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**Academic Centers for Eastern and Russian Studies in the
United States in the Context of the Role of the Centre for East
European Studies at the University of Warsaw**

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper aims to highlight the significance of the SEW UW - Centre of East European Studies in the context of the pivotal academic hubs for Eastern studies in the United States. The article also provides a comprehensive review of United States academic institutions with Eastern and Russian Studies.

Materials and Methods: The article adopted inductive reasoning. The concept of the study was to bring a general notion that represents important aspects of the Sovietological expertise in academia, both in North America and in Central Europe. Such a research goal is intriguing and important in light of the Kremlin's ambition to restore the former empire within the borders of the Soviet Union. There are tangible changes in international law and international relations already, including contemporary rapid expansion of NATO, and highlighting the importance of

accession to the Alliance in the nineties for Central European countries from the former Soviet sphere of influence.

Findings: The inductive reasoning shows patterns of regularity and a broad scope of research on analyzed topics. It also demonstrates the importance of the field of study and the expertise at the University of Warsaw.

Unique Contribution to theory practice and policy: The study aims to contribute to theory, practice, and policy regarding current rapid developments in international law and international relations. It is connected with the increasing threats of potential World War III¹.

Keywords: *East Europe, East European studies, academic centers, Sovietology, WWII threat*

JEL classifications: K, O, Y

INTRODUCTION

Academic centers play a significant role in shaping public opinion, influencing foreign policy discussions, and affecting policymakers, thereby shaping the knowledge and perception of the Eastern European region and its affairs in the West.

Soviet Studies experienced stunning growth in the 1950s and 1960s. The United States government's funding increased after 1958, and scholarly exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union began. However, as America and American campus life underwent radical changes in the 1960s and 1970s, area-focused funding declined again, and Russia experts turned to engage more fully in their respective disciplines.

Some prominent contemporary examples include the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University², which focuses on interdisciplinary research and teaching about Russia and Eastern region, hosts lectures, seminars, and conferences on regional issues, and the Harriman Institute at Columbia University³, one of the oldest and most prominent institutions dedicated to Russian, Eurasian, and East European studies. The University of Michigan: Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (REEE)⁴ offers degrees, language programs, and cultural programming, and research regional politics, history, and cultures. University of California, Berkeley Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies⁵, which focuses on language, culture, and political studies related to the region. Ivy League Stanford University's Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies offers academic programs and supports regional research initiatives.

These centers often collaborate with diplomatic, cultural, and academic organizations, providing resources for students, scholars, and policymakers focused on or simply interested in Eastern European and Russian affairs. Most of those U.S. centers provide undergraduate and graduate programs.

What is visible is that most of those centers are focusing on Russian affairs. The Central and Eastern European focus is the next.

Examples of Influence from DE

How important is the influence of academia, with Sovietological hubs and media, one can take the historic NATO expansion on Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in 1999⁶

Historically, Russia was the main and biggest threat to the security in the region. The war in Ukraine since February 2022 is a strong indicator of possible confrontation with other countries in the area, including NATO members. The governments of Sweden and Finland, the newest members of the Alliance (2023 and 2024 respectively)⁷, openly stated that their rapid decision to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was based on the increasing threat from the Kremlin⁸.

The President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczynski, in a landmark speech to the international community in Tbilisi in 2015⁹, after Moscow attacked Georgia, warned that Russia would not stop in Georgia and Ukraine. Kremlin would attack NATO countries, including Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and eventually Poland.

"What I want to tell you and tell our friends from our shared European Union is that the Central Europe, Georgia and our whole region is going to have say, that we are a subject. And we also realize all too well that what has befallen Georgia today may befall Ukraine tomorrow, the Baltic States a day after, and then perhaps also my own country: Poland. We were deeply convinced that the membership of NATO and the EU would put an end to Russian appetites. It turned out that it did not"¹⁰. Thus, NATO's membership and efforts to join the Alliance are

directly connected to the paper's hypothesis about the role of academia and its Sovietological centers, as forefront hubs in this matter.

In line with the Polish President's warning is Andrey Kolesnikov's analysis on Moscow. He underlined the long-term plan and vision authorities at the Kremlin: "*The Russian world is Ancient Rus, the Kingdom of Muscovy, the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and modern Russia, which is restoring, strengthening, and multiplying its sovereignty as a world power*"¹¹.

That's why Central European countries considered NATO membership as protection against potential Russian plans, and that's why Sovietological centers and their influence in society, including politics and media, also played a crucial role in the Alliance's expansion.

The President of the Republic of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski (1995-2005), underlined that one of the main obstacles to Poland joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was strong opposition from the New York Times¹². Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the United States, Jerzy Koźminski (1994-2000), emphasized that among opinion-forming centers and figures are indeed academic, university circles and Sovietological centers, as experts on international affairs¹³.

Along with it, crucial was also the mobilization of Polish Americans, especially in the First State, Delaware. The unique relationship between U.S. elected representatives, especially young politician Joseph Robinette Biden Jr., future President of the United States, and members of the Polish American community in the state of Delaware, along with the influence of academia, helped bring Poland, along with its neighbors, to join NATO¹⁴.

Many Polish organizations operated in the First State in harmony and the spirit of cooperation, such as AmPol. (Cultural Association of Americans of Polish Descent), the Polish Library Association, sports societies, Sokoly, the Paderewski Society, the St. Stanislaus Society, the Pulaski Legion, the Captain Mlotkowski Brigade, the Polish Veterans Association. Some of these organizations still operate today, although not on the same grand scale as they did decades ago. AmPol was the most prestigious, associating the elites of Polonia, including lawyers, doctors, businessmen, scientists, and influencing universities in Delaware. The relationship was extraordinary, due in part to the nature and character of Polish immigrants and their adaptation to the new homeland. One of the features evident in the joint actions of the Polonia in Delaware was reconciliation and a sense of a strong community acting together and effectively. It led to the moving of proverbial mountains in American politics in favor of Poland, which is especially important in terms of contemporary security and international law guarantees, and is an inspiring example of migrants' smooth assimilation in the United States.

The most significant political achievement of Polish Americans from Delaware was persuading Senator Biden, who had been reluctant to expand NATO to include Poland, in the second half of the 1990s¹⁵.

He was an influential member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the decision of the entire House to agree to the expansion of the Pact depended on his attitude. The Delaware Polonia was so determined and effective that Biden¹⁶ went from being Poland's opponent in NATO to being one of its most ardent supporters¹⁷. Polish Americans from Delaware¹⁸ paved the way for NATO membership in other Central European countries, including the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Baltic states¹⁹.

Thus, when analyzing the influential role of higher education Sovietological centers, one should consider a broad spectrum of entities that shape public and policymakers' opinions, influenced by the higher education institutions.

Casualties of Kremlin

U.S. universities endeavor to foster a deeper and more informed understanding of Eastern Europe and Russia, benefiting both their students and the broader public.

Academic institutions usually strive for a balanced and objective approach to studying the region, while also acknowledging the complex geopolitical landscape and challenges related to academic freedom and access to information. Carol J. Williams, a retired foreign correspondent with 30 years of reporting abroad for the Los Angeles Times and Associated Press, emphasizes that the unprovoked Russian military attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022²⁰, significantly affected the condition of Russian studies at American universities. *Among the casualties of Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine are Russian studies programs at universities across the United States where scholars are losing access, funding and interest in gaining the expertise needed to guide U.S. foreign policy in the future*²¹.

According to Professor Theodore P. Gerber, the director of the Wisconsin Russia Project²², the Russian invasion has a “very negative” impact on their studies and access to the information necessary to conduct research.

Within Russia, the invasion of Ukraine has been followed by massive repression of dissent, a devastating exodus of scholars and other highly educated professionals, and a retreat into a world defined by state propaganda, with economic, educational, and cultural ties to the West all but completely severed²³.

As stated by Gerber²⁴, Russian studies at American Universities already faced several external challenges and unfavorable long-term trends, long before the Russian attack in February 2022. The impact of external challenges confronting the field, as well as long-term trends, is evident²⁵.

Heightened tensions between Russia and the United States, which, already strained in the aftermath of the 2011 Duma elections and ensuing protests in Russia, have been escalating sharply since Russia seized Crimea in 2014²⁶, were accompanied by a concerted crackdown on civic and academic freedom within Russia. These two factors, combined, raise barriers to collaboration between US- and Russia-based researchers, pose growing limitations on US-based scholars' access to sources of historical and contemporary data within Russia, and polarize discussions of Russia in policy and public opinion circles. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its shutdowns, travel restrictions, and vaccine nationalism, added more obstacles. Such challenges developed at a time when the broad field was already grappling with declining enrollments in Russian language courses, and a tendency for scholars to move away from researching²⁷.

It is noted steady academic decline (2017-2022) in interest for Russian studies at American Universities, including the intake of students interested in Russia into PhD, programs in the disciplines, numbers of Russia-focused PhDs supervised, numbers of faculty with Russia expertise, the average quantity of publications about Russia, the average number of briefings of policymakers, and the number of research trips to Russia²⁸. Researchers on Russia showed a greater tendency to move away from than toward research on this country throughout their careers, and this tendency is increasing²⁹. This shifting process is partially due to the focus on other countries in the region.

Additionally, the invasion has sparked criticisms of Russian studies, highlighting a need for greater attention to the colonial and exploitative aspects of Russian history and the experiences of minority groups within Russia, according to the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS)³⁰.

Similar problems, as described regarding Russian studies, also affected other Eastern countries of interest in East European Studies. Prof. Todorova³¹ emphasized problems with interest in taking such specialized studies in the United States.

Concerns about the future of East European studies often originate outside academia, stemming from the real or perceived decline of Europe's relevance in U.S. foreign policy. However, as the region's complex history and contemporary politics seem to attest, it is highly unlikely that it will lose its strategic importance anytime soon. Therefore, the most important dimension of East European continued significance might be the normative one. Whither to/for whom? Who are the audiences that we are addressing and what is our responsibility to them? - questioning Prof. Hozic from the University of Florida³².

However, the opinions of such experts, particularly those from East European and Russian Programs at United States colleges, remain influential and active all around the country.

Higher education institutions have strong voices in geopolitical matters. President of the University of Washington-Madison Tommy Thomson, in a powerful statement issued a few days after Russia invaded Ukraine, said:

“My heart goes out to the people of Ukraine as they fight against Vladimir Putin’s invasion of their homeland. The University of Wisconsin System educates a handful of Ukrainian international students, and we will support them to the best of our ability during this time when their attention has undoubtedly turned toward concern for family and friends at home. We have also seen students, staff, and faculty from both Russia and Ukraine come together, as they did last week at UW-Madison, in solidarity against the invasion of Ukraine. Our students attend our universities not only for the world-class education that changes lives and builds careers, but also for the sense of purpose and community our universities foster. To those students who are struggling during this time, away from family and uncertain about their future, our counseling centers and other support services at every one of our 13 universities are positioned to help.”³³

The opinions of such experts, particularly those from East European and Russian Programs at United States colleges, remain strong and active all around the country.

Major Academic Centers

The following are major academic institutions in the United States that provide programs in East European and Russian studies. Notably, the study of Russia and Russian affairs is a priority in most programs. Eastern European affairs are usually the second focus of the study.

The Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center is home to a wide variety of programs for members of the university community and the general public designed to expand understanding of and promote knowledge about Russia, and the countries of Eastern and Central Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

Ivy League³⁴ universities (U.S. national university ranking):

1. Program in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies at Princeton University³⁵;
2. Davis Center for Russian & Eurasian Studies at Harvard University³⁶ and Ukrainian Research Institute (HURI) at Harvard University³⁷;
3. The Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at Yale University³⁸;
4. The Russian and East European Studies department at University of Pennsylvania³⁹;
5. The East European and Russian Studies at Cornell University⁴⁰;

6. The Department of Slavic Studies at Brown University (focuses on the study of Russian, Czech, and Polish cultures, literatures, and languages) ⁴¹;
7. Harriman Institute at Columbia University⁴² and East Central European Center at Columbia University⁴³;
8. East European, Eurasian, and Russian Studies at Dartmouth College⁴⁴;

Other Universities

The Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies at Stanford University⁴⁵;
The Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies at Georgetown University⁴⁶;
The Center for East European and Russian, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Chicago⁴⁷;
The Center for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies at the Ohio State University⁴⁸;
The Center for Russian, East European, & Eurasian Studies at the University of Kansas⁴⁹;
The Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies at the University of Michigan⁵⁰;
The Russian and East European Studies at Seton Hall University⁵¹;
The Russian and East European Languages and Literatures at Rutgers University⁵²;
The Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies (CSEES) at Duke University⁵³;
The Russian & Eastern European Studies at College of Holy Cross⁵⁴;
Russian and East European Studies at Union College⁵⁵;
Program in Russian and East European Studies at Lafayette College⁵⁶;
Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies at Middlebury College⁵⁷;
The Russian and East European Studies at Tufts University⁵⁸;
The Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies (CREEES) at the University of Texas at Austin⁵⁹;
Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies at University of Pittsburgh⁶⁰;
Program in Russian and East European Studies at University at Albany (State University of New York) ⁶¹;
Department of East European, Eurasian, and Russian Studies at Dartmouth⁶²;
East European and Russian Studies at the University of Cincinnati⁶³;
East European and Russian Studies Department at Washington and Lee University⁶⁴;
Center for East European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies (CEERES) at the University of Chicago⁶⁵;
Russian and East European Program Binghamton University (State University of New York) ⁶⁶;
Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia (CREECA) at University of Wisconsin-Madison⁶⁷ and Wisconsin Russia Project the UW-Madison⁶⁸;
Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies at University of California-Berkeley (UC Berkeley)⁶⁹;
The Center for European and Russian Studies (CERS) at University of California--Los Angeles (UCLA) ⁷⁰;

The Russian, East European and Eurasian Program (REEP) Binghamton University (State University of New York)⁷¹;

Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at Five College Consortium (Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, UMass Amherst)⁷²;

Russian, Eurasian, and Polish Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst⁷³;

Slavic & East European Studies at the Ohio State University⁷⁴;

The Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies (CSEES) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill⁷⁵;

East European and Eurasian Studies at Boston College⁷⁶;

East European Studies at the Pennsylvania State University⁷⁷;

Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (REEES) at the University of Oregon⁷⁸;

Russian and East European Studies (REEL) at Indiana University Bloomington⁷⁹;

Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign⁸⁰;

Graduate Interdisciplinary Program in Russian and East European Studies at Florida State University⁸¹;

The Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies Program (REEES) at Emory University⁸²;

Russian & East European Studies at University of Wisconsin Milwaukee⁸³;

The Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies (CSEES) at Duke University⁸⁴;

The Center for Russian, East European, & Eurasian Studies at the University of Kansas⁸⁵;

The Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies (CREEES) at University of Virginia⁸⁶;

Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies at the University of Washington Seattle⁸⁷;

Russian, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies at City University of New York (CUNY)⁸⁸.

Influential Centers

Considering the position and prestige of elite Ivy League higher education institutions as some of the most prestigious universities in the world, their programs play a significant role in shaping opinions about Russia and Eastern Europe.

Columbia University's Harriman Institute is the first academic center in the United States devoted to the interdisciplinary study of Russia and the Soviet Union. It was founded in 1946 as the Russian Institute with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation⁸⁹.

In 1992, following the collapse of the USSR, the Institute officially expanded its focus to encompass all the states of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and adopted the name of the Harriman Institute. In 1997, the Harriman and East Central European Institutes united to promote comparative scholarly knowledge and public understanding of the complex and changing politics, economies, societies, and cultures of the area between Germany and the Pacific Ocean. In 2017, the East Central European Center was officially integrated into the Harriman Institute and is now governed by two co-directors⁹⁰. The Institute administers the MA program in Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies⁹¹. The goal is to bring the next generation of regional specialists, who will continue to shape policy, fill leading academic positions, and challenge the accepted truths about how we study our rapidly changing world.

The interdisciplinary Russian Research Center (RRC)⁹² at Harvard University was founded in 1948 with the hopes that the social sciences could collectively address the pressing national need to understand the Cold War adversary. A grant from the Carnegie Corporation⁹³ provided seed money to create a center in which large-scale research projects on the USSR could be designed and carried out by scholars and a reserve army of graduate student affiliates. The Center's mission was to advance both pedagogical and policy objectives. While the RRC retained its convening power, scholars sought more and more to advance knowledge through disciplinary channels, working individually rather than on collective or interdisciplinary projects.

Michail Gorbachev's rise in power in 1985⁹⁴ changed the international landscape radically, including in higher education. The Solidarity movement contributed to the fall of communism not only in Poland but also in all the former Eastern Bloc countries. After Poland's peaceful transfer of power and peaceful revolution, the Berlin Wall fell. Within six years, the Soviet Union had ceased to exist. Interest in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe surged among academics, students, and the general public. Renamed the Kathryn W. and Shelby Cullom Davis Center upon receipt of a pledge from Kathryn Wasserman Davis, the Harvard University center became a nexus for lively discussions and research into once inaccessible archives and regions.

The modern Davis Center emphasizes that is strengthened by Harvard University's "academic firepower, comprising leading scholars, exceptional graduate students, and motivated undergraduates, as well as its over seventy years of history."⁹⁶

Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies at Stanford University in California offers a range of programs and resources related to the Eastern region. CREEES emphasized that it is a center of interdisciplinary intellectual exchange, a community of students, scholars, and practitioners, and a resource for anyone with a passion for all matters Russian, East European, and Eurasian. The "Committee for Russian, East European and Communist Studies" was designated in 1969 by Stanford University authorities and started serving as the Center for Russian and East European Studies. Thus, Stanford recognized the institutional structures that had emerged in the field over the preceding decades. CREEES' contemporary objectives include training an annual cohort of MA students in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, hosting renowned area specialists for guest teaching, lectures, and conferences, conducting endowed lecture series, seminars, and public events, promoting languages of the region, and supporting community outreach activities⁹⁷.

The Program in Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies at Princeton University was established in 1961. It promotes itself as "one of the world's leading centers for teaching and research in the Russian area".⁹⁸ Keeping pace with global developments, the program's geographic scope has expanded over the years. In addition to the history and geography of Russia, it includes Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

REEES also supports innovative research. Along with an annual interdisciplinary conference, Princeton Conjunction, the program organizes various workshops and seminars throughout the academic year. In addition, it holds monthly Kruzhok meetings that provide a forum for graduate students and faculty to discuss their work-in-progress and offer other experiences, such as film screenings and an array of speaker events open to the public⁹⁹.

The major in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (RSEE), administered by the Yale University's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, provides an interdisciplinary approach to the study of a broad region: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus, and central

Asia; Poland, Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and other areas in east central Europe, and the Balkans. Students majoring in RSEE concentrate exclusively on Russian Studies, or on East European or Eurasian Studies. The major is appropriate for students considering careers in international public policy, diplomacy, or business, and is also suited to students wishing to continue academic work.

East European and Russian Studies at Cornell University offers an interdisciplinary exploration of the cultural, historical, and linguistic richness of Eastern Europe and Russia. Students are invited to explore the diverse societies of these regions, engaging with topics ranging from literature, language (Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, and other) and history to contemporary political issues.

The Department of Slavic Studies at Brown University focuses on the study of Russian, Czech, and Polish cultures, literatures, and languages. Founded in 1947 by Edward J. Brown, one of the pioneers of Russian literary history in the United States, ours is one of the oldest Slavic departments in the country. Building on a strong tradition of academic excellence and teaching, in recent years the department has become fundamentally interdisciplinary.

The Russian and East European Studies Program (REESP) at Seton Hall University brings together faculty and students from various fields to pursue a common interest in the cultures, history, languages, and political institutions of Eastern and Central Europe, as well as the successor states to the USSR. Through the REESP Certificate Program, the University offers a rigorous and comprehensive liberal arts education, preparing our students for ongoing engagement with Russia, Eurasia, and Eastern Europe throughout their careers.

An interesting initiative is the Russian and East European Studies (REES) series at the University of Pittsburgh, established in 1984. Since then, REES series has expanded to encompass a diverse list of distinguished books from various disciplinary, ideological, and methodological perspectives on every aspect of the region's history, politics, society, economics, and culture. With the dissolution of old Cold War boundaries, the series has expanded its scope to include the German-speaking parts of Central Europe as a vital factor in the region. REES thus takes under its purview potentially everything from Aachen to Vladivostok, and from Tirana to Petersburg. REES is the home of many prize-winning books on the Eastern European region and Russia¹⁰⁰.

National Resource Center on Russian and East European Studies

In 2022, the Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies at Arizona State University was designated a National Resource Center by the U.S. Department of Education. Designation included \$1.9 million in program support. The four-year grant supports instruction, research, and public outreach in international studies and world affairs issues.

The grant also support the work of the center's Critical Languages Institute (CLI), established in 1991 the year marking the dissolution of the Soviet Union which provides intensive summer instruction in less commonly taught East European and Eurasian languages (e.g., Albanian, Armenian, Russian and Turkish) with the goal of building proficiency and intercultural competence. Since the Soviet Union's demise, American perceptions of the region have evolved slowly, and the center's staff and faculty have worked to offer insight and combat prejudice and disinformation on this part of the world¹⁰¹.

The Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia (CREECA) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison established the Wisconsin Russia Project. An initiative funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, the US-Russia Foundation, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison International Division. It is administered by the Center for Russia, East

Europe, and Central Asia (CREECA) at UW-Madison. The project builds on the already robust social science research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The goal of this initiative is to bring together academic departments, faculty, and scholars with social scientists from the Russian Federation, and to train social scientists who focus on Russia. It also aims to foster close collaborations and networks between social scientists from both countries.

ASEEES

The Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) is influential organization which consist of major American academic programs on East Europe, and Eurasia.

Since 1960, the Association has been housed at the University of Illinois (1960-1969), Ohio State University (1969-1981), Stanford University (1982-1995) and then Harvard University (1995-2010). The Association has been hosted by the University of Pittsburgh's University Center for International Studies since 2010¹⁰².

The Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies was founded in 1948 as the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS). The organization's precursors the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies (JCSS) and the American Slavic and East European Review (ASEER) were two entities already in the field. The JCSS a joint committee of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) supported scholarly conferences and publications, disbursed research and fellowship grants, and sponsored bibliographic and other projects. In 1938, the JCSS set up a subcommittee specifically for the review of Russian studies, whose chief activity was to prompt and finalize a proposal for a national professional organization.

Currently ASEEES has approximately 3,400 members, predominantly from the US while including a significant representation from Canada, Europe, Australia, and East Asia.

ASEEES influences academic discourse through its annual convention, which serves as an international forum for scholars, professionals, and graduate students to exchange research and information. It is an important place to share objectives, ideas, and influencing trends in East European and Eurasian affairs¹⁰³.

The Association demonstrates a robust commitment to diversity, sustains a well-established publication ecosystem, and exerts significant influence on academic discourse and policy in its field. ASEEES actively shapes academic discourse through both its publications and its high-profile annual conventions, which facilitate idea exchange across national and disciplinary lines. The organization supports diverse scholarly and professional endeavors: it offers grants, fellowships, mentoring, connecting graduate students and recent PhDs with non-academic professionals

ASEEES's chief publication is the peer-reviewed journal *Slavic Review*, which has global influence and a subscriber base of approximately 3,800. It also publishes *NewsNet*, a newsletter distributed five times a year to members, featuring professional news, field updates, conference calendars, and job postings

SEW UW - Centre for East European Studies

SEW UW - Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw is a leading academic center in Europe in the field of Eastern Studies. December 5, 2025, marked the 35th Anniversary of the establishment of the SEW UW.

Moreover, is rooted in the two most important European Sovietological centers established before World War II – the Eastern Europe Research Institute in Vilnius (1930-1939)¹⁰⁴ and the

Eastern Institute in Warsaw (1926-1939). The Eastern Institute is considered the oldest of its kind in the world¹⁰⁵. The inspiration for creation of the SEW was also Sovietological research conducted after WWII, which in the institutional sense focused exclusively on emigration, the Eastern Institute "Reduta" in London and the Literary Institute in Maisons Laffitte in France, founded and run by Jerzy Giedroyc.

The foundations from which the SEW grew include the underground Eastern Europe Institute, established in the autumn of 1983 by Jan Malicki,¹⁰⁶ highly respected authority on the region, and in democratic Poland advisor to the Polish governments, and Foreign Affairs Committee at the Polish Parliament¹⁰⁷ in cooperation with Jerzy Chmielewski, Stefan Rakowski and Jerzy Kumaniecki¹⁰⁸. However, due to the enormous difficulties resulting from its conspiratorial nature, especially after the arrest of its originator, this initiative was halted for several years.

The organizational and intellectual roots of the Eastern Europe Studies Center lie in the underground journal "Obóz"¹⁰⁹ founded by Jerzy Targalski in 1981, from the very beginning devoted, as its subtitle suggests, to "the problems of the nations of the communist camp", edited by a group of intellectuals in the 1980s.

Contemporary SEW UW is a vibrant academic research and teaching center with own scientific and scholarly and public policy influential publications: *Obóz*¹⁰⁹, *Bibliotheca Europae Orientalis series*¹¹⁰, *Eastern Review*¹¹⁰, *Pro Georgia. Journal of Kartvelological Studies*¹¹², *New Prometheus*¹¹³, *Warsaw East European Review*¹¹⁴, *Yearbook of the Center for Belarusian Studies*¹¹⁵, *Yearbook of the Center for Ukrainian Studies*¹¹⁶.

It offers study programs at the first and second cycle and postgraduate levels, and two Eastern Schools: Eastern Summer School and Eastern Winter School.

SEW is the organizer and the host of various prestigious international and national awards, government fellowships¹¹⁷, including those under the Patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland¹¹⁸.

Largest Program in Europe

The government-sponsored Konstanty Kalinowski Scholarship Program under the patronage of the Polish Prime Minister is the largest Program in Europe that helps young Belarusians unable to study in Belarus due to their political views.

The elections on 19 March 2006 in Belarus led to mass protests and, consequently, to large-scale arrests and mass repressions against opposition activists. The scholarship program was created in response to the immediate events in Belarus by the Polish government and the authorities of Polish higher education institutions. On 30 March 2006, Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz and Alaksandr Milinkievič¹¹⁹, representative of the United Democratic Forces of Belarus, as well as university rectors representing the Conference of Polish University Rectors (KRUP) and the Conference of Polish Academic School Rectors (KRASP), signed a Letter of Intent at the University of Warsaw. As a result, a previously unforeseen opportunity to educate new Belarusian elites in a democratic and European spirit was made possible at SEW UW¹²⁰.

In 2016, after 10 years of its activity, the Program was transformed into "Konstanty Kalinowski Scholarship Program II". The formula of the first version of the Program scholarship for full 5-year studies in Poland was changed into a 1-year stay for Belarusians who specialize in issues concerning broadly understood transformation. The Program has become more specialized.

The Tytus Filipowicz Award, created in 2018 on the 100th anniversary of the restoration of Poland's and Georgia's sovereignty. It is addressed to citizens of Armenia, Georgia, and

Azerbaijan and offers 2.5-monthly research stays at two Polish higher education institutions for candidates in the field of social sciences, exact sciences, economic sciences, technical sciences, and the humanities.

The main goal of SEW is to educate future specialists in the fields of Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans, and to coordinate numerous international scholarship programs, including government and scientific internships, scholarships for citizens of Poland and neighboring countries, as well international scientific conferences, like St. Gregory Peradze International Caucasus Conference¹²¹, Warsaw East European Conference¹²².

Since 2007 the Centre for East European Studies organized Polish Russian School under the patronage of Sokrates Starynkiewicz (1820-1902) a Russian general and President of Warsaw (1875-1892), with two monuments erected in his honor by the Poles themselves and Dmitry Filosofov (1872-1940) publicist, literary critic and political activist.

Every year, the School gathered approximately 20 participants young scholars from Russia and Poland interested in various fields of the humanities, history, and the present problems of the region.

The Polish Russian School was part of a broader project called Bilateral Schools¹²³. Their organization was the Centre's response to the need to educate future elites and leaders of social change, as well as leaders in the realms of science, culture, politics, the media, and civil society that are actively engaged in building a civil society in East European countries.

One of the unique values of the SEW UW, at the international level, is its scholars and researchers. They hold a special position of global significance and expertise. It is not only at a theoretical academic level, but with deep professional practice and experience in the field.

Among SEW UW prominent academics are two former presidential candidates in Belarus running against Lukashenko, leading European expert on Eastern Affairs (Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Baltic States) - Jan Malicki, dr.h.c. mutl., head of SEW UW, leading opposition leaders fighting for democratic Belarus, former Belarus Ambassadors to France, Cuba, Argentina, former and current Polish Ambassadors and Consuls Generals in Central and East European countries, including Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia, Czechia.

They are providing students and authorities with firsthand, in-depth knowledge and analysis at the highest standard levels. One of the eminent scholars who worked for SEW UW is Professor Adolf Juzwenko¹²⁴, a longtime distinguished Director of National Ossolinski Institute Foundation (Ossolineum)¹²⁵, one of the most important and oldest cultural institutions in Poland. It was founded in 1817.

SEW is a partner with the U.S. Fulbright Commission, hosting annually American intellectuals as recipients of the prestigious United States Scholar Program¹²⁶.

Notably, the Centre has signed separate bilateral agreements¹²⁷, including one with the oldest university in the world the University of Bologna (founded in 1088)¹²⁸, as well as Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, The Pázmány Péter Catholic University¹³⁰, Masaryk University¹³¹, University of Copenhagen¹³², the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences¹³³.

The SEW UW programs offer a broad spectrum of professional skills,

Equipping with necessary modern professional skills to work for the government, diplomatic service, international business and finance, law, media, science, teaching, nongovernmental organizations, and other aspects of global affairs with Eastern specialization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The paper aims to underline and contribute to the notion that the Sovietological centers may play a pivotal role in shaping policy and helping to make the right choice in the light of the protection of international law and strengthening international organizations responsible for keeping peace and security globally, e.g., the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Deep understanding of the region, its geopolitical conditions, may help to bring early solutions and prevent larger-scale tensions and international conflicts.

Academic Centers for Russian and Eastern Studies in the United States are specialized institutions affiliated with universities and colleges that focus on researching, teaching, and promoting understanding of the Eastern Region, including Eastern Europe and Russia, as well as the broader Eurasian region. These centers often offer academic programs, language instruction, cultural events, policy analysis, and government policy roadmaps.

There are number of prominent U.S. experts on region Padraic Kenney¹³⁹, Stephen Kotkin¹⁴⁰ Mark Kramer¹⁴¹, Anna Muller¹⁴², Neal Pease¹⁴³, Serhii Plokhyy¹⁴⁴, Antony Polonsky¹⁴⁵, Marci Shore¹⁴⁶, Timothy Snyder¹⁴⁷, Theodore Weeks¹⁴⁸, Larry Wolff¹⁴⁹, Geneviève Zubrzycki¹⁵⁰, who can shape public opinion towards the region and Russia.

Thus, Sovietological centers maintain a significant influence in society and internationally.

A comprehensive review of U.S. programs on East Europe and Russia shows, in the context of the traditional understanding of the role of the most influential global academic centers, a significant potential and value for the SEW UW Centre for East European Studies, built on the tradition of a preeminent East Institute the first of its kind in the world. Its scholars, broad scope of outreach, and variety of programs give it a leading role in the field.

The paper showed visionary efforts of local communities in the United States inspired by the Sovietological centers thought to expand Western protection (NATO) to post Soviet countries of East and Central Europe. The Alliance is considered a solid protector from Russia and its rebuilding efforts and aspirations.

Forward-looking recommendations for strengthening global collaboration, knowledge diplomacy, and regional scholarship:

Sovietological centers play a critical role in advancing scholarship on erstwhile Soviet regions and provide key platforms for dialogue and research on transregional issues.

Sovietological centers may act as diplomatic bridges, using their convening power and knowledge production to build international trust and cooperation. The concept of knowledge diplomacy involves leveraging higher education and research to strengthen international relations, international law, distinct from soft power or cultural diplomacy.

Potential strategic university alliances, such as higher education collaboration and partnerships between North American and Polish Sovietological centers, can support global engagement, aligning national interests with shared global aims, especially in preventing another potential global conflict.

These actions, rooted in the principles of knowledge diplomacy, position university-based Sovietological centers as key actors in building resilient, innovative approaches to worldwide scholarship and cooperation.

Recommendations

The study aims to contribute to theory, practice, and policy regarding current rapid developments in international law and international relations. It is connected with the increasing threats of potential World War III¹³⁴. The European Union's first-ever defense commissioner in June 2025 has issued a stark warning: the world's "most dangerous moment" could arrive as soon as 2027, when Russia and China may coordinate aggressive moves designed to overwhelm Western defenses. Andrius Kubilius, the European Union's Commissioner for Defense and Space¹³⁵, followed similar remarks made in July 2025 by U.S. Air Force Gen. Alexis Grynkewich Supreme Allied Commander Europe¹³⁶.

Both highlighted 2027 as a potential flashpoint year when simultaneous military actions by Moscow and Beijing could trigger World War III. Kubilius in Washington D.C. "The most dangerous moment can be in 2027, when both Russia and China will make these aggressive moves in a coordinated way¹³⁷". Head of the Main Military Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine (HUR) general Kyrylo Budanov warned on August 2, 2025, that if "NATO and the European Union continue pretending 'everything is fine' while Russia wages war, the very foundation of these alliances could fall apart".

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<https://www.president.pl/archive/news-archive-2000-2010/news-2008/president-of-rp-sets-off-to-visit-georgia,37405>
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- ¹² NATO Still Divides, New York Times, March 16, 1999, selecting letters with specific opinions, including the following, shows the political position of the NYT regarding NATO expansion and the President of the Republic of Poland's judgment on it. Editorials/Letters: Re "3 Fragments of Soviet Realm Joining NATO's Ranks Today" (front page, March 12): President Aleksandr Kwasniewski of Poland is cited as saying that NATO enlargement brings an end to a divided Europe. How could that be when Russia, Europe's largest country, is excluded? Anti-Russian analysts are quick to overlook the fact that Russia had inquired about membership in the alliance before Poland. *How would the Poles feel if Russia were to join NATO and Poland were left out?* Michael Averko, Malverne Park, N.Y., March 12, 1999

- ¹³ Lecture entitled Poland's Path to NATO – from the Perspective of the Polish Ambassador to Washington, delivered on October 2, 2019, during the ceremonial inauguration of the academic year at the Warsaw School of Economics. Speech has a paper written version published by the Warsaw School of Commerce, *Polish Road to NATO*, on October 17, 2019
- ¹⁴ P. Maciag, *Delaware: Extraordinary State of Polish American synergy. Selected Legal and Social Aspects of the Integration Phenomenon*, New York, Warsaw 2025. The completed journal paper ready for publication. It was presented at the World Conference of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America, Bialystok 2022.
- ¹⁵ Biden entered politics in 1970, running his first successful political campaign for the New Castle County Council in Delaware. He won by a very small margin, i.e. by a difference of two thousand ballots. It turned out that these were the votes of Americans of Polish origin from the polling station at the parish of St. Jadwiga (St. Hedwig) in the Polish district of Hedgeville in Wilmington - the largest city of Delaware. They were counted and forwarded to the election commission last. Both candidate Joe Biden and his campaign team were eagerly awaiting these results. The former president of the United States mentions two thousand votes of Polish voters in his autobiographical book "Promises to Keep". See more: Joe Biden, *Promises to Keep. On life and Politics*, (Random House, New York, 2007).
- ¹⁶ Biden in "Promises to Keep" "I made sure to make time in the schedule to drive over to the Democratic meeting places like the Polish Library to show the bosses there that I understood their neighborhoods; that Hedgeville and Browntown were just like Green Ridge in Scranton. It was easy to demonstrate that I felt at home at Mass at Saint Hedwig's and Saint Elizabeth's and that my family knew what it was to work for a living. When the esteemed boss of those Polish neighborhoods introduced me around like I was a member of the family "I likeably," they'd say I knew that was good". See more: Joe Biden, *Promises to Keep. On life and Politics*, (Random House, New York, 2007).
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- ¹⁸ Based Face-to face recorded interviews conducted during multiple research visits in Delaware in the span of 2023-2024
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- "After years of struggling for independence and sovereignty, the Polish people formally joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Let me assure you that we take responsibility for the security of each NATO member and for the interest of the entire alliance. Under those flags, waving in the wind, allow me to say: you can count on us. You can count on Poland.
- ²⁰ C. Todd Lopez, *Two Years in, Russia's War on Ukraine Continues to Pose Threat to Global Security*, U.S. Department of Defense News, Washington D.C. February 24, 2024

- ²¹ Carol J Williams- Post Alley/Seattle, November 12, 2023
- ²² The Wisconsin Russia Project is an initiative funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, the U.S. Russia Foundation, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison International Division. It is administered by the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia (CREECA) at UW-Madison.
- ²³ *The State of Russian Studies in the United States: 2022. An Assessment by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies ASEES*, August 2023
- ²⁴ Gerber conducted his assessment with Michael Zaslavsky *University of Wisconsin-Madison*
- ²⁵ *The State of Russian Studies in the United States: 2022. An Assessment by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies ASEES*, August 2023, p. 4
- ²⁶ More on this topic in Steven Pifer's analysis *Crimea: Six years after illegal annexation*, Brookings, Washington D.C., March 17, 2020
- ²⁷ *The State of Russian Studies in the United States: 2022. An Assessment by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies ASEES*, August 2023, p. 5-10
- ²⁸ *The State of Russian Studies in the United States: 2022. An Assessment by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies ASEES*, August 2023, p. 8
- ²⁹ *The State of Russian Studies in the United States: 2022. An Assessment by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies ASEES*, August 2023, p. 9
- ³⁰ The Association represents American scholarship in the field of Russia, Central Eurasian, Central and East European studies. Representatives of the AAASS sit on such bodies as the US State Department's Advisory Committee on the Soviet/East European Research and Training Act (1983), and the International Congress for Central and East European Studies (ICCEES). It is a constituent society of the American Council of Learned Societies. *The State of Russian Studies in the United States: 2022. An Assessment by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian studies ASEES*, August 2023
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- ³² A. Hozic, *East European Studies: A Question and Some Ambivalence*, *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 29(2): May 2015, pp. 433-439
- ³³ Statement from UW System President Tommy Thompson in support of Ukraine available at:
<https://www.wisconsin.edu/news/archive/statement-from-uw-system-president-tommy-thompson-in-support-of-ukraine/>
The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 165,000 students
- ³⁴ Ivy League schools are considered the most sought-after institutions of higher learning in the United States and in the world. It consist of eight private Northeastern schools (Princeton University Princeton, NJ, Harvard University Cambridge, MA, Yale University New Haven, CT, University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA , Cornell University Ithaka, NY, Brown University Providence, NH, Columbia University New York, NY, Dartmouth College Hanover, NH) which are known for their highly selective admissions process, academic excellence and promising career opportunities.

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⁹¹ Approximately 10 students per year

⁹² Kathryn w. And Shelby Cullom Davis center for Russian and Eurasian studies

⁹³ A foundation established in New York in 1911 by Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919), one of the wealthiest and most famous industrialists of his day, to promote “the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding.”

<https://www.carnegie.org>

⁹⁴ Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985 and subsequently served as head of state, beginning in 1988. He served as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet from 1988 to 1989, and Chairman of the Supreme Soviet from 1989 to 1990. Eventually, he served as President of the Soviet Union from 1990 to 1991.

⁹⁵ More historic development of Davis Center at
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- ¹¹⁷ Incl. the Scholarship Program of the Government of the Republic of Poland for Young Scientists from Eastern countries
- ¹¹⁸ Eastern Review Award, Ivan Vyhovski Award, Lew Sapieha Award, Tytus Filipowicz Award, St. Gregory Peradze Award, IWKL Juliusz Bardach Award - established by the Institute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, The Jadwiga and Zbigniew Kruszewski Award
- ¹¹⁹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/afet/dv/20140401_cv_mi-linkievic_/20140401_cv_milinkievic_en.pdf
- ¹²⁰ Each year, after completing a 6-week preparation course, scholarship recipients are assigned to appropriate studies at universities all over Poland. In order to integrate and acclimatize each new group of students, the Centre organizes an annual meeting of all the scholarship recipients in Białowieża.
- ¹²¹ The last St. Gregory Peradze's 21st International Caucasus Conference took place in December 2024. The session "Caucasica Antiqua et Christiana" brought many valuable discoveries, including the research of Rev. Prof. Henryk Paprocki, which was a significant scientific finding.
- ¹²² <https://english.studium.uw.edu.pl/conferences/about-weec/>
- ¹²³ The Centre had organized the following Bilateral Schools: Polish-Russian School (2007-2012 and 2014-2015) Polish-Ukrainian School (2008) Polish-Caucasian School (2008) Polish-Moldavian School (2008) Polish-Belarusian School (2008)
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- ¹²⁵ <https://www.ossolineum.pl/o-nas/dyrektorzy-znio/>
- ¹²⁶ <https://fulbrightscholars.org/award/teaching-east-european-and-urasian-studies-center-east-european-studies-university-warsaw>
- ¹²⁷ Some of them with perpetual dates
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- 135 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2024\)762437](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2024)762437)
- 136 <https://www.eucom.mil/about-the-command/senior-leadership/commander>
- 137 Excerpt from The European Union's Commissioner for Defense and Space Andrius Kubilius' interview with reporters in Washington, D.C., July 21, 2025
- 138 Head of the Main Military Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine (HUR) general Kyrylo Budanov: It's a philosophical paradox of Western diplomacy: praising values while refusing to defend them. When alliances become therapy groups — rather than defensive coalitions — they die not with a bang, but with a shrug. The EU and NATO were born in response to threats. If they now treat aggression with statements instead of actions, why should they even exist in 10 years? Interview conducted in Kiev on August 1, 2025, by Ukrainian TV journalist Nataliya Moseychuk. She was sentenced in absentia by Russia in 2024 for five years in prison.
- 139 <https://history.as.uky.edu/users/pke235>
- 140 <https://history.princeton.edu/people/stephen-kotkin>
- 141 <https://daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/about/people/mark-kramer>
- 142 <https://umdearborn.edu/people-um-dearborn/anna-muller>
- 143 <https://uwm.edu/history/department-life/people/pease-neal/>
- 144 <https://history.fas.harvard.edu/people/serhii-plokhii>
- 145 <https://www.huri.harvard.edu/people/antony-polonsky>
https://scholarworks.brandeis.edu/esploro/profile/antony_polonsky/overview
- 146 Former Yale University scientist, and currently Chair in European Intellectual History
<https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/person/marci-shore>
- 147 Former Yale University scientist <https://history.yale.edu/people/timothy-snyder>, and since 2025 at University of Toronto <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/news/hitler-and-stalin-today-timothy-snyder-s-new-u-t-course-explores-legacy-authoritarian-regimes>
- 148 <https://academics.siu.edu/humanities-social-sciences/history/faculty/weeks-theodore.php>
- 149 <https://as.nyu.edu/faculty/lawrence-wolff.html>

¹⁵⁰ <https://lsa.umich.edu/soc/people/faculty/genez.html>

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