

Section 3: Sense of Identity and Home

Chapter 10: Nataliia Kasianenko and Robert Ostergard, Jr., “Building Consensus?: Russian Nationalism as Social Cohesion and Division.”

Abstract

The recent decade has witnessed the rise of nationalism in many states. The paper focuses on the effects of nationalism on community formation in Russia. Nationalism itself and its impact on community can be ambiguous, especially in a multicultural and multiethnic state. On the one hand, nationalist ideas can be seen as a tool used by the government to develop a united multi-ethnic community of Russians with a strong sense of national belonging. On the other hand, nationalism can be viewed as a divisive force in a society that promotes discrimination and intolerance towards ethnic “others” in light of Russia’s socio-economic challenges. The paper explores the impact of Russian nationalism on social inclusion and patriotism as opposed to its effect on the growing xenophobia toward certain ethno-religious groups. Nationalism has typically embodied two facets that include a more benign promotion of Russian patriotism and national support but also a more malignant form that taps into people’s innate fears that then forms the basis of widespread, but officially ignored, xenophobia. In particular, all government factions, including political opposition, promote the idea of nationalism and patriotism, while largely ignoring the problem of xenophobia in Russian society. From the economic perspective, the high level of labor migration in Russia combines with a high level of unemployment, which creates social tensions in the country. Finally, the historical legacy Russian “internationalism”, the long history of interethnic hostility that many groups have faced in the 1990s, and the ongoing terrorism perpetrated by ethno-religious groups in Russia contribute to the complex role of nationalism on the formation and development of Russian communities.

Introduction

“The biggest nationalist in Russia is me. But the most proper nationalism is the alignment of actions and policies so that it benefits the people.”¹

Vladimir Putin, October 2014

International sanctions on Russia, economic stagnation and the loss of Russia’s image on the world stage have produced surprising effects on the Russian people. Public opinion surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center in April-May 2015 suggest that Russians exhibit the highest approval rating of their leader than ever before (Simmons et al. 2015). Approximately nine in every 10 respondents showed confidence in how President Vladimir Putin has done his job. The same survey suggests the continuing rise of Russian nationalism. The overwhelming majority (93%) of the Russian people have a positive view of their country, with 69% of respondents exhibiting nostalgia over the breakup of the Soviet Union (Simmons et al. 2015). At the same time, according to the think tank “Sova”, the level of aggressive xenophobia and radicalism in Russia continues to grow (Yudina and Alperovich 2015).

Nationalism has a high degree of complexity and ambivalence, contributing to our changing understanding of nationalism and its role throughout history (Williams 1989). Originally, scholars conceptualized nationalism in terms of state building and unification; today it can also refer to a separatist movement for independence or a component of a xenophobic agenda. States in political and economic transition, like Russia, present an interesting subcategory of states when it comes to tracing the nature of nationalism and its effects on community formation. On the one hand, nationalist ideas have been a tool used by the government to develop a united multi-ethnic community of Russians with a strong sense of

¹ Putin, Vladimir. 2014. “Zasedaniye Mezhdunarodnogo Diskussionnogo Kluba «Valdai»” Available online at <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46860> [24 October 2014]

national belonging. On the other hand, nationalism can be a divisive force in a society that promotes discrimination and intolerance towards ethnic “others” in light of Russia’s socio-economic challenges.

We focus specifically on “top-down nationalism” in Russia, defined as a form of ideology that gets promoted by the elites to achieve their political goals (Tilly 1996). Nationalism promoted from the top is associated with state building. State leaders advance this type of nationalism as they try to unite and assimilate culturally distinct groups or territories into a single state (Hechter 2000). One of the core elements of top-down nationalism is a conscious intent on behalf of the elites to transform the state and the identity of the masses to build a united community. As a process, state-induced nationalism presents ambiguities and complexities because of its objectives. The Russian government has tried to build a strong, united community of Russian citizens, while at the same time offering support for the nationalist ideology that proclaims the exclusive view of “Russianness” based on ethnicity, culture and religion.

In highlighting these complexities, this chapter briefly explores nationalism throughout Russian history and how it informs nationalism in the post-Soviet period. We focus specifically on contemporary nationalism in Russia and how political leadership in the country might use nationalism to reach political goals. Next, we present the theoretical foundation for the role of nationalism in building a sense of community and home. Finally, we apply existing theories of nationalism to examine how it impacts social inclusion and patriotism, as well as xenophobia in Russia. The objective is to show how the government is using nationalist ideology to gain legitimacy and to create a sense of a single national identity among the masses.

Nationalism and the sense of community

Scholars characterize nationalism in a number of different and even contradictory ways: peaceful or violent, objective or subjective, inclusive or exclusive, seeking to build a single nation or to break away from an existing nation-state (Bauman 1992; Calhoun 1997; Tamir 1995; Acton 1974; Kedourie 1993; Plamenatz 1976). Commonly accepted definitions of nationalism refer to it as a type of political ideology (Billig 1995; Gellner 1983; Smith 2004; Tilly 2002) or as an element of culture (Billig 1995; Brubaker 2004; Freedman 1998; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989). In addition, prior research has conceptualized nationalism as a form of individual attachment (Alstynne 2001; Kimmelmeier and Winter 2008; Li and Brewer 2004); others have explored it as a sentiment or action expressed by a particular group or community (Anderson 1991; Fabre and Cassia 2007; Gellner 1983; Weber 1976), or as a feature of state policy (Hechter 2000). Hence, depending on the definition, nationalism can take many forms and might be characterized in multiple ways (Breuilly 1994; Özkırımlı 2000).

Scholars suggest that nationalism as a popular ideology is rooted in the identification with a country's history and culture (Habermas 1992; Snyder and Ballentine 1996). The masses embrace nationalism when they clearly understand their national distinctiveness, favor their in-group community, and feel proud of their history, culture and people (Kimmelmeier and Winter 2008). Research has directly linked the concept of nationalism to the idea of community through these intense feelings of belonging. According to Young (1976, 70) the nation is the largest community that incorporates other communities within it. Thus, it is the highest form of community that supersedes individual loyalties to sub-communities and is thus a "terminal community" that promotes the broadest form of identification and the highest form of obligation and loyalty to the community (Young 1976, 71; Geertz 1973, 258). The notion of community has several dimensions that link to nationalism. Amongst the strongest are a common cultural

heritage and destiny (Segesvary 2000) and political inclusiveness through a common citizenship or a civic engagement (Budryte 2011; Gledhill 2005). The most intense of the relationships between nationalism and community manifests in a sense of duty to protect the community and nation. The desire to protect a community's culture, tradition, and language places nationalism into the role of a protector in wanting to shelter the community from outside cultural threats (Sabanadze 2010). Ultimately, a desire to transform, to create or to protect one's cultural identity becomes primary and dominant among individuals as protectors of the community. Anderson (1991) argues that nationalism can be a powerful tool of mobilization because the members of a nation share cultural roots.

While these notions of nationalism and community put an emphasis on the real origins and consequences of nationalism (Posen 1993; Gellner 1983; Breuilly 2001), some contend that nationalism is nothing more than a manifestation of "imagined" communities that elites invented (Anderson 1991; Deutsch 1966). Anderson (1991) considers nations to be "imagined" because the idea of a nation is a modern phenomenon that elites introduced. He emphasizes the role of print media and literature in constructing the abstract idea of a nation. A member of a nation will never meet all of his fellow members; she simply believes in this idea of a single community. However, the idea of an "imagined" community is theoretically weak because Anderson does not explain what his idea of a community is. A real community may in fact exist even if it is so large that its members cannot realistically meet each other. In addition, the idea of a nation suggests that its members are tied not only by the common history and symbols invented by the elites, but also by a common citizenship, culture, language, or religion.

Top-down Nationalism

Nationalism scholars primarily view nationalism as a top-down phenomenon. It is defined as a form of ideology that elites promote to achieve their political goals (Tilly 1996).

Thus state building and nationalism are intricately linked. State leaders advance this type of nationalism to unite and to assimilate culturally distinct groups or territories into a single state (Hechter 2000). One of the core elements of top-down nationalism is a conscious intent on behalf of the elites to transform the state and the identity of the masses. The origins of state-building nationalism trace back to the age of industrialization in the 18th and 19th centuries when, due to structural transformations, elites promoted nationalist sentiments as people lost their identity with rural areas and identified more with urban environments and the state (McCrone 1998; Brown 2000; Guibernau 1999). The greater availability of education, books and the media provided the means and mechanisms for elites to promote a restructuring of cultural identity that broke with traditional rural customs and advanced a stronger identification with the broader state community (Gellner 1983).

Contemporary nationalism is flexible and can take on different forms depending on the state's political environment (Sutherland 2006). It cannot be explained solely by the desire to create a nation-state, as in earlier forms of nationalism. Contemporary nationalism can be associated with irredentism or political demands for autonomy by a distinct group in a state (Basque nationalism, Scottish nationalism, nationalism in Quebec; African nationalist movements), a response to state repression of a minority (Kurdish nationalism, nationalism in the former Yugoslavia), or a result of state propaganda directed against a particular ethnic/cultural group (the former Yugoslavia).

For the different forms of nationalism elites use power or seek power to express their goals in the name of the whole nation. Scholars agree that nationalism is a powerful political tool used for gaining legitimacy, as well as mass mobilization and resource extraction associated with it (Cederman et al. 2011; Eatwell 2003; Breuilly 1994; Snyder 2000). Thus, the elites do not

have to make commitments to solve all the issues that the masses are concerned with, including an increase in social welfare and wealth redistribution. By addressing the goals of protecting and advancing the nation, the elites seek to speak to the interests of all citizens in a state, regardless of their socio-economic status (Barkey and von Hagen 1997; Suny 1993).

While expressions and forms of nationalism might differ from country to country, the mechanism of how nationalism emerges and changes its intensity remains similar. The basis for nationalism forms through early socialization of individuals through the symbols of a nation that become embedded in state institutions, norms and cultural practices. As a result, benign forms of national attachment, such as patriotism are formed. More violent and aggressive forms of nationalism can form through a different mechanism that involves an active role of political elites. When the elites seek to gain power or legitimacy, they might emphasize the salience of particular issues and tie them to nationalist ideas. The elites may also pick up cues on the issues important to voters at the moment and add greater emphasis and saliency to the issues through their political positions. In doing so, they will stress the survival of the nation and its people as paramount goals and objectives for the political state and community. Therefore, political elites are able to influence the intensity of nationalism and its nature through their actions and rhetoric.

Typology of Nationalism

The dominant typology of nationalism distinguishes between the “good” (civic) nationalism and the “bad” (ethnic) nationalism (Brown 1999; Gledhill 2005; Hroch 1996; Kohn 1944; Plamenatz 1976). Civic nationalism is associated with the idea of inclusive citizenship based on common territory, a positive view toward multiculturalism and internationalism (Brown 1999; Castles and Miller 1998). Within the concept of civic nationalism, common roots, culture

and ethnic origins do not constitute criteria for membership in a nation. Instead, the focus is on building a cohesive community in a united political entity (Gledhill 2005). Ethnic nationalism, on the other hand, represents a more exclusive view of nationality, which only views members of one titular ethnic group as deserving citizenship and membership in a nation (Hjerm 1998). Common history, ethnic origins and culture become central criteria for membership (Brown 1999; Gledhill 2005). Therefore, the logic behind ethnic nationalism is to unite representatives of one distinct cultural (ethnic, religious) group within the territory of a nation-state.

The civic-ethnic dichotomy is much too broad to describe a variety of nationalist sentiments in a particular region (Gellner 1983; Hechter 2000). It does not account for the fact that nationalism in a country may incorporate the elements of a civic type, such as multiculturalism, yet also advance the idea that certain ethnic groups can be a threat to the nation (e.g., the US, Great Britain, France). Nevertheless, the dichotomous typology is instrumental in analyzing the two main effects nationalism might have on community formation. Benign civic forms of nationalism might be the instruments of social cohesion, while exclusive and ethnic-based forms of nationalism can further divide a multicultural community. Some scholars argue that nationalism in the former Soviet states may have both civic and ethnic elements (Kuzio 2002; Shevel 2011; Smith 2004). In the case of contemporary Russia, elites have used top-down nationalism as a way of promoting both civic and ethnic nationalism through a concerted state effort.

The Historical Roots of Russian Nationalism

The roots of nationalism in Russia go back to the beginning of the nineteenth century (Billington 2004) as modern nationalism took hold in Europe more generally. Prior to this period, Russian nationalism was virtually non-existent. The majority of the population in tsarist

Russia consisted of peasants (surfs), poorly educated and deeply religious. The vast Russian empire was neither ethnically nor linguistically united (Billington 2004, 3). Dominated by an elite class, the people of Russia identified solely with their tsar and their religion. Toward the 19th century, change came with the emergence of urban journalism in Russia and Napoleon's invasion. The emergence of urban journalism coincided with an urban society engaged in intellectual debates on the meaning of Russian identity, while the victory in the Franco-Russian war enhanced the secular self-consciousness of the Russian people (Billington 2004). The first nationalist thinkers, such as Sergei Uvarov and Konstantin Pobonostsev, advocated loyalty to the Romanov dynasty and the Russian imperial legacy, such as in Russia emerged during the tsarist period. Later nationalists within the empire focused on the cultural context and heritage of the Russian people in the larger context of slavophiles, populists and pan-Slavists (Laurelle 2009). While these factors contributed to the birth of Russian nationalism, contemporary Russian nationalism has few ties to the nationalism that grew under tsarist rule. So, while modern nationalists may wax nostalgically about the tsarist period, the true birth of the nationalist movement in Russia occurred during the period of Soviet rule (Laruelle 2009).

The Soviet Period

Laurelle has argued that contemporary nationalism in Russia should "be conceived of not as in opposition to the Soviet experience, but as the continuation of a phenomenon that existed within it" (Laruelle 2009, 2). The establishment of the USSR brought about mixed policies regarding nationalities. In theoretical terms, Vladimir Lenin and other revolutionaries like Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky denounced "bourgeois" nationalism that oppressed people in favor of a national equality based on proletarian identity that promoted a true self determination (Tucker 1975, 160-166; Bukharin and Preobrazhensky 1988, 197-203).

Lenin and others within the revolution took advantage of minority nationalist aspirations, even promising nationalist leaders self-determination. But Lenin had hoped that the success of the revolution would stomp out nationalist sentiments; this desire proved to be impractical given the demands nationalists in the republics were making and nationalism's irreconcilability with Bolshevik ideology (Pipes 1992, 67). In practical terms, what emerged in the post-revolutionary period was a hegemony of the "Great Russians" based on the growth of a strong nationalist sentiment inside the Communist movement which the party embraced and Stalin, as Commissar of Nationalities, ensured (Pipes 1992, 68).

The individual republics that became part of the Soviet Union were nominally independent, with separate communist parties ruling in each republic. In reality however, these parties were subject to the dictates of the Soviet (Russian) Communist Party. The Soviet leadership centralized all the power in the hands of a Russian dominated government that made all major political and economic decisions in the People's Republics. Instead of promoting the equality of all nationalities, Soviet leaders advanced the dominance of ethnic Russians over all other groups with the idea of Russia as a "big brother" to all other national minorities inside the Soviet Union (Laruelle 2009). Russian communists in large Russian cities played a special vanguard role of helping the "backward" non-Russian nationalities in border regions. In addition, the Russian language became the lingua franca, adding further to Russians' dominance over other ethnic groups in the new Soviet state (Vujacic 2009, 53). These policies helped reinforce Russian nationalism and foster weak reactionary nationalist movements in the borderland regions in opposition to the dominance of Russian communists (Pipes 1992). Russian ethnic and nationalist dominance of the other Soviet republics would be an ongoing theme until the Soviet Union's demise, partly attributable to the nationalities issue within the Soviet Union.

With the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced issues with national self-identification. The quick disintegration of the Soviet Union put ethnic Russians in a dilemma between the superiority complex of the past and the fear of humiliation in the present (Herrberg 1998; Tuminez 2000). The collapse of the Soviet system, profound economic crisis and the loss of a superpower status on the world stage all contributed to mass apathy and disillusionment in Russia. The Russians questioned their place in the world, not sure whether they were still part of the Great Russian nation, or simply citizens of a politically and economically weak transitional state. At the same time, the Western world exacerbated these sentiments by largely ignoring Russia's interests (Mankoff 2011). Some have gone so far as to say that the 1990s in Russia was absent a single national idea (Yakunin et al. 2013; Tuminez 2000). National identities at this time were mixed and ranged between national patriotism and Western nationalism (Tuminez 2000).

The Soviet Union's disintegration also created a mixture of political, economic and cultural security concerns for the ethnic Russians living in the "near abroad." Former Soviet republics had a large percentage of ethnic Russians who also suffered from an identity crisis. Ethnic Russians, who previously have enjoyed a privileged status in the whole Eurasia, began to lose their status and power in the former Soviet republics (Shnirelman 1996). As perceived titular nationalities gained citizenship and voting rights, better employment opportunities and better living conditions, Russians became a disadvantaged minority in the Baltic states and some Central Asian countries (Shnirelman 1996). Thus, these factors helped to create concerns that promoted an identity crisis among ethnic Russians in contiguous post-Soviet space.

Contemporary Russian Nationalism

Historians suggest that modern-day Russia follows the same historical pattern in its foreign affairs (Aggarwal and Govella 2011; Mankoff 2011). The international community and

the majority of Russians see their current president, Vladimir Putin, as a strong leader who is reinforcing the image of Russia as a great power nation on the world stage (Levada Center 2015). Putin has continued the historical pattern of Russian politics, promoting security of its vast territory by projecting its power over the neighboring states.

Today's Russia can be characterized by two main national identities. One of them endorses the idea of the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural Russia that has close ties with its former Soviet neighbors. The Russian government has been an active promoter of this national identity (Shevel 2011). The other national identity is more exclusive and tends to be the result of the recent socio-economic trends in Russia. It promotes the idea of Russia belonging to ethnic Russians and the need for strict immigration controls. Nationalist groups and movements have embraced this identity, though it does not have official government support (Laruelle 2009). Russia's elites have tried to capture this ethnic rhetoric, however, by drawing attention to the unique historical, cultural and ethnic roots of Russia. They have also emphasized external threats to Russian identity by promoting Russia's dominance in the region and its leadership in the world (Aron 2014). In doing so, some of Russia's political parties (such as LDPR, CPRF, and Rodina) and their leaders put blame for Russia's economic hardships on non-Russian immigrants.

In post-Soviet countries, government elites have promoted official nationalist rhetoric that forms the basis for constructing national identity (Arel 1995; Kuzio 2001; D'Anieri et al. 1999). Given the illiberal nature of Russia's current political regime, opposition groups do not hold much power. At the same time pro-government nationalism has been on the rise for more than 10 years, beginning with the presidency of Vladimir Putin, who ascended to Russia's presidency in the wake up corruption and mismanagement charges against Boris Yeltsin. While

“Russian nationalism” is not a unified phenomenon (Laruelle 2009), the nationalism promoted by the government has consistent themes and rhetoric to its foundation. Some nationalists in Russia support the government; others represent a form of political opposition. As an authoritarian regime, the Russian government limits most forms of opposition, including that of nationalist groups that have emerged in the early 2000s.

At the same time, it is clear that state-promoted nationalism does not have a unified message. The Russian government has used multiple and often conflicting messages in regards to the nature of the nationalism that it is promoting, which has been both civic and ethnic. Civic nationalism draws its origins back to the days of the Soviet Union. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russians have been searching for their national identity. During the 70 years of communism, the Soviet government eradicated any remnants of Russia's imperialist ideology from the consciousness of the masses. Communist ideology became dominant in the hearts and the minds of the people. With the fall of the Soviet Union, communist ideology became virtually obsolete, which created a sense of confusion in terms of Russia's national identity. While those who grew up in the Soviet Union remained partially loyal to the Soviet identity, new generations ended up in an ideological vacuum. In the 1990s, the government was too preoccupied with the economic struggles to deal with the national identity question. Thus, political elites largely failed in their attempts to unite the people by neglecting Russia's history, cultural legacy and national symbols. Patriotism particularly amongst the youth declined dramatically as they embraced Western culture and values. Consequently, a high percentage of young and educated citizens in the 1990s aspired to leave Russia in search of better jobs and higher standards of living (Hrapov 2014).

The absence of a national idea in Russia also led to the loss of influence over the younger generations in the satellite states of the former Soviet Union. Thus, formerly friendly neighbour states like Georgia, Ukraine and the Baltic countries started to exhibit growing anti-Russian attitudes (Shnirelman 2009). The lack of national identity has also influenced political elites themselves. Those in the positions of power found little incentive to work toward the benefit of the people and the future of Russia (Hrapov 2014). Russian citizenship alone did not evoke strong patriotic feelings. Being Russian could mean different things to different members of the community. It could represent either the legacy of the once great Russian empire, being Soviet, being part of the Slavic community or the Christian Orthodox community.

The revival of a national identity and community began with the presidency of Vladimir Putin. Putin promoted himself as the defender of Russia's sovereignty, its national and historical legacy. Putin's presidency marked the birth of an official nationalist ideology in Russia (Laruelle 2009). While the majority of the world sees Russia as an aggressor state, the Russian government (and most Russians) perceive themselves on the defensive side, protecting Russia from Western influence and domination. Thus, President Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov view world conflicts as the struggle between the Western world on the one hand and the states seeking to maintain their sovereignty on the other hand (Krastev 2015). This view fits well with the interests of the ruling elites in Russia. Through nationalist rhetoric expressed in political speeches, educational materials in schools, and media announcements, political elites are able to portray their goals as the common goals of all citizens in the nation. By doing so, the government effectively gains control over the masses. At the same time, nationalism serves as an instrument of "achieving national reconciliation in the wake of the profound divisions produced by perestroika and the reforms of the early 1990s" (Laruelle 2009, 2). The government promotes the

idea that a strong Russia requires the presence of a united people with a common sense of national identity. Thus, “in 2001 Russia’s government put forward the first of the two five-year plans to foster patriotic education” (Sperling 2009, 219). These educational programs focused specifically on Russia’s military history, particularly the Soviet victory in World War II.

The official approach of the Russian government to nationalism has been stated in 2011. The government rejects any violent and radical forms of nationalism, as well as any expressions of ethnic nationalism. Instead, the ruling regime promotes statist nationalism, encouraging all citizens of Russia, who represent different ethno-religious groups, to unite under a single political authority (Verkhovsky 2014). The exact premises and positions of this statist nationalist ideology are not clearly defined. At times, the government alludes to the idea of the Russian World (“*Ruskiy Mir*”) uniting all former Soviet republics into a single community. Other times, being Russian means being a Russian citizen (*rossiyanin*) regardless of an ethnic background. At the same time, some official government announcements suggest being Russian is a unique category reserved for Russian language speakers of Russian ethnicity and Russian Orthodox religion (*russkiy*) (Laruelle 2009).

Today’s media flows emphasize the revival of traditional Russian values. The government promotes patriotism, glorifies Soviet history, and promotes Christian Orthodox values (Clover 2010; Vujacic 2009). In his speeches, the Russian president calls on the Russians to respect their historical past “despite all of its flaws”.² The government is particularly trying to reframe the country’s Soviet past by promoting nostalgia and admiration for the Soviet Union, glorifying Soviet Russia’s victories and downplaying failures of the Soviet leadership (Prozorov 2005; Levy 2008). Recently published history books describe the Soviet society as fair and

² President of Russia. December 19, 2007. “Interview with Time Magazine.” Available online http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/12/19/1618_type82916_154779.shtml

progressive, and portray Stalin as “one of the most successful leaders of the U.S.S.R.” (Levy 2008). The Russian president personally promotes nostalgia for the Soviet times by describing the fall of the Soviet Union as “a major geopolitical disaster of the century.”³ The Russian public is embracing these sentiments. Recent public opinion data suggests that 69 per cent of Russians regret the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Simmons et al. 2015).

In recent years, President Putin adopted new laws and made public speeches exclusively related to the new national identity for Russia. By promoting a civic type of nationalism, the president is emphasizing the goal of interethnic peace as one of Russia’s main national interests. With the start of the Ukraine-Russia conflict in 2014, Russia’s leader has been making even more references to the greatness and exceptionalism of Russia, Russian ethnicity, Russian values and culture (Aron 2014). Putin continuously contrasts the values of the Russian people with the Western values, while suggesting that all foreigners should be distrusted (Clover 2010). Multiple references are given to patriotism as a national trait of the Russians. At the same time, Putin references the Russian culture, history and traditions as the core components of the Russian nation (Aron 2014).

Ethnic Nationalism in Russia

Despite the official government rhetoric, ethnic forms of nationalism also find tacit support from the Russian government. Verkhovsky (2009) claims, “neither civic nor even imperial, today’s Russian nationalism is instead almost exclusively ethnic” (91). While President Putin officially favors a civic and inclusive type of nationalism in Russia, his understanding of a national identity “is not free of ethnicist themes” (Laruelle 2009, 44). The rhetoric of the government at times comes close to the ideology of the far right groups and organizations. In

³ President of Russia. 2005. “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.” Available online http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029type82912_87086.shtml

particular, the Kremlin-funded youth group NASHI openly supports nationalist ideology and advances xenophobic statements along with pro-Putin rhetoric (Sperling 2009). The government is also advancing legislature that creates new opportunities for nationalist groups and organizations. Strict migration policies against non-Slavs in Russia are particularly illustrative of the ethnic nationalist bias of the government. Anti-migration statements gained much prominence in all parties across the political spectrum. State-controlled media helped reinforce this nationalist message by putting immigrants at the center of most economic and cultural issues in Russia (Kraus and Herrera 2012).

Political, economic and social (demographic) reasons account for the ambiguous nationalist strategy of the Russian government. Politically, Russia has engaged itself in a number of conflicts, such as the Chechen Wars, the war with Georgia, the conflict in Ukraine and the new diplomatic confrontation with the West. Vladimir Putin came to power at the time when Russia has suffered the defeat in the first Chechen war and had to deal with a number of terrorist threats. At the time the Russian government has received a lot of criticism both from the West and domestically (Prozorov 2005). Putin has therefore adopted a firm military stance when dealing with Chechnya and avoided any show of weakness in foreign affairs. By consolidating political power and promoting the image of a strong independent Russia, Putin's regime has been gaining legitimacy domestically and internationally.

Economically, Russia has been experiencing growth in the last decade, yet still struggling with unemployment, low wages and inadequate social security. The government thus benefits from ethnic nationalist rhetoric that blames the influx of immigrants for Russia's economic troubles (Kraus and Herrera 2012). The state-controlled media further promotes discriminatory rhetoric toward the immigrants, while the government largely ignores the use of ethnic profiling

and the activity of violent nationalist groups. The immigrants from the Caucasus and the Central Asian republics are viewed not as much-needed minimum wage workers but as foreigners who take away jobs from Russians and harm Russia's economy (Kraus and Herrera 2012).

Russia's demographic problem lies in the ongoing decline of its population. Starting in the 1990s, the mortality levels have increased due to the low standards of living and healthcare, the high levels of alcoholism, drug use and high abortion rates (Da Vanzo and Farnsworth 1996). The low birthrate in Russia has coincided with the influx of immigrants from the former Soviet republics. At the same time, liberalization of Russian migration policies in the early 1990s allowed large numbers of Russian citizens to emigrate to the West (Ivakhnyuk 2009). The government has used these trends to portray the survival of the Russian ethnic group, the existence of the Russian culture and traditions as being under a direct threat from the incoming immigrants.

The demographic crisis in Russia became one of the central issues of concern for President Putin (Ivakhnyuk 2009). Thus, the Russian authorities framed illegal migration into Russia as one of the main national security issues. Since the early 1990s, Russian immigration policies have gone through a series of transformations and adjustments only to result in a highly bureaucratic and corrupt immigration system (Nozhenko 2010). In particular, the new law adopted in 2003 has imposed an annual quota on the amount of labor migrants who could come to Russia (Nozhenko 2010; Ivakhnyuk 2009). Since 2003, the labor migration quota has been reduced every year. The government has also introduced a complex policy of obtaining work authorizations for non-citizens. However, multiple restrictions on immigration adopted in 2002-2005 had the reverse effects of being inefficient and promoting an increase in illegal migration from the CIS countries (Ivakhnyuk 2009; Ioffe and Zayonchkovskaya 2010). The complex

system of bureaucratic procedures and the growing corruption in the immigration sector stood in the way of creating a transparent and efficient migration system (Ivakhnyuk 2009).

The lack of solid citizenship and immigration policies has further aggravated the position of migrants inside Russia (Kitschelt and McGann 1995). The government often pitted ethnic Russians against the foreigners, as insiders vs. outsiders. State-sponsored media has a critical role in this process by further criminalizing illegal immigrants and promoting xenophobic sentiments (Laruelle 2009). Several political parties, like LDPR and Rodina have also adopted openly xenophobic stances (Ivakhnyuk 2009). These developments have instilled a negative and hostile view of immigrants in the eyes of the Russian public, promoting the growth of xenophobia and hate crimes in the country (Nozhenko 2010).

Xenophobic violence has been continuously on the rise in Russia. Research suggests that “Russia is home to half the world’s skinheads, averages several dozen fatal attacks on ethnic minorities yearly, and has seen local ordinances and pogroms intended to reverse the access of immigrants to Russian markets” (Rubin and Wendt 2009, 1). At the same time, the rise in state-led Russian nationalism and the emergence of far right political parties in Russia provide certain legitimacy to xenophobic behavior and further aggravate the problem of hate crimes in the country. Recent studies suggest that the amount of xenophobic violence and hate crimes has decreased slightly in 2014 but only because the right-wing groups and radicals have been divided and discouraged by the events in Ukraine (Yudina and Alperovich 2015). The Russian government and with it the Russian public have blamed Ukrainian ultra-nationalists for the violence and instability in Ukraine. In addition, some radical groups have crossed the border into eastern Ukraine to fight on the side of pro-Russian separatists. Nevertheless, scholars suspect that this slight decrease in ethno-nationalist violence is temporary and expect a further surge in

ethnic Russian nationalism in the near future (Yudina and Alperovich 2015).

The ongoing pressures from the West as well as growing domestic legitimacy concerns might push the Russian regime to continue using nationalism in its different facets. Public opinion data suggest that the current strategy of the government in promoting civic nationalism to build patriotism and obtain public support from Russia's multi-ethnic population is rather successful. The regime will also continuously benefit from ignoring the problem of xenophobia and the growth of ethnic nationalism in Russia. Immigrants and ethnic minorities are easy targets of blame for Russia's political, economic and social struggles, particularly in the absence of independent media in the country. The use of nationalism to build consensus in Russia becomes problematic when the ruling regime's legitimacy may be strengthened through both, social cohesion and social division.

Nationalism and community in Russia

With the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Russians have lost their sense of community and the sense of connection to their territory. Community formation matters in Russia because it helps promote the sense of belonging to one's land and one's people. The people may identify as members of their local community, village, city or region. However, the elites are focusing on advancing the broadest form of identification in a state, national attachment. By promoting nationalism, the Russian government is attempting to construct a unified political community of the highest degree. Putin's regime is trying to recreate a well-defined and unique image of what it means to be Russian. Nationalism serves a tool of promoting loyalty among citizens and reinforcing the legitimacy of the nation's leadership. The link between nationalism and the idea of community creates an emotional element of attachment among the Russian public. Those who

strongly identify with their nation tend to cherish their history, protect their national culture, and work hard for the welfare of their community. Under the influence of nationalist ideas, individuals become sensitive to the threats their community might be facing. In Russia, the elites are continuously emphasizing the threats of Western culture and ideas to the Russian nation. The regime also turns a blind eye to xenophobia and racism inside Russia with the state-controlled media and a number of political parties blaming immigrants and ethnic minorities for Russia's economic struggles. Community formation implies a degree of homogeneity in a society. By promoting nationalist ideology, the elites are advancing homogeneity within the community of Russians as a whole.

The nation as a "terminal community" is associated with a sense of common cultural heritage and destiny, which fits well into President Putin's idea of Russia as a unique country with a special place among other world powers. Political elites also use nationalism to extend Russian influence outside the country's borders. The Russian government urges ethnic Russians, Russian language speakers and Orthodox Christians in Russia and the former Soviet space to unite into a single community and resist foreign pressure and discrimination. By referring to all ethnic Russians living in the near abroad as members of the Great Russian community, the government can get domestic support for its often aggressive foreign policy in the region. Nationalism is a successful tool of social mobilization, particularly when the elites advance the idea of an imminent threat to the members of one's community. The conflict in eastern Ukraine serves as the most recent example of how the government can obtain public support for military engagement if the members of the Russian community abroad face discrimination.

Works Cited

- Acton, Thomas Alan. 1974. *Gypsy Politics and Social Change: The Development of Ethnic Ideology and Pressure Politics Among British Gypsies From Victorian Reformism to Romany Nationalism*. Taylor & Francis.
- Aggarwal, Vinod and Kristi Govella (eds.). 2011. *Responding to a Resurgent Russia: Russian Policy and Responses from the European Union and the United States*. New York: Springer.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Growth and Spread of Nationalism*. New York and London: Verso.
- D'Anieri, P., Kravchuk, R. and Kuzio, T. (eds) *State and Institution Building in Contemporary Ukraine*. Palgrave Macmillan Date, 1999
- Arel, D. "Language Politics in Independent Ukraine: Towards One or Two State Languages." *Nationalities Papers*, Volume 23, Issue 3, 1995
- Aron, Leon. 2014. "Why Putin Says Russia Is Exceptional." *The Wall Street Journal*. May 30, 2014. Available online at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/why-putin-says-russia-is-exceptional-1401473667>
- Barkey, Karen and Mark von Hagen. 1997. *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 1992. "Soil, Blood and Identity." *The Sociological Review* 40(4): 675–701.
- Calhoun, Craig J. 1997. *Nationalism*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*. Sage.
- Billington, J. H. 2004. *Russia in Search of Itself*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- Breuilly, John. 1994. *Nationalism and the State*. University of Chicago Press.
- Breuilly, John. 2001. *Nineteenth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1780-1918*. London: Arnold.
- Brown, Rupert. 2000. "Social Identity Theory: Past Achievements, Current Problems, and Future Challenges." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 30: 745-778.
- Brown, David. 1999. "Are There Good and Bad Nationalisms?" *Nations and Nationalism* 5(2): 281–302.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 2004. "In the Name of the Nation: Reflections on Nationalism and Patriotism 1." *Citizenship Studies* 8(2): 115–27.
- Budryte, Dovile. 2011. "From Ethnic Fear to Pragmatic Inclusiveness? Political Community Building in the Baltic States (1988-2004)." *Ethnicity Studies*, Issue 1(2): 14-41.
- Castles, Stephen, and Mark Miller. 1998. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. Hong Kong: Macmillan.
- Cederman, Lars-Erik, T. Camber Warren and Didier Sornette. 2011. "Testing Clausewitz: Nationalism, Mass Mobilization, and the Severity of War." *International Organization*, 65: 605-638.
- Clover, C. 2010. "Managed Nationalism' Turns Nasty for Putin." *The Financial Times*, 23 December 2010. Available online at <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/046a3e30-0ec9-11e0-9ec3-00144feabdc0.html>
- DaVanzo, Julie and Gwen Farnsworth. 1996. *Russia's Demographic "Crisis"*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Deutsch, Karl W. 1966. *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundation of Nationalism*, Second Edition. Cambridge: Mass.

- Eatwell, Roger. 2003. "Ten Theories of the Extreme Right." In Merkl, P. and Weinberg, L., eds. *Right-Wing Extremism in the Twenty-first Century*. London: Frank Cass: 45-70.
- Etling, Bruce et al. 2011 "Mapping RuNet Politics and Mobilization." Berkman Center Research Publication No. 2010-11. Available online at http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/sites/cyber.law.harvard.edu/files/Public_Discourse_in_the_Russian_Blogosphere_2010.pdf
- Fabre, Professor Thierry, and Dr. Paul Sant Cassia. 2007. *Between Europe and the Mediterranean: The Challenges and the Fears*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- FOM. Public Opinion Foundation. 2009. "Internet in Russia, Special Release." [March 2009] Available online at http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/smi/smi_int/d091617.
- Freden, Michael. 1998. "Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?" *Political Studies* 46(4): 748–65.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Vol. 5019. Basic Books.
- Gehlbach, Scott. 2010. "Reflections on Putin and the Media." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 26(1): 77-87.
- Gellner, Ernest. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University.
- Gledhill, John. 2005. "The Power of Ethnic Nationalism: Foucault's Bio-Power and the Development of Ethnic Nationalism in Eastern Europe." *National Identities* 7(4): 347–68.
- Greenfeld, Liah. 1992. *Nationalism*. Wiley Online Library.
- Guibernau, Montserrat. 1999. *Nations Without States: Political Communities in a Global Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1992. "Citizenship and National Identity: Some Reflections on the Future of Europe." *Praxis International* 12(1).
- Hechter, Michael. 2000. *Containing Nationalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Herrberg, A. 1998. "The European Union and Russia: Toward a New Ostpolitik," in *The European Union in the World Community*, edited by C. Rhodes. London: Lynne Rienner, 83-104.
- Hjerm, Mikael. 1998. "National Identities, National Pride and Xenophobia: A Comparison of Four Western Countries." *Acta Sociologica* 41(4): 335–47.
- Hjerm, Mikael, and Annette Schnabel. 2010. "Mobilizing Nationalist Sentiments: Which Factors Affect Nationalist Sentiments in Europe?" *Social Science Research* 39(4): 527-539.
- Hrapov, Andrey. 2014. "Rossiya-Natsionalnaya Ideya Kak Brend." Available online at <http://sputnikipogrom.com/russia/13910/brand-of-russia/#.VYmkr0s73wJ>
- Hroch, Miroslav. 1996. "Nationalism and National Movements: Comparing the Past and the Present of Central and Eastern Europe." *Nations and Nationalism* 2(1): 35-44.
- Ioffe, G. & Zayonchkovskaya, Z. 2010. "Immigration to Russia: Why is it Inevitable, and How Large it May Have to Be to Provide the Workforce Russia Needs." Working Paper. Seattle: The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research.
- Ivakhnyuk, I. 2009. "The Russian Migration Policy and its Impact on Human Development: The Historical Perspective," Research Paper 14 (United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Reports).
- Kedourie, Elie. 1993. *Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kemmelmeier, Markus, and David G. Winter. 2008. "Sowing Patriotism, but Reaping Nationalism? Consequences of Exposure to the American Flag." *Political Psychology* 29(6): 859–79.
- Kitschelt, H. & McGann A. 1995. "The Internal Politics of Parties: The Law of Curvilinear Disparity Revisited." *Political Studies*, 37, 3: 400-21.

- Kohn, Franz. 1944. *The Idea of Nationalism. A Study in Its Origins and Background*. New York, Macmillan.
- Kosterman, Rick, and Seymour Feshbach. 1989. "Toward a Measure of Patriotic and Nationalistic Attitudes." *Political Psychology*: 257–74.
- Krastev, Ivan. 2015. "Russian Mistakes and Western Misunderstandings." *The Financial Times*. June 17, 2015. Available online at <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/6b79c31a-14fb-11e5-9509-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3fd3NgceX>
- Kraus, Nicole Butkovich and Yoshiko M. Herrera. 2010. "Xenophobia and Nationalism in Russia." APSA 2010 Annual Meeting Paper. Available online at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1644264>
- Kuzio, T. 2001. "Nationalising States' or Nation Building: A Review of the Theoretical Literature and Empirical Evidence." *Nations and Nationalism*, Volume 7.
- Kuzio, Taras. 2002. "Nationalism in Ukraine: Towards a New Theoretical and Comparative Framework." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 7(2): 133–61.
- Laruelle, Marlene. 2009. *In the Name of the Nation*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Laruelle, Marlene. 2013. "Anti-Migrant Riots in Russia: the Mobilizing Potential of Xenophobia," *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 141, December 2013.
- Levada Center. 2014. "Rossiyskiy Media-Landshaft: Televidenie, Pressa, Internet." Available online at <http://www.levada.ru/17-06-2014/rossiiskii-media-landshaft-televidenie-pressa-internet>
- Levada Center. 2015. "Vladimir Putin: Doverie, Ocenki, Otnoshenie." Available online at <http://www.levada.ru/27-03-2015/vladimir-putin-doverie-otsenki-otnoshenie>
- Levy, Clifford J. 2008. "Purging History of Stalin's Terror," *The New York Times*, 26 October 2008, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/27/world/europe/27archives.html?hp>
- Li, Qiong, and Marilyn B. Brewer. 2004. "What Does It Mean to Be an American? Patriotism, Nationalism, and American Identity after 9/11." *Political Psychology* 25(5): 727–39.
- Lipman, Maria. 2005. "Constrained or Irrelevant: The Media in Putin's Russia," *Current History* 104: 684.
- Malashenko, Alexey. 2013. "Biryulyovo: More Than Just a Riot," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October 31, 2013.
- Mankoff, Jeffrey. 2011. *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Marinova-Zuber, Boriana. 2007. "The Rebirth of Nationalism in the Balkans in the 1990s: Causes, Consequences and Possible Solutions," *International Relations and Security Network (ISN)*, Zurich, Switzerland, August 2007. Available online at <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/poll16/nationalism.htm>
- McCrone, David. 1998. *The Sociology of Nationalism: Tomorrow's Ancestors*. Psychology Press.
- Sabanadze, Natalie. 2010. *Globalization and Nationalism: The Cases of Georgia and the Basque Country*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Nozhenko, M. 2010. "Focus Migration No.20: Russian Federation," Hamburg Institute of International Economics, July 2010, Available online at <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/Russian-Federation.6337.0.html?&L=1>
- Özkırımlı, Umut. 2000. *Theories of Nationalism. A Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pipes, Richard. 1992. "The Establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." *The Soviet Nationality Reader: The Disintegration in Context*: 35-86.

- Plamenatz, John. 1976. "Two Types of Nationalism." *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea* 27: 29–31.
- Posen, Barry. 1993. "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," *International Security* 18: 80-124.
- Prozorov, S. 2005. "Russian Conservatism in the Putin Presidency: The Dispersion of a Hegemonic Discourse," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 10, 2: 121-43.
- Riggs, Fred W. 2002. "Globalization, Ethnic Diversity, and Nationalism: the Challenge for Democracies." *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Sage
- Segesvary, Victor. 2000. *Inter-Civilizational Relations and the Destiny of the West: Dialogue or Confrontation?* University Press of America.
- Shevel, Oxana. 2011. "The Politics of Memory in a Divided Society: A Comparison of Post-Franco Spain and Post-Soviet Ukraine." *Slavic Review* 70(1): 137–64.
- Shnirelman, Victor. 2009. "New Racism, "Clash of Civilizations" and Russia." in *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, edited by M. Laruelle, 125-144.
- Simmons et al. 2015. "NATO Publics Blame Russia for Ukrainian Crisis, but Reluctant to Provide Military Aid." Available online at <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2015/06/Pew-Research-Center-Russia-Ukraine-Report-FINAL-June-10-2015.pdf>
- Smith, Anthony D. 2004. *The Antiquity of Nations*. Malden, MA: Polity Press Ltd.
- Snyder, Jack L. 2000. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*. Norton New York.
- Snyder, Jack and Karen Ballentine. 1996. "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," *International Security*, Vol. 21, no. 2.
- Sperling, Valerie. 2009. "Making the Public Patriotic: Militarism and Anti-Militarism in Russia," in Marlène Laruelle, ed., *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, 218-271.
- Suny, Ronald Grigor. 1993. *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. Stanford University Press.
- Sutherland, Claire. 2006. "Calculated Conviction: Contemporary Nationalist Ideology and Strategy." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 6(1): 69-89.
- Tamir, Yael. 1995. *Liberal Nationalism*. Princeton University Press.
- Tilly, Charles. 2002. *Stories, Identities, and Political Change*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Tilly, Charles. 1996. "The State of Nationalism." *Critical Review* 10: 299–306.
- Tuminez, Astrid S. 2000. *Russian Nationalism Since 1856: Ideology and the Making of Foreign Policy*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Van Alstyne, Adam. 2001. "Measuring Russian Nationalism In Complex Times." Available online at <http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/pol/F00/POL397-01/vanalstyne.pdf>
- Verkhovsky, Alexander and Galina Kozhevnikova. 2009. *Radikalniy Russkiy Natsionalizm: Struktury, Idei, Lica*. Moscow: Sova Center. Available online at <http://www.sova-center.ru/files/books/rb09-text.pdf>
- Verkhovsky, Alexander. 2014. "Etnopolitika Federal'noi Vlasti i Aktivizatsiia Russkogo Natsionalizma" [The Ethnopolitics of the Federal Authorities and the Activation of Russian Nationalism], *Pro et Contra* 62 (1-2): 19-33.
- Verkhovsky, Alexander. 2009. "Future Prospects of Contemporary Russian Nationalism," ed., *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, 89-103.

- Völgyes, Iván. 1975. *Political Socialization in Eastern Europe: A Comparative Framework*. Praeger Publishers.
- Vujacic, Veljko. 2009. "Stalinism And Russian Nationalism: A Reconceptualization," ed., *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, 49-74.
- Weber, Eugen. 1976. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford University Press.
- Wendt, Christopher and Gabriel Rubin. 2009. "Explaining Increases in Xenophobic Outcomes in Post-Communist Russia." *APSA 2009 Toronto Meeting Paper*. Available online at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1450285
- Williams, Marc. 1989. *International Relations in the Twentieth Century: A Reader*. Macmillan Education.
- Yakunin V.I., Bagdasaryan V.E. and S.S. Sulakshin. 2013. *Novye Tekhnologii Bor'by s Rossiyskoy Gosudarstvennost'yu*. Directmedia.
- Young, Crawford. 1976. *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*. Madison and London: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Yudina, Natalia and Vera Alperovich. 2015. "Calm Before the Storm? Xenophobia and Radical Nationalism in Russia, and Efforts to Counteract Them in 2014." Available online at <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/reports-analyses/2015/04/d31818/>