

David Szakonyi

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs
George Washington University 2023-present
Affiliated Faculty, Advisory Board Member, Institute for Russian, European, and Eurasian Studies
Affiliated Faculty, Institute for International Economic Policy
Assistant Professor of Political Science 2016-2023

Co-Founder, Anti-Corruption Data Collective 2020-present

Co-Director, PONARS (Program on New Approaches to Research and Security in Eurasia) 2022-present

Research Fellow, International Center for the Study of Institutions and Development (ICSID)
Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia 2011-2022

Academy Scholar, Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies
Harvard University 2017-2018, 2019-20

EDUCATION

PhD, Political Science, Columbia University 2016

B.A., Political and Social Thought (High Distinction), University of Virginia 2006

RESEARCH

Books

Timothy Frye, Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi. *Workplace Politics: How Politicians and Employers Subvert Elections*, Oxford University Press, 2025

David Szakonyi. *Politics for Profit: Business, Elections, and Policymaking in Russia*, Cambridge University Press, 2020 (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

Based on dissertation awarded:

Finalist, Ronald Coase Best Dissertation Award, Society for Institutional & Organizational Economics
Winner, Robert C. Tucker/Stephen F. Cohen Dissertation Prize, Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies

Winner, Gabriel A. Almond Award for the Best Dissertation in Comparative Politics, American Political Science Association

Reviewed in: *Perspectives on Politics*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, *Governance*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Political Science Quarterly*, and *Slavic Review*

Trier, Tom, Hedvig Lohm, and David Szakonyi. *Under Siege: Inter-ethnic Relations in De Facto Abkhazia*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010

Reviewed in: *Slavic Review*, *Nationalities Papers*, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* and *Europe-Asia Studies*.

Published Articles

David Szakonyi. "Opposition Rule under Autocracy: Evidence from Russia." *American Journal of Political Science*, Early View, March 2025.

David Szakonyi. "Corruption and Cooptation in Autocracy: Evidence from Russia." *American Political Science Review*, 119(1), 402-419.

Michael Best, Jonas Hjort, and David Szakonyi. 2023. "Individuals and Organizations as Sources of State Effectiveness." *American Economic Review*, 113(8), 2127-67.

David Szakonyi. 2022. "Candidate Filtering: The Strategic Use of Electoral Manipulations in Russia." *British Journal of Political Science*, 52(2), 649-670.

David Szakonyi. 2022. "Indecent Disclosures: Anti-Corruption Reforms and Political Selection." *American Journal of Political Science*, 67(3), 503-519.

Ora John Reuter and David Szakonyi. 2021. "Electoral Manipulation and Regime Support: Survey Evidence from Russia." *World Politics*, 73(2), 275-314.

David Szakonyi. 2021. "Private Sector Policymaking: Business Background and Politicians Behavior in Office." *Journal of Politics*, 83(1), 260-276.

Timothy Frye, Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi. 2019. "Vote Brokers, Clientelist Appeals, and Voter Turnout: Evidence from Russia and Venezuela." *World Politics* 71(4), 710-746.

David Szakonyi. 2019. "Princelings in the Private Sector: The Value of Nepotism." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 14(4), 349-381.

Ora John Reuter and David Szakonyi. 2019. "Elite Defection under Autocracy: Evidence from Russia." *American Political Science Review* 113(2), 552-568.

David Szakonyi. 2018. "Businesspeople in Elected Office: Identifying Private Benefits from Firm-Level Returns." *American Political Science Review*. 112 (2), 322-338.

Timothy Frye, Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi. 2018. "Hitting Them with Carrots: Voter Intimidation and Vote Buying In Russia." *British Journal of Political Science*. 49 (3), 857-881.

Ora John Reuter and David Szakonyi. 2015. "Online Social Media and Political Awareness in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes." *British Journal of Political Science*, 45 (01), 29-51.

Timothy Frye, Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi. 2014. "Political Machines at Work: Voter Mobilization and Electoral Subversion in the Workplace." *World Politics*, 66 (2): 195-228.

David Szakonyi and Johannes Urpelainen. 2014. "Who Benefits From Economic Reform? Firms and Distributive Politics." *Journal of Politics*, 76 (03), 841-858.

David Szakonyi and Johannes Urpelainen. 2014. "Veto Players and the Value of Political Control: A Theory with Evidence From Energy Privatization." *Comparative Political Studies*, 47 (10), 1384-1415.

Under Review

David Szakonyi. "The Technocrats: Competent Loyalists and Authoritarian Rule." Book Manuscript.

Florian Hollenbach and David Szakonyi. "The Political Consequences of Private Equity: Evidence from U.S.

Leveraged Buyouts”

Matthew Collin, Florian Hollenbach, and David Szakonyi. “The End of Londongrad? The Impact of Beneficial Ownership Transparency on Offshore Investment in UK Property”

Yunus Orhan, Ora John Reuter, Bryn Rosenfeld, and David Szakonyi. “Polarization and Support for Undemocratic Behavior: The Case of Russia”

Work in Progress

Polina Protozanova and David Szakonyi. “Educating the Opposition: Elite Universities in Authoritarian Russia.”

David Szakonyi and Jordan Gans-Morse. “Corruption and Property Rights in Russia: Evidence from the Arbitration Court System.”

Evgeny Finkel and David Szakonyi. “Flying with the Stars: Performance, Loyalty, and Awards in the Soviet Air Force during WWII.”

Matthew Collin, Florian Hollenbach, and David Szakonyi. “The Impact of Beneficial Ownership Transparency on Illicit Purchases of US Property”

Book Chapters

David Szakonyi. “Authoritarian Bureaucracy” in Anne Wolf (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Authoritarian Politics*, Oxford University Press, 2024.

David Szakonyi. “Authoritarian Mechanics” in Henry E. Hale, Juliet Johnson, and Tomila Lankina (eds.), *Developments in Russian Politics 10*, Bloomsbury Academic. 2024.

David Szakonyi. “Corruption Risks Within Sovereign Wealth Funds” in Jodi Vittori and Lakshmi Kumar (eds.), *Sovereign Wealth Funds: Corruption and Other Governance Risks*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024.

Ora John Reuter and David Szakonyi. 2022. “Party Politics and Voting in Russia” in Suzanne Wengle (ed.), *Russian Politics Today: Stability and Fragility*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 56-80.

Policy Reports and Other Publications

Anti-Corruption Investigations (through Anti-Corruption Data Collective)

Florian Hollenbach, Michael Hornsby, John Dell’Osso, and David Szakonyi “Inside the Congo Hold-Up: How a Captured Bank Enabled Grand Corruption” *PPLAAF* and *Anti-Corruption Data Collective*, July 10, 2025

Louis Goddard, Florian Hollenbach, Michael Hornsby, Sam Leon, and David Szakonyi “COP Co-Opted?: How Corruption and Undue Influence Threaten Multilateral Climate Action” *Transparency International* and *Anti-Corruption Data Collective*, October 31, 2024

Cited in: *AFP*, *OCCRP*

Sara Brimbeuf, Mara Martini, Florian Hollenbach and David Szakonyi “Behind a Wall: Investigating Company and Real Estate Ownership in France” *Transparency International* and *Anti-Corruption Data Collective*, July 5, 2023

Cited in: *Le Monde*, *OCCRP*

David Szakonyi (with Americans for Financial Reform and Public Citizen) “Public Money for Private Equity: Pandemic Relief Went to Companies Backed by Private Equity” *Anti-Corruption Data Collective*, September 15, 2021

Cited in: *NBC News*

David Szakonyi and Maira Martini. “In the Dark: Who is Behind Luxembourg’s 4.5 Trillion-euro Investment Fund Industry?” *Transparency International*, February 8, 2021

Cited in: *Reuters*, *Associated Press*, *OCCRP*, *Miami Herald*, *Daily Express*, *Sddeutsche Zeitung*, *Delano*, *Forbes*, *Finance.si*

Ben Wieder, Shirsho Dasgupta, Christina Saint Louis, and David Szakonyi, “A Felon, An Alleged Drug Dealer and a Comic: How Some Who May Be Ineligible Got PPP Loans.” *Miami Herald*, December 20, 2020

Casey Michel and David Szakonyi. “Americas Cultural Institutions Are Quietly Fueled by Russian Corruption.” *Foreign Policy*, October 30, 2020

Nick Schwellenbach and David Szakonyi. “Large Political Donations Came After Paycheck Protection Program Loans” *POGO Investigations*, November 17, 2020

Nick Schwellenbach and David Szakonyi. “How a Ukrainian Oligarch’s Companies Got Paycheck Protection Program Loans.” *POGO Investigations*, August 24, 2020. Cited in: *OCCRP*

Nick Schwellenbach and David Szakonyi. “Whistleblowers Said This Company Is a Fake Small Business. It Got a PPP Loan.” *POGO Investigations*, August 3, 2020

Cited in: *Washington Post*

Nick Schwellenbach and David Szakonyi. “Millions in PPP Loans Went to Chinese State-Owned Companies” *POGO Investigations*, July 23, 2020

Nick Schwellenbach and David Szakonyi. “Inside the Pandemic Cash Bonanza for Private Equity-Backed Firms” *Daily Beast*, July 15, 2020

Cited in: *Brookings Institution*

Russian Politics

“Why Russia’s Last Independent Election Monitor Mattered to the World.” *Moscow Times*, July 11, 2025

“Americas Oligarchs Could Be Even More Powerful Than Russias.” *Moscow Times*, December 13, 2024

“Corruption Hiding in Plain Sight.” *Russia.Post*, July 5, 2024

“War and Organized Corruption in Russia.” *Russia.Post*, October 25, 2022

“Russia may be about to invade Ukraine. Russians don’t want it to.” *Monkey Cage*, *Washington Post*, February 11, 2022 (with Henry E. Hale, Ora John Reuter, Bryn Rosenfeld, and Katerina Tertychnaya)

“Banking on Politics: How Russia’s Banking Sector Clean-Up Affects Regime Stability” *Point / Counter Point*, May 13, 2019

“Buyer Beware: Evaluating Russian Exports Under Sanctions and Stagnation” *PONARS Policy Memo*, #585, March 2019

“The Effects of State Capitalism on Russia’s Business Environment” *Baltic Rim Review*, #2, May 31, 2018

“Here’s What You Can Expect from Putin’s Next 6 Years” *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*, March 22, 2018 (with Noah Buckley-Farlee)

“What Another Six Years of Putin Spells for Russia’s Economy” *EurasiaNet*, March 11, 2018

“Why Did Trump Let the Russians Off the Hook?” *Newsweek*, February 11, 2018

“Governing Business: The State and Business in Russia” *Foreign Policy Research Institute’s Russia Political Economy Project*, January 2018, 1-32

“Why Russian Oligarchs Remain Loyal to Putin, *Moscow Times* , December 8, 2017

“Monopolies Rising: Consolidation in the Russian Economy” *PONARS Policy Memo*, #491, November 2017

“Sanctions”, *Russian Analytical Digest*, #205, July 2017

“New Rules, New Members, Same Results? A Look at the New Russian Duma” *Wilson Center Cable*, #22, May 2017

“State Duma Elections in Crimea”, *Russian Analytical Digest*, #203. May 2017

“Here’s What a Study of Russian Business Leaders in Politics can Tell Us About Donald Trump” *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*, September 26, 2016

“Putin Is Still Standing” *Foreign Affairs*, July 26, 2016.

“In Russia, the Political Impact of Social Media Varies by Platform” *Monkey Cage, Washington Post*, December 31, 2014. (with Ora John Reuter)

Book Reviews

“Russia Resurrected: Its Power and Purpose in a New Global Order“ by Kathryn E. Stoner, *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 138, Issue 1, Spring 2023, Pages 9596

“Billionaires and Stealth Politics by Benjamin I. Page, Jason Seawright and Matthew J. Lacombe.” *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 134, No. 4, Winter 2019-2020.

“Constructing the Post-Soviet Economic Order: A Review of Economic Liberalism and Its Rivals by Keith Darden.” *Journal of International Affairs*, Volume 63, No. 2, Spring 2010.

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

University Facilitating Fund, GWU, \$15,215	2025
National Research Competition, NCEEER, \$15,921	2024
Anti-Corruption Evidence, UK Aid, \$258,913	2023-2026
University Facilitating Fund, GWU, \$19,995	2022
National Science Foundation, Research Grant (with Henry Hale, John Reuter, Bryn Rosenfeld, and Katya Tertychnaya), \$339,122	2021-2023
GW-CIBER Grant, \$14,685	2020-2021
National Research Competition, NCEEER, \$9,000	2020
University Facilitating Fund, GWU, \$24,349	2020
University Facilitating Fund, GWU, \$19,291	2018
GWIPP Policy Scholar, GWU, \$11,000	2018
National Science Foundation, Research Grant, \$410,191 (with Timothy Frye and Ora John Reuter)	

“Political Machines at Work: Voter Mobilization and Electoral Subversion in the Workplace”	2014-2017
Mellon Interdisciplinary Graduate Fellowship, Interdisciplinary Center for Innovative Theory and Empirics (INCITE), Columbia University	2014-2016
International Growth Centre, Bihar Office, \$50,000 (with Johannes Urpelainen)	
“The Benefits of Solar Technology Adoption for Street Vendors in Bihar”	2014-2015
CIBER Summer Research Grant, \$3,500	2014
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship	2011-2014
SSRC Eurasia Program Pre-Dissertation Award, \$2,500	2012
Harriman Institute / Pepsico Fellowship for Research Travel, \$3,000	2010, 2011, 2012
Center for the Study of Development Strategies Summer Research Grant, \$2,500	2010
Jefferson Scholarship (full merit scholarship), University of Virginia	2002

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talks

2026 (scheduled) - MIT, University of Pennsylvania, ITAM ; 2025 - Vanderbilt University, US State Department, Norwegian Institute for International Affairs, University of Oslo / WhoGov Workshop Keynote, Center for Strategic and International Studies; 2024 - Cornell University; 2023 - University of Toronto, Freie Universität Berlin, Northwestern University; 2022 - University of California-Berkeley, Temple University, Essec Business School; 2021 - Bank of Finland, World Bank (2), SRC, National Intelligence Council, WZB-IPI, PONARS, PPSW ; 2020 - Oxford University ; 2019 - University of Wisconsin-Madison, NYU Shanghai, University of Maryland; 2019 - University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen Business School ; 2018 - NYU, University of Colorado - Boulder, USC - Moore School of Business, Higher School of Economics, Northwestern University, IADB ; 2017 - PONARS New Voices in Russian Politics, Oxford University ; 2015 - Higher School of Economics ; 2013 - Perm State University ; 2012 - New Economics School

Conferences

American Political Science Association Annual Conference (2011-2021, 2024); ASEEEES Annual Conference (2011-2022, 2024-2025); Annual ICSID Conference, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia (2011-2021); Strategy and the Business Environment Conference (2016); Ronald Coase Institute Workshop on Institutional Analysis (2013); Academy of Management Annual Conference (2015, 2016); European Political Science Association (2017, 2019, 2023, 2025); Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference (2018-2022); Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference (2013, 2014, 2023, 2024); Western Political Science Association Annual Conference (2018, 2019); BASEEES Annual Conference (2017, 2018); European Public Choice Society Annual Meeting (2017)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Editorial Boards

<i>American Journal of Political Science</i>	2023-
<i>Nationalities Papers</i>	2018-

Reviewer

American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, World Politics, British Journal of Political Science, Comparative Political Studies, Comparative Politics, Quarterly Journal of Political Science, Economics and Politics, European Journal of International Relations, Party Politics, Problems of Post-Communism, Post-Soviet Affairs, Public Choice, Economic Systems, Business and Politics, Acta Politics, Journal of Comparative Economics, Political Research Quarterly, PLOS ONE, Demokratizatsiya, Governance, Journal of Law and Economics, Journal of Public Policy, Public Integrity, Perspectives on Politics, Journal of Public Economics, Swiss Political Science Review, European Political Science Review, Journal of Experimental Political Science, West European Politics, World Development, Legislative Studies Quarterly, Research and Politics, Political Science Research and Methods, Journal of

Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, International Political Science Review, European Political Science Review, Cambridge University Press, University of Michigan Press

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Member (Executive Board, 2020-), Program on New Approaches to Research and Security in Eurasia (PONARS).	2017-present
Member of Advisory Board, Envest Microfinance Loan Fund.	2008-present
Compass Volunteer.	2017-2019
Research Associate, National Endowment for Democracy.	2008-2009
Evaluation Officer, Association of Scientific and Technical Intelligensia, Khujand, Tajikistan	2008
Program Manager, European Center for Minority Issues, Tbilisi, Georgia	2007-2008
Research Assistant, SOVA Center, Moscow, Russia	2006-2007

TEACHING AND ADVISING

Classes Taught:

Craft of Political Inquiry
Money and Influence Around the World
Russian Politics
Russian Underground Economy
Russian Financial System and Cryptocurrency
Theories of Comparative Politics
Comparative Political Economy

PhD Students Advised:

Samuel Frantz, GWU (US Department of State)
Elizabeth Meehan, GWU (American Political Science Association)
Silvia Nitsova, UNC (University of Manchester, postdoc)
Aparna Ravi, GWU (University College London, tenure-track)

OTHER SKILLS

Languages:	Russian - Professional Fluency, Spanish - Beginner
Analytical:	R, ArcGIS, Python, SQL, STATA, MongoDB, HTML
Field Research Experience:	Russia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, India