

Marlène Laruelle (ed.)

**Russian Nationalism, Foreign Policy,
and Identity Debates in Putin's Russia**

*New Ideological Patterns after the
Orange Revolution*



ibidem

Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society (SPPS)

ISSN 1614-3515

General Editor: Andreas Umland,
Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, umland@stanfordalumni.org

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE*

DOMESTIC & COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Prof. **Ellen Bos**, *Andrássy University of Budapest*
Dr. **Ingmar Bredies**, *FH Bund, Brühl*
Dr. **Andrey Kazantsev**, *MGIMO (U) MID RF, Moscow*
Dr. **Heiko Pleines**, *University of Bremen*
Prof. **Richard Sakwa**, *University of Kent at Canterbury*
Dr. **Sarah Whitmore**, *Oxford Brookes University*
Dr. **Harald Wydra**, *University of Cambridge*

SOCIETY, CLASS & ETHNICITY

Col. **David Glantz**, *“Journal of Slavic Military Studies”*
Dr. **Marlène Laruelle**, *George Washington University*
Dr. **Stephen Shulman**, *Southern Illinois University*
Prof. **Stefan Troebst**, *University of Leipzig*

POLITICAL ECONOMY & PUBLIC POLICY

Prof. em. **Marshall Goldman**, *Wellesley College, Mass.*
Dr. **Andreas Goldthau**, *Central European University*
Dr. **Robert Kravchuk**, *University of North Carolina*
Dr. **David Lane**, *University of Cambridge*
Dr. **Carol Leonard**, *University of Oxford*
Dr. **Maria Popova**, *McGill University, Montreal*

ADVISORY BOARD*

Prof. **Dominique Arel**, *University of Ottawa*
Prof. **Jörg Baberowski**, *Humboldt University of Berlin*
Prof. **Margarita Balmaceda**, *Seton Hall University*
Dr. **John Barber**, *University of Cambridge*
Prof. **Timm Beichelt**, *European University Viadrina*
Dr. **Katrin Boeckh**, *University of Munich*
Prof. em. **Archie Brown**, *University of Oxford*
Dr. **Vyacheslav Bryukhovetsky**, *Kyiv-Mohyla Academy*
Prof. **Timothy Colton**, *Harvard University, Cambridge*
Prof. **Paul D’Anieri**, *University of Florida*
Dr. **Heike Dörrenbächer**, *DGO, Berlin*
Dr. **John Dunlop**, *Hoover Institution, Stanford, California*
Dr. **Sabine Fischer**, *SWP, Berlin*
Dr. **Geir Flikke**, *NUPI, Oslo*
Prof. **David Galbreath**, *University of Aberdeen*
Prof. **Alexander Galkin**, *Russian Academy of Sciences*
Prof. **Frank Golczewski**, *University of Hamburg*
Dr. **Nikolas Gvosdev**, *Naval War College, Newport, RI*
Prof. **Mark von Hagen**, *Arizona State University*
Dr. **Guido Hausmann**, *University of Freiburg i.Br.*
Prof. **Dale Herspring**, *Kansas State University*
Dr. **Stefani Hoffman**, *Hebrew University of Jerusalem*
Prof. **Mikhail Ilyin**, *MGIMO (U) MID RF, Moscow*
Prof. **Vladimir Kantor**, *Higher School of Economics*
Dr. **Ivan Katchanovski**, *University of Ottawa*
Prof. em. **Andrzej Korbonski**, *University of California*
Dr. **Iris Kempe**, *“Caucasus Analytical Digest”*
Prof. **Herbert Küpper**, *Institut für Ostrecht Regensburg*
Dr. **Rainer Lindner**, *CEEER, Berlin*
Dr. **Vladimir Malakhov**, *Russian Academy of Sciences*

Editorial Assistant: Olena Sivuda, *Drahomanov Pedagogical University of Kyiv, SLS6255@ku-eichstaett.de*

FOREIGN POLICY & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Dr. **Peter Duncan**, *University College London*
Dr. **Taras Kuzio**, *Johns Hopkins University*
Prof. **Gerhard Mangott**, *University of Innsbruck*
Dr. **Diana Schmidt-Pfister**, *University of Konstanz*
Dr. **Lisbeth Tarlow**, *Harvard University, Cambridge*
Dr. **Christian Wipperfürth**, *N-Ost Network, Berlin*
Dr. **William Zimmerman**, *University of Michigan*

HISTORY, CULTURE & THOUGHT

Dr. **Catherine Andreyev**, *University of Oxford*
Prof. **Mark Bassin**, *Södertörn University*
Prof. **Karsten Brüggemann**, *Tallinn University*
Dr. **Alexander Etkind**, *University of Cambridge*
Dr. **Gasan Gusejnov**, *Moscow State University*
Prof. em. **Walter Laqueur**, *Georgetown University*
Prof. **Leonid Luks**, *Catholic University of Eichstaett*
Dr. **Olga Malinova**, *Russian Academy of Sciences*
Dr. **Andrei Rogatchevski**, *University of Glasgow*
Dr. **Mark Tauger**, *West Virginia University*
Dr. **Stefan Wiederkehr**, *BBAW, Berlin*

Dr. **Luke March**, *University of Edinburgh*
Prof. **Michael McFaul**, *US Embassy at Moscow*
Prof. **Birgit Menzel**, *University of Mainz-Germersheim*
Prof. **Valery Mikhailenko**, *The Urals State University*
Prof. **Emely Pain**, *Higher School of Economics, Moscow*
Dr. **Oleg Podvintsev**, *Russian Academy of Sciences*
Prof. **Olga Popova**, *St. Petersburg State University*
Dr. **Alex Pravda**, *University of Oxford*
Dr. **Erik van Ree**, *University of Amsterdam*
Dr. **Joachim Rogall**, *Robert Bosch Foundation Stuttgart*
Prof. **Peter Rutland**, *Wesleyan University, Middletown*
Prof. **Marat Salikov**, *The Urals State Law Academy*
Dr. **Gwendolyn Sasse**, *University of Oxford*
Prof. **Jutta Scherrer**, *EHESS, Paris*
Prof. **Robert Service**, *University of Oxford*
Mr. **James Sherr**, *RIIA Chatham House London*
Dr. **Oxana Shevel**, *Tufts University, Medford*
Prof. **Eberhard Schneider**, *University of Siegen*
Prof. **Olexander Shnyrkov**, *Shevchenko University, Kyiv*
Prof. **Hans-Henning Schröder**, *SWP, Berlin*
Prof. **Yuri Shapoval**, *Ukrainian Academy of Sciences*
Prof. **Viktor Shnirelman**, *Russian Academy of Sciences*
Dr. **Lisa Sundstrom**, *University of British Columbia*
Dr. **Philip Walters**, *“Religion, State and Society”, Oxford*
Prof. **Zenon Wasyliv**, *Ithaca College, New York State*
Dr. **Lucan Way**, *University of Toronto*
Dr. **Markus Wehner**, *“Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”*
Dr. **Andrew Wilson**, *University College London*
Prof. **Jan Zielonka**, *University of Oxford*
Prof. **Andrei Zorin**, *University of Oxford*

* While the Editorial Committee and Advisory Board support the General Editor in the choice and improvement of manuscripts for publication, responsibility for remaining errors and misinterpretations in the series' volumes lies with the books' authors.

Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society (SPPS)

ISSN 1614-3515

Founded in 2004 and refereed since 2007, SPPS makes available affordable English-, German-, and Russian-language studies on the history of the countries of the former Soviet bloc from the late Tsarist period to today. It publishes between 5 and 20 volumes per year and focuses on issues in transitions to and from democracy such as economic crisis, identity formation, civil society development, and constitutional reform in CEE and the NIS. SPPS also aims to highlight so far understudied themes in East European studies such as right-wing radicalism, religious life, higher education, or human rights protection. The authors and titles of all previously published volumes are listed at the end of this book. For a full description of the series and reviews of its books, see

www.ibidem-verlag.de/red/spps.

Editorial correspondence & manuscripts should be sent to: Dr. Andreas Umland, DAAD, German Embassy, vul. Bohdana Khmelnytskoho 25, UA-01901 Kyiv, Ukraine. e-mail: umland@stanfordalumni.org

Business correspondence & review copy requests should be sent to: *ibidem* Press, Leuschnerstr. 40, 30457 Hannover, Germany; tel.: +49 511 2622200; fax: +49 511 2622201; spps@ibidem.eu.

Authors, reviewers, referees, and editors for (as well as all other persons sympathetic to) SPPS are invited to join its networks at www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=52638198614 www.linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=103012 www.xing.com/net/spps-ibidem-verlag/

Recent Volumes

114 Ivo Mijnsen

The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia I
Back to Our Future! History, Modernity and Patriotism according to *Nashi*, 2005-2012
With a foreword by Jeronim Perović
ISBN 978-3-8382-0368-3

115 Jussi Lassila

The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia II
The Search for Distinctive Conformism in the Political Communication of *Nashi*, 2005-2009
With a foreword by Kirill Postoutenko
ISBN 978-3-8382-0415-4

116 Valerio Trabandt

Neue Nachbarn, gute Nachbarschaft?
Die EU als internationaler Akteur am Beispiel ihrer Demokratieförderung in Belarus und der Ukraine 2004-2009
Mit einem Vorwort von Jutta Joachim
ISBN 978-3-8382-0437-6

117 Fabian Pfeiffer

Estlands Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik I
Der estnische Atlantizismus nach der wiedererlangten Unabhängigkeit 1991-2004
Mit einem Vorwort von Helmut Hubel
ISBN 978-3-8382-0127-6

118 Jana Podfußweit

Estlands Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik II
Handlungsoptionen eines Kleinstaates im Rahmen seiner EU-Mitgliedschaft (2004-2008)
Mit einem Vorwort von Helmut Hubel
ISBN 978-3-8382-0440-6

119 Karin Pointner

Estlands Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik III
Eine gedächtnispolitische Analyse estnischer Entwicklungskooperation 2006-2010
Mit einem Vorwort von Karin Liebhart
ISBN 978-3-8382-0435-2

120 Ruslana Vovk

Die Offenheit der ukrainischen Verfassung für das Völkerrecht und die europäische Integration
Mit einem Vorwort von Alexander Blankenagel
ISBN 978-3-8382-0481-9

121 Mykhaylo Banakh

Die Relevanz der Zivilgesellschaft bei den postkommunistischen Transformationsprozessen in mittel- und osteuropäischen Ländern
Das Beispiel der spät- und postsowjetischen Ukraine 1986-2009
Mit einem Vorwort von Gerhard Simon
ISBN 978-3-8382-0499-4

Marlène Laruelle (ed.)

**RUSSIAN NATIONALISM, FOREIGN POLICY,
AND IDENTITY DEBATES
IN PUTIN'S RUSSIA**

New Ideological Patterns after the Orange Revolution

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

The contributions in this book were originally published in © *Demokratizatsiya* 19, no. 3, Summer 2011. They are reprinted here with kind permission by the editors and Heldref.

Formatting assistance: Olena Sivuda

Frontcover Picture: Demonstrations in Moscow, November 4, 2007. © Marlène Laruelle

ISSN: 1614-3515

ISBN-13: 978-3-8382-6325-0

© *ibidem*-Verlag / *ibidem* Press
Stuttgart, Germany 2014

Alle Rechte vorbehalten

Das Werk einschließlich aller seiner Teile ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Jede Verwertung außerhalb der engen Grenzen des Urheberrechtsgesetzes ist ohne Zustimmung des Verlages unzulässig und strafbar.

Dies gilt insbesondere für Vervielfältigungen, Übersetzungen, Mikroverfilmungen und elektronische Speicherformen sowie die Einspeicherung und Verarbeitung in elektronischen Systemen.

All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

Contents

	Introduction	
	<i>Marlène Laruelle, George Washington University</i>	7
1	Is Nationalism Rising in Russian Foreign Policy? The Case of Georgia	
	<i>Luke March, University of Edinburgh</i>	11
2	History, Memory and National Identity: Understanding the Politics of History and Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Lands	
	<i>Igor Torbakov, Uppsala Center for Russian Studies</i>	41
3	Negotiating History: Memory Wars in the Near Abroad and the Pro-Kremlin Youth Movements	
	<i>Marlène Laruelle, George Washington University</i>	75
4	Making Sense of Nashi's Political Style: The Bronze Soldier and the Counter-Orange Community	
	<i>Jussi Lassila, Aleksanteri Institute</i>	105
5	Russian Radical Nationalist Interpretation of the French Riots of November 2005	
	<i>Lukasz Jurczyszyn, Pultusk Academy of Humanities</i>	139

Introduction

Marlène Laruelle, George Washington University, USA

Works devoted to nationalism in contemporary Russia often tend to dissociate the radical, extremist movements—whether it is a matter of small, neo-fascist parties or youth sub-cultures such as the skinheads—from the more official movements within the country's ruling bodies, and which manipulate the theme of the nation for diverse aims. In Russia itself, both the media and researchers have a tendency to dissociate expressions of *nationalism*, considered as destructive of the social fabric and as being often violent, from those of *patriotism*, which, by contrast, is perceived as a healthy and constructive movement—indeed, on the back of significant support from public opinion, it is a movement that the Kremlin has again made fashionable. However, despite the existing diversity of agendas and methods of action, these differing statements on the nation can be said to share many overlapping spaces, or even a continuum. This is so much the case that issues related to national identity have become central for the creation of a civic consensus.

The so-called nationalist movements, the Russian authorities, and public opinion have sometimes very contradictory visions of the country's future, but their points of view join up on a series of themes. Two types of topics fall under this consensual category. The first one is xenophobia against migrants, although the degree of radicalism varies widely, as do the strategies proposed to fight it (which range from state programs for teaching “tolerance” to calls by radical groups to expel “foreigners”). The second domain of consensuality bears on the interpretation of evolutions in the Near Abroad. Here, too, in spite of differences in nuance, the same interpretative grid is deployed in the Kremlin's narratives, surveys of public opinion, and nationalist movements. Nationalism is, above all, an instrument geared for the Russian domestic scene. The Kremlin's promotion of its very statist patriotism is de-

signed to respond to a social demand from “below” as well as to prevent nationalist sentiment from becoming a driver of possible opposition to United Russia. The media-cultivated mainstream points up cultural components connected with Russian history and reprises for its own ends Soviet mottos and pathos, such as those concerning ethnic tolerance and the unity of Eurasian peoples. There are numerous projects for political mobilization that are based on the notion that multiple potential enemies, both internal and external ones, put the nation in “danger,” but not all are successful.

Contrary to what is often supposed, however, “Russian nationalism” does not play a structural role in Russia’s foreign policy: grounded in existing legal frameworks, Moscow’s decisions at the international level are much more nuanced than those endorsed by nationalist groups. Indeed few so-called nationalist figures occupy positions in institutions connected with foreign policy. The exception here is Dmitri Rogozin, though Putin has managed to marginalize him from domestic politics by appointing him as Russia’s NATO representative. Over recent years mechanisms have been developed to promote Russia abroad, and a new space of meeting has been created between the *statist* logics pertaining to foreign affairs and those of groups or major figures sensitive to the future of the Russian *nation*. These logics underscore Moscow’s underestimation of questions of nation-branding, its need to invest in the “information war,” and its need to rally Russian-speaking communities throughout the world.

Moreover, in the domestic sphere, themes connected with the Near Abroad engender – near total – unanimity: one of the most striking examples is the war with Georgia in August 2008. Such unanimity also reigns concerning Moscow’s criticisms of the Baltic States, its opinion of the Ukrainian political elite, and that of the situation in Moldavia whenever the future of Transnistria is at stake. Consensus also prevails through a vague, but historically anchored, resentment toward “the West,” whether at issue is Europe or the United States, both of which are suspected of not appreciating Russia’s real worth and of applying double-standards in their policies toward it. The only event of the “Far Abroad” that received a uniform interpretation in Russia was the riots in the French suburbs in 2005: the authorities, public opinion, and nationalist groups, not to mention very many Russian intellectuals, viewed

these riots as a fight conducted by “Arabs” against the “French.” A mirror of their own domestic phobias over the migration issue, this gave birth to multiple narratives about the “disappearance of European ethnic identity,” and about the need for Russia to avoid this path.

The five chapters gathered in this work discuss the new conjunctions that have emerged between foreign policy events and expressions of “Russian nationalism.” Relations with Georgia, Ukraine, and the Baltic countries, in particular over the memory wars that have developed throughout post-Communist space in recent years, as well as the interpretation of the French riots, have all contributed to reinforcing Russian apprehensions. These apprehensions are shared not only by the organs of the Russian state, and public opinion (which is heavily monitored by official propaganda on these questions), but also by nationalist groups, that is, mainly the youth ones, which include the pro-Kremlin youth as much as the skinheads. All these groups have their own agendas, and employ different methods of action in the public sphere for participating in the social consensus and receiving recognition from other segments of society. But they share a very similar reading of these events. This fact contributes to reinforcing the idea that there is a prevailing unanimity in Russian society, and thus indirectly also to shaping current Russian national identity.

1 Is Nationalism Rising in Russian Foreign Policy? The Case of Georgia¹

Luke March, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Western discussion during the last half-decade has increasingly focussed on an “assertive” and even “aggressive” Russian foreign policy that underpins an ever more confident global position. From a Russia that could only say “yes” in the 1990s, the West is apparently now confronting a Russia that can, and will, say “no”.²

For many analysts, this assertive stance has been associated with distinct ideational underpinnings that have sought to challenge Western liberalism. Although “sovereign democracy” has been the most obvious example, many have also argued that anti-Western nationalism has moved from the margins to the mainstream of Russian discourse in the Putin era.³ Moreover, this nationalism has, apparently, begun ineluctably to influence Russian foreign policy and to deepen the rhetorical and cognitive dissonance between Russia and the West. Indeed, as Edward Lucas argued, “the ideological conflict of the New Cold War is between lawless Russian nationalism and law-governed Western multilateralism.”⁴

-
- 1 I wish to acknowledge the support of the British Academy (Overseas Conference Grant) in this research.
 - 2 Walter D. Connor, “A Russia that Can Say ‘No’?,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40, no. 3 (September 2007): 383-391.
 - 3 Hyung-min Joo, “The Soviet Origin of Russian Chauvinism: Voices from Below,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 41, no. 2 (June 2008): 217-242; Andreas Umland, “Rastsvet russkogo ul'tranatsionalizma i s tanovlenie soobshchestva ego issledovateleĭ,” *Forum noveishei vostochnoevropeiskoi istorii i kul'tury* 6, no. 1 (2009): 5-38; and George W. Breslauer, “Observations on Russia’s Foreign Relations under Putin,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 25, no. 4 (2009).
 - 4 Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces Both Russia and the West* (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2009), 14.

However, the role nationalism might have played in the Russia-Georgia War of August 2008 has been largely ignored. One of the most influential authors on the conflict, Ronald Asmus, did argue that “by the summer of 2008 ... an increasingly nationalistic and revisionist Russia was ... rebelling against a system that it felt no longer met its interests and had been imposed on it during a moment of temporary weakness.”⁵ Yet neither he nor other authors examined this claim in depth. Yet his contention can support a narrative of “lawless Russian nationalism.” Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in defiance of Euro-Atlantic positions can be seen as the tipping-point when Russia began to substantiate its rhetoric and to export highly nationalistic internal values in an attempt to revise the post-Cold War order.

Nevertheless, hindsight perhaps confounds this view. Although the Western consensus is that Russia wanted and planned the war, Western and Georgian mistakes mean that a narrative of “good” West versus “evil” Russia (implicit in Lucas’s account) cannot be convincingly maintained.⁶ More widely, the US-Russia “reset” has involved a marked change of climate and de-escalation of rhetoric. Russia itself has focussed increasingly on internal modernization and the immediate fear that it was to pursue overt annexation of other contested regions like Crimea and Transnistria has receded. Finally, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev’s modernization rhetoric is associated with increased efforts to control domestic nationalist excesses via greater law enforcement.⁷

In this article, I will trace the foreign policy influence of Russian nationalism from the Putin to the Medvedev eras, focussing specifically on Russian nationalist arguments for and reactions to the August 2008 conflict. The main questions in focus are: (1) What are the basic dynamics of the relationship between nationalism and foreign policy under Putin and Medvedev?; (2) What

5 Ronald Asmus, *A Little War that Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West*, 1st ed. (Houndmills, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 7.

6 Some of the most detailed and nuanced accounts are contained in Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr, *The Guns of August 2008: Russia’s War in Georgia* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009).

7 Galina Kozhevnikova, “Manifestations of Radical Nationalism and Efforts to Counteract it in Russia during the First Half of 2010,” SOVA Center, July 30, 2010, available at <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/reports-analyses/2010/07/d19436/> (accessed May 23, 2011).

role did Russian nationalism play in the Russia-Georgia War? Was it a significant factor in Russian motivations before and after the conflict as Asmus indicated?; and, (3) Overall, was the role of Russian nationalism in the war a corroboration of or a deviation from this general relationship? I will end with some observations about whether the influence of nationalism on Russian foreign policy has indeed decreased since 2008 and whether Russian nationalism presents a significant obstacle to the “modernization” and “resetting” of Russian policy.

I will argue that the typical relationship between Russian nationalism and foreign policy is a complex one—it is simply not the case that Russian nationalism is inherently expansionist and militarist, as some classic accounts argue.⁸ Even under Putin and Medvedev, the authorities have generally promoted a foreign policy based on “statist nationalism” that is conservative as opposed to reactionary, and that is orientated towards pragmatism, not ideology. In the foreign policy realm, the authorities traditionally attempt to insulate themselves from constrictive ideational factors in general, including more aggressive forms of nationalism. Nevertheless, they have simultaneously stoked more aggressive ethno-nationalist sentiment (“civilizational nationalism”) in the domestic sphere for legitimacy and mobilization purposes—sometimes inadvertently, but often quite deliberately, in ways that conflict with their declared foreign policy goals. The typical relationship is, then, not of nationalism motivating or “driving” foreign policy, but of the elites exploiting nationalism for domestic purposes.

However, the Russia-Georgia War was a marked deviation from this pattern. Civilizational nationalism did directly matter in foreign policy, because foreign policy and domestic discourse became blended to an unprecedented degree, and the terms of debate were largely set by the civilizationists. This was not a sudden phenomenon; in the Putin era, the domestic mobilization of civilizational nationalism increased so that it became the “politically correct” domestic discourse. Yet the Georgian case is one which shows an unprecedented spill-over from the domestic to the foreign policy realms—the long build-up to the 2008 war showed a gradual commingling of Russian official and civiliza-

8 Richard Pipes, *Survival Is Not Enough: Soviet Realities and America's Future* (Simon & Schuster, 1984).

tionist attitudes that created a self-fulfilling prophecy. From the Russian perspective, Georgia was the hostile, nationalist “aggressor” against whom measures had to be taken. Moreover, the conflict also showed that for the first time, civilizational nationalism was directly influencing Russian foreign policy, even at the level of doctrine. Since 2009, there has been a partial return to the norm; the Russian elite seems aware of the dangers of aggressive nationalism escaping its control and has sought to return to non-ideational, non-nationalist rhetoric. However, without more fundamental domestic change, this is likely to remain a superficial “reset” that does not circumvent the likelihood of nationalism increasingly affecting Russian foreign policy.

Nationalism and Foreign Policy: From “Managed” to Unmanageable?

Observers fundamentally disagree about the role of nationalism in Russian foreign policy. This is unsurprising. As John Breuilly argues, there is a significant conceptual problem with identifying state nationalism: “nationalist” governments whose policies defend “national interests” and which other states might regard as “assertive” or “aggressive” are so universal that “governmental nationalism” can become a meaningless category unless there is an obvious, direct link between government and a nationalist movement.⁹ In Russia, no such link exists.

Nevertheless, three broad approaches to Russian state nationalism can be identified. Liberal views tend to assume that domestic ideas and constituencies are determining in general and nationalism has become more relevant (and dangerous) in particular. For example, analysts have traced the influence of anti-Western neo-Eurasianists like Aleksandr Dugin and Mikhail Leont’ev over the political establishment—in particular the number of leading Russian executive and legislative figures in Dugin’s International Eurasian Movement (including Presidential aide Aslanbek Aslakhanov and South Ossetian President Eduard Kokoity).¹⁰ For some, indeed, Putin has himself been

9 John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed. (Manchester University Press, 1993):10-11

10 Yigal Liverant, “The Prophet of the New Russian Empire,” *Azure* 35 (2009), available at <http://www.azure.org.il/include/print.php?id=483> (accessed June 6, 2011); and

heavily influenced by neo-Eurasianist ideas.¹¹ For many, increasing domestic authoritarianism promotes anti-Western nationalism in foreign policy.¹² For them, Russian foreign policy has become increasingly driven by its domestic imperatives. Most notably, the Kremlin doctrine of “sovereign democracy” was motivated primarily by the need to defend against regional “coloured revolutions” and allegedly marked a fundamental existential challenge to the West.¹³

In contrast, many (primarily, but not exclusively, realists) argue that even under Putin Russia remains a predominantly pragmatic, non-ideological state motivated largely by traditional high-level security concerns, material interests and economic opportunism—this is the Russia Inc. outlined by Dmitri Trenin.¹⁴ The highly consolidated elite can conduct foreign policy independently of domestic interest when necessary, as in Putin’s notorious pro-Western shift after September 11, 2001. Of course, the Russian foreign policy elite themselves largely share this realist view, seeing their policy as one of pragmatic and rational national interests based around *raison d’état*.

Arguably more persuasive are broadly constructivist accounts that do not assume *a priori* that external or internal factors are dominant, but argue that they are dialectical and mediated subjectively via the policy process.¹⁵ For

Umland, “Rastsvet russkogo ul'tranatsionalizma i s tanovlenie soobshchestva ego issledovatelei.”

11 Liverant, “The Prophet of the New Russian Empire.”

12 E.g. James Sherr, “The Implication of the Russia-Georgia War for European Security,” in *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*, ed. Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009): 196-224; Pierre Hassner, “Russia’s Transition to Autocracy,” *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 2 (2008): 5-15; and Lilia Shevtsova, “The Return of Personalized Power,” *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 2 (2009): 61-65.

13 Ivan Krastev, “Russia as the ‘Other Europe,’” *Russia in Global Affairs*, November 17, 2007, available at http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_9779.

14 E.g. Dmitri Trenin, *Getting Russia Right* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007); Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, 4th ed. (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009); Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Books, Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); Elana Wilson Rowe and Stina Torjesen, *The Multilateral Dimension in Russian Foreign Policy*, 1st edition (New York: Routledge, 2008).

15 E.g. Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Cornell University Press, 2002); Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Revised edition (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010); Robert Jackson