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**For the Health of the Nation: Comparing Healthy Lifestyle Promotion Strategies in
Russia**

MA Thesis

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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**FOR THE HEALTH OF THE NATION:
COMPARING HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROMOTION STRATEGIES IN RUSSIA**

Nile R. Miller
Tartu, Estonia 2018

Abstract

The negative demographic trends that accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union and continue to create uncertainty about Russia's future have pushed the Russian state towards more direct involvement in the promotion of healthy lifestyle practices with the aim of increasing the population's longevity and well-being. These efforts have intensified over the past decade as the state has begun to more actively intervene into the bodily habits of Russian citizens on many other fronts, including reproductive behavior and sexual orientation, in order to craft the "ideal" Russian subject and establish the boundaries of "normal" Russian behavior. Meanwhile, other actors throughout society, motivated by their own ideas about what constitutes proper conduct, have been developing alternative strategies to encourage Russians to pursue healthy lifestyles. This thesis examines the content of the official healthy lifestyle promotion strategy, deconstructing how it envisions the ideal Russian body and frames the necessity of leading a healthy lifestyle. It also analyzes some of the strategies that contest the official one, with the aim of finding out which aspects are contested and how, as well as discerning the common discursive threads that run through all of the strategies. The study draws on a broad base of materials, from official policy documents to social media communities, and seeks to understand how various actors throughout Russian society attempt to transform the bodily conduct of their fellow citizens. In doing so, it relies heavily on the insights of Michel Foucault and others about power, biopolitics, discipline, and resistance, which allow for a nuanced understanding of how official discourses about the body and the nation in Russia are contested and how they are reproduced. The analysis revealed the prevalence of several themes across all of the strategies, including the ruinous impact of non-Russian values, the corrupting effects of capitalism and consumerism, the hostility of the outside world towards Russia, the glory of Russia's past, and the importance of maintaining traditional gender roles.

1. Introduction	6
2. Theoretical Background	12
2.1. Power	12
2.2. Strategies for Reforming the Body in 18th-20th Century Europe and Russia	20
2.3. Contestation and Resistance	27
3. Research Design and Methodology	33
3.1. Clarification of Research Question and Methodological Approach	33
3.2. Data Collection and Research Design	34
3.3. Limitations	37
4. Empirical Part	39
4.1. The Official Strategy	39
4.2. The Teetotaler Strategy	48
4.3. Running for Russia: The Imperial Ethnic Nationalist Strategy	54
4.4. Killing the State Inside Yourself: The Straight Edge Strategy	61
5. Discussion and Conclusions	66
6. References	70

1. Introduction

Since before the election of President Vladimir Putin, the Russian state has sought to craft a broad ideological consensus that would serve to unify Russian citizens around the country's ruling party. The tumultuous events of the early 90s, including Boris Yeltsin's violent conflict with the Russian parliament and the hardships wrought by the transition away from a command economy, set the stage for what Laruelle (2009, p. 10) calls "patriotic centrism": the state's establishment of a "hegemony over the spectrum of political belonging which places the unity of the nation, and therefore the unity of its political representation, under the unique banner of the presidential party." Meanwhile, the state remains as vague as possible on substantial ideological questions, as the formulation of a clear doctrine might risk "undermining the reconciliatory dynamic embodied by the presidential apparatus" (ibid., p. 136).

The Bolotnaya Square protests that broke out in 2011 reminded the Russian authorities of the urgency of reinforcing their ownership over the nation's unity. This consensus has been grounded, for example, in Soviet nostalgia, the promotion of so-called traditional Russian values, and the idea of Russia's organic multiculturalism as opposed to the false multiculturalism of Europe (Morozov 2015, p. 125). In 2012, Putin declared that Russia was facing "a clear deficit of spiritual bonds [*dukhovnye skrepy*]", which he defined as "that which has from time immemorial made us stronger and more resilient." He called on his fellow citizens to "support the institutions that promote traditional values," to take heed of the fact that "Russia developed as a multinational state [...] a state-civilization bound together by the Russian people, the Russian language and the Russian culture," and to remember that "regardless of our ethnic backgrounds, we have always been and will continue to be a united people." He spoke of the necessity of using the spheres of education, culture and youth politics as "spaces for the production of the moral and well-balanced individual and the responsible citizen of the Russian Federation" (Putin 2012).

Meanwhile, during his third term, the Russian state began to more actively embrace what Michel Foucault calls biopolitics as a means of "producing" such ideal Russian citizens (Makarychev & Medvedev 2015). According to Foucault, biopolitics "wields its power over living beings as living beings"; it is characterized by the government of the people "not by

law but by [...] intervention in the behaviour of individuals” with the objective of “foster[ing] the citizens’ life and the state’s strength” (Foucault 1988, pp. 159-160). Biopolitical practices are not exercised exclusively within Russia, nor do they represent a new form of government. Foucault traces the origin of biopolitics to 18th-century western Europe, positing that the emergence of this mode of governing people was characterized by an increasing interest of states in managing, optimizing, and producing knowledge about human lives, rather than simply disposing of them at will, in order to bolster the state’s strength (Foucault 1978, pp. 135-137). Biopolitics did not replace the more violent and coercive forms of rule, but rather “[recast] them within this concern for the population and its optimization (in terms of wealth, health, happiness, prosperity, efficiency)” (Dean 2010, p. 30). Biopolitics operates through what Foucault calls “biopower,” a form of power which is located “at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions” (Foucault 1978, p. 141). Biopower in Putin’s Russia has taken on many different forms and has been exercised by many different actors in Russian society. Makarychev and Medvedev (2015) describe how many legislative initiatives and social programs undertaken during Putin’s third term — e.g., the “gay propaganda” law, the ban on the adoption of Russian children into American families, and the various attempts to regulate reproductive behavior and promote childbirth — have implicitly or explicitly biopolitical components. As Foucault prescribed, these regulatory functions have been taken up by entities not located within the state structure itself; for example, Cossack brigades and the Orthodox Church.

These developments have been described as “biopolitical conservatism” and aim to bolster support for the state by promoting a rejection of tolerant “Western” values and bodily practices (Makarychev & Yatsyk 2015). Putin’s biopolitical conservatism seeks to enforce a certain idea of the “correct” Russian citizen; its aim is to define the bounds of Russia’s “organic community” and to securitize those who fall outside these bounds (Morozov 2015, p. 193). In securitizing the bodies of Russian homosexuals, for example, the Russian authorities lay claim to Russia’s status as the “true Europe,” in opposition to the decadent and morally corrupt “false Europe” that lies to the West (ibid.). To use Foucault’s terminology, the biopolitical measures which have been enacted by the Russian state seek to produce “docile” Russian bodies which can be “subjected, used, transformed, and improved” (Foucault 1995, p. 180). Gaufman (2017) uses the Foucauldian concept of “pastoral power”

to discuss the Russian state and the networks through which it exercises biopower in terms of a “pastor” that intervenes in the lives of each member of the Russian “flock.”

The applicability of Foucauldian concepts such as biopolitics/biopower to Russia and to non-Western contexts in general has been challenged by writers such as Said (1988), Plamper (2002), and Engelstein (1993), who problematize Foucault’s supposed Eurocentrism and assert that the processes he traced in his work developed over a specific territory and are too closely bound up with the emergence of capitalism and liberal democracy. Kangas (2015, p. 485) convincingly attributes such charges to what Agnew described as a “territorial trap”: the tendency of IR scholars “to try to pin [...] systemic or societal processes down to immutable spatial frameworks, mostly territorial states.” This tendency, Kangas argues, obscures the continuities between liberal and illiberal/authoritarian modes of government and reproduces the idea of Russia as a “self-enclosed world” not subject to external analysis (ibid.). Thus, the point of departure for this study is that the Foucauldian perspective has opened up an interesting avenue of research on the nature of power in modern-day Russia. However, I argue that the existing literature focuses on biopower as primarily a punitive mechanism wielded by the Russian state and has thus neglected to bring on board the full arsenal of Foucault’s ideas about power and how it functions.

Firstly, I argue that the literature on biopolitics in Russia has not yet provided a sufficient investigation of non-punitive forms of biopower. Central to Foucault’s understanding of power is that it does not merely punish and discipline using physical coercion; it is not merely a “lawgiver that forbids and represses,” but it also “comprises the intention to teach, to mold conduct, to instill forms of self-awareness and identities” (Faubion 2000, xix). Makarychev and Medvedev (2015), as well as Makarychev and Yatsyk (2015) acknowledge the role of biopower in renegotiating the borders of the Russian political community and enforcing certain forms of conduct. They focus primarily on actions by the Russian state that have an explicitly restrictive or punitive component, such as its anti-LGBT policies, the imprisonment of Pussy Riot, and the American adoption ban. Certainly, power can punish and coerce while also producing or stabilizing identities. However, I am interested primarily in the forms of biopower that work not by imposing material sanctions or instilling a fear of reprisal, but by producing in individuals a desire to

transform themselves in order to conform to certain ideals or norms. In other words, it could be fruitful to study how biopolitical practices can induce individuals to “voluntarily control themselves by self-imposing conformity to cultural norms through self-surveillance and self-disciplinary practices” (Pylypa 1998, p. 212). How do biopolitical discourses emanating from the state produce the desire to become the moral, well-balanced and responsible citizens Putin spoke of in 2012?

In addition, while taking into account Foucault’s insight that power is dispersed throughout society, the literature does not give due attention to competing biopolitical discourses emanating from within Russian society. The concepts of “government,” “conduct,” and “counter-conduct,” introduced by Foucault and developed more fully by authors such as Dean (2001) and Deleuze and Guattari (2010), are useful in understanding the diverse and subtle ways in which hegemonic discourses can be challenged. Government is not just a political entity or system but “any attempt to shape [...] aspects of our behaviour according to particular sets of norms and for a variety of ends” (Dean 1999, p. 18). Foucault also described government as “the conduct of conduct” (Foucault 2009, p. 389), where the first instance of “conduct” refers to the way people seek to shape the behavior of others and the second refers to the ways that people conduct themselves. However, Foucault stressed that to govern is to “structure the *possible* field of action of others” (Foucault 1982, p. 790, emphasis mine), which means that there is always the possibility for resistance to the dominant mode of conduct. Any attempt to govern the behavior of others will inevitably result in the appearance of “counter-conducts,” movements or currents within society “whose objective is a different form of conduct” (Foucault 2009, pp. 194-195). Such movements may seek “to be conducted [...] by other leaders, towards other objectives and forms of salvation, and through other procedures and methods” than the ones prescribed by the hegemonic models of conduct.

However, while they seek to be governed differently, these counter-conducts do not necessarily entirely reject the authority of the governors, so counter-conduct is not synonymous with words like “dissent” or “opposition.” Moreover, all conduct strategies are intermeshing and composed of a “multiplicity of discursive elements” (Foucault 1978, p. 100), so even oppositional counter-conducts may reproduce elements of the hegemonic discourse and thereby reinforce existing power relations. Occasionally, the hegemonic form

of government might transform itself in response to counter-conducts, incorporating and recoding elements of the latter. All strategies for conduct envision an ideal subject, prescribe different practices and forms of conduct for producing this subject, and have different ways of framing the necessity of their conduct. Returning to the previous discussion, I believe that the literature on biopolitics in Russia could be enriched by a fuller analysis of different “biopolitical counter-conducts” within Russian society, what kinds of Russian identity they presuppose, and how they overlap with each other and with the dominant strategy.

Therefore, this study will analyze the strategies used to promote healthy lifestyle practices in Russia, focusing specifically on how physical fitness and abstinence from smoking, alcohol consumption, and drug use are promoted and what discourses frame the necessity of these activities. My interest in these specific forms of conduct is triggered by the observation that there are a large number of groups involved in the promotion of healthy lifestyles, from the state itself to temperance activists to radical ethnic nationalists and others. Each group has its own strategy involving different ideas of the “healthy Russian body,” its own practices, and different ways of rationalizing these practices. Several authors (e.g., Gaufman 2017; Sperling 2016) have drawn attention to how Vladimir Putin himself has used athleticism and adherence to a healthy lifestyle as a legitimation strategy and to promote a certain image of the “proper” Russian male. Various groups within Russian society often explicitly ground the necessity of maintaining a healthy lifestyle in the pursuit of a greater good: honoring Russia’s glorious past, reversing the country’s negative demographic trends, paving the way for Russia’s re-emergence as a great power, etc. In addition to studying how these strategies are different, it is also important to understand how they are similar, and in particular how they might reproduce or challenge elements of the official discourse.

This seems to be an understudied area of research, even more so from the angle of Foucault and the counter-conducts perspective. Makarychev and Medvedev (2015, p. 47) refer to the Kremlin’s resurrection of a Soviet-era physical fitness program as part of the “biopolitical turn” in Russia, but the subject is only mentioned in passing. Gabowitsch (2016) discusses the Russian Runs [*Russkie probezhki*], a network of ultranationalist organizations devoted to the promotion of physical activity and sobriety. He describes this as a form of “subversive temperance” (ibid., p. 8), highlighting the generally anti-Kremlin

orientation of this movement's participants. While this analysis is very useful, I argue that focusing only on the oppositional nature of such groups obscures their relationship to the broader milieu of healthy lifestyle discourses and practices, which the counter-conducts perspective has the potential to make visible. Pain (2014) also notes the prevalence of the topic of healthy lifestyle promotion in online communities frequented by far-right Russian nationalists. Here again, this exclusive focus on the radical currents of healthy lifestyle promotion prevents us from getting a more complete picture of the ecosystem in which such currents emerge and develop. Moreover, the emphasis on opposition to the state obscures the ways in which the practices of these groups may reproduce the official discourses about the Russian body. The notion that resistance may sometimes reinforce vertical power relations rather than effectively challenging them is central to Foucault's understanding of power (Foucault 1980, p. 86) as well as Death's (2016) ideas about counter-conducts.¹ Finally, such analyses may fail to take into account the practices of groups who enthusiastically support the Kremlin but nonetheless have different ideas about what a healthy lifestyle is and how and why it should be pursued.

The topic of healthy lifestyle promotion strategies is interesting for a number of other reasons. For one thing, it does not generally involve physical coercion or material sanctions and is ostensibly the about self-improvement of each individual who engages in the prescribed healthy practices. At the same time, many of the healthy lifestyle promotion strategies in Russia seek to mold individuals' behavior so that it conforms to particular understandings about the healthy Russian body and the healthy Russian nation. It could thus be interesting to investigate how these strategies produce the desire to conform, functioning simultaneously as technologies of domination and technologies of self-improvement. Secondly, to the extent that healthy lifestyle promotion is not explicitly a form of political participation, it should be revealing to investigate the ways in which national and patriotic belonging are reproduced in the "banal" everyday self-improvement practices of different groups (Billig 1995). Thirdly, healthy lifestyle promotion is an activity with rich metaphorical content. The nation and/or state can be represented as an organic entity with a

¹ As will be explained in the theoretical section, I approach the ideas of resistance and power from a non-normative stance that does not imply my personal approval or disapproval of any of the actors analyzed in this thesis. For Foucault, resistance is not always something to be celebrated, nor is power by default a negative thing.

transformable “body” and varying levels of health and vitality, and these representations can be linked back to the behavior of individuals.

My primary research question consists of three parts: **“What healthy lifestyle promotion strategies are present in Russian society, what discourses does each of them embrace, and how do they contest and reinforce one another?”**

First, I establish the theoretical underpinning of the study by presenting the ideas of Foucault and later scholars about power, discipline, biopolitics, and counter-conducts. This is followed by a brief historical overview of some of the strategies states have pursued to physically transform the bodies of their citizens in order to create “ideal” subjects. I then elaborate on the idea of counter-conducts to show how contestation of these strategies might be conceptualized. After describing the methodology and data collection procedure, I move on to the empirical part, in which each strategy is analyzed on the basis of data collected mainly from policy and regulatory documents, websites and documents associated with state-supported healthy lifestyle initiatives, and online communities associated with the alternative healthy lifestyle promotion strategies. In addition to contributing to the somewhat sparse body of literature in which Foucauldian insights are applied to post-Soviet Russia, this thesis will hopefully shed more light on the interactions between Russian state discourse, the discourses of groups usually categorized as oppositional, and those of groups more supportive of the Kremlin, with the goal of revealing how they contest as well as reinforce each other.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Power

In order to understand how power is exercised over the body to transform conduct, it is first necessary to discuss Michel Foucault’s insights on the topic. Classical debates about power had developed around the writings of Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes. These writers sought to answer, respectively, the questions of what power does and what power is. Machiavelli and Hobbes represented two fundamentally different ways of thinking about power. For Hobbes, power was something to be possessed and wielded by an all-powerful sovereign, whereas for Machiavelli, power was "decentralized, strategic and contingent"

(Stör 2017, p. 143). Foucault did not dispense with either of these notions of power. In privileging the question of how power operates over that of what power is, his understanding is clearly closer to that of Machiavelli. Foucault even makes the claim that “power as such does not exist”; rather than being something which is out there and up for grabs by individuals, power comes into existence when it is exercised (Foucault 1982, p. 786). Instead of being “acquired, seized, or shared,” power is “immanent” in all types of relationships (Foucault 1978, p. 94). Thus, the themes of how power works and what it does run through all of Foucault’s writings.

Nonetheless, Foucault does not fully reject the Hobbesian sovereign; the figure of the sovereign forms an important part of his study of how the modern art of government emerged, a project which spans his entire bibliography. However, Foucault focuses on the historical contingency of sovereignty as a form of government, stating that it “rose up on the basis of a multiplicity of prior powers, [...] dense, entangled, conflicting powers” (Foucault 1978, p. 86). The idea of historical contingencies, phenomena that arise as “one possible result of a whole series of complex relations between other events” (Wickham & Kendall 1999, p. 5), is important to Foucault’s work; rather than simply appearing as the most logical form of government over men in the state of nature, the sovereign belongs to a particular moment in history. Moreover, for Foucault, while sovereign power may be exercised by a monarch or another concrete person, it would be a mistake to equate sovereign power solely with the state or with the figure of the sovereign. Foucault’s sovereignty can be found “wherever power is deployed to restrain or punish what escapes the bounds of a unified scheme of what is right” (Rouse 2005, p. 7), meaning that sovereign power can operate even, for example, in the relationships between parents and children (Foucault 1978, p. 85).

Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, first published in 1975, and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, first published in 1976, offer valuable insight into Foucault’s ideas about sovereign power and the historically contingent ways in which it came to influence the European penal system and later society as a whole. "For a long time, one of the characteristic privileges of sovereign power was the right to decide life and death" (ibid., p. 135). In describing the ritual of public executions, he asserts that such events were intended to terrorize the public and remind it of the “unrestrained presence of the sovereign,” which is the source of all laws (Foucault 1995, p. 49). A violation of the law is seen as an

attack on the sovereign. Foucault emphasizes the theatrical aspect of public executions, stressing that this was an important characteristic of each aspect of the process (ibid., p. 49). This form of punishment was less about correcting the behavior of wrongdoers than it was about exercising and reproducing the absoluteness of sovereign power through the body of the criminal and inspiring awe in others.

However, at a certain point around the beginning of the eighteenth century, an art of revolt against the violent exercise of sovereign power began to emerge among the publics that assembled to observe the executions (Foucault 1995, p. 60). At this critical juncture, “there was a whole aspect of the carnival, in which rules were inverted, authority mocked and criminals transformed into heroes” (ibid., p. 61). People began to protest against the arbitrary exercise of power and the administration of harsh punishments for offenses they regarded as minor. Again, Foucault’s account is deeply historical and is grounded in interactions between specific events occurring at the end of the 17th century, rather than implying any sort of teleology. He describes the appearance across Europe of a genre of literature in which punished criminals were celebrated as martyrs and heroes, followed by calls for the reform of the penal system (ibid., p. 68). He maintains, however, that these demands were motivated not so much by a newfound regard for humanity or equality among men as by the desire for the establishment of “a new 'economy' of the power to punish, to assure its better distribution, [...] so that it should be distributed in homogeneous circuits capable of operating everywhere, in a continuous way, down to the finest grain of the social body” (ibid., p. 80). The idea that the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century was a turning point in the way the state related to the individual recurs frequently in Foucault’s work. The move away from sovereign power marks the point at which Foucault becomes interested in how power is exercised at the level of individual bodies and how the individual is implicated in broader networks of power.

Thus, from “punishments that were spectacular in their manifestations and haphazard in their application” (ibid., p. 87), it became necessary to develop more targeted and more regular forms of punishment. This revelation precipitated the birth of the modern prison system. Importantly, developing targeted forms of correction and punishment in order to optimize the penal system implied coming up with new ways of knowing the individual: the criminal’s body became the “domain of a whole series of ‘criminological’ sciences” (ibid., p.

74). The idea that power is productive of new forms of knowledge, rather than simply being a matter of overt physical coercion, is one of Foucault's key innovations on the concept. He criticizes Marxists for exaggerating the repressive aspect of power: "[P]ower would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress [...] it produces effects at the level of desire — and also at the level of knowledge" (Foucault 1980, p. 50). Foucault's concept of "discourse" refers to the socially constructed fields of knowledge or systems of statements that render people's bodies and surroundings intelligible and produce certain types of subjects. For example, the discourses of psychiatry and medicine produce the mentally ill subject; discourses on penology produce the criminal (Wickham & Kendall 1999, p. 34). Discourses of the human body are therefore inextricably bound up with the exercise of power. This does not mean that Foucault dismisses all knowledge about the human body as invalid or corrupted because of its relationship to power; rather, in asking "how" instead of "what," he seeks to understand how different knowledges (which may well have scientific value) are instrumentalized (Faubion 2000, pp. xvii-xviii), such as how new knowledge about the body shaped the prison system and vice versa.

The new forms of punishment, as mentioned, entailed increased attention to the individual human body. Foucault stresses that the body had been a site of power since the classical age; older forms of power had also sought to produce the "docile body" that could be "subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault 1995, p. 136). What was unique about the power being exercised on the body on the beginning of the 18th century was its sheer scale; it was concerned not just with the body as a "wholesale" object but as a mechanism consisting of countless parts; "an infinitesimal power over the active body" (ibid., p. 137). Foucault refers to the new methods by which power was exercised over the body as "discipline." While these disciplinary mechanisms had their origin in the prison facilities of the 18th and 19th centuries, Foucault stresses that they tended to be "de-institutionalized" and reproduced at many sites throughout society (ibid., p. 211). Every action of this new docile body, from the prison to the classroom to the hospital, was to be strictly regimented, from its movement through space and time (enforced by time-tables and guides explaining how and in what steps particular actions, such as marching, are to be performed) to its handling of objects (for example, weapons) (ibid., pp. 149-155). The

success of these mechanisms was reinforced by “hierarchical observation,” “normalizing judgement,” and the “examination” (ibid., p. 170).

Hierarchical observation refers to a form of discipline that “coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power” (ibid., p. 170). The idea of hierarchical observation originally concerned the ideal architectural layout of a prison that would make it possible for the entire inmate population to be viewed and monitored from one central point. Foucault describes English law philosopher Jeremy Bentham’s *Panopticon*, a concept prison design that would enable the guards to observe the entire prison population from one central tower. The most relevant feature of the *Panopticon* for Foucault was that the prisoners would never know whether or by whom they were being observed; power was thus “visible” (in the sense that the guard tower could be seen from below) but “unverifiable” (the inmates could never know with certainty that they were being watched, or by whom). The strength of such a design was thus in its ability to promote adherence to disciplinary practices by inducing a sense of constant self-surveillance in the inmates (ibid., p. 201). Far from regarding the *Panopticon* as an outdated and irrelevant blueprint, Foucault asserts that “[w]e live in a society where panopticism reigns” (Foucault 2000, p. 58). In this “disciplinary society,” the older forms of power have not been replaced, but “infiltrated” by the phenomenon of discipline (ibid., p. 216). Like sovereign power, it cannot always be traced to any one institution or political structure; rather, it is reproduced throughout society in countless forms.

Foucault asserts that the new forms of punishment were distinguished by their connection to the *norm*. While the exercise of older forms of punishment had been characterized by questions such as “was this done?” and “who did it?”, now the question of how far an individual’s behavior deviated from a certain norm became relevant (ibid., p. 59). The formulation of norms and the exercise of normalizing judgment, in turn, implied the production of new forms of knowledge about individual bodies. Normalizing judgement individualizes by measuring an individual’s deviation from the norm, but at the same time it “imposes homogeneity” by seeking to remedy those deviations (Foucault 1995, p. 184). Repression is thus transferred from the physical realm to the symbolic realm by inducing individuals to transform themselves into “normal” members of society. Finally, Foucault claims that the examination combined both the previously mentioned techniques,

constituting the individual as an object of both knowledge and power that can be more effectively controlled. It was the examination that would give rise to “sociology, psychology, psychopathology, criminology, and psychoanalysis” (Foucault 2000, p. 5). Sporting competitions, physical fitness tests and similar undertakings, as discussed by Markula & Pringle (2006, p. 42), can be considered as types of examinations that rank, qualify, and constitute individuals as objects of knowledge about the human body. This insight will prove particularly useful in the discussion about the official healthy lifestyle promotion strategy in Russia.

Foucault intimates that these micro-level practices of disciplining the body were conditioned by the relations between European states in the 18th century. This suggestion allows us to see a bridge between the politics of the individual body and the larger game of geopolitics. Foucault (1995, p. 169) quotes Guibert, a French military scientist, who in 1857 wrote, “Discipline must be made national. [...] The state that I depict will have a simple, reliable, easily controlled administration. [...] It will disprove that vulgar prejudice by which we are made to imagine that empires are subjected to an imperious law of decline and ruin.” Guibert clearly articulates a connection between practices of disciplining the individual and the strength of the state. As will be discussed shortly, similar images of the decay of the state and the necessity of disciplining the individual to ensure the survival of the nation were evoked in geopolitical texts at the beginning of the 20th century. The appearance of the disciplinary techniques and the discourses that produced the new docile body seems to have made it possible to begin to think of the “healthy” state in terms of the agility, vitality, and efficiency of each individual inhabiting it.

The beginning of the 18th century also marked an important moment at which the state became something “which exists per se” and which should be governed for the sake of its own survival, as if it were a natural object (Foucault 1988, p. 151). In most locations, government was no longer performed with reference to God or to a sovereign, but to the state itself. The new aim of government was to “reinforce the state itself, its own strength, greatness and well-being, by protecting itself from the competition of other states and its own internal weaknesses” (Dean 1999, p. 104). Foucault describes this new governmental rationality as “reason of state” [*raison d’État*]. Government by reason of state required the production of new forms of exact knowledge about the strength of the state and the strength

of other states in a world marked by struggle and competition. Sadurski (2014, p. 21) points out that the concept of reason of state generally has negative connotations in Anglophone countries and is associated with that which is “antithetical to currently dominant liberal-democratic ideas.” Foucault, on the other hand, does not assign any unequivocal normative labels to the concept, in keeping with his view that most things are not essentially good or bad, but everything is potentially dangerous (Faubion 2000, p. xix). Far from being something which is incompatible with liberal government, Foucault regards the appearance of reason of state as an essential part of the genealogy of modern liberal society.

Nevertheless, Foucault does open his discussion of reason of state by referring to “mass slaughters” and the “butchery” of war that have often resulted from government in the name of the state (ibid., 147). However, the paradox of reason of state for Foucault is the “*coexistence* in political structures of large destructive mechanisms and institutions oriented toward the care of the individual life” (ibid., emphasis mine). He thus began to look through the historical record to uncover “the techniques, the practices, which give a concrete form [...] to this new kind of relationship between the social entity and the individual” (ibid., p. 153). He defines “police” as the techniques of power and knowledge that were exercised over individuals to provide for the strength of the state. The term as it was used in 18th-century France and Germany did not refer to a specific institution or profession, but a broad set of methods and practices. In Germany, the term *Polizeiwissenschaft* essentially referred to the science of the management of the state at the level of individuals. This science entailed the development of new techniques and forms of knowledge “for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations” (Foucault 1978, p. 140). One group of such techniques was “anatomo-politics”, which was focused on disciplining the individual body and constituting it as an object of knowledge and power (ibid.). *Discipline and Punish* is devoted to the genealogy of anatomo-politics and its proliferation throughout society.

However, during this era, the members of a society also increasingly began to be viewed as members of a *population*, an entity with birth and death rates, levels of health and vitality, and various other variables (ibid., p. 25). Populations could be studied and known, and if they could be known, they could become the subjects of interventions by the state and other institutions. Foucault describes such interventions as “biopolitics,” which operates using a form of power known as “biopower” (ibid., p. 140). With biopolitics, the science of

demography as the study of the population was born. The latter half of the 18th century saw the development of the “medical police,” which was devoted to the regulation of public hygiene and social medicine (Foucault 2009, p. 474). Importantly, anatomo-politics and biopolitics/biopower have a different underlying rationale than sovereign power; whereas sovereign power was characterized by right of the sovereign to take the lives of its subjects in as extravagant a way as possible, the new forms of power sought to protect the well-being of the population as a way of ensuring the prosperity of the state as a whole.

Again, this shift toward biopolitics did not take place for humanitarian reasons or because death became less acceptable; in fact, Foucault states that “wars were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century” (Foucault 1978, p. 136). However, rather than being waged with reference to a sovereign, modern wars are waged with reference to the survival of the population. Discourses of the human sciences produced by biopower thus made genocide and massacres tolerable by referring to the inherent biological threat posed by certain elements of the population. While Foucault seems to regard biopolitics as a more recent phenomenon, later scholars such as Agamben argue that the practice has ancient roots and has always been an integral part of politics (Catlaw 2007, p. 211). Esposito (2008, p. 43), however, argues that Foucault himself wavers between a view of biopolitics as a wholly novel phenomenon and a view of it as a blend of older technologies of power; he is reluctant to support either the “continuist hypothesis” or the “discontinuist hypothesis.”

Foucault seems to have taken a middle ground stance on this issue, stressing the distinct and innovative nature of biopolitics while not denying that it emerged as the interaction of older variations of power. Among the most important of these older forms is what he calls “pastoral power”, which was derived from Christian institutions (Foucault 1982, p. 782). Pastoral power concerned the relation between the pastor and his flock of followers. It had several distinct features: 1) its goal was the salvation of each member of the flock; 2) it required that the pastor be ready to sacrifice himself for the well-being of the flock; 3) it sought to understand the flock as a community but also each member of it as an individual; 4) it required access to the inner workings of the mind of each member of the flock (ibid.). Like the disciplinary mechanisms that appeared later, pastoral power was both individualizing and totalizing; the pastor developed a special body of knowledge about each

individual and exercised power by using this knowledge to guide the flock as a whole towards salvation. Pastoral power required “a permanent intervention in everyday conduct, in the management of lives, as well as in goods, wealth, and things” (Foucault 2009, p. 206). Foucault argues that, for several centuries, pastoral power was fundamentally different from political power. However, in the 18th century, the two began to merge together, forming, along with reason of state, the foundations of modern the modern state (Simons 2013, p. 312).

2.2. Strategies for Reforming the Body in 18th-20th Century Europe and Russia

By the end of the 19th century, the ideas of the state as a natural entity, biopolitics, and discipline had begun to inform the emerging discipline of geopolitics. Indeed, Rudolf Kjellén, a Swedish political scientist and one of the first geopoliticians, seems to have been the first person to use the term “biopolitics” (Lemke 2011, p. 9). Drawing on the ideas of his German predecessor Friedrich Ratzel, Kjellén understood geopolitics as “the doctrine of the state as a geographic organism” (Marklund 2015, p. 251). He formulated several sub-categories to geopolitics, one of which was biopolitics. Kjellén’s biopolitics, in contrast to his concepts of topo-politics and morpho-politics, which dealt with the location and spatial shape of the state, was concerned with the life and well-being of the people residing in the state (Abrahamsson 2013). He thought of states as organic entities with natural borders that conformed to a certain community of people. The Darwinian idea of a constant struggle between these entities was central to Kjellén’s work, and he was particularly interested in how states with less favorable demographic circumstances (such as Sweden at the end of the 19th century) could survive. He suggested that such states should “use science and technology to promote the health, productivity, and growth of the population” to increase their competitiveness on the world stage (Marklund 2015, p. 259).

Kjellén’s biopolitics is thus something similar to Foucault’s reason of state, in that he advocates for state to take interest in the health and well-being of individual members of society only insofar as it contributes to the strength of the state itself. Foucault’s power/knowledge nexus is relevant here: Kjellén’s organic metaphor of the state was intentionally based on biological knowledge about the human body (Lemke 2010, p. 423), and this body of knowledge was later instrumentalized by National Socialists and others (for

example, Latin American military dictatorships) to legitimize the extermination of certain elements of society. As mentioned earlier, however, Foucault did not see an inherent danger or evil in reason of state or in the organic conception of the state, regarding such understandings only as potentially dangerous.

The organic metaphor is less important to the work of British geographer and geopolitician Halford Mackinder; however, he still relies on the idea that the state is inherently subject to natural and eternal laws and that its people's potential can be leveraged as a tool of statecraft. His work was inspired by his worries about the survival of the British Empire, and he recruited "objective" scientific knowledge in the service of imperialism (Ó Tuathail 1996, p. 70). He regarded geographic location as one of the most important factors in a state's success, carving the world up into sea-powers and land-powers and designating Eurasia as the "pivot area" from which world domination could be staged. However, he also insisted on the importance of "manpower," which entailed "not only the idea of fighting strength but also that of productivity" (Mackinder 1942, p. xxiii). According to Ó Tuathail, "By the early twentieth century, [...] strong 'health' and 'national fitness' movements were reconfiguring how the state conceptualized and treated its inhabitants" (1996, p. 70), and Mackinder's academic work and his advocacy for the study of geography developed in this context. Mackinder called for new ways of measuring the health and fitness of British males — in other words, of turning them into objects of knowledge that could be used as a basis for biopolitical interventions by the state. His discourse of manpower "invented a biopower front in Britain's imperialist rivalry with Germany" (ibid., p. 71).

Scouting for Boys, a manual written by Boer War veteran Lord Baden-Powell in 1908 that was one of the founding documents of the Boy Scout movement, provides an illustration of how Foucauldian discipline and biopower were at work to create the docile British (male) body at the beginning of the 20th century through the "micro-physics of power" (Foucault 1995, p. 139). The manual contains moral guidance, instructive anecdotes, and detailed instructions about how to perform the skills in which each Scout was expected to be proficient. Scout training was both individualizing and totalizing; its aim was to "replace Self with Service, to make the lads individually efficient, morally and physically, with the object of using that efficiency for the service of the community" (Baden-Powell 2005, p. ii). Every aspect of the Scout's body, from his attitude towards his country to the

way he breathes, is subject to reform and regulation. Patriotism is celebrated as the highest value to which all Scouts should aspire. Scouts are described in terms of their utility, as if they were part of a larger mechanism: “by becoming a Scout and carrying out the Scout Law every boy can be of use” (ibid.). The Scout’s uniform and salute are strictly regulated, and time-tables (which were of particular interest to Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*) chart out how each hour of the day is to be spent during Scout camp.

Scouting for Boys contains an entire chapter devoted to the topic of the practice of physical fitness. Scouts are asked as citizens to subject themselves to constant self-surveillance by “[assuming] responsibility for his own development and health” (ibid., 145). The disciplining power of the norm is deployed to produce the docile Scout body; each Scout is “measured, and [learns] in which points he fails to come up to the standard” (ibid.). The chapter provides a series of exercises to be performed to promote good health, each of which is described in detail and accompanied by diagrams of the body to ensure what Foucault (1995, p. 151) described as the correct “temporal elaboration of the act.” The leaders of each Scout Patrol are given the pastoral task of “[getting] hold of each boy in your Patrol and [making] a good fellow of him” in order to ensure the success of the entire troop (Baden-Powell 1908, p. 30). Later in the manual, Baden-Powell recalls an encounter he had with a drunken fellow Boer War veteran and insists that the good Scout, and by extension the good British citizen, has nothing to do with alcohol (ibid., 158). One may discern from this anecdote the suggestion that Britain lost the First Boer War in part because of its unfit, drunken citizenry.

The use of physical training programs to foster the strength of the state by nurturing its population was not restricted to the British Empire. Other powers had recognized this form of discipline as a useful tool before Britain, and still others would do so afterwards. Already in the 18th century, the ideas of German physical education theorist Johann GutsMuths were being used in the implementation of compulsory physical education programs in Danish schools. In Denmark, against the backdrop of revolutions and wars across Europe, the gymnastic exercises proposed by GutsMuths were paired with military exercises (Pfister 2003, p. 64). In Germany, a philosophy of exercise known as Turnen was designed by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn in the early 19th century. Jahn began to develop these principles after discovering, in his role as a grammar school teaching assistant, that having

his pupils go for walks and play games was the best way of “achieving an internalization of discipline” among them (ibid., p. 65). More than a set of exercises to be completed, Turnen also incorporated the recitation of patriotic speeches and songs meant to increase Germans’ national consciousness. Despite the claim that Turnen was open to all, it was a deeply male-dominated practice, and its main emphasis was on military preparedness (ibid., p. 67). A popular gymnastics movement also appeared in Sweden. The appearance of each of these movements was conditioned by the spatial and temporal context in which each state found itself (ibid., p. 76).

It was according to this pattern that the promotion of physical fitness became a priority in the Russian Empire. Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War of 1855, the Russo-Turkish Wars in the 1870s, and regular famines had brought to the fore the need to provide for a fitter and more well-nourished population (O’Mahony 2006, p. 125). These events also served as reminders of Russia’s general backwardness in relation to the West, which spurred Russian leaders to “[refer] more frequently to the experience of Europe” (Polunov 2005, p. 87). Thus, in 1875-6, Pyotr Lesgaft, a teacher of anatomy, was sent on a War Ministry-sponsored mission to learn about how physical education was promoted across Europe. Upon his return to Russia, he began to write a study that compared German gymnastics, Swedish gymnastics, and the system of gymnastics that he himself had developed for use in a military training school in St. Petersburg. He eventually concluded that his system was superior (Shakhverdov 1951, p. 16). He regarded the English system of physical education with a mix of admiration and skepticism about the applicability of foreign philosophies to the Russian context: “[it] is readily apparent how much attention is devoted [in England] to physical education, how clearly they have articulated the link between physical and moral upbringing” (Lesgaft 1951, p. 285). At the same time, he lamented the state of physical education in Russia, where

unlike in Europe [...] there are no original methods or approaches [...] the schools take almost no interest in physical education and entrust its instruction to completely ignorant people who are familiar only with the methods that have been mechanistically adopted from foreign schools or foreign teachers. (ibid.)

Lesgaft was thus stating the need for the development of new knowledge specific to the Russian context that could be used to exercise discipline over Russian schoolchildren. His work was built on the idea that a harmonious relationship should be established between the

body and mind. He asserted that “the proper functioning of the body’s organs can only be ensured through [...] rigidly graduated and vigorous exercises” (ibid., p. 290).

While Lesgaft’s ideas were an innovation for Russia, his efforts to spark broad interest in physical education outside of military academies were largely unsuccessful (Keys 2009, p. 402). The situation began to change at the beginning of the 20th century, when the number of clubs and societies devoted to physical activities began to grow sharply (Riordan 1977). In 1905, Russia’s defeat in the Russo-Japanese War reminded the authorities of the population’s low levels of military preparedness. Moreover, they were also guided by the fact that “[t]he stereotypical European image of the Russian as a lumbering bear came to be seen as an affront to national pride” (O’Mahony 2006, p. 125). The Russian government thus began its attempts to centralize physical education and sports. In 1912, a large variety of physical education philosophies were being practiced in Russian schools, most prominently German gymnastics, Swedish gymnastics, Lesgaftian gymnastics, and finally, a system of gymnastics known as Sokol (Goloshchapov 2001, pp. 108-109). Sokol was a nationalist sporting and gymnastics movement that had been developed in the Czech region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. While its Czech version was grounded in Czech nationalism, “the Russian Sokol had an underlying great-power ideology” and so it earned the support of the Russian government and young Russians after the Russo-Japanese War (Riordan 1977, p. 35).

In its attempts to gain more control over physical education and promote physical fitness, the Russian government established the Chancery of the Central Department for the Physical Development of the population in 1913. The Russian Scouting movement was also initiated by tsarist army officers. According to Goloshchapov (2001), the Japanese defeat had moved the government towards a view in which physical education was no more than an instrument to ensure military preparedness. Accordingly, practices that were perceived as unnecessarily holistic, such as those of Lesgaft (who held ideas about the unity of body and mind and had a deeply philosophical outlook), were marginalized (ibid., p. 108). By the beginning of World War I, the new government department had been given control over all Russian sports clubs (O’Mahony 2006, p. 126). Meanwhile, the sale of vodka in Russian cities was banned to prevent a repeat of 1905, when widespread binge drinking had supposedly hobbled the war mobilization effort (Nemtsov 2011, p. 21). A year after the ban

had been initiated, I. N. Vvedenskij wrote an article in which he reported on the successes of the anti-alcohol campaign and its contribution to the war effort, noting that “[i]ndividual failures and violations of discipline took place only where the reservists got access to spirits” (Vvedenskij 1915). Vvedenskij lobbied for the state to extend the prohibition indefinitely but ultimately failed.

The Bolshevik Revolution saw the further centralization of physical education. The concept of “physical culture” [*fizicheskaia kul'tura* or *fizkul'tura*] was developed in the 1920s and was meant to establish norms for physical exercise as well as all other forms of conduct. Although *fizkul'tura* was largely dedicated to the production of a fit pool of citizens to serve in the military, it also explicitly revived Lesgaft’s holistic approach that stressed the connection between physical and moral fitness. It was imagined as a new lifestyle and not just a way for Soviet citizens to spend free time or achieve physical fitness. It was meant as a way to craft the new docile, healthy Soviet body by subjecting it to new forms of discipline: “In our Soviet circumstances, we must doggedly fight for a new healthy way of existence, because the old existence [...] was unhealthy from start to finish” (Starikov 1930, p. 78). There was thus a clear articulation between transformation of the self and transformation of the state. Participation in *fizkul'tura* was represented as a civic duty (O’Mahony 2006, p. 138). Along with *fizkul'tura* came the *fizkul'tura* parades [*prazdniki fizkul'tury*], which took place all across the Soviet Union and involved mass choreographed gymnastics displays. Such displays were adapted from the Sokol school of gymnastics mentioned above (Goloshchapov 2001, p. 34). Bourdieu (1992, p. 69) suggests that such collective demonstrations impose discipline on the body by “ordering thoughts and suggesting feelings through the rigorous marshalling of practices and the orderly disposition of bodies.” They also serve as a way of visually representing the united national body (Keys 2009).

In 1931, the *Ready for Labor and Defense* [*Gotov k trudu i oborone*, GTO] program was launched by the state. GTO was meant to further popularize physical activity by encouraging citizens to test their proficiency in a variety of exercises and be awarded with badges for meeting or exceeding the normal levels of competence [*normativy*]. It was also designed to foster patriotism. The competitive nature of GTO signaled a broader change in the attitude towards competitive forms of physical activity, as opposed to pure gymnastics, with the latter giving way to the former (Keys 2009; Louis & Louis 1980). After the

introduction of *fizkul'tura*, GTO, and physical education in Soviet schools, the population's involvement in physical activity increased sharply. In the lead-up to World War II, during the war, and afterwards, the Soviet authorities emphasized the connection between *fizkul'tura* and the heroic defense of the Motherland, a theme which was prominent in the visual culture of the time (O'Mahony 2006, pp. 145-150). After the end of the war, stories of individual victories and acts of heroism on the front began to be used as stimuli for Soviet citizens to aim for physical and moral perfection (Kharkhordin 1999, p. 237-238).

The development of the competitive sport infrastructure became a high priority after World War II, when the Soviet Union began to send participants to international sporting competitions (Louis & Louis 1980, p. 5). Goloshchapov (2001, p. 101) argues that the Soviet authorities began to invest more resources in this area because sporting victories were considered an important source of the state's international prestige and strength. On the domestic front, participation in international competitive sports was also presented as a way to bind the multinational Soviet people together, as illustrated by a propaganda poster featuring a Russian athlete and his Uzbek counterpart running side by side, with the caption "To Our Unbreakable Friendship! To New Successes in Sports!" and a large banner in the background reading "300 Years Since the Reunion of Russia and Ukraine" ("Sovetskie plakaty sport"). The goal of the Soviet physical education system seemed to be the production of obedient bodies that were inscribed with selfless patriotism and the discourse of fraternity between the peoples [*druzhba narodov*] to provide for the greatness of the Soviet state.

The purpose of this historical overview was to demonstrate some of the ways in which discipline and biopower have sought to create docile and patriotic bodies in the service of the state. These techniques of power are not always "wielded" exclusively by the state and can be found throughout society (for example, in educational institutions and scouting clubs), although the symbol of the state is often used to promote discipline. The promotion of physical fitness in the Soviet Union seems to have been primarily non-coercive; it worked in large part by leveraging new knowledges about the human body to generate new images of the normal/fit citizen and subjectivities toward which people would themselves aspire. The proliferation of images throughout Soviet society that emphasized the

greatness and moral righteousness of the *fizkul'turnik* and of Soviet athletes provided inspiring new subjectivities and models of behavior for emulation by Soviet citizens.

Foucault's understanding of power and discipline not require that individuals are not free and have no control over their actions; on the contrary, all individuals are free because they are presented "with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available" (Foucault 1982, p. 790). However, the "micro-penalties" associated with not conforming to norms, including, for example, social isolation, compel people to submit to the disciplinary techniques being used on their bodies (Markula & Pringle 2006, p. 44). The bodily reform strategies discussed in this section can thus still be considered to represent a form of symbolic repression, even when they lack a clearly punitive or restrictive element (which may have indeed been present to some degree in the case of the Soviet Union). Apart from avoiding micro-penalties, another incentive to submit oneself to discipline is the possibility of being rewarded for complying, which Foucault regards to be more effective in disciplinary societies than outright punishment: "the lazy [are] more encouraged by the desire to be rewarded in the same way as the diligent than by the fear of punishment" (Foucault 1995, p. 180).

2.3. Contestation and Resistance

Most of Foucault's earlier work focused on how certain subjectivities were produced as effects of knowledge and power and made available to individuals or imposed on them. Thus, even though he had always tried to draw attention to the fact that power does not necessarily involve the use of force or overt coercion, most of his work on discipline and power did not leave much room for individual agency, making resistance and contestation to dominant power strategies seem impossible. "Perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination," Foucault confessed in one of his late works (Foucault 1988, p. 19). However, he eventually became interested in how individuals craft their own subjectivities and how they govern themselves as opposed to simply being objects of government. "If the formation of subjectivities is a central part of power strategies, than [*sic*] self-formation is a central part of the resistance that these strategies provoke" (Mitcheson 2014, p. 65). As Markula (2003, p. 98) puts it, Foucault began to move from the study of the outside ("how individuals are subjected to knowledge"; "how individual subjects act upon

each other”) to that of the inside (“the individual’s relationship with his or her self”). He thus proposed the concept of technologies of the self,

which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (Foucault 1988, p. 18)

Foucault contrasted technologies of the self with technologies of power, “which determine the conduct of individuals” from the outside (ibid.). He explored the role of technologies of the self in ancient Greece, where care for the self was considered a civic duty. Just as knowledge is produced by the external subjugation the individual, technologies of the self allow one to develop knowledge about oneself. Ancient technologies of the self included writing, physical deprivation, and sporting activities, among others.

However, importantly for Foucault, because “[p]ower is everywhere” (Foucault 1978, p. 93), there is no “self” that governs itself and makes itself into a certain type of subject independent of relations of power. This stems from Foucault’s opposition to the humanist notion that each individual has a “true self” that can be revealed (Markula & Pringle 2006, p. 139). He believed that there is no “self” prior to discourses, systems of rules which set the bounds of the knowable and the say-able. There is no pre-discursive self because “there is no body, no sexuality, no gender, and no subjectivity before inscription in language” (Carter 2013, p. 585). Discourses in turn are produced by power, which Foucault believed to be inherent in all social relationships. Already in the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault began to develop the idea that any given social unit is pervaded by a multiplicity of power strategies, which “are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole” (Foucault 1978, p. 94). He asserts that power strategies are everywhere and that there is nothing “outside” of the web of competing strategies. The various power strategies presuppose different types of subjects, have different objectives, and imply different ways of producing that subject: “there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives” (Foucault 1978, p. 95). However, Foucault stresses that while these power strategies are intelligible to the analyst and have their own internal logic, they are not the result of the choice of any individual actor. While power strategies are distinct, they are also mutable and heterogeneous. They are mutable because they change as they interact with each other, sometimes appropriating elements of other

relations in order to become stronger, although not necessarily on purpose. They are heterogeneous and are composed of a “multiplicity of discursive elements” (Foucault 1978, p. 100) that may be shared among different power strategies and that may contradict one another.

The idea that power is everywhere does not mean that technologies of the self are an illusion and that people are not free after all, but rather that in engaging in practices of the self, people are still operating within the context of the various discourses and power strategies that are present in their social environments. Resistance is possible because individuals are free and they can adopt “different strategies in response to the strategies of domination” (Mitcheson 2012, p. 66), but this choice never takes place outside of the context of power relations. Moreover, in taking up practices of the self, people may “reproduce existing patterns of interaction” between power relations (ibid., p. 65). For example, a person who decides to stop drinking alcohol for purely personal reasons is still doing so within the bounds of a discourse that establishes alcohol consumption as an undesirable behavior for physiological and/or social reasons. A person who decides to go to the gym to pursue his or her personal fitness goals still does so in the context of discourses regulating the “fit” body and the “unfit” body, which are effects of power. Therefore, technologies of the self are always embedded in specific discourses and power relations and are located at the nexus between self-conduct and conduct from the outside.

In order to better understand this dynamic, Foucault introduced the concept of “governmentality”: the “contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self” (Foucault 1988, p. 19). This concept stemmed from his understanding of “government” as the “way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed” (Foucault 1982, p. 790), or, put another way, the “conduct of conduct” (Foucault 2009, p. 389). His study of Christian pastoral power led him towards some important insights about the interplay between government from the outside and resistance. As part of his *Security, Territory, Population* lecture series, he began to speak of resistance to the forms of conduct being exercised by the pastor in the Christian church. He stressed that the term conduct [*conduite*] has more than one meaning: it can refer to the *act* of conducting (i.e., directing) others or oneself, and it can also refer to the *way* in which one person conducts others or conducts himself (ibid., p. 258). Pastors sought to modify the conduct of each

member of the flock so that they may be led towards salvation. However, movements began to appear that sought

to be conducted differently, by other leaders [*conducuteurs*] and other shepherds, towards other objectives and forms of salvation, and through other procedures and methods. They are movements that also seek, possibly at any rate, to escape direction by others and to define the way for each to conduct himself (ibid., p. 259).

The specific pastoral “counter-conducts” (ibid., p. 268) Foucault describes are asceticism, the formation of communities independent of the Church, mysticism, the reading of Scripture, and the belief that the end times were about to happen (“eschatological beliefs”). These counter-conducts were each associated with particular practices of the self that sought to create new kinds of subjects toward different ends and by different means. Foucault identifies asceticism as a counter-conduct because its practitioners sought to develop mastery over their own bodies by subjecting them to constant trials and making them impervious to suffering, undermining the pastor’s ability to enforce their obedience. The communities that were formed separate from the Church often rejected the authority of the pastor by claiming that he himself was in a state of sin or the embodiment of the Antichrist (ibid., p. 275). Mysticism involved nurturing the belief that a person could become one with God, which removed the need for a pastor as a mediator between the two. The reading of Scripture served a similar function: those who had access to it had no need for an interpreter. Finally, the belief that the end times were near implied a belief in the impending return of God to earth, which would remove the need for a pastor who guides his flock towards salvation (ibid., p. 281).

However, Foucault stresses that while such counter-conducts sought to modify existing power relations, they “did not have as their objective how to get rid of the pastorate in general, of any pastorate, but rather: how to benefit from a better pastorate, how to be guided better, more certainly saved, maintain obedience better, and approach truth better” (ibid., p. 231). Therefore, while a counter-conduct might be identified by its outright rejection of the pastor, the most important feature of a counter-conduct is its practitioners’ desire to be governed differently, which might even imply being governed *more*. Foucault was careful not to equate counter-conducts with concepts such as “revolt,” “disobedience,” and “dissidence,” which he believed did not capture “more diffuse and subdued forms of resistance” and carried too many normative connotations (ibid., p. 200). Moreover, Foucault

discusses how the pastorate itself was often forced to adopt elements of the various counter-conducts in order to remain dominant (ibid., p. 215), illustrating his point about the mutability of power relations.

I argue that this counter-conducts approach can be used as a lens through which to analyze the non-hegemonic healthy lifestyle promotion strategies in Russia. Such an approach “looks within government to see how forms of resistance rely upon, and are even implicated within, the strategies, techniques and power relationships they oppose” (Death 2016, p. 210), allowing us to see how the discourse of groups nominally opposed to the Russian state may still reinforce certain aspects of its biopolitical strategy. On the other hand, it also makes it possible to see how groups and individuals that openly support the state may propose alternative subjectivities and biopolitical practices. Finally, it can offer insight into how the state itself might change its biopolitical strategy in response to these biopolitical counter-conducts. An objection to the use of this approach might be that Foucault wrote about the pastorate as a form of government that preceded biopolitics. However, as noted earlier, Foucault also stressed that the pastorate was a foundational element of the modern state and that many of its aspects persisted beyond the 18th century.

A further objection (e.g., Said 1988; Plamper 2002; Engelstein 1993) could be that the concepts of the pastorate and pastoral counter-conducts, as well as virtually all of Foucault’s ideas, were developed with reference to Western Europe and Western Christianity and thus may not be applicable to Russia. Foucault himself (Foucault 2009, p. 155) intimated that the “Eastern Christian pastorate” might have had unique features for which he could not account. While I agree that the Foucauldian framework should not be applied randomly and without reflection, I follow Kangas (2015, p. 488) who suggests viewing it “less as a historical schema and more as a flexible analytical tool” that can be tested in a variety of contexts. A full Foucauldian genealogy of the Russian Orthodox pastorate, its counter-conducts, and its contribution to the structure of the modern Russian state, which might be required to settle the question of applicability, is beyond the scope of this study. Kangas also cautions against restricting Foucault’s ideas about government to bounded territorial units, as doing so can obscure the continuities between modes of government in different countries and reproduce the idea of a “special path” for Russia that does not lend itself to outside analysis (ibid.). Moreover, Gaufman (2017, p. 76) convincingly demonstrated how the

concept of the pastorate could be applied to Russia, suggesting that it may indeed be an ideal lens through which to study forms of government in illiberal settings “given [their] reliance on detailed knowledge of individuals and incomplete transition to the administrative state.”

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Clarification of Research Question and Methodological Approach

The main research question of this thesis is the following:

“What healthy lifestyle promotion strategies are present in Russian society, what discourses does each of them embrace, and how do they contest and reinforce one another?”

I use the term “healthy lifestyle promotion strategies” to refer to the discourses and practices used by the Russian state and state-sponsored institutions to encourage the uptake of healthy lifestyles and as well as the competing discourses and practices (the “counter-conducts”).

The use of the word “strategy” is meant to convey the notion that the state as well as each of the “counter-conducts” have their own objectives and reasons for pursuing those objectives.

It is also intended to encompass discourses as well as the healthy lifestyle practices which are given meaning by those discourses. By “healthy lifestyle promotion,” I refer primarily to the promotion of physical fitness, participation in sports, sobriety, smoking cessation, and abstinence from drugs.

The basic methodological approach I will use to analyze the healthy lifestyle promotion strategies is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA “employs interdisciplinary techniques of text analysis to look at how texts construct representations of the world, social identities, and social relationships” (Luke 1997). It is not a linguistic exercise but an examination of social phenomena, and it is particularly interested in power and “the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (van Dijk 1993, p. 249). It is therefore well-positioned to analyze how the official healthy lifestyle promotion strategy in Russia is constructed and how these forms of conduct are contested and reproduced.

However, while CDA is typically aimed at “the power elites that enact, sustain, legitimate, condone or ignore social inequality and injustice” and has the agenda of promoting social justice (ibid., p. 252), I take a less normative stance more in line with Foucault that 1) does not view power as fundamentally oppressive, 2) looks past the “elites” to also examine how

power is exercised by and within other groups, and 3) does not make any claims or assumptions as to the “righteousness” of these groups.

While there is no such thing as “the Foucauldian method” if “method” is taken to mean a rigid set of rules, steps, and ways of interpreting data (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine 2008; Hook 2001), Foucauldian analysis can be deployed in a wide variety of contexts depending on the particular research question at hand. I therefore augment my approach with Foucault’s insights about power, discipline, the production of subjectivities, technologies of the self, and other ideas. While Foucault himself was mostly interested in “historical documents, legal cases, sets of rules and descriptions of institutional practice,” the kinds of texts to be included in a Foucauldian-style discourse analysis depend entirely on the research task (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine 2008, p. 14). I embrace a broad understanding of the term “text” that encompasses “anything that generates meaning through signifying practices [...]. This includes the generation of meaning through images, sounds, objects [...] and activities” (Barker 2004, p. 199). The sources from which I will draw these “texts” are described in more detail in the next section.

3.2. Data Collection and Research Design

The primary units of analysis in this study are “healthy lifestyle promotion strategies.” While my initial instinct had been to compare and contrast the official healthy lifestyle promotion strategy with a singular hypothetical “nationalist” one, a review of the relevant literature on the ideological divisions in Russian society made it clear that this distinction might obscure more than it would reveal. Laruelle (2009, p. 10), for example, points out that “nationalism has come to dominate the whole political spectrum and constitutes the common denominator of political correctness” in Russia. Moreover, the landscape of groups and ideological currents typically associated with “nationalism” in Russia is quite diverse and does not lend itself to a single label. Another option would have been to identify the strategies solely on the basis of their advancement by groups that openly oppose the Putin regime. However, as Cheskin and Marsh (2015) point out, consent and dissent are both multi-layered phenomena in Russia; Vladimir Zhirinovsky’s Liberal Democratic Party, for example, advances a hardline imperialist and populist politics that could be considered more extreme than that of Putin and United Russia but still maintains “almost unconditional support for the political

establishment” (Laruelle 2009, pp. 98-99). The counter-conducts approach makes it easier to account for counter-hegemonic healthy lifestyle promotion strategies that nonetheless do not necessarily seek to challenge or subvert the authority of the Russian state.

Therefore, to figure out what alternative strategies of healthy lifestyle promotion were present in Russian society, I began the process by developing a pool of primary data and then forming categories on the basis of those data, rather than developing categories first, collecting data, and then sorting the data into those rigid categories. This procedure resembles the first two steps of the “grounded theory” research method, in which the analyst “collects some data, explores the data through initial open coding, establishes tentative linkages between categories, and then returns to the field to collect further data” (Willig 2013, p. 72). The point was to avoid imposing artificial categories onto the data to the greatest extent possible. I did, however, begin by presuming the existence of an “official” strategy advanced by the Russian state as well as institutions and organizations affiliated with or financed by the state. Below I will describe how I collected the initial data and identified some of the alternative strategies.

A necessary first step was surveying the Russian internet in order to reconstruct the ideological landscape of groups involved in healthy lifestyle promotion. This is based on the assumption, following Pain (2014), that Russian social media platforms are generally a reliable mirror of the ideological divisions in Russian society. As a starting point, I searched VKontakte (vk.com), the largest Russian-language social networking platform, for communities that published content related to the promotion of healthy lifestyles by using keywords in Russian such as “healthy lifestyle” [*zdorovyj obraz zhizni*], “ZOZh” (an abbreviation of the term “healthy lifestyle” in Russian), “sobriety” [*trezvost*], and “health of the nation” [*zdorov’ye natsii*]. In addition, I focused mainly on pages that made frequent reference to themes such as Russia, the Motherland, or the Russian nation, as opposed to ones that contained generic information about health and fitness.

Then, I attempted to reveal links between these different communities and with other websites. A convenient way of discovering links between groups on VKontakte and elsewhere on the internet is by looking at a group’s “links” [*ssylki*] section, where the page’s administrators can manually input links to related groups and websites. Group administrators can also link directly to external content that they feel is appropriate for their communities.

A cursory analysis of the content in each community/on each website was also performed to begin to get a picture of the discursive fields in which they might be embedded. After I had analyzed this initial pool of data, some “clusters” of groups that were related because of similar ideological content or affiliation with particular movements or organizations had begun to form. Based on these clusters, I drew up three categories, which I took to represent separate “counter-conducts” advancing different healthy lifestyle promotion strategies. While subsets of each of the strategies could conceivably be identified, the following three seemed to be the largest possible categories that are still more or less internally coherent:

1. The “**teetotaler**” strategy. This strategy is made up of groups whose primary area of activity is informing the Russian public about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, and lobbying the government for a total ban on the sale of alcohol. It represents a blend of, among other elements, anti-Western conspiracy theories, Soviet nostalgia, and medical discourses and has its roots in the *perestroika*-era temperance movement. I identified the two most influential organizations belonging to this strategy as the Society of the Fight for the Nation’s Sobriety [*Soyuz Bor’by za Narodnuiu Trezvost’* or SBNT] and Common Cause [*Obshchee delo*] based on the number of times that these groups were linked and referenced on pages belonging to this strategy.
2. The “**imperial ethnic nationalist**” strategy. I associate with this strategy groups that ground the legitimacy of their practices in the idea that the ethnic Russian nation is being threatened by vices such as drinking and physical inactivity. They appeal to the greatness of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union to attract followers and generally have an oppositional view of the state. They have a highly messianic view of their cause and prioritize garnering the attention of the public. The most prominent group is the Russian Runs [*Russkie probezhki*] network, which has a large presence on VKontakte.
3. The “**Straight Edge**” strategy. This strategy belongs to groups that explicitly adhere to the Straight Edge lifestyle, an international subculture that involves total abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, and in the Russian case, intense physical training. In my search, I discovered that virtually all these groups also

professed a white nationalist/neo-Nazi ideology. Pursuing a healthy lifestyle is framed as necessary for the salvation of the ethnic Russian nation but also for that of the white race. These groups have low public visibility because of their violent ideology and staunch opposition to the state. The largest communities devoted to the Straight Edge on VKontakte (by number of followers) are Fine Line [*Chyotkaya gran*'] and Iron Rus [*Zheleznaya Rus*'].

During the next stage of my research, I analyzed the official strategy by conducting a thorough reading of regulatory and policy documents related to healthy lifestyle promotion, and I also considered materials related to the state's flagship initiative to promote physical activity, Ready for Labor and Defense [*Gotov k trudu i oborone*, GTO]. I then analyzed materials published by Sober Russia, an organization sponsored by the Russian state. Next, the websites and/or VKontakte communities for each of the groups named above were considered. On the VKontakte groups, I only considered top-level posts; that is, I only read content posted by group administrators and disregarded comments left by other users. My analysis was supported by the qualitative research software MAXQDA, which helped me keep track of the broader themes and discourses underlying each strategy and allowed for cross-strategy comparisons. All the materials come from after 2009, with the majority having been published during the period of 2012-2018.

3.3. Limitations

One of the main limitations of this study is that it deals primarily with how certain strategies *seek* to reform conduct and create new subjects but does not account for the success of those strategies, nor is it sufficient to provide an understanding of how certain healthy lifestyle practices are “translated” by the individual people who adopt them. After all, “meanings are never simply inscribed on the minds and bodies of those to whom they are directed or on whom they are ‘imposed’ but are always reinscribed in the act of reception” (Toews 1987, p. 884). Answering these questions would have required a different methodology that involved directly interviewing individuals involved in the various strategies I have identified. While this would have been fruitful and could be pursued in future research, my study is more concerned with the “input” than the “output” of these strategies. Moreover, because of the

secretive and anonymous nature of the activities of many of the groups involved (e.g., neo-Nazis involved in the Straight Edge subculture), contacting and developing rapport with them would have proved difficult, especially for a foreign researcher.

A further limitation of this study is its bias toward explicitly patriotic discourses and, thus, its exclusion of the more generic or internationalized healthy lifestyle discourses that might be discovered, for example, in the Russian editions of international lifestyle publications. Taking these into account might have offered interesting insight into how the more cosmopolitan self-improvement discourses in Russia compare and contrast to the patriotic ones. However, because of space and time constraints, I decided to focus on the discourses that in one way or another seemed to frame leading a healthy lifestyle as an imperative of being a good Russian citizen or member of the Russian nation.

4. Healthy Lifestyle Promotion Strategies in Russia

4.1. The Official Strategy

As in the rest of the world, the Russian state imagines its population as a natural entity with its own dynamics and characteristics that can be governed and transformed. Anxiety about the demographic situation of the Russian population is the fundamental factor undergirding the state's healthy lifestyle promotion strategy and permeates all of the other strategies analyzed in this thesis. This is due to the fact that the collapse of the Soviet Union was accompanied by a catastrophic rise in mortality and a corresponding decrease in Russia's birth rate, the country's first such peacetime "demographic shock"; moreover, despite some improvements in the 2000s, the overall downward trend of Russia's population seems indefinite (Eberstad 2010).

Central to the Russian state's efforts to reverse the negative demographic trends have been measures aimed at reducing the population's consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and narcotics. The primary objectives of its anti-alcohol strategy are the "reduction of the volume of alcohol consumption [...], the improvement of the country's demographic situation, an increase in the population's life expectancy, a reduction in mortality, and the creation of stimuli to engage in a healthy lifestyle" ("O kontseptsii realizatsii"). Excessive alcohol consumption is named as "a nationwide threat on the level of the individual, the family, the society, and the state" (ibid.). The demographic well-being of the country and its physical security, as well as the stability of all other social institutions, are thus constructed as matters of individual conduct, the transformation of which requires biopolitical intervention by the state.

The 2009 "Concept of State Policy for the Reduction of the Scale of Alcohol Abuse," the most explicit articulation of the state's anti-alcohol policy, stresses that before the 1970s, the volume of alcohol consumption in Russia was lower than in Europe, which seems to reflect a general tendency to use Europe as a yardstick of Russia's progress. The rise in alcohol abuse beginning in the 1970s and reaching a crescendo in the early 1990s is explained partially by "a shift in priorities in favor of economic interests, to the detriment of the population's health"; similarly, the increase in illegal drug use is attributed to "a shift in personal attitudes toward consumeristic values" (ibid.). These cause-effect attributions seem

to imply that during the Soviet period, the state was better able to safeguard the well-being of the population as it had total control over all means of production, and the population's conduct, in turn, was uncorrupted by the hedonistic consumerism that accompanied the collapse of central planning. Companies producing alcoholic beverages are also represented as amoral actors who make profits by concealing the alcoholic content of their products and using eye-catching labels to attract the attention of young Russians (ibid.), whose consumption of alcohol is seen as having particularly ruinous implications for the country's economy. However, the consumption of alcohol is not seen as totally incompatible with a healthy lifestyle, nor is the legitimacy of alcohol production as an economic activity rejected outright; the state seeks to increase the market share of "high-quality Russian wines" in order to "promote cultured alcohol consumption" (ibid.).

The Russian state's anti-alcohol and anti-narcotic measures stress that informational campaigns must be used to redefine Russians' relationships with their bodies and with other bodies. The transition to a healthy lifestyle must occur not only on the level of bodily practices, but also on the level of thoughts and attitudes; it is framed as a matter of individual and collective morality. Among the state's objectives for such informational campaigns are "the reorientation of the population toward the conduct of a sober and healthy lifestyle" and "the bolstering of the morality and self-identity of children and young people with the goal of enabling them to effectively abstain from the consumption of alcohol" (ibid.). Along with the 2010 Strategy for the State's Antinarcotic Policy's description of the danger of "the spread of tolerant attitudes toward the non-medical use of narcotics" ("Ob utverzhdanii Strategii gosudarstvennoj", IV.23.a) and the 2009 anti-alcohol strategy's assertion of the necessity of "promoting intolerant attitudes towards displays of excessive alcohol usage" ("O kontseptsii realizatsii"), these statements evoke the idea of a field of competing discourses about what constitutes appropriate conduct and an enlightened, paternalistic state that is responsible for guiding its population toward the correct one.

A further assumption that seems to underlie the state's anti-drugs and anti-narcotics policy is that increased drug and alcohol use in Russia are primarily the result of a systematic campaign by foreign actors to undermine Russian national security. The Strategy for the State's Anti-Narcotic Policy lays out the need to counter "narco-aggression" [*narkoagressiya*] (ibid.), which creates the subject position of a conscious aggressor. Among

the proposed solutions to the problem of illegal drug use is increased surveillance over foreign citizens residing in the country, reflecting the idea that the drug problem is caused or exacerbated by foreign influence and betraying a securitization of this discourse. Moreover, the previously mentioned emphasis on shifting values and attitudes about drugs and alcohol also betrays the notion that external forces are working to erode the health of the Russian population by morally corrupting them, which belongs to a “general discourse over cultural contamination by foreign liberal values” (Marshall 2014, p. 17).

The promotion of sports and physical activity is proposed as a solution to the problems of alcohol and drug abuse, reflecting the view that these activities are useful in transforming the individual both inside and out. The concept of “physical culture” [*fizkul'tura*], formulated during Soviet times, is still used by the Russian state and has persisted intact, referring to the rejuvenation of the mind through the rejuvenation of the body. It forms part of the title of the primary document regulating the conduct of sports and physical activity in Russia: “On Physical Culture and Sport.” This document defines “physical culture” as

that subset of culture comprising the range of values, norms, and knowledge that are created and used by society with the objectives of increasing the individual’s physical and intellectual capabilities, perfecting his motor skills, and instilling a healthy lifestyle; socialization through physical education, physical preparedness, and physical development. (“O fizicheskoi kul'ture i sporte”, 2.26)

This moral and physical development of the individual is explicitly linked to the Russian state’s prestige on the world stage: “The involvement of the masses in physical culture and the state of the population’s health [...] are undeniable proof of the vitality and spiritual fortitude, as well as the military and political might, of any nation” (“O federal’noj tselevoj programme”, p. 7). This reflects a view of the state as a natural entity whose greatness and competitiveness are bound up with the physical well-being of its inhabitants. An instrumental function of the state’s physical culture strategy is the formation of a pool of potential future competitive athletes, who are to be constituted as athletic subjects from an early age.

Foucault was interested in how power was exercised over spaces, which led him to study how Jeremy Bentham’s *Panopticon* promoted internalized discipline and social control. The Russian state’s healthy lifestyle promotion strategy places a heavy emphasis on

spatiality. The regulation, renovation, and construction of sites of physical activity is envisioned as crucial to the maintenance of the nation's physical health. Certain spaces are designated as "sites of sport" [*ob"ekty sporta*] which are to be used and governed according to specific rules ("O fizicheskoi kul'ture i sporte", 2.7). For example, these sites must be equipped with video surveillance systems that enable the identification of individuals from a distance (ibid., 37.9). In addition, individuals can be designated or volunteer as stewards [*kontrolyory-rasporyaditeli*], who receive extensive training on the enforcement on how to enforce proper conduct among spectators during sporting events, particularly football matches. The stewards are endowed with the authority to determine whether an individual belongs at a site of sport and enforce the standards of behavior laid out in federal law. The Ministry of Internal Affairs also keeps a running list of individuals whose presence in these spaces is prohibited ("Spisok lits"). These mechanisms ensure that attendees of sporting events and other such gatherings are in a state of constant vigilance and obedience to the accepted forms of conduct in such spaces.

The most prominent initiative in the field of physical education is the "Ready for Labor and Defense" program, or GTO (*Gotov k Trudu i Oborone*). GTO, as mentioned previously, was introduced during the 1930s as a way of encouraging the masses to engage in physical culture, as well as to increase the military readiness of Soviet citizens. The program was resurrected on Putin's orders in 2014. It was, however, going to be rebranded with a new name that maintained the original acronym: "I Am Proud of You, My Fatherland" (*Gorzhus' Toboj, Otechestvo*). In the end, Putin elected to preserve the original name of the program "as an homage to tradition and our national history" ("Putin podpisal ukaz"). In maintaining its original name, Putin was clearly counting on the symbolic power of Soviet nostalgia to attract people to the reinvigorated GTO. The move reflected a longing for a past in which the people were physically and morally fit and in which patriotism was expressed at the level of the individual body.

This sense of nostalgia for a bygone era is vivid in the narrative of the program's history on the official GTO website: "...back then, more than half of the country's population were GTO medalists, and everyone was ready for labor and defense!" ("GTO, Istoriya GTO"). It emphasizes the role GTO played in protecting the Soviet Union from external enemies, securing the country's victory over Nazi Germany, and ensuring its international

sporting prestige in the post-WWII period. The narrative of the original GTO ends with the sober statement that “The fall of the Soviet Union led to a collapse in the efforts to engage the population in physical activity” (ibid.). This implies that a strong state should have a leading role in intervening in the bodily practices of the citizenry.

The new program’s stated objectives are:

an increased capacity to take advantage of the opportunities presented by physical culture and sport in maintaining health, forming harmonious and well-rounded individuals, fostering patriotism, and ensuring continuity in the physical education of the population. (“Ob utverzhenii polozheniia”, II. 5)

Another explicit goal of the new GTO is to “instill in the population a conscious desire for systematic participation in physical culture and sports, physical perfection, and the practice of a healthy lifestyle” (ibid., II. v). In this way, it seeks to transform ways of thinking about conduct and make self-work in the service of the state a priority. Absent from the decrees and handbooks about the GTO are explicit references to increasing the population’s overall military preparedness; however, given the fact that the program was preserved with its original name (“Ready for Labor and *Defense*”) and the way in which it is tied into the narrative about Soviet resilience during World War II, it can be hypothesized that this is one of the objectives. The concluding section of the GTO website’s “History” page, titled “Why Participate in the GTO in the 21st Century?”, also emphasizes the importance of physical fitness in being a successful participant in a competitive market economy. Thus, while the state still has a dominant role in the new GTO, the program also seeks to produce neoliberal subjects who are “compelled to assume market-based values in all of their judgments and practices in order to amass sufficient quantities of ‘human capital’ and thereby become ‘entrepreneurs of themselves’” (Hamman 2009, p. 38).

The themes of unity and belongingness can be met throughout the GTO promotional materials and handbooks, in many ways mirroring the Soviet discourse of “fraternity between the peoples.” The idea of the country as a team [*komanda*] is used to increase the popularity of the program; for example, in late 2017 and early 2018, a centrally-organized series of GTO testing festivals was held nationwide under the title “One Country, One Team!” (“Vserossiiskij fizkul’turnyj festival”). The notion of a team implies a set of shared attitudes and objectives, while also creating a subject position for a coach or team leader responsible for facilitating the team’s harmony. The GTO is also seen as a way of promoting

“national self-identification” and “national consciousness” (“My - Komanda GTO!”, p. 12); presumably, it is envisioned as a path toward affirming oneself as a member of the Russian nation. On the other hand, it is also fundamentally rooted in post-WWII discourses of individual victories, heroism, and the ascetic subjection of the body to the will (Kharkhordin 1999, pp. 237-238). These two dimensions are encapsulated in the refrain of song published on the GTO’s official VKontakte page titled “Be Victorious!” [“*Pobezhdaj!*”]:

Every day, be victorious over yourself [*sam sebya pobezhdaj*] / Be resilient, flexible, and strong! / Fulfill the tests of the GTO, be a part of Team Russia! / Work on yourself and train your spirit [*dukh zakalyaj*] / To be energetic, swift, and active! / Get everyone around you excited about sports / And all of Russia will be healthy! (“VFSK GTO”).

As in Soviet times, the GTO requires participants to complete a series of “tests” [*ispytanie*], or physical exercises. For each gender and age group, there is a set of mandatory exercises. Participants can choose to compete for a bronze, silver, or gold medal; each medal level requires each exercise to be completed a certain number of times, with a certain speed, or with a certain level of proficiency (these requirements are called *normativy*). To find out one’s *normativy*, one must visit the GTO website’s calculator and enter in his or her age and gender. For example, according to the calculator, an 18-year-old male who wants to try for a bronze GTO medal must be able to do ten chin-ups and run three kilometers in no more than 14 minutes and 30 seconds, among other requirements. Elective exercises include swimming, long jumping, rowing, shooting, and others. Each federal subject is also encouraged to include traditional/ethnic group-specific sports in its local program. There are extensive rules regulating how each exercise must be performed (“*Metodicheskie rekomendatsii*”), including the timing, (Foucault’s “temporal elaboration of the act” [Foucault 1995, p. 151]), the positioning of the body (the “correlation of the body and the gesture” [ibid., p. 152]), and, for exercises involving weapons or other equipment, the way in which these objects must be handled (the “body-object articulation” [ibid.]).

The exercises and their corresponding *normativy* are used to fulfill two purposes: on one hand, they help individuals assess their own physical fitness; on the other hand, they are used by the state to gauge the physical fitness of the population overall (“*Ob utverzhenii polozheniia*”, 9a-9b). The disciplinary component of the GTO is abundantly clear. The GTO serves as an “examination” in the Foucauldian sense: something that ranks, qualifies, and renders individual Russian bodies knowable and transformable by others as well as by the

self. With its focus on medals, it rewards rather than punishing (gold medalists even receive extra points when applying to universities [“Metodicheskiye rekomendatsii”, p. 141]). Drawing upon a potent reservoir of symbols and references to a shared Soviet past, the GTO is used to construct (in material terms and in the sense of the creation of new subjectivities) the fit Russian body.

4.1.1. Outsourcing Healthy Lifestyle Promotion: Sober Russia

As is the case in any country, the Russian state’s biopolitical agenda is deployed by a large number of actors. One of the most visible actors advancing the state’s healthy lifestyle promotion strategy is an organization called Sober Russia [*Trezvaya Rossiya*]. The state-funded “federal project” was launched in 2012 under the leadership of Sultan Khamzaev, a native of the Republic of Dagestan who holds the title of Coordinator of Interethnic and Interconfessional Relations for Putin’s United Russia party (“Zapusk federal’nogo proekta”). Its mission is to “protect Russian citizens from the threat presented by alcohol and drugs, promote the practice of a healthy lifestyle, and popularize the GTO” (“O proekte”).

The most visible activities of Sober Russia are its “anti-alcohol raids.” During these raids, representatives of the organization work with journalists and police to expose shopkeepers who sell alcohol and tobacco products to minors, without the appropriate labeling, or outside of the hours stipulated by the law. Videos of these raids are published across the organization’s social media pages, accompanied by lengthy texts condemning the shopkeepers. By March 2017, Sober Russia claimed to have conducted 1300 such raids (*Trezvaya Rossiya* 2017, March 30). Another typical activity of A Sober Russia is the organization of open-air fitness classes, runs, and cycling competitions. These events are meant to capture the attention of passersby and convince them to get involved in physical activity (*Trezvaya Rossiya* 2015, June 2). In putting their bodies on display, participants attempt to influence the public’s understanding of normal conduct and the normal body. This genre of healthy lifestyle promotion resembles the “*fizkul’tura* parades” of Soviet times and also mirrors that of some of Russia’s radical nationalist groups.

As part of its educational program, Sober Russia conducts “sobriety lessons” in schools across the country, in which representatives of the organization lecture about the dangers of alcohol consumption. A typical lesson includes a showing of a short animated

film titled “A Lesson in Sobriety” [“*Urok trezvosti*”], in which the organization lays out its view of the stakes involved in not practicing a healthy lifestyle. Alcohol consumers are portrayed as societal rejects whose brains are chemically incapable of producing authentic happiness; alcohol violates a person’s contact with his untainted inner Self. The disreputable excessive alcohol drinker is contrasted with the athletic, self-disciplined, and successful sober person, reproducing the link found in the official discourse between abstinence from drugs and alcohol, sports, and moral purity. According to the film, many of the ethnic groups comprising the gene pool [*genofond*] of Russia are genetically predisposed towards alcoholism and can become addicted after one short bout of heavy drinking. In these populations, “the products of the breakdown of ethanol are not removed from the body, but rather accumulate in the blood” (“*Urok trezvosti*”). This notion resembles the “firewater myths” that appeared when European colonists in the Americas first made contact with Natives, according to which “White drunkenness was interpreted as the misbehavior of an individual; Native drunkenness was interpreted in terms of the inferiority of a race” (Coyhis & White 2002, p. 2).

The topic of gender roles and gender relations is prominent in the film. It stresses that alcohol can lead to a hormonal imbalance that causes women to become more like men and vice versa. Viewers are also reminded that alcohol consumption can lead to impotence and decreased sexual potency in males. By contrast, the film emphasizes that alcohol can lead to promiscuous behavior [*dostupnost*] in women and makes them unattractive. An illustration of two disheveled and intoxicated women appears on the screen, and the narrator comments, “Guys, alcohol doesn’t make you look good either. Think about what kind of girl you want to attract: *this* kind of girl?” Thus, female drunkenness is constructed as more of a moral failing than is male drunkenness, which is bad primarily because of its implications for the man’s ability to attract and mate with women. Alcohol is bad because it disrupts proper Russian gender roles, which are laid out in the following way:

Guys, you were created to be great, to conquer new heights and to be real men! Each of you was made to be a protector of women, children, and the Motherland; to serve as a role model for young boys, and to inspire the admiration of women and the pride of your parents! You were made to be strong. Girls, you were created to be beautiful, gentle, and inspiring; not to be used, but rather to be loved! (“*Urok trezvosti*”).

At the end of the video, viewers are admonished to “fight back against the propaganda of degradation,” reproducing the idea that alcoholism and drug use result from of an intrusion of non-Russian values. Against the backdrop of the Soviet war song “The Sacred War” [*Svyashchennaya vojna*], which fades into the Russian national anthem, the faces of influential figures from Russian and Soviet history appear, including Yuri Gagarin, Aleksandr Pushkin, Mikhail Kalashnikov, Georgy Zhukov, and finally, Vladimir Putin, who is depicted in a judo uniform taking down an opponent. The viewers’ affective ties with symbols and personalities from Russian and Soviet history are leveraged to spur them into abstaining from alcohol and also to promote the idea of Putin as the ideal ruler and the ideal Russian male.

While the discourse of Sober Russia seems to be composed of more or less the same elements as that of the state and can be considered a part of the official strategy, these elements are often expressed more explicitly and more boldly. For example, the organization’s VKontakte page is rich with posts criticizing bureaucrats and regional governors for relaxing anti-alcohol legislation, which is seen in terms of a crude pursuit of profits that undermines the nation’s health and security: “The Ministry of Finance’s inhuman initiative [to relax the regulations on the sale of alcohol online] to sabotage the nation’s security fuels contempt for certain government institutions. In their quest for profits, these bureaucrats are releasing an atomic bomb” (Trezvaya Rossiya 2017, September 15). Another post laments the use of Soviet symbols on alcoholic products, which “discredits the idea of military glory [...] has a negative effect on the youth, turns a symbol of pride for the Motherland into a source of profits” (Trezvaya Rossiya 2014, October 1). The idea of a concerted anti-Russian conspiracy is also more prominent in the discourse of Sober Russia, as expressed in a post about how powdered alcohol from the United States was slated to appear on the Russian market. The post, titled “Americans are Planning to Get Russians Drunk with Dry Vodka,” alleges that the American companies producing powdered alcohol understand the health risks associated with their product and have given up on trying to sell it in the United States but have no regard for the health of Russians (Trezvaya Rossiya 2015, June 11).

4.2. The Teetotaler Strategy

The teetotaler strategy is largely informed by the teachings of Vladimir Georgevich Zhdanov, an activist and the founder of a number of organizations dedicated to developing non-medical interventions to cure alcoholism, drug addiction, poor eyesight, and other afflictions. Zhdanov's methods are inspired by those of Fyodor Uglov, a surgeon renowned for his volunteer work during the siege of Leningrad ("Fyodor Uglov") and later as the leading voice in the anti-alcohol movement during the final years of the Soviet Union (White 1996, p. 169). Uglov petitioned Gorbachev's government to introduce a total ban on the sale and production of alcohol within the Soviet Union, as well as harsh punishments for public drunkenness and the consumption of moonshine (ibid.). In 1988, Zhdanov and Uglov cofounded the Society of the Fight for the Nation's Sobriety [*Soyuz Bor'by za Narodnuyu Trezvost'* or SBNT]; after the latter's death, Zhdanov became its chairman, a title which he holds to this day.

As in the official strategy, the teetotaler strategy sees the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle as a question of morals as well as a necessary condition for Russia's great power revival: "the sobriety of the nation is the foundation of the spiritual, moral, economic, and demographic rebirth of Russia" ("O soyuze bor'by za narodnuyu trezvost'"). Two major ways in which this strategy differs from the statist strategy, however, is 1) its zero-tolerance attitude towards alcohol and tobacco, and 2) the elaborateness of its narrative about a conspiracy to destroy the Russian state and its people. I have identified it as a counter-conduct because its followers desire to govern and be governed by different means (namely, a total ban on alcohol and other strict measures), although not necessarily by a different leader. In advocating for a stronger and more punitive state, promoters of this strategy want to be governed *more*.

Apart from SBNT, another prominent organization founded in part by Zhdanov is Common Cause [*Obshchee delo*], whose name is derived from its slogan: "A Healthy Russia is Common Cause." Its objectives include "supporting, developing, and realizing presidential initiatives in the area of preserving the health of the nation," "the popularization of a healthy lifestyle," and "changing society's attitude towards alcohol and tobacco, particularly among the youth, making them understand that the consumption of alcohol and tobacco is incompatible with a fulfilling, healthy, and happy life at the level of the individual, the

family, and society as a whole” (Obshchee delo 2012). Another stated goal is the strengthening of the moral foundations of Russian society (Obshchee delo, “Ob organizatsii”). To meet these objectives, activists from Common Cause develop educational materials, deliver lectures on the topic of healthy lifestyle practices, create various multimedia products, and organize a variety of demonstrations and events to advance their worldview.

Like Sober Russia, Common Cause travels to schools around Russia to deliver lessons about the dangers of alcohol. A thorough handbook with an outline of how such a lesson should be conducted is published on the organization’s website; this plan was approved for use in Russian classrooms by the Russian Ministry of Education (Obshchee delo, “Programma dlya profilaktiki”). A common thread throughout the handbook is the idea that alcohol and tobacco companies and hostile foreign actors manipulate people to turn a profit, an element which was present in the official discourse but more elaborately expressed here. According to the handbook, alcohol producers use popular movies and television shows to brainwash viewers into believing that alcohol consumption is normal and stylish. Cocktails and other sugar-filled alcoholic drinks exist to trick children into consuming alcohol. Alcohol and tobacco companies advertise their products as legal for consumption only by people over 18 in order to manipulate children into thinking that smoking and drinking are markers of adulthood. The handbook also decries the “myth of cultured drinking,” according to which certain types of alcohol are safe to drink in small quantities, insisting that no amount of alcohol can be consumed without inflicting harm on the body (ibid., p. 21). To followers of this strategy, as to teetotalers in 1830s Britain, “the idea that man must trust his reason in not drinking excessively [is] foreign. Impulse renunciation and the control of desire and spontaneity [are] best served only by total sobriety, which [ensures] self-command” (Sulkunen & Warpenius 2000, p. 428).

The notion that foreign alcohol and tobacco corporations (described by Zhdanov as the “mafia” [Obshchee delo 2016b]) are in league with treacherous Russian bureaucrats to profit from the destruction of Russians’ health, while also pursuing geopolitical goals, is a common theme throughout this discourse. One advertisement designed by Common Cause depicts a group of Soviet soldiers and is accompanied by the text, “Thank you, granddad, for our Victory [*spasibo dedu za Pobedu*, a common expression of gratitude to World War II

veterans] / but the enemy has gone another route / he's poisoning your grandchildren with alcohol / and killing them with tobacco!" In the corner of the advertisement is a map of Russia overlaid with the flags of Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The caption explains that over 97 percent of tobacco and 90 percent of alcohol consumed in Russia is produced by foreign companies and admonishes the reader to "Be worthy of your ancestors! [...] Stop giving money to people who are destroying our country!" (Obshchee delo, "Plakaty sotsial'noj reklamy"). This advertisement tries to modify its viewer's conduct by appealing to Soviet nostalgia and framing abstention from alcohol and tobacco as a matter of national security. The use of the term "the enemy" [*vrag*] also implies the existence of a timeless, decentralized force determined to destroy Russia and its people. Drinkers and smokers are thereby constructed as anti-Russian traitors, a sentiment echoed by a Spetsnaz officer and supporter of Common Cause in one of the organization's promotion videos: "Every person who quits smoking makes one less enemy, one more plus for our team [...] our granddads, our ancestors, died so that we could live. And if you smoke, you're just betraying your ancestors!" (Obshchee delo 2016c).

Nevertheless, there is a tension in this discourse between, on the one hand, the idea that people who drink and smoke are immoral traitors and, on the other hand, that they are innocent victims of manipulation. The overview video for Common Cause goes as far as to claim that "people do not choose to smoke or drink; rather, they do so as the result of the cold financial calculations of a third party" (Obshchee delo 2015d). People are thus either completely free agents or they are ensnared in externally-imposed ways of thinking about conduct and must consciously resist them. It could be said that this strategy, with its focus on conspiracy theories and its concern with manipulation and deception, seeks to make individuals conscious of these various discourses that silently act on their behavior (i.e., the hegemonic discourses about alcohol consumption according to which moderate alcohol consumption is acceptable) and give them the ability to challenge existing power relations through the banal act of abstaining from drinking and smoking. However, proponents of this discourse do not generally challenge the authority of the president; their anger is directed towards regional politicians and bureaucrats throughout the various ministries. The state itself is to be given more power to enforce the moral order advanced by the teetotalers.

The idea of a departure from “traditional Russian values” is present in a more explicit form than in the official discourse. As in the official policies, the Common Cause school handbook stresses the claim that Russia was one of the soberest countries at the turn of the 20th century, specifically comparing it to the United States and the countries of Europe, but that “in order to weaken and then destroy our country and reduce our population, the idea of the normalcy of alcohol consumption was drilled into the minds of the Russian people” (“Metodicheskoe posobie”, 22). Moreover, it claims that the widely held belief that drinking is a national tradition in Russia was engineered by hostile forces and imposed on Russians in order to hobble Gorbachev’s anti-alcohol campaign and topple the Soviet Union. According to the Common Cause-produced film “History of a Deception,” foreign aggressors and wicked capitalists had been trying to turn Russians into drunkards for several centuries. However, they failed each time as the population refused to give up its sober way of life and revolted against the foreign merchants and their domestic collaborators (Obshchee delo 2014b).

This strategy shares the same concern with gender relations as Sober Russia. The educational handbook repeats the claim that the consumption of alcohol leads to the masculinization of women and the feminization of men, in addition to impotency (ibid., p. 7). Smoking and drinking are again seen as particularly immoral vices when women partake in them; the film “History of a Deception” describes with approval how women in ancient India were punished by having bottle-shaped marks branded onto their foreheads with hot metal to warn men not to court them. The handbook “Relationship Constructor” reminds girls that if they smoke or drink alcohol, “no serious man will pay any attention to [you]. If a man is looking for a serious relationship, he will seek out a girl without unhealthy habits” (Obshchee delo 2016a, p. 11). Moreover, abstention from smoking and drinking is an important component of “moral purity”, which is an inherent characteristic of women but not necessarily of men (ibid., p. 12). Masculinity, in turn, is tied to athleticism, strength, and the ability to protect women. The anxiety about maintaining traditional gender roles is also expressed as a condemnation of homosexuality. One of Common Cause’s promotional videos features an athlete who warns male viewers that smoking, in addition to simulating the act of fellatio, furthers the homosexual agenda because “all of the world’s tobacco

companies give money to [LGBT organizations] [...] so, think about it: if you're a smoker, then what are you — pro-gay?" (Obshchee delo 2015c).

The topics of genocide and extinction [*vyrozhdienie*] are also prevalent in this strategy. References to the treatment of Native Americans by European settlers and their descendants can be found throughout the materials of Common Cause and SBNT. According to the narrative, the Natives were forced to succumb to the settlers only after their bodies and minds had been weakened by alcohol. There is an anxiety that Russians will face the same fate and that the enemies of Russia will only be satisfied “when the last Russian drops dead into the grave, like the Indian in America” (Obshchee delo 2015b). This narrative seems to be used to convince people of the inherently genocidal character of Europeans and Americans as well as to create anxiety about the “colonization” of Russia by hostile outside forces. However, the genocide is being waged from within as well as without, primarily by money-hungry bureaucrats. *Soratnik*, the official newspaper of the SBNT, is full of open letters to the government and to the president asking for specific bureaucrats to be dismissed or punished as traitors, such as the following one, in response to a proposal by the Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade [*MinPromTorg*] to relax the regulations about where alcohol can be sold:

Just what is the ministry trying to achieve? The answer is obvious: an increase in alcohol sales for the purpose of making a profit [...] The MinPromTorg's proposal means that the ministry is sabotaging Russia's anti-alcohol policies[...]. it will result in thousands more deaths, suicides, rapes, thefts, and more street violence, as well as orphaned children. How can people who propose such inhuman policies be in charge of ministries? Dmitri Anatolevich [Medvedev]! I implore you to fire the bureaucrats responsible for these provocations. (“Gnat' sabotazhnikov!”, p. 1)

The language of war is used to emphasize the stakes involved in the campaign against the genocide. Supporters of the teetotaler movement are addressed and referred to as *soratniki*, which translates approximately to “comrades in arms” and carries military connotations. Notably, the members of Russian National Unity, an ultranationalist organization founded in the early 1990s whose mission was to safeguard the health and purity of the (ethnic) Russian nation, also addressed each other as *soratniki* (Shenfield 2001, p. 131). Though this may well be a coincidence, it demonstrates that these movements emerged from a similar discursive field in which Russia and its people are being besieged by aggressors and enemies and individuals must join the “fight.” A more muted form of this militarism can also be seen

in the official discourse in terms such as “narco-aggression” (“Ob utverzhdenii Strategii gosudarstvennoj”).

What is not always clear in this discourse is who the objects of genocide are perceived to be: the ethnic nation or the civic nation. Common Cause nominally adheres to the principle of “national neutrality,” a recognition of the fact that “Russia has for centuries been a multinational country [...] and the organization’s work regards all citizens as equal, without exception” (Obshchee delo 2015d). Its materials abound with references to the *rossijskij* (civic Russian) nation, as opposed to the *russskij* nation, which commonly refers to ethnic Russians. The idea that certain ethnic groups in Russia are exceptionally prone to becoming alcoholics is reproduced alongside the claim that alcohol is a “genetic weapon” that has already wiped out “several ethnic groups of the Russian far north” (Obshchee delo, “Glavnyj faktor vyrozhdeniya”). At times, however, they stress that the ethnic Russian nation has always been at the vanguard of the anti-alcohol movement: “Slavic Russians gave up their lives and their freedom for the cause of sobriety; they raided pubs and protested against forced intoxication [*spaivanie*]” (Obshchee delo 2014a). The combination of these discursive elements suggests that while the concern about alcohol abuse and genocide is oriented toward the entire Russian citizenry, the strategy privileges a view of this citizenry in which the ethnic Russian nation plays the role of the “big brother.”

Finally, the strategy draws on scientific discourses to emphasize the fatal implications smoking and alcohol can have for genetic purity. Deploying constant detailed references to DNA, it stresses that men and women (but especially women) who consume any amount of alcohol or tobacco run the risk of producing genetically, physically, and intellectually inferior offspring. The idea of the gradual genetic degradation of the Russian people is weaved into the narrative about how these substances represent an existential threat to the country. The practice of a healthy, sober lifestyle is thus constructed as a way to return the Russian nation to its pure, sober essence. The “genetic code” is also described as “the treasure of the nation” that is facing the threat of destruction, seemingly suggesting that the peoples of Russia are united a common genetic heritage (Obshchee delo 2015a). Lemke (2011, p. 100) observed that “In contrast to ‘racial hygiene,’ human genetics today is directed not at the body of the population but at the genetic makeup of the individual. The central goal of genetic interventions [...] is less the health of the public at large or some other

collective idea and more an attempt to improve the health of individuals and to help them avoid illness.” The coexistence in this strategy of a concern for individual genetic hygiene and a concern for the collective genetic hygiene of the Russian population suggests that this statement is not necessarily universally applicable and that this form of biopower can still be found in some settings.

Sulkunen & Warpenius (2000) demonstrate that the rise of temperance movements in Western Europe and the United States was closely linked to the appearance of representative institutions. Temperance activists sought to inscribe their sense of moral superiority and their “romantic search for authenticity” (ibid., 431) onto the state’s rationale of government. Moreover, “The enlightened nation-state, imbued with aspiration and commitment to moral and social progress, was thought to be the external instrument for constructing the inner Self of citizens” (ibid., 430). Given the Russian temperance movement’s origins in the era of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, these observations seem to have a broader applicability. As in the West, these organizations seek to create a strong, messianic Russian state with the capacity to enforce self-discipline among its citizens. However, I argue that the Russian teetotaler strategy is unique because it blends together anti-Western conspiracy theories, Soviet nostalgia, militarism, and medical discourses to act on people’s conduct, whereas similar movements in the West were unable to move beyond narrow arguments about the negative effects of alcohol on will power and therefore ultimately became irrelevant (ibid., 429). The eclectic nature of the Russian teetotaler strategy suggests that it might eventually have more influence and staying power than its Western equivalents.

4.3. Running for Russia: The Imperial Ethnic Nationalist Strategy

In 2014, a report by the Russian SOVA think tank observed: “The topic of healthy lifestyles plays a particularly important role for all shades of modern Russian nationalism, which over the last 20 years has gradually been pushed out of the political arena by the government” (Pain 2014, p. 18). Healthy lifestyle promotion thus represents a way for ultranationalists to effect change in society and advance their ideas about proper conduct in the absence of a political outlet to do so. The imperial ethnic nationalist strategy is epitomized by an organization called Russian Runs [*Russkie probezhki*]. As I will demonstrate, it is differentiated from the other strategies primarily by its explicit concern for the ethnic

Russian nation, its particular forms of visibility and ways of attracting followers (namely, mass coordinated demonstrations of strength and agility), its high level of militarism, and its generally oppositional stance toward the state. As a counter-conduct, it seeks government by different means, toward different ends, and by different leaders. However, I will also show that this strategy has notable similarities with the other ones under analysis.

The first Russian Runs were held in January 2011 on the heels of the nationalist revival prompted by the 2010 Manezhnaya Square riots (Nikiporets-Takigava & Pain 2016). Yudina et al. (2012) attribute the appearance of the movement to two additional trends: 1) Russian nationalists' increased interest in portraying themselves in a positive, non-aggressive light, and 2) the increasing popularity of sports and physical fitness among Russian nationalist youth. Gabowitsch (2016, p. 2) describes the Russian Runs as a “network movement”: it has no hierarchy or central command but rather is made up of a horizontal nationwide network of groups operating under the banner of the Russian Runs. Apart from its focus on public demonstrations, it has some other trademark features, including its participants' use of the yellow-and-black Russian Imperial flag (also known as the *imperka*), which forms part of the movement's main logo, as well as its use of pithy slogans and cheers [*krichalki*] that are yelled out during public events and express the essence of the movement, including “Russians Choose Sport!” [*Russkie vybirayut sport!*] and “Russian Means Sober!” [*Russkij znachit trezvyj!*].

The Russian Runs' unofficial, decentralized nature means that social media networks — namely, VKontakte — play an important role in its proliferation throughout the country (as well as in several other former Soviet republics). At the time of this study, the main Russian Runs VKontakte page had over 17,000 subscribers; its content is a mixture of original posts and reposts from regional Russians Runs VKontakte groups and other groups involved in healthy lifestyle promotion. It describes the movement's mission as “the promotion of healthy lifestyle practices and sports first and foremost among the Russian [*russkij*] population on account of that population's extinction, its extermination, and its historical and contemporary role in Russia's emergence, existence, and prosperity as a state” (Russkie probezhki, “Informatsiia”).

The Russian Runs' ambition to play by the rules of the game, portray themselves as practitioners of the “healthy Russian nationalism,” and attract followers by setting an

example rather than recruiting outright is evident in the movement's Charter, which is published on its main page on VKontakte. It lays out the runs' goal as "letting every member of society know that a healthy lifestyle [ZOZh] and sports are the normal ways of life by setting an example and doing sports in public" (Russkie probezhki 2016, p. 1). The emphasis on influencing by example reflects the movement's desire to establish its forms of conduct as the norm and marginalize those who act contrary to this norm: "the average Russian doesn't like us because we force him to feel ashamed about his beloved daily bottle of beer" (ibid.). Participants are instructed to "yell joyously, light-heartedly, and in a friendly way," to smile and wave at passersby and keep in mind that they might be frightened or intimidated, because "there must only be a positive opinion about us!" (ibid.). They are cautioned not to use any symbols or cheers that violate Russian law or contain curse words. Moreover, the Charter emphasizes the non-political nature of the Russian Runs and reminds participants that their personal political views should remain at home. The movement is thus careful not to frame itself as a form of civil disobedience or a protest movement, "which everyone is sick and tired of" (Russkie probezhki 2012).

At the same time, the Russian Runs' distrust of the authorities is clear. Its participants are wary of the prospect that the government might infiltrate the movement in order to portray it as an extremist organization and use that as a pretext to outlaw it. "The powers-that-be don't like us; we're a community of friendly (but unified) healthy young men and women with an active position in life. And they don't know whether we're planning to open up a chain of sports clubs or topple the government, because they think our promotion of a healthy lifestyle is just a cover for something else" (Russkie probezhki 2016, p. 1). A post from the Krasnodar branch of Russian Runs warns readers of the opening of a new sports club in the city whose logo uses the Celtic cross (a symbol often used by white nationalist and neo-Nazi organizations) and whose organizer has appeared in pictures wearing a t-shirt with the emblem of the Ukrainian Azov Battalion. "There is no doubt that this 'club' is operating at the behest of the powers-that-be. After all, they want Russian sports and nationalism to correspond to the image created by the lying mass media" (Russkie probezhki Krasnodar 2015, July 6).

Moreover, the Russian Runs' stated commitment to non-aggression and cooperation with the authorities is belied by its heavily militaristic discourse, as well as its sponsorship of

activities such as hand-to-hand combat classes and weapons trainings. As opposed to the runs, these activities are often held in forests and other remote locations away from the gaze of the public and the police (e.g., Russkie probezhki Petrozavodsk 2014, April 13). The trainings are meant to mimic real-life situations, and their purpose seems to be actual preparation for battle as opposed to the mere pursuit of physical fitness. The imagined opponents are most frequently migrants and ethnic minorities. For example, a post from Krasnodar emphasizes the importance of learning how to handle combat knives in addition to becoming proficient in hand-to-hand combat: “All guys who practice hand-to-hand combat are naturally inclined to defend their women and their families and to not shy away from conflicts in the streets, but they completely disregard the fact that almost all ethnic criminals are armed with knives. If you don’t have any knife skills, you’re a dead man walking, one-hundred percent” (Russkie probezhki Krasnodar 2013, July 9). It is worth noting, however, that the frequency of posts related to migration in the group dropped dramatically after 2013, the specific issue of migration into Russia being subsumed under the broader topic of the global refugee crisis. This shift is in line with broader Russian society’s declining interest in this issue in the wake of the Ukrainian conflict (Laine 2017).

Even before the events in Ukraine, however, the Russian Runs were envisioned as a way of stirring Russian national consciousness and representing the unity of the peoples of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus: “As the Runs take place primarily in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, one of its goals is to unite the Russian people across its native lands — after all, we are one people, one state! And the Imperial flag [...] serves as a symbol of the unity of our people and our state” (Russkie pobezhki 2012). In this way, participating in the Runs is a way of constituting oneself as a member of the ethnic Russian nation and constituting one’s land as a distinctly Russian space. It is also a way to use the body to advance geopolitical claims about Russia’s neighboring countries. This particular form of representing the unity of the people is not unique to the Russian Runs: the Soviet authorities deployed the same techniques in orchestrating the mass *fizkul’tura* parades (Keys 2009), and, as Boyer (2005, p. 109), observes,

The Nazi emphasis on mass, coordinated movement can be understood as a performance designed to simulate the ideal, harmonized *Volkstruktur* of which Germans were felt to have been robbed by the exteriorizing, individuating tendencies of bourgeois-Semitic mass culture [...]. cultural activity could no longer proceed in the decentered unorganized way that served

Jewish and capitalistic interests. Rather, for Hitler, Nazism had to focus single-mindedly on the necessity of cultivating an integrated *Volk* consciousness among the masses.

The Russian Runs movement shares the Nazis' (but also the Soviets') disapproval of cosmopolitanism and concern about the loss of nationhood and posit the existence of a conspiracy to rid Russians of their national consciousness: "The Russian nation has long faced extermination, and our enemies are making short work of it: they have divided us, turned us into drunkards [...] and turned us into a nation-less herd of sheep [...] who poison themselves with alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs" (Russkie probezhki Petrozavodsk 2015, June 16). Many of the posts in the group pejoratively refer to Russians who drink, smoke, are physically inactive or do not have a strong sense of national identity as "rootless Russians" ["*bezrodnye rossiane*"], the word "rossiane" referring to the civic Russian nation as opposed to the ethnic Russian (*ruskij*) nation. The word "rootless" is notable because of its widespread usage during the Stalin era to refer to those who were perceived as inadequately loyal to the Soviet Union; the term "rootless cosmopolitans" had distinctly anti-Semitic connotations (Gelbin 2016). The war against Russian national consciousness is thought to be waged primarily by the state, which unfairly labels the "healthy nationalism" of the Russian Runs as extremism and those who refuse to fall in line with the state's biopolitical strategy as extremists.

The imperial ethnic nationalist strategy's antipathy towards the state, its distinct practices, and its hardline position on the question of nationhood should not obscure its similarities with the other strategies that have so far been discussed. One major similarity with both the official strategy and the teetotaler strategy is its concern about an influx of non-Russian values and their role in promoting unhealthy behavior. In particular, it reproduces the teetotalers' discourse of a disembodied, atemporal enemy working tirelessly to corrupt Russian minds: "there is a war going on, an information war, in which the people will become so indoctrinated that they destroy themselves. We are being injected with false values and a false culture. At every step, there is booze and cigarettes — legal drugs" (Russkie probezhki Petrozavodsk 2014, May 12). Sobriety and physical activity are praised as traditional Russian values that have become alien to Russian society as a result of the onslaught of foreign, consumerist values and mass culture. As in the teetotaler discourse, the idea that one can consume alcohol moderately is condemned as a dangerous myth

consciously promoted by the media and hostile foreign actors in order to get Russians drinking.

Moreover, as was the case with the teetotalers, it is at times unclear whether the ethnic nationalists prioritize structure or agency in defining individual conduct and creating subjectivities. On one hand, people who smoke and drink are often portrayed as morally inferior and beyond salvation: “Most people are supporters of the destruction and degradation of the country — drop by a night club or any other such ‘upstanding’ establishment and you’ll see a huge herd of reprobates and *rossiianty* [a pejorative term for Russians who embrace a civic Russian identity]” (Russkie probezhki Petrozavdosk 2014, February 3). Self-improvement is portrayed entirely as a matter of choice and individual will power, and self-discipline is seen as the ultimate virtue. On the other hand, as previously mentioned, the Russian Runs wholly embrace the conspiratorial discourse according to which Russians who do not lead healthy lifestyles are the victims of information warfare and must be woken up to the fact that they are being manipulated. “Don’t finance your own suicide! Do sports, read books, think with your own head! [...] We won’t let those parasites destroy us!” (Russkie probezhki 2016, November 17). A large portion of the content on the Russian Runs pages is made up of reposts of Vladimir Zhdanov’s lectures and videos produced by Common Cause about the dominance of foreign companies on the Russian alcohol and tobacco markets, a global cabal determined to flood Russia with illegal narcotics, and other topics.

In addition, despite the Russian Runs’ general aversion to the state, “which tries to scare us with all its laws” (Russkie probezhki Petrozavodsk 2016, July 11), and its criticism of Vladimir Putin specifically, they believe in the necessity of a strong, enlightened state capable of mandating self-discipline and individual morality. A post from the Samara group, for example, includes a lengthy quote from Stalin about the imperative of a government takeover of alcohol production as a prelude to the closure of all alcohol plants (Russkie probezhki za ZOZh Samara 2012, May 31). Other posts discuss the need for a greater state presence in the promotion of sports and physical activity. Russian Run participants also directly enforce other aspects of the state’s biopolitical strategy, as illustrated by a 2013 post from Krasnodar instructing followers to attack local residents who planned to gather in the city’s center to protest the cancellation of a concert by gay British performer Elton John:

“Let’s help these perverts understand the wickedness of their behavior and explain to them what the law says about gay propaganda!” (Russkie probezhki Krasnodar 2013, July 9).

As with the other strategies, the ethnic nationalist strategy is partially built upon a glorification of Russia’s heroic past, and self-improvement is framed as a matter of honoring the greatness of one’s ancestors. The Russian Runs are particularly active around May 9 (“Victory Day”), the date on which Russians commemorate the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany. In offline demonstrations and on social media, the movement encourages people to celebrate the holiday without drinking, because “your forefathers fought for Russia’s life and for your freedom, not for an alcoholic genocide!” (Russkie Probezhki za ZOZh Samara 2017, May 8). The “information war” is framed as a continuation of Hitler’s campaign to bring Russia to its knees. Similar to the other strategies, the ethnic nationalists take the idea of Great Power Russia as a point of departure; one of the most common slogans on the Russian Runs’ VKontakte pages is “Only a Sober Russia Will Be Great!”

A further point of overlap between the ethnic nationalist strategy and that of the teetotalers is its concern with genetics and the importance of genetic purity; however, while the teetotaler strategy draws heavily on medical and scientific knowledges and concentrates on alcohol, tobacco, and cigarettes, that of the ethnic nationalists is more underpinned by the discourse of racial hygiene. Intimate relations with non-Russians are considered as unhygienic as the consumption of alcohol: “In simple terms, the first man you were sexually involved with, the first man you slept with, is to be considered the father of all of your children. If that man was unhealthy, a criminal, a drunkard, mentally ill, or non-Russian, that will have a big effect on your children” (Russkie probezhki 2011). This serves as a bridge to the broader theme of anxiety about the dissolution of gender roles and proper gender conduct, which was also found in the other strategies. Women are instructed not to drink not only because “the health of future generations of our children rides on the health of the mother” (Russkie probezhki Petrozavdosk 2016, March 7) but also because drinking leads to sexual promiscuity and runs counter to women’s naturally gentle nature. Alcohol is also said to result in the feminization of men and the masculinization of women (Russkie probezhki 2011). Men are called to work on themselves and build strength in the name of fulfilling the role of warrior and defender of the family, the nation, and the Motherland.

In conclusion, despite the imperial ethnic nationalists' opposition to the state and their preoccupation with the question of the Russian nation, their biopolitical strategy contains many of the same discursive elements as the official strategy, echoing Foucault's ideas about the heterogeneity of power relations and the contextuality of practices of resistance/technologies of the self. The imperial ethnic nationalists draw upon the same discursive and symbolic reservoir as the state to advocate for the creation of new Russian subjects, and they contest vertical power relations and coercive state practices while at the same time reinforcing them. This fact demonstrates the strength of conceiving of radical Russian nationalist movements as counter-conducts that inform and are informed by a broader discursive milieu rather than simply as sources of opposition to the state.

4.4. Killing the State Inside Yourself: The Straight Edge Strategy

The Straight Edge movement (colloquially known as sXe) was born out of the early 1980s punk scene on the American East Coast as a response to the “nihilistic tendencies, including drug and alcohol abuse, casual sex, violence, and self-destructive ‘live fast, die young’ attitudes” that prevailed in that subculture (Haenfler 2006, p. 8). Its essential tenets are total abstention from the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco and a commitment to avoid casual sex, but different branches are influenced by different subcultures and different contextual factors (ibid.). For example, while many Straight Edge groups in the United States champion the causes of social justice and anti-racism (ibid., p. 40), the Russian scene is distinct because of its domination by white nationalists and neo-Nazis (Shekhovtsov 2013, p. 287). Such groups began to face particularly harsh repression by the Russian state in 2014; many fled to Ukraine to fight on the side of the Ukrainian government (Yudina 2015).

To understand the Russian Straight Edge strategy for the body, I analyzed content in two groups on VKontakte: Fine Line [*Chyotkaya gran*'] and Iron Rus [*Zheleznaya Rus*']. These are the largest and most active Straight Edge communities on VKontakte, with respectively over 7,000 and over 12,000 members at the time of writing. While the nature of the group is necessarily cryptic, Fine Line seems to be an umbrella organization coordinating various offline Straight Edge communities across Russia in addition to serving as a discussion board; Iron Rus is dedicated to the online discussion of the Straight Edge

lifestyle. The latter community describes the Russian Straight Edge scene as follows: “nssxe (national socialism streight [*sic*] edge) is a subgroup of neo-Nazis who believe that drinking and smoking are below the dignity of the white race. There are thousands of them, and it just so happened historically that almost all Straight Edgers in Russia are nationalists and neo-Nazis (nationalism + sxe = nssxe)” (Zheleznaya Rus’ 2016, May 14). While they profess solidarity with the white race in general, they represent Russia as potentially one of the last bastions of “true” European values and lament the idea that the white West has been destroyed by multiculturalism and tolerance, a sentiment which is widespread in broader Russian society (Morozov 2015).

Out of necessity, the Russian Straight Edge community keeps a low profile and employs different forms of visibility than followers of other strategies. The Fine Line’s page contains many photographs of the offline activities of Straight Edgers in various cities; however, the participants’ faces are always pixelated, betraying the group’s wariness about the possibility of detection by the state. Russian Straight Edgers do not share the Russian Runs’ sense of messianism; rather than promoting their strategy by appearing on the streets in large numbers, they place pro-Straight Edge signs in public spaces and on the storefronts of businesses that sell alcohol or tobacco. Other Straight Edge activities consist mainly of weapons trainings and workout sessions that take place out of the public eye, either in gyms or in the forest; a common slogan repeated on both pages is “the forest and the gym are our chapels!” (Chyotkaya gran’ 2018, February 4). While the imperial ethnic nationalists seemed to view the forest primarily as a place to avoid the police, the Straight Edgers’ reading of the forest is explicitly rooted in a Russian neo-pagan religious movement known as Rodnoveriye, which glorifies nature and sees the human body as an inseparable part of it. Interest in paganism began to grow in Russia in the early 1990s and has almost always been accompanied by fascist ideologies (Shenfield 2001, pp. 248-249). Russian Straight Edgers view the forest as a sacred site of bodily transcendence and transformation. “For the pagan, person and nature are one in the same. For the pagan, each form of nature is the will of one of the gods” (Zheleznaya Rus’ 2016, January 6).

The Straight Edgers’ adoption of a pagan view on nature and the body is linked to the imperatives of reviving Russian traditions, awakening Russian national consciousness, and living up to the great deeds of one’s ancestors. Unlike the other strategies, however, the

Straight Edgers' historical reference point for Russian greatness is the pre-Christian era: "More and more, paganism is gaining currency among healthy, active youth, taking the place of Soviet atheism/indifference [*pofigizm*] and crowding out rotten Jew-Christianity [...]. Paganism is a worldview that we inherit along with our blood. The revival of our ancestors' faith is in full swing" (Zheleznaya Rus' 2015, August 21). The primary subjects of heroism and virtue are ancient figures such as Oleg of Novgorod, as opposed to Soviet war veterans. Regardless of the references to pre-Christian Russia and the disdain of the Soviet experience, the basic structure of thought is the same in the Straight Edge strategy as in the others; namely, the idea that reviving forgotten subjectivities is the key to returning Russia to an imagined glorious past. The Straight Edgers also condemn the notion that drinking is a Russian tradition: "People who say, 'But Russians have always been drinkers!' are spreading total nonsense! That's not the case and people who say those things simply don't know their own history" (Zheleznaya Rus' 2017, August 18). Moreover, they too decry what they see as an onslaught of liberal, consumerist values, which are thought to be forced upon Russia by a cabal of globalists. The Straight Edgers thus share the conspiratorial worldview of other strategies. They assert that a genocide is being carried out against the Russian people, that traditional Russian values have been perverted by information warfare, and that the Russian government is colluding with alcohol and tobacco companies to rake in more money at the expense of the health of the nation. They reproduce the discourse of "alcohol and narcotic terrorism" that is buttressed by "the propaganda of false freedom" (Chyotkaya gran' 2018, February 22). The concern about a genocide against the Russian people is nested within greater anxieties about a putative worldwide genocide of the white race.

These conspiratorial ideas that deprive Russians of their agency throw into particularly sharp relief the Straight Edgers' emphasis on individual discipline, which is more prominent than in the other strategies. A large number of the posts in both communities are devoted to the topic of self-discipline, which is promoted using positive, motivational messages that distinctly resemble the American discourse (Gabowitsch 2016) of individual self-betterment: "The cultivation of an internal sense of discipline is the task of anyone who wants to be successful [...] You're capable of more!" (Chyotkaya gran' 2018, February 14). Many of these posts are accompanied by lists of healthy habits that one should pursue in order to be successful, such as exercising in the morning, sleeping for eight hours

each night, and drinking sufficient amounts of water, advice which comes from the international “common sense” about healthy living and draws upon medical discourses. The restoration of government over the self is linked in with the Russian Straight Edgers’ pagan worldview, as illustrated by a poem posted in the Fine Line group: “By the millions, the media / proposes us new models for enslavement / pack your backpack, we’re headed to the forest / to kill the State inside ourselves” (Chyotkaya gran’ 2018, March 1).

These positive messages of self-improvement and self-liberation, however, are confounded by the Straight Edgers’ violent rhetoric about the moral and biological inferiority of people who do not lead healthy lifestyles, who are depicted as worthless and beyond salvation:

The more you look at modern society [...] the less interest you have in participating in the “war for the health of the nation”. What’s the point? What war? Demonstrative runs around the city and pull-up competitions? That’s the same as trying to reanimate a zombie. But we’re no voodoo shamans — we’re the cleansers [*chistil’shchiki*] [...] I want everyone who destroys their body to get it over with quickly and effectively. I want the Untermensch to go from drinking one or two beers a day to drinking moonshine [...] I want to witness your suicide. (Chyotkaya gran’ 2016, October 20).

People who drink, smoke, and use drugs are also portrayed as traitors of the Russian nation and the white race. “They are killing OUR future. Weak people, weak souls, weak wills. Worthless, spineless hunks of flesh who are incapable of further development. They’re dead weight. And dead weight must be gotten rid of” (Chyotkaya gran’ 2016, January 29). Thus, for the Straight Edgers, the health of the nation is not so much a matter of laws or state intervention as it is a question that will eventually be resolved by natural selection.

As in the other strategies, women who consume alcohol or smoke are considered to be particularly inferior, although this is expressed much more aggressively by the Straight Edgers: one image that appears frequently in both groups depicts the silhouette of a man holding an axe and standing above a cowering woman, with the caption “good night smoking girl” (Chyotkaya gran’ 2016, February 23). Women who engage in these behaviors, as well as women who choose not to have children, are portrayed as race traitors and denied any legitimacy as female subjects: they are “not women, but bio-waste [*biomusor*] and parasites” (Chyotkaya gran’ 2016, June 12). At the same time, alcohol and tobacco marketers are blamed for tricking women into smoking and drinking. The man in the

Straight Edge strategy plays a similar role as in other strategies: he is a warrior and a protector who fears nothing, and he is not afraid to kill in order to defend his honor, his land, or his family. Alcohol and other substances are represented as contrary to the nature of men: “Alcohol and drugs drain the man of his essence - they make him tolerant, apathetic, soft, and unable to defend his land, his family, or even himself” (Zheleznaya rus’ 2016, April 7).

While the Straight Edgers employ rhetoric that is at times violent, reject the Soviet experience, and embrace paganism, a deeper look reveals that many of the core tenets of its biopolitical agenda can be found in slightly different forms in other strategies. They share the same anxieties as other groups about the continued existence of the Russian people and the dilution of its gene pool, the erosion of gender roles, and the inability of “traditional Russian values” to withstand the onslaught of tolerant foreign values. They look back at Russia’s past with longing and use it as a basis for the construction of new norms. This brief exploration of the Russian Straight Edge community demonstrates again that even the most extreme forms of resistance do not necessarily entail a wholesale rejection of hegemonic discourses and may indeed serve to reproduce certain aspects of them.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This study revealed several prevalent themes across the sample of healthy lifestyle promotion strategies in Russia. For one thing, each strategy attributes Russians' embrace of unhealthy habits at least partially to the influence of "non-Russian" values. The promotion of healthy lifestyle practices is viewed as a key element of the revival of a traditional Russian subjectivity that has been obscured by consumerism and foreign mass culture. Each strategy to a greater or lesser extent advances the idea of a conspiracy to relax Russians' attitudes towards drugs, tobacco, and alcohol by distorting their values. While this discursive element is present in the official strategy, it is a central theme of the alternative strategies under analysis, which represent the practice of a healthy lifestyle as a subversive way of "reclaiming" one's Russian-ness. The official strategy, the teetotalers and the imperial ethnic nationalists all envision a strong and enlightened state capable of enforcing certain types of conduct and protecting Russians from immoral thoughts and behaviors, even while the latter also resent what they perceive as the state's restriction of self-expression. However, this emphasis on structure and laws is sometimes accompanied by a contrasting emphasis on agency and self-discipline. The uptake of healthy lifestyle practices is often viewed as a question of individual resolve and morality; the discourses of constant self-improvement and full responsibility for one's own actions can be found in each of the strategies, and particularly in the imperial ethnic nationalist and Straight Edge strategies, an individual's inability to exercise total self-government is interpreted as a sign of moral inferiority.

Each of the strategies also seeks to influence Russians' bodily conduct by referencing the country's glorious past. They stress the importance of honoring the country's history and living up to the deeds of one's heroic ancestors by transforming one's behavior. These heroes and heroic events are drawn primarily from the Soviet period, with the Great Patriotic War in particular serving as a potent reservoir of affective resources that are leveraged by various actors to convince Russians to lead healthy lifestyles and practice greater self-surveillance. The Straight Edgers also take Russia's glorious past as a given while locating that glory in a different era and recoding it to fit in with their neo-pagan worldview.

Another prominent theme running through each of the strategies is anxiety about the survival of the Russian nation and the Russian state. In each case, the states and the nation are viewed as natural entities whose vitality is reducible to the vitality of individual members

of the population, and the promotion of individual self-improvement is linked to the objective of reviving the people's collective economic, demographic, and spiritual well-being. Each strategy takes as a given the idea that the Russian people – ethnic, civic, or something in between – is under threat or in decline, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles is meant to reverse these trends. Thus, while certain groups view themselves as resisting the state's authority (such as the imperial ethnic nationalists and the Straight Edgers), some of their activities, at least in the area of healthy lifestyle promotion, are nonetheless in line with the state's mission of putting an end to the demographic crisis.

Each of the healthy lifestyle promotion strategies is heavily gendered, and concern about the survival of the Russian people is bound up with an anxiety about the erosion of traditional Russian gender roles. Women are instructed to lead healthy lifestyles not only to ensure the health of their children and future generations of Russians, but also to maintain their femininity and provide a contrast to the Russian male subject, who is represented as a strong, fearless defender of his lands and his people. Women are expected to practice healthy lifestyles in the context of a panoptic male gaze that continually monitors their performance of femininity. The reaffirmation of these gender norms throughout each of the strategies is again in line with the state's efforts to unite the Russian citizenry around "traditional" Russian values and to "counterdistinguish a 'de-masculinized and pacified Europe' from Russia, which remains 'the masculine country'" (Makarychev & Yatsyk 2015, p. 147).

Several theoretical implications can be drawn from this study. The first is that power, understood as any "attempt to direct, control, or determine the conduct of others" (Allen 2013, p. 344), rather than simply being wielded from above and resisted from below, is also exercised by different groups within society. Each of these groups has its own notions about proper conduct and coherent strategies for the establishment of new behavioral norms that use a variety of discursive practices and performances. Moreover, the power exercised through these groups does not have to be physically coercive or violent. It can work by generating the desire to modify one's behavior in accordance with certain ideals or objectives rather than by punishing. It can discipline by encouraging individuals to exercise constant self-surveillance in order to live up to certain norms. Despite the absence of physical violence, the imposition of "micro-penalties" (Markula & Pringle 2006, p. 44) in the form of the shame or social ostracism that one may experience when deviating from a

norm can be considered symbolically repressive. While power in the Foucauldian sense is exercised constantly at all levels of society, any one individual or group's real ability to establish new norms of conduct may be conditioned by material and institutional factors. In stressing that power is everywhere and comes from everywhere, Foucault is charged with "ignoring the structural power imbalances in society" (Pylypa 1998, p. 35). This criticism is particularly pertinent for illiberal societies, in which real political participation and opportunities for collective action may be limited. Therefore, in the absence of changes in the structure of Russian society, the alternative healthy lifestyle promotion strategies likely have little hope of actually becoming institutionalized in the immediate future.

Nonetheless, Foucault's ideas about power relations provide a useful background against which to analyze the substance of these strategies. He emphasized that in any power strategy, "a multiplicity of discursive elements [...] can come into play," sometimes in contradictory ways (Foucault 1978, p. 100). Death (2016) used Foucault's insights about counter-conducts to show how these contradictions may unintentionally lead to the solidification of existing power relations. Accordingly, I demonstrated how the imperial ethnic strategy combines two seemingly incompatible elements: namely, hostility towards the state, which it sees as repressive and overly controlling, and a push for more state intervention into the conduct of Russian citizens. I also showed how both of the oppositional strategies reproduce certain elements of the official discourse and may ultimately only help the state achieve its objectives in the area of healthy lifestyle promotion as well as in its broader agenda of "biopolitical conservatism" (Makarychev & Yatsyk 2015). The Foucauldian idea of mutable and dynamic power relations also sheds light on how different power strategies confront one another, sometimes appropriating and recoding certain discursive elements. Thus, for example, the conspiracy to undermine the Russian state and civic nation present in the official and teetotaler strategies is recoded into a conspiracy to wipe out the ethnic Russian nation or re-embedded into a broader narrative about global white genocide.

The application of Foucault's and Death's counter-conduct perspective enhanced the analysis in several ways. In focusing on different groups' actual ideas about proper conduct rather than stated opposition to or approval of the existing power structure, it allowed for the inclusion of the teetotaler strategy, which contests the hegemonic discourse about healthy

lifestyles without challenging the overall legitimacy of the state. It enabled an analysis of the other two strategies that focused on how their practitioners seek to be governed and towards what ends rather than placing too much emphasis on their opposition to the state *per se*, which made visible some of the similarities between these strategies and the official strategy. This made it possible to destabilize the conventional binary between “compliance” and “resistance” also challenged by Death (2016), showing that neither is necessarily absolute; resistance may be coupled with an acceptance of certain elements of hegemonic discourses, and compliance may contain subversive elements that challenge those discourses. These observations will hopefully allow this study to contribute to the growing body of literature on contestation and political activism that has sought to introduce nuance by challenging the strict pro-/anti-Kremlin binary that informs many analyses of state-society relations in Russia (e.g., Cheskin & March 2015; Bindman 2015; Åberg 2015).

This limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, it analyzes each of the healthy lifestyle promotion strategies separately and over a large period of time. A more rigorous chronological analysis could shed light on how and when particular discursive elements entered and exited each of the strategies and how these transformations were conditioned by broader contextual factors. As mentioned previously, it is also limited by its non-inclusion of strategies that promote healthy lifestyles without making explicit reference to patriotism or national belonging. This exclusive focus on such discourses might make the study’s conclusions less innovative; for example, it is perhaps not surprising that such ideologically traditionalist groups would advocate for traditional gender roles, and one could reasonably argue that a certain confirmation bias is present. A lengthier study could investigate a broader sample of healthy lifestyle promotion strategies. Finally, a discussion of the discourse surrounding events such as the Russian Olympic doping scandal, the 2018 FIFA World Cup, and competitive sports more broadly would surely have enriched the analysis of the official strategy but was omitted for the sake of space.

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