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Andrei P. Tsygankov
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Russia and the West from Alexander to Putin

Honor in International Relations

Since Russia has reemerged as a global power, its foreign policies have come under close scrutiny. In *Russia and the West from Alexander to Putin*, Andrei P. Tsygankov identifies honor as the key concept by which Russia's international relations are determined. He argues that Russia's interests in acquiring power, security, and welfare are filtered through this cultural belief and that different conceptions of honor provide an organizing framework that produces policies of cooperation, defensiveness, and assertiveness in relation to the West. Using ten case studies spanning a period from the early nineteenth century to the present day – including the Holy Alliance, the Triple Entente, and the Russia–Georgia war – Tsygankov's theory suggests that when Russia perceives its sense of honor to be recognized, it cooperates with the Western nations; without such a recognition it pursues independent policies either defensively or assertively.

ANDREI P. TSYGANKOV is Professor of International Relations and Political Science at San Francisco State University.

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"In the life of states just as in that of private individuals there are moments when one must forget all but the defense of his honor."

Tsar Alexander II,
as cited in Wohlforth, "Honor as Interest"

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Preface

This book grew out of my desire to develop the argument I introduced in the textbook *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), which covers Russia's international behavior from Mikhail Gorbachev to Vladimir Putin. Encouraging reactions from colleagues, students, and members of the policy community, augmented by my own curiosity about Russian history, prompted me to refine my theory by testing it against a longer range of historical cases.

The result is a book with an explicitly developed theory of Russian-Western relations across two centuries and one that is centered on the concept of national honor. Rather than narrowly associating honor with international prestige or reputation, as some international relations theories do, I have tried to uncover what Russians themselves understand to be their honor and honorable foreign policy. I have found that Russia's idea of honor, although continuing to shape the country's foreign policy, reaches back to the premodern era and predates the system of nation-states. Because Russia's behavior originates from a culturally distinct source, its foreign policy has meaning that differs from that of other members of the international system. By studying such meaning, we have an opportunity to develop a rich understanding of a particular policy's source and future direction.

Through personal correspondence and conversations and through reading portions of this book, many friends and colleagues have contributed their support and ideas for improvement. Among them, I should like to especially mention Sanjoy Banerjee, David Foglesong, Pavel Tsygankov, and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist. For financial support, I wish to thank IREX and San Francisco State University, which provided me with summer grants to conduct library-based research and interviews with Russian experts. Furthermore, I thank my students for their interest and feedback. I alone am responsible for the book's content and the remaining errors.

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Parts of several chapters draw on my previously published book *Russia's Foreign Policy* and the article "Dueling Honors: Power, Identity and the Russia-Georgia Divide" (co-authored with Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist), *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 5, no. 4 (2009). I thank the publishers for permission to use these materials in the book.

At Cambridge University Press, I am especially grateful to John Haslam for his steady support of the project and valuable editorial suggestions. Comments and constructive criticisms by anonymous reviewers have assisted me in improving the book, and I hope the final version will satisfy some of their expectations.

Finally, I owe a special debt to my family for their love and support. I dedicate this book to my son Pasha who at the age of eight is beginning to express interest in the country from which his family originates. Pasha wanted me to write a book "about good Russian tsars." Although this book will be only partly satisfactory on that account, I hope that it is a step in the right direction.

In transliterating names from Russian, I have used "y" to denote "ы"; "'" to denote "ь" and "ъ"; "yu" to denote "ю"; "ya" to denote "я"; "i" to denote "й" and "ий"; "iyi" to denote double "и"; "e" to denote "э"; "kh" to denote "х"; "zh" to denote "ж"; "ts" to denote "ц"; "ch" to denote "ч"; "sh" to denote "ш"; and "sch" to denote "щ." I have also used "Ye" to distinguish the sound of "e" (such as "Yevropa") in the beginning of a word from that in the middle of a word (such as "vneshnei"). Everywhere, I did not distinguish between "e" and "ë." Spelling is retained in quotations.

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