreneurship. The Minister of Economic Affairs, as well as the Business Ombudsman are conspicuously missing from the Group, whereas they should be crucial actors in matters of entrepreneurs' rights. At the same time, performance assessment criteria for inspection bodies could be changed from the purely quantitative ones that prevail today (for example, number of inspections and fines) to effectiveness-oriented ones (for example, the monetary value of collected fines as a proportion of the cost of the inspection bureaucracy).

As far as business is concerned, a transformation of the dominant entrepreneurial culture and deep-seated perceptions that underpin it is required. In this context it is crucial that entrepreneurs cease seeing formal and informal costs of doing business (and solving arising problems) as comparable expenses. Instead, business should treat legal compliance not merely as an option, but as default behaviour - at least in cases when there is a choice. To be sure, many circumstances under the current legal and political conditions dictate informal adaptation strategies unless the company wants to go bust. However, in many other cases, when firms choose informal practices out of expediency, there are

alternatives to cutting corners and thus ways to evade the long-term negative effects of informality. Entrepreneurs should stop evading taxes, cease bribing state officials or fighting competitors through instrumentalisation of the judiciary. Bearing obstacles related to collective action problem in mind, in this way formal behaviour may become a new norm in the long run. Results of my fieldwork in Russia provide a serious underpinning for this vision: the overwhelming majority of the respondents lamented the current situation and wished they could conduct 'honest business'.

However, it is illusionary to expect entrepreneurs to switch to legal compliance if the tax burden remains unsustainably high or bureaucrats continue to extort bribes. We need to be aware that the informality trap can be avoided only if the best efforts by entrepreneurs are supplemented by broad comprehensive political and economic reforms, which may tackle the very foundations of the current Russian regime, including diversification of the economy away from oil, an effort to keep the *siloviki* at bay and the attainment of the rule of law. The prospect of such reforms is very uncertain under current political and economic conditions.

The least the state can and indeed should do in this situation is to make legal compliance more expedient than beating the system. The predominant coercive approach based on stricter laws and tougher controls has not proven successful so far; instead, provision of opportunities and incentives for leaving the shadow economy is lacking. Specifically, the state can provide such opportunities and incentives by creating sound financial conditions, which is overdue in the context of the current economic slump. This measure comprises two components: taxation and credit.

First, the Russian state should decrease the overall tax burden on SMEs and thus give them maximum incentives and a real possibility to conduct 'white' business. It should revise the new land tax and the retail levy that impose a disproportionately high burden on small firms. Additionally, a stimulus programme to support the SME sector in the current economic slump is advisable, similar to the stimulus programme for big business in the 2008-2009 crisis. Given the current constraints on the state budget the stimulus can be in form of tax breaks or tax exemptions for companies

that plan to invest. In addition, regional governments should be incentivised to introduce tax holidays or other support measures for local SMEs by increasing the tax share from SMEs allocated to municipal budgets.

Second, the state should provide access to credit, which remains among the biggest problems for Russian SMEs. The volume of credits to SMEs fell by 6.5% in 2015 compared with 2014, while the share of overdue loans doubled to 14%, according to data from the Central Bank (Seryogin et al. 2016) Almost half of SME loan applications are still rejected across the banking system. Interest rates on loans remain very high, at about 17–20%, and banks commonly seek marketable collateral of up to 200% of the loan amount (OECD 2013: 21). Additionally, a system of low-interest micro-loans for the smallest firms can be created, which does not require cumbersome paperwork and collateral. Affordable credit will not eliminate all problems, but it will allow entrepreneurs to invest, develop and grow and thus in the long run hopefully become the foundation of economic development in Russia.

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Appendix

List of interviews conducted by the author

Note: Entrepreneur = owner of small- (/S) or medium-sized (/M) business. * = CEO.

Small business: 1-50 employees; medium-sized business: 51-100 employees

Location indicates the physical location of the business. All 34 interviews were conducted and recorded in Moscow and St. Petersburg (B17 and B18)

Position	Code	White or grey	Date of interview
Entrepreneur/M, sewing factory, Moscow Oblast	B1	White?	4.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, publishing house, Moscow	B2	White	4.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, retail, Moscow	B3	White?	6.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, PR agency, Moscow	B4	White	8.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, street food, Moscow	B5	Grey	8.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, medical clinic, Moscow	B6	Grey	9.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, construction company, Moscow	B7	Grey	10.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, private kindergarten, Moscow	B8	White?	10.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, legal services, Moscow	B9	Grey	10.04.2014

Entrepreneur/M*, manufacturing (chemicals), Moscow	B10	White	11.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, translation agency, Moscow	B11	Grey/black	11.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, construction company, Moscow	B12	Grey	14.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, retail, Moscow	B13	Grey?	15.04.2014
Entrepreneur/M, manufacturing (metal), Vishniy Volochek (Tver Oblast)	B14	Grey	15.04.2014
Entrepreneur/M, IT services, Moscow	B15	White?	15.04.2014
Entrepreneur/M, manufacturing (furniture), Kaluga (Kaluga Oblast)	B16	White?	16.04.2014
Entrepreneur/M*, manufacturing (plastic), St. Petersburg	B17	White?	17.04.2014
Entrepreneur/M*, manufacturing (metal), St. Petersburg	B18	Grey?	17.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, retail, Moscow + assistant of a Duma deputy	B19	Grey?	18.04.2014
Entrepreneur/M, retail, Moscow	B20	Grey	21.04.2014
Entrepreneur/M, confectionary production, Moscow	B21	Grey	21.04.2014
Entrepreneur/S, manufacturing (industrial fans), Zelenograd (Moscow Oblast)	B22	Grey	22.04.2014
(former) Entrepreneur/S, car retail,	B23	Grey	23.04.2014

Moscow			
Business association executive, Moscow	A1		3.04.2014
Business association executive, Moscow	A2		7.04.2014
Business association executive, Moscow	A3		8.04.2014
Corporate Lawyer (Centre 'Business Against Corruption'), Moscow	L1		7.04.2014
Corporate Lawyer, private legal company, Moscow	L2		7.04.2014
Academic, Moscow	E1		9.04.2014
Academic, Moscow	E2		14.04.2014
Academic, Moscow	E3		21.04.2014
Academic, Moscow	E4		22.04.2014
Journalist, 'Kommersant Dengi', Moscow	J1		8.04.2014
Journalist, 'Forbes Russia', Moscow	J2		11.04.2014

Dutch summary

Nederlandse samenvatting proefschrift Alexandra Vasileva
“Verandering, continuïteit en macht in de Russische politieke economie
in vergelijkend BRICs-perspectief”

In dit proefschrift wordt de ontwikkeling van de Russische politieke economie van de afgelopen 25 jaar in een vergelijkend BRICs (Brazilië, Rusland, India en China) perspectief onderzocht. Het concentreert zich op de belangrijkste eigenschap van het Russische kapitalisme, genaamd 'patrimonialisme', waarbij de relatie tussen de staat en (voornamelijk kleine) bedrijven, met name de informele aspecten, worden onderzocht. Deze dissertatie is op artikelen gebaseerd en stelt zichzelf de volgende doelstellingen:

- het beschrijven van het duidelijke onderscheid van het Russisch kapitalisme (hoofdstuk 1);
- het vergelijken van de Russische kapitalistische evolutie en variëteit met die van de andere BRIC-landen (hoofdstuk 2)s
- kennis verschaffen over hoe het Russisch kapitalisme functioneert en zich staande houdt (hoofdstuk 3);
- een analyse bieden over waarom het Russisch kapitalisme zich op deze manier ontwikkeld heeft (hoofdstuk 4).

Kortom, de hoofdstukken richten zich op de beschrijving, de vergelijking, het functioneren en de geschiedschrijving van de kenmerkende Russische vorm van kapitalisme. Daarbij richten zij zich op de beantwoording van de vier fundamentele vragen in de sociale wetenschappen: ‘wat?’, ‘in vergelijking met?’, ‘hoe?’ en ‘waarom?’.

In conceptueel opzicht, verschuift de dissertatie vanuit een macro-perspectief van de algehele politieke economie (hoofdstukken 1 en 2) naar een micro-onderzoek van haar functioneren op het niveau van het midden- en kleinbedrijf (MKB) (hoofdstuk 3), en gaat vervolgens weer terug naar het macroniveau, wat zich er daarna op richt de bredere implicaties van de bedrijfsactiviteiten op het oorspronkelijke systeem weer te geven (hoofdstuk 4). Deze drie-stappen analyse vereist een conceptuele ‘*gear shift*’. De theoretische instrumenten van de ‘*Varieties of Capitalism*’ (VOC)-beurs worden in de eerste helft van het proefschrift gebruikt om de specificiteit van de politiek-economische vorm van

Rusland te beschrijven en weer te geven hoe het in de loop van de tijd in een vergelijkend BRICs-perspectief is ontwikkeld. De resterende helft van het proefschrift kijkt naar het buitengewone patrimoniale Russisch kapitalisme, en richt zich erop het gedrag van de MKB en haar interactie met lokale overheidsdiensten op basis van inzichten die verkregen zijn middels diepte-interviews weer te geven.

Qua methode, combineert de dissertatie een historisch onderzoek met een statistieke analyse; een casus met een vergelijkend onderzoek; een macroanalyse van belangrijke instellingen in een politieke economie die draait op een *micro treatment* van zakelijke actoren; het gebruik van beschrijvende en verklarende benaderingen, evenals *deskresearch* en data verkregen uit persoonlijk veldonderzoek. Het tijdschema van de analyse begint bij de ineenstorting van het communisme eind 1991 en eindigt in 2014 – het jaar van de laatst beschikbare gegevens.

Kwalitatieve gegevens verkregen uit diepte-interviews vormen het empirisch fundament en bieden een methodologische bijdrage aan dit proefschrift. De interviews werden afgegeven tijdens het veldonderzoek wat in het voorjaar van 2014 in Rusland ondernomen is. Onder de 34 respondenten bevinden zich ondernemers, bedrijfsverenigingen, advocaten, academici en journalisten. Daarnaast zijn in deze studie *cross-sectoral* en *cross-national* kwantitatieve data gebruikt, evenals secundaire literatuur, krantenartikelen en historische analyses van collega-wetenschappers.

Hieronder volgt een overzicht van de belangrijkste bevindingen van de vier artikelen (hoofdstukken) van het proefschrift:

Hoofdstuk 1, getiteld ‘**Continuity and Change in Russian Capitalism**’ (gepubliceerd als hoofdstuk in een *edited volume*), is een historisch onderzoek naar de evolutie van Russische *state-business* relaties en kapitaal-arbeidsverhoudingen sinds de ineenstorting van de Sovjetunie langs drie dimensies. De politieke dimensie omvat de staatscapaciteit en de samenstelling van de dominante politieke elites; de juridische dimensie heeft betrekking op de rechtsstaat en de waarborging van privaat eigendom; en de economische dimensie beslaat het economisch staatsbeleid ten opzichte van het bedrijfsleven. Tegen de achtergrond van de ideaaltypische staatsgeleide, liberale en patrimoniale vormen van

kapitalisme bekeken, wordt duidelijk dat de belangrijkste verandering van richting in de Russische politieke economie uitgedrukt wordt in het proportionele aandeel van liberale en staatsgeleide elementen. Terwijl tussen 1992 en 2002 het Russisch kapitalisme grotendeels kan worden gekenmerkt als liberaal, verschuift die trend naar een uitgesproken staatsgeleide kapitalisme na 2003. De nationalisering van het Russisch kapitalisme uit zich in een gedeeltelijke toename van de staatscapaciteit, alsook in de overgang van liberale naar conservatieve politieke elites, en de gedeeltelijke nationalisering van de strategisch economische activa, wat ook gekoppeld is aan een algehele toename van de staatsbetrokkenheid in de economie en de bestaande arbeidsverhoudingen.

De belangrijkste continuïteit in de ontwikkeling van het Russisch kapitalisme bevindt zich in het aanhoudende patrimonialisme, wat zich manifesteert in de doordringende zwakte van de rechtsstaat; in de onverbiddelijke corruptie, in de gedeeltelijke fusie van de staat en het bedrijfsleven en in de ontplooiing van de informele verhoudingen tussen de staat en het bedrijfsleven en de kapitaal-arbeidsrelaties – wat aanvankelijke allemaal in strijd was met de formele regelgeving omtrent dit soort betrekkingen. Een ander opmerkelijk kenmerk van het Russisch patrimonialisme is te vinden in de informele bureaucratische controle van het privaateigendom (genaamd ‘power-ownership’), en de van daaruit onttrokken zogenoemde administrative rents, wat nader wordt onderzocht in de volgende hoofdstukken. Dit hoofdstuk geeft geen antwoord op de reikwijdte van het Russisch patrimonialisme, de uiteindelijke verschillen tussen de jaren negentig en het nieuwe millennium, of haar mechanismen, aangezien deze in de komende hoofdstukken van deze dissertatie aan de orde komen.

Hoofdstuk 2, getiteld ‘Russia’s political economy re-conceptualised: a changing hybrid of liberalism, statism and patrimonialism’ (gepubliceerd in co-auteurschap met Uwe Becker in het *Journal of Eurasian Studies*), is een onderzoek naar de evolutie van het Russisch kapitalisme in vergelijkend BRICs-perspectief. Het is gebaseerd op een analyse van zowel historische als statistische data, en geeft antwoord op de vragen die in het voorgaande hoofdstuk open zijn gebleven. Het benadert, in het bijzonder, de reikwijdte van het Russisch

patrimonialisme en hoe deze zich ontwikkelde in de jaren negentig en in het eerste decennium van de eenentwintigste eeuw.

Dit hoofdstuk legt een conceptueel kader voor met de bedoeling de invloed van het patrimonialisme op het landelijke veranderingstraject te evalueren, door het patrimonialisme systematisch als een derde dimensie toe te voegen aan het beter bekende liberalisme en statisme. In dit hoofdstuk wordt het Russisch veranderingstraject geconceptualiseerd ten opzichte van ideaaltypische liberalisme, statisme en patrimonialisme. De belangrijkste bevindingen van het eerste historische gedeelte van dit hoofdstuk is dat het Russisch patrimonialisme de opkomst van het economisch gefaciliteerde staatscapaciteit belemmerde, en zowel de liberalisering in de jaren negentig als de her-nationalisering na 2000 ondermijnde. Het tweede gedeelte geeft een kwantitatieve evaluatie van deze ontwikkelingen die gebaseerd zijn op statistieke data, en voegt een vergelijkend BRICs-perspectief toe aan de analyse, die de eigenaardigheid van de Russische ontwikkeling verduidelijkt. De onderzoeks-data bevestigen de de-liberalisering van Rusland en vertonen een toename van patrimonialistische gebruiken in het eerste decennium van de eenentwintigste eeuw ten opzichte van het decennium ervoor. Een volgende bevinding is dat Rusland het enige BRIC-land was dat de-liberaliseerde en steeg in niveau van patrimonialisme in de onderzochte periode.

De overige twee hoofdstukken van het proefschrift richten zich op de Russische casus en haar staatsgeleide patrimoniale versie van het kapitalisme, met de bedoeling haar werkwijze en haar origine – door zich op de economische activiteiten van het MKB te concentreren – nader te belichten. **Hoofdstuk 3**, getiteld ‘**Trapped in informality: The big role of small firms in Russia’s statist-patrimonial capitalism**’ (gepubliceerd in *New Political Economy*), omvat een studie naar de werking van het Russisch kapitalisme en de mechanismen die haar stabiel houden. Het beantwoordt een volgende vraag die in het eerste hoofdstuk open is gebleven, namelijk wat de mechanismen achter het Russisch patrimonialisme zijn en welke factoren en omstandigheden de bureaucraten in staat stellen om onder hun indirecte controle *administrative rents* uit privaat eigendom te halen.

Terwijl de voornaamste toelichtingen zich richten op het gebrek aan institutionele beperkingen om staatspredatie te verklaren, wordt in dit hoofdstuk de veerkracht en handhaving van het Russisch staatsgeleide patrimoniale kapitalisme uitgelegd door middel van de vaak nagelaten bijdrage van het MKB nader te onderzoeken. Op basis van statistieke data, blijkt in dit hoofdstuk dat de MKB-sector, ondanks de toenemende staatspredatie, gestaag steeg in het eerste decennium van de eenentwintigste eeuw, waaruit kan worden opgemaakt dat het MKB niet alleen aan de werking van de staat onderworpen is. Uit diepte-interviews met Russische ondernemers blijkt verder dat het bedrijfsleven een bijdrage levert aan de handhaving en het functioneren van het staatsgeleide patrimonialisme door middel van het ‘*informality trap*’-mechanisme: bedrijven die voor een informele strategie kiezen, vinden het moeilijk om terug te keren naar de juridische sfeer en blijven vervolgens vastzitten in de informele economie.

In dit hoofdstuk wordt geconcludeerd dat de bestuurders die de informaliteit aansturen de institutionele beperkingen omvatten, zoals over-regulatie en bureaucratische afpersing, wat betekent dat het een machtsbron aan de kant van de overheid representeert, en waarmee bedrijven gedwongen kunnen worden voor informeel gedrag te kiezen. Informaliteit wordt echter ook aangedreven door enkele bedrijfsspecifieke factoren. Ten eerste, afhankelijk van de bedrijfskenmerken (zoals omvang en sector), kan een kleine onderneming geprikkeld worden tot informeel gedrag. Ten tweede, sociaal-culturele factoren, ook wel 'normaliteit van informaliteit' genaamd, spelen in dit verband ook een rol: het beschouwen van formele zakelijke kosten en informele uitgaven zoals steekpenningen als vergelijkbare kosten, kan – om subjectieve redenen – sommige midden- en kleinbedrijven ertoe doen kiezen half werk te leveren in het naleven van wettelijke normen. Hoewel deze minimale machtsvorm om het systeem te ondermijnen deze bedrijven kan helpen in hun doen en laten en in de bescherming van hun belangen, heeft het vaak een onbedoeld langdurig negatief effect op de waarborging van privaat eigendomsrecht en kunnen deze bedrijven komen vast te zitten in informaliteit. Kortom, het ‘*informality trap*’-mechanisme markeert het agentschap van het MKB in de Russische politieke economie en hun bijdrage aan het functioneren ervan.

Tenslotte geeft hoofdstuk 4 een historische analyse van de oorsprong van het Russisch kapitalisme, getiteld ‘**Digging their own graves: how small companies contributed to the emergence of Russia’s statist-patrimonial capitalism**’ (in voorbereiding op indiening). Dit hoofdstuk traceert in historisch perspectief de verschillende redenen die ertoe hebben bijgedragen dat Russische bedrijven in de jaren negentig aan informele praktijken begonnen, en hoe ze, door in de daaropvolgende tien jaar in een ‘*informality trap*’ te vallen, de basis voor onzekere eigendomsrechten en de informele betrekkingen tussen de staat en het bedrijfsleven hebben helpen creëren.

De belangrijkste bevinding in dit hoofdstuk is dat het staatsgeleide patrimoniale kapitalisme niet alleen een resultaat is van een *topdown*-activiteit van een staatssoeverein, zijn corrupte actoren of trawanten in de *big business*, zoals dat in het algemeen gekenmerkt wordt, maar dat het systeem ook berust op een *bottom-up* activiteit van het leeuwendeel van economische actoren – het MKB. Het zijn grotendeels geen passieve slachtoffers van staatsbedreigingen op het privaat eigendomsrecht, maar hebben in veel gevallen juist bijgedragen aan de opkomst van dergelijke praktijken. Deze – vaak onbedoelde – bijdrage hangt samen met enkele informele business praktijken die door de midden- en kleinbedrijven ondernomen zijn en welke hun op de langere termijn in de ‘*informality trap*’ gevangen hebben gezet. Terug in de jaren negentig waren sommige van deze informele praktijken niet de enige opties van bedrijfsvoering, maar werd daar uit opportunistische redeneringen toch voor gekozen. Toen na 2000 de staat steeds machtiger werd, begon het informele gedrag van de MKB-sector averechts te werken, aangezien het corrupte staatsstelsel gebruik maakte van de gevestigde informaliteit en deze exploiteerde om de eigendomsrechten van vrijwel elke zakenman te schenden. Zo wordt de opkomst van het staatsgeleide patrimoniale kapitalisme in 2000 gekenmerkt door staatsbedreigingen op het private eigendomsrecht, welke mogelijk gemaakt – en feitelijk gefaciliteerd – is door o.a. de informele praktijken van zakelijke actoren in het voorafgaande decennium.

De belangrijkste bijdrage van deze dissertatie is tweeledig. In empirisch opzicht stelt het ons in staat beter te begrijpen hoe Rusland werkt, en waar haar politieke economie zich bevindt in vergelijking met de andere

BRIC-landen. Het suggereert ook waarom het Russisch staatsgeleide patrimoniale kapitalisme op haar eigen manier functioneert, en hoe het zover is gekomen. Een andere empirische bijdrage is de instrumentele suggestie voor het kwantificeren en vergelijken van de verschillende veranderingstrajecten in opkomende economieën, die ook buiten de BRIC-landen en in andere tijdvakken van toepassing zijn.

In conceptueel opzicht verfijnt dit proefschrift het *Varieties of Capitalism*-debat door systematisch een gedetailleerd onderzoek naar patrimonialisme erin op te nemen. De bevindingen in dit proefschrift bevestigen dat het patrimonialisme een veel belangrijker kenmerk is dan een incidenteel detail, zoals corruptie of een leemte in een bepaald type kapitalisme. In plaats daarvan moet het patrimonialisme gezien worden als een concurrerende logica van economische en sociale organisatie, zonder welke de politieke economieën buiten de OESO niet voldoende begrepen kunnen worden. Door de reproductie van het patrimonialisme in het Russisch voorbeeld te bestuderen, draagt dit proefschrift bij aan de kennis over de reproductie van instituties in het algemeen. Door de aandacht te vestigen op *bottom-up* praktijken die het patrimonialisme ontwikkelen en handhaven, spreken de bevindingen in dit proefschrift ook aan op het bredere *state-society* debat in de sociale wetenschappen.