Russia Before and After Crimea
Nationalism and Identity, 2010–2017
Edited by Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud

RUSSIA BEFORE AND AFTER CRIMEA

Nationalism and Identity, 2010–17

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Preface

This book emanates from the research project 'Nation-building, nationalism and the new "other" in today's Russia' (NEORUSS) funded by the Research Council of Norway under the Russia and the High North/Arctic (NORRUSS) programme, project number 220599. It is a sequel to *The New Russian Nationalism: Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism, 2000–15* (2016), edited by Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, likewise published by Edinburgh University Press. Since our research project commenced, major events have taken place that affect Russian nationalism, in particular the annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine. The first volume was well underway when these momentous developments unfolded and we were able to reflect on them only to a limited degree. In this second volume, with more distance to these events, we are better able to incorporate the effects of the Ukrainian crisis on Russian nationalism.

Our research project organised a capstone conference at Tallinn University 28–29 April 2016, and most of the chapters in the current volume were first presented as papers at that conference. We would like to express our sincere gratitude towards the Tallinn University Conference Centre and to Professor Raivo Vetik for their invaluable assistance in organising this conference.

The English language in this book, as everything we publish, has been corrected and improved upon by our indispensable copy editor Susan Høivik.

Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, Oslo, May 2017

Introduction: Exploring Russian nationalisms

Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud

Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 marked a watershed in European history: for the first time since the Second World War, a European state violated the sanctity of international borders and appropriated part of the territory of a neighbouring country. Western states reacted strongly and negatively, and Russia–Western relations may well have been severely damaged for the foreseeable future.

Politicians and scholars alike are struggling to understand how this situation came about. Like all historical turning points, the current breakdown in Russia–Western relations has both immediate triggers and a longer history of gestation. We can choose to focus on the details of the political confrontations in and around Ukraine that led up to this event: Ukraine's parallel negotiations with the European Union (EU) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU); President Viktor Yanukovych's abrupt decision not to sign the Deep and Comprehensive Trade Agreement with the EU in November 2013; the massive protest this decision unleashed in the Ukrainian population; and finally, Yanukovych's flight and dismissal. Alternatively, we can broaden the timeframe to include the growing distrust between Moscow and European/North American capitals over the last two decades fuelled by – among other things – NATO's eastward expansion and deployment of ballistic missile defence in former Eastern Europe, on the one hand, and Russia's aggressive policy towards Georgia and other neighbours, on the other. Or we can widen our analytical lens even further to include the more general mental framework within which Russian politicians are acting: the constraints and drivers imposed by perceptions, emotions, self-understanding and world outlook. This book is an attempt to contribute to this latter endeavour by examining and discussing contemporary Russian nationalism in its various incarnations.

Some have interpreted the Putin regime's sudden territorial aggression towards Ukraine in 2014 as a manifestation of deep-seated

Russian imperialism: that the Russians have never been reconciled to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and will exploit any weakness in the neighbouring states to try to re-establish the lost empire (see, for example, Grigas 2016). As is often pointed out, Vladimir Putin is on record as having described the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as 'a major geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century' (Putin 2005). Indeed, part of Putin's justification for the annexation of Crimea was that the peninsula was 'Russian' territory. Speaking to an expanded session of the Russian parliament on 18 March 2014 on the occasion of the official accession of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, he argued that 'in people's hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia' (Putin 2014a). 'Russia', then, in the thinking of the Russian leader, seemed to encompass more than the territory of the Russian Federation. This is also the interpretation which Russian imperialists seek to give this event. For instance, immediately after the annexation, high-profile editor-cum-pundit Aleksandr Prokhanov declared: 'this is the beginning of the resurrection of the Russian Empire' (Prokhanov 2014). That view is shared by many of the insurgents in Eastern Ukraine. For instance, in his *The Torch of Novorossiia*, Pavel Gubarev, an early ideologue of the Donbas rebellion, claims: 'we are imperialists: we despise . . . petty, national states' (Gubarev 2016: 286).

Alternatively, the new Russian policy towards Ukraine can be seen as reflecting not 'imperialism' but 'nationalism'. In this interpretive scheme, the emphasis is not so much on the perceived necessity of expanding the Russian state or resurrecting the empire, but the fact that ethnic Russians make up the majority population in Crimea and were allegedly discriminated against by the Ukrainian state. Also this reading can be substantiated by quotations from Putin's March 2014 Crimea speech – as when he bemoaned how ethnic Russians after the fall of the Soviet Union had become 'one of the biggest, if not the biggest divided people in the world' (Putin 2014a). That claim seems to smack less of Russian state patriotism and more of ethnically framed nationalism. And indeed, this is how many Russian ethnonationalists interpret it. For instance, Valerii Solovei, a leading intellectual in the nationalist camp, noted that in his speech, Putin employed the ethnic and cultural word for 'Russian', *russkii*, no less than twenty-seven times. Previously, Putin had used the ethnically neutral and more politically correct word *rossiiskii*, even in speaking about such cultural issues as 'Russian values' (*rossiiskie tsennosti*).[1] The switch to *russkii*, Solovei claimed, was 'an ideological innovation'

and signalled that Putin was *not* resurrecting the empire, as the imperialists claimed, but was instead building a Russian national state (Solovei 2014; see also Piper 2014).[2]

Then again, some observers will deny that we have to choose between these two interpretations. Well-informed authorities on Russian nationalism like Emil Pain maintain that Russian nationalism comes in at least two guises, both imperial and ethnic (as well as in intermediate varieties) (Pain 2016; Pain, this volume). While 'imperial nationalism' might seem a contradiction in terms in other parts of the world, that is not the case in Russia, Pain claims. There is a historical explanation to this: prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Russians had never lived in a nation-state. As soon as the many Russian principalities had been gathered into a unitary state led by the emerging power of Muscovy, the state in the mid-sixteenth century began to expand into territories inhabited by non-Slavic, non-Orthodox peoples, such as the Tatars and other Turkic peoples. Nationally oriented Russians have tended to identify with and feel pride in this state, regarding it as 'their nation-state' even though it was clearly a multinational state and – from the time of Peter the Great – was even officially designated as an 'empire' (Kappler 2001). However, unlike for example the British and French empires, there was no clear demarcation between the metropole and the colonial periphery. Everything was 'Russia', and the number of Russian nationalists who would countenance the truncation of 'their' state could be counted on the fingers of one hand (Szporluk 1989). Before the 1917 Revolution, some Russian nationalists such as Petr Struve could be regarded as 'liberals', and others, like the Slavophiles, as 'conservatives', and yet others, for instance the Black Hundreds, as reactionaries – but they were all 'imperialists' in the sense that they took the empire for granted (ibid.).

After the Revolution, one of the fifteen Soviet republics came to be called the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), but this entity was not named after the ethnic Russians (*russkie*) living there: it took its name from the former Russian Empire (*Rossiiskaia imperiia*). Millions of ethnic Russians lived outside the RSFSR and felt equally at home wherever they were living – they did not regard the RSFSR as their putative 'own' homeland (Kolstø 1995). Also those Russians who did live in the RSFSR rarely took that republic as their reference point, but would say, as did a popular song from 1978: 'My address is the Soviet Union'. Only when the USSR broke up did the difference between an imperial and an ethnic national identity gradually began to dawn upon many Russians.

Between the French and the German models

Contemporary ‘Russian nationalism’ is a variegated phenomenon with numerous emphases and possible definitions. The diversity can be quite confusing. In an effort to introduce some sense and order we can start by arranging ‘real existing’ Russian nationalisms along two axes in a two-by-two matrix (see Table I.1).

The two vertical axes – state-oriented and ethnic – in many respects correspond to the classical distinction between French and German nationalisms as they developed historically. While French nationalists celebrated *la Patrie* and automatically included all inhabitants of the state as French *citoyennes*, German nationalism took the German language and *Kulturnation* as its starting point. Ever since Hans Kohn published his seminal *The Idea of Nationalism* in 1944, historians have regularly presented East European nationalisms as belonging to the German variety (Kohn 1944 [1961]; see also Plamenatz 1976). However, while this designation captures the orientation of most nationalists within smaller East European nations, Russian nationalism is more complex. The reason seems quite straightforward: whereas nationalism among the smaller East European nations developed before they had acquired ‘their own’ nation-states, a Russian state has existed ever since the Middle Ages, and Russians have had a state to identify with.

Even so, the ethnic understanding of the nation is also widespread in Russia today. Again, the reasons must be sought in history. The Russian state never seriously pursued a ‘melting pot’ nation-building strategy: no attempt was made to create a common cultural identity among the many linguistic and religious groups residing within the realm. Under the tsars, the non-Russians retained their separate ethnic identities, which were determined primarily by language and religion. Only in the late nineteenth century did the authorities begin to take active steps to subsume White Russians (*belarusy*) and the Little Russians (*malorossy*, today’s Ukrainians) into a common Russian ethnic group together with the Great Russians – a policy that eventually failed. Later, under the Bolsheviks, ethnic identities were instead rigidly codified and institutionalised (Slezkine 1994). As a result of this historical legacy, virtually all varieties of Russian nationalism today contain elements taken from both the French state-oriented and the German ethnicity/language/culture-oriented prototypes (Laruelle 2014).[3]

Whereas the two vertical axes in our typology identify the ‘in-group’ – those who constitute ‘the nation’ – the two horizontal axes capture

Table I.1 A typology of Russian nationalisms (adapted from Kolstø 2016)

	Primarily state-oriented	**Primarily ethnically oriented**
'Empire'-oriented	Imperial nationalism	Supremacist nationalism
'Core'-oriented	Russian Federation nationalism	Ethnic core nationalism

the territorial expression of nationhood – which state-formation the nationalists see as their natural 'homeland'. While both France and Germany have waxed and waned in size over the centuries, and the contemporary borders in both states were not fixed until after the Second World War, there is virtually no pressure today for territorial expansion. The situation is very different in Russia, where the multinational empire collapsed as recently as in 1991. As a result, in addition to the distinction between ethnic nationalism and state-focused nationalism, Russian nationalists can be differentiated according to whether they orient themselves towards the current Russian state, the Russian Federation ('core-oriented' nationalism in Table I.1) or towards restoring the borders of one of Russia's larger, imperial historical predecessors – the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union.

Spanning the ideological spectrum

This two-by-two matrix is complemented by an ideological overlay. Russian nationalism can be found across the political spectrum – from the national bolsheviks on the far left, to neo-fascist groupings to the far right. Organisationally, some nationalists, like the right-wing populist Vladimir Zhirinovskii, belong to the political establishment of the Kremlin-loyal 'systemic' opposition. More often, however, nationalists have found an ideological home in various groupings in the 'non-systemic' opposition – or in more marginal, loosely organised intellectual or para-political circles (see Laruelle 2009). The main point is the malleability of Russian nationalism – it is not monopolised by any particular ideological persuasion, but can be found in various constellations ranging from national democrats to anarchists, from parties inside the State Duma to fringe groups that engage in nationalistically motivated terrorism.

Crimea represented a watershed in the structuring of the Russian nationalist field. With the Kremlin adopting many of the former positions of the nationalists, the latter were forced to take a stance for or against the Kremlin's new political line. As we will return to below (see chapter by Alexander Verkhovsky, this volume),

after Crimea it might be more pertinent to categorise Russian nationalists ideologically according to whether they are pro- or anti-regime and pro- or anti-Russian Spring (that is, whether they support the pro-Russian uprising in Ukraine), rather than according to a traditional left–right axis. While a pro-regime nationalist stance automatically goes together with support for the Russian Spring – as exemplified by Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democratic Party or State Duma deputy Evgenii Fedorov's National Liberation Movement (*Natsional'no-osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie*) – the anti-regime nationalists are further divided into pro- and anti-Russian Spring. The imperialist Igor Strelkov (Girkin), famed for his role in the war in Donbas and now heading the All-Russian National Movement (*Obshcherusskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie*), falls in the anti-regime, pro-Russian Spring category – whereas, for example, ultranationalist Dmitrii Demushkin and his now-banned *Russkie* (Russians) movement were both anti-regime and anti-Russian Spring.

However, due to the way the Russian political field is structured, most ideological groupings beyond the 'party of power' and the systemic opposition represent rather marginal phenomena. Thus, as argued by Pain in this volume, another at least equally important distinction in the Russian context is *from where* the nationalist impulse originates: from the societal level, or from the state.

Sources of nationalism: State and society

Societal Russian nationalism can be found in various guises: it can be ethnic, state-oriented or imperial, it can be inclusive or xenophobic, and it can be coloured by a range of ideological beliefs. Common to all such variations of Russian societal nationalism is, however, that it emanates from below and is formulated and developed independently of the state. The Russian state has always been extremely sceptical towards all such manifestations of autonomous social initiatives, irrespective of their political message. Societal nationalism is frowned upon by the authorities, and they actively seek to supress it.

For its part, the Russian state has been motivated by a pragmatic *raison d'état*: the state is its own justification and purpose. However, as Pain points out, at certain junctures, the state has elaborated ideological programmes for legitimation in which it resorts to some variety of imperial nationalism. That was the case under Nikolai I when his Minister of Education, Count Sergei Uvarov, developed the ideological doctrine of 'Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality (*narodnost'*)'. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Aleksandr

III and his son Nikolai II also incorporated elements of such imperial nationalism in their state ideology – and, perhaps more surprisingly, so did Iosif Stalin as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party from the mid-1930s until his death in 1953.

We do not have to believe that these rulers were 'convinced' nationalists in any meaningful sense of the word. Most probably, they were simply using nationalism as a tool to mobilise support in the population. In any case, in order to analyse the policies of state nationalism we do not have to look into the hearts and minds of the rulers in order to determine what 'actually', deep down, motivated them: we can focus on their words and deeds. Likewise, from a sociological point of view, a 'nationalist turn' in Russian state policy makes sense only if we can also assume that there exists a pool of nationalist sentiment in the Russian population the rulers believe that they can tap into.

'Crimea is ours' – the revival of state nationalism

Returning to Russia's annexation of Crimea, can this short presentation of the role of nationalism in Russian politics and society help to explain what motivated the Kremlin to break the strong post-Second World War European taboo against territorial enlargement at the expense of a neighbouring state? We believe yes. When various circumstances converged and induced Putin and his team to embark upon an adventurous foreign policy course that they knew would inevitably lead to confrontation with the outside world, they added a nationalistic varnish. Previously in his career, Putin had been very wary of playing with nationalist themes (Hale 2016), but now, when it was imperative to rally the nation around his leadership, strong nationalist tropes crept into his rhetoric.

In this volume, we argue that strong currents of nationalism were evident in Russian society in the decade preceding the Ukrainian debacle; societal nationalism of various ideological persuasions was gaining ground. Furthermore, we see the Kremlin's decision to resort to nationalist rhetoric in connection with the conflict in Ukraine as part of the explanation why Putin could not only annex Crimea and get away with it, but even capitalise on it on the home front. And finally – and perhaps most importantly – we show how societal nationalism has gone into deep decline after Crimea. The champion of democratically oriented Russian nationalism, Aleksei Navalnyi, who made headlines by garnering 27 per cent of the vote in the 2013 Moscow mayoral elections, alienated much of his

old constituency due to his principled criticism of the Crimean operation. Similarly, the radical nationalists behind the annual Russian Marches have managed to mobilise only a fraction of the number of people they were able to bring into the streets only a few years earlier.

What we see, then, is a demobilisation of nationalism in Russia at the societal level, at the same time as it is being activated at the state level. This might appear paradoxical, but, as Pain explains, should probably to be regarded as logically interrelated tendencies. The state not only 'taps into' Russian societal nationalism – it also 'drains' it. In times when the state does not feel that it needs nationalism as a legitimation base for its own purposes, various groups of autonomous nationalists can be allowed to operate, thus providing a safety valve for social frustration. However, in times of turbulence and official nationalist ferment, the state tolerates no competitors. Figuratively speaking, state nationalism and societal nationalism in Russia are connected vessels: when the state vessel fills up, the other is being emptied.

'Russian' as simultaneously russkii *and* rossiiskii

While we believe the typology described above is helpful in demonstrating the differences between the various main strands of Russian nationalism, it is intended as an analytical model only. The four boxes should be understood as ideal types in a Weberian sense: very few Russian nationalists can be unambiguously pigeonholed into one and only one of the boxes (see Laruelle 2017). This is true also of Russian thinkers and politicians who like to present themselves as purely 'civic' or purely 'ethno-nationalist' in orientation. For instance, during Boris Eltsin's rule, two of his ministers for nationality policy – the ethnic Avar Ramazan Abdulatipov and the ethnic Russian Valerii Tishkov – presented models for a nationality policy for the Russian Federation under a (multi)ethnic and a civic label, respectively (Kolstø 2000: 210–12). The practical differences between the nation-state visions that these two officials promoted, however, were not so obvious (Shevel 2011: 183–84).

Also under Putin, the nation-state model pursued by the Russian state appears to have been, as Oxana Shevel (2011) describes it, 'purposefully ambiguous': to allow Russian policymakers maximum space for manoeuvre, the Kremlin has been vacillating between a civic and an ethno-cultural understanding of the nation. Even today, the signals coming from Putin continue to point in

very different, seemingly contradictory, directions. To be sure, from around the onset of his third term Putin appeared to be switching from the Eltsinite *rossiiskii* nation-building terminology to increasingly using *russkii*. The first clear indication of this was his pre-election article on the nationality question, where Putin referred to ethnically Armenian and German citizens of Russia as 'Russian (*russkie*) Armenians' and 'Russian (*russkie*) Germans' (Putin 2012). This was followed up and even accentuated in his various addresses after the Crimean annexation (see Putin 2014a, 2014b). Seemingly, Putin was adopting if not the agenda, then at least the terminology of the ethno-nationalists. However, just as that conclusion seemed logical, Putin gave the go-ahead to drawing up a law defining the *rossiiskii* nation (*rossiiskaia natsiia*) (RIA Novosti 2016).[4] What are we to make of this?

While several interpretations are possible, we suggest that rather than revealing confusion or vacillation in the Kremlin, this can be seen as a strategy for eradicating the difference between *russkii* and *rossiiskii*. That may not be quite as radical as it sounds. Most languages do not make a lexical distinction between an ethnic and civic designation of the nation: neither the paradigmatic 'ethnic' case – German – nor the paradigmatic 'civic' case – French – has more than one word to describe the 'national'. The Russian language, on the other hand, not only *allows* for a distinction between those two aspects, it also makes it impossible for Russian speakers *not* to choose one of the two words, *russkii* or *rossiiskii*, when they talk or write. There is no 'neutral' term to describe Russianness. The only way to fuse those two aspects therefore seems to be to use the two terms interchangeably, until in the end they are understood as expressing the same meaning (as the two designations of the state, 'Russia' and 'the Russian Federation', do in practice).

Seen in this perspective, the language games of the Kremlin's nation-building strategy can be regarded as attempts to make Russia a 'normal' nation-state like Germany and France. While, as pointed out above, German and French nation-building have historically been informed by very different principles, more recently this distinction has been gradually fading. Contemporary French nationalism focuses very much on the need to permeate the entire population with French culture and to teach all citizens to speak proper French; German nationalists created their own unified nation-state in the late nineteenth century – later modified several times – with which they identify keenly (Brubaker 1998). Today, therefore, it is probably more accurate to speak of a common French–German, or simply

civic–cultural, 'European' nation model, which, it can be argued, the Russian leadership is attempting to emulate – at least on the rhetorical level.

We should note one major caveat, however: modern European nation-states that identify 'the nation' with the culture, language, citizens and territory of the state no longer question the state borders, not even in cases when compact groups of co-ethnics reside outside the borders of the nation-state. Germany, for example, a country that has experienced dramatic truncations of the state's territory over the last century, does not harbour irredentist aspirations today. For the first couple of decades after the breakup of the Soviet Union, it also seemed as if Russia would follow that path, but the annexation of Crimea belied those expectations. Deeds speak louder than words, and as long as Russia continues to hold on to and justify Crimea's annexation with nationalist rhetoric, it is of minor importance whether this rhetoric is interpreted as 'imperialistic' or 'ethnic': in either case, it is clearly not 'civic'. Therefore, the annexation is not only a watershed in modern European history, but also, we argue, a major barrier to Russia's nation-state transformation.

Structure of the book

The various chapters in this book fit into and lend support to the interpretive framework developed above. In Part I, we study the phenomenon of 'official nationalism' more closely. First comes a background chapter by Emil Pain that further refines this frame. Pain traces the political role and the ideological content of contemporary Russian nationalism against a historical canvas that extends from the late eighteenth century to the present, and explores the understudied and poorly understood relationship between official state nationalism and autonomous societal nationalism. The latter variety appeared in Russia initially as a carrier of ideas of civic and popular sovereignty, drawing on the ideas of the French Revolution. Since the late nineteenth century, however, Russian societal nationalism has been dominated by an anti-liberal tendency.

From its very first appearance, Russian state powers have attempted to neutralise this societal nationalism by replacing it with something ostensibly similar but actually very different: an 'imperial nationalism'. The fact that state-promoted imperial nationalism has no rigid ethnic ties, that it is not transmitted through the channels of cultural tradition but is developed in response to socio-political challenges, might indicate that a radical reprogramming is possible,

Pain argues. However, he concludes that today there are no political forces in Russia that could start the deconstruction of the imperial consciousness. On the contrary: what we see is the continued discrediting of the basic tenets of a civic nation.

Eduard Ponarin and Michael Komin, in keeping with Pain, survey the development of the elite and the masses' attitudes towards nationalism across the post-Soviet period. In the 1990s, new drivers of Russian nationalism appeared on the scene, making possible two alternative scenarios: either, as a reaction to globalisation, a return to an imperial nationalism; or, alternatively, in response to the problems inherited from Soviet federalism and the ensuing ethnic conflict, a rise in ethnic nationalism. Ponarin and Komin analyse the changing balance of imperial and ethnic nationalism and their influence on the choices made by the Russian government.

During Putin's third term, they argue, in a reversal of a long-term post-Soviet trend, the attitudes of the elite shifted dramatically in favour of imperial projects beyond Russia's borders. Another long-term trend has recently accelerated: that of valuing military might over economic power in international relations. Surveys show that the share of elite respondents who see the USA as a threat has now reached an all-time high, standing at more than 80 per cent. The findings of Ponarin and Komin indicate fairly widespread elite support for an imperial scenario, with the West cast as the 'Other' against whom the new Russian identity can coalesce.

Next, Yuri Teper turns to the core of state-level nationalism, to the Kremlin and its post-2012 quest for securing legitimacy, and what he describes as an emerging Russian identity dilemma. His chapter examines the Kremlin's changing attitudes towards nationalism since the onset of Putin's third term, with special emphasis on the post-2014 period. Changes are analysed against two primary factors: regime efforts to sustain popular legitimacy against the backdrop of failure to deliver on output promises, and the perceived popular need for a more articulated national identity.

Teper argues that, since Putin's return to the presidency, the Kremlin's approach to the national issue has undergone a twofold change. First the authorities' mobilisation strategy shifted from being reactive to proactive, with the Kremlin seizing complete control over the nationalist agenda, and the official discourse on identity turning profoundly national. This ethno-national trend peaked around the annexation of Crimea. However, realising the risks such ethno-national rhetoric might pose domestically as well as in relations with the outside world, the Kremlin quickly tempered its message – and

cracked down on those nationalists who did not fall in line. The emphasis shifted toward a securitised great-power – or imperial – nationalism, as shown by Russia's subsequent intervention in the Syrian civil war.

Andrey Makarychev and Alexandra Yatsyk round off the first part. They propose a distinct interpretation of the making of Russian national identity by applying the concept of 'biopolitics'. According to Makarychev and Yatsyk, in recent years Russia has taken a biopolitical turn, exemplified by the introduction of regulatory mechanisms aimed at consolidating Russian national identity by disciplining and constraining human bodies. They thus contend that the nationalist turn in Russian state policy during Putin's third period can be regarded as part of a general tendency towards a more authoritarian, intrusive regime type that seeks to control every aspect of the life of the citizens, including their bodies.

Their chapter discusses the concept of biopolitical sovereignty, followed by an examination of specific cases that illustrate practices of biopolitics in legislation on, for example, the penitentiary system, family and reproductive health and gender representations. Makarychev and Yatsyk conclude that a biopolitical agenda currently shapes much of the content and contours of the Kremlin-promoted nation-building project. The regime utilises biopolitical discourses and practices to consolidate its rule, drawing on conservative norms that may be asserted through religious, gender-based or 'Russian World'-grounded discourses. Biopolitics, they argue, offers a specific way of anchoring the uncertain Russian identity in a set of consensually understood nodal points that encapsulate bodily practices of corporeal discipline and control.

The second part of this book, 'Radical and other societal nationalisms', offers a range of perspectives on the societal level, autonomous nationalism. It consists of four chapters that assess the ideological-organisational landscape of the Russian nationalist movement and present key actors.

Alexandra Kuznetsova and Sergey Sergeev examine organisations that combine nationalist principles with propagation of revolution and that advocate the violent dissolution of the existing political regime in the name of the nation (be it civic, ethnic or something else). They identify four main categories of such organisations in Russia today: national bolsheviks, national anarchists, national socialists, and national democrats. The organisations of the 'national bolshevik' category are primarily associated with veteran political activist Eduard Limonov. While continuously modifying their ideological

orientation, these organisations have all managed to combine leftist military activism with imperial ideals. The 'national socialist' category, by contrast, consists of proponents of a 'white revolution' who embrace various forms of terror directed against immigrants as well as political rivals. Nationalist and anarchist ideas are combined in the third group, the national anarchists; according to their view, after the demolition of the state, people will live in communities based on ethnic principles. Finally, there are the national democrats, who seek to combine ethnic nationalism with political democracy.

Kuznetsova and Sergeev trace the major actors and dynamics of development within this scene from the early 1990s up to, and including, the Crimean annexation. They conclude that, with increased regime repression in the aftermath of Crimea, Russia's revolutionary nationalists have now lost whatever limited influence they once enjoyed.

In the next chapter, Alexander Verkhovsky examines in detail the changes that have taken place in the Russian nationalist movement in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea. He provides a broad overview of nationalist activities and initiatives undertaken from below, from the societal level, while also taking into account the complex relationship and interaction between the various groups of nationalists and the powers-that-be.

The Russian nationalist movement had already started to disintegrate before Crimea, Verkhovsky argues. At the time, the decline was not very visible: prior to the onset of the conflict in Ukraine, the Russian ultra-rights looked, if not very strong, then at least rather promising – but they were already suffering from internal rifts. Since 2014, however, the nationalist movement has been torn apart over which side to support in the war in Ukraine. And with the subsequent increase in state repression of the ultra-rights, the whole movement has lapsed into total decline. Verkhovsky's chapter discusses the separate trajectories of the pro-Kremlin and oppositional nationalists, providing a comprehensive overview of the most prominent nationalist organisations and groups in the contemporary landscape of Russian nationalists, assessing their public activism and potential.

Then we move on to individual portraits of prominent figures on the Russian nationalist scene. Robert Horvath traces the career of Aleksandr Sevastianov. A disturbing aspect of current Russian nationalism is the existence of networks of skinheads and neo-Nazi paramilitary groups responsible for violent attacks on migrant labourers and other non-Slavic inhabitants of Russian cities. Horvath examines this phenomenon in relation to the ideology of

Russian nationalism – specifically, to the work of Sevastianov as Russia's leading apologist of ultranationalist revolutionary terror.

Horvath shows how violence has been central to Sevastianov's vision of a Russian national revolution. The chapter outlines the evolution of Sevastianov's revolutionary project. It traces Sevastianov's emerging sympathy for the militant neo-Nazi underground, his compilations of lists of 'enemies of the Russian people' in the early 2000s and his ideological tracts about a global 'racial war'. Next, Horvath examines Sevastianov's interaction with the underground, which reached its apogee during his campaign in defence of Nikita Tikhonov and Evgeniia Khasis, two Russian ultranationalists charged with murdering two prominent human rights activists. And finally, he shows how Sevastianov has recently abandoned the underground, redeploying his arguments to support the 'Russian national revolution' in southeast Ukraine and holding this up as a springboard for the transformation of Russia itself.

In the last chapter in this section, Sofia Tipaldou focuses on the extreme right fringe of Russian nationalism. She presents the Russian societal nationalist scene as a multifaceted social movement network made up of organisations with ideologies ranging from democratic to authoritarian, but with a shared self-understanding of being in opposition to the powers-that-be. Within this network, 'ethno-nationalist' organisations have taken it upon themselves to combat illegal migration, promote Russian ethnic superiority, provide sports and military training, and develop national socialist ideology.

Tipaldou highlights the career of Dmitrii Bobrov and his now-banned National Socialist Initiative (NSI). Together with its close allies, the Movement Against Illegal Immigration and the Slavic Union, the NSI formed the backbone of the *Russkie* (Russians) movement, an umbrella structure aimed at representing the major trends within contemporary Russian societal nationalism. The escalation of the conflict in Ukraine brought these consolidation efforts to a halt, however: Bobrov and the NSI supported the pro-Russian insurrection in Eastern Ukraine, while their closest allies did not. Tipaldou concludes that the conflict in Ukraine exposed the power relations and coalition potential within the Russian extreme right fringe and led to a restructuring of this – now greatly weakened – sector of the Russian nationalist movement.

In the third and final part of the book, we focus on 'identities and otherings' – more precisely, how the Russian 'in-group' is defined in the encounter with its 'others'. Up until Crimea, the growing migrant population provided the nationalists with an easily identifiable 'other', and migrantophobia was on the rise. In their chapter, Helge

Blakkisrud and Pål Kolstø examine the role that migrants – and widespread migrantophobia – play in Russian identity discourse, through the lens of the 2013 Moscow mayoral elections.

On the eve of these elections, Muscovites identified the large numbers of labour migrants in the capital as the most important campaign issue. Blakkisrud and Kolstø explore how 'the migrant issue' was addressed at the candidate level as well as how it was perceived by ordinary Muscovites. First, they trace what images of 'the migrant' the candidates presented; how they assessed the potential for integration into Russian society; and what measures they proposed for regulating the flow of new migrants. Next, drawing on survey data, Blakkisrud and Kolstø discuss to what extent campaign promises reflected the positions of the electorate. They conclude that the Moscow electoral experiment of allowing semi-competitive elections contributed to pushing the borders of what mainstream politicians saw as acceptable positions on migrants and migration policy. In the course of the campaign, incumbent mayor Sergei Sobianin hijacked the anti-migration agenda of the democratically oriented nationalists, represented by the rising star of the non-systemic opposition, Aleksei Navalnyi. As a result, the elections reinforced the idea of 'the migrant' as the new 'Other' in Russian identity discourse.

Next, Caress Schenk, continuing on the migrant theme, discusses how Putin's return for a third presidential term ushered in a period of increasingly securitised migration policy. While the Kremlin's new policies in this area may be framed as anti-migrant, Schenk questions whether they in fact reflect an overt nationalist campaign. To evaluate the extent of nationalist content in the Kremlin's migration-related rhetoric, she structures the discussion around three migration myths: 'migrants take our jobs'; 'they are culturally incompatible with the host society'; and 'they represent a security threat'. While she finds that these myths are to some degree consistent with Russian public opinion, they are not actively utilised by the Kremlin. To the contrary, Schenk concludes that Putin has eschewed a populist course, opting for a migration discourse that seeks to utilise migration for the benefit of the state. Economically, for example, migrants are framed as a tool for development rather than a threat to the native workforce. Though the Kremlin has become more active in addressing issues of national identity, including immigration, Schenk finds that rather than backing a narrowly ethno-political agenda, the state's migration discourse has remained firmly state-oriented.

In his chapter, J. Paul Goode explores the boundary between nationalism and patriotism. Whereas for a long time the Kremlin was

reluctant to engage in nationalist rhetoric, ever since the beginning of Putin's first term it has vigorously promoted a multi-ethnic vision of patriotism and patriotic education in all walks of life. The outpouring of public support for the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the subsequent Russian involvement in Donbas in Eastern Ukraine nevertheless demonstrate that such state patriotism and nationalism are not easily distinguished, and that one may easily transmute into the other.

When does patriotism turn into nationalism? Rather than treating the two as categorically distinct, Goode examines how ordinary Russians understand the meaning and implications of patriotism in their daily lives. Based on interviews and focus groups conducted in two Russian regions his analysis reveals the ease with which state patriotism can be ethnicised, such that the practical difference between patriotism and nationalism becomes a matter of political loyalty rather than ethnicity. Goode concludes that the sudden outburst of nationalism in Russia in 2014 may be understood in terms of the ethnicisation of everyday patriotic practices.

In the final chapter, Eleanor Knott addresses the lived experience of Russian identity and nationalism beyond Russia's borders. The chapter focuses on the case of Crimea, a region where the majority of residents have been assumed to identify as ethnically Russian. Using the approach of everyday nationalism, Knott examines the meanings of identifying oneself as ethnically Russian in Crimea before the 2014 annexation, to see how being Russian was articulated, experienced, negotiated and subverted, and opposed to, or combined with, being Ukrainian and/or Crimean.

The annexation of Crimea has often been explained, if not legitimised, by framing the peninsula as a region of strong Russian national identity and support for separatism. Drawing on fieldwork interviews with actors from across the political and social spectrum in the years immediately prior to the annexation, Knott criticises this framing, and argues that a more nuanced understanding of Russian identity is necessary. She problematises what it meant to be ethnically Russian in Crimea and to engage with Russia in terms of identification prior to the annexation. By doing so, she demonstrates how malleable ethnic identity can be, and how the ethnic effervescence among Russians and Russian speakers in Crimea in early 2014 can be seen as largely a product of political engineering.

* * *

The overall aim of this book is to map and examine major developments within the field of Russian nationalism in the crucial years

around the 2014 annexation of Crimea. By investigating the interrelationship between official, state-level nationalism and independent societal nationalism, and exploring the internal dynamics involving various actors, identity entrepreneurs and groupings at both levels, we aspire to provide greater clarity to the complex and multifaceted reality of Russian nationalism and national identity at the time around this watershed event.

The annexation of Crimea is likely to have long-lasting implications for the development of Russian nationalism. At the same time, as becomes abundantly clear from the case studies presented in this volume, the field of Russian nationalism is dynamic. Above we have described how the Russian state from time to time 'drains' the vessel of societal nationalism. By the same token, this means that if and when the 'state vessel' for some reason gets emptied of nationalist content, the 'society vessel' may be filled up again. Although at the time of writing (spring 2017) it is too early to conclude on any long-term trajectories, we can note some signs of reappraisal and reversal. By late 2015, the Russian authorities had already seemed to have drawn the conclusion that the potential for pro-regime mobilisation to be derived from the Ukrainian crisis and the Crimean annexation had basically run its course. Coverage of events in Ukraine gradually diminished in regime-controlled Russian media, and the topic virtually disappeared from Putin's speeches. For instance, in his one-hour state-of-the-nation address to the Russian Parliament on 3 December 2015, there was not one mention of the conflict in Donbas – in sharp contrast to the address of the previous year, when Putin referred to Ukraine no less than eighteen times (Putin 2015; Whitmore 2015). Moreover, some triggers of ethnonational mobilisation, like the labour migration issue, seem to have been suppressed rather than permanently removed, and might well reappear on the political agenda. Crimea led to a radical restructuring of the field of Russian nationalism, through a return of the state and a marginalisation of the fledgling pre-Crimea societal nationalism. However, the understanding of who constitutes the Russian nation, and what territorial expression this nation should have, will continue to be the object of contestation and reformulation.

Notes

1. See, for instance, Putin's 'Millennium Manifesto' (Putin 1999).
2. Solovei's article was later removed from the Internet, but Solovei has confirmed the content and that this remains his view. Authors' email communication with Valerii Solovei, 18 December 2015.

3. The dichotomisation of national identity in a French 'civic' and German 'ethnic' model has drawn considerable criticism for its oversimplification of how nation-building processes unfold in the real world (Yack 1996; Kuzio 2002). However, in a post-Soviet Russian context, it makes sense to use the dichotomy as a prism through which to view and understand the Russian nation-building process, as the Russian authorities initially opted for emulating the Soviet practice of simultaneously promoting a civic state identity *and* ethnicising individual identity. To avoid giving the impression that a 'civic' identity is ethnically neutral, however, we refer to what constitutes the main object of reference for the nationalists: *territory* or *group*: hence the use of 'state-oriented' and 'ethnically oriented' in the two-by-two matrix.
4. The *rossiiskii* nation project was soon shelved, however (see Yuri Teper in this volume).

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