View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk

brought to you by CORE

provided by Calhoun, Institutional Archive of the Naval Postgraduate School

Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive

Faculty and Researcher Publications | Faculty and Researcher Publications Collection

2012

þÿConstructivism s micro-foundations: as social identity theory, and Russia's national interests (DRAFT)

Clunan, Anne L.

American Political Science Association

Draft conference paper for the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, August 30-Sept 2, 2012

Calhoun is a project of the Dudley Knox Library at NPS, furthering the precepts and goals of open government and government transparency. All information contained herein has been approved for release by the NPS Public Affairs Officer.

Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School
411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle
Monterey, California USA 93943

http://www.nps.edu/library

Constructivism's Micro-Foundations: Aspirations, Social Identity Theory, and Russia's National Interests

Anne L. Clunan[*]
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, CA
alclunan@nps.edu

Paper delivered at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting
New Orleans, LA
Aug. 30- Sept. 2, 2012
Draft. Please do not cite without author's permission.

Abstract:

Russia's national interests have not been defined on the basis of conventional cost-benefit assessments, perceptions of material threat, or the identities projected onto Russia by other countries. Aspirations to regain the international great power status that Russians believe their country enjoyed during the tsarist and Soviet past were critical to the creation of its present national identity and national security interests. This paper asks how Russian elites came to have these national interests in social competition for great power status. In trying to explain how national interests are created, I present a novel aspirational constructivist approach that draws heavily on social psychology to answer three fundamental questions: What are the sources of national identity? Why do multiple identities come into contention? How does one of these candidate national identities come to dominate the others and become "social fact," acting as "the" national identity that defines a country's core national interests? In developing the answers, we gain a better understanding of how foreign "others" enter into the definition of Russia's national identity and the formation of its interests

[*]. The views expressed here are those of the author, and do not reflect the views of the United States Government, the Department of Defense, of the United States Navy.

Constructivism's Micro-Foundations:
Aspirations, Social Identity Theory, and Russia's National Interests

Anne L. Clunan[*]

The question of world peace and international order in the twenty-first century is often said to hang on the ways in which newly powerful and resurgent countries interact with the West and its institutions in a world with plentiful—and distributed—nuclear weapons. Our traditional understandings of power politics hold out dim prospects for global peace and order in our time. Changes in the distribution of military and economic capabilities—the relative decline of the United States attending the rise of China, India, Brazil and Russia—ought to augur a major power war to determine which state or states will govern the new twenty-first century order. The international status hierarchy that was born out of the last great power war may lag the shifts in material power, but as the disjuncture between status and actual power grows, the existing system will inevitably break down into war.[1] In this world, peaceful power transitions only happen when the rising power continues to profit from the institutional order held together by the power, or authority, of the declining power.[2] In short, peace depends on whether states can remain satisfied as they rise within the existing hierarchy of power and authority.[3]

The resurgence of Russia and the emergence of China, India and Brazil have heightened concerns about what rising countries want. Scholars recently have begun to focus on the role that status, particularly great power status, plays in shaping state behavior and interests.[4] The usual tools for understanding the implications of power dynamics can neither explain the social sources of authority, influence and legitimacy in our current era, nor the relationship of these things to status. So, while, Robert Gilpin was right that struggles over status are the daily stuff of world politics, he was wrong to associate status only with the prestige derived from military power and victory in the last war. As a result, realist predictions do not help us understand what status is, why struggles over it are so pervasive in politics, and how status independently may affect the way states do and can behave.

To conflate status with material capabilities as many traditionalists do is to miss the central role that social psychological factors play in world politics and in a state's "satisfaction" with existing forms of international order. Status conflicts in international affairs are about legitimacy, authority, and acceptance. They are as much about self-empowerment and self-

---

[*] The views expressed here are those of the author, and do not reflect the views of the United States Government, the Department of Defense, of the United States Navy.

[1] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

[2] Krasner, Kindleberger.

[3] Krasner, Kindleberger.

[4] Deborah Larson, T.V. Paul, and William Wohlforth, eds. *Status in World Politics* (unpublished manuscript); Deborah Larson, T.V. Paul, and William Wohlforth "Status and World Order," paper prepared for delivery at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, March 16-19, 2011; Iver B. Neumann, "Status is Cultural," paper prepared for delivery at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, March 16-19, 2011; Vincent Pouliot, "Setting Status in Stone: The Negotiations of International Institutional Privileges," paper prepared for delivery at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, March 16-19, 2011; William C. Wohlforth, "Unipolarity, Status Competition and Great Power War," *World Politics* 61:1 (January 2009): 28-57.

respect as international influence and power dynamics. States are willing to use threats, coercion and even armed force to attain and maintain status, even when doing so is self-defeating or irrelevant from a rational security or capability optimization perspective.[5] This paper aims to link the social psychological micro foundations of the pursuit of status with a constructivist explanation of the sources of the post-Soviet Russian political elites' national identities, interests, and behavioral orientations.

Aspirations to regain the international great power status that Russians believe their country enjoyed during the tsarist and Soviet past have been critical to the creation of Russia's present national identity and national security interests. Russia's national interests have not been defined on the basis of conventional cost-benefit assessments, perceptions of material threat, or the identities projected onto Russia by other countries. As early as 1993, Russia's elite converged around a status-driven national self-image that located Russia in the group of global great powers and the West. Contrary to oft-repeated warnings of a new Cold War, however, this identity generated diffuse national interests in *social*, rather than material, competition for global status, primarily with the United States. A key source of Putin's domestic authority lay in his ability to employ an identity management strategy that satisfied the status aspirations of Russian political elites.

This paper addresses why Russian elites came to have these national interests in social competition for great power status. It employs an aspirational constructivist approach that brings together social psychology and constructivism to gain a better understanding of the causes and consequences of status-seeking in international politics. It explains how a country's aspirations, and multiple in-groups, or "others," enter into the definition of its national identity and the formation of its interests.[6]

Constructivism's Micro Foundations: Social Identity Theory, Aspirations and the Creation of Identities and Interests

This paper posits two hypotheses to address these questions. First, political elites are motivated by the psychological need for both collective self-esteem and value rationality to create collective identities, which in turn shape their interests and behavior.[7] Before turning to these hypotheses, a brief review of social identity theory is called for.

Social identity theory (SIT) allows constructivists to ground the study of international status in social psychology and its explanations for the formation of group identities. SIT provides the motive—the need for positive self-esteem—missing from structural accounts—that is required to explain why individuals and collectives seek to improve or maintain a positive status. SIT highlights the roles that perceptions of self and other play in defining status as well as in generating behavior towards others.

---

[5] Anne L. Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity and Security Interests* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

[6] Anne L. Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009).

[7] On Weber's value rationality, and the desire to create valid social orders, see the discussion in Clunan, *Social Construction*, 32-34, and, more generally, Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (New York: Bedminster, 1918/1968), and Morris Zelditch, Jr., "Theories of Legitimacy," in John T. Jost and Brenda Major, eds., *The Psychology of Legitimacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 33-53.

Social identity theory offers a nuanced and empirically validated conceptualization of status that locates it firmly in the human need to belong to groups and create collective identities. SIT focuses precisely on how and why individuals form groups, and how those groups act to promote a collective sense of self-worth within existing social and material structures. SIT enables international relations scholars to link micro-motives of group identity formation and intra-group behavior with international and national structural factors that are both material and normative. Ontologically, SIT is well suited to locating the two-level game of status politics that Pu and Schweller describe.[8] Chinese leaders are engaged in a domestic game of defining China's identity while simultaneously signaling the statuses this identity requires to the international community.

SIT stresses that individuals and groups have multiple identities, and therefore multiple in-groups to which they belong, or aspire to belong. The in-groups or audiences that are salient for a state's leadership vary in different material and social conditions. SIT opens the path for scholars to understand and explain which of many international statuses a state may have or seek, and how that multiplicity may moderate or exacerbate preferences for cooperation or conflict.[9] Such a conceptualization enables scholars to resolve the puzzle of why China may at one moment claim its rights as a rising power, while the next stressing its status as a developing country.[10]

Rather than a simple focus on status as a zero-sum good and the inevitable winner-take all competition that follows, exploring the social psychological foundations of status opens international relations theorizing to multiple forms of state behavior used to achieve positive status in world politics. As this paper demonstrates, a country's leadership may use one of several strategies to attain or maintain its desired status in the major power status group. Material competition for status is not the sole method available, contrary to the expectations of structural realist theories.[11] A country's leaders can also seek to assimilate or invent a new dimension on which to be judged as having a positively distinctive position in international society. This returns agency to the state and its leaders, which in turn allows for the concept of status to link domestic political actions with patterned international behavior and international structures.[12]

Aspirational constructivism seeks to combine the microfoundations of social psychology with a constructivist emphasis on the importance of values and ideas in shaping social structures and interests. The psychological need for collective self-esteem involves both the need to feel valuable and worthy and the need to feel competent and effective. This need is fulfilled, according to social

---

[8] Xiaoyu Pu and Randall L. Schweller, "Status Signaling, Multiple Audiences, and China's Blue-Water Naval Ambition," in Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, eds. *Status in World Politics* (unpublished manuscript);

[9] Clunan, Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence, ch. 2.

[10] Pu and Schweller, "Status Signaling, Multiple Audiences, and China's Blue-Water Naval Ambition," in Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, eds. *Status in World Politics* (unpublished manuscript).

[11] Thompson, "Status Conflict, Hierarchies, and Interpretation Dilemmas," in Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, eds. *Status in World Politics* (unpublished manuscript); Gilpin 1981.

[12] Deborah Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, "Shortcut to Greatness: The New Thinking and the Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy," *International Organization*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Winter, 2003), pp. 77-109; and their contribution to this volume; Clunan, Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence, ch. 2.

psychology, when one feels part of a group that one values positively and sees as distinctive from other groups.

Central sources of collective self-esteem are the intersubjective memories of the past national Self and the aspirations they generate for the future. These motivations drive political elites to create or alter national identities and national interests in order to promote national self-esteem and further their preferred form of social order, particularly in times of great change.

Second, political elites attempt to craft and re-craft national identities through the introduction of national self-images, sets of ideas about the correct international status and political purpose of their country. They promote their preferred national self-image in the public discourse through the deployment of identity management strategies, which are the means to persuade other political elites that their national self-image promotes collective self-esteem and can provide the basis for a valid social order. The many national self-images and identity management strategies that elites introduce into the political discourse depict other countries as similar or dissimilar to the national Self, and this depiction creates orientations to behave in a generally cooperative fashion toward in-group members and a generally competitive manner toward out-group members.

Exploring the empirical applicability of these aspirational constructivist expectations is the subject of this paper.[13] It explores the identity management strategies Russian political elites adopted in order to promote the two national self-images, Western and statist, that were the most important candidates for Russia's new identity in the post-Soviet political discourse. It details prominent Westernizers' deployment of an identity management strategy of assimilation and the strategies of social competition and social creativity put forth by statists such as Sergei Stankevich, Evgenii Primakov, and Vladimir Putin.

This paper also illustrates the second aspirational constructivist expectation regarding the construction of national interests and behavioral orientations through the in-groups and out-groups associated with various national self-images. Designations of in-groups should produce propensities toward cooperation with those group members, while identification of out-groups are likely to create orientations toward competition and confrontation. Partial in-groups should produce conflicting orientations--a desire both to cooperate and to compete, and thus a bounded form of competition. These expectations, and how they play out in Russian discourse during the 1991-2004 period, are more fully developed below.

The Sources of Russia's Quest for International Status

Political elites are psychologically motivated to find positive meaning in their societal situation; a key method of establishing meaning is to create and defend a collective identity based on one's values, beliefs, norms, and practices and make it the foundation of social order.[14] It is for these reasons that they introduce national self-images into the political discourse. A

---

[13] The empirical conclusions drawn in this paper are based on the qualitative content analysis outlined in Clunan, *Social Construction*, 225-232.

[14] Penelope J. Oakes, "Psychological Groups and Political Psychology: A Response to Huddy's 'Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory'," *Political Psychology* 23:4 (2002): 809-824; and Marilynn B. Brewer, "Many Faces of Social Identity: Implication for Political Psychology," *Political Psychology* 22:1 (2001): 115-125.

central reason that multiple identities contend with one another for dominance in public discourse is that policymakers and opinion makers are self-consciously engaged in creating and legitimating what "ought to be," not merely judging or accepting what "is." They are value-rational--driven by their values, ideas, and beliefs--to undertake actions that instantiate them.[15] Political elites are not merely passive reproducers of social structures; they also seek to shape the world around them. Political elites, more than other members of society, are actively engaged in a legitimation project of asserting a particular set of ideas to empower their values, norms, and beliefs and shape the state's policy course--to create a valid social order, in Max Weber's terms.[16]

Advocates of national self-images implicitly employ identity management strategies designed to enhance national self-esteem. Inherent in national self-images are prescriptions and comparators--such as political-economic system, rank, international roles, or mission--that are designed to make members of the nation feel positive and distinctive--in other words, to enhance self-esteem. Social psychologists have identified a number of identity management strategies.[17] Implicit in all of these strategies is the assumption that social groups compare themselves on the dimension of social status--with the recognition that the factors constituting social status are socially constructed.[18] Each strategy seeks to overcome a group's perceived negative social status: "An unsatisfactory status position leads to engagement in strategies to cope with and overcome [it]. Likewise, . . . people tend to defend a satisfactory status position and maintain a positive in-group evaluation."[19] These strategies fall into three categories: mobility, competition, and creativity.[20]

These strategies, and the motivations underpinning them, help explain the presence of multiple candidate national identities at any given time. Different strategies, reflected in different national self-images, can be employed at the same time, as they are not structurally determined.[21]

---

[15] Weber, *Economy and Society*.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979); and Amelie Mummendey, Thomas Kessler, Andreas Klink, and Rosemarie Mielke, "Strategies to Cope with Negative Social Identity: Predictions by Social Identity Theory and Relative Deprivation Theory," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 76, no. 2 (1999): 229-45.
[18] That these social groups and their statuses are socially constructed is amply demonstrated by the favored measurement strategy of social identity theorists, the minimal group paradigm. In experiments based on this paradigm, researchers found that strangers were willing to use any measure, from a preference for Kandinsky over Monet or eye color, to construct social groups and thereby provide meaning in their environment. Henri Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social* Groups (New York: Academic Press, 1978), Leonie Huddy, "From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory," *Political Psychology* 22:1 (2001): 127-56; and Oakes, "Psychological Groups," 812.
[19] Mummendey et al., "Strategies," 229.
[20] Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner. "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior," in S. Worchel and W. G. Austin, eds., *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1986), 7-24; and Ad van Knippenberg, "Strategies of Identity Management," in Jan Pieter van Oudenhoven and Tineke M. Willemsen, eds., *Ethnic Minorities: Social-Psychological Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Sets and Zeitlinger, 1989), 59-76. Identity theorists have put forward similar strategies to maintain self-esteem. See Alicia D. Cast and Peter J. Burke, "A Theory of Self-Esteem." *Social Forces* 80, no. 3 (2002): 1041-68.
[21] Naomi Ellemers, "Individual Upward Mobility and the Perceived Legitimacy of Intergroup Relations, " in Jost and Major, eds., *The Psychology of Legitimacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 205-222.

They also help explain why identities change. Different strategies highlight different dimensions of identity that their proponents believe provide self-esteem and meaning.

The Behavioral Consequences of In-groups and Out-groups in Russian National Self-Images

Social identity theory focuses on how people construct collective identities by creating in-groups and out-groups. In-groups are based on perceived shared ties to membership in some social category, while out-groups are social categories perceived as not shared by the self.[22] Social categories related to national identity may include, but are not limited to, "great power," "civilized," "Russian," "multicultural," "monocultural," "religious," "cultured," "communist," "nuclear power," "Western," "European," "Eurasian," "Eastern," and "Slavic."

Contrary to assumptions that in-group-out-group and status distinctions necessitate inter-group or intra-group conflict, recent work in social psychology has cast substantial doubt on such black-and-white predictions.[23] The categorization of in-groups tends to produce favoritism toward in-groups and increase the potential for cooperation with in-group members and to create negative bias toward out-groups and increase the derogation of out-groups.[24] The creation of in-group and out-group identities does not in and of itself produce intergroup conflict and hostility. Conflict between groups depends on the content of the group identity and the nature of the comparison between in- and out-groups. As Brewer writes, "Whether actual or imagined, the perception that an out-group constitutes a threat to in-group interests of survival creates a circumstance in which . . . [those identifying with the in-group feel] fear and hostility toward the threatening group."[25] Moreover, Brewer has found that even within a group, there is the need to feel distinctive, what she calls “optimal distinctiveness.” As a result, belonging to a group does not entail that a member will stop seeking to establish and maintain its positive distinctiveness—what makes it special—even within that group.[26]

However, people often feel part of multiple groups. When these group identities overlap, they may produce cross-cutting categorizations that can make the distinction between in-groups and out-groups less pronounced and produce less bias and even favoritism toward the partial out-

---

[22] Brewer, "Many Faces of Social Identity," 119.

[23] Jonathan Mercer, "Anarchy and Identity," International Organization , Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring, 1995), pp. 229-252; Muzafer Sherif, Group Conflict and Cooperation (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956); and Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn Sherif, Groups in Harmony and Tension (New York: Harper, 1953); William Thompson, “Status Conflict, Polarity and Hierarchies,” paper prepared for delivery at the International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, Canada, March 16-19, 2011; Pouliot, “Setting Status.” The indeterminancy of out-group memberships is underscored in recent work in social cognition theory. See Penelope Oakes, “The Root of all Evil in Intergroup Relations? Unearthing the Categorization Process,” In Marilynn B. Brewer and Miles Hewstone, eds, *Social Cognition* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004).

[24] Jeff Spinner-Halev and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, "National Identity and Self-Esteem." *Perspectives on Politics* 1:3 (2003): 515-532.

[25] Marilynn B. Brewer, "The Psychology of Prejudice: In-group Love or Out-group Hate?," *Journal of Social Issues* 55, no. 3 (1999): 435-436, cited in Spinner-Halev and Theiss-Morse, "National Identity," 520.

[26] Marilynn Brewer, "The Social Self," and Brewer, "Social Identity, Distinctiveness, and In-Group Homogeneity."

group.[27] For example, in statist and Western national self-images, the West and the great powers are both in-groups for Russia. Statists and especially Westernizers should display preferences for special relations with the West. Statists, because they emphasize that Russia is only partly Western, construct the West as a partial in-group. Social identity theory predicts that these cross-cutting group memberships should affect the views of Russian statists toward the West, producing less pronounced favoritism toward the West, but great attention toward the West.

When group memberships reinforce each other, the opposite effect is predicted: if a country is viewed as a double out-group member, members of the in-group should display more bias toward them and more favoritism toward double in-group members.[28] In the national restorationist and neocommunist national self-images, the West is a double out-group: it is antithetical to Russia because of its cultural values, ideology, and capitalist system. Social identity theorists would therefore expect national restorationists and neocommunists to be the most hostile toward the West and to advocate confrontation with it. In contrast, for Westernizers, the West is a double in-group, and social identity theory therefore expect them to show considerable favoritism toward Western countries.

Each Russian national self-image has multiple in-groups and out-groups, and the cross-cutting cleavages or reinforcements of those groups will shape which identity management strategies are most likely to be employed by advocates of the self-images. Russian political discourse reveals five main national self-images: Western (including liberal internationalist and democratic developmentalist); statist (including Eurasian statist, and statist developmentalist); Slavophile; national restorationist; and neo-communist.[29] Below, this paper develops the various in-groups and out-groups entailed in each national self-image and then turns to the identity management strategies we might expect advocates of the different self-images to use.

In studying how people manage their identities and attempt to enhance their self-esteem, social psychologists focus on the in-groups and out-groups that people construct and the strategies they employ to enhance their group's self-esteem. Applying social identity theory to the inductive categorization of national self-images allows us to determine which in-groups and out-groups the Russian political elite identified in the 1990s. It also lets us explore the implications these group designations have for the type of identity management strategies political elites might use to enhance Russia's position and the behavioral orientations they might be expected to develop relative to these groups. The content of the five national self-images at play in post-Soviet Russia and the identity management strategies implicit in them shed light on what national interests flow from each national self-image. Table 1 summarizes the in-groups, partial in-groups, and out-groups entailed in each of the five main national self-images present in post-Soviet Russia.

[Table 1 about here]

---

[27] Brewer, "Many Faces of Social Identity," 122-23, Brewer, "Psychology of Prejudice," Marilynn B. Brewer, "Importance of Being 'We': Social Identity and Intergroup Relations" (paper presented at the American Psychological Association Convention, San Francisco, Ca, August 17-20 2007), and Spinner-Halev and Theiss-Morse, "National Identity," 523-24.
[28] Spinner-Halev and Theiss-Morse, "National Identity," 423-24.
[29] For full development of these national self-images, see Clunan, 60-73.

Table 1. Russian National Self-Images: Depiction of In-groups and Out-groups and Evaluation of Russia's Position

	West/Capitalist Countries	FSU	Great Powers	South/Islamic World	East/Authoritarian Countries
In-group	Liberal internationalist; democratic developmentalist	All except liberal internationalist	All except liberal internationalist	--	--
Partial In-group	Eurasian statist; statist developmentalist; slavophile	--	--	--	Eurasian statist; statist developmentalist
Out-group	National restorationist; neocommunist	Liberal internationalist	--	All	Liberal internationalist; democratic developmentalist; slavophile

	National Restorationism		Neocommunism		Slavophilism	Statism			Western		
	Great powers	FSU	Great powers	FSU	Slavs	Great powers	FSU	West	Great powers	West	FSU
Evaluation of position within in-group (+/-)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+

Russian In-groups

The West in its general and particular forms is the primary significant other for Russian political elites.[30] Some national self-images portray the West as an in-group, while others identify it as an out-group. The West is variously viewed as a developmental or civilizational model to emulate, as a degenerate and dehumanized foil for what Russia should not become, and as a geopolitical or geocultural rival. Within the West, Russian elites tends to focus on Western Europe as a political-economic model and the United States as a geopolitical peer in terms of status.[31]

The West is a role model in a number of Russian national self-images. Western national self-images wholly endorse the generalized Western political and economic model and downplay the West as status rival, even though, following Western market economic logic, it is a competitor for markets. All statists identify the West as a desired in-group regarding great power status, particularly the United States, and statist developmentalists, to greater or lesser extent, identify with Germany and Japan. All statists essentially accept the West as an economic role model, though the "Western" path is to be Russified (to a greater extent by Eurasian statists and to a lesser extent by statist developmentalists). In line with Marilynn Brewer’s optimal distinctiveness theory, statists tend to believe that Russian history sets Russia apart from the West and that Russia will never be fully Western and will retain some uniquely Russian qualities.[32] As such, Russia will always only be partly Western, and therefore only a partial in-group. The West in their discourse is often identified as Russia's main competitor, either for status, cultural, or historical reasons, but it is a partial in-group of which statists and Westernizers believe Russia should be a member. Slavophiles also view the West as a partial in-group; it is an out-group because of its secular humanism and corrupt decadence, but it is part of the Christian world and therefore far more similar to Russia than the alien "East."

The national-restorationist and neocommunist self-images see the United States and the West more generally as Russia's primary out-group--as Russia's rival with regard to great power status and political purpose.

Given Russia's long history of seeking to be a great power and the Soviet Union's position as the superpower peer to the United States, it is not surprising that all Russian national self-images hold that Russia belongs to the group of great powers, and belive it is distinctive in its centuries-old unbroken great power status.[33] All of these national self-images have a negative evaluation of Russia's position in the great power in-group. In their view, Russia's rights, privileges, and obligations as a great power are not sufficiently respected by the Western great powers, particularly the United States. The Western national self-image blames Russia's negative status in the group of great powers on an internal failing: Russia's lack of Western political and economic credentials and the destructive legacy of the Soviet militarized economy and its messianic mission. The statist developmentalist self-image also focuses on internal sources of

---

[30] This point has been extensively documented and discussed in Western scholarship. For just one example, see Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe* (London: Routledge, 1996).
[31] VTsIOM, "Analiz Rezultatov Oprosov. Eksperty O Kharatere Peremen v Rossii," *Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny: monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniia* 2, no. May (1993).
[32] Brewer, "The Social Self," and Brewer, "Social Identity, Distinctiveness, and In-Group Homogeneity."
[33] Even liberal internationalists accept that Russia, once it has transformed itself into a civilized market democracy, belongs among the great powers.

weakness and failings to account for Russia's negative status, largely resulting from the Soviet militarized economic system. However, it shares with all the other self-images the belief that the West, particularly the United States, does not accord Russia its due status.

Both the statist and Western national self-images also portray the West as an in-group that Russia aspires to join. For statists, this aspiration is limited primarily to integration into the West's political and economic clubs and into the Western global economy. In the statist view, belonging to the Western in-group is instrumental to achieving Russia's desired status in the great power group. For Westernizers, the aspiration is to more fully join the West and Europe, including its military alliances, and to be part of the club of Western market democracies. Russia's great power status is dependent on its transformation into a stable, prosperous democracy.

For all of the self-images except the liberal internationalist, all or part of the former Soviet Union (FSU) constitute an in-group. The liberal internationalist national self-image sees the FSU as an out-group, as a drag on Russia's integration into the West. The Slavophile self-image views the post-Soviet lands outside of Russia where Russian-speakers predominate to be Russian territory, while the statist, neocommunist and national-restorationist self-images characterize the entire "near abroad" as Russia's rightful sphere of influence. None of these self-images have a positive evaluation of Russia's status relative to the FSU. National restorationists and neocommunists desire reestablishment of an explicit hierarchy of Russian hegemony over the other former Soviet republics through reintegration of these areas into a new Russian empire or confederation. Statists also desire Russian hegemony on the territory of the FSU but without the need for formal reintegration.

According to social psychology, such negative evaluations of Russia's position relative to in-groups contribute to negative self-esteem, which should produce motivations to improve Russia's status in these groups.

Russia's Out-groups

As noted above, the West and capitalist countries more generally are out-groups for national restorationists and neocommunists. Slavophiles view the non-Orthodox, non-Slavic West as an out-group that threatens the autonomy of Orthodox Slav culture and lands. In the Western national self-image, authoritarian countries form an out-group, as their purpose is inimical to the Western liberalism.

The East is the primary alternative to the Western "other" in elite discourse. However, it does not explicitly take on the shape of an out-group in all the national self-images. Russian elites generally ignore the East. When it surfaces in discourse, they display marked ambivalence toward it, generally viewing it in terms of how it may affect Russia's position vis-à-vis the West. Rarely does the East stand on its own as a significant other in its own right. The statist national self-images point to the East as a potential economic role model in the form of the Asian "dragons" (the NICs); the neocommunist self-image looks to China's transitional model with considerable longing. All the self-images place China in the in-group of great powers. But the East, because of its "oriental despotism," "emotionalism," and "backwardness," is still tacitly viewed as inferior to Russia.[34] The applicability of the East as a wholesale model for Russia's

---

[34] Vladimir P. Lukin and Aleksandr I. Utkin, *Rossiia i Zapad: Obshchnost Ili Otchuzhdenie?* (Moscow: Sampo, 1995).

identity does not appear in any national self-image. On the whole, all the national self-images implicitly or explicitly view Russian or Western traditions as superior to Eastern ones.

Much of the East is perceived as an explicit out-group in several national self-images. For Westernizers, China is an out-group because of its communist system and political illiberalism; for Slavophiles and national restorationists, the East is an important out-group because of its non-Slavic and non-Christian civilization, which threatens the Russian Far East. In the Western and statist self-images, China is identified as a potential military threat and great power rival and as a significant market competitor.

The South as an out-group marks a point of almost unanimous consensus among Russian national self-images. The South in its generalized form equates with Islamic fundamentalism and is perceived as a serious threat to Russia's "weak underbelly." More specifically, Turkey represents a regional rival in the images advocating a status of great power or regional hegemon. Southern states are identified positively (Iran, Iraq, and India) only in self-images that identify the West as an out-group. In the neocommunist and national-restorationist self-images, these three countries are seen as important geopolitical allies against the United States or against the West in general. In the Western and statist self-images, the South is linked to global instability but also to Russia's status competition with the West: India is viewed as a particularly important market, as are Iran and Iraq.

It is the fear of the Islamic "other" that pervades elite discourse regarding the South, even among Eurasian statists claiming Russia's unique ability to meld Islam and Christianity. Without this blending, Islam is seen as dangerous. The South has had potential to serve as a unifying Other for the Russian political elite and act as the galvanizing force in shaping its foreign policy orientations, but the South's role in Russian national identity formation is secondary at best. Its role in national identity formation is eclipsed by the Russian political elite's overwhelming focus on the West as the Other.

A status that enhances one's self-esteem cannot merely be asserted to exist for one to feel positive; it has to be proved, and this is the psychological source of status-driven behavior. Having self-value by claiming positive attributes such as self-determination is essential to a group's self-esteem, whether they are colonized Indians or colonial Virginians. Self-value is, however, only half of the equation; positive self-esteem requires that a group enact its identity, in order to "verify the self in context." If the identity cannot be verified, then that status is not accepted as self-defining. This verification requires the social recognition of one's status, but it also means that the group assesses its status claims against the social and material structures that make up its context. Humans need to feel that their identities can actually be performed in order to feel that they are valuable and effective agents, the elements of positive self-esteem.[35] This need for self-esteem motivates people to match "perceptions of the environment or the 'actual' performance of the self" with the prototypical meanings of a given identity.[36] In other words, for a status to be legitimate, it must be legitimate in both the eyes of the holder and the beholder.

---

[35] Cast and Burke, "A Theory of Self-Esteem," Burke and Stets, "Trust," Stets and Burke, "Identity Theory," Bandura, "Self-Efficacy," Bandura, "Social Cognitive Theory," and Bandura, "Self-Efficacy Mechanism."
[36] Stets and Burke, "Identity Theory," 231.

A state will seek to verify its claimed status through identity management strategies. [37]

Identity Management Strategies

Social identity theory outlines three main types of identity management strategies that people use to enhance self-esteem: mobility, competition, and creativity.[38] Social identity theory is interested in how groups with low social status, such as African Americans in the United States, are able, through identity management strategies, to create positive group identities and positive self-esteem. It is important to remember here that the primary objective of mobility, competition, and creativity strategies is to instill in the Self a belief in its positive and distinctive attributes and its self-efficacy (the elements of self-esteem), not necessarily to gain positive evaluation from others. For our purposes, it is whether Russia's political elite accepts the positive views entailed in the national self-images and their identity management strategies that matters, not whether other persons or other countries are in agreement that Russia conforms to those views.

A collective social mobility strategy is one of assimilation: the goal is to become more similar to the desired in-group and eventually to merge into it.[39] For example, the desire to be a great power would lead to a strategy of becoming more and more like other great powers through the development of those characteristics seen to be indicative of great power status. Since all five national self-images posit Russia's proper status as a great power, all could employ a strategy of assimilation. Historically, Russian leaders have focused extensively on a military criterion, rather than economic, political, or diplomatic characteristics, as the key to social mobility, as a "shortcut to greatness."[40]

Assimilation is a likely strategy for Westernizers and statists. For Westernizers, their desired in-group of the "civilized" Western world is premised on the strategy of assimilation of Western values and institutions. For statists, Russia seeks to assimilate into the group of great powers as well as into the Western international economy, requiring assimilation of some market

---

[37] Henri Tajfel, ed., *Differentiation between Social Groups:* Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations (London: Academic Press, 1978).

, and van Knippenberg, "Strategies of Identity Management." See the chapter by Larson and Shevchenko in this volume and Clunan, Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence for elaboration of these strategies.
[38] Tajfel, *Differentiation*, and Tajfel and Turner, "Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict."
[39] Tajfel, *Differentiation*, 93-94. Note that social identity theorists characterize the other mobility strategy ("mobility," or leaving one group and joining another) as a purely individual-level strategy that cannot be employed by groups. Mathias Blanz et al., "Responding to Negative Social Identity: A Taxonomy of Identity Management Strategies," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 28 (1998): 700. According to Tajfel, however, the strategy of assimilation *can* be pursued by groups.
[40] Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, "Shortcut to Greatness: The New Thinking and the Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy," *International Organization* 57, no. 1 (2003): 91-95. In line with social identity theory, the development of military capabilities can reflect a social mobility rather than a social or realistic competition strategy. In this sense, the pursuit of military capabilities is driven by desire for social status and recognition rather than threat perceptions or insecurity. This is likely to be particularly true of high-status weapons systems, such as nuclear weapons. This strategy conforms to structural constructivist explanations that states will seek to conform to normative standards of what it means to be a great power in order to gain social recognition through isomorphism. See Martha Finnemore, "Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism," *International Organization* 50: 2 (1996): 325-47.

norms and Western rationalism. Whether or not a social mobility strategy will garner support beyond the proponents of the national self-image depends on whether members of the group perceive the boundaries of the desired in-group to be permeable or not. For those seeking great power status or Russia's place in the West, Russian political elites must view access to the group of great powers and to the West as possible. Those who reject the national self-images will attempt to persuade the rest of the political elite that assimilation is not possible through the application of history and efficacy tests portraying such as strategy as inappropriate or impractical in light of historical traditions and the behavior of the other great powers and Western countries. Advocates of assimilation will do the reverse.

Another identity management strategy that people can employ when the position of their group with respect to the desired in-group is seen as negative and illegitimate is a strategy of social competition. The aim of social competition strategies is not to challenge or reinvent the basis on which rankings are made. Instead, the existing criteria for status allocations are accepted as correct, but negative rankings are challenged.[41] For international relations, social competition strategies are not premised on confrontation or revising the criteria for determining social status. There is no goal to create a new world order or overturn the existing one. Instead, the goal is social recognition--domestically and internationally--of the positive and distinctive features that make Russia a leading member of the existing world order--an order that is recognized as being constructed on Western terms. Social competition strategies are, per Hatch and Schultz, "motivated by self-evaluation; fed by social comparison," in contrast to "instrumental [or "realistic" or "objective"] competition strategies," which are "motivated by self-interest; fed by incompatible goals."[42]

With such a strategy, Russian political elites compete with those in the desired in-group for positive evaluation of the Self. A social competition strategy would seek to get foreign leaders to admit that Russia is a great power in their statements and to include Russia in gatherings of great powers, as recognition of Russia’s social status rather than because Russia would materially gain from such inclusion. The illegitimacy of Russia's negative status relative to the West is prevalent in all the national self-images except the Western. Therefore, these national self-images are most amenable to a strategy of social competition. It is important to highlight here that social competition is not reducible to a conflict of material interests between groups. Instead, the group that feels negative self-esteem is competing with other groups for prestige and social recognition, not "objective" gains and losses. Social competition is an effort to join the group through promoting recognition of the Self's similarity to the group. If Russia wants to join the group of great powers, it can emphasize to domestic and foreign audiences its internal and external resources, its history of being a great power, and use its diplomatic and political skill in order to gain social recognition of its domestic and foreign achievements and great power status. Proponents of statism, neocommunism, and national restorationism are most likely to adopt this identity management strategy.

Social identity theorists characterize competition for scarce material resources as a strategy of "realistic" competition--what Hogg and Abrams call "objective" competition and Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke, and Klink have termed "instrumental" competition.[43] "Realistic"

---

[41] On different identity management strategies, see Tajfel and Turner, "Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict."
[42] Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz, "Introduction," in *Organizational Identity*, ed. Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 13.
[43] Blanz et al., "Responding to Negative Social Identity," 701.

competition, according to social identity theory, by definition only takes place only in zero-sum situations over indivisible material goods ("groups in competition for a goal which only one can attain").[44] Such a strategy entails struggling with competitors for material resources regardless of the impact of those resources on the group's relative prestige. As Hogg and Abrams note, "A battle over territory or bidding for a franchise, or even the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union are all forms of objective competition (both sides have plenty to lose by lagging behind the other). However, when the aim is merely to alter the relative position of one's group irrespective of the objective gains or losses, this is called social competition. For example, the 'space race' (during the 1960s and 1970s) between the United States and the Soviet Union had as much to do with national pride and prestige as material gain."[45]

The centrality of territorial control and winner-take-all ideology in the national restorationist national self-image suggests that this self-image is most likely to rely on a strategy of "realistic" competition with Western countries. It is almost impossible to overemphasize the importance of territorial vastness in national restorationist conceptions of Russia. The notion of a huge territorial entity that developed over centuries of "organic" accretion litters elite discourse on Russia's national identity.[46] Military might is the primary source of international role and rank in the national-restorationist and the neocommunist self-images. This is especially the case with national restorationism, given its construction of world politics as a zero-sum contest for global dominance between Russia and the West.

Creativity strategies involve the Self taking a different perspective on its social situation. Social creativity strategies redefine the dimension causing negative self-esteem. We would expect to see, counterintuitively, devaluation of a positive pole of evaluation (economic advancement) and valuation of a negative pole (economic backwardness). For example, if Russia's economic position relative to the West is seen as the source of low collective self-esteem, it can be transformed into a positive attribute: the West embodies heartless capitalism and Russia's material backwardness reflects a more humane form of economic development. We are most likely to see such social creativity strategies in all but the Western national self-image.

Another strategy of social creativity is to find a new dimension along which to compare the self with the other. In this strategy, a new comparison dimension is created, one in which one's group holds a higher position than other groups. The Slavophile and Eurasian statist national self-images are most likely to employ such a strategy, though national restorationists and neocommunists may employ it as well. These self-images are based on a geocultural interpretation of the world in which Russia stands alongside the various world civilizations, vaguely defined by geography, culture, and religion. This notion of Russia being a unique civilization goes back to nineteenth-century Slavophiles and the original group of Eurasianists in the 1920s. For Slavophiles, Russian unity (sobornost'), religion, and culture are superior to Western individualism, secularism, and materialism. Russian culture not only is a source of Russian strength and uniqueness but also determines Russia's role as defender of Orthodox Christian Slavs. For Eurasian statists, it is Russia's unique amalgamation of civilizations that make it superior to the West in bridging the divisions that separate East and West and North and

---

[44] Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations And* (London: Routledge, 1988), 55.
[45] Ibid., 50.
[46] For a nice comparison of the importance of territorial expanse in Russian and American national myths, see Mark Bassin, "Turner, Solov'ev, and the 'Frontier Hypothesis': The Nationalist Significance of Open Spaces," *The Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 3 (1993).

South and that give it a special role in world affairs. Eurasianism varies in its definitions, but Russia is seen as creating something more than the sum of its eastern (Turkic/Islamic) and western (European/Christian) parts. This Eurasianism was reinvented in Soviet propaganda as the slogan of the USSR as a multinational nation building a new Soviet man. It appeared again under the Eurasian label in the nationalist press in 1991, where it was largely the preserve of national-restorationist writers until moderate Sergei Stankevich launched Eurasian statism into elite discourse in February 1992.[47]

Each of the five national self-images in contention in the Russian political discourse is compatible with at least one identity management strategy.

National Identity Management Strategies in Post-Soviet Russia

As noted earlier, aspirational constructivism expects that political elites will deploy identity management strategies in an effort to promote their preferred national self-image and have it come to act as the basis for a new, valid social order. Such identity management strategies attempt to make their preferred national self-image persuasive by highlighting positive and distinctive elements of the Self. In post-Soviet Russia, two sets of national self-images--Western and statist--were the primary contenders for defining the new order. Their advocates attempted to enhance national self-esteem and their self-image's appeal through identity management strategies that ranged from assimilation to social competition and social creativity.

Westernizers and Strategies of Assimilation

The Western national self-images in play in post-Soviet Russia included liberal internationalism, which was initially dominant in the Yeltsin administration, and democratic developmentalism, which replaced liberal internationalism as the primary Western national self-image in the Russian political discourse after the liberal internationalists were forced from office and their views ceased to be widely reflected in popular discourse. The two Western national self-images had much in common; their primary differences lay in the importance they attached to Russia's international great power status and in their depiction of the nature of international relations. These differences led their advocates to adopt similar methods for bringing about Russia's new identity: assimilation into the West, both through joining its clubs and through Russia's transformation into a market democracy. The differences produced divergences largely in terms of the completeness and pace of assimilation.

Liberal Internationalism and Russia's Complete Assimilation into the West

Liberal internationalists differed from democratic developmentalists in advocating that Russia's assimilation into the West should occur rapidly and without regard for Russia's historical status as a great power. They considered Russia's historical quest for great power status to be a root cause of its previous authoritarian regimes and suppression of its people. As such, they rejected efforts to uphold this status, as it would delay, even cripple, Russia's development

---

[47] Sergei Stankevich, "Derzhava v Poiskakh Sebia," *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, Mar. 28 1992.

as a Western market democracy. National self-esteem, in this view, could only be achieved by rejecting Russia's past and its great power aspirations and becoming wholly Western. Once Russia became a member of the West, its greatness would stem from its ability to be a competitive market democracy, similar to Japan or Germany.

Andrei Kozyrev laid out this strategy of assimilation in 1992.[48] National interests would be premised on "our internal transformation," not on transforming global politics or pursuing great power status. He stated Russia's national interests as joining a Western, linear path of political economic development. "We want democracy and human rights," he declared, "not a 'humane socialism,' a normal market without 'socialist' or any other reservations. This means that we, too, have finally chosen good health and prosperity. We want to return to the normal development cycle which we dropped out of for 70 years."

For liberal internationalists, the past held little of legitimate value because of Russia's autocratic traditions and the messianic and militaristic totalitarianism of Soviet rule. The nascent market democracy that was developing prior to the Bolshevik Revolution was seen as the main source of historical legitimacy, as it comported with the goal of becoming a "normal"--meaning Western--country that put the health and prosperity of its citizenry at the heart of the national interest. "Yet to be normal is probably the most difficult thing," Kozyrev argued, because "our country was fettered even before, [but] particularly in this century, by messianic ideas virtually sacrificing national interests." Communist messianism led to "expansion and reckless confrontation with the outside world" as well as the exhaustion of the economy. Russia now should reject that past and focus on its national interest of becoming a market democracy. Kozyrev and his domestic counterpart Egor Gaidar advocated a national self-image and identity management strategy that stipulated unadulterated adoption of Western institutions and values and cooperation with the West. "I think we can unhesitatingly follow the same road [as the West]," Kozyrev said. "The only way out is to return to the natural environment in which Russia should be by rights." For Russian liberal internationalists, national self-esteem could only be enhanced by adopting the positive and distinctive features of Western countries and rejecting the Russian traditions because they were the source of its negative self-esteem.

Democratic Developmentalism and Gradual Assimilation into the West

Democratic developmentalists agreed with liberal internationalists that Russia's status ultimately rested on its assimilation into Western and European institutions and the internal transformation of Russia's political economy into a market democracy. However, they argued that such assimilation should be more gradual than their radical Westernizing counterparts. Most significantly, democratic developmentalists disagreed with liberal internationalists about Russia's past great power status. They believed that Russia's status as a great power need not be a hindrance to Western assimilation. Russia had legitimate national interests as a great power that, while historically based, were not forever linked to communist ideology or tsarist autocracy. This historical distinctiveness had positive elements, which did not need to be discarded.[49] As Kortunov and Volodin, proponents of democratic developmentalism, suggested, the liberal internationalist "mode of thinking can be identified as an uncritical emulation of Western models

[48] All quotations in this paragraph and the next come from statements made by Kozyrev in "A Transformed Russia in a New World," *International Affairs* (Moscow), no. 4-5 (1992): 85-89, and Andrei Kozyrev, "Russia Looks West," *Moscow News*, Sept. 29-Oct. 6 1991.

[49] Alexei Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives." *International Security* 18: 2 (Fall 1993): 5-43.

of social organization and principles of foreign policy. The [democratic developmentalist] mode regards Russia as a 'vital' European power having strategic interests in Europe and in Asia as well." In their view, Russian national interests "should creatively combine the priority of Russian geopolitical interests, on the one hand, with the consistent democratization and liberalization of the economy and polity, on the other. An open political system is equally important for Russia for the obvious reason that such a model of state-civil society relationships will create preconditions for intellectual, cultural, economic and technological potential of the society to be fully realized." In the democratic developmentalist view, "preservation of Russia's age-old geopolitical role as civilized and strong equalizer is a main resource against geopolitical chaos, for the benefit of Europe and the world."[50] Assimilation into the West therefore did not require ignoring Russia's historical distinction as a great power and should be compatible with great power status.

Statists and Strategies of Social Competition and Creativity

Statists agreed with democratic developmentalists that Russia's historical distinctiveness as a great power was important to preserve. But instead of Westernizing Russia through assimilation, those espousing statist national self-images advocated rebuilding Russia's identity and national esteem on the basis of its historical great power status and Russia's integration on that basis into the Western-dominated international polity and economy. Their strategies for doing so included demanding recognition of the counts by which Russia was rightfully a great power and through reimagining the criteria by which Russia status in the world should be judged.[51] Such reimaginings constituted social creativity strategies, while the demands for social recognition of Russia's existing great power criteria fall under social competition strategies.

Eurasian Statism and Social Creativity

As noted earlier, social creativity strategies seek to enhance self-esteem by changing the dimension on which the Self and Others are compared. Instead of suggesting that Russia should only compare itself to the United States and the West in terms of military, economic, or political criteria, Eurasian statists invoked a new dimension of comparison that highlighted Russia's positive distinctiveness from the West. Advocates of the Eurasian subtype of statism, such as state chancellor and Yeltsin advisor Sergei Stankevich, clearly put forth a social creativity

---

[50] Andrei. V. Kortunov and Andrei Volodin, *Contemporary Russia: National Interests and Emerging Foreign Policy Perceptions* (Köln: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, 1996), 13.

[51] Larson and Shevchenko conflate social (or evaluative) competition with realistic (or instrumental) competition, an important flaw, as the latter is more likely to produce conflict. They also use social mobility in manner inconsistent with social identity theory, as simply leaving one (backward) group and joining another, and suggest that this is achieved through "hard work." The only available social mobility strategy for a group is assimilation, which implies identity transformation, rather than simply hard work to acquire the material resources necessary for being a group member. Their portrayal of much of Russian history falls more accurately under social and realistic competition than mobility. See Larson and Shevchenko, "Shortcut to Greatness." For a clarification of the distinctions among identity management strategies, see Blanz et al., "Responding to Negative Social Identity," 700.

strategy. They emphasized the historical uniqueness of Russia as the fulcrum of four civilizations and proposed a new, transcendent role for Russia as a harmonizer of these civilizations. Stankevich succinctly captured this social creativity strategy in his depiction of Russia's unique "Eurasian" calling: "Russia's mission in the world is to initiate and maintain a multilateral dialogue of cultures, civilizations and states. Russia the conciliator, Russia the unifier, Russia the harmonizer. A merciful power, patient and open within the limits outlined by law and goodwill, but a fearsome power outside those limits. A country that takes in West and East, North and South, and that is uniquely capable--perhaps it alone has this capability--of harmoniously unifying many different elements, of achieving a historic symphony. That is how I see Russia in a new world."[52]

Statism and Social Competition

Social competition is aimed at creating a positive and distinctive identity for the Self through positively differentiating it from the Other on the dimension of comparison. For Russian statists, the key dimension for self-evaluation is great power status; they sought to posit a higher-status level or reverse the status relationship with the main Others, the United States and the West. Those employing social competition strategies regarding status would argue that their exclusion from or lesser status in a group was unjust, that they deserve inclusion or elevation to a higher position, and that the Other's elevated position should be decreased. Additionally, they emphasize that adjusting social recognition requires self-improvement (rather than competing in a zero-sum fashion for material resources), since their goals and those of the desired in-group are not seen as mutually exclusive.[53] Russian statists, including Evgenii Primakov and Vladimir Putin, did not portray Russia and the United States or the West as having necessarily incompatible goals; rather, as both countries were great powers, they shared the same goal of preserving international order. This had significant consequences for their behavioral orientations toward the United States, a point developed below.

Russian statists predominantly employed social competition strategies, though they accepted Russia's special role in Eurasia, demanding from both domestic and international audiences social recognition of Russia's status as a great power with special rights and responsibilities and its place in Western-dominated institutions. Social competition strategies were particularly pronounced under Prime Minister Evgenii Primakov and continued under Vladimir Putin. Instead of creating a new, Eurasian dimension along which to compare Russia with the United States (the primary Other), they attempted to alter Russia's negative position on the existing dimension of comparison--membership in the great power and the Western in-groups--in order to cast Russia in a more positive and distinctive light.

Primakov's social creativity strategy was to invert the relationship between the United States and Russia. Rather than conceding Russian inferiority in a unipolar world ordered by the United States, Primakov declared his doctrine of a "multipolar world" in which he put forth an image of Russia as holding the superior distinction of being a genuine status quo great power seeking to restrain its fellow great power, the United States, for its own good and return it to the right path instead of destabilizing international relations through the pursuit of ideological goals. Primakov cast the United States as the negative actor acting in a revisionist and dangerous manner, while Russia was acting responsibly and soberly, as a great power should, to uphold

[52] Stankevich, "Derzhava v Poiskakh Sebia."
[53] Blanz et al., "Responding to Negative Social Identity," 726-27.

international order and restrain its fellow great power from going too far.[54] His creativity was to ignore the material dimensions of great power status--by which criteria the United States was superior--and to create a new dimension based on responsibility and pragmatism as the defining dimension on which Russia's status and the status of all great powers would be judged.

Vladimir Putin, a chief proponent of statist developmentalism, adopted Primakov's social creativity strategy of a multipolar world. However, he modified it to highlight Russia's "traditional" role as a joint stabilizer of the international system that, in Russian eyes, had placed Russia on a par with the United States during the Cold War. This theme appeared in Primakov's foreign policy as well but was especially evident in Putin's depiction after the attacks of September 11, 2001, of Russia's joint responsibility with the United States to rid the world of terrorism.[55] As Putin declared in 2002, "Russia is one of the most reliable guarantors of international stability. It is Russia's principled position that has made it possible to form a strong anti-terrorist coalition. . . . Our major goal in foreign policy is to ensure strategic stability in the world. To do this, we are participating in the creation of a new system of security, we maintain constant dialogue with the United States, and work on changing the quality of our relations with NATO."[56] In this case, the desire is to create a positive and distinctive role for Russia in which its status is equal to the United States, but using as a criterion the attributes of a truly responsible and reliable stabilizer of world politics rather than material capabilities. In contrast to the Soviet role in a "superpower condominium," this status is premised not on nuclear danger but on jointly fighting common threats from nonstate actors and thereby providing international stability for the rest of the world.[57]

In addition to promoting this social creativity strategy, Putin also adopted a social competition strategy with regard to Russia's place in the West. In Putin's statist developmentalism, Russia's place was unquestionably among the advanced industrial countries of the West, but as a country that retained its own distinct historical traditions. Putin offered a historically legitimate hybrid of Russia's greatness with a Western emphasis on international economic standards. The result was liberal statist developmentalism. Despite Putin's orientation toward the West and his pragmatism, his "idea" for Russia rested squarely on what he termed "belief in Russia's greatness." In emphasizing Russia's greatness, Putin was filling the psychological need to assert Russia's distinctiveness from other, lesser, European countries. Putin skillfully assembled "patriotism," "belief in the greatness of Russia," "statism," and "social solidarity" as "foothold[s] for the unity of Russian society" drawn from the past, together with acceptance of the "universal values" of private property and entrepreneurship drawn from the West. He argued that "the new Russian idea will come about as an alloy or an organic unification of universal general humanitarian values with traditional Russian values which have stood the test of the times, including the test of the turbulent 20th century."[58] Here we see efforts to preserve Russia's distinctive traditions while accepting elements of Western universalism and the demand of Russia's assumption of its rightful place among the group of great powers and in the West, all while being not fully Western (just as Japan and the NICs had done).

---

[54] Evgenii Primakov, "Mnogopoliarnii Mir i OON," *Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn'*, no. 10 (1997).
[55] Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly," (Moscow, Russia: 2002), and Evgenii Primakov, "Rossiia Byla i Ostaetsia Velikoi Derzhavoi," *Panorama* 1996.
[56] Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly," 2002.
[57] On U.S.-Soviet cooperation to avoid nuclear danger, see Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Nuclear Learning and U.S.-Soviet Security Regimes," *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (1987).
[58] Vladimir Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium," *Irish Times*, Dec. 31 1999.

Russian National Self-Images and the Determination of National Interests

One of the central propositions of aspirational constructivism is that national self-images constitute certain countries and regions as in-groups and out-groups for the national Self. As noted earlier, such group categorization leads to expectations regarding behavioral orientations toward competition and cooperation between the Self and the group. National self-images rarely create in-groups or out-groups on a single dimension, and a country may appear in multiple groups. This creates overlapping or mutually reinforcing in-groups and out-groups, a dynamic that complicates the simple behavioral expectation that in-groups produce orientations toward cooperation and out-groups produce orientations toward competition.[59] The behavioral expectations associated with these sorts of groups are more complex.

The West as a Double In-group and Cooperative Foreign Policy Orientations

If a national self-image constructs a group as a double in-group, in which Russia is similar to the group on both status and purpose, the expectation is that the national interest would dictate cooperation with that in-group, even as it competes for an improved position within the group. The Western national self-images depict the West as a double in-group, so we would expect advocates of these self-images to favor cooperation with the West, even when seeking a higher-status position.

Liberal internationalists constructed the West as a double in-group, depicting Russia's international status as function of its membership in the club of market democracies. In Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev's words, Russia was the "missing component of the democratic pole of the Northern Hemisphere."[60] He and other liberal internationalists divided the world primarily according to type of political-economic system rather than material power, with the democratic capitalist club congregating in Western-dominated multilateral organizations. Their assumption, quickly challenged as utopian, was that once a club member, Russia would be accorded equal rank with other members. Kozyrev saw the Western democracies as "Russia's natural allies," not the post-Soviet republics, and argued that a democratic Russia would have "friendly and eventually allied relations with the civilized [meaning Western] world, including NATO, the UN, and other structures."

Prominent advocates of liberal internationalism, particularly Kozyrev, suggested that Russia, as a means to this end, end all policies implying an imperial role with respect to the former Soviet republics and satellites and accept Western policies globally. In practice, this meant cutting off subsidies to the former Soviet republics, raising their energy prices to world levels, acceding to Western conditions for aid, and prioritizing warm relations with the United States and Europe over economic profits from arms sales and losses from economic embargoes of countries out of favor with the West. Kozyrev and liberal internationalists, unlike many others, rejected calls to keep the Soviet Army unified. With regard to the former Soviet republics in general, Kozyrev represented an anti-imperial, anti-restorationist image of a Russia

---

[59] Spinner-Halev and Theiss-Morse, "National Identity."
[60] The quotations in this paragraph are from "A Transformed Russia in a New World," 85-89, and Kozyrev, "Russia Looks West."

consolidating its own sovereign democratic identity and happy to let the other republics do likewise. In this view, as in the democratic developmentalist self-image, Russia's interests in joining the democratic club should not be held hostage to reintegration of the former Soviet republics. The central importance of membership of the democratic in-group is clear in Kozyrev's relegation of the former Soviet republics' significance in Russian foreign policy to the effect Russia's behavior there would have on "Russia's standing in the civilized world."[61] Liberal internationalists argued that Russia had to do everything possible to avoid the appearance of imperialism, as this would both frighten Russia's newly and rightfully (in the view of liberal internationalists) sovereign neighbors and impede Russia's joining the West.

While wholeheartedly advocating cooperation with the West and the United States, democratic developmentalists suggested that such cooperation neither precluded a self-interested policy toward the former Soviet republics nor required accepting Western policy positions on all issues.[62] As Vladimir Lukin noted, "In showing a perfectly laudable desire to overcome our imperial heritage, we occasionally tend to bear ourselves much more gently and modestly than any normal power should do when the interests of compatriots are affected."[63] Democratic developmentalists did not dispute the importance of the United States to Russia but stressed the need to influence U.S. policy, not merely track it.[64]

The West as a Double Out-group and Confrontational Foreign Policy Orientations

In contrast to the positive and cooperative orientations toward double in-groups, double out-groups are expected to produce national interests in confrontation: a desire to compete with the out-group in order to overturn the negative status position of the Russian in-group and hostility based on dissimilar political purposes. The national restorationist, neocommunist and Slavophile self-images construct the West as a double out-group, and we would therefore expect them to advocate hostile competition with the West, as their desired international status and political purpose are at odds with the West. While these national self-images are not the subject of this paper, their foreign policy orientations generally are consistent with this expectation. Their advocates generally promote "realistic" competition or confrontation with the West and exhibit hostility toward the West, particularly Western behavior in areas deemed to be Russia's primary in-group--the former Soviet republics.[65]

The West as a Partial In-group and Boundedly Competitive Foreign Policy Orientations

---

[61] "A Transformed Russia in a New World," 88, 100. See also Kozyrev, “Russia Looks West,” and Zagorskii, “Rossiia i Evropa.”
[62] Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives," 11.
[63] "A Transformed Russia in a New World," 93.
[64] Ibid., 92.
[65] For reviews of their attitudes toward the West, see Michael Urban, "Remythologising the Russian State," *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 6 (1998), Aleksei Arbatov, "Parliament and Politics in Russia" (paper presented at the Strategic Arms Control -- Moment of Decision?, Washington, DC, Jun. 11 1997), and Vera Tolz, "Forging the Nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 6 (1998).

In between the cooperative and confrontational ends of the behavioral spectrum lie national self-images that construct partial in-groups, in which the group is seen as similar to Russia on one dimension but dissimilar on another. With respect to such self-images, aspirational constructivism anticipates that this cross-cutting cleavage would produce a desire for cooperation on the in-group dimension, which moderates any interest in competition along the out-group dimension. Russian statist national self-images fall into this category. They depict Russia as a member of the great power in-group along with many Western countries and as a partial member of the West, but not purely Western.

This partial membership bears a bit more explanation: statism portrays Russia as combining qualities of both Western and Eastern civilizations, and in this self-image, Russia is partly Western. Russia is also depicted as a member of the modern Western group of advanced industrial countries, even though it has distinctive national characteristics that set it apart from the West. Statists also construct Russia as the most prominent member of the post-Soviet in-group. Western countries are not part of the post-Soviet in-group, and competition is therefore anticipated with regard to that in-group on issues related to the FSU. So these self-images construct the Western great powers as a partial in-group. As such, aspirational constructivism expects that statists are unlikely to advocate confrontation with the West. Instead, it expects them to develop national interests in cooperating with the West in order to integrate into it and in limiting competition with the West to that end.

For statists, Russian history and geography dictates its character as a "Eurasian" country. This character prevents Russia from being a completely Western country but also gives it a special role as the hegemon of Eurasia. This constructs the former Soviet republics and the Russian diaspora there as a natural in-group and produces orientations to compete with outside countries trying to influence that in-group. For many statists, as Stankevich writes, a foreign state's "attitude toward the Russian population and Russian heritage is the most important criterion for Russia in determining whether a given state is friendly." This criterion determines Russia's bilateral positions with the former Soviet republics, particularly regarding troop withdrawals, economics, and finance. It also predisposes Russian statists to favor competition with states outside of the former Soviet Union who seek to increase their standing among this in-group.[66] The most likely points of conflict with the West therefore are likely to be over perceived threats to Russia's position in its FSU in-group.

Russian statists view Russia as one of the handful of great powers in a multipolar world, and its responsibilities are therefore not merely regional but global. As a member of the great power in-group, Russia therefore should cooperate with other great powers to produce international stability and compete for recognition of its position.[67] As a result, statists like Primakov favored a Gaullist mode of international relations in which Russia's position in the West was not to be questioned and its great power status relative to the United States would be asserted. Primakov's foreign policy orientation prompted Dmitrii Trenin to note that "Russian diplomacy is acquiring a French accent. Alternatively opting in and out, Moscow has managed to be anti-American on a given issue without being anti-Western."[68] While he emphasized Russia's role as a global great power and made achievement of a multipolar world a central tenet of Russian foreign policy, Primakov and his successor Vladimir Putin never moved Russian foreign policy toward confrontation, as national restorationists advocated. Instead they emphasized

---

[66] Stankevich, "Derzhava v Poiskakh Sebia," 1.
[67] Primakov consistently developed this theme. See for example Primakov, "Mnogopoliarnii Mir."
[68] Dmitrii Trenin, "Russia's French Accent," *Moscow Times*, Mar. 13 1998.

Russia's special status in West and the importance of its relationship with the United States.[69] A creativity strategy is apparent in statist national self-images, which devalue U.S. military preeminence and highlight Russia's positive role as the genuine stabilizer of the international system (in contrast to the roguish United States). For Primakov and Putin, partnership with the West remained a top priority, as the West was an important in-group; in contrast to liberal internationalists, however, partnership was not to be the sole or main national interest, as Russia's position among the great powers, Eurasian distinctiveness, and special role in the FSU dictated social competition for recognition of its status.

For statist developmentalists like Putin, the goal of global great power status required Russia's integration into global economic and political institutions but not its subordination to the West. As Stankevich advocated, Russians should seek "integration into the world economy, without losing face and while protecting their own interests."[70] Statist developmentalists therefore advocated a national interest in cooperating with the West in order to join the global economy and maintain Russia's great power status on that dimension. Putin and other statist developmentalists sought broad cooperation and limited competition with the West, as Primakov did.

Conforming to a strategy of social competition, Putin and other statist developmentalists accepted Western economic criteria for ranking countries. In contrast to a social creativity strategy, they stressed the need for Russia to change its place in the existing ranking rather than create a new ranking system. As Putin said in his annual address to the Federal Assembly in April 2002, "The principle feature of the modern world is the internationalization of economy and society. And in these conditions, the best world standards become the most important criteria of success." Russian status in the global economy was determined according to Western criteria, which meant market competition. Putin highlighted the economic competition entailed in integration into the Western global economy but also rejected confrontation or hostility based on different political purposes:

> the period of confrontation has ended. We are building constructive, normal relations with all the world's nations. . . . However . . . the norm in the international community, in the world today, is also harsh competition--for markets, for investment, for political and economic influence. And in this fight, Russia needs to be strong and competitive. Today, the countries of the world compete with each other in all economic and political parameters: in the size of the tax burden, in the security level of the country and its citizens, in guarantees for protecting property rights. They compete in the attractiveness of the business climate, in the development of economic freedoms, in the quality of state institutions and the effectiveness of the legal system. The conclusion is obvious: in the world today, no one intends to be hostile towards us--no one wants this or needs it. But no one is particularly waiting for us either. No one is going to help us especially. We need to fight for a place in the "economic sun" ourselves.[71]

---

[69] For one of many pronouncements to this effect, see Primakov, "Rossiia." On Putin, see Interfax, July 10, 2000, Official Kremlin International News Broadcast, "Press Conference with Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov," Jul. 10 2000, Daniel Treisman, "What Is Different About Putin's Russia?," *Foreign Affairs* (2002), and Gail W. Lapidus, "Putin's War on Terrorism: Lessons from Chechnya," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 18, no. 1 (2002).

[70] Stankevich, "Derzhava v Poiskakh Sebia."

[71] Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly," 2002.

For statist developmentalists such as Putin, Russia's global integration required advancement in the global status hierarchy and competition for social recognition on the West's terms and therefore competition bounded by cooperation with Western powers and institutions and acceptance of Western economic values.

Conclusion

Aspirational constructivism expects political elites to use identity management strategies to promote their preferred national self-image in order for it become the basis of a new social order. It also expects these national self-images to generate behavioral orientations toward countries belonging to in-groups and out-groups. This paper finds that advocates of the Western and statist national self-images employed such identity management strategies, whether consciously or not. These two sets of national self-images vied for dominance in the political discourse in post-Soviet Russia throughout Russia's revolutionary decade. Both constructed Russia as at least partially a member of the West. As a result, as aspirational constructivism expects, the behavioral orientations associated with these national self-images advocated some degree of cooperation with the West. Liberal internationalism quickly fell from dominance and how, after ten years of vigorous debate, the Russian political elite settled only partly on a statist definition of Russian national identity--the part that most conformed to shared historical aspirations regarding Russia's great power status.

For liberal internationalists, their strategy of complete and rapid assimilation into the West dictated a policy orientation toward conciliation and accepting the West's lead--and toward a complete rejection of Russia's past as containing any positively distinctive elements. Enhancing Russian national self-esteem could only be accomplished through Russia's complete transformation into a "normal" Western country, similar to Germany or Japan. Democratic developmentalists joined with their fellow Westernizers in using a strategy of assimilation; however, they favored a gradual process of assimilation that preserved Russia's historical distinction as a great power. They favored extensive cooperation with the West but accepted that Russian interests in preserving its historical distinctiveness would at times mean rejecting Western positions and advice.

Statists viewed Russia as largely Western but as historically distinct from the West in important ways. For Eurasian statists, such distinctiveness was Russia's special gift, enabling it to aspire to a role that transcended the great power attributes that other statists prioritized. Russia's primary in-group was therefore the former Soviet republics, and Russia would compete with outside countries to maintain its special role there. Instead of remaking the world as a Eurasian harmonizer, Eurasian statists such as Evgenii Primakov suggested that Russia should seek recognition of its great power status through assertion of its rights and existing strengths (social competition) and by highlighting the manner in which it was a "better" great power than the United States (social creativity). Statists and statist developmentalists accepted Russia's Eurasian distinctiveness and therefore its hegemonic role in the post-Soviet in-group but sought social recognition of Russia's status as a great power and membership in the Western global economy. They advocated a strategy of social competition in addition to social creativity. Statist developmentalists, most prominently Vladimir Putin, argued that Russia should seek its place in the Western global economy through internal transformations designed to make it more

economically Western and therefore more competitive in a global marketplace. For all subtypes of statism, national interests dictated that Russia should cooperate with the West, restrain competition, and avoid confrontation.

Russia and Status-as-Interest

The question of whether states are driven to compete for international status or prestige has important real-world implications. This paper has highlighted the crucial importance of elite aspirations to restore Russia's historical great power status to the definition of its post-Soviet national self-images and national interests. Such aspirations stoked fears that Russia would take a revanchist tack in its relations with the outside world. Russian policymakers' constant proclamations of its great power status and its efforts to keep its status on a par with the United States suggested Russia was embarked on a confrontational course with the United States. This prompted repeated talk about "a return to the Cold War." Drawing on recent research in social psychology, this paper suggests, however, that such declarations may well be directed primarily to a domestic audience, as they are efforts to enhance Russians' own sense of their country's self-worth.[72] Policymakers need to look beyond the surface of such proclamations and behavior if they are to avoid misperceiving the sources and reasons for a country's pursuit of international status—in this case, Russia's.

The aspirational constructivist approach offers some moderately good news in this respect. Contrary to more pessimistic assessments of Russian foreign policy, aspirational constructivism highlights that Russia is not a revisionist power seeking to create a non-Western international order. Instead, Russia seeks to join the West, but in a manner that allows its leaders to maintain national self-esteem in the eyes of Russian political elites, primarily through Russia's involvement in the management of global affairs and its partial Westernization. At a minimum, Russian elites require recognition as a regional hegemon in the former Soviet Union. This suggests that strategies of face-saving or "respect-enhancing" engagement (such as Russia's addition to the G-7, or the Russia-NATO Founding Act) can allay tension, while Western efforts to aid the post-Soviet countries will generate conflict. The development of a Russian national identity as a partly Western great power does not rule out competition with the United States and the West, but it does suggest that such competition will take place on the terms of existing Western-dominated international society and will be bounded in an overarching desire to remain engaged with the West. NATO’s war against Serbia challenged the legitimacy of Russia’s historical role as protector of the Southern Slavs. Russia vehemently denounced and successfully blocked efforts to authorize the use of force against Serbia to stop ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. By then acting without the UN Security Council, NATO and the United States rejected Russia’s status as a global power, in particular its right to decide with other great powers when wars would be fought. Russian troops immediately moved from Bosnia to seize the Pristina airport ahead of NATO forces, surprising NATO commanders, and delighting the Russian elite. “The Kosovo conflict revealed a fundamental gap between Western and Russian perceptions of the evolution of international relations. The concept of humanitarian intervention was alien to Russian thinking. It was dismissed by Russian politicians and generals as a disguise for

[72] Brewer, " Psychology of Prejudice," and Brewer, "Importance of Being 'We.'"

America's geopolitical ambitions."[73] Russian and Western decisionmakers have a "noticeable difference in basic values" underpinning world politics, as one Russian observer noted.[74]

The bad news is that promoting Russia's resurgence as a great power within the existing international order has been the domestically legitimate identity management strategy when Russia was weak, as it was throughout the 1990s, and as it grew stronger thereafter. Russian political elites reject rapid and total Westernization and following a pro-Western line in foreign policy as unbefitting Russia's greatness, even though most are positively inclined toward the West. For Western decisionmakers, the primary problem is that Russian political elites want to participate in the contemporary, Western-dominated international society, but they view this society through a nineteenth-century lens rather than one that takes into account the impact that democratization, economic liberalization, increasing interdependence, globalization, and softened sovereignty are having on that society.[75] Russian political elites view the countries of the former Soviet Union through this nineteenth century lens, as the part of the historical basis of Russia's great power status and unique Eurasian form of development. Western encroachments in this region are equated with loss of Russia's historical status and therefore threaten national self-esteem.

It is not surprising, from this perspective, that Russian policy makers would risk its relations with the West over countries that are considered core to its identity as a great power, as it did in its war with Georgia in 2008. The conflict between Russia and Western powers over what the status of great power entails became much more serious during and after the "colored" revolutions in favor of democracy in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan. Whereas Kosovo challenged Russia's status as a global power, the West's support of these revolutions and pro-Western governments denied Russia the status of even being a regional great power, with exclusive rights in its sphere of influence, what it calls the "near abroad." When Georgia, the most overtly pro-U.S. ally in the former Soviet Union, acted rashly in 2008 to retake control over breakaway parts of its territory, Russia invaded. Russia's action was a war for status, a way to re-stake its claim to being a great power with special rights and responsibilities in its sphere of influence.

NATO's intervention in Serbia over Kosovo and Russia's 2008 war against Georgia reflect how disagreements over what constitutes status lead to conflicts over the legitimacy of actions by major powers, and even to military action to assert status. In some cases, the use of force may be trivial, such as Russia's lightning seizure of Pristina's airport; in others, such as Georgia, it can be far more consequential for great power relations. The Georgian case suggests that a war over status is most likely when the one side feels that it is at risk of losing its status, including its legitimate right to act out that status.

It is in the former Soviet Union, therefore, that Russia is most likely to compete with the West, and it is the only region where genuine confrontation is likely. Such competition is

---

[73] Max Jakobson, "Russia Heads Off toward a Solution of Its Own," *International Herald Tribune*, Nov. 12 1999.

[74] Sergei Karaganov, "Russia and the International Order," in Dov Lynch, ed., *What Russia Sees*, (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2005), 33.

[75] Sergei Medvedev, "Rossiia v Kontse Epokhi Moderna: Vneshniaia Politika, Bezopasnost', Identichnost'," in Sergei Medvedev, Aleksandr Konovalov, and Sergei Oznobishchev, eds., *Rossiia i Zapad v Novom Tysiacheletii: Mezhdu Globalizatsiei i Vnutrennei Politikoi*, (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2002), 41-67; and Trenin, "Rossiia i Novaia Evropeiskaia Sistema," *Rubezhi* 1, no. 16 (1997): 109-21.

unlikely to reach levels approaching that of the Cold War, as the Russian political elites seek entry into the Western political order rather than replacing it with their own. However, Western policymakers should expect Russian leaders to continue to make pronouncements about Russia's historical rights to be treated as a great power, in the former Soviet Union and globally.

In post-Soviet Russia, for the majority of political elites, the depiction of the West as an in-group or partial in-group and the illegitimacy of national self-images premised on ideological confrontation with the West have produced more moderate foreign policy orientations toward the West than many pundits expected, given the often belligerent great power rhetoric of its policymakers.[76] However, a key source of Russian political elites' sense of positive distinctiveness and national self-esteem is Russia's leading role in the former Soviet republic in-group. As such, perceived threats to Russia's identity as playing the leading role in the former Soviet republics are the most likely sources for genuine conflict between Russia and the West.

---

[76] For an example of how a focus on rhetoric and realist assumptions about international prestige can produce misreadings of sources of genuine conflict in Russian-American relations, see Thomas Ambrosio, "The Russo-American Dispute over the Invasion of Iraq: International Status and the Role of Positional Goods," *Europe-Asia Studies* 57:8 (2005): 1189-1210.