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## Post-Soviet Russian Culture : Anomy, Desecularization and the Conservative Turn

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Routledge  
2021

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Kivinen , M , Mustajoki , A , Nikula , J , Österberg , I , Aitamurto , K , Kahla , E , Oittinen , V , Viljanen , E , Kangaspuro , M , Lassila , J , Hast , S , Tynkkynen , V-P & Ratilainen , S 2021 , Post-Soviet Russian Culture : Anomy, Desecularization and the Conservative Turn . in K Markku & B Humphreys (eds) , Russian Modernization : A New Paradigm . Studies in Contemporary Russia , Routledge , Abingdon , pp. 174-256 . <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003099161>

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<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/344104>  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003099161>

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## 5. POST-SOVIET RUSSIAN CULTURE: ANOMY, DESECULARIZATION AND THE CONSERVATIVE TURN

*Markku Kivinen et al.*

### 5.1. Introduction: Russian culture and the modernization process

*Markku Kivinen and Arto Mustajoki*

#### 5.1.1. Culture as an aspect of social structuration

In the previous chapters, we have dealt with economic, political, and social aspects of contemporary Russia. Now we should bring in culture. What kind of role does culture play in determining the dimensions of social change in Russia? Our intention is *not* to deal with culture as a specific instance of society and, consequently, we do not analyze here say Russian literature or art in detail. Our scholars have, obviously, published many interpretations of Russian cultural products and institutions (Aitamurto 2016; Kahla 2018; Mustajoki & Lehtisaari 2017; Mäkinen & Turoma 2015; Oittinen & Levant 2014; Turoma, Ratilainen & Trubina 2018; Viljanen 2017). But in this book we deal with culture as an aspect of social structuration.

With regard to representations of modernization, Laine and Mustajoki have analyzed how this issue is articulated in Russian media texts. They have shown that the inclination to the monocausal reasoning becomes very clear in the analysis of media narratives. It frequently appears within commentary on modernization by using expressions like ‘modernization is possible only if x’, ‘it is not worth talking about modernization, if not x’, ‘modernization can take place only on condition that x’, ‘no real modernization is possible if not x’. The x’s are in each case different. They can be connected to economy (‘investments’, ‘conditions for civilized concurrence’), with science and education (‘normal conditions for young scientists’, ‘avoidance of brain drain’), with politics (‘real democracy’, ‘activation of citizens’, ‘change of the president’) (Laine & Mustajoki 2017). As a matter of fact, this monocausal reasoning shows how complex is the relationship between agency, representation – and structuration. In most cases, highlighting one concrete thing in the modernization process means that modernization is in fact impossible, because the person behind the opinion implicitly thinks that this particular obstacle is impossible to overcome (cf. Prokhorov & Sternin 2006, 67-68). The belief in centralized solution of problems is based on thinking that ‘they’ who have the power are responsible not only for the prosperity of the country but also the well-being of people. ‘They’ is personalized as Tsar, president, or some more abstract concept of those in power. The main logic is that the solution is outside and above, not in people themselves. This resonates well with the contemporary form of governance by the Russian elite. We characterize this by the formulation: *political support without mobilization*.

One of the key issues in all social theory is the question of the relationship between power and culture. In Russian studies, and especially in Russia, a strong tendency exists to see the cultural aspect of society as the key sphere (See e.g., Yakovets 2003 and 2014; Mchedlova 2011; Loginov et al. 2008; Petrova 2014; Inozemtsev 1999). Even a specific discipline of civilizational studies has been established (cf. Mjør, 2017). This approach has made Samuel P. Huntington the most cited Western scholar and Nikolai Danilevski (2011 cf. also comments by Belov) a leading domestic authority. In Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations*, Russia represents the core of the Orthodox world. The main

reason for Huntington's exceptional popularity in Russia is this Russian-specific role in the world, grounded in cultural legacy. The usual key argument in the civilizational approach tends to be Russia's essential difference from the West. Methodologically this kind of civilizational emphasis leads towards theorizing that might be called 'arbitrary totalizing'. This means that all kinds of Russian specificities be they geographical, historical, or economic are put under a civilizational totality without any effort to find any particular causal mechanism, let alone results of social action. This kind of effort may serve as an identity-building narrative after the collapse of communist ideology, but it lacks value for conceptually-specified and empirically-oriented social science.

That said, in contemporary social science the other extreme also exists. In his seminal work on social power, Michael Mann does not see *any* relevance for cultural explanations. For him power networks can be differentiated into four categories: economic, military, political, and ideological. Culture as such does not have any causal power. For us however, Mann's position is too reductionistic. When he speaks about ideologies, he seems to put too much emphasis on top down processes while neglecting horizontal cultural traditions, as well as long-standing cultural structures, which can have impact even within changing and opposing ideological formations. Yet, we approach the ideological tensions in the same spirit as Mann:

Religious meaning-systems will continue to figure in this volume, as will secular ideologies like patriarchy, liberalism, socialism, fascism, nationalism, racism and environmentalism. The power of ideological movements derives from our inability to attain certainty in our knowledge of the world. We fill in the gaps and the uncertainties with beliefs which are not in themselves scientifically testable but which embody our hopes and our fears. No one can prove the existence of a god or the viability of a socialist or an Islamist future. Ideologies become especially necessary in crises where the old institutionalized ideologies and practices no longer seem to work and where alternatives offered have, as yet, no track record. That is when we are most susceptible to the power of ideologists who offer us plausible but untested theories of the world. (Mann 2012, 5)

Even if we cannot find the 'final truth' of ideological issues, we can still study intended and unintended effects of ideological choices.

In the case of Russia, we have previously shown that an exceptionally dualistic cultural structure can be found in the adversary ideologies of orthodoxy and communism (Cf. Lotman and Uspenskii 1985; Lotman 1990 and 1992; Kivinen 2002 and 2011). In contemporary Russia, there is no official ideology at all. A state ideology is even prohibited by the Russian constitution. At present, there is competing ideological formations, and deep everyday-level normative changes such as Durkheim's anomy. What we intend to do in this chapter is to analyze this complexity, and to conceptualize the tension field that culturally and ideologically defines the choices of Russian modernization.

We argue that there are several historical layers and confrontation fields within contemporary Russian culture. Some of them can be linked to the traditional quest for Russia to follow its 'own path' (*osobyi put' Rossii*) somewhere between East and West – something that has already puzzled both Russian philosophers and leaders for two centuries. In the 1830s Slavophiles and Westerners (*zapadniki*) confronted each other on this issue, and in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Eurasianism movement tried to clarify both the roots of, and future perspectives for, Russia. Even nowadays, the pathos remains the same: 'we do not belong to the West, nor to the East, we are something else' (on Russian missionistic exceptionalism, see Humphreys 2016). But in addition to these traditional confrontations there are many new forms of confrontation based on ideology or economy (neo-

liberalism versus developmental state), religion (secularization versus desecularization, Islam versus Christianity), gender (conservative or liberal family values), ecological problems (climate change versus denialism), and international mass culture versus Russian tradition. Additionally there are everyday experiences: for example, the expanding sphere of consumerism, anomy caused by norms changing too rapidly, and dark legacies of violence and fear in places like Chechnya. In this work, our intention is not to have any sort of final say on these highly-contradictory and complex phenomena, but we intend to open new ways of conceptualizing and approaching the issue.

Our main arguments are the following:

- (1) When the Soviet system collapsed, the institutional matrix based on the Bolshevik sacred code and a single grand narrative also decomposed. The sacred elements defining the basic rules of society, such as the working class, communist party, planned economy, and state ownership of the means of production lost their regulative role and the unintended results of the communist project were no longer maintained as taboos.
- (2) This fundamental change in the regulation of society was experienced first as an anomic situation, which had cultural codes and normative structures changing too rapidly. As the second phase of development, anomy was replaced by the return of the traditional religious values and desecularization emerged as a dominating cultural process. In the third phase of development, desecularization was accompanied by a more organized ideological project of conservative value-orientation.
- (3) Consequently, in contemporary Russia there are several competing narratives concerning the reconstruction of society in economy, politics, and culture. Various agencies promote their discourses based on varying power resources.
- (4) However, these narratives are multi-layered palimpsests (Genette 1982) in which previous structures have complex forms of interaction with contemporary forms of expression and articulation.
- (5) In these conditions, Russian social change is a contradictory tension field of some basic antinomies. For Russian cultural identity, the key antinomies are; global processes versus nationalistic closing; and the conservative hegemonic project versus secular liberalism.

#### 5.1.2. Post-socialism: from anomy to desecularization and the conservative turn

What happens when a social system changes? The next day, most people continue their daily activities, workers going to the same factories, army officers to their units, public authorities to their offices, teachers to the same schools. But after a while, everybody starts to realize that this change is not only a top-level abstract move. The planned economy is gone, the Soviet Empire is gone, but these macro-level changes have dramatic implications at the everyday level as well. All societal reality is different. The total institutional matrix of society is in turmoil.

The Communist party of the Soviet Union that used to be the key agency of the elite is suddenly illegal. Later on, it experiences a second coming as the Communist party of the Russian Federation, adopting a completely new ideological emphasis borrowed from the traditional White Russian values. Many other basic codes are turned around as well. Private enterprise that used to be a serious crime (even causing death sentences during the Khrushchev years as, for example, in the famous Frunze textile enterprise case, see Heinzen 2016) is suddenly a strong virtue promoted in the government's privatization drives. All political forces support voucher privatization, and since ordinary people do not understand the value of vouchers, big enterprises are suddenly owned and controlled by the

previous Nomenklatura managers. In the 1990s the value of people's savings is lost twice, first in 1991 and then again in 1998.

The working class used to be the proposed ruling class in the Soviet Union. Now the Great Narrative of Bolsheviks is collapsing. During the Soviet years, people had to live in double reality of the intended and unintended aspects of the Bolshevik project, and this created the paradoxical strong individualization within the officially collective culture. However, until the very end of the 1990s, all political (cf. Clarke et al. 1995; Kivinen 2002).

Soviet taboos seem to be breaking. Security organizations implementing demonization of endless group of suggested enemies; capitalists, imperialists, revisionists, religious propagandists, reformists or simply hooligans seem to lose their power. There is no state ideology any more. The whole fearful and untouchable negative sacred connected with foreigners – and especially to the West – seems to be gone. Ideological regulation is replaced by indifference. Previously there was the horror, now there is nothing, as a Russian sociologist puts it. Everything seems to be allowed.

Rules are changing within the basic institutions of society. In a planned economy, agreement-based civil law was almost non-existent. In the transition years not only the legislation, but the legal practice and professional education have to be reformed. Science is losing its sacred position to religion. Almost overnight, teachers of scientific atheism are transforming themselves to theologians, teachers of Marxism-Leninism to 'culturologists'. Academy of Sciences start to struggle with declining resources, and universities take more and more paying students.

Not only the institutions, everyday life is transforming fundamentally as well. Jukka Gronow has argued that consumers were the key to the collapse of the Soviet Union, since the planned economy was clumsy and non-competitive in producing consumption commodities (Gronow and Zhuravlev, 2010). When the market economy brings a large variance of consumption products to the shops, this changes the time budgets of Russians in a fundamental way. There is no need to queue anymore. Since the Soviet system was both clumsy and closed, it created almost a mystification of all western things. Andrey Makine's *French Testament* is an impressive description of the magic that was connected to individual objects that were of Western origin. In transition, the borders are opening, Western consumption products pouring into Russian markets, and the closed Soviet mass culture replaced by a much more forceful Western, especially Anglo-Saxon popular culture.

Viktor Jerofejev gives an adequate description of this "earthquake":

We'll change five fingers to a comb, our armoured car into perfume, our vulgar language into English, shit to manure, stink to lemon, used drags to triumph, May Day to priest, snottiness to shoe polish, hoarseness to longevity, a party card to a seal ring, literature to television, a caster of steel to Jeep, holey socks to new ones, kolkhoz to a business, and impecuniousness to wealth.

We'll change currency.

We'll change build-it-yourself- type shack into a datcha, cabin log to a brickhouse, barbed wire to Coca-cola, trenches to a graveyard, antisemitism to prosematism, collective living to a helicopter and a home brew to a home brew.

We'll change dissidents to a diversity. (Jerofejev, 12-13)

Sociological tradition has the concept of *anomy* for too rapid normative change. If the Russian 1990s were not that, one can ask what is? Russians themselves spoke of the 'value vacuum'. In sociological analysis there are both explanations referring directly to anomy, and efforts to conceptualize the same phenomenon as a lack of social capital or trust. Our argument is that it is the phenomenon of anomy

– defined by almost whatever terms – that dominates the Russian cultural change in the 1990s. We do not maintain that it has completely disappeared today, but was the dominating phenomenon, especially in the first decade of transition. In terms of structuration theory, we would be inclined to argue that in the 1990s the top down ideological regulation was very weak, and the agency at the horizontal-everyday level. This commonly shared social reality is full of ontological insecurity. It is not only the economical unpredictability of inflation and changing entrepreneurial structures, but also the whole way of life is in crisis, poverty growing, life expectancy falling, violent crime approaching the world record, as well as the suicide rate. An already very high alcohol consumption dramatically increases. Participation in all kinds of associations, even in such non-political fields as sports and hobbies decline (Gronow et. al 1999). Wars in Chechnya maintain legacies of violence, terror, and fear.

The ontological insecurity is not only caused by the final secularization and collapse of the “Soviet sacred”. Western consumption habits are coming in while the old Russian values of Orthodoxy and empire are also returning. Jerofejev describes these contradictions:

We’ll change religion. We don’t get the same kicks anymore that we previously got from stealing. By severe suffering we stop thinking that we are better than others. We respect the Russian flag.

We’ll change death to metempsychosis, rats to supermarket, knaves to the police, manure to children, fools of God to mentality, pensioners to beggars, ideology to companionship, gold teeth to porcelain teeth, fear for obliviousness, Chechens to Japanese, soldiers to drugs and perfume to meatballs.

We’ll change home brew again to home brew. Something at least must be permanent.

We’ll change “us” to “me”. Doesn’t change. We’ll change “us” to “me”. Doesn’t change. We’ll change “us” to “me”. Doesn’t change. No, something yet must have changed. (Jerofejev, 14)

“We’ll change religion” catches the contradictory development aptly. In 1990s religious organizations greatly strengthened their position. People started to identify as Orthodox Christians even without knowing much of the substance. A person declaring himself “orthodox” might still ask ‘who was the father and who was the son?’ (Kääriäinen 1998). However, in the middle of the ontological insecurity and ideological deregulation, the Russian Orthodox Church becomes the most significant ideological apparatus. We would characterize the first decade of the new millennium in Russia as the time of when desecularization dominates the cultural and ideological field. It is accompanied by a broader conservative offensive that becomes dominant when the economic and political resources of ideological state apparatuses are consolidated towards the end of that decade. This development is linked with the new ruling party United Russia, as well as with the more anti-Western foreign policy, especially after President Putin’s Munich speech in 2007 and the Georgian War of 2008.

In this chapter, we will analyze anomy, desecularization, and the conservative turn in some detail. Our idea is to encourage further studies on each of these dimensions. In the vein of our new paradigm, we want to emphasize that even the dominating ideological tendencies must be approached *not* as all encompassing “Russian civilization” but as complex processes of structuration comprising several agencies and institutionalization processes. At the same time, there are also counterforces, contradictions, and resistance. Anomy, desecularization, and the conservative political project are

developing as parallel phenomena and they have an internal connection; desecularization is a major answer to anomy when ideologies are weak, and around desecularization a more comprehensive conservative ideological project is starting to evolve.

As far as desecularization is concerned, it can be convincingly documented with many forms of empirical evidence. However, there are many layers and contradictions in this process. The first of them is exactly what Viktor Jerofejev calls the *change* of religion. When Christian religiosity is rising, the Communist sacred codes, known to all Russians, are secularized. Secondly, the institutionalization of the ROC is a long process starting from the limited rights during the Soviet years and consolidated in new legislation, firstly on the restitution of property rights, and later in defining the special position of traditional Russian religions in law. Another level in the analysis concerns the fundamental semiotic structures of Orthodoxy. On the other hand, it is worth noting that even within ROC there are different forces and agencies, let alone the other major religions, especially Islam, and even more marginal religious movements, such as Rodnoverie.

Russian conservatism is a complex phenomenon, multifaceted, and a work in progress. It involves multiplicity of individual actors, think tanks, movements, and institutions. The ideological spectrum is large from communists to white emigration, from Slavophiles to Eurasianists, and from Western European kind of neo-liberal conservatism to many anti-Western nationalisms and Soviet nostalgia. Major think tanks work within the ruling United Russia party but also with the Rodina party, Communists, Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democrats and Limonov's National Bolsheviks have their own versions of conservatism. The elite is not united in the degree and form of conservatism, and the different formal, semi-formal, and informal agencies compete as ideological entrepreneurs (cf.; Remizov 2006; Remizov et al 2014). The Russian Orthodox Church represents a conservative turn for mores and values, but the idea that 'Gayropa' is giving up genuine Christianity is becoming mainstream, especially after President Putin's Valdai-talk in 2013 (Putin 2013b). In general, Putin's ideological statements are still rather sporadic. He has characterized Nikolai Berdyaev as the founding father of Russian conservatism (Putin 2013c; e.g., Berdjaev 1953/1917). In post-Soviet period, Russian leadership has paid tribute to émigré philosophers for their keeping traditional Russian values alive through the decades while they were banned in the Soviet Union. Patriarch of Moscow Kirill has openly remembered the importance of that theological literature, authored by émigré writers, he was able to bring home in his attaché case from his trips abroad. His formative years were the murky 60s and 70s. This literature kept generations alive, and made an amazingly rapid renaissance possible in 1988. That was the year of millennium of baptism, promising the end of Bolshevism and rejuvenation.

President Putin seemingly coined pragmatism as his guiding principle, in other words, preference of action vis-à-vis clear-cut ideological statements. In this vein, he launched the Eurasian Customs Union, annexed the Crimean peninsula (including the Sevastopol naval base, the crown jewel of Russia's maritime fame), and uses unidentified troops in operations when necessary. In rhetoric, he frequently refers to "Eurasian space" – *evraziiskoe prostranstvo* – in different contexts. Nonetheless, he is reluctant to associate himself with any of the famous Eurasian thinkers, "forefathers" – Prince Nikolai Trubetzkoy, P.N. Savitsky, and P.P. Suvchinsky – who were expelled from Bolshevik Russia in the early 1920s, and cherished "the Russian idea" and its cultural heritage in their writings. If Putin is reluctant to pay tribute to these ideological forefathers, he is even less willing to quote the practitioners of today. Alexander Dugin may act as an ideological leader of traditional values and Izborskii club think tank, but his role is not visible.

Why so? Perhaps, a supreme leader of an autocratic state structure manages without a signature doctrine. However, by carefully avoiding the names of past thinkers and their fatalistic prophecies, Eurasian rhetoric can be utilized as an efficient tool, a reminder of Eurasia's ageless mission to act as

potential leader of the colonized peoples of the Orient in their revolt against the Western oppressors. It is enough to appeal to the minimal common factor: Eurasianism provides critique of Eurocentrism.

In the ideological state apparatuses, the previous minister of culture Vladimir Medinski promoted conservatism as a more or less systematic project since 2012.

Marlene Laruelle analysed Russian Nationalist think tanks in 2009 and concluded:

United Russia is becoming a factionalised party on the model of the former CPSU and presents itself as a discussion platform for currents with very different ideological backgrounds. The structuration of political clubs within the presidential party, the role of the Department of Domestic Policy at the presidential administration and its leaders (Surkov, Shuvalov, Chesnakov etc.) in the formation of nationalist think tanks, the development of new institutions of expertise and the increasing cooptation of doctrinaires of Russian neo-conservatism, all confirm the Kremlin's present propensity to engage in ideological experimentation. Whether this will take the form of a new prescriptive indoctrination is going to depend on future domestic and international evolutions. (Laruelle 2009a, 8.)

Now we can conclude that Medinski's programmes already represent at least an effort towards a new more systematic indoctrination. However, the ideological variance and competition has not disappeared either. Laruelle found three different currents within United Russian common conservative approach: the liberal conservative current, mainly represented in business circles, the former leftist represented in social conservative current, and a third current of Christian conservatives. These currents have never been recognized as official fractions or wings, but instead express themselves as discussion clubs. Liberal conservatives might be close to European neo-liberalism, whereas social conservatives, although promoting some welfare ideas, refuse to associate their movement with European social democracy, and have even adopted some Eurasianist claims.

In her analysis of Russian neoconservatives Katherina Bluhm (2016) argues that contemporary think tanks want to see themselves outside traditional distinctions between left and right, and even outside the three distinctive currents that Laruelle identified. She focuses her analysis mainly on the Isborsk Club and ISEPI Foundation. Bluhm notes that these Russian new conservatives have a strange combination of ideas of European conservatism, neoliberalism, and geopolitical categories that are similar to the American neocons. On the other hand, criticism of globalization and emphasizing the "nation" and economic unity links Russian neo-conservatives to European anti-globalization movements and EU-critics.

To make the mix even more complicated, all contemporary think tanks deal with modernization and geopolitics. The geopolitical aspect is connected with an interpretation of the Great Patriotic War in a sense that Russian conservatives see themselves as guardians of the joint victory. Thus, revisionists of the international order are seen as a "New Europe", challenging the Yalta agreement-based international order. For these conservatives, modernization is always on the agenda but meaning almost exclusively only what we have in this book called "narrow modernization", technological modernization, usually accompanied by some ideas about mixed economy.

Russian conservative ideology has several "floating signifiers": sovereignty, order, nation, Christianity, Europe, national security (cf. Laclau and Mouffe 2001). Instead of trying to make sense of all these combinations and currents within Russian conservatism, our analysis of this flexible new hegemonic project focuses on the tension field between the conservative project and the other currents in Russian society. We will not cover all counter discourses, but concentrate on a few key aspects.



## 5.2. Anomie and transition: too high expectations or loss of normative community?

*Jouko Nikula*

As a wide body of social, criminological, and medical study has demonstrated, the collapse of socialism – and especially the first years of transition – resulted in dramatic consequences in many respects. Kainu et al. (2017, 291), for example, notes that, “Russia’s transition from a socialist system to a market economy resulted in an exceptionally dramatic post-socialist social crisis: increases in poverty, inequality, and mortality are its indicators”. They also note an “unequalled depopulation of 700,000 people per year at its worst and the decline of life-expectancy of Russians as low as 57 years in 1994” (ibid). Additionally, a number of epidemiological studies have proved the rapid growth of male mortality in Russia during the early 1990s. In these studies, the primary causes are the usual suspects; excessive use of alcohol and drugs, unhealthy dietary habits, smoking, and violence. However, most studies acknowledge that even if these reasons explain most variation in the mortality, there remains some that cannot be explained by any of them. This is the “anomie part”; psychological or mental reasons that are related to lack or obliteration of norms, distortion of identity, and dissolution of community. For example, Kumo (2012, 16) notes that “the view that the increase in psychological stress accompanying the transition to capitalism, the resultant rise in alcohol consumption, and the subsequent increase in deaths due to diseases of the circulatory system and external factors contributed to the rise in mortality rates is consistent with the facts.” Therefore, we can speculate that even if anomie was not a direct cause for high mortality in Russia during the first years of transition (and still is to some extent); it most likely was the reason behind the causes (of alcohol, violence, or diseases of circulatory systems).

### 5.2.1 What is anomie?

In classical sociology, there are two principal theorists of anomie, Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton. For Durkheim anomie was a consequence of loss of community and close relationships, and the lack of the certain regulations and institutions, which then cause normlessness. Too little integration leads to egoism, while if there is too much integration, the result is altruism. In any case, under-regulation causes anomie: normlessness, insatiable appetites, and a fevered imagination. Therefore, for Durkheim *anomie reflects a sense of normlessness*, the lack of any societal norms. This lack of norms can cause criminality or lead to *egoistic* or *anomic* suicides as a result of “weak social integration and failed moral regulation” (Durkheim 1951, 241). Based on his studies, one could conclude that the most likely candidate for committing suicide is a single (Protestant) man, who does not have children. His most interesting finding was that in times of war suicide-rates decline, which would imply that societal turmoil means *less* suicide than in times of tranquility. According to Durkheim, there are three layers of analysis:

- Macro: where the anomie is analyzed as a consequence of social and normative dissolution
- Meso: where the analysis concerns institutional anomie
- Micro: where anomie is analyzed as a social psychological condition

At the macro level analysis, the focus is on the normative structure. Very sudden and contradictory change implies breakdown of predictability and coherence, which in turn causes loss of norms. In the most straightforward analysis, the rapid introduction of market economy reforms and the simultaneous collapse of the former system, plus the underdevelopment of a new institutional order, causes increasing levels of anomie. However, it is not possible to argue that rapid social change would have meant similar developments in all post-socialist countries: there are vast differences between societies in their historical background, cultural features, as well as institutional arrangements.

Merton's understanding of anomie is a theory on the meso-level causes of anomie, which is concentrated on the foundation of asocial behaviour, based on a mismatch *between social ideals and the means to achieve them*. An example is the institutional anomie-theory, (for example, the Messner and Rosenfeld 1994 study crime and the American Dream), where the basic concept for the explanation of anomie is *the overemphasis on economic goals*, coupled with a devaluation of society's non-economic institutions (family, education, polity, and church). The main problem of the theory is that it is limited to one form of collective representation.

The micro-level analysis of anomie utilizes psychometric anomie scales (see; Srole 1956, Dean 1961 etc.) Their problems are a rather low reliability and a lack of causal theory. There is also a contradiction between cultural sensitivity and comparability.

### 5.2.2 Anomie and transition

The general view of the relation of anomie and transition is that sudden transition caused destruction of not only the economic base of society and local communities, but also the ties that bind the communities together; values, norms, habits, etc. When the former bases of existence have been threatened or even destroyed, the members of community lose their grip on the social bonds, and become marginalized. The marginalization and growing anomie is a result of modernization, when more intimate and informal social relations are replaced with formal and instrumental relations. One aspect in this is the formalization of regulation and normative control. This means a shift of normative control over individuals from the *informal*, based on interpersonal close ties, to the *formal*, based on abstract, rational, and codified institutions. It is a crucial aspect of modernization, understood as a rationalization, urbanization, and growing dominance of reason over religion, science over faith. Kosals and Swader (2013) argue that, "modernization and informality have a paradoxical relationship; modernization may cause increasing informality by lowering the density of normative regulation, i.e. individuals become less controlled by their relationships". People "feel more free but are at the same time more reliant upon abstract market and state institutions that help them manage risks".

Kosals and Sader (ibid) empirically studied uncertainty about *social norms* and one's personal behaviour. Their expectation was that initially economic growth means *more anomie*, because loosening ties of personal relationships, normative support, and control of the local community decreases the informal control. On the other hand, economic growth means also greater political formalization and more formal social control, which *decreases* the levels of anomie. The more economically developed societies should also be more formally governed in terms of economy, politics, and in citizens' private lives. Therefore, according to Kosals and Swader, the level of anomie *decreases* because more spheres of life become thickly regulated. This is to some extent contrary to mainstream thinking, which says that economic change also means higher levels of anomie. There is an assumption that rapid social change embodies social uprooting and societies with greater economic growth should be more anomic.

However, Kosals and Wader argue that, despite the economic growth and formalization of social control, there is a strong anomie syndrome in post-communist societies. Overall, their reasoning follows the Weberian theory of bureaucratization, where rules are clearer and give guidance in making decisions about roles and responsibilities. In other words, the more formalized the normative control becomes, the more free people are in making choices and decisions, because they know the rules, which are based on formal law and not on personal dependencies. One can also argue that post-socialist anomie with its longing for socialism is caused by the incomplete formalization of normative control – the strength of paternalism has not yet been overcome by the development of a legal system.

In concrete terms, the norms are still dependent on informal policies and informal practices, where economic power is tightly coupled with social control.

Based on the analysis of European Social Survey data, Kosals and Swader concluded that *anomie correlates negatively with modernization* if measured with GDP per capita, i.e., economic growth should mean less anomie and wealthy societies exhibit lower levels of anomie. However, this relationship is *reversed if the speed of economic growth is taken into account*. In other words *the process of becoming modern* may spur anomie. Kosals and Swader also show that people with higher education, higher incomes, and higher social class are less anomic.

Kosals and Swader argue that people from post-communist countries are clearly more anomic than those from developed countries. This finding is in line with the results of Zhao and Cao who noted: “The results confirm that individuals who live in Eastern European nations, which have undergone democratic transition, experience a higher level of anomie than those who live elsewhere” (2010, 1222). Both the studies by Kosals and Swader and Zhao and Cao revealed that the confidence in authority is a very accurate predictor of higher levels of anomie. As the former note:

The key finding is that the inefficient governance (political informality) has strong impact on anomie. While country-level social and economic informality were insignificant in explaining individual anomie, we in fact found that informal social control is an important individual-level predictor.

One can ask whether this also holds true in Russia, both in the 1990s and today? I could easily buy this thesis if the analysis concerns the 1990s, but today’s Russia is a different matter, even if there still is cronyism, Russia is not unstable; quite the contrary. And can we use levels of trust as indicators for levels of anomie? If yes, it should follow that levels of trust are low in anomic society – at least when concerning the state or public institutions. And once again, the levels of trust were quite low in the 1990s, but now they are at a relatively high level.

Another adoption of anomie theory to post-socialist context is Marina Simic’s study (2015), which uses the Herzfeld’s concept of “disemia” (see Herzfeld 1999, 113). Disemia is the *discrepancy between the ideal and the real of the social world*. In more simple terms, disemia is the conflict between hopes and reality – and social anomie is a feeling of a loss of the (imagined) normality of previous sociality that was only vaguely connected with socialism (unspecified “previous” times). This discrepancy between reality and hopes (past and present) is a sign of the longing for existential certainties that used to be; (permanent job, secure social services, and subvented prices as a core of the “social contract” of socialist society) against the uncertainty over even the basic matters or preconditions of life (is there a job, who pays the services, does my wage cover all costs of living?)

Both studies confirm that, “males, the young, the unmarried and the unemployed are found to be more anomic than females, the older, the married and the employed.” The relation between social class and anomie is contradictory in the quoted studies; Zhao and Cao noted that “education and subjective social class, are not significant predictors of anomie” (ibid, 1222), while Kosals and Swader note that “Greater education (this effect also varies by country) and subjective social class each exhibit a moderate diminishment of anomie., the power of income is greater. Someone with the highest income level is likely to have on average .135 standard deviations less in anomie”(2013, 24).

### 5.2.3 Anomie in today's Russia

The levels of anomie should be lower in today's Russia, because as both of the above-mentioned studies note, the more developed societies with more mature institutional structures have less anomie than those where development is lagging. The life of Russian citizens has become more stable and predictable over the past decades, which is reflected in the growing levels of trust in the social and political institutions. This can be seen in table 5.1.

	1998	2007	2015
Duma	77	35	23
Council of Federation	72	27	18
President	88	12	8
Courts	58	39	26
Police	61	45	26

TABLE 5.1 THE SHARE OF THOSE WHO HAVE LARGE OR COMPLETE MISTRUST OF SOME STATE INSTITUTIONS (%)

Source: Aleksanteri Welfare Data 1998-2015

The presidency is the institution that has gained most trust. From being the most mistrusted in the last years of Yeltsin era, it has become the *most trusted institution*. The same is seen with the Duma and the Council of Federation, but to a smaller extent. The legal institutions, courts, and the police have also become more trusted institutions, but still in 2015 there were more who either distrusted them, or were at least hesitant in their evaluations.

We constructed an index of anomie based on two variables, the statement according to which “a person in my position cannot influence governments decisions”, and secondly the intensity to which a person visits or receives his/her friends or relatives and visits his/her social networks. In our index, those who agreed *mainly* or *fully* to the statement, and who did not visit or receive their friends or relatives, and who did not visited their social networks at all, were calculated as anomic.

We tested the differences in the levels of anomy according to objective social class, age, education, marital status, and occupational status (table 5.2). Our results confirmed the findings of Kosals and Swader, and of Zhao and Cao in that married persons are less anomic than single, and those who have higher education are less anomic than those with elementary education. However, contrary to other studies, our results show that older persons are *more* anomic than young, and that social class is a significant factor in determining the level of anomie; the working class shows clearly higher levels of anomie than the middle classes.

Class	Median	Age	Median	Education	Median	Region	Median
Core of middle classes	0.16	Young	0.10	Primary	0.57	Metropolises	0.17
Margin of the middle classes	0.21	< 40	0.16	Incomplete secondary	0.41	Big cities	0.22
Working class	0.28	<50	0.26	General secondary	0.25	Small cities	0.23
		<60	0.33	Technical	0.24	Villages	0.28

		>60	0.43	Higher	0.17		
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TABLE 5.2 ANOMY INDEX ACCORDING TO EXPLAINING VARIABLES

Source: Aleksanteri Welfare Data

These results are plausible when we take into account that those who have been on the losing end of transition are less educated, less skilled, and older people. Furthermore, they are living outside metropolitan areas that do not possess those resources that are necessary for success within social change – educational, cultural, or political capital. This is indicated by the fact that these groups are the ones who think that Russia should be a society like the Soviet Union, not because of any yearning for socialism, but rather because Soviet Union, whatever its faults, was a society that provided many welfare services and benefits to most of its citizens.

BOX: Modernization of the Russian film industry and Aleksei Balabanov's *Brother* (1997)

*Ira Österberg*

Following the collapse of the USSR, Russian cinema underwent a large-scale organizational transformation, from a government-led field of culture to a market-based industry. This began in 1986 when the Film Makers' Union, first among all cultural workers, declared itself free of government control. By the early 1990s, the unified Soviet system of film production, distribution, and screening had been dismantled. New independent production companies and distributors mushroomed. However, the results of this rapid transformation were devastating: the annual film production numbers first went up, and then came crashing down as the films failed to cover their costs at the box-office, and companies went bankrupt. The main problem was that Russians had simply lost interest in domestic cinema: attendance dropped drastically, and the majority of ticket sales went on American films (Beumers 2009, 217-219; Faraday 2000, 2-3)

To adapt to the massive reconfiguration of the industry, the overall role of filmmaking and filmmakers in society had to be reformulated. Film critic and sociologist Daniil Dondurei (1994, 18) describes this as a tough process of modernization, which entailed a change of perspective from film as art to film as *business*. Previously, as artists, filmmakers were seen as being on a sacred mission, “[P]eople came to ask Tarkovsky how to live, where to go, where to find the truth” (Selianov 1999, 44).

The film that perhaps best captured the essence of the societal and cultural debates – and became subject of them – was Aleksei Balabanov's *Brother* (*Brat*, 1997). This small-budget gangster film was one of the first films to attract serious audience attention, and possibly the only one of the 1990s that managed to recoup its production costs (Solnceva 1997). The film's production company, newly-established STV, presented a new, pragmatic model for conceiving films – it aimed at supporting genre films with mass appeal in order to finance more artistic pictures on the side (Beumers 2003: 453). The company's co-founder, Aleksei Balabanov understood the changing rules; “Filmmaking is a mass industry and people want to see films that are stimulating and interesting. That's why we have Tarantino and Luc Besson's *Léon*” (quoted in Faraday 2000, 168).

*Brother* was criticized for the same dark and hopeless image of Russia that was seen as putting people off domestic cinema. That is, the film and films like it, were not giving Russian audiences anything of which to be proud, in the way that Americans produced their blockbuster fantasies (Mihalkov 1999, 50-51; Dondurei 1999, 47-49). The latter states, “[H]eroes of a commercially successful cinema

cannot be cynics, defeatists, failures, or unmotivated killers. A national inferiority complex cannot be cultivated in cinema” (ibid.). *Brother* featured all the bleakness of the so-called *chernukha* or “black wave” cinema – the crime, the violence, the rape, the drugs, homelessness, poverty – yet it was different. After anecdotal complaints that Russian six-year-olds idolized Schwarzenegger and Jean-Claude van Damme, but could not name a single Russian actor (Dondurei 1994, 17; see also: Mihalkov 1999, 51), a new Russian hero was born, and a journalist reported hearing young girls on the streets say: “His name is Danila, and he is so gentle, and kind – and he kills everyone!” (Solnceva 1997, 18). The film struck a chord, especially with young people.

Seemingly realistic and simple, the film depicts, nevertheless, a model of Russian culture and society that adheres to several traditional cultural myths. The main character’s journey from a province to St. Petersburg and then Moscow references, for example, both traditional Russian fairy tales and the St. Petersburg texts of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature (see Österberg 2006, 11-32; 59-79). The whole story can be read as an attempt to answer the eternal question of where will Russia go, which path will it choose. This can be seen reflected even in the way, for example, Russian rock is used in the film both as intellectual narrative commentary and as an American-style commercial compilation score (Österberg 2018). The film becomes a journey of classic cultural dichotomies: the main character attempting to navigate his path between East and West, past and present, and *svoe* (own, familiar) and *chuzhoe* (foreign, unfamiliar).

The significance of *Brother*, has only increased over the past twenty years. In the end, the film managed to capture the essence of the Russian experience of the 1990s on several levels. In its narrative, it reflected the anomic social processes in Russian society of that decade, and in its formal aspects it reflected the modernization of poetics that took place as Western influences became more openly available, and finally, the film serves as a practical example of the modernization process that took place within the film industry itself.

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## 5.3 De-secularization

### 5.3.1. Orthodox Christianity and Islam

*Kaarina Aitamurto and Elina Kahla*

The failure of the militant atheist policies of the Soviet Union, under which faithful of all denominations were regarded as ‘potential conspirators’ and therefore persecuted, led to a radical backlash, followed by massive emergence from underground catacombs to full visibility and legitimacy. All of a sudden, ruined churchyards filled up with impoverished citizens, victims of an ideological vacuum and systemic crisis (*likholetie*) – begging for alms, crossing themselves, and blessing passers-by. In addition to the resurgence of grass-roots religiosity, the role of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), especially as ‘moral norm entrepreneur’ has strengthened (Stoeckl, 2016). Consequently, in the 2010s, scholars have utilized the concept of de-secularization to portray the situation in contemporary Russian society (Lisovskaya and Karpov 2010; Aitamurto 2016). The process of de-secularization has multiple, even mutually-independent aspects, and various kinds of manifestations (Karpov 2010). In this chapter, we will analyse *different structures* and the *agency of different actors* in the ‘de-secularization’ process in contemporary Russia. Our discussion focuses on the two largest confessions in Russia, Orthodox Christianity and Islam.

In the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the number of Orthodox Christians among Russians was between 20 and 30%, but it soon begun to grow rapidly, and has continued to do so. In 2010s, over 70% of Russians identify themselves as Orthodox Christians, whereas the number of non-

believers has fallen from over 60% to under 20%. The number of Muslims is especially difficult to estimate, because of the large number of migrants, but it is estimated at between 5 and 10% of the population (Dubin, 2014; Pew Research Center 2017). The majority of Russian Muslims are Sunnis. In Middle Volga area, *Hanafi maddhab* (legal school) is the dominant one, while in the Northern Caucasus, the majority of Muslims subscribe to *Shafii madhhab*. However, many other Islamic traditions are also represented in Russia and some, like Salafists, do not subscribe to any of the four established *madhhabs*. The majority of Shias are of Azerbaijani or Tajikistani origin. Until recently, the relationship between Sunnis and Shias have been quite cooperative and in many areas, they have even used the same mosques. However, the Syrian war, in which Russia has supported President Bashar Al-Asad and Iranian Shia forces against Sunnis, has made these relationships more tense.

At the same time, statistics demonstrate that only a small percentage of Orthodox Christians actively practice their religion or participate in liturgical life (that is, are 'churched', or *votserkovleny*). For a majority, Orthodoxy is rather an organic part of cultural tradition, 'our own' values and an ethnic identity rather than a personal religious conviction. This is revealed by the number of people who identify themselves as Orthodox Christians, but do not believe in God, or consider themselves religious (Dubin 2014). Nevertheless, regular church-going or formal commitment to the ROC do not necessarily give a full, or even balanced, picture of the everyday Orthodox religiosity among contemporary Russians (Bremer 2013). Lived religion manifests itself in the increased popularity of, for example, Lent and various Orthodox feasts. Widely popular are the pilgrimages, both domestic and abroad. Among the most popular sites are the Trinity-Sergius Monastery, Diveevo, Optina, Solovetsk, Valaam (seen as on civilization's border), as well as Kyivan Caves Monastery, the Holy Land, and Greek sites like Mount Athos.<sup>i</sup>

The post-Soviet religious liberation also allowed Russian Muslims to revitalize their religious life. Despite decades of intensive Soviet anti-religious campaigns, Muslim communities in different areas of the country had quite unequal opportunities to preserve their religious traditions. While in big cities Muslims were mostly areligious and secularized, in rural areas, for example, Central Asia, religion could maintain its position as a part of everyday life (Abashin 2014) However, the Muslim community in general faced challenges similar to Orthodox Christians; there was a shortage of religious literature, education, and places of worship. Potential adherents lacked basic knowledge of religion. Despite all this, new Muslim communities emerged and fought these challenges. For many of these, aid from such Islamic countries as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, or Turkey, as well as from international Islamic charity organizations, was substantial.

In Soviet times, official Islamic activity was strictly limited to the four Muftiates, which controlled their own areas. The 1990s witnessed not only a mushrooming of new organizations, but also an internal power struggle. Even today, this complicates the Russian Muslims' aims to promote their interests as a community. Moreover, these power struggles, as well as the compliance to the political elite of the leading Muftiates, have diminished their credibility in the eyes of ordinary believers. Nevertheless, as in the case of Orthodox Christianity, there are also countless expressions of lived religions beyond Islamic organizations, such as the expanding markets for the halal industry. Over the past decade, institutionalization and centralization have been the main aims of Russian policies towards religion, especially Islam. The authorities prefer to cooperate with few trusted institutions and they regard grass-root activism with suspicion. However, both the diversification and revival of religiosity among the Russian Muslim community nourishes countless new initiatives and communities (Aitamurto & Gaidukov 2018).

According to its constitution, the Russian Federation is a secular state, which does not interfere in the internal affairs of religious organizations, and does not provide funds for their activities. Indirectly, the state may offer various kinds of support. The ROC is the main beneficiary of state support, but substantial funds are also allocated to Muslim communities through, for example, the Fund for Support of Islamic Culture, Science and Education. The pre-revolutionary possessions of religious

organizations can be returned to them, and they can apply for land on which to build religious premises. In practice, these kind of opportunities are not available to all religious organizations.

Even though the law from 1997 does not grant any special position to Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism as the ‘traditional religions’, this perception, and the idea that these should enjoy some privileges over other religions is deeply established in Russia. For example, when the teaching of religion at school or prison, or army chaplains are discussed, it is regularly taken for granted that only these four religions can be involved. While the position of minority religions has become increasingly precarious in the 2000s, the ROC – and to some extent the others of the four ‘traditional religions’ – enjoy special protection. For example, after the Pussy Riot case, a new law against offending religious feelings was passed in 2013. The law has received much criticism for the limitations it may set on freedom of speech. Ironically, in the secular state of the Russian Federation, it had led to court cases against, for example, a blogger who was accused of offending religious feelings by stating that there is no God. There are some cases when material that has been deemed as offending Muslims has been banned, either based on this new law, or on the basis of extremism. However, the vast majority of such cases involve alleged offenses against Orthodox Christianity (Aitamurto 2016).

The ROC has expanded its influence in the field of cultural production. The Bishop as artist, musician, and filmmaker is not a rarity – quite the contrary. New genres encompass Orthodox fiction (even the sub-genre ‘Orthodox detective’). There are periodicals (online and print), films, radio and tv channels on Orthodox topics – on theology and teachings of holy fathers, traditions, feasts, saints, shrines. Artists, writers, and musicians may welcome global and Western technology, and enjoy the access to social media and digital publishing, but *content* production and cultural innovation are “modernized” only *within*; that is, by recycling and reinventing ‘our own’ traditions, by retelling stories in modern language, and to a new generation of audiences. Russian Orthodox tradition colours and manifests itself in most diverging cultural productions. However, projects that have been explicitly designed to promote Orthodox Christianity among Russians have not always been very effective in reaching a sizeable audience (Suslov 2016). In addition to cultural production, the ROC and Orthodox activists have also aimed to influence culture by numerous cases of censorship, and they often get their demands through (Turoma & Aitamurto 2016).

Though the position of the ROC as a de-facto state church, and as a major player in Russian society and politics, have grown gradually but consistently since the beginning of the 1990s, there have been specific turning points. One of these were the years 2008/09, when Dmitri Medvedev was elected president; his close relationship to the ROC is widely known. Also at this time, Kirill became the new Patriarch, and he was more interested in deepening cooperation with the state than his predecessor, Aleksii II. Though Vladimir Putin had also been eager to display his religious conviction and to invite the representatives of the ROC to high-profile stately events, he has not yielded to many of the ROC’s central requests, such as the teaching of religion in schools, or institutionalizing religious chaplains in the army. These concessions were granted only gradually, in the mid-2010s.

Another turning point were the massive protests in 2011/12, after which the Kremlin sought more support in Russian society. As a trusted and respected institution, the ROC turned out to be an ideal partner. Moreover, along with the political neo-conservative turn in 2010s, the *values and interests* of the Kremlin and the ROC converged considerably. In Putin’s third presidency, the ROC gained new privileges and its cooperation with the state deepened. Patriarch Kirill even described Putin as being a ‘miracle of God’ (Bryanski 2012). The World Russian People’s Council, close to the Church, gave its first award to the Russian president for the preservation of Russia’s ‘great power statehood’ (*Russia beyond the Headlines* 2013).

Though the political elite carefully remembers to pay lip service to the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional traditions, more often Russia is referred to as an ‘Orthodox country’ and Orthodoxy is



represented as core of ‘civilizational choice’; Orthodox symbols and vocabulary have entered a secular context (Bogumil, 2015). In public life, the ROC aims to appear as norm-booster, closely associated with the manifestation and promotion of ‘Russian values’, resembling the 1960s concept of ‘civil religion’ in the United States (Kahla 2014). Orthodox symbols, values, and ethics are presented as an inseparable part of Russianness (Curanovic, 2012, 237).

In the 2010s, the Russian political elite has sought to gain the role of the champion of ‘traditional values’ in the world. This rhetoric targets other BRICS countries and the Islamic world, but Russia also aims to present itself as a bastion of Christianity, in contrast to the secularized and liberal West. In his speech at the Valdai Club in 2013, Putin directly blamed Europe for abandoning its own Christian heritage (Putin 2013a). By offering an easily comprehensible and communicable antithesis to Western hegemony and its liberal value system (slandered as ‘Gayropa’ for promoting sexual and other minority rights), Orthodoxy – and Islam in relation with Muslims, both home and worldwide – are supposed to unite people as an unquestioned value core. Not coincidentally, after 2014, non-Western initiatives, including efforts of religious diplomacy, have increased. Patriarch Kirill signed the bill against abortion in 2015, in alignment with the conservative trend.

Religious players outside Russia, in its newly independent neighbouring countries with (ex-)Russian national minorities (now called the ‘near abroad’) or ‘far abroad’, are an important part of religious life and networking. Among the most important milestones was the merger of ROCOR (Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia) and ROC, in 2007, which was preceded by canonization of the last Tsar and his family. In 2000s, Patriarch Kiril launched the concept of the ‘Russian world’ (*russkii mir*) as a reference to these national and/or linguistic diasporas, but also in a wider sense as a *civilizational* term for an antithesis to the ‘corrupt’ West. From the context of Orthodox Christianity, the concept was adopted by political rhetoric, and in reference to Russia’s soft power it became securitized and politicized. By the annexation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine, it has lost a substantial part of any positive connotations in ex-Soviet areas (Rousselet 2015; Petro 2015). However, Russians also often refer to the resonance of Orthodoxy as a deep, uniting component in Russian-Ukrainian, and in further inter-Slav dialogue (Kahla 2016).

Islamic leaders are also being co-opted into foreign diplomacy, though to a lesser extent than the ROC. Their international credibility is undermined by their internal rivalry, but also by their subservience to the Kremlin. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the threat of Islamic extremism and terrorism has configured at the very core of both domestic and foreign politics of Russia. Without belittling this threat, it can be argued that the theme is also used for political purposes, both within the Muslim community to smear their opponents, and by outsiders. Russian laws on extremism are very strict, and verdicts on Islamic organizations and activists have been passed on very slight grounds. Therefore, official Muftiates seldom raise such issues as the discrimination against Muslims. The majority of Russian Muslims are Sunnis and belong to the Turkic nations. Yet the Muftiates have been quiet about Russia’s war alongside Assad’s Shia regime, or its clash with Turkey, which led to deportations of Turkish citizens and companies from Russia.

Like Patriarch Kirill, the leading Muftis are regularly invited to state festivities. In 2005, Russia joined the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as a member state. In 2015, President Putin attended, with Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Mahmoud Abbas, the opening of the new Grand Mosque in Moscow, which replaced the demolished one. However, local authorities have refused to grant any new building permission to the Muslim communities in Moscow, even though the existing four mosques are utterly insufficient to accommodate all the believers every Friday. In several legal battles over the right to wear hijab at schools or universities, the authorities seem to be adopting a stricter line. Thus, one may argue that even though ‘official’, institutionalized Islam is established as a part of the official sphere, its visibility in public space is increasingly controlled and limited.

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Especially in the 2010s, the Russian state has re-institutionalized and re-strengthened the position of the Orthodox Christianity. The ROC has gained new influence in Russian society, even though this clericalization has also provoked opposition. As a consequence, Vyacheslav Karpov (2013) argues that the de-secularization in Russia is more of a top down project, and strikes one more as an infiltration of religion into public space and previously secular institutions, than as a grassroots revival of religious beliefs and practices. That said, Orthodox symbols have made a comeback into the cityscape, and traditions play an increasing role in the everyday life of people as revealed by, for example, the popularity of lent menus and public commemoration practices. However, the whole picture, at this point, is more complex.

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### 5.3.2. Diversification versus tightened control of religiosity: the case of Rodnoverie

*Kaarina Aitamurto*

After years of oppression and persecution, the liberation of religion in Soviet Union gradually begun during *perestroika*. From those times on, religious life in Russia has both redoubled and diversified. In addition to the ROC, the other biggest confessions with their long histories in the area have managed to re-establish premises and congregations. In addition, religions, which had no, or a weaker, history in Russia were able to initiate activity there. However, the religious diversification involves not only confessional diversity, but also mushrooming of different communities and ideas within and across these. This diversification is often said to characterize religiosity in modern societies. It is an outcome of both by the dissolution of religious monopolies, caused by the differentiation of societies, the freedom to choose and construct identities, and the explosion of available cultural schemes, brought on by globalization. In contrast to this tendency, Russian policies concerning religion have consistently shifted from the liberalism of the early 1990s toward stricter control, aiming toward institutionalization and centralization of religiosity (Aitamurto & Gaidykov, 2017). This section discusses these two contradictory trends. As a case study, it analyses contemporary Slavic Paganism, Rodnoverie, which combines the features of claims of indigeneity and of a new religious movement.

In 1990, a new law on the freedom of conscience was passed for the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, this law came into force in the Russian Federation. The law was quite liberal, and set very few restrictions on religious activity. Foreign missionaries and influences flooded into Russia, but new domestic religious communities also emerged. One of these was Rodnoverie. The first public calls to revive pre-Christian Slavic spirituality appeared in *samizdat* and *tamizdat* literature already in the late 1970s, and the first informal communities were founded in the early 1980s. By the time of *perestroika*, some articles on the topic were even published in the popular journal *Nauka i Religiya*. However, only at the beginning of the 1990s did Rodnoverie communities and publications begun to mushroom within both nationalist and alternative spirituality circles (Aitamurto 2016).

New, and especially foreign, religious actors did, however also face opposition. In the early 1990s, the term ‘totalitarian sects’ was launched in public. The ROC and Orthodox actors close to it fueled the fear of ‘brainwashing’ sects among anti-cult activists (Shterin & Richardson 2000). At the same time, nationalist demands to return to ‘our own traditions’ gained momentum in Russian society. After lengthy political struggles, a new law on the freedom of conscience was passed in 1997. It set some new restrictions to religious activity. For example, communities have to prove that they have functioned in Russia for fifteen years before they can register as religious communities. However, the ROC did not get through many of its own requests, and its special status is *not* mentioned in the text of the law itself. For Rodnovers, the law did not impose any major difficulties, even though the number of registered communities fell, and the ones registered as religious communities turned into

cultural ones. In fact, quite a few Rodnovers actually agreed on the need to check and control foreign religious influences, because their religious conviction was also based on the idea that people should follow their own, native traditions.

No new law on the freedom of conscience has been introduced since 1997. However, several other laws and acts, the latest being the so-called Yarovaya's Act, passed in 2016 (Lunkin 2017) have since considerably limited the freedom of religious activity. Particularly detrimental in this respect have been the laws against extremism, the first one of which came into power in 2002. Admittedly, the amount of brazenly anti-Semitic and racist publications in the Russian markets at the time, as well as the alarming rates of racist street violence, demanded some action. However, already during the discussions about the law, several human rights activists pointed out that it might lead to a creation of a new censorship machine.

The definition of 'extremism' in the law is very wide, leaving much room for interpretation. Concerning religion, a problematic aspect is its wording of 'claims of superiority' over others' religious convictions. It seems safe to say that a substantial part, if not a majority of religious texts contain some claims of the superiority of their teachings. In consequence, countless religious publications have fallen on the list of banned literature, as based on this law (Ledovskikh 2013). In the first years after the enforcement of the law, some controversial verdicts were made in this respect, but many of the publications that were banned did indeed contain blatant racism or anti-Semitism, or contained calls for discrimination or even violence. In terms of religious literature, the biggest groups were Islamic and Rodnoverie publications.

In addition to literature, religious organizations have also been banned for violating the laws against extremism. Many of these verdicts too have been criticized, such as the banning of the half-fictional organization of the followers of Said Nursi (Ponomarev 2012). In many respect, the verdicts to ban religious publications and organizations seem quite arbitrary. For a large part, the inconsistency results from the large room of manoeuvre that the law allows to local authorities. Indeed, often these verdicts, as does the granting of official registration or permission to build religious premises depend on the local power-struggles and balances, as well as the ideological underpinnings of local authorities (Aitamurto & Gaidukov 2017). Consequently, local courts have made decisions that have embarrassed even the political elite. For example, in 2013, a translation of the Koran was banned. In 2015, so too was a book called *Prayer to God: Its Meaning and Place in Islam*, of which the court referred to a direct quote from the Koran as a proof of extremism. In the same year, President Putin signed a law, exempting holy books, such as the Koran, Bible, and Talmud from extremism checks in 2015.

Geraldine Fagan argues that even though the tightening of the control in religious activity is in line with the similar tendency for civil society in general, for a large part it can also be explained by the Communist legacy and the inner logic of the state structures. An essential part of this legacy is a suspicious attitude toward unofficial, grass-root activism. She points out that even today, objectively or subjectively, Russian authorities may consider allowing something that should not be allowed as being more a risk for their own careers than banning something that should not have been banned (Fagan 2013).

However, the inconsistencies may also divulge ideological and political commitments and the preferences of the authorities. For example, while many religious books have quickly ended up in the list of banned literature on a very light grounds, there was a year of struggle concerning an ultra-nationalist, openly racist and anti-Semitic Rodnoverie book, *The Strike of the Russian Gods (Udar russkikh bogov)* penned under the pseudonym Istarkhov. Some Rodnoverie circles, often possibly connected to nationalist forces among state structures, seem to have preserved from prosecution writers and groups, often marginal geographically or otherwise (Aitamurto 2016, XX). In my fieldwork among Rodnovers, I have also heard people tell of the representatives of the police or

special services, who have been ordered to surveil Rodnoverie festivals for any extremist activity, but have actually expressed their sympathy for these revived Russian festivities, and perhaps also nationalist underpinnings of some rituals.

Even though countless Rodnoverie publications and many organizations have been banned (many on well-grounded basis), it has preserved itself better than many other minority, and especially new, religious movements. However, after the ROC's position in Russian society begun to strengthen in 2010s, Rodnoverie communities have encountered more pressure. All the more often, the movement is presented as a social problem or even a threat in media. Representatives of the ROC have also urged authorities to pay attention to the phenomenon of 'neo-paganism'. In cultural productions from close to the ROC, 'paganism' is increasingly presented as an age of dark forces and ignorance, without much regard for any social and cultural continuities. The close alliance of the ROC and the Kremlin has made many Rodnovers more critical of the current political elite. Interestingly in the Ukrainian war, Russian Rodnovers have fought as volunteers on *both* sides, but the biggest organizations seem to oppose Russia's actions in Ukraine (Shizhenskii & Aitamurto 2016).

A characteristic feature of contemporary Paganisms is that its different forms usually have no single organization, authority, or holy scripture. Quite the contrary, it is an 'open source religion', which anyone can develop as one sees appropriate. In consequence, virtually all contemporary Paganisms are extremely heterogeneous religions. Furthermore, Rodnoverie communities may considerably differ from each other in many respects. One main difference is whether they are focused on a nationalist, nature-oriented, or folkloric approach to their religion. Moreover, it is difficult to demarcate or define the religion itself. Constant internal negotiations are waged over which groups and individuals have the right to call themselves Pagans or Rodnovers. Drawing the line from an analytical point of view also poses serious challenges for the scholars of the topic. For example, there are skinhead groups, who use Pagan imagery and maintain they revere some Pagan gods, but do not practice the religion or seem to be interested on any theological level. At the other end of the spectrum are eclectic alternative spirituality groups and publications, which are drawn to Paganism, but employ it only as one element among others.

This heterogeneity, anti-dogmatism, and suspiciousness toward hierarchization and institutionalization may actually have also protected Rodnoverie. Under the conditions of a tightened control of religiosity, many Rodnoverie actors nowadays prefer to present themselves as simply representatives and revivalists of 'Russian tradition', occasionally with more religious colouring in the rituals reserved for members only.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, growing pressure toward institutionalization and hierarchization is one of the main characteristic of the contemporary Russian policies concerning religions. For example, in several areas Islamic organizations have been denied registration, or closed down with a clear message that any new form of activity should take place under the existing, dominant muftiates. Though this policy has turned out inefficient in blocking the internal diversification of the Muslim community in Russia, it has still posed many challenges for it. Rodnoverie rituals usually take place in natural settings, and therefore there is no necessary need for any religious buildings or institutions. While many Rodnovers aspire for a more established and recognized position in Russian society, others are suspicious of all kind of institutionalization and prefer to function as informal networks. Therefore, their agility may protect them from the increased control.

## 5.4. Conservative turn and counter forces

### 5.4.1. Kant and Russian modernization – pro and contra

Vesa Oittinen

In Russian culture, philosophy does not play as important a role as in many Western European cultural traditions. Without doubt, one reason for this is that philosophy in the proper sense was introduced into Russia only very late, as a part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century reception of Enlightenment ideas and culture. In addition, for a long time philosophy in Russia was a prerogative of foreign scholars, initially almost exclusively Germans. A more distinctive Russian philosophical culture began to develop only in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Piotr Chaadayev, with his scandalous *Philosophical Letters* of 1836 was maybe the first genuinely original Russian philosophical thinker), and even still, Russian philosophy has never attained the international fame that the classical Russian literature did. Edith Clowes has aptly chosen, in an allusion to Gogol's famous novel, *Fiction's Overcoat* as the title of her book on Russian philosophy, since philosophy in Russia actually grew out from under the "overcoat" of literature (Clowes 2004). Even today, many Russian philosophical works have a narrative tint and an essayistic character that reveals the origin of the genre, and, on the other side, such great novelists as Dostoevsky or Turgenev discussed openly philosophical issues in their works.

However, from its origins, the Russian philosophical culture has been characterized by a dualism that reflects the general antinomies and problems of Russian modernization. In philosophy, these problems appear in a profile that is, if possible, even sharper than in literature. In Russia, we actually may encounter two different ways of making philosophy – a dichotomy that is not of the same kind as the usual division in philosophical schools and currents. There is, on the one side, the received philosophical culture we know from elsewhere; we see Russian Kantians, neo-Kantians, phenomenologists, Hegelians, logicians, and so on. This is the "normal" philosophizing, which follows the Western paragons. We might call it "philosophy in Russia".

But, in addition, there is a genuine Russian tradition, which starts from Chaadayev and the Slavophiles of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and reaches its acme with the thinkers of the so-called Silver Age. The most known protagonist of this current is Vladimir Solov'ev (1853-1900), among other names we could mention the Trubetskoi brothers (Sergei, 1862-1905, and Evgeni, 1863-1920), Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) and Pavel Florensky (1882-1937). Many of these thinkers were collected in the *Put'* group, which as such existed only a short time (from 1909 to 1919), but was the culmination of a longer tradition. One of the *leitmotifs* of these thinkers was "Russianness", that is, the idea that Russian culture and thought are "otherwise", representing a form of rationality different from that of the West.

This distinct Russian form of philosophy emerged immediately in the wake of Chaadaev and found its expression in the theories of the Slavophiles, where the originality of Russia in contrast to the West was for first time clearly formulated. In an important article, the contemporary Russian scholar A. M. Peskov has, in an ironic allusion to the psychological theory of the inferiority complex, spoken of the "German complex" of the Slavophiles, tracing its origin to the first generation of this current, that is, to A. S. Khomjakov, Ivan Kireevskij, and K. S. Aksakov, who were all active in the late 1830s and 1840s (see Peskov 1993; he uses the adjective *germanskij* instead of *nemetskij*, which hints to cultural "Germanness" as the source of influences). Earlier, under Peter I and Catherine II, the Russians had simply copied the West – selectively, of course, but nevertheless without bothering to reflect on the matter unduly. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the situation changes, and a "complex" becomes visible. As Peskov puts it, this complex shows itself in,

...infinite deliberations about how the Russian love of wisdom necessarily must move from a foreign way of thinking (from a 'German-Rationalistic', says Kireevskij, from a

‘formal and logical’, says Khomjakov) towards an own, ‘Orthodox-Russian’ thought: towards ‘a living, holistic conception of what an inner, spiritual life is, and towards a vital, unprejudiced examination of the nature outside us’ (Peskov 1993, 56).

The contrast between “German (especially Protestant) rationalism” and an original “Russianness” is a *locus communis* even in classical Russian literature. It is precisely this complex that Goncharov parodied in his famous novel *Oblomov* (1859). The plot of the novel builds on an antithetical juxtaposition of two characters, the German Stolz and the Russian Oblomov. While Stolz is an active and industrious person, successfully making his own fortune, Oblomov lives on the revenues he gets from his serfs somewhere in the vast Russian countryside, and spends most of his days lying on the sofa. Now and then, he becomes conscious of the futility of his idle way of life, but he consoles himself by saying that he, the “genuine” Russian, in any event has a soul, whilst his German friend has only a clock in its place.

Goncharov wanted to parody the self-indulgent Slavophiles (although this current was already in retirement when the novel appeared), who praised the alleged virtues of pre-modern and pre-capitalist Russia. Since Germany was the closest Western country to Russia, it was natural that the most important impulses for modernizing Russia came from there. The modernization thus had a “German” face. Nevertheless, the picture described by Peskov needs some qualifications. Not all things German were repulsive to the Russians, even in cases where they resisted the modern world. In the field of intellectual life, the Russians adopted without difficulty the post-Kantian philosophies of Schelling and Hegel. For example, in an article in *Russkaja beseda* 1856, Ivan Kireevskij wrote that “the German philosophy, in the form it has obtained in Schelling’s latest system, suits us very well. It offers for thought a level from which it is possible to begin to develop an independent love of wisdom, instead of adopting philosophical systems...” (quoted in Akhutin 1996, 25).<sup>ii</sup> The aversion seemed to focus above all onto one figure, the most well-known of German philosophers, Immanuel Kant. Furthermore, this was a “complex” that did not restrict itself to the Slavophiles only, but covers a substantial part of Russian intellectual history until the present day. “In fact”, writes a Russian scholar of the post-Soviet era, “the religious-philosophical thinkers criticized incessantly Kant’s doctrine, which according to them was the fountainhead of the ‘radical evil’ and ‘perniciousness’ of modern philosophy. It seems that no philosopher has so much occupied the mind of Russian thinkers and given occasion to so much reproach as Kant” (Baram 1994, 173).

If we were to point to a single distinctive trait of this tradition of an “indigenous” Russian thought, it might indeed be anti-Kantianism. That in Russian culture there is a special relation to Kant’s philosophy, is an intriguing fact noted by many scholars of Russian culture and history of ideas.<sup>iii</sup> In 1993, the present-day Russian writer Anatoly Akhutin published an essay *Sofiya i chërt* (Sophia and the Devil), where he analyzed, as the sub-title suggested, “the encounter of Russian religious metaphysics with Kant” (Akhutin 1997, 244). Akhutin was not the first to approach the theme, but he was perhaps the first who detected that the “difficult” relationship to Kant was a trait which, although it is most clearly discernible in the religious philosophers of the Silver Era, actually permeates the whole Russian history of ideas, culture, and literature of the modern epoch, the Soviet period included. Akhutin’s essay soon became famous, and it has been constantly cited in subsequent discussions on the theme.<sup>iv</sup> It contained an impressive selection of examples of a negative, even hostile attitude to Kant collected from the Russian religious Idealist thinkers. While some representatives of this tradition, such as Vladimir Solov’jev or Evgeni Trubetskoi, took Kant’s challenge seriously and took the trouble to develop counter-arguments, many other thinkers rejected Kant *a limine* without discussion. For example, to Pavel Florensky, Kant reminded him of Lucifer. There was “no system which would be more slippery, difficult to handle and perfidious” than Kant’s (Akhutin 1997, 247).

## Seeking alternative to Kant

The adherents of an indigenous Russian thought have made many efforts to find alternatives to Kant. We could mention Pamfil Jurkevich (1827-1874), a professor of philosophy, who was an important link between the Slavophiles and later Russian Idealism. In delivering a widely noted lecture at a jubilee session of the Imperial University of Moscow in 1866, he compared Kant's concept of experience with Plato's concept of reason. Jurkevich had chosen expressly these two thinkers, as he thought that they formed the cornerstones of European culture, while being at the same time antipodes. Jurkevich admitted that Kant's philosophy, "this wonderful doctrine", constituted the "soul" of the modern culture and modern science (Jurkevich 1990 [1865], 496). He himself, however, preferred Plato, who he felt satisfied the needs of the spiritual life of the Russians much better. The only thing that was needed was to add a Christian concept of *personality* to the Platonic doctrine, but this had already been done by the Fathers of the Church. It seems thus that the philosophy, which for Jurkevich should best suit the Russians, would not differ much from the Christianised Platonism of the Late Antiquity or early Byzantine times.

Much better known than Jurkevich would be his pupil Vladimir Solov'ëv (1853-1900), maybe the most famous of all Russian philosophers. Solov'ëv's fame does not rest so much upon his philosophical doctrines, which may with good reason be called syncretistic, if not exactly eclectic. But Solov'ëv was a charismatic personality. It was rumoured that Dostoevskij modelled the character Alësha Karamazov on him. Solov'ëv's stance in relation to Kant is more sophisticated than that of most other Russian Idealists. In his youth he shared the aversion of the Slavophiles and Jurkevich to Kant. Later, however, he came to the insight that a simple return to the Platonism of the Late Antiquity would not be sufficient, since such an attitude would neglect all the achievements that philosophical thought had accumulated during the modern period, starting from Descartes. Solov'ëv translated Kant's *Prolegomena* into Russian (1893, a translation which is deemed as classic), and in his main work on moral philosophy, *Opravdanie dobra* (1899) he much praised Kant's ethics. However, Solov'ëv never became a Kantian. He conceived his ethics as a synthesis of Kant and Hegel. Actually, he interpreted even Hegel in his own way, and the "Hegelian" component of his philosophy, when one takes a closer look at it, amounts to the refutation of Kant's alleged subjectivism in favour of a collectivist and "ontological" view of man. For Solov'ëv, man is in the last instance not an autonomous subject as Kant had thought; on the contrary, the real philosophy begins only when one has grasped that the "trans-personal" – that is, ideas in the Platonic sense – forms the proper basis for truth.<sup>v</sup>

The Russian Idealists who followed Solov'ëv held stubbornly to the idea that Kant's philosophy was something one should reject and overcome. The Moscow-based so-called *Put'* group continued in all essential traits the anti-Kantianism one already met in the Slavophiles. One of the main theoreticians of the group was Evgenij Trubetskoi. Unlike many other Idealist thinkers, he followed Solov'ëv in understanding that Kant's philosophy offered a real challenge to the philosophical programme of Russian Idealism. Instead of simply repudiating Kant's doctrines, Trubetskoi tried to develop something one could call a parallel, Orthodox-Russian alternative to Kantianism.

Here we encounter an interesting phenomenon of the Russian modernization process. It would be a mistake to evaluate the Russian Silver Age Idealism as something merely retrograde and backward-looking. Despite the fact that they rejected the "Protestant spirit" of the West, especially German form of modernity, which according to Weber was a precondition for the emergence of the entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism, they nevertheless were forced, by the inner logic of the controversy, to build up something like an *ersatz* for Western modernity. An example of this production of surrogates is the "philosophy of economy" of Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944), which he presented in his work *Filosofija khozjajstva* (1912). The book can be interpreted as an Orthodox answer to Max Weber's famous thesis that it was Protestantism that gave rise to modern capitalism.

For Bulgakov, what is needed, is a “reformed Orthodoxy” which could give an impulse and spiritual force to Russian economic life. So one might say that the Russian Idealist philosophers had *nolens volens* to play a similar “reformatory” role in regard to traditional Orthodoxy as the Protestants had earlier in regard to Catholicism and the Pope.<sup>vi</sup> The official Russian Orthodox Church was, of course, not delighted by such experiments.

Jevgenij Trubetskoj’s alternative to Kant was presented in the monography *Metafizicheskie predpolozhenija poznanija*, which was issued as an author’s edition in 1917. I cannot here give a detailed account of Trubetskoj’s train of thought, but his main argument in every case is that Kant’s famous “Copernican turn”, which posited human subjectivity as the center of philosophy, should be taken back. Subjectivity as the starting-point for philosophy was for Trubetskoj, as for other Russian Idealists, a token of the hubris inherent in modernity. One must, argued Trubetskoj, try to find another, yet higher vantage point, a point around which even human subjectivity revolves, and on which it is dependent.

As can easily be seen, Trubetskoj’s suggestion was but a continuation of Solov’ëvs programme, which already demanded that the subjectivity in the form of the “I” (the Ego) of Kant’s philosophy should be bereft of its central position and replaced by an “objective” principle. Following this programme, Trubetskoj believed that he had found just in the core idea of Kant, in the doctrine of the Transcendental Apperception (which is the very action in which the Ego is constituted), something that was “unconditioned” (*bezuslovnoe*).<sup>vii</sup> This “unconditioned” should point to a way out from the alleged blind alley of Kantian subjectivism. If human culture could be based on such an unconditioned fundament, the hubris of modernity would finally be overcome. Of what does the unconditioned consist? Trubetskoj tries to show that even if we try, we cannot remove all objectivity from our thinking. According to him, in the case we are thinking something which is true, our thinking leaves the domain of pure gnoseology and switches back into ontology. We experience the truth as a compelling necessity, which is independent of our subjective wishes. This feeling of necessity in the truth implies something that exists outside my subjective I. So the Kantian primacy of gnoseology gets dethroned and the Copernican turn is reverted to.

How successful was Trubetskoj in his attempt to build up an alternative to Kant? *Prima facie*, the argument seems interesting. However, everyone familiar with the history of philosophy can easily recognize that Trubetskoj’s move to find an ontological, objective grounding in the domain of the subjective Ego itself, was in no way a novelty. Trubetskoj’s standpoint is very similar to the so-called Ontological Argument already presented by medieval Schoolmen. In the textbooks of the history of philosophy, it is known as the “Anselmian” argument, from St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033/34-1109) who seems to have been the first who formulated it in an exact manner. The core of the argument boils down to the assertion, that it is not possible to think about something absolutely unconditioned that would exist in my mind only. Instead, it must have a real existence outside my thinking (in Anselm’s exact formulation: *id quo maius cogitari nequit, non potest esse in intellectu solo*). But it was just this argument that Kant famously disproved of already during his pre-Critical period by showing that “to exist” is not a predicate. In other words, we cannot predicate the existence to things in the same way we predicate them such properties as, say, redness or roundness. Thus one cannot conclude from the idea of an unconditioned or necessary being, that it by the force of its idea only that it should exist.<sup>viii</sup>

These examples show that the anti-Kantian programme of Russian Idealism was not able to produce any convincing alternative to Kantianism. It is, actually, astonishingly easy to show that their argumentation contains lacunae and shortcomings that would embarrass any serious modern philosopher. Despite this, the lukewarm attitude towards the German philosopher did not vanish. On the contrary, it continued even into Soviet times, although the new regime had put the Russian Idealists in the notorious “Philosophers’ Steamer” and sent them abroad. In Marxism-Leninism, the



official Soviet ideology, Kant was also rejected, although for reasons different to those of the Russian Idealists. Now Kant was seen as the inspirer of revisionism in Marxist theory. Already Lenin branded Kant with “agnosticism”, according to which we are not able to have any certain knowledge of the things-in-themselves, and this then became the standard assessment of Soviet philosophers. Only towards the end of the Soviet regime did more interest in Kant begin to emerge; the Kant Congress in Riga in 1974 seems to have been some kind of turning-point.<sup>ix</sup>

### Anti-Kantianism as anti-modernism

In his analysis of the “Kant phobia” of the Russian conservative intelligentsia, especially in the form that was exhibited by the *fin-de-siècle* Idealist philosophers, Akhutin stated that we can see here the collision of two different world-views. These views can be distinguished by a Latin respective Greek translation of the term for “reason” or “wisdom”. The *sophia* designates the Russian form of wisdom, in contrast to the Western *ratio*, which in turn is embodied in the supposedly devilish figure of Kant, “whose wily, seductive enemy face becomes visible in the blaze of the hell” (Akhutin 1997, 248). Actually, the *sophia* vs. *ratio* distinction was made already by Aleksei Losev, the philosopher-aesthetician, who continued the tradition of Russian pre-revolutionary idealism a long way into the Soviet era. He elaborated on the terms by adding that while the *ratio* is human and subjective and has a gnoseological orientation, the *sophia* in turn focuses on the Divine and sees the world from an objective and ontological point of view (Losev 1990, 76).

This strong anti-Kantian trait in Russian culture, which repeatedly comes to the fore when Russian thinkers try to define their position towards Western modernity, may at first sight seem somewhat enigmatic. However, if we put it into the wider context of the antinomical character of Russian modernization, the picture becomes much clearer. Kant is rejected by the Russian idealists and traditionalists – and not only by them – because he has formulated the ideas and principles of the modern world in perhaps the most poignant form one can think. As Heinrich Rickert, the philosopher of culture of the “Baden school” and a friend of Max Weber, already implied in the title of his book *Kant als Philosoph der modernen Kultur* (1924), Kant is the philosopher of modernity *par excellence*. He was this in a more radical way than, for example, such thinkers of Western liberalism as John Locke, because he developed a conception of man as an autonomous agent and founded it in a theory of human subjectivity, which was more profound than the ideas of his Enlightenment predecessors. As Rickert writes:

Kant has, as the first thinker in Europe, created the general theoretical basis, from which it is possible to give scientific answers to specifically modern problems of culture [...]. His thought [...] is critical in the sense [...] that it corresponds in principle to the autonomization and differentiation of the areas of culture which actually has taken place since the beginning of the modern era, but had not found any theoretical expression in the philosophy before Kant (Rickert 1924, 141).

Rickert’s interpretation has been supported by many historians of philosophy, recently, for example by Herbert Schnädelbach. The “differentiation of the areas of culture” of which Rickert spoke, is very close to Max Weber’s idea of the “differentiation and autonomization of systems of action and spheres of valuation, forms of life and world pictures” which is, according to him, characteristic of the modern world (Schnädelbach 2005, 14). However, Schnädelbach adds that we should not read Kant only as a philosopher of culture, because his main theoretical achievement consisted in the analysis of the factor – which in the last instance was able to produce all these new cultural forms of the modern world – the subjectivity. Kant’s “Copernican turn” implies that “if one sets out to realise consequently

the principle of critical reason, there cannot be more any objectivity, which would not be founded in the self-conscious subjectivity” (Schnädelbach 2005, 12).

In sum, the opposition between Kant and the Russian idealistic tradition (from the Slavophiles to the representatives of the Silver Era) is so distinctive that it is easy to draw up a table (5.3) reviewing the main dichotomies:<sup>x</sup>

KANT	RUSSIAN IDEALISM
The primacy of the individual (abstract) subject	The primacy of collective (concrete) subject
Core of the subjectivity: the Transcendental Ego	No Transcendental Ego
The subject as the legislator of experience	A “Platonic” theory of knowledge (the ideas which regulate our experience, have their origin outside the individual subject)
Autonomy of the subject	Heteronomy of the subject
Things in themselves vs. phenomena	No things in themselves, we can grasp the essences of things
Morality based on freedom	Morality based on tradition and religion
Subject vs. object	Subject-object identity or harmony
World citizenship	“The Russian Idea”

TABLE 5.3 KANT VS RUSSIAN IDEALISM

Source: Oittinen 2020

The table could be continued indefinitely. The question that interests us here, however, is: what lies behind the “Kant Complex” of Russian Idealism and, in general, of Russian traditionalism, a complex that seems to give expression to something essential in the Russian culture? Usually, and to this day, one has sought the explanation of the “Russian specifics” in the spiritual traditions of Eastern Christendom or in other cultural factors. Of course, such factors give their unmistakable tint to Russian culture and thought. Nevertheless, I would say that the complex should, first of all, be analyzed in the light of the *contradictory process of modernization* which has been so characteristic for Russia since the days of Peter I. It becomes then clear that the critique of Kant at the same time is a critique of modernity, but in the first instance is a critique of the modern concept of an autonomous subjectivity.

In thematizing the *philosophical* concept of modern subjectivity and how it was criticized or rejected in Russian discourses, we are able to approach the question of the character of modernity in a novel way. The German historian of philosophy Klaus Düsing has criticized the one-sidedly “sociological” approach to the problems of modernity and modernization (see Düsing 1997). According to him, philosophy and social sciences have been dominated since the Second World War by an attitude he

calls “sociologism”, that is, a view that takes the intersubjectivity paradigm as the granted point of departure for explanations in the humanities. Of course, the intersubjectivity paradigm rightly stresses man as a collective, social being who can realize her/himself fully only in constant interaction with other people — but on the other side it has almost totally neglected to reflect on the individual subject, the “I”. Typical of this attitude was young Wittgenstein’s remark that the individual subject might be a mere fiction (see *Tractatus* 5.631). A re-evaluation and re-actualization of Kant’s legacy, and especially his theory of the subject, is crucial in overcoming such one-sided views. In this sense, the attitude to the Kantian legacy gives the necessary point of reference for comparisons with the Russian “anti-subjectivist” tradition.

#### 5.4.2 The first Conservative Turn: from Silver Age to Stalinism

*Elina Viljanen*

Cultural- and intellectual-historical research has an important role in ensuring the critical conceptual attitude and hermeneutic quality when analyzing the current phase of post-Soviet Russian modernization as a multidisciplinary project. Among the important questions of our analysis is the role of cultural tradition. Here, we need to first ask what we mean by cultural tradition and address some basic questions concerning the intellectual history of modernity. In the above section, Oittinen presents a view of Russian modernization by highlighting a strong “anti-subjectivistic” tradition in the Russian philosophical tradition. His point of departure comes from the Western Neo-Kantian cultural theoretical tradition that perceives Kant as the philosopher of modernity; the developer of a conception of Man as an autonomous agent. Oittinen argues that an understanding of the way Kant’s philosophical concept of modern subjectivity was criticized and rejected in Russian philosophical discourses enables us to approach the question of the character of modernity in a novel way. I would like to continue this topic here to some extent, and talk about the emergence of a “possibility” of cultural modernization in its aforementioned Kantian sense in the early Soviet era.

In the early Soviet period, there were some initiatives to base the construction of the Soviet humanities on the critical, Neo-Kantian cultural theory, as means to modernize Russian culture. I argue that critical philosophy could not settle into a Russian social and political context during the so-called Russian Silver Age (*Serebriannyi vek*) of 1890-1917. Instead, the early Soviet context was more opportune for the cultural project that critical philosophy had to offer. The view of the culture of Silver Age as being somehow more passive in terms of philosophical culture is nevertheless an early Soviet myth. One of the features of the Soviet cultural modernization lies in its messianic hue, in its recycling of the old thirteenth century idea of Russia as a Third Rome attached to a vision of an unprecedented noble and unified civilization (for the “Third Rome”, see Zenkovski 1953, 35; Clark 2010, 2). The idea of the Third Rome was *activated* during the Silver Age in a Nietzschean spirit. It functioned as a driving force for the youngest members of the Silver Age generation, people who made their active professional careers during the first Soviet decade by ostensibly criticizing the pre-revolutionary culture. However, they did not want to challenge the sacred code of Bolshevik revolution. Having adopted a dialogic relationship with the political elite – or by becoming part of the new political elite themselves – this generation of the new *Soviet professional intelligentsia* established the cultural basis for the Soviet modernization of the Stalin era, but also the early philosophical basis for what we can refer to as Soviet cultural nationalism. Among other things, the latter functioned as a granter of ethical permission that allowed a return to certain cultural values, which were traditional and spiritual. It is here that we can talk about a new conservative turn.

In examining the intellectual history of the early Soviet decades, I share the *via media* conception of Michael David-Fox (2015, 4), who emphasizes the idea that the particularity of the Soviet Union can

be approached from a comparative perspective, and note that Soviet modernization followed international outlines. I hold that a certain *mimicry* of Western thought, which Oittinen mentions, is exactly one of the main reasons why Russian intellectual currents are often so difficult to access for a general European reader: *they seem familiar and foreign at the same time*. Therefore, and correspondingly, the classical notion of the intellectual historian Andzej Walicki applies to my methodological stance as he writes: “the originality of Russian philosophy is not easy to define whereas its dependence on Western European thought is obvious. Its striking originality can only be perceived when we examine it within the context of Russian intellectual history” (Walicki 1979, xvi). Here I pose the question: what kind of striking originalities can be traced in Russian cultural modernization in the early Soviet period and, furthermore, through the lens of a cultural field that at first glance might seem to us rather remote? And finally, do these originalities help capture something essential of the post-Soviet Russian modernization project?

In the following case study I focus on a little-known case of Soviet musicology by contextualizing the Neo-Kantian current of musicology in the early Soviet period from the point of view of cultural modernization. Scholarship on art and music offered a new cultural sphere for Russian philosophical debate in the late Silver Age and early Soviet period. Musicology offers an interesting example of the development of the Soviet humanities during the 1920s. It was a brand-new academic discipline in Russia, based on the newest Western theoretical ideas, while simultaneously and constantly reflecting its national scientific and cultural scope against the other Soviet humanities. I have called the early Soviet musicology “autonomist” (Viljanen 2016). It functioned as one of the laboratories of the early Soviet cultural philosophy in the 1920s. We witness in the early Soviet musicological theory a transition from Russian philosophy to Soviet cultural theory, with the contribution of Neo-Kantian philosophy.

Below, I shall explain what I mean by the aforementioned “autonomism.” I argue, that the autonomist philosophy of the early Soviet musicology soon reconciled to the more traditional perspectives, and not least because of the political ambitions of the Soviet musicologists to gain more and more cultural power in the new society. After Stalin’s cultural revolution, the critical aspect of Soviet musicology was merely a legend in the past, which some musicologists idealized and sought to revive; but without real success. Instead, the pre-revolutionary “Russianness” was promoted in all its idealism within the borders of Soviet Marxism. My following contribution is a summary based on an analytical study of the foundation of Soviet musicology and the development of a distinctly *Soviet* cultural theory of music. (see Viljanen 2016).

A case study: Soviet music – a means for cultural *modernization*?

*Elina Viljanen*

Given how prominent a cultural symbol Russian classical music had become by 1917, it might sound surprising that there was no musicology as a formal university discipline in Russia before the October Revolution. The fact that the former study of music at the conservatories – the way it had created a nationalist theoretical school like Germany – became a target of critical European cultural and scientific theories in the 1920s, reflects the endeavour of the early Soviet professional intelligentsia to modernize the country following the European internationalist direction, after the introverted phase of the First World War. Meanwhile we can observe a strong continuity of more traditional Russian cultural mission, as the Soviet musicologists argued for the ethical value and originality of Russian culture in the world through music. The start phase of musicology was formalist in methodology, especially in St. Petersburg (then Petrograd). Compared with other spheres of culture, the

philosophical debate in musicology was able to flourish quite free of the burning political questions in the early Soviet period. That said, musicologists were not happy with their remote cultural position. To obtain greater cultural power, musicologists such as Asafiev, N. Briusova, Yavorsky, etc. sought a closer interaction with Soviet politicians. Curiously, formalist musicology thereby took a slightly different direction to formalist literary study, although they developed hand in hand. At the core of literary formalism was an attempt to gain cultural autonomy, whereas for musicologists, autonomy meant an independent and recognized status for musicology and music as a cultural, artistic, and scientific discourse. In Russia, music had been previously defined via other discourses, such as literature and philosophy.

The mainstream of the old cultural elite wanted to safeguard the continuation of the tradition of Russian classical music culture in the new era. Indeed, the early Soviet cultural modernization project was on various levels tradition-conscious (or at least tradition-aware) in preserving its national mission, which then gradually merged with the larger political trends of Leninism and Stalinism.

To attain a higher social status for their new discipline, musicologists now sought to prove the general cultural value of their field. A new cultural theory of music was gradually born of this process. It highlighted, among others, an active and critical subject – a new listener.

One of the foremost formulators of Soviet cultural theory of music was the Silver Age music critic and historian Boris Asafiev (1884–1949), today a classic author of contemporary Russian musicology. His initial task – to elevate the value of music as an autonomous voice of human culture – grew into a rather extensive theory between 1917 and 1948, which was accepted as a genuine Soviet theory of musical form during the Stalin era (BSE 1936, 150). As a thinker, Asafiev engaged with many prominent thinkers and schools of thought; Nietzsche, Bergson, N. Lossky, neo-Kantians like Cassirer, Soviet Marxists, French linguistics and new sociological theories, and his thinking would anticipate structural linguistics, Lotman's semiotics, and Husserl's phenomenology. (Viljanen 2020)

In his early career, Asafiev had stressed a Bergsonian view that one of the advantages of music over the arts is that it avoids becoming a static essence or a substance that does not correspond with reality in its movement and change. His general conception did not, however, conceptualize *how* and *what* we hear when we adopt the given view of music, a question that became his main concern after he adopted the Bolshevik revolutionary vocabulary and severely criticized the old 'bourgeois hearing.' Thereafter he sought to find an up-to-date scientific and philosophical definition for musical morphology to teach composers, listeners, and performers to become *analytical listeners* so that the true nature of music's fluid essence does not suffer. This essence was based not only on the composer's creativity, but also on the creativity of the listener's perception, which also participates in the peculiar philosophical or phenomenological process of knowing the world through music, knowing the 'other I.'

Developing Soviet sociology of music and applying Trotsky's ideas of new everyday life (*novyi byt*) and new revolutionary language (1923) Asafiev argued that through classical music, the lower layers of culture could be elevated. The 'lower' (*bytovaia*) forms of music were like raw material for higher intellectual treatment. The Soviet music educational elite envisioned that in this way the mass listeners would be gradually introduced to the intellectually higher forms of music (See Viljanen 2016, 457-462).

Alongside his colleagues, Asafiev contributed to the Stalin era 'educatedness' (*kul'turnost*). Classical music became gradually viewed as a feature of a civilized person, and classical music became considered a higher cultural and intellectual activity than other musical genres. In addition, during the Stalin era and beyond, the Soviet professional musical intelligentsia participated in educating the

new Soviet citizen by compromising the theory of ‘critical listener’ with politics. The new Soviet intellectual listener was a cultural political listener who was given *kul’turnost* via “high-art” music with proper ideological content (*ideinost*). Whereas the lower forms of ‘popular music’ were identified with Western corruption, the higher genres of Soviet classical music were viewed as products of civilized ‘culturedness’ (see Viljanen 2017).

## Conclusion: The role of tradition in Soviet cultural modernization

The case of Soviet musicology challenges the conventional totalitarian paradigm and gives us a cultural and philosophical perspective onto the early Soviet modernization project. By this, we have referred here to a particular process that took place in the 1920s, when certain critical philosophical, ideological, cultural, social, and political currents merged into a large-scale cultural movement that aimed to civilize the new Soviet citizen. Many traditional scientific disciplines found themselves at odds with the new government. However, the new Soviet musicology enjoyed a rather unique intellectual freedom because of the remote cultural position of music in Russian society. Soviet musicologists collaborated eagerly with the new government to promote musicology as a socially-important and recognized scientific discipline in the spirit of critical philosophy. Within a short time, musicology was a cultural discourse that conveyed certain ideas of critical Neo-Kantian philosophy to larger segments of culture. During the mid-1920s, the project of the new listener merged into a larger scale cultural political project of educating the new Soviet citizen.

I shall return to the questions posed at the beginning about the originalities that can be traced back to Russian cultural modernization in the early Soviet period. The mainstream of the early Soviet cultural modernization project, which sought to base the new cultural perception on the latest Neo-Kantian theoretical foundations, was at the end of the day very tradition-conscious. It resulted in the preservation of certain Russian intellectual traditions, such as a national culture of classical music, which was not only reinvented through a more modern cultural philosophical filter, but also *Sovietized*. Acknowledging the strong traditional inclinations of the early Soviet theoreticians working with the critical cultural theoretical questions helps us see that the “leitmotif” of *Russianness* (cf. Oittinen), which emerged also in Stalinist era Soviet Marxism, did not appear *ex nihilo*. The re-evaluation of the origins of the early Soviet cultural theories in their context, i.e., seeing the various ideological ramifications and contrasting cultural political agendas of Soviet theoreticians, we can better understand the difficulty of Soviet cultural theoreticians to go beyond the mere “potentially critical” theory of culture. An interesting question for further study would also be how much the fate of the persecuted “Russian philosophy” raised nostalgia in those theoreticians who originally wanted to overcome its basic problems in the new Soviet era.

It seems that the question of the role of tradition in Russian modernization in the early Soviet period, as well as in the contemporary post-Soviet Russia, should be approached from the perspective of continuities and discontinuities of Russian intellectual traditions. I would like to propose here the concept of *discontinuity in the continuity of tradition*, which suggests that the tradition is not a monotonous continuing line, which now and then suffers from abrupt breaks over the course of history. Continuity and discontinuity are contradictory moments constituting the cultural process in its entirety. This methodological tool allows a deeper analysis of cultural phenomena than such abstract schemes as cultural modernization, for example. Cultural discourses such as classical music, philosophy, and literature had very close ties with one another during the Silver Age, but very different pasts in Russia, and rather specific intellectual histories in the Soviet context.

Finally, do the aforementioned originalities help us to capture something essential of the particularity of the post-Soviet Russian modernization project? Integrated multidisciplinary cooperation of the social and political sciences and humanities is required in the field of contemporary modernization analyses in national contexts. Excluding the perspective of cultural and intellectual history, we tend to dismiss the logic, reason, and motivation of deep-level cultural attitudes that participate in, or oppose, these changes. I have argued elsewhere that the historical background of the educational and critical mission of Russian classical music on the one hand, and its collaboration with the political elite of the country, on the other, is also evident in the post-Soviet Russia. The Russian classical music elite lost its cultural position after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it has actively regained it during Putin's second presidential term as the cultural side of the development that Vladimir Gel'man has termed Russia's "authoritarian modernization" (see Viljanen 2017, 118–135).

More than explaining contemporary Russian modernization development, cultural and intellectual history gives hermeneutic scope to understand some of the nuances of this modernization. Here critical hermeneutics should be developed to counter contemporary historicism in both academic and non-academic analyses that make simple one-to-one analogies between Russian contemporaneity and the Soviet past. The latter was a multi-phased and multi-voiced entity, which still lacks concise intellectual historical analyses in the multidisciplinary research context.

#### 5.4.3. Post-Soviet "Communism" in Russia

Vesa Oittinen

The total reshaping of the Communist party was one of the most dramatic changes that took place during the demise of the Soviet Union – yet at the same time, one of the least noted. It is indeed astonishing how little the social scientists, politologists, and philosophers have been interested in the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), or the "Ziuganovites", as the party is commonly called, after its long-term chairman Gennadii Zjuganov (b. 1944).<sup>xi</sup> Only a few analyses of the party and its ideology have been carried out,<sup>xii</sup> and they are seldom mentioned in the Western media. Nor can one speak of some kind of "bourgeois conspiracy", since the post-Soviet leftist activists and Marxists in Russia are also not interested in the actions of the CPRF, and do not regard it as a serious oppositional force. This disinterest is all the more strange, as the CPRF is the biggest political party in Russia next to the (ruling) United Russia, and its chairman Ziuganov seriously challenged Yeltsin in the presidential elections of 1996 and 2000. Furthermore, according to many political observers, even Putin was not able to defeat his Communist rival in the 2008 and 2012 elections by means other than massive electoral fraud.

One reason for the non-recognition of the Ziuganovites may be that many regard them as a party of Soviet nostalgia, looking back at the "good old times", which were not, in fact, so good. Such a straightforward characterization, however, does no justice to the party, which in many respects is a quite unique hybrid of not only Soviet, but even pre- and post-Soviet goals, ideas, and sentiments. The antinomic character of Russian modernization is represented in the CPRF in a very conspicuous form. Ideologically, post-Soviet Russian communism is a curious *mixtum compositum*, which is not so easy to locate in the received right/left spectrum of modern European politics. It is absolutely not communist in the same sense as the old Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU), since the Leninist jargon that pops up in its official documents and declarations, is more a reminiscent of the past than a serious directive for action. If one would define the real ideology of the party by a single term, it would be its *geopolitics*, in a conservative and "patriotic" sense of the word.

The parties and political movements of present-day Russia have emerged in most cases from the dissolution process of the CPSU in late 1980s. The West-oriented “democrats” as well as the conservative-patriotic Ziuganovites have their background in some platform or fraction of the old Soviet Communist party. The disintegration of the once all-powerful party took place at amazing speed during the last years of *perestroika*. This was a token of that deep processes of differentiation had been running behind the seemingly monolithic façade of the CPSU, and already long before the Gorbachev era. To this day, these processes have not been researched or analyzed in a pertinent manner by either social scientists or politologists.

Be that as it may, it was not only the political structures of the Soviet era that transformed around 1990. The changes in *mentality* and *ideological landscape* were equally striking. It is not an exaggeration to say that in those years, not only the members of the Communist party, but the whole of Soviet society experienced an “ideological catastrophe”, which in turn led to a widespread feeling of helplessness and disorientation among the people. True, the dogmas of Marxism-Leninism had already begun to lose their credibility during the so-called stagnation period under Brezhnev, but it was only after the breakdown of the structures of Soviet society that there was a dramatic collapse of its legitimizing ideology. The seemingly incredible evolution of the Politbureau member and advisor of Gorbachev, Aleksandr Yakovlev was by no means unique. He was in charge of the ideological work of the Party, and evolved from a stern Marxist-Leninist to an enthusiastic advocate of market economy and neo-liberal values. His development was typical for the current in the CPSU, which during the terminal phase of *perestroika* was first presented as the “Democratic Platform” and then became consolidated as the Democratic Party, which denounced socialism and the 70 years of Soviet rule as a failed experiment.<sup>xiii</sup> As another prominent example of this syndrome we could mention Yegor Gaidar, the Russian premier-minister and chief executor of market liberal “reforms” of the early 1990s. Originally, he was the director of the section for economic sciences of the leading ideological Party journal *Kommunist*. As to Yakovlev, he has tried to rationalize his choices i.a., in a collection of articles *Gor’kaja chasha* (1994), but the reader is struck above all by the primitive level of his arguments against Marxism. Instead, from the neo-liberal camp one could now hear voices, recommending a Pinochet-style dictatorship for Russia. For a resumé of the discussions about the possibility of a “Chilean way” for post-socialist Russia, see, for example, Nakhimova (2013, 72 – 75). A concise snapshot of the mental situation in Russia after the dissolution of the CPSU can be found e.g., in the article of Wladislaw Hedeler (see Hedeler 1994).

But even the “traditionalist” adversaries of Gorbachev’s reforms of the CPSU were also struck by the ideological catastrophe. After everything that had happened, it was of course impossible to try to swim against the tide in the old manner of pure Marxism-Leninism. Some small splinter parties of would-be Communists, such as the “Bolsheviks” of Nina Andreyeva, revisited the 1930s in an attempt to save the cherished ideological foundations of the Soviet era, as exemplified by the idea of a “pure Stalinism”, that is, a Stalinist rule without mass terror.<sup>xiv</sup> But the majority – above all the followers of Ziuganov – chose another option: they tried to unite the “Red” values of the Soviet era with the “White” (or even “Black”) of old Russia. As such, this phenomenon was not quite new. A forerunner of these developments can be found in the National Bolshevism of Ernst Niekisch (1889-1967), a German politician who tried to combine socialism with nationalism. Actually, in all their haziness, the ideological and theoretical debates in Russia of the 1990s much resembled the atmosphere of the Weimar republic.



A new kind of “Communist” is founded

The Ziuganov party has its origin in those cadres of the old CPSU that were critical of *perestroika* and not willing to consent to the Gorbachevian reforms. During the preparations of the 28<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of the CPSU (it was to be its last congress), which was intended to take place in July 1990, the anti-*perestroika* elements began to work for a separate party for Russia, with the rationale that all other Soviet republics already had their own communist parties. Although the all-union CPSU should still play the role of an umbrella organization for the parties of the various republics, from the beginning it was clear that the Russian communists would become a “second commando center” inside the CPSU, thanks to their numerical superiority. Everyone was thus aware what it meant when the adversaries of *perestroika* and Gorbachev’s policies founded the Communist Party of Russian Federation (CPRF), with Ivan Polozkov – and later (from August 6, 1991) Valentin Kuptsov – as general secretary. The failed coup of August 1991 caused a delay in the organizing process of the conservative communists, as the new President of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, outlawed the party, which had compromised itself in the putsch attempt. Soon even the old CPSU was abolished once and for all. However, the period of illegality did not last long for the CPRF, as in September 1992 the Constitutional Court of Russia decided that the party should be allowed to continue its political activities. The party was able to have its congress on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of February, 1993. However, a telling example of the sharp turn in the attitudes of Yeltsin’s Russia, where the (neo-)liberal elements now held power, was that the party had to hire its congress rooms outside Moscow, since in the capital itself it was impossible to find locations. For example, the rector of the Academy of the Government explained that he would “rather be host for a congress of lesbians” than the Communists – despite the fact that only some months earlier his institute had had the title ‘Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the CPSU’ (*Sovetskaja Rossija* 28. I. 1993, quoted from Slater 1993).

The Party Congress of 1993 entailed the consolidation of a new communist party, of a type never seen before. Political commentators could note that Anatoli Lukjanov and Oleg Sheinin, among others, who both were waiting for impeachment because of their participation in the August putsch, were elected to the Executive Central Committee. But more important was that Gennadi Ziuganov became the new General Secretary. He has held this position since then, and his personality has been emblematic for the public image of the whole party. In the early 1990s, and under Ziuganov’s leadership, the new Communist Party formulated its main ideological tenets and political goals, which have remained almost unchangeable since then.

A comparison with other ex-Communist parties in Eastern Europe makes the uniqueness of the path chosen by the CPRF palpable. Whilst, for example, the Left Democrats that emerged from the ruins of the Polish Communist Party, or the successors of the East German SED, the erstwhile PDS, now *Die Linke*, painstakingly tried to rebuild themselves as a modern left wing/socialist political forces and took a clear distance from the stigmatized “Stalinist” traits of their past, it is not possible to speak of the CPRF in a similar manner as a “pink/red” follower of the CPSU. The seeds of a social-democratic party that existed in the old CPSU developed in the 1990s into independent (but short-lived) parties, which positioned themselves *outside* the communist spectrum. The ideology of the neo-Communists of the CPRF consists of remnants of Leninist rhetoric, on the one side, and of Russian patriotism, on the other, and the latter seems to actually dominate at the present. This was obvious already in the crystallization phase of the CPRF. Party leader Ziuganov himself referred soon after the 1993 congress to this metamorphosis, while in discussion with Aleksandr Prokhanov, the editor-in-chief of the “national-bolshevist” journal *Zavtra* (previously *Den*):

Now there emerges a party which is qualitatively of a new kind. It assumes much from its predecessor: ideas of a brotherhood between men and social justice, and a high level

of spirituality. It is necessary to enrichen it with Russian patriotism, with the love towards the fatherland; it must necessarily embrace the heritage of Russian imperial thinking [*derzhavnost'*] – we cannot get along without a strong state. (*Zavtra* N:o 40, October 1994, republished in Ziuganov 1995, 135 sqq)

In his reply, Prokhanov characterized the social composition of the new party in an interesting manner. According to him, there existed in the CPRF “as if three layers”: first, the traditionalists, who have been brought up in the spirit of the classical Marxism-Leninism, then the pragmatists and administrators (i.e., the functionaries of the state-owned big industry), and finally “the young ones, the new human material, which has attached itself to the party after your message concerning the interests of the Empire, the Great Russia, the coming national renaissance, reached the wide public” (Ziuganov 1995, 134).<sup>xv</sup>

### *The Alliance with the “Patriots”*

The nationalist phraseology in the party press and in the speeches of its leaders was from the beginning so glaring, that a Moscow-based political scientist was able to state already in 1994, that “the concept which [...] forms the ideological centre of gravity of the CPRF, is state-patriotism” (Soko'skij 1994, 43). The neo-Communists laboured single-mindedly in order to create a united front against Yeltsin's regime and the hated market liberals, whose politics violated traditional Russian values in all conceivable manners. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that it was the necessity of this alliance with the patriotic right against “modernization politics” that created the CPRF, and *not vice versa*.

In the circumstances of the Yeltsin era, such an alliance might seem reasonable, since the neo-liberal “reforms” of the period, the shutdown of the – in itself rather modest – social state of the Soviet period, and especially the privatization of the immense Soviet industry led to disastrous consequences for a substantial part of the population. In popular language, this politics was soon coined “*prikhvatizatsija*” (from Russian *prikhvat*, ‘seizure, theft’): it created a class of super-rich oligarchs, which meant disaster for the majority of the Russian people. In this respect, the pact of the Ziuganovites with the “patriots” superficially resembles the alliance tactics of “classical” communists, the idea of a popular front of all progressive forces, communists and liberals alike, against the threat of Fascism, which was proposed by the Comintern leader Dimitrov in the 1930s. But the big difference is that Comintern and Dimitrov thought of the alliance as a *tactical-political* one only; it was never intended that the Communists should merge ideologically with their bourgeois-liberal allies. In the case of the CPRF, however, the alliance is not tactical only, but involves a long-term absorption of the ideology of the “patriots”. In the Russian media, there has been mentions of a “left” and a “right” wing or tendency in the party, and such persons as Vladimir Tikhonov and the businessman Gennadii Semigin (who later, in 2004 was expelled from the CPRF) have been pointed out as the leading figures of the more nationalist tendency. However, it is difficult to say anything certain about the possible different currents of the CPRF, since no politological analyses have been carried out. The commentators have, nevertheless, identified a continuous drift of the party towards more nationalistic rhetoric, and away from Marxist phraseology during the 2000s (cf. Kalinin, 2014).

The long-time leader of the party Gennadii Ziuganov can be regarded as its chief ideologist, too, since the main arguments of the “new” Communist ideology were laid down in his articles and speeches of the 1990s and have remained virtually unchanged to this day. It is important to note that the politics of CPRF rely mainly on the ideological statements drafted by Ziuganov, not on a serious and scholarly analysis of Russian society. There have been attempts to create think-tanks and research centres that would anchor the party's agenda in a factual analysis of Russian realities, but the results have been meagre, not least because the CPRF is not seen as intellectually attractive. Already back in 2005, the

sociologist and politologist Aleksandr Tarasov commented spitefully on the Ziuganovites' efforts, saying that "inside the CPRF, there exists a colossal deficit of intellectual resources". To boot, he also accused the CPRF of forming the main obstacle to the development of a leftist theoretical and cultural alternative in Russia. "This party has lain as a barrier on the path of the Left in our country and did not allow it to develop" (Tarasov 2005).

### Geopolitics as the new Communist ideology

Already at the onset, the programme of the CPRF demanded, more or less openly, the territorial restoration of the Soviet Union. In the version of 1995, it stood thus: "It is necessary [...] to maintain the integrity of the Russian state, to renew the union of the Soviet people and to guarantee the national unity of the Russian people" (*Pravda* 31. 1. 1995). The Ziuganov party sees the strengthening of the Russian state and its support as one of its main tasks. If one takes in account the peculiarities of Russian history – such as the absence of a robust civil society – so the state undoubtedly is the institution that best can guarantee the social security and equality of the citizens. However, the CPRF backs up the state not only as an actor in public social policy, but and above all as a tool for upholding the national goals of Russia. According to Ziuganov, the state has always played a positive role in Russian history. In a programmatic article entitled '*Derzhava*' (the Russian word refers both to 'imperium' as supreme power in general and to 'empire' as a territorial power), Ziuganov wrote that it is not appropriate to see in the old Russian empire only a bureaucratic structure that repressed the people. On the contrary – the empire was "a historically and geopolitically determined stage in the development of the Russian state". After the bitter experiences of *perestroika*, a reassessment of the historical role of Czarist Russia has become necessary. Ziuganov calls for a rehabilitation of the well-known slogan, originally coined by Count Uvarov, the Minister of National Education of Czar Nicholas I, 'Orthodoxy – Autocracy – Nationality', because it summarizes so well the essence of the Russian form of civilization, which is a contrast to that of the West (Ziuganov 1993, 194). The Uvarovian scheme "mirrors essential invariants in the different, even contradictory periods of the development of the Russian statehood", and it can be utilized even in present-day politics (Ziuganov 1993, 196). Implicit in this renewed 'Uvarovism', which Ziuganov seeks to foist onto his fellow-communists, is a geopolitical world-view that gives the rationale for a strong Russian state. According to Ziuganov, Gorbachev's incompetent politics weakened the positions of the "Eurasian fortress", which was the old Soviet Union. The time now calls for re-establishing the old status of Russia as a "geopolitical stability factor in the world". Ziuganov sketches a new structure for the world, in which the local civilizations – the Western, the Russian-Orthodox, the Muslim, the Indian and so on – are thought to play the role of geopolitical powerhouses (Ziuganov 1994, 114).

Ziuganov's "geopolitical turn" means a radical rejection of the Enlightenment universalist tradition, which always has been the hallmark of the left. Of course, it might be objected that other forms of geopolitical thinking than that of the notorious Haushofer school are possible. But Ziuganov does not try to make any distinction between the conservative (or even pro-fascist) use of geopolitical argumentation, on the one side, and of a possible leftist geopolitics, on the other. Without blinking an eye, he embraces the ideas of geopolitics in a ready package and ends up with a view of the world that is similar to that of Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations". It is important to see that the Ziuganovites' geopolitical stance implies an abandonment of the attempts to modernize Russia, and not only in the crude neo-liberal form pushed by the Yeltsin regime, but in its very principle. These implications were clearly drawn, for example, in a series of articles published by Sergei Kara-Murza in *Nash Sovremennik*, the organ of the Patriotic Union of Writers in 1993 and 1994. According to Kara-Murza, the *perestroika* initiated by Gorbachev was nothing but a violent attempt to break the moral and spiritual spine of the Russian people and force-feed them the values of an alien, Western civilization (Kara-Murza, 1993; Kara-Murza, 1994). His main thesis was that *perestroika* was for

Russia what the Reformation was in Western Europe. Gorbachev and his allies had done their utmost to supply the Russian people with capitalist ideas, for example, that “the money forms the basis of human relations”. This was a mode of thinking devoid of solidarity between human beings, unfamiliar to the Orthodox Russians, and actually of Jewish origin. Hinting at Max Weber’s analyses of the spirit of Protestantism, Kara-Murza wrote that the ethos of capitalism is incompatible with the Christian brotherhood so typical of the Russian national character. He goes on to reproach “radical Jewish intellectuals” for their contribution to *perestroika*, which has so much damaged Russia.

In short, the message of the Ziuganovites is clear: modernity and modernization are not seen as a global process encompassing the whole of humanity, but as a trait of a single “alien” civilization, that of the West. This geopolitical stance that stresses the uniqueness of different civilizations changes all parameters even in the alleged Marxist-Leninist heritage of the CPRF. For example, Lenin’s importance is no more seen in the role he played for the international socialist and revolutionary movement, but in the fact that he belongs to the great personalities of Russian history, like Ivan IV or Peter the Great. The “socialism” the CPRF is pursuing is not the result of universal demands of the development of human societies towards a better future, as the “old” communists saw the matter; instead, it is now a result of the national character of the Russians, and expresses the values of a closed Orthodox civilization. In this sense, it is not appropriate to call the ideology of the CPRF a conglomerate, in which the left and conservative components would have roughly equal weight. Quite the contrary, the underlying geopolitical assumptions mean that the conservative and patriotic ideas enjoy the advantage and the Marxist-Leninist language used in the Party documents has become emptied of its previous content and meaning. In short, the CPRF seems to identify the critique of capitalism with a need to revert to pre-modern forms of sociability. No wonder that its message is not widely felt as a genuine leftist alternative to the present state of affairs in Russia.

In the light of the latest elections, the long-time trend of a diminishing support for the CPRF seems set to continue, but the party remains, nevertheless, a considerable political force in the country. A recent survey published by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) stated, that the Communists have not been able to recover from the electoral defeat the party suffered in the early 2000s (from the more than 24% support in the 1999 Duma elections, to 13% in the 2003 elections). Between August 2016 and August 2018 the public approval of the CPRF was only 9-10%, but it must be noted that the approval of other parties, notably of United Russia, has dropped in a like manner. However, the party has recently had some local success, for example, in the Primorsky province gubernatorial election in Autumn 2018, where CPRF’s candidate almost succeeded in beating the acting governor, and its victory was hindered only by a “blatant vote-rigging” (Lassila and Nizhnikau 2018, 4-5).

It is not easy to predict the future of the party. As the FIIA report states, the CPRF has the character of a “systemic opposition”, that is, it is in the last instance loyal to the existing political system (not unlike the “His Majesty’s Opposition” in Britain!). If the party could renew itself and drop the nationalist orientation, its future prospects might well brighten. But at the moment, there are no signs of a new beginning.

#### 5.4.4. Conservative turn and populist opposition

*Markku Kangaspuro and Jussi Lassila*

Early in the morning of 13 April 2017, Viacheslav Mal’tsev, the opposition activist in Saratov, woke up to noise. Special police forces had come to arrest him and, while they certainly knew that he was at home, they nonetheless cut the door open with a cutting torch. While sparks flew from the door, Mal’tsev recorded everything on his mobile phone and sent the live footage to his webpage, which

was followed by tens of thousands of his supporters. The culmination of this brutal waking and arrest was he saying goodbye while his daughter cried hysterically as the police took the activist away. A couple of hours later it became clear that he suffered a heart attack before the flight to Moscow, to where he was being forcedly moved in order to be a witness against protesters who allegedly attacked police during anti-corruption demonstrations held on 26 March, 2017.

On 19 April 2017, it was announced that the authorities had prepared a law-initiative that would criminalize the unblocking of the websites prohibited by authorities (Golitsyna & Ser'gina 2017). Website blocking had become one of the measures that the authorities began to actively practice after the mass protests of 2011/12. However, this new law-initiative offers additional evidence of weaknesses of this blocking, since their unblocking is relatively easy. In general, control over the internet has not appeared particularly effective. The protests on 26 March and 12 June, 2017, which were mainly peopled by youngsters and organized by the indisputable leader of Russia's political blogging and front man of the opposition since 2011, Aleksey Naval'nyi, is the case of point.

On 8 June, 2017, four days before the second round of Naval'nyi's nation-wide, anti-corruption demonstrations, the office of *Rus' Sidiashchia* (literally *Sitting Russia*), a NGO which focuses on the rights of prisoners and arrested people was raided (Nastoiashchee Vremia 2017). Indeed, raiding the offices of groups perceived as being anti-governmental has become a repeated practice since the protests of 2011-12.

Finally, news on the conditions of those who were arrested during the demonstrations against corruption on 12 June, 2017 – which appeared to have even larger geographical scope than those on 26 March – revealed that police had conducted systematic abuse (Vol'tskaia 2017). Besides OMON, the special force of the Ministry of Interior, another active conductor of arrests in demonstrations during 2017, was the National Guard. This additional internal security unit was established by the president in April 2016, approximately a year before these incidents (Rozhdestvenskii 2016). A central point in announcing its establishment was that the guard is licensed to shoot without warning.

What do these measures indicate in terms of Russia's political trajectories and of political modernization at large? Does the civic pressure against the regime show a new wave of activation followed by the regime's response, and is this response in line with the regime's persistent turn towards anti-liberal authoritarian conservatism? Or, is Russia irrevocably stepping into revolutionary political dynamics, as suggested by some renowned political commentators? (Solovey 2017).

The aforementioned examples, among numerous other cases, are illustrations of the politics of fear par excellence. Instead of figuring as a form of mass repression, a key component in the politics of fear is the function of signaling via selective repressions. As Gel'man notes,

...the selective repressions demonstrate to the elite and ordinary citizens that open manifestations of their disloyalty may result in heavy losses. This fine-tuned approach to repressive policy can be more efficient for the preservation of authoritarian regimes than mass repressions, but it also requires keeping a delicate balance between sticks and carrots, and skillful and measured application of various tools of political control. (Gel'man 2016, 30)

In comparison to the practices of other authoritarian regimes on the globe, about their overall performance and capacities, the Kremlin's behaviour might be assessed via Adam Przeworski's (1991) blunt condensation of the three pillars of the authoritarian equilibrium. As he argues, when there is more *economic prosperity*, fewer *lies* and less *fear* are needed. By contrast, when there is *less* economic prosperity, more lies and fear are needed, and finally, if lies no longer work as planned, even more fear is required. While the economic prosperity is the pillar that the Kremlin cannot trust

in the near future, the efficiency of lies that are distributed by the state media is also at a crossroads. By 2017, it had become clear – at least among younger Russians, that is, the most active internet users – that the capacity of the state media has *no* effect in keeping them immobilized in accordance with official views. Thus, the recent intensification of the regime’s politics of fear is the completely logical outcome of Russia in recent years.

As pointed out above by Gel’man, the usage of fear via selective repression requires delicate balance. Christian Davenport argues that the central question in evaluating motives of authoritarian regimes is their willingness to use more fear, or less, against perceived threats. ‘If repressions in the past served as efficient tools for diminishing threats to the regime’s survival, then the chances of their use in the future increase, as do their scope and intensity’ (quoted in Gel’man 2016a). As a test case in light of recent repressions and protest waves *visa-a-vis* the previous repressions against protests since 2012, Russia does not provide a clear-cut answer. However, viewed against the peak of patriotic euphoria since the annexation of Crimea, anti-Westernism, the rapid recovery of Putin’s popular support since late 2013, plus the overall impact of Boris Nemtsov’s murder in early 2015, Gel’man suggests that the Kremlin sees the usage of fear as an effective strategy, which explains the intensification of repressions (Gel’man 2016a).

However, in 2017 the flip side of these politics were more visible than two years previously. The issue here is about the non-intended consequences of fear signaling, which results in a partial rupture of the balance between sticks and carrots. The outcome of intensified repression might lead *not* to stronger equilibrium, but rather to a more active, wider, and determined opposition. This would certainly be the case if the society is moving towards the revolutionary dynamics seen in Ukraine in 2013/14. In the interview in the web-channel of Naval’nyi’s team, the aforementioned activist Mal’tsev announced that following his arrest he has become more determined and ‘the revolution will be inevitable’ (Naval’nyi Live 2017). Naval’nyi himself can be seen the brightest illustration of the non-intended outcomes of the politics of fear: regardless of numerous lawsuits and sentences against him, he has become increasingly active – and even more troublesome for the regime – more popular as well. In this light, the regime’s use of fear indicates that the Kremlin is not sure whether the use of selective repressions is insufficient to prevent further protests and activism, or whether the use of fear has become too harsh, which actually motivates the opposition, and in particular its key agents, to act even more purposefully.

What is then the role of *ideas* in the Kremlin’s growing authoritarianism? The annexation of Crimea, the geopolitical adventurism in relation to Ukraine, and the overall anti-Western and anti-liberal stance all offer a picture of a regime in which opponents of the ‘conservative authoritarianism’ will be crushed. Nonetheless, to take ideas seriously, they should be reflected in the regime’s policy implementations as well, as was the case during Soviet times, or is in other ideological regimes. Marxist-Leninist policies were not solely policies in the party speeches, they were also actually implemented, yet they often had consequences completely opposite to those planned. In today’s Russia, it is the policy *implementation* that raises questions *vis-à-vis* numerous conservative and illiberal policy initiatives launched by the State Duma in recent years. A greater ideological control, plus anti-Western propaganda unparalleled since the Soviet Union, and neo-imperial visions of the empire’s return advocated even by some of the Kremlin’s top officials<sup>xvi</sup> in the state media, should limit conditions for such oppositional activism as was seen in 2017. As touched on above, the mobilization, organization, and communication needed for the oppositional activism before the eruption in 2017 indicate that the regulation of the internet by numerous administrative deterrents since 2012 had not been particularly effective. Nor we would see Moscow and other Russian cities conquered by such a number of international enterprises, facilities, and overall Western-global socio-cultural fabric that we actually see today, if all those ultra-conservative, paranoid, and anti-Western policy initiatives and ideas were fully implemented.

Putin's recent views with regard to disputes and the 'seeds' of protests in terms of the Kremlin's supposed conservative ideological preferences would seem to support its claim to focus persistently on the status-quo in the name of all-encompassing stability. For instance, in the annual 'Direct line with citizens' in 2017 Putin answered – seemingly reluctantly – a question of the emerged dispute and protests around the fate of Saint Isaac's Cathedral in Saint Petersburg. Putin pointed out that the cathedral was originally built for religious purposes, not as a museum, and explicitly condemned the Soviet era when the building served as the museum of atheism (Radio Svoboda 2017). This view alone is a clear signal against supposedly 'anti-religious' protesters who have defended the preservation of the cathedral's current museum status against plans of its removal to the auspices of the Russian Orthodox Church. However, Putin immediately continued that the museum status must be *preserved*, along with forthcoming religious rituals as well, and he denounced any attempts to politicize the issue. While the president's sympathies were no doubt on the 'conservative' side, such a position is in line with Putin's previous views. These pinpoint the idea of de-politicization: all the state's periods, from the pre-Soviet to the Soviet-era, both Stalinism and Stalin's condemnation, must be harnessed into the service of the state. These plans are not organized by any clear-cut ideological visions but by the 'wisdom' of technocratic expertise, which is suited to the maintenance of the authoritarian status-quo (Gel'man 2017). Part of this supposed wisdom has been the tradition of Russia's rulers to instrumentalize *existing* ideological currents within society, rather than proposing a strict ideological course for governance (Laruelle 2009; Brudny 1998).

Taking these views together and projected them into the political dynamics of Russia between 2011 and 2017, we can state that the opposition can exist in the role of the perceived minority located in the shadow of the supposed majority. From this position, it does not threaten the regime in political terms. The problem, however, emerges within the *temporality* of this perception. Whereas there is no systematic political control, the perception of the minority and its meaninglessness for the regime becomes irrevocably delayed because the minority might have become 'different' (larger, more determined, etc.). In Russia, this is especially true of the internet. When the threat becomes visible, for instance by sudden protests, or by a vanishing majority, the regime is somewhat late at the outset. What follows is reflection on whether more, or less, repressive measures are again needed.

Let us now provide a deeper conceptualization of Russia's state practices in relation to these points. In general, the characterization of Russia's political system has revolved around multiple concepts, from sovereign democracy to authoritarianism, and different descriptions of hybrid systems. Richard Sakwa suggests that it can be denominated as a dual system, the characterizing feature of which is a permanent tension between the *constitutional matrix* and *para-constitutional practices* of administration. He defines it as a 'peculiar hybrid' or 'dual state model' in which forces favouring normative-constitutional renewal compete with the bureaucratic regime that follows the pragmatic-technocratic rationality of the administrative system. Although liberal 'constitutionalism' has always existed to some extent in Russia, the dominant 'ideological school' has been based around the adherents of the ideas of Russia's exceptionalism, great power status, and distinct civilization. The significant leverage of partisans for liberal democracy and constitutionalism has so far been a temporary phenomena in Russia. Dmitry Medvedev's presidential term (2008-2012) has been perceived as the most recent example of this (Sakwa 2011). It was followed Vladimir Putin's third presidential term and a return to 'normality': that is, to the idea of Russia as a great power and strong state. This is also reflected in attitudes to Putin's presidency. Almost 70% of respondents in a survey have considered that it is beneficial to Russia if 'power is concentrated almost entirely in the hands of Vladimir Putin'. (Levada-Center 2015d).

The purpose is not to discuss whether the Russian regime is a democratic or authoritarian regime or what type of regime the people endorse more. In the past, the assumption has been that Russia's transformation has followed theories of democratization, which has led us to hold misleading expectations of the direction it would follow, and consequently, of the methods which Russia's

regime would use to consolidate its power. This *consolidation* is the common object of all types of regimes; all of them aim to increase the support and consent of their subjects, only the methods vary.

Besides the dual state model, Russia has commonly been defined as an “electoral authoritarian regime” (Diamond 2002: 22). In this chapter, however, it is not essential to precisely define Russia’s political system. We are interested in the methods that Russia’s regime uses to legitimize its position. Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Neil Munro remind us that democracy is not the only method used by regimes to gain subjects’ consent. They point out that an authoritarian regime is also able to consolidate its power if it “holds firmly to an undemocratic course and offers appropriate sticks and carrots to induce support, then subjects will learn to support what the new regime supplies” (Rose et al. 2011: 69). This is easy to apply to Russia’s case.

The perception of a “strong state” includes both symbolic and material supply by the regime on the one hand, and demands by the subjects on the other. This dynamism reproduces conflicting mass perceptions of the strong state, which elude strict definitions. Our claim is that the regime’s supply of a strong state has often been more *symbolic* than *material*, which is often reproduced by political demagoguery, and does not meet the predominant material (welfare state) demands of the population.

While not agreeing with the path dependency approach, it is easy to agree with the assumption that for historical reasons Russian identity is closely tied to an imperial (as opposed to ethnic) state identity, plus to the concept of the strong state. Therefore, the common perception of the state is a significant variable in understanding Russia’s development. The essential feature of Russian identity-building has been that it is based on the state’s priority over the citizens’ rights, which is usually justified by the above-mentioned reasons, and the argument about the underdevelopment of civil society.

In general, symbolic markers have a significant role in all societies. In Russia they are crucial in constructing the image of a strong state and strong leader which, in turn, is an essential part of state identity, reproducing citizens’ loyalty to power. In this respect, a common understanding of the state’s unique past reproduces the belief in Russia’s particularism and distinctiveness. This idea goes back to nineteenth-century discussions. In the Soviet Union, the political tendency that promoted Russian nationalism and statism complemented by the conviction of particularism was called *gosudarstvennichestvo* (statism). It also gained strength within the Soviet establishment of the 1960s and 1970s (Duncan 2000: 77).

However, Russia’s constantly top down-reproduced statism has also produced its counterforces. Russia as one of the birthplaces of the populism as we acknowledge it today – that is, empowering the common people against immoral elite – and it includes factors that host important connections to the prospects of the country’s political modernization. The People’s Party in the United States, another forefather of modern populism dating from the 1890s, consisted of members who identified themselves with a leftist agrarian idea against the ‘east-coast elites’ (Goodwyn 1978). However, Russian *narodniki*, generally comprising young urban intellectuals with revolutionary ideas, faced the permanent problem of convincing its own political resource, Russian peasants, of the importance of empowering them against the Tsarist autocracy. In other words, by their socio-economic and cultural background, the actual populists in Russia, in contrast to their American contemporaries, did not easily fit with ‘common Russians’ in the country’s prevailing rural backwardness.

It is long way from the *narodniki* and their idealized perception of the ‘Russian People’ to Putin-era Russia and his persistent support, particularly among Russians beyond the big cities. In any event, something similar might be found among the challenges of Russia’s opposition in trying to create a potential popular movement against the elite by empowering the common people, who are largely seen as apolitical. As was the case with the *narodniki*, the political conduct of the Russian opposition in general, which has been predominantly discussed and debated in urban circles, has been relatively



alien to those who struggle with multiple, mundane problems of a dysfunctional society. This distance has been maintained by endless intellectual debates on Russia's development, either on its unique spiritual path (Soviet and/or imperial), or one rapidly reforming her towards abstract European practices (nationalistic and/or liberal democratic).

In sociological terms, following Pierre Bourdieu's theory of fields, the political field is a historically institutionalized and hierarchized set of practices moving towards exclusive professionalism. While decisions made in this field affect everyone and might receive attention from numerous citizens, it is eventually accessible only for the few. This view makes sense as an important source of people's indifference towards politics in both democratic and electoral authoritarian regimes. As he writes:

(A)politicism, which sometimes takes the form of anti-parliamentarism and which can be channeled into various forms of Bonapartism, Boulangism and Gaullism, is fundamentally a protest against the monopoly of the politicians, and represents the political equivalent of what was in previous periods the religious revolt against the monopoly of the clerics (Bourdieu 1991, 175).

This certainly applies to Russia and the overall apoliticism of Russians. However, Bourdieu's reference to particular political regimes as consequences of apoliticism in the history of France are revealing since they all resulted in a larger access to power in the political field. In other words, in the history of Russia adequate access to power has not existed due to a more or less persistent capacity of Russian rulers – that is, the state under varying denominators (Tsar, party, or the president) – to co-opt or repress the access of alternative forces into the political field. Besides the gap between the rulers and the ruled that this legacy sustains, it has also impacted on the political conduct of those alternative forces, that is, the opposition. A case in point is one of the most durable, radical, and odd political movements in post-Soviet Russia, the *National-Bolshevik Party* (NBP), established and led by the late writer and Soviet-era dissident Eduard Limonov. Looking at NBP's carnivalistic and artistic protests, emphatic political incorrectness, and romanticized engagement with revolutionary totalitarianism over the course of almost 25 years, there are good grounds to argue that it has never seriously calibrated its political message for any realistic chance to get into power. Why is this the case? Answering in Bourdieu's terms, in Russia the literary artistic field has had an institutional autonomy, and therefore the power to view political and social issues from the standpoints of the rules of its own field (that is, the enormous historical and political impact of literature on Russian society). Conversely, the narrowness and closed nature of Russia's political field – the enduring legacy of the ideal of strong state – has allowed a relatively sustainable political movement into its margins. Without a realistic chance or even incentive to match its message to the rules of the political field – that is, towards a realistic competition between ideas in solving concrete social and political problems – NBP's marginal position nonetheless sustains symbolic struggles according to the rules of the literary artistic world.

Whereas NBP is certainly radical but marginal actor in Russia's terrain of political parties and movements, its overall ambition to be 'intellectual' and distinctive from the common people is anything but exceptional in Russia's larger political culture. Against the legacy of the strong state and its top-down Enlightenment ideals, weak civil society but highly personalized political-cultural conducts (person-centered parties and movements), it is not too far-fetched to say that political movements and parties in Russia are not guided by ideologies but by persons. In this respect, NBP is not a radical *exception* in Russia's post-Soviet political landscape, rather a radical *exemplification* of it and its endemic features: personalistic movements and eclectic political ideas. While a real challenge to any political regime, authoritarian or democratic, requires a popular (or populist) rupture – a combination of new and old societal demands in an accessible format for the masses – among

numerous political formations in Russia NBP is an *anti*-populist movement. NBS's revolutionary- and literary-oriented message is ultimately inflexible, and therefore unsuited to the more realistic practices in the field of politics.

Aleksey Naval'nyi, the front man of the new anti-Kremlin opposition that emerged along with 2011/12 protest rallies, has demonstrated that the populism has a serious empowering potential under the centralized yet ideologically-inconsistent authoritarian rule surrounded by multiple socio-economic challenges. Naval'nyi's scandal-revelatory tactics in opposing the elite's corruption in favour of the politically-indifferent population has been the most effective that has emerged from the real opposition under the Putin regime. At the same time it seems that the only way to challenge Putin politically in terms of ideas, that is, discursively, is the populism represented by Naval'nyi. It is also unsurprising that this challenge is channelled into a single individual, regardless of wider networks and a seemingly effective organization behind him. Charismatic leaders are endemic to populism, and to populism's negative stance towards existing political structures and ideational establishments. In this respect, Russia is an optimal environment for figures like Naval'nyi. Populism in the Russian case can be seen as a political facet of the society in which 'low levels of impersonal trust [in state institutions are] balanced [or compensated] by strong interpersonal trust' (Ledeneva 2013, 11). In other words, weak and practically non-established party ideologies are compensated by the trust in persons within politics. In general, Naval'nyi's discourse and opportunism work because he is *not* allowed to make decisions at any political level. His radical democratic views upholding the people's obvious will to decide on their own issues works as a demand as long as this right is violated. These demands are both important and necessary. Nevertheless, it remains an open issue how multilevel democracy will work when (or if) this right is guaranteed. Will the resources of the state be distributed more democratically than in the 1990s, and the reactive need for an authoritarian leader wane into a real political competition? Russia's ideational paradox is that consistent ideological alternatives are missing, and if there are any, they lack mobilization potential in terms of large-scale political inclusion. Consequently, populism as a logical alternative to the existing situation has not much to offer if power is achieved after a successful populist rupture, since populism hardly includes any consistent ideological alternative.

A revealing case of the limits of the Kremlin's statist use of populism (understood as a popular mobilization on the basis of consistent anti-elite imaginaries) as part of its political legitimation has been the so-called *Russian People's Front* (*Obsherossiiskiy narodnyi front*, ONF), established during the protests of 2011/12. Instead of providing any authoritarian populist alternative in galvanizing symbolic support for the regime, ONF has profiled itself as Putin's watchdog, whose activities have become surprisingly close to Naval'nyi's; the revelation of corruption by authorities, particularly in the regions. In terms of Russia's historical and political conditions of populism, the political identification of the Russian People's Front offers two explanations concerning populism's availability for use by Putin's regime. On the one hand, the instrumentalization of the opposition's anti-corruption activism and populist potential implies the regime's limited capacity to provide its own populist alternative. In other words, the regime does not see any other alternative while positioning itself within multiple societal problems than co-opting the opposition's alternative. That is, to admit ubiquitous social problems by simulating them in the way that supposedly secures Putin's position beyond the administration's difficulties in handling these problems. On the other hand, in cultural and historical terms, Russia as a post-imperial state does not have adequate 'others' in the creation of a populist negativity. This results as a constant tension of creating both political enemies and partners strengthened by the historical legacy of seeking stability at the cost of a people's mobilization (Baunov 2016). Such a mobilization might yield some dynamic and positive effects for rulers, yet the mobilization of the people might ultimately carry detrimental results.

#### 5.4.5. Chechnya' Role in the Future of Russia

*Susanna Hast*

In March 2017 the Russian journal *Novaya Gazeta* released news about an anti-gay campaign in Chechnya, claiming that over 100 men accused of homosexuality have been detained and three killed. The response from the Chechen authorities was to claim that there has been no such campaign because there are no gay people in Chechnya, and if they were, their *families*, not law enforcement, would implement the punishment (Walker 2017). Sexuality is a taboo subject in Chechnya, and the shame around what are deemed improper relations, be they gay or not, makes LGTB rights hard to pursue in any form in Chechnya, even simply collecting information is difficult.

The poor state of LGTB rights in Russia is not unknown, and even less a novelty is the imprisonment and torture of individuals (for various reasons) in post-war Chechnya. What is surprising though is the lack of attention Chechen politics receives in terms of research and media exposure. The French journalist Anne Nivat (2001), who covered Chechnya during the second war of 1999-2009, reminds us that we need to research a territory in which nothing dramatic seems to be happening, if we want to analyse a conflict when it arises. There are presently seeds of conflict in Chechnya, planted deep into the soil, affecting the entire Russian future.

War is a human tragedy, an environmental catastrophe, but also a material disaster. According to Amjad Jaimoukha (2005, 77), economists estimated that the second Chechen war cost as much as 30% of Russian budget at the time. He continues:

In the opinion of many analysts, the Chechen war has done serious damage to the process of liberalization and democratization in Russia. The absence of open condemnation of Russian policy in Chechnya by the world community has strengthened the hands of hard liners and muffled the voices of the moderates and the independent media. The peaceful resolution of the Chechen issue and subsequent support for a Chechen state would impel Russia a long way towards joining the civilized world (ibid.).

Jaimoukha wrote *The Handbook on Chechnya* in 2005, and it would take another 5 years for Russia to stop the anti-terror operation in Chechnya. But unfortunately we did not see Russia having to answer for the almost genocidal policies implemented in Chechnya, and with the war in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, the hard-liners are standing firm.

#### Collective trauma

One reason why I say that seeds of conflict are planted deep, is the lack of concern for collective trauma in Chechnya. The grave human rights violations during the two wars in Chechnya (1994-1996 and 1999-2009) did not appear out of nowhere. Cruelty against Chechen civilians was produced through an affective economy in which Chechens were regarded as non-human (nor were Chechen rebels innocent of grave violations). The trauma after terrorising civilians for years – abductions, disappearances, killings, torture, rape, looting, hunger, injuries, and the list goes on – is almost unimaginable. The traumatized are not only Chechens. Trauma also concerns the Russian soldiers who return home from the war. No that the war ended when Russian troops left. The so called “Chechenization” of the conflict created more enmities, and President Akhmad Kadyrov’s *kadyrovtsy* paramilitaries, supported by Russia, took over fighting the insurgency. A Human Rights Watch report (2006) reveals systematic torture during the years 2004-2006 in Chechnya, conducted by paramilitary under the leadership of Ramzan Kadyrov, the son of the former president. Yet, the collective trauma

extends even beyond that, to Russia, and even to the international community. Justifying violence and terror in Chechnya under the pretext of an anti-terrorist operation is symptomatic of the state of both the political institutions and of society in Russia, and symptomatic of the cycle of affects that lead to ignorance of, or acceptance of, cruelties against a population. Hannah Arendt (1970, 53) writes, 'To substitute violence for power can bring victory, but the price is very high; for it is not only paid by the vanquished, it is also paid by the victor in terms of its power'. There is an emotional price to be paid by all of us.

The private experiences of individual emotions relate to collective emotions. As Bleiker and Hutchison (2008, 387) write, 'We believe there is evidence to suggest that an active engagement with emotions can actually be a source of political imagination, inspiration and hope.' A politics of grief would then involve questioning pre-conceived ideas about how individuals and societies can best deal with past violence (Bleiker and Hutchinson 2015, 211). They hope that by addressing collective emotions, it would be possible to cultivate empathy and compassion (ibid.).

*Not* dealing with trauma is a potential source of further violence. Speckhard and Akhmedova (2006, 66) who studied the cases of female Chechen terrorists dating from 2000, conclude that the women involved in terrorist activity did not suffer from personality disorder but rather traumatization, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, and dissociative phenomena. They had lost family members in bombings, landmines, and 'cleansing' or had witnessed battle and violence (ibid., 67). Many turned to Wahhabism (which was imported to Chechnya around the first war) only after their traumatization, connecting traditional Chechen blood revenge to jihadism (ibid., 77). Both perpetrators and targets of violence can have a similar background of exposure to extreme violence and trauma. This is the breeding ground for cycles of violence, which can originate in childhood. The Chechen surgeon Khassan Baiev (2003, 2) explains how war is an ever-present legacy in Chechnya, 'Even today, mothers rock little ones to sleep with lullabies urging them to be brave warriors'. Young Chechen males are trained in physical strength and fighting skills (ibid.).

Chechen identity feeds on memories of past wars and injustice. These memories are constitutive of feelings of belonging, and when remembered they can shape the future. The year 1944, an important memory for Chechnya, has been silenced in Kadyrov's Chechnya. I am told this by Ali (not real name) who I interviewed for my research on the Chechen Wars (Hast 2017). He tells me that in Chechnya people are not allowed to talk about the deportations of 1944 anymore. It is as if erased from history, and moreover, Kadyrov has forbidden the Day of Mourning (23 February) and introduced a new national holiday, which is on the day his father died, 8 May, a Day of Solidarity – thus disgracing history (Ali). This is rewriting history for the construction of a new national identity.

The deportations are but one source of collective trauma in Chechnya. The two recent wars need to be dealt with, publicly and openly. We have no indication of any such development taking place in Russia. The Russian government has denied atrocities such as abductions and torture, and families affected have had very little possibility to seek redress via the domestic judicial system (Van der Vet 2013). They have had to file applications to the European Court of Human Rights with the help of NGOs (ibid.). As stated by Amnesty International (2009), when Russia announced the end of its counter-terrorism operation in Chechnya, 'normalization is not possible without full accountability for the gross human rights violations of the last 10 years'. To commemorate and remember is important, as is the acknowledgement by the state officials of the human rights abuses. There is no such affective climate or political space in Chechnya or Russia generally, in which emotions and trauma could be collectively engaged with. There is no space in which collective fear could give way to healing.

## Post-war never posted

In 2007 Ramzan Kadyrov became the president after the death of his father. Kadyrov has Putin's support even today, and Chechnya has received significant financial support from Moscow for rebuilding. The majority religion in Chechnya is Islam with two branches; canonical Sunni represented by the Shafii legal school, and Sufism. President Ramzan Kadyrov has been promoting a peculiar mixture of the two as part of a new Chechen identity. Journalist Anna-Lena Laurén has explained how Kadyrov became an authoritarian leader whose propaganda is visible everywhere (Laurén 2009, 29-31). Kadyrov has his own private militia called *Kadyrovtsy*, which is inherited from his father's security force.

After the war, a phenomenon known as the 'Zone' came into being. Kvedaravicius coined this phrase to refer to the zone of counter-terrorism, which was in place until 2009. Violence was 'lingering heavily on the spectacle of reconstructed cities and the subsidized economy' (Kvedaravicius 2012, 15). This was carried out by the same methods as in war time: aerial bombardment, the wiping out of villages, killing civilians, creating concentration camps and torture chambers (ibid., 19). Violence also created financial opportunities: kidnappings for ransom, bribes at checkpoints, illegal oil and weapon trading and so forth. By 2006, Kvedaravicius writes, the operation involved over 45,000 federal troops, thousands of law enforcement and security service agents, as well as thousands of Chechen soldiers and law enforcement agents (ibid., 20). Enforced disappearances became a widespread and systematic, constituting crime against humanity as thousands have disappeared, most of them young men, since 1999 (Human Rights Watch 2000, Gilligan 2010, 3).

Pro-Moscow Chechen forces gradually took over the task of abductions from the federal troops (Gilligan 2010, 3). Some people have even chosen not to report the disappearance fearing further persecution (ibid., 4). The Russian human rights organization *Memorial* kept a database of the disappeared and had an office in Chechnya until July 2009, which was when Natalia Estemirova was abducted and killed. Disappearances and killings continue to date, targeting, among others, sexual minorities (for example, Hille 2015; Walker 2017). Yulia Gorbunova (2017), from the Human Rights Watch, writes how asylum seekers from the North Caucasus, especially Chechnya, have arrived at the Belarus-Polish border hoping to cross to safety. In the summer of 2016 some 400-800, mostly from Chechnya, tried to cross the border from Brest to Terespol. They are escaping the violence of the Kadyrov regime, fearing for their lives. This flow continues to other countries as well.

Kvedaravicius explains how, through the abductions, terrorists were simultaneously being produced and destroyed: people change sides when security and financial interests are at stake. Different agents, groups, and institutions are in abundance. 'Thus, military battalions, combat units and institutions with strange acronyms, and special groups, police stations, prosecutors' offices, and courthouses [...] were now vying and collaborating in the production of terrorists while other, complex, post-war entanglements were weighing upon them' (Kvedaravicius 2012, 14). Kvedaravicius shows how there is no post-war situation in Chechnya because *war* and *peace* are not dichotomies that can explain Chechnya's situation (ibid., 28). This is the legacy of conflict that Chechnya – and Russia as a whole – has inherited.

## Living with fear

We should be extremely concerned about the politics of fear implemented by Kadyrov's regime in present day Chechnya. How long will President Putin invest in Chechnya and support a leader who violently governs and imposes an intolerant strain of Islam on the territory?

Curious about the everyday experience of Chechens, I met Ali and Said, both residing in Europe, who referred to the current political climate in Chechnya as almost worse than during war with federal Russia, because now they have been betrayed from the inside. 'We have been free inside, but now we are not', and so, people are leaving Chechnya. 'We are attached to our land, our hearts are always there' the two men say. 'People do return, but they have forgotten how bad it is', Ali continues. The documentarist Monan Loizeua, in an interview from her film on post-war Chechnya, says that the enemy used to be only federal Russia, now people are afraid of being betrayed by their own family in the face of Kadyrov's terror (Tchernookova 2015). She says that solidarity no longer exists (ibid.). Trust is not easily earned, and in a terrorized community with corrupt structures, it is no wonder.

Ali laughed when I ask about Kadyrov's announcement that he would step down in 2016. 'He is not going anywhere, he is a showman.' Ali thinks that when he is gone, there will be another Russian puppet in charge. 'Chechen's do not like him', Ali says, 'he betrayed us'. He mentions the Chechenization of the second war, a form of politics that made Chechens turn against each other. There is no criticism allowed within Chechnya. Ali talks about the lack of freedom of religion; bearded men are considered Wahhabi. Kadyrov has imposed a regulation to enforce the headscarf for women in public spaces as part of his Islamization policy. The beard as a bodily sign of suspicion is the legacy of Chechenization and the anti-terrorist campaign of the second war. This is how war continues as a lived, bodily experience.

I ask if Ali and Said would like to return home. No, they answer, because there is no normal life anymore. 'You are either with him or against him (Kadyrov)', so there is no returning for those who oppose to his policies. Retribution would be fierce. It is an anti-terror law, the men tell me, and Ali continues, 'Everyone is so tired after the wars'.

But at least Chechnya has been rebuilt after the wars, or has it? My two interviewees tell me the rebuilt side of Grozny is just a façade. It is a postcard shown to the outside world, attesting to the safety of Chechnya. I ask the men what happens after Kadyrov, and they say, "There will probably be another dictator and life will continue as bad as now". To criticize Kadyrov in Chechnya is impossible, and the punishment for such criticism will fall upon the family, the relatives, the *teip* (clan), which makes people silent. But these men also take a risk by criticizing the regime, even from afar; their families are still there.

It is hard to imagine that peace, democracy, economic and social justice would suddenly begin to thrive in Chechnya; and as long as it does not, it cannot in Russia either. There is silence for now, but the situation can change. Political upheaval is not unheard of in Chechnya, and history teaches us that the internal political rivalries in Chechnya are not irrelevant to the possibility of conflict with federal Russia.

#### 5.4.6 The Conservative turn and nature – Climate denialism and 'hydrocarbon culture' in Russia<sup>xvii</sup> *Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen*

Putin's Russia is highly dependent on fossil fuels and other non-renewable natural resources. This dependence has been discussed previously in the realm of politics and the economy (e.g., Sutela, 2012), but the main argument in this chapter is that this dependence is of a more profound nature, encompassing the spheres of culture and identity, as well. The research question I pose here is: how does the conservative turn experienced in Russian politics and society, and the underlying economic realities of the Putin regime, affect the way that nature and environmental issues are framed in the Russian domestic debate? By debate, I mean the discourses that are constructed, maintained, and renewed in Russia's domestic context, thus concerning and targeting the Russian populace. This is an important delimitation, as in the international arena, Russia's communication, for example, concerning climate change, the Arctic, and energy trade and cooperation, is very different from the domestic one (see, e.g., Gritsenko and Tynkkynen, 2018). This chapter is based on four articles published previously on climate policies and discourse (Tynkkynen and Tynkkynen, 2018; Skryzhevskaya et al., 2015) and on the energy/power nexus (Tynkkynen, 2016a; 2016b) in Russia.

##### The conservative turn under Putin

Vladimir Putin was re-elected to the position of President of the Russian Federation in 2012. Many recent studies support the observation that his re-election marked a further expansion of autocratic elements in Russia's political system (e.g., Gel'man, 2015; Ross, 2015). President Putin's more authoritarian stance since his re-election in 2012, assured already in autumn 2011, is visible both in domestic and foreign policy issues alike. Limiting freedom of expression, limiting gay rights, forcing foreign funded institutions to register as foreign agents, acting as a decisive military force in the Syrian civil war, starting the war in Ukraine and subsequently disagreeing with the European Union, and arresting Greenpeace activists in the Arctic, all indicate the emphasis on sovereignty rather than international cooperation (cf. Palosaari and Tynkkynen, 2015).

Despite the seemingly drastic changes in Russia's domestic and foreign policy brought about by Putin's third term, I argue that there are continuities in the Russian political culture that frame major societal challenges facing Russian regimes. As Kivinen (2002) notes, political decision-making regarding the modernization agenda of basically all Soviet as well as Russian leaders has allegedly been based on the 'sacred' objectives of science, promoting progress and modernization, plus producing economic growth and well-being via expanding industrial production. This consecration has unintended results that are turned into the 'negative sacred' that cannot be addressed in the political and public arenas (ibid: 215-222). The 'negative sacred', especially three such taboos – the demonization of reality, chaos, and consumption – seem pivotal also when trying to understand Russia's stance in global climate politics. The strengthened authoritarian stance presumably indicates that the 'negative sacred' has also strengthened in recent years – there is less effort to justify political decisions for the wider audience, both at home and abroad (see, e.g., Pomerantsev, 2014; Gel'man, 2016b).

Accordingly, Putin's return has not as such contested the policy objectives of modernization and efficiency that were set during Medvedev's presidency. However, the justifications for these

measures have changed and weakened. During Medvedev, energy efficiency and modernization were justified not only by economic, but also by foreign policy and image gains (Henry and McIntosh Sundstrom, 2012; Korppoo et al., 2015). Since Putin's re-election, the rhetorical need to please foreign audiences has decreased significantly, and the motivation behind modernization has now a more economic bias, in addition to harsh geopolitical considerations (see Gel'man and Appel, 2015). These developments, according to our analysis, also explain the changed tone on climate change and strengthening link between fossil energy and Russian identity.

Studies such as that of Gustafson (2012) hint that Putin's agenda rests not on diversification of the Russian economy, but on granting the hydrocarbon sector an even greater role in paving the way for Russia's future success. The Russian economy and society are firmly tied to, and dependent on, the extraction, transport, refining, consumption, and export of fossil energy. Fossil energy is central to Russia's economy, as more than half of Russia's budget revenue and 70% (in 2014, 54% in 2000) of export is covered by oil, gas, and coal; the oil and gas industry alone accounts for a fifth of national GDP (Federal State Statistics Service (2015). Moreover, the interests behind Russia's national gas programme, run by the parastatal gas giant Gazprom, are at odds with regional interests aiming at energy self-sufficiency via regional renewable sources. In short, Putin's changes in political emphasis have given impetus to the strengthening of Russia's 'hydrocarbon superpower' status (Bouzarovski and Bassin, 2011). An energy superpower is a country that is able to influence political choices of other countries via energy exports, by producing dependencies through energy infrastructures (coercive) and economic benefits produced by the energy trade (alluring). Discussion on whether Russia is an energy superpower culminates in the question of how Russia has used energy as a foreign policy tool vis-à-vis its neighbours and the EU, the main customer of Russian energy. Thus, energy wealth and power has been 'productized' into an identity-construction tool, and President Putin can be seen as the person responsible for bringing energy assets back to the state and the people from the hands of the oligarchs (e.g., Grib, 2009). Yet, recent studies (e.g., Rutland, 2015; see also Levada Center, 2014) indicate that elites and the public are not particularly attracted, or, more precisely, have an inconsistent and even contradictory attitude, to the idea that hydrocarbons form the fundamental basis of Russia's superpower status or national identity. The elite is aware of the economic problems related to hydrocarbon dependence, and to the narrow base of Russia's economy. The people, again, see that due to this dependence – exporting raw materials, importing goods – Russia is easily seen as a *developing* nation, which does not sit well with the great power frame in the heart of Russian (national) identity. However, at the same time, the majority of Russians, according to Rutland (2015), see the country as an energy *superpower* – thus, the weakness of a one-sided economy is turned into a strength. Therefore, in case Putin's entourage wants to strengthen Russia's superpower status based on hydrocarbons, the above-mentioned identity-construction tool leaning on energy and power needs to be used even more aggressively.

Meanwhile, global hydrocarbon markets have changed significantly during the last couple of years. This change is clear in the gas market, as the 'shale gas revolution' that started initially in the US is reformulating the global gas trade. Production of shale oil is also growing. This has had a negative impact on the traded volumes of Russian hydrocarbons, and also on future export prospects (Sharples, 2013). The new energy market situation has been (slowly) internalized by Russian leaders and major energy companies during 2011/12. Dwindling energy export prospects in Europe, coupled with anti-monopoly measures by the EU Commission and price cuts demanded for Russian pipeline gas (Riley, 2012), have perhaps motivated the Russian political elite to look for greater export prospects elsewhere, especially in North and Southeast Asia (Bradshaw, 2013), instead of relying on European energy partners, which are institutionally incompatible, and demand ethical standards from energy



producers. Though these ethical standards, for example, concerning environmental effects of energy production, have not been high on the agenda in the EU's energy policy vis-à-vis Russia. In 2000-04, the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue had an explicit environmental component to curtail pollution related to oil and gas extraction and transport, but the ecological aims were pushed aside and an economy-driven agenda prevailed from 2004 onwards (European Commission, 2011: 16-19), at the same time as the price of oil and gas increased, and Russia's economy boomed. Thus, I argue that during Putin's third term, the need to pay court to international environmental objectives has diminished due to domestic and international factors, and Russia's image as a responsible energy producer is of less concern than before. This would leave room for the temptation of downplaying the climate policy objectives and promoting identities leaning on hydrocarbons and fossil energy. More, these two approaches – climate denial and 'hydrocarbon culture' – are but two sides of the same coin: in a nation that sees itself intertwined with the semiotics, materialities, and wealth-creation of fossil energy (e.g., Kalinin, 2014; Tynkkynen, 2016a), the impetus to act in the forefront of climate politics is a very unlikely choice. In addition, the heightened confrontation between Russia and the West, especially after the outbreak of the wars in Ukraine and Syria, including economic sanctions that target the energy sector, shows the Russian need to distinguish itself in all possible ways from the Western-backed agendas. Naturally, the drastic changes in US climate and environmental policies during the Trump administration blurs the East-West dichotomy on this issue. Trump's US has moved closer to, while China, previously defining itself as a developing nation with limited climate responsibilities, distanced its climate-policy position from, the 'free-rider' Russia. Our research material was, however, collected before 2016. Moreover, as climate change is elementarily linked to the economic base of contemporary Russia and the political power of the ruling regime, i.e., fossil energy, it is no surprise that there is an attraction in this geopolitical situation to define the issue via sovereignty and national identity.

How is climate denial constructed in Russia?

The internationally prominent community of Russian climate scientists have adopted the international orthodoxy, and dismissed the idea that the Russian context could impact their views on climate science, as showed by Wilson Rowe (2012, 712). However, based on our more contemporary study of Russian media (see Tynkkynen and Tynkkynen, 2018), we unfolded three categories of climate change denial – namely conspiracy theories, cherry-picking arguments that fit the denialist narrative, and utilization of outright logical fallacies – that specifically underline the Russian context in terms of political and economic conditions. Thus, Russia's climate change discourse appears nationally-specific, especially with regard to denial. It draws on a Russian self-image shaped by geography and resources, Russia's place in the world, and the prevalence and change of historical cultural categories.

The extreme version of the denial discourse promotes the messianic idea that Russia has a special role to play in the global climate system and world history; according to this discourse of climate denial, indicative both of the cherry-picking and logical fallacies categories, Russia needs to 'save the world' from global cooling by emitting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Here, the cooling hypothesis also links to Soviet climate science, and thus to the national context, but also to the widely uttered fear of the 1970s academic discourse that we are heading towards a new 'Ice Age'. The milder version underlines that Russia is actually behaving responsibly when it opposes the Western-led green industry conspiracy and declines to compromise global economic growth and, in particular, developing nations' right to modernization, in the name of climate policy.

A juxtaposition of Russian and international interests regarding climate change is constantly present in our research material on the Russian media. International climate policy seems increasingly to be seen as a Western-led hegemonic project aiming to bypass or overrule the sovereignty of Russia. This juxtaposition is also supported by conspiracy-inclined arguments. As our analysis indicates, the denial discourse sows distrust in international climate science and emphasizes the positionality and contextual nature of scientific knowledge, in particular by claiming that the West is trying to monopolize climate science, and that global climate governance is a Western strategy to weaken Russia economically and politically. Parallel arguments, yet with slightly different content, were already uttered in the Russian media in the early 2000s (see, e.g., Korppoo et al. 2015, 28–29), but it seems that changes in the domestic and foreign political contexts have created even more room for them (cf. Laruelle, 2012).

When compared to the Russian climate change discourse during the 2000s (see Wilson Rowe, 2009, 2012; Tynkkynen, 2010), a change can be identified: pessimistic accounts of climate change have gained dominance over the arguments supporting mainstream climate science. Extreme denialists may be no less influential in Russian climate science than before the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol (cf. Laruelle, 2012), but as our analysis shows, they seem to have more opportunities to reach the public via the media compared to scientists and journalists clinging to the ‘mainstream’ understanding. The changes experienced recently in Russia’s position as hydrocarbon producer and exporter and Russia’s foreign and domestic political situation does not encourage the political leadership to oppose climate denial voices, yet alone oppose such forces openly.

### Why climate denial?

The temporal overlap of the change in climate change discourse and Putin’s return indicates that the new discourse obviously serves the domestic–political needs of the regime. It might be too far-fetched to argue that the impetus for this qualitative change came after the 2010 drought and fires that devastated Russia, and turned many Russian heads concerning climate change. There was thus a need to reduce the threat posed by protestors of the regime, especially as we have not seen much public criticism of climate change politics. Yet, the need to downplay criticism toward a regime that has not engaged in climate change mitigation and adaptation is perhaps not fully detached from the fear caused by the protests against Putin’s third term in major Russian cities in 2011 and 2012.

On top, and as part of, the sovereignty argument and direct political interests of Putin’s regime, we argue that Russia’s material/spatial context, permeating to the cultural and political spheres, explains at least some of the arguments behind climate denial in Russia. No doubt, one motive for Russian political and energy actors to oppose mainstream international understanding of climate change, or at least to cast severe doubts on whether climate change is human-induced, could draw from both the specific interests of the energy sector in maintaining the status quo in domestic energy policy, as well as the general interests of Putin’s regime in reducing the likelihood of criticism by the Russian people of the hydrocarbon-based political and economic system.

On a theoretical level, this denialist strategy leans on a Russian cultural code that enables the use of ‘the negative sacral’, that is, societal taboos for the benefit of those in power (cf. Kivinen, 2002). In the context of climate denial, three above-mentioned negative sacreds are of particular interest: demonization of reality, chaos, and consumption. Our analysis indicates that we often see the demonization of reality constructed especially through the cultivation of conspiracy theories, instead

of leaning on scientific facts, exemplified in arguments like ‘a widely known factor is the interest of (Western) financial giants to engage in trade with greenhouse gas-emissions quotas’ (Pavlenko, 2011, 103). Frequently, more fossil fuel exploitation is offered as a cure both for Russia and the developing world, rather than arguing for the decreased extraction (e.g., Channel One, 2009; REN-TV, 2013). This concurs with Jacques’ (2012) general theory of denial: the primary cause for it is because it is threatening for those wishing to maintain power and their accustomed way of life.

Accordingly, the potential and realized chaos caused by climate change is difficult to admit and discuss in the public arena, as a *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* (2012) claims: ‘According to scientists, humans, alas, cannot do anything to avoid such nightmarish forecasts from taking place’. Moreover, the development of production, that is, industrial capacity and an increase in consumption, is viewed as a linear process producing well-being and reducing poverty, as stated on the TV talk show Gordon Kihot (Channel One, 2009): ‘. . . all possible steps aimed at changing the (global) economy for the benefit of others are taken. . . simultaneously worsening others’ possibilities. (This is) based on an academic dispute, nothing more’. This sacral objective is turned into a ‘negative sacred’, hiding the fact that the extractive nature of the Russian economy ultimately leads to the consumption of the future wealth of the nation through resource depletion and climate change.

Of course, discussions in the state-controlled media do not reflect the attitudes of Russian people, nor do they necessarily predict the moves that Putin’s Russia will make within the framework of international climate negotiations (e.g., Korppoo et al., 2015, 44, 47; cf. Smyth and Oates, 2015, 302). Yet, the less the Russian populace is aware of the problems caused by climate change, and especially the less it is alarmed by it, the longer those in power can continue to solidify their power by accumulating wealth through extraction and export of fossil energy and ignoring the threats caused by climate change. Promoting ideas of ‘undecided climate science’, ‘nonrational climate agreements’ or ‘risk-free climate impacts for Russia’ fits well with the interest of the energy industry and Putin’s regime to ensure that there is no strong opposition from the grass-root level toward the ‘free rider’ role of Russia in international climate change mitigation commitments.

For the future of Russia’s climate policy, all this has major implications. The need for rapid climate change mitigation may arouse more rejection and denial than willingness to change. Because of the ‘negative sacred’, the potential and realized chaos potentially caused by climate change cannot be discussed. More to the point, as the international climate effort is often seen as a conspiracy to make profit or limit Russia’s sovereignty, the Great Power aspect of national identity makes it difficult to accept the need for mitigation policies and emission cuts. Fossil energy is seen as a ticket to the class of global Great Powers; it seems that this ‘sacred’ cannot be questioned any time soon.

Furthermore, referring to the literature on identity-construction based on the materialities of energy in Russia (e.g., Bassin, 2006; Grib, 2009; Bouzarovski and Bassin, 2011; Rogers, 2012; see also Rutland, 2015), we find that climate denial discourse in Russia could be strategically used to strengthen the national identity constructed on the notion of ‘hydrocarbon giant’ or ‘energy superpower’. The international understanding of the problem, and especially its internationally agreed solution including diversification of energy sources away from fossil fuels, are thus pictured in the media as existential threats to Russian national identity. We now examine this ‘hydrocarbon culture’ in-the-making.

How is 'hydrocarbon culture' constructed in Russia?

Scholars interested in the intertwinement of energy, power, and culture in Russia, such as Ilya Kalinin (2014), Douglas Rogers (2012, 2015) and Peter Rutland (2015), have inspired others to engage in similar research with versatile empirical approaches. Our analysis of state-owned gas company Gazprom's advertisements aired on national TV and the web during the early 2010s reveals (see Tynkkynen, 2016a) that the governmental rationality and action, i.e., practiced governmentality by, and via, Gazprom's *Gazifikatsiia Rossii* programme derives its power from geographical knowledge and Soviet and post-Soviet imaginaries, plus from the ability to do 'good' and 'bad'. In this endeavour, the materialities of gas and gas infrastructures are used for both purposes. This produced governmentality is invested with meaning by the existent materialities of hydrocarbons; the pipelines, for example, embody energy security and connectedness to the nation and its resource geography. The physical profoundly affects the social. Notions of Russia as a territorial superpower and energy superpower are based on the centrality of this materiality. At the same time, this construction lumps together the material-specific and nationalistic imagination of energy with universal (neo-liberal) binding goals, such as economic growth and modernization, but also with particular Russian values, including conservative gender roles. This 'gendered gas' is also visible in the way women are viewed. They are controlled and fall under the patronage of men, the company and the state, but have some power in their role as healers, consumers, and producers of new generations of Russians. These gendered roles date partly from Soviet practices and culture, but they also clearly go hand in hand with the contemporary conservative turn in Russian society and politics. It is no surprise that parastatal Gazprom and the gas industry are viewed as guarantors of this Russian mix of neo-conservative and traditional, patriarchal values. Clearly, gas is a strongly gendered substance and helps to build and maintain a specific form of geographically-inspired governmentality.

Moreover, the materialities of gas thus feed into the national identity of Russians as citizens of an energy superpower. This power – projected via international gas pipelines and a military vocabulary – also defines harm in the domestic arena; gas energy, infrastructure, and the gas industry are defined and viewed in a manner that underscores the submissive role of individuals and communities. Good Russians 'invite' gas into their community; bad ones leave their community out in the cold by relying on 'non-modern' sources of energy, such as bioenergy.

The production of truths, identity, and power in this geography-inspired governmentality includes institutional, physical, and administrative mechanisms and knowledge structures. Several discourses, with roots in both the Soviet and post-Soviet nationalistic modernization ethos, are combined with the spatial and material characteristics of the gas industry to form a compelling narrative where institutional and administrative mechanisms – the *Gazifikatsiia* programme of a parastatal energy company – provide the frame. Furthermore, specific ways of thinking, the understanding of reality, the construction of certain subjectivities and refutation of others, and government-specific strategic technologies of rule and the values are all visible in the effort to build a specific 'hydrocarbon culture' (comp. Legg, 2005). Moreover, the rationalities and practices of *Gazifikatsiia* governmentality function in, and combine, several scales; the subject is tied to territories and the nation through gas, individuals are made responsible for the (bio) security of the population, and even the global is harnessed in legitimizing the heavy reliance on gas. Gazprom's *Gazifikatsiia Rossii* advertisement video shows how the leadership of the company wants gas as a substance and source of energy, and wants the gas industry and the *Gazifikatsiia* programme to be seen by the Russian people.

## Why 'hydrocarbon culture'?

The argument presented here is as follows; the way Gazprom attaches meanings to its tasks as a Russian energy company, and the mentality that can be gauged by looking at words and deeds of *Gazifikatsiia Rossii* is partly shared by the leadership of the country. Thus, it reflects the efforts of the regime to construct a specific 'hydrocarbon culture'. The overt aim of the video and the governmental thinking behind it is to show how many positive things gas can provide for Russians, but there are subtle hints in the advertisement that gas has the ability to do harm as well. Parastatal Gazprom is there also to control communities and to normalize certain type of identities that reflect the needs of the political elite and those of a nationalistic, aggressive state. As with the climate denial narrative, the construction and maintenance of a hydrocarbon culture narrative suits the needs of the Putin regime, economically and politically highly-dependent on oil and gas. The governmental mentality, and governmentality visible in Gazprom's advertisements reflects many conservative objectives of the state and the regime, but by far the most important of them is a conservative economic policy relying on extraction of natural resources and fossil energy.

The hydrocarbon culture thus can be seen as a tool to prevent popular criticism of economic policies that resemble those of developing states, and the chosen economic system that relies more and more on the hydrocarbon sector where Russia's role in the global trade is merely a raw material provider, an 'energy-producing appendage' of the West. As Peter Rutland (2015) argues, despite the fact that a majority of Russians consider their country an energy superpower, most simultaneously oppose the wealth enjoyed by the elite and created by the energy trade, even as many Russians live in factual energy poverty. Therefore, one motive to produce advertisement videos like this one on *Gazifikatsiia Rossii* is the need to change this impression and fortify the position of Putin's regime.

This energy culture in-the-making fortifies not only economic and industrial policies, prohibiting them to modernize, but also advocates authoritarian, non-democratic rule and the regime's Great Power ambitions. This is seen in the case study we conducted in Russian Karelia (Tynkkynen, 2016b), where *Gazifikatsiia* was strongly promoted with the help of social infrastructure construction, such as sports halls. Here, discursive (with words) and coercive (with infrastructural objects) governmentality came together in the practices of both Gazprom and the Russian state. The amalgamation of energy and sports has enabled the state to practice discursive and coercive power cunningly, as the 'presence' of the state is made visible through both gas pipelines and spatially-extensive sport facilities. Gazprom's all-Russian gas programme and its practices on the local level, as in the Karelia case study, may be a form of corporate white-washing, but they also advance the Great Power ambitions of Putin's regime in the name of social 'responsibility'. Ultimately, however, Gazprom's sports-oriented social programme aimed to achieve the responsabilization of individuals – as physically, mentally, and ideologically fit workers and soldiers – to take care of both the well-being of the self and of the nation, along with its economy and military might. Its unique form of corporate governmentality can thus be defined as a marriage between the energy superpower ideal and military Great Power identity, constructed in this case with the help of sports metaphors, values, and infrastructures. Thus, sport was utilized to steer energy policies on the local and regional level; here the gas programme pushed local bioenergy and energy self-sufficiency goals off the regional agenda. The compelling nationalist narratives seen in the triangle uniting Russian sports, energy, and Great Power status are thus just as important as the mundane energy security objectives, which persuaded Karelian leadership and communities to join *Gazifikatsiia Rossii*.

## Conclusions: the nature of a fossil giant

The Russian hydrocarbon superpower and hydrocarbon culture constructs take a completely different approach to what energy means culturally, socially, and economically than that to which Western observers are accustomed. The fact that European consumers have become alienated from fossil energy – how their mundane gas and gasoline are produced, where it comes from, with what social and environmental consequences, and how it actually keeps our mobile societies and democracies running – can be seen as a troubling issue. Therefore, the Russian way of constructing an energy culture can also be seen as a more rational way of thinking about society's and the individual's energy dependence than the prevailing Western way. Thus, energy-culture construction efforts such as the *Gazifikatsiia Rossii* promotional video can serve as a sobering reminder for Western societies of what keeps, in the end, our societies and economies running (comp. Mitchell, 2011). Moreover, and contrary to the Western understanding, the Russian people may choose to join the gas infrastructure and voluntarily remain under the patronage of a national monopoly and the federal centre. This positive understanding of patronage certainly has its roots in Soviet history (e.g., Collier, 2011). According to this view, practiced *Gazifikatsiia* governmentality merely mirrors some of the needs of the Russian population.

However, as this 'realist' approach to the issue of how energy and natural resources are intertwined in the social fabric of the society *might* have its positive sides, the implications of the practices we have observed in contemporary Russia do give room for more worrying thoughts. Firstly, the amalgamation of the needs and rationalities of the fossil energy sector and the domestic and foreign policy interests of the current regime do give grounds to argue that via fossil energy, energy infrastructures, and the versatile 'epiphytes' attached to it, the state has been able to construct and maintain black and white, nationalistic identities. These normalizing identities enable the curtailing of possibilities to modernize Russia's economy, suppress domestic political opposition, and build an illusion that *everyone* is against Russia on the international arena. Secondly, the emerging energy culture of a fossil giant is trying to monopolize and distort the environmental agenda, transforming it in practice into a social taboo. From regional-level examples, where state energy giants are prohibiting more sustainable energy and environmental policies from developing, to nation-wide propagation of climate denial narrative in the state-controlled media, we see examples of this. Thus, it is unlikely that Russia will take leadership in global climate politics and act in the forefront of efforts to cut emissions. If Russia leads or behaves as a compliant student in global climate policies, it is because of the Putin regime's foreign policy interests, not because there is strong civic opposition among Russians towards Putin's economic, environmental, and foreign policies. Therefore, in the near future, another important issue to follow in this field is the way environmental awareness and civic environmental activism is being handled by Putin's regime and its fossil energy entourage. An interesting case to follow was the 'The Year of the Environment 2017' in Russia, and similar state-led environmental initiatives. Specifically, how state organizations, such as the Russian Geographical Society, in the framework of such projects, try to channel and control civic sentiments and empowerment in the realm of the environment and nature. Despite the fact that there was a category of projects called 'The Arctic and Climate', none of the projects addressed climate mitigation per se. This tells us that environmental change that is visible for Russians (waste, air pollution) catches also the attention of the regime, but *not* the global

environmental change that will cause much more severe effects for Russians and Russia. This, again, seems to remain in the realm of a taboo for the regime.

#### 5.4.7. Women's role, feminism and Russian (neoconservative) gender politics

*Saara Ratilainen*

##### Russian Feminisms

The feminist movement is one of the most groundbreaking ideological and political movements of modernization (e.g., Zdravomyslova 2012). Within the framework of this book, feminism offers important insights into the discussion of Russian modernization and its 'choices'. At first sight, especially when looking at Russia in the 2000s, it seems that various institutions have efficiently excluded feminism as one of the potential driving forces of political, social, and cultural change. This is due to the persistent struggles with the socialist legacy, the increased status of the Orthodox Church, the overall militarization of Russian society, plus the pronatalist state's family policies, all of them fostering anti-feminist gender ideologies in their own ways. The conservative turn has brought a number of drawbacks to women's rights. For example, women's rights to make choices concerning their bodies and sexuality have been questioned by efforts in the State Duma to make the abortion laws more stringent. Amendment to the family law in February 2017 partially *decriminalized* domestic violence, from which more than 50% of Russian women suffer in their daily lives (Jäppinen 2015). At the same time, the mainstream media reproduces representations of polarized and hierarchical gender relations, which assign fixed roles to men and women through symbolic production. These representations align neatly with the hyper-masculine image of Putin as the head of state (Goscilo 2013; Riabov & Riabova 2014).

From a historical perspective, however, improving women's status and gender equality, the so-called 'woman question' (*zhenskii vopros*), has been one of the central topics of Russian political and intellectual debates at times of turbulent change through new radical ideologies, mass mobilization, and economic reforms. The Russian women's movement took an active part in the socialist mobilization of the late Tsarist period, and after the 1917 revolution, the Bolsheviks brought a number of women into leading positions of power, on both local and state level (Lapidus 1978). The reformed legislation of early Soviet society gave women more freedom than in any other country in the world at the time (Stites 1978/1991; Rosenholm 2000; Iukina 2007). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the concept of gender that stemmed from academic feminist research emerged in the centre of public discussion, and women's organizations played an important role in the development of the NGO sector in Russia in the 1990s and early 2000s (Hemment 2007; Salmenniemi 2006). In short, fundamental political and societal upheavals have provided the context of the mobilization of the Russian feminist movement at different times. Through this legacy the Russian feminist movement has continued to live and recreate itself as an important resource of political, social, and cultural agency.

The Punk Prayer [*Pank-moleben*] performed by the actionist art group Pussy Riot in the Cathedral of the Christ the Savior in Moscow, February 21, 2012 brought radical feminism to the forefront of the Russian opposition movement. The feminist message of the performance, addressed to contemporary Russian society, however, got lost in the aggressive commentary on all the main national media channels. These diatribes were led by voices sympathetic to the Russian Orthodox Church, accusing the young women of anti-religious attacks and blasphemy (Hutchings and Tolz 2015, 194-220). In August of that year, the Russian court convicted three members of Pussy Riot, Maria Alekhina, Yekaterina Samutsevich and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, of 'hooliganism based on religious hatred' and sentenced them to two years in prison. Samutsevich's sentence was suspended but Alekhina and

Tolokonnikova served in prison until they were freed under an amnesty law in December 2013, just months before the end of their sentences.

A number of scholars share the view that behind the disproportionately harsh court verdict was, in fact, Pussy Riot's public violation of gender norms. They also remark that the language used by many leading politicians to comment on the case revealed sexist and misogynist attitudes across the Russian political spectrum, among both liberal and conservative, the Kremlin-aligned and oppositional parties (Sperling 2015; Gapova 2016). These analyses also point to the marginalized state of feminism in contemporary Russia. On the other hand, by discussing Pussy Riot's complicated relationship to other activists groups, they at once demonstrate that different feminisms co-exist at grass-roots-level as geographically-dispersed, but transnationally-connected and digitally-networked initiatives. (Perheentupa 2017; Sperling 2015; Gapova 2016; Johnson 2014; Yusupova 2014; Shnyrova 2012.)

Conservative gender politics and the public discourse on women's role in Russian society have mobilized a new generation of feminist activists who are closely aligned with different streams of global feminism, i.e., the wave of protesting and campaigning for women's rights all over the world in which digital communication plays an important role. Feminist activism in today's Russia provides an important discourse of freedom and field of agency in opposition to state conservatism (Perheentupa 2017). Furthermore, feminism intersects with human rights activism among a number of minority groups (e.g., Andreevskikh 2018). Therefore, feminist identification and collaboration across regional and national borders is an important resource in the absence of state support for liberal initiatives. Considering that today feminist activists do not have the kind of financial and institutional resources that, for example, the earlier post-Soviet generation of feminists did, it is remarkable that the number of feminist initiatives is currently increasing.

#### Liberalization of gender roles through everyday life and media

Aside from direct feminist activism, post-Soviet Russia has witnessed a number of other developments that have put female agency under renegotiation, and redefined women's role in society. Feminist sociological inquiries, for instance, have pointed out the various ways women have strengthen their role as social and economic actors in the sphere of everyday life, through private social relations (Zdravomyslova et al. 2009). The liberal market economy has legitimized a set of commercialized practices of reproductive work, which have liberated women from the overly burdensome Soviet standard of motherhood, at once offering new resources for social distinction and identity work, including paid services for the household and childcare, 'conspicuous consumption', and various lifestyle industries. The latter grew extensively in post-Soviet Russia, especially in the early 2000s.

The liberal consumer media and popular culture, produced as based on Western models, targets women as the most reliable consumers of the market economy (Ratilainen 2015; Gudova & Rakipova 2010). Within this framework, the popular media have established a heavily gendered discourse of the 'work on Self', which focuses on improving one's physical appearance, diet, sex life, home and social relations through different consumer- and lifestyle-practices. Participating in the global circulation of ideas and images, the post-Soviet popular culture provides a diverse set of liberal models of femininity that all point to the ideals of individual success and prosperity in the new market economy. These models range from sexually liberated to professionally ambitious and economically independent woman. As the culmination of this ideology, the post-Soviet celebrity culture represents female actors, musicians, and media hosts as heroes of the post-Soviet entertainment industry (Ratilainen 2012; Strukov and Goscilo 2010). In feminist scholarship, this discourse is referred to as typical of post-feminism and characteristic of post-industrial and neo-liberal media systems (Gill 2007). Post-feminism is an ideological constellation that counts on equal social rights for men and



women while simultaneously emphasizing the sexual and biological divide. Within the post-feminist discourse, the commodified body becomes an important resource for social mobility and professional success (ibid., Salmenniemi & Adamson 2014).

These frameworks of liberalization of gender roles (reorganization of the private sphere and diversification of media) are the result of the large-scale structural changes in post-Soviet society and culture. As symbolic resources, they draw on a diverse set of ideological and cultural backgrounds thus leaving the question of feminist empowerment open and ambiguous, to say the least. On the one hand, women's resources for making independent decisions about their private and professional lives have increased with the transition to liberal market economy, but on the other, the gender *imbalance* in the higher echelons of economic and political power is greater than in the Soviet times. This imbalance in the power resources available for men and women in the post-Soviet society explains, at least partially, why there is such an emphasis on bodily appearance as the key feminine resource in popular culture and media (Ratilainen 2012). Moreover, this framework hardly challenges the neo-traditional/neoconservative state gender politics, but rather presents the market economy as the underlying logic for social behavior, thus accentuating the entrepreneurial ethic of personal achievement and individual efforts over social and political responsibilities for people's wellbeing. In this framework, the neoconservative and neo-liberal trajectories go hand-in-hand.

As, for instance, political scientist Valerie Sperling points out (2015, 5), Russia would have need of a strong feminist movement in order to recognize and, ideally, *resolve* the gendered imbalances in power resources. Several scholars of Russian feminism, however, note, that there is a lack of communication between different generations of feminist activists, on the one hand, and different, co-existing grass-roots-level groups, on the other. This makes the possibility of any larger-scale feminist breakthroughs rather difficult, both presently and when thinking about the possible future developments (Sperling 2015; Gapova 2016). At the same time, the dominant practices of feminist activism and feminist knowledge production are changing rapidly all over the world. With the digital turn, societies have become increasingly mediatized (Couldrey and Hepp 2017), which means that new communication technologies shape the framework for the new feminist initiatives in a completely original manner as, for example, the #MeToo campaign has demonstrated (see Ratilainen et al. 2018; Shnyrova 2012). In this situation, societal influence through traditional institutions is *not* necessarily the prerequisite for the emergence of a strong feminist movement. Effective participation in knowledge production and campaigning through different channels of information is becoming the dominant practice of feminist activism globally.

To shed light on the different trajectories of feminist knowledge production in post-Soviet Russia, I will now turn to the questions of post-Soviet academic feminism and contemporary digital activism.

### Early post-Soviet feminism, gender and the new field of knowledge

The conceptual divide between sex and gender differentiates between biological characteristics and the institutionally, socially, and culturally constituted roles of women and men. In feminist research, this differentiation opened up a new way to analyze social inequality and gender parity, and it brought the feminist analysis of patriarchy into the realm of symbolic and linguistic power. These questions are intrinsic to the second wave of feminism, which started to develop in Western Europe and the United States in the 1960s with structuralist and post-structuralist theories, eventually reaching the Soviet Union during the *glasnost* era of the 1980s. In post-Soviet Russia, the concept of gender also became part of the transition from the Soviet tradition of knowledge production to the post-Soviet one.

For example, sociologist and gender studies scholar Elena Gapova depicts this development as the division of the academic field into the ‘new’ and ‘old’ fields of knowledge production (Gapova 2016: 249-291). The formation of the ‘new’ field was strongly supported by international collaboration between post-Soviet and Western academics. No less significant was financial aid from the West, especially from the United States. International funding helped to establish new academic institutions that also became home institutions of feminist research and gender studies in Russia. One of the ways to describe the early post-Soviet academic feminism is to call it a ‘translation project’. A significant number of new publications consisted of Russian translations of the key second-wave feminist texts and their commentaries. (Yusupova 2014; ‘Doing Gender’ 2005, 197-198.)

Gapova remarks that although the term ‘gender’ was extensively applied to the early post-Soviet language of media, politics, and culture (together with dozens of other terms of Western origin), its background and intellectual underpinnings, i.e., the history of international women’s movement and second-wave feminism, were discussed only within a small circle of academics and NGO-activists (Gapova 2016). A number of contemporary researchers also point to the poor quality of the Russian-language translations of Western feminist theory. This, they claim, makes it difficult to use gender theory productively when working on the problems of gender inequality outside of academia, that is, in political decision-making, civil organizations, and cultural production (see Yusupova 2014; ‘Doing Gender’ 2005).

However, when reviewing the outcomes of the early post-Soviet feminist ‘awakening’, one must acknowledge the various complexities embedded in feminist positioning at that particular moment of history. Firstly, one of the primary tasks of early post-Soviet feminist activism was to dismantle the Soviet gender order, which had been based on strong state-patriarchy. Although women’s emancipation was an integral part of socialist ideology, the lived reality of Soviet women proved far from that which was promised by the political slogans. The Soviet women’s organizations operated under strict party rule, women’s rights were systematically violated in both the professional and private spheres, and women’s secondary status as societal actors was deeply institutionalized. Women’s basic needs were also neglected in the Soviet health care system. For instance, birth control and sex education were unavailable to most Soviet citizens, which had dramatic consequences, especially to women who had to bear the consequences of unwanted pregnancies (Zdravomyslova et al. 2009; Lapidus 1978).

As the result, the Soviet experience of feminism was based on sharp contradiction between ideology and practice, and thus in public understanding feminism gained a reputation as a failed project. It was from this standpoint that the academic and NGO feminists of the 1990s started to work with new ideas and models for international cooperation. Their immediate tasks were to re-establish and legitimize a gender-sensitive approach to political decision-making based on the ideas of second wave feminist thinking, institutionalize gender studies as a scholarly field, and to build and maintain a dialogue with both Western colleagues and fellow feminist activist in other former Soviet countries through newly founded channels (Zherebkina et al. 2000). Considering these challenges, it is no wonder that the results of the feminist processes started over the transition period seem insufficient and unaccomplished in the eyes of contemporary viewers.

In conclusion, we can say that the feminist activism of the 1990s in academic research, through civil organizations, as well as in culture and literature did not result in large-scale feminist mobilization and state-level normalization of gender-sensitive policies. The institutionalization of gender studies and women’s civil organizations were interrupted by the foreign agent law, as well as with redirection of the US foreign aid after the 9/11 terrorist acts (Gapova 2016). This context of post-Soviet institutionalization vs. deinstitutionalization of ‘new knowledges’ and grass-roots-level movements/organizations brings the case of feminism into a dialogue with a number of other post-Soviet developments analyzed elsewhere in this book.

## Generational shift, intersectional feminism and digital activism

Third wave feminism refers to one of the most recent shifts in feminist thinking, which dates to the turn of the 1990s. It was initially a result of reconceptualizing the central questions of feminist thinking to encompass a more nuanced understanding of individual differences between women based, for example, on their race, ethnicity, religion, social background, and sexual orientation. The criticism by third wave feminists toward earlier (mainly second wave) feminists consisted of problematizing the idea that the feminist movement had represented all women equally. These ideas were also present in black feminism that had already emerged in the United States at the time of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. For instance, the famous gender and race studies scholar and writer bell hooks, has written widely how the experience of gender discrimination of black women intersects with their experiences of racial, cultural, class, and religious inequality (e.g., hooks 1989, 1992, 2000, 2015). These streams come together in intersectional feminism, which includes, for instance, such sub-categories as post-colonial feminism, queer feminism, and anarchist feminism. Against this backdrop, it is clear that Pussy Riot represents intersectional feminism; in addition to sending their anarchist appeal to the Mother of God to ‘chase Putin away from Russia’ and ‘become feminist’, the Punk Prayer referred to the oppression of LGBTQI+ rights by Putin’s administration (Pussy Riot 2012). After becoming international celebrities, Alekhina and Tolokonnikova have reformulated these ideas in their later media appearances. For example, shortly after being released from prison Alekhina and Tolokonnikova appeared on American network Comedy Central as Stephen Colbert’s guests on his late night show *The Colbert Report*. In that interview, Alekhina and Tolokonnikova were particularly vocal about the discrimination of LGBTQI+ rights by Putin’s administration.

The intersectional approach to identity politics and social equality stands in contradiction to the conservative tendencies currently dominant in Russian society. Over the past several years, a number of minority groups, including ethnic, religious, and sexual, have been losing their legal rights (see Aitamurto & Kahla in this volume). One of the most discussed milestones of the Russian conservative turn, is the ‘anti-gay law’, which banned ‘propaganda of non-normative sexuality and family values among minors’. This law became active on the Federal level in 2013; it was not only an attack against LGBTQI+ rights but also served as a reminder by ruling politicians to all liberal parties of the path Russia as a state and nation should now follow. These sentiments are echoed in state media. For example, Hutchings and Tolz discuss how one of the state television’s strategies of portraying Russian nationhood consists of a certain ‘paranoid discourse’ in which ‘universal liberalism’ – which covers homosexuality, feminism, and a number of other qualifiers – is rhetorically opposed to the group of ideas and concepts understood as ‘national culture’ or ‘Russian values’ (Hutchings & Tolz 2015, 204, 206).

How, then, can contemporary feminist activists and initiatives find room for agency? How can a regular citizen get access to the remaining resources of feminist empowerment in Russia? One resolution can be found in new communication technologies, which already at the turn of the millennium Russian feminists discovered as one of the most important means to combat the ‘negative effects of globalization’, i.e., increasing social and gender inequality in different parts of the world (Lipovskaia 1999).

It is true that in the age of global connectedness through the internet, digital technologies offer some of the most important channels for Russian feminist activism (see, Ratilainen et al. 2018). Through digital publications, feminist messages have a chance to circulate to wider audiences. One of the most important venues of information sharing among Russian feminist activists is the LiveJournal blog and community *Feministki* founded in 2005. Furthermore, a number of new-generation feminist groups have sprung up on social media but they also reach out to local communities by organizing gatherings, demonstrations, and educational events (see Perheentupa 2018). This type of activism represents

network feminism. It is an eclectic and flexible method of civic organization in terms of its theoretical foundation and the degree of commitment by its members (Shnyrova 2012). It is also worth noting that some practices started by the 1990s feminists are now being regenerated through current online feminism. New translations of feminist texts are available to new readers through blogs and social media.

In addition, some online media platforms of more mainstream character offer significant spaces for feminist empowerment that can have a wider circulation among Russian audiences. For example, the urban online magazine *Afisha* publishes the feminist article series ‘*Silnyi pol*’ (The strong sex), introducing stories on various gender-related topics, such as domestic violence, gender discrimination at the workplace, male feminists, and gender stereotypes connected to different professions. In my view, the most significant contribution of these media contents to feminist empowerment is their normalized gender-sensitive discourse, that is, the terminology used to describe the topics in question is based on gender studies research and used in a balanced, neutral tone.

*Afisha* and other similar liberal online media subscribe to the intersectional understanding of identity. They regularly discuss sexual and religious minorities from the perspective of Russian gender politics. These online media, however, face problems similar to the 1990s academic feminism. They reach only a small slice of Russian society, and their followers are most likely already well informed on gender issues and supporters of feminism, i.e., they belong to the group of most liberal Russians. For the time being, these forums constitute a significant alternative space for discussions on gender and sexuality, which stand apart from the state-aligned media and conservative organizations that strive to dominate the public sphere and political decision-making.

Together with a number of other online media outlets, *Afisha* participated in the social media campaign *#IaNeBoiusSkazati/IaNeBoius'Skazat* (I am not afraid to tell) against sexual violence and gender discrimination. The campaign was initiated in summer 2016 by the Ukrainian journalist and feminist activist Anastasiia Mel'nichenko, and it became one of the landmark actions of the Russian-speaking internet. As part of the campaign, thousands of women and men shared their stories of gendered violence and a number of roundtables and discussion clubs were organized, and in this way brought the campaign from the realm of digital media into various offline arenas. Another remarkable thing in this campaign was that Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking internet users shared their experiences in the same conversation threads often marking their posts with both Ukrainian and Russian-language versions of the hashtag. Moreover, those Russian-language media outlets (mostly liberal) that participated in the campaign did not make divisions between the Russian and Ukrainian situation, but framed the issue as concerning the entire post-Soviet space.

*#IaNeBoius'Skazat* thus demonstrates that digital feminist activism in post-Soviet countries gains relevance from the work of local activists within local communities. It also shows how solidarity movements travel through transnational channels of information within the multilingual post-Soviet digital media space that encompasses countries and nations who are now in state-level political conflict with each other (in this case Russian and Ukraine). It is also important to note that, although *#IaNeBoius'Skazat* thematically overlaps with a number of Western social media campaigns, it was an entirely ‘home-grown’ act of digital feminism, and that it was peaking more than a year before *#MeToo*, which is to date the most influential feminist social media campaign globally raising awareness of sexual assault and harassment.

Unlike so many other countries, Russia did *not* join the global *#MeToo* movement. Indeed *#MeToo* was publicly ridiculed by the famous film director Nikita Mihailkov, and on primetime television, for instance, on the popular talk show *Vechernyi uragant* on Channel One. However, in March 2018 probably the first high-profile case around sexual harassment emerged in Russia, with apparent connections to *#MeToo* and global feminist campaigning. Three female journalists alleged Deputy

Leonid Slutski from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) of sexual harassment while working at the State Duma. One of them provided an audio recording as evidence. The journalists took the case to the Ethical Commission of the State Duma but the representatives of the Commission stated that they did not see any violation of norm in Slutski's behavior! As an act of solidarity, a number of significant Russian media houses started a boycott, withdrawing their reporters from the parliamentary pool. As usual in these cases, a turbulent but relatively short-term media scandal followed, dividing opinion according to the conservative-liberal divide and driving aggressive commentary on social media. Notwithstanding the decision of the Ethical Commission not to take any measures against Slutski, other reactions among the deputies signal that new initiatives against sexual harassment are possible in the future. For example, Deputy Oksana Pushkina announced that she plans to (re)launch a legal initiative to prevent sexual harassment at workplace.

Elsewhere in the Russian media, some commentators remarked on the broader context of the scandal. For example, an expert commentator interviewed in *Afisha* says, 'Last year was spent under the banner of exposing sexual harassment (...). Time's Up and #MeToo movements were born in America and different people in many countries joined them. In my view, at least partly because of these movements the journalists had the strength to speak out about what happened (in the State Duma)'. This comment affirms that although it might seem at first sight that Russian society is *not* influenced by the current waves of feminist action demanding a fundamental cultural change in attitudes towards gender discrimination, actors at all levels of Russian society *are* aware of the basic mechanisms and potential consequences of online campaigning.

Overall, the examples discussed in this chapter show that feminist initiatives and feminist discourses develop at different levels of contemporary Russian society, although the political support for institutional (and legal) improvements in gender equality remains scarce. Pussy Riot's shock-treatment brought Russian feminism international fame, which some domestic actors find problematic. On the grass-roots level, both long-term women's NGOs and new groups that rely on digital activism continue their work to prevent gender discrimination. Feminist terminology evolves through global networks of information. Popular culture and lifestyle media re-package both radical and global mainstream feminism with consumer culture, fashion, and trends while viral social media campaigns increase the potential of feminist discourses to enter the digital newsfeed of regular internet users. The diversity of different resources can also be seen as counteracting some of the influence of state conservatism.

## 5.5. Conclusions

Over the last one hundred years, Russia has experienced two large-scale modernization projects inspired by radically different ideas. In both cases, Russian people have lived both the intended and unintended results of these vast projects. The Bolshevik one that constituted the Soviet social system succeeded in industrializing and urbanizing Russia, society was forcefully secularized, and huge institutions of science created. However, Soviet citizens also had to live in a double reality in which the unintended results of the Soviet project were taboos that everybody knew but could not challenge; NKVD, the *Nomanklature*, chaos, environmental disaster and clumsy consumption commodities. Inspired in part by Khrushchev's thaw, Gorbachev tried to return to the original project without the dark shadows of purges and terror. However, as a project to redefine Soviet institutions *perestroika* failed, and the old Russia that was supposed to be eliminated by Soviet modernization appears again as a reality.

The second modernization project is articulated in terms of transition to a market economy, rule of law, and a multi-party democratic system. In principle, all this was achieved during Yeltsin's presidency. Private property was established, and new political and civil organizations emerged. But the ordinary Russians have had to live with dramatic anomy and ontological insecurity.

European conservatism was a reaction to the unintended results of the French revolution. A similar logic seems to explain the contemporary Russian conservative turn as well. If before 1917, as Elina Viljanen shows, both religious and Marxist circles shared a common preoccupation with revolution, but the contemporary Russian field of culture is highly anti-revolutionary.

Russian conservatism is a reaction to the unintended results of these two great transformations. Leftist ideas have no credibility due to the Soviet experience, and the liberal ideas of the 1990s are blamed for the anomy and chaos of that time. This has created a strong grounding for the conservative hegemonic project, especially in an international situation that mobilizes the legacies of the Russian Empire and the Cold War.

As Oittinen and Viljanen show, Russia has always had a complicated relationship with European modernization. Although various philosophical approaches exist in Russia, there seems again to be a tendency towards a distinct "Russian philosophy". This approach has a problematic relationship to Kant. But Viljanen shows that even within the first Soviet decade, there existed a complex palimpsest of philosophical approaches. If we look at the broader field of ideology and culture, we can conclude that Russia has a special antinomy between global processes versus nationalistic closing. In the contemporary world, Russia wants to be a global conservative player, even arguing that it represents the *original* Western values. That said, the global conservative conference organized in 2015 failed. Domestically, it looks like a paradox that all conservative think tanks have some commitment to modernization rhetoric. Key to understanding this, however, is to see the narrow economic and technological emphasis of the concept.

In fact these two antinomies: the *conservative hegemonic project* versus *secular liberalism*, and *global processes* versus *nationalistic closing* are interdependent in a complex way. Liberal ideas of human rights and democracy flow in when the society is more or less open to international information networks. A very consolidated conservative hegemonic project can also cause unintended consequences in all fields that we have analyzed in this chapter:

- (1) Excessive repression of populist opposition can mobilize and magnify the opposition.
- (2) Continuity of trauma and violence in Chechnya can have dramatic effects throughout Russia.
- (3) The external and internal vulnerabilities of the welfare system may place uncontrollable requirements on the capacity of the hybrid state, but without strong mechanisms of conflict regulation.
- (4) If the hydro-carbon economy is linked with stronger climate change denialism, domestic environmental problems and climate change may raise environmental movements to a new scale and significance.
- (5) Over-conservative policies on gender issues and abortion may ruin the support of the conservative project in a way similar to Poland.
- (6) If desecularization becomes more systematic and intervenes in daily life and education, liberal resistance based on international information flows may turn the tendency again towards secularization.
- (7) Individualistic consumption and mass culture contradict the idea of nationalistic and religious mythologies at the 'paleosymbolic' level of basic cultural codes.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.travel.ru/news/2017/04/13/258922.html>. Most popular sites of pilgrimages in Russia. Retrieved 10, May, 2017.

<sup>ii</sup> Maybe it should be mentioned, that the “latest system” by Schelling, of which Kireevskij speaks here, was the reactionary *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, based on lectures held by Schelling in Berlin in 1842, where he was called by the King of Prussia in order to ward off the influence of Hegel and the Left Hegelians. Later, Vladimir Solov’ev developed his “free theosophy” just in the spirit of the old Schelling, showing thereby that his thought had deep roots in the Slavophile tradition.

<sup>iii</sup> An indispensable overview available in English of Kantianism in pre-revolutionary Russia is Nemeth 2017. The studies written by the Russians themselves on Kant’s influence in their country has in the last years been steadily growing. Here I can mention only some recent works on the theme: Kalinnikov (2008), Motroshilova 2006, (especially 195-228); Kruglov 2009, which covers in principle the same theme as Nemeth’s study. A quite recent noteworthy study on the reception of Kant among Russian Populists and Marxists is Chaly 2018.

<sup>iv</sup> For example, Nelli Motroshilova agrees that a more or less anti-Kantian bias can be found in the most Russian philosophers of 19th and 20th centuries, but she will mitigate Akhutin’s theses by constating that occupation with Kant nevertheless gave to the Russian philosophers “a very valuable stimulus to an independent philosophizing” (Motroshilova 2006, 196, 199).

<sup>v</sup> For a more detailed analysis of Solov’ev’s later philosophy and Kant, see Oittinen (2003).

<sup>vi</sup> It goes without saying that the analogy should not be carried too long. The Protestant upheaval of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was a mass phenomenon, whereas the theorizing of the Silver Age idealists was confined to a narrow circle of intellectuals only.

<sup>vii</sup> Kant’s original German term was *das Unbedingte*, with which he referred to the “peculiar principle of Reason in general (in its logical use): to find to the conditioned knowledge of the Intellect that which is unconditioned, so that its unity becomes complete” (*zu dem bedingten Erkenntnisse des Verstandes das Unbedingte zu finden, womit die Einheit desselben vollendet wird*; KrV B 364).

<sup>viii</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Trubetskij’s critique of Kant, see Oittinen 2007. In the modern times, the Anselmian argument was repeated yet by Descartes in his *Meditationes*.

<sup>ix</sup> This is not the place to describe post-Soviet Kant scholarship in Russia. Be it only mentioned, that a crucial role has been played by the journal *Kantovskij sbornik*, which has been published since 1975 in Kaliningrad (Kant’s hometown!), downloadable from the web address [https://journals.kantiana.ru/kant\\_collection/](https://journals.kantiana.ru/kant_collection/). One of the best present-day Russian experts of Kant is Erikh Solov’ev (born 1934; no relation to Vladimir S.). He has published an important work on Kantian ethics (see E. Solov’ev 1993). 1993. For further discussion on Erikh Solov’ev, see Oittinen 2011.

<sup>x</sup> The table has been published earlier in my article (Oittinen 2017a), but as the layout was inadequate, so I repeat it here.

<sup>xi</sup> For a biography of Ziuganov, see e.g., Otto (1999)

<sup>xiii</sup> The most informative analysis of the ideology of the CPRF available in English is yet to this day the article by Veljko Vujacic (see Vujacic 1996). See also Oittinen (1995).

<sup>xvi</sup> The person in question was Sergey Glaz’ev, one of the top-level advisors of Putin and active member of radical imperialist conservative think tank *Izborsk Club*, see <https://izborsk-club.ru/author/glaziev>.