Journal of Political Ideologies (2001), **6**(3), 263–288

Nationalism and the Russian political spectrum: locating and evaluating the extremes

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ABSTRACT *This article argues that nationalism should be addressed specifically in attempts to systematize Russian politics. 'Radicalism' or 'moderation' in terms of nationalism does not necessarily follow 'radicalism' or 'moderation' on other political indicators. Some political actors are simply better categorized by their nationalism than by their position on, say, an economic (state vs. market) or political (liberal vs. authoritarian) scale. This argument is developed in a three-step analysis. First, the article discusses typical meanings of spatial terms—such as 'left', 'right', and 'centrist'—in modern Russian politics, and existing attempts to model the Russian political landscape. Secondly, it presents a two-dimensional model which distinguishes between four different expressions of Russian nationalism. Thirdly, it compares various political actors introduced in the first section with each of the two dimensions of nationalism.*

Nationalism has had a place in many attempts to systematize Russian politics, but its integration into systems or models has most often been awkward. Frequently, 'nationalism' has been a category reserved only for the most radical actors, much in line with Russian political terminology. That has served to obscure the fact that radical nationalist positions are sometimes part of the platforms of politicians mostly seen in Russia as being mainstream—combinations that tend to surprise Western audiences.

As for linear, 'left–right' models, these have often placed nationalism only in a limited segment of the political spectrum. In particular, ethnocentric, imperialist nationalism, an inclination towards conspiracy thinking, are often placed to the far right of what one considers a single continuum encompassing all political differences. In Russia, however, these traits are also very much present on the left. That has been acknowledged by scholars studying, in particular, the Communist Party (KPRF) and the ideology of its leader, Gennadiy Zyuganov,[1] but has hardly been properly considered in such models. Constructions such as 'communist-nationalist' or 'red-brown' have been used to describe the

ISSN 1356-9317 print; 1469-9613 online/01/030263–26 © 2001 Taylor & Francis Ltd
DOI: 10.1080/13569310120083008

ideological proximity between these categories, but has not solved it model-wise. The term most often used in Russia—'national-patriotic'—does emphasize the fact that nationalism is a shared feature, but does not indicate where exactly this category would fit in a model or spectrum.

The aim of this article is to demonstrate how analysis may suffer when nationalism is not addressed specifically in attempts to systematize Russian politics. It will do so in three steps. First, it will discuss typical meanings of spatial terms—such as 'left', 'right', and 'centrist'—in modern Russian politics, and existing attempts to model the Russian political landscape. Secondly, it will present a two-dimensional model which distinguishes between four different expressions of Russian nationalism. Thirdly, it will hold the various political actors that were introduced in the first section up against each of the two dimensions of nationalism: not in order to assign a rigid 'box' to each of the actors, but in order to show that 'radicalism' or 'moderation' in terms of nationalism does not necessarily follow 'radicalism' or 'moderation' on other political indicators, and also to show that some political actors are simply better categorized by their nationalism than by their position on, say, a scale of economic policy preferences.

Mapping the Russian political landscape

Terms such as 'spectrum', 'continuum', and 'landscape' all suggest that we are dealing with something that relates to distance. Of course, political distance is not as straightforward to measure as metres and kilometres. In Russia as in Western countries, it is common to use as the basic measure of political distance placement on a left–right continuum. Applied stringently, a single continuum would indicate position on one single variable. For a left–right continuum, this variable could be, for instance, attitude towards state intervention in the economy (state vs. market), or individualist vs. collectivist orientation.

Several scholars, both Russian and Western, have gone beyond the one-dimensional spectrum when mapping the Russian political spectrum. One way this has been done is by the use of models of two crossing axes. This allows one to plot a political actor according to two variables at the same time. In addition to an economic axis (state vs. market), a second axis employed by several scholars is a political (or regime type) one, spanning liberal democracy and authoritarian (or totalitarian) rule. The combination of these two axes is clearly a useful tool for mapping Russian politics. One would easily place the Communist Party more on the 'state' (or left) and the authoritarian side than, say, Grigoriy Yavlinskiy's Yabloko, whereas politicians such as Boris Nemtsov and Yegor Gaidar would appear quite far out on the 'market' and the 'liberal' side. Accordingly, for instance, Geoffrey Evans and Stephen Whitefield in one statistical study identified 'two lefts and two rights ... one based on the economy and distributional conflict, and the other based on disputes over social and political rights'.[2]

However, there are limitations to such models. Some have to do with the

categorization within the model; I will return to this briefly. More to the point for this article, however, is the fact that such a model does not take into account the nationalist orientation of actors—to what extent they can be described as nationalist, and, if they can, what sort of nationalism they represent.[3] This weakness becomes most obvious in the case of the so-called 'national-patriots', or 'red-browns' (*krasno-korichnevye*). These may all be closer to the 'authoritarian' rather than the 'liberal democratic' pole, but where would they score on the economic scale? Some of these will be in favour of a totally planned economy, while others will be more pro-market. However, what in the end brings them together (in addition to their anti-liberalism) is the character of their nationalism and the weight it carries in their overall political programme.

While this weakness of otherwise useful political models is particularly evident in the case of the 'national-patriots', it is also present for actors that tend to be attributed less extreme positions in the political landscape. Thus, as will be demonstrated later in this article, politicians that many Russians would tend to place somewhere around a 'centre' may well hold rather radical nationalist views. At this point, however, it is useful to explore in more detail models of Russian politics, and the meaning currently attributed in Russia to some terms that pertain to political distance.

Many categorizations of Russian politics envisage a left–right spectrum, but in real fact assume more than score along just one variable. Basically, these assume that attitudes come in *clusters*; if you hold one specific opinion, you probably hold a few other, related ones, too. Thus, in the Russian context, if you are out on the left, you are probably also in favour of authoritarian rule, and in favour of Soviet re-union. Categorizations like these are often used in Russian media, but also by Russian (and sometimes by Western) scholars. Rather than envisaging a one- or two-dimensional landscape, they have simplified politics into a collection of 'islands', or separate categories. It is often implied that these categories are located in particular positions (e.g., more left or right) in relation to each other, but this is not always spelled out. Typical categories include *Stalinists, new left, social democrats, centrists, liberal democrats, national patriots,* and *extreme right*. Among the categories specifically identified as nationalists (or national patriots) in Russia, terms one may encounter include ethnocrats, imperialists, and fascists.[4]

In order to establish actors' placement relative to each other, scholars have typically used one out of two different techniques. The first is expert judgements; relying on the assessment of journalists or academics who know a country well. The second includes different kinds of surveys, by which respondents in public opinion polls are asked to position the actors according to their own judgement. On the basis of such responses, the scholars have then calculated 'sums' of scores for the different actors, and in turn placed them along a linear (or two-dimensional) spectrum. Both expert judgements and plotting by surveys have weaknesses. For the former, it is a fact that one's own ideological platform influences how one will assess others. For instance, analysts in the conservative American Heritage Foundation will tend to view the Russian political spectrum

as a whole as lying more to the left than, say, European liberals or Russians themselves would. Consequently, for instance, the Heritage Foundation described the 1999 electoral bloc that included Anatoliy Chubais, Sergey Kirienko, Yegor Gaidar, and Boris Nemtsov (the Union of Right Forces—SPS) as 'centre-right'.[5] Similarly, of course, Russian political actors or observers will characterize others according to their own perspective, and relative to themselves.

Left, right, and centre

Ever since the pre-Revolutionary French monarchy, and across political systems, the terms 'left' and 'right' have both been attributed many of the same issue orientations: the left has typically represented collectivism (vs. individualism); substantial (vs. lesser) state involvement in the economy; emphasis on the interests of the working class/lower social strata; solidarity (vs. egoism); internationalism (vs. nationalism); pacifism (vs. militarism). During different phases of Russian and Soviet history, these two terms have also been used regularly to describe relative political placement; at times in accordance with Western use, at other times not. In Soviet party rhetoric, perhaps surprisingly, it was not necessarily the case that 'that more to the left, the better'. Deviations from the dominant line could be condemned as either 'right' or 'left', albeit not for the same reasons. The specific Soviet use of these terms originated in works by Lenin, above all his *Left-wing childishness and the petty-bourgeois mentality* (1918). Here, Lenin described as bourgeois those who did not support the proletarian revolution, while he described as an immature left deviation those he considered as too eager: '[u]ntil the world socialist revolution breaks out ... it is the direct duty of the socialists who have conquered in one country (especially a backward one) *not* to accept battle against the giants of imperialism'.[6] The highly contextual circumstances of such labels became particularly visible during perestroika. As pluralism developed in the USSR, the Western audience would see more similarities between their own political system and the Soviet one. Soon, however, it became clear that perestroika accentuated the left–right confusion, since a new terminology would now co-exist with the old, Leninist one.

While everyday use of the terms 'left' and 'right' has implied a score on several indicators, many Western scholars have attempted to reach one-factor definitions for them. Examples of countering everyday usage may be given for each such definition. If we first consider the right, *individualism* as a single criterion would, for instance, put Western-style liberals to the right of fascists, since the latter tend to emphasize the collective more. As will be seen, moreover, the Russian political landscape is complicated further by the fact that several traits presumably defining the extreme right—it has been described as anti-intellectual and prone to conspiracy thinking, and involving views centring around nationalism and racism[7]—are also found on what is seen as the far left. Attitude to *change* has been employed as another one-factor defining criterion of

the right. However, as radical policies abound from parties generally termed 'right-wing', this criterion seems to imply a slight confusion of 'rightism' with 'conservatism'. During the late Soviet years, the word 'conservative' was used to describe the more orthodox Communist opposition to Mikhail Gorbachev, to some dismay among traditional Western conservatives. More precisely, the old-style opposition to Gorbachev within the KPSS was often spoken of in Russia as *konservatory*—conservers. Of course, the essence of conservatism in the Soviet context was the same as it is elsewhere: the resistance to change and the wish to preserve elements of the past. The difference was only that 'the past' in this case was 70 years of Soviet rule. Simultaneously, Gorbachev's stepping back on reforms and re-alliance with conservative Communists has been described as a 'turn to the right'.[8] Conservatism is a relational term that cannot stand alone in Russia the way it does in the West. There is no comparable category that is described simply as 'conservatives' (although there could be such a sub-category within, say, the KPRF) in a Western sense. Moreover, there is really no term as frequently used to describe the *opposite* of conservatism in Russia. A term such as 'progressive' might be a candidate, but is less usable since it is closely linked to Soviet rhetoric. In post-Soviet Russia, 'progressive' might be used to describe any position that is not that of the more orthodox Communists. In the Soviet Union, whatever was Soviet policy would be defined as progressive, and most other policies would be 'reactionary'. 'Radical' might work better as a contrast to 'conservative', but may describe forces both on the left and the right, and can therefore also not stand alone.

Today, the most basic trait of the *left* in Russia is a positive assessment of the Soviet era.[9] A major dimension of the Soviet heritage is the organization of the economy. Today's Russian left, which to a large extent is made up of what were the most conservative elements of the KPSS, remains market-sceptic. Whereas only Stalinists would call for a return of the command economy, until 1999 the KPRF would speak in favour of a 'mixed economy', but reveal a preference for state ownership: its priority over others 'follows from the nature of national character, and not from Communist orthodoxy', Zyuganov said in 1994.[10] Similar reasoning has been made by Sergey Baburin, a left-leaning politician and leader of the Russian All-People's Union (ROS): 'The characteristic of our culture over the centuries was a common economy and a common culture. Socialism—or collectivism—the roots grow out of our own history'.[11] A very harsh assessment of the manner in which the privatization of state property has taken place is part of this political perspective, as are often also calls for a more or less wide-ranging reversal of that process. Despite the retrospective character of much left-wing ideology in Russia, the imperatives of the current market economy have had a significant impact on political thinking. In a study of parties' economic programmes before the 1999 elections, Mikhail Dmitriev found that the KPRF's economic thinking had 'evolved dramatically from very populist and anti-market to slightly pro-market and less unrealistic'. This shift had turned the overall vector of economic policies to 'remarkably pro-market', he said. On the other hand, the overall realism of the economic programmes had

not significantly improved, given the harsher economic realities after August 1998.[12]

Over the last few years, another term of relativity—*centrism*—has come to describe a political line to which numerous politicians at different times have expressed adherence. Only shortly after the USSR broke up did the term appear in the political discourse. Aleksandr Rutskoy, Yeltsin's vice-president and in 1993 his most dangerous opponent, attempted at an early stage to moderate his disagreements with Yeltsin by assuring that he was no renegade. In 1992, Rutskoy said: 'I am a centrist, a *derzhavnik*'.[13] Indeed, by 1992, the so-called Civic Union (*Grazhdanskiy soyuz*), which Rutskoy had joined (other leaders included Nikolay Travkin and Arkadiy Volskiy), was often described as a centrist organization. At that time, the Civic Union spoke for a market economy, a constitutional and democratic order, and a government of checks and balances.[14] 'Centrism' is a concept that is quite difficult to define. An early 1999 poll found that 16.6% of Russian voters were supporters of 'centrism'; the largest single category defined by the researchers, in a poll where 44.6% did not group themselves with any category. As part of the poll, a group of respondents were asked to define the concepts 'liberalism', 'social-democracy', 'centrism', 'left-wing', and 'right-wing'. The greatest difficulties in answers were caused precisely by 'centrism': some 80 of the 100 respondents could say virtually nothing.[15] When, in August 1999, *Otechestvo* (Fatherland) and *Vsya Rossiya* (All Russia) formally united into one bloc (OVR), the most prominent actor normally spoken of as a 'centrist', was former premier Yevgeniy Primakov. He defined his centrist platform above all in relation to his political competitors, scolding 'destructive extremes'.[16] Primakov's partner in those elections, Otechestvo leader and Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov, is a figure of whom it is somewhat more difficult to make sense. Descriptions of his political style themselves tend to include contradictions; his way of running Moscow has been spoken of as 'command capitalism'[17] or 'paternalistic capitalism';[18] one Russian analyst said that Luzhkov's position 'cannot be defined within the framework of linear logic ... [but is] quite understandable to the average person, who doesn't care about "isms" or the difference between social-democrats and liberals'.[19]

Terminology and political preferences: the impact of the Yeltsin years

Before we introduce nationalism into this equation, we should remind ourselves of a series of factors that each contribute to complicate the already less-than-linear picture of Russian politics. These are all factors that characterize current Russian politics, and that have come to do so under the regime of Boris Yeltsin. These are changes that both have come as reactions to Yeltsin's failures, and are coloured by the political culture bequeathed by the Soviet Union.

First, we should note the fact that several analysts who have tried to map the Russian political landscape have found it particularly difficult to find a place for President Yeltsin and his governments in such models. The most important

explanation for this is the fact that it was difficult to attribute to the executive power one specific political programme. As reforms failed, popular dissatisfaction grew, and political polarization remained high, winning and staying in power became the most important motivation for the Kremlin. Self-protection, and in many cases self-enrichment, played a greater role than ideology or visions for the country. However, the Russian public solved the scholars' problem in their own way: they began to speak of Yeltsin and his entourage as 'the party of power'. In loose terminology, the 'party of power' can be both a circle of people (or the culture they represent), and an actual party (or election bloc). In the former case, the 'party' would typically be assumed to include a constantly shifting group of shadowy figures surrounding the president, but not necessarily the entire cabinet (or even the Prime Minister). In the latter case, it would be used to describe a party (or bloc) whose main function was to secure support for the Kremlin in the State Duma. While Russia has not at any time had an openly 'presidential party', each of the post-Soviet Duma elections have had one (or more) parties serving this purpose.

This leads us to another dimension of Russian politics that also serves to complicate straightforward categorization of political actors: the opportunism that often goes deeper than ideological convictions. To politicians in the regions, or less influential ones in the centre, lending their support to what seems to be the most promising candidate before an election means that they can expect to harvest rewards later, personally, or as concessions for their own electorate. This inclination of politicians to play with the 'party of power' in its own right constitutes a problem for classification of political actors. One response which eases this problem without denying the existence of ideological convictions on the part of the actors, is to systematize parties—again in clusters—taking into consideration their relationship to the current powers. This is the response of, among others, Vladimir Pribylovskiy: on the 'right' part of the spectrum, he distinguished in 1995 between 'pro-government democrats', 'democratic opposition', and 'pro-government and pro-president centre'.[20]

Another significant development during the Yeltsin years is one by which 'democracy' has become discredited, and increasingly identified only with a limited section of a political spectrum. In most Western countries, endorsement of democracy is a fundamental of the general setting for political activity; parties or individual politicians who explicitly distance themselves from democracy are rarely more than insignificant actors on the fringes of political life. This has not been the case in Russia after the period of 'democratic enthusiasm' at the beginning of the 1990s. Since Yeltsin personally was so closely associated with 'democracy' and 'market reforms', it followed that these, too, were discredited as popular enthusiasm for Yeltsin and his policies faded. One began to hear terms such as 'liberal democrats' and 'radical democrats' (in a linguistic sense illogically, these two have been used interchangeably). Neither sounded positive to all; at least the second one seemed to imply that there was too much of something. The opposition's rhetoric would not be so much 'we are the true democrats' as 'they are the democrats and see what they're doing'. Among the

leading parties, paying allegiance to democratic values remained important above all to Yabloko.

It is worth noting that Boris Yeltsin, who on many occasions described himself as a democrat, has hardly, if ever, been recorded describing himself as being on the right. When he ran for re-election in the spring of 1996, his success strategy was not to pose left against right, but rather democracy against the communist threat as represented by Gennadiy Zyuganov. However, the politicians described as 'liberal democrats' or 'radical democrats'—the most discredited are without doubt Yegor Gaidar and Anatoliy Chubais, but the category also includes people like Boris Nemtsov, Galina Starovoitova, and others—have in every model been placed to the right in the political spectrum. In other words, dedication to democracy has in Russia become an orientation that is located in a particular section of the political spectrum, and that place is on the right. The policies attributed to these politicians—market liberalism, privatization, pro-Western foreign policy, and a lacking appreciation for Russia's own character—as well as their perceived manipulation of elections and links with corruption and 'oligarchs'—add up to what is identified with 'democracy'. During the first years after 1991, these politicians did not make much effort to state their love of Russia and dedication to patriotism. In the Russian political setting, thus, a politician like Yegor Gaidar, who has been a favourite of Western governments, is seen as a radical: Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev (KPRF) has spoken of him as 'the main political extremist' in Russia.[21] Of course, Seleznev's labelling of Gaidar was rhetorical. Nevertheless, if 'radicalism' or 'extremism' are seen as purely relative terms, and as the opposite of 'conservatism', there is a point to this. The 'shock therapy' that Gaidar launched in the beginning of 1992, signified a dramatic break with the Soviet tradition. And, of course, his market liberal line has made him a favourite of (traditional) Western conservatives. Gaidar's continuing identification with Western models became evident in the summer of 1999, when he launched a party called *Pravoe Delo*. The word *pravoe* means both 'right' and 'just'; the party name was translated as 'Just Cause'. Also, the electoral bloc that Gaidar later entered, together with Chubais, Nemtsov, Khakamada and Kirienko, explicitly placed these politicians to the right: it was called *Soyuz pravykh sil*—the Union of Right [/Just] Forces.

One may make the point that the discrediting of democracy is mostly a matter of terminology; that the Russian public still appreciates the essence of democracy, such as freedom of expression, organization, etc. However, during the late 1990s it appears that more and more Russians came to the conclusion that they would trade at least some of their freedoms for more safety and predictability. A great many opinion polls inform us that a majority of Russians are now ready to welcome the return of authoritarian rule, hoping that it will bring law and order to society.[22] Awareness of these trends has long spread among Russian politicians. Even Yabloko under Grigoriy Yavlinskiy appeared to be tapping into the renewed enthusiasm for authoritarian rule when, in August 1999, he joined forces with former interior minister and premier Sergey Stepashin. The two had been seriously at odds over the 1994–96 Chechen war, which Yavlinskiy

opposed while Stepashin was seen as a Kremlin hawk. For the election campaign, however, the mix of liberalism with a general's firmness seemed timely.

President Vladimir Putin is a politician who manoeuvres particularly easily in this new landscape. His extremely successful campaign before the March 2000 presidential elections can provide at least some idea about the population's political preferences. Contrasts to the public mood ten years earlier are remarkable: by the beginning of the 1990s, a past as a KGB officer would have been a problem for a would-be president. By now, however, the Kremlin seemed even to be trying to exaggerate Putin's significance as a spy and cold warrior. And Putin himself, in a programmatic article posted on the website of the Russian government on 29 December 1999,[23] did not in any way exert himself trying to appear as a liberal democrat. Rather, his focus was on *gosudarstvennichestvo* ('state-ness', governmentalism: *Gosudarstvo* = state). This is a concept with clear connotations towards authoritarian rule. This term has not been used very much traditionally, but has risen to prominence in Russian political discourse since the mid-1990s. This in itself is a notable development, and should be seen as a reaction to trends in Russian society under Boris Yeltsin. As such, the term may be attributed additional, related meanings. *Gosudarstvennichestvo* may in everyday use indicate a preference for a stronger enforcement of law and order; and the strengthening of the federal centre at the expense of the regions.

In the article mentioned, Putin wrote: 'It will not happen soon, if it ever happens at all, that Russia will become the second edition of, say, the US or Britain in which liberal values have deep historic traditions'. And, later: 'For Russians a strong state is not an anomaly which should be got rid of .... Modern Russian society does not identify a strong and effective state with a totalitarian state'. In effect, Putin defined his own platform by excluding two 'extremes'—a complete adoption of US or British values, or totalitarianism. In another article, which is as close as Putin came to issuing an electoral programme—his 'Open letter by Vladimir Putin to the Russian voters', published in several newspapers on 25 February 2000—the promise of an authoritarian turn seems very clear: 'Our first and most important problem is the weakening of the will. The loss of state will and persistence in carrying through things that have been started. Hesitation, swaying from side to side, a habit of putting off the most difficult tasks'.[24] Further suggestive of an authoritarian leaning is a statement made by Putin in late January, at which he spoke of the need for a 'dictatorship of law' in Russia. 'The dictatorship of law is the only kind of dictatorship which we must obey', he said, adding that freedom without law and order 'inevitably tumbles down to chaos and lawlessness'.[25]

Locating nationalism in the political spectrum

In this section of the article, I will first present my model of Russian nationalism. Thereafter, I will hold some of the actors in the preceding discussion up against the two dimensions of the model, in order to highlight the limitations of models

that do not integrate nationalism as a variable. For the purposes of this article I will define 'nationalism' as a doctrine emphasizing the importance of belonging to an ethnic group and promoting the interests of this group—which is perceived by the 'nationalist' to form a 'nation'. Above all, such promotion may imply efforts to make the borders of a state coincide with those of an ethnic group, but it may also take other forms. The character of the nationalism may vary depending, *inter alia*, on its perception of other ethnic groups and its territorial aspirations. When I refer to a 'nation', I will do so in the understanding of the individual perception with which I am dealing at the moment, while not necessarily endorsing this assessment.[26]

In official Soviet terminology, nationalism was described as 'a bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology and policy'.[27] All nationalist ideologies, with their insistence on 'nation' being a more important distinction of people than 'class', were seen as containing reactionary elements. Contrary to this, 'patriotism' was defined as 'love and devotion to the motherland and readiness to serve its interests'. In Russia, 'patriotism' remains a highly rated term, whereas only a few extremists admit to being nationalists.

When the USSR broke up, the Russian Federation was the only one of the 15 successor states that did not declare itself the homeland of one ethnic group. Still, the new Russian state was in ethnic terms significantly more 'Russian' than the Soviet Union—some 82% of the population were ethnic Russian, while in the USSR, the figure had been some 50%. The Yeltsin regime, however, maintained a policy of emphasizing the multi-cultural character of the state. The 1993 constitution explicitly speaks of 'the multi-ethnic [*mnogonatsionalnyy*] people of Russia'. Similarly, the Yeltsin administration took up the term *rossiyanin* (pl. *rossiyane*) to describe all citizens of Russia. Rarely used in Soviet years, it substituted 'Soviet citizen' as the non-exclusive term to describe the citizenry. This is not to say that the Yeltsin regime did not struggle with its own conceptions of ethnicity and citizenship. In particular, both Russian nationalists and the Russian political leadership soon turned to defend their 25 million 'compatriots' (*russkie* by passport nationality) in the former Soviet Union.

Four categories of Russian nationalism

In general terms, we may speak of four rough categories of nationalist sentiments in post-Soviet Russia, distinguished along two different dimensions: *territorial orientation* ('core' or 'empire') and *character of nationalism* (primarily ethnic or primarily statist). In the table that appears when we join these two dimensions, we get the following four categories of nationalism.[28]

Ethnic core nationalism (core oriented, primarily ethnic). Nationalism of this category is focused on promoting the interests of ethnic Russians within a core area densely populated by ethnic Russians. The territorial ambitions of this nationalism may coincide with the borders of the Russian Federation, but may in principle be both narrower and wider. In practice, somewhat wider ambitions are not uncommon, relating in particular to such areas as eastern Estonia,

northern Kazakhstan, and southern and eastern Ukraine. (As many Russian nationalists see little or no difference between Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, this category also touches onto the promotion of East Slav union.)

Russian Federation nationalism (core oriented, primarily statist). This category is focused on the Russian Federation, accepting the borders it had when it was still the RSFSR. Being less oriented towards ethnicity than the category above, it holds that this new state should define its own national interest, and that these might not always coincide with those of its neighbours. I have termed actors in this category *gosudarstvenniki*; cf. the discussion earlier.

Russian supremacist nationalism (empire oriented, primarily ethnic). This category signifies a nationalism that has territorial ambitions outside Russia's current borders, also into areas that are not necessarily inhabited mostly by ethnic Russians. The ethnic element expresses itself as an acceptance of a degree of oppression of other peoples in order to realize such ambitions.

Empire restorers (empire oriented, primarily statist). This final category may be seen as shaped by Soviet official ideology both by its emphasis on the multi-ethnic character of the USSR, and by its parallel emphasis on the greatness of that state. It was in the form of the Soviet Union that *Rossiya* had become a superpower, projecting its might—ideologically as well as militarily—around the globe.

Four Categories of Russian nationalism

	Character of nationalism	
Territorial orientation	Primarily ethnic	Primarily statist (*gosudarstvenniki*)
'Core' oriented	Ethnic core nationalists	E.g. Russian Federation nationalists
'Empire' oriented	Supremacist nationalists	Empire restorers; *soyuzniki*

If we look at nationalist ideology isolated from other political orientations (for instance, democracy vs. authoritarianism), we should consider one of the four ideal types in my model as a more radical position than the remaining three, for its potential to cause conflict. Along the 'core'–'empire' axis, I consider an empire-oriented nationalism to be more conflict-prone, since this is an ideology that has aspirations outside the borders of the state from which it springs. Along the 'nation-centred'–'state-centred' axis, I consider the 'nation-centred' ideology to be the more conflict-prone, since, in a multinational state like Russia, it necessarily has an exclusionary character, and may instigate conflict between ethnic groups. Accordingly, we may consider the empire-oriented, primarily ethnic nationalism to be the most conflict-prone kind of the four.[29]

I will not speak of 'patriotism' here other than when referring to others' use of this term. My model is one of nationalist ideology, and as such excludes a

purely 'patriotic' sentiment, understood as dedication to one's country with no element of ethnic accentuation whatsoever. While there is no definite reason why such a sentiment could not be found in reality, my opinion is that a model that caters for 'primarily statist' sentiments is sufficient for all practical purposes of this study.

In the following, I will relate the above four categories to the preceding discussion of the Russian political 'map', in order to establish in which circles the radical brands of nationalism are most frequently found. This section is divided in two; 'territorial orientation', and 'ethnocentrism'.

Territorial orientation: the FSU and the Russian Federation

In this section, we find ourselves, image-wise, moving between two of the ideal types identified in the model presented above: the 'core'-oriented and the 'empire'-oriented brands of Russian nationalism. That is, the four categories developed above are seen as ideal types, and are not dealt with as sealed boxes, but rather as two dimensions along which a given political actor can position himself. The prime question defining a actor's position on this first dimension may be posed like this: 'To what extent does he recognize the current borders of the Russian Federation?'. Furthermore, we will compare the different actors' positions on this question with how they place themselves and are placed by others in a general political spectrum. As will become evident, there is no clear-cut correspondence between left–right placement and the making of territorial claims on behalf of Russia. Or, rather: actors out on the wings of the perceived spectrum (with the exception of the 'democrats' that are placed on the far right) tend to show little respect for other former Soviet republics' independence altogether, but challenges to their territorial integrity are heard from just about every political circle.

In the first year or two after independence, emphasis on the interests of the Russian Federation as opposed to an imperial nostalgia was represented above all by the MFA under Andrey Kozyrev, and by President Yeltsin personally. To the 'radical reformers', Russia would be better off on its own, gaining in strength and recognition by achieving economic growth. To a majority of Russians and certainly of Russian politicians, however, this preparedness to abandon territorial claims was quite alien. Among Russia's political institutions, the most uninhibited exponent for border revisions (or Soviet restorationism) was the parliament—the Supreme Soviet of the Congress of People's Deputies, as well as first and second post-Soviet State Dumas. These assemblies, dominated by nationalist forces, passed a series of resolutions that would have been combustible indeed had it not been for the weakness of the parliament as an institution.

The fact that the liberal deputies and parties did not seriously oppose the nationalist policies of the assemblies may partly be explained both by the political leaning of the deputies, and partly by their concern not to be seen as completely insensitive to issues of national pride. The same explanation goes a long way also towards explaining the shift in the policies of the Yeltsin regime

towards other FSU states from 1993 onwards. By late 1993, President Yeltsin and the MFA were moving to become more in line with the nationalist opposition. The political challengers that Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Kozyrev were trying to match were indeed radical. With Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's (and the KPRF's) showing in the 1993 Duma elections, it had become clear that anti-democratic and expansionist forces could come to power in Russia by constitutional means. And Zhirinovskiy maintained the expansionist and supremacist policies which made him famous: 'Russia within the borders of the USSR. That's minimum. And maximum — that's Russia within the borders of the Russian Empire [including Poland and Finland]. And Alaska in America'.[30]

That is not to say that the liberal politicians have merely attempted to steal the thunder of the nationalists. For instance, Vladimir Lukin, the foreign policy spokesman and co-founder of the Yabloko, typically seen as a centre-right liberal party, seemed to differ from the liberals in the government, for instance in the dispute with Ukraine over the ownership of Crimea. Lukin was a driving force in trying to prevent the Kremlin from signing a treaty with Ukraine, and thereby accepting the territorial *status quo*.[31]

There were politicians also in President Yeltsin's entourage who would favour a significantly more assertive policy towards other former Soviet republics. Some of these, of course, would later join the opposition; the most prominent one being Aleksandr Rutskoy—who, as we have seen, at that time spoke of himself as a 'centrist and *derzhavnik*'. When he returned to politics in 1994, as leader of *Derzhava*, his platform was that of a staunch empire builder (with a highly populist programme). Russia, he said, should return to 'the original historical truth, to what Russia had'. That implied abolishing territorial subjects within the state, and bringing back into the fold independent states including the Baltic states: 'When we look at a map of 1915, we find no sovereign and independent states in it. What we see is the great power Russia', he said.[32]

There were also several other actors in Boris Yeltsin's entourage expressing opinions that diverged substantially from the initial line of the president and the MFA. Perhaps the most vocal one was Sergey Stankevich, a prominent presidential adviser. In December 1992, while stating that Russia had made 'a fundamentally anti-imperial choice', he wrote that Russia now desired to treat the diaspora as an issue of 'vital national interest'. And, he added, it was also natural for Russia to maintain 'certain existing capabilities to influence the course of events in regions of vital importance to us and to create new ones'.[33] Stankevich would also dispute Ukraine's claim to Crimea, and express hope that a referendum on the peninsula would allow for it to be declared an independent state, which later might join Russia.[34]

In the opposition, the rhetoric has been yet tougher. Sergey Baburin, a persistent foreign policy hardliner, has openly disputed other states' ownership of several regions where ethnic Russians have been exponents of irredentism. Expressing a particularly Russo-centric expansionism, he has said that (parts of) former republics should be re-united with Russia either through the annexation of the Dniester region and Abkhasia, and—after holding a referendum—of

Crimea and any other territories, for example Northern Kazakhstan, or through the creation of a Russian Union through unification of the present-day Russian Federation, Belarus, Ukraine and other republics. Baburin's ultimate vision is of a 'Russian union' (*Rossiyskiy soyuz*), which encompasses the entire expanse of the former Soviet Union.[35] To expansionists like Baburin, General Aleksandr Lebed was a favourite in his first few months as the commander of the Fourteenth Army in the Dniester region. After employing his forces to end the fighting between the separatists and the Chisinau regime, Lebed would describe the latter as 'firmly national-totalitarian' and representing 'the return of fascism'.[36] Later, however, Lebed fell out with the Dniestrian leadership, and began to nourish a more moderate image. With his strong showing in the 1996 presidential election, and subsequent negotiation of a peace deal in Chechnya, he was well on his way to having achieved that. Still, Lebed could not accept Ukrainian ownership of Crimea, and in particular of the city of Sevastopol. Among the reasons (or pretexts) for his dismissal from the Kremlin in the fall of 1996, was his writing of an open letter to the sailors of the Black Sea Fleet, arguing that Russia 'must keep the glorious city of Sevastopol Russian, which is our legal right'.[37] While some analysts might still place Aleksandr Lebed in a category of imperial nostalgics—a categorization that would not have been unreasonable by 1992–93—similar territorial demands have been put forward by several politicians who are normally seen in Russia as quite moderate. One prominent exponent of an aggressive Russian line on this issue is Moscow Mayor and 'centrist' Yuriy Luzhkov. Among his extravagant initiatives are building housing quarters for Russian BSF personnel in Sevastopol,[38] and the January 1995 declaration of that city being Moscow's eleventh district. In December 1996, the Federation Council voted overwhelmingly in support for a bill penned by Luzhkov declaring Sevastopol a Russian city.[39]

Somewhat different from the assertive policies discussed above, is the expansionism of the more purely Soviet restorationist brand, promoted above all by communists. It was the KPRF, for instance, that initiated the Duma vote in March 1996 which led to the denouncement of the 1991 Belovezh accords, which had implied the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The KPRF still has at the top of its agenda the re-establishment of the Soviet Union. By 2000, its programme—reflecting the tension between old and new; internationalism and Russian nationalism—states that it is necessary to 'protect the state integrity [*tselostnost*] of Russia, recreate a renewed Union of Soviet peoples, secure the national unity of the Russian [*russkogo*] people'.[40]

While Soviet restorationism remains on the agenda of the Russian left, Russian nationalism has in recent years become more focused on the Russian Federation. Ideas take shape around structures, and the structure of the USSR is gone. Russian policies have been formulated within the boundaries of the Russian Federation, and that is also how far Russian authority reaches. Not only homogenizing state policies such as conscription, schooling, etc., within a territory, which have been held up by theorists as powerful nation-building tools, serve to build nations. The very existence of borders, maps, foreign policies

formed within and directed outside those borders, influence perceptions profoundly. Reflecting a tension between restorationism and identification with the Russian Federation, State Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev—typically seen in Russia as a KPRF moderate—caused uproar in the autumn of 1998 among Ukrainian nationalists by criticizing Ukraine for its ties with NATO, referring to Russians and Ukrainians as 'a single people', and calling for the expansion of the Russia–Belarus Union into a Russia–Ukraine–Belarus Union.[41] On a similar note, KPRF deputy leader Valentin Kuptsov one year earlier told this writer: 'A new union is unavoidable .... We lived together for three hundred years in a unitary state, fully developing systems of government, mechanisms for communications, culture, *ethnos*, *narodnost'*. However, when asked explicitly about Crimea, Kuptsov shifted outlook briefly: Crimea is 'sacred Russian [as opposed to Ukrainian] land', covered with the blood of the ancestors of today's Russians, he said.[42]

It is tempting to see this brief outburst as encompassing the entire process that took place within nationalist circles in Russia after 1991: if we relate to the four-square model, there were two major trends taking place in Russian national identity in the period we are considering. First, in territorial terms, the identification of Russianness with the entire former Soviet Union grew weaker, while the Russian Federation gained in relevance. And secondly, ideas of basically being one with other East Slavs gave way to a stronger accentuation of Russian ethnicity. However, these were trends; they did not reshape people's consciousness entirely. As for the territorial dimension, then, the 1991 borders were still being contested, to different degrees, by political actors in most camps.

Ethnocentrism: russkie *and* rossiyane

In Russian political discourse, 'nationalism' tends to be associated with such terms as 'extremism', 'fascism', and also 'separatism'. In terms of actors, the term is usually linked only with the most radical.[43] While these actors are identified by several traits, they are normally exponents of unmitigated ethnocentrism and supremacism. In the late 1980s, media coverage of 'Russian nationalism' would often deal with Dmitriy Vasiliev's extreme (but, as gradually became evident, very small) group *Pamyat* (Memory). Later, a similarly narrow understanding of the term was maintained as attention shifted to Vladimir Zhirinovskiy—first as he came a surprising third in the RSFSR presidential elections in 1991, and then even more so as the LDPR won the 1993 Duma elections. As the LDPR has become a mainstream party of sorts, Russian discussions of 'nationalism' have shifted to new fringe actors. A survey of the major newspapers prior to the 1999 elections gives the impression that discussions of 'nationalism' dealt above all with the participation of Aleksandr Barkashov, leader of the neo-Nazi organization Russian National Unity (RNE), and his election bloc *Spas* (Saviour).

However, we should not conclude from the character of the Russian discourse that ethnocentrism does strike so narrowly. If explicit supremacism may be a

fringe phenomenon, identifying the Russian Federation (or indeed the Soviet Union) with its ethnic Russian majority is more widespread. In other words, it would be too simple to conclude that Russian politicians generally belong to the 'primarily statist' category in our four-square model.

Communist Party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov—the self-declared 'patriot' and 'internationalist'—frequently runs into trouble making his mind up about whether to speak of *russkie* or *rossiyane*. 'The ethnic Russian [*russkiy chelovek*] cannot live normally without a strong state, without a sense of belonging to a collective, be it the peasants' commune, a Cossack circle or a Russian state, the Soviet Union', he said, explaining why communism is the future for Russia—including, of course, its non-Russian population as well.[44] Similarly, Aleksandr Lebed, who on the whole does not appear to be burdened with a strong sense of supremacist nationalism, nevertheless is marked by his experiences in the Dniester region. Shortly before the 1995 elections, Lebed with characteristic bluntness said that Russia's sphere of interest should include as a minimum the states of the former Soviet Union: '25 million Russians live there. Our men are treated like slaves and our women are offended like whores'.[45]

Precisely the Russian diaspora communities—referring to the 25 million ethnic Russians who found themselves outside the Russian state when the USSR broke up—has been the single strongest focus of ethnocentric Russian nationalism of different shades. This issue could also serve as an indicator of the hardening of Russian policies after 1992. At his most accommodating, Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev would warn that creating enclaves to satisfy Russian minorities in the FSU inspired parallels to Nazi Germany.[46] Similarly, Boris Yeltsin as early as in May 1991 had defused the issue of the diaspora when he stated that it indeed was the responsibility of the Russian state to protects their interests, but also warned that 'it is impossible to defend people with tanks'.[47] Later statements from Yeltsin, and even more so from Kozyrev, strongly contradicted this impression of benevolence. And the diaspora became a central dimension of a new foreign policy consensus. Indicatively, Boris Yeltsin in his 1994 New Year Address addressed the diaspora specifically: 'Dear compatriots [*sootechestvenniki*]! You are inseparable from us and we are inseparable from you. We were and we will be together'.[48]

Whereas nationalism of the primarily ethnic kind does exert significant influence, it is still reasonable to say that it is the more state-centred brand that is the most prevalent category in Russian political discourse. That does not mean, however, that 'all is well' in inter-ethnic relations in Russia. Just as Soviet declarations of friendship of peoples could only partly conceal the intolerance that was inherent in that political system, emphasis on the multinational character of Russia's population easily evaporates. One example is the rhetoric surrounding the beginning of the second Chechen war. When President Yeltsin responded to the bomb attacks on housing blocs in Moscow and other cities, that served as a pretext for the war, he made certain not to associate the perpetrators with any particular ethnic group: 'This enemy does not have a conscience, shows no sorrow and is without honour. It has no face, nationality or belief. Let me

stress—no nationality, no belief'.[49] The guilty were clearly assumed to be Chechens, but that would not be held against the Chechen people as a whole. Leaving aside speculations that the Kremlin may in fact have planned the attacks itself, making such a distinction appears honourable and in line with a multinational orientation—and one that Yeltsin personally did maintain throughout his presidency. What disrupts this picture, however, is the extent to which the Kremlin later—under Vladimir Putin's premiership—did in fact demonize the entire Chechen people, as part of the propaganda war. All nuances were lost as 'Chechens' became synonymous with 'terrorists' and 'bandits'. While the war in Chechnya in 1994–96 was presented by the Kremlin as aimed at restoring control and securing Russia's territorial integrity, the current war is a 'fight against terrorism'. The Kremlin's practice is more radical, and there is a stronger ethnic element to it.

Another example indicating that not only fringe actors represent or provide for racist policies may be seen in the practices of Yuriy Luzhkov. The Moscow Mayor and 'centrist' has received much media coverage for his apparent efforts to ban Aleksandr Barkashov's neo-Nazi organization, RNE. At the same time, however, his own administration is consistently violating federal laws by its harsh treatment of people from the Caucasus. And Luzhkov openly endorses practices including illegal registration and deportations, and disregards reports of widespread police violence.[50]

In the Soviet political vernacular, not only 'nationalism' but also 'cosmopolitanism' was an unhealthy counterforce to (Soviet) patriotism. More often than not, this word would signify a reference to Jewishness. Anti-semitism in Russia has a long history, and it did not in any way disappear with Soviet rule. In post-Soviet Russia, anti-semitism remains strong in the population as a whole. To cite just one source, as many as 17.8% of respondents in a 1992 survey in Moscow (which is known to have a relatively liberal electorate) agreed or were inclined to believe that 'there is a global plot against Russia organized by Zionists'.[51] In Russian politics, too, anti-semitism is widespread. This is not in any way a phenomenon only on the right, or in the category typically spoken of as the 'national-patriots'. In particular, prominent representatives of the KPRF have often expressed anti-semitic views. The anti-semitism of the KPRF received particular attention in late 1998, as Communist Duma deputy, General (ret.) Albert Makashov, and later also the leader of the Duma Security Committee, Viktor Ilyukhin, were reported making extreme statements. Makashov on several occasions blamed 'Yids' [*zhidy*] for Russia's troubles, and on one occasion he called on his audience: 'To the grave with all the Yids!'.[52] One opinion poll at the time found that 15% of Muscovites approved of Makashov's remarks, while 51% condemned them.[53]

Gennadiy Zyuganov has never seemed to have any problem with working closely with extreme anti-semites. He himself has, however, not to any great extent been found making overt anti-semitic statements. But as the storm around Albert Makashov and Viktor Ilyukhin raged in late 1998, Zyuganov showed lack of concern as he and his party prevented the Duma from reprimanding those for

their statements. And shortly afterwards, Zyuganov appeared as the author of an article with a strong anti-semitic content. He described the 'campaign' against Makashov as being 'provocatively Russophobic' in nature. He made sure to distinguish between Jews and Zionists, and described Zionism as a strain of 'the most aggressive imperialist circles striving for world domination'. For good measure, he pointed out that no Russian citizen had 'the right ... to view Russia as an alien "host country"', or to be a 'tool in the hands of Zionism'.[54]

While tolerance for radical political rhetoric is high, a special category is often distinguished for the most radical politicians and organizations, and also tends to be used by these themselves. This is the category of *national-patriots*, which is also often spoken of (by others) as the 'red-browns' (*krasno-korichnevye*), or 'communist–nationalist alliance'—names that give the impression of an illogical proximity of forces as far away from each other politically as they can get. Two traits make these actors stand out in relation to our model of nationalism. First, they are particularly oriented towards ethnic supremacism and territorial expansion. Secondly, they are forces that put *heavy emphasis* on these issues: their rhetoric is much less concerned with the nitty-gritty of economics, agriculture, media issues, etc., than with relations to the outside world. Moreover, while they differ among themselves, they are all quite predictable in that they all are highly populist in their rhetoric. If we look more specifically at what brings the 'reds' and 'browns' together, we may identify a series of issue orientations which they tend to share. These include, very sketchily, populism, authoritarianism, prejudice (expressing itself above all as anti-semitism), militarism, collectivism and anti-liberalism.

By some notions, the category national-patriots also includes the Soviet restorationists; however, this group also overlaps into categories mostly described simply as left-wing (*levye*). The restorationists that fall into the category of national-patriots are therefore mostly those who see the USSR (or the Russian Empire) more as the realm of ethnic Russians than was common in Soviet rhetoric. Precisely which organizations are placed in this category varies somewhat depending on the eyes of the beholder. Among notable parties that would be placed here, are the LDPR, Aleksandr Rutskoy's *Derzhava*, Nikolay Lysenko's National-Republican Party of Russia, and Sergey Baburin's ROS. In the terminology of Vladimir Pribylovskiy, these are the 'national and imperial patriots'.[55] From the character of their rhetoric, other parties, too, may be placed in the category of national-patriots. Most significantly, some would place the KPRF here—in particular for its representatives of Makashov's brand—together with other parties and groups such as the Agrarian Party, Aleksey Podberezkin's Spiritual Heritage (*Dukhovnoe nasledie*), KRO, and Stanislav Govorukhin's bloc. These are all parties from which we can hear expressions of Soviet nostalgia and ethnocentrism.

The 'national-patriots' are not a specifically Russian phenomenon. What is special for today's Russia, is that the 'national-patriots' constitute a highly influential force, and the fact that they are seen as overall more legitimate than they are in most other countries. A look at the list of blocs that were

registered by the Central Electoral Commission (TsIK) before the December 1999 Duma election is enough to see that the span of legitimate political ideologies represented in Russian electoral politics is wider than in most Western countries. Among the blocs registered were the neo-Nazi *Spas* (Saviour),[56] and the Stalinist Bloc for the Soviet Union, which included Stalin's grandson as one of its top three candidates.

Of course, most of the defining traits of the 'national patriots' above hardly match the 'classic' traits of the left as outlined earlier. On the contrary, they match much better what we could describe as a classic left-wing perspective of the radical right. Still, one will not often hear accusations of fascism used against politicians on the left. This is partly the case because the 'stringent' use of the term still seems to be used quite narrowly in Russia.[57] Another reason why this term is not used to describe the left, is its relationship to the Soviet past. Basically, for historical reasons, it would be difficult to sustain a description of Soviet nostalgics as fascists, as long as communism has been the fascists' main scourge. Anti-communism remains an important trait of the Russian right, distinguishing it from the left. Branding radical left-wingers as fascists might make some feel good, but important precision would get lost on the way. While the left has not to any great extent been described explicitly as fascist, it appears that forces including the KPRF are sensing a risk of being linked with this term themselves. This has sparked some peculiar initiatives: on the one hand, it has been convenient for more 'moderate' forces to apply the discourse over 'fascism' and 'extremism' only to Barkashov's RNE and similar organizations. On the other hand, they have at the same time made an effort to prevent an expression such as 'Russian fascism' (*russkiy fashizm*) from becoming part of the discourse.[58]

Russia after Yeltsin: a new consensus on statist issues

While models of the Russian political landscape continue to be relevant, their limitations in not incorporating issues of nationalism have, if anything, become more visible over the last few years. This has happened as a new consensus on statist issues has appeared in Russia, shaping voting behaviour and the policies of parties and individual politicians above all in the 1999 and 2000 elections. It is a trend that has been fed by such factors as Russia's reduced power and influence on the international scene, and, domestically, centrifugal tendencies in the regions, the impoverishment of large segments of the population, and the spread of corruption and crime. All these factors have come together to stimulate a wish for the re-consolidation of the Russian state and the federal centre. In relation to my model of nationalism, its expressions will first and foremost be found in the 'core-oriented, primarily statist' area.

The growing 'patriotic' sentiment in the public and its increased emphasis is not a completely new phenomenon in post-Soviet Russia. The December 1993 election result sparked a process which has been going on ever since, where political parties of different shades, as well as the Yeltsin regime itself, have

been trying ever-harder to exploit the sentiments that fuelled Aleksandr Rutskoy, and later brought Zhirinovskiy success. One way in which this became evident is through the names of the new parties that were set up in this period. In 1993, the 'party of power' was called Russia's Choice; in 1995, the party playing this role was named Our Home is Russia. Some democrats also changed their rhetoric at an early stage in order to win back 'patriotism' from the communists and nationalists. One of these was former Minister of Finance Boris Fedorov, leader of Forward, Russia! and an early exponent of the 'liberal *gosudarstvenniki*': 'I am personally not willing to abandon a single one of the notions "great Russia", "great power", "introducing order", and "patriotism"', he stated.[59]

By the 1999 Duma election, political life in Russia seemed to be characterized by a consensus over statist issues. This could probably in part be explained by the rise to prominence first of Yevgeniy Primakov (and Yuriy Luzhkov) and later of Vladimir Putin, and by the new war in Chechnya. Notably, the Union of Right Forces (SPS) also remained united in its support of the warfare; Yegor Gaidar, who broke with Yeltsin over the war in 1994, was now on the side with Anatoliy Chubais and the rest of the SPS, who wholeheartedly supported Putin, and benefited from his endorsement prior to the election. Even Yavlinskiy's Yabloko held back its criticism; when Yavlinskiy briefly called for a halt to the bombing (given a long list of conditions), he was described as a 'traitor' by Chubais. The liberal-patriotic agenda could be seen for instance in the SPS electoral campaign. One SPS campaign poster put forward three issue positions: the protection of private property and civil liberties; an abolition of Duma deputies' immunity; and (the only one in bold letters) the formation of 'a strong, professional army'. In other words, the quality of the armed forces appeared as the prime cause of this party; the 'liberal touch' was added by the call for a professionalization of the forces.

The 'new patriotism' we are witnessing in Russia today comes in a loose ideological format. It is not dogmatic with regard to market relations or other aspects of policy. Rather, it pragmatically portrays itself as offering to the people a 'minimum package' of policies that will secure the fundamental needs for a country in crisis. The 'minimum package', as it was presented by Vladimir Putin before the 2000 presidential elections, defined the primary goals as strengthening the state and the economy, introducing order, securing Russia's territorial integrity, raising its status internationally, and strengthening the military to resist possible attacks by other powers. In relation to the attempts at modelling the Russian political landscape mentioned earlier (other than the model of nationalism), the most apparent connection is with a sympathy for authoritarianism (rather than political liberalism); the willingness to put to use tough measures to bring about changes appears essential in a reluctant environment.

An important part of this 'minimum package' on the part of Vladimir Putin is a perceived need for a 'national idea' that will contribute to keeping the state together. Already in 1996, his predecessor Boris Yeltsin urged his aides to design a 'national idea' that would unify all Russians. 'There were various periods in the Russian history of the twentieth century—monarchy, totalitarian-

ism, perestroika and, finally, the democratic path of development. Each stage had its own ideology. We do not have it', Yeltsin said, giving his people one year to fill the void.[60] In many ways, this may be seen as a naïve initiative, presuming that a country's identity can be adopted like, for instance, a military doctrine is.[61] If we again return to Vladimir Putin's election campaign, we see that his reflections precisely on a uniting idea appeared on numerous occasions. Indeed, early in his premiership Putin took up Yeltsin's initiative. The country, he said, needs a new national ideology based on patriotism: 'Large-scale changes have taken place in an ideological vacuum. One ideology was lost and nothing new was suggested to replace it'. 'Patriotism in the most positive sense of this word' must be the backbone of a new ideology, he said.[62] Immediately after the Duma elections, Putin expanded on this issue, specifying what the components of the ideology should be: 'It is very difficult to strive for conceptual breakthroughs in the main areas of life if there are no basic values around which the nation could rally. Patriotism, our history and religion can and, of course, should become such basic values', Vladimir Putin said.[63] In his December 1999 article posted on the government's website, Vladimir Putin went to great lengths in stating his political preferences. In the article, Putin identified what he described as the 'traditional values' of Russians: patriotism, *gosudarstvennichestvo*, and social solidarity. Patriotism he defined as 'a feeling of pride in one's country, its history and accomplishments [and] the striving to make one's country better, richer, stronger and happier'. 'When these sentiments are free from the tints of nationalist conceit and imperial ambitions, there is nothing reprehensible or bigoted about them', he added.[64]

Here, of course, Putin reflects the popular Russian use of the term 'patriotism' as a noble sentiment that may have nothing to do with the evils of nationalism. However, Putin's own record in this field is a mixed bag. While being a leader is a learning process, Putin at an early stage of his presidency appears less sensitive to issues of ethnicity than his predecessor, meaning that his statism is not devoid of an ethnic element. In a different article, this author has described his policies as 'ethnocentric patriotism'.[65] Such a description is reasonable on the basis of several observations. One is the way the president has allowed racism against Caucasians to grow during the Chechen war. More directly, we may consider how Putin on several occasions has identified Russia (and the Soviet Union) primarily with ethnic Russians. For instance, at one of his speeches on Victory Day (9 May 2000), commemorating the victory over Nazi Germany, Putin focused on the achievements of the Slavic peoples, and in particular on the ethnic Russians: 'The people's pride and Russian [*russkiy*] patriotism are immortal. And therefore no force can win over Russian [*russkoe*] arms, defeat the army'.[66] There are also other dimensions to Putin's policies to watch out for in the future, that relate to ethnicity: his efforts to regain power for the Kremlin from regional leaders may cause responses that take on an ethnic colouring; and non-Orthodox believers may find his playing on religion (he has thus far spoken of 'religion' rather than Orthodoxy) for nation-building purposes excluding, e.g., Muslims.

Putin's ethnocentrism may be a trait that will be smoothed out on the advice of political advisers, and it may be that we will never see Putin turning to play an ethnic Russian nationalist card to prop up his regime (although he is not averse to using anti-Westernism for such a purpose.) Nevertheless, it is sufficiently evident for him to have a place in the model among the *gosudarstvenniki*; his nationalism is *primarily statist* rather than *primarily ethnic*, but there is an ethnic element to it, and thus it does not fall outside the model as a purely 'patriotic' sentiment would; cf. the introduction to the model. What is essential in this case, however, is that the model of nationalism presented earlier appears as a tool that has gained further in relevance by the new statist consensus in Russia, and may therefore add to our understanding also of the country's new leader. While a president at least by default will have some sort of economic policy, categorizing him politically primarily on that basis (as 'pro-market', etc.) may render the essence of his ideological convictions unaccounted for. The essence of Putin's regime is the statist ambition to strengthen the centre and the statehood as such (and, in the process, consolidating his own regime). In this context, authoritarianism is above all a means to that end.

Conclusions

This article started out with a brief discussion of models that have been developed to map the Russian political landscape. Without denying the relevance of the economic (state vs. market) and political (liberal vs. authoritarian) variables, and the usefulness of models built on these, the discussion pointed out that nationalism and its character may be an equally important trait of a political platform. Moreover, this is a trait that defies traditional categorization into left and right. This becomes particularly clear in the case of the 'national-patriots' or 'red-browns', but is not a problem limited to actors in this category.

Next, I went on to present some points regarding the current use in Russia of terms that pertain to political distance. From the brief discussion of the terms 'left', 'right', and 'centre', it should have become clear how much their current meaning is coloured by the country's own history—notwithstanding the fact that their use in recent years has moved closer to that in the West. The section on the impact of the Yeltsin years on terminology and political preferences should add to that impression. Each factor discussed in that section should serve to remind us that any simple and rigid model will require modification when confronted with the real world. As for the narrowing down of the 'democratic' part of the political spectrum, and new enthusiasm for authoritarian rule, these are developments that complicate straightforward comparison with Western politics. However, they may well have added to the relevance of nationalism as a factor of categorization and analysis.

In the main section of the article, I first introduced a model distinguishing among four categories of nationalism, defined by two different dimensions: *territorial orientation* ('core' or 'empire') and *character of nationalism* (primarily 'ethnic' or primarily 'statist'). I argued that the empire-oriented, primarily

ethnic nationalism is the category with the largest potential to cause conflict. The discussion that followed is where the first section, with reflections on political distance in Russia, is integrated with the model of nationalism. This was done in two sub-sections, 'territorial orientation', and 'ethnocentrism'.

It is in these sections that the importance of nationalism as a factor becomes clear. When actors whose left–right placement we have already discussed are compared to the model of nationalism, several findings emerge. As for territorial orientation, it becomes evident that only a minority of the prominent actors considered appear wholly content with the post-Soviet borders of the Russian Federation. This also goes for politicians clearly seen as liberal and democratically-minded. Certainly, there is a difference between the Communists' wish to restore the Soviet Union, or Zhirinovskiy's rabid imperialist expansionism, and the more modest ambitions of, for instance, Yuriy Luzhkov. Nevertheless, the fact remains that we are dealing with a number of mainstream politicians who are in effect making territorial demands on neighbouring states. In the section on ethnocentrism, similarly, we see how politicians who are not seen as particularly radical in Russia in fact represent ethnic Russian nationalism. One example is the Communist leader Gennadiy Zyuganov, who of course also is a prominent example that illustrates how meaningless it is to think of nationalism as limited only to the right in the case of Russia. Prejudice against other ethnic groups also has a place in this equation, and this is again a factor that in actuality may strike anywhere in the spectrum. The manner in which both Moscow's Mayor and the Kremlin under Putin's leadership have not interfered with anti-Caucasian attitudes and policies springs to mind. This is where we returned to the 'national-patriots', to highlight the point that was made in the introduction: how this category stands out as the one whose actors are most properly described in terms of nationalism, and how this eases the problems of categorization caused by the seemingly illogical proximity between 'reds' and 'browns'. These actors stand out for the character of their nationalism, and for the *emphasis* they put on issues of ethnicity and territorial expansion. Moreover, this should demonstrate that not only can politicians widely seen as being 'moderate' represent radical positions in terms of nationalism; it can also happen that politicians seen as 'moderate' and ones seen as less so find themselves scoring similarly in a model which takes into account only preferences of economic and political systems. We know that the outcome is unreasonable, and the introduction of nationalism as a variable will show us why. Finally, I have argued that a growing consensus on statist policies in Russia in recent years has, if anything, increased nationalism's relevance as a factor in the analysis of Russian politics as a whole, not to the point where ideas of left and right have been made redundant, but where it is necessary to supplement such ideas with others that cannot easily be integrated into one and the same model.

Doing that increases complexity, where we would prefer to see simplicity. For a fuller understanding of the truly complex field of Russian politics, that is hard to avoid. Moreover, we should keep a healthy respect for those complexities. Maps are for navigation. As always, the best way to make sure that we on the

right track is to look up every now and again and check the map against the landscape.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for funding the study which is the basis for this article. He would also like to thank Tor Bukkvoll, Pavel Baev, Pål Kolstø, and the anonymous referees who contributed with valuable comments to earlier drafts of the article. An early version of this article, with the same title, was published as a report by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Studies on Foreign Policy Issues', Report 4:2000).

Notes and references

1. See, e.g., Joan Barth Urban and Valerii D. Solovei, *Russia's Communists at the Crossroads* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).
2. Geoffrey Evans and Stephen Whitefield, 'The evolution of left and right in post-Soviet Russia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 50/6 (1998), p. 1036.
3. As a matter of fact, Evans and Whitefield do examine a factor they define as 'nationalism' in their study. However, that is a category defined by two questionnaire items that both imply a different approach than this article. One reads, 'We have a lot to learn from other countries in running [Russia's] affairs'; the other, '[Russia] should co-operate with other countries even if it means giving up some independence': Evans and Whitefield, *op. cit.*, ref. 2, pp. 1039–1040.
4. For two different surveys that both present different Russian scholars' systems of categories, see Aksel V. Carlsen, 'Partier i det post-sovjetiske Rusland—et forsøg på typologisering', *Nordisk Østforum*, 13/4 (1999) pp. 5–21; and Jakub Godzimirski, 'Russian political landscape, 1991–99', NUPI Center for Russian Studies database, http://www.nupi.no/forskning/.
5. See Heritage Foundation's *Dateline Moscow*, 15 December 1998 and 19 July 1999.
6. V. I. Lenin, 'Left-wing childishness and the petty-bourgeois mentality', *V. I. Lenin: Collected Works*, vol. 27, *February–July 1918* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), p. 327.
7. Roger Eatwell and Noël O'Sullivan (Eds), *The Nature of the Right: European and American Political Thought Since 1789* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989), pp. 62–75.
8. For a discussion of this process, see Jeffrey Surovell, 'Gorbachev's last year: leftist or rightist?', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46/3 (1994). In this article Surovell uses the terms 'conservative' and 'right', and 'democratic' and 'left' interchangeably.
9. One exception is provided by the very small groups that may be described as 'new left', which are closer to resembling contemporary left-wing parties in the West.
10. 'Novogo izdaniya Oktyabrskoy revoliutsii ne budet', *Rossiya*, 40 (19–25 October 1994).
11. 'Situatsiyu vzryvaet natsionalnaya ushchemlennost russkikh', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 9 January 1992.
12. Mikhail Dmitriev, 'Party economic programs and implications', in Michael McFaul, Nikolai Petrov, and Andrei Ryabov, with Elizabeth Reisch, *Primer on Russia's 1999 Duma Elections* (Moscow: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Carnegie Moscow Center, 1999), p. 39. The survey, which covers the programmes of the KPRF, LDPR, Yabloko, OVR, and NDR, is also covered in the article 'Cherez vybory k rynku', *Itogi*, 14 December 1999.
13. *Derzhavnost* refers to the word *derzhava*—great power. It is a term that indicates the promotion of the greatness of the state. As such, it indicates significant assertiveness on part of the state, and it has a clear foreign policy (external) dimension. Someone adhering to such a policy may be termed a *derzhavnik*.
14. Nikolai V. Zlobin, 'The political spectrum', in Alexander Dallin (Ed.), *Political Parties in Russia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California at Berkeley, IAS Research Series, no. 68, 1993), p. 77. Even Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who by his rhetoric many would describe as a nationalist-imperialist, has spoken of his party as being 'right-centrist'. In a 1994 interview, he said that centrism was 'the very best form .... To stay in the centre, not go to the extremes': 'My vsegda otkryty dlya vsekh', *Oppozitsiya*, 4 (1994).
15. Poll by the Russian Independent Institute of Social and National Problems. Supporters of radical market reforms constituted 7.2%, of 'an independent Russian path of development' 15.6%, of communist ideology

10%, and of social-democracy 5.2%: Vladimir Popov, 'The razor's edge, or centrism the Russian way', *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 24 February 1999.
16. Itar-Tass, 28 August 1999.
17. 'Luzhkov, the biggest (business) man in Moscow', *St. Petersburg Times*, 15–21 September 1997.
18. *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, 9 April 1998.
19. Aleksandr Buzgalin, 'Luzhkov as a "new socialist": a collage in the post-modern style', *Jamestown Foundation Prism*, 4/6, 16 July 1999.
20. Pribylovskiy, Vladimir, *43 linii spektra. Kratkoe opisanie vsekh predvybornykh blokov* (Moscow: Informatsionno-Ekspernaya gruppa 'Panorama', December 1995).
21. *Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy*, 2 February 1999.
22. For instance, a 1998 poll found that one third of Russians believed that the president should have 'supreme power', and that dictatorship was the only way out of the current economic crisis. 45% of respondents disagreed that dictatorship was the only solution: 'Russia poll: bring on dictatorship', Associated Press, 23 September 1998, poll by VTsIOM. Similarly, in a late 1999 poll, 45% answered that the Russian people 'needs an iron hand', while another 27% said that power 'should be concentrated in one pair of hands now': Nikolai Popov, 'The quiet appeal of dictatorship', *Vremya MN*, 6 December 1999, reported by RIA Novosti, poll by ARPI.
23. V. V. Putin, 'Rossiya na rubezhe tysyachetletiy', www.government.gov.ru/government/minister/article-vvp1.html.
24. Vladimir Putin, 'Otkrytoe pismo Vladimira Putina k rossiyskim izbiratelyam', www.putin2000.ru.
25. Interfax, 31 January 2000. As a matter of fact, this peculiar phrasing—which he repeated later—is not only Putin's. A few years earlier, at the peak of his popularity, Aleksandr Lebed expressed himself in exactly the same way—leaving open questions about his dedication to democracy: see, e.g., 'The difference? I do not drink!', *Die Woche* (Hamburg), 1 December 1995, FBIS-SOV-95–232.
26. This interpretation is not meant as the last word on the primordialist/constructivist debate over the degree of 'constructedness' of nations, or in this case, the 'Russian nation'.
27. The definitions are from *Bolshaya Sovetskaya entsiklopedia*, 3rd edn., Moscow, 1970–81, quoted in Pål Kolstø, 'The concept of "patriotic internationalism": a contribution to the understanding of Soviet ideology', *Nordic Journal for Soviet and East European Studies*, 4 (1984), pp. 2–6.
28. This model was developed and elaborated upon by this author in a different article: see 'Raising the Russian question: ethnicity and statehood, *russkie* and *Rossiya*', *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics*, 2/1 (1996) pp. 91–110.
29. It should be pointed out that a regime espousing one of the two remaining categories of nationalism is not necessarily more 'liberal' or 'democratic', although it *could* be described as more forward-looking and less conservative, by virtue of accepting to a greater degree the post-1991 realities.
30. 'Milliard dollarov—I ya u vlasti', *Rossiya*, 27 (1–7 June 1992).
31. 'Lekarstvo ot geopoliticheskogo psikhoza', *Obozrevatel*, 6 (1995).
32. BNS, 13 September 1994.
33. Sergei Stankevich, 'Russia has already made an anti-imperial choice', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 6 November 1992, *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, 44/45 (9 December 1992), p. 11.
34. 'Dlya chego perevozit chto-to iz Rossii v Rossiyu?', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 7 April 1992.
35. Sergey Baburin, 'Volya, pobeda', *Zavtra*, 27 (July 1995).
36. Aleksandr Lebed, 'Armiya—eto vsegda zashchita naroda', *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, 31 July 1992.
37. Aleksandr Lebed, *My Life and My Country* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1997), p. 359.
38. Also in the 1999 election campaign, Luzhkov promoted OVR in Moscow with posters saying, 'We are building houses for Russian military servicemen'.
39. RFE/RL Daily Brief, 6 December 1996.
40. 'Programma Kommunisticheskoy partii Rossiyskoy Federatsii', *Informatsionniy byulleten*, 50/9 (15 May 1997), p. 12. This programme may also be found on the internet, at www.kprf.ru.
41. *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, 30 September 1998.
42. Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Still favoring the power of the workers', *Transitions*, 4/7 (1997), p. 53.
43. Not surprisingly, furthermore, only the most radical political forces would agree to be described as nationalists. The neo-Nazi Aleksandr Barkashov entitled the book he wrote for the members of Russian National Unity *Azbuka russkogo natsionalista* ('ABC of the Russian Nationalist').
44. 'Lyubaya diktatura besperspektivna: boyarskaya, proletarskaya, prezidentskaya', *Oppozitsiya*, 11 (1994).
45. 'Betrayal of Serbs is a deadly sin', *Stern* (Hamburg), 21 September 1995, FBIS-SOV-95–183.
46. 'Russian militarism risks new Hitler', *Chicago Sun-Times*, 8 July 1992.
47. Alfred B. Evans, Jr., 'Yeltsin and Russian nationalism', *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review*, 21/1 (1994), p. 38.
48. Quoted in Vera Tolz, 'What is Russia? Post-Communist debates on nation-building', paper presented at the 1997 AAASS convention, Seattle. Strictly speaking, the term Yeltsin used here applied not to ethnic

Russians, but rather to those—relatively few—holding Russian passports. In fact, the Yeltsin regime never completely solved its problems in denominating those whose rights it spoke up for, having to strike a balance between what was acceptable by international standards (and its own status as a multinational state) and the pressures from the strong ethnocentric nationalist opposition at home.

49. Televised address by Yeltsin on the bombings, transcript from Reuters, 13 September 1999.
50. For one early report on Moscow's policies against Caucasians, see 'Moscow: open season, closed city', *Human Rights Watch*, 9/10 (D) (September 1997).
51. Robert J. Brym and Andrei Degtyarev, 'Anti-semitism in Moscow: results of an October 1992 survey', *Slavic Review*, 52/1 (1993), p. 5.
52. 'Russian left descends into dark well of anti-semitism', *The Guardian*, 5 November 1998. Similarly, in a speech reprinted in the radical newspaper *Zavtra*, Makashov said: 'Usury, deceit, corruption, and thievery are flourishing in the country. That is why I call the reformers yids. Who are these Jews? ... Yid is not a nationality, yid is a profession': General Albert Makashov, 'Usurers of Russia', *Zavtra*, 4220 (October 1998).
53. Interfax, 11 November 1998.
54. G. Zyuganov, 'On the national pride of patriots: statement by Communist Party of the Russian Federation Central Committee Chairman', *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 24 December 1998.
55. Vladimir Pribylovskiy, *43 linii spektra. Kratkoe opisanie vsekh predvybornykh blokov* (Moscow: Informatsionno-Ekspernaya gruppa 'Panorama', December 1995), pp. 22–23.
56. Based on a district court decision, *Spas* was later removed from the election register. For a background on Barkashov and the RNE, see Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Blackshirt friends of the nation', *Nationalities Papers*, 24/4 (1996) pp. 625–639.
57. To illustrate, Yegor Gaidar lost a court suit by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in 1994, for having called Zhirinovskiy a 'fascist'. The court agreed with Zhirinovskiy's lawyer that fascism should be used to describe only the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini before and during the Second World War, and thus could not apply to Zhirinovskiy. The defendant's argument that something that looks, walks, and talks like fascism in fact *is* fascism was not supported. For an in-depth examination of this issue, see Andreas Umland, *Vladimir Zhirinovskii in Russian Politics: Three Approaches to the Emergence of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia, 1990–1993* (Berlin: Promotionsausschuss, FB Geschichtswissenshaft, Freie Universitat Berlin, 1997), pp. 331–361.
58. Thus, a statement from the State Duma, reprinted in a KPRF publication, expressed concern about political extremism in Russia, and at the same time basically described such extremism as a provocation by the Yeltsin regime itself: 'There is reason to believe that these [extremist] organizations are using support from forces that are interested in creating an impression that there is such a thing as a "Russian fascism"': see 'Ob istokakh politicheskogo ekstremizma v Rossiyskoy Federatsii', *Zayavlenie Gosudarstvennoy Dumy*, 19 March 1999, reprinted in Nikolay Bindyukov and Petr Lopata, *Osobaya tretya sila—novyy politicheskiy fenomen* (Moscow: ITRK, 1999), p. 318.
59. Interview with Fedorov on Russian Television, 'Podrobnosti', 14 February 1995.
60. 'Yeltsin calls for "unifying national idea"', Itar-Tass, 12 July 1996, FBIS-SOV-96–135.
61. For details on this process, see Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Inheriting the Soviet policy toolbox: Russia's dilemma over ascriptive nationality', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 51/6 (1999) pp. 1069–1087.
62. Interfax, 3 November 1999, FBIS-SOV-1999–1103.
63. Itar-Tass, 22 December 1999, FBIS-SOV-1999–1222.
64. V. V. Putin: Rossiya na rubezhe tysyachetletiy', www.government.gov.ru/government/minister/article-vvp1.html.
65. Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Vladimir Putin's leadership style: ethnocentric patriotism', *Security Dialogue*, 31/3 (2000), pp. 220–222.
66. Vladimir Putin, 'Vystuplenie na torzhestvennom prieme v oznamenovanie 55-y godovshchiny Pobedy v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941–1945 godov', http://president.kremlin.ru/events/32.html.