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THE MEANING OF "RUSSIAN"

CONSIDERATIONS OF RUSSIAN NATIONALISM & RUSSIAN IDENTITY

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Layers of Identity:

Self-identity in U.S. child immigrants from the former Soviet Union

by Natasha Sumetsky

Geography and history have made Russian identity hard to define. Russia spans both Europe and Asia and is split between East and West. The Soviet-era process of "Russification" imposed the Russian language on non-Russian-speaking groups and made other calculated attempts to draw each nationality's individual identity closer to one that would be coherent with the Russian. Furthermore, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the once-stringent rules imposed on the citizens of the former USSR abated, allowing many to emigrate abroad. This led, in part, to a significant population of Soviet-born individuals currently residing in the United States. This can be viewed as a further complication of identity particularly for child immigrants, who were often born in one country and raised in another.

The present study seeks to understand various aspects of identity in a particular group of immigrants who were born in the former Soviet Union, immigrated to the United States at age 12 or younger, and are currently between the ages of 18 and 40. The study used a 59-item questionnaire (see Appendix 1) concerned with identity "markers" such as preferred language, city of residence, and perceived ethnic, national, religious, and cultural identity.

Overview of Previous Studies

According to the latest published U.S. census, conducted in 1990, out of nearly 20 million immigrants living in the United States, approximately 334,000 had been born in the Soviet Union (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Although this is a substantial group, it is not surprising that most recent research has focused on Asian-American and Latin-American groups, who together compose 75% of the U.S. immigrant population. Furthermore, few analyses have

focused on child immigrants (Aronowitz, 1984; Rumbaut, 1994). The relatively scarce research that has approached this topic has emphasized child immigrants' socioeconomic, educational, and psychiatric status, often placing these individuals at a disadvantage when compared to native-born children of non-immigrant parents (Aronowitz, 1984; Suarez-Orosco, 2001). Researchers have also consistently emphasized the importance of identity and its effects on many aspects of daily living (Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, & Wong, 2002).

To the author's knowledge, no identity studies of child immigrants have studied individuals born in the former USSR. However, more general studies of child immigrants can give a general picture of the demographic group. One of the earliest surveys polled 600 American-born middle-school children of foreign parents (Young, 1936). Fewer than 15% considered themselves fully Americanized and fewer than 10% perceived no conflict between standards of American society and those of their parents' country of origin. Since those born abroad were not included, it is difficult to say whether birthplace was a factor in identity.

In a more recent study (Rumbaut, 1994), U.S.-born and foreign-born children of Asian and Latin American immigrants were asked to name their national identity. Twenty percent of U.S.-born children of immigrants identified themselves as American, and 49% claimed a hyphenated identity. In contrast, 3% of the foreign-born children of immigrants viewed themselves as American, while 32% declared a hyphenated identity. Based on these results, it appears that place of birth and its confounding factors affect self-identity.

Another study by Tsai et al. (2002) investigated notions of "being American" expressed by Chinese-American, Hmong-American (an ethnicity from Southeast Asia), and European-American groups. Asian-Americans were more likely to refer to "ethnic diversity" or "traditional behavior," whereas European-Americans tended to refer to "patriotism" as an important aspect

of "being American." The authors suggest that this results from a significant number of Asians in America having been born abroad, while respondents of European descent had more often been born in the United States. The researchers speculate that ideas regarding "being American" will eventually become more congruent. Interestingly, however, little significance emerged between the number of years spent in the United States and notions of "being American."

Tsai et al. (2002) did find that convergence might be correlated with the presence of concentrated populations of immigrants: Chinese-Americans held views more similar to those of European-Americans than did Hmong-Americans. The researchers attributed this, in part, to the idea that there were more Chinese-Americans in California, where the first group was tested, than there were Hmong-Americans in Minnesota, where the second group was tested. The Chinese-Americans were thus better represented, enabling them to become a larger demographic of mainstream society and therefore integrate better with that society.

Not all researchers agree with this. Berrol suggests: "What is certain is that for those immigrant children who came in larger numbers and were seen as more foreign and less welcome, marginality was a central facet of their experience" (1995). Regardless of which theory holds true, community seems to be an important aspect of defining one's identity; context is a critical factor for analysis in such studies.

One problem with identity studies is that many, including the study discussed in the present paper, rely on self-reported measures. Researcher Thierry Devos (2006) used a less obvious measurement of identity. Through use of the Implicit Association Test (IAT), he studied identity in Asian- and Mexican-American college students. The IAT is a tool used to measure associations between certain variables by measuring the quickness of response when associating given variables. For instance, if one is quicker at pairing words related to oneself to symbols of

Mexican culture than to American culture, it is assumed that one identifies with Mexican culture more strongly. Though it is difficult to say whether the IAT is a valid measure for identity, no measure used thus far is foolproof. Devos' results suggested that participants in his study identified equally with both cultures. While the current study did not use IAT, developing such a test for immigrants born in the former Soviet Union might produce interesting results.

Overview of the Present Study

The present study is based on the results of a survey.[1] Participants are asked to make a self-definition of their race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion. These terms are purposely not defined for the survey-takers, as the survey seeks to explore understand *their* understanding of the terms. The differences between ethnicity and nationality might be exceptionally interesting in the case of Soviet-born individuals. The infamous "fifth point" (*pyatyi punkt*) in each Soviet citizen's passport was his or her "nationality" (*natsional'nost'*), a term which carried essentially the same meaning as the English term "ethnicity" (Simonson, S.G., 1999). Thus, it is especially interesting to ascertain the trend of responses to "nationality" and "ethnicity."

To examine the differing theories of Tsai et al. (2002) and Berrol (1995), the participants' location is also considered in relation to the strength of their self-perceived "Americanness." Residents of New York City and Chicago, home to the largest Russian-speaking communities in the United States, are compared to those who spent most of their time living in other U.S. cities.

Feelings of "Russianness" versus "Americanness" are also examined to see whether these identities are mutually exclusive, whereby feeling more of one diminishes the strength of the other, or whether both (or neither) of the identities could be assumed simultaneously. These constructs are then compared to participants' perceptions of the extent to which others label them

[1] Presented in full in Appendix 1

as "Russian" or "American."[2] Perceptions of accents are also measured to see if self-identity is correlated with the frequency of being told that one has a foreign accent. Both citizenship and age of arrival are also cross-referenced. Finally, ratings of the importance of culture, nationality, and ethnicity are compared to the extent of feeling "Russian," "American," or other.

Overview of statistical jargon and abbreviations

M=mean; *SD*=standard deviation; *p*=p-value; *N*=sample size; *r*=correlation; *F*=*F*-test; *t*=t-test.

The greater the standard deviation, the more responses tend to deviate from the reported mean. Several tests are conducted to deduce the significance (i.e., whether a relationship between given variables has been statistically determined). Results of these tests are reported via the type of test and its numerical outcome, followed by the p-value (a continuous probability distribution). The lower the resultant p-value, the more likely that a relationship between the tested variables exists in real life. Results are often considered significant only when the p-value is less than .05. A p-value of .05 signifies that there is a 5% chance that the null hypothesis (i.e., the lack of a relationship between given variables) holds true. Generally, low p-values are difficult to achieve when relationships between variables are not obvious and when the sample size is low. P-values can be determined via t-tests (which measure difference) or f-tests (which measure probability distribution) and via other methods.

Correlations (symbolized as *r* in the text and also reported in Tables 1 and 2) are numbers between -1 and +1. Negative correlations suggest a negative relationship between two variables, while positive correlations indicate positive relationships. In Tables 1 and 2, correlations determined to be significant at different p-value levels (explained above) are marked with asterisks.

Methods

Individuals who were born in the former Soviet Union, immigrated to the United States at age 12 or younger, and were at least 18 but no older than 40 years old at the time of the study were selected. Twenty-five females and 21 males completed the 59-item survey at http://www.musail.com (see Appendix). Among the questions were open-ended measures of identity, where participants could freely respond regarding their perception of their ethnic, national, cultural, and racial identities. Another measure asked them to rate, on a Likert scale,[3]

[2] This idea of dual identity is a common topic of research, with arguments both for its positive and negative effects. In her book, *Middle of Everywhere*, Mary Pipher discusses refugees' quests for identity. "This shouldn't be an either/or, but rather, a both/and situation," she claims (2002). Extrapolating this idea to immigrant groups, Pipher's claim is that the ideal situation would be for one to feel included in both identities. According to Laitin, however, it is unclear whether a hyphenated identity is advantageous, giving one a richer culture and a greater scope for understanding oneself, or if it diminishes one's affiliation with either of the components of such an identity (1998).

[3] A Likert scale is one that measures a respondent's agreement with a particular statement based on a point scale. The present survey uses a five-point scale.

the extent to which they felt American, Russian, or as having another former-USSR identity, as well as their perceptions of how strongly others viewed them as being American or Russian.

Survey-takers were recruited by means of advertisements hung up in Pittsburgh, PA, and advertisements placed on the Internet (e.g., forms and mailing lists). Fifty-six sets of results were obtained. Ten sets were eliminated, as nine respondents did not meet the requirement of the maximum age of arrival to the United States and one resided in Canada.

The final sample size that was included in the final analyses was *N=46*. These individuals were required to have been born in a former republic of the USSR, which include present-day Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. However, the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan are not represented in this survey. Twenty respondents were born in Russia, 20 were born in European republics of the former Soviet Union, and 6 were born in Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. The respondents' ages ranged from 18 to 30, with a mean age of 21.33 (*SD=2.85)*. Thirty-six participants were college students. All of them came to the United States at age 12 or younger, ranging from 1 to 12, with a mean age of arrival of 8.04 years (*SD=2.97*).

Results

All figures and tables are included in Appendix 2. Figures 1-4 represent respondents' self-identification based on nationality, ethnicity, religion, and race respectively. Table 1 correlates the self-perception of being "American" or "Russian" versus others' perceptions of the same as interpreted by the survey-taker. Table 2 represents correlations between identifying oneself as "Russian" or "American" and the survey-taker's rated importance on a five-point scale of nationality, ethnicity, religion, and race in determining that identification.

Areas with large and small Russian-speaking populations were compared to test for the effect of community on identity. Fifteen survey-takers lived in New York City or Chicago, which host the largest Russian-speaking populations in the U.S., while 25 lived in other areas (M=2.24, SD=*1.61*), and (M=2.93, SD=1.28). In terms of the degree to which one felt American, no significant effect was observed between these two groups, $F(2,40)=2.00$, $p=0.17$.

U.S. citizens perceived themselves to be more American than non-U.S. citizens, $t(41)=2.86$, $p=.01$. However, the relationship between age of arrival and one's perception of being American was not significant, with $r(41)=-0.25$, $p=0.10$. Age of arrival was also not significantly correlated with perceptions of being Russian, with $r(42)=-0.10$, $p=0.52$.

While a negative correlation was observed between judging oneself as having an accent and judging oneself as being American, it was short of reaching statistical significance at the $p<.05$ level, $r(41)=-0.276$, $p=0.07$. The same was true of participants' replies regarding others noting that they had accents and others considering them American, $r(40)=-0.26$, $p=0.09$. A relationship was not found between one perceiving oneself as speaking English with a foreign accent and perceiving oneself as being Russian, $r(42)=-0.130$, $p=0.40$. Likewise, no significant correlation was found between the participants' responses concerning others regarding them as being Russian and noting that they spoke English with a foreign accent, $r(37)=0.13$, $p=0.42$.

Four subjects (M=1.00, SD=0) preferred Russian or Ukrainian as their spoken language, twenty-three preferred English (M=3.13, SD=1.58), and sixteen had no preference (M=2.06, SD=1.24). The effect of preferred spoken language was significantly correlated with one's perception of being American, $F(2,40)=5.46$, $p=.01$. However, no correlation was observed between preference of language and considering oneself to be Russian, $F(2,41)=0.70$, $p=0.50$.

Analysis

Participants who were American citizens tended to view themselves as more American than those without American citizenship. However, age of arrival was not a significant factor. Perhaps this can be attributed to the idea that certain "markers" (e.g., citizenship, birth) are more important in shaping one's concept of identity than more abstract or gradual constructs, such as the number of years spent in a given culture. This is consistent with the results of Tsai et al. (2002), who did not find a significant age of arrival effect in the similarity of responses between Asian-Americans and their European-American counterparts counterparts. Perhaps, especially when not born into a culture, individuals need notable, concrete symbols of identification in order to feel that they belong to a given culture. Citizenship could be one such symbol.

Table 2 depicts the survey-takers' ratings of the importance of each of the following identities: national, cultural, religious, and ethnic. The results suggest that the more importance one places on one's national and ethnic identity, the less one judges oneself to be American, while a positive correlation emerged between judging oneself as being strongly Russian and finding national identity to be important. Thus, it can be assumed that individuals who are raised with a strong emphasis on national, ethnic, or cultural identity tend to carry this idea into adulthood, clinging to their original national and other identities.

The role of community is unclear. It may be that living in a community with a large Russian-speaking population would allow for views and traditions to converge with the mainstream, thus allowing for the two identities to be more compatible. Conversely, it is possible that this could lead one to identify more with a "Russian" identity since access to this culture is more readily available. In relation to the discrepancy between the explanation of results in the study by Tsai et al. (2002) and the theoretical implications of Berrol's work (1995), the results

obtained in this study did not significantly favor either supposition in terms of community. However, the general trend was for participants residing in New York City or Chicago to rate themselves as more American than those who lived outside these two cities.

As suggested by Table 1, there was a tendency for self-identification as "Russian" to be negatively correlated with one's judgment of being "American." However, this relationship did not reach statistical significance. When other former-USSR identities were incorporated, however, this negative relationship *was* significant. Since the majority of participants were not born in Russia but in other former-USSR countries (especially Ukraine), it is expected that not all of them would identify themselves as being Russian. Thus, for each individual the higher score of either judging oneself as being Russian or as having another former-USSR identity was taken, and these scores were combined in order to establish a data set of the participants' highest rating of their most salient former-USSR identity. That is, if one participant rated his identity as "Russian" as a 5, he would receive a score of 5. Likewise, if another participant rated her identity as a 5 on the former-USSR identity scale, she would also receive a score of 5. In this way, former-USSR identities in general, and not just considering oneself to be Russian, were compared to feelings of being American.

A negative correlation was noticed between self-identification as American and having an accent. This, however, was just short of reaching statistical significance. Increasing the sample size could be expected to result in a lower *p* score for this correlation.[4] An accent is often regarded as a strong indicator of foreignness, and it would seem that others would therefore view individuals with conspicuous accents as being more foreign. Based on the relationship between self-identification as American and others' judgments, this may also have an effect on the individual's own identity.

[4] Statistical power is increased with larger sample sizes, thus allowing for stronger correlations and lower *p* scores.

Limitations

Particularly when survey-takers were divided into two qualitative groups (e.g., citizens and non-citizens) and compared, the sample sizes were relatively low, making it difficult for the results to indicate statistical significance. Also, the surveyed individuals were relatively young, so it is difficult to generalize the findings to child immigrants who are now older. In future studies, this could be improved by recruiting more diverse participants.

Another concern is that identity priming may have occurred. That is, participants were made aware that this study was a survey of identity, and they were recruited based on having been child immigrants from countries within the former Soviet Union. This may have caused respondents to fixate on this part of their identity. Making questions less explicit may help in future studies. It is also possible that participants' understanding of the principal investigator or "audience" (who is herself a child immigrant, born in Russia) could have influenced their responses (e.g., Barreto et al., 2003).[5] For a more accurate data set on others' judgments of the respondents' "Russianness," others who know the respondents would need to be polled.

Conclusion

The results of this study generally imply that U.S. child immigrants from the former Soviet Union identify themselves less as being "American" and more with some other nationality related to the former Soviet Union (see Fig. 1). This study was a preliminary approach to empirically quantifying this particular group of child immigrants' perceptions of identity. No judgments are made regarding whether participants' perceptions had positive or negative effects on them or their roles in society. As such, the aforementioned arguments regarding dual identity made by Pipher (2002) and Laitin (1998) remain largely theoretical in terms of this study.

[5] The target audience generally had a similar heritage or at least one distinct from mainstream American society. While this was not explicitly made known, participants could have deduced my ethnicity (I am also a child-immigrant from the Former Soviet Union) based on something as simple as my name, which was revealed to them.

Considering the large U.S. immigrant population and the relative lack of research on child immigrants especially of former-Soviet descent, it is important to expand our knowledge on this topic in future studies.

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Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Participants were instructed to answer the following questions in the order in which they are presented and to not read ahead. They were asked to not alter previous answers if they felt they were inappropriate after reading subsequent questions. All questions were optional, and if participants were asked to skip any questions that they were not comfortable answering. Survey-takers were informed that all responses were confidential and anonymous.

1. Hometown*
2. Age**
3. Sex (Female, Male, No response)
4. Present location (city, state)*

5. Are you enrolled in a college or university? (Yes, No, Other)
   If so, which college, university?*
6. If enrolled, what is(are) your major(s)?*
7. Have you lived in any countries outside of your country of origin or the United States (Yes, No, Other)
   If you, which country(s)?*
8. In how many different locations have you lived since you came to the United States?**
9. Present-day name for city and country of origin*
10. Age at which you left your country of origin**
11. Age at which you arrived to the United States**
12. Occupation*
13. City and state in which you lived the longest in the U.S.*
14. Are you a citizen of your country of origin? (Yes, No, Other)
15. Are you a U.S. citizen? (Yes, No, Other)
16. Do you currently live with your parents? (Yes, No, When not in school, Other)
    If not, where do your parents live? (In your neighborhood, In your city, In your state, A nearby state, Elsewhere in the U.S., In Canada, In your country of origin, In another country, Other)***
17. Have you ever participated in study abroad? (Yes, No)
    If so, where did you go?*
18. Please answer how you would most closely identify yourself in each of the following categories: Religion, Ethnicity, Nationality, Race*
19. Please answer how you would most closely identify your mother/parent/guardian 1 in each of the following categories: Religion, Ethnicity, Nationality, Race*
20. Please answer how you would most closely identify your mother/parent/guardian 2 in each of the following categories: Religion, Ethnicity, Nationality, Race*
21. Which language(s) do you speak fluently?*
22. Which other, if any, language(s) are you currently studying or have studied in the past and how did you learn them (e.g., school, friends, study abroad)?*
23. In which language are you most comfortable speaking?*
24. Writing?*
25. Which language(s) do you use at home?*
26. Which language do you use most frequently at home?*
27. Which language(s) do you use with your friends?*
28. Which language do you use most frequently with your friends?*
29. Do you think you speak English with a foreign accent? (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)
30. Do others tell you that you that you speak English with a foreign accent? (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)
31. When asked where you are from, which city/state and country do you tend to reply with?*
32. Out of your closest friends, how many were born in the U.S.?**
    Former USSR?**
    Elsewhere?**
33. If you have a significant other, was she/he born: (In the U.S., In the former USSR, Elsewhere, N/A)
34. When do you feel it is appropriate to collectively call all the ethnicities/cultures/nationalities of the former Soviet Union "Russian?" (When in the United States, When in any of the former Soviet Union republics, If the person considers him/herself to be Russian, If the person speaks Russian, If the person lives/was born in Russia, If the person is Russian Orthodox, Always, Never, Other)***

Please place a checkmark in the box you feel most accurately represents your answer on a 1-5 scale (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=always, N/A).

35. How often does your family celebrate holidays specific to your country of origin?
36. How often does your family celebrate holidays specific to your religion?
37. How often does your family celebrate holidays that were not celebrated in your country of origin?
38. How often do you celebrate holidays that your parents/guardians do not?

Please place a checkmark in the box you feel most accurately represents your answer on a 1-5 scale, with 1 representing "not true at all" and 5 representing "completely true" (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, N/A)

39. Your mother/parent/guardian 1 speaks English very well.
40. Your father/parent/guardian 2 speaks English very well.

41. Most of your family is in the U.S.
42. You often have family get-togethers.
43. You keep in touch with family abroad.
44. You keep in touch with friends from your country of origin.
45. Your family values traditions specific to its culture.
46. You think of yourself as an American.
47. You think of yourself as a Russian.
48. Others think of you as an American.
49. Others think of you as a Russian.
50. You think of yourself as a Ukrainian, Latvian, Uzbek, Kazak, or any other national/ethnic label of the former Soviet Union (except Russian).
51. Your cultural identity is very important to you.
52. Your ethnic identity is very important to you.
53. Your national identity is very important to you.
54. Your religious identity is very important to you.
55. You are NOT concerned with your identity in terms of ANY of the following factors: cultural, religious, racial, national, or ethnic.
56. Being "Jewish" refers only to a religious identity.

Please place a checkmark in the box you feel most accurately represents your answer on a 1-5 scale, with 1 representing "minimally/not at all," and 5 representing "maximally" (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, N/A).

57. How involved are you in the ethnic community of your country of origin?
58. How involved are you in your religious community?
59. How involved are you in your community, non-specific to religion, culture, race, nationality, or any other such category?

* Questions allowing open-ended answers
** Questions requiring numerical answers
*** Questions allowing for the selection of multiple answers
All others were close-ended questions that allowed for a single or no response.

Appendix 2: Graphs and Figures

Table 1. *Correlations of Self-Perception of Being "American" or "Russian" vs. Others' Perceptions as Interpreted by the Survey-Taker*

	Russian (Self)	American (Self)	Russian (Others)	American (Others)
Russian (Self)	--	--	--	--
American (Self)	-0.275	--	--	--
Russian (Others)	0.349*	-0.021	--	--
American (Others)	-0.143	0.646***	-.255	--
Russ and Other USSR (Self)	--	-0.375*	--	-0.199

Note. The "Russ and Other USSR (Self)" group consolidates the "Russian (Self)" and the "Other USSR (Self)" constructs by taking the higher identification number. That is, this row displays identifying oneself with any of the former Soviet Union republics.
* significant at $p < .05$ level; ** significant at $p < .01$ level; *** significant at $p < .001$ level

Table 2. *Correlations Between Identifying Oneself as "Russian" or "American" and Importance of Four Types of Identities*

	National Identity	Cultural Identity	Religious Identity	Ethnic Identity

American (Self)	-.0426**	-0.464**	0.098	-0.416**
Russian (Self)	0.390*	0.252	0.067	0.371*

* significant at p < .05 level; ** significant at p < .01 level

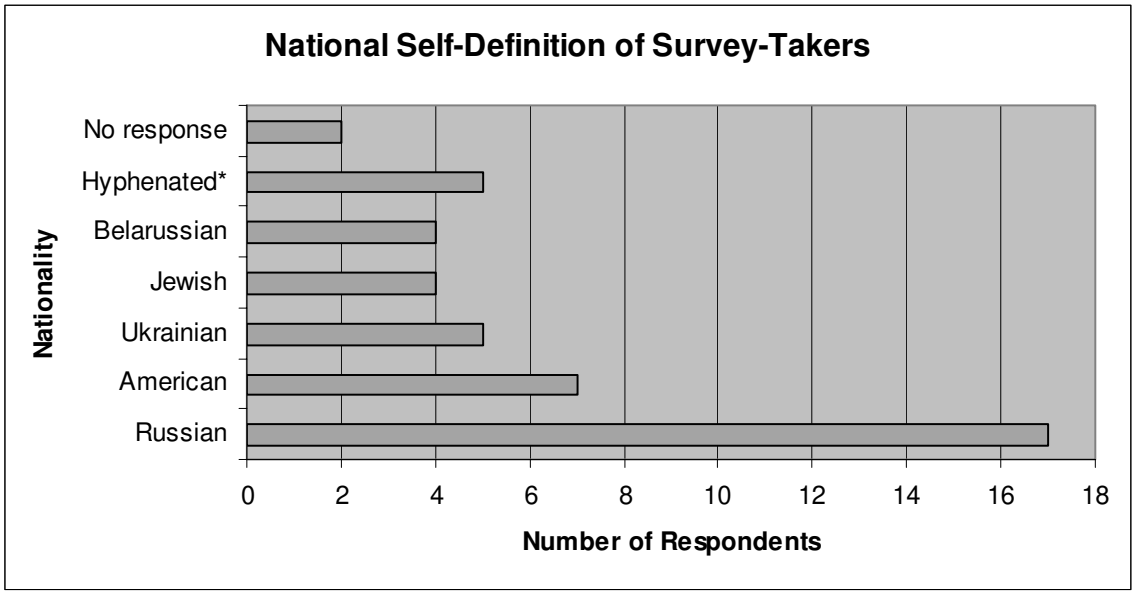

Figure 1. Perception of national identity in U.S. child immigrants born in the former USSR
* Including Russian-American (1) and Russian-Jewish (2), and combinations of former Soviet identities (2)

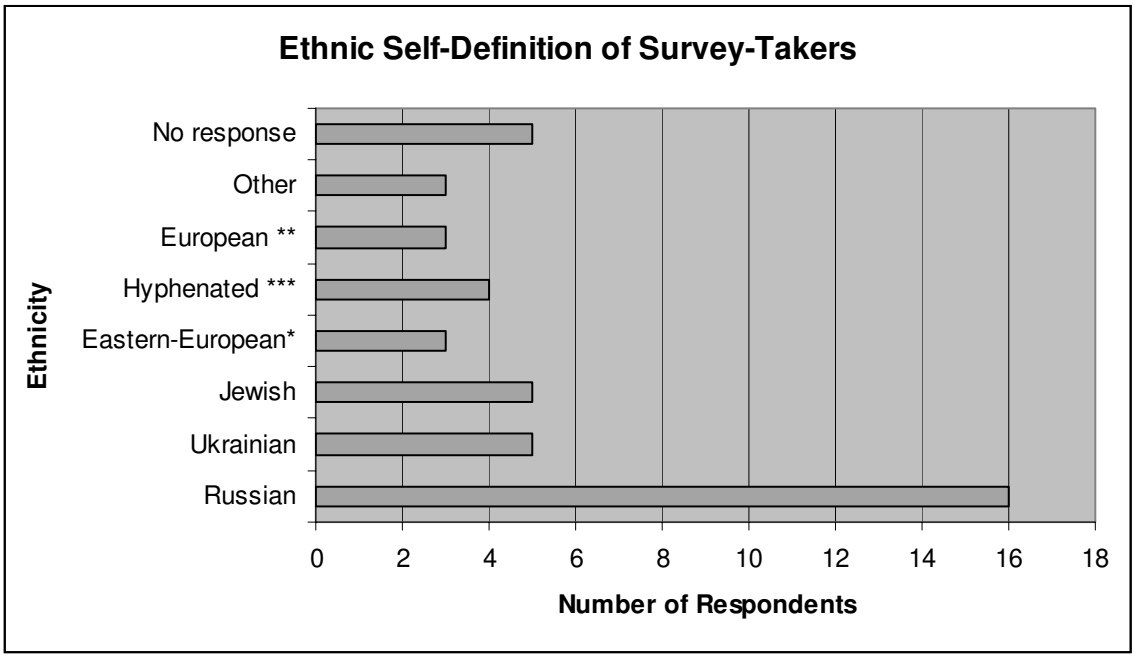

Figure 2. Perception of ethnic identity in U.S. child immigrants born in the former USSR
* Includes "Slavic"

** Includes “White”
*** Including “Polish-, Ukrainian-, and Russian-Jewish”

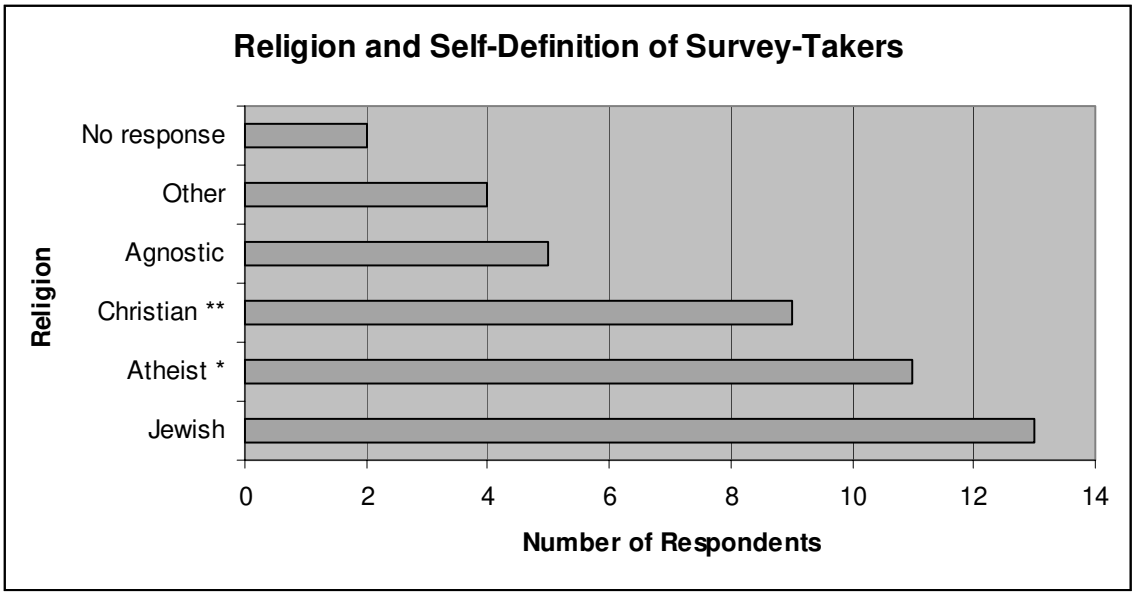

Figure 3. Perception of religious identity in U.S. child immigrants born in the former USSR
* Includes “secular” and “none”
** Includes “Russian Orthodox” and “Eastern Orthodox”

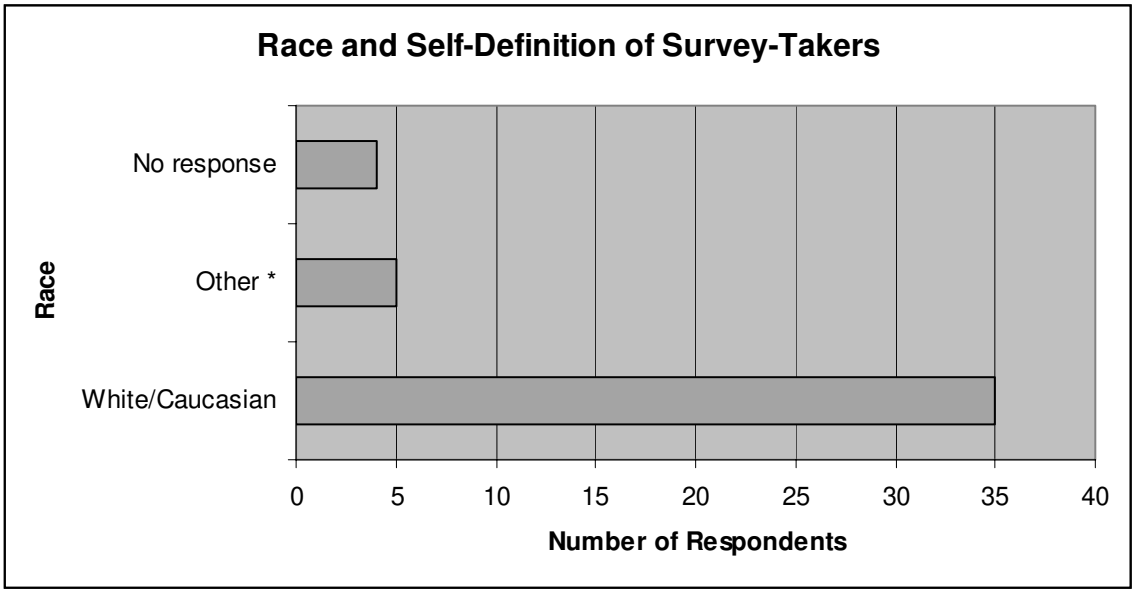

Figure 4. Perception of racial identity in U.S. child immigrants born in the former USSR
* Including “Jewish/white,” “Slavic,” “Russian,” “Jewish,” and “Other”

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The "Norman Problem" in Historiography:
Nationalism and the Origins of Russia
by Michael Westrate

Within the realm of history, several old controversies persist, taking on new meanings within the context of today's political and cultural imperatives. One of these, often called the "Norman problem," revolves around the participation of Scandinavians in the origin of the first Russian state at Kiev. This problem still survives, though the historians on each side of the debate are now different; and the problem now involves new issues. What is at stake is the origins of the word "Russia," the first Russian state, and the Russian and Ukrainian people.

This debate has waxed and waned over the last 300 years. Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, one of the most influential authorities on Russian history in the Anglophone world, is one of today's foremost experts on the subject. In the seventh edition of his textbook, *A History of Russia*, published in 2005, Riasanovsky wrote, "The problem of the origin of the first Russian state in Kiev is exceedingly complex and controversial. No other chapter of Russian history presents the same number and variety of difficulties."[1]

Simply put, the "Norman problem" is the debate over whether Scandinavians founded and ruled the first Russian state. Proponents of the "Norman theory" have used their research to argue that Russia would never have developed "civilization" without influences from the West. Opponents say the Slavs developed civilization independently. Others have argued that the first Russian state was a melding of Scandinavian and Slavic influences. This paper will trace the historiography of the problem, and detail some approaches for further research. It is aimed at an American academic audience in an attempt at stimulating further study on this important issue.

[1] Nicholas Riasanovsky and Mark D. Steinberg, *A History of Russia* (New York, 2005): 21.

Beginnings of the Problem

The historiography of the problem is quite old. *The Chronicle of Bygone Years*, which dates from 1116 and traces the then-ruling house of Rurik from the biblical flood to AD 1110, is the earliest known history of the first Russian state. Its narrative is followed by the inscription:

> In the hope of God's grace, I Sylvester, Prior of St. Michael's, wrote this Chronicle in the year 6624 (1116), the ninth of the indiction, during the reign of Price Vladimir in Kiev, while I was presiding over St. Michael's Monastery. May whosoever reads this book remember me in his prayers.[2]

Unfortunately, although the basic redaction of Sylvester's text may date from 1116, the earliest available manuscript of the *Chronicle*, the Laurentian, was transcribed in 1377. Historians do not know what changes may have occurred in the interval between the original and the Laurentian text. The next available manuscript, the Hypatian, transcribed in 1450 and somewhat different from the first, throws little light on what changes may have occurred before 1377. The pertinent portions of the *Chronicle*, reproduced here, come from the earlier Laurentian text.[3] In this text, Sylvester is unequivocal about the coming of the Scandinavians. Speaking of the Slavs, he states:

> [T]here was no law among them, but tribe rose against tribe. Discord thus ensued among them, and they began to war one against another. They said to themselves, "Let us seek a prince who may rule over us and judge us according to the law." They accordingly went overseas to the Varangian Russes: these particular Varangians were known as Russes, just as some are called Swedes and others Normans, English, and Gotlanders, for they were thus named. [And the East-Slavic peoples] said to the people of Rus', "Our whole land is great and rich, but there is no order in it. Come to rule and reign over us.[4]

Six hundred years later, Peter the Great may have "remembered Sylvester in his prayers," for in 1722, he directed that all *Chronicle* texts should be collected and copied at the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg for the scholars there. However, no attempt was made to publish the manuscript for a larger audience before 1804—and even then, the publication process was interrupted by the French invasion of Russia. It was during the time that the *Chronicle* manuscripts were housed in the Academy that controversies over Russian identity and

[2] Quoted in Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor, "Introduction," 4.
[3] Ibid
[4] Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, trans. and eds., *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text* (Cambridge, Mass, 1953): 61.

conceptions of Russian culture first erupted. These controversies have survived, in one form or another, until the present day, and most arguments still mention the *Chronicle*.

Although known to Russian scholars, the *Chronicle* remained unknown to Westerners until 1732, when Gerhard Freidrich Muller, a German working at the Academy, published his translation of certain excerpts from the book. These aroused the curiosity of other German scholars, and a number of these, including Muller himself, August Ludwig Schlozer, and Gotlib Bayer, worked out what was named the "Norman theory" of the origin of the Russian state. In it, they claimed that the Varangians—a Germanic-Scandinavian people, known as Vikings or Normans in the West—founded the Kievan Rus. Their theory was unsurprising, considering the *Chronicle*'s clarity on the issue.

However, the theory was immediately subjected to sharp criticism. In particular, Mikhail Lomonosov, an influential Russian "natural scientist" of the period, wrote an irate refutation which minimized the role of the Varangians and asserted the primacy of the Slavs. Lomonosov's counter-conception is known, unsurprisingly, as the "Anti-Norman theory" and has been popular with Russian nationalists ever since. In 1940, the Soviets renamed Moscow State University after Lomonosov, in recognition not just of his work in helping to found the university, but also of his early work in countering the Norman theory of the origin of the Rus.[5]

In 1810, Nikolai M. Karamzin, a Russian historian, attempted to seek reconciliation between the two sides in his *A Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia*. For Karamzin, the foundation of Russia's present and future lay in a blend of East and West, and he conceptualized Russia as having native roots and simultaneously reflecting the influence of the West. Regarding the origin problem, he boldly built upon the *Chronicle*, and wrote: "Scandinavia, the lair of

[5] Lomonosov Moscow State University website, "MSU History," found online at http://www.msu.ru/en/info/history.html

restless knights…furnished our fatherland with its first sovereigns.… 'come,' the Finns and Slavs told them, having wearied of internecine wars, 'come to reign and rule over us.'"[6] Of the controversy surrounding the origin issue, he wrote:

> This difference [between the two theories] was not without profound bearing on Russian politics, for which the attitude to the institutions and ideas of the West was always a touchstone; by it one can often distinguish in Russia conservatives proper from extreme reactionaries.[7]

Through the debates involving Lomonosov and Karamzin, we can see that the origin problem divided scholarship among Russians even as it divided scholarship in the West from that in Russia. In the words of historian Vladimir Volkoff, writing in 1985:

> Since even the first redaction [of the Chronicle], which we do not possess, was obviously a compilation of facts, fantasies, interpretations, materials of different origins, interpolated discourses, imitations of other sources and fortuitous or non-fortuitous omissions, modern historians have had a jolly time tearing down the flimsy edifice. No wonder if it collapsed satisfactorily over their own heads. For, having discarded all the evidence, and having nowhere else to look for more, they began replacing it with wishful figments of imagination, each expert brilliantly succeeding in proving exactly what he set out to prove.[8]

This, then, is where the *modern* trouble over the origin problem began.

Modern Debate Concerning the Norman Problem

In 1947, a young Nicholas Riasanovsky wrote an article entitled "The Norman Theory of the Origin of the Russian State."[9] In it, he bemoaned the fact that

> … most of the literature on the subject which is available in western languages, and in English in particular, strikes one as being one-sidedly and extremely Normanist…practically no anti-Normanist works are available in any language but the Russian.[10]

According to Riasanovsky, the Norman theory, as formulated by Bayer, Schlozer, and Muller, and developed by others, "claimed that the entire Russian culture—religion, customs, political structure, law, art—owed its origin and the first two centuries of its development to

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[6] Nicolai Karamzin, *Karamzin's Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia*, trans. Richard Pipes (Cambridge Mass., 1959): 103.
[7] Karamzin, 51.
[8] Vladimir Volkoff, *Vladimir the Russian Viking*, (Woodstock, N.Y., 1985): foreword, xx-xxi.
[9] N. Riasanovsky, "Norman Theory," 96-110. According to his first footnote, Nicholas' article was apparently a slightly modified distillation of a chapter in his father's most recent book, which had just been published in New York, but in the Russian language. Nicholas had helped his father write that chapter.
[10] Ibid., 97.

Scandinavians-Normans."[11] For Riasanovsky, "[t]his astounding theory could exist only as long as the ignorance of Russian antiquity was practically complete, and as long as there was no native Russian historical school."[12]

However, Karamzin's *Memoirs* were clearly part of a "native Russian historical school." It is apparent that Riasanovsky wished to divide debate on the Norman problem with a clear East-West delineation. There are obvious problems with attempting to set all historians within these strict categories. Riasanovsky calls both Nikolai Beliaev and George Vernadsky (who were native Russians) "Normanists of one kind or another..."[13] In fact, Vernadsky was far from a Normanist. His work, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this paper, clearly argues that Russia did not completely owe its origin to Scandinavians.

Until others took up the origin problem in 1996, twentieth-century English-language debate on the issue can be encapsulated within the work of the Riasanovsky family (who argued for the Anti-Norman theory), Henryk Paszkiewicz (who argued a Normanist line) and George Vernadsky (who credits both theories). Of course, each scholar had supporters and detractors, but their positions on the origin problem are representative of most scholarship at the time.

According to the Riasanovskys, "the Slavs of the Kievan state were…the inheritors of centuries of cultural development in southern Russia."[14] As to culture—language, law, literary traditions, etc.— Nicholas Riasanovsky went so far as to state in a 1947 article that "in fact Russia exercised a considerable cultural influence on Scandinavia."[15] He later continues:

> At the present time most specialists in the field of early Russian history think that the Normans formed merely one of the elements of the Rus, which was fundamentally connected with the natives of southern Russia and their gradual economic and political evolution….The Normans had very little

[11] Ibid., 98.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 99.

> to contribute to Russia…they represented merely a minor or even a superfluous element in the formation of that state.[16]

Riasanovsky's article relied heavily on the work of G. and S. Gedeonov, Russian historians of the late 1800s. Several times, when Riasanovsky referred to arguments of ostensibly western Normanists, he actually quoted from Russian-language sources. Overall, the article reads like the polemic of a Russian who wished his history to be purely Slavic. [17]

In 1954, Henryk Paszkiewicz, a Polish historian of the Slavic peoples, entered this ongoing controversy with his *The Origin of Russia*. He continued in 1963 with *The Making of the Russian Nation*. Both books concentrate on the topics surrounding the Norman problem. Paszkiewicz largely discounted the work of Soviet historians, as he pointed out that nationalist Communist leaders had directed them to find a continuous Slavic primacy. For example, in *Russian Nation*, Soviet scholar Boris D. Grekov is quoted as having written in 1940 that: "It is not easy to do away with the evidence of the Normanists. I am convinced that it will never be completely suppressed. Too many facts have been verified by this school."[18] Yet Grekov had changed his tune by 1942, writing simply that: "The Norman thesis was the work of 'fascist falsifiers of history.'"[19] Paszkiewicz highlights the fact that, in 1940, the Soviets were allied with Germany, while in 1942, these two countries were at war.[20]

Although Grekov's change in conclusions was timed suspiciously with his country's change in alliances, he was correct when he stated that the "fascist falsifiers of history" used the Norman theory to further their ends. Adolf Hitler himself said: "Unless other peoples, beginning

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[16] Ibid., 109-110.
[17] I have nothing but the highest regard for Dr. Riasanovsky. In fact, in my work as a graduate student, I have always began my studies—of any topic in Russian history—with his extraordinary *History*. This paper does not seek to degrade the work and theories of great scholars. Rather, it is an attempt to generate new interest in an old, but still unsettled, controversy.
[18] Boris D. Grekov, quoted in Henryk Paszkiewicz, *The Making of the Russian Nation* (London, 1963): 172.
[19] Grekov, quoted in Paszkiewicz, *Russian Nation, 172*
[20] Henryk Paszkiewicz, *Russian Nation,* 172.

with the Vikings, had imported some rudiments of organization into Russian humanity, the Russians would be living like rabbits."[21] However, Grekov was also obviously incorrect with his sweeping generalization that all Norman theorists were fascists.

To return to Paszkiewicz, his basic thesis was as follows:

> Our considerations so far throw some light on the provenance of the Rus'. Since they were not Slavs and inhabited the northern lands, on the Baltic; since their journeying—both warlike and commercial—embraced Eastern and Western Europe, only one conclusion can be reached, viz., that they were Norsemen.[22]

Norsemen came to the city of Kiev to rule it, and Kievan rulers were descended from them, just as the *Chronicle* reported. He also argued that, though the Slavic element quickly became the largest component of the Russian people, the Norse influence continued for some time. Paszkiewicz used a variety of sources, including Byzantine records, Scandinavian epics, and the letters of Turkic traders, as well as varied Russian manuscript evidence including all of the various iterations of the *Chronicle*, to argue his theories.

The Riasanovsky family responded, via articles, to Paszkiewicz at least twice. First Valentin, Nicholas's father, accused Paszkiewicz of "an arbitrary use of the sources, an insufficient acquaintance with the literature on the subject, and unsubstantiated conclusions."[23] Alexander V. Riasanovsky, Nicholas' brother, wrote an article entitled "'Runaway Slaves' and 'Swift Danes' in Eleventh-Century Kiev." It appeared in *Speculum* in 1964, and was a direct response to Paszkiewicz's second book on the subject, *Russian Nation*, which itself had included a retort to Valentin Riasanovksy's article. In that article in *Speculum*, Paszkiewicz was lumped in with the same German and Scandinavian scholars (from the late 1700s and 1800s) whom Nicholas and Valentin had railed against in 1947. Alexander set out to undermine Paszkiewicz's

[21] Quoted in Wladyslaw Duczko, *Viking Rus: Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe* (Leiden, Netherlands, 2004): 4.
[22] Paszkiewicz, *Russian Nation*, 158.
[23] Valentin Riasanovsky, "Review of *The Origin of Russia* by Henryk Paszkiewicz," *The Russian Review* no. 2 (Apr., 1956): 134.

conclusions solely on the basis of Paszkiewicz's use and translation of a certain version of the *Chronicle*.[24] Since it deals only with this small issue, Riasanovsky's argument seems insufficient as a refutation of his opponent's well-developed research.

The exchanges between the Normanists and Anti-Normanists in the mid-twentieth century were at least as vitriolic as the exchanges between their predecessors in earlier centuries. Paszkiewicz and his supporters were perhaps less polemical than their opponents, but they did not shy away from accusing the Anti-Normanists of a "National and Soviet ideological bias in interpretation of the sources."[25] On the other side, the Anti-Normanists charged Paszkiewicz with multiple scholarly transgressions, including the sin of allowing his Polish nationalism to color his work. One reviewer, Anotole Mazour, even took the debate a step further, stating:

> Academic freedom is a precious possession…If, however, some of the highly hypothetic theories assume the form of political dogmas that might seriously affect world policies, it is necessary to call for alertness. Highly hypothetical theories can quite easily turn into false instruments of national policy with sorrowful consequences for all concerned.[26]

George Vernadsky, in a 1955 review of Paszkiewicz's *Origin of Russia*, applied a similar parsing of translation such as that used by Alexander Riasanovsky. Essentially, Vernadsky applauded the depth and detail of Paszkiewicz's work, while discounting his conclusions based solely on the basis of certain translations. These translations were not central to Paszkiewicz's main arguments, and therefore are not sufficient to refute his basic conclusions.[27]

Vernadsky briefly developed his own thoughts on the original problem in 1959 with *The Origins of Russia* (not to be confused with Paszkiewicz's similarly titled book). In a work of over 300 pages, he spent a scant 15 on the Norman problem, quickly reconciling the issue in the

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[24] Alexander's argument is based on the small issue of Paszkiewicz's translation of Thietmar's *Chronicon*, a later version of the *Chronicle*. Alexander V. Riasanovsky, "'Runaway Slaves' and 'Swift Danes' in Eleventh-Century Kiev," *Speculum*, no. 2 (Apr., 1964): 288-297.

[25] Frank T. Nowak, "Review of *The Origin of Russia* by Henryk Paszkiewicz," *The Scientific Monthly*, no. 1. (Jul., 1955): 45.

[26] Anatole G. Mazour, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 300, Internal Security and Civil Rights 9Jul., 1955): 170.

[27] George Vernadsky, "The Origin of Russia," *Speculum*, no. 2 (Apr., 1955): 293-301.

following way: "[T]he best way to reconcile the contradictions in the evidence…is to admit the presence of both the Norse and the Slavic elements in the people of Rus at that time, in other words to consider them a symbiosis of Slavs and Norsemen."[28] This seems to be sidestepping the issue. What was—and is—important to almost all parties in this controversy is the level of primacy the Scandinavians had in Kiev. On this issue Vernadsky was silent.

At the same time that this debate raged in Western scholarship, at least one Soviet scholar was working to temper the nationalistic tendencies of Soviet historiography. Leo Klein, together with his Leningrad seminar students, recognized seven steps in his conception of Norman influence on the East Slavs:

1. The definite arrival of the Normans to the ancient East-Slavic area.
2. The foundation of Kiev's dynasty by the Normans.
3. The Norman origin of the word "Rus."
4. The continued influence of the Normans on the East-Slavic state.
5. The creation of the first East-Slavic state by the Normans.
6. The pro-Scandinavian racial preferences of the Normans were the cause of their successes.
7. In the ancient East-Slavic state, Scandinavians were the rulers, Slavs were their subordinates.[29]

Klein's conception was remarkably like that developed by Paszkiewicz, putting this Russian scholar firmly into what the Riasanovskys called the "Normanist camp." Again, the controversy had proven not to be a debate of historians in the West versus historians in Russia. Rather, it continued as a debate between nationalistic historians and their more objective contemporaries.

Nationalism and the New Historiography

Judging by publication volume, Nicholas Riasanovsky's textbook, *A History of Russia*, is the most popular English-language textbook on Russian history. It is now in its seventh edition, published in 2005. In that edition, Dr. Riasanovsky asserts that, although "the majority of scholars today consider the first Russian dynasty and its immediate retinue as Scandinavian…there is no reason to assert a fundamental Scandinavian influence on Kievan

[28] George Vernadsky, *The Origins of Russia* (Oxford, 1959): 199.
[29] Leo Klein, from papers published in the 1960s, referenced in Duczko, 4.

culture."[30] However, much of the recent scholarship conducted on this issue does find what can be called at least a "Scandinavian influence."

In 1984, for example, Vladimir Volkoff wrote *Vladimir the Russian Viking* about the early ruler of Kiev who brought Christianity to the Russians. Volkoff also describes the "bickering" among historians on the Scandinavian influences in Kiev, and even alludes to the Riasanovsky-Paszkiewicz feud, but ultimately takes the *Chronicle* at face value and proceeds with an understanding that is decidedly Paszkiewiczian in nature.

In 1996, Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard wrote *The Emergence of Rus: 750-1200*. In it, they wove archaeology and historical manuscripts together to explore the origins of the Rus. They also worked largely outside of the Norman debates; instead of arguing for Slavic or Norse primacy in the creation of a Russian state, Franklin and Shepard demonstrated both the diversity of populations and cultures in the lands of the Rus and the irrelevance of the concept of a "state" during the period in question. Franklin and Shepard instead traced the steady development of the "Rus" people from their first small settlements to a more unified network of towns, and thence to the first centuries of the Kievan Rus—a modern state which had evolved from one of those settlements. According to Franklin and Shepard, a "state," using the modern definition, did not exist on the Dnieper until long after the events described in the Chronicle.[31]

In 2001 Geoffrey Hosking painted a picture in his *Russia and the Russians: A History* that was not unlike that of Paszkiewicz and Klein:

> It is not unknown for relatively primitive peoples to accept a ruler from a higher culture, to end feuding among themselves, to bring trade, and also to organize external defense. It is a function the descendents of the Rus frequently exercised for other peoples in later centuries. This is certainly the service the incoming Vikings performed….Together the 'Viking-Slavs' formed a kind of tribal super-alliance, with its center in Kiev.[32]

[30] N. Riasanovsky, *History of Russia*, 25.
[31] Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus 750-1200* (London, 1996).
[32] Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia and the Russians: A History* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001): 33-34.

Also in 2001, Franklin wrote an article entitled "Pre-Mongol Rus': New Sources, New Perspectives?" in which he discounted much of the new scholarship:

> Radical changes in history do not necessarily produce instant radical changes in the writing of history; or at least, not in the writing of history which deserves to be taken seriously. The historiography of pre-Mongol Rus' has certainly developed *since* the collapse of the Soviet Union, but not necessarily in ways which are *attributable to* the collapse of the Soviet Union. Indeed, one could almost formulate a law: the extent to which a change is *attributable to* the collapse of the Soviet Union tends to be in inverse proportion to its scholarly value.[33]

In his synthesis of the current historiographical situation, Franklin wrote:

> If we ignore the lunatic fringe, change is limited. On the one hand, long-established scholars continue to slug out the same old battles with only slight modifications to the terminology. On the other hand, attempts to introduce fresh perspectives are generally tentative in practice (if not in introductory declarations) and have not as yet produced fully coherent results.[34]

During recent decades, the debate has continued without resolution, influenced by different chauvinisms and newly emergent nationalisms. At the same time that Russian nationalist historians are continuing a conception of the ancient Russian past much like that promoted by the Riasanovskys, the new Ukrainian government has taken an official position that draws heavily on the earliest Norman theory.[35] For Russian nationalists, it is perhaps natural that they would try to prove a purely Slavic birth for their nation, and the Anti-Norman theory fits this need. For Ukrainian nationalists, many of whom now wish to minimize their connection with Russia, the reverse seems to be true—and the Norman theory is convenient for them.

Scandinavian scholars such as Hakon Stang have developed theories that help to place their homeland at the pinnacle of history.[36] In response to Anti-Norman theorists, he writes: "hypothesis is piled upon hypothesis to create edifices which are simply not susceptible to critical analysis, and the volume should be recommended only with the attachment of a clear

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[33] Simon Franklin, "Pre-Mongol Rus': New Sources, New Perspectives?" *The Russian Review* 60 (Oct., 2001): 465. Emphasis in the original.
[34] Franklin, "Pre-Mongol Rus," 470.
[35] Official website of the government of Ukraine, "Kyivan Rus," found online at http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/en/publish/article?art_id=2629325&cat_id=32672
[36] Håkon Stang, *The Naming of Russia* (Oslo, 1996), available on-line at http://www.hf.uio.no/east/Medd/Medd77/dl.html

health warning."[37] From his position at Uppsala University, Wladyslaw Duczko published a synthesis of newer archeological evidence in 2004, which he claims supports the Norman theory.

Franklin and Duczko assert that new information is now emerging out of the former Soviet countries. According to Franklin, "early Rus' may not have Central Committee archives to declassify, but every year brings an equivalent frisson of anticipation ahead of the season's archaeological discoveries."[38] These post-Soviet discoveries include: numerous *gramoty*, or written declarations, on birch bark from ancient Novgorod; clusters of documents from the eleventh and twelfth centuries relating to the collection of dues from outlying territories of the early city-states; and waxed wooden tablets from the beginning of the eleventh century that are now recognized as the earliest known Cyrillic "book" of the Rus.[39] No less noteworthy are the post-Soviet publications of other epigraphic sources. V. L. Ianin has written several volumes on ancient official seals, including very early examples of previously unknown types.[40] M.P. Sotnikova has republished a corpus of early native coins. T.V. Rozhdestvenskaia has published a book on ancient graffiti.[41] All of this is likely pertinent to the current debate, although most has not had time to be fully considered in the debate's context.

Franklin also tells of new source material found in the continuing series of non-Slavic sources initiated by V.T. Pashuto in 1977. In recent years, the series has expanded to include newly discovered Latin sources from Germany, new translations of the work of ancient

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[37] Franklin, "Pre-Mongol Rus," 468.
[38] Franklin, "Pre-Mongol Rus," 466-477.
[39] See V.L. Ianin and A.A. Zalizniak, *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste (Iz raskopok 1984-1989)* (Moscow, 1993); and idem, *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste (Iz raskopok 1990-1996)* (Moscow, 2000). See also A.A. Zalizniak, *Drevnenovgorodskii dialect* (Moscow, 1995), which is a major reassessment of birchbark writing using linguistic analysis. All of the footnotes which contain Russian-language sources were taken from Franklin's "Pre-Mongol Rus."
[40] V.L. Ianin and P.G. Gaidukov, *Aktovye pechati Drevnei Rusi X-XV vv*., vol. 3, *Pechati, zaregistrirovannye v 1970-1996* (Moscow, 1998).
[41] M.P. Sotnikova, *Drevneishierusskie monety X-XI vekov: Katalog i issledovanie* (Moscow, 1995); T.V. Rozhdestvenskaia, *Drevnerusskie Nadpis I na stenakh khramov: Novye istochniki XI-XV* (St. Petersburg, 1992). Sources found in Franklin, "Pre-Mongol Rus'," 466-467.

Byzantine historians, newly released eighth-to-thirteenth century maps, four recent volumes on Icelandic sagas, and freshly published compilations on other Byzantine and Arab sources.[42]

Though Franklin details possible sources, he makes no conclusions of his own other than:

> In a field where historians' main complaint tends to be the lack of written sources and where many remain reluctant to pay due attention to non-narrative evidence, the value of the continuing expansion and diversification of the available source base over the past decade (including non-written archaeological sources) can hardly be overestimated. The traditionally high-profile native sources--above all, the chronicles—gradually shed at least part of the burden of proof.[43]

Wladyslaw Duczko detailed the recent archeological findings in the Volkhov area that relate directly to other finds in Scandinavia. He highlighted the importance of the women's personal ornamentation that archeologists have found in both Eastern Europe and Scandinavia and its interconnection. For Duczko, putting the post-Soviet archeological evidence in its wider context is a key to understanding the Norman problem and the culture of the people who lived and died in Ladoga, Gnezdovo, Shestovitsa, Novgorod, Kiev, and elsewhere.[44]

Despite all this debate, there seems to be both a lack of general interest in this topic in the United States and a lack of viable English-language sources to stimulate such interest. Although Duczko's book is well-documented and relatively objective, it is poorly written in English and was clearly influenced by Duczko's surroundings and his funding.[45] Although Simon Franklin seems to be doing his best to create a more objective picture, he works and publishes in Great Britain and his books are consequently price-prohibitive for the average American student.[46]

All these new sources, however, may not be enough to resolve the Russian origin problem. Personal agendas, including nationalistic tendencies--both Imperial and Soviet, both

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Franklin, "Pre-Mongol Rus'," 467.
[44] Duczko, 8-9.
[45] Duczko's funding was provided by the Berit Wallenberg Foundation in Stockholm. "The purpose of the Foundation is to: 'promote scientific research, teaching and/or education *beneficial to the Kingdom of Sweden*.'" Found online at http://wallenberg.org/kaw/in_english/default.asp, emphasis added.
[46] Dr. Franklin is the Director of the Department of Slavic Studies, Clare College, University of Cambridge.

Ukrainian and Russian--have skewed the study of the origin question for far too long. Although it is clear that the Russian origin problem has not yet been resolved, it can be researched further, particularly with the numerous new primary sources. Perhaps American scholars, with little to lose by the outcome, could bring some much-needed detachment to the study of the early Rus. The author of this paper is confident that if American "Russianists" would simply pursue the new evidence, they would find an audience sufficiently interested in the subject.

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The Rise of Economic Nationalism under Globalization and the Case of Post-Communist Russia

by David Szakonyi

Across the globe, trends of nationalization and economic nationalism have crept into the policies of nation-states recently. Fueled by popular nationalist sentiment, state elites from Bolivia to Russia have reasserted state control over resources connected with energy and industry and promoted the interests of a purely national economy. Economic nationalism has emerged as a powerful and attractive policy to press for national interests, achieve economic aims, and preserve the autonomy of individual nation-states in an increasingly internationalized world. Understanding how and why this process is taking place will be important to developing effective foreign policy and effective energy policy for the foreseeable future.

This paper is organized in two parts. The first will describe the role of the nation-state within the context of globalization. The second will examine the representative case of post-communist Russia in order to provide insight into both the structural conditions surrounding economic nationalism and the actions of state agents in the formation of popular nationalist sentiment in favor of specific economic policies.

Part 1. The Nation-State and Globalization

Most recent authors writing about the future of nationalism foresee some transformation of the classic nation-state under globalization, and envision a decrease in nationalist sentiment over the next century. These ideas come largely from Eric Hobsbawm and Ernest Gellner, authors of two classic studies which are generally considered the foundations of nationalism studies. These authors have been the most cited and discussed, and have been most influential in creating the modern definition of nationalism. An exploration of their thoughts will serve as the basis for defining the terms “nationalism” and “economic nationalism” for the purposes at hand.

In his work *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Eric Hobsbawm argues that nationalism "is simply no longer the historical force it was" and adopts an overall negative view of the future for states in the age of globalization.[1] For Hobsbawm, the growth of the international economy and advances in communication and transport have undermined the vitality and purpose of nations. International associations, trade organizations, and transnational corporations are usurping economic powers from nations and replacing them as the "major building-blocks of the world system."[2] Hobsbawm envisions nations as "retreating before, resisting, adapting to, being absorbed or dislocated by the new supranational restructuring of the globe."[3] This rather ambiguous statement is pessimistic about the ability of nations to continue to dominate the international order and economy.

Similarly, Ernest Gellner writes that in order for nations to remain politically viable, the relationship between "class" and "nation" must be maintained in the minds of the elites and populaces of modern nation-states. Gellner writes, "the definition of political units and boundaries will not be able to ignore with impunity the distribution of cultures."[4] The training required to maintain an advanced industrial society will preserve the nation-state as the primary agent behind the necessary standardization of language and culture. On the other hand, Gellner remarks that "late industrial society can be expected to be one in which nationalism persists, but in a muted, less virulent form."[5] As long as differing nationalities do not self-identify themselves as subordinate "classes" within a state, violent confrontation between ethnicities will diminish. This point can also be transferred to the world order. Nationalist conflict between states often occurs as the result of perceived inequalities and competition. According to Gellner, nationalism

[1] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780 : Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 169.
[2] Ibid., 181.
[3] Ibid., 191.
[4] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 121.
[5] Ibid., 122.

may thus resurge as a result of unfulfilled economic expectations. Also, if states feel inferior to, exploited by, or dominated by "advanced" powers, new forms of nationalism may appear to combat this perceived threat and will foster a politically divisive and tense environment.[6]

Economic Development and Nationalism

For most recent authors, nationalism is tied to economic development and vice versa. Developing or transitioning modern industrial economies are quite unique in their individual models of development, restricting generalizations about a single set of economic conditions in each. Thus, to define how economic nationalism has emerged in these states, it is worth examining the importance of nationalist sentiments as a common attribute of them. Although development patterns are diverse and thus hotly debated, several authors have asserted that uniting a populace under a national symbol has a strong influence on the rate of development. This link between national identity and growth lays the foundation for the contemporary conception and implementation of economic nationalism.

In *The Spirit of Capitalism*, Liah Greenfeld asserts the centrality of nationalism in industrializing and advancing the major world powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

> nationalism necessarily promotes the type of social structure which the modern economy needs to develop. Being inherently egalitarian, nationalism has as one of its central cultural consequences an open-or class-system of stratification, which allows for social mobility, makes labor free, and dramatically expands the sphere of operation of market forces.[7]

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[6] The relationship between the nation-state and globalization is debated. In an article entitled "Globalization and Nationalism," J.A. Hall argues against the "myth of globalization," writing that "most economic activity remains firmly within the territorial boundaries of national states." (J.A. Hall, "Globalization and Nationalism," *Thesis Eleven* 63, no. 1 (2000): 65.) He goes on to argue that different national styles further render the nation-state resilient to global, conformist pressures. According to Hall, the stable geopolitical arrangement following World War II fostered the expansion of liberalism and consociation, giving new roles to the nation-state outside of conflicting national interests and ambitions. In "Globalization and the Nation-State," Montserrat Guibernau seems to disagree. He argues that the nation-state is "steadily losing its relevance as a frame for political, economic, social and cultural life." (Montserrat Guibernau, "Globalization and the Nation-State," in *Understanding Nationalism,* ed. Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 266.) Globalization threatens the autonomy and identity of nations, as leaders must adapt and evolve state processes to redefine national identity against the context of a globalized world. The question remains of how states will achieve this.

[7] Liah Greenfeld, *The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 23.

Greenfeld thus connects the needs of capitalism with the origins of nationalism. She further argues for the importance of nationalism in economic development as long as "economic achievement, competitiveness, and prosperity are defined as positive and important national values."[8] Similarly, shared economic development can serve as a national symbol with which individuals identify, along with identity markers such as shared language, culture, and territory.

Once a strong sense of national purpose supports economic development, a nation-state must appeal to popular sentiments in order to organize collective effort. Takeshi Nakano writes in "Theorizing Economic Nationalism" that "in order to mobilize economic resources, create an integrated national market and effectively implement economic policies,"[9] state elites must draw upon shared cultural resources and national allegiances. The confidence derived from allegiance to a strong national identity can strengthen economic growth by rallying a citizenry around a set of national objectives. According to Nakano, "a large part of the national market is historically shaped by the state through the monetary system, legal system, system of education, transportation and information networks, trade policies and so forth."[10] Therefore, in modern history, the centrality of the state as an agent of economic change involves a sociological component, which nationalistic ideologies can complement and even bolster.

The Origins and Goals of Economic Nationalism

Upon examining the relationship between nationalism and economic development, one next must select a definition of economic nationalism and its goals and purposes. The definition offered by Rawi Abdelal in his article "Nationalism and International Political Economy in Eurasia" is useful due to its concise nature and its consideration of most of the important factors discussed above. Abdelal states simply that economic nationalism involves the implementation

[8] Ibid.
[9] Takeshi Nakano, "Theorizing Economic Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 3 (2004).
[10] Ibid.

of "economic policy that follows the national purpose and direction."[11] In other words, economic nationalism prioritizes national interests above private property and profit motives. Instead of pursuing opportunities solely to increase capital, policymakers make economic decisions with the intention of uniting and strengthening the nation-state.

Clearly, the definition of economic nationalism is connected with a broader conception of nationalism, but the two are not exactly the same. Whereas contemporary concepts of nationalism posit that for every nation, there should exist a corresponding state that protects and vitalizes this nationality, economic nationalism goes one step further. Economic nationalism draws on the foundations of national identity, but concentrates on using economic means to unite a populace and increase the power of the nation-state in the world order. This emphasis on economic security may entail the nationalization of key industries, or simply the restriction of foreign influence and the protection and promotion of domestic labor and products. Nationalist sentiments are mobilized to ensure the economic autonomy of the nation-state.

The emergence of economic nationalism in a state generally occurs as a result of several conditions. First, the expansive processes of globalization may elicit strong reactions by ethnic nationalities which fear the eradication and subordination of their cultural identities. As promises of economic security and happiness remain unfulfilled by ineffective, selective, or uneven development and progress, individuals may blame groups or specific people that they see as responsible. Increases in movement and contact between states create both internal groups such as immigrants and external groups such as world powers, which can be seen as responsible for economic hardship or the destruction of traditional ways of life.[12] Nationalist tendencies can

[11] Rawi Abdelal, "Nationalism and International Political Economy in Eurasia," in *Economic Nationalism in a Globalizing World*, ed. Eric Helleiner and Andreas Pickel (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 26.
[12] Abdelal, "Nationalism and International Political Economy in Eurasia," 21.

reemerge as a reaction to these "enemies." Thus, economic and cultural grievances play a large role in precipitating nationalist sentiment under globalization.

Second, a set of elites and policy makers set nationalist goals of autonomy, unity, and identity to appeal to this sentiment and achieve several aims. Nationalism can be used as a political instrument by elites attempting to concentrate their hold on political power and increase the global status of their nation-state. These elites identify economic prowess as an effective means for protecting culture, promoting national power, and winning the support of citizens who feel disenfranchised and powerless as a result of the processes of globalization.[13]

Recent explosions in nationalist sentiments, such as those in Russia, conform to Gellner's theory that when "class" and "nation" combine, political activism erupts.[14] Pressure to conform to the models described by Meyer forces governments to adopt measures that promote the advancement of the economic security of national citizens.[15] As shown above, nationalism and the state have historically played crucial roles in economic development, prompting elites to strive to reinvigorate nationalism as a driving force for the economy.

Misconceptions About Economic Nationalism

Robert Gilpin and James Mayall argued in the late 1980s that economic nationalism is purely or primarily protectionist and mercantilist, and that it aims at the complete financial independence of the nation-state by countering the ventures of foreign capitalists and governments with trade barriers, tariffs, and other mercantilist policies.[16] Although the history of

[13] Nakano, "Theorizing Economic Nationalism."
[14] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 121.
[15] eds John W. Meyer, "World Society and the Nation-State," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 1 (1997): 149. These models include: "territorial boundaries and a demarcated population; sovereign authority; self-determination, and responsibility; standardized purposes like collective development, social justice, and the protection of individual rights; authoritative, law-based control systems; clear possession of resources such as natural and mineral wealth and a labor force; and policy technologies for the rational means-ends accomplishment of goals."
[16] James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society*, vol. 10, *Cambridge Studies in International Relations* (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 71.

economic nationalism lends support to this theory, the continued spread of globalization has significantly changed the tone and direction of economic nationalists. The last decade has shown that cooperation with other national economies can foster greater growth and development and modern economic nationalist doctrine has become more flexible to take advantage of this opportunity.[17] For example, the aim of promoting local industries can lead governments to encourage expansion into new markets outside their own borders. Lifting certain trade barriers and encouraging foreign direct investment can actually assist certain areas of the economy and thus can be in the national interest. Therefore, economic nationalism need not solely be affiliated with protectionism, but may be simply the pursuit of national interests through economic means.

Part 2. Post-Communist Russia: A Case Study

Since the fall of the USSR in 1991, the Russian people have seen a series of dramatic political, economic, and social changes, including greater integration into the global economy and two economic collapses that obliterated personal savings and caused a lasting feeling of economic insecurity. In a move that is not at all surprising given the theory outlined above, the Putin administration has adopted what may be seen as aggressive economic nationalist policies.

The years immediately following the fall of the Soviet Union witnessed a catastrophic upheaval of Russian society, providing what scholar Paul Starobin terms "highly fertile soil for nationalism."[18] First, the "piratization" of Russian natural resources by young oligarchs after 1991 sent economic indicators and standards of living spiraling.[19] Second, "Western reforms" adopted by Yeltsin failed to curb recession, and violent tensions between displaced ethnic

[17] Andreas Pickel, "Explaining, and Explaining with, Economic Nationalism" *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 1 (2003).
[18] Paul Starobin, "The Rise of Nationalism," *National Journal*, December 30 2004.
[19] Ibid. "Piratization" refers to the rapid privatization of state industries after the fall of the USSR. Due to the overall economic collapse at the time, the prices of such resources fell exorbitantly, enabling cunning young entrepreneurs to buy up and consolidate these industries. These quick sales and subsequent high concentration of wealth in the hands of these businessmen led many in Russia to believe that the country's wealth had been pirated away.

minorities plagued Russian societal relations.[20] Psychologically, Russians never came to terms with the USSR's failure to provide necessary social services and to compete as the world power it claimed to be.[21] Insecurity about the future prompted chaotic responses to government policies in the early 1990s, when Russians suffered from a severe identity crisis as their economy and national ideology completely and suddenly reversed itself. Many resented the loss of status held under the communists or the security that the USSR had afforded and openly grieved for the loss of the USSR, which Starobin says is "a powerful catalyst" for the rise of nationalism in Russia.[22]

In addition, the actions of Western powers and the spread of globalization exacerbated the situation. Initially, most welcomed the introduction of Western culture and systems of government. However, with the resultant mismanagement and exploitation of Russia's economy, many came to perceive an "invasion" of Western powers which, in the words of one Russian scholar, took advantage of "Russia's temporary weakness to promote their own interests."[23] According to this logic, transnational corporations ravaged the carcass of the deceased Soviet state and NATO crept closer to Russia's borders, while Russian politicians encouraged cooperation with European and American interests as key to Russia's revival in the world arena.

Unfortunately, decades-old animosity towards the West also did not immediately disappear from the minds of Russian citizens. As globalization diffused new forms of culture across Russia's borders, Russians became, in the words of yet another Russian scholar, acutely "aware of their cultural distinctiveness from the West."[24] Also, as the economy collapsed in the

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[20] S. Kortunov, "Russia's Way: National Identity and Foreign Policy " *International Affairs: A Russian Journal* 44, no. 4 (1998).
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] S. Kortunov, "Russia's Way: National Identity and Foreign Policy " *International Affairs: A Russian Journal* 44, no. 4 (1998).
[24] Andrei P. Tsygankov, "The Return to Eurasia: Russia's Identity and Geoeconomic Choices in the Post-Soviet World," in *Economic Nationalism in a Globalizing World*, ed. Eric Helleiner and Andreas Pickel (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 57.

Russian regions and the other former Soviet states, new waves of immigrants, many of them ethnic minorities, streamed into Russia's major urban areas, creating new competition for limited employment. Xenophobia grew as Russians became disenchanted with the "free movement" principles of globalization, which seemed to exacerbate the already dire economic situation.

The social and economic difficulties of the immediate post-communist era translated into a highly potent situation for a rise in nationalism. Also, a "political vacuum" emerged within the state, as Russian citizens lost faith and interest in political participation. Political economist V. I. Tikhomirov argues that the failure of the Russian leadership to combat corruption and the economic chaos of the transitioning state "led to a growing alienation between the population and the establishment"[25] and further asserts that mass political disillusionment, apathy and the absence of a uniting ideology made the positions of the radical opposition even stronger in their appeal to constituents.[26] Here, the "radical opposition" included nationalists who offered policies that they claimed would place the expectations of Russians and Russia's national interests above those small groups who profited while most of the population lost everything they had.[27]

State-Directed Economic Nationalism

By 1995, many Russian politicians began to understand the political value of tying policies directly to "Russia's interests." Over the second half of the decade, Russia moved away from previous efforts at closer integration with the West, as the society experienced a powerful resurgence of nationalism.[28] Perhaps most importantly, these domestic and foreign policy

[25] V. I. Tikhomirov, *The Political Economy of Post-Soviet Russia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 157.
[26] Ibid., 276.
[27] Ibid., 157.
[28] Ibid., 276. Parallels can be drawn between Putin's attempts to harness nationalist sentiments to drive economic development with those of Stalin during the 1920's and 1930's. Although different mechanisms enforced cooperation, the rhetoric of "socialism in one country" strongly resonated with that part of Russian society which wished to reassert the dominance of Russia, especially after humiliating defeats in the Russo-Japanese War and the First World War. Furthermore, the "world-historical" significance of becoming the first country to successfully adopt Marxist ideas contributed to the public's enthusiasm for the state-directed economic policies

initiatives also helped to reestablish Russia as one of the predominant powers in Eurasia. Both the elites and the lower classes identified with the goal of reasserting Russian power in the international order and combating the chaotic tumult caused by privatization in the name of national interests. Although this period witnessed a strong emphasis on the promotion of nationalism by elites, one cannot disregard the active participation and attitudes of the average Russian citizen in supporting and identifying with the nationalist ideology.[29] This support not only developed organically within the population, but also was officially promoted by the government, including its most popular and influential member, President Vladimir Putin.

An understanding of the development of specifically economic nationalism during this time is greatly bolstered by an understanding of Putin's actions and policies during this time. After 1999, Putin quickly began to rearrange the priorities of Russian politics along nationalist lines largely according to his understanding of the relationship between the state and the economy as described in his doctoral thesis, "in which he championed the creation of public-private 'financial-industrial corporations' to exploit Russia's mineral wealth, fueling an economy built on natural resources."[30] Russia could reemerge as a global political player if Russia's vast quantities of oil and gas were taken away from already unpopular private firms and placed in the hands of the state. Putin's analysis "assumed the significance of geoeconomics over geopolitics, and the need for Russia to defend its national interests by primarily economic means."[31]

According to Paul Starobin, to promote patriotism, Putin appealed to "to Russians' traditional sense of themselves and their country as self-reliant and indomitable."[32] This strategy was accomplished by a series of symbolic gestures as Putin used language and culture to reassert

[29] Rick Fawn, *Ideology and National Identity in Post-Communist Foreign Policies*, 1st ed. (London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 46.
[30] Daniel Twining, "Putin's Power Politics; Rebuilding Russian Clout, One Natural-Gas Pipeline at a Time., " *The Weekly Standard* 11, no. 17 (2006).
[31] Tsygankov, "The Return to Eurasia: Russia's Identity and Geoeconomic Choices in the Post-Soviet World," 63.
[32] Starobin, "The Rise of Nationalism."

the concept of the "Russian people," largely according to the concept of the "Soviet people" with which most Russians were already familiar. In fact, in one state-of-the-nation addresses Putin described the Russian people as an "historical category, as an analog of the Soviet people, and as the contemporary 'people of Russia.'"[33] He also restored the music of the Soviet anthem to the national song of Russia and publicly commented that "the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century."[34] It seems that most Russians would have agreed with this comment, at least in theory. According to a survey in 1997, "about 84 percent of a sample of 1,500 Russians either regretted the disintegration of the Soviet Union 'very much' or 'to some extent.'"[35] Putin also supported legislating against giving work permits to immigrants if Russians could fill the positions for which they were being issued.

It is important to consider just who was included and who excluded from the definition of "Russian" as put forth by the Kremlin. The Kremlin, at least officially, did not draw the definition along ethnic lines.[36] Russia is home to hundreds of ethnic groups, who speak a myriad of languages and practice differing cultures. The government recognized this and extended the definition to all those holding Russian citizenship, excluding perhaps those Russians (who were largely ethnic Russians) who had profited from the economic chaos. However, it is also important to realize that in the public mind at large, the contemporary definition prioritizes only those individuals who possess Russian ethnicity, and whose Slavic roots and connection to the ancient "Rus" are generally evident in their physical features. Other ethnicities, such as darker-skinned groups from the Caucasuses, are considered "others." This is readily evident in their

[33] Tishkov, "Russia as a European Nation and Its Eurasian Mission."
[34] Ibid.
[35] Tsygankov, "The Return to Eurasia: Russia's Identity and Geoeconomic Choices in the Post-Soviet World," 57.
[36] Fawn, *Ideology and National Identity in Post-Communist Foreign Policies*, 44.

well-publicized harassment by Russian ethnic nationalists. State-sponsored economic nationalism has, in Russia's case, reinforced definitions of nationality based on ethnicity. [37]

Putin overtly targeted the above-mentioned "others" began to develop policies that 'removed' their negative influence on Russia's national interests. The distinctively anti-Western rhetoric of Putin's speeches also drew upon popular resentment of Western influence in Russia.[38] However, this variant of economic nationalism did not necessarily involve pure protectionism; instead, Putin adopted a selective approach to liberalization by continuously keeping the augmentation of national power as the principal concern of economic policy.[39] In addition, political economist V. I. Tikhomirov writes that "any attempt to place capitalist ideals into the basis of a new national ideology in Russia was doomed to failure."[40] Putin understood the aversion to market ideals caused by the piratization of Russia's economy after 1991.[41] The new nationalist rhetoric emphasized the role of the state in economic planning as well as usurping financial power from the oligarchs, who were Russians, but were not seen as acting with the interests of the state in mind.[42]

The Kremlin systematically reacquired large portions of Russia's energy resources and deployed them as tools of international statecraft and to fund the projects and reforms of the state. [43] Assigning control over the new state corporations to trusted members of his administration, Putin began to control economic development through state supervision and gained valuable authority over the pricing and delivery of energy supplies. Much of the profits

[37] Tikhomirov, *The Political Economy of Post-Soviet Russia*, 313.,
[38] Tsygankov, "The Return to Eurasia: Russia's Identity and Geoeconomic Choices in the Post-Soviet World," 63.
[39] ibid
[40] Tikhomirov, *The Political Economy of Post-Soviet Russia*, 315.
[41] Fawn, *Ideology and National Identity in Post-Communist Foreign Policies*, 46.
[42] It is important to note that although these oligarchs may have fit the definition of 'Russianness,' it was their pursuit of different ends that ultimately ostracized them from the favor of the Kremlin. Acting solely to increase their profits and expand their own influence, such oligarchs diverged from the government's intentions to strengthen only the national interests of Russia. This discrepancy of interests led to the appropriation of personal wealth by the state in order to redirect such resources to promote the entire Russian populace, not just the interests of a select few.
[43] Twining, "Putin's Power Politics; Rebuilding Russian Clout, One Natural-Gas Pipeline at a Time.."

from Russia's natural resources now go to the state treasury to be used for domestic programs. The Kremlin can also, at least theoretically, influence the politics of foreign countries by controlling the delivery of and, to a large extent, the price of gas on the international market. This gives the Kremlin some control over a major part of the economies of foreign states and, through that control, some influence on popular political support for foreign leaders. Russian popular support for these policies has been unparalleled and is seen largely as the personal brain-child of Putin. Putin's party, United Russia, now controls a large majority in the State Duma and Federation Council and holds the most unified governmental authority since Soviet times.

Consequences of Nationalist Rhetoric

The last decade of Russian politics has witnessed a revival of officially supported nationalist ideology. From laws limiting employment opportunities for migrant workers to the creation of a "Day of National Unity," the state has shown its support for renewed pride in Russian citizenship. However, these actions have opened up a political space for radical and xenophobic parties to capitalize on this upsurge in nationalist sentiment. In a recent poll by the independent Levada Center, for example, "half of the 1,880 respondents said they would support banning natives of the Caucasus from living in Russia."[44] It is important to note that the Caucasuses themselves are partly within the territory of Russia. Violence against ethnic minorities has increased dramatically over the last five years.[45]

Encouraging nationalist sentiments to bolster economic policies can have radical consequences. By directly and indirectly supporting nationalist parties and doctrines, the Kremlin has opened the door for radical and xenophobic parties. The creation of internal and external enemies may have short-term benefits in uniting a populace and thus encouraging

[44] Nabi Abdullaev, "Nationalists Staking Their Political Claims," *Moscow Times*, November 17 2005.
[45] Bill Gasperini, "Rise of Hard-Line Nationalists in Russia Causes Concern," *Voice of America*, January 18 2006.

economic growth, but it can also have long-term negative consequences by contributing to animosities between groups of citizens within a state. Problems arise when a state actively encourages these sentiments without placing limits on their development.

The Kremlin has attempted to create such limits over the last few months, with several official programs designed to increase discussion of "Russianness" and minimize the damaging effects of the nationalism. As noted above, a certain level of nationalism is needed to unite a populace towards economic and political goals. However, the definition of "Russianness" inserted an exclusive, ethnic component into this economic nationalism. The active facilitation of intolerance, hatred and racism as integral parts of that nationalism has created immeasurable problems in the populace. Russia finds itself in the particularly difficult position of needing a strong, self-confident national identity to drive economic development, while also wishing to prevent violent manifestations in which supposed enemies are physically targeted.

Conclusion

As a theory to counteract the perceived injustices and insecurities caused by globalization, economic nationalism has emerged as a popular and powerful theory that is supported by wide and diverse constituencies looking to preserve their cultural heritage and expand their state's international power. Nation-states must concentrate on building economic prowess in order to maintain or strengthen their international influence. However, the consequences of encouraging economic nationalism can involve the radicalization of politics and the persecution of segments of the national population, which can lead to fragmentation and eventual political and, hence, economic instability within a state. How this will play out in Russia and other countries where economic nationalist policies are being implemented is yet to be seen.

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Rejecting Professional Medicine in Contemporary Russia

by Polina Aronson

The rejection of professional medical care (except for acute cases demanding urgent or specific treatment) has become common in contemporary Russia (Maximova 2002, Rose 2000). Although the statistics for major life-threatening conditions (cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes) show a decrease in their treatment, high mortality levels from the same conditions are observed (Shilova 2005). The lowest number of consultations with medical professionals is observed in the adult working population, although this has been the population group with the highest mortality rates since the mid-1990s (Garrett 2000). Clearly, this dangerous trend deserves to be analyzed and explained in greater depth.

In this paper I will review two major theoretical avenues which could account for this trend, income-based approaches and value-based approaches, while arguing that neither pays enough attention to a basic lack of institutional trust, which causes people to avoid interactions with professional healthcare and instead rely on private networks and lay healing methods. The Soviet healthcare system's disregard of the individual has resulted in the substitution of professional medical knowledge by traditional healing practices, particularly those given by women to men in the course of traditional gender roles.

This paper will present an analysis of the legacy of Soviet medicine, as well as preliminary evidence from the author's own qualitative field study conducted in 2004-2006 (Aronson 2006a, 2006b). Originally, the central objective of the study concerned social networks among chronically ill individuals. However, non-compliance with and avoidance of professional medical care and the prevalence of self-healing have revealed themselves as crucial topics within many of the narratives of the study's informants. This article is not written with the purpose to present the results of my own field work. Rather, the objective is

to shape a new research agenda for studying the phenomenon of the delegitimation of professional medicine and increasing distrust towards healthcare institutions.

I. Current Theoretical Explanations

There are two major approaches to explain why people might avoid professional medical care: income inequalities and health values.

1. Income-based explanations

Several authors stress the high cost of medical services as the main reason to avoid professional medical care. Each Russian citizen has a constitutional right to participate in the Obligatory Medical Insurance Program (*fond obyazatelnogo meditsinskogo strahovaniya*). This state program provides insurance meant to allow free access to all major areas of medical care. However, according to a survey conducted in 2001 (Sidorina, Sergeev 2001), this system fails to reach the whole population. A great number of citizens do not participate in the program, and those who do are extremely poorly informed about the provisions – i.e. they do not know how much the insurance will cover or the services and rights they are entitled to under the program. At the same time, less than 5% of the population holds private insurance (Sidorina, Sergeev 2001: 91).

Panova and Rusinova have found that the provision of primary medical care through the Obligatory Medical Insurance Program is such that persons who need it, low-income patients and individuals who report the worst state of personal health, report the greatest difficulty in obtaining primary healthcare services as well as the greatest dissatisfaction in the doctor-patient relationship (Panova, Rusinova 2005: 135). Shishkin (Shishkin et al. 2004), Sidorina and Sergeev (2001), Zarutskaya (2003), Boikov (1998), and Panova and Rusinova (2005) have all argued that the state has essentially ceased to finance healthcare and makes patients pay for medical services themselves. Correspondingly, a survey on medical expenses conducted in 2001 found that Russian households generally spend about 17-18% of their total

monthly income on healthcare (Sidorina, Sergeev 2001: 75) and, according to WHO data published in the Russian daily newspaper *Kommersant* ("*Meditsina iz karmana,*" issue 231, 9/12/2006), "out-of-pocket" (not reimbursed by insurance) medical expenses constitute about 40% of all the healthcare expenses in contemporary Russia, which is much higher than in other European countries (for instance, in Germany it is 18%).

This is aggravated by the fact that a significant amount of healthcare expenditures is consumed by informal payments (bribes and informal fees). For obvious reasons it is difficult to obtain reliable and up-to-date information on this issue, but a survey taken in 2000 found that 27% of respondents have sometimes made informal payments at state medical institutions, and 8% have regularly paid them (Klyamkin and Timofeev 2000:219). The reason this informal system has emerged will be discussed later. For now it is enough to say that high out-of-pocket expenses, augmented by informal payments, deter patients in Russia from seeking professional care. However, this is not the only reason.

2. Values-based explanations

William Cockerham (Cockerham 1998), Michele Rivkin-Fish (Rivkin-Fish 2005), and Laurie Garriet (Garriet 2000) have discussed the health-related cultural values particular to post-Soviet Russia. They stress the paternalistic expectations of the Russian public towards healthcare and a perception, shared both by patients and care providers, that health is a secondary resource necessary to achieve other goals (make more money, receive an earlier pension, raise one's status). This has produced a dangerous behavioral pattern whereby patients do not consult a doctor on their own initiative, even after symptoms have appeared.

Ludmila Shilova (Shilova 1999, 2000, 2005) refers to the notion of "health exploitation" (Shilova 2005), which designates particular patterns of social behavior that create serious health risks. Such risks include growing overtime and work-related stress due to working several jobs or regularly working long hours. These patterns of behavior can

cause chronic fatigue, which may lead to other chronic conditions. A survey conducted by the VTSIOM (All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Research) in summer 2006 supports this argument: 24% of the respondents claimed that although they were not entirely healthy they would prefer to ignore their symptoms, and only 11% of the whole sample regularly schedule check-ups or practice preventive care (VTSIOM, 2006).

The reasons for this, again, will be discussed later. What is important at this stage is to stress that these attitudes cannot be reduced to economic conditions or to values only. That is, it might seem plausible that perception of health as a secondary resource is a result of low income but, as Shilova argues (Shilova 2005), it is not just the poor who jeopardize their health; this behavioral pattern may also be observed among those who enjoy a high and stable income and is typical for private sector employees, especially managers. It is both a workload necessity and a part of corporate culture to prove dedication to the company (Shilova 2000).

Meanwhile, limited income and perception of health as a secondary value are not an exhaustive explanation of why people avoid *professional* medical care. According to surveys conducted in Russia within the last decade (Brown, Rusinova 1993; Shilova 1999, 2000; Pachenkov 2001; Maximova 2002; Shishkin 2004; Brown, Rusinova 2005), people are making efforts to improve their health and even purchasing health-related products and services. However, they often employ self-healing or consult alternative medical practitioners while avoiding contacts with professional clinical medicine. Research conducted in St. Petersburg in 2005 (Goryunov, Hlopushin 2005) showed that 24% of the city's population consult an alternative medical practitioner about twice a year. The study estimates that the *minimum* sum annually spent by the population of St. Petersburg on alternative healing is nearly 8 million USD. However, experts believe that the true sum might be as high as nearly 20 million USD per year *(ibid).* Generally, those who choose alternative healing methods are dissatisfied with professional medicine (Maximova 2002). A telephone survey of 1502

residents of St. Petersburg found that 23% of respondents prefer self-treatment over medical consultation (Baranov, Sklyar 2004). Moreover, the longitudinal study by the N.A. Semashko Institute for Social Hygiene, Economics and Management of Healthcare showed that 8% of the population prefers alternative to professional medicine. Russian journalist Konstantin Krylov in his LiveJournal blog recently commented on this:[1]

> The Russian people have some kind of a special mentality when it comes to their health: they hate to be medically treated. Actually, there are plenty of people who love self-healing, but *nobody is seeking professional help*. Well, they do seek help when they are nearly dying, that is when they call for an ambulance. But usually everybody is waiting till the last minute, hoping that "it will be ok," "will heal itself," and then, hopefully, everything will be all right. As if some broken record is stuck in their heads: "don't go to the doctor, don't go to the doctor." Just don't go to the doctor, for God's sake! The sickness (*bolyachka*) will get better (*peremozhetsja*), will go away. One can forget about the sickness, and it will go away. In the most acute case, well, lie down. But not to the doctor, never, ever, the doctor will treat you to death! If you are a healthy guy or a robust woman, you can beat the sickness without any pills; you will survive. And if not, well, that means nothing would help you anyway: you are rotten inside. So, just lie down, drink some herbs. Herbs are good for you. Getting only worse? Tough luck, your time has come then. No one can cheat death by taking pills anyway! And if you are really keen on being treated, go see baba Nura, she will whisper something into water, breathe on your sickness, and it will go away. Also, take some Chinese stuff, Jen Sing or however is it called, is said to be really good, eat it, and you will live a hundred years. Some Japanese mushrooms are good, too. And drink urine, that is what all the intelligent people do! Urine is health! Doctors with their pills just want to cheat you! Who knows what they put in these pills, probably, some chemical crap. The doctors will treat you to death! Who needs their clinics!

This text clearly shows that the lack of trust between doctors and patients is the main reason to avoid professional medical care. Linda Cook (Cook: 2003:18) argues the following:

> The post-authoritarian state can provide social goods – education, social security, poverty relief – only if the society minimally trusts it to manage redistribution of resources fairly and reliably across age and income groups and individual life cycles, and so pays taxes and social security contributions. Obviously trust is not the only factor here; the state's capacity to enforce payment compliance also matters greatly. But the argument is that in the Russian system, with its large potential for escape into the informal sector, the state must establish credibility as a condition for generalized compliance.

Credibility, a component of public trust in healthcare professionals and institutions, has not yet been studied exhaustively in Russia and needs closer attention. However, several surveys by Russian and Western sociologists have begun to address the issue. In particular, Nina Rusinova and July Brown in 1993 studied the impact of private networks on individual

[1] http://krylov.livejournal.com/1335666.html The post has received more than one hundred comments and was widely discussed. It should be noted that it is not quite possible to reproduce Krylov's peculiar linguistic style in English, as he is choosing pseudo-folk wording to convey what he sees as "vox populi". Translated from the Russian by the author; italics in original.

health in St. Petersburg (Brown, Rusinova 1993) and found that having an acquaintance or a relative among medical professionals significantly improved respondents' self-rated health. Patients who had friends among medical professionals had the best access to healthcare resources and were generally more satisfied with the quality of the services they received.

Another study (Brown, Rusinova 2005) focused on the prevalence of traditional self-healing methods over professional treatment of non-acute cases. In this qualitative research, which will be drawn upon extensively throughout the remainder of this paper, they argued that the growing popularity of alternative medicine is due to the delegitimation of professional medicine and declining public trust in healthcare institutions in contemporary Russia.

Others agree. Laurie Garrett (Garrett 2000) showed that the resultant breakdown in healthcare after the collapse of Soviet Union not only caused a massive hike in mortality rates, epidemics and social inequalities, but also shaped public perception of professional medical care as harmful and risky. Moreover, Ludmila Shilova found that distrust was further deepened because services were not clearly defined as free or paid, resulting in confusion and inconsistency (Shilova 2005). Michele Rivkin-Fish also showed in *Women's Health in Post Soviet Russia* (Rivkin-Fish 2005) that distrust among all actors was directly detrimental to the quality of reproductive health services and patients' quality of life.

II. Trust in Doctor-Patient Relationships in Soviet Institutional Settings

As a first step to defining trust as a new focus for studying the rejection of professional medical care, the next paragraphs will briefly address specific aspects of the historical doctor-patient relationship in the USSR. This historical interpretation will also be complemented and buttressed by interview data from my own research in recent years.

Institutional distrust is a phenomenon which is not peculiar to the post-Soviet period. According to a well-known study by Alena Ledeneva of the informal economy and private networks in Soviet Russia, the level of trust granted to government institutions was very low

even before the collapse of the USSR (Ledeneva 1998). Bo Rothstein argues that dishonest behavior toward these institutions was often justified and even praised in the face of what was perceived as illegitimate power (Rothstein 2004b:13).

In general, trust extended only as far as one's personal network of family and close friends (ibid). Several studies on the development of civil society in Russia within the last decade show that the level of trust outside personal networks remains very low. A national survey conducted in 1996 by James Gibson (Gibson 2001) revealed that only 31% of Russians believe that most people can be trusted (with another 19% being uncertain whether most can be trusted). In 1998, when Gibson repeated his study (Gibson 2001), the figures were roughly the same (31% and 11%, respectively). A survey by the New Russia Barometer demonstrated similar results (Rose 2000: 1426): only 7% of Russians said you can usually trust people, and 27% thought people can sometimes be trusted, whereas almost 66% said you need to generally be careful in dealing with people.

Modern distrust in healthcare institutions has been particularly shaped by the history of the doctor-patient relationship. During the Soviet period, the healthcare system boasted high numbers of hospital beds and doctors but paid scant attention to the quality of care (Schecter 1997:38). Doctors had almost no professional autonomy and performed as administrative servants, rather than independent experts. They were supposed to cater to the needs of the Soviet state by controlling the well-being of its workforce, and thus doctors had the status of and served the functions of state workers. This bureaucratic, vertical structure led Mark Field to call Soviet healthcare a “medical military corps” (Field 1987: 66).

One of the most important bureaucratic procedures in the doctor-patient encounter was the issue of sick leave, which was studied in detail in one of the early works by Mark Field (Field 1957). Sick leave was often the only legitimate reason for absence at the workplace, especially under Stalinism, when labor legislation differed little from criminal

legislation. Militant discipline in many industries pressured people to malinger in order to receive a sick leave.[2] Under institutional pressure, doctors could only issue a certain amount of sick leave per day and carried personal responsibility if a malingerer missed work. As a result, patients carried the burden of proof for convincing the doctor that a sickness was "real." As Field observed (Field 1957), doctors were more inclined to trust patients that were of a social background similar to their own: the intelligentsia. Manual workers and peasants had the most difficulties establishing trust relationships with medical professionals.

Formation of trust was also impaired by the fact that a patient could not choose a doctor: In a Soviet clinic a patient would have to see the doctor "on duty," whichever one had consultation hours at the moment the patient came, and this doctor would then oversee the patient's entire healing process. In many cases doctors and patients managed to make their relationship more constant; however, their agreements were only personal ones and were not supported by institutional regulations.

Despite the official ideology of egalitarianism, Soviet healthcare was highly stratified (Schecter 1997: 39; Field 1957, 1987). The party elite and privileged persons (favored actors, athletes, writers, etc.) had access to special hospitals where doctors were of the highest rank and the best equipment was available. Most people knew this and accepted the double standards, but also distrusted the healthcare system more because of them.

At the same time, this institutional setting contradicted patients' expectations about what a good doctor should be. Fields' informants believed that the medical profession implied specific personal characteristics (Field 1957:156). Despite a sometimes negative experience with Soviet medicine, they had a highly idealized understanding of what a doctor should be, which was to a great degree shaped by the Russian literature of the nineteenth century (Chehkov's *Uncle Vanya* providing one of the main role models). A doctor was

[2] Field describes malingering practices in detail, like injecting sour milk under the skin to cause fever.

supposed to be, first, "a good human being," capable of commitment and sensitive to the pain of others (both literally and metaphorically). A study by Rusinova and Brown demonstrated that this can be seen in contemporary Russia as well (Brown, Rusinova 2005:166-167):

> Very few Peterburgtsy[3] regard the ideal physician as a mere technician whose role is to mend damaged bodies. Most expect far more. They believe that doctors should also exhibit particular qualities of character, without which their ability to heal is severely limited. [...] Good doctors are specialists with good education, high qualifications, and they work in good institutions. Equally, or even more important, however, are human or spiritual qualities, particularly those that manifest themselves in interactions with patients. The men and women of St. Petersburg describe ideal physicians as sympathetic, compassionate, and caring. They always listen to patients, are attentive to their concerns, and offer warm words of support. People do not regard these as extraordinary or superhuman qualities. On the contrary, they represent the most essentially human ones. A good doctor, as one woman put it, is "a Person with a capital 'P.'"[4]

The doctor's role is not confined to medical knowledge, but draws on wider expectations and traditions. One of the informants in my own study, Ludmila, a woman of 70, said:

> You know, sometimes the doctor simply gives you a friendly look, has received you nicely, has shown some commitment to your problems, and you decide straight away that it is a good doctor. Because it means so much! And sometimes you ask for a prescription, the doctor writes you one, and does not even ask you why you need it, what reasons you have to ask for it, nothing. Just gives you a prescription or sick leave, and that's it. We are like blind kittens! We can only act by our own intuitions and feelings in these relationships.[5]

In such a setting the doctor not only performs his or her professional duties, but also grants the patient personal *favors* which need to be *rewarded*. The only possible strategy of interaction with an institution becomes through personalization, building a relationship with a particular person, not with the organization he or she represents. Private networks start substituting for institutional structures and become the *real* mechanism of obtaining social goods such as healthcare. In addition, paternalistic expectations towards medical professionals mean that patients look for personal guidance and assistance, which could only exist in a personalized relationship. Galina Lindquist mentions the following in her case study of a Russian family's choice of healing methods (Lindquist 2002: 338):

> In the West, in this period of late modernity, we are used to having specialised authorities and guarantees for the source or status of facts: what these say, we believe (cf. Giddens, 1990). In other cultures, this faith in experts is not so steadfast. This may be because faith in the official

[3] Residents of St. Petersburg
[4] The expression refers to "a kind person with a well-developed personality."
[5] Translated from the Russian by the author

> or in what is presented as the authoritative word has been undermined by an epoch of 'double think' and 'double talk', as is the case in Russia after the 70 years of the Soviet regime (at least for some social groups). [...] [T]herapeutic efficacy, a sensory process of betterment, is (especially in non-biomedical treatment) connected with the acceptance of the healer as a person with 'power' or 'charisma': with the recognition of his or her 'charismatic legitimacy.'

To make these informal relations happen in the institutional setting, a special set of norms is developed. Thus, patients are not only expected to give small presents or favors, but to make other informal payments. By the middle of the 1990s, such informal payments had become a crucial part of medical professionals' income.

Klyamkin and Timofeev (2000) argue that informal payments should not only be considered as corruption, but also as a specific form of cooperation between the impoverished population and the impoverished healthcare system; in the 1990s, informal payments became needed salaries, drawn from patients rather than the state. Additionally, Klyamkin and Timofeev assert that the provision of actual medical treatment was still a possibility in the dysfunctional setting. However, if the patient did not already have a personalized relationship with his/her healthcare provider, this informal system created suspicion and distrust. The ambiguity of rules and imbalance of control in medical care was often a traumatizing experience, unless an informal relationship and personalization could moderate it.

With the collapse of the USSR, state public health guarantees also collapsed, and institutional interaction became even more inefficient (Field, Twigg et al 2000, Garriet 2000, Shishkin 2004). Free medical care was an important ideological issue during the Soviet epoch, and the state's inability to provide it has had a strong negative impact on the popular perception of post-Soviet reforms. Mark Field mentions (Field 1957: 203):

> In its attempt to capture and retain the loyalty of its citizens the Soviet regime affirms that one of its major concerns is the welfare of the individual (*zabota o cheloveke*). In the realm of health the individual is said to be entitled, as a matter of the constitutional right, to high-quality medical assistance at the expense of the state. This constitutional provision is, of course, constantly and continually commented upon and amplified in all the means of mass communication. It would be very surprising, indeed, if such a campaign did not mold expectations concerning medical care, particularly in view of the fact that it caters to deeply felt anxieties. If a person believes that he should receive medical services when he needs them, and if, furthermore, he is told time and again, day in and day out, that it is the duty of the state to make these services available, the time will soon come when he will expect the services.

Given the ideological importance of free medical care, the reforms of the 1990s increased institutional distrust. Michele Rivkin-Fish argues (Rivkin-Fish 2005: 181):

> Neoliberal reforms introduced monetary exchange as a newly legitimate tactic for accessing quality care, but largely neglected the ongoing structural impediments providers and patients faced, such as political disenfranchisement, the lack of material resources, lack of state oversight of quality, and the absence of health users' groups empowered to ensure women's rights.

That is, the reformers might have imagined that the introduction of market relations in healthcare would compensate for the lack of adherence to institutional norms by providing competition and thus raising the quality of medical care, once the providers had to become economically interested.[6] However, in practice this process has led to quite an opposite result. It was originally intended that paid services would be introduced only for wealthier patients, and free healthcare services would remain available for poorer patients. Some services (such as emergency and ambulance) were also meant to remain free to everyone. However, the state did not have a sufficient budget for such medical services; the percentage of GNP spent for healthcare never exceeded 3% (compared to 6.5-13% in Western countries (Rivkin-Fish 2005:71)), which was not enough to pay for all the free medical care promised to Russian citizens as part of the Russian constitution (Schecter 1997: 39, Field, Twigg et al. 2000: 62).

As I have mentioned in the section on income-based explanations, the introduction of obligatory state insurance for all Russian citizens has not greatly improved this situation. Medical institutions have also had difficulty in adapting to the new market funding schemes, growing a Petri dish of informal tariffs. A quote from Kate Schecter, a well-known expert on post-Soviet healthcare, illustrates this situation very well (Schecter 1997:40):

> By the end of 1980s, the aging medical institutions could not provide basic care and specialized high quality care was not even a consideration. Epidemics were spreading, infections were not held in check by primitive sterilization methods, and the Russian population was no longer receiving even adequate care. Medical education and preparation of medical personnel came under sharper scrutiny as the country tumbled down into an increasingly serious health crisis. Home remedies and homeopathic medicine have become popular. Confidence in the healthcare system has dipped so low that it will take many years to reestablish authority and recover from the setbacks it has suffered.

This process can only contribute to the delegitimation of professional medicine.

3. The Delegitimation of Professional Medicine

In the following paragraphs I will argue that the decline of trust is a result of negative relationships with healthcare institutions, as well as commonly-held beliefs about health. In one of my group interviews two informants, Tanya and Lida, both about 26 years old, say:

> Tanya: I think I have always hated doctors.
> Lida: Right. Just think of the medical check-up in school.
> Tanya: Right. They kick you into the gym and you gotta walk around there in your underwear, from one doctor to another, together with everybody! Pull up your underpants and go!... I don't really remember. I remember there were these desks, with a different doctor sitting in front of each, and you had to see all of them. This I remember well.
> Lida: Yep. And a gynecologist behind the curtains.[7]

The prevalent emotions about "state" medicine and hygiene expressed here are disgrace and humiliation as well as expected danger that is associated with professional medicine. In a recent survey by Nina Rusinova and July Brown, 42% of informants claimed to have had at least one treatment experience which has negatively affected their health (Brown, Rusinova 2005:165), and which has led them to believe that professional medicine should be considered only in the most acute cases due to the risks involved with treatment.

In many of my interviews in St. Petersburg, as well as with Russian immigrants in Germany, I encountered narratives about clinical medicine shaped by a binary opposition of "live – dead" and almost never into "healthy – sick." Linguistically, this is expressed in such structured sayings as "if alive, then ok" (*zhiva, i ladno*), "While I'm still living, to no sickness I'm responding" (*poka zhivu, ni na kakie bolezni ne reagiruyu*), and so on. "Healthy – sick" is much more frequently used in the context of domestic medicine, while professional medicine is symbolically tied to the world of death. Pharmaceuticals and other medications sold in the drug stores also belong to this world, and are also avoided. Drugs are said to interfere with the "natural processes" in the body, to weaken its immune system and cause other negative side effects. Lida and Tanya had this to say about the subject:

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[6] Rivkin-Fish gives a very thorough analysis of market reforms in post-Soviet Russia (Rivkin-Fish 2005: 76-90).
[7] This excerpt and all that follow have been translated from the Russian by the author

Lida: Well, speaking of migraines… If you have a migraine, go to the bathroom, stick two fingers in the throat, and here you go. If I have a migraine, I always hug the toilet, and then I feel better. Then I fall asleep, and next day I feel totally fine. And the pill… The pill does not treat the reason you have a migraine. It only kills the pain. I think a headache is something one can bear. It's all right to have a headache.
Tanya: I don't know… I can't do anything then.
Lida: You can go lie down. You know, the folk wisdom has it: "The head is not the ass, tie it up and lay you down" (*golova ne zhopa, zavjazhi da lezhi*).
Interviewer: So, if the ass hurts, something has to be done?
Lida: Nah, its just folk wisdom. People say it.
Tanya: Aah, you are like my mother. She is always like that. "Mom, I have a headache" – "Go lie down." "Mom, I am cold" – "Go wash the floor, you will be hot soon." End of discussion.

Homemade remedies, treatments offered by alternative healers, and use of non-pharmaceutical medications sold in drug stores (herbs, balms, tonics), are regarded by informants as likely less effective, but definitely less dangerous. Another informant, Olga, a woman 70 years of age and an asthma patient for at least half her life, says:

> I try to take as few pills as possible and only if I really can't do without it. And I always half the recommended dose. I mean I take the drug twice as long, but in portions twice as small as were recommended. I always read the product insert carefully, and if I don't like something, I rather don't take these pills at all. I was in the hospital once, and the doctor gave me some pills. I told her to give me the insert, and she says, woman, the insert is for me, not for you. So I said, look, whose life is it, mine or yours? It's mine! And the doctor is there only to help me save it! So, I need to be the first person to know what I am taking into my body!

When trust in professional medicine declines, the value of traditional and lay knowledge increases. One of the strongest beliefs among informants is that a person can treat him or herself without consulting doctors. More than half of those interviewed by Nina Rusinova and July Brown have agreed that "individuals understand their own health better than any physician" (Brown, Rusinova 2002:164).

It is also worth mentioning that this knowledge has a distinct gender structure. Russian culture emphasizes a woman's ability to possess sacral knowledge about the natural world. In fact, traditional medicine is often believed to be best performed by "*babki*" – "grandmothers" or old women. Home care is an important element of a woman's identity, and self-healing is performed as part of her gender role. In fact, my own field observations show that it is mostly women who refuse taking pharmaceutical drugs. While men simply avoid consulting a doctor, women use a broad range of replacement strategies which vary from pharmaceutical self-healing to homemade medicines or folk healers (Lindquist 2001).

Traditional knowledge about treatment methods is rooted so deeply that it is often still a part of the local culture retained by Russian emigrants (Remennik 1997). One of my informants, Tanya, lives in Germany and is married to a German man. Whenever he is sick, she tries to treat him with homemade medicines commonly used in Russia.

> Tanya: I tried to give him herbal teas. He says "OK," but he does not really drink them. I give him the cup, he looks at it, but does not touch it.
> Interviewer: He is not used to it, is he?
> Tanya: No, that's the thing. He is not used to it at all. He is worse than a little baby, you really have to control him, to make sure that he really drinks it. Or, for instance, he loves to be massaged with ointments. To that he agrees straight away. But if I make him some herbal inhalations, I really have to control him, I have to cover him with towel and make sure he sits and inhales! And he starts complaining straight away: "Oh, it's hot, it's hot!."
> Interviewer: What kind of treatment does he choose himself?
> Tanya: He runs to the drug store straight away and gets himself some pills. He takes what they give him in the drug store. Sometimes he needs a prescription, so then he goes to the doctor first, but most of the stuff he needs is sold without prescription.

Employment of homemade medicines is an important family practice for this young woman, a practice which shapes her understanding of gender roles: by making medicine for her husband herself, she performs the role of a caring wife, and reproduces social norms common in Russia. Tanya continues speaking about her husband:

> Men can't overcome pain at all! If something hurts them, it's a total drama. First, he starts being sick straight away. I tell him, c'mon, get up, go gargle your throat or drink some herbs. But no, he will lie on bed and moan: "Oh, I am so, so sick!" I offer him dozens of treatment methods, but he does not want to do anything. He just moans about how sick he is. He just wants all eyes to be on him. Of course, I am happy to help him, but he has to do something himself! I also want to be sick sometimes, and have everyone dancing around me! But no one does this.

In Russian culture, the male sick role traditionally involves a female as an active caregiver (Shilova 2000, Remennick 2001). Pharmaceutical drugs do not allow these roles to be performed, because in this case, lay women do not have the power of knowledge and control, which is the essence of their gender role in this situation. Prescription drugs and clinical medicine take the traditional knowledge away from the woman, making her less competent in family matters and undermining her traditional gender role as a caregiver.

Thus, the perception of professional medicine as dangerous and prone to negative side effects might on the one hand be the result of an immediate negative experience within the healthcare system, and on the other hand can be shaped by popular beliefs and gender roles.

4. Summary

The delegitimation of professional medicine and strong distrust of healthcare institutions in contemporary Russia should be regarded as a product of the legacy left by the Soviet healthcare system. Professional clinical medicine preserves its dominating role in the broad range of medical services, but it is considered by many to be the most undesirable. Russians tend to employ lay and alternative medical knowledge as well as self-healing practices as a rational strategy to decrease the perceived risk to their health.

Without considering trust as a crucial factor, income and health-related values cannot fully explain why Russians avoid professional medical care. Moreover, pure materialistic or culture-based attempts to solve this problem fail, since neither growing income nor the desire to be treated will necessarily lead to interaction with *professional* medicine. By no means should alternative, folk medicine or self-healing as a whole be regarded as "false." Lay treatment methods can be very successful in some individuals, especially for long-term, chronically ill patients who develop their own ways of dealing with their illnesses. Also, the role of the private network and its ability to care about the patient should not be underestimated. However, one must take into consideration that in modern society institutionalized forms of knowledge and social networking have much better access to state social goods. Russia's long tradition of informal economies has a negative effect on health by detaching individuals from these goods, which are provided by a state healthcare system.

This situation calls for further research aimed at studying the problem of trust in professional medicine and in the healthcare institutions of Russia's transitional society. This approach will likely complement greatly the income- and value-based explanations for the avoidance of professional medical care. Such research would not only have academic value, but could also potentially help professional medicine to win the trust of the populace and hence improve the distribution of this essential social good.

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Empire, Nationalities, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union

by Reza Zia-Ebrahimi

Michael Doyle defines empires as follows: "Empires are relationships of political control imposed by some political societies over the effective sovereignty of other political societies."[1] In both Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union there existed a "metropole" or a core of Russian population and institutions molded in Russian culture and language with some participation of representatives of other cultures who helped maintain those Russian-centric institutions. This metropole maintained the type of imperial relationship described by Doyle to the non-Russian periphery territories and populations. This relationship was engineered to the general political and economic benefit of the metropole. The peripheral populations never enjoyed genuine sovereignty or political independence. However, at least in the case of the Soviet Union, which will be the focus of this paper, fluctuations did occur in the comparative level of the periphery's autonomy and their freedom to express their respective individual nationalities. In fact, these expressions were at times even encouraged.

The Soviet leadership displayed a striking flexibility in defining the place of Russianness in the Union's identity and institutions. The prevalence of the identity, its status in education, its role in defining the nation and/or the state, and the stature of Russians in the Union's institutions all remained in a state of continual change as the leadership adapted itself to new challenges from both inside and outside the Union on the one hand, and its own priorities, whether economic centralization, the war effort or the continuous endeavor to gain and maintain legitimacy, on the other hand. Analyzing this vacillation in Soviet nationalities policy, the reasons behind it, and its role in the demise of the USSR, is the aim of this article.

[1] Michael W. Doyle, *Empire*, Cornell University Press, 1986, p.19.

Early Nationalities Policy

As early as the 1917 Revolution and the ensuing Civil War, a new nationalities policy and a campaign of de-Russification were launched.[2] Exhausted by the First World War, the Russian empire was on the verge of disintegration. Polish and Finnish nationalisms were long known sources of concern to Russian rulers and were still problematic.[3] However, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and Azeri nationalisms – to mention but a few – were expressed with vigor for the first time. The Bolsheviks had to quickly formulate an effective policy to appease non-Russian nationalist impulses and avoid the fragmentation of Russian territory. Equally crucially, the main remnant of the old *régime*, the nationalist White Army, conducted some of its operations in non-Russian territories, and was absolutely uncompromising on the idea of a single and undivided Russia ruled by Russians.[4] The White Army's stance was particularly unappealing to non-Russian nationalists, and if the Bolsheviks were to win the hearts and minds of non-Russians and prevail, they had to distinguish themselves from the White Army's imperialist ideology.

Lenin initiated the first shift away from imperial policies. At the Eighth Party Congress in 1919, Lenin argued that the nascent socialist fatherland must radically distance itself from the imperialism of Tsarist Russia.[5] Lenin advocated recognition of the various peoples of the old empire as separate nationalities and argued that they should be granted significant concessions. This stirred ideological opposition among hardcore elements since Marxist theory defines nationalism as the foe of true socialism and a plot of the bourgeoisie to curtail the proletariat from reaching its universal aspirations. However, by using a degree of flexibility and acknowledging and accommodating peripheral national aspirations, Lenin

[2] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, Cornell University Press, 2001, pp. 11 – 12.
[3] Ibid, p. 2.
[4] Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union. From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society*, Westview, 1991, p.21.
[5] Lenin had already developed these ideas in a brochure written in April 1917, *Zadachi proletariata v nashei revoliutsii (Proekt platformy proletarskoi partii)*.

suggested a very pragmatic move. In his mind, from a theoretical point of view, this was a temporary concession necessitated by political imperatives.[6] The supremacy of the proletariat would ultimately render nation-states and thus nationalism obsolete.

The right to partial self-determination was thus formulated as a response to the increasing assertiveness of non-Russian nationalisms. Federalism and the co-option of non-Russians became a source of legitimacy to what was – after all – an emerging imperial state desperately seeking to consolidate its rule over the periphery. The national identity of the new Soviet state and its citizens was thus established on the universal ideology of communism – and not ethnicity.[7] According to Hans Kohn, the Bolsheviks turned "nationalism from an all-commanding absolute into the servant of a supranational idea."[8] Communism as an ideology was the foundation for the Soviet state-building process; it defined the Soviet Union as a federation of equal peoples inexorably advancing towards the communist ideal of unity.[9] It was to be radically different from Tsarist Russia and to be antidote to the social viruses which had plagued it (i.e. monarchy, reactionary aristocracy, capitalism, the Orthodox Church, and "imperialism," officially defined as the cultural repression of the non-Russian periphery). The nationalities policy took the name of коренизация (*korenizatsiia)*, which is often translated as "indigenization," and its objective was to make Soviet power seem more "indigenous" to the non-Russian periphery.

One of the primary manifestations of *korenizatsiia* was a wave of Moscow-sponsored nation-building efforts. The central authorities actively established separate republics and a

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[6] Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past; Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, Stanford University Press, 1993, p. 87.

[7] Interestingly, for all its apparent modernity and progressiveness, this move was reminiscent of more ancient empires where ethnicity was also not a defining element of citizen identity. For instance, most Roman emperors were not ethnic Italians, as Latin high culture was considered the actual determinate of Roman identity and had precedence over ethnic origin.

[8] Hans Kohn, *Der Nationalismus in der Sowjetunion*, Societäts-Verlag, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1932, pp. 94 – 96, quoted in Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 7.

[9] Dominic Lieven, *Empire, the Russian Empire and its Rivals from the Sixteenth Century to the Present*, John Murray, London, 2000, p. 291. According to the constitution of the USSR, the Soviet republics had the right to secede.

myriad of national territories that were drawn up along ethnic lines. The central authorities supported local languages, educated and promoted local elites and thus built new loyalties to the socialist cause and the central state that was its main champion. As Ronald Suny put it, "[r]ather than a melting pot, the Soviet Union became the incubator of new nations."[10] Each Soviet republic was flanked with an official culture, official folklore and national opera-house. Soviet authorities went as far as to develop written systems for local languages that had previously lacked them. Local languages were taught at schools and universities and used in local administration, provoking in some cases a decade-long adaptation process of a previously Russianized population.[11] In the 1920s, when almost all pupils in the Ukraine were taught in Ukrainian, a Russian residing there also had to be educated in Ukrainian (and obviously to master it if he/she was to pursue a political career in the local administration).[12]

While the central state accommodated and encouraged non-Russian expressions of nationhood, it was particularly suspicious of Russian chauvinism. Lenin stated that one must:

> distinguish between the nationalism of oppressor nations and the nationalism of small nations… [I]n relation to the second nationalism, in almost all historical practice, we nationals of the large nations are guilty, because of an infinite amount of violence [committed].[13]

In other words, nationalism of smaller nations – in this context, the non-Russian periphery – was a legitimate response to the chauvinism of larger oppressing nations. If this chauvinism were defeated, peripheral nationalisms would lose their *raison-d'être*. This mistrust of Russian nationalism involved a sustained effort to eradicate the Russian past, its cultural expressions, its rural roots and the institutions that embodied Russianness, especially the Orthodox Church and the Romanov dynasty. This culminated with the deportation of the Don and Kuban Cossacks, who were ethnic Russians who had supported the royalist White Army.[14] It is therefore fair to talk of this period as one of *de-Russification*.

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[10] Idem.
[11] Ibid., p. 102-103.
[12] Ibid., p. 292.
[13] Lenin, *K voprosu o natsional'nostiakh*, 359, quoted by Martin in *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 7.
[14] Lieven, *Empire,* p. 303.

Korenizatsiia helped to prevent the disintegration of the fragile Bolshevik state and created a combination of direct and indirect rule.[15] *Korenizatsiia* was so efficiently carried out that one could argue, as author Terry Martin does, that the USSR was truly the first "affirmative action empire" in history.[16] De-Russification and Sovietization also had a cultural corollary in the short-lived movement of *Proletkult* (a portmanteau of пролетарская культура, *proletarskaya kultura*, Russian for proletarian culture), an avant-garde artistic movement with the goal of creating a truly Soviet civilization, purified of the old elitist Russian culture of the nineteenth century. *Proletkult* was to become a revolutionary new culture transcending Russianness. It was to be internationalist, collectivist and proletarian.[17]

Stalin and the About-Face in *Korenizatsiia* Policy

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Stalin slowed and eventually reversed the process of *korenizatsiia*. Several factors may explain this. First and foremost, *korenizatsiia* had generated a strong sense of national consciousness among the non-Russian populations, and Stalin grew increasingly mistrustful of them. Although he had earlier supported the institution of *korenizatsiia* and even helped develop its conceptual framework in his 1913 pamphlet *Marxism and the National Question*[18], he now believed that national consciousness posed a challenge to the metropole. Additionally, the state had by then the means of repression which it lacked in 1919 and priorities had shifted from consolidation and accommodation to development. Increasing economic centralization required Russian to be imposed as the predominant language of economics, development and education, and this logically favored an active incorporation of large numbers of educated Russians into the national enterprise.[19]

The leadership also found itself confronted with a still strong chauvinism in the Russian masses. A more appeasing approach had to be adopted to avoid alienating Russians

[15] Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 1.
[16] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, Cornell University Press, 2001.
[17] Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance, A Cultural History of Russia*, New York, 2002, p. 450.
[18] Joseph V. Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question", in *Prosveshcheniye*, Nos. 3-5, March-May 1913.
[19] Lieven, *Empire*, p. 292.

and help them identify with the goals set by the Kremlin; their loyalty was needed to carry out the government's ambitious political and economic development plans. In a developmental endeavor of such a scale, the central government had to make the best use of its resources, and needless to say, Russians stood at the core of the empire in terms of population numbers and education levels. Educated Russians were sent to help expand the economies of less-developed republics, creating one of the lasting consequences of this period: the large-scale migration of Russians, which in turn modified the ethnic composition of nearly all the republics.[20]

Russianness was "rehabilitated," and Russian patriotism was encouraged and often imposed from above. Many local political leaders in the Republics were physically eliminated in large-scale purges, while national treasures were devastated and cultural institutions shut down. Additionally, several autonomous republics and regions were abolished and entire populations deported from their homelands to politically quell what was seen as a dangerous and rising local nationalism.[21]

By 1938, Russian was compulsory in all schools across the Union. In the mid-1930s, *korenizatsiia* institutions, which had previously represented minority interests were dismantled at an accelerated pace.[22] This "re-Russification" was amplified further during the Second World War as chauvinism was exploited to mobilize the specifically Russian masses for the battlefield. Concurrently, nineteenth century Russian literary and artistic classics were restored as models while *Proletkult* was set aside. [23]

During the Second World War, the symbolism of the 1812 fight against Napoleon with its fervent nationalism was utilized to inject a patriotic dimension into the ongoing struggle against fascism. Alexander Nevsky, Kutuzov, and even Peter the Great were

[20] Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 2.
[21] Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, p. 108.
[22] Ibid., p. 108.
[23] Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, p. 480 – 481.

glorified as war heroes of the past and their aristocratic blood was forgiven. Famous filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein was commissioned by Stalin to adapt Nevsky's valiant fight against the Teutonic knights. In another act supporting Russian nationalism, it was "Mother Russia" herself on propaganda posters all across the Union calling the citizens to the front. Pre-Soviet high culture was promoted by the Kremlin as an attempt to legitimize the state and promote national unity during unpredictable years. [24]

Reaching a Balance

The third shift in nationalities policy was much less abrupt and led to a more balanced situation. In the immediate aftermath of Stalin's death, the nationalities question became crucial to the battle for his succession. The contenders had come to believe that once again, in order to gain support, they had to grant concessions to the non-Russian periphery. Once Khrushchev ascended to power, some economic-administrative competencies shifted from the metropole to the republics and many non-Russians gained offices in the central and local governments (although some of these transfers were reversed in the 1960s.) [25]

At the root of this shift was the fact that the *korenizatsiia* policies followed during the 1920s had allowed the blossoming of strong national consciousness and, more importantly, of an experience of limited statehood. This consciousness was fuelled by the most powerful catalyst of identity, i.e. a national language, which in many cases *korenizatsiia* had helped to bring about. The national consciousness of non-Russians was even further strengthened with the widespread literacy and education achieved from the 1930s onwards. Undoubtedly, Stalin's repression of these identities in the 1930s and 40s and re-Russification created tremendous ethnic and political tensions in regions that had only recently tasted national freedom, at least in the cultural sphere of identity. Hence, in order to give new life to Soviet

[24] Lieven, *Empire*, p. 305 – 306.
[25] Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 234 – 258.

politics after Stalin's death, the leadership had to once again recognize national elites and co-opt them in the broader power structure.

National differences were officially recognized at the Twentieth Party Congress of 1956, and socialism was again positioned as the humanistic ideology that would allow national idiosyncrasies to flourish. From a pragmatic perspective, as mentioned previously, the promotion of federalism and of national differences had always been a strategic means of fostering the authority of the metropole over the periphery. Nonetheless, Khrushchev actively endeavored to devise a theoretical basis to his policies. He endorsed the paradigms of сближение (*sblizhenie,* rapprochement) and слияние (*sliianie,* merging) and developed them at the 1961 Party Congress.[26] These concepts, relying on previous Leninist ideology, essentially asserted that the march towards communism would merge national differences, leading to a fusion of nationalities into one "Soviet people." There was therefore no need to repress expressions of difference that would disappear over time.

However, Khrushchev's nationalities policy would not be a complete return to the situation of the 1920s, and on one particular aspect he would remain intractable: Russian remained the Soviet язык межнационального общения, (*yazyk mezhnatsionalnogo obshcheniya*, the language of internationality communication) and of the "cooperation of all peoples of the USSR."[27] Higher educational institutions and an ever-growing number of high schools operated exclusively in Russian, especially after the education reforms of the late 1950s.[28] The predominance of Russian was the major difference between this third period – where national differences were accommodated – and the first period analyzed in this article, the nation-building craze of the 1920s (*korenizatsiia*).

[26] Khrushchev, N.S. "Report on the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union." *Documents of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU*. New York: Crosscurrents Press, 1961, 2 vols.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, p. 108-110.

One of the reasons for this discrepancy was that the national goal of economic development was a priority now more than ever, and a unifying idiom was necessary to carry it out efficiently. It was a premeditated choice, and Khrushchev most probably was aware of its political cost. When he clearly expressed his determination to foster the position of Russian as the dominant language in the late 1950s, he essentially signaled an end to his systematic policy of concessions and in the process destroyed the support that he had enjoyed in the non-Russian republics. Although this language policy was extremely unpopular among non-Russians, it remained unchanged up until the collapse of the Soviet system in 1991.

It would be an exaggeration to state that the USSR between Stalin's death and 1991 was fully a Russian empire, but it must be stressed that the Russian-centric metropole and the Russian language dominated. However, indirect rule was more firmly established, and in large parts of the Union, especially in Transcaucasia and Central Asia, local leaders enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy.

Nationalism and Collapse

To what extent did the fluctuations in nationalities policy play a role in the collapse of the system as a whole? The situation in the 1980s reveals the crucial role played by nationalism, both Russian and non-Russian, in the last years of Soviet history. Increasingly, during Brezhnev's rule and later, nationalism became a catalyst of discontent. Brezhnev's era was characterized by permissiveness *vis-à-vis* many expressions of nationalism, and this passivity allowed the development of dissident movements under the guise of nationalism. Nationalism was also used to express dissent in Gorbachev's time,[29] especially when economic reform failed and after *glasnost*'s revelations about Soviet repression wiped out the state's legitimacy almost overnight.[30] According to Dominic Lieven, "in the emerging re-construction of their own history, the nationalists identified the Soviet experiment as the

[29] Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, p. 125 – 126.
[30] Lieven, *Empire*, p. 335.

enemy of essential, authentic, natural national aspirations,"[31] despite the fact that the Soviet policies had nurtured and even shaped some of these nations.

In confronting these national movements and their demands for sovereignty or independence, Gorbachev, committed to democratic reform, could not use the convenient instrument of force that had been used so often to hold the USSR together. Nationalism, stimulated by the fluctuation between the experience of statehood and forced Russification, thwarted the reform envisioned by Gorbachev and led the country towards radicalism and ultimately implosion and an interesting type of decolonization. There were many other reasons behind the fall of the Soviet Union, of course, but nationalism was one among the major ingredients. As Gorbachev's decentralization policies further eroded an already weakening central authority, declarations of independence mushroomed in the republics.

Russian nationalism and resentment was an equally crucial element in this process. Many Russians did not have the impression of belonging to a metropole. In most Russian regions, the perception was that the metropole was concentrated in Moscow alone. Indeed,

> Russian regions from Vladivostok to Leningrad were as tightly controlled as non-Russian republics, perhaps more so. Everything from their school curricula to their crop acreage to the types of goods they sold in their stores was determined in Moscow.[32]

There was an equally strong resentment against smaller republics having superior autonomy, representation and lobbying power than larger and more-developed Russian regions within the RSFSR. Boris Yeltsin played partly on these resentments when he conveyed the populist message that for too long Russians had been dominated by what he called "The Center," i.e., the Moscow central institutions. As the progeny of the Soviet system, Gorbachev was in no position to challenge Yeltsin's appeal to the dormant but still powerful nationalism of the Russian masses.

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[31] Ibid., p. 139 – 140.
[32] J. Hough, *Democratisation and Revolution in the USSR 1985-1991*, Brookings Institution Press, 1997, p. 57.

Thus Yeltsin, enjoying a strong base of support among Russian nationalists, became chair of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, and declared Russia a sovereign state. After a series of uprisings, hasty decisions, misreading of actual events and a missed coup, the USSR ultimately collapsed.

The status of the Soviet Union as an identity marker however, has not collapsed. It is interesting to notice that the merger of Russian and purely Soviet symbols, in addition to the victory of 1945, gave reality to the abstract notion of Soviet patriotism.[33] For some time, Russia and the Soviet Union became indistinguishable. It is not the existence of this Soviet patriotism but its resilience that is remarkable. In Russia itself, many Soviet patriotic elements have been restored by Vladimir Putin into the national symbols of the Russian Federation, including the music (though not lyrics) of the Soviet national anthem. A Russian military parade today is an interesting blend of Soviet and Russian components that shows how confused Russian identity itself has become after 70 years of Soviet infiltration.[34] Also, many in Russia today feel a strong Soviet nostalgia and do not see the break between Russia and the USSR as a clear one.

Conclusions

The extent of the Russian character of the USSR was more clearly defined in the two periods that followed the 1917 Revolution, i.e. *korenizatsiia* between the Civil War and the early 1930s, and re-Russification until Stalin's death in 1953. In the first period the USSR was not a Russian empire, as policies were not intended to inequitably favor the imperial core over the periphery. During *korenizatsiia*, the USSR was an incubator of new nationalities, replacing earlier local, religious or tribal solidarities with a sense of belonging to various nation-states comprising the broader Union.[35] Russianness was repressed. However, this

[33] Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, p. 149.
[34] Dominic Lieven, "The Soviet Union: an anti-capitalist empire?", lecture in *Empire, Colonialism and Globalization*, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), London, March 2006.
[35] Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, p. 110.

statement must be tempered by the fact that despite the official recognition of non-Russian nationalities, real political power and economic decision-making were still concentrated in Moscow. An absurd situation was created in which nationalisms with all their flags, lexicons and national clothing were promoted, but true national political expression was lacking. Subsequently, during the second period, when Russianness was restored as the overarching identity of the union, these new national consciousnesses, still freshly promoted or created, were ruthlessly repressed, and therefore paradoxically consolidated. From that time, Russianness was deeply resented by non-Russian nationalists as the nemesis. Indeed, it was not only Tchaikovsky and Pushkin who were back on the pedestal, but an imperialist metropole, imposing an inequitable relationship upon the periphery. This left an indelible perception among non-Russians. The assimilation of the Soviet system with Russian imperialism, led the non-Russian nationalists at a later stage to define themselves against both the Soviet system and the perceived Russian imperialism for which it seemed to stand.

The post-Stalinist period was again more permissive and more tolerant toward expressions of non-Russian nationalism. Many of the nationalist movements, which were allowed to express themselves in the republics during Brezhnev's reign, would later fuel the mass movements of the Gorbachev period.[36] The USSR was not a Russian empire as such, but there was a predominance of Russians, although this was never absolute.

The ultimate irony of Soviet history is that its proclaimed initial objective of unifying the Soviet people – an honorable goal which might have overcome divisions created by nationalism – was frustrated by a pragmatic policy of cultivating non-Russian national consciousnesses, believing that the march towards socialism would one day render nations obsolete. This never happened. In fact, the very national experiences that *korenizatsiia* had engendered, consolidated by later repression, provided a social and cultural base for discreet

[36] Ibid., p.124.

resistance to rule by the metropole and ultimately radical nationalist uprisings in the 1980s.[37] In fact, the republics had been brought into the Union by force and were kept there by force during Stalin's reign.[38] Force, or the memory of force, helped hold the Union together for 74 years, until Gorbachev liberalized some aspects of Soviet political life and, in the process, unleashed the inherent vulnerability of Soviet federalism: the right of the republics, embodied in the Soviet constitution, to secede. Nationalism was a time bomb that exploded in the void left by the de-legitimized Soviet ideology in a period when the leadership was reluctant to use force to hold the empire together.

In the last days, the USSR was perceived as a Russian empire by the republics aspiring to self-determination. In Russia itself, the USSR was perceived as an over-centralized Moscow empire. The convergence of these two perceptions played a role of great consequence in the disintegration of the imperial territory into fifteen independent states.

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[37] Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, p. 126.
[38] Lieven, *Empire*, p. 326.