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Doctoral Dissertation

**Russia's Nationalist-Patriotic Opposition: The Shifting Politics of
Right-Wing Contention in Post-Communist Transition**

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List of Abbreviations

APN	Political News Agency (<i>Agenstvo Politicheskikh Novostei</i>)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation (<i>Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii</i>)
DPNI	Movement Against Illegal Immigration (<i>Dvizhenie Protiv Nelegal'noi Immigratsii</i>)
DPNI-RGO	DPNI-Russian Civil Society (<i>DPNI-Russkoe Grazhdanskoe Obshchestvo</i>)
ESM	Eurasian Youth Union (<i>Evraziiskii Soyuz Molodezhi</i>)
GCD RNS	National (People's) Socialist Initiative (<i>Natsional'naya (Narodnaya) Sotsialisticheskaya Initsiativa</i>)
INS	National Strategy Institute (<i>Instituta Natsional'noi Strategii</i>)
KRO	Congress of Russian Communities (<i>Kongress Russkikh Obshchin</i>)
LOM	League of Moscow's Self-Defense (<i>Liga Oborony Moskvy</i>)
LDPR	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (<i>Liberal'no-Demokraticeskaya Partiya Rossii</i>)
LZND	League for the Protection of National Heritage (<i>Liga Zashchity Natsional'nogo Dostoyaniya</i>)
MGO VOOPiK	Moscow City Branch of All-Russian Society for the Protection of Monuments of History and Culture
NAROD	National Russian Liberation Movement (<i>Natsiona'noe Russkoe Osvoboditel'noe Dvizhenie</i>)
NBP	National-Bolshevik Party (<i>Natsional-Bol'shevistskaya Partiya</i>)
ND	National Democrats (<i>Natsional'nye Demokraty</i>)
NDA	National Democratic Alliance (<i>Natsional-Demokraticeskii Alians</i>)
NDP	National-Democratic Party (<i>Natsional-Demokraticeskaya Partiya</i>)
NDPR	National Sovereign Party of Russia (<i>Natsional'no-Derzhavnaya Partiya Rossii</i>)
NDSM	People's-Democratic Union of the Youth (<i>Narodno-Demokraticeskii Soyuz Molodezhi</i>), youth wing of RNDS
NSI	National (People's) Socialist Initiative (<i>Natsionalnaya (Narodnaya) Sotsialisticheskaya Initsiativa</i>)
NSO	National Socialist Society (<i>Natsional-Sosialisticheskoe Obshchetsvo</i>)
OGF	United Civil Front (<i>Ob'edinennyi Grazhdanskii Front</i>)
OOPD RNE	All- Russian Public Patriotic Movement Russian National Union (<i>Obshcherossiiskoe Obshchestvennoe Patriochiskoe Dvizhenie Russkoe Natsional'noe Edinstvo</i>), transformation of Barkashov's RNE or simply RNE.
PZPK 'Rus'	Party for the Defense of the Russian Constitution 'Rus' (<i>Patriya Zashchity Rossiiskoi Konstitutsii 'Rus'</i>)
RFO	(Russian Liberation Front Memory (<i>Russkii Front Osvobozhdeniya Pamyat'</i>)

Pamyat'

RGS	Russian Civil Union (<i>Russki Grazhdanskii Soyuz</i>)
RID	Russian Imperial Movement (<i>Russkoe Imperskoe Dvizhenie</i>)
RNBF	Russian National–Bolshevik Front (<i>Russkii National–Bol'shevistskii Front</i>)
RND	Russian National Movement (<i>Russkoe Natsional'noe Dvizhenie</i>)
RNDS	Russian People's-Democratic Union (<i>Rossiiskii Narodno-Demokraticeskii Soyuz</i>)
RNE	Russian National Unity (<i>Russkoe Natsional'noe Edinstvo</i>)
RNPTS	Russian National-Patriotic Center (<i>Russkii Natsional'no-Patrioticheskii Tsentr</i>)
RNS	Russian National Council (<i>Russkii Natsional'nyi Sobor</i>)
RNSRP	Russian National-Socialist Worker's Party (<i>Russkaya Natsional-Sotsialisticheskaya Rabochaya Partiya</i>)
RO	Russian Image (<i>Russkii Obraz</i>)
ROD	ROD: Russian People's Movement (<i>Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie</i>)
RONs	Russia Free Our Forces (<i>Rossiia Osvoboditsya Hashimi Silami</i>), former Russian Nation-wide Union (<i>Russkoe Obshchenatsional'nogo Soyuza</i>)
RPP	Russian Patriotic Party (<i>Russkaya Patrioticheskaya Partiya</i>)
RV	Russian Renaissance (<i>Russkoe Vozrozhdenie</i>)
SRN	Union of the Russian People (<i>Soyuz Russkogo Naroda</i>)
SS	Slavic Union (<i>Slavyanskii Soyuz</i>)

Abstract

My **PhD dissertation** deals with the factors that influence the emergence of contemporary far right organizations in Russia and underlines the key role of leadership in those organizations. The research questions addressed in my research are: To what extent does the Russian radical right movement vary over time? What accounts for the internal transformation (the emergence and further evolution) of radical right organizations in Russia?

The central **outcome variable** of my study are the emergence and organizational change of the Russian radical right movement that has to do with the why, when, and how mobilizing structures arise and how they change their form, strategy, discourse, and model. The **population** of my study is the broader radical right movement in Russia, which I will call “nationalist-patriotic opposition” and define as: the wide spectrum of extra-parliamentarian nationalist organizations (parties, movements, and milieus), as well as their allies within the Duma. I used a number of **data-gathering methods** that include participant observation, semi-structured interviewing (key informant interviews), the use of indigenously generated documents by social movement organizations, newspaper articles, and archival research.

My study uses an **interdisciplinary approach** that combines different disciplines (political science, sociology, and area studies) and different methods based on extensive fieldwork (key-informant semi-structured interviewing, participant observation, and archival research) and aims to forge a bridge between political science and sociology literature on this topic. It addresses the analytical challenge of identifying circumstances that include both structural and cultural processes and combine them with an agent-based approach in order to understand movement emergence and development. It is based on the ongoing effort of merging nationalism and social movement theories in order to contribute to the construction of a more solid theory of radical right protest.

My **argument** is that Russia's contemporary radical right organizations have changed their form, strategy, discourse, and model through an adaptation process under the influence of new socioeconomic cleavages (along the lines of nation-state/ nationless confederacy, civic/ blood citizenship, and parliamentarian/ extra-parliamentarian political organizations), the government's response towards these cleavages (particularly through migration policy), and opportunities the regime or other external factors (e.g. technology) opens or closes to them. Opportunities are shaped by the structural context which includes cultural, social, and political elements. The mobilization and outcomes of the nationalist-patriotic movement may feed back into both movement structures and context structures. During this process, the role of leadership is crucial, for capitalizing on the existing opportunities, for constructing a message attractive to the public, and for transforming their organizational forms and structures in a way that will enable them to survive and to accomplish their goals.

Evidence from interviews with leaders of nationalist-patriotic movements shows that their agency is fundamental for the movements' creation and survival. My study makes a series of **conceptual contributions**, including the introduction of a broader definition of the radical right that accounts for the complex relations that exist within and among the organizations that comprise it and their interaction with opposing organizations; the introduction of the term “technological opportunity structures”; and the disentanglement of the existent form of the National-Bolshevik Party- The Other Russia- from the nationalist-patriotic front.

The present research **contributes** to obtaining more insight into the patterns and dynamics of right-wing radicalism in transitional settings, especially non-democratic ones. The case study of Russia seeks to contribute to the debate in social science on the emergence and development of radical right wing movements about a broader category of similar cases that undergo rapid systemic change. It has further **implications** for our understanding of the role of nationalist organizations in democratic transition; on the understanding of similar movements in other transitional settings, e.g.. Ukraine, or in Western non-transitional settings with similar characteristics, e.g. Southern European economic crisis environments; and for the better understanding of pressures in domestic policy that may impact governmental decision-making in a series of issues, e.g. foreign policy.

Abstract (en castellano)

Mi tesis doctoral trata los factores que influyen la aparición de organizaciones de extrema derecha contemporáneas en Rusia y subraya el papel clave de liderazgo en dichas organizaciones. Las preguntas de investigación son: ¿Hasta que punto ha cambiado el movimiento de derecha radical ruso a lo largo del tiempo? ¿Qué factores son responsables de la transformación interna (la aparición y la evolución) del movimiento de derecha radical en Rusia?

Las variables dependientes centrales de mi estudio son el surgimiento y el cambio de los modelos organizativos de la derecha radical rusa y tienen que ver con el por qué, el cuándo y el cómo emergen nuevas estructuras movilizadoras y como cambian su forma, sus estrategias, discursos, y modelos. El objeto de mi estudio es el movimiento nacional-patriota ruso, lo cual llamaré "oposición nacionalista-patriota" y definiré como: el amplio espectro de organizaciones nacionalistas extra-parlamentarias (partidos, movimientos y milieus), así como sus aliados dentro de la Duma. Utilicé una serie de métodos de recolección de datos que incluyen la observación participante, entrevistas semiestructuradas (entrevistas a informantes claves), el uso de documentos generados por los movimientos bajo investigación, artículos de prensa e investigación de archivos.

Mi estudio utiliza un enfoque interdisciplinario que combina diferentes disciplinas (ciencia política, sociología, economía) y diferentes métodos, y su objetivo es forjar un puente entre la documentación existente de ciencia política y de sociología sobre el fenómeno de la derecha radical. Queriendo entender el surgimiento y evolución de los movimientos, mi tesis aborda el desafío analítico de identificar las circunstancias que incluyen procesos estructurales y culturales y los combina con un enfoque basado en la actividad humana. Se basa en el esfuerzo continuo de fusionar las teorías de nacionalismo y de los movimientos sociales con el fin de contribuir a la construcción de una teoría más sólida sobre la protesta de los movimientos de la derecha radical.

Mi argumento es que las organizaciones rusas de derecha radical contemporáneas cambian su forma, la estrategia, el discurso y el modelo a través de un proceso de adaptación basado en nuevas divisiones socioeconómicas (en la línea de estado-nación/ confederación sin la dominancia de una nación, cívica ciudadanía basada en derechos cívicos/ en sangre, y organizaciones políticas parlamentarias/ extra-parlamentarias), en la respuesta del gobierno hacia estas divisiones (en particular a través de la política de migración), y en las oportunidades que el régimen u otros factores externos (por ejemplo la tecnología) se abre o se cierra a ellos. Las oportunidades están determinadas por el contexto estructural que incluye elementos culturales, sociales y políticos. La movilización y los resultados del movimiento nacionalista-patriota pueden alimentar de nuevo en ambas estructuras de movimiento y estructuras de contexto. Durante este proceso, el papel del liderazgo es crucial, para capitalizar las oportunidades existentes, para construir una atracción al mensaje público de que es capaz de atraer el apoyo del público, y para transformar sus formas y estructuras organizativas de una manera que les permita sobrevivir y lograr sus objetivos.

La realización de las entrevistas con líderes de los movimientos nacionalistas patriotas muestra que su actividad es fundamental para la creación y supervivencia de los movimientos. Mi estudio elabora una serie de movimientos conceptuales, incluyendo la introducción de una definición más amplia de la derecha radical que toma en cuenta las complejas relaciones que existen dentro y entre las organizaciones que la componen y su interacción con las organizaciones de oposición; la introducción del término estructuras de oportunidades tecnológicas; y la evolución del partido La Otra Rusia (anterior Partido Nacional-Bolchevique) del frente nacional-patriota.

La investigación presente contribuye a la obtención de una visión más clara de los patrones y la dinámica de la derecha radical en contextos de transición, especialmente en los no-democráticos. El caso de estudio de Rusia se integra en el debate de las ciencias sociales enfocado en la aparición y el desarrollo de los movimientos de extrema derecha y pretende aportar herramientas para entender mejor casos similares que atraviesan un cambio sistémico rápido. Cuenta con implicaciones más amplias sobre el papel de las organizaciones nacionalistas en la transición democrática; el entendimiento de los movimientos similares en otros entornos de transición, como en Ucrania, o en contextos occidentales con características similares, por ejemplo los entornos de crisis económica del sur de Europa; y la mejor comprensión de presiones en la política interna que puedan afectar la toma de decisiones gubernamentales en una serie de cuestiones, como podría ser en la política exterior.

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1. Introduction

1.1. *The puzzle*

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 1993 legislative election produced a negative surprise for pro-radical reform advocates of Russia's Choice (15.5 percent) and designated the “obstreperous” Liberal'no-Demokraticeskaya Partiya Rossii (Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia – LDPR)¹ of Vladimir Zhirinovskii as the second biggest force with nearly 23 percent of the vote (Colton 1998: 23; McFaul 1998: 115). LDPR together with Gennadii Zyuganov's Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Communist Party of the Russian Federation – CPRF) received together almost 35 percent of the total vote, translated in 135 of 450 seats in the Duma. Both parties' rhetoric is of ultranationalist and neo-imperialist inspiration (Casals 2003:225), and even if LDPR has been labelled as radical right party (Tolz 1997:177) and CPRF as “occasionally extremist” (Tolz 2003: 260) or as “moderate national patriotic party” (Verkhovsky 2000:707), both parties form part of a broader movement of “organized intolerance” in Post-Soviet Russia (Hanson&Williams 1999:260) comprised by a variety of organizations of ultranationalist or radical right orientation.

Vladimir Putin's rise in power in 2000 coincides with an interesting turn in the radical right scene: Many of the organizations of the 1990s disappear or transform radically, whereas new ones emerge. Previous research has shown that the “new” radical right groups of the 2000s differ from the “old” radical right of the 1990s in terms of organizational features (increased use of new communication strategies), strategic choice features (new forms of connecting violent perpetrators with formal organizations), their action versus theory orientation, and the degree of public visibility they enjoy (Varga 2008). Against this backdrop, the research questions of this thesis are: 1) What has been the nature of radical right mobilization since the 1990s and how does it vary over time? and 2) What accounts for within-movement transformation of the radical right movement in Russia and what led to the shift towards “preferences for change” over the course of the last two decades amongst right wing thinkers and newcomers?

¹ Russian is transliterated in this research using the adapted BGN/PCGN system adopted by the academic journal Europe-Asia Studies. The difference with BGN/PCGN system is that the adapted system uses the letter “E” instead of “É” and the letter “I” instead of “Y”. Exceptions are made for names that widely appear in English-language media (common spellings are employed, e.g. Dmitry Medvedev not Dmitrii Medvedev) and for authors of English-language publications (the spelling of people themselves is preferred, e.g. Alexander Verkhovsky instead of Aleksandr Verkhovskii).

Studies on the radical right in Eastern Europe have underlined the existence of new social cleavages and rely on structural explanations in order to explain the rise of the radical right, highlighting the importance of the institutional context, the electoral system, and new social cleavages (Kitschelt 1995a, 1995b; Pippa Norris 2005: 80), the volatility of the electorates, the enormous social and economic upheavals, and the discrediting of the communists that strengthened the rise of movements diametrically opposed (Szayna 1997: 112; 143). Another set of explanations in the comparative analysis of the radical right in Central and Eastern Europe relies on the role of legacies and on historical analogies and sees the transformation process after 1989, either as a ‘return of history’ or as a ‘return to Europe’, or both (Held 1996; Hockenos 1993; Kopecký & Mudde 2003; Minkenberg 2002; Mudde 2005a; Shafir 2008; Ramet 1999). Closely related to this approach is the perception of right-wing radicalism in Eastern Europe as *sui generis*, “inherently shaped by the historical forces of state socialism and the transformation process”, a genuinely different variant from its Western equivalent (Minkenberg 2009; 2002:355).

The role of political opportunity structures is continuously gaining ground in the field of radical right politics in Western contexts (Mudde 2007, 232; Rydgren 2005; Minkenberg 1998; Kitschelt & McGann 1995) and has already been applied in the Russian case (Varga 2008). This ‘new wave’ of research in Russia includes political opportunity structures (Varga 2008), narrative shifts (Sokolov 2008), social network theories, and new media theories (Zuev 2010, 2011) for explaining radical right mobilization, but also further aspects of the radical right environment, i.e. music (Pierobon 2011) and the skinhead subculture (Shnirel’man 2011; Pilkington 2010; Pilkington et al. 2013).

My argument builds upon the literature on political opportunity structures to construct a new account for organizational change of radical right movements. It applies to countries that have basic liberal requisites, such as freedom of speech, constitutional rights for assembly, and political rights. Another important scope condition of my argument is that the country should have a “glorious past” (true or fictitious) to draw upon national pride, territory claims, and institutions which promote (or maintain) the national identity, i.e. schools, religious institutions. Given these background conditions, I argue that fluctuations in the salience of socio-economic cleavages and the degree of respect for those basic liberal requisites and of foreigners' inclusion by the government, account for the different frames of the “enemy” as well as the likelihood of the political message of these radical groups succeeding. A crucial role in this process is that of leadership, which may or may not be able to mobilize support and capitalize on the available opportunities.

At the same time, studies on Russian radical right parties have become more scarce in the past decade. This is probably due to the fact that key radical right politicians were unable to mobilize as much electoral support as they did in the 1990s. My study aims to address the analytical challenge of identifying circumstances that include both structural and cultural processes and combine them with an agent-based approach in order to understand movement emergence and development. It is based on the ongoing effort of merging nationalism and social movement theories in order to contribute to the construction of a more solid theory of radical right protest. It furthers our knowledge by applying the ongoing research to a rapidly changing political environment and by adding realism to the study of radical right movements through interviews with their leaders. Finally, it addresses political science literature on the role of democracy and civil society in transitional settings.

1.2. The outcome variables: emergence and organizational change of the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement

Social movement families or social movements are comprised by different and sometimes varying social movement organizations (SMOs) (McCarthy & Zald 1977) or “challengers” (Gamson 1990). Scholars proceeded to the theoretical distinction between the two terms for being able to link the literature developed by political scientists on the subject of interest groups with the study of SMOs. Following this distinction, a Social Movement Organization (SMO) is “a complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals” (McCarthy & Zald 1977:1218). SMOs differ from other types of formal organizations in that they mobilize their followers for collective action with a political goal (Kriesi 1996: 153).

Accordingly, the Russian radical right movement is composed by a plethora of SMOs, which base their action on “dense social network and connective structures”, draw on “consensual and action-oriented cultural frames”, and can “sustain these actions in conflict with powerful opponents” (Tarrow 1998: 10). The Russian radical right social movement is conceptualized in this research as “a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Diani 1992, 13).

The central outcome variables of my study are the emergence and organizational change of the Russian “nationalist-patriotic movement” (for the definition of the “nationalist-patriotic movement see section 1.3.2.). Movement emergence has to do with the origins of social movements: the why, when, and how a movement arises. Resource mobilization theory sees movement emergence as a result of the resources and the coordination ability of SMOs, whereas the political process model connects it to expanding political opportunities (Soule et al. 1999: 239 – 240; McAdam et al. 1996: 7-12). Movement emergence focuses on mobilizing structures which include “both formal movement organizations and the social networks of everyday life” (McAdam et al. 2001: 14).

The origins of SMOs is a different concept from their mobilization; the latter takes place throughout episodes of contention² and can even be reversed in demobilization instances (McAdam et al. 2001: 50-51). Social movement organizations mobilize the public in order to support its goals by material or non-material means. Mobilization always contains two components: the process through which a social movement tries to obtain support for its viewpoints (consensus mobilization) and the process by which an organization in a social movement calls up on people to participate (action mobilization) (Klandermans 1984: 586). Mobilization is a process that is connected to various interacting mechanisms, such as social change, attribution of opportunity and threat, social appropriation, framing, and that displays innovative forms of collective action (McAdam et al. 2001: 28). Furthermore, mobilization is not isolated, “it intersects with other mechanisms and processes – such as creation and transformation of actors, their certification or decertification, repression, radicalization, and the diffusion of contention to new sites and actors in complex trajectories of contention” (McAdam et al. 2001:13).

Organizational change, as I will be using it in this research, is similar to what Kriesi defines as “organizational development”³ and can be observed in the dimensions of movement structures (or organizational models), their patterns of development (or evolution), and the organizational forms of SMOs. The dimensions of movement structures depend on the degree of organization, power distribution, and expected commitment from its members and vary from friendship networks,

² Episodes are unique sequences of alterations in relations among connected elements (McAdam *et al.* 2001: 85) and always involve two or more processes, defined as unique sequences of alterations in relations among connected elements (McAdam *et al.* 2001: 28).

³ Kriesi (1996: 154) uses the word “organizational development” to refer to all levels of a social movement's organizational structures (including SMOs and substructures of SMOs) and analyzes them through the following parameters: organizational growth and decline, the internal organizational structuration, the external organizational structuration, and goal orientations and action repertoires.

churches and unions to activist networks and SMOs (McCarthy 1996:141-145; Della Porta and Diani 1999: 163). The patterns of development of SMOs also vary: they may become institutionalized (political parties or interest groups), commercial (involved in the market), radical (involved in violent forms of actions), or inward (resembling religious sects). Finally, organizational form is a strategic choice made by leaders and depends on the SMO's goals, resources, and external to the movement developments, like technological development and institutional actors (either hostile or friendly). Organizational goals vary depending on each movement's mobilization phase (Della Porta and Diani 1999: 137-164).

Collective actors, in their effort to adopt to external conditions, are adapting new or newly combined uses of mobilization structures or invent new mobilizing structures out of them (what McCarthy calls the process of “adopting, adapting, and inventing”, 1996: 147). The emergence and further development of movement structures is shaped by the overall context structure (cultural, social, and political), the conjunctural structure, and within-movement factors (ideology, central themes, leadership) (Rucht 1996: 188-191). How these mobilizing structures change their form, strategy, discourse, and model; how activists choose them, combine them, and adapt them; and how they can change movements and movement circle trajectories (McCarthy 1996:141-145) forms part of what I understand as organizational change.

1.3. The Argument

My argument is that Russia's contemporary radical right organizations emerge and change through an adaptation process which is influenced of new socioeconomic cleavages (along the lines of nation-state/ nationless confederacy, civic/ blood citizenship, and parliamentarian/ extra-parliamentarian political organizations), of the government's response towards these cleavages (particularly through migration policy), and of opportunities the regime or other external factors (e.g. technology) opens or closes to them. Opportunities are shaped by the structural context which includes cultural, social, and political elements. The mobilization and outcomes of the nationalist-patriotic movement may feed back into both movement structures and context structures. During this process, the role of leadership is crucial, for capitalizing on the existing opportunities, for constructing an attractive to the public message that is able to draw public support, and for transforming their organizational forms and structures in a way that will enable them to survive and to accomplish their goals.

In the case of Russia, the massive influx of immigrants,⁴ mainly from Central Asia and the Caucasus, in combination with one of the highest levels of wealth inequality, the ongoing internal conflict in Chechnya, and the growing demographic problem account for the identification of non-Slavic, non-Russian people, especially the darker-skinned people of Central Asian origin (“chornii”), as the “enemy”. As a result, radical right movement organizations of the 2000s shifted their frame-making from the external enemy (USA, Jews) to the internal one (Caucasians, people from the former CIS countries), as well as the focus of their strategies (against illegal immigration, against state subventions for the Caucasian republics).

Furthermore, Vladimir Putin's anti-liberal and anti-democratic political reforms, i.e. destruction of free media; state-controlled attack on civil society and NGOs; penalization of all forms of opposition and dissent (from Pussy Riot to gay rights)⁵ to the ruling system and the values it promotes; control of parliamentary opposition; obstacles to electoral competition, contracts political opportunities for dissident organizations and makes them find alternative forms and structures (multiple leadership, labor-division); a strategic decision that lies above-all to each organization's leadership. of each organization are above-all charged with this strategic decision.

At the same time, the government created patriotic youth movements that may benefit existing nationalist-patriotic organizations in terms of resources and popularity among the youths. The government has also been promoting ideas of patriotism, morality, neo-imperialism, xenophobia, opening thus discursive opportunities for the main claims of nationalist-patriotic organizations—that stand close to such values—to gain more visibility, resonance, and legitimacy. Finally, the use of Internet has facilitated nationalist-patriotic organizations to gain integrity, efficiency, visibility, and to link with the electorate, as well as to further develop their structure into a network.

My argument aims to show how the interplay of the three major factors culture, structure, and agency, can contribute to our understanding of radical right movements' emergence, strategic choices, and further development up to the point to become political parties.

⁴ Indicative, the year with the maximum inflow, 1994, Russia received more than one million immigrants, a number that was, nevertheless, was reduced twice by 1996 (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 31). This accounts for registered migration, since the number of irregular migrants are speculative. A 2004 study by Y. Tiurikanova shows that only 10 percent of the total of migrants was regular in Russia (ILO 2004:66 [Ivakhnyuk 2009:45]).

⁵ For a thorough analysis of Russia's contemporary protest movement see Gabowitsch 2013.

1.3.1. Definition of the radical right in the existing literature

The definition of the 'radical right' has been under extensive scholarly debate and has produced multiple definitions, which have brought about confusing academic uses (Klandermans & Mayer 2006: 4). By the middle of the 1990s, Cas Mudde (1996) found 28 competing definitions and 58 different ideological dimensions of the contemporary extreme right in the literature. The radical right has been considered one 'style of thought' of the 'right', together with the reactionary right, the moderate right, the extreme right and the new right⁶ (Eatwell and O'Sullivan 1989:63).

The term 'right' can be distinguished in three different cultural-ideological traditions. The first one is based on British conservatism and Edmund Burke's thinking, it emphasizes order and tradition while accepting modernity. Specifically, this definition stresses the need for authority, law and religion, the 'necessity' of hierarchical societal organization and the importance of family and natural community bonds. Post-1980s neo-conservatism belongs to right wing democratic ideology and is clearly distinguished from anti-democratic thinking (Ignazi 2003:14).

The second tradition steams from the German conservatism of the early nineteenth century and is influenced by Karl Mannheim. Its basic features are backward looking, pragmatism, anti-egalitarianism, and opposition to market capitalist property rights. It is counter-revolutionary, rejects modernity and aims at recasting society according to nature (Ignazi 2003:15).

The third tradition is a new phenomenon of the twentieth century: Fascism.⁷ Roger Griffin's influential study on fascism defines it as a "genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic⁸ form of populist ultra-nationalism"⁹ (Griffin 1991:26). Populist ultra-nationalism rejects the principles of absolutism and of pluralist representative government, repudiates 'traditional' and 'legal/rational' forms of politics with 'charismatic' leaders,

⁶ According to Ignazi, the new right refers to a cultural movement of some conservative think tanks and publishing enterprises. It is anti-statist and pro-liberal, whereas its French version, the *Nouvelle Droite*, is anti-statist and anti-liberal, therefore misleading as it does not convey extremist anti-system ideas (Ignazi 2003:28ff).

⁷ The affiliation of some fascist and neo-fascist fringes with the Left makes it complicated to comprise it with the Right. The scholarly debate on the nature of fascism, its taxonomy on the Right-Left axis and the degree of its revolutionism is broad and extends beyond the scope of this research.

⁸ The term palingenetic refers to a 'new birth' occurring after a period of perceived decadence (Griffin 1991:36).

⁹ According to Anthony Smith (2001: 9), nationalism is an ideology that places the nation at the centre of its concerns and seeks to promote its well-being. This is comprised of three goals: national autonomy, national unity and national identity. For a nationalist, the nation cannot survive without attaining all three. Smith suggests an inductive working definition of nationalism: "An ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'".

tends to be associated with a nation¹⁰ as a ‘higher’ racial, historical, spiritual or organic reality, and this nation is considered as a natural order by its members, who have to protect it from a number of dangers, ranging from immigration and miscegenation to ‘modern society’s values’ (Griffin 1991:37). The palingenetic ultra-nationalism defines a political energy “whose mobilizing vision is that of the national community rising phoenix-like after a period of encroaching decadence which all but destroyed it” (Griffin 1991:38). To sum up, the fascist tradition is apprehensive of civilization and aspires to the construction of a utopian community where spiritual values overcome material interests (Ignazi 2003:18).

The term ‘radical’ originates from the supporters of the French Revolution, the ‘left’, and is still used by left-wing groups or by progressive liberal groups (Mudde 2007:24). The term ‘right-wing radicalism’ is often used interchangeably with the term ‘right-wing extremism’, not without raising subsequent criticism. Piero Ignazi (2003: 28) for instance, considers the term ‘extreme right’ to be more advantageous than the term ‘radical right’, because the latter is identified through individuals’ personality traits (and not as a set of political values), it describes a very limited sector due to its use for movements and groups of the counter-revolutionary anti-modern tradition that even adopt violent means, and it is ambiguous because of its different use in the American and German tradition (Mudde 2000:12).

Regarding this last point, in the American tradition the term ‘radical right’ is commonly used for “a wide variety of groups and small political parties that rekindled a special American tradition of right-wing radicalism” (Sprinzak 1991:10). These parties, based on the old school of nativism, populism, and hostility to central government, have developed a new post-World War II combination of “ultranationalism and anti-communism, Christian fundamentalism, militaristic orientation, and anti-alien sentiment” (Sprinzak 1991:10). “The radical right can include movements that are conspiratory but not race-based, extreme right as those committed to white/Aryan supremacy, and far right as including both radical and extreme rightists as well as ultranationalists” (Blee & Creasap 2010 [Durham 2000]).

‘Nativism’, in particular, is a central term in our study and can be defined as “an ideology, which

¹⁰ Nation is “a named human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, a common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members”. It differs from an ethnic that shares the three first characteristics, but does not necessarily occupy the homeland, has one or more elements of shared culture and a measure of solidarity among the elites (Smith 2001: 13).

holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde 2007:19). Nativism is closely related with the idea that non-native people are a threat to the state’s homogeneity; therefore it includes a combination of nationalism and xenophobia (Mudde 2007: 22).

‘Populism’ is an ideology, which postulates that society is divided between “the pure people” and “the corrupted elite”. For the populists, politics exists to express the people’s general will, which is more important than human rights or constitutional guarantees. It is “a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the ‘pure people’ versus the ‘corrupt elite’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people (Mudde 2007: 23). Hans-Georg Betz describes radical right parties as populist “in their unscrupulous use and instrumentalization of diffuse public sentiments of anxiety and disenchantment and their appeal to the common man and his allegedly superior common sense (Betz 1994:4). Herbert Kitschelt describes populist antistatism, which differs from the New Radical Right, and can be electoral profitable for political entrepreneurs, as “primarily directed against ‘big government’ and the ‘political class’ that dominates a country’s politics through the conventional parties, but to a much lesser extent against the libertarian themes of multiculturalism, environmentalism, gender liberation and direct political participation” (Kitschelt & McGann 1997: 21).

In the German tradition the distinctive point between radicalism and extremism is their stance vis-à-vis democracy, and both terms can be used for the right-wing and for the left-wing. The difference between radicalism and extremism, according to the official definition of the German state, is that radicalism is a radical critique on the constitutional order without any anti-democratic meaning, whereas extremism is anti-democratic, anti-liberal and anti-constitutional (Ignazi 2003:28). Of a different connotation are the terms ‘neo-Nazism’ and ‘neo-Fascism’. They are used for formations, whose ideological influence is historical National Socialism or Fascism and whose objective is the restoration of the Third Reich or the Italian Social Republic respectively (Mudde 2000a:12).

The ideological features used in the bibliography for the definition of the radical right or the extreme right vary considerably. In what follows I will only present a few of the existing definitions, on which I base my understanding of the radical right in Russia. The criteria for the

organizations' categorization may vary in quantity, from one, e.g. xenophobia (Fennema 1997) to ten, e.g. nationalism, ethnocentrism, anti-communism, anti-parliamentarism, anti-pluralism, militarism, law and order thinking, a demand for a strong political leader, anti-Americanism, and cultural pessimism (Falter & Schumann 1988).

Seymour M. Lipset and Earl Raab (1970) give a “relativist” definition for extremism and use it to describe someone who is going beyond the limits of the normative procedures which define the democratic political process. Extremism is for them a “self-serving term” (Klandermans & Mayer 2006: 4). What matters are procedures, not issues; it may mean going to the poles of the ideological scale or embracing authoritarianism and totalitarianism.

For Hans-Georg Betz (1994:4) radical right-wing populist parties are radical “in their rejection of the established socio-cultural and socio-political system and their advocacy of individual achievement, a free market, and a drastic reduction of the role of the state without, however, openly questioning the legitimacy of democracy in general”. They are right-wing, because they reject individual and social equality, because they oppose the social integration of marginalized groups and because they are xenophobic or even racist and anti-Semite.

Piero Ignazi combines spatial with ideological definitions. He argues that the “extreme right denotes the issues and organizations that are close to one extreme of the political spectrum”, meaning the right of the left-right continuum, and “the extremeness is related to ‘anti-system’ value sets” (Ignazi 2003:30; 1997). These ‘anti-system’ value sets, often intertwined with anti-democratic values, are the key feature of the new extreme right, while the old extreme right was characterized by fascism (Ignazi 1997).

Michael Minkenberg (1998:33) defines the radical right as “a political ideology¹¹ based on a myth in the form of a populist and romantic ultra-nationalism that tendentially opposes liberal democracy and its basic values of liberty and freedom, as well as the categories of individualism and universalism”. Characteristic of radical right thinking is the emphasis on social homogeneity, and therefore they explicitly support the creation of a homogenous nation with priority over individuals and their civil rights. The national myth is the idea of an individual’s belonging to a nation, defined by certain ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural and political criteria (Beichelt/

¹¹ Ideologies are conceived as “mass belief systems”, which means “a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence (Minkenberg 1998:32).

Minkenberg 2002:249-250).

Sabrina Ramet (1999: 13) uses the term radical right interchangeably with the terms ‘ultraright’ and ‘extreme right’ for twentieth-century incarnations of “organized intolerance”: the refusal to allow the right of existence of alternative ideas. The intolerance of ‘the Right’ gives emphasis to the restoration and imposition of supposedly traditional values that are based on a fictional reconstruction of the past (Ramet 1999:4). This intolerance manifests as a war against society itself and legitimizes violence against designated “outsiders” (Ramet 1999:13). The radical right is also characterized by hostility to popular sovereignty and advocacy of authoritarianism¹² based on populism, the obsession with conspiracies, and the authoritarian equation of the community with the Nation (Ramet 1999: 15-17).

Betz and Johnson (2004: 312) use the term ‘radical right parties’ for parties that use a radical language to confront their opponents and have a radical political project. Cas Mudde (2007:26) defines the term ‘radical’ as opposition to fundamental values of liberal democracy and the term ‘right’ as the belief in a natural order with inequalities.

A broader definition of the ‘far right’ or the ‘extreme right wing’ includes less sophisticated exclusionary groups on the basis of ethnic and racial principles, from ultranationalist intellectual circles to skinheads, “those informal or formal (legally established) groups that demand the exclusion of other individuals from public life, civil rights or national territory on ‘the basis of ascribed differences between human beings’ [Umland 2005:35]” (Varga 2008:562ff.). These differences vary from physical characteristics to membership in an ethnic or religious group (Varga 2008:563).

There are two critiques concerning the people who are involved in the radical right, either voting for radical right parties or participating actively. First of all, that they are considered a homogeneous population. Klandermans and Mayer (2006:3) challenge this view by underlining the difference between radical right voters and activists. By activists they mean “individuals who are not only members but active participants in a movement” that do not only cast a ballot for radical right parties, but are deeply committed (Klandermans & Mayer 2006: 3; Klandermans 1997). This

¹² Authoritarianism is “the belief in a strictly ordered society in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely”. This definition includes law and order and “punitive conventional moralism” (Smith 1967: vi) and although it does not necessarily mean an antidemocratic attitude, neither does it exclude such an option (Mudde 2007: 23).

suggests that extreme right activists may have different profiles and motivations than other sympathizers.

Second, this non-homogeneous population is not cut-off from its broader environment. There are instances of multiple memberships for example, not only with other radical right organizations, but also with different kind of groups, like football groups. Neither is it clear whether right-wing beliefs are the effect or the result of right-wing activity: if people joined right-wing movements for ideological reasons, or if they adopted right-wing ideology taking part in right-wing activity (see more in Blee & Creasap 2010). Therefore, the radical right should not be studied separately from both other movement organizations and the wider societal context.

Activists studied by Klandermans & Mayer (2006: 7) were not only active in political parties. Their mobilization reached a broader scope that takes the form of a social movement in Sidney Tarrow's terms (1998: 3): “collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities”. Therefore, the study on the participation of radical right organizations shall consider the people involved in the process of the radical right party formation and development as movement activists, their organizations as movement organizations, and their actions as a cycle in a longer trajectory (Klandermans & Mayer 2006: 7). A social movement organization (SMO) is “a complex, or formal, organization which identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement these goals” (McCarthy & Zald 1977: 1218).

1.3.2. From the radical right to the “nationalist-patriotic opposition”

My understanding on the phenomenon under study in Russia builds upon sociological insights from social movement networks and the classic agenda of radical right studies, in particular Cas Mudde's (2007) core ideological features for the populist radical right, namely nativism, authoritarianism, and populism as defined above. In my study I use the term radical right, far right and ultra-nationalist interchangeably.

I apply the term “nationalist-patriotic opposition” for the phenomenon under study that shares many features with the radical right. The “nationalist-patriotic opposition” in Russia represents the wide spectrum of extra-parliamentarian nationalist organizations (parties, movement organizations, and

milieus), as well as their allies within the Duma. I will use this definition in my study for two reasons. First, it is the term that Russian nationalist activists use to describe their own organizations.¹³ Second, because it is a broad definition that includes a wide variety of ideological and organizational styles.

These organizations vary substantially in the level of authoritarianism, ranging from democratic to authoritarian groups. Still, the organizations that make up the nationalist-patriotic opposition have two things in common. First, they consider themselves to be part of the country's oppositional forces and other opposition organizations also perceive them as such. Second, they share a nativist¹⁴ ideology, which distinguishes them from the other oppositional forces in Russia (Mudde 2007).

Russia's nationalist-patriotic opposition is conceptualized as “a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Diani 1992, 13). The movement, especially since the 2000s, has been based on multiple affiliations that gave it a “specific subcultural form”. Multiple affiliations facilitate the circulation of information and resources between the movements' different organizations, cultivate feelings of mutual trust, make the organizations more flexible organizationally, expand opportunities for activating alliances or obtaining information and resources over which institutional organizations have greater control, and reinforce the organizations' legitimacy (Della Porta & Diani 1999, 120-124).

Although the nationalist activists often declare that they all belong to the same basin, one cannot neglect, or turn a blind eye on the fact that, to a certain extent, they are competing between them and that their opportunities for alliances – similarly to other movement networks – are limited by the quantity of resources and their maintenance (Della Porta & Diani 1999, 125). So, in terms of interorganizational networks, it seems that the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement functions under a “competitive cooperation” situation: the nationalist organizations develop joint initiatives; nevertheless they compete for the same support base and for “similar sectors of public opinion whose interests they wish to represent” (Della Porta & Diani 1999, 125).

Finally, I argue that the Russian nationalist-patriotic oppositions resemble the new radical right. It is

¹³ For a classification of the nationalist-patriotic opposition from 1991 to 2003 see Likhachev 2006, 43ff.

¹⁴ Nativism is “an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde 2007:19).

radical, because it demands major transformation of society wither towards some future vision or back to an idealized past (Powell 1986), and the ideal society is ethnocracy, which counters the pluralistic values of liberal democracy (Betz 2005, Minkenberg 2000) and makes it antipluralist (Lipset & Raab 1970).

The Russian nationalist-patriotic opposition belongs to the right, first because the sociopolitical issues of major concern are traditional issues of the right, e.g. national identity, law and order, immigration policy, abortion. Second, because it gives priority to national identity and is against multiculturalism that claims that migrants should have the right to preserve their traditions considering that it leads to cultural extinction of the dominant culture. Third, because its ethno-pluralism is not hierarchical, like in fascism, but aims at the expulsion of immigrants. It perceives as basic threats: immigrants, especially Muslims, supra-national entities like the European Union, multinational corporations, economic globalization, and cosmopolitan elites. Its core message is that immigrants cause criminality and unemployment and constitute a threat to the ethno-national entity and to the taxpayer because they abuse the welfare state.

The Russian nationalist-patriotic opposition also has populist characteristics, because it aims to protect the “poor” people versus the “corrupt” elite. Populist organizations aim to construct an image of themselves as in opposition to the political class, while they actively try not to appear antidemocratic. Such organizations also share a Manichean worldview, presenting themselves as the real champions of true democracy. Finally, the Russian nationalist-patriotic opposition shares another similarity with the new radical right: it is less aggressive and expansive than fascist parties and is oriented towards an idealized idea of the past. The myth of the palingenetic rebirth that stands in the core of fascist ideology (Griffin 1991) is much weaker and does not aim at replacing the democratic system with a new order (Griffin 2000).

1.4. Why study the nationalist-patriotic opposition in Russia?

The project's findings should be relevant for understanding the factors that shape collective mobilization in post-communist societies, especially Russia, as compared to other (e.g. western) environments. Russia is the most striking example of a rapidly changing society towards liberalism and capitalism compared to the other countries of the former Soviet Union, not only because of the pace that liberal reforms were applied, but also because of its size, geopolitical significance, natural

resources, and historical role in last century's political changes. Understanding the factors of collective mobilization in this rapidly changing society may contribute to our understanding of the under-researched issue of similar phenomena in other transitional environments and to the over-researched issue of collective mobilization within established liberal democracies.

The present research contributes to obtaining more insight into the patterns and dynamics of right-wing radicalism in transitional settings, especially non-democratic ones. Ultra-nationalist movements are exclusive; their ideology is based on an “us-them” division, a distinction between those whom they consider to be their own and “outsiders”. Based on such a world view, they create distinctions between populations of different civic and/or ethnic characteristics, which can end up to national polarization, enmity, and even ethnic conflict. Additionally, the broader sphere of ultranationalist movements includes some openly totalitarian that are willing to repress freedom of expression and democratic rights even in the case of their own people as long as they share different political beliefs. In sum, radical right movements may pose a danger to liberal democracies, economic growth, and regional stability, as has shown the 2014 Ukrainian example. Russia is one case of nationalist awakening in countries under rapid political and economic change that can help us understand how similar movements in transitional countries may grow.

Finally, as it deals with a particular type of movements, those that belong to the so-called uncivil society, my research also addresses the ongoing debate on the relationship between civil society and democracy in transitional environments. A democratic civil society was considered a precondition and near-guarantee for democratic consolidation in the late 1989 transitions (Ishkanian 2007:58). This fact raised scholarly expectations on the role of civil society regarding the establishment of genuine democracies of Western type in the former Soviet Union countries. Nevertheless, the parallel formation of an uncivil society formed by radical right parties and movements led many scholars to consider them as a true social movement involved in grass-roots supported contentious politics and, thus, as a more authentic representatives of civil society in transition countries (Kopecký & Mudde 2003:4; Kubik 2005:107; Umland 2002: 362; Putnam 1993). Studying the Russian radical right, thus, will therefore help us understand whether, and to which extent, democracy in the former post-communist world failed.

1.5. Dissertation Outline

The Russian radical right, which I call the nationalist-patriotic opposition, does not share the same characteristics over time and over space. Studying thus as a monolith may pose theoretical obstacles in the understanding of its implications. The present dissertation addresses this theoretical constrain by highlighting the main mobilizing structures that form this multi-faceted movement and by presenting its variation over time, in search of the factors that contributed to its emergence and further development.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical debate of dominant approaches in the study of the emergence and further development of radical right wing movements from the scope of political science, especially radical right studies, and sociology, especially the study of social movements. It presents the state of the study of the radical right in Western democracies and in the post-communist world. Its aim is to lead the reader through an overview of existing and competing theories to the synthesis of the dissertation's theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 discusses the study's methodology. It starts with the presentation of existing research on the radical right in Russia and of its comparative study in Eastern Europe. It then focuses on the Russian case and presents the logic that lies behind the choice of my research design sample. The selection of the nationalist-patriotic SMOs is crucial in the intensive study of a single case (Russia in this case) that aims to shed light on a larger class of cases (Gerring 2007:20). The chapter concludes with the presentation of the methods for data gathering I used, along with their constraints. An important aspect of these methods lies on the collection of original data from semi-structural interviews with the leaders of a milieu of difficult access in an equally complicated—for research and political activism—political setting.

The empirical part of the research follows. Chapter 4 and 5 present the background, ideology, internal structure, activities, and evolution of my case studies in the 1990s and 2000s accordingly and demonstrate this study's implicit assumption of within-movement variation. Both chapters follow the same structure in order to facilitate comparison, although information on each of the fore-mentioned aspects may vary according to the bulk of secondary bibliography available for each case (there is more research on the cases of the 1990s than on those of the 2000s). Each chapter ends with a comparison between the two case studies of each decade, showing variation not only

through time, but also across organizations. These two chapters also helped me position the organizations under study within the broader nationalist-patriotic movement, a systematic map of which I present in Appendix 4.

The last two chapters research the factors that account for organizational change (within-movement variation). Chapter 6 offers an account of the case-specific context structure that shapes the emergence and further development of Russian nationalist-patriotic SMOs. The first section of chapter 6 first refers to broader cultural and socio-economic structural changes rooted in Russian transition, as well as from the Chechen wars. The second section offers an insight into Russia's institutional context, mostly focusing on the time period from Vladimir Putin's rise to power on. It discusses three main aspects of the institutional context that are relevant to organizational change of nationalist-patriotic organizations: the political regime, migration policies, and shifting public attitudes towards foreigners.

After having set out the broader environment that influences collective action (and may in turn get influenced by collective action as result of long-term processes), Chapter 7 focuses on the specific political and discursive opportunities the regime opened or closed for dissident forms of political organizations. Furthermore, the chapter introduces technological developments in the study of opportunities for mobilizing structures and defines them as “technological opportunity structures”. The second section of chapter 7 presents the role of human agency in the conceptualization and seizing of opportunities and their central role in organizational change, concretely in message construction, organizational, and strategic decisions.

Chapter 8 draws the study's conclusions on the factors that contribute to the emergence and development of the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement. It also discusses the conceptual, methodological, and theoretical contribution of the present dissertation, as well as its further implications for the future of the study.

2. The Theoretical Debate on the Radical Right

2.1. Dominant approaches on the rise of the radical right

Core hypothesis of postwar political sociology were contradicted with the emergence of strong radical right parties after the end of WWII. For example Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) freezing hypothesis failed to predict the emergence of new party families and Ronald Inglehart's (1977) postmaterialist theory failed to predict the rise of radical right parties that went along with new left-liberal ones (see Rydgren 2007). The answers that contemporary political scientists tried to give to this phenomenon have resulted in the conceptualization of two main factors for the rise of radical right parties, which can be grouped under the categories of demand-side factors and supply-side factors.

2.1.1. Demand-side theories

Demand-side theories focus primarily on socioeconomic developments, meaning the social and cultural conditions that may be exploited by far right organizations, such as the impact of immigration and unemployment, value change, and structural cleavages related to the modernization process (e.g. Betz 1993; Ignazi 1992; Norris 2005; Minkenberg 1992).

Cas Mudde (2007) distinguishes further on the three-level analysis (macro, meso, micro). The macro-level examines broad economic, historical, and social processes, i.e. modernization, crises, ethnic backlash, and authoritarian legacies. Meso-level explanations that refer to all that intervenes between the individual (micro-level) and international or national level processes (macro-level), e.g. family, school, party. Micro-level theories, try to explain why people vote for populist radical right parties, looking for correlations between individual attitudes and voting behavior. Building upon Roger Eatwell's (2003) seminal work on the theories of the extreme right, Mudde categorizes the macro-level demand-side theories into: modernization theories, crises theories, ethnic backlash theories, authoritarian legacy thesis. A discussion of these theories along with my critique on their applicability in the Russian case follows:

Modernization theories (postindustrial or postmodern theories) link the rise of popular radical right parties with the ability of these parties to attract the losers of modernization (*Modernisierungsverlierer*), because they are seen as opponents to modernization (e.g. Decker

2004; Minkenberg 1998; Betz 1994). These theories, rooted in the historical nationalism school, focus on macro-level development processes such as globalization, postindustrialism, post-Fordist society, but fail to show how these processes influence voting behavior (micro-level). Some authors argue that these processes either create new cleavages, or re-activate old ones, according to Lipset and Rokkan's cleavage theory, this, nevertheless, still implies the interference of meso-level actors, like political parties (Kriesi *et al.* 2005B; Minkenberg 2000; Kitschelt & McGann 1995; Kriesi 1995; Betz 1994; Sartori 1990). In Eastern Europe the modernization theory is linked to the transition of state socialism to capitalist democracy (Anastasakis 2002; Beichelt & Minkenberg 2002; Minkenberg 2002; Linz & Stepan 1996). Research in Eastern Europe has shown that the voters of radical right parties share the same attitudinal and sociodemographic characteristics with the electorate of social populist and communist parties (e.g. Shafir 2001; Clark 1995). This may indicate that both extremes on the left-right scale compete for the “modernization losers” (e.g. March & Mudde 2005a; Mudde 2002a).

In the case of Russia, the nationalist-patriotic opposition under research is not opposing modernization. On the contrary, it is in favor of the capitalist economic model and is actually demanding the introduction of a real democratic system of Western standards. Furthermore, the term “modernization losers” seems to be a catch-all term that could apply to the Russian society as a whole at the beginning of the 1990s (except oligarchs and political elites), to nowadays jobless, to those who lost social benefits, to Russian migrants, etc. In any case, it refers to huge numbers of modernization losers, whereas support for the nationalist-patriotic opposition is marginal and support for Russia's most cited example of populist radical right party, Zhirinovskii's LDPR, has fallen on the half, or even less, since its 1993 electoral peak. Furthermore, as single-country studies show, populist radical right electorates include not only modernization losers, but also modernization winners (Mudde 2007: 204).

Crises theories come from efforts to connect high levels of unemployment with the electoral success of populist radical right parties. They result to contradictory empirical conclusions in Western countries, whereas they examine Eastern Europe as a genuinely different case study (see Mudde 2007: 205ff.).

Since the beginning of the 2000s the Russian economy has been constantly growing while unemployment rate has been falling. So, at first sight the theory seems to make in the Russian case.

Although unemployment decreases, wealth inequality rises. Actually, Russia's wealth inequality is one of the world's biggest with 110 billionaires controlling 35 per cent of the total national household wealth (Kudenko 2013). Maybe, accompanying unemployment with wealth inequality could make crises theories less controversial when they are empirically tested. The main problem with this theory when applied to Russia is that it fails to explain the adverse relationship between the levels of unemployment and Zhirinovskii's LDPR success throughout the whole decade of the 1990s. In particular, unemployment has been constantly growing from 1992 to 1999, while at the same period support for LDPR has been downward trend.

An attempt to explain why the populist radical right did not overtake Eastern Europe in the first years of the transition is offered by Greskovits which argues that “populist episodes usually begin immediately after a deep economic crisis” (Greskovits 1995). This argument is close to Lipset's (1995:188 [Mudde 2007:106]) line of thought, according to which “status insecurities and status aspirations are most likely to appear as sources of frustration, independent of economic problems, in periods of prolonged prosperity”. If Greskovits turns out to be right when he compares post-populist Latin America with post-communist Eastern Europe on the basis of structural similarities, in the future Eastern Europe may witness demagogic economic populism, most probably in the form of “neopopulism”, meaning neoliberal populism, rather than populist radical right (Weyland 1999; Knight 1998; Mudde 2007: 206ff.). This may be the case in Russia with Vladimir Putin's United Russia party that under the ideological flag of neoliberalism has been introducing in its agenda over the years segments of the ideologies of other parties, in particular nationalist issues.

The political crisis thesis studies the correlation between political dissatisfaction and the electoral support of populist radical right parties at the national level, with some studies finding a positive correlation (e.g. Knigge 1998) and others a negative one (e.g. Norris 2005). The political crisis has been linked to the specific support for democracy (e.g. the practice, the general support, the ideal).

In Western Europe support for democracy is considered to be constant and very high (e.g. Dahl 2000), whereas in Eastern Europe the panorama is more complicated. Pickel and Jacobs (2001:6 [Mudde 2007:208-209]) offer a categorization of Eastern European countries based on the support they show to democratic and antidemocratic ideals and connect the level of support to the electoral success of the populist radical right. According to their research, five out of their ten case studies show an inverse relationship between high democratic support and electoral success of populist

radical right parties (namely Albania, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Slovenia), whereas three countries are close to it (Estonia, Romania, and Slovakia). Russia, in particular, has the lowest democratic support (it scores 48), the highest antidemocratic support (it scores 43), and high electoral success of the populist radical right among the researched countries.

A possible reason to explain why Russia is not actually ruled by a populist radical right party (since it has such a low democratic support) could be found in the nature of its non-democratic political system dominated by a strong and authoritarian President. In this model parliamentarian opposition is kept under control and dissident organizations are persecuted. This could be an explanation, but still it does not guarantee that the percentage of the people holding undemocratic views would have actually voted for radical right party, had the system been a real democracy. Neither does it explain why Russians did not choose a “dictator” in the 1990s and why Zhirinovksi failed to be elected President.

The ethnic-backlash-thesis considers populist radical right parties to be a political step for the population’s defense under a supposedly ‘ethnic’ threat. It belongs to the theoretical school that comes from history and nationalism studies and considers nationalism to be Eastern Europe’s “dominant political force” in the first years of post-communist transition (Bogdanor 1995: 84; Mudde 2007: 211). According to this theory, communist totalitarianism was an unnatural situation for these countries and sooner or later nationalism would be dominant again, given the historical legacies and the continuing ethnic diversity of Eastern Europe. Studies in Western Europe were not influenced by this historical determinist approach, although much of the literature sees populist radical right parties “as a majority response to the perceived threat of mass immigration” (e.g. Husbands 2001; Fennema 1997; Von Beyme 1988).

In Eastern Europe mass immigration is not (yet) an important social phenomenon, therefore the number of refugees seems not to be an effective variable, and it makes more sense to consider the numbers of ethnic nationals of former “occupied” states and the Roma. Studies, nevertheless, were not able to establish a strong empirical correlation (Mudde 2007: 214). Furthermore, ethnic diversity does not mean ethnic conflict, a fact that contrasts with the theoretical foundations of this theory and makes it a questionable theoretical assumption. Last, the immigration thesis in Western Europe fails to explain temporal and regional differences in electoral support within single countries (Mudde 2007: 216).

In contrast to other post-communist countries, Russia receives the highest influx of immigrants, mainly from the former CIS countries. Additionally, Russia's population is declining. This makes mass immigration an important social issue, not only in terms of employment, but also in terms of survival as a nation and as a culture. Immigration and the demographic problem seem to have opened a new socio-economic cleavage of insiders versus outsiders that was not present at least at the beginning of transition in the early 1990s. This new cleavage might in its turn open opportunities for political action. Nevertheless, the ethnic-backlash theory does not account for temporal and regional differences in the support of the nationalist-patriotic opposition— in our case ideological support since the organizations under study have not ran for election.

The theory of the authoritarian legacy is based on Adorno's *et al.* thesis on the "authoritarian personality" (1969), which basically argues that people with a particular personality are susceptible to the radical right and that authoritarian upbringing leads to this personality (e.g. Reich 1970; Mudde 2007: 216). Thought at a micro-level, this theory has also been applied to the macro-level, i.e. to states. The argument is that Europe's new democracies are particularly vulnerable to populist radical right parties, because under the communist regime people have been raised in an authoritarian way (Mungiu-Pippidi 2004: 71ff.; Tismaneanu 1998; Braun 1997). Some of the scholars go so far to speak of a "double authoritarian legacy": the pre-war fascist one and the post-war communist one (e.g. Anastasakis 2000).

The legacy theory, relying on historical analogies, has become one of the most widespread approaches in the comparative analysis of the radical right in Central and Eastern Europe. It sees the transformation process after 1989, either as a 'return of history' or as a 'return to Europe', or both (Held 1996; Hockenos 1993; Kopecký & Mudde 2003; Minkenberg 2002; Mudde 2005a; Shafir 2008; Ramet 1999). Legacies are "the structural, cultural, and institutional starting points of ex-communist countries at the outset of the transition" (Pop-Eleches, 2007: 910). The 'return of history' theory draws analogies between the post-1989 radical right and interwar fascism and the return of the pre-socialist, ultranationalist or even fascist past, whereas the 'return to Europe' parallels Central and Eastern European radical right parties—as well as the whole party systems—with its Western European counterparts (Minkenberg 2009:447).

Based on the role of legacies, scholars have identified various factors that account for radical right mobilization in Central and Eastern Europe. Timm Beichelt and Michael Minkenberg (2002: 260)

developed a model for the explanation of radical right emergence in post socialist settings that builds upon culturalist theories and relies on the role of legacies (see also Beichelt 2009). The model argues that the rise of the radical right in Eastern Europe can be explained through modernization conflicts (socio-economic transformation costs and socio-cultural modernization) in combination with the historic-cultural context (irredentism and the existence of minorities) (Beichelt/ Minkenberg, 2002:260).

Lenka Bustikova and Herbert Kitschelt (2009) elaborated a theory on the potential of radical right mobilization in the 2000s, based on the ethnic composition of post communist countries and on the institutional legacies of communist and pre-communist rule. They argue that the legacy of national-accommodative communism on the electoral success of radical right parties was limited, because major parties differentiated early on the socio-cultural issues and because they managed to keep reform losers satisfied by continuing the implementation of social policies. On the contrary, the mobilization potential of radical right parties will be more successful in countries with patrimonial legacy (e.g. Russia) that are highly polarized over economic policy reforms, because the rapid dismantling that occurred of the welfare state resulted to high levels of inequality and dissatisfaction. Radical right parties will also benefit in settings with small ethno-cultural minorities.

Although legacies can explain the ideological positions of radical right parties in post-communist settings, mainly its frame-making of 'the Other', this approach received considerable critique for being "abstract, theoretical and ultimately authoritarian" since it leaves unclear the mechanisms through which legacies traverse history "in a presumable invariable and ready-made manner" (Magun 2003 [Prozorov 2005]). Critics to the legacy approach deny that Russia's traditions (either Imperial or Soviet), culture, and religion are an adequate tool to understanding political and societal developments after the regime's turn. On the contrary, they point out that modern Russia descends from a profound historical discontinuity and that instead of Russia's exceptionality we should assert the "exceptional nature of post-communism as an *event*" (Prozorov 2005: 123). Furthermore, the legacy approach has been criticized for ignoring the interaction effects between different types of actors (see Varga 2008, 563). It also fails to explain variation among countries of similar historical backgrounds and within the same country. Supporters of the legacy theory admit that due to their static nature, legacies can only explain rough patterns of radical right mobilization, whereas electoral support over time can be better explained by the strategic role of parties in "translating

economic dissatisfaction into socio-cultural grievances”, for example (Bustikova & Kitschelt 2009: 481).

According to the legacy approach, we should expect that the radical right in Russia would receive a lot of support, because of the country's lack of a democratic past. Still the country's president for the last fifteen years has been Vladimir Putin and not Vladimir Zhirinovksi or another populist radical right leader. And before him, when the country started its transition, Russian citizens elected Boris Yeltsin. The reasons for Vladimir Putin's electoral persistence may vary from obstacles the regime poses in opposing electoral fraud – a different institutional setting from Boris Yeltsin's term – or it may be because he is the authoritarian leader the people were asking for, confirming thus the legacy theory. Still, if we consider Vladimir Putin as the authoritarian leader who represents the people raised under the communist regime, we cannot explain why other forms of political expression take place at the same time, like the nationalist-patriotic opposition under study, let alone liberal opposition. Finally, the legacy theory cannot explain regional differences within Russia, like for example St. Petersburg that, from a political and cultural point of view, is considered a liberal city.

Meso-level explanations for the rise of radical right parties have to do with the local organizations that intervene between the individual and international or national level processes, e.g. family, school, party, through which they “gain knowledge norms” (Eatwell 2000: 350). Studies that applied macro-level theories to the meso-level found substantial different results and cannot explain the dramatic rise in populist radical right support in the 1990s, neither short-term fluctuations (Mudde 2007: 218).

Micro-level explanations try to relate individual attitudes with voting behavior. Two sets of explanations in finding out why people's vote for radical right parties prevails. The first one investigates radical right attitudes and claims that people placing themselves on the extreme right of the left-right scale - that is people with an extreme right ideology - are more likely to vote for extreme right parties (e.g. Betz 1994; Bauer & Niedermayer 1990; Schumann & Falter 1988) even in multivariate studies (e.g. Van der Brug *et al.* 2005, 2000; Van der Brug & Fennema 2003). These studies are criticizable for the proxies they use for very complex concepts like authoritarianism, populism, nativism, but the most considerable critique is that they prove correlation and not causality between populist radical right attitudes and vote for radical right parties (Mudde 1999).

The second set of micro-level explanations is based on the insecurity theory. It argues that large groups feel insecure for their identity, job, and life as a whole by macro-level developments, i.e. globalization, mass immigration, economic and political crisis, and therefore feel attracted by the simple messages of the radical right (e.g. Christofferson 2003; Dehousse 2002:4). The problem is that the term insecurity is not adequately defined and can thus refer to many reasons, .e.g. cultural, economic, financial, personal, political insecurity, although most commonly it refers to crime.

Related to the insecurity theory is the welfare chauvinism thesis, or theory of “prosperity-born bitterness” (Lipset 1959; 1960) that claims that the support for radical right parties comes from people who want to preserve what they have within the threats caused by mass immigration and by postindustrial society (see De Weerd *et al.* 2004:81 for the “Social-Economic Change, Individual Reactions and the Appeal of the Extreme Right” projects). Another related theory, part of the modernization thesis, sees the radical right as a materialist “counter-revolution” against the economic insecurities caused by globalization and modernization (e.g. Bjørklund & Andersen 2002; Minkenberg 2000) and finds correlations between objective or subjective modernization losers and voting for radical right parties (e.g. Mayer 2002). Nevertheless, these researches do not show that the populist radical right’s electorate holds welfare chauvinist attitudes and that these attitudes seriously affect their voting behavior (Mudde 2007:224). Meso- and micro- theories are beyond the scope of the present research and demand a more intensive fieldwork that was not possible for me to undertake at the moment I was conducting my fieldwork.

In sum, demand-side theories can explain similar developments in very different settings, but they cannot account for different developments in similar settings (Mudde 2007:230). They can also explain why people vote for radical right parties and which people constitute the potential electorate (which according to Van der Brug *et al.* (2005) is a *necessary* but not a *sufficient* condition for radical right support), but they cannot explain why and who votes for radical right parties, meaning that they do not show how macro-level factors influence micro-level behavior (Mudde 2007: 230). Neither can demand-side theories explain fluctuations in the support and mobilization of radical right organizations (Mudde 2007: 230). Finally, most empirical studies on the electoral support of radical right parties consider the electorate homogenous and they do not distinguish between supporters of radical right ideology and protest voters (Mudde 2007: 225).

2.1.2. Supply-side theories

Supply side theories research factors that have to do with the radical right parties and constitute the political opportunity structure (POS). The concept of political opportunity emanates from the literature of new social movements and is defined as the “consistent, but not necessarily formal or permanent, dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure” (Tarrow 1998: 76-77).

The use of political opportunity as a significant environmental element that translates the potential for collective action into actual mobilization has been becoming more widespread. Various researches have introduced this factor on the study of radical right parties (e.g. Rydgren 2005b; Decker 2004; Jungerstam- Mulders 2003; Minkenberg 1998; Kitschelt & McGann 1995). The underlying conviction behind the American and European traditions of political process theorists (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1982, Tarrow 1983) and new social movements scholars (Kriesi 1989, Kitschelt 1986, Koopmans 1992) respectively is that social movements are shaped by a broader set of political constraints and opportunities ingrained in their national context (McAdam *et al.* 1996). According to Cas Mudde (2007), the major overlapping external factors are: the institutional, political and cultural context, and the media. As above, a brief discussion on each of the external factors and their applicability in the Russian case follows.

Theories connected to the institutional context link each country's political system with opportunities and limitations playing on radical right parties' electoral success. Recent studies have researched the effects of the institutional context on populist radical right parties' success (e.g. Arzheimer & Carter 2006; Carter 2005; Norris 2005; Jungerstam-Mulders 2003:29; Denmark & Bowler 2002). Although electoral systems seem to have some effect on the electoral opportunity structure of political parties, they cannot explain why electoral success varies between countries, parties, periods, and regions; in other words they do not determine their success (Mudde 2007: 234-236).

The Russian political system, dominated and controlled by the President and his party, is clearly posing limits to all forms of political dissent. It is thus closing opportunities for political opposition organizations to run for election, whereas official electoral results may also be manipulated to downplay the success of opposition parties. Opportunities for electoral success as opportunities for

emergence are thus very limited. Nevertheless, movements in Russia emerge and mobilize, which seems to be paradoxical given the hostile institutional conditions.

Political opportunities are considered a critical ingredient of movement emergence (Oberschall 1996) and development, though they are more difficult to emerge than grievances and organizational sources and only arise at specific points in history (Suh 2001: 439). Apart from emergence, research shows that they also affect movement strength (Rucht 1996), strategy (Kitschelt 1986), behavior (Della Porta 1996), form (Tarrow 1996), and outcome (Kitschelt 1986 [Suh 2001: 439]).

Political process and resource mobilization theory received considerable critique for offering “little more than plausible post-hoc accounts on the rise of movements” (Soule *et al.* 1999: 241). Furthermore, the number of variables of political opportunities has grown considerably within the big volume of case studies and cross-national comparisons of the 1980s, expanding the explanatory power of the concept but reducing its specificity (Della Porta & Diani 1999: 223). Thus, the literature offers a long and variant list of dimensions of opportunity but no large conceptual statements of opportunities.¹⁵ Most of the research is directed toward explaining cases instead of testing political opportunity theory and usually variables of opportunities are case-dependent (Meyer 2004: 134). Therefore, political opportunities have been criticized for being a vague concept that could “become an all-encompassing fudge factor for all the conditions and circumstances that form the context for collective action” (Gamson & Meyer 1996: 275). Goodwin's (2002) macroanalysis that tests political opportunity theory and Meyer's (2004) overview of selective studies that test the political opportunity structure against alternatives, show that political opportunity theory shows a mixed explanatory record.

This does not mean that social movement scholars should drop the theory; it rather shows that there are significant challenges that need to be overcome from future studies on the field. Meyer suggests that disaggregating the outcomes of opportunities for mobilization from those of opportunities for

¹⁵ The elements of political opportunities vary in literature. Indicatively, I mention the following descriptions of political opportunities as “specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others” (Kitschelt 1986:58); “national cleavage structures, institutional structures, prevailing strategies, and alliance structures” (Kriesi *et al.* 1995: xiii); the structure of the electoral system, the responses of established actors, the dynamics of party alignment, demarcation, and competition, the presence of political entrepreneurs who channel extreme-right demands into the political system (Giugni *et al.* 2005: 146). For an effort to distinguish different kinds of political opportunities and the structural bias of political opportunity see Goodwin & Jasper (1999: 40).

policy influence will help our understanding of the relationship between activism and public policy (Meyer 2004: 136- 138). Furthermore, he stresses the need of every study to declare explicitly the dependent variable it seeks to explain and the dimensions of political opportunity through which it will offer the explanation (Mc Adam 1996:31).

Following McAdam, McCarthy and Zald's (1996: 10) work¹⁶, I will operationalize political opportunity structures according to three indicators that show the state's capacity to repress or embrace the nationalist movement's demands: (i) the government's limitations to the opposition, (ii) the creation of patriotic youth movements by the government, and (iii) the legal barriers to the nationalist opposition in particular.

The political context has to do with the opportunities for radical right parties created by their interaction with other political parties, especially the established ones, and by the dynamics among parties in the political system ("electoral opportunity structure") (Van der Brug *et al.* 2005: 546ff.). The electoral success of new parties depends first on all from electoral volatility that creates space in the party system for new parties to enter (e.g. Rydgren 2005b; Veugelers 1997; Linz 1976). Empirical studies have shown that populist radical right parties are successful among first-time voters and nonvoters that constitute a small part of the electorate (e.g. Kreidl & Vlachová 1999; Ignazi 1996; Betz 1993a), but since the 1990s electoral volatility has increased significantly in Western Europe (Gallagher *et al.* 2005; Mair 1997). In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, extremely high volatility was the case since the beginning of the democratic transition due to lack of distinguishable party profiles and a subsequent lack of party identification among other reasons (e.g. Shabad & Slomczynski 2004; Mudde 2002c; Sikk 2005; Tóka 1997).

Russia, in line with other Eastern European countries, has shown high volatility in the beginning of transition, but after that it seems that the political system has been stabilized, or better crystallized around the President's paternalistic figure. The government, nevertheless, did create opportunities for nationalist movements either from its direct involvement with them (for its own benefit) or through the nationalist narrative it soon introduced in its rhetoric that legitimized and gave publicity to the nationalists' claim. The later is also called "discursive opportunity", which I discuss in detail

¹⁶ Process theorists argue that changes in any of the following variables may cause the expansion or contraction of political opportunity and influence thus mobilization: (1) the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system, (2) the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity, (3) the presence or absence of elite allies, and (4) the state's capacity and propensity for repression (McAdam *et al.* 1996: 10)

in section 2.2.

New radical right parties can also enter the political domain if they address new developments and issues that the old parties do not, like mass immigration, multicultural society (e.g. Kriesi 1995; Betz 1994) or if the established parties of the left and the right converge ideologically (Kitschelt & Mac Gann 1995; Stöss 2000; Backes & Jesse 1993) or if mainstream right-wing parties move to the right (polarization) (Ignazi 2003, ch. 12). In Eastern Europe empirical evidence is scarce and post-communist politics has been characterized by polarization rather than convergence, especially on the dividing line of communist versus anticommunist parties in the first years of transition (Mudde 2007: 239).

Studies found that for many years in Eastern Europe polarization actually hindered parliamentary representation for radical right parties (Mudde 2005ab), as was the case of the 2002 Hungarian parliamentary elections (Fowler 2003). Nevertheless, convergence favors all parties and not only radical right ones, while these parties can also profit from polarizations when they are part of one of the two main competitive blocks (Mudde 2007: 240-241). This is also the case of the Russian nationalist-patriotic opposition, the first political actor openly positioning itself against “illegal migration”. Furthermore, , although they do not converge ideologically, United Russia and the Communist Party have common features such as the glorification of the Soviet past and nostalgia for the lost empire. Zhirinovskii's populist radical right party, on the other hand, moved to the center, up to the point to be considered Kremlin's puppet.

Finally, another factor is the issue-ownership established by a radical right party (Petrocik 1996: 826; Budge & Farlie 1983). Issue ownership refers to a party's ability to persuade voters that it is the most adequate one for resolving an issue, e.g. immigration. If confrontation between mainstream parties over this specific issue increases without ending in its resolution, then the salience of the issue will increase. If the radical right party has established ownership over the issue, the issue's increasing salience can turn in its favor; otherwise other parties (radical or not) may profit (e.g. Bélanger & Meguid 2005; Meguid 2005; Mudde 1999).

The striking weakness of populist radical right parties in most post-communist countries, according to this argument, is caused by these parties' lack of experience, in combination with the above-mentioned volatility, which prohibits them to establish ownership over any issue (Mudde 2002a).

So when mainstream parties adopt the vocabulary of extreme nationalism then populist radical right parties are unable to profit from the same issue (Mudde 2007: 242). This is not exactly the case in Russia, because the nationalist-patriotic opposition of the 2000s indeed managed to establish issue-ownership: *Dvizhenie Protiv Nelegal'noi Immigratsii* (Movement Against Illegal Immigration – DPNI) over the issue of illegal immigration and *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie* (Russian People's Movement – ROD) over the issue of financing the Caucasus. The ruling party, then, quickly introduced frames against illegal immigration in its discourse and created nationalist youth wings. Nevertheless, it opposed ROD's claim to stop financing the Caucasus. Thus giving a clear answer as whether the nationalist-patriotic opposition was favored or not by issue-ownership is not an easy task. If we take public opinion as a proxy, then it seems that the Russian public recognizes these two organizations as the issue-owners and that a big percentage is supporting their claims. Whether this can be translated in electoral success is a more complicated process that depends on other factors as well.

The cultural context has to do with how national and political mores and values that differ across countries can benefit radical right parties (e.g. Art 2006; Minkenberg 2001; Helms 1997). Research on the role of the *nouvelle droite* intellectuals and their effort to establish a cultural hegemony in Western European contexts (e.g. Spektorowski 2000; Minkenberg 1998) shows that their influence on the public and on radical right parties is marginal (Mudde 2007: 244).

In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, public intellectuals are openly nativist and revisionist and are thus closer to the views of populist right wing parties. On the other hand, intellectuals educated under the former regime (e.g. Shafir 2002a; Markotich 2000; Sekelj 1998) that are contrary to the radical right's ideas could contribute to the stigmatization against them, making their resurgence more difficult (e.g. Klandermans & Mayer 2005; Decker 2003a; Van Donselaar 2003; Schikhof 1998). Nevertheless, studies show that radical right parties are particularly successful in countries which officially collaborated with the Nazis. This might result from the way national elites deal with the Nazi past (Art 2006) or from the existence of nativist/nationalist subcultures outside the formal radical right party that provide it with facilities and activists (e.g. Hossay 2002; Mudde & Van Holsteyn 2000; Koopmans 1998). Subcultural organizations can also connect mainstream parties to radical right parties in countries whose politics are heavily dominated by nativist issues, by increasing the salience of the radical right claim through mediation between mainstream and radical right politicians, and recruiting new personnel, promoting thus a positive image and

decreasing the stigmatization of radical right parties (Mudde & Van Holsteyn 2000; De Witte 1998).

On the other hand, in favorable to the radical right political cultures the risk of closing the electoral space for radical right parties is present. This is merely due to the fact that the themes of radical right parties can be integrated into the discourse of mainstream parties, regardless if mainstream parties will then treat the issues later in a moderate way. This was the case of Eastern Europe in the first years of democratic transition. Additionally, if the ruling parties adopt the program of radical right parties, then radical right parties may become needless, as in the case of Estonia and Latvia in the early 1990s (Mudde 2007: 248).

The symbolic importance of Russia as the country that coordinated the attack against Nazi Germany and suffered the most casualties is still very big. I would say that revisionist views are marginal, whereas expanding nationalism and glorification of the nation are most the case in Russian intellectual ultranationalist circles. There is also the case of Aleksandr Dugin, founder of *Natsional-Bol'shevistskaya Partiya* (National-Bolshevik Party – NBP) and then of Eurasia Party, for whom the Kremlin showed interest. Vladimir Putin's 2011 project of a Eurasian Union is clearly influenced by Dugin's thought. Whether this move led to closing the electoral space for radical right parties (or the support for the movements under study) remains unclear, given Russia's poor democratic score. Nonetheless, I propose a methodological choice that will help me include the blurred environment of nationalist subcultures into my case study, the definition of the nationalist-patriotic opposition as the wide spectrum of extra-parliamentarian nationalist organizations (parties, movements, and milieus) and their allies within the Duma.

Finally, another factor that can influence radical right parties' electoral success—although not so thoroughly researched as other factors—is the media. We expect that when the media, especially tabloids and commercial television, use discourses similar to the ones of the radical right (e.g. Norris 2000), they set a favorable public agenda that may favor radical right parties (Norris 2000; Vliegenhart & Boomgarden 2005; Walgrave & De Swert 2004). Previous studies, nevertheless, have shown that in some Western European and many Eastern European countries where the media project nativist and populist campaigns, the success of radical right parties remained quite marginal (Mudde 2007: 249). Reasons for this failure may be that mainstream parties use a radical right rhetoric (the above-discussed issue ownership thesis) that makes it difficult for radical right parties

to compete and profit from the media discourse (Walgrave & De Swert 2004). Other reasons may be that the media are hostile to the radical right even though they might use a similar rhetoric (Eatwell 2003: 60) or that the “elite media” are involved in campaigns against the radical right (e.g. Schellenberg 2005; Mazzoleni 2003, Steward *et al.* 2003).

On the other hand, a charismatic radical right leader can take advantage of the forum the media provides him, even if the media are not openly sympathizing with him i.e. in Russia's 1993 parliamentary election with Zhirinovskii (Tolz 2003: 264), in Romanian 2000 presidential election with Tudor (Shafir 2001: 105), and in more instances in France with Le Pen (Birenbaum & Villa 2003). It is true, on the other hand, that media attention cannot not only profit radical right leaders but all kind of populist leaders (“media populism”) (e.g. Mazzoleni 2003), or in the most extreme cases even to have a media-party fusion, like Berlusconi's neoliberal populist FI in Italy (e.g. Grassi & Rensmann 2005) and Pavel Rusko's centrist-populist ANO in Slovakia (Učeň 2004). Finally, any publicity, positive or negative, can turn out to be good publicity, because it promotes the radical right party's profile and the salience of its main issues (Wendt 2003). The media's impact on the radical right is difficult to assess, although the most frequent case is that when radical right parties score electoral success then the media tend to pay more attention to them (Mudde 2007: 252- 253).

Freedom of press in Russia scores pretty low (148th out of 179 countries in 2013 according to the annual ranking of Reporters Without Borders). The number of Russian media is huge (93.000 media outlets) but the most popular source of information is television, with three nationwide channels, which are state-controlled, and many regional ones. The state-controlled channels tend to project the message that the government wants to pass to the public and their neutrality is dubious. Furthermore, there are lots of instances of state pressure and impediment to independent media, along with a series of assaults or even suspicious deaths of journalists that were covering uncomfortable topics, like Politkovskaya.

Still, written press and the Internet are freer than television, although so far they are not so widespread. The nationalist-patriotic organizations have their own channels, the most prominent being the newspaper *Den'* that later became *Zavtra* and the internet site *Agentstvo Politicheskikh Novostei* (APN). Especially the Internet and the new communication technologies have opened new opportunities for these organizations to express their views and diffuse their message. Even if the government prohibits an organization and shuts down its webpage, then the organization can

transfer its web in a different country's server that will not have similar restrictions and will function from abroad. Both of the 2000s organizations under study have relied overwhelmingly on the Internet, since they barely had any air time in television or radio stations, at least during the first years of their existence. Through the internet, thus, they have managed not only to diffuse their message, but also to recruit new members, and to organize massive mobilizations.

Therefore, I consider the Internet an important factor for the evolution of modern social movement organizations, especially grassroots ones, the impact of which still remains under-researched in Russia's political context. How the Internet influences nationalist-patriotic movement organizations has only recently started to attract scholarly interest (Zuev 2011; Zuev 2010; Fossato *et al.* 2008; Aiatamurto 2007; Rock 2004). I will call "technological opportunities" the structures that are connected to the general structural changes of modern societies. The diffusion of mass communications has brought the delineation of global public space, contributing thus to the emergence of a civil society and public opinion of supranational dimensions (Keane 1988; Castells 1996). The Internet also leads to the expanding of the public sphere, but at the same time its own boundaries also expand and sometimes contract over time. I will operationalize technological opportunities through the use of the following variables: (i) the scope of Internet use in Russia, (ii) the potential for political activism Internet use opens, and (iii) freedom of expression in RusNet.

Summing it up, scholars divide radical right parties' performance in two stages, before and after electoral breakthrough, because the factors that interfere in each stage vary. My research concentrates on movement emergence, but the movements under research have already formed parties in order to run for the next election. In this case, the factors that may contribute to their potential electoral breakthrough, supposing they manage to break through and that the regime does not hinder their participation, are useful for our understanding of their next stage of political mobilization as political parties and in order to draw useful conclusions on their future development.

In particular, for the electoral breakthrough phase factors that can contribute positively, the chief ones are convergence between the major established parties, a broad nativist subculture, a fascist past that can contribute to linking nativist subcultures with mainstream politics, and the media's positive or neutral reporting on radical right actors. On the contrary, plurality systems, cultural stigmatization of the radical right, or a negative media projection can hinder the radical right parties'

electoral breakthrough. Polarization of party systems in two party blocks is an additional obstacle to radical right parties' electoral breakthrough.

After electoral breakthrough, radical right parties can change a political opportunity structure to a more favorable one for their direction. The role of the media in particular can have the most dramatic decline when populist radical right parties remain in the political scene (persistence phase), because the radical right parties become less reliant on positive coverage by the media, while the media have to report on these parties because they are part of the opposition. In Eastern Europe, mainstream and radical parties are not so clearly differentiated than in Western Europe therefore, radical right parties cannot easily present themselves as the alternative to the corrupt elite.

2.1.3. Internal supply-side theories

Political opportunity structures can facilitate electoral success of radical right parties, but cannot determine it. Additionally, not only radical right parties, but all parties can benefit from openings within the political opportunity structure, it is thus not clear why radical right parties in particular profit from it and one should look at demand-side (discussed above) and internal-supply factors (Mudde 2007: 255) that I will discuss in this section. Internal supply-side theories refer to the radical right parties' strategies, i.e. its ideology, image, leadership, and organization.

The ideology theory claims that the closer the ideological links to the historical extreme right, the less the probability for electoral success (Hainsworth 2000b: 1). On the contrary, radical right parties will be more successful if they proclaim a moderate and new ideology (e.g. Cole 2005; Taggart 1995; Ignazi 1992). The new radical right has been described as the most significant “winning formula”, although there is little consensus on its ingredients, which may be: extreme and economic right, free-market, and politically and culturally authoritarian positions (Kitschelt & McGann 1995: vii) or a combination of “differentialist nativism and comprehensive protectionism” (Betz 2003a). Nevertheless, the lack of consensus as to the criteria the radical right parties are categorized leads to contradictory findings and impedes the factor ideological extremity from being a necessary or a sufficient condition for their electoral success (Mudde 2007: 258- 259).

The party's image, constructed through extensive propaganda campaigns, can be much more effective than the party's ideology in influencing radical right parties' success. Of special

importance are websites, easy to construct and maintain and difficult to censor, some of the best belong to radical right parties. Independent media play an important role for the radical right parties' breakthrough and the propaganda of the parties play a role for their electoral persistence since they can attract outsiders and convince first-time voters to stay loyal to the party (Mudde 2007: 259-260).

Previous studies have also underlined the role of leadership, the “charismatic leader”, in the electoral success of radical right parties (Husbands 1998; Minkenberg 1998; Carter 2005; Zaslove 2004b; Eatwell 2003; Gunther & Diamond 2003; Decker 2004; Scharsach & Kurt 2000; Rizman 1999; Pfahl-Traugher 1994), like for example the Le-Pen effect (Plenel & Rollat 1984), the “Haider phenomenon” (Sully 1997), and Zhirinovskii (Eichwende 1994). There are also comparative studies between Le-Pen and Zhirinovskii (Eatwell 2002). Nevertheless, there are also examples of non-charismatic leaders in unsuccessful parties as well as moderate successful parties without a charismatic leader (Mudde 2007: 261), as well as cases in which the leader polarizes the party's followers, such as what happened with Le Pen in 1998 when 59 per cent of the French electorate considered him an obstacle for the party (e.g. Mayer 2002: 177; see also Minkenberg & Schain 2003: 177).

The charismatic leader seems to be more important in the breakthrough phase, whereas electoral persistence seems to depend more on party organization. Again, the problem of the operationalization of the variable “charismatic” surges because it mainly depends on its followers (Weber 1987 [1919]), it requires that his followers perceive him as such (Tucker 1968: 737) and the key is the “charismatic bond” between the two parts (Eatwell 2006: 142). The factor leadership, a strong and dominant leader however charismatic he is, will bring more success to a radical right party in a majoritarian and personalized institutional system, especially when the heads of state are directly elected (Mudde 2007: 263).

External leadership can influence the party's success in the breakthrough phase, but internal leadership is fundamental for the party's institutionalization. Institutionalization, on the other hand, usually depends inversely to a successful external leader (e.g. Probst 2003; Harmel & Svåsand 1993; Panebianco 1988), because they tend to gather all powers around them and avoid internal competition (i.e. Lega Nord's leader Umberto Bossi in Gomez-Reino 2001, 15). The first objective of a party is its “identification” that is best achieved by the charismatic leader, guiding the diffusion

of the party message. The second objective is its “organization” that requires a practical leader to deal effectively with the party’s infrastructure. The third objective is the party’s “stabilization” by the leader of the organization and its electoral success (Mudde 2007: 263, original emphasis).

Diverse levels of radical right parties' persistence after their breakthrough, in national or regional levels, are connected to party organization (Mudde 2007: 264; Delwit 2007; Harrison 1997: 147; Mudde 2002b). Party organization can sustain electoral success in the long run, because it enhances party cohesion and leadership stability and turns the party into a serious competitor in the electoral arena (Betz 2002b). Furthermore, the leadership structure of radical right parties is considered an obstacle for strong party organization that in its turn makes such parties incapable of governing (e.g. Delwit & Poirier 2007; Fröhlich-Steffen & Rensmann 2005a). Most new radical right parties remain very small movements with strict internal hierarchies and a high level of member discipline (Mudde 2007: 268) or try to construct movement parties (*Bewegungsparteien*) around charismatic leaders and keep their anti-party ideologic profile (e.g. Gunther & Diamond 2003; Geden 2005; Mény & Surel 2002a). There are also a few examples of radical right parties that follow the old model of the mass party, like the FN (e.g. Ignazi 1998), with various factions (think tanks, religious groups) with their own leaders and suborganizations who are all loyal to the leader (Mudde 2007: 268). Another important organizational aspect for radical right parties is their youth organization that is usually more radical than the party and serves for recruitment of young people that will be later send to the party (Mudde 2007: 269).

The principle for internal organization of radical right parties is usually the Marxist Leninist principle of “democratic centralism” (e.g. Minkenberg 1998; Mudde 1995a) with a minimalist structure around the party leadership, like the LDPR which had democratic internal procedures until 1994 when Zhirinovskii started appointing the internal leadership by himself (Shenfield 2001: 98-100). A possible explanation for the non-transparent internal procedures is that the active individuals are few, that many leading members used to have mediocre careers before entering politics to which they cannot return because they are stigmatized (Mudde 2007: 271) and this is also the reason why there are so many family relations between their members (e.g. Gomez-Reino 2001; DeClair 1999).

The last issues that have to do with internal organization are the radical right party's solid or fractional form. The organizational talent and practical leadership of the leader are important for

strong organizations. Eatwell (2004: 2) distinguished between “centripetal charisma” meaning their ability to attract the public and “coterie charisma” that can help a party to keep its subdivisions together. On the contrary, the split of radical right parties that is more common than among established parties, is usually due to internal divisions between the fundamentalist/ideologues and the realists/pragmatists (Mudde 2007: 273). Finally, through the internationalization process, radical right party success in one country can open opportunities for radical right parties in other European countries (Mudde 2007: 274). Specifically, the radical right parties abroad can benefit from practical assistance by their “sister” party, by copying its successful formula or by legitimizing their sister party's claims in their homeland (Schain *et al.* 2002: 16-17). Additional research could shed more light on this topic.

To sum up, the internal supply-side is the most important variable in explaining electoral failure or success after electoral breakthrough. Party ideology can partially explain electoral breakthrough between extreme and radical right parties, but it cannot explain the persistence or the divergent electoral successes within the populist radical right party family. Similarly, charismatic leadership can affect the breakthrough phase, but its importance decreases significantly during the phase of electoral persistence. For electoral persistence the three key variables are party organization, party propaganda, and internal leadership. Leadership is crucial for party organization and for local implantation, both decisive factors for electoral persistence (see Mudde 2007: 276).

As I explained above, although my research does not include the organizations' electoral breakthrough – because my case studies of the 2000s had not run for election by the time this research was concluded – the organizations' strategies can help us understand the previous stages of electoral competition, like their emergence, mobilization, and course. The empirical part of my research will start with the internal-supply factors of my case studies from the 1990s and from the 2000s, i.e. their historical roots, ideology, message, funding, internal organization, and leadership.

This last factor, leadership, is of major importance for the understanding of ultranationalist organizations' emergence, as I will argue, because an opportunity is nothing but an abstract idea until movement participants actually grasp it. Opportunity, although never thoroughly conceptualized, is generally considered as something existing outside of the movement that affects its chances of mobilizing (Suh 2001:440). A problem that arises from this conceptualization is that it ignores that the movement itself has to perceive changes in political opportunity structure as

being important in order to have effect on the social movement (Della Porta & Diani 1999: 223-4). Movement participants will evaluate in the external environment how effectively collective action can attain desired goals. In Doowon Suh's words (2001: 442): "change in a political situation becomes an "opportunity" only if it is perceived as such by movement agents". It is the leaders who will usually turn a structural change into an opportunity for action, because they are charged with the strategical choices of the organization, they can easily influence decisions on the organizations' future, and they may have more information than a simple participant.

2.2. Externalist versus internalist studies on the radical right

The study of the new radical right has been "strictly divided" from the study of new social movements (Rydgren 2007: 257). Most research has focused on parties, while studies on the non-party sector, e.g. think tanks, informal circles of intellectuals, civil society organizations, women's organizations, are scarce (Rydgren 2007: 257). Right-wing movements have resurged worldwide, varying from neo-Nazi gangs and white power skinheads to religious supremacists (Blee 2007: 119). This trend has inevitably captured the interest of fields as sociology and ethnology whose main focus were movements with progressive agendas, e.g. feminist, labor, civil rights, environmental, antiglobalization, LGBT movements (Blee 2007: 119). After all, radical right parties are part of a larger mobilization of far right movements (Klandermans & Mayer 2006: 7)

To this extent, the theoretical mechanisms and findings from social movements' research and related areas could offer useful insights into the radical right (Rydgren 2007: 257). Many studies that come from the field of radical right research have been criticized as "externalist" (Goodwin 2006), because they analyze the macro environments that give birth to radical right organizations and neglect the dynamics of the radical right itself. They can explain under which conditions radical right parties emerge and become institutionalized, but they fail to explain its periodic emergence. Therefore, a more thorough analysis of micromobilization that has to do with individual and collective identities, and on the recruiting strategies of radical right groups is needed (Blee 2007: 120).

Externalist theories also fail to grasp the motivations of activists that sometimes may have little connection to political ideology (Blee 2007: 120; 2002). Most studies rely on publicly available data, e.g. propaganda material, Internet sites, police records, leaders' speeches, which may diverge

from the ideology of radical right activists and the internal dynamics of such groups (Blee 2007: 121; 2005; 2002). But a closer follow up of radical right groups is hindered by the difficult, even dangerous, access to them, the lack of trust of radical right activists towards academics, and the barrier of political affinity (Blee 2007: 121).

Despite the difficulties, “internalist” research (Goodwin 2006) on radical right organizations is constantly gaining ground. Findings from the resource mobilization theory (Obeschal 1973; McCarthy & Zald 1977) and the political process approach (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1982) contributed to a new understanding of radical right activists. Scholars moved from perceiving radical right activists' behavior as irrational, emanating from marginal and isolated individuals, or as an aggressive reaction to frustration, and started analyzing the instrumental character of movement participation and the reasons for which activists join radical right movements (Klandermans & Mayer 2006: 7). Internalist studies have also introduced new methods to the study of radical right movements. Life-history interviews, document analysis, and participant observation are some of the new methods that sketch such groups' reality (Blee 2007: 126). Another important aspect is that they offer comparative analysis of single groups across national contexts and over time. This way, scholars can identify and include in their studies the motivations of activists and non-evident for external researches aspects of radical right movements.

The introduction of social movement tools in the study of the radical right has contributed to a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon (see also Walder 2009). For instance, studies have started highlighting under-researched topics such as the place of women in the radical right movements (Bitzan 2002; Blee 1996; Metzger & Riegel 1995). Klandermans and Mayer's (2006) collected volume offers significant insights on the motivation of radical right activists, their social movement organizations, and the wider societal environment such motivation takes place across Western European settings, taking into consideration each country's historical roots of right-wing extremism, the political context, the multi-organizational field, and the political demand and supply. Finally, attempts to theorize new factors that influence radical right activism are presented in a collected volume in the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, like the activists' agency, emotions, variation in tactics and strategies that are endogenous to the movement cultural features, and suspicion (Kimmel 2007; Linden & Klandermans 2007, Virchow 2007; Berezin 2007; Sehgal 2007).

Interest also turned to concrete aspects of the radical right subcultural environment. The role of music was introduced as an important tool for campaigning purposes and for the recruitment of new, usually young, members (e.g. Cotter 1999; Brown 2004; Futrell *et al.* 2006; Tipaldou 2012), for its role on mobilization (Corte & Edwards 2008), and for its use from radical right movements in a comparative perspective across Western and Eastern Europe (see the edited volume of Shekhovtsov & Jackson 2012). The radical right's media strategies and transnational networks from interdisciplinary and transnational perspectives are two further topics of growing scholarly interest in the last years, given the communication possibilities that new communication technologies offer (e.g. Laruelle 2015; Tipaldou 2015; Simpson & Druxes 2015).

Research has also included the skinhead subcultures in different settings and to some extent their countermovement (antifascist movement), e.g. in the United States (Hamm 2009; 1993), in Russia (Pilkington *et al.* 2013; Pilkington 2010) and was broadened by infiltrated journalists in these subcultures, e.g. in Spain (Salas 2003), and documentary work, e.g. Giorgos Avgeropoulos' *I Ageli ton Levkon Likon* [The Herd of White Wolves] is about Russia's skinheads and Marc-Aurèle Vecchione's *Antifa: Chasseurs de Skins* [Antifa: Skins Hunters] about the French antifascist movement.¹⁷

Closely connected to the internalist turn is the development of research around factors that go beyond the structural approach. Mobilization and process theories focus on structural shifts that enabled actors to act collectively on longstanding grievances, giving an answer to “how” mobilization occurs (Polletta & Jasper 2001: 283). Nevertheless, these theories can still not give a straightforward answer to “why” collective actors come into being at a specific point in time. The “cultural turn” on social movements’ research tries to fill this gap using often somewhat neglected factors, such as identity, culture and emotions (Goodwin and Jasper 1999: 53) and to include countercultural movements that have been mostly ignored by process theorists, e.g. “literary, musical, and other artistic movements that challenge dominant beliefs and symbols, influence collective identities, and even penetrate more state- oriented movements” (Goodwin and Jasper 1999:35).

¹⁷ Avgeropoulos, Giorgos (2008) *I Ageli ton Levkon Likon* [The Herd of White Wolves], Eksantas, documentary, Greece, available at: <http://www.exandasdocumentaries.com/documentaries/chronologically/2007-2008/110-the-pack-of-white-wolves>, accessed 30 June 2015; Vecchione, Marc Aurèle (2008) *Antifa: Chasseurs de Skins* [Antifa: Skins Hunters], documentary, France.

Scholars have started addressing these problems, adding factors that had to do with nonstructural variables, like strategy and agency, which have to do with the active choices and efforts of movement actors, their opponents, and other players, and cultural factors, like moral visions, cognitive understandings, and emotions (Goodwin & Jasper 1999: 29). Driven by the belief that culture can lead to explanations about how society works, studies on the field influenced by the “cultural turn” have increasingly strived to offer systematic approaches to culture (Johnston 2009: 5-6).

The definitions of culture vary substantially. For Anne Norton (2004:2), culture is not a variable at all, because it is everywhere. Etkind talks about a “psychological culture”, meaning a “set of theories and practices that describe, prescribe, and facilitate the formation of certain cognitive, emotional, and behavioral traits in a given population”. He argues that notions as “national character”, “modal personality”, “collective unconscious”, “ethnic mentality”, and “cultural identity” are designed to capture psychological traits that distinguish social groups. Psychological culture enters the psychological makeup of individuals, offering them ready-made models for self-understanding, but is different from the way they feel, think, and act. The approach, based on *Folkpsychologie*, grew to include the role of culture and psychology in nation-building, and was sealed by Ernest Gellner’s provocative assumption that cultures produce nations, and not vice versa (Etkind 1996:99ff.).

David S. Meyer argues that in order to understand the process and the meaningful realities of social protest research has to link the notions of identity to an analysis of political process. States can create identities within the norms they pose while it is in this environment that activists choose the ways they will identify themselves, by alliances, claims, and tactics (Meyer 2002:5, 12). Identity is a social process, it is what emerges from the individual’s process of self-identification and external recognition (Della Porta & Diani 1999:91). Collective identities¹⁸ can help explain the macrohistorical context within which movements emerge (Polletta & Jasper 2001: 284). Especially for transition countries, like Russia, previous research has shown that actions driven by identity rather than calculations of interest are especially likely when political, economic, or social change has destabilized prior identities (Ringmar 1996). In the words of David S. Meyer:

¹⁸ Collective identity is defined as “an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution” that can be imagined or experienced directly and which is distinct from personal identity but may form part of it (Polletta & Jasper 2001: 285).

“The state makes “dissidents”, creating common cause and thus an identity. To ignore government policy in creating causes and constituencies is to essentialize identity and ignore the importance of possibility and human agency. Only by understanding structure and constraints can we have a meaningful – and ultimately empowering – understanding of agency. In the case of East European dissidents, the state, by limiting democratic means of participation, turns everyone with a grievance into a democracy activist – at least for a time” (Meyer 2002: 13).

But how can we analyze activists’ understanding of potential opportunities for their movements (Della Porta & Diani 1999: 223-4)? Sidney Tarrow implicitly recognizes that people interpret political opportunities through cultural filters in his definition, because he includes “incentives” and “expectations” that necessarily involve interpretation (Goodwin & Jasper 1999: 33). Furthermore, an important factor that may intervene in the causal relationship between political opportunities and social movements is the movements’ “cultural framing” of political opportunity that is defined as “conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understanding of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action” (McAdam *et al.* 1996: 6-8). Collective action frames are “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (Benford and Snow 2000; 614). They are the result of the activity of “framing”, which means actively signifying or constructing meaning through agency and contention (Benford and Snow 2000; 614). Framing is “a necessary and crucial modifier of social movements, as is political opportunity” (Suh 2001: 444) and “without objective political opportunity, framing of an outcome source cannot occur; likewise, without framing, the influence of political opportunity is indeterminate” (Suh 2001: 445).

Nevertheless, the effort to introduce cultural factors to the study of social movements has received considerable critique. Polletta (1997: 439) points out that the understanding of master frames as “deliberately chosen worldviews, which can be embraced or suspended depending on leaders’ perceptions of strategic imperatives”, as Snow and Benford put it (1992: 146), is missing the fact that the same master frames are shaped by prevailing ideological frames. Goodwin and Jasper (1999:29) point out that process theorists try to make strategy, agency, and culture look more like structures, therefore in their effort to include culture they came up with the variables “mobilizing structures” and “framing” that “actually leaves out most of culture” (Goodwin & Jasper 1999: 29). For instance, culture permeates the political opportunities and mobilizing structures, perceptions

can also create opportunities, framing cannot capture all cultural dynamics, i.e. emotions, moral principles, intuitions, and strategic action is shaped by expectations (Goodwin & Jasper 1999: 52-53).

So, in addition to political-institutional variables and the technological developments, I will look at the impact of cultural-discursive factors as a relevant political opportunity structure for the radical right claim making. Discursive opportunities link political opportunity structure and framing perspectives on collective action and can capture the role of the public sphere where activists communicate their message and gain information about the actions and reactions of other players (Koopmans & Olzak 2004: 198-199). As in the political sphere, the boundaries of the public sphere are not fixed, but expand and contract over time. To this extent, the variables (i) traumatic public events, (ii) scope of migrantophobia in the media, and (iii) national traditions provide different sets of discursive opportunities which determine the degree of visibility, resonance, and legitimacy of xenophobic claims and extreme-right actors (see also Giugni *et al.* 2005: 146).

2.3. My argument

My approach for explaining emergence and organizational change of Russian nationalist-patriotic social movement organizations is grounded on the ethnic-backlash thesis, on political opportunities accounts, and on the role of leadership. In particular, the ethnic-backlash thesis (demand-side theories) helps us understand how mass migration from the former CIS countries along with emerging social problems (i.e. war, low birth rates) contributed to the creation of new socio-economic and cultural cleavages, as a response to the threats of which nationalist-patriotic actors transform their discourse (i.e. xenophobic discourse as a response to the threat of mass migration). Supply-side theories, especially the role of political opportunities, help us understand structural changes caused by new cleavages and by changes in the political and institutional context. Internal supply-side theories show how dynamics of movement organization and strategic choices can contribute to change. At the same time, cultural and strategic processes define and create the factors usually presented as “structural”. Human agency, in particular, is seen as the factor that activates structural opportunities.

I recognize three sets of opportunities in my study: political, discursive, and technological (as presented in section 2.1.2. and 2.2.). Grounded on previous studies focusing on structural factors,

my approach connects political opportunities to (i) the limitations that the government poses to dissident organizations and all forms of opposition in general, (ii) the repression against nationalist activists, and (iii) the creation of state-controlled patriotic youth movements. The first two are apparently hostile for nationalist-patriotic organizations, but through strategic framing choices—they identify themselves with the country's democratic civil society based on their self-representation as victims of state repression—they manage to turn them to their favor. On the contrary, the third opportunity structure, the creation of patriotic youth organizations from the government opens political opportunities for nationalist-patriotic organizations to mobilize, to receive resources (funding), and turns the use of patriotic frames into mainstream for the youth. Discursive opportunities are operationalized in the present study in terms of (i) reframed national traditions, (ii) scope of migrantophobia in the media, and (iii) traumatic public events. Finally, technological opportunities—a term introduced in this study for connecting the use of new communication technologies with political opportunities—will be assessed through: (i) the scope of Internet use in Russia, (ii) the potential for political activism Internet use opens, and (iii) freedom of expression in RusNet.

This study aims to address the analytical challenge of identifying circumstances that include both structural and cultural processes that through agency can shape the organizational forms of social movements. The new socio-economic cleavages and the political sphere compose the wider societal environment where contentious action takes place. These structural conditions open or close specific sets of opportunities for political organizations to undertake collective action. Political, discursive, and technological opportunities constrain the way in which radical right movements emerge and develop. Opportunity structures are necessary but not sufficient conditions for collective action. They have to be perceived and seized as opportunities for collective action by political entrepreneurs who will be available at that particular moment in time and convinced to undertake political action. These possible openings and closings in the political domain presuppose agency in order to be transformed into opportunities for collective action. At the same time, long-term cultural processes, like collective identity, formed by legacies and cultural traditions, e.g. hegemonic past, lack of democratic experience, Orthodox values, permeates political opportunities, agents, and the consequent mobilizing structures they might form.

My **argument** is that Russia's contemporary radical right organizations change their form, strategy, discourse, and model through an adaptation process based on new socioeconomic cleavages (along

the lines of nation-state/ nationless confederacy, civic/ blood citizenship, and parliamentary/ extra-parliamentary political organizations), on the government's response towards these cleavages (particularly through migration policy), and on opportunities the regime or other external factors (e.g. technology) opens or closes to them. During this process, the role of leadership is crucial, for capitalizing on the existing opportunities, for constructing an attractive to the public message that is able to draw public support, and for transforming their organizational forms and structures in a way that will enable them to survive and to accomplish their goals.

Dieter Rucht's model (1996: 203-204) for context structures and social movements will serve as the conceptual guide for my argument (Illustration 1). Despite the fact that it draws upon data on social movement in Western democracies, the model depicts the interplay of various sets of factors (context structure, social movement characteristics, movement outcomes) and considers movement structure as a crucial intervening variable between the structural context (opportunities) and movement strategy, mobilization, and outcomes. Therefore, I consider it a powerful conceptual tool for systematizing variables in the complex field of social movements that can guide the reader through my explanation on the Russian radical right SMOs emergence and change.

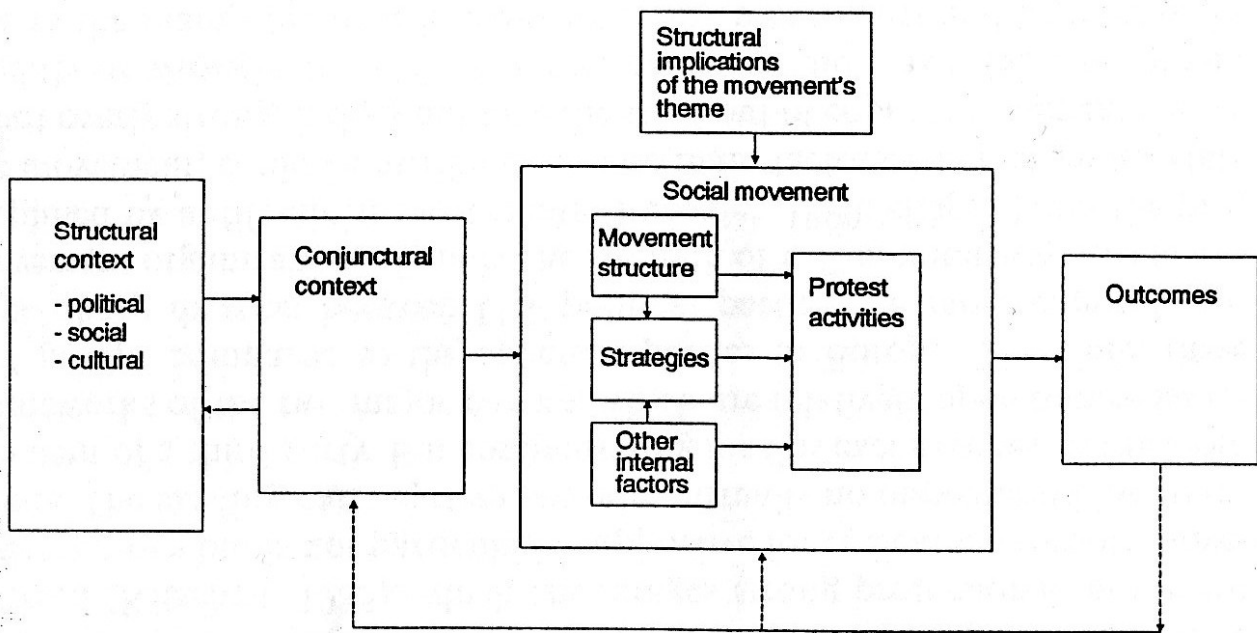


Illustration 1: Model for context structures and social movements, elaborated by Dieter Rucht (1996: 203).

When applying this model on the Russian case, I recognize the following aspects of the structural context that account for the nationalist-patriotic movement's organizational change: the semi-authoritarian regime, the influx of immigrants¹⁹ mainly from Central Asia and the Caucasus, the demographic problem, wealth inequality (one of the highest levels in the world), collective identity formed by legacies, and cultural traditions (e.g. hegemonic past, lack of democratic experience, Orthodox values). The conjunctural context refers to less inert factors, such as the Chechen conflict and migration policy. The structural contexts account for opportunities, while the factor structural implications of the movement's theme have to do with movement-specific opportunities, links to movements within and across countries, as well as diffusion between them. All these external to the movement opportunities shape movement structure and other internal factors, like ideology, central themes, and aspects of leadership, which in their turn shape organizational strategies and protest activities. There are more cases of independent effects of internal to the movement factors that shape its structure. This study focuses on the role of leadership in perceiving opportunities as such

¹⁹ Indicative, the year with the maximum inflow, 1994, Russia received more than one million immigrants, a number that was, nevertheless, was reduced twice by 1996 (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 31). This accounts for registered migration, since the number of irregular migrants are speculative. A 2004 study by Y. Tiurikanova (ILO 2004,66) showed that only 10 percent of the total of migrants was regular in Russia (ILO 2004 [Ivakhnyuk 2009:45]).

and turning them into factors that facilitate their organization's change. Finally, the model takes into consideration that mobilization and outcomes may feed back into both movement structures and context structures (Rucht 1996: 191- 203).

3. Research Design and Methodology

“Listening is an art that carries hidden responsibilities,
however; it brings with it the expectation of being understood”
Pilkington *et al.* 2010: 21

Previous research on the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement has produced many single case studies. Additionally, the Russian case has often been compared to other Eastern European or Western European countries. In what follows I summarize these findings, describing my case selections rationale, as well as my methodology for gathering the relevant data to test my argument against alternative hypothesis.

3.1. Single-case country studies on Russia

Single-case country studies focus on each country’s particular past and heritage for the explanation of the radical right’s features and mobilization (Minkenberg 2009: 447). The study of the radical right in Russia began with the systematic record of organizations that embrace nationalist ideology by Russian scholars and was soon followed by Western scholars, especially after Vladimir Zhirinovskii's high electoral score in the 1993 legislative elections.

Studies on the Russian radical right were focusing on anti-Westernism as a common ideological theme in the 1990s (Laqueur 1993, Dunlop 1996, Allensworth 1998; Shenfield 2001; Parland 2004). In the 2000s, the focus shifted towards sociological and anthropological approaches of nationalist networks (Pilkington *et.al.* 2010; Shnirelman 2011) and towards a repositioning of Russian nationalism in a global context (Laruelle 2009). The study of movements that belong to the ‘uncivil society’²⁰ was amplified over the years with studies on Orthodox nationalist groups (Verkhovsky *et al.* 1999; Mitrofanova 2004) and on Russian New Right intellectuals and think tanks (Mathyl 2002; Sokolov 2006; Laruelle 2006; Umland 2010b).

The extent to which research on the Russian radical right can use the same theoretical tools that were developed for Western contexts has been under debate. Vera Tolz identifies similarities in the

²⁰ ‘Uncivil’ or ‘non-civil’ society refers to groups with non-democratic or right-wing extremist ideas, groups that use violence as a means for the achievement of their goals or that lack the spirit of civility. Far-right parties and movements belong to this category (Kopecký & Mudde 2003, p. 4; Kubik 2005, p. 107).

roots of right-wing extremism between the East and the West, namely social and cultural changes; the challenging of established identities, values and institutions; the weakening of the welfare state; and political scandals, but also stresses the differences in Russia. According to Tolz, the social, economic and political changes in Russia have been much more drastic and have affected more people and in more dramatic ways than in Western Europe. For example, long-accepted identities, particularly national ones have been challenged and “the main difference is that the expression of racial intolerance and of a paranoid worldview is much more acceptable in Russia, both among members of the mainstream political establishment and the public at large” (Tolz 2003:269).

Markus Mathyl also underlines the difference between the Russian Federation and other Eastern European countries. He argues that the main difference is that only a small minority of Russian ultra-nationalists perceived the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the breakup of the Soviet sphere of influence as a gain regarding Russia's national autonomy. The majority of ultra-nationalists saw the loss of the ‘Empire’ as a national defeat, the result of an imaginary Third World War, and of forces that were engaged into a world conspiracy against Russia (Mathyl 2002:886).

Studies on the Russian far right organizations of the 1990s are disproportionately more numerous than on their counterparts in the 2000s. Approaches by Russian scholars are merely taxonomic or outdated to cover events in the first half of the 2000s (Varga 2008: 564), with the exception of Misha Sokolov, who concentrated on the agency of far-right organizations, taking into consideration how these far-right organizations through a flexible ideology court other actors such as the Orthodox Church (Sokolov 2004 [Varga 2008: 564]). Studies explaining fluctuations within the Russian radical right scene are also scarce. Furthermore, the majority of the studies on the Russian radical right tends to conceive it as a monolithic entity, failing to grasp thus the complex relations that exist within and among the organizations that comprise it, and its connections with opposing organizations. Exceptions are a few agent-based approaches (Sokolov 2004, Sokolov 2008) and studies that connect the nationalist organizations with state and non-state actors (Verkhovsky 2002; Likhachev 2002).

In the last years, social movement theories have entered the field of radical right research in Russia. The role of political opportunity structures has been continuously gaining ground in the field of far right politics in Western contexts (Rydgren 2003; 2004; 2007) and political opportunities have been introduced in the study of the Russian case (Varga 2008). At the same time, studies have started

using social network theories, and new media theories for explaining radical right mobilization, especially on explaining the role of new players, like the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI) (Zuev 2010, 2011). Further aspects of the radical right environment such as music (Pierobon 2011) and the skinhead subculture (Shnirel'man 2011; Pilkington *et al.* 2013), have also been under the academic lens.

3.2. Comparative studies on the radical right in Eastern Europe

Research on the radical right in Eastern Europe forms part of the new discipline of transition studies that emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union. Therefore, empirical cases of post-communist countries are significantly less than of Western European settings. Most studies of Central and Eastern European countries see the transformation process as a parallel process to Western European modernization. This approach has its roots in Émile Durkheim's argument that modernization is not (or is only rarely) a process of methodically planned and controlled turn (Boudon & Bourricaud 1992:349). System transformation is a term for all forms of regime change²¹, systemic turn (the beginning of change of the basic functional and structural elements of a political system²²), systemic change (the processes that definitely lead to a new type of system) and transition (from autocratic to democratic systems) (Merkel 1999:74-75). It includes the collapse of state socialism and its ideology, a simultaneous economic and social transformation that touches all aspects of life, and high levels of disorientation and ambivalence towards the new order.

Recent studies on the radical right in Eastern Europe have underlined the existence of Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) four main cleavage structures of the 1920s (centre-periphery, religious-secular, urban-rural, and capital-labour) and of new ones. Herbert Kitschelt (1995a) distinguishes between three basic cleavage dimensions: (1) universalist conception of citizenship versus particularist definition of ethnic or cultural status, (2) political and social liberalism versus authoritarianism, and (3) free-market economic liberalism versus economic populism, and hypothesizes on complex versions of the kind of cleavages we should expect in post-communist countries, which may evolve into party divisions. As far as the citizenship cleavage is concerned, although in western contexts winners of market liberalism are cosmopolitan, in post-communist countries we should expect that market liberalizers in economically disadvantaged majority ethnicities may call for exclusionary

²¹ Regimes are the formal and informal organizations of the political administrative centre, on the one hand, and the relationship they form each time to the society, on the other hand (Merkel 1999:71).

²² The "political system" comprises the government, the regime and the state (Merkel 1999:73).

policies against privileged minorities. Furthermore, voters unsatisfied with market liberalism are unlikely to cast their ballot for radical antidemocratic parties (e.g. neo-communist, fascist) and will probably turn to ‘social-democratized’ parties of the post-communist left or Christian and nationalist parties. Finally, with respect to the social libertarianism²³ cleavage, economic and social libertarian divisions are very complex in positioning a party according to the left-right axis, whereas social libertarianism is often fused with more nationalist or cosmopolitan views (Kitschelt 1995: 458- 464).²⁴

Can we study the radical right parties in Eastern Europe, and in particular in Russia, based on the theoretical framework developed for Western European countries? Pippa Norris (2005: 80) suggests we can. She focuses her approach for the rise of the radical right on structural explanations: the institutional context, the electoral system, and new social cleavages (Norris 2005: 80). Cas Mudde also argues that Eastern European party systems share similarities with Western European ones and so do radical right parties (Mudde 2000b: 27). Mudde perceives radical right parties in Central and Eastern Europe as a specific subtype of the new radical right in Western Europe, since they have the same ideological focus but they operate in distinct cultural, historical, and sociological contextual frameworks that have to be taken into consideration (Mudde 2007:5). His argument is shared by Szayna (1977: 144), who finds it worth comparing the fringe movements on the right in post-communist central Europe to the initial post-Second World War West European experience. He recognizes as potential reasons for the emergence of radical right formations the volatility of the electorates, the enormous social and economic upheavals and the discrediting of the communists that strengthened the rise of movements diametrically opposed to them (Szayna 1997: 112; 143).

Michael Minkenberg suggests that right-wing radicalism in the East is a *sui generis* phenomenon, “inherently shaped by the historical forces of state socialism and the transformation process” (Minkenberg 2009), a genuinely different variant than its Western equivalent (Minkenberg 2002:355). The transformation process in Eastern Europe is more far-reaching, deeper, and complex than the current modernization process in the West, because regimes and their legitimating

²³ Elements of social libertarianism are: law and order, family and morality, and de-communization (Kitschelt 1995b: 462).

²⁴ Liberal parties are characterized as secular, tolerant, pro-market and cosmopolitan, with a focus on the protection of civic-freedoms. Christian/nationalist parties want authority, order, collectivist morality, tough de-communization, economic populism, and national autonomy. Post-communist or new-social democratic parties ask for social libertarianism as the liberals but at the same time they support economic populism (Ishiyama 1995; Kitschelt 1995b: 462).

ideologies are collapsing, democratization is accompanied by an economic and social transformation resulting to high levels of social disorientation and ambivalence towards the new order (Minkenberg 2002: 356; Minkenberg & Beichelt 2001: 5ff.). In a similar vein, Paul Lewis (1996: 184) considers that radical right parties in post-communist countries are organizationally of a new type: “associations of sympathizers run by a political elite and professional party apparatus as tertiary sector organizations providing political services for a loosely constituted electoral clientele”.

Supporters of this approach argue that the post communist world has two distinct features from the West. First, it has a more recent history of contentious state building compared to the West, therefore the concept of the ‘other’ still relies on deep historic roots. The West, on the contrary, follows more contemporary narratives with a focus mostly on immigrants. Second, the transition of these countries after 1989 to markets and democracy affects the rising inequalities and the quality of governance and offers thus a distinct set of initial conditions that affect the mobilization potentials of the radical right (Bustikova & Kitschelt 2009: 462).

Transition may favor radical right parties for several reasons. First of all, because “modernization losers” do not have the option to return to left- wing or socialist ideas, so a combination of socialist with nationalist ideas on behalf of right-wing groups may succeed in attracting votes. Second, the radical right can derive benefit from the large “transformation costs” of such a complicated transformation process. Third, because, given the social disorientation of the populations, political entrepreneurs have a competitive advantage when they offer simple solutions and appeal to the nation as a whole, rather than to a particular social class or when they have a universalist vision of progress (Minkenberg 2002: 356).

3.3. The Russian nationalist-patriotic movement

The Russian nationalist-patriotic movement is composed by a plethora of social movement organizations whose ideology and size vary. Although nationalist activists often declare that they all belong to the same group, ongoing research should take into account that they are at the same time competing between them. Previous research has shown that “social movements operate as coalitions of organizations and individuals who cooperate on some matters of concern, and simultaneously compete for support” ([Rochon & Meyer 1997] Meyer 2004: 140). Similarly to

other movement networks, the opportunities for alliances of nationalist-patriotic organizations are limited by the quantity of resources and their maintenance (Della Porta & Diani 1999, 125).

To this extent, Russian nationalist-patriotic organizations function under a “competitive cooperation” situation in terms of interorganizational networks: while they develop joint initiatives, they compete for the same support base and for “similar sectors of public opinion whose interests they wish to represent” (Della Porta & Diani 1999, 125).

Therefore, we expect that the relationship between the organizations of a social movement may vary. Social movement organizations may be friends or foes or may even have no influence whatsoever on each other (the last option, however, is probably quite rare). Their members may have friendly relationships and, especially in the era of network movements, the same person can have multiple memberships in various organizations. There are also instances of intra-organizational mobility within the nationalist-patriotic front by members and leaders who switched from one organization to another. Nevertheless, all of them tend to belong to the same ideological umbrella. Therefore, the case study selection is crucial for enabling us to understand the dynamics of radical right protest in Russia.

As noted above, this dissertation aims to unveil some of the factors that account for within-movement variation. To this extent, I conducted a single case study²⁵ with within-case synchronic and diachronic variation in what is called a co-variational research design (Gerring 2007: 27-28). The population of my study is the nationalist-patriotic movement. It contains a big number of organizations (within-case units), from which I extract a sample of four. Hence, the sampling frame, or the cases, are four organizations, two from the 1990s: *Russkoe Natsional'noe Edinstvo* (Russian National Union – RNE) and *Natsional-Bol'shevistskaya Partiya* (National-Bolshevik Party – NBP) and two from the 2000s: *Dvizhenie Protiv Nelegal'noi Immigratsii* (Movement Against Illegal Immigration – DPNI) and *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie* (Russian People's Movement – ROD).

I selected these four cases, through which I expect to provide insight into a causal relationship across a larger population of cases (the whole nationalist-patriotic movement), on the basis of the diverse case selection strategy. The primary objective of the diverse is the achievement of

²⁵ Case study analysis focuses on a small number of cases that are expected to provide insight into a causal relationship across a larger population of cases (Gerring 2007: 86).

maximum variance along relevant dimensions (Gerring 2007: 97). This method introduces variation on the key variables of interest and has stronger claims to representativeness than any other small-N sample (Gerring 2007: 100).

The cases of the present research seem to represent typical cases at first sight, because they all form part of the nationalist-patriotic opposition, therefore we expect them to share similar ideological features. Actually, most research on Russian nationalism has been based on this hypothesis. Nevertheless, a thorough research reveals that the four cases differ in various elements. This is precisely the point that I want to underscore with the present research: differences between nationalist organizations may lead us to a more thorough understanding of how the nationalist-patriotic movement functions as a whole.

I based the initial selection of the Russian nationalist organizations on their success in terms of followers and media visibility, something that inevitably generated more scholarly interest and produced more research on them. The first choice that I had to make when starting my investigation was whether to include the two prominent—according to Western scholars—radical right parties of the 1990s: the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)²⁶ and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)²⁷. Parliamentary representation gains special importance in Russia given its weak democratic performance. The credibility of political parties with political representation is undermined because they are seen as Kremlin favorites. Both LDPR and CPRF have had representation in the Duma since 1991. In the context of Russian politics and given the country's weak democratic performance, entering the Duma in the first place and staying there over a long period raises serious doubts about the party's independence from the Kremlin. As for the LDPR, it may use an antisystemic rhetoric, but it has been voting in favor of most legislative acts initiated by the ruling United Russia party.

As for the CPRF, although it embraces great power chauvinist ideas (Hanson & Williams 1999: 268) and calls for the reestablishment of the former Soviet Union (Tolz 2003: 206), I would argue that most of CPRF's electorate votes for the party based on its Marxist-Leninist ideology and for its

²⁶ The LDPR has been often cited as Russia's representative radical right party (Laruelle 2010; Mudde 2000; Beichelt & Minkenberg 2002), as a 'proto-fascist' party (Dunlop 1996: 523), and as a fascist party (Umland 2010; Kailitz & Umland 2010).

²⁷ Scholars also argued that the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) is also a radical right party and characterized it as the party of 'great power chauvinists' (Hanson & Williams 1999: 268), as occasionally extremist (Tolz 2003: 206), or as a moderate national patriotic party (Verkhovsky 2000: 710), raising considerable criticism (see also Timmermann 1995; Gregor 1998; Mathyl 1999).

romanticized nostalgia for the Soviet past. Since the imperialist tendencies are common ground between the LDPR and the CPRF, I consider that the racist and xenophobic electorate will lean towards the LDPR and I will, therefore, not include the CPRF in my analysis (see also Varga 2008:571). Additionally, the CPRF denied to enter in coalition with *Rodina*—the only party the nationalist activists feel it represents them to a certain extent in the Parliament, as discussed in the empirical part below—for the 2003 elections (Hanson & Williams 1999: 268).

The extra-parliamentarian nationalist-patriotic political camp is considered by activists as the original representative of bottom-up nationalist sentiments. Nevertheless, the situation in Russia is extremely complicated. There are some Kremlin-made youth movements, such as *Nashi* and Young Guards, that could match the categorization of radical right movements. However, the fact that they were launched by the Kremlin excludes them from being a representative case of bottom-up mobilization. Movements against the existing *status quo* are constantly being banned and their leaders are often prosecuted, mainly under Article 282 of the Penal Code on inciting racial hatred. Therefore, radical right SMOs are often changing names so that they can keep on mobilizing. Furthermore, they have a stronger presence on the internet (see also Lonkila 2008; Zuev 2011:124), where they are organized in a network of nationalist sites and blogs, usually hosted on US web pages (Zuev 2011: 124). Their leaders are seen with conspicuousness if they have not experienced ‘problems’ with the authorities for one reason or another. The nationalist network all over the country may seem divided, but this is designed for ‘self-defense’. In reality this ‘network of networks’ is interconnected and its members know each other, despite their ideological disagreements (interview with RID leader in 2011).

From the nationalist-patriotic ‘network of networks’ I chose four organizations based on their ‘success’, which I extracted from their number of followers, their frequency of mobilization, the media coverage they enjoy, and scholarly consensus. Previous secondary research on these organizations has also guaranteed me more data on them. Additionally, the more prominent an organization and well-positioned in the media, the better were my chances to interview its leadership. We should keep in mind that one of the main constraints in researching the radical right milieu is the difficulty to enter and the reluctance of insiders to talk. As Kathleen Blee affirms:

“a closer follow up of radical right groups is hindered by the difficult, even dangerous, access to

them, the lack of trust of radical right activists towards academics, and the barrier of political affinity” (Blee 2007: 121).

There is a big list of other patriotic organizations, Orthodox nationalist organizations, and skinhead groups, which I decided not to include in this study. The reasons are that they have low membership rate, are loosely organized, and some of them are engaged in illegal activities, therefore it is difficult to have access to them. Secondary bibliography on such organizations is also scarce.

Another criterion for the case selection was the data I collected from my first informants (Russian activists, specialists, and scholars) when asking their opinion about the most important contemporary nationalist movements. This method confirmed that the choice I had made for the first three organizations (RNE, NBP, and DONI) was correct and convinced me to include the understudied movement ROD. ROD at that time was becoming more visible in the public domain, it was organizing protest events and heading a campaign against the funding that Caucasus received from the Russian state. Additionally, its founder, Konstantin Krylov, is one of the most prominent ideologues of Russian nationalism and a prolific writer.

The following table depicts my study's sample. The four cases (RNE, NBP, DPNI, ROD) were intended to represent the broader nationalist-patriotic movement and include the full range of values characterizing the X/Y relationship under study:

Table 1: Research design sample

Movement	Date of emergence	Leader(s)	Membership	Publications (newspaper, journal)	Characteristics
Russian National Unity (RNE)	1990	Aleksandr Barkashov	100,000 (1999-peak)	<i>Russkij Porjadok</i> (Russian Order)	Neo-Nazi, Paramilitary organization. In decline.
National-Bolshevik Party (NBP)	1994	Eduard Limonov	20,000-50,000 Nationwide (2005)	<i>Limonka</i> (Small hand granate)	Fascist, anarchist, pro- revolutionary, expansionist. Transformed into political party, <i>Drugaya Rossiya</i> (Other Russia).
Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI), later <i>Russkie</i>	2002	Aleksandr Belov, Vladimir Basmanov	Approx. 5,000 in 30 regions		Internet, flexible membership, loose leaderless structure, network in different Russian cities, mobile fighting forces. Banned in August 2011. Transformed into political party: Party of Nationalists.
Russian People's Movement (ROD)	2005	Konstantin Krylov, Nataliya Kholmogorova, Viktor Militarev, Tat'yana Shlikhter	Unknown, 5 regional branches by 2014	<i>Voprosy Natsionalizma</i> (Queries of Nationalism)	national democrats, pro-Russian human rights, against financing the Caucasus, construction of Russian nation state. Transformed into political party, <i>Natsional'no-Demokraticeskaya Partiya</i> (National-Democratic Party)

Source: Author's elaboration.

At the same time, I wanted these cases to vary in their basic features of organization, mobilization, and discourse, in a research design resembling the deviant case method that assumes that different combinations of variables have effects on an outcome that varies across types as Table 2 shows (Gerring 2007: 98):

Table 2: Sample variation (0 accounts for the absence and 1 for the presence of the variable)

Movement	leader-centered	Paramilitary wing	Solid ideology	Connected to state institutions	Transformation of discourse over the years	Transformation into political party
RNU	1	1	1	1	0	0
NBP	1	0	0	0	1	1
DPNI	0	1	0	1	0	1
ROD	1	0	1	0	0	1

Source: Author's elaboration.

3.4. Methods for data gathering and constraints

In line with the case study research strategy, I used a number of data-gathering methods. My qualitative procedures included participant observation, semi-structured interviewing, the use of indigenously generated documents by social movement organizations, newspaper articles, and archival research. These qualitative procedures are grounded in real-life situations and settings and are thus more likely to generate data that allow for the development of a more complete understanding of the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement (Snow & Trom 2002: 151).

The first method I used is documentary evidence. I have gathered data from the relevant secondary literature on the selected cases and on the nationalist-patriotic camp in general, in libraries and bookstores in the European Union (Spain, Italy, Germany, Netherlands) and in Russia, as well as from the Library of Congress in the United States. Then, I turned to data based on primary documentation coming from the selected organizations, such as leaflets, journals and books, keeping in mind that organizational documents may also distort information in order to present a favorable image of the organization (Clemens & Hughes 2002: 204). This was my basic source of data for the predecessor of the modern nationalist-patriotic organizations, the “free space”²⁸ *Pamyat*, and also for organizations of the 1990s, especially RNU that is no longer active. It turned out to be extremely difficult to find further data on RNU. RNU ex-members were not willing to speak about their past in organizations that were torn apart due to internal dissensions (see chapter 4).

Another method that I used in my study is semi-structured interviewing. I took the methodological decision on the geographical scope of my interviews based on my limited funds and on the

²⁸ “Free spaces” is one of the many names researchers attribute to “small-scale settings within a community or movement that are removed from the direct control of dominant groups, are voluntarily participated in, and are generative of the cultural challenge that precedes political mobilization (see Poletta 1997: 434).

bureaucratic obstacles for staying in Russia over long periods (I was granted a three-month visa). I decided to conduct my interviews in the country's two biggest cities for the following reasons. Moscow and the Moscow region remain "traditional hotbeds of racist violence" (Verkhovsky & Kozhevnikova 2011, pp. 8). Moscow is a megacity, Russia's most populous federal subject that concentrates the majority of internal and external immigrants. Apart from that, Moscow is the country's administrative headquarter, and as such, the majority of political organizations are based there, along with the majority of Duma members and bureaucrats. It seemed to me reasonable to assume that Russian political organizations, in general (at least those that aspire to mobilize at a federal-wide level), ensure their presence in the capital, where the majority of political decision-making is taking place and where they have more opportunities to come in contact with other politicians, policy makers, and political and economic elites.

The second biggest branches of nation-wide political organizations—in terms of followers and mobilization—are based in St. Petersburg. Russia's second biggest city has a rich liberal tradition (Gabowitsch 2013: 47) and is the cradle of today's elites (Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev started their career in St. Petersburg). As such, it can be considered as the second most important place to undertake political action. Indeed, two of my respondents (the nationalist activist and one of the regional leaders of Russian Imperial Party in St. Petersburg) confirmed that St. Petersburg is the country's revolutionary city with rich tradition on producing critical thinking, with which it seems to keep up with up to nowadays (RID leader, personal communication).²⁹ Indicative are the huge anti-corruption demonstrations after the 2011-2012 election, the 'Million March'; the biggest demonstrations took place in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The mobilization of the nationalist-patriotic organizations under study confirm this fact as the second biggest annual Russian March, for instance, is organized in St. Petersburg by branches of Moscow-based nationalist-patriotic organizations and by other local nationalist organizations. In 2011, in particular, the famous in nationalist circles Moscow rock band *Kolovrat* performed in St. Petersburg's Russian March. I conclude that the general pattern of mobilization strategies is that they are usually designed and tested in Moscow and then successful models are exported to the rest of the regions.

Once having chosen the location of my research, the next methodological question had to do with the population of my sample. I decided to conduct key informant interviews, a method that is used to obtain descriptive information that might be too difficult and time-consuming to retrieve through

²⁹ See Appendix 2 for the complete list of respondents.

surveys or multiple semi-structured individual interviews ([Tremblay 1957] Blee & Taylor 2002: 105). The survey started with one leader and has yielded a “snowball” sample of those individuals who are seen as leaders from the activists of the nationalist-patriotic movement and from Russian experts on contemporary nationalism. After my first interviews, I suddenly found myself “inside” the nationalist network, a fact that assured me that I had managed to talk to the “gatekeepers” who guaranteed me further access.

I treated my respondents as both informants and respondents, in the sense that my respondents served both as a source whose experiences and motivations were the unit of analysis (characteristic of respondent interviews) and as experts who informed me about the various aspects of the movement (characteristic of key informant interviews). This enabled me to gather information about various aspects of the movement and to understand their experiences over time, that is to gather data from life history and oral history interviewing (Blee & Taylor 2002: 102- 107). The average interview lasted from two to three hours and some up to four hours. I interviewed some activists more than once (up to three times), gathering up to six hours of recorded material for a single person. I interviewed eleven nationalist activists in total, but the actual number of interviews I conducted was fifteen. The interviews were structured conversations (see Appendix 1 for the questionnaire), with the respondents doing the talking and me asking critical questions when I felt that I needed to go deeper into a topic.

I interviewed eight leaders from the nationalist-patriotic organizations handpicked for my sample and two leaders from organizations that closely collaborate with the ones of my sample (see the Appendix 2 for the detailed list of respondents). I did not interview members of RNU which, as already explained, is no longer active. However, one of the respondents is a former-RNU member. The respondents' ages, along with their experience in politics, varied from late-twenties/early-thirties to middle forties by the time the interviews were taken. Some of them were experienced speakers, while others were interviewed for the first time. Some of the veteran leaders have started their activism in *Pamyat'* in the 1980s. I also interviewed a member, who participated actively in ROD but did not have any organizational responsibilities at that time.

My Russian skills were intermediate at that time; I could hold simple conversations on every-day topics, but with a careful preparation of the required vocabulary in the forehand and a written presentation of my questions to the respondents, I faced no serious difficulties in conducting the

interviews by myself. At a later stage, when I found an interpreter I could trust (and when he/she was available), I did conducted the interviews with him/her. This had, on the one hand, the privilege that I could do more precise interventions in the discussion. On the other hand, it had the following disadvantages: interpretation was interrupting the flow of the conversation, was time-costly because sometimes I had to give detailed explanations to the interpreter on what exactly I wanted to ask, and was intervening in the bond between the respondents and me.

In sum, I interviewed ten out of eleven leaders from the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement in Russian and the nationalist activist in English. Two out of four interviews with experts on Russian nationalism were in Russian and the other two in English. All interviews with the academicians were in English. Seven out of fifteen interviews in total (counting the final number of interviews) were conducted by me alone, whereas the other eight took place with the presence of either an English-speaking or a German-speaking interpreter.

The contacts I established with the nationalist-patriotic leaders has influenced the third method that I followed for collecting data: participant observation. The research, in which the researcher observes and participates in the action being studied as the action is happening, can produce rich descriptive accounts for everyday life. It can also show how organizational dynamics shape individual behavior and how groups shape selves (Lichterman 2002: 120- 121). The first public act that I attended was a press conference organized by ROD for the inauguration of its new campaign “Stop Feeding the Caucasus”. I only knew one of the leaders who spoke in the panel that day, ROD leader³, because I had interviewed him the previous week. After the presentation, ROD leader³ introduced me to the rest of the speakers (leaders of ROD and other organizations that took part in the campaign) and left. That is how the snowball effect kicked off.

I also attended the Russian March (4 November 2011), the biggest Russian-wide nationalist demonstration (I had planned my fieldwork to coincide with the Russian March). Some of the ROD leaders I had met participated in the protest, which took the form of a closed column parade behind the organization's distinctive banners, repeating the slogans the leaders were chanting in the loudspeakers. They were accompanied by some angry-looking guys, who were obviously there to protect the column's participants and did not seem happy to have outsiders following the column over a long period of time. During the parade, I took pictures and made videos of participant organizations and leaders. The act concluded with speeches by known representatives of the

nationalist-patriotic movement, like Aleksandr Belov, Vladimir Tor, Aleksei Navalny, Alla Gorbunova, and was followed by concerts. ROD founder and leader Konstantin Krylov was arrested the same morning before going to the March, so he could not address the public that day.

Things went different in the third event in which I participated, a gathering “Against Ethnic Criminals” in St. Petersburg (11 December 2011). I was accompanied by some of the event's organizers. The event took place at a square in the outskirts of St. Petersburg, close to Avtovo metro station. When we reached the scene, there were about 350 participants surrounded by a numerous police barrage. In the center of the square was a small stage with the pictures of ‘ethnic criminals’ victims (that means that the perpetrators were foreigners), decorated with candles and flowers. After the public act, we all went to a nearby café, to have some food and a friendly chat. Through this event, I also witnessed the tension between nationalist activists and law enforcement agents (OMON police forces) and the relationship between the leaders when they leave political activism apart, as well as their presence as a group in a public space in “normal life”. I also saw some of their promotion techniques, like handling fliers on the street and posting pictures of the event on social media.

I did not restrict my data gathering to nationalist activists. In order to obtain information about the nationalist milieu, I also interviewed experts on Russian nationalism from various backgrounds. The most notorious research center on Russian nationalism is SOVA center, a Moscow-based NGO established in 2002 by experts of from the Panorama research centre and the Moscow Helsinki Group. SOVA center collects data on xenophobic and extremist acts and attacks, as well as on developments in the nationalist-patriotic scene. It publishes the results of daily monitoring on the topics of: Racism and Xenophobia, Misuse of Anti-Extremism, and Religion in a Secular Society (SOVA 2012). I interviewed SOVA center’s head, Alexander Verkhovsky, well-known for his publications on all aspects of modern Russian nationalism. Another important figure was Vladimir Pribilovsky, head of the PANORAMA center based in Moscow, who has published a large amount of detailed information on modern nationalist organizations and its leader .

Additionally, I interviewed Dr. Viktor Shnirelman from the Russian Academy of Sciences, historian, who has published a vast amount of research on contemporary Russian nationalism e.g. racism, xenophobia, Caucasophobia, skinheads. Dr. Shnirelman guided me through my first steps in the fieldwork and shared with me his insight on important modern actors of the nationalist-patriotic

milieu. I also interviewed human rights defender and lawyer, Valentina Uzunova, expert on Russian extremism, and expert witness in legal cases of incitement of violence. She also assists the authorities in distinguishing extremist material. I will never forget how our interview got unexpectedly interrupted by two Russian police agents, who brought her some boxes full of books to ask her whether it was extremist material or not. It was.

My interviews continued with Dr. Mikhail Sokolov, a sociologist at the European University in St. Petersburg (EUSP), who has conducted research on the Russian nationalist the Russian National Unity and on Russian 'New Right intellectuals' and Dr. Vladimir Gel'man, historian in EUSP, who has extensively published on Russia's political system. Dr. Boris Kagarlitsky, sociologist and director of the Institute of Globalization and Social Movements (IGSO) in Moscow, author of a number of books on modern Russian politics, was also kind enough to share his knowledge with me and to give me his point of view on Russian nationalism.

3.5. Data analysis

Qualitative methods “enhance data to make it possible to see aspects of their subjects that might otherwise be missed” (Blee & Taylor 2002: 109). Especially the semi-structured interviewing technique is particularly useful for social movements which are difficult to locate and to gain access to. Through the semi-structured interviewing that brings agency to the center of movement analysis, I gained insight on themes and categories of analysis generated by the responses of the leaders, of a longitudinal window of social movement activism, and of the context of their motivations, beliefs, and attitudes (Blee & Taylor 2002: 93-96). This method allowed me to add new data from the responses of my interviewees that I had not imagined before and contributed to my sample's refinement.

I am aware that semi-structural interviewing can create different forms of bias: from the side of the researcher because of her personal convictions and from the side of the respondents for trying to make a good impression. In order to avoid bias and threats to validity associated with the other methods I used, and for increasing the level of detail of my analysis, I sought to achieve the triangulation of multiple methods (documentary evidence, key informant interviewing, semi-structured interviewing with experts on Russian nationalism and academicians, and participant observation) that brings out more nuanced and multilayered understandings (Snow & Trom 2002:

150). This is precisely the advantage of the case study, “a research strategy that seeks to generate richly detailed, thick, and holistic elaborations and understanding of instances or variants of bounded social phenomena through the triangulation of multiple methods that include but are not limited to qualitative procedures” (Snow & Trom 2002: 151- 152).

For the data collection, I first had all interviews transcribed. I did the transcription from the English and German interviews by myself (conducted with either an English- or German-speaking interpreter) and had the Russian interviews transcribed in Russian by a Russian student. I compared the Russian transcription with the original recorded material and then translated the Russian text into English by myself. When I had doubts, I consulted Russian friends of mine. Once I had the interviews transcribed in English and German, I applied close reading to the text, with the aim to understand the ideology of my informants and to identify the structural and societal factors that influence their decisions and ideological orientation, as well as their actions and goals. This understanding of ideologies is rooted in Van Dijk's (1995: 32) combined cognitive and social approach to ideology, which assumes that the ideologies of the informants are “constructed by a biased selection of basic social values and organized by group self-schemata in which categories such as *identity, task, goal, norms, position* and *resources* play an important role ”.

Despite the fact that my questions to nationalist-patriotic leaders are restricted in four sets of questions (see Appendix 1. The questionnaire for nationalist-patriotic activists), the volume of data gathered from semi-structural interviewing is huge and, as already suggested in the bibliography, the end effect relies on the researcher's interpretative skills. I also kept in mind that my interpretation has to be anchored in “the everyday understandings and language” of the respondents (Blee & Taylor 2002: 112). I analyzed the data from the interviews guided by a series of analytical questions that stem from my hypothesized variables (see the model on Illustration 1):

- I. On the respondents' personal trajectory: How does someone enter the radical right movement in Russia? Were there any critical-events in their life-history that made them become radical right wing activists? What drove them to make their own organization instead of staying with the older existing ones?

- II. On the features of the respondents' respective organizations: Who do they consider as their enemy? Along which distinctive lines do they construct the *us* versus *them* divide? How

widespread are the organizations?

III. On the nationalist movement as a whole: Are there any outcomes from the actions of the nationalist movement? Is it getting more powerful or even mainstream? Which are the allies and the enemies of each organization? Are they working as a network and if so, are they aware of it?

IV. On the political and social situation in Russia: What were the main cleavages when they entered politics that made them join the ultranationalist cause? Which opportunities do they recognize that helped their organization(s) and/or the radical right movement evolve and gain more support, resources, and public visibility? What constraints is Vladimir Putin's regime posing to them and to what extent does it differ from Yeltsin's years?

Based on these questions, I selected the most relevant data through the method of close textual analysis. I extracted keyterms from the text after at least one listening of the original interview and two careful readings of the transcribed interviews. I also used the keyword search function of the word processing software to identify the appearance of key topics, e.g. internet, Putin, names of other nationalist leaders and organizations, names of non-nationalist politicians, years, key events (Russian March, Kondopoga, Manezh), nationalities (Caucasians, Chechens), immigrants. I had to leave apart some very interesting data, especially from the life histories of the respondents, which I am looking forward to use in future research projects.

I also took into consideration “surface structures”, like phonological variations of my respondents for attracting attention to specific meanings. Surface structures of discourse do not have explicit ‘meanings’ of their own, but that can include underlying ‘meanings’. Such structures may express how respondents interpret events (Van Dijk 1995: 23-24). Based on the fieldnotes I held during the interviews and combining them with the careful listening of the recorded material, I collected data on issues that seem to generate strong feelings to the respondent, which I made sure to include in my research.

On the ideological features and mobilization of nationalist-patriotic organizations under study, I gathered data from primary sources in Russian, mainly their organizations' webpages, their journals, and the blogs of their leading members, from newspapers (in English and Russian), and from

secondary sources, especially SOVA and Panorama center. I searched for information through Russian and English keywords in the Russian searching machine Yandex and in Google.

Finally, based on careful processing of the available data, I offered for the first time new systematic lists on:

- DPNI's protest events from 2004 and 2011 (Table 4), based on data from three sets of sources: (1) from SOVA center and Moscow Bureau for Human Rights; (2) newspaper articles from RIA Novosti and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty with the keywords 'Movement Against Illegal Immigration' and 'DPNI' from 1 January 2002 to 1 January 2011; and (3) from DPNI's key document 'DPNI: Results 2002–2006' (DPNI: Itogi 2002–2006) (DPNI 2007) that gives an overview of the organization's mobilization.
- interconnections between the organizations under study and accounts for the network structure of the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement (Appendix 4) with data that I extracted from my interviews and from secondary bibliography.
- migration policy trends, migration flows, population growth, and unemployment from 2000 to 2012 (Table 7), based on data from secondary literature.
- migration policy changes from 2002 to 2011 (Appendix 5), based on data from secondary literature.

3.6. Ethics and risks

In accordance with the ethical guidelines of social science research (Social Research Association 2003), the data was collected with the participants' explicit oral informed consent, recorded in most cases and in some cases also stated in front of the presence of a third person (my interpreter when he/she was present). I recorded the majority of the interviews with nationalist activists, always with their permission (the recording was made by a laptop that I was placing on top of our table and close to the respondent, in order to avoid noises from the background), except from two interviews that I did not have the chance to do so.

In these last cases, I was taking notes during the interview pointing only the respondent's first name

and the date. Then, after the end of the interview, I composed a detailed document with the interview that I emailed myself. I emailed each recording to me and then kept them in a cloud service not installed in my computer, only with the respondents first name and date. In order to prevent the disclosure of identities, I kept the list of the full names in another file, separate from the recordings. When I returned, I also stored interviews, pictures, and data from my fieldwork on a hard disc that is safely kept and I am the only person who has access to it.

I had provided all respondents information on my person (name, nationality, place of residence, university affiliation), usually by email or phone, when I first contacted them. Concerning the risk of harm to field researchers, I met activist respondents in public spaces, in half of the occasions with the presence of an interpreter. The interviews were taken in cafes or restaurants, whereas both public events I participated were monitored by police forces.

At the beginning of each interview, I repeated information on me and explained respondents in more detail the purpose of my research. Respondents were aware that they can stop the interview at any time they wanted, or talk to me for as long as they wanted, and that they did not have to answer all my questions. I asked all activists respondents if they wanted to keep their anonymity, given the non-democratic characteristics of Russia's regime that has repeatedly repressed dissident voices in the past. This question was relevant to the activists, since there are no similar risks for the rest of the respondents, who are well-known experts on Russian nationalism in their country and abroad.

All participants agreed on having their interviews published with their real names, based on the fact that most of them are public figures who have already presented their political ideas in public in more than one occasions and are perfectly aware of what consequences their political dissidence may have (many of them had already been detained for their public actions and those who have not, were very well informed on the detentions of their comrades). Furthermore, I facilitated my contact information to all respondents and I encouraged them to contact me in the future, in case they want me to anonymize the interviews, but no one did so.

Nevertheless, taking also into consideration that Russia's performance as far as human rights and liberty of expression not only has not shown any signs of improvement since the time of the interviews, but has backlashed in some cases, I decided not to publish the names of the activists respondents at the present moment in my dissertation, in order to guard them against any harmful

effects and to comply with the guidelines of social research ethics. I also cut or hid the faces of participants in the Russian March in the pictures I included in the dissertation to protect them from being identified.

4. Radical right mobilization in Russia in the 1990s

4.1. Short History of the Russian Radical Right Movement

According to Stephen Shenfield, Russia has a very weak and fragmented living fascist tradition, in comparison with the fascist traditions of Italy, Germany or France (Shenfield 2001: 44). Nor were Russian nationalists by the end of the 1990s interested in any particular intellectual fascist tradition (Shenfield 2001: 45).

Yuri Samarin and Fyodor Dmitriev may be considered as the precursors of Russian fascism in the 19th century. They are authors of the book *Revolutionary Conservatism* (1985) in which they formulate the idea of revolting against the early state-sponsored modernization, incarnated by the following three persons: Tsar Alexander II, whose land reform emancipated the serf, the neo-Slavophile Nikolai Danilevsky, forerunner of modern totalitarianism, who was nevertheless closer to bolshevism, and the imperialist Konstantin Leontiev, who was looking forward to the conquest of Constantinople and the creation of a great neo-Byzantine empire (Shenfield 2001: 26-30).

The first radical mass movement was organised by conservative Russians in the beginning of the 20th century: the “Black Hundreds” (*Chernosotentsy*). It was a union of three distinct groups: the Union of Russian People (*Soyuz Russkikh Lyudey*), the largest of all three Unions of the Russian People (*Soyuz Russkogo Naroda*, URP), and the Russian People's Union of the Archangel Michael. The Black Hundreds were conservatives or reactionaries, according to Stephen Shenfield. URP was ideologically against the limitation of the autocracy by the newly established Duma, loyal to the Orthodox Church, in favor of the monarchy, and anti-Semite. Unofficially, they were encouraging the Jews to emigrate by instigating pogroms (Shenfield 2001: 30-32).³⁰

Fascist tendencies were to be found in the Russian dissident circles after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Stephen Shenfield distinguishes four such tendencies: the *Outright Fascists* represented by Konstantin Rodzayevsky's All-Russian Fascist Party in Manchuria; the émigrés who saw fascism from the vantage point of traditional monarchism but also maintained certain distance from it, like the influential philosopher Ivan Ilyin; the *National-Bolsheviks*, taken their name from Nikolai Ustryalov's group, who considered the Bolshevik regime the historically legitimate successor to Tsarism; and the *Eurasianists*, which created a new totalitarian ideology and movement, shaped by

³⁰ For a thorough analysis of the Black Hundreds see Laqueur 1993.

the work of Pyotr Savitsky and Lev Gumilyov (Shenfield 2001: 32-37).

Inside the Soviet Union, *Pamyat'* (Memory), an ultranationalist intellectual circle that laid the seeds for all modern Russian radical right movements, was formed towards the end of the Brezhnev period. *Pamyat'* was formed between 1978-1980 with the merge of three patriotic organizations: the Knights (*Vityazi*), the creative youth association under the Moscow City Branch of All-Russian Society for the Protection of Monuments of History and Culture (MGO VOOPliK) and especially the *Obshchestvo Knigolyubov* (Bibliophiles' Society) that is considered its immediate predecessor (Verkhovsky *et al.* 1998: 41-42). The Bibliophile's Society of the Minister of Aviation Industry emerged around the end of 1979 and its leaders were the engineers Gennadii Frygin and Eduard D'yakonov; the latter was a key figure because of the leader positions he held in all three organizations (Verkhovsky *et al.* 1998: 41-42). Especially, the members of the Knights were familiar with the patriotic articles of A. Ivanov-Skuratov and G. Shimanov in the journal *Champer* (*Veche*) and were influenced by the anti-Zionist ideas of Valerii Emel'yanov (Verkhovsky *et al.* 1998: 41).

In 1982, *Pamyat'* passed officially under the administration of the Moscow metro (Verkhovsky *et al.* 1998: 42) and was functioning as a literary and historical society at its beginning (Tolz 1997:180), organizing evenings of literature, history (legacy of the Bibliophiles' Society) and "historical tourism" (legacy of the Knights). Dmitrii Dmitrievich Vasil'ev, an artist, joined the society in 1984 and was eager to show his anti-Zionist ideas. His charismatic nature as a leader and his good orator skills made him one year later the leader of *Pamyat'*, while his friend Kim Andreev became the president of *Pamyat's* council. Since then *Pamyat'* became political (Pribylovskii 2003).

Gradually *Pamyat'* shifted its focus towards anti-Zionist propaganda and was the first organization that talked about that in public (Verkhovsky *et al.* 1998: 44; Shenfield 2001: 41). Vasil'ev considered Zionism and freemasonry the main causes of the world's ills and was blaming Zionists for the deaths of his mother and wife (Pribylovskii 2003). Most of *Pamyat's* members shared his view and, from 1984 onwards, they started studying the literature on Zionism and Masonry, like the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (Verkhovsky *et al.* 1998: 44). Vasil'ev also declared that he was in favor of authoritarianism and against parliamentarianism. He called himself a fascist, following Mussolini's line and distancing himself from Hitler's National Socialism. Therefore, he supported Yeltsin in the constitutional crisis of 1993 and was in favor of Yeltsin's dissolution of the

Parliament. For Vasil'ev, the Russian synonym to fascism would be “collegiality” (*sobornost'*) (Pribylovskii 2003).

From 1987 until 1992, a series of internal divisions gave birth to a number of new patriotic organizations: Igor' Sychev's *Pamyat'*, Nikolai Filimonov's *Pamyat'*, Konstantin Smirnov-Ostashvili's *Pamyat'*, Viktor Antonov's and Nikolai Lysenko's *Russkii Natsional'no-Patrioticheskii Tsentr* (Russian National-Patriotic Center – RNPTS), Aleksandr Barkashov's Russian National Unity (RNE), Aleksandr Shtil'mark's *Chernaya Sotija* (Black Hundred), and others. Vasil'ev's authoritarian way of leading and communicating with other nationalist-patriotic organizations and his abstention from electoral campaigns pushed his *Pamyat'* to the fringe of public life. Nevertheless, *Pamyat'* was the incontestable predecessor of the modern nationalist-patriotic camp or “the seedbed from which numerous Russian nationalist groups of either a reactionary or a fascist type were to emerge” (Pribylovskii 2003; Shenfield 2001: 41). Indeed, the most prominent figures of the 1990s radical right scene in Russia, like Aleksandr Dugin, Aleksandr Barkashov, Aleksandr Belov, etc., were former *Pamyat'* members. Vasil'ev died in July 2003 (Pribylovskii 2003).

By the end of the Soviet period scholars identified three main tendencies on “the national question”: the internationalist “Soviet” tendency, national-bolshevism, and anti-Soviet Russian nationalism (Shenfield 2001: 41). Within the anti-Soviet one, there were moderate nationalists influenced by the Slavophile tradition and more extreme nationalists who were also named “Black Hundreds”, as well as major tendencies of non-Orthodox character, like pagans, Nazis, classic fascists, New Right, etc. (Shenfield 2001: 42). Stephen Shenfield concludes that Russia has an autocratic, imperialist, militarist, and genocidal tradition, as well as a reactionary tradition. By the beginning of the 2000s, the Black Hundreds were alive, and nationalists were more interested in following the intellectual tradition of the Slavophiles than of émigré fascism (Shenfield 2001: 46-47).

4.2. Russian National Unity (RNE)

4.2.1. Description of the organization, its leaders and its background

Russian National Unity (RNE) was probably the most influential radical right organization in the 1990s. RNE was “the most successful of the nationalist organizations that appeared in 1990-92” (Sokolov 2008: 68), the “foremost radical nationalist organization and the best organized” at its time (Laruelle 2009: 56), the largest organization of the “new right” in Russia and the near abroad

(Kuz'min 2008). RNE is “virulently antisemitic, racist and homophobic [*sic*]” (JPR 2001). It became “the largest of the unequivocally fascist organizations in Russia” (Shenfield 2001:115).

RNE adopted a “completely new pattern of collective action” (Sokolov 2008: 68). Its leader, Aleksandr Petrovich Barkashov, managed to turn RNE into a combination of small political organization, medium-sized security firm, and criminal gang. The experiment turned out to be a success: Barkashov was at the top ten of Russia's most influential politicians ten years following RNE's emergence (Sokolov 2008: 75). His organization was “a complex, powerful, and synergetic mechanism for the accumulation of paramilitary potential, financial and material assets, and political influence” (Shenfield 2001: 146).

What distinguished it from *Pamyat'*, and other organizations that arose from it, was the structure of a military division. Its members wore black uniforms, received something similar to a military training (including shooting exercises) and were often employed in the network of security firms that RNE had set up. RNE was not interested in meetings and discussions. Rather it was concerned with marches and street patrols, sometimes joined by the militia. Its members were often involved in violent crimes and arms trade (Likhachev 2002; [Sokolov 2008: 68- 69).

Barkashov was born in Moscow, on 6 October 1953, and came from a peasant family. Barkashov was an electrician, but his biggest passion was karate and, although he did not win any belts³¹, he managed to set up his own karate club at the thermal station where he worked (Shenfield 2001: 116). In 1985, Barkashov joined *Pamyat'* together with one hundred of his karate students. He rose rapidly in the ranks and became member of *Pamyat'*'s central council in 1987 and deputy chairman in 1989 (he was number 2 after Vasil'ev). Barkashov was responsible for *Pamyat'*'s “counter-intelligence” unit and of about 100 fighters – the same Barkashov claimed he controlled over “thousands of fighters” (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). In 1990, Barkashov broke with Vasil'ev and founded the openly neo-Nazi Russian National Unity (RNE) that was using the Roman salute, a modified swastika and biological racism as its core doctrine (Dunlop 1996:519-520; Shenfield 2001: 117; Varga 2008: 566). Barkashov's objective was to protect the Russians and the Slavs from deadly enemies at home and abroad, particularly from the world Jewish conspiracy (Dunlop 1996:519-520).

³¹ Barkashov says he has won the black belt in Shotokan style (Aleksandr Petrovich Barkashov, available at: <http://soratnik.com/barkashov/#>, accessed 21 December 2012), but it is said that it was actually his brother Vladimir the one who has won the black belt (Shenfield 2001: 117).

Vasil'ev characterized Barkashov as a very limited person, whom they kicked out of *Pamyat'* for being a traitor (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005) according to one version, or a neo-Nazi, and a KGB agent according to another (Dunlop 1996: 520). Barkashov, on the other hand, said that he and the most disciplined and active members were tired of empty talks and wanted to do more serious work (Shenfield 2001: 177). According to this version, *Pamyat'*s members who followed Barkashov were tired from Vasil'yev, because he made them work in the organization's cooperative farm for fund-raising, he banned smoking and the public displaying of the Nazi swastika and the “Roman salute”, and forced them to learn prayers by heart (Likhachev and Pribylovskii 1997:8; Shenfield 2001: 117).

Barkashov and his group, not satisfied with the already existing organizations of the “patriotic” camp, decided to create their own organization in October 1990. Although Barkashov did not have the characteristics of a *Führer*, he became the organization's leader and his followers were called *Barkashovtsy*. Barkashov is described as short and pale and with no special narrative or writing skills; a person who cannot fluently speak in public and whose articles are written by his close colleagues (Shenfield 2001: 118-119; Sukhoverkhov 1999). Barkashov's first publication dates in 1991, *Era Rossii* (The Era of Russia). Then he published the *Azbuka Russkogo Natsionalista* (The ABC of the Russian Nationalist) in two printed editions (in 1993 and 1994), which was a collection of Barkashov's articles from 1990 to 1994 explaining Barkashov's worldview. A free copy was given to every member of RNE (JPR 2001) and the book was also available at: the organization's web page.³² He also wrote numerous articles for the newspaper *Russkii Poryadok* (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

RNE grew rapidly from 1990 to 1993. In 1991, shortly before the August coup, Barkashov issued an appeal to introduce emergency rule throughout the country (like Vladimir Zhirinovskii). He also told his RNE colleagues to be alert and sent a letter of support to one of the coup leaders, Gennadi Yanaev, on the 21st of August (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). In 1992, Barkashov became a member of the Russian National Assembly (*Russkii Natsionalny Sobor*), founded by the retired KGB major general Aleksandr Sterligov (Dunlop 1996: 520).

RNE was officially registered in 1993 as a ‘social-political movement’ by the Justice Department of

³² *Azbuka Russkogo Natsionalista*, Russkoe Natsional'noe Edinstvo, available at: <http://soratnik.com/abc/>, accessed 21 December 2012.

Moscow and began to publish its own newspaper, called *Ruskii Poryadok* (Russian Order) (Dunlop 1996:520). RNE's newspaper reached a circulation of several tens of thousands and was one of the two main nationalist newspapers along with *Den'* (Today), later renamed into *Zavtra* (Tomorrow) following its ban in 1993 (Laruelle 2009: 56).

From 1993 to 1996, RNE was at its peak, and was presenting itself as a mass movement that would defend Russian interests from all kinds of enemies. In March 1993, Barkashov's RNE, together with Vlasov's *Russkaya Gvardiya* (Russian Guard) and Federov's *Rus'* (Russian), founded *Ruskii Natsional'nyi Sobor* (Russian National Council – RNS) in “an attempt to bring a hybrid communist socialism with attributes of pseudo-monarchy” (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

During the constitutional crisis of 1993, Barkashov offered to defend the Russian White House against Yeltsin's forces with his group of 100-200 neo-Nazi *soratniki* and was involved into the gunfight (Dunlop 1996:520; JPR 2001; Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). It is said that vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi gave RNE the right to bear arms, because he equated it with a military organization, and set RNE under the command of General Vladislav Achalov, his “defense minister” (Dunlop 1996:521; Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). Supporters of the Parliament, like S. Kurginyan, characterized RNE's role as provocative because they were freely passing through the police lines, dressed in crisp uniforms with the “left swastika” on the sleeve (Dunlop 1996:521; Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

Some of Barkashov's men got killed “by Jews allied to the Yeltsin forces” and others got wounded (Dunlop 1996:521). After the end of the crisis, the procurator general issued an arrest warrant for Barkashov for fighting on the side of the Supreme Soviet –along with the putsch leaders Viktor Anpilov and Ilya Konstantinov– and Barkashov disappeared. He was arrested only months later, in December 1993, when he was introduced to a hospital with bullet wounds to the thigh and knee. The two versions of this incident are that he was either attacked by a car while walking around at 4 am in Krasnogorsk, or that he was accidentally shot by one of his comrades in the *dacha* where he was hiding.

Barkashov was imprisoned for the organization of mass riots and for illegal possession of arms (Art. 79 and Art. 218 of the Criminal Code). His captivity did not last long; in February 1994 he was granted, together with all the leading figures of the 1991 and 1993 putsches, amnesty by the newly

elected Duma (Dunlop 1996:522; Shenfield 2001: 118; Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). Nevertheless, Barkashov's "image-makers" started to spin a heroic legend around him. He was depicted as the leader of RNE's fighters during the defense of the White House in October 1993 and as a hero, who was injured and captured in an enemy assault (Shenfield 2001: 118). The myth that wanted RNE to be the "main defender of the White House" in October 1993 helped the organization to grow (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

At about that time, a series of internal conflicts and a hit to the prestige of its leader due to a film showing him trembling at gunpoint and revealing party information, caused the weakening of the movement (Sukhoverkhov 1999). Barkashov, then, ousted from the party many well-known nationalists (like Krivov, Kochetkov, Makarikov, Denisov, Rogozin, Nikitenko) as FSB agents (Sukhoverkhov 1999). In late 1994, regional organizations led by Aleksandr Fedorov left RNE to create a party of Russian nationalists (Kuz'min 2008).

Even if the organization lost some supporters, RNE became the largest and most authoritative radical right organization in Russia and in neighboring countries (Kuz'min 2008). It kept several branches in at least half of the provinces, 351 according to its Krasnodar representative B. Zelinsky (Kuz'min 2008) and had between 5,000 and 10,000 people (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). The print of RNE's newspaper in 1994 was about 10,000 copies (Dunlop 1996: 520). Barkashov also described his organization as a "reserve" for the Ministries of Defense and Interior for the 1994 military operation in Chechnya, which he supported (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). In 1995, RNE, probably as a response to the internal conflicts, changed its name to *Obshcherossiiskoe Obshchestvennoe Patrioticheskoe Dvizhenie Russkoe Natsional'noe Edinstvo* (All-Russian Public Patriotic Movement – OOPD RNE), during its Constituent Assembly that was attended by 304 delegates from 37 regional organizations (Kuz'min 2008).

In 1997, the OOPD RNE (or simply RNE) celebrated its First All-Russian Congress that was attended by more than two thousand delegates from 57 regions (Kuz'min 2008). The Russian Cossacks were also represented at the congress with the Chief of the Tersk Cossack Army (TKB) in Pyatigorsk, Yuri Churek. But the following year, RNE's attempts to organize the same Congress for a second consecutive year failed, because Moscow's major, Yuri Luzhkov, banned it. After that, Barkashov was engaged in a series of legal battles with Moscow's mayor (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). In the following months RNE was gradually banned in various regions, starting in Moscow

and Petersburg (also in Borovichi, Primorskii Krai and Karelia) (Sokolov 2004; JPR 2001).

After the organization's ban, RNE quickly began to disintegrate/crumble (Kuz'min 2008). Further internal splits lead to the formation of new Russian nationalist organizations, like *Russkaya Pravoslavnaya Partiya* (Russian Orthodox Party), *Russkoe Narodnoe Dvizhenie Severovostoka* (Russian National Movement of the North-East), *Russkaya Natsional-Sotsialisticheskaya Rabochaya Partiya* (Russian National Socialist Worker's Party – RNSRP), neither of which managed to be as influential as RNE (Kuz'min 2008).

4.2.2. Ideological features, influences, symbols

The ideology of RNE is, according to John Dunlop (1996: 523), “insane and genocidal”. RNE follows the principles of National Socialism.³³ Barkashov stresses that he is not a fascist, because the term fascists applies to the followers of Mussolini's party in inter-war Italy and cannot be applied to the Russian conditions (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). Barkashov bears sympathy and respect for Adolf Hitler. He says that Adolf Hitler's role in WWII is misconceived; it was actually the Jewish financial oligarchy, the USA and the UK that started the war. He also sympathizes with the German neo-Nazis and he claims never to have encountered German “nationalist organizations” that consider Russians second-class citizens (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

RNE's symbols are slightly modified Nazi symbols. The emblem of RNE is a combination of a left handed swastika, *kolovrat*, that is said to be an ancient Russian symbol and of the eight-pointed star of the Mother of God, “another traditional Russian symbol that counterposes the “Judeo-Masonic” five pointed star of the Bolsheviks” (Shenfield 2001: 119-120). The salut of RNE members resembles as well the Nazi salut: raising the arm forward with open palm, crying *Slava Rossii!* (Glory to Russia). Finally, RNE's dress code is black shirts and quasi-military uniforms, reminiscent of the original Black Hundreds –“the black-clad warrior monks who led Russian troops into battle in times of old” (Shenfield 2001: 120). More specifically, they use berets, high-laced boots, military-style pants, while the black and camouflage colors dominate their outfit (Sokolov 2008: 70).

According to RNE, National Socialism's main goal is to build a nation-state on the principles of

³³ ‘Kto i zachem obvinyaet RNE v Fashisme’, Russkoe Natsional’noe Edinstvo, available at: http://soratnik.com/about/a_16.html, accessed 26 December 2012.

social justice for the whole nation, without giving a privileged position to any class. The “new Russians”, meaning the financial oligarchs, are actually deceiving the people, using pseudo-nationalist slogans. In reality, for the financial oligarchs their own interests are above those of the whole nation, they want to steer Russia into a fascist path. This is something very different than nationalism, which is the love for one's nation and place of birth. But RNE, which is “the largest political movement of national socialist orientation”, prevents the plans of the “capital”, therefore it is a subject of constant attack on the media.³⁴

Democracy for Barkashov is “a society, where every fool or maniac recognizes the right to give his own understanding of truth”. Democracy is “the same deception and violence to human nature, like Marxism-Leninism”. Barkashov wants to establish a “national dictatorship” in the territory of the former USSR, based on the “Russian national state idea” (including Great Russians, Little Russians, and Belorussians) (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). He is in favor of a strong authoritarian government that will be led by one leader, without presidents, general secretaries, and kings and that will suppress all opposition. His prototype is the Portuguese dictator Antonio Salazar (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

Barkashov, inspired by the German Nazis, is obsessed with race and conspiracy. According to him, in 1917 Jewish Bolsheviks seized the power in Russia with the help of Jewish bankers in New York and gradually uprooted the Russians and Slavs in vast numbers, while at the same time a healthy development was taking place in Germany: Nazism. It was the Jews of New York and London that made two brother Aryan peoples, the Germans and the Slavs, fight against one another, resulting to the destruction of German National Socialism and the enslavement of the Slavic people of the USSR (Dunlop 1996:524). Then, in the post-revolutionary period, there was a “genocide of the Russian people” by the Jews, who destroyed the upper classes (the clergy, the aristocrats, the businessmen, and the intellectuals) in order to occupy their positions (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

Nowadays, Russia remains under the threat of extinction, since the “international financial oligarchy” ruled by the Jews of the United States and Israel seeks to rob its natural resources and turn its people into cheap manual labor (Dunlop 1996:524). The USA, according always to

³⁴ ‘Kto i zchem obvinyaet RNE v Fashisme’, Russkoe Natsional’noe Edinstvo, available at: http://soratnik.com/about/a_16.html, accessed 26 December 2012.

Barkashov, is converting the world to its appendage for raw materials' supply, in the name of “ideological myths”, such as the “universal progress”, the “struggle for democracy”, “sustainable development”, and a “new world order”. Barkashov also considers necessary to ban american products from sale and advertising, as well as american films and videos and western rock music (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

The last hope of the Russian nation is a young national elite, therefore RNE tries to recruit members from the military, from blue-collar workers and from unorganized young people (Dunlop 1996:525). RNE's goal is to help Russian youth establish a “Russian order”, meaning a vision of a great Russia with Russian Orthodox values (JPR 2001). Once RNE comes into power, Russia will be transformed into a unitary state and the Tsarist system will be revived (Dunlop 1996:525). An authoritarian state will be established with a mixed economic system that will have a large state sector and “aggressively “defensive” foreign policy”, since “Russia has no friends” (Dunlop 1996:526). Russia's 1914 borders should also be restored (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). For Jews and Gypsies a new Final Solution is planned, while people from Central Asia and the Caucasus will be expelled to their homelands (Dunlop 1996:525). Barkashov's program also includes the introduction of the death penalty for almost all types of crime (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

RNE is also critical of the Russian Orthodox Church, because it considers the church’s leadership to be Zionist and Masonic and against the restoration of the monarchy (Laqueur 1996: 190). Although religion played a positive role in the development of the Russian nation, it later became ‘internationalized’. One of RNE's spiritual fathers, Valerii Emel'yanov, alleged in his book that the Jewish conspiracy against Russia began with the Christianization of the Kievan Rus, a religion under strong Judaic influence (Tolz 1997:180). Barkashov has been characterized as a pseudo-Orthodox mysticist³⁵, a self-declared Christian with little attachment to the majority of the bishops of the ROC, except from the anti-Semitic Metropolitan Ioann, a public defendant of the authenticity of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Metropolitan Ioann was praised by Barkashov as “the incarnation of our spiritual strivings” (Dunlop 1996:526ff.).

Apart from Jews and Freemasons, RNE's overt enemies are liberals and democrats and its covert

³⁵ After his release from prison in 1994, Barkashov was influenced by a guru, Igor' Antonov, who was offering a mix of Orthodoxy with Buddhism and astrology (Shenfield 2001: 118).

enemies are most of the other extremist parties (JPR 2001). But also the FSB is against RNE and “wants war”: In 1997 Barkashov accused the FSB of being involved in the death of RNE's security chief Aleksandr Chulin, and for the heavy injury of two other militants – their attackers were also RNE's members, but according to Barkashov, they were FSB's infiltrates that were trying to discredit RNE (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

Sources of RNE's ideology are German Nazism, Italian Fascism, Romanian fascism, and the Black Hundreds tradition of late tsarist Russia (Shenfield 2001:127). Among the favorite readings of RNE members figure Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, Barkashov's *Azbuka Russkogo Natsionalista* (The ABC of a Russian Nationalist), Shafarevich's *Russophobia* and selected writings of Prokhanov, editor-in-chief of *Zavtra* (Dunlop 1996:523).

The concept of the nation is marked by an essentialist approach which is in line with RNE's “racially obsessed leadership” (Dunlop 1996:526). One is born Russian (*jus sanguinis*). The term Russians includes the Great Russians, the Little Russians (Ukrainians), and the Belorussians (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005). Accordingly, Russians or “racially pure” Slavs or “Aryan Slavs” are those who were not mixed with Jew, gypsy, Caucasus, or Central Asian blood (Dunlop 1996:526). Neither can homosexuals, perverts, drug addicts, alcoholics, tramps, and those with one serious or more than two minor charges, be patriots (Shenfield 2001: 114). RNE's candidates were obliged to indicate the full names of their ancestors for as many generations back as possible, which the organization would then carefully verify (Shenfield 2001: 114). Finally, the state should follow “eugenics” policies and mixed marriages should be a criminal offense, because they “violate the genetic purity of the Russian nation and lead to its erosion”.³⁶

For RNE the nation is the majority of the people who has the same origin and historical destiny. This common destiny constructs the language, territory, economy, culture, and national-psychological type or national character.³⁷ Furthermore, the most important value in life is the “duty” one has before their children, their parents, and the people among whom they live, before the state, and before God. And the most important duty Russian people have is the creation of a “mighty and fair Russian state” through which the Russian people will be the guarantors of

³⁶ ‘Osnovnye Polozheniya Programmy RNE’, *Russkiy Poryadok*, 8 (11), August 1993, available at: http://soratnik.com/rp/11/11_1.html, accessed 3 December 2012.

³⁷ ‘Ponjatie ‘Russkaya Natsiya’, *Russkoe Natsional’noe Edinstvo*, available at: http://soratnik.com/abc/a_7.html, accessed 23 September 2011

“justice” in the world – a concept that should not be confused with “equality”. Only then, according to RNE, will the Russian people become a Russian Nation and a “fair order” will be established in the world”.³⁸

Throughout the Russian history, the “Slavs” were most severely persecuted, whereas the Jews were behind the “genocide” of the Russian nation, i.e. in 1917 when the Jews were the majority in the governing bodies and destroyed all Russian clergy, officers, and *intelligencia*. The Jews were behind the collectivization that killed Russian peasants in 1937, in order “to break their resistance and to make them obedient executors of their plans”³⁹. RNE's duty when seizing power will be to protect the Russian “gene pool” from the Jewish conspiracy (Dunlop 1996:526).

4.2.3. Internal structure

RNE was an authoritarian organization with a strictly centralized, hierarchical, and disciplined internal structure. Its leading body was the Central Council, led by Barkashov and comprised of Moscow-based loyalists to Barkashov and leaders of the larger regional organizations from other cities that were a little less dependent on Barkashov. Lower-level leaders, nevertheless, were granted broad responsibility of their spheres of competence and each leader was assisted by an advisory council made up by their subordinates (Shenfield 2001: 128).

Furthermore, RNE was composed of central agencies, such as press service, intelligence agencies, a team for the coordination of the military training of youth, and an agency that was presumably responsible for the training of administrative personnel under the future RNE rule (Shenfield 2001: 129). The counter-intelligence section prepared lists of enemies to be arrested and executed when militants would come to power, collected information on a wide range of individuals, and tried to prepare the population for the introduction of the ‘iron order’ through propaganda (Dunlop 1996:523).

RNE received material support from sympathetic regional administrations and from the Ministry of Internal Affairs directly for its “military-patriotic” and policing services. It also received money from Alexei Vedenkin, a former KGB agent with influential friends, from businessmen, probably

³⁸ ‘O silax, brazhdebnyx Rysskomu Norodu’, Russkoe Natsional’noe Edinstvo, available at: http://soratnik.com/abc/a_9.html, accessed 23 September 2011.

³⁹ Ibid.

also from ethnically Slav criminal gangs and maybe from financial oligarchs Boris Berezovskii and Vladimir Guzinskii (Likhachev & Pribylovsky 1997: 38; Shenfield 2001: 141-142). RNE's members were offered in exchange for their loyalty employment opportunities in the martial arts centers of the organization, wages from the organization's economic investments, and the chance to make a political career. It was not uncommon, though, for regional leaders to use the armed members of RNE that were under their control for their own personal enrichment (Sokolov 2008: 75).

There were three levels of member participation. The lowest level consisted of the “supporters” (*storonniki*) constituting RNE's largest category and its social base of potential activists. Supporters were obliged to attend one or two RNE meetings per month but were free to decide what kind of activities they would offer to the group. The middle level was comprised by the “associates” (*spodvizhiki*) and the top level by the “comrades-in-arms” (*soratniki*). Barkashov was called “chief comrade-in-arms” (*glavnyi soratnik*). The two highest ranks had to participate compulsorily in RNE activities and comrades-in-arms, in particular, were obliged to follow strict military discipline. There were also secret collaborators in all sorts of public office, from the central government and the police to the armed forces and the Russian Orthodox Church that maintained contact with RNE through its intelligence services (Shenfield 2001: 131). RNE members could ascend to a higher level after intensive training. After successful training, the newly trained partisans, called *soratniki*, could lead small groups of about ten persons integrated within a larger pyramidal structure (Laruelle 2009: 56).

RNE was, above all, a “military machine” in Stephen Shenfield's words and its activities aimed to accumulate military, financial, and political power (2001: 136). It resembled the armed forces or the law enforcement agencies: it was organized into divisions, squads, and battalions; it used reports and orders for its bureaucratic paperwork; its members were wearing a quasi-military uniform (Sokolov 2008: 70). RNE was not only an organization, it was “a way of life” (Dunlop 1996:523). Its members were offered free food, free instruction in different kinds of combat, a free uniform and free trips around Russia as an attraction (Dunlop 1996:523). Even shooting was compulsory twice a week in “paramilitary clubs” of the organization (Shenfield 2001: 114; JPR 2001). The organization was also helping the police in patrolling the streets in various cities (e.g. Moscow, Ekaterinenburg, Kostroma, and Saltykovka) (Sokolov 2008: 70). RNE had also access to weapons, through its military training camps, through the volunteer patrol persons who had legal access to weapons, and

through its members that worked for private protection and debt-collection agencies (Shenfield 2001: 146). Barkashov was described as a dangerous person by one former member, because he managed to create an “army” (Womack 1998 [Shenfield 2001: 136]).

The estimations about the size of RNE vary. According to Barkashov, in 1996 his organization had 15,000 *soratniki* nationwide, 1,500 of which in Moscow, whereas the FSB downplays the number at 2,000 nationwide, one hundred of them in Moscow. The head of Panorama center, though, and leading independent analyst on the topic, Vladimir Pribylovsky, estimates that RNE had 5,000 to 6,000 members throughout Russia, 500-600 of them in Moscow and Moscow oblast (Dunlop 1996:522). Before the split, according to RNE's estimations, it had 25,000 members, whereas according to security forces the true number was about 7,000 (JPR 2001). RNE was targeting mainly soldiers, workers and students for recruitment and was training Russian youths of various ages (JPR 2001). Indeed, sociologist Mikhail Sokolov reports that most of RNE members he managed to collect information about, were either former soldiers or police officers (Sokolov 2008: 70). It was enormously successful to youths, nevertheless, the inner core of the organization, those who committed themselves for a long time, was much smaller (Shenfield 2001: 136). Some journalists reported that the number of hard-core members was 10,000 whereas its overall sympathizers were 150,000-200,000 (JPR 2001).

RNE's influence has been stronger in the regions. RNE reported to have branches in 53 cities. It also claimed to have had support amongst army, police, and state security officials, but also among the Russian Orthodox clergy (JPR 2001). The regions where RNE was stronger were the Russian Northern Caucasus, above all the Stavropol territory and then the Krasnodar and Rostov provinces, Voronezh city and province, and in the eastern and southeastern parts of the Moscow province (Shenfield 2001: 164). But members of RNE were reportedly making street and market patrols together with police officers in Voronezh, Bryansk, Kstovo, and Kostroma. In 2000, RNE's leader Grigorii Trofimchuk was appointed at an advising committee of Saratov's regional parliament (JPR 2001).

4.2.4. Activities

RNE was undertaking actions that were complementary to the ones of the police and the military. More specifically, RNE was patrolling public places in search of illegal immigrants mainly after

agreements with the police departments. RNE also guarded the governmental building of the Sverdlovsk District Council in 1992-93. In a similar vain, RNE regularly cooperated with official military authorities at all levels for training teenagers for the compulsory military service. Pre-draft training used to be taught at schools before the breakdown of the Soviet social structures. Pre-draft training took place in the “military-patriotic clubs” of RNE's regional organizations and consisted not only of fighting skills (from shooting and hand-to-hand combat to martial arts and survival techniques), but also of studies of politics, the history of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church, reconnaissance, crowd control, military theory. The instructors were former army officers from all bodies, usually with combat experience in Afghanistan and Chechnya. RNE members who successfully completed a training course in one of the organization's clubs were promised to be appointed in an elite unit by regional military commissariats (Likhachev & Pribylovsky 1997: 50; Shenfield 2001: 137-139).

4.2.4.1. Relations with the Russian Orthodox Church

RNE managed to penetrate also the Russian Orthodox Church mainly by offering its services for the “maintaining of order” at religious events after being called by sympathetic priests and church officials. It also helped the Orthodox Church's struggle against “foreign” religious confessions like the Jehova's Witnesses and the Seventh Day Advenstists. Finally, RNE seems to have been taking part in intra-church disputes, like when RNE members presumably acted in support of Bishop Arkhady in Tomsk who had been transferred from the local church, following the decision of “priests with non-Russian surnames”. An interesting fact is that many RNE members became Old Believers—loyal to the form of Orthodoxy that prevailed before the Petrine reforms— following political indoctrination within the organization, although they were not obliged to (Shenfield 2001: 143-144).

4.2.4.2. Propaganda

RNE distributed literature in public places. The circulation of its official newspaper, *Russkii Poryadok*, rose from 25,000 copies in 1992 to 500,000 in 1997 and 800,000 in 1998. Nevertheless, its propaganda was characterized as boring and stereotyped, which made it little effective in appealing to a broad public. It also handed “black propaganda”, meaning false leaflets from supposedly Russia's enemies, like Jewish organizations urging Jews to enslave and destroy the Russian people (Belasheva 1999; Shenfield 2001: 144- 145).

4.2.4.3. Activities for attracting new members

RNE organized public meetings in parks during the weekends often handing out pancakes. In order to attract young people RNE organized music events –the folklore group *Ristala* was associated with RNE– and held football matches in RNE-controlled stadiums, in which “RNE teams took on famous teams such as *Dinamo*”.

4.2.4.4. Electoral activities

RNE participated in elections only rarely. In 1994, RNE run a candidate for a vacant seat in the State Duma in Moscow's Mytishchin District who came sixth out of twelve (Shenfield 2001: 145). The following year, RNE did not take part in the December Duma elections, nor did Barkashov run independently on the list of other organizations. But five RNE members did run as Duma candidates in two Moscow districts, in Stavropol, Kaluga and Vladimir. Larisa Dementieva won most votes among all RNE candidates in the Moscow district Babushkinskii, with 2.53 per cent (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

In January 1996, a group of RNE supporters nominated Barkashov as candidate for the presidential election, but Barkashov later changed his mind. One reason might have been that RNE did not actually manage to gather the required one million signatures for registering, although it held an active campaign in all the regions where it was active. RNE's press service, nevertheless, announced that they managed to collect one million and one thousand signatures, despite the authorities' opposition, but that, as “a matter of principles”, they would not take the signatures to the group's central committee because, as Barkashov announced, the elections were “not serious”. In the presidential election, Barkashov did not openly support Boris Yeltsin but did call against voting for the Communist candidate, Gennadii Zuyganov (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

In April 1999, Barkashov created a “National Block” together with Vladimir Davidenko's organization *Spas* (Savior) and Valerii Skurlatov's *Vozrozhdenie* (Revival). Boris Mironov, leader of *Russkaya Patrioticheskaya Partiya* (Russian Patriotic Party – RPP), and Aleksandr Sevast'yanov, leader of the *Liga Zashchity Natsional'nogo Dostoyaniya* (League for the Protection of National Heritage – LZND), also joined the Block. The Block operated under the flag of *Spas*. Its list was headed by Barkashov and included also representatives of RPP, LZND and of a skinhead group called *Russkaya Tsel'* (Russian Goal). Nevertheless, the *Spas* central committee decided to

withdraw from the elections after it faced some registration problems from Moscow's regional ' courts (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

Barkashov did not run for the Duma elections of December 1999, but RNE members participated in the elections as independent candidates in various districts. From the participants, Fedor Galkin won the highest percentage of the votes, 4 per cent, in Stavropol region (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

In January 2000, Barkashov announced that he would run for the presidential elections but, unlike the 1996 campaign, RNE did not collect signatures because there were no signature sheets for Barkashov. Barkashov, then, urged his supporters to vote “against all”—copying the campaign of democratic and left-anarchist groups in December 1999—and numerous leaflets of RNE with this slogan were handed out in Moscow (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005).

4.2.4.5. Violence

Many RNE members, including regional leaders, have been prosecuted for criminal activities, i.e. theft, extortion, illegal trade in arms, violent takeover of businesses, and murder. At this point, the data are controversial. Stephen Shenfield argues that murders were commonplace and gives the example of Oryol, where seven out of the fifty members of RNE regional organization were found guilty on murder. He also claims that RNE members conducted various violent attacks against political opponents, people belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, foreign students of different color, distributors of radical left press, Jewish youths (Shenfield 2001: 140).

Mikhail Sokolov, on the other hand, reports that RNE members rarely made use of political violence. When they did, they were mostly beating undesirables, like people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds and suspected drug dealers. It differed though from the skinhead's technique which was the systematic nighttime hunt for lone victims usually belonging to different ethnic groups (Caucasus, Africa, Central and South Asia), youths belonging to different music subcultures, anarchists, homeless and skinheads who support other football teams. According to Mikhail Sokolov, since RNE was escorting the police, it was involved in crimes typical of police-officers, like racketeering, extortion, and the beating of detainees (Sokolov 2008: 70 -72).

In any case, the fame of RNE in the nationalist circles wanted them to be “the chief specialists in

violence”. Paradoxically enough RNE was presenting itself as the “most law-abiding organization”. Members were immediately expelled when they came under police suspicion and RNE even cooperated with the police against prosecuted members. All this, despite the fact that RNE members received an “impressive array” of criminal charges (Sokolov 2008: 69-70). Law obedience and distance from extremist activities were emphasized during RNE meetings – the military training sessions were presented as a preparation for the young to join the army (Sokolov 2008: 69; JPR 2001). Nevertheless, the organization was using verbal threats and warnings of severe punishment against its opponents during its conferences and press releases (Shenfield 2001: 141).

4.2.5. Collapse or transformation in the 2000s

On 13 September 2000, Barkashov expelled his deputy Oleg Kassin and the head of the Moscow branch, Yurii Vasin, from RNE for treason. The next day, the heads of several RNE branches (of the Ural, North-West, Kirov, Volga, the North Caucasus, and the Black Earth regions) as well as the heads of Moscow, Kirov, Ryazan, Mari and Rostov regional offices issued a statement with which they accused Barkashov of failing to lead the movement because of his problems with alcoholism, of his passion with Buddhism and of his denial to recognize the positive changes the new president brought to the country. They announced they were going to turn their organizations into independent political movements. Soon after that, on 21 September, RNE's anti-Barkashov opposition held a closed plenum that decided to exclude Barkashov from the organization (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005; Kuz'min 2008).

The anti-Barkashov opposition of RNE also split soon in three subgroups: the group of Oleg Kassin and Yurii Vasin named *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Renaissance – RV); the group of brother Evgenii and Mikhail Lalochkin based in Voronezh which maintained the name RNE; the Moscow-based *Gvardiya Barkashova* (Barkashov's Guards) formed by Barkashov's loyal companions (Likhachev & Pribylovskii 2005; Sokolov 2004). Although these three organizations united a considerable part of RNE regional organizations, they couldn't survive for long because constant conflicts between their leaders made any negotiations between them impossible. Despite their efforts, they could not be compared with Barkashov's RNE (Sokolov 2004). RNE never fully recovered from this crisis (Kuz'min 2008).

The former head of RNE's St. Petersburg branch wrote that the main cause of the crisis was that

Barkashov had lost the ability and desire to lead “the most powerful, capable, and organized force in the Russian national liberation movement”. Aleksandr Sevast'yanov, leader of *Natsional-Derzhavnoi Partii Rossii* (National-Sovereign Party of Russia – NDPR) said in 2002 that RNE was a “very prominent Russian association”, but that it “had lost its former influence” and started to disappear. Sergei Lebedev, former member of Russian National Council (RNS), pointed out that the reasons for RNE's failure was the leader cult, the rigid centralization and hierarchy, and the isolation of the organization from other nationalist-patriotic forces. All these reasons ultimately transformed RNE into a “sect” (Kuz'min 2008).

Summing up the main reasons for RNE's ideological stagnation were Barkashov's authoritarian control and the lack of a clear plan when coming in power (Kuz'min 2008). It seems that the organization was not prepared for a massive influx of people looking for answers—especially the youth—that RNE could not offer. Barkashov was described as of “very mediocre” intelligence, avoiding contacts with the patriotic fronts' intellectual elite. His personality contributed to the decline of the organization's intellectual level (Kuz'min 2008). Analysts also mentioned that Barkashov was using the income generated by the security activities of the party members for his own benefit. He has been accused of having reserved a big salary for himself (of about USD 5,000 to 7000 per month) and of driving an expensive car, which annoyed many RNE members (Sukhoverkhov 1999). Another thorny issue was the ambiguous stance of Barkashov towards Christian Orthodox religion. Barkashov came under the influence of the leader of the Russian Buddhist Community, Igor' Antonov, and was carried away into mysticism, violating the statute of RNE. Barkashov's openly associated Orthodoxy with the Russian people but, at the same time, flirted with two Orthodox sects: The Archbishop Lazarus' Lamb of Revelation and the True Orthodox (Catacomb) Church (Kuz'min 2008).

In 2006, Barkashov founded the movement “Aleksandr Barkashov”. The organization was open to everyone—even to those of non-Russian nationality—who “does not accept the satanic values of our civilization” and to anyone who believes in Barkashov and shares his ideology. According to its web page, the new movement was a better supporter of the mission of purifying Russia and opposing the satanic manifestations of modern civilization as well as the principles of commitment to rigid discipline and loyalty to the leader. In one of the organization's important documents, the “Oath of RNE associates”, seven out of ten points refer to the superiority of the Russian nation over all others, while it also states that RNE members must be “vigilant to all religions and aliens”

(Kuz'min 2008).

In its official web page, there is a link to the newspaper *Russkii Poryadok* as well as to the “intraparty” newspaper *Russkii Stag* that has only three issues on line (from 1995, 1996, and 2000). The last issue of the, once printed in millions, *Russkii Poryadok* to be found online was in 2002 when RNE published only one issue as in 2001.⁴⁰ This is indicative of the organization's stagnation. Indicative is also the exaggeration of the official numbers Barkashov's organization gives in terms of membership. Although Barkashov's web page mentions that the organization maintains regional offices in 62 Russian cities, according to researchers, a number of regions, and in Belarus, Latvia, Estonia, and Ukraine, only about 30 internet websites of this presumable branches function (Kuz'min 2008). Barkashov's movement never made any attempts to run for public office (Kuz'min 2008); he also became the director of the organization *Pora!* (It's Time!) founded in 2004. *Pora!* is a moderate nationalist organization influenced by the “orange traditions of the anti-Putin liberal forces (Kuz'min 2008).

In sum, after the split of the first RNE (of the 1990s), its members continued to operate in the political sphere, mainly through the organization's original structure to which some of them had retained their influence. As observed, almost all former members of the first RNE remained loyal to the organization's principles of the race, Orthodoxy, discipline and order, and considered as enemies the “world plutocracy”, “the Zionist globalization” and “the Jewish godless civilization” (Kuz'min 2008). However, despite their “common origin”, RNE's former members seem to have different interpretations of Barkashov's heritage and often competed with each other.

4.3. National-Bolshevik Party (NBP)

4.3.1. Description of the organization, its leaders, and its background

The *Natsional-Bol'shevistskaya Partiya* - NBP was founded in 1994 by Aleksandr Dugin, Eduard Limonov, “Egor” Letov, and Sergei Kurekhin. It emerged as a response to the anti-Yeltsin opposition that inspired new types of political mobilization (Mathyl 2002:63). The NBP belongs to the counter-cultural, expressly anti-systemic current in Russian ultra-nationalism, as RNE (Umland 2002:8). The NBP's supreme leader was Limonov, whereas Dugin was not only NBP's theorist: he

⁴⁰ ‘Ob uchrezhdenii Dvizheniya “Aleksandr Barkashov”’, *Russkoe Natsional'noe Edinstvo*, available at: <http://soratnik.com/organization/ab.html> , accessed 11 January 2012.

is a major theoretician of the Russian radical right, standing simultaneously at the fringe and at the center of Russian nationalism (Laruelle 2006:1). The other two co-founders belong to Russia's musical scene. Kuryokhin is a composer, whereas Letov is the lead singer of the most well-known Soviet Russian punk band, *Grazhdanskaya Oborona*, who began to reinterpret his own history and music from a national-Bolshevik perspective when he got involved in the NBP (Mathyl 2002:66).

Both Dugin and Limonov mutually accepted the division of roles for five years, until the simplification of Dugin's ideas for mass propaganda turned difficult for him to accept. That led Dugin to leave the NBP in May 1998 taking with him his small number of followers from the Moscow branch. I will start my analysis of the NBP with an insight of its ideological and operative heads because it is on the basis of their personalities and ideologies that they constructed the innovative -for the Russian political standards of the time- patriotic organization NBP.

4.3.1.1. Dugin

Aleksandr Gelevich Dugin, was born in 1962 in a family with military tradition. Dugin's educational background is broad. He speaks nine foreign languages, he has written several books on international relations and he teaches at Moscow State University, department of Sociology.⁴¹ When he was young, he joined by chance, through a neighbor, a secretive group of intellectuals who were to form his ideas. "The true masters of the Moscow esoteric elite" as Dugin called them, were Evgenii Golovin, a specialist in European mystical literature and poetry; Yurii Mamleev, a Christian philosopher; and Gerdar Jemal, a specialist in the metaphysics of Islam (Shenfield 2001: 191). Through them, he got to know the writings of foreign writers—whose works the group also translated—who were the source of inspiration for most Western European New Right intellectuals, like Julius Evola, Ernst Jünger, and René Guénon (Shenfield 2001: 192). Therefore, his thought is pervaded by the intellectual tendencies of traditionalism, Orthodox religious philosophy, Aryanism, occultism, and Eurasianism (Laruelle 2006:1).

Dugin joined *Pamyat'* in 1987, because it was "the most revolutionary organization available" and was even member of its central council for a few months. Nevertheless, the low cultural and intellectual level of *Pamyat'*'s members pushed him away from the organization. In 1989, he visited West European countries and established bonds with representatives of the New Right, like the

⁴¹ See Aleksandr Dugin's profile in the internet portal academia.edu, available at: <https://moscowstate.academia.edu/AlexanderDugin>, accessed 13 January 2013.

French Alain de Benoist, the Belgian Jean-Francoise Thiriart, and the Italian Claudio Mutti. His encounter with Western culture, made him turn more sympathetic to the Soviet regime, which he previously discarded, and to get close to Gennadii Zyuganov of the Communist Party – probably also playing a significant role in Zyuganov's nationalist-communist ideology (Shenfield 2001: 192).

From 1991 onward, he was a writer and member of the editorial board of the “red-brown” opposition's newspaper *Den* (Day) that was later renamed *Zavtra* (Tomorrow) (Shenfield 2001: 192-193). Dugin also established between 1990 and 1991 two think-tanks: the *Arktogeya* think-tank with a New Rightist and third positionist-national Bolshevik orientation and the Center for Special Meta-Strategic Studies, later renamed it Center for Geopolitical Expertise (Mathyl 2002:64; Umland 2010:149). The “philosophical portal”, according to its internet portal⁴² *Arktogeya*, was also functioning as a publishing house that printed Dugin's works (eleven titles) and books by various authors of the European New Right (Shenfield 2001: 193). Dugin published a series of magazines, but the official vehicle for the propagation of his ideas was the magazine *Elementy: Evraziiskoe Vtorzhenie* (Elements: A Eurasian Review), with a monthly print run averaging from 5,000 to 10,000.⁴³

In 1998, Dugin's ideological rupture with Limonov led to the abruption of *Arktogeya* from the NBP. From that moment, the NBP became more radical in its activism and less intellectually prominent. It was, nevertheless, not threatened with extinction, due to *Limonka* and the steady increase in the number of members (Mathyl 2002:73).

4.3.1.2. Limonov

Limonov is even more famous than Dugin and has become one of the most popular writers in Russia. His autobiographical book *Eto ya, Edichka* (It's me, Eddie) has sold over a million copies and has become one of the cult books of Russian counter-culture (Mathyl 2002:66).

Limonov was born in 1943 in Dzerzhinsk, Gorky Province, and grew up in eastern Ukraine, where his father, of Ukrainian descent, served as a secret police officer. Limonov came across a collection of the Soviet poet Aleksandr Blok that awakened his literary talent for writing and, in 1965, he entered a circle of bohemian artists, who encouraged him to become a writer. Limonov moved to

⁴² See *Arktogaya's* official web page, available at: www.arcto.ru/index.php, accessed 13 January 2013.

⁴³ For a more detailed overview of Dugin's activities, see his biography, available at: www.evrazia.info/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1882, accessed 13 January 2013.

Moscow, where he was leading the “irregular” life of artists, soon attracting KGB's attention

Shortly after, he departed for Vienna and stayed in the West for a total of eighteen years, first in New York, then in Paris, where he also acquired French citizenship. He became disillusioned from the Western, and especially the American, society; he describes his experience in his American trilogy: *It's me Eddie*, *Diary of a Loser*, *Or the Secret Notebook*, and *Story of His Servant*. His novels were first published in the USSR in 1989, and in 1991 he returned to Russia. Limonov's novels are mainly based on his personal experiences and thus give its readers a full picture of his adolescence and stormy adult life (Shenfield 2001: 200-201).

In 1992, Limonov met Vladimir Zhirinovskii and became member of the LDPR's leadership and head of its “All-Russian Bureau of Investigation” (Shenfield 2001: 202). Nine months later he left the LDPR because Zhirinovskii had disappointed him and went to the battle-front. From 1991 to 1993 Limonov was involved as an “armed journalist” in the wars of Vukovar, Bosnia, and Knin Krajina, fighting on the side of “our Serbian brothers”. In 1992 he also fought in Transnistria and Abkhazia.⁴⁴ Probably that is the reason why he is convinced that ‘war is freedom’ (Mathyl 2002:67; Shenfield 2001: 202). At the end of 1992, he met Dugin with whom he realized his own political project (Shenfield 2001: 202).

Limonov developed a militarist and nationalist stance from an early age, already before his Moscow years. He was also obsessed with the “harsh “heroic” ideal”—a clear influence from his father—and with the ideal of “female sexual purity”. His first encounter with the West European New Right was a book by Julius Evola, when he lived in New York. Later, while living in Paris, he met Alain de Benoist and worked with him on the editorial board of *Jean-Paul Sartre's* journal of left and right extremism. At the same time, Limonov was also interested in left-wing ideas. He had friends in Moscow that belonged to the Socialist Party and contacts with anarchist and Trotskyist organizations in New York (Shenfield 2001: 202-203). Judging from the most recurring themes in his books, Limonov is a person who denies humanism and shows misogynic tendencies, a revolutionary who urges to disturb and shock the “respectable society”, a person obsessed with death and expecting a tragic, but heroic, death (Shenfield 2001: 203).

⁴⁴ ‘Litsa: Eduard Limonov’, Drugaya Rossiya, available at: www.drugoros.ru/persons/26.html, accessed 13 January 2013.

4.3.2. Ideological features, influences, symbols

The symbols of the NBP are a mix of Communist and Fascist traditions. NBP's dress code requires members to wear a black leather jacket, a black beret and army boots. The black color is a sign of mourning for the perished brothers and for the war that is taking place in Russia. Its flag is a white circle with a black hammer and sickle in the middle of a red background symbolizing the blood spilled by Russian martyrs (red color), the skin (white color), and Russian socialism (the hammer and sickle). The greeting of the so-called *natsboly* is raising the arm out to the side (not forward as the Nazi *Heil*, neither up over the head as the leftist clenched-fist salute) and crying *Da, smert!* (Yes, death!), similar to Franco's Spanish Legion salute. Finally, the organization's symbol is a hand-grenade, called *Limonka* (little lemon) in Russian slang, like the NBP's newspaper (Shenfield 2001: 211).

The ideology of the NBP is a mix of Western European New Right thinking and authoritarian Russian-Soviet intellectual traditions. It is the product of a metapolitical national-Bolshevik synthesis that was not intended originally to be a single organization's foundation, but was rather aiming at uniting the anti-liberal forces (monarchists, Communists and fascist nationalists) against Russia's further democratization (Mathyl 2002:68).

National Bolshevism is for Dugin a messianic ideology that has national basis but universal purpose; a philosophical conception of the world that brackets together all non-conformist thinkers seeking for an alternative to liberalism and communism; it is defined as a "meta-ideology common to all enemies of open society" (Laruelle 2006:16). It rests on mystical foundations, draws parallels between mysticism and political commitment (be it Fascist, Nazi or Bolshevik) and represents a politicized version of traditionalism, the modernized expression of the messianic hopes that have existed in Russia since the fall of Constantinople in 1453 (Laruelle 2006:16).

Between 1991 and 1993, Dugin became one of the most important ideologues of the radicalization of Russian nationalism, publishing regularly in *Den'* and working on "a new, aggressive geopolitical doctrine whose long term objective was the restoration of Russia's former superpower status" (Mathyl 2002:65). Dugin later published in detail his ideas in his book *Basic Principles of Geopolitics*. Dugin's spiritual child, the think-tank *Arktogeja*, formed decisively the NBP's ideological basis. *Arktogeja* was intimately associated with *Den'* and was opposing the ideology of

both the LDPR and the CPRF (Mathyl 2002:65). *Arktogeya* also maintained close relations with high levels of the Russian military and with the Western European New Right. Characteristic of the ideology promoted by *Arktogeya* is the struggle against ‘American dominance’ in the new unipolar ‘world order’ (Mathyl 2002:64).

Arktogeya and NBP made positive references to individual fascist movements and were in favor of a fascist regime in Russia (Mathyl 2002:71). Dugin, in his essay “Fascism-red and unbounded” dating back to the early period of the NBP, supports the idea of a second historico-political bridge that would serve to neutralize the potential historical conflict between fascism and Bolshevism in a national-Bolshevik way (Mathyl 2002:69). It is important to note that Dugin, even though he shares many ideological features of the original Fascism, cannot be considered fascist. His ideas are adherent to intellectual Fascism, which shares with other currents of the extreme right a Romantic heroism in the sense of the cult of the leader, the army, the physical effort and the indoctrination of the young, but differs on its revolutionary and pro-socialist aspects and by its attraction to futurism and esotericism (Laruelle 2006:15). By Fascism, Dugin refers to the secret fear that brings people of different political orientations together and advances, therefore, a positive reading of Fascism, without denouncing Nazism, although he condemns Racism (Laruelle 2006:17).

Limonov is openly fascist, as demonstrated by his answer to the question “Who needs fascism in Russia?”. On behalf of the NBP, Limonov outcries “everyone” (Mathyl 2002:71). According to Limonov, the administrative borders of the communist era should be revised according to the minimal criterion: “where Russian people live, there is a Russian territory”, and the maximal criterion “where people who regard themselves as belonging to the Russian civilization live, there is Russian territory, protected by Russian might” (Tolz 1997:188). In his Manifesto of Russian Nationalism, Limonov describes a classic model of a corporate state, with a hierarchical state structure and associations and unions controlling the lower levels, reproducing actually the idea of Italian fascists (Tolz 1997:192). In addition, the NBP’s biweekly newspaper *Limonka* was propagating a fascist style and dress code that decisively influenced the emergence and growth of the Russian skinhead movement of the mid-1990s (Mathyl 2002:73). Nevertheless, and paradoxically enough, the political system that the NBP dreams is a “total state” based on the rights of the nation, and not of the individual, that will nevertheless contain elements of parliamentarism and electoral democracy (Shenfield 2001: 211).

NBP's program is full of such controversies. National Bolshevism is described as hatred for: liberalism, democracy, and capitalism, but supports modernization, the up-to-date, and the avant-garde. The NBP wants a national and social revolution that will bring ethnic Russians to power and will establish social justice within the nation (Verkhoskii & Pribylovskii 1996: 133 [Shenfield 2001: 209]). Then, *Limonka* also contains straightforward Stalinism and anarchism – both inconsistent with fascism and with one another. Among Limonov's admired personalities figure leaders from both right and left intellectual traditions: from Mussolini, Ciano, Hitler, Goerring and Goebbels, Lenin, Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, Beria, Molotov, Voroshilov, and Zhukov, to Bakunin and Nestor Makhno (Shenfield 2001: 209). Taken this paradox into account, one concludes that the NBP is not a solidly fascist-oriented party, like RNE, but “a party of general extremism” (Lykhachev [Shenfield 2001: 209]).

In the economic sphere, the NBP wants to establish “Russian socialism”, meaning that all large and medium-sized enterprises, as well as the land, and the military industry will belong to the state and medium-sized enterprises will belong to the regional government. Russia's strategic goal is autarky; therefore, it will take measures to reverse foreign penetration to the Russian market. The population will enjoy many economic benefits, like respectable salaries and pensions, fixed prices for basic food products, transfer of houses from the owners to the renters, abolition of taxes for servicemen, civil servants, old-age pensioners, and the lowly paid, to mention only a few (Shenfield 2001: 213). The NBP is also very positive towards the development of culture. It will grant artists complete freedom and scientists, researchers, and inventors “heavenly conditions” (Shenfield 2001: 213).

As far as external policy is concerned, the NBP argues that the enemies of Russia are the USA and Europe's mundialists who are united in the NATO and the UN. Russia's possible allies are Germany, Iran, India, and Japan. The goal of national-bolshevism is to create “an Empire from Vladivostok to Gibraltar on the basis of Russian civilization” (Shenfield 2001: 214). NBP's plan has as follows: first, a Russian revolution will transform Russia into a “unitary Russian national state”. Then Russia will annex territories of the former Soviet republics populated by Russians and the Eurasian people from the former USSR will unite around Russians. Finally, Russia will create a gigantic continental Empire (Shenfield 2001: 214).

Finally, the NBP perceives itself as the “national party of Russians”. NBP's definition of “Russian” relies on a non-essentialist concept of nationality, or in Ernest Renan's (1995) words on “subjective

nationality”. In particular, ethnicity is defined neither by blood nor by creed. “Russian” is for the NBP someone who considers the Russian language, culture, and history as their own. Furthermore, “Russian” is the one who is ready to “spill their blood and another’s blood in the name of Russia”.⁴⁵ The organization sets as a goal to “unite all Russian in one state”. For the territories that have been broken away from Russia, e.g. the Crimea, Northern Kazakhstan, Narva region, and where Russian population is more than 50%, the NBP wants to realize referenda for their re-incorporation into the Russian Federation. On the other hand, national minorities that aspire independency and separation will be “ruthlessly suppressed”.⁴⁶

4.3.3. Internal structure

The NBP is organized in local branches of ten to fifteen members that belong to regional “columns”, each made ideally of nine branches. NBP’s “center”, meaning Limonov, appointed the column commanders and the members of each branch elected their leaders. Members were expected to implement the directives of the party leadership and, at the same time, they are encouraged to undertake their own initiatives (Shenfield 2001: 215).

In the 1990s, the NBP was one of the largest political organizations of “fascist” orientation (Shenfield 2001: 190). Its membership was estimated between 6,000 and 7,000 people, with about 500 members in Moscow, several hundred more in St. Petersburg and with branches in more than half of Russia’s regions, as well as in other post-Soviet states, with Riga being the most striking example (Shenfield 2001: 190).

The *natsboly* were mostly young people and included everyone, from students, engineers and highly educated youths to unemployed and working-class youths (Shenfield 2001: 190). For instance, in the universities they established links with the organization Student Defense that was active in the student protest movement (Shenfield 2001: 215).

The party’s newspaper, *Limonka*, is rich in artistic, literary, and intellectual creativity, and is considered “by far” the most interesting and popular of Russian patriotic periodicals (Shenfield 2001: 190). Apart from that, Limonov appeals to young people because of his connections with

⁴⁵ ‘Program of National-Bolshevik Party’, *NBP-INFO*, available at: <http://web.archive.org/web/20070501182900/http://eng.nbp-info.ru/cat19/index.html> , accessed September 23, 2011.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

well-known musicians of jazz, folk and rock, the above-mentioned co-founder Egor Letov being one of them (Shenfield 2001: 215).

4.3.4. Activities

The actions of the national-Bolsheviks resemble the ones of “left-wing radical-ecology groups”, above all Greenpeace (Sokolov 2008: 68). They organize public meetings, demonstrations, picketing, leafleting and call for boycotts of foreign products and services. It also plans less conventional activities, like painting the slogans “Eat the Rich!” and “Stalin – Beria – Gulag” in Irkutsk's central streets, interrupting the conferences of Egor Gaidar's Russia's Democratic Choice, disrupting the George Soros' tour in Russia (Shenfield 2001: 216-217). The NBP also gives incentives and instructions to its members to wreak maximum havoc as suddenly and quickly as possible, to loot stores in the event of mass disorder, to sabotage Western films in cinemas and theaters (Shenfield 2001: 216-217).

The NBP could never take part in elections because the Ministry of Justice always banned its registration. NBP's members, as well as Limonov and Dugin, stood as candidates independently from the organization but never had great success (Shenfield 2001: 216).

The NBP refrains from violence. The vast majority of its actions were symbolic politics (Sokolov 2008: 72). Limonov, in his *Anatomiya Geroya* (Anatomy of a Hero), presented in detail the advantages of political over physical action. For Limonov intellectuals are more effective than storm troopers (Limonov 1998: 68 [Sokolov 2008: 73]). The *natsboly* were attacking symbolic objects (flags, embassies), countries (USA, Latvia, Croatia), or processes (perestroika, globalization, mass culture) and not individuals, unless they were personifying similar abstractions (Sokolov 2008: 73).

Finally, the NBP demonstrates a negative stance towards military training and combat experience. Until 2001, NBP's members spoke openly about their willingness to use violence, although they never did so. Supposedly successful violent actions that the NBP pretends to have taken are not recorded in police documents. It was exactly the opposite of RNE's members who said they refrained from violence but many of them got convicted of violent crimes. The *natsboly*, on the other hand, used symbolic violence for their political attacks, e.g. pelted with tomatoes, struck with

a bouquet, threw ink on their targets (Zyuganov, Mikhailov, Gorbachev, Prince Charles, Veshniakov, Matvienko) (Sokolov 2008: 71).

Limonov and other members of the NBP faced various legal problems, the most serious of which in 2001, when Limonov and five of his companions got arrested in Altai region for supposedly trying to create a military unit for the invasion of Eastern Kazakhstan in order to create a separatist republic and annex it to Russia. They were charged with terrorist acts (Art. 205 of the Criminal Code), creation of illegal armed groups (Art. 208) and acquisition and possession of firearms and ammunition (Art. 222), facing a fourteen-year sentence. Finally, Limonov was convicted in four years of imprisonment because the accusations could not be proved. While in jail, he wrote eight books. He was conditionally released in 2003.⁴⁷

4.3.5. Collapse or transformation in the 2000s

The departure of Dugin and *Arktogeya* from the NBP in 1998 cost the organization a decline in intellectual activity, as explained above, but the *natsboly* continued their activities and their intellectual influence was increasing, despite the organizational difficulties they had faced when Limonov was imprisoned in 2001 for armed revolt preparation (Sokolov 2008). The NBP was banned in 2005 on the grounds that the NBP was calling itself a “party” without having been registered as such and despite the fact that the NBP had already tried to register three times but was always denied registration for “trifling reasons”—a move that Limonov called “political pressure”.⁴⁸

In 2006, Limonov took part in the anti-Putin coalition *Drugaya Rossiya* (The Other Russia) that demanded the restoration of democratic rights in Russia. The Other Russia united Limonov's National Bolshevik party with Garri Kasparov's *Ob'edinennyi Grazhdanskii Front* (United Civil Front – OGF), Mikhail Kas'yanov's *Rossiiskii Narodno-Demokraticeskii Soyuz* (Russian People's Democratic Union – RNDS), among others.⁴⁹ (Stolyarova 2007). The Other Russia's first declaration was signed by V.I. Anpilov, G.K. Kasparov, M.M. Kas'yanov, E.V. Limonov, and V.A. Ryzhkov.⁵⁰ The organization also asked for the return of the savings that the people lost in 1991-

⁴⁷ ‘Litsa: Eduard Limonov’, *Drugaya Rossiya*, available at: www.drugoros.ru/persons/26.html, accessed 13 January 2013.

⁴⁸ ‘Russian Supreme Court upholds ban on National-Bolshevik Party’, *RIA Novosti*, 15 November 2011, available at: <http://sputniknews.com/russia/20051115/42096057.html>, accessed 13 January 2013.

⁴⁹ ‘Closing Statement of the Participants of the Other Russia Conference’, *The Other Russia*, available at: <http://www.theotherussia.ru/eng/>, accessed 5 April 2015; see also Stolyarova 2007.

⁵⁰ ‘Zayavlenie Politicheskogo Coveshchaniya “Drugoi Rossii”’, available at:

1992, for a stop in enriching Moscow's "construction mafia", for freezing the increase in gas and electricity tariffs, for the abolition of the cast of "untouchables", for the to freedom of political prisoners, for the revoke of a degree that awarded Kadyrov for "courage and heroism".⁵¹ *Drugaya Rossiya* organized the Dissenters' Marches from 2006 to 2008⁵². According to Alexander Verkhovsky, Limonov lost many followers through this turn (Alexander Verkhovsky, personal communication).

In 2006, Limonov published his book *This president is not needed: Limonov against Putin*, where he accused Vladimir Putin for a number of criminal acts.⁵³ The NBP was banned for the second time in 2007, accused of extremist activities.⁵⁴ By 2008, the *natsboly* had changed their rhetoric and ideology. They stopped using nationalist slogans and they started standing for the defense of "civil rights and freedoms from the terror of the police state" (Sokolov 2008: 68). In 2009, the *natsboly* organized Strategy-31, which was a series of civil protests in support of the right to peaceful assembly organized in the last day of each month that has 31 days. Strategy-31 appeals mainly to the liberal forces, rather than the nationalist-patriotic ones, bringing together activists from movements like "Solidarity" and *Yabloko*. The price for *Drugaya Rossiya*'s activists for this public actions was high, they usually got detained, and even sentenced, like for example Andrei Dmitriev as I learned, head of the St. Petersburg branch, during the action of November 2010.⁵⁵

In 2010, the former National Bolsheviks formed a new political party, *Drugaya Rossiya* (The Other Russia) that aimed to "ensure and improve the well-being of the Russian people, their civil and political rights, and their security... in conjunction with the strictest observance of human rights". The party's objectives were to establish a "real democracy" in Russia, to reduce the volume of state bureaucracy, to ensure free elections at all levels, to abolish the "repressive" law "on political parties" that posed obstacles to the parties' registration. In the economic field: to nationalize oil and gas industries, to solve the housing problem, to develop the agricultural sector in order to achieve a self-sufficient economy, and to pose a luxury tax, in order to exempt taxation on the poor. The party

<http://www.theotherussia.ru/statement/20061110.php>, accessed 13 January 2013.

⁵¹ 'Rezolyutsiya Marsha Nesoglasnyx', available at: <http://www.theotherussia.ru/statement/20061216.php>, accessed 13 January 2013.

⁵² 'Zavlenie Politicheskogo Soveshchaniya "Drugaya Rossiya" o "Marshe Nesoglasnyx"', available at <http://www.theotherussia.ru/statement/20061219.php>, accessed 13 January 2013.

⁵³ 'Litsa: Eduard Limonov', *Drugaya Rossiya*, available at: www.drugoros.ru/persons/26.html, accessed 13 January 2013.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ 'Natsboly cherez trebuyut razreshit' akstiyu "Strategiya-31"', *Rosbalt*, 27 January 2010, available at: www.rosbalt.ru/piter/2010/01/27/707552.html, accessed 13 January 2013.

also proposed to populate and develop Siberia into “Russia's European metropolis” in order to stop the Chinese expansion.⁵⁶

Despite Limonov's *Drugaya Rossiya*, the NBP's legacy also includes Dugin's *Evrasiya* (Eurasia Party), founded by Aleksandr Dugin in 2001. In 2003 it got transformed into the ‘International Eurasian Movement’ (IEM) (Umland 2010; Laruelle 2006: 4). *Evrasiya* was officially allied to Putin, and one year later it got transformed into a ‘radically centrist’ (according to Dugin) political party (Laruelle 2006: 3). In the same year, Dugin became an advisor to the Speaker of the lower house of the Russian Parliament, Gennadii Seleznev, entering Moscow’s political establishment (Umland 2010: 145) and starting to move closer to centrist groups (Laruelle 2006: 3). In parallel, *Arktogeya* returned in the same period to the mainstream of the national-patriot movement. Dugin did not break his close ties to western New Right and radical-right groups, however; neither did he remove his neo-fascist writings from the internet (Mathyl 2002:74).

Evrasiya is a social, traditionalist, and nationalist party, the party of Russian patriots and étatists, and the party of regions (Dugin 2002). However, Dugin’s ‘neo-Eurasianism’ is a broader concept of national Bolshevism that proposes the expansion of Eurasia to include the whole Europe. Dugin's core ideology has been mounted through the years to include anarchism, leftist terrorism, postmodernism, Old Believers and Jewish traditionalism (Mathyl 2002:70).

Although the party ideologically opposes every form of racism and national exclusiveness (Dugin 2002), Dugin managed to draw “a distinction between ‘subversive, destructive Jews without a nationality’ and good, traditionalist -that is, Zionist and Eurasian- Jews” (Mathyl 2002:71). His version of anti-Semitism lays on the fact that he considers “Judeo-Christianity” an incorrect formula for Orthodoxy, which he considers to be more distant from Judaism than from Catholicism, he accuses the biological concept that the Jewish world has created for itself and the opposes the self-perception of the Jews as the chosen people, because it clashes with Russian Messianism (Laruelle 2006:18).

In the economic domain, *Evrasiya* stands for the “third way”: the de-privatization of administrative resources for an ‘economic nationalism’, meaning the subordination of the market mechanisms to the concerns of the national economy. In the domestic domain, the Eurasia party wants to reinforce

⁵⁶ ‘Programma Politicheskoi Partii “Drugaya Rossiya”’, *Drugaya Rossiya*, available at: www.drugros.ru/programm.html, accessed 13 January 2013.

the geopolitical homogeneity of Russia and the vertical line of authority. They ‘radically’ support Putin and see him as the savior of the country from separatism and disruption. Finally, for the Eurasianists Orthodoxy symbolizes Russia, as Catholicism symbolizes Europe. They find the separation between Church and state correct; nevertheless, for them the Church is inseparable from society, culture, education and information (Dugin 2002). Since 2005, Dugin has been appearing on the new Orthodox TV channel *Spas* of Ivan Demidov with a weekly broadcast on geopolitics called *Vekhi* (Landmarks) (Laruelle 2006: 1).

4.4. Conclusion: overview of the 1990s

Following the path that was firstly paved by *Pamyat'* in the 1980s, the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement was based on the principle of increasing the political power of Russians at the expense of other ethnic groups. The movement broke into three segments in the 1990s, the main representatives of which were RNE, the NBP, and the skinheads (Sokolov 2008: 67). RNE was standing closer to *Pamyat'* than both the NBP and the skinheads (Sokolov 2004). The difference between these segments was a matter of political style rather than of ideology. The three segments were functioning independently. They were not uniting for joint actions, neither were members circulating between them, but only within each segment (Sokolov 2008: 67).

Apart from the differences in terms of political actions, the three segments of the 1990s were differing in their system of argumentation. RNE-led segment was appealing to religious symbols, whereas the NBP one offered a theoretical mixture of the New Right and the New Left and never inhibited any anti-Semitic tendencies (Sokolov 2008: 67). RNE, and almost all organizations that belonged to this segment (Nikolai Bondarik, Konstantin Kasimovskii), followed the same pattern: they offered military training to their members, published the party journal that represented the organization in the political sphere, and -almost all of them- owned security firms, training halls, and martial arts centers. In this way, the organization was investing the “violence-related resources” of its members in politics and was using the profit of the security firms to attract new members (Sokolov 2008: 75).

RNE managed to become a relatively large, disciplined and centralized organization. It had the support of a “sizable” portion of Russia's urban youth, probably because it managed to cover the vacuum left by the collapse of schools, youth organizations, apprenticeship into secure employment

and the family, presenting itself to disoriented youth as “an alternative provider of paternal care and authority” (Shenfield 2001:135). Apart from its appeal to the youth, RNE also managed to obtain material assets, to penetrate the army, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and some regional administrations, as well as to develop a significant military potential. Additionally, the media have been a main reason for the public awareness of and interest in RNE (Sokolov 2007: 51-52; Kuzmin 2008). On the other hand, RNE's internal divisions proved problematic, the support it had was unevenly distributed geographically and it lacked broad support among the adult population and the intelligentsia (Shenfield 2001:172).

The NBP, on the other hand, appealed to people from a broader range of social and educational status. Its advantage was that it appealed to the most discontented and rebellious strata of the Russian youth. At the same time, it was its weakness because it could not find any appeal outside that milieu. The NBP never had a military section and did not manage to establish relations with any sort of governmental institutions. Nevertheless, its leadership seemed to be the opposite of Barkashov's style of ruling. Dugin offered a solid and novel ideological foundation, something that RNE always lacked. Then, Limonov proved a very capable leader, able to keep the organization together through all these years, to reinvent original public activities that fascinated its members, and to be in charge of the organization, even if he did not demand so strict discipline, like Barkashov.

RNE found the largest number of supporters among the group of former military and police officers, whom RNE would use as source of economic wealth, and among young men who wanted to get a job in combat training. The NBP, on the other hand, addressed those who possessed a cultural capital, but could not offer its members a successful career. The NBP could only promise to change things “so that only talent will matter” when in power, something that did find the response among people that did not give priority to intellectual issues (Sokolov 2004).

5. The “new” Russian nationalist-patriotic opposition, 2000-2012

5.1. The Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI)

5.1.1. Description of the organization, its leaders and its background

Dvizhenie Protiv Nelegal'noi Immigratsii (Movement Against Illegal Immigration – DPNI) was formed in 2002 by the Potkin brothers (Aleksandr Potkin *alias* Belov and Vladimir Potkin *alias* Basmanov) and managed to become over the years the most significant extra-parliamentarian radical right organization (Varga 2008; Laruelle 2009, 2010; Zuev 2010, 2011; Kozhevnikova 2010b) until its ban in August 2011. DPNI's main goal is to cease non-Slavic immigration to Russia (Pribylovskii ca.2013a).

DPNI's “public face”, and probably one of the most prominent nationalists of the younger generation, is Aleksandr Anatol'evich Potkin, most known under his pseudonym “Belov” (that derives from “white”). He was born in 1976 and graduated around 2001 from the faculty of Information Security at Moscow's State Humanitarian University. Aleksandr Belov joined Dmitrii Vasil'ev's *Pamyat'* at the age of fourteen, where he served as press secretary and liaison officer chairman (Pribylovskii *et al.* 2010, p. 18). As I learned from *Russkie* leader¹, Aleksandr Belov was spreading *Pamyat'*'s propaganda materials at school and in the subway, and despite the young of his age, he was noticed by his adult companions. In October 1992, Aleksandr Belov participated in seizing the newspaper *Moskovskii Konsomolets* for denouncing the newspaper's “insulting” publications for the Russian people and the Orthodox Church (Pribylovskii *et al.* 2010, p. 18).⁵⁷

Before Vasil'ev's death, Aleksandr Belov became the general director of *Pamyat'*'s newspaper. In 1997, Aleksandr Belov was convicted for illegal possession of arms (art. 222. 1 of the Criminal Code) and was under probation for one year (Pribylovskii *et al.* 2010, p. 18). Aleksandr's younger brother, Vladimir, born in 1980 and graduate from the Moscow State University of Culture and Arts, also joined *Pamyat'* in a very young age (13 years old) like his brother. He was member of its Central Council and staff commander. From 2000 to 2002, he became the head of *Pamyat'*'s Information Service (Pribylovskii ca. 2013c).⁵⁸

⁵⁷ A criminal case was opened against three participants and one of them, Nikolai Detkov, even spent six months in jail (Pribylovskii ca.2013b).

⁵⁸ Besides their action in *Pamyat'*, the Potkin brothers were also involved in physical action for their beliefs, even from a very young age. As Aleksandr claims, he and his cousin, Oleg Adamlyukom, went to defend the White House, and a sniper shot his cousin. Aleksandr was not close, but Vladimir – despite the young of his age – was (Vinogradov

In July 2002, and while they were *Pamyat'* members, the two brothers founded DPNI, some days after the anti-Armenian pogroms in Krasnoarmeisk in Moscow oblast (Pribylovskii ca.2013a). Aleksandr Belov became the coordinator of Public Relations and Vladimir Basmanov was the head of Moscow's regional branch. The two brothers were rotating in various leading positions over the years⁵⁹ until DPNI's ban and after that they both joined the organization *Russkie*, among other DPNI's members (Pribylovskii ca.2013a, Pribylovskii ca.2013b, Pribylovskii ca.2013c). DPNI's leaders in St. Petersburg were Semen Pikhtelev and Andrei Kuznetsov, both chairmans of the National Council and heads of the St. Petersburg regional branch (Pribylovskii ca.2013a).

Aleksander Belov figures in the press as DPNI's "coordinator of public relations' centre" (Pribylovskii ca. 2013a). Aleksandr Belov's profession is consultant "in the field of security" or "conflict management", meaning he recommends specialists and staff to businessmen mainly, in order to protect their business (Vinogradov 2008). Although Aleksandr Belov was DPNI's "front-man", the organization's "father" is actually his brother, Vladimir, who seems to be the puppet-master (*Russkie* leader1, personal communication). Vladimir Basmanov undertook most of the organizational part, i.e. DPNI's structure, the formation of regional offices, the ideology, the resolution of internal conflicts, and the organization of press conferences and other public events (Stepanov 2008). Vladimir Basmanov was also the initiator of the first "Russian March" in 2005 a nation-wide nationalist parade introduced by that radical right organizations to celebrate the new public holiday Day of National Unity (Pribylovskii ca. 2013c).

Unlike other patriotic organizations, DPNI was not a vertical organization, but a network. This allowed for participation in it of various patriotic subcultures. For example, between 2003 and 2005 DPNI started becoming popular among skinhead groups, who called themselves DPNI's "combat troops" or "gangs" (Pribylovskii ca. 2013a). In 2005 and 2006,, DPNI started presenting itself as a supporter of ethnic Russians throughout Russia and functioned as a 'broker', connecting previously unconnected groups, as the skinheads and the Cossacks⁶⁰ (Varga 2008, 569). In particular, DPNI broke into the radical right scene in 2006 with the organization of the Kondopoga pogroms (Varga 2008, 570; Laruelle 2010, 23). Kondopoga was a crucial point for authorities, since they lost the

2008).

⁵⁹ Aleksandr Belov was head of the Central Council, chairman of the Federal National Council and coordinator of the Center for Public Relations. Vladimir Basmanov was elected head of the Central Council in 2003 and head of DPNI's Moscow branch (Pribylovskii ca.2013a).

⁶⁰ Cossacks are the descendants of Russian serfs who managed to escape. They were set free with the condition of guarding the country's frontier (Matthews & Nemtsova 2011).

city control for two days. Since then, authorities started exercising more legal pressure to nationalists (Alexander Verkhovsky).

At the same time, DPNI took the leading role of the Russian March. In 2008, SOVA center classified DPNI as “the most dangerous” ultranationalist groups, together with DPNI's ally *Slavyanskii Soyuz* (Slavic Union-SS), and some branches of RNE.⁶¹ By the end of the 2010, DPNI was “undeniably” the movement that spread the slogan “Russia for the Russians” throughout society (Laruelle 2009, 74). The DPNI also acted increasingly as the only information source of xenophobic events, in the absence of alternative coverage by mainstream media. Additionally, the authorities’ tendency to withhold xenophobic events gave DPNI the opportunity to construct its own version of the reported events (Kozhevnikova 2007b).

The DPNI claimed it enjoyed broader public support than any other right wing organizations, even in regions it recently emerged (DPNI 2010). Data from Russia's best-known opinion pollsters, Levada-Center, shows that DPNI's popularity has been rising through the years: the percentage of respondents who have heard about DPNI – be them positively or negatively predisposed towards it - has increased by ten points in only five years (from 14 percent in 2006 to 24 percent in 2011). The following table shows Levada-Centre's survey in detail:

⁶¹ ‘Newslines’, 21 November 2007, *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143999.html>, accessed 14 March 2013.

Table 3: DPNI's popularity, 2006 – 2011

Have you ever heard about DPNI, do you think it is a patriotic or an extremist pro-fascist organization? (N=1600)				
	Nov. 2006	Nov. 2007	Dec. 2010	Oct. 2011
Russian patriotic organization (1)	7%	8%	9%	9%
Extremist pro-fascist organization (2)	7%	10%	16%	15%
Total of respondents who were aware about DPNI's existence (1)+(2)	14%	18%	25%	24%
I never heard about DPNI	73%	70%	61%	62%
It is difficult to answer	14%	12%	14%	15%

Source: Levada-Center 2012, p. 183; authors' elaboration.

Since the winter of 2007, a series of internal conflicts have started weakening DPNI. Aleksandr Potkin was accused for being an agent-provocateur, who was collaborating with the Kremlin. In spring 2007, the leader of neo-Nazi *Natsional-Sotsialisticheskoe Obshchestvo* (National-Socialist Society – NSO), Dmitrii Rumyantsev, gave Aleksandr Belov a punch in the public for allegedly being financially dishonest. After that, NSO and its fellow neo-Nazi organization Format 18 stopped all kinds of joined activities with DPNI and were organizing separate events (Kozhevnikova 2008: 17).

In 2008, the Potkin brothers intended to transform DPNI from a network structure into a party-type organization on the basis of a code and strict hierarchy (Kozhevnikova 2009: 21). It was reportedly Vladimir Basmanov who actually started the reform, backed by his brother (Stepanov 2008). This led to the resignation of Vladimir Basmanov from the post of coordinator of the Central Council and his replacement by Aleksandr Belov (Pribylovskii ca. 2013a). It also led to the secession from DPNI of two branches: the Moscow leader's Aleksei Mikhailov *DPNI-Mossovot* that was later renamed in *Russkoye DPNI* (Russian DPNI) and the Briansk leader's Dmitrii Zubov *DPNI-Russkoe Grazhdanskoe Obshchestvo* (DPNI-Russian Civil Society – DPNI-RGO) (Kozhevnikova 2009: 21). The Potkins' organisation overtook DPNI's brandname and remained with the following allies”:

Slavic Union (SS)⁶², *Natsional'no-Patriotiicheskii Front 'Pamyat'* (National-Patriotic Front Pamyat'), *Natsiona'noe Russkoe Osvoboditel'noe Dvizhenie* (National Russian Liberation Movement – NAROD), and Russian People's Movement (ROD), *Russkii Poryadok* (Russian Order), and *Russkii National – Bol'shevistskii Front* (Russian National Bolshevik Front – RNBF) (Kozhevnikova 2009: 22).⁶³

The 2008 Russian March that followed DPNI's split was subsequently fragmented in terms of events and participants. Potkins' DPNI organized the 'March to the Kremlin' that did not gather more than 500 people, the majority of which was detained by the OMON police (Kozhevnikova 2009: 24). The DPNI did not fully recover from the confrontation with the authorities in the next year and did not overcome the stigma of being a marginalized and persecuted group. At the same time, DPNI's rival organization *Russkii Obraz* (Russian Image – RO) through a series of successful alliances with parliamentarian and extra-parliamentarian actors⁶⁴ managed to increase its popularity and to make its regional branches grow rapidly. In contrast, DPNI, SS, and their collaborators were facing a series of criminal trials and an increasing drop in membership (Kozhevnikova 2010, pp. 17-18).

In 2009, Aleksandr Belov resigned voluntarily from DPNI's National Council in the light of criminal persecutions against him for inciting ethnic hatred (Pribylovskii ca. 2013b). He was replaced by the unexperienced Vladimir Ermolayev, who was not such a gifted speaker (Kozhevnikova 2010b). In the autumn of 2010, the two biggest ultra-right organizations, DPNI and Russian Image, joined forces in a unification move of the Russian radical right movement. A coincidence or not, that was the year of the most attended Russian March (Verkhovsky & Kozhevnikova 2011, pp. 14; Yudina & Alperovich 2011). Nevertheless, Russian Image got soon involved into a scandal, when its former leader Il'ya Goryachev gave evidence that connected Russian Image with Nikita Tikhonov and Evgeniya Khasis, charged with the murders of lawyer

⁶² The Slavic Union (SS) is a neo-Nazi organization, with a modified swastika as a banner. Its ideology resembles the RNE and the National-Imperial Party of Russia. Its leader, Dmitrii Demushkin, was a member of Aleksandr Barkashov's RNE. He has been convicted for incitement of ethnic hatred and was reported that he was mailing death threats to human rights activists Andrei Yurov and Liudmila Alekseeva in 2004. For these reasons, he has been described as "an extremist without adversions to anti-liberal rhetoric or imperial restoration" (Rothrock 2012).

⁶³ National-Sovereign Party of Russia (NDPR) and *Patriya Zashchity Rossiiskoi Konstitutsii 'Rus'* (Party for the Defense of the Russian Constitution 'Rus' – PZPK 'Rus') joined Russian DPNI (Kozhevnikova 2009: 22).

⁶⁴ Russian Image first got into an alliance with Sergei Baburin's *Narodnyi Soyuz* (Popular Union – NS) in 2007, then with United Russia MP Maksim Mischchenko in 2008, and finally with the St. Petersburg organization Resistance in 2009 (Kozhevnikova 2010: 16).

Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasiya Baburova. This rose a wave of indignation on radical right websites, the isolation of Russian Image from other nationalist leaders, e.g. ROD's leader Konstantin Krylov and DPNI's leader Vladimir Tor, and the subsequent reinstatement of DPNI as the most significant ultra-right organization (Yudina & Alperovich 2011).

On 11 December 2010, a crowd of about 5,000 rallied on Manezh Square as a reaction to the killing of ethnic Russian *Spartak* fan, Egor Sviridov, in Moscow by a group of young ethnic Caucasians. The protesters were chanting xenophobic and anti-Caucasian slogans (as “Russia for the Russians” and displaying Nazi salutes in public) and when the crowd entered the metro station it started beating everybody who did not seem ‘Russian’. The Manezh Square events were the biggest violent nationalist rally the country has witnessed. President Dmitry Medvedev and Moscow's mayor Sergei Sobyenin accused the radical right scene for the Manezh events (Yudina & Alperovich 2011; Washington 2011). An attempt to make a branding out of the Manezh events and to repeat a similar gathering in a more organized fashion followed soon after and was named 11 December Movement. Presumably, Vladimir Tor was one of its founders (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d).

From that moment on, authorities started suppressing attempts to hold unsanctioned radical right actions and began to detain and charge participants of the Manezh events and other public actions convoked by nationalists (Yudina & Alperovich 2011). In February 2011, Moscow Prosecutor's office suspended DPNI's activities on the grounds that it “pursues extremist goals and objectives” and started the process to deem it extremist, although DPNI was not the organizer of Manezh's violent protest. A similar ban was imposed to DPNI's traditional ally Slavic Union (SS) one year earlier (Washington 2011). Aleksandr Belov denied in an interview every connection with DPNI and extremism. He said that extremist activities were committed by some DPNI members, but all these acts were condemned by DPNI's leadership and these members were expelled from the organization. For Belov, the sentence was not objective. For example, all DPNI's requests were rejected. Therefore, Belov concludes that “we do not see any reason to continue to participate in this farce”.⁶⁵

After that, DPNI announced its self-dissolution and proposed its members to join other Russian national organizations of different domains (i.e. political, social, human rights, information, sports)

⁶⁵ ‘Interv'yu. Gosti: Aleksandr Belov, eks-lider Dvizheniya Protiv Nelegal'noi Immigratsii’, 19 April 2011, *Ekho Moskvy*, available at: <http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/beseda/767429-echo/>, accessed 14 March 2013.

(Pribylovskii ca.2013a). After the ban, DPNI's webpage was moved to a foreign country's server and remains active. Vladimir Basmanov had moved abroad and had been living in exile for some time by 2011, because according to his brother he was wanted by the police. In August 2011, the Supreme Court deemed DPNI as extremist (*Russkie* leader1, personal communication; see also Yudina & Alperovich 2011).

In the spring of 2011, the ultra-right scene underwent a remarkable restructuring, probably because the Manezh events made nationalists optimistic and because the coming elections made the organizations look for strategic alliances. The two main transformations of this period were the formation of *Russkie* coalition and the organizational change of Konstantin Krylov's Russian People's Movement (ROD) into an association of organizations (I will present in more detail the organization ROD in the following section).

The majority of DPNI leaders (i.e. Belov, Basmanov, Ermolaev, Pikhtev, and Tyukin) created together with Demushkin's SS the "ethnopolitical association" *Russkie* (Russians) in April 2011. It was soon joined by *Natsional-Sosialisticheskaya Initsiativa* (National-Socialist Initiative – NSI), *Russkoe Imperskoe Dvizhenie* (Russian Imperial Movement – RID), *Soyuz Russkogo Naroda* (Union of the Russian People – SRN), *Russkii Front Osvobozhdeniya Pamyat'* (Russian Liberation Front Memory – RFO *Pamyat'*), and *Natsional-Demokraticeskaya Partiya* (National-Democratic Party – NDP) (Yudina & Alperovich 2011).

Russkie's leading positions were distributed between the representatives of the movements that formed part of the coalition (Yudina & Alperovich 2011). Aleksandr Belov heads the supervisory board, while Vladimir Basmanov coordinates the national political council.⁶⁶ Other DPNI leaders that are leading the organization are: former St. Petersburg leader Semen Pikhtev, former head of the Moscow branch Vladimir Ermolaev, and former leader Denis Tyukin. Vladimir Tor did not join *Russkie* but remained with ROD which he was also associated with (Yudina & Alperovich 2011).

Russkie leaders that come from other organizations than DPNI are: former leader of the banned SS Dmitrii Demushkin, convicted for violence former leader of Schulz 88 group and at present NSI leader Dmitrii Bobrov, Georgii Borovikov whose *Pamyat'* has been associated with radical nationalism since the 1990s, and RID's head Stanislav Vorob'ev (*Russkie* ca. 2013; Yudina &

⁶⁶ 'Rossiiskie natsionalisty ob'edinilis' v organizatsiyu "Russkie", pravozashchitniki obespokoeny', 5 May 2011, *Newsru.com*, available at: <http://www.newsru.com/russia/05may2011/russkie.html>, accessed 13 March 2013.

Alperovich 2011). Judging from the fact that five out of nine leaders come from DPNI, I come to the conclusion that *Russkie* is a successor or, better, a mutation of DPNI, since it aspires to unite various Russian nationalist organizations under a common platform. It may therefore signify the beginning of a third generation of radical right movements in Russia. Additionally, the new organization targets the people who support the slogan “Russia for the Russians” and largely reproduce DPNI's organizational structure, which I analyze in section 5.1.3. (Yudina & Alperovich 2011).

In the spring of 2012, the nationalist scene made another political maneuver through the formation of three nationalist parties (from *Russkie*, ROD, and Valerii Solovei, which I will analyze in the following section) almost simultaneously. On 20 April 2012, *Russkie* announced the formation of its own party that would be named Party of Nationalists and have the imperial flag for emblem. The founding congress was held in Belarus, so that the Russian authorities could not prohibit it or disperse it. Dmitrii Demushkin was elected chairman of the organizing committee. Aleksandr Belov and Dmitrii Bobrov also took part at the congress. The “neutral” party's symbol and name were probably chosen in order to attract a broad spectrum of nationalist ideologies. Nevertheless, the party comprises three different ideologic waves of nationalism: the National Socialist Initiative that attracts the most radical part of the nationalist scene, the Russian Imperial Movement that attracts Orthodox and monarchists, and Dmitrii Sukhoru's *Natsional'nye Demokraty* (National Democrats – ND) that attract moderate nationalists (Yudina & Alperovich 2012).

5.1.2. Ideological features, influences, symbols

DPNI introduced a new “enemy”: illegal immigrants. The organization was open to all citizens with more than 14 years of age, who opposed illegal immigration and who “really want to work for the motherland”⁶⁷. At first, DPNI presented itself as “an independent consortium of radical right organizations” that stands for “human rights’ nationalism”, meaning that it aimed to protect “Russians” in the legal and labor field (DPNI 2010). DPNI stressed its systemic character and its recognition of democratic principles. It also collaborated with the police for identifying places of residence and work of illegal immigrants (DPNI 2007).⁶⁸

⁶⁷ “Kratko o dvizhenii”, DPNI, available at: http://dpni.org/articles/o_dvizheni/25/, accessed on 24 September 2011.

⁶⁸ That was probably the reason why the presidential administration tried to collaborate with this moderate-nationalist movement so that it could “assuage the threat and further its own ideological agenda” (Arutunyan 2011).

The DPNI's main objectives were: to contribute to the formation of a Russian national identity and attract new members; to coordinate its supporters' activities; to help "Russian people" who were victims of illegal immigrants; and to influence the legislative, executive, and judicial branches to implement DPNI's program (DPNI 2007). Its symbol was also something new that could not be associated with any previous nationalist organizations: an X in a circle in black and red colors with the slogan "For Law and Order" written around it in white letters.

The DPNI did not provide a well-elaborated ideology and its basic appeal was on xenophobia, in particular on "migrantophobia" (Laruelle 2009, pp. 75). For instance, DPNI informed that "visitors" were responsible for 70% of rapes, 40% of murders, and 45% of all the crimes conducted in Moscow in 2008⁶⁹. Although DPNI's official claim was to deport illegal immigrants, in reality it stands against every type of non-Slavic immigration to Russia – as the proper DPNI explains the neophytes, the letter "N" in its acronym stands for both Non-legal and Non-Slavic immigration (Pribylovskii ca.2013a). The DPNI refers to "We, Russian people" that demand the restriction of unreasonable mass immigration and only together can protect the "general Russian interests". The organization asks for the introduction of a visa regime with the states of Central Asia and Transcaucasia in particular, and with all CIS countries.⁷⁰

Offering an ideological mix of anti-immigrant arguments it managed to suit different ultranationalist thoughts and therefore offered the possibility of networking between ideologically different radical right actors, like the the skinheads and the Cossacks (Varga 2008: 569; Zuev 2010: 269). Through the years, the DNPI got established as a unifying association, a "central node in the production of knowledge about the anti-immigration issue and ethnic relations" (Zuev 2011, 141; Laruelle 2010, 23).

The affiliates of DPNI section abroad, proved to be more extreme than the ones living within the Russian Federation. In their statement of August 2011 the Committee of DPNI living abroad issued a statement that is openly White-Supremacist: "We have spent nine years of struggle, (...) for the sake of the White Race's future". The statement closes with a mention to the "Fourteen words", a phrase used by white nationalists that means "We must secure the existence of our people and a

⁶⁹ "1 Oktyabrya – Den' pamyati zhertv etnicheskoy prectupnosti", *DPNI*, available at: <http://dpni.org/articles/vazhnoe/26033/>, accessed on 24 September 2011.

⁷⁰ "1 Oktyabrya – Den' pamyati zhertv etnicheskoy prectupnosti", *DPNI*, available at: <http://dpni.org/articles/vazhnoe/26033/>, accessed on 24 September 2011.

future for White Children”.⁷¹

Moving to DPNI's “successor”, *Russkie*, the very name of the organization is significant as it emanates from the ethnic/cultural definition of the nation, contrary to the term *Rosyiskiy* that refers to statist/territorial variables of the nation (Simonsen 1996: 91). Apart from the name, the new movement defines as a decisive point in its history the killing of Colonel Yuri Budanovin in June 2011; this is supposedly the beginning of the battle between the ruling regime and the Russian people.⁷² In its manifesto, *Russkie* is defining itself an “ethno-political” association that strives for the protection of “Russian people”, after the loss of their state in 1917. Furthermore, the movement declares that it wants to fight against the constant oppression of Russian people that often takes the form of “genocide” because of the population’s decrease. The movement’s short-time objective is to facilitate “ethnic and political solidarity of Slavic Russians”, whereas its ultimate goal is “to establish the power of the national government and the proclamation of a Russian national state”.⁷³ According to human rights activist Svetlana Gannushkina, *Russkie* is calling for a change in the country’s constitutional order, since a “Russian national state” would mean to cut off much of the Russian Federation.⁷⁴

Russkie's manifest reads: “We, Russian people, having lost our state in 1917”. This means that the Russians consider that the “Russian” state was the Czarist Empire. Furthermore, there are notions here as well, as in other cases discussed above, of the continuous oppression of the “Russian” people that take the form of “genocide”. The overall objective is for Russia to become the “national state” of “Russians” again. The term “Russian people” refers, according to *Russkie*, to all Russian people, who wish to fight for the future of the Russian nation. The manifesto also states that it is time for Russians to stop being the oppressed nation in their own Fatherland. Furthermore, the influx of immigrants in Russia and the payment of tribute to Caucasus should be both stopped. And the manifesto concludes: “For a free Russia and Russian power!”, “We are Russian! We WILL win!”.⁷⁵

⁷¹ “Zayavlenie tsentral’nogo shtaba dvizheniya protiv nelegal’noy immigratsii o prodolzhenii deyatel’nosti”, *DPNI*, available at: http://dpni.org/articles/novosti_d/25437/, accessed on 24 September 2011.

⁷² ‘Rossiiskie natsionalisty ob’edinilis’ v organizatsiyu “Russkie”, pravozashchitniki obespokoeny’, 5 May 2011, *Newsru.com*, available at: <http://www.newsru.com/russia/05may2011/russkie.html>, accessed 13 March 2013.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ “Rossiyskie natsionalisty ob’edinilis’ v organizatsiyu “Russkie”, pravozashchitniki obespokoeny”, *Newsru.com*, available at: <http://www.newsru.com/russia/05may2011/russkie.html>, accessed 21 September 2011.

Another important point for understanding the ideology of an organization is the ideology of its leaders. I will constrain my research to the ideology of its founders, the Potkin brothers. Russian (*Russkie*) is for Aleksandr Belov an ethnic group. It depends on blood, language, and culture. Nevertheless, he recognizes that there are Russians who emigrated and have forgotten their homeland and Dagestani who have shed their blood for Russia. But all this, according to Belov, is clear in the streets, in general Russian people are extreme racists – a Russian man with dark hair and brown eyes is “probably not Russian” (Vinogradov 2008).

As far as the immigrant workers are concerned, Aleksandr Belov believes that they are not needed, because Russia could resolve work shortages with internal immigration from rural to urban areas (Vinogradov 2008). He also states that the government has taken over DPNI's rhetorics on migration (e.g. “It is time to chase these immigrants away”) and that DPNI will continue until it achieves that “all these bad people understand their place in Russia and realize who is the boss” (Shibanova 2006).

Additionally, for Aleksandr Belov, Moscow and other European examples, like France, show that people from different civilizations cannot live together (Shibanova 2006). “Migration is unpleasant when it becomes visible” and the level of xenophobia naturally grows. What DPNI strives for is the reduction in the number of conflicts by reducing the number of immigrants (Vinogradov 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to impose restrictions in immigration so that workers leave after their working season ends. Nowadays, according to Belov, migrants are not only working where Russians do not want to work, but they are working in the entire industry instead, while Russians are not allowed even to receive the same salary (Shibanova 2006).

For Chechnya, a Russian territory, Belov says that when “we” left in the 1990s the territory turned into a gangster enclave. He believes that if no total Russification of North Caucasus takes place, then the government will not be able to avoid its secession (Vinogradov 2008). Finally, Belov believes that Chechens increasingly dominate Russian politics and that they have lots of rights (Shibanova 2006).

Regarding the Jewish question, Aleksandr Belov holds an ambiguous stance. On the one hand, he says that when he was young he ran into the Protocols of the Elders of Zion with which he was amazed, but had doubts on the book's correctness. A Jew classmate of his resolved his doubts by

confirming that what the book says is true. On the other hand, he says that he really likes Jews, because their state is a prototype of a national state. He believes that “happiness” for Russian people will be established by re-writing the Jewish laws, but replacing the word “Jew” with “Russian” (Russkii) and “Judaism” with “Orthodoxy” (Vinogradov 2008).

Finally, Aleksandr Belov states that he “honestly” feels closer to Hitler's methods for ceasing power through democratic elections. Capturing the parliament and shooting the dissidents would cause the country more harm than a democratic rise to power (Vinogradov 2008). His brother Vladimir Basmanov is close to this view. Vladimir writes that he is not a monarchist-fascist, nor a National Socialist, neither a national democrat. He is a “nationalist” and his dream is to take all useful lessons from the past that “will suit most of the major groups of the national liberation movement” (Basmanov 2013).

It would be reasonable to assume that the affiliations of one organization (with other organizations and public figures it collaborates with and supports in elections) indicates its ideological positioning. DPNI's “traditional partners” were neo-Nazi Slavic Union (SS), anti-Semite and racist National-Sovereign Party of Russia (NDPR)⁷⁶, N. Kur'yanovich and V. Osipov's *Svyato-Sergievskii Soyuz Russkogo Naroda* (St. Sergius Union of the Russian People), and Ivan Sturkov's Russian National–Bolshevik Front (RNBF) (Kozhevnikova 2009: 18).

However, DPNI also experimented with other organizations of the broader nationalistic spectrum. For example, in 2008 DPNI got into a coalition with several other organizations in order to create the nationalist umbrella organization *Russkoe Natsional'noe Dvizhenie* (Russian National Movement – RND) together with the following organizations: Great Russia Party, National Russian Liberation Movement (NAROD), and Russian People's Movement (ROD). NAROD's activists come from National-Bolshevik Party, CPRF, and *Yabloko* and are considered too liberal by most of the nationalists (Kozhevnikova 2009: 20- 21).

⁷⁶ NDPR was the first attempt to gather Russia's nationalist organizations under a single nationalist party. Stanislav Terekhov, Dmitrii Demushkin, Aleksandr Sevast'yanov, Andrei Arkhipov, and others signed NDPR's first declaration in May 2001. NDPR does not have a solid ideology, except of anti-Semitism. It unites from neo-pagans to Orthodox fundamentalists, and from anti-communist nationalists to national communists. Aleksandr Sevast'yanov, the person who contributed most to the party's programmatic documents, was a racist, anti-Christian, “national-capitalist” (SOVA 2003). NDPR's publishes its newspaper *Russkii Front* (Russian Front) and anti-Semite and racist, anti-Caucasian in particular, articles, e.g. “The Jews ... always a parasite on the body of the other nations”, “These unshaven, smelly “children of the mountains” ... spit, litter It is time, without waiting for a legal court, to arrange a fair trial and to remove the scum from the RUSSIAN LAND!”, “We need a Russian Hitler” (Pribylovskii ca. 2013g).

Finally, DPNI has supported through the years various politicians. For example, it supported Boris Fedorov of *Novyi Kurs- Avtomobilnaya Rossiya* (New Course – Automotive Russia) for the 2003 Duma elections (DPNI made an active campaign for him together with the skinhead team *Russkaya Tsel'* (Russian Goal) (Pribylovskii ca.2013a). In 2005, Aleksandr Belov declared that his organization will support some candidates from the CPRF and *Rodina* for the Moscow city elections.⁷⁷ In 2006, MPs Andrei Savel'ev of *Rodina* and Nikolai Kur'yanovich of LDPR entered publicly DPNI (Pribylovskii ca.2013a).⁷⁸ Finally, DPNI has been collaborating with Dmitrii Rogozin. In December 2006, DPNI took active part in the revival of Dmitrii Rogozin's Congress of Russian Communities, after his party *Rodina* merged with Fair Russia. In March 2007, DPNI also took part in Rogozin's next project, *Velikaya Rossiya* (Great Russia), headed by Duma deputy Andrei Savel'ev (Pribylovskii ca.2013a).

5.1.3. Internal Structure

In terms of movement organizational structures, DPNI introduced the use of new communication technologies and flexible membership. Formally, DPNI had no legal status and no leader; it was a form of voluntarily political self-organization maintained through the Internet (Zuev 2010, pp. 269). As far as participation is concerned, DPNI claimed it enjoyed broader public support than any other right-wing organizations, even in regions it recently emerged (DPNI 2010). As it was offering a catch-all ideology based on anti-immigrant sentiments, it managed to bring together ideological different nationalist organizations. It soon became a centre of convergence of knowledge production on the ethnic question (Zuev 2010, pp. 269). Through its “untwisted” TV, it started early on (from 2003 to 2005) to gain the support of skinhead groups, the so-called “combat troops” or “gangs” of DPNI, that found in DPNI an ideological umbrella.

The originality of DPNI, when compared to other nationalist-patriotic parties, was that it was a network and not a vertical organization (Pribylovskii ca. 2013b). It was based on mixed membership with other nationalist organizations and on a network of regional representatives throughout the Russian regions (Zuev 2010, 269). Local activists were free to participate to DPNI's projects and were coordinated by its regional leaders. Regional leaders participated in the election

⁷⁷ “Aleksandr Belov iz DPNI: “Kto s nami svyazhetsya – nikogda ni otmoetsya””, 26 November 2005, *Novyi Region – Ekaterinburg*, available at: <http://stringer-news.com/Publication.mhtml?PubID=4926&Menu=&Part=37>, accessed 12 March 2013.

⁷⁸ This cost Nikolai Kur'yanovich his position as MP. In 2006 he got expelled from the LDPR and from the Duma faction (Pirogov & Shidlovsky 2006).

of DPNI's National Council. Every two weeks representatives from DPNI's National Council made on-line conferences with its regional offices and monitored their projects. In this way horizontal and vertical cooperation was facilitated (DPNI 2010).

DPNI's funding comes from private and from public resources: "Surkov is giving money to those who interfere with him", said Belov.⁷⁹ First of all, according to Aleksandr Belov, a lot of people, mostly from the middle class are funding DPNI. Then, DPNI earns some money by helping someone in the election, although it is not a major source of funds. Aleksandr Belov also revealed that DPNI was funded by the Kremlin. In particular, in 2005, the movement *Nashi* approached DPNI's leadership and asked it if DPNI wanted to help them to organize militias. The DPNI agreed, because *Nashi* would provide them with halls for training skinheads, lectures by prominent nationalists, telephones, computers, and a salary to several DPNI members. The deal broke when DPNI people started to promote DPNI's objectives (Shibanova 2006). Journalists from newspaper *Izvestia* have also speculated that Dmitrii Rogozin gave DPNI its principle founding in the mid-2000s (Rothrock 2012).

When in 2005, Aleksandr Belov was asked why they did not register a party and run for elections, he replied that "if a majority in the Duma does not solve anything, why create a party and go to the polls?". He also said that is better to prepare the electoral programs of the existing parties and get paid for it, insinuating that DPNI or some of its members are getting also funds by writing programs for some parties.⁸⁰ Some years later, in 2008, Vladimir Basmanov initiated an organizational reform in DPNI that would bring it closer to a party, which included: a single statute, the creation of primary cells, and the "Matrix-hierarchical principle of the organization". These reforms brought intra-organizational disagreements that finally lead to Vladimir Basmanov's resignation from his post as a coordinator of the Central Council in May 2008 (Pribylovskii ca. 2013a) and brought a schism within DPNI as previously presented.

Apart from these mainly financial connections to the establishment, Aleksandr Belov says that the nationalist-patriotic movement is associated with the Kremlin: "Everybody in Russia has a connection to the Kremlin". In 2006, for example, the first Russian March occurred because there

⁷⁹ Aleksandr Belov iz DPNI: "Kto s nami svyazhetsya – nikogda ni otmoetsya", 26 November 2005, *Novyi Region – Ekaterinburg*, available at <http://stringer-news.com/Publication.mhtml?PubID=4926&Menu=&Part=37>, accessed 12 March 2013.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

was a need for organizing something for Putin's new-established holiday of 4 November. Accidentally, Aleksandr Belov met Yurii Gorskii, who was associated with Aleksandr Dugin's Eurasian Youth Union, on his way to the Kremlin. He proposed to Belov to organize an anti-imperialist, anti-US rally, and Belov agreed, because as he says, Russian nationalists used to have such a holiday. But, Belov continues, when the Kremlin noticed that the nationalists could gather 5.000 people—mainly young people with an average of 30 years—in Moscow's centre, it got “hysterical” and tried to crush the nationalist movement (Vinogradov 2008).

Finally, there is evidence about “special ties” between nationalists and law enforcement agencies. In particular, Aleksandr Belov talks openly about his contacts among senior counterintelligence officers and was photographed at a Kremlin banquet for the “Police Day” in November 2006 (Rothrock 2012). Dmitrii Demushkin, former leader of banned SS, openly admitted in an interview that “we have allies in the Army, in the police, and among the FSB” (Matthews & Nemtsova 2011).

5.1.4. Activities

I decided to divide DPNI's activities in three periods for simplifying my analysis.⁸¹ The first one, 2004- 2006, covers the first public events organized of DPNI up to DPNI's break through in the radical right scene with the Kondopoga events. The second period, 2007- 2009, refers to the attempts of DPNI as a significant mobilizing force to attribute to new events the status of nationwide nationalist mobilizations, and to repeat the Kondopoga lessons. Finally, the years 2010 and 2011 show the last mobilization efforts of DPNI before its ban and present the riots of Manezh Square.

The first stage of DPNI's activities starts with DPNI's first small-scale public events in 2004 and ends with the Kondopoga pogroms of 2006 that resulted to DPNI's break through into the radical right scene. The DPNI started gaining public visibility in 2005, when it got involved together with the youth wing of Aleksandr Dugin's Eurasia Party called *Evraziiskii Soyuz Molodezhi* (Eurasian Youth Union – ESM) and National-Sovereign Party of Russia (NDPR) in the organization of the first nationalist march, the Radical-Right March. In the following year, the event was renamed into Russian March and passed under DPNI's control. At the same time, DPNI was organizing various

⁸¹ As already discussed in section 3.5., the data collection on DPNI's mobilization is based on two of the organization's key documents of 2007 and 2010 that offer an overview of DPNI's activities and its strategy for future actions, on the publications of SOVA center. Additionally, I have compared this information with newspaper articles from the Moscow Times, *RIA Novosti*, and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL).

small-scale political events in Moscow and started having regional activity, mainly through the dissemination of xenophobic leaflets.



Illustration 2: Russkie column, Russian March, 4 November 2011, Moscow, picture taken by author.

In the summer of 2006, ethnic clashes in Kharagun and Salsk paved DPNI the way to organize the Kondopoga riots. On 30 August, a brawl between ethnic Russians and Chechens and Azerbaijanis in one of Kondopoga's Chechen-owned restaurants that ended to two killings and several injuries, triggered an aggressive public reaction. Local residents interpreted the conflict as an interethnic one

and expressed a deep distrust towards the regime and law enforcement agencies in protecting “Russians”. At the same time DPNI played a catalytic role in framing the conflict in interethnic terms and calling for support of ethnic Russians through an effective on-line and street campaign (SOVA 2007). Under DPNI’s initiative a People’s Assembly was organized on 2 September, with the aim to show everyone that there are a lot of people who advocate the deportation of criminals from the city” (Pal’tsev 2007). About 2,000 people showed up, including Aleksandr Belov and some DPNI members (Mite 2006, SOVA 2007) and quickly violence intensified leading to smashing shop windows⁸² and to at least twenty arson attacks against the property of Caucasians, including the restaurant’s arson (Kozhevnikova 2007). Riot police got control over the situation hours later (Pal’tsev 2007).

The Kondopoga pogroms resulted to the detention of 109 people, including the three suspects of the killing, the injury of at least eight Caucasian-looking people (Kozhevnikova 2007), and the flee of hundreds Caucasians from the city⁸³, who did not return until November (Pal’tsev 2007). Kondopoga riots also had a spill-over effect over governmental policies and the media. Bureaucrats of various levels started distinguishing between “indigenous” and “non-indigenous” population, legitimizing effectively DPNI’s rhetoric. A massive media campaign for the adoption of administrative regulations that will “establish order” in markets and in immigration policies started that was threatening the liberal amendment of the immigration law. On 16 November, the government’s official quotas for foreign labor banned from January 2007 foreigners from selling alcohol and pharmaceuticals, and from April 2007 prohibited foreigners from working in retail sales in kiosks and markets or other types of outside stores. Furthermore, after the strong and consistent critique of nationalists, some amendments of the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners that was signed on 18 July 2006, were reversed (Kozhevnikova 2007c).

In the aftermath of Kondopoga events, the 2006 Russian March became the first nation-wide nationalist event. The march took place in eleven cities and was banned in other three, while Aleksandr Belov became the radical right’s public face. A group of parliamentarians joined the organizing committee of the 2006 Russian March, among them Dmitrii Rogozin and Alexei Navalny (Kozhevnikova 2007c). In summing up its activities from 2002 to 2006, DPNI writes that it managed to become a “famous and recognizable brand”, to introduce the term “illegal

⁸² Violence leaves two dead in Karelia □ *RFE/RL*, 5 September 2006, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143709.html>, accessed 10 December 2012.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

immigration” in public discourse, to become the most visited web site among social movements and political parties, to open offices in more than fifty cities, and to enjoy the support of Duma deputies (DPNI 2007). Finally, it was reported that supporters of DPNI are to be found even among state bureaucracy.⁸⁴

The second distinguishable period in DPNI’s life circle begins in 2007, after the organization had already gained public visibility, and ends with Aleksandr Belov’s voluntary resignation in 2009. During this period, DPNI uses the same tactic in cases that resemble the Kondopoga conflict, in order to repeat its successful mobilization. What I call the “Kondopoga tactic” was repeated eight times in various regions with different levels of success. Since 2007, DPNI has been introducing new public events, aspiring to establish landmark dates for the nationalist movement: the Russian Labor March on 1 May, rallies in support for “political prisoners”⁸⁵ and for the abolishment of Article 282 Article of the Criminal Code (the date was also chosen to coincide with the anniversary of Adolf Hitler’s birthday), the Fatherland’s Heroes Day. At the same time it was organizing smaller-scale pickets, was pasting stickers, and was continuing with internet propaganda. The Russian March was grew substantially in 2007, but the internal division within the nationalist movement withheld its scope in 2008, to return the next year on 2009’s standards. By 2009, DPNI, together with *Russkiy Obraz*, were the two “key players among the legally operating Russian nationalist groups (Kozhevnikova 2010b).

Finally, the years 2010 and 2011 were years of internal splits that include the last mobilization efforts of DPNI before its ban. The Kondopoga tactic was applied again and reached its peak with the riots of Manezh Square that involved football hooligans. On 6 December, Egor Sviridov, a Spartak fan, was killed in a street fight with youngsters from the North Caucasus⁸⁶. On 11 December, soccer fans organized a memorial rally at the murder scene that went smoothly, apart from some beatings of foreign-born people nearby. Aleksandr Belov incited the crowd when he called for violence against the Caucasian “animals”. About 3,000 people arrived at Manezh Square, some of them were coming from the memorial rally. The crowd chanted racist slogans and slogans against the police, raised hands in Nazi salutes, and attacked Caucasian-looking young men and

⁸⁴ ‘Russian police sympathize with nationalists’, *Novye Izvestia*, republished in *RIA Novosti*, 28 September 2006, available at: <http://en.ria.ru/analysis/20060928/54370532.html>, accessed 4 September 2012.

⁸⁵ Under the term “political prisoners” DPNI refers to activists that have been imprisoned under Article 282 of the Criminal Code for Incitement of Hatred or Enmity and Article 282.1 for Organizing an Extremist Community.

⁸⁶ A similar killing happened six months before that, when three Chechens killed the Spartak fan Yuri Volkov, nevertheless the commemoration gatherings were peaceful.

police officers that tried to protect them. After negotiations with the police, the mob left the square, entered the metro, and started attacking “non-Slavs”, leaving forty injured and one dead (Verkhovsky & Kozhevnikova 2011, pp. 23). Parallel events were organized in 19 other cities from various organizers, including DPNI, and in St. Petersburg it mobilized about 2,000 people.

Manezh riots could have been considered DPNI’s most successful mobilization effort since the Kondopoga pogrom, had Aleksandr Belov not denied that the overall existence of organizers behind it. For one of the leaders of the nationalist-patriotic opposition, it was a “spontaneous reaction” (*Russkie* leader1, personal communication). The event was shocking, because for the first time such a big crowd proclaiming radical slogans gathered so fast under the Kremlin walls. Furthermore, the crowd exhibited mass violence, but, nevertheless, no one was held accountable (Verkhovsky & Kozhevnikova 2011, pp. 24). The aftermath of Manezh included clashes in various Moscow locations on 15 and 16 December, and a series of attacks and brawls between “Russian youth” and “Caucasian youth” in Moscow, and in other cities (Verkhovsky & Kozhevnikova 2011, pp. 25). In 2011, similar clashes that involved football hooligans were repeated twice and an attempt was made to celebrate Manezh’s anniversary.

The findings from my empirical research on DPNI's mobilization are summed up in the following table:

Table 4: DPNI's mobilization 2004-2011

	Public events in Moscow & St. Petersburg	Russian March (4 November)	Russian Labor March (1 May)	Mobilization following the Kondopoga-tactic	Hate Crimes (Total of killed and injured)
2004	2				269
2005	2	3,000 people in Moscow, 150 people in St. Petersburg, 2 cities in total			468
2006	5	1,000 people in Moscow, 14 cities in total (in 3 of which banned)		3 incidents: Kharagun (spring), Salsk (June), Kondopoga (September)	588
2007	10	2,500- 3,000 people in Moscow, 22 cities in total	500-700 people in Moscow, 300 people in St.Petersburg, 4 cities in total	3 incidents: Saratov (March), Stavropol (May), Zelonograd- Moscow (June)	716
2008	9	Year of the split, 500 people in Moscow, 200 people in St. Petersburg, 16-19 cities in total	200-400 people in Moscow., 50 people in St. Petersburg, 3 cities in total	3 incidents: Belorechensk (January), Karagai (autumn), Mozhaisk- Moscow (October)	615
2009	6	2,500- 3,500 people in Moscow, 12 cities in total	300-400 people in Moscow, 150 people in St. Petersburg, 7 cities in total	2 incidents: Cherkizovsky Market- Moscow (September), Znamensk (July)	535
2010	13	5,500 people in Moscow, 30 cities in total	400-500 people in Moscow, 200 people in St. Petersburg, 10 cities in total	6 incidents: Pughachev (April), Krohnstadt (May), Hotkovo (October), Manezh (Dec. 11), various districts in Moscow (Dec.15), Chistye Prudy & Solnechnogorsk (Dec. 16)	443
2011	13	6,000 people in Moscow, 35 cities in total	600 people in Moscow, 300 people in St. Petersburg, 16 cities in total	3 incidents: Sagra (July), Nevskaya Dubrovka (July), Manezhnayaanya anniversary (Dec.)	177

Sources: 'May-Day Actions of National-Radicals', Moscow Bureau for Human Rights, available at: <http://antirasizm.ru/index.php/englishnews/258-mbhr-english-news-9may-naci-2010> , accessed 10 December 2012; 'Racism and Xenophobia' archive on SOVA center's website, available at: <http://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/reports-analyses/>, accessed 12 December 2012; own elaboration.

5.2. Russian People's Movement (ROD)

5.2.1. Description of the organization, its leaders and its background

Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie (Russian People's Movement – ROD) was formed in the spring of 2005 by Konstantin Krylov, Nataliya Kholmogorova, Viktor Militarev, and Tat'yana Shlikhter. The aim of the organization was initially to support Aleksandra Ivannikova, a lady who was charged with premeditated murder for stabbing an Armenian taxi driver that presumably tried to rape her (Pribylovskii ca. 2013e). ROD is a word with many meanings in the Russian language: genus, race, family, gender, generation, clan, species. ROD's president ever since its formation is Konstantin Krylov. One of the prominent ideologists and pioneers of contemporary Russian nationalism, Krylov was born in Moscow in 1967. He got his university degree in 1991 in engineering and mathematics from the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute (MIFI). After graduating, he worked at Moscow's Air-building Institute and at the New Information Technologies – Konversiya (NITKON).

Konstantin Krylov is a prolific writer: he has written and co-written several books on politics and philosophy, e.g. *Net Vremeni. Stat'i i Retsenzii* (No time. Articles and Reviews), *Osobennosti Natsional'nogo Povedeniya* (Peculiarities of National Behaviour), *Povedeniye* (Behaviour), *Morgenshtern* (Morning Star), *Uspekhi* (Success), and also fiction books under the pseudonym M. Yu. Kharitonov and poems under the pseudonym Yudik Sherman. He also participated in the Russian “Wikipedia” in 2006 and the same year created its Russian counterpart, called *Traditsiya – Russkaya Entsiklopediya* (Tradition – Russian Encyclopedia) together with Sergei Nesterovich (Pribylovskii ca. 2013e). In 2009, Krylov was given the fifth place out of 330 (after Mikhail Khodorkovskii) among the most influential intellectuals of Russia in a survey conducted by the website Openspace with the participation of more than 40.000 people. Eduard Limonov of Drugaya Rossya (ex-National-Bolshevik Party, see chapter 4) scored tenth.⁸⁷

In 1998, Krylov created together with Egor Kholmogorov one of the first Russian nationalist projects online, called Doctrina.Ru that was later transformed in Rossia.org. In the following year, he co-founded together with Egor Kholmogorov and Anton Ter-Grigoryan the magazine *Epokha*:

⁸⁷ ‘Samyi Vliyatel'nyi Intellektual Rossii. Opros v Detalyakh’, 21 December 2009, *OpenSpace.ru*, available at: <http://os.colta.ru/society/russia/details/15155/>, accessed 15 March 2013.

Politika. Obshchestvo. Tsivilizatsiya. (Era: Politics. Society. Civilization.). Krylov also became chief editor in the newspaper *Spetsnaz Rossii* (Russia's Special Forces) and editor of the newspaper *Konservator* (Conservative) in 2003.

Since 2004, he has been a member of Stanislav Belkovsky's *Instituta Natsional'noi Strategii* (National Strategy Institute- INS) (Pribylovskii ca. 2013e). One of the INS' projects is the online journal *Agenstvo Politicheskikh Novostei* (Political News Agency – APN) that is an alternative information agency on Russian and world politics. Its chief editor is Konstantin Krylov. The APN became the major information center for the Russian nationalists, according to expert on Russian extremism Viktor Shnirelman (personal communication). In APN's website one can find links to Krylov's movement ROD and to National-Democratic Party (RDP) party he founded in 2012 (see below), as well as to Russian Imperial Movement (RID) that figures in all Krylov-related internet pages (APN ca. 2013). Therefore, one can conclude that RID is one of ROD's main allies.

Konstantin Krylov published in 2004 an article with the title “*Polnoch', 22 Iyunya*” (Midnight, 22 June) in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, where he drew parallels between the terrorism of modern Chechen rebels and Hitler's army during WWII. Chechen diaspora reacted to this article, suing Krylov under Article 282 of the Criminal Code for the incitement of ethnic hatred. His supporters organized then the online *Norodniii Fond Pomoshchi Krylovu* (People's Fond for Krylov's Support), in order to help him with his trial. At the end, Krylov was not prosecuted and wanted to return the money of the Fond, but the donor refused to take it back and asked him to use the fund for “the good of Russian people”.⁸⁸ One year later, when Konstantin Krylov was appointed ROD's president, the People's Fond for Krylov's Support passed to the organization (Pribylovskii ca. 2013e). The rest of ROD's directive board, formed in 2006, was composed as follows: Nataliya Kholmogorova executive director, Pavel Svyatenkov finance director, Sergei Nesterovich technical director, Viktor Militarev coordinator of public affairs, and Vyacheslav Makarov head of ROD's youth front (Pribylovskii ca. 2013e).

In 2005, ROD took part in the preparation and the conduct of the first Russian March and Krylov was one of the leaders who addressed the public. In 2006, Konstantin Krylov was elected member

⁸⁸ ‘O nac – Istoriya’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/o-nas/istorija/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

of the Central Committee of Dmitrii Rogozin's *Kongress Russkikh Obshchin* (Congress of Russian Communities – KRO) (Pribylovskii ca. 2013e).

In 2007, ROD confronted an internal schism that had to do with the decision whether it should participate in the organizing committee of the Russian March together with DPNI and other “more radical” groups. Krylov and Kholmogorova were in favor of participating in the organizing committee. Nevertheless, ROD's directive board decided in February 2007 to abstain from the organization of the 2007 Russian March and discouraged its members from being members of DPNI at the same time, while it allowed them to participate in Rodina (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d). Viktor Militarev and Vyacheslav Makarov published ROD's decree in their blog, contrary to the agreement not to publish it temporarily, a fact that led to Konstantin Krylov's resignation from ROD's presidency and Vyacheslav Makarov—leader of ROD's youth branch—became the new leader (Pribylovskii ca. 2013D; Pribylovskii ca. 2013e).

But, soon enough several other members (particularly Kholmogorova) requested from Krylov to return to the presidency (Pribylovskii ca. 2013e). Since then, two parallel organizations were formed. The one Konstantin Krylov is heading is called ROD-Rossiya, which includes Nataliya Kholmogorova, Vladimir Tor, and Matvei Tszen between others. The other ROD was that of Vyacheslav Makarov, Viktor Militarev, Tat'yana Shlikhter, and Mikhail Denisov, and resulted “unobtrusive” (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d). From now on, ROD will refer to Konstantin Krylov's organization ROD-Rossiya.

In 2008, ROD got into a coalition with the brother Potkins' DPNI, Andrei Seval'ev's *Velikaya Rossiya* (Great Russia), and NAROD, signing the coalition agreement “8th of June Pact” (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d). This was not the only coalition ROD got into with DPNI and other political forces, nationalist or not. For instance, in September 2010, ROD signed the “Declaration of Russian national organizations” that was intended to put an end to the competition between DPNI and Russian Image. The declaration was also signed by *Rossiya Osvoboditsya Hashimi Silami* (Russia Free Our Forces – RONS)⁸⁹, Russian Imperial Movement (RID), National Socialist Initiative (NSI), and others (Verkhovsky & Kozhevnikova 2011, pp. 17). Then, in November 2010, Anton Susov of DPNI took the initiative to organize the founding conference of a new movement

⁸⁹ Russia Free Our Forces is the successor of the banned *Russkii Obshchenatsional'nii Soyuz* (Russian National Unity – RONS). Its leader is Igor' Artemov.

called *Russki Grazhdanski Soyuz* (Russian Civil Union – RGS) that would unite Russian nationalists and the democratic opposition. Members of this new platform were: ROD, Russian Image, RFO *Pamyat'*, *Natsional-Demokraticeskii Alians* (National Democratic Alliance – NDA), *Pravoe Delo* (Just Cause), and the youth wing of Mikhail Kas'yanov's Russian People's Democratic Union (RNDS) called *Narodno-Demokraticeskii Soyuz Molodezhi* (People's-Democratic Union of the Youth – NDSM) (Verkhovsky & Kozhevnikova 2011, pp. 17).

In April 2010, ROD published its journal, *Voprosy Natsionalizma* (Queries of Nationalism), a journal of “scientific and socio-political thought”. The journal comes out four times a year in printed version and online. The editor of *Voprosy Natsionalizma* is Konstantin Krylov and the editorial board “is closely linked” to ROD. The journal became an influential channel for the spread of ROD's national democratic ideals. It unites 36 authors, between them Valerii Solovei, Aleksandr Sevast'yanov, Aleksandr Khramov, Tatyana Solovei, Dimitrii Savvin, Egor Kholmogorov, Nataliya Kholmogorova, Anton Susov.⁹⁰

At this point, I would like to draw the attention on two of the above-mentioned authors of *Voprosy Natsionalizma*, who have a remarkable action in Russia's modern nationalist scene. The first one is Valerii Solovei, historian, professor at the faculty of History of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), prolific writer⁹¹, and author of the book *Nesostoyavshayasya Revolyutsiya* (The Revolution that did not take place) (Solovei & Solovei 2009), the book that at least two nationalist leaders I interviewed recommended me. Valerii Solovei is a national-democrat and leader of the political party *Novaya Sila* (New Force), formed in 2012.

The second one is Aleksandr Sevast'yanov, leader of National-Sovereign Party of Russia (NDPR). Sevast'yanov, openly anti-Semite and racist, was NDPR's main ideologist, writer, and editor of various journals. Indicatively, some of his titles are: *Natsional-Kapitalizm* (National-Capitalism), *Chego ot nas Xotyat Evrei* (What do Jews want from us), *Rossiia – dlya Russkix!* (Russia for the

⁹⁰ ‘Nashi Avtory’, *Voprosy Natsionalizma*, ca. 2013, available at: <http://vnatio.org/nashi-avtory/>, accessed 15 March 2013; Pribylovskii ca. 2013ff.

⁹¹ For an overview of his latest writings, see also Valerii Solovei's homepage at the MGIMO University, available at: <http://www.mgimo.ru/users/document35523.phtml>, accessed 15 March 2013.

Russians!), *Russkii Natsionalizm: ego Druzya i Bragi* (Russian Nationalism: Its Friends and Enemies) (Pribylovskii ca. 2013g).

In the spring of 2011, probably because Manezh mobilization caused the nationalists an increased euphoria, ROD started writing a program for a unified nationalist organization after DPNI's initiative. But the project took the opposite direction: each organization started developing a different project for the movement's integration, something that might have caused a conflict between Vladimir Basmanov and Vladimir Tor, one of DPNI's leaders and ROD's member at the same time, who left DPNI and moved to ROD (Yudina & Alperovich 2011).

At about the same time, ROD launched the campaign *Khvatit Kormit' Kavkaz* (Stop Feeding the Caucasus) that raised lots of conversation and controversy. For the purpose of the campaign, the organizers ROD and the newly formed Russian Civil Union (RGS) of Anton Susov and Aleksandr Khramov, formed the umbrella organization *Russkaya Platforma* (Russian Platform). It was joined by: New Force, Russian Imperial Movement (RID), *Natsional'naya (Narodnaya) Sotsialisticheskaya Initsiativa* (National (People's) Socialist Initiative – GCD RNS), and *Sibirskaya Novostnaya Sluzhba* (Siberian News Agency) between others.⁹² In Russian Platform's website one can find a subcategory that provides a direct link to Daniil Konstantinov's *Liga Oborony Moskvy* (League of Moscow's Self-Defense – LOM). Judging from the fact that it is the only organization on ROD's site that receives this promotion, I conclude that LOM must be a semi-autonomous organization that functions under ROD's banner.

ROD organized with its partners various public events and press conferences in order to promote the campaign *Khvatit Kormit' Kavkaz*. I present these initiatives in more detail in the section of ROD's activities (see below).⁹³ Nevertheless, the “Stop feeding the Caucasus” initiative did not find support in the whole nationalist camp. *Russkie* and its allies Russian Image and *Kongress Ruskikh Obshchin* (KRO), joined by the Russian Congress of Caucasian Communities, opposed it. Russian Platform does not hide its surprise and blames Demushkin's and Belov's trip to Chechnya in the summer of 2011, “a visit to Ramzan Kadyrov” as they write, for this.⁹⁴ “If we don't feed them,

⁹² ‘O nas’, ca. 2013, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/o-nas/>, accessed 16 March 2013; ‘Nod RNS prisoedniyatsya k “Russkoi Platfome”’, 8 November 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1571/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

⁹³ See the organization's web page on <http://rusplatforma.org/>, accessed 15 March 2013.

⁹⁴ ‘Dvizhenie “Russkie” I kongress kavkazskikh obshchin protiv kampanii “Khvatit kormit' Kavkaz!”’, 3 November 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1530/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

millions of Chechens will come to Moscow, Stavropol and other cities” says Dmitrii Demushkin from SS (Fomichev 2011). The campaign was received with severe criticism from the government as well: “As soon as any country starts to reject some problematic territories, this means the beginning of the end for the whole country”, according to prime minister Vladimir Putin (Fomichev 2011).

On the day of the 2011 Russian March, Konstantin Krylov—one of the organizers—was detained and could not reach the March on time where he was supposed to give a speech. He was accused under Article 282 for incitement of ethnic hatred for a speech he delivered during a meeting on Bolotnaya square on 22 October 2011 (Shmaraeva 2011). After his trial having been cancelled six times, he finally was found guilty and was sentenced to 120 hours community work. All information about Krylov's trial is posted on ROD's internet site.⁹⁵

Konstantin Krylov took actively part in the massive protests that followed the Duma 2011 elections. Krylov, as well as Vladimir Tor, addressed the public together with liberal politicians, in a demonstration of the anti-Putin opposition's power in Russia (Zykov *et al.* 2011). In February 2012, Krylov announced the creation of the national democratic political party *Grazhdanskaya Platforma* (Civil Platform) that was based on the organizations ROD and RGS.⁹⁶

One month later, in March 2012, ROD and RGS formed a new nationalist political party, the National-Democratic Party (NDP).⁹⁷ The constituent conference in Moscow was attended by collaborators of APN and *Voprosy Natsionalizma* and by national-democrats activists. Apart from founders Konstantin Krylov, Anton Susov, and Aleksandr Khramov, the event counted with the participation of Vladimir Tor, Rostislav Antonov (ROD-Siberia), Egor Kholmogorov, Mikhail Remizov (president of INS), Pavel Svyatenkov, Oleg Nemensky, Sergei Sergeev, Vladimir Milov (*Demokraticheskiy Vybor*, Democratic Choice), and Vladimir Ermolaev (*Russkie*). Krylov became the party's chairman, Susov his deputy, and Kholmogorov the organizing committee's plenipotentiary for relations with the Ministry of Justice (Yudina & Alperovich 2012). The new party attempts to resemble a “classic, European national-democratic party” that aims to restore democracy in Russia (Bennetts 2012).

⁹⁵ ROD ca. 2013 ‘Podderzhi Konstantina Krylova-282’, *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/tag38/>, accessed 15 March 2013.

⁹⁶ ‘Zayavlenie Orgkomiteta po sozdaniyu partii “Grazhdanskaya Platforma”’, 12 February 2012, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news2280/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

⁹⁷ The homepage of National-Democratic Party is <http://rosndp.org/>.

5.2.2. Ideological features, influences, symbols

One can get into Konstantin Krylov's ideology through his texts and his journal *Voprosy Natsionalizma*. This section aims to present Krylov's political thought through his main political projects: ROD, the campaign “Stop feeding the Caucasus”, and his political parties.

ROD defines itself as the “first Russian human rights organization” that protects the rights, interests, honor, and dignity of the Russian people. Its main activity is to assist the Russian people (*Russkim lyudyam*) who are in trouble by collecting information on cases of oppression, discrimination, persecution of Russians in Russia and outside, and disseminate the information in order to promote public awareness. ROD's main principles are truth, justice, legitimacy, and solidarity. Specifically, ROD aims to withstand lies and baseless attacks and its presentation in the media (“truth”). Furthermore, according to ROD, Russians are practically defenseless in front of state organs and of other organized forces hostile to them and ROD wants to protect their rights (“justice”). The organization stresses that it operates exclusively with legal methods and does not break the law (“legitimacy”). Finally, ROD wants to unite the people, in order to overcome their fear to defend their interests collectively (“solidarity”).⁹⁸

ROD parts from the idea that Russia is falling apart, because of widespread poverty, paralysis of state institutions, lack of freedom, law infringement, corruption, destruction of morality, alcohol and drug abuse, extinction of the indigenous population, national conflicts, etc. The only political force who can show the country a way out of this dead-end are Russian nationalists. What nationalists propose is the construction of a national state for Russian people.

Nationalism is for ROD “the ideology and the consequent political practice that tends to the building of the nation and the assertion of its rights as the face of the state”. A nation has the right, according to nationalists, to require from the state the guarantee of its rights and long-term interests, otherwise the nation has the right to make a national revolution to overthrow the government. In the Russian case, the Russian Federation is not a state of the Russian people, because it is controlled by an “anti-national elite” that has the opposite interests of the Russian people. Russia is ruled by a “colonial form of government”. “All Russian nationalists believe” that Russians in Russia are discriminated against people who are subjected to national oppression by the authorities, as well as

⁹⁸ ‘O nas’, ca. 2013, *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/o-nas/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

some of the people of power. Therefore, the Russian people have the right and need to make revolutionary changes and to proceed to the construction of the Russian nation state.⁹⁹

National democrats support the “classic national democratic state of the European type”, in contrast to monarchy, dictatorship, and other non-democratic forms of government. They also stand for unlimited economic freedom and for the establishment of human rights. According to ROD, the optimal strategy for the national revolution is through non-violent resistance by the Russian civil society. ROD tries to achieve this goal by helping the Russian people who fell victims of the authorities or of protected national communities, by protecting Russians in the country's border regions where their interests are most often violated, and by creating an institution that will function as representative of the Russian people internationally. “We do not intend to oppress other nations, but neither do we want to live in captivity”. What ROD strives for is that Russians have equality and justice, that they can live from their work, and that they can determine their own destiny.¹⁰⁰

To this extent, ROD has prepared a list of seventeen demands that starts with granting the constitutional right to Russian people to have a Russian national state, similar to European Union's legislation on national minorities. Other demands are the legislative recognition of ethnic Russians and the right to be repatriated to Russia regardless of place of birth, as well as the constitutional right to write voluntarily the nationality in the passport. ROD also asks for a visa regime with the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, for equality between the regions and limitation of fiscal transference between regions, for the termination of resettlement projects in Northern Caucasus, and for the transfer of the Stavropol region in the Southern Federal district. Some other demands are the legalization of firearms and self-defense groups (militia and teams), the creation of a unit to combat ethnic and organized crime in the Ministry of Interior, free elections, the cancellation of Art. 282 of the Criminal Code, and the rehabilitation of “political prisoners.”¹⁰¹

Respecting the campaign “Stop feeding the Caucasus”, I would summarize it as follows: to Vladimir Putin's comment that “Those who say so [that some problematic territories need to be rejected] deserve to have a piece of themselves cut off” (Fomichev 2011), Konstantin Krylov's answer would be: “The separation of all non-Russian territories could be the last chance for the

⁹⁹ ‘Politicheskaya Platforma Russkogo Obshchestvennogo Dvizheniya’, ca. 2013, *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/nasha-pozicija/politicheskaja-platforma/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ ‘Nasha Positsiya – Nasha Trebovaniya’, ca. 2013, *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/nasha-pozicija/nashi-trebovaniya/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

survival of the Russian nation. Better amputation than gangrene” (Leigh 2012). ROD's idea is “not against the Caucasus, but against the Kremlin” and its budget policies (Fomichev 2011).

The explanation for the reasons that lead ROD to start a campaign against the Caucasus starts like this:

“In Russia there is an undeclared ethnic war. North Caucasian diaspora and ethnic criminal clans are carrying out an aggression against the Russians and other nations of Russia. Our way of life, our prosperity, our freedom, our very lives are under constant and increasing threat. Every day and every hour, we learn about a new murder, robbery, racketeering, and acts of violence committed by people from the North Caucasus...their [Caucasians] cynical disregard of our traditions and behaviors causes widespread anger”.¹⁰²

After that, the focus turns to the government that dedicates a “colossal” budgetary expenditure to the Caucasus and exempts “Caucasian invaders” from complying with the Russian law and the norms of “civilized behavior”. According to ROD, the Northern Caucasus has 6.3 percent of Russia's population and receive 22 percent of the funds allocated by the federal center to the regions, while the tax revenue from the Caucasian republics is less than 1 percent. The state grants Chechnya and Ingushetia subsidies that correspond to more than 90 percent of their budgets (from \$ 100 that a Chechen receives, he has only earned \$9 and the rest is subsidized). “We work, they boycott and dance *Lezhinka*”.¹⁰³ Krylov also stated that it is insulting for North Caucasus people to suggest they are not able to work, because they are perfectly capable people (Bennetts 2012).

The campaign poses two objectives: the constitution of the principle of equality between all regions and the abolition of all criminal and budgetary offshore. In sum, ROD argues that the Russian society is psychologically prepared for the Caucasus secession (50 to 70 percent of the population wants the secession of the North Caucasus in whole or in part). ROD offers, instead, the only way to overturn the situation, which is the equality of all citizens before the law regardless of ethnicity and region, the destruction of ethnic criminal groups, and fair and efficient budget funding for all regions depending on their labour contribution and political and social stability.¹⁰⁴

The program of Russian Platform, the umbrella organization formed by ROD and RGS for the

¹⁰² ‘Nasha Pozitsiya – Khvatit kormit' Kavkaz!’, ca. 2013, *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, <http://rod-ru.org/nasha-pozicija/hkk/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

purposes of “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” campaign, is the same with ROD's seventeen demands. But in this case, the document ends with the words: “We stand on our own land. We protect our rights and our freedom. We will support all who support us and our legitimate demands. One for all and all for one!”.¹⁰⁵

Also the famous anti-corruption blogger and Kremlin criticizer Aleksei Naval'nyi has been supportive of the “Stop feeding the Caucasus” campaign. In an interview he stated:

“What are there only two alternatives: either one just pours money into the region and enriches these local chiefs indefinitely, or Russia separates from them immediately? No, this alternative doesn't exist. With the North Caucasian republics, it seems necessary (especially if the situation deteriorates into civil war) to introduce additional controls, some of which already exist. [...] So at the administrative border let there be controls on the movement of people and cargo, in order to regulate all these things. The Caucasus exists at any rate as something disconnected. It's already not a part of the country” (Rothrock 2012).

Maria Rozalskaya from the SOVA center, on the other hand, sees the Caucasus campaign as another attempt of the nationalists to mobilize under one idea that will sound in unison with the passive majority. The slogan “Stop feeding the Caucasus” is a softer version of the separation of Caucasus from Russia, which cannot attract the majority's support (Chernikh 2011).

ROD's two subsequent party projects together with RGS move in the same lines and mainly repeat ROD's program. The party Civil Platform is based on the principles of a national democratic state, a strong presidency with a government responsible to the Parliament and a truly independent judiciary, and on a free economy that ensures ownership, and against *de jure* and *de facto* inequality of the federation.¹⁰⁶ The National-Democratic Party (NDP) stands for the four main principles of democracy, democratic government, people's welfare, and federalism.¹⁰⁷ The party's manifesto keeps with the objectives of its leaders to become nationalists of the European kind that would find support from society's xenophobic part. Ethnic nationalism is camouflaged behind the description of Russian people as the main force capable of “reviving the country” and anti-migrant attitudes are expressed indirectly with speculations for the rise of social tension and ethnic crime (Yudina &

¹⁰⁵ ‘Trebovaniya Russkoi Platformy’, ca. 2013, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/nasha-pozicija/nashi-trebovaniya/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Zayavlenie Orgkomiteta po sozdaniyu partii “Grazhdanskaya Platforma”’, 12 February 2012, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news2280/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Patriya’, ca. 2013, *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, <http://rod-ru.org/partija/>, accessed 17 March 2013.

Alperovich 2012).

NDP's main competitor is Valerii Solovei's party *Novaya Sila* (New Force), founded in May 2012. New Force also speaks about adherence to democracy, human rights, the allegedly infringed rights of ethnic Russian population. In migration policy, New Force wants to hinder everyone who is not ethnically Russian to move to Russia and foresees the construction of labor centers for those who are subject of deportation, where workers will get a salary, from which their deportation costs will be subtracted. Solovei wants to broaden the president's functions by making him also head of the government, balancing his powers by broadening the parliament's authorities as well regarding the president's impeachment and other new functions. Solovei's vision resembles the classic model of the United States' presidential republic. In the economic sphere, New Force proposes just like the NDP the obligation of major business to pay a “compensatory tax” for the “unjust” privatization of Soviet enterprises and manufacturing facilities (Yudina & Alperovich).

5.2.3. Internal Structure

Contrary to DPNI, ROD has the characteristics of the 1990s movements. It seems it has a hierarchical structure and the organization heavily depends upon its president, Konstantin Krylov. Had it not been like this, ROD would not have faced the internal division that led to two different ROD fractions. ROD's directive board is made up by: ROD's legal representative Nataliya Kholmogorova, secretary Nadezha Shalimova, press-secretary Alla Gordbunova, technical director Sergei Nesterovich, and head of informatics projects Yaroslav Prokof'ev. Other members of the director board are Matvei Tszen and Vladimir Tor (ex-DPNI leader) and four regional coordinators: Tat'yana Uvarova in Primor'e, Aleksei Razumov in Saratov, Rostislav Antonov in Sibiria, and Andrei Kuznetsov in St. Petersburg (ex- DPNI coordinator of public relations in St. Petersburg).¹⁰⁸

ROD has branches in five regions (ROD classifies them as Petersburg, Krasnodar, Sibiria, Primor'e, and Volga¹⁰⁹) and in various cities (e.g. Tver, Volgograd, Rostov, Togliatti, Saratov, and St. Petersburg) (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d). I only found one active link on ROD's website for Saratov branch, which makes me suspect that it must be the most active regional branch. Saratov branch was founded in 2010 and it lists seven members. Its main fields of action are the protection of rights

¹⁰⁸ ‘Litsa’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/lica/>, accessed 17 March 2013.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Regiony’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/regiony/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

in the housing sector, the restoration of violated consumer rights, the protection from unlawful prosecution, the fight against corruption, and the protection of victims' rights. In the link of the Saratov branch, there is also a mention of its financing: in 2011 the Saratov branch received a sponsorship of 29,400 rubles from the Moscow branch and it added 2,250 rubbles from its own funds for the legal advice of people from the region that the branch leaders decided to help.¹¹⁰ This means that ROD Moscow branch is the central branch that also helps its regional branches financially.

ROD's members are fixed and they also have to pay a membership fee (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d). Organizations and individuals can join ROD. In case of an organization that shares the principles of Russian nationalism and the protection of the Russian people's rights and interests, ROD declares itself open to undertake joint activities, to share information, and to help each other's resources – a relationship based “on democratic principles”. In case of individuals, ROD suggests they should contact the ROD branch of their region, if there is one, or to contact ROD Moscow for the European Part of Russia and ROD Siberia for Siberia and the Far East.¹¹¹ It also offers the option to create a new regional branch for areas that do not have one and provides contact details for those interested.¹¹²

As mentioned before, ROD's first financing came from the People's Fund for Krylov's Support, an account that Konstantin Krylov's supporters created in order to support him with a trial he was about to face for inciting ethnic hatred. Krylov was not brought in front of the court, so the fund's money passed to ROD, since the sponsors refused to take it back and trusted it to Krylov for his future projects.¹¹³ Besides the fund, ROD is asking his supporters for financial support and states that without its supporters and adherents' help, it could not exist. Affiliates can also help with advertising, become volunteers, and participate in public events.¹¹⁴

Finally, as far as the connections between ROD and the political establishment is concerned, the only clear evidence of cooperation I found was the election of Konstantin Krylov in Dmitrii

¹¹⁰ ‘Regiony – ROD – Povolzh'e’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/regiony/saratov/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹¹¹ ‘Prinyat' uchastie - Vstupit'’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/prinjat-uchastie/vstupit/>, accessed 17 March 2013.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ ‘O nac – Istorija’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/o-nas/istorija/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹¹⁴ ‘Prinyat' uchastie – Pomoch’’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/prinjat-uchastie/pomoch/>, accessed 17 March 2013.

Rogozin's KRO in 2006 (Pribylovskii ca. 2013e). It comes as no surprise, since Rogozin had participated in various nationalist projects from different organizations. Rogozin is considered by all leaders and activists of the nationalist extra-parliamentarian organizations I talked to, as the only true nationalist sitting in the Duma. Apart from this, I did not find any other evidence of direct cooperation between ROD's members and the government or state institutions (like the police for example, to which DPNI was reportedly having contacts). Indirectly, we can assume that ROD, as one of the the Russian March's organizers, has links to the Duma deputies that participate in it, despite the extra-parliamentarian nationalist organizations these deputies might have entered. For example, the 2006 Russian March was joined by Rogozin and Rodina deputies Andrei Saveliev, V. Alksnis, I. Saveyeva, B. Vinogradov, Nikoloy Pavlov, as well as by LDPR deputies Nikolai Kur'yanovich and I. Musatov (SOVA 2007).

5.2.4. Activities

ROD was actually formed for defending Aleksandra Ivannikova, charged with murder for stabbing an Armenian taxi driver who presumably tried to rape her in 2005. ROD together with a broad spectrum of political organizations, i.e. DPNI ¹¹⁵, CPRF, the LDPR, *Yabloko*, and also ordinary citizens and the press, managed to do an intensive campaign through pickets, rallies, and the Internet and to attract media attention. The court absolved Ivannikova at the end. ROD was already established. Since its formation, ROD has been “actively involved, organizationally, informationally and financially” in the organization of the Russian March.¹¹⁶

In 2006, ROD became involved in the case of a nationalist from Astrakhan, Igor Mogilev, who was brought to trial under Art. 282 of the Criminal Code. ROD representatives from Moscow and Volgograd helped him with his defense and tried to give visibility to the issue. Nevertheless, Mogilev received a one-year imprisonment sentence. In the fall of 2006, ROD started supporting Sergei Arakcheev and Evgenii Khudakov, two Russian army sappers who had served in Chechnya and were accused for killing civilians. Although the officers had an alibi, and the case fell apart in court twice because of lack of evidence, according to ROD, every court was declared invalid for “ridiculous reasons” and the prosecution officers continued to drag them into trials. ROD was spreading information on the Internet, writing articles in the press, doing parliamentary inquiries,

¹¹⁵ The DPNI as well has supported Aleksandra Ivanikova actively and also awarded her a monetary award (Pribylovskii ca. 2013a).

¹¹⁶ ‘O nac – Istoriya’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/o-nas/istorija/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

organizing rallies and pickets, and provided them with legal and organizational support through the following two years. But, ROD did not succeed with this case either. In 2007, Arakcheev was sentenced to a long imprisonment term.¹¹⁷

Ever since, ROD and its close allies got involved into various actions in support of individuals that were mainly either convicted under Art. 282 of the Criminal Code, or were involved into interethnic cases that reached the court.¹¹⁸ The trial of Konstantin Krylov, as expected, received broad coverage on ROD's website, and all internet platforms related to it.¹¹⁹ ROD distinguishes also the 2007 case of Svetlana Gogol, a Russian teacher, whose 13-year-old disabled son was severely beaten by a Caucasian classmate of his, Kamran Taghizade. Gogol beat Kamran, but Kamran's father accused her for chasing and beating his son motivated by ethnic hatred. The trial issued a verdict on two criminal counts. ROD raised money to help Gogol and to contract highly qualified lawyers and initiated a media campaign. Gogol's trial ended as ROD wanted, she was proved innocent, while Tagiyev had to pay court costs and a compensation to Gogol.¹²⁰

Besides helping individuals, ROD also organized educational activities. Since 2006, ROD has been organizing open free seminars on Russian nationalism's ideology, called *Russkie Chteniya* (Russian Reading). It brings together “well-known experts and ideologues of Russian nationalism”, like Aleksandr Sevast'yanov, Valery Solovei, Mikhail Remizov, Miksim Kalashnikov, and publishes reviews of the meetings in electronic and print media.¹²¹ In 2006, ROD also took part in the rally *Russkie Protiv Narkotikov* (Russians against drugs), organized by RONS (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d).

In 2006, ROD created the Anti-Russophobia League, which it described as a “national human rights project” with the aim to monitor and analyze the events of Russophobia in Russia. According to the League, “Russophobia” refers to crimes committed from ethnic non-Russians to ethnic Russians, as well as all kinds of persecution against Russian nationalists. In 2009, the Anti-Russophobia League launched a new website that started monitoring the news on Russophobia and ethnic crime in the Russian Federation. The project reminds us of a mix between SOVA's practices as a monitoring

¹¹⁷ ‘O nac – Istorija’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/o-nas/istorija/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹¹⁸ See the section ‘Novosty’, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/o-nas/istorija/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹¹⁹ ‘Delo Krylova’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/delo-krylova/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹²⁰ ‘O nac – Istorija’, ca. 2013, *Rysskoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/o-nas/istorija/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹²¹ Ibid.

center of extremism and xenophobia (that is also monitoring nationalist-patriotic groups) and of DPNI's self-presentation as a news agency, specialized on crimes against Russians. In March 2008, the League published the first newsletter called *Russkie v Rossii: Khronika Sobytii* (Russians in Russia: A chronicle of events) that was edited by Nataliya Kholmogorova (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d). Later on the same year, with the Kondopoga events taking place, both Krylov and Kholmogorova publicly supported the “Russian national uprising” in Kondopoga (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d).

In March 2008, ROD's members Nataliya Kholmogorova and Matvei Tszen ran for the municipal election with CPRF. Tszen managed to get elected to the municipal assembly of Pokrovskoe-Streshnevo district. In June 2008, Konstantin Krylov was one of the organizers “New Political Nationalism” conference that resulted to the coalition agreement “8th of June Pact” between ROD, DPNI, *Velikaya Rossiya* (Great Russia) and NAROD. As seen in the previous section, NAROD was criticized by DPNI's members for being “too liberal” (Pribylovskii ca. 2013d).

In 2009, ROD established the “Fund for the Support and Development of Civil Society ROD”, and Vladimir Tor was appointed its director. The aim of the Fund ROD was to protect the arrested and convicted Russian nationalists. It was involved in a campaign for the rights of Nikita Tikhonov and Evgeniya Khasis, who were charged with the double murder of lawyer Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasia Baburova in 2009 (Pribylovskii ca. 2013e).

In the spring of 2011, ROD started promoting its new campaign *Khvatit Kormit' Kavkaz* (Stop Feeding the Caucasus). The idea was based on the assumption that the lives of the Russians will become better if the Caucasus stops being a part of Russia, a popular idea in Estonian and Latvian politics in the beginning of the 1990s (Artyukov 2011). In 23 April 2011, ROD and Russian Civil Union organized a public action under the slogan “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” in Moscow, that despite its promotion in Russian nationalist blogs did not gather more than 200 people (reporters inclusive) (Artyukov 2011), 500 according to ROD.¹²² A press conference followed, at the end of September 2011, with Konstantin Krylov, Vladimir Tor, and Dmitrii Feoktistov presenting the initiative (the author attended this press conference). The speakers said that the civil campaign will be held under the slogans: “Stop feeding the Caucasus”, “Stop robbing Russian regions”, and “Down with the party of crooks and thieves”.¹²³ The organizers formed the umbrella organization

¹²² ‘Natsionalisty podali zayavku na provedenie mitinga “Khvatit Kormit' Kavkaz” 22 Oktyabrya’, *Russkaya Platforma*, 8 October 2011, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1361/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹²³ ‘Dan start kampanii “Khvatit kormit' Kavkaz”’, 28 September 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at:

Russian Platform (Russian Platform) to unite all organizations that wanted to take part in the campaign (like New Force, RIM, NSI). And indeed, one of the slogans the crowd chanted in the 2011 Russian March was “Down with the party of crooks and thieves” (participant observation; see also Tayler 2011).



Illustration 3: The Russian Platform column, Russian March, 4 November 2011, Moscow, picture taken by author.

In the autumn of 2011, Russian Platform posted the official video of the campaign “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” on its website, as well as guidelines and stickers for the campaign.¹²⁴

ОБЩЕНАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ ГРАЖДАНСКАЯ КАМПАНИЯ

“ХВАТИТ КОРМИТЬ КАВКАЗ!”



Illustration 4: A caricature from the National Civil Campaign “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” that shows Chechnya's governor Ramzan Kadyrov saying: “Allah gives the budgets to Chechnya – thanks Putin for that!”

Source: Shura.Fe (2011).

Russian Platform also organized a press conference on 18 October,¹²⁵ in order to promote a second meeting on 22 October for the “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” campaign. This campaign was supported according to Russian Platform's website, by the famous blogger Aleksei Naval'nyi and by liberal politicians, i.e. Vladimir Milov and Sergi Lark. The organizers also stated that “whoever is

¹²⁴ ‘Ofitsial'nyi polik kampanii “Khvatit Kormit' Kavkaz!”’, 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/video/node171/>; ‘Instruktsiya po provedeniyu kampanii i stikery’, 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1314/>, both accessed 16 March 2013.

¹²⁵ ‘V Neyavisimom press-tsentre na Prechistenke rasskazali o mitinge “Khvatit Kormit' Kavkaz!” 22 Oktyabrya i Russkom marshe’, *Russkaya Platforma*, 2011, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1411/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

not against us is for us”.¹²⁶ The rally was planned to take place simultaneously in different regions as well: Novosibirsk, Tula, Nizhnii Novgorod, Stavropol, Pskov, Krasnoyarsk, St. Petersburg, Tomsk, Tambov, Udmurtia, and Buryatia. Konstantin Krylov also stated at the press conference that the Platform's slogans will be some of the main ones in the upcoming November's Russian March.¹²⁷

The slogan “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” proved to be such a big success, that newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* ranked it as the second most popular phrase of 2011.¹²⁸ By November 2011, more than 60 percent of the Russians supported the slogan “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” according to a poll conducted by Levada-Center (28 per cent answered that they “definitely support it” and 34 per cent that they “rather support it”).¹²⁹

The organization League of Moscow's Self-Defense (LOM) published an invitation on Russian Platform's site for a rally against ethnic crime. Furthermore, nationalists are making efforts to establish as the “Day of ethnic crime victims”, scheduled for 1 October. “Ethnic crime victims” refers to victims of violence exercised by Caucasian and Asian migrants. According to the call for the rally, the number of ethnic Russian victims is increasing every year. The organizers, therefore, demand a fair and just punishment for the responsible for the killings of Egor Sviridov (the Spartak football fan, whose murder triggered Manezh's violent events), Yuri Volkov (another football fan, whose murder preceded that of Sviridov), and other Russians killed by “ethnic gangsters”. Other demands the organizers articulate are following the Russian Platform's basic demands: the introduction of a visa regime with Caucasus and Central Asia, amnesty for the accused in the organization of the Manezh square protest, protection of the Russians' rights and freedoms. Additionally, they demand the creation of “civil self-defense groups” of the indigenous population in each district's police department and the reduction of foreign labor quota for 2012.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ ‘Natsionalisty podali zayavku na provedenie mitinga “Khvatit Kormit' Kavkaz” 22 Oktyabrya’, 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1361/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹²⁷ ‘V Neyavisimom press-tsentre na Prechistenke rasskazali o mitinge “Khvatit Kormit' Kavkaz!” 22 Oktyabrya i Russkom marshe’, 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1411/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹²⁸ ‘Slovo goda’, 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1998/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹²⁹ ‘Bolee 60 protsentov grazhdan Rosii podderzhivayut lozung “Khvatit kormit' Kavkaz”’, 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1883/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹³⁰ ‘“Liga oborony Moskvyy” priglashaet “Russkikh” prinyat' uchastie v marshe protiv etnoprestupnosti 1-go oktyabrya’, 2011, *Russkaya Platforma*, available at: <http://rusplatforma.org/novosti/news1287/>, accessed 16 March 2013.



Illustration 5: The flyer of League of Moscow's Self-Defense for the 1 October 2011 rally for the commemoration of the “day of ethnic crime victims”. The flyer reads: “Our city – our laws! We will remind whomever forgets it!”

*Source: “Marsh protiv etnoprestupnosti v Moskve”, *Voprosy Natsionalizma*, 28 September 2011, available at: <http://vnatio.org/news1683/>, accessed 30 March 2015.*

After the 2011 Duma elections, Konstantin Krylov took actively part in the protests against the electoral fraud. Krylov addressed the public at what it turned to be the largest protest in the history of the Russian Federation: the meetings on Bolotnaya Square of 10 and 24 December. Other opposition politicians that addressed the public during the Bolotnaya Square meetings were Vladimir Ryzhkov, Boris Akunin, Artemii Troitskii, Leonid Parfenov, Dmitrii Bykov, Boris Nemtsov, Sergei Udal'tsov, Anastasiya Udal'tsova, Il'ya Ponomarev, Mikhail Gel'fand, Garri Kasparov, Aleksei Naval'nyi, Viktor Shenderovich, Grigorii Yavlinskii, Ksenia Sobchak, Aleksei Kudrin, Vladimir Tor, Evgeniya Chirikova (Zykov *et al.* 2011). The majority of the speakers belong to the liberal camp, except from Krylov, Naval'nyi, and Tor who are Russian nationalists. This shows that despite their ideological differences, nationalists are respected within the anti-Putin opposition camp.

Finally, *Grazhdanskaya Platforma* (Civil Platform) of ROD and RGS was one of the organizers of the march “For Fair Elections” in St. Petersburg of 25 February 2012. According to ROD, the rally was attended by 20.000 people. Andrei Kuznetsov, former DPNI member and head of the Civil

Platform's branch in St. Petersburg, was at the column's head. The action was joined by Ivan Mironov, Aleksei Naval'nyi, Garri Kasparov, Sergei Udaltsov.¹³¹ Also, ROD's member Nadezhda Shalimova ran for the municipal elections of 4 March 2012 with Sergei Mironov's party *Spravedlivaya Rossiya* (Just Russia).

5.3. Conclusion: The radical right movement of the 2000s and its future perspectives

Chapter 4 and 5 show that new nationalist-patriotic organizations came into being in the 2000s. These new organizations differ so significantly from their predecessors presented in the previous chapter that indicate the existence of two tendencies within the nationalist movement. Although the majority of the new generation's leaders started in the organizations of the 1990s, they came up with totally different forms in terms of organization, protest, and discourse, which opens the debate on the possible factors that enabled such variation to occur. The following chapters address the issue of why this organizational change within the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement occurs. The new generation of nationalist organizations that emerged in the 2000s managed to form two main camps (radical ultra-right and national democrats), to organize hallmark nationalist events all over the country, and to evolve into political parties.

The new organizations of the 2000s, judging by the research sample, also differ between them in many respects. First of all, in terms of organizational structure, DPNI offers an innovative proposal with its structureless network of networks based on overlapping membership between nationalist organizations. In this respect, ROD is closer to the 1990s organizational forms: its structure is based on its leader, Konstantin Krylov, who is its philosopher, organizer, and visionary. Without him, ROD could fall apart or transform dramatically. The opposite happens with DPNI, which seems to combine a visible leadership (the Potkin brothers) with more dispersed decision centers that enable the organization's survival even without its leaders.

The leadership factor may have something to do with each organization's ideology, another point where DPNI and ROD differ. ROD has a solid ideology (national democracy) which brings to all projects it participates and with which its members should conform. This is mainly the result of Krylov's political thought and charisma. The DPNI, on the other hand, is something undefined.

¹³¹ ‘ ‘Grazhdanskaya Platforma” prinyala ychastie v aktsiyakh “Za chestnye vybory” v Peterburge’, 2012, *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/news1190/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

Under the popular slogan “against illegal immigrants” it serves every purpose. Therefore, it includes in its ranks so different nationalist ideologies that vary from neo-Nazism to nationalist democracy.

Finally, both organizations are heavily based on the use of internet and new communication technologies. They take advantage of the internet's anonymity, and thus impunity, and manage to express themselves freely, to disperse their ideas, and to recruit new members. They also developed a new strategy of providing information on activities that draw on ethnic lines, e.g. “russophobia”, “ethnic crime”, despite the fact that nationalist-patriotic organizations do not dispose of a straightforward definition of “who is Russian” and that organizations may differ between them significantly regarding this issue. Nevertheless, although both organizations part from the same basis, DPNI shows more organizational capacity to attract activists, probably because of its catch-all rhetoric.

Both camps of the nationalist milieu undertook a transformation after the 2011 legislative elections. They turned from extra-parliamentarian forces into vehicles of political representation. According to area experts, the process of party formation has made the craving for personnel and competition between the nationalist organizations more intensive. This fact, combined with the principle of overlapping membership, results to the baffled situation of movement representatives participating in competing structures. The future perspectives of Krylov's National-Democratic Party seem better than its competitors, Solovei's New Force and Russkie's Party of Nationalists, in terms of regional departmental activity. On the other hand, its ideological proximity with New Force will probably become a minus. Finally, the Party of Nationalists has better chances to attract more supporters and regional organizations, because of its mixed membership. It is probable that a new considerable nationalist force will take part in Russia's next elections.

6. Changing structural conditions and organizational change of nationalist-patriotic organizations

The previous two chapters showed within-case variation of the movements under consideration. Thus, the new organizations emerging in the 2000 differ significantly in terms of organization, protest and discourse from their predecessors but also vary between them in many respects. The purpose of chapters 6 and 7 is to address the complex question of why such variation occurs. This chapter will offer an overview of Russian transition that caused structural changes to the broader socio-political environment where contentious action takes place. These structural changes brought about new societal cleavages, which in turn activated opportunity structures that shaped the transformation of nationalist-patriotic organizations.

6.1. Changing structural conditions and new societal cleavages

6.1.1. The Russian transition

Russia underwent dramatic social, political, and economic changes over the course of the last century. Similarly to the other former USSR countries, when the monolith of the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia witnessed a system transformation, which corresponds to all forms of regime¹³² change, systemic turn (the beginning of change of the basic functional and structural elements of a system¹³³), systemic change (the processes that definitely lead to a new type of system), and transition (from autocratic to democratic systems) (Merkel 1999:74-75.; own translation). System transformation in Eastern Europe brought the collapse of regimes and their legitimating ideologies, as well as economic and social transformation that accompanied the democratization process and high levels of social disorientation and ambivalence towards the new order (Minkenberg 2002: 356).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the political and institutional vacuum was filled by three forces: firstly Yeltsin and the Russian Congress, secondly *Konsomol*, and managerial *nomenklatura*

¹³²Regimes are the formal and informal organizations of the political administrative centre, on the one hand, and the relationship they form each time to the society, on the other hand (Merkel 1999:71).

¹³³The “political system” comprises the government, the regime and the state (Merkel 1999:73).

(some segments of which were connected to underground empires and shadow economy), and thirdly the newly formed civil society that wanted antiestablishment democracy (the most visible political organization of which was Democratic Russia (*DemRossiya*)) (Glinksi & Reddaway 1998: 529). The power balance shifted in favor of the anti-*nomenklatura* democrats in August 1991 and helped Yeltsin ascend to power, but he soon turned against them because the growing political influence of the anti-establishment movement was threatening his position. In other words, he used the democratic movement “not as a tool of creative reform but as a tool of destruction, primarily to weaken the all-Union institutions that were propping up Gorbachev”. This led to the dismantling of the Union state, despite the fact that Yeltsin preserved the *nomenklatura* system's social structures and introduced policies that would widen the gap between the elite and the society (Glinksi & Reddaway 1998: 529). As a result, the political sphere was not so extensively transformed after all, as shown by the degree of continuity between the pre-Soviet and post-Soviet political elites. For instance, the old political elites were occupying 51.9 percent in the 1999 Russian parliament (Hahn 2002: 500; Jagudina 2009:98).

Yeltsin and Gaidar's “shock therapy plan” was designed to create a new class of entrepreneurs based on the “commercialized party-Komsomol elite and the networks of the shadow economy, which included the organized crime”, in order to create a privileged class of committed supporters (following the old Bolshevik pattern), the “New Russians”. This was mostly due to the fact that Yeltsin's inner circle supported the fractions of the Soviet elite that managed to accumulate wealth through corruption and abuse of power, and, therefore, wanted to safeguard monopoly positions for themselves in the newly created free-market system (Glinksi & Reddaway 1998: 530-532). As a result, privatization clearly privileged industrial, financial, and resource-exporting clans in this experimental “*nomenklatura* capitalism” (Hahn 2002: 513) or “market bolshevism” (Reddaway & Glinksi 2001). Soon, the business elite gained control over large industrial enterprises, transportation, construction, telecommunication, and media through financial-industrial lobbies. They became known as the “oligarchs” and gradually formed powerful lobbies to influence governmental policies, while at the same time they used the media under their control to influence public opinion (Kryshantovskaya 2002: 27; Jagudina 2009:98).

The “shock therapy” introduced a series of unpopular economic measures for the middle class, e.g. price liberalization, cuts in governmental spending, courting for financial help from the West, creation of institutional and legal infrastructure. These measures could not have been imposed, had

Yeltsin not undermined democracy (Crabtree 2001). So, although economic reforms were designed to boost democracy, they were applied in a very undemocratic manner. Especially privatization, out of all the economic reforms, was not supported by the people and resulted in a “distorted economic system that further limited the ability of actors such as trade unions to exercise political or economic influence” (Kubicek 2002: 620). Instead of creating a new bourgeoisie, they created an oligarchy, while marketization undermined trade unions (Kubicek 2002: 620). Furthermore, Russia's transition to liberal economy was hindered due to the country's militarization and lack of self-stimulating economic mechanisms in Soviet times. Unlike other transitional countries, liberal reforms in Russia did not raise productivity because they were following the process of adaptation without restructuring policies (Yasin 2008 [CIDOB International Yearbook 2010: 244]).

In the first five years of transition, income disparity grew, along with mortality rates. In 1995, the top 20 per cent of the population held almost half of the total income (46 per cent) and the bottom 20 per cent accounted for 6.1 per cent, while mortality rates rose by 70 per cent compared with 1989. The GDP was constantly shrinking during the 1990s, with an historical low in 1999, the year that external debt was 90 per cent of the GDP, as a result of the 1998 economic crisis. In the 2000s, Russian economy witnessed a rapid economic growth due to favorable external conditions, namely record oil prices and large investment inflows. Consequently, the GDP started increasing (it reached the 1990 levels in 2004), external debt made an impressive drop (9% of GDP in 2008). We have to add that mineral source extraction accounts for a considerably big amount of Russian GDP (9.50% in 2008) and Russian exports (69.7%) (CIDOB International Yearbook 2010: 244-246).

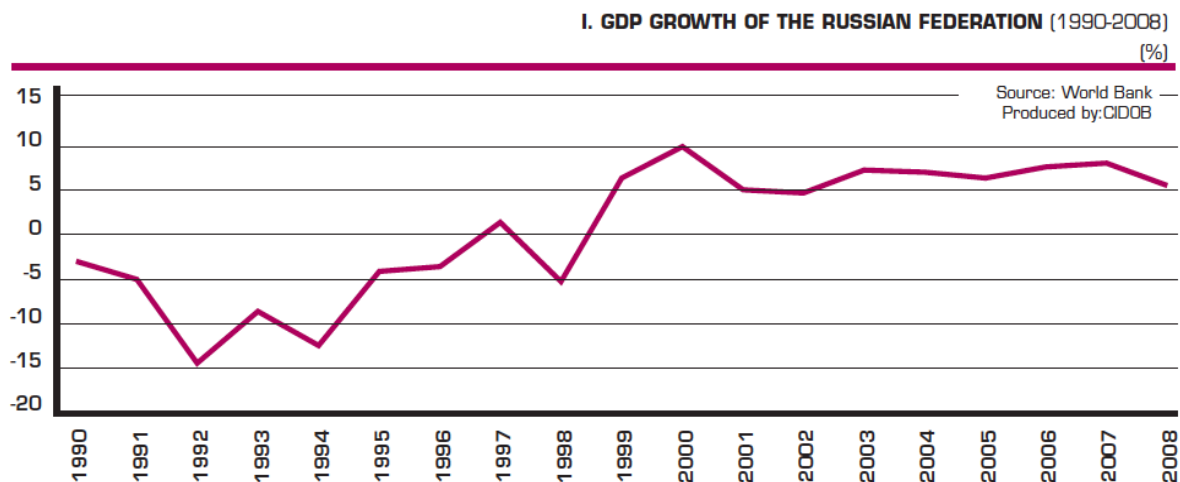


Illustration 6: GDP growth, Russian Federation

Source: CIDOB International Yearbook 2010: 245

6.1.2. The ideological vacuum

In addition to the economic transition, the fall of the Soviet Union and of the socialist dream—one of the “most notoriously unanticipated developments of modern history” (Beissinger 2002:2)—left an ideological vacuum that was not easy to fill. As Mark Beissinger (2002: 387) puts it: “the once unthinkable and impossible had become the conventional and inevitable”.

By the end of the 1980s, 81.5 per cent of ethnic Russian population lived within Russia, whereas about twenty-five million lived in former Soviet republics, encouraged by a centrally planned policy of cultural mongrelization of non-Russian republics with the aim of creating the (Russian-speaking) “Soviet people” (Dunlop 1993: 43). At the same time, the Soviet state opposed non-Russian nationalism (Zaslavsky 1993: 33). In 1989 and 1990 non-Russian republics were overtaken by a “tide of nationalism” transforming secessionist movements into important players in the political realm of non-Russian republics that started asserting republican sovereignty from the center.¹³⁴

As a result, Russians living within and outside Russia had to redefine their identity and the ways

¹³⁴By 1990, nationalist consciousness in non-Russian republics did not only spread through popular movements; it also became central in political power and opposition movements formally assumed power in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, and over most Western Ukrainian local governments (Beissinger 2002: 402).

they positioned themselves *vis-à-vis* non-Russian nationalisms (Beissinger 2002: 388). For Russians in the periphery this was a profound shock, since they found themselves being strangers in their place of stay (Dunlop 1993: 47). We can assume that inhabitants of non-Russian or mixed national background must have found themselves in a similar uncomfortable position in the Russian Federation. Would they be welcome in the new Russian state? And if the Russia didn't, then who would? Would, for example, a family of non-ethnic Russian background who had been living in the territory of the Russian federation for decades be less "Russian" than ethnic-Russians living in the republics? Even today, the Russian Constitution defines Russian citizens as "the multinational people of the Russian Federation, united by a common fate on our land".¹³⁵

At the same time, Russians had to redefine how they would position themselves *vis-à-vis* the Soviet state, with which they were closely associated. The Soviet regime made efforts to equate Russian interests with the interests of the USSR as a whole and to present Russians as Soviet Union's "linchpin ethnos", i.e. there was deliberately no Russian Communist Party, no Russian KGB, no Russian Academy of Sciences, no television or radio stations (Dunlop 1993: 43; Beissinger 2002: 388 – 389). The positioning towards the Soviet state divided Russian mobilization of the late 1980s into three trends: (i) the nationalist-conservative that included both those who wanted to preserve the Soviet system and those who wanted to enhance Russian dominance within it, (ii) the liberal-intellectual that allied itself with non-Russian separatists against the Soviet regime; and (iii) the labor-economic that sought economic independence from ministerial control and that considered non-Russian nationalisms as incidental (Beissinger 2002: 389-395). Therefore, when the liberalization of the Soviet state put Russian dominance at stake, Russians did not defend the coherence of the Soviet state; on the contrary, growing alienation from it seems to have accelerated the process of the union's collapse, which was finalized by the Russian declaration of sovereignty in June 1990 (Beissinger 2002: 387- 404).

This double dilemma of ethnic and political identification opened what I name a cultural cleavage. The cultural cleavage has its roots in the ideological vacuum created by the collapse of the 'socialist in form, nationalist in content' formula. Additionally, Russians stopped being the dominant nation inside the Soviet nation and there was no straightforward definition for the "Russian nation". Indicative of the cultural cleavage is the blurred definition of Russian national identity. There are

¹³⁵ 'The Constitution of the Russian Federation', 2001, available at: <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-01.htm> , accessed 6 July 2014.

still two terms for “Russian” in the Russian language: *ruskii* that refers to ethnic/cultural variables and *rossiiskii* that refers to statist/territorial ones (Simonsen 1996: 91). In the 1990s, the government maintained the Soviet system of passports, in which citizens were obliged to state in the internal passport their nationality, choosing their father's or mother's nationality; the difference was that it introduced the option to leave the nationality line blank. Some argue that the government did it to mobilize voters on an ethnic basis, whereas others argue that the government aimed at preventing ethnic assimilation of non-Russian groups (Simonsen 1996: 99).

Even nationalist-patriotic organizations, who place national identity at the center of their ideological paradigm and present themselves as guardians of ethnic Russians, do not have a clear-cut and overall acceptable definition of who belongs to the Russian nation. Those organizations who stand closer to national-democracy prefer a civic definition of Russian identity (like ROD), while those who lean towards the extreme right tend to prefer a racial definition (like Dmitrii Bobrov's National (People's) Socialist Initiative (NSI)). The limits are further blurred between organizations, whereas also within the same organization one may hear different opinions about who is “Russian”.

Furthermore, one of the features of Russia's traditional patrimonial authoritarian system is the strong dependency on the leader's personality. One can find a number of powerful figures that dominate their eras in Russian history, e.g. Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, Stalin (Kuchins 2007: 10). Similarly, the mid-1990s governmental crisis of the newly-formed Russian state made Russians support new ethnic, religious, and social identities in their search for authority figures.

The ideological vacuum, the strong confidence in the Church and Patriarch Aleksii II, and an increase in religiosity and self-consciousness during the 1990s made the Orthodox identity a cultural identity marker (Ryzhova 2005: 65). Andrew Greeley's survey in 1991 shows an increase in religious belief and affiliation with the Orthodox Church: 22 per cent of Russians who once did not believe in God, changed their mind and started believing in God because of a “religious turning point” experience that made them view religion as giving a meaning and purpose to life (Greeley 1994: 257). Furthermore, the ROC was seen by the people as playing a stabilizing role in society and believers described themselves as more tolerant and democratic (Greeley 1994: 271). This religious boost was explained by the need of Russians to believe in something since the “God” of socialism had faded away (Greeley 1994: 260).

Orthodoxy is one of the legacies modern Russia has inherited from its past. It is argued that legacies offer systematic insights into the varying interpretations of ‘usable pasts’ from intellectual entrepreneurs. The concept stems from Ken Jowitt who introduced the term ‘Leninist legacy’ to define insights into the varying interpretations of ‘usable pasts’ from intellectual entrepreneurs (Beichelt 2009:508; Jowitt 1992). Other pre-communist legacies are the Russian empire and anti-Western national identity. Imperialism is often interwoven with Orthodoxy (Beichelt 2009: 505-514). In turn, Orthodoxy is linked to the messianic vision of Moscow as the Third Rome, an interpretation pattern that was encouraged by Moscow’s resistance to Napoleon (Beichelt 2009:514). Other scholars, nevertheless, dismiss Russia's Imperial or Soviet traditions as inadequate variables for explaining the present and argue that post-communist Russia comes from a profound historical discontinuity (Prozorov 2005: 123).

Nevertheless, political elites that lack confidence in their country's prospects may seek to promote the dominant religious tradition as a “civil religion” that will provide a set of “consensual values” capable of filling a perceived ideological or spiritual vacuum (Anderson 2003:20). This was the case in Russia where political leaders sought religious legitimization for the first time since 1918. Apart from covering the ideological vacuum, the Church may also exert direct political influence over the part of the electorate that identifies itself as Orthodox, which at the beginning of the 2000s was found to be 65 per cent of the whole population (Pollack 2003: 447).

Unlike other transitional contexts that opted for new forms of state legitimacy under a charismatic leader with “extraordinary” political visions when their traditions and legal procedures have been dysfunctional for a period of time, in Russia traditional authoritarianism, modern democratic proceduralism, and charismatic utopianism could not prosper. The profound cynicism and the alienation from all official ideologies that communism's failure had left behind, lead Russian “charismatic” politicians, e.g. Vladimir Zhirinovksy, Gennadii Zyuganov, and Eduard Limonov, to express aspirations for imperial restoration in a discourse imbued by self-deprecating humor and to insist on their own “pragmatism”, while the construction of a new Russian idea from the Kremlin bureaucrats (under Yeltsin and Putin) brought up “ridicule” results (Hanson 2007:73).

6.1.3. The demographic factor

At the same time, Russia's population started to decline rapidly. The roots of this change are

situated in the Soviet Union's system that, on the one side, granted free circulation of its inhabitants and, on the other side, was not a refugee-receiving country, therefore it did not have developed migration policies. Thus, when the first refugee flows followed the fall of the Soviet Union, the new post-Soviet states found themselves without immigration or refugee laws (Nozhenko 2010). In the early 1990s, Russia's migration policy was imbued with liberalization tendencies, in accordance with the spirit of *perestroika* (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 12). It resulted in large-scale emigration from Russia to the USA, Germany, and Israel, and from other former Soviet states to Russia (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 13). In 1992, CIS governments signed the Bishkek Agreement for visa-free entry of their citizens in the territories of the member countries. In 2000, Russia withdrew from the agreement for not effectively counteracting cross-border threats, and signed bilateral agreements with all CIS members, except Turkmenistan and Georgia in 2001.¹³⁶ Russia's strong bureaucracy, combined with an “irrational” work permits procedure, impeded legal migration and allowed corruption in the immigration process. This had as a result that migrant workers from the CIS states entered the illegal sphere (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 14).

New political elites in the recently formed sovereign states initiated “repatriation” policies, aiming to replace ethnic Russians in administrative and managerial positions and to form ethnically homogeneous states. Numerous forced migrations began across the post-Soviet territory, mainly based on the nation-building processes in the new sovereign states. 25 million ethnic Russians found themselves living outside the Russian Federation. About three million of them returned to Russia from 1991 to 1998, whereas from 1998 to 2007 two thirds of immigrants were “ethnic repatriates” and about 12 per cent were other ethnic groups originating from Russia, mainly Tatars (Nozhenko 2010). At the same time, the negative effects of the USSR's collapse caused massive migrant inflow to Russia from the newly formed states, making Russia, because of its huge labor market and business opportunities, the major receiving country in the post-Soviet territory. Migrants arriving in Russia were mostly coming from areas of armed conflicts that had lost their possession and needed urgent assistance. Migration laws in the 1990s, therefore, became reactive and emergency-oriented (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 16).

Already since the mid 1990s, observers were talking about Russia facing a “demographic crisis” because it had “unusually high mortality rates from preventable causes (e.g. alcoholism), extremely

¹³⁶ By 2008 Russia had visa-free migration agreements with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 14).

high induced abortion rates, and fertility rates that were among the lowest in the world” (Da Vanzo 1996: xiii). The situation worsened during the next decade, as the following Illustration 8 shows, with the population continuously and dramatically declining, and net migration (that hit its peak in 1994) diminishing, especially from 2003 to 2006. The metaphorical term “Russian cross” (*ruskii krest*) combines the increase in the number of deaths and the declining birth rates with religious dimensions of the past, according to which the dying of the Russian nation is presented as a historical project that provides an inverted teleology of ethnic extermination (Oushakine 2010: 157-158). The media started projecting the topic in a similar and homogeneous way since 2002, framing it “by the rhetoric of mourning over actual and hypothetical losses” (Oushakine 2009: 101). The emotionally charged discourse of the Russian tragedy was connected to the political disintegration and traumatic survival after the collapse of the Soviet Union. At his state-of-the-nation address of May 2006 President Putin defined population decline as his highest priority.

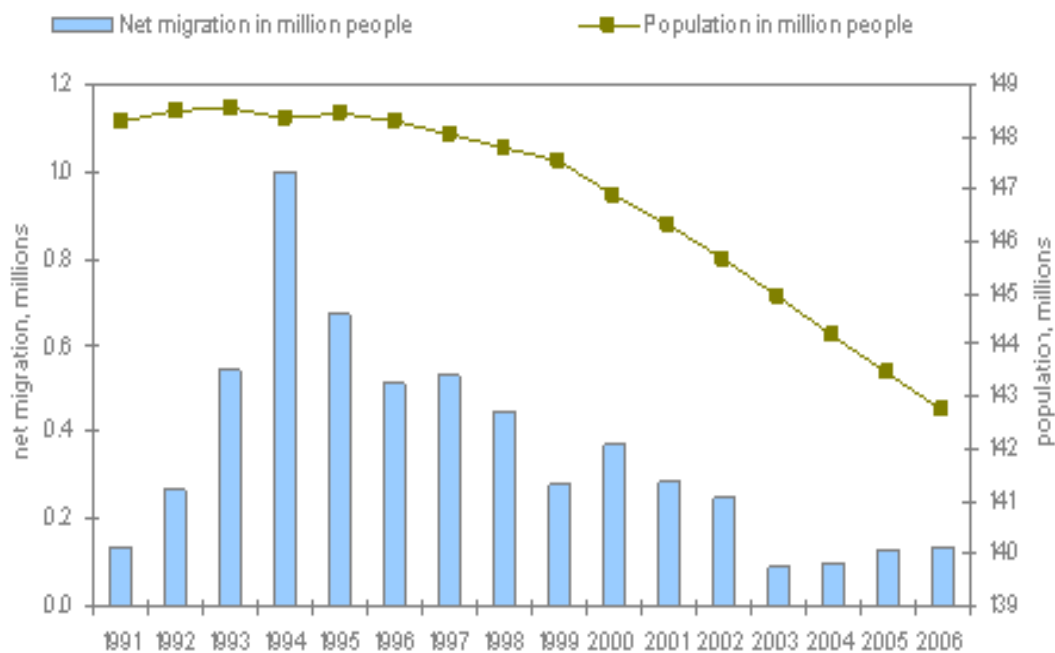


Illustration 7: Net migration and natural population growth: 1991-2006

Source: Euromonitor International from national statistics/UN [Banjanovic 2007]

The combination of these two factors – low fertility rates and inflow of migrants – created a new cleavage of “insiders” versus “outsiders” that was probably unimaginable in Soviet times. This cleavage, which I will call the citizenship cleavage, is connected with Russia's process of nation-building and has an impact on the societal division between “Russians” and “foreigners”. The citizenship cleavage sets divides between those who support a universalist concept of citizenship and individual rights and those who stand for a particularist definition of ethnic or cultural status attributed to particular collectivities (Kitschelt 1995: 458).

6.1.4. Chechen wars and the rise of terrorist attacks

Apart from the rough economic conditions connected to its transition, Russia passed through a turbulent political transformation: the institutional struggle between the executive and legislative in the first transition years and the frequent change of the governors in key positions, the 1993 constitutional crisis and the adoption of a new super-presidential system, the first Chechen war of 1994 that received sharp criticism from Europe¹³⁷, the creation of the new class of oligarchs with connections to the former *nomeklatura*, the political crisis of 1998 after the financial collapse, whereas at the same time President Yeltsin's health along with his popularity deteriorated. The defeat of the Russian army during the first Chechen war created a trauma to Russians, and Chechnya became, and remains to this day, a reference point for all Russian fears (Laruelle 2011). The war, on the one hand, contributed to the reaffirmation of the Chechen national identity that had been latent since the deportation of the Chechen people in 1944, and caused, on the other hand, a growing anxiety to Russians for secessionism within the borders of their own newly-formed country (Serra Massansalvador 2011: 118).

In 1999, Yeltsin finally appointed Vladimir Putin as prime minister after four failed attempts. The only experience with politics the ex KGB agent, Vladimir Putin, had up to that point, was working for St. Petersburg's mayor, Anatoli Sobchak (Claudín 2011: 12-16). Under Vladimir Putin's term as prime minister Chechen troops invaded Dagestan. The Russian apartment bombings that followed caused hundreds of victims and were attributed to Chechen terrorists. This was the pretext for the start of the second Chechen war that helped Putin establish himself as the strong personality that Russians needed, who would bring order to the Russians (something that Russians historically value more than rights) (Claudín 2011: 16). Prime minister Putin did not repeat Yeltsin's mistakes during

¹³⁷ See also Serra Massansalvador 2011: 120.

Chechnya's intervention; he relied neither on a fast victory nor on popular support, while he tried to gain the executive's and the army's support.

Contrary to the first Chechen war that led to the separation of Russians and the unity of Chechens, the second one brought to the surface the existent fragmentation of the Chechen side (president Majadov, guerilla leaders like Basayev who strived to become the visible heads of resistance against the Russian attack, and local or religious clan leaders) and the uniting of Russians against an operation that was presented as a vehicle for re-establishing public order and restoring the country's national cohesion (Serra Massansalvador 2005: 239). The second Chechen war was soon perceived as an campaign designed to bring Vladimir Putin to the presidency. At the same time, it also contributed to the recovery of Russia's pride, along with its economic and political upturn, which was took a rather bad hit under Yeltsin (Serra Massansalvador 2011: 118- 119; Serra Massansalvador 2005: 241).

With his popularity growing because of the Chechen war and with President Yeltsin's full support, Vladimir Putin won the following presidential election of 2000 with an overall majority, marking a new era in Russia's political life, which observers also refer to under the term "Putinism" (McFaul 2003; Serra Massansalvador 2011: 119). Vladimir Putin took a liberal conservative turn, making the Chechen war an issue of Russia's sovereignty against "the unconstitutional separatist regime, whose internal politics manifestly contradicted any conceivable version of liberalism" (Prozorov 2005, 126). The 11 September attacks gave President Putin the pretext to assimilate Chechen rebels with international terrorism and to proceed to further military action in Chechnya (Stoner-Weiss 2009: 270).

During the second Chechen war terrorist attacks intensified: Dubrovka theater hostage crisis in 2002, the double bombing of Moscow's metro and Beslan school hostage crisis of 2004, another Metro suicide bombing in 2010, the storming of Chechnya's Parliament, and the suicide attack at Domodedovo airport in 2011, to mention only a few, which resulted to what Marlene Laruelle (2009, 19) calls the "Chechen syndrome". Along with the attacks, public opinion was radicalized, with the majority of people asking for the toughening of anti-terrorism legislation and the introduction of the death penalty for terrorists (58 percent), the destruction of all the bases of terrorists in North Caucasus regardless of civic casualties (35 percent), the closing of the Russian border to North Caucasians (33 percent), and even the punishment and expulsion of supporters and

relatives of terrorists (26 percent). A smaller percentage asked for martial law in Northern Caucasus (12 percent) and an even smaller one wanted to hire international observers to ensure peace (8 percent). The analytical results of the Levada-Center are presented in the following table:

Table 5: Public response on how to put an end to terrorism in Russia

What should be done, in your opinion, in order to put an end to terrorism in Russia? (N= 1600)			
	2004 April	2010 April	2011 January
Without regard to any victims destroy all the bases of terrorists in North Caucasus	35	33	30
Toughen anti-terrorism legislation, introduce the death penalty for terrorists	58	48	50
Punish, expel supporters, relatives, and sympathetic to terrorists	26	20	30
Prevent people from entering from the North Caucasus and live in Russian cities	33	17	24
Martial law in the North Caucasus	12	7	7
Do anything to achieve a peaceful solution to the problems of North Caucasus	15	10	13
Strengthen and close the borders between the republics of North Caucasus and give the power to these republics to establish themselves the order in the region	17	16	19
Attract international observers to ensure peace in the North Caucasus	8	77	8
Agree to talks with the leaders of the “underground” in North Caucasus	7	4	3
Difficult to answer	3	12	8

Source: Levada-Center 2012: 195.

Nevertheless, it seems that, while Putin's aggressive policies in Chechnya were initially backed by the general public, by the end of his first presidency the echo of the war resulted in a decline of this support: the majority of the participants in Hale's *et al.* (2004: 303) survey opted for resolving the conflict primarily through negotiations (56 percent) versus primarily through force (37 percent). Despite the falling popularity of Vladimir Putin's policies against Chechnya, the terrorist attacks, I argue, contributed to a further polarization of the newly formed citizenship cleavage of Russians versus foreigners.

6.2. The institutional context

6.2.1. Assessment of Russian democracy

Russia's democracy score has been steadily deteriorating over the years. Under Boris Yeltsin, it was “an unconsolidated, often disorderly and raucous electoral democracy” (Stoner-Weiss 2009: 253), “at best a proto-democratic *mélange*, mixing ingredients of representative government with generous portions of bossism, corruption, and anarchy” (Colton 1998:1). Russia's political system, named “sovereign democracy” by Kremlin's ideologue Vladislav Surkov (Claudín 2011: 20), received various definitions by scholars ranging from “hybrid regime” (Colton & Hale 2009: 473), “managed democracy” (Laruelle 2009, p. 24) and “stealth authoritarian system” (Hahn 2004), to “illiberal internationalism” (Kuchins 2007, p. 4) and “Tsarism” (Åslund 2008).

Especially the ascendance to the Presidency of Vladimir Putin's chosen one, Dmitry Medvedev, in 2008, did not even pretend to uphold any democratic pretext (Stoner-Weiss 2009: 253). Despite showing a more liberal facade and developing the concept of the “modernization” (*modernizatsia*) of the economic activity, the war against corruption, administrative reforms, and the importance of civil society's role, Medvedev would not go beyond the margins that the prime minister Vladimir Putin set for him (Claudín 2011: 21).

Data from the Freedom House, although only a rough sketch, are indicative of the overall picture. The survey is based on the Gastil index, a 7-point scale measuring political rights and civil liberties on a yearly basis, with 1 representing the highest and 7 the lowest level of democratic development. As a point of comparison, Russia's overall democracy score was 3.80 in 1997, while in 2001 it dropped by one point to 4.88 (Orttung 2012: 435; McGrath 2003: 498f). Table 6 offers an insight of the Russian democracy's quality since 2003:

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Electoral Process	4.75	5.50	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75
Civil Society	4.25	4.50	4.75	5.00	5.25	5.50	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.25
Independent Media	5.50	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25	6.25
Governance*	5.00	5.25	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
National Democratic Governance	n/a	n/a	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50
Local Democratic Governance	n/a	n/a	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00
Judicial Framework and Independence	4.50	4.75	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.50	5.50	5.75	6.00
Corruption	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50	6.50
Democracy Score	4.96	5.25	5.61	5.75	5.86	5.96	6.11	6.14	6.18	6.18

Table 6: Russia's democracy score (2003-2012) according to Freedom House survey.

Source: *Orttung 2012: 451.*

Countries receiving a Democracy Score between 6.00 and 7.00 are characterized by the survey as “Consolidated Authoritarian Regimes”, which means that they are “closed societies in which dictators prevent political competition and pluralism and are responsible for widespread violations of basic political, civil and human rights” (Freedom House 2010: 25).

6.2.2. Vladimir Putin's regime

In his 1999 policy manifesto ‘Russia at the Millennium’, Vladimir Putin underlined the need to combine market economy and democracy with the Russian reality and coupled Russia's economic revival and a minimal social stability to the “authoritarian grabbing of power” or strong hand (Laruelle 2009, 18). To this extent, one of the first things Vladimir Putin made clear during his first presidential speech was that the authorities must be guided by law and by the single executive power vertical that was formed in accordance with law (President of Russia 2000). Since that point and following the footsteps of his predecessor, Putin reinforced the executive, especially the role of the President, against other political institutions and power centers, such as the main opposition

party CPRF, the Duma, the regional governors, and the oligarchs (Gabowitsch 2013: 42). To ensure Moscow's dominance over the regions, he created seven new supra-regional executive authorities for enforcing Moscow's policies and he removed governors and heads of regional legislatures from the Federal Council (McFaul 2003). His “*substantively* liberal... but *situationally* and *stylistically* conservative” socioeconomic reform (Polyakov 2000 [Prozorov 2005, 124], original emphasis), which differentiated him from Yeltsin's project, was built around the slogans “vertical power” and “the dictatorship of the law” and focused on stabilization, restoration, and state efficiency (Laruelle 2009, 19).

From 1995 to 2003, CPRF was the dominant opposition force in a State Duma dominated by oppositional fractions (Gabowitsch 2013: 44). Gradually, all forms of political opposition, either systemic or anti-systemic, dramatically diminished in comparison to the 1990s (Gelman 2005: 227). In 2005, the Duma adopted a series of institutional changes that were especially unfavorable for the opposition: increase of the electoral threshold in the State Duma and in regional legislative elections from 5 to 7 percent, prohibition of electoral coalitions, tougher rules for political parties for registering for the elections, and restrictions on the role of electoral observers at the polls (Gelman 2005: 241). This changes seems to have closed political opportunity structures for opposition actors. At the same time, the Kremlin also tried to establish a “puppet-like opposition” in order to absorb the vote from the left and nationalist extra-parliamentarian minor groups, like Eduard Limonov's Other Russia Party, and from the liberals (Gelman 2005: 242).

The next step for Vladimir Putin was to built an inner circle following the “loyalty principle” within the power vertical of his trustees, the majority of whom came from his hometown St. Petersburg (except the regional politician Vyacheslav Volodin and Vladislav Surkov , key figure of United Russia's creation and father of the term “sovereign democracy”). All actors and institutions that could exercise any kind of political influence passed, one after the other, under the control of the “vertical”, i.e. the most important media outlets¹³⁸ (like RTR, NTV and ORT), political parties, courts, electoral commissions, regional governors, and the oligarchs (e.g. Boris Berezovsky, who built United Russia and orchestrated Putin's succession after Yeltsin). The FSB was strengthened and was given a central role in the application of the new power structure. It proved to be especially

¹³⁸ White *et al.* (2005) show how the state may exercise a disproportionate influence on the election in newly established systems through the media. In Russia's case, the state media, especially the ORT, contributed to the impressively rapid creation of United Russia party and its electoral triumph in 1999 Duma election by the “smear campaign” it waged against its opponents. It also paved the way for an easy victory for Vladimir Putin in the presidential election of 2000.

effective in controlling rebellious economic and regional bosses through threats, detentions, raids, and criminal proceedings (Gabowitsch 2013: 50-51; McFaul 2003). Subsequently, Vladimir Putin proceeded to the incarceration of the oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovskii, who, even though complied with Putin's rules at the beginning, started showing signs of independent thinking and political ambition and expressed his preference for a parliamentary democracy in Russia (McFaul 2003).

Finally, the new authority weakened the executive even further than it already was after the 1993 Constitution. The vehicle for the success of this process was the party United Russia, formed in 2001 with the merge of the parties Unity (*Edinstvo*) and Fatherland-All Russia (*Otechestvo–Vsyā Rossiya*). It gathered the majority of administrative resources in federal and regional level, and in this way, it could have easy majorities in the Duma and the regional parliaments. The new authority started incorporating the rest of the parties in the system, through electoral manipulation, arrangements, formation of new parties controlled by the higher ranks, and changes of voting legislation. Indicatively, from 2005 to 2011, the number of officially authorized political parties fell from thirty two to seven. Finally, United Russia made party membership a prerequisite for aspiring to any sort of political career or economic success and created a series of youth wings, such as *Molodaya Gvardiya* (Young Guard), which serves as a stirrup for a political career, and the organizations *Nashi* and *Idushchie Vmeste* (Walking Together), which served for media projection and for a broader youth mobilization in favor of Vladimir Putin (Gabowitsch 2013: 52-53).

These authoritarian characteristics of the Putin regime has opened another cleavage in Russian politics: on one side, there are the parties and organizations that are created by the Kremlin, e.g. United Russia, LDPR, *Rodina* (McFaul 2003) and are thus not expected to come into conflict with it. For instance, *Rodina*, which was seen as an attempt to disperse the vote from the CPRF (Abdulaev 2005). However, since the government toughened so much the rules of the game, the majority of the political parties that were elected in the *Duma* – even parties beholden to societal forces, e.g. CPRF, *Yabloko*, Union of Right Forces (later transformed into the Right Cause) (McFaul 2003) – are seen with suspicion for collaborating with the government (otherwise they would have not been allowed to enter the parliament in the first place). On the other side, other political organizations, usually smaller in size and short on resources, were not allowed registration at the first instance. Furthermore, many leaders of such organizations were persecuted. These formations are seen as grassroots organizations that the government does not control and for this

reason it tries to silence them. We can extract the conclusion that the regime's authoritarianism opened a new political cleavage between parliamentary (Kremlin-manipulated) and extra-parliamentary (Kremlin-persecuted) political organizations, to which I will refer as the “institutionalization cleavage”.

Kremlin's efforts to weaken or eliminate independent sources of power (McFaul 2003) could not turn a blind eye over the civil society.¹³⁹ Although the role of the civil society was important in overthrowing the Soviet Union, new parties were formed around a few persons while the democratic movement remained a spectator (Patomäki and Puriainen 1998: 20 [Uhlin 2006: 49]). Scholars often see the Russian civil society as weak and atomized, whose organizations are treated with skepticism by the general public, and probably, therefore, receive the lowest participation within the whole post-communist space (McFaul 2002: 109; Howard 2002: 159; Mischler and Rose 1997). Nevertheless, there are a few optimists, as far as Russian organizational life was concerned in the 1990s, who stress that it developed a variety of social networks that were politically charged, dense, with high levels of trust and moderate levels of political agreement. Russians also did not trust organizations imposed upon them from the top.

Although Russia lagged behind when compared to Western democracies, civil society organizations were not so barren and fulfilled the conditions for developing more grassroots organizations that take time to evolve and that could have contributed to Russia's democratic consolidation (Gibson 2001: 51). However, Putin's system needed a weak civil society and weak formal institutions in combination with the rule of law (Hahn 2004: 2), along the above described characteristics. “We do not need great upheavals. We need a great Russia” is one Vladimir Putin's favorite quotes (Hill & Gaddy 2012). He established a “vigilant state” toward civil society organizations – in contrast to Yeltsin's “benign neglect” of them– (Handerson 2008) and changed the official discourse on the role of civil society from “state-adversarial” to “more corporate” (Jagudina 2009: 105).

The Kremlin soon divided NGOs into friendly and critical, the first being organizations that work primarily on issues related to concrete problems of Russian society, while the latter focused on democracy issues and human rights –and were often founded by the West. The 2006 controversial NGO law amended the previous judicial framework, introduced restrictions on the formation of

¹³⁹ Civil society is defined here as a combination of autonomous organizations (Putnam 1993), interpersonal interaction and collaboration (Inglehart 1997), and social networks (Gibson 2001), and is connected with Russia's inability to become a consolidated democracy.

NGOs, and increased the government's supervision upon them (Jagudina 2009: 107-111). The bill was criticized for limiting the previously vital civil society after the fall of the Soviet Union by bringing foreign and domestic NGOs under tighter governmental oversight (Stoner-Weiss 2009: 267). As a result, 600 Russian NGOs had been suspended by 2007 for failing to comply with the law and its lengthy annual reports, like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the International Republican Institute, etc., something that was seen as “an excuse to clamp down Russia's nascent civil society”.¹⁴⁰

Despite the serious difficulties the regime posed, social protest and citizens' movements have managed to emerge. Karine Clément (2008) talks about the new social movements that emerged in early 2005, after the reform of the social benefits that caused massive upheavals. New organizations in the 2000s also emerged from the nationalist-patriotic movement, which consider themselves to be part of the democratic opposition in Russia's repressive political system. Such forms of protest might be marginal, but they are significant in the Russian context if one thinks that Russian citizens largely do not participate in public life and that collective actions are very infrequent (Clément 2008: 72). Thus, the massive 2011-2013 anti-fraud protests were, without a doubt, the largest in the last twenty years and marked a turn towards a rejuvenation and a geographical spread of protest in the Russian capital (Gabowitsch 2013: 363).

¹⁴⁰ “600 NGOs Deregistered in Russia”, *The Independent*, 22 August 2007; Finn, Peter ‘Russia Halts Activities of Many Groups From Abroad’, *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 20 October 2006.



Illustration 8: The protester's badge reads "Against the party of crooks and thieves", Anti-fraud rally, St. Petersburg, 4 December 2011, picture taken by author.

The “March of the Millions” was attacked by the police and many leftist activists were arrested (see Markova 2014), as were other protest actions during the last years, such as the protests in support of the imprisoned activists of the Million March¹⁴¹ and the famous example of the Pussy Riot's punk prayer¹⁴² in 2012. Amnesty International expressed, in the summer of 2014, its concern for the gradual extinction of the right of assembly in Russia, because of the demonstrations' arbitrary ban

¹⁴¹ “Anti- Putin protesters detained in Moscow”, *The Guardian*, 28 April 2013, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2013/apr/28/anti-putin-protesters-detained-moscow-video> , accessed 27 June 2014.

¹⁴² “Who are Pussy Riot and why has Putin put them on trial?”, *The Week*, 30 July 2012, available at: <http://www.theweek.co.uk/russia/pussy-riot/48217/who-are-pussy-riot-and-why-has-putin-put-them-trial> , accessed 27 June 2014.

by the government, the violent dissolution by the police, and the inability of the courts to establish respect to the right and freedom of assembly. The organization adds that seven out of ten protests were dispersed by the police, more than thousand demonstrators were arrested, and abusive police officers were not punished.¹⁴³

At the same time, dissidents and political activists, such as the case studies of the present thesis, are also harassed by the Russian authorities, i.e. *Drugaya Rossiya's* protest action Strategy-31—among others—has often been dispersed by police, Konstantin Krylov—among other nationalist activists—was arrested on his way to the 2011 Russian March and could thus not attend it. All these examples of harassment of independent NGO activists and use of administrative methods to marginalize political opposition are instances of the Kremlin's strategy to silence dissident voices and to weaken civil society and opposition. We can safely conclude that they contribute to the cleavage of parliamentary/extra-parliamentary opposition, the first being Kremlin-manipulated, whereas the latter is usually anti-systemic and Kremlin-persecuted.

One of the first targets to be put under state control after the “chaotic liberty” of the 1990s were the media outlets (both print and broadcast), as in all authoritarian regimes, that had to start exhibiting a strong stance in favor of the regime (Fossato *et al.* 2008: 1). But still, media are not totally controlled as in South Korea or Cuba; one can buy dissident newspapers (*Novaya Gazeta*) and find oppositionist radio stations (*Ekho Moskhvy*) and TV stations (Ren TV) (Fossato *et al.* 2008: 3-4). At the same time, Russia is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a journalist. Landmark of this tragic feature is Anna Politkovskaya's murder in 2006; she had been investigating human rights violations of Chechen civilians for seven years (Stoner-Weiss 2009: 268) and was considered the most critical voice against Vladimir Putin's war. In various occasions she had confessed having received death threats by the Russian secret service, the army, and other security agencies.¹⁴⁴ Others had a similar fate, like the liberal dissident politician Sergey Yushenkov¹⁴⁵ and the former security officer Aleksandr Litvinenko (Whitmore 2007). All these examples can assist us to better understand why Russia's democratic performance is so poor or why people do not engage in public protest.

¹⁴³ ‘To sinexersthai sti Rosia kindinevei’, *TVXS*, 8 June 2014, available at: <http://tvxs.gr/news/kosmos/diethnis-ammistia-synerxesthai-stin-rosia-kindynevei>, accessed 16 June 2014.

¹⁴⁴ “Asesinada en Moscú Anna Polítkovskaya, periodista rusa crítica con el Kremlin”, *El País*, 7 October 2006.

¹⁴⁵ “Yushenkov: A Russian Idealist”, *BBC News*, 17 April 2003.

Although Russia is becoming less free since the 2000 election of Vladimir Putin in the presidency, Vladimir Putin remains popular (his popularity remained over his two first terms consistently at over sixty percent) (Stoner-Weiss 2009: 260). For instance, in 2011, 39 percent of the respondents to the annual Levada-Center's survey described the 1991 events as “tragic”, while in 1994 the percentage was 27. The same survey shows that by 2011, 49 percent of the respondents thought that the country had deviated from the “good” course it was on since the Soviet Union's fall, whereas only 27 percent claims the contrary (Bonet 2011).

Why does such a paradox occur? One possible explanation is that increased authoritarianism occurred alongside the economic growth (as explained above mainly by the rise of world oil prices); in this sense, the average Russian linked these two processes, attributing economic growth to President Putin's policies. A second reason, also mentioned above, is the government overtaking the public media - especially the television - which can influence popular perception, in combination with an endurance towards its critics. Another factor was Vladimir Putin's contrast to Boris Yeltsin, his external features (young, fit, and nondrinker) as well as his character (outspoken and determined to resolve Russia's problems) (Stoner-Weiss 2009: 261). Additionally, Vladimir Putin is assertive with internal and external issues. In the interior, he sends the message that the political dissent in the Yeltsin years ended up destabilizing Russian society, that there was too much opposition and chaos. In the exterior, he aims to show that Russia is a superpower again (Whitmore 2007), an example of which was Russia's stance towards the 2013-2014 events in Ukraine.

6.3. *The migration issue*

6.3.1. Migration flows and migration policy (2000-2012)

Migration is a crucial issue for nationalist organizations, since they construct “Rusianness” based on foreigners' “otherness”. We can expect that Russian nationalist-patriotic organizations reflect the citizenship cleavage¹⁴⁶ in their discourse and that they exert a limited impact on elite framing of migration issues, on migration policy, and on public opinion (Tipaldou and Uba 2014: 1095). We can also expect that priorities and changes in Russia's migration policy and governmental discourse with respect to immigrants reflect the new socio-economic cleavages, especially the citizenship

¹⁴⁶ I do not imply that migration policy only depends on the citizenship cleavage. Other factors that may have contributed to migration policy change is, for example, the general international shift towards more restrictive attitudes regarding immigration (Tipaldou& Uba 2014: 1096).

cleavage as a result of Russian's continuing decline in population that causes labor shortage problems (Tipaldou and Uba 2014: 1084). At the same time, migration policy can also contribute to the sharpening of the citizenship cleavage. Therefore, migration policy is conceptualized here as both cause and effect for the division between Russians and non-Russians. Additionally, migration policies could help us offer a first assessment on minority integration which is a crucial factor together with ethnic relations for the radical right, the interaction of which has, nevertheless, received marginal scholarly attention (Koopmans & Statham 2000: 32).

Russia started regulating migration in June 1992 with the creation of the Federal Migration Service (FMS) and with the adoption of the “Law on Refugees” and the “Law on Forced Settlement” in 1993 (Tessier 1995: 247ff.).¹⁴⁷ Until 1995, migration policies –following the *perestroika* tendency– were imbued by liberal principles.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, these policies were not effective and irregular migration started increasing from 1996 on, mainly because many people from the CIS, who had entered Russia under the visa-free regime, decided to stay and work “illegally” in Russia. From 1996 to 2001, migration policy aimed to regulate the dominating economically driven migration to Russia's huge economic market, caused by the economic difficulties in the former Soviet republics (Ivakhnyuk 2009, p. 33). Regular migration, however, did not become the rule, as Russia's bureaucracy and the “irrational” procedure for obtaining work permits led to huge corruption (Nozhenko 2010; Ivakhnyuk 2009, p. 14). By the end of the 1990s the focus had turned to the regularization of irregular migration from the CIS (3-4 million workers). The government adopted the Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation, but the shadow economy was so big that the law proved ineffective (Nozhenko 2010).

A change towards more restrictive immigration policy¹⁴⁹ took place already in 2001, when Vladimir Putin presented irregular migration as a national security issue and adopted a strongly negative official attitude against it. At that time, the image of immigrants became increasingly negative, among other reasons, due to the high numbers of irregular immigrants, the ineffective measures to

¹⁴⁷ Nowadays, migration policy is directly guided by the President who appoints directly the director and vice-directors of the FMS. The key political parties present their viewpoints, but there are merely populist acts that have minimal influence, or no influence at all, on decision making process. Reforms in Russia reflect the interests of various lobbying groups and the final decision is always made by the head of the state (Ivakhnyuk 2009:47ff.).

¹⁴⁸ For example, Russia and the rest of the CIS signed the Bishkek agreement for visa-free entry of their citizens across the territory of the CIS in 1992 (Ivakhnyuk 2009, p. 14).

¹⁴⁹ Restrictive immigration policies refer to legislation that removes or limits the rights of immigrants in comparison to the existing legislation, whereas liberal are the policies that result in a more simple system for immigration or provide some new rights to immigrants. My study is based on all adopted legislative acts that refer to immigration in the Russian parliament since 2001.

counteract irregular migration, the connection of irregular migration with terrorism worldwide, and the media's aggravation of the situation. The Russian society gradually became more intolerant towards immigrants (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 37). The new migration policy of 2001/2002 was clearly more restrictive than the one of the previous era. It established stricter conditions for applying for Russian citizenship in general, but made the acquisition of Russian citizenship easier for citizens of the former Soviet Union. It also established the need for a migration card and for registration within three working days upon arrival. The penalties for entering Russia irregularly, for trafficking, and for participating in extremist communities became harsher, and the organization of "illegal immigration" was added to the Criminal Code.

In 2003 the government set an annual quota for foreign workers from non CIS countries, which was gradually reduced during the following years (Nozhenko 2010; Ivakhnyuk 2009, p. 39; Chudinovskikh *et al.* 2010, p. 26). All these changes created more barriers for regular migration, increased the number of irregular immigrants and led to high corruption in the "immigration industry" and in law enforcement agencies (Ioffe & Zayonchkovskaya 2010, p. 22; Ivakhnyuk 2009, p. 41). For example, it was estimated that the actual number of migrant workers was at least 20 times higher than the quota (Ivakhnyuk 2009, p. 40).

The government proceeded to mass apprehensions, criminalization and deportation of migrants, while the media were broadcasting increasingly xenophobic news. Nevertheless, restrictive migration legislation turned out to be inefficient. The red tape set such serious barriers to migrants that in the end it turned against regular immigration (Ioffe & Zayonchkovskaya 2010:22). This resulted in the growth of corruption in the 'immigration industry' and in law enforcement agencies, and an increase in forced labor. At the same time, the quotas were reduced every year, without being based on a transparent system (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 40-41). The 2002-2005 migration policy that resulted in an increase of irregular immigrants, in combination with their demonization from the media reinforced the negative public opinion towards migrants and is connected with today's high levels of xenophobia (see also Table 5 in Appendix) (Nozhenko 2010). Noticeable, without implying a linear connection between organizational change and migration policies, DPNI was formed in 2002, a year after the turn towards restrictive and reactive migration policy and ROD in 2005.

President Putin's second term had Russia's population decline as its highest priority, as he declared

during his May 2006 state-of-the-nation address (Banjanovic 2007). The government offered financial aid to families that give birth to a second child and which could be spent either for improving the family's living conditions or for educating their child. Arguably, as a direct result of the new policy, the birth rate was boosted in 2007 by 8.8% for the first time since 1975. The death rate has been decreasing and net migration was increasing enough to score in 2009 the first population growth of 0.002% in a long time. Forecasts show that the number of working-age people is expected to decrease by 7%-9% which will probably have to be covered by migrant workers (CIDOB International Yearbook 2010: 248- 250).

At the same time, the government introduced more liberal and pro-active changes in migration policy (Banjanovic 2007).¹⁵⁰ The objective of the new migration policy was to generate more favorable conditions for residence and for recruiting foreign citizens primarily from the CIS countries (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 55) and to incentivize the return of Russians living abroad.¹⁵¹ This radical shift towards an 'open door' policy, however necessary, given the demographic and economic conditions in Russia, contradicted the dominating public opinion that supported the limitation of immigrant inflow, and was thus considered as unpopular (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 73). Irregular migration remained a major national security concern. Russia's interior minister, Rashid Nurgaliyev, stated in June 2006 that: "Illegal migration has become a serious problem, as it is closely related to terrorism".¹⁵² The quota system was also changed; quotas were now applied on the total number of migrant workers - including workers from the CIS states - and for specific sectors, regions, and countries of origin (Human Rights Watch 2009, p. 24).

This liberal turn of the second half of the 2000s was, nevertheless, disturbed by a sudden backtracking that followed the Kondopoga events.¹⁵³ Just two months after the outbreak of violence

¹⁵⁰ Some of the reasons that led to this change were the economic losses of shadow economy and corruption, the increasing xenophobia and intolerance towards migrants that resulted to inter-ethnic conflicts, police inefficiency to reduce irregular migration, and the pressure from NGOs and experts to change ineffective migration laws (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 53).

¹⁵¹ The Russian Federation President's Decree No. 637 of June 22, 2006 "On Measures to Assist in Voluntary Return of Compatriots Living Abroad to the Russian Federation" introduced the ambitious programme for voluntary resettlement. The programme foresaw the compensation of transportation costs, full access to social services, and lump-sum allowance. The turnout turned to be much lower from what the policy makers expected (16.3 thousands by the end of 2009, instead of the expected 195 thousands) (Chudinovsky *et.al.* 23, 27).

¹⁵² 'Interior minister says Russia concerned about illegal migration', RIA Novosti, 28 June 2006, available at: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20060628/50587118.html>, accessed 30 June 2015., accessed 30 June 2015.

¹⁵³ In September 2006 in the small town of Kondopoga, Republic of Karelia, a fight between Russians and Chechens in a Chechen-owned restaurant took a dramatic course. Four Russians were killed during this fight and their killing incited the violent revenge of the Russian population of the city against their Caucasian neighbors – an arson that made most Caucasian residents flee the town – and the arrival of a group of DPNI activists on the scene, in order to

in Kondopoga, the government adopted a decree which prohibited the employment of foreigners as salespersons in retail markets (Chudinovskikh *et al.* 2010, p. 25). During the following years (2007-2010), the general liberal trend of immigration policies continued, although in early 2007 it was still affected by the reactions to radical right mobilization. In January 2007, foreign workers were banned from selling alcohol and pharmaceutical goods and, in April 2007, foreign workers were not allowed to sell anything in all markets and other retail outlets.¹⁵⁴ Even the quota for 2008 got severely reduced from 6 million work permits in 2007 to 1.8 million (Human Rights Watch 2009, p. 25).¹⁵⁵

In 2011, shortly after the riots of Manezh Square, Vladimir Putin declared that the government should apply harsher registration rules to migrants who violate regulations. He also stated that “we have evidently jumped the gun in liberalizing the procedure”.¹⁵⁶ It seems that authorities started rethinking immigration policy. The FMS set as an objective for 2011 to help migrants living in Russia integrate better and to attract higher qualified workers. In order to achieve these aims, the government would deny visas to foreigners that had broken Russian laws more than twice and extend the visas of “highly-qualified professionals” to a wider category of high-caliber foreign workers (Doff 2011). The government’s priorities became the simplification of immigration procedures for “highly-qualified professionals”, the prevention of the immigration abroad of local qualified workforce, the regulation of migration registration and the simplification of its bureaucratic procedures, including electronic registration (Agrba 2011). By August 2011, the FMS proposed the replacement of the quota system by a grading system for the selection of migrants that depended on age, education, professional qualifications, and the ability to adapt to changes (Domnitskaya 2011).

In 2012, President Vladimir Putin urged the authorities to test migrant workers in subjects like Russian language, history, and legislation. He also prepared the introduction of stricter penalties for the violation of migration laws. In March, trade unions and government officials started examining

take revenge. And they did, they set more fires and destroyed the Chechen restaurant, where everything began. To be noted, that police interference was brutal and delayed (Varga 2008: 70).

¹⁵⁴ *Immigration Limits come into effect in Russia*, available at: www.workpermit.com/news/2007_01_15/global/Russian_immigration_reform_begins.htm, accessed 10 December 2012.

¹⁵⁵ The 2007 quota did not cover the needs of the whole year. Therefore, in 2009 the initial decision was to raise the quota up to 3.9 million, but as a result of the economic crisis half of it was cut. The announced quota for 2010 was 2 million workers (Ioffe & Zayonchkovskaya 2010: 24). accessed 30 June 2015.

¹⁵⁶ ‘Putin urges harsher rules for misbehaving migrants’, *RIA Novosti*, 27 December 2010, available at: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20101227/161953326.html>, accessed 30 June 2015.

a new roadmap on immigration that was initially developed by the FMS together with Strategy-2020 experts (Adelaja 2012b). In May, the FMS together with law enforcement agencies conducted the “Illegal-2012” operation, arresting, deporting, and fining irregular migrant workers and their employees. The operation has been accused of being a “poor substitute for badly-needed immigration reform”. On the other hand, the program, which started in 2006, for the repatriation of Russians living abroad had failed to meet the expectations, since only 68,000 Russians decided to move back permanently (Adelaja 2012a).

A summary of the socio-economic change from migration is presented in Table 7 with the available data on migration policy trends, migration flows (with special reference to migration from the CIS to Russia) unemployment, and population growth.

Table 7: Migration policy trends, migration flows, population growth, unemployment (2000-2012 according to available data, compared to 1992)

YEAR	1992	2000	2001	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Migration Policy (1)	Inexistent		Restrictive, reactive		Liberal, Pro-active/ Open door for CIS (3)						Backlash against liberal policies
Net migration (thousands)	176,1	213,6		107,4		239,9	242,1	247,4	158,1	319,8	294,9
Illegal Immigration (2) ¹⁵⁷			1.5 million						3.5-5 million		
Arrivals of immigrants-total (3)		359,330		177.230			281,614	279,907	191,656	356,520	417,681
Arrivals of immigrants from CIS (3)		326,561		163.101			261,170	261,495	171,940	310,549	363.955
Migration from Russia total (3)		145,720		69.798			39,508	32,458	33.578	36.774	122.751
Migration from Russia to CIS (3)		80,510		35.418			25,542	20,326	21.206	22.568	95.572
Unemployment (thousands persons)	3889	7700		5242		4519	4697	6284	5544	4922	4131
Population (millions)	148,6	146,3		143,2		142,8	142,7	142,8	142,9	143,0	143,3
Natural population increase, decrease (-) (thousands)	- 219,8	-958,5		-846,5		-470,3	-362,0	-248,8	-239,6	-129,1	-2,5

Sources: (1) Nozhenko 2010; (2) Ivakhnyuk, 2009; (3) Federal'naya Sluzhba gosudarstvennoi statistiki (2013a), (all the rest) Federal'naya Sluzhba gosudarstvennoi statistiki (2013b), authors' elaboration.

¹⁵⁷ The number of irregular immigrants is complicated to estimate because there is no adequate border and immigration control, neither an integrated migration database, whereas border guards and migration services do not collaborate efficiently (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 42). According to scholars' estimations, the total number of irregular migrants in Russia is 3-4 million, whereas in spring and summer many seasonal workers arrive and the total becomes 5-7 million. The majority of irregular immigrants come from the CIS countries to find job. They cross the border legally, due to bilateral visa-free agreements of most CIS countries with Russia. Many of them come for seasonal work, e.g. in the construction and agriculture sectors, and stay about 8 months. In the spring and summer their number reaches three to four millions. Additionally, another two to three million irregular migrants from the CIS stay in Russia for a few years. This group tends to maintain close ties with their ethnic communities, because they get unofficial protection and support. Finally, irregular migrants from non-CIS countries are usually transit migrants from Asia and Africa but stay in Russia only for a while (about 500,000) and foreign citizens, mainly from Vietnam and Korea and students from the Middle East or Africa, whose contracts have terminated, but do not want to return to their countries (about 100,000) (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 43).

The 2012 backlash against liberal migration policies gives a pessimist message on the integration of minorities in Russian society. Affirmative to this idea is the opinion poll of *Vserossiiskii Tsentri Izucheniya Obshchestvennogo Mneniya* (All Russia Public Opinion Research Center - VTsIOM) of February 2012. The opinion poll showed that Russians are generally in favor of Putin's proposals to regulate immigration policy. The vast majority of respondents (77 percent) were in favor of tightening immigration laws and of criminalizing the violations of immigration rules and registration regulations. 75 percent were in favor of tightening registration rules and penalties for their violation, while 79 percent agreed with preventing the emergence of closed, isolated, national enclaves that do not comply with Russian laws. Finally, 67 percent agreed that immigrants should be examined on Russian language, literature, history, and the basic rules of state functioning and law.¹⁵⁸

6.2.3.Changes in public attitudes towards foreigners

The influence of public opinion on the government's anticipated opportunities for re-election is weak in non-democratic regimes, although the degree that of public acceptance can still matter for non-democratic governments (Tipaldou& Uba 2014: 1083). Previous studies on Russia have shown that public opinion exercises very limited influence on its migration policy (Ivakhnyuk 2009: 48). Additionally, public demands can also be manipulated so that they match every decision made by the government, which is often driven by corporate interests (Clément 2008: 71). However, it would be reasonable to assume the opposite, that the changes in structural conditions and migration policy can exert an influence on public opinion.

My assessment of Russian attitudes toward “foreigners” draws on the survey of Levada-Center relying on modern scientific sampling, with a sample of 1,600 persons. Pooling data from the survey on xenophobic sentiments of Russians, as presented in the following Table 8, shows that the most unwanted nationalities are: Vietnamese, Caucasian, Chinese, people from the former Central Asian republics, and Roma. In the first half of the 2000s, xenophobic sentiments of Russians were more widespread, but then they started following a downtrend up to 2011. Although by 2011 negative sentiments towards Vietnamese, Chinese, and Roma nationalities have diminished by 18, 9, and 14 percent respectively when compared to 2004, negative feelings towards Caucasians and

¹⁵⁸ Vserossiiskii Tsentri Izucheniya Obshchestvennogo Mneniya (VTsIOM) (2012): “Idei Putina po Migratsionnoi Politike: Obshchesivennaya Otsenka”, available at: <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=112370> , accessed 10 June 2014.

Central Asian fell by only 5 percent. The peak of xenophobia was undoubtedly the year 2005. In 2005, dislike towards Chinese and Caucasians rose with of 6-7%.

Table 8: Xenophobic sentiments of Russians (2004-2011)

Do you think that the presence of people in the Russian Federation should be reduced according to their nationality? N=1600							
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009	2010	2011
Yes- Vietnamese	39	42	35	34	24	33	21
Yes- Jews	15	18	13	10	6	11	8
Yes- From the Caucasus	44	50	42	44	38	37	39
Yes- Chinese	39	46	41	41	34	36	30
Yes- Immigrants from the former Central Asian Republics of the USSR	31	31	23	25	20	27	26
Yes- Ukrainians	8	8	7	6	7	6	5
Yes- Roma	32	30	29	25	22	30	18
Yes- From all nations, except the Russian	14	11	11	10	16	16	17
No, there should be no restrictions for people whatever their nationality is	21	20	25	23	19	21	17
It is difficult to answer	5	5	6	8	14	12	15

Source: Levada-Center 2012: 179.

A similar survey, provided by ‘All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center’ (*Vserossiiskii Tsentri Izucheniya Obshchestvennogo Mneniya – VTsIOM*) over the same sample (N=1600) gives slightly different results. In VtsIOM's research, presented in the following tables, Table 9 and Table 10, the proxy for xenophobia are feelings of irritation and dislike of respondents towards specific nationalities.

Table 9: Ethnic-sympathies and antipathies of Russians

Please, name the nations and peoples whose members make you feel irritation, dislike? (open-ended question, any number of responses) N=1600

	2005	2006	2009	2010
Caucasians (Azerbaijani, Armenians, Georgians, Ingushes, Dagestani, Chechens, etc.)	23	29	29	29
People of Central Asia (Tajik, Uzbeks, Kazakhs)	4	2	6	6
Chinese	2	2	3	3
Jews	2	1	2	3
Roma	3	3	4	2
Asians	1	1	1	2
Arabs, Muslims	2	0	1	2
Americans	1	1	3	2
Ukrainians	1	2	3	2
Baltics (Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians)	3	2	3	1
Europeans (English, Germans)	1	0	2	1
Tatars	1	0	1	1
Africans	1	0	1	0
Moldavians	1	0	1	0
Turks	1	0	1	0
No one from the above	34	41	55	56
Other	0	0	3	2
It is difficult to answer	30	20	8	9

Source: VTsIOM 2010.

This survey clearly demonstrates that Russians are irritated mostly by Caucasians, with a huge difference with respect to the second less wanted group, Central Asians. Antipathy to other ethnic groups (Vietnamese are not included in the survey) are radically lower, while Chinese and Roma receive a very low score, in contrast to Levada-Center's survey. The negative sentiments towards Caucasians slightly rose from 2005 to 2006 and remained at the same constant levels until 2010. However, what this study shows is that the sympathy towards other nationalities (as induced from the answer “no one from the above”) was much higher in 2009 and 2010 than in 2005 and 2006.

A complementary question for the reasons of national dislike (presented in Table 10) indicates that Russians feel irritation and/or dislike because they are afraid of terrorist threats, because the members of these nations do not comply with Russian norms and behaviors, and because they do not like the appearance or character of these peoples. The highest number of respondents, though, finds it difficult to answer why they dislike members of certain ethnic groups or even which ethnic groups they dislike.

Table 10: Reasons for ethnic sympathies and antipathies of Russians

If you feel irritation, dislike for members of some nations and peoples, with what has it more to do? (close-ended question, one answer)

	2004	2005	2006	2010
I am afraid of them due to the terrorist threat	11	15	17	13
These people do not want to reckon with the customs and norms of behavior accepted in Russia	9	23	18	11
I do not like their appearance, demeanor, character traits	7	14	12	6
These people usually do not have elementary culture and do not know how to behave	7	9	10	6
I do not like the fact that they control certain types of business	7	13	8	6
They take jobs away from local people	2	9	6	4
These people do not want to learn Russian	0	1	2	1
For different reasons	5	0	0	8
It is difficult to answer	51	47	52	47

Source: VTsIOM 2010.

Data in Table 10 contrast with a survey presented by Levada-Center in 2005 that found that xenophobia is mainly focused on economic reasons and not on the threat of terrorism (Mukomel 2005: 70-71), despite the fact that data in Table 7 shows that unemployment has been constantly falling since 2002. In particular, the 2005 Levada-Center's survey found that 35% of Russian citizens argue that “migrants take jobs that could be taken by local workers”, 23 per cent that migrants do not pay taxes and facilitate the outflow of capital, 22 per cent that migrants dump wages of local workers (Mukomel 2005: 70-71).

The above-presented surveys show some trends of the Russian population's stance towards foreigners. I observe a correlation between growing xenophobic sentiments towards foreigners and restrictive migration policy. Since the year 2001, with the introduction of restrictive and reactive migration legislation, xenophobia has been on the rise. The peak of xenophobic sentiments was the year 2005. In the period 2006-2011, with the introduction of more liberal, pro-active, and open door for the CIS migration policy, we notice that xenophobia has been slightly falling, although some studies show that negative feelings (irritation, dislike) towards Caucasians and towards people from the former Central Asia remain pretty much the same.

I propose that this overall trends can be related to migration policy, without implying neither causality nor that migration policy is the only factor that influences Russian public opinion. For

instance, the 2004 double bombing in Moscow's metro and the Beslan school hostage crisis have probably contributed to the fact that the year 2005 was the peak year of xenophobia. This assumption is confirmed from data from the public's response on how to put an end to terrorism in Russia (Table 5) that show that the majority of respondents asked for tougher anti-terrorism legislation and for the prevention of people from the North Caucasus from living in Russian cities confirm this assumption.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter showed that Russian transition triggered major economic and cultural changes in the broader structural conditions, which in turn caused new socio-political cleavages. A cultural cleavage was formed with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when the so-called ethnic Russians found themselves in different newly formed nation-states, while at the same time they did not form a nation-state themselves. Moreover, Russia's demographic decline in combination with an increase in immigration waves created a new citizenship cleavage. Terrorist attacks could be an additional reason for the polarization of the citizenship divide, or for the exclusion of another category of possible "Russian citizens", like Caucasians, but the cleavage itself would probably still exist, had the terrorist attacks not taken place.

The governmental response to migration waves through changes in migration policy reflect the crystallization of the citizenship cleavage. Additionally, as data from public opinion show, migration policy accompanied by xenophobic media campaigns probably contributed to the sharpening of the citizenship cleavage. Finally, repressive governmental policies under Vladimir Putin opened a new cleavage that cuts along the parliamentarian/extra-parliamentarian lines of political organizations, which I called institutionalization cleavage.

Finally, the third section of this chapter presented a crucial issue for nationalist organizations migration and focused on migration policy and the public response towards foreigners. Migration policy was presented as both cause and effect for the division between Russians and non-Russians (citizenship cleavage). It offered an overview of Russia's migration flows and migration policy, and presented them together with data on population growth and unemployment rates. Then the discussion turned around public attitudes towards foreigners on the basis of public opinion surveys.

The available data shows a correlation between growing xenophobic sentiments towards foreigners and restrictive migration policy. I also recognize the terrorist attacks as an additional factor that may influence xenophobia. It also shows a stability on negative sentiments (irritation, dislike) towards Caucasians and people from the former Central Asia. The reasons for such dislike has mainly to do with their unwillingness to reckon with Russian cultural norms and with the terrorist threat. Other public opinions point to economic reasons for xenophobia, despite the fact that they come in contrast with macro-economic data on unemployment that show a constant falling tendency since 2002.

National cleavage structures define the political space which is available for social movements to introduce new conflicts into a policy and are therefore “a particularly important dimension of political opportunities” (Kriesi *at al.*[Koopmans & Statham 2000: 33]). To this extent, all three cleavages analyzed in this chapter shape the chances the nationalist-patriotic organizations have to mobilize contentions. The following chapter identifies these opportunities that shaped the organizational model, form, and evolution of the nationalist-patriotic organizations under study and stresses the role of leadership in this process.

7. Opportunities for nationalist-patriotic organizations to emerge and the role of leadership

This last chapter aims to present structural changes in Russia's political system that opened or closed political and discursive opportunities for nationalist-patriotic organizations to emerge and to further develop. It also discusses another set of opportunities, which I call technological opportunities, that resulted from the technological developments of the last twenty years and their impact on Russia's political developments. Opportunities have been criticized for their static nature and for the fact that they can benefit all movement organizations and not only nationalist-patriotic ones. This chapter addresses this issue following an agent-based analysis of the movements under study. It distinguishes the role of leadership as an important factor for message formation, internal organization, and mobilization of each movement. My parallel analysis of opportunities and leaders' response to them aims to shed light to the dialectic relationship between structure and agency that can help us understand the mechanisms that lie behind the way that opportunities get transformed into action.

7. 1. Political, discursive, and technological opportunities under Vladimir Putin's regime

7.1.1. Political Opportunities

I recognize three sets of political opportunities as the most significant ones, without implying that they are the only ones that opened for challengers under Vladimir Putin's regime: (i) the limitations that the government poses to dissident organizations and all forms of opposition in general, (ii) the repression against nationalist activists, and (iii) the creation of state-controlled patriotic youth movements.

The first one has to do with the limitations that the government poses to dissident organizations and all forms of opposition in general. As analyzed in the previous chapter, the “vertical system of power” is highly centralized and resistant to criticism. The Parliament is controlled by the Kremlin, and even regional governors are now appointed by the President (Orttung 2011:453). Decisions emanate from the top and are passed down to regional and local officials (Levy 2009). The

government system that Vladimir Putin created leaves, therefore, many doubts to whether it can respond to rising dissatisfaction, mainly because government officials are completely cut off from grass-roots sentiments, since they do not have to reach for popular support in elections any longer. The relationship then between the authorities and the people is made through television, since the Parliament and the so-called civil society do not function any longer (Levy 2009).

The new government introduced restrictions on political party registration. It now required that parties have more than 50,000 members and more than 45 regional sections to run for elections. As a result, many regional parties were excluded from elections (Laruelle 2009, 20). Parallel, it brought the media under the president's control and turned openly against the oligarchs who were shown unwilling to collaborate (Laruelle 2009, 20). The arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky was indicative of the Kremlin's hard position (Prozorov 2005, 137). From 2004 on, opposition forces have been selectively coerced and intimidated, civil society associations have been broadly manipulated, and the media have passed under Kremlin's increased control. Exception to the rule was a bill that President Medvedev introduced in December 2011 that simplified party registration (Yudina & Alperovich 2012).

The second set of political opportunities has to do with the repression against the nationalist-patriotic camp in particular. Most prosecutions are made under Article 282 of the Criminal Code for incitement of hatred or enmity and Article 282.1 for organizing an extremist community.¹⁵⁹ Nationalists refer to activists arrested under the above-mentioned articles of the Criminal Code as 'political prisoners'. RONS' leader, Igor' Artemov, explains in an article how the amendment of 16 December 2013 to the Penal Code, widens the scope of its application on anyone who criticizes governmental domestic or foreign policies for example and provides for stricter penalties: "public calls to carrying out extremist activities" (Article 280) are punished with up to four years and the establishment of "an extremist community" (Article 282.1, part 1) with up to six years in jail. Additionally, suspects can now enter under surveillance and interception of phone calls, which for Igor' Artemov is the reason that stands behind this amendment, that the regime wants to spy on its opponents legally at any moment of time (Artemov 2013).

On the extent of the nationalists' persecution, Petr Antonov (2013), RONS member, writes that

¹⁵⁹ 'Ugolovnyi Kodeks Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 13 iyunya 1996 g. N 63-F3, 2010', available at: <http://www.rg.ru/2007/11/12/ukrf-dok.html>, accessed 11 May 2014.

approximately two thousand Russian nationalists were imprisoned in the last decade, most of them under Article 282 of the Penal Code in the aftermath of conflicts with Caucasians or Central Asians. He also states that these cases remain unknown, because mass media in Russia and abroad focus on the arrests of Mikhail Khodorkovskii, Sergei Magnitsky, and Bolotnaya demonstrators. Many nationalist organizations have been outlawed in the last years, i.e. RONS, DPNI, *Slavyanskii Soyuz*. Nationalist-patriotic newspapers have been attacked, i.e. the editors of *Moskovskie Vorota* (Moscow Gates) newspaper in 2006; of *Kazachii Vzglyad* (The Cossack's Opinion) in 2012; the editor of *Russkoya Zabaikalye* (Russian Trans-Baikal Region), the editor of *Otchisna* (Fatherland) in 2007.

Additionally, many activists and leaders of nationalist organizations have been arrested and imprisoned. A full list of them goes beyond the scope of the present research, but I will refer briefly to three of the leaders, whose court trials nationalist circles denounce as fraudulent (Antonov 2013). As already mentioned, Konstantin Krylov, leader of ROD and editor of *Voprosy Natsionalizma*, was arrested the morning of the 2011 Russian March, where he was going to deliver a speech, and could therefore not attend it. He was sentenced to 120 hours of correctional labor for inciting ethnic hatred at a 2011 speech where he positioned himself against the de-facto governmental tribute to Northern Caucasian republics. This conviction, however mild, deprives Krylov from the right to lead a political party and to participate in elections (Antonov 2013).

Similarly, DPNI leader Aleksandr Belov was sentenced in 2009 to one and a half year imprisonment suspended over two years for inciting ethnic hatred and ethnic violence with his 2007 speech at the Russian March,¹⁶⁰ while his brother Vladimir Basmanov, lives in exile in order to evade prosecution. In October 2014, Aleksandr Belov was arrested for launder and embezzlement of about five billion dollars, which break Art. 174 and 159 of the criminal code and account for sentences up to seven and ten years, respectively. He has remained in pretrial detention until the beginning of 2015 that these lines were written. Public figures, some of the affiliated to the nationalist opposition while others not (e.g. Alexey Navalny, Vladimir Milov, Ilya Ponomarev, Boris Nemtsov), have connected Belov's persecution to his political activities and have even expressed their concerns on his safety.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ "Ultranationalist race-hate leader gets suspended sentence", *RT*, 28 May 2009, available at: <http://rt.com/news/ultranationalist-race-hate-leader-gets-suspended-sentence/>, accessed 30 March 2015. DPNI's official website offers a full list of detentions and sentences against DPNI's members from 2004 to 2009 in "Repressii v Otnoshchenii DPNI 2004-2009 (Uchтена Nebol'shaya Chast')", 10 July 2012, available at: http://dpni.org/articles/novosti_d/31934/, accessed 30 March 2015.

¹⁶¹ Rothrock, Kevin "Police Say He Helped Steal \$5 Billion, But Russia's Opposition Wants to Save Aleksandr Belov",

Also, Daniil Konstantinov, leader of League of Moscow's Self-Defense (LOM), was arrested in March 2012 on suspicion of a street knife murder in 2011.¹⁶² Konstantinov was accused under Art. 105.1 of the Criminal Code and was facing up to fifteen years in prison. He remained in custody for two and half years until his trial was over. Konstantinov's defense claimed that his prosecution was politically motivated. His lawyer also denounced the police for torturing Konstantinov physically and psychologically.¹⁶³ The judge did not find evidence of murder, but reclassified the charges and found him guilty for hooliganism under Art. 213.1 of the Criminal Code. He was sentenced with three years imprisonment, but was released from liability under the amnesty adopted by the parliament in honor of the 20th anniversary of Russian Federation's Constitution and was released directly from the court in October 2014.¹⁶⁴

Probably the most well-known case against Russian nationalists is that of Aleksei Navalnyi, lawyer, anti-corruption blogger (he revealed large-scale embezzlement schemes and high-level corruption), and leader of the registered party *Partiya Progressa* (Progress Party). Navalnyi has been receiving one criminal charge after another since he emerged as a key opposition figure in the past few years. He has participated in several mass demonstrations, e.g. the anti-electoral-fraud protests, and he is also one of the main speakers in Russian Marches, and he is the one behind the dissemination of the slogan “party of crooks and thieves” for United Russia. In July 2013, in a trial called “parody” by Amnesty International, Aleksei Navalnyi was sentenced to five years in a prison colony for embezzlement in Kirov.¹⁶⁵ His case raised considerable criticism for being motivated and was eventually suspended (Lally 2014). Despite this case, he was arrested and imprisoned various times for his participation in anti-fraud protest actions and has been accused for defrauding a no longer existing liberal political party and for embezzling 55 million roubles in a postal business he was in with his brother.¹⁶⁶ In September 2013, Navalnyi ran for mayor of Moscow and won an unexpected

Global Voices, 11 November 2014, available at: <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/11/11/police-say-he-helped-steal-5-billion-dollars-but-the-russian-opposition-wants-to-save-alexander-belov/>, accessed 30 March 2015; see also Aleksandr Belov's personal website, available at: www.alexanbelov.com, accessed 30 March 2015.

¹⁶² ‘Podrobnosti aresta lavy “Ligi Oborony Moskvy” Daniila Konstantinova’, 22 March 2012, *APN*, available at: <http://www.apn.ru/news/article26236.htm>, accessed 16 March 2013.

¹⁶³ ‘Pytki vmesto prigovora’, *Kasparov.ru*, 27 December 2013, available at: <http://www.kasparov.ru/material.php?id=52BD7C8A0C621>, accessed 6 April 2015.

¹⁶⁴ ‘Natsionalisty perevalifitsirovali ubiistvo v khuliganstvo’, *Kommersant*, 16 October 2014, available at: <http://www.kommersant.ru/Doc/2590912>, accessed 6 April 2015; ‘Daniil Konstantinov amnistirovan i osvobozhden v zale suda’, *Rapsi*, 16 October 2014, available at: http://rapsinews.ru/moscourts_news/20141016/272382387.html, accessed 6 April 2015.

¹⁶⁵ “Russia: Political activist Aleksei Navalny must be released after 'parody' trial”, *Amnesty International*, 18 July 2013, available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/russian-political-activist-sentenced-five-years-penal-colony-parody-trial-2013-07-18>, accessed 26 June 2014.

¹⁶⁶ “Profile: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny”, *BBC*, 19 July 2013, available at:

high percentage of 27.24 percent of the vote, despite claims of vote falsification in favor of his opponent, United Russia's candidate Sergei Sobyenin (Luhn 2013). In 2014 he was put under house arrest for two months—later extended by six months¹⁶⁷—and was prohibited from using the Internet and speaking with anyone but his family, something that would prevent him from continuing his on-line activism (Lally 2014).

The third set of political opportunities has to do with the creation of state-controlled patriotic youth movements. The government invested enormous resources in Kremlin-friendly patriotic youth movements, in order to control political activity on the streets and prepare the defence against possible future struggle with political opponents (Satarov 2011). The most famous example is *Nashi*, which was created in 2000, succeeding the youth group Walking Together. It is considered to be the “brainchild” of Vladislav Surkov, deputy chief of staff of the three last Russian presidents (Clover 2010) and chief ideologist of Putin’s Russia (Felgenhauer 2010). *Nashi* actively collaborated with right-wing football hooligans and their head expressed in 2005 the organization’s readiness to work with skinheads (Varga 2008: 573). “Surkov is giving money to those who interfere with him”, said Aleksandr Belov at an interview where he also revealed that DPNI got approached by *Nashi* to help it organize militias, DPNI's leadership accepted and DPNI was getting funds directly from the Kremlin for some time.¹⁶⁸

At these point, two opposing political opportunities for the nationalist-patriotic organizations are apparent. On one hand, state repression to all types of political opposition in general and to nationalists in particular, closes opportunities for challengers to emerge. Indicative is that when President Medvedev simplified party registration in 2011 (Yudina & Alperovich 2012), the nationalist movement reacted immediately with the almost simultaneous emergence of two new party branches. The first branch are national-democrats, represented by Konstantin Krylov's National-Democratic Party (NDP) and Valerii Solovei's *Novaya Sila* (New Force). The second branch is more radical but with a catch-all tendency, and is represented by the Party of Nationalists of Aleksandr Belov, former leader of the banned DPNI and Dmitrii Demushkin, former leader of

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16057045> , accessed 27 June 2014.

¹⁶⁷ “Russian Court Extends Navalny's House Arrest By Six Months”, *RFERL*, 24 April 2014, available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/russian-court-extends-navalnys-house-arrest-by-six-months/25361087.html> , accessed 27 June 2014.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Aleksandr Belov iz DPNI: “Kto s nami svyazhetsya – nikogda ni otmoetsya”’, 26 November 2005, *Novyi Region – Ekaterinburg*, available at <http://stringer-news.com/Publication.mhtml?PubID=4926&Menu=&Part=37> , accessed 12 March 2013.

banned SS.

On the other hand, nationalist-patriotic organizations could benefit from the closing opportunity influenced of the new cleavage that state repression opened of parliamentary/extra-parliamentary organizations. They could do so by presenting themselves as victims of state repression and by associating themselves closely with the democratic civil society. Additionally, the creation of patriotic youth organizations by the government opens political opportunities for nationalist mobilization and provides some organizations, e.g. DPNI, with funding, contributing this way directly to the nationalist movements' organizational capacity. Furthermore, patriotic youth organizations turns into mainstream the use of patriotic frames by the youth. We can expect that youngsters who have been systematically exposed to the patriotic rhetoric of Kremlin-made movements are more vulnerable to nationalist-patriotic claims and can easier get involved in the organizations of the nationalist-patriotic opposition, especially if *Nashi* or similar Kremlin-made youth groups let them down.

7.1.2. Discursive Opportunities

Passing from political opportunities to discursive ones—a term designed to link political opportunity structures with collective action framing—I distinguish between three sets that can determine the extent of visibility, resonance, and legitimacy of the nationalist-patriotic opposition's claims (as those were explained in detail in chapters 4 and 5): (i) reframed national traditions, (ii) scope of migrantophobia in the media, and (iii) traumatic public events.

Starting with reframed national traditions, the “Putin project” introduced new stylistic features to defend its institutional order:

“the rhetoric consolidation and normalization after the turbulent and antagonistic politics of the 1990s, the abandonment of doctrinaire policy orientations in favor of a variably understood ‘pragmatism’, the refusal of the wholesale condemnation of Soviet history, the reaffirmation of sovereignty in foreign policy, etc.” (Prozorov 2005: 124).

At the core of Vladimir Putin's “Russian idea” stand patriotism, collectivism, solidarity, the belief that Russia is always destined to be a great power (*derzhavnost'*), and the belief that the state is at

the heart of everything (*gosudarstvennichestvo*) (Hill & Gaddy 2012). Furthermore, his vision draws clear separation lines between Russia and Western countries like the USA or the UK (Hill & Gaddy 2012). To this extent, Russia's authoritarian traditions are promoted as the equivalent of western democratic traditions. Human rights and democracy—that have no roots in Russian history—are not as valued by Putin's supporters as a strong state, economic growth, and security (Beer 2009).

Vladimir Putin's "hegemonic project" no longer defines itself against the Soviet past, but against the revolutionary turmoil of the 1990s, inspiring scholars to name it "post-postcommunist" (Prozorov 2005, 130). In an effort to restore Russia's standing, the ruling elite now openly shows its admiration for the Soviet Union, glorifying Soviet triumphs and downplaying or whitewashing the system's horrors. To this extent, many archives detailing the atrocities of Soviet authorities are getting out of reach (Levy 2008) and a new history textbook proclaims that the Soviet Union, although not a democracy, was "an example for millions of people around the world of the best and fairest society".¹⁶⁹ A study guide for high school teachers promoted by the Kremlin, described Stalin as "one of the most successful leaders of the U.S.S.R." (Levy 2008). Vladimir Putin acknowledges Stalin's crimes, but insists that Russians should not feel ashamed of them (Levy 2008) and even restored the Soviet hymn with a different letter in 2000 (Serra Massansalvador 2005: 245). In his 2005 annual address to the Federal Assembly, President Putin stated that the collapse of the Soviet Union was "a major geopolitical disaster of the century", whereas for the Russian nation it became "a genuine drama", since "tens of millions of our co-citizens and compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory".¹⁷⁰ Although at that time the disintegration of the Soviet Union was mainly perceived in economic terms of everyday survival, President Putin soon made clear the need to equate the Soviet Union with the Stalinist regime in subsequent interviews (Oushakine 2009: 80).

Despite the glorification of the Soviet past, the basic values that the Kremlin tries to pass to the public through the media are a "belligerent form of patriotism" (Clover 2010) and morality that basically refers to Orthodox Christian values. For instance, in 2007 Vladimir Putin stated that the foundation of Russia is love for Fatherland and patriotism – in the best sense of the word – and, therefore, Russians need to respect their history "despite all of its flaws" and consolidate society on

¹⁶⁹ 'The hand that feeds them', *The Economist*, 7 August 2008, available at http://www.economist.com/node/11880594?story_id=11880594, accessed 17 August 2011.

¹⁷⁰ President of Russia (2005) 'Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation', available at http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029type82912_87086.shtml, accessed 17 August 2011.

the basis of common moral values.¹⁷¹ In sum, Vladimir Putin's official discourse, speeches, and state news broadcasts, is saturated by the trivial Imperial symbols of "Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality" (Gudkov 2008) and by distrust for foreigners (Clover 2010).

The second set of discursive opportunities are connected to the pervasive "migrantophobia" in the press and governmental discourse that were heavily influenced by the restrictive migration policies of Vladimir Putin's first term in the presidency. As the previous chapter shows, when Vladimir Putin stepped into the presidency, not only did he present illegal migration as a national security issue, but he also adopted a strongly negative official attitude against it (Ivakhnyuk 2009, p. 37). The restrictive immigration policies the Putin regime introduced turned to be inefficient; they created more barriers to legal migrants, increased the number of illegal immigrants and forced labour, and led to high corruption in the "immigration industry" and in law enforcement agencies (Ioffe & Zayonchkovskaya 2010, p. 22; Ivakhnyuk 2009, p. 41).

The media were accompanying the government's massive deportation and penalization campaigns against immigrants with xenophobic publications. At the same time, some politicians started expressing openly xenophobic positions, like Dmitrii Rogozin of *Rodina* who called for "stopping the hordes of uninvited settlers" and V. Ilukhin from the KPRF who stated that immigrants should not be let feel masters in the Russian land (Ivakhnyuk 2009:46). On the other hand, liberal opposition leaders, who called for the unavoidability of immigration to Russia and for policies that would help immigrants integrate in Russian society, were ignored (Ivakhnyuk 2009:47). "Xenophobic journalism" and "government-sponsored Islamophobia" resulted to an increasingly negatively view of immigrants, mainly from Central Asia and North Caucasus (Yasman 2005).

Finally, the third set of discursive opportunities, traumatic public events, have to do mainly with the terrorist attacks that, as I have analyzed in detail in section 6.1.4., are connected to the polarization of the newly-formed citizenship cleavage. Terrorist attacks throughout the Russian territory have contributed to the creation of a "Chechen syndrome" and their downgrading in the minds of people as "second class citizens", like basically other Muslim migrants. This seems to be a paradox, since Chechens are Russian citizens, in contrast to Caucasian or Central Asian migrants. As a response, Putin's government started highlighting the need of the establishment of "a constitutional order on

¹⁷¹ President of Russia, 'Interview with Time Magazine', 19 December 2007, available at: http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/12/19/1618_type82916_154779.shtml , accessed 17 August 2011.

the whole national territory” (Laruelle 2009, 19), in combination to “reaffirmation of sovereignty in foreign policy” (Prozorov 2005, 124).

7.1.3 Technological Opportunities

Technology is linked to broader structural changes of modern societies. The use of Internet and modern communication technologies has contributed to a new form of fast, direct, and even anonymous interaction between politicized groups and individuals that is very difficult—and sometimes impossible—to be controlled by the state. This makes it a perfect tool in the hands of challengers to express their discontent, recruit new members, and mobilize, especially in non-democratic environments. I introduce the term “technological opportunities” to connect the Internet and the political opportunities it has opened to the nationalist-patriotic movement of the 2000s. I recognize three sets of technological opportunities: (i) the scope of Internet use in Russia, (ii) its potential potential for political activism, and (iii) freedom of expression in RusNet.

7.1.3.1. *Scope of Internet use*

In Russia, and everywhere, activity and engagement through Internet has been growing strong in the last years (Fossato *et al.* 2008, 52). The amount of households with Internet access has increased dramatically in the last decade in all continents, except Africa, while in the CIS countries it increased more than four-fold since 2005 (from 10 percent it now reaches 46 percent).¹⁷² In Russia, in particular, Internet penetration has multiplied from 2 percent in 2000 to 43 percent in 2010.¹⁷³ Illustration 10, created by Public Opinion Foundation (Fond “Obshchestvennoe Mnenie”- FOM), shows the increasing use of Internet from 2007 until 2011 (in orange the figures of Russia, in blue of Moscow, and in green of St. Petersburg). It also offers a forecast of Internet use from 2011-2014 (intermittent parts of the lines) and assesses that by the end of 2014 about 80 million Russians (71 percent of the total population) will be using the Internet.

¹⁷² “ICT Facts and Figures: The World in 2013”, *International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*, available at: <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2013-e.pdf>, accessed 8 July 2014.

¹⁷³ “Russian Internet market is the second largest in Europe, and growing”, *Siberianlight*, 10 February 2011, available at: <http://siberianlight.net/russian-Internet-market/>, accessed 8 July 2014.

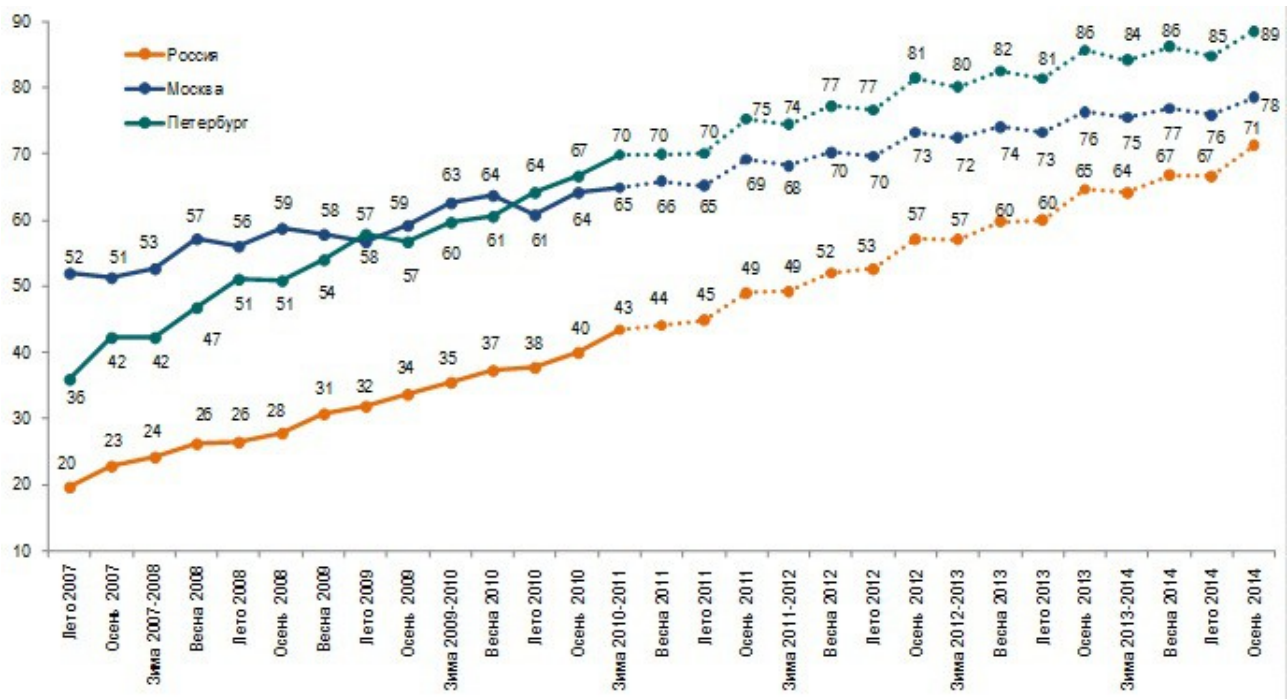


Illustration 10: Forecast of monthly Internet audience
Source: FOM 2011.

FOM's forecast proved ambitious but not that far from reality. More than half of the Russian population, 53.3 percent by 2012,¹⁷⁴ was connecting to the Internet at least once a week and preferred to get regular information from alternative sources and not from Kremlin-controlled TV stations (Adomanis 2013). By February 2014, about 66.8 million Russians were using the Internet, which makes Russia rank sixth in the world behind China, US, India, Japan, and Brazil in terms of Internet users.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, cell phone ownership was close to 100 percent by 2007 (Kuchins 2007: 10).

The highest number of Internet users is concentrated in the country's major urban centers, where 73 percent of its population lives. By 2013, one can find sustained communities of Internet users, apart from except Moscow and St. Petersburg, in regional cities, e.g. Samara, Chalyabinsk, Novosibirsk, Krasnodar, and Vladivostok. Furthermore, the majority of Internet users tend to be young, wealthy, and urban (following the similar pattern around the world) and there is no apparent gender divide (Alexanyan *et al.* 2012: 7). Nevertheless, the Internet is popular for the urban educated elite,

¹⁷⁴ "Russia Profile (Latest data available: 2012)", *International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*, available at: <http://www.itu.int/net4/itu-d/icteye/>, accessed 8 July 2014.

¹⁷⁵ "Number of Internet users in selected countries as of February 2014 (in millions), *Statista.com*, 2014, available at: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/271411/number-of-Internet-users-in-selected-countries/>, accessed 8 July 2014.

whereas for those that did not go above secondary education it is either considered a “luxury item” or irrelevant to daily life (Alexanyan 2009: 3). Results from a 2009 FOM survey show that the Internet competes with television as information source only for frequent Internet users, who tend to be more literate than “urban residents” and “non Internet users” and to choose different sources for informing themselves. For those who do not use Internet on a daily basis, the leading source of “interesting and trusted information” is television (Alexanyan 2009: 3).

The Russian Internet is bloggers-dominated; blogs can be more popular and influential than well-maintained web-sites (Zuev 2010, 263). Most non-commercial organizations have Internet sites with lively forums and blogging platforms to create communities and attract supporters (Fossato *et al.* 2008, 20). By the end of 2009, the size of the Russian Blogosphere, that is all blogs and their interconnections, exceeded 11 million blogs, with a million of posts and comments produced on a daily basis. One of the characteristics of the Russian Blogosphere is that it is “inwardly focused” and is more interested with developments within Russia, rather than with the rest of the world and has relatively few “bridge bloggers” who write about other countries. In sum, “Russians tend to communicate with Russians in Russian about Russia-related topics” (Gorny 2009: 8).

Another characteristic of the Russian Internet (RusNet) is that it does not draw a clear distinction between blogging and social networking and between the public and private; most blogs are publicly accessible but follow the model of informal in-group communication, the terms “blog” and “online journal” are entirely synonymous, “friends” and “readers” are used in the same way, and “communities” are included in the total blog count (Alexanyan 2009: 3; Gorny 2009: 8). Especially the weblog platform LiveJournal—an hybrid social media that offers a combination of blogs and social networking sites that was created in the early 2000s—has a central role in the socio-political debate (Zuev 2010, 263; Alexanyan 2009: 4). LiveJournal, together with the other three top “blogging platforms” LiveInternet, Ya.ru, and Blog.Mail.ru., host 70 percent of all blogs. All these blogs also offer “friends list” and the option to share fotos, videos, and audio. Around 2006, social networking after the American model - focusing on locating, reconnecting with, and participating in groups and communities - entered Russia with the creation of the Russian alternative for Facebook, Vkontakte (Alexanyan 2009: 4).

7.1.3.2. Potential for political activism through Internet use

The theoretical debate around the use of Internet supposes that the Internet liberates from state censorship, from the capture of means of communication by large corporations, and from the inaccessibility of information and knowledge due to limited sources, contributing, thus, to a personal liberation (Fossato *et al.* 2008: 2). Here, I would add that it not only liberates the *netizens* (Fossato *et al.* 2008, 2, original emphasis) as information consumers from limited resources; it also liberates the information producers—like the extra-parliamentarian nationalist-patriotic organizations—from the high costs of information dissemination in the “traditional” way, e.g. by printed publications, dissemination of flyers, etc.

In nowadays Russia, the Internet is not merely a watchdog that reports on political power, it has turned into a political player (Fossato 2008: 9). First of all, the Internet can provide a linkage between civil society and the state (March 2005: 136). In Russia, there are over 300,000 registered non-commercial organizations, the majority of which use the Internet (Fossato *et al.* 2008:1). At the same time, the number of political blogs is growing (March 2007). The Internet can help overcome the differences that impeded the formation of horizontal ties and grassroots movements out of government control (Graham 2007: 36). It also grants access to Russian citizens to the rest of the world and although there were not many foreign websites in Russian by 2007 (Graham 2007: 36; Fossato *et al.* 2008: 1) technology develops new tools that facilitate free online translation. Additionally, Russian was the fastest growing language used over the Internet by the end of the 2000s (Graham 2007: 36). Most likely to take advantage of the Internet's potential is the youth generation that grew up hand in hand with new technologies and has no memory of the Soviet past (Fossato *et al.* 2008: 7).

In a 2007 research on the Russian Cyberspace, Alexanyan and her colleagues identify various instances of bottom-up agenda-setting across several sectors and topics. A striking example is the extensive promotion of the alternative protest for the Khimki forest (before the pro-government Seliger youth camp protest) that forced traditional and Web newspapers to pick it up and even pro-Kremlin bloggers to react to it. The most successful civic organizations in Russia are issue-based campaigns, organized mostly online but accompanied by offline actions as well, i.e. corruption and abuse of power campaigns, car accidents caused by officials with special privileges, and the Bolotnaya protests (Alexanyan *et al.* 2012: 7-10).

Apart from being a civil society booster, the Internet can also open possibilities for new parties to emerge in terms of organizational integrity, efficiency, and visibility (March 2005: 136). For instance, through the use of Internet new parties can avoid the costs of headquarters and physical participation, given also the country's geographic scale (Zuev 2010, 263). These new parties might in their turn provide a competitive incentive to web strategy innovation (March 2005: 124). For instance, by the end of the 1990s, the electronic media contributed to the creation of parties based on image and media exposure and in absence of a strong civil society. Some parties created stronger sites (the CPRF, the Union of Right Forces, and *Yabloko*), others weak (the LDPR and the People's Party of the Russian Federation), while United Russia's predecessor, Unity Party, stood somewhere in the middle. Although the parties with the better sites received the lower scores in 1999 election, the importance of domination in the virtual realm became clear. Indicatively, the 'unofficial' Putin home page was made in 2002 that offers its viewers not only the president's speeches, activities, and pictures, but also his current location in the globe. The site soon became the most popular of all political parties' websites (March 2005: 124-134).

The possibilities to link with the electorate that the Internet offers to politicians became more evident by the end of the 2000s with the "Navalny phenomenon". Aleksei Navalnyi became a worldwide dissident figure by publishing confidential documents on high-rank corruption in his LiveJournal blog, attacking Vladimir Putin's regime, and by provoking, thus, the regime's reprisal. He, then, started using his blog for the promotion of his political campaigns. This is maybe the most straightforward example of the Internet's function in Russia as "a liberator, a tool whose possession, or ability to access, allows individuals, opposition parties and NGOs to escape the control the state can exercise over TV and radio channels, and the press" (Fossato *et al.* 2008: 1).

Nevertheless, findings from Russia in 2007 suggest that political groupings and civil society groups that are not linked to the government tend to have less developed Internet activity. The reasons for the inability of these groups to develop a "strong, attractive and accessible presence" vary: from inexperience on how to present themselves, to internal divisions that leads them to fractionalization, to co-option with the power structure (Fossato *et al.* 2008: 8).

On the other side, the 2011-2013 anti-fraud protests were the most impressive political mobilization that Russia has seen since the fall of the Soviet Union. They soon spread from the capital to the rest of the country. Without the use of modern technologies the organization and scope of the protests

would have been impossible. Thomas Graham (2007: 36) was foreseeing the Bolotnaya protests already in 2007: “at some point in the next decade the Russian government could face a severe crisis, and social forces organized by these new technologies could compel a significant change in how the country is governed”. Although they did not overthrow the government, social forces did indeed bring a significant change in the Russian political realm: Between 50.000 to 70.000 protesters rallied in Moscow and tens of thousands in other cities convoked through the social media and without TV coverage. The government not only could not control, but could neither hide, public discontent. The role of Internet as a deliberative social and political tool was made clear to the government that later on, as shown above, tried to find ways to restrict Internet activity as it can.

7.1.3.3. Freedom of Speech in RussNet

The Internet in Russia – as in all undemocratic regimes – gains special importance, because of the regime's control over mainstream media and the difficulties that Internet restrictions are connected to. Some years ago, senior Carnegie expert Masha Lipman was characterizing it “so far the most open and potentially democratic communication platform in Russia (Fossato *et al.* 2008, 56). In contrast to the majority of the print and broadcast media, the Internet often becomes the only source of information for the public for things that the Kremlin would prefer to keep secret, like dissident protests or negative comments on its leadership.¹⁷⁶

Vladimir Putin's first presidential term was promising in terms of online freedom of expression, when he stated that there will be no censorship. Then when Dmitry Medvedev stepped into the presidency, he seems to have followed the same policy of freedom of speech, which as he stated, should be at the center of Russian politics. Indeed, Medvedev, a self-characterized “avid Internet user ...fully satisfied by the degree of diversity of opinions on offer on the Russian segment of the Internet”, blocked attempts to control the internet at the *Duma*. (Fossato *et al.* 2008, 15- 54).

Nevertheless, the Federal Security Service was granted with a government decree unrestricted monitoring of all communications at any time without the knowledge of the provider (as supplement to the 1998 SORM-2 program for monitoring the internet) that will most likely lead to preventive censorship. Indeed a few bloggers were sentenced for posting anti-systemic comments,

¹⁷⁶ For example, during my fieldwork I noticed that the news about Vladimir Putin's reward cancellation from the German Quadriga role model prize (BBC 2011) were not broadcasted in the TV, because its organizers received heavy critique for their choice to select Vladimir Putin.

but scholars agree that such cases are rather exceptional and depend on the revenge mood of regional security officials when they are targeted online (Fossato *et al.* 2008: 15-17).

The redactors of a broad RussNet research recognized in 2008 the Internet as the least controllable of media, but still saw it under the informal control of “a political culture which has as yet not produced a stable basis for competing parties, and a central political authority with strong popular support which is capable of blocking oppositionist messages and is careful to do so” (Fossato *et al.* 2008: 9). They conclude that new communication developments will not manage to change or to break down well-established patterns of power and that the state remains the main mobilizing agent in Russia (Fossato *et al.* 2008, pp. 53).

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned research mentions also more pessimistic views on online freedom, like the one of Boris Dubin from Levada-Center, who sees the Internet as a mere device to test one’s circle that can be used to reproduce well-tested mechanisms of propaganda and manipulation, especially since all civil society institutions are emasculated and manipulated. For the creation of ideas that can mobilize people offline, he sees the creation of a corresponding vertical network (to Internet’s horizontal organization) necessary (Fossato *et al.* 2008, 52).

After a recent authoritarian turn of Vladimir Putin’s ongoing presidential term with regards to Internet activities, reasons to be pessimistic about online freedom are even more. It seems now that the government has targeted Internet dissent and starts introducing a series of restrictions. Maybe the decision to follow a hard line on Internet communication was accelerated with the recent Ukraine crisis. For example, there are clear instances of the authorities blocking independent online news site Lenta.ru after it published an interview with the leader of a Ukrainian nationalist organization (Barry 2014). Analysts, on the other hand, suggest that Vladimir Putin is “riding a wave of popular support” after the Winter Olympics and Crimea’s annexation (MacFarquhar 2014).

It is worth mentioning indicatively, that on February 2014, the government passed a law that grants it the power to block sites and after that it immediately proceeded to the shutdown of its most famous critics, like Aleksei Navalnyi and Garri Kasparov. Furthermore, another recent law imposed heavy fines for using four common vulgarities in the arts (crude terms for male and female genitalia, sex and prostitute) (MacFarquhar 2014; Barry 2014). Russia’s magic kid of internet innovation, Pavel Durov, creator of VKontakte (the Russian equivalent to Facebook), announced on

22 April 2014 that he had left Russia after he was forced to sell his ownership shares in VKontakte. His shares were bought by pro-Kremlin oligarchs Alisher Usmanov and Igor Sechin (Sindelar 2014).

On 24 April 2014, President Putin characterized the Internet as “a special C.I.A. Project”. Shortly after, he passed a bill broadly known as the “bloggers law” that requires any site with more than 3.000 daily visitors to register with the government. Civil society actors perceived this bill as a governmental attempt to break the Internet's anonymity and to track the source of every comment. Russia, thus, joins authoritarian governments like China, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan that received harsh critique for their restrictive policies in the virtual realm (MacFarquhar 2014; Sindelar 2014). Finally, in the summer of 2014, the *Duma* passed a new bill requiring Internet companies to store Russians' personal data inside the country. By doing so, analysts write, the government seeks to increase pressure on social networking services outside Russia, like Gmail, Facebook, and Twitter, that have become a “vital resource for anti-government groups” (Antonova 2014).

7.2. The role of leadership in the emergence and development of nationalist-patriotic movements in Russia

The new nationalist-patriotic organizations that were formed in the 2000s, judging by their main representatives DPNI and ROD, differ so significantly from their predecessors of the 1990s, Aleksandr Barkhasov's RNE and Eduard Limonov's NBP, that mark the existence of two tendencies within the nationalist movement. Although the majority of the new generation's leaders started their political trajectory in *Pamyat'* and other organizations of the 1990s, they came up with totally different forms in terms of organization, protest, and discourse, which puzzles us about the factors that enabled it to occur. This new generation of nationalist organizations managed to get united in two main camps—far-right and national democrats—to organize hallmark nationalist events all over the country, and to evolve into political parties in the turn of the second decade of the 2000s.

This section will try to assess the role of the leadership factor in the rapidly changing environment of Russian politics. How do they respond to the opportunities the regime opens or closes to them? How necessary are they for movements' further development? Three main aspects of their agency will be taken into consideration; their message, the internal organization of their movements, and mobilization.

7.2.1. The message

Social movements draw on their environment for constructing their proper images of “friends” and “enemies”. The formation of both DPNI and ROD coincided with Vladimir Putin’s first presidential term that brought significant changes in the political spectrum. The above-analyzed characteristics of Vladimir Putin's regime form the broader cultural background, under which social movements function and which is beyond their sphere of immediate influence (Koopmans 1999, 101). These characteristics opened discursive opportunities, which the leaders of the national-patriots made good use of and constructed a message that gives them resonance, legitimacy, and public visibility.

Probably, under the influence of the new cultural cleavage that USSR's collapse brought about (see chapter 6), the nationalist-patriotic camp consents to the fact that one of the most important social problems for Russian society is that “Russians did not get their own nation state, like most of other USSR nations” (ROD leader3, personal communication).

“It is the Russian nation that established this very state. As a consequence, Russians are the only state-forming nation, but unfortunately in terms of legal regulations this concept is not reflected in the laws. So, Russians are deprived from their collective rights” (*Russkie* leader2, personal communication).

“Although 82 per cent of Russia's population are ethnic Russians, the government does not represent the interests of “the Russian people” but those of minorities, like Caucasians” (ROD leader3, personal communication).

“The dream of Russian nationalists is the creation of a Russian national state, a state where the Russians feel absolute masters. It must be clearly understood that he has the law on his side, that the government stands up for his interests, that no one can take away his private property, and not how it is now. It should be clearly defined even at the level of the constitution that Russia is a Russian state (*russskikh gosudarstvo*). And of course, democratic freedom: free elections, public institutions to avoid lawlessness in law enforcement” (ROD leader4, personal communication).

“When the Soviet Union fell, people needed to find themselves a new identity, during all the 1990s. When the Homo Sovieticus collapsed, Russians regained their national identity. A new type of nationalism arrived, based on ethnicity and blood [...] Russians started understanding that Caucasians occupy specific places of work with the disbandment of the Soviet system of registration that assigned specific nationalities in specific regions where they lived, e.g. Georgians in Georgia, and that was

diminishing, thus, tensions” (*Russkie* leader1, personal communication).

The influence from Europe is also very present to the discourse of the nationalist-patriotic opposition. Maybe this has to do with an effort to juxtapose European values of democracy and human rights to Putin's increasingly authoritarian regime, in order to equate themselves with civil society. Another reason may be the electoral victory of European far right parties and their entrance in their respective national parliaments, which justifies the Russian nationalists' existence and adds popularity to their claim for a Russian nation-state. Whatever the reason, their discourse turns around the concept “Europe” and, most importantly, they consider Russia a “European country”. This tendency is more obvious in the national-democratic front than in the extremist branch, and is closely linked to the idea of the “nation”.

For one of ROD's leading members, for instance, the biological basis of a nation is as important as the cultural and linguistic heritage, but basing nationality on blood is a mistake that can even lead to Nazi extremes of “racial purity”. For him, a nation is a “bio-political” or “bio-cultural unity”. Parting from Fernand Braudel's thinking, Western, Central and Eastern Europe are inhabited by people who are similar to each other, starting from color and finishing with cultural characteristics, e.g. material civilization, economy, and capitalism, Christianity. Following this line, according to ROD's leading members:

“At the stage that the nation (*natsiya*) grows into various nationalities (*narody*), then they usually tend to create a nation-state, in which each nationality (*narod*) could live free, where the people could carry out their will, without forcing it to others, but imposing it to themselves” (ROD leader1, personal communication, 3 November 2011).

“Russian (*Russkii*) is a nation. Like every nation, it has an ethnic base of course, those who reject it are those who do not know. Well, we can reject that the sun exists. The fact that Russian is an ethnicity is proven scientifically, roughly speaking. This is the foundation on which everything rests. Further characteristics are common language, common history, and the realization of common goals. This is what we should achieve: the recognition of the Russian common goals of ethnicity, language, and history to complete the formation of the nation” (ROD leader4, personal communication).

Accordingly, ROD's main claim is the establishment of a “normal nation-state”, that is a nation-

state after the European model. In such a nation-state, the question of the “Russian character” will become clear and similar to other nations that live in a nation-state and there will be no doubt on who is Russian as there is no doubt on who is Greek, for example. Since nobody would call Poland a non-European country, although it is a Slavic state, also Russia should be considered an Eastern European country “in the true sense of the word” (ROD leader1, personal communication, 3 November 2011).

“Russia is a European nation. Although we are hammered that Russians are not Europeans, since they are in Asian ground, it is not clear what the Russians are, we do not see any special difference from Europe. The history and the language is different, but the Russians are much easier to live with for example with Czechs, Germans, and French, than with Turks and Chinese who are completely different. I distinguish between the Asian and European paths of development, the European one is based on freedom and community life, like in Norway or Switzerland. Whereas the Asian model is based on the king Khan who decides everything for everyone and Russians are not like that” (ROD leader4, personal communication).

For the more radical wing of the nationalist-patriotic opposition that is represented in my research by *Russkie*, the definition of “Russians” tends to be based on ethnic characteristics, i.e. “common language, ancestry, culture, racial identity, anthropological characteristics” (*Russkie* leader2, personal communication). Another leader, on the other side, mentions two factors for being Russian: to see yourself as a Russian and the other people around you to see you as a Russian (*Russkie* leader2, personal communication). Belov's definition is broadly accepted, according to ROD member, who explained to me that differences in the definition of “Russians” started in the 1990s, when the movement got set up, but it is not something that can divide the nationalist scene. This rod member distinguishes between two levels of identity: the core identity that is ethnic and accordingly a person has to have a Russian parent and to consider himself a Russian and the civic identity, as for example a Tatar who knows the Russian culture, who grew up among Russians is eligible to be described as a Russian by other Russians (ROD member, personal communication).

In a similar fashion, a leader from League of Moscow's Self-Defense LOM, member organization of Russian Platform (that collaborates with ROD in the Stop Feeding the Caucasus campaign among other things), underlines the ethnocultural characteristics of the Russian nation and defines it as “the society, the people, who speak Russian, read Russian literature, and Russia is the land where they were born” (LOM leader, personal communication).

Moving from the nationalist-patriotic opposition to *Drugaya Rossiya* that does not belong to the nationalist-patriotic opposition, its definition of Russians (*Russkii*) is even more subjective and is not based neither on blood nor on faith, but on the fact that each man defines his identity and perceives Russia as his homeland. In the first NBP program (*Drugaya Rossiya*'s predecessor in the 1990s), Russian is the one who considers Russian language and culture and his own, Russia his home, and for which he is willing to shed his own and others' blood (The Other Russia leader², personal communication).

Furthermore, both case studies under research of the 2000s (DPNI and ROD) have distanced themselves from the dominant ideologic discourse of our case studies from the 1990s (Russian National Unity and National-Bolshevik Party) and from other nationalist organizations created at that time, like Sergei Baburin's *Nardoniya Soyuz*, that were dominated by anti-Semite, anti-American, and pro-Orthodox messages (Tipaldou 2011). Drawn by the sharpened citizenship cleavage that was created from the accelerated migrant influx and the state's incapability to control it (see chapter 6), the organizations of the 2000s seem to have made a discursive shift from the “external enemy” to the “internal” one: the illegal immigrant that does not share the same cultural characteristics of Russian society.

As leader¹ of League of Moscow's Self-Defense (LOM), puts it, nowadays the nationalist-patriotic movements is addressing the issues of:

1. Immigration from Muslim countries, e.g. Central Asia and the Caucasus.
2. Criminality
3. Discrimination against Russians, e.g. economic discrimination, inequality of rights for Russians.
4. Protecting and preserving the identity of Russians.

Additionally, the “Chechen syndrome” and media-sponsored Caucasophobia makes ROD's campaign “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” gain resonance and legitimacy that stems from the “Caucasians” hypothetical bad behavior. Vladimir Putin immediately criticized it and condemned it publicly, but his disapproval might also have granted the campaign more public visibility. The following table draws on data from public surveys and is indicative of the resonance of the nationalists' claim. Contrary to other studies that take the “Russia for the Russians” slogan as a

proxy for nationalist sentiments, I consider that support for this slogan after 2002, when DPNI was formed, and especially in the second half on the 2000s, represents a direct support for DPNI's claim since DPNI was the organization that contributed most of all for its spread into society (Laruelle 2009, 74). Support for the “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” campaign is accordingly a ROD triumph.

Table 11: Scope of nationalist-patriotic opposition's resonance

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 (Nov)	2010	2011	2012 (Nov)
What do you think about the idea “Russia for the Russians”? (N=1600)													
I support it, it is time to implement it (1)	15	16	16	21	16	16	15	14	15	18	19	19	15
It wouldn't be bad to happen, but within reasonable limits (2)	34	42	38	32	37	37	35	41	42	36	35	40	41
I am negative, this is real fascism	27	20	26	18	25	23	26	27	25	32	21	23	23
I am not interested in it	12	11	9	7	12	12	12	11	12	9	16	11	14
It is difficult to answer	6	5	3	8	4	5	4	7	7	5	9	7	6
Total of respondents who are supportive of the idea “Russia for the Russians” (1)+(2)	49	58	54	53	53	53	50	55	57	54	54	59	56
Do you support the slogan “Stop Feeding the Caucasus”?													
I totally support it (3)												28	26
I mostly support it (4)												34	39
I mostly not support it												18	17
I do not support it												6	6
It is difficult to answer												15	11
Total of respondents who support the solution “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” (3)+(4)												62	65

Source: Levada-Center 2012: 179, author's processing.

The table shows that more than half of the respondents are supportive of the idea “Russia for the Russians” (“Total of respondents who are supportive of the idea”), while since the year 2000 this support is constantly rising (with a small retrocession in 2006). Support for “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” slogan (“Total of respondents who support the solution “Stop Feeding the Caucasus”) is even higher than for “Russia for the Russians”, with 62 and 65 per cent of respondents agreeing

with it in 2011 and 2012 respectively. When the “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” campaign was launched in 2011, 28 percent of the respondents “definitely supported” the slogan “Stop Feeding the Caucasus”, 34 percent rather agreed, 18 percent rather disagreed, while only 6 percent “definitely did not support” it. In public opinion terms, it seems to be more widespread than the “Russia for the Russians” one, but still the difference is not very sharp.

In sum, governmental policies on the immigration issue since the first half of the 2000s, especially after the Kondopoga events, seem to have offered fertile ground to the nationalists to disseminate their xenophobic message. Apart from the migrantophobic and Caucasophobic campaigns, after the Chechen war and the latest tensions with Georgia, the new pejorative characterization “black” (*chornyi*) was introduced in Russian for the darker skinned people of the Caucasus and was used by various organizations, from *Nashi* (Fossato *et al.* 2008, 21) to nationalist-patriotic organizations. The reframing of the Soviet past, on the other side, despite the fact that in terms of economic policy it was only adopted by a few nationalist groups, e.g. Limonov's NBP in the 1990s, is relevant to the level of authoritarianism that some of the nationalist-patriotic movements endorse, e.g. the *Russkie*, monarchists, national socialists. In a similar vein, the projection of the traditional Russian values, like Orthodox Christianity, by the regime legitimizes the claims to tradition of the majority of the nationalist-patriotic organizations, with the exception of some marginal Neo-pagan groups.

7.2.2. Internal structure

At first sight, Putin's regime closes the opportunities for small dissident organizations of all ideologies and makes their survival difficult. Nationalist leaders recognize the continuities and differences of Putin's regime with the Yeltsin era. ROD leader¹ says that there were no democratic institutions nor mechanisms to implement democracy under Yeltsin. There was free party registration that enabled political parties to run massively for elections, but there were no free elections in reality, because new political parties had no possibility to organize mass campaigns since the new power-holders got control over the media and promoted the parties they supported. Many TV channels even turned against election and were passing the message that what Russia needed was a dictatorship of democrats. The press was free, but was mainly used for commercial reasons, not for ideological. Then, Yeltsin turned authoritarian with the 1993 Putsch and his “super-presidential” constitution. Only organizations that posed no threat to the government were allowed to register, like small ones based on volunteer work. Russia has never had a free election with two

equal candidates running for head of the state.

Under Putin, nobody even pretends that there are other candidates, everyone knows that his successor will be the person that he will appoint. He has created an authoritarian control from the center. Under Putin new political parties are impossible to get registered because of the tough conditions he established. Furthermore, the government grants permission for rallies only with grand difficulty. Nationalists are persecuted and a lot of them sit in prison, while after *Rodina's* artificial dismantlement, they are not represented any longer in the *Duma*. Many “comrades”, as the same Krylov, left *Rodina* after that. The parties that sit in the *Duma*, thus, are only those that serve the power (ROD leader1, personal communication, 3 November 2011). Similarly, ROD leader2 wanted to underline that Russia is not a democracy under Putin (personal communication).

For ROD leader4 Putin's era is “a social chaos by and large”. Political repression and pressure are increasing, although in his city of origin St. Petersburg he says that repression is not felt that much as in smaller cities. Russia for him is a non-democratic society where people cannot choose even the smallest representative, neither those that will deal with migration and crime (including ethnic crime) or housing and communal services. He also believes that in Soviet times things were not so bad as far as the “Russian question” (*russskogo voprosa*) is concerned, as it is now. Nowadays the “Russian question” is banned because the state cannot resolve it, neither does it propose solutions as the nationalists do. He thinks, nevertheless, that all free nations underwent a similar path of fear and repression in the process of their formation, that is why he says “we are moving in the right direction in general and all will end well”. Therefore, he also finds the struggle of ROD and of other nationalist organizations for the abolition of article 282, the release of political prisoners, and the struggle for their rights in general as the most important path to follow. When asked about Yeltsin's years, he replied that hardly someone in Russia says something good about Yeltsin. He had a chance to build a democratic society in which a Russian national state might have appeared, but the chance got lost in 1993.

Russkie leader2 emphasizes the governmental efforts to suppress the nationalist movement and to forbid the organizations by initiating criminal cases against nationalist activists (personal communication). In the 1990s, although he was not into politics, he knows that there were more liberties than today, but still there was no democracy and no “real” political life. The political scene was occupied by representatives of the “oligarchic clans” that could also skirt the law. Today, on

the other hand, he observes a certain liberalization, e.g. the police is acting in a more polite way, but on the other hand, persecution against nationalists intensified.

Moving from the nationalist-patriotic opposition to The Other Russia, Moscow-based leader1 thinks that Putin follows Yeltsin's line of thought: that one of an authoritarian leader (personal communication). ROD leader4, based in St. Petersburg, affirms that the Kremlin is very wary of any events beyond its control and of street politics. But particularly after the velvet revolution in Ukraine, and in the meanwhile the Arab springs, the Kremlin became particularly strained and started to act proactively: “they want clearly to keep us on the hook now, at election time and if necessary, they will strike immediately to scare us all”. Accordingly, *Rodina* and DPNI got dissolved when they started getting popularity and the government felt in danger, that is when the government decided to block the slightest possibility from nationalists to get an office.

The above-cited evidence from the leaders of anti-systemic opposition—be it from the nationalist-patriotic front or from the liberal front as represented by *Drugaya Rossiya*—reaffirms the pressure that the government's political opponents receive. Still, the regime's repression seems to have opened a political opportunity for nationalist actors, however paradoxical it might seem. The nationalist-patriotic organizations, managed to turn it to their own benefit, first, by getting identified with the civil society and by presenting themselves as victims of state repression, and, second, by re-organizing their internal structure using the “network strategy”.

ROD leader4 reflects on his DPNI times, before he joined ROD:

“The DPNI was by and large a classic civil society organization. We have been holding conferences, legal street activities, we have been working with citizens, for example we had a special phone line for citizens to complain when the authorities could not solve their problems. The DPNI was then making appeals to the authorities, e.g. the Federal Migration Center, the police, the prosecutor, etc. We were working with officials and with the media. It was a classic NGO (*obshchestvennaya organizatsiya*) like in civilized countries.”

Russkie leader2 also considers his organization, the Nationalist Socialist Initiative (NSI), and *Russkie* that he is heading in St. Petersburg as civil society organizations, as well the first organization that he was a member before making his own movement, Barkashov's RNE.

As far as the “network strategy” is concerned, the nationalist-patriotic movement was forced to adopt it given the constant pressure from the state. Had they been all together in an organization, it would have been instantly dispersed by the government. This way, nationalist-patriotic organizations remain independent and have their own structure, but at the same time they collaborate with each other. As ROD leader1 puts it:

“Why are there a lot of small movements? For a simple reason: once the movement becomes large, it gets destroyed or prohibited. So, we have to act as a network structure. At some point this was decided: no more attempts to create a super-movement, but rather to create lots of small ones. If you ban one, you can create another. Network principle”.

This flexible network form proved to be very efficient for the nationalist-patriotic movements. Indeed, although some of them got banned, they started to function again under different names or different coalitions. The Internet played a decisive role in the organizations' development into a network.

The nationalist-patriotic movements also adopted to a larger or lesser extent the principle of multiple leadership. This enables the organizations to keep on functioning, even if their leader gets arrested, relying either on the other leaders or on the support of its closest allies. This was initially the case with DPNI that tried to create a leaderless movement with a number of cells, but not all of them worked. Now, DPNI has leaders. In the point of view of The Other Russia leader2, a leaderless movement is impossible to be sustained and he does not consider that there is any successful network movement in Russia (personal communication). ROD leader1 also affirmed that *Russkie* leader1 has been always trying to create a large Russian organization and he ended up facing all sorts of accusations. Accordingly, there can be no single leader, because he is going to be sent immediately to prison” (personal communication, 3 November 2011).

For his proper organization, ROD leader1 states they have chosen to follow the network structure:

“Once it became bigger,¹⁷⁷ we quickly transformed into an association with individual units, which operate almost independently. I am not even their coordinator, we only assist them, but we do not control them. Because, first it is inconvenient (...) [Second, because] if we are banned, the rest will survive. If anything happens to me, someone else will take control. If everything had been concentrated in one center, one could crash the whole organization by crashing the center” (personal

¹⁷⁷ That happened approximately in spring 2011, according to SOVA center's experts (Yudina & Alperovich 2012).

communication, 3 November 2011).

Despite their ideological differences, the leaders of the nationalist-patriotic opposition are aware that they belong to the same branch and consciously maintain the network structure of the nationalist movement.

“All Russian nationalist organizations have their focus. There was a time when every organization was trying to deal with all the issues, but it was long ago and did not lead to success. Now there is specialization” (ROD leader1, personal communication, 3 November 2011).

The organizations are not very well separated, it is “just a different format of work” (ROD leader4, personal communication). They all collaborate with each other. ROD is more focused on human rights protection, DPNI on migrants, RONS that are more conservative focus on anti-abortion, morality, etc., whereas *Russkie* is focused on the political and street activity. Some slogans vary a little, but overall the Russian movement is quite consolidated (ROD leader1, personal communication, 3 November 2011; ROD leader4, personal communication).

Nevertheless, the data I collected from non-affiliates of the nationalist circle stress the nationalists’ internal leadership problems that create constant splits within the movement:

“The big problem with nationalists is that they have bad relations to other nationalists. For example they ask if one is a Jew. They fight with each other, hold hate speeches, they hate each other more than they hate the Jews or the Caucasians, and they are all striving for the same public. Another weakness is that they have no head to represent them. Each one of them wants to be a *Führer* and they cannot organize themselves because of this” (The Other Russia leader1, personal communication).

In a similar vein, The Other Russia leader2 affirms that the nationalist scene is very divided, it is made up by many small movements that do not have one leader for two reasons. First, because of the Kremlin's very strong pressure, which does not allow a leader to grow and form a unified nationalist movement through different manipulation techniques. The second reason is that the nationalists did not get lucky with their leaders. They have a lot of them and all of them imagine themselves as a *Führer* and can not agree on a single leader (personal communication). This is also the impression of Russian nationalism expert Vladimir Pribylovksy. He describes *Russkie* as an amorphous organization with horizontal structure, whose leaders do not get along very well with

each other (personal communication).

The nationalists as well make occasionally references to their internal schisms. For example, although *Russkie* leader1 was confirming that nationalists can work together, he then explained me that the real reason that one of the high-rank members left DPNI to join ROD was that he wanted more independence. But they still work together, he continued, organizing the Russian March. *Russkie* leader1 also told me he had met with Aleksei Naval'nyi the day before our meeting (Naval'nyi had just been released from one of his detentions shortly before) and repeated to me, as ROD leader1 had done before, that Naval'nyi is a supporter of the nationalist movement, a national-democrat. Indeed, Naval'nyi has been participating and addressing the public in Russian Marches since years and he also joined the nationalists when they spoke in public during the Russian 2011 anti-fraud protests. Nevertheless, Naval'nyi made his own party in 2013, named People's Alliance.

Neither is there consensus on one of the most famous “true” nationalists of the beginning of the 2000s, *Rodina's* leader Dmitrii Rogozin—the only “true nationalist party” in the parliament according to ROD leader1—who later became Russia's ambassador to NATO and since 2011 has been serving as Deputy Prime Minister of Russia. For ROD leader1, Rogozin is “the greatest nationalist in the *Duma*”, but he would refrain from calling him a “national figure in the movement”, because although he led the nationalists to the parliament, he confided in Putin and compromised with him. Historian Vladimir Gel'man affirms that Dmitrii Rogozin, efficient in bargaining, has promoted his own career within the system in exchange for his party (Vladimir Gel'man, personal communication). The words of ROD leader4 wrap up how the nationalist-patriotic opposition sees Rogozin:

“Rogozin is the man who earned a reputation as the most famous Russian nationalist. But over the last few years, support for him fell, and recently he said he supported Putin – whom nationalists absolutely do not support – and this was the most serious political mistake he did. Therefore, I see his political future difficult. I am sure it is good for the Russian nationalist movement, but I am not prepared to accept him as a leader after such statements”.

7.2.3. Dissemination of information, recruitment, mobilization

New generation nationalist leaders also managed to take advantage of the opportunity new communication technologies have opened to them since the beginning of the 2000s. Nationalists use

the Internet, in order to disseminate their propaganda and to mobilize their followers for protests and demonstrations (Fossato *et al.* 2008, 23). In the 1990s, the nationalist-patriotic opposition had to use the press to spread its propaganda, which was also a popular form of mobilization, e.g. the first activist action of *Russkie* leader1 for *Pamyat'* at the beginning of the 1990s was pamphlet sharing in the metro. The new nationalist-patriotic organizations of the 2000s, in turn, rely increasingly on the Internet for publications, internal communication, and interaction with the public, while the blogs have turned a popular means of political expression.

Scholars grant DPNI a central role in Russian nationalist Internet activity, as one of their main online discussion platforms; nevertheless the extent of their Internet activity is nowhere large (Zuev 2010, Fossato *et al.* 2008, pp. 22- 24). *Russkie* leader1 confirms that DPNI took advantage of the Internet and its success was based on it. He also claims that DPNI's website was visited by ten times more people than United Russia's website (personal communication). The most active bloggers from the nationalist scene, according to scholars, are Vladimir Tor, Andrei Savelyev, Evgen Valyaev, Konstantin Krylov (Zuev 2010, 263; Fossato *et al.* 2008, pp. 25).

According to expert on Russian nationalism Viktor Shnirelman, the alternative online journal *Agentstvo Politicheskikh Novostei* (Political News Agency – APN) is the major information center for Russian nationalists (personal communication), information that was reaffirmed to me by many of the interviewed nationalist-patriotic activists. Fossato *et al.* (2008, 25) distinguish blogger Vladimir Tor as an exceptional figure both for nationalists and for the Russian activists as a whole because, due to his almost daily plethoric posts, he became more popular on the net than well-known political figures.

ROD leader2 agrees with the fact that:

“Everything changed with the Internet. Before, nationalism was grounded in printed texts, while nowadays it is all in Internet (...) There are questions in discussion forums and you have to choose what you consider to be good, which side you are” (personal communication).

Russkie leader2 described me how he saw the FSB confiscating his book based on articles of his at the publishing house, the day he went to pick up the samples, in order to decide whether it breaks the extremism law and should therefore be banned (personal communication). Notwithstanding this

incident, he told me that I could still find his articles, and even the book, online. The Other Russia leader¹ also told me that the internet is the only place, where the “illegal opposition” like his party can express themselves, since they are offered no air time on TVs and radios and public protest is being banned.

We see, thus, that despite the regime's efforts to restrict all kinds of critic towards it information exchange, that may turn into undesired for the Kremlin mobilization, the nationalist activists managed not only to have their voice listened to but also some of them to achieve broad popularity. They even managed to turn the regime's prohibition in their favor, because they use the fact that they get banned like Russia's other dissident voices in order to unite their activism to the broader anti-Putin opposition.

On the other side, the Internet can also be used by the authorities or other rival organizations to disseminate negative propaganda about the nationalists. This seems to be Aleksandr Belov's case, for whom articles were circulating in the web that he was a Jew (The Other Russia leader², personal communication).

Besides gains in the cultural field, the nationalists have been using the Internet successfully to recruit new members. ROD leader⁴, for example, says he read on the Internet that the Russian March in Moscow reached the number of 10.000 participants – a large number for Russian standards when one takes into consideration that street activity in the 1990s was considerably low. He thought it was interesting, followed its organizers, and then he heard about DPNI and decided to become a member (ROD leader⁴, personal communication).

Finally, the Internet became a very potent tool in the hands of the nationalists for their mobilization. The best example are the events on Manezh Square of 11 December 2010, when following the assassination of *Spartak* football fan Egor Sviridov by a young Caucasian, about 5,000 people gathered next to the Kremlin chanting xenophobic slogans and beating up “non-Slavic” looking passersby. What started as a demonstration of the crowd's rage against immigrant crime and state corruption, ended up as an open demonstration of racist, anti-immigrant sentiments and of political disobedience; the biggest violent nationalist protest up to nowadays. The “spontaneity” of the event, this massive rapid turmoil, could not have occurred without the use of modern communication technologies.

“Thank God there is the Internet, there are mobiles, so if you want, you can – as they say – organize. Understand it, before people needed a stable place to call. Now, almost everyone has a cell phone, everyone has personal access to the Internet, that is, everyone can express himself, his civic activity, call his friends, and meet. So, really, there were no Manezh Square's organizers and therefore guilty of organizing it, and there cannot be, because really it is a spontaneous phenomenon caused by the...well, just the reaction to another inequality, right?” (ROD leader4, personal communication).

7.3. Conclusion

After having presented the new national cleavage structures that define the political space available for social movements in Chapter 6, this chapter aimed to assess specific opportunities of the structural context that shaped the organizational model, form, and evolution of the nationalist-patriotic organizations under study. Opportunities form part of the broader structural environment and are relatively static (though less static than cleavages). Additionally, opportunities influence equally all political movements and not only nationalist-patriotic ones. Human agency perceives opportunities as such and seizes them. Therefore, the second part of the chapter offers an agent-based approach for organizational change and shows the importance of the factor leadership for the organizations' strategic choices (message formation, internal structure, mobilization). This way, the chapter gives prominence to the relationship between structure, culture, and agency.

In particular, this last chapter recognizes three sets of political opportunities Vladimir Putin's regime opens (limitations to dissident action; repression; government-created patriotic youth movements) and three sets of discursive opportunities (national traditions; migrantophobia; traumatic public events). My research shows how government-initiated limitation and repression to all types of political opposition closes opportunities, while the creation of patriotic youth movements from the government opens opportunities for challengers to undertake political action or to transform their forms and strategies. It further shows how Vladimir Putin's “hegemonic project” that promotes the ideas of patriotism, morality, approximation to the Soviet past and distancing from the revolutionary turmoil of the 1990s, and neo-imperialism contributed to making the discourse of nationalist-patriotic organizations gain more visibility, resonance, and legitimacy. The discursive opportunity was further opened by the government's presentation of illegal migration as national security issue and the subsequent targeting of foreigners that was reproduced by the media, as well as by the terrorist attacks that resulted to a collective social

trauma.

Additionally, this chapter explains how technology can contribute to the emergence and organizational change of dissident movements. Internet use becomes increasingly widespread in Russia and cannot be easily controlled by the government (although governmental efforts to reduce freedom of expression have been increasing in the last years). The Internet offers more possibilities to new organizations to gain organizational integrity, efficiency, and visibility, and to link with the electorate.

This chapter then focused on leaders' agency and its outcomes on their organizations' form, frame-making, and evolution. It aimed to show how their organizations adopted and adapted to the new conditions of Vladimir Putin's regime. In terms of their message, it is centered around the until nowadays not recognized status of the Russian nation (inducing its positive discrimination) and is based on European-style nation-states and human rights norms. It also became clear that the organizations under study differ between them in the idea of the "nation". The organizations of the 2000s' have distanced themselves from the discourse of their predecessors from the 1990s (centered around anti-Semite, anti-American, and pro-Orthodox messages) and have made a discursive shift from the "external" to the "internal" enemy (Illegal Immigrants, Caucasians). One of the findings is that The Other Russia follows a definition of "Russians" that is not based neither on blood nor on faith, a fact that leads us to distinguish it from the nationalist-patriotic opposition.

In terms of structure, all leaders of the nationalist-patriotic movement under research recognize the democratic backlash under Vladimir Putin. Their adaptation strategy towards this turn was their self-identification as part of Russia's democracy-striving civil society and the re-organization of their internal structure following the "network strategy", the principle of multiple leadership, and labor-division within the nationalist-patriotic movement. This blurs the division lines between nationalist-patriotic organizations and makes each one to appear as specialized in different aspects of nationalist-patriotic ideology, and helps them avoid—up to a certain extent—internal struggles within the organizations of the broader movement. The interviews also make clear that the nationalist-patriotic network is not restrained at the extra-parliamentarian organizations, but that they recognize allies within the Duma as well. The almost simultaneous evolution of the movements under research into political parties can be attributed to the

simplification of party registration rules under President Medvedev in 2012 and to their leadership's readiness to undertake such a step, despite the personal danger that it might have implied. Nevertheless, since my interviews took place before that, I cannot offer a more elaborated explanation, since I do not dispose any original data stemming from the leaders.

Finally, this chapter showed how nationalist activists take advantage of the Internet and the liberty of expression it offers when compared to other media, in order to disseminate their message, to gain popularity, and to organize public actions. Judging from the high popularity of DPNI's and ROD's main frames ("Russia for the Russians", "Stop Feeding the Caucasus"), we can conclude that they were not mistaken in adopting their strategies, even if this decision involved a high personal cost (they are under constant state persecution).

8. Conclusions

In my study, I have drawn patterns of movement variation and behavior of the Russian nationalist-patriotic movement from the detailed study of four representative movement organizations. In chapters 4 and 5, I offered a detailed description of the history, ideology, leadership, internal organization, and mobilization of two nationalist-patriotic organizations of the 1990s (RNE and NBP) and of the 2000s (DNI and ROD) respectively and show within-movement diachronic variation in terms of organizational forms, protest actions, discourse, and evolution. Based on my study, I also drew a map of the main nationalist-patriotic organizations that draws links according to the available data to their allies and demonstrates the network structure of the Russian nationalist patriotic movement (Appendix 4).

I have presented an explanation for the factors that enable within-movement variation in what is widely described as Russia's radical right movement. Russia as a semi-authoritarian regime represses all forms of political dissent, including the nationalist opposition; nevertheless, “new” nationalist-patriotic movement organizations emerged in the 2000s, formulating a novel political ideology. These organizations managed to attract the public and even to mobilize the public at a nation-wide level, and, finally, to transform into parties ready to run for public office. At the same time, radical right organizations of the 1990s either ceased to exist or transformed radically into new forms of liberal opposition. Why did these new nationalist-patriotic organizations emerge in the 2000s? To what extent and above all why did these new organizations shift their preferences in terms of discourse, organization, and mobilization? Especially when taking into consideration that most of the leaders of these new organizations started their political careers in the organizations of the 1990s; why did they not continue the path of their predecessors?

The most prominent explanations on the rise of populist radical right parties focus on factors external to the parties. One set of these explanations, rooted in the historical nationalism school, researches the extent to which broader socio-economic developments, i.e. structural cleavages caused by the modernization process, economic crisis, immigration, unemployment, value change, prepare the ground for radical right organizations to surge or succeed in the polls. These so-called demand-side theories can explain similar developments in different settings, as well as which people vote for radical right parties and why, and are useful, thus, for understanding important societal changes and the results they may cause. Therefore, the parting point for my framework are

modernization theory that points out how transition creates new cleavages or reactivates old ones and the ethnic-backlash-thesis which sees the populist radical right parties as a response to mass migration. Nevertheless, broad economic, historical, and social processes fail to explain spatial and temporal variation under similar conditions, and, above all, they fail to explain why so huge masses of voters affected by these broad processes, give only limited support to (populist) radical right parties.

A second set of externalist explanations stems from the sociology field and has to do with the factors that constitute the political opportunity structure, i.e. the institutional, political, and cultural context and the media. The concept of political opportunity is increasingly used as a significant environmental element that translates the potential for collective action into actual mobilization. These “supply-side theories” recognize that the national context poses a series of constraints and opportunities that shape social movements. Political opportunity structures can facilitate electoral breakthrough and success of radical right parties. However, political opportunities have been criticized for being a vague and all-encompassing fudge factor that can explain every condition for collective action. Most studies adopt a case-dependent concept of opportunities, something that led to a rising volume of variables of political opportunities in the literature and consequently to a demise in the specificity of the concept. In my study, I developed my own operationalization of opportunities, however my research is not directed towards testing the political opportunity theory, but towards explaining the Russian case. So, in order to overcome the challenges of the opportunities concept, I made explicit the dependent variable (movement emergence and development) and the dimensions of opportunity through which I explained it.

Opportunities benefit all political organizations, not only radical right ones. They are necessary, but not sufficient variables to determine party emergence or further development. Internal-supply theories examine the role of factors that originate from the party itself. Such factors refer to the organization's ideology, image, organization, and leadership. Each of these factors has been granted different significance at the different stages of a party's course, like electoral breakthrough, electoral persistence, dissolution. A parallel wave of studies stemming from the new social movements' research grants special importance to these internal factors and enriches them with further endogenous to the organization aspects, i.e. gender, agency, emotions, cultural features, music, subcultures, and with new methods that come from a closer follow up of the organizations under study. “Internalist” studies have the advantage that they can offer comparative analysis of single

groups across national contexts and over time (its periodic emergence).

In my study I aim to forge a bridge between the political science and sociology literature on this topic. Following the dominant structural theories on radical right parties' rise, I argue that Russia's contemporary radical right organizations construct “otherness” based on existing socioeconomic cleavages and on opportunities the regime opens to them. How the “other” or the “enemy”'s will be framed and whether the organization's message will succeed to attract and even mobilize the public is conditioned by the level of the regime's authoritarianism. During this process, the role of leadership is crucial, for capitalizing on the existing opportunities and for constructing an attractive to the public message that is able to draw further support. My objective was to show how the interplay of the three major factors culture, structure, and agency, can contribute to our understanding of radical right movements' emergence and further course.

In particular, my research showed that the Russian transition has opened new cleavages (or reactivated pre-existing ones) along the lines of nation-state/ nationless confederacy, civic/ blood citizenship, and parliamentary/ extra-parliamentary political organizations. National cleavage structures define the political space which is available for social movements to introduce new conflicts into a policy and are considered a particularly important dimension of political opportunities. Additionally, changes in state policies open or close political and discursive opportunities for nationalist-patriotic movement organizations to emerge and to develop further, as does the introduction of new communication technologies. It then depends on human agency whether openings in the structural domain will be translated into political action and, if so, the form it will take.

The evidence from interviews with leaders of nationalist-patriotic movements makes clear that their agency is fundamental for the movements' formation and survival. It is the leaders who model their organization's ideological core and message and who take the important decisions for its strategy. Furthermore, they are charged with their organizations' relations with the public, with allied organizations and entrepreneurs, as well as with hostile ones. The leaders have also turned hostile opportunities into beneficial for their cause through careful frame-selection.

But this has its pitfalls. Leaders become targeted and are therefore more vulnerable to state repression of all kinds, be it through receiving sanctions or negative propaganda. Especially in

Russia's semi-authoritarian environment, they need to protect themselves and their organizations from state repression, and they do so by adjusting their organizational characteristics accordingly. Which brings us to the issue of movement cooperation. Nationalist-patriotic opposition leaders cooperate with each other in a curious model of labor division. They have formed a network of complementary organizations, each one of which focuses on an issue, and all of them together constitute the bits and pieces of the nationalist-patriotic movement. This allows each organization to keep its distinguishing ideological features and internal organization, whereas at the same time they manage all together through their network to have an impressive regional (e.g. Kondopoga) or even nation-wide presence (e.g. the Russian March).

An important issue in this process is the construction of trust bonds between leaders of different organizations and between leaders and members. In such a hostile environment every mistake can result very costly. I have often noticed feelings of trust, acceptance, and admiration between my respondents. My interviews could not possibly have taken place, had it not been for the firm reliance of my respondents among each other that could put into motion the snowball effect. One has to keep always in mind that talking about opposition politics in Russia, let alone organizing and even participating in public actions, can turn out complicated, especially with a pending extremist legislation that allows for a broad interpretation and with the increasing barriers the regime poses to the expression of contention.

Stressing the role of leadership in movement emergence in my work does not mean to undermine the role of the organizations' members. After all, an organization without members has no real reason of existence and leaders usually stem from members ranks, as the majority of my respondents who had joined different nationalist organizations in the past. I am convinced that members are not just passive followers of the organization's leadership, unless if it is of a strict hierarchical model like Barkashov's RNE in the 1990s. Contemporary nationalist-patriotic organizations differ from the organizational patterns of their predecessors and opt for a horizontal model. Still, leaders do stand out in this horizontal, "leaderless" model, because they are the movement's public face. But how important the role of the members is for the construction of each movement organization's message, ideology, image, strategies, etc., needs to be further researched.

Furthermore, my operationalization of opportunities was designed taking into consideration the nationalist-patriotic movement. I showed how nationalist-patriotic organizations profited from the

structural openings and from the changes in their broader environment, but opportunities can potentially benefit all dissident organizations and not only radical right ones. Indeed, the Nationalist Bolshevik Party became part of the liberal opposition in the 2000s under its new name *Drugaya Rossiya*, after undertaking an internal transformation. The extent to which the opportunities under consideration benefited or impeded other movements, i.e. the liberal opposition, would be valuable to research in the future for understanding the role of civil society in contemporary Russia and for testing the role of opportunity structures in Russia's transitional environment.

Although my cases were carefully selected based on their representativeness of the whole nationalist-patriotic movement, I have to stress that the panorama of nationalist-patriotic organizations in Russia is broad enough to allow more factors than the ones taken into consideration in the present dissertation. For instance, there is a wide variety of Orthodox organizations that belong to the nationalist-patriotic front. They have a visible and continuous presence in the Russian Marches, displaying their huge banners of Jesus Christ and other religious symbols. Some of these organizations have contacts to the Orthodox Patriarchate, as I have researched in my Master thesis (Tipaldou 2006), usually with the lower rank clergy, but also with a few high-rank Church officials who belong to the Church's fundamentalist fraction. The most famous high-rank anti-Semite was Metropolitan Ioann, to whom Barkashov was also attached. Fundamentalist nationalist organizations may even receive direct support from the clergy, either through statements or through material help, especially in the form of publications and propaganda material. Therefore, an additional factor, the Church, may cause an influence on the course of fundamentalist nationalist organizations.

In Russia's opaque political environment the government is another factor that may contribute to the emergence and growth of radical right organizations. The Kremlin's effort to tame nationalist-patriotic forces through “managed nationalism” was followed by the 2007-2008 “preventive counter-revolution” that aimed to protect Russia's *status quo* from a possible spill-over of the colorful revolutions – both policies connected to Vladislav Surkov, one of the main architects of Russia's political system. As Aleksandr Belov confirms in a 2005 interview, DPNI was financed by the Kremlin for showing its knowhow in militias organizing to *Nashi*. By the following election radical right organizations, like Russian Image, appear to develop contacts with the Kremlin and to make public alliances with pro-Kremlin youth organizations, like *Rossiia Molodoya*, enjoying suspicious “privileged access” to the public sphere (Horvath 2014). Such privileges from the state

are received with suspicion from other activists and most usually the leaders of these organizations are seen as Kremlin-collaborators. To a certain extent I tried to include this aspect of Russian politics in my research through what I described as parliamentary/ extra-parliamentary political organizations' cleavage. But it is also possible that the government plays a more active role to the emergence and also the demise of some radical right organizations. Therefore further research like Horvath's (2014) on the course of specific movement organizations, would be of particular interest to disentangle the Kremlin's role not only to their dismantlement, but also to movement emergence and mobilization.

8.1. Conceptual contributions

This research makes four critical conceptual contributions in the study of Russia's radical right movement. The first contribution has to do with the adoption of the name “nationalist-patriotic opposition” for what has been until now described with concepts varying from the Russian radical right, radical right, or ultranationalist movement to fascism and neo-Nazism. This decision is not only for respect towards my respondents, but mostly for the sake of conceptual clarity that can bring us closer to the object of study. If we want to understand the functioning of a social actor, we should first define it properly to know precisely what we are talking about. The term “nationalist-patriotic opposition” presumes the novelty that is taking place in the Russian opposition spectrum. It shows that contemporary nationalist organizations are moving towards a new synthesis of national-democracy, leaving older ideologies of imperial aspirations or anti-Semitic ideology behind and moving closer to the *Nouvelle Droit* and to populist radical right parties of Western Europe. Influences from successful Western European populist radical right parties are also obvious, especially the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim frame, and many organizations compare themselves with established organizations like the French *Front National* and the Austrian *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* and even with newer ones like the Catalan *Plataforma per Catalunya*. It is the level of authoritarianism that each organization embraces that signifies its distance from the fringe of the political spectrum.

The second is the selection of a broader definition of the movement organizations under study that includes extra-parliamentary nationalist organizations and their allies within the Duma. The extra-parliamentary character of these organizations reflects the regime's repression towards non-allied grassroots movements and may change over time, if the Kremlin permits the newly-formed

nationalist parties to run for election and if they make it to the *Duma*. Still, such a scenario will not necessarily mean that these parties will remain independent from governmental manipulation; for the moment, the majority of the leaders I interviewed have either been persecuted in the past, have been detained during my fieldwork, or have been sentenced shortly after. Moreover, after the dissolution of *Rodina* there is no “true” nationalist representation – according to nationalist activists – in the parliament. But there might be MPs in other parties, i.e. in LDPR or even the CPRF, who have been sympathetic to the nationalists' cause and might have even directly supported them. My definition includes such cases, because it can help us understand better the course of nationalist-patriotic organizations.

Additionally, the radical right is depicted in most studies as a solid construction with clearcut ideology, a monolithic entity as I call it. The problem is that such a perception of the object under study does not take into consideration the complex relations that exist within and among the organizations that comprise it, nor their interaction with opposing organizations, and may thus lead to misleading conclusions about their agency. Defining Russia's nationalist-patriotic opposition as the wide spectrum of extra-parliamentarian organizations that may take the form of a party, a movement organization or a milieu, reflects better the nature of nationalist mobilization in Russia that has taken the form of a network of networks. For example, drawing conclusions on the past, present, and future of the nationalist-patriotic opposition from, i.e. Zhirinovskii's LDPR, could be misleading, since – as I repeatedly stated above – the organizations that are within the network of the nationalist-patriotic opposition do not recognize it as one of their own.

The third conceptual contribution is the disentanglement of National-Bolshevik Party (NBP) from the nationalist-patriotic front. The NBP does not exist any longer and was succeeded by *Drugaya Rossiya* that keeps up NBP's anti-systemic character, but also differentiates its ideology significantly, mostly by leaving provocative pro-fascist courtesies behind and by becoming part of the liberal opposition. It was made clear by the activists from its higher leadership ranks that *Drugaya Rossiya* is not part and is not collaborating with the nationalist-patriotic organizations, although they may be sympathetic to some of their claims, especially the creation of a Russian nation-state. *Drugaya Rossiya* is not organizing, nor taking part in the Russian Marches, neither do nationalist activists take part in *Drugaya Rossiya*'s strategy³¹ for example. There may be instances of activists from each front that participate in public actions of the other, for example, *Drugaya Rossiya*'s activists were sentenced for the riots of Manezhnaya square of December 2010, but this is

merely an isolated event and does not show that these two actors actually work together.

The fourth conceptual contribution has to do with the introduction of the new term “technological opportunity structures” in my study referring to the Internet and to new communication technologies. Through this proposal, I intended to include this new reality in the broader structural environment that conditions human action and treat it as one more structural factor in the same fashion of political opportunities. This conceptual shift may result valid for a more systematic future research of the new communication means technology opened up in the last two decades and that can have important outcomes on all kinds of social movements, especially in environments with poor liberal record.

8.2. Methodological contributions

Through the use of Internet, scholars of radical right movements can find without many complications primary original material from the movement organizations they study, like programs, pamphlets, and even pictures, videos, and eye-witness descriptions of their mobilization. Nevertheless, the most common methodological problem in the study of radical right movements is the difficult access to their participants. I tried to overcome this barrier with my fieldwork that allowed for direct interaction with the activists engaged in political action. Interaction means verbal and non-verbal communication that helped me understand better not only my respondents' actions or strategical decisions, but also the general environment this action takes place.

For instance, I was surprised to discover that the organizations are not competing one with the other – although to a certain extent it can happen that organizations or leaders compete against each other – but that they are actively collaborating together. This feature granted me access to the leaders of different movements, since they were sending me from one to another after a certain point, contrary to my initial concern that a possible competition between leaders would block me the access to them. It did not take me long to discover that they are a diverged but united network.

Equally surprised was I to find out that there is no representation of the nationalists in the *Duma* at the moment, contrary to the widespread view that the “far right” LDPR is the party of nationalists or of patriots. This is one example of selection bias that scholars of Russian nationalism face. In the 1990s, Zhirinovskii's LDPR has been considered Russia's radical right party *par excellence* and

there were even calls about the potential danger that Russia could be ruled by a fascist regime. This case selection was taken up by the majority of the scholars in the field to a certain extent up to today. The taxonomy of the radical right in Russia even included the Communist Party, because of some especially polemic declarations of its all-time leader.

Throughout my fieldwork, I understood that for a party to enter the Duma must be either managed by the Kremlin or, at least, considered as no threat for the existing government. This is probably why a typical response is: “They are all the same” when you ask Russians about their politicians, especially the younger ones, despite the fact that they do not have direct Soviet experience. Neither would it have been possible to know from the “outside” that, for example, Limonov was playing the fascist card back in the 1990s because he wanted to create fuzz around the NBP by any means, and provocation through such a shocking concept enabled him to draw attention. Or that Rogozin's credibility (and popularity) within the nationalist scene has fallen after his controversial political moves and his acceptance to hold key positions in the government.

Closely connected with the previous concern, another methodological issue I had to resolve is how to gain representation of the broad nationalist-patriotic movement through a relatively small sample that I could research given the time and the resources I was disposing. The case study selection was, thus, crucial. The selection of the organizations in the 1990s was based on previous research that was done, the overwhelming majority of which was on the movements National-Bolshevik Party and Russian National Unity. That was a relatively easy choice. What was really complicated was to decide which contemporary organizations I should include. Some scholarly work was done at the time on the Movement Against Illegal Immigration, so it was clear to me that I should take it into consideration. Besides, I decided to be guided by the activists themselves, so I let my respondents show me the way. I found out soon that DPNI, correctly, but also ROD were the most influential movements at the time. At the same time, my doubts on whether or not to include parties, like the above mentioned LDPR and *Rodina*, were cleared out as I explained above.

Here, I should add that the list of my respondents is by no means complete; I focus on the moderate movements of the nationalist spectrum and leave more extreme ones out, without wanting to deduct that the face of Russian nationalism is only the one here presented. I do argue, nevertheless, that this is the most popular and influential one. I would have liked to interview more nationalist activists that my respondents recommended me, like the author of “The Revolution that did not take place”

and leader of *Novaya Sila* Valerii Solovei, the leader of Slavic Union Dmitrii Demushkin, and ex-leader of *Natsional'no-Derzhavnaya Partiya Rossii's* (National-Sovereign Party of Russia - NDPR), Aleksandr Sevast'yanov, or with SS leader Dmitrii Dyomushkin, with both of which I got into contact but they denied to give me an interview. Neither did I have the time to contact Aleksei Naval'nii, who was released from jail some days before my departure. I also interviewed leaders from organizations which go beyond my case-study selection for the dissertation, like RONS, League of Moscow's Self-Defense, and Nationalist Socialist Initiative, but whose interviews I partly included since they participate in my case-studies' broader coalitions. The study of these and other movement organizations that I do not mention here would complete our understanding on Russia's nationalist-patriotic movement.

Another problem that has to be taken into consideration is to what extent the respondents' response is close to their true intentions and actions. I tried to overcome this barrier by checking their published material, i.e. texts, articles, comments, and also by asking other respondents on their opinion about the rest of my respondents. I also relied on secondary bibliography that exists on some of my case studies (I am not aware about academic works from non-Russian scholars written on ROD by the time I write these lines). Apart from this, there is always the issue of the respondents' bias, which I tried to balance with interviews with Russian scholars and specialists on Russian nationalism, as well as with the study of the publications of the most prominent monitoring center on racism and xenophobia, SOVA.

The use of multiple methods for data collection guarantees a more equal representation of the different opinions on a certain topic and for a more objective approximation of the truth that lies behind human agency. The key for understanding political dissidence lies at the meso level. This public space, institutionalized or not, that lies between the individual and the state and enables or enforces political expression is the vehicle through which cleavages are transformed into political action and through which the individuals find a political expression to their frustration, problems, fears, dreams.

8.3. Theoretical contributions

My study showed how relatively static socioeconomic cleavages and less static opportunities can be transformed into political demands through the agency of political entrepreneurs. It proposes that

for the understanding of modern political phenomena we should look into the interplay of agency with structure. In Russia's transitional setting, social change has accelerated since the fall of the Soviet Union when compared to Western environments. The study of an oppositional movement in Russia demonstrates how changing societal conditions can lead to a movement's transformation in the form of the disappearance of some organizations, change in discourse and strategies, or even ideological shift.

In Russia, I have analyzed how different nationalist- patriotic organizations adopted strategies under a repressive regime and turned opposing opportunities to their favor. When the issue of “stateness” (Gill 2006) in a post-communist setting has not been resolved and there is a strong presence of “non-core groups” (Mylonas 2013)—either traditionally living within the borders of the state or having recently moved there as immigrants—we can expect that nationalist opposition actors will play the national card and try to push it to the mainstream political agenda.

From the research findings, we can conclude that whenever the state can not or does not put enough effort to control increased influx of migrants in the country, new actors are likely to present themselves proposing alternative solutions and entering the political domain. My case, Russia, shows that increased immigration flows, in combination with population decline and growing economic inequalities, form favorable conditions for the formation of new nationalist-patriotic organizations. I also demonstrated that the adoption of a nationalist discourse by government officials, as well as the stigmatization of migrants by the media, prepared society to embrace nationalist ideas. This is an important lesson for governments, especially when they are faced with rapidly changing social environments, in order to avoid or at least moderate social tensions that can lead to violent conflict and ethnic polarization.

My research also highlights the importance of studying leaders and their agency, since the ways they make use of existing opportunities and/or they overcome closed opportunity structures are an understudied, but crucial phenomenon. As previous sociological studies have shown, opportunities only arise at specific points in history, less often than grievances and organizational sources. Whether a political organization makes use of arising opportunities relies first of all on whether its leadership will perceive them as such. The second step is for the leaders to decide whether to act upon the perceived opportunity or not. Since the nationalist-patriotic organizations under study have not ran for elections, but are ready to do so if the government does not constrain them, my research

findings do not confirm (yet) existing theories that see “external” leadership as crucial for the electoral breakthrough. It rests on future research, once the organizations have competed in elections, to study the role of “external” leadership, “internal” leadership, and party organization on the electoral breakthrough, electoral persistence, and long-run electoral success of the newly formed parties of the nationalist-patriotic opposition.

8.4. Further implications and future research

Another finding of this thesis is that the nationalist-patriotic organizations consider themselves to be part of Russia's civil society. Russia's repressive regime legitimizes this claim of nationalist-patriotic organizations, since one of their principal demands is the establishment of a genuine democracy where they will be allowed to run for elections. According to previous research on post-Soviet countries, nationalism can both be an obstacle and an aid to democratic transition (Gill 2006). Nationalist mobilization can contribute to the fall of authoritarian regimes and to the establishment of democracy, like in the case of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania if strong majority nationalism comes to power and minority nationalism does not manifest in a violent way. But, if nationalist mobilization does not displace conservative rulers or if national minorities resort to armed violence, non-democratic (e.g. Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) or facade democratic regimes (e.g. Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia) are likely to emerge.

Whether the nationalist-patriotic opposition in Russia will play a catalytic role in the establishment of a democratic regime is something to be seen in the future. Based on previous experience, we could infer that if national minorities or non-core groups do not resort to violence, and if the ongoing violent ethnic conflicts stop, then transition to democracy is likely to occur. Levada-Center's opinion polls show that more than half of Russians agree with the slogans “Russia for the Russians” and “Stop Feeding the Caucasus” (Bennetts 2012). Supposing that this opinion guides the public's vote and that one nationalist-patriotic party will run for the election, it would be reasonable to assume that it will be voted by those who support these slogans. Nevertheless, there is not a single nationalist-patriotic party at the moment, but three (without counting Naval'nii's party) and despite their internal fragmentation, the chances they have to run for the election under Vladimir Putin's regime are marginal. Besides, their role in a potential democratic course will also depend on whether or not the nationalist-patriotic opposition will be dominated by pro-democratic

organizations, as it is at the moment with my case studies adherent to liberal democratic goals and to legal and societal norms. In the opposite case, if authoritarian formations become more popular and take the lead within the nationalist-patriotic block, then depending on their adherence to the use of violence, the nationalist-patriotic opposition could lean towards the “uncivil society”, the most dominant characteristics of which are: violence, exclusivism, inflexibility, intolerance, anti-modernism (Glasius 2009).

A further implication of the nationalist-patriotic opposition's study in Russia is whether my argument can help us explain the rise of similar movements in other transitional settings, e.g. Ukraine, or in Western non-transitional settings with similar characteristics, e.g. Southern European economic crisis environments. Except for the Baltic states that established true democracies, the rest of the post-communist world is non-democratic. All of them also passed through the transitional phase, although the economic and social policies that were implemented differed considerably, along with their results. Did nationalist organizations, of varying degrees of affiliation to democracy, construct the “enemy” according to the salience of the socio-economic cleavages and the degree of openness of their respective regime and, if so, could their leaders capitalize on existing opportunities and mobilize support? Can we explain the rise of, e.g. the Ukrainian Right Sector or other radical right formations that came in the surface with the *Euromaidan*, under this framework? Future research on transitional settings may benefit from the present research and provide further explanations of the same phenomena in similar settings, making the theory better by completing it with region-based factors, e.g. geographical divides, the use of two languages.

Can we explain under the same framework the rise of Golden Dawn in crisis-ridden Greece? In Greece, the recent economic crisis has had similar effects to Russia's transitional economy in the 1990s. Parallel to economic inequalities, Greece has been receiving high migration flows since the 1990s, first from the Balkans and the former Soviet Union, then from Africa and the Middle East. At the same time, the Greek ruling party has followed an open nationalist discourse shortly before the last election of 2012. After the election, the government proceeded to mass apprehensions, penalizations (up to the point to create immigrant detention camps), and prohibition of entrance to immigrants (with the creation of a wall in the Northern border with Turkey or with refoulement policies), whereas the media have been increasingly broadcasting xenophobic news. The government has been also turning more authoritarian in the last years, judging by the way it passes governmental bills that can sometimes be described as anti-constitutional, by the increasing

repression of demonstrations and political discontent, by the violation of human rights, etc. Under these new socio- economic cleavages and under a government that is increasingly turning antidemocratic, the Greek extreme right organization Golden Dawn found the perfect breeding ground to succeed with the way it framed the “enemy” that had the form of the illegal immigrant and the corrupt political elite. Its long-standing leadership made the right maneuvers, sensed the opportunities that were opening and seized them to its own benefit. This can be an explanation why the Golden Dawn managed to multiply its vote from 0.29 to 6.92 per cent and to enter the parliament for the first time in 2012.

Finally, a further implication is how the empirical knowledge accumulated from my study allows us to understand better the pressures Vladimir Putin is facing in the domestic policy domain. In previous research, I have shown that the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI) has played a role in shaping negative public attitudes towards immigration and that its mobilization has caused reactions in terms of elite discourse and restrictive immigration legislation (Tipaldou and Uba 2014). In the last years, the nationalist-patriotic opposition has passed from the fringe of political life, overshadowed mainly by the liberal opposition, into the center of Russia politics (Nechepurenko 2014). Following this reality, another issue that rises is how the fluctuating popularity of various nationalist patriotic organizations I have described introduce new coordinates, within which Vladimir Putin and his associates make decisions on Russian's involvement in conflicts merging from Georgia to Syria. The latest and most proximate to the EU example is the conflict in Ukraine. The demands of the Russian nationalist-patriotic opposition, which is fundamentally anti-Western, have been placed on the top of Russia's political agenda due to the ongoing political crisis between Russia and the West over the conflict in Ukraine. But during 2014, support for liberals fell, because of their pro-Ukrainian stance. Russian political analyst Nikolai Petrov foresees that Vladimir Putin will face pressure from the nationalist-patriotic front to national pride and will probably have to side with the new patriotic majority (Nechepurenko 2014). The political maneuvering, thus, of the Russian government can be better understood and foreseen when taking into consideration domestic opposition forces that can influence public opinion.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The questionnaire for nationalist-patriotic activists

I. PERSONAL TRAJECTORY

1. When did you join the nationalist movement and how?
2. What was your first organization?
3. When did you decide to make your own organization and why?

II. YOUR ORGANIZATION

4. Could you make a short description of your organization and its basic aims?
5. How many members do you have?
6. What other nationalist organizations are close to your ideology?

III. THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

7. What do you think about the nationalist movement in Russia? Is it getting better?
8. Do you think that it can change something in politics?
9. What is the relationship between the different nationalist organizations? I know that there are some ideological differences. But still, do you work all together for a common aim?
10. Who are the persons and movements you consider important nowadays and that you would recommend me to study.

IV. THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION IN RUSSIA

11. What did you believe that were the main problems of Russian society when you joined the movement?
12. Are there the same now?
13. Is it easy to have a political oppositional organization in Russia nowadays under Vladimir Putin? How does the regime react to your initiatives?
14. Was it better under Boris Yeltsin to be a political activist?

Appendix 2. Nationalist Activists Respondents, September-December 2011

No.	Party/City	Pseudonym	Former affiliations	Coalitions	Observations
1	ROD, Moscow	ROD leader1		<i>Russkaya Plataforma</i>	-3 interviews on 3/11/2011, 14/12/2011 & 16/12/2011 -in our very extensive interviews he informed me practically on every aspect of the nationalist movement, including its historical roots, ideology, leaders, state repression, Putin's regime -one of the most prominent figures and an ideologue of the "democratic-nationalist" doctrine -detained various times for his political activity
2	ROD, Moscow	ROD leader2		<i>Russkaya Plataforma</i>	-interview on 15/12/2011 -he pointed out he is an activist, not an ideologue -we talked about the reasons he created ROD, its repercussion and future goals, he recommended other influential nationalists
3	ROD, Moscow	ROD leader3	DPNI	<i>Russkaya Plataforma</i>	-interview on 7/10/2011 -Famous blogger
4	ROD, St. Petersburg	ROD leader4	DPNI	<i>Russkaya Plataforma</i>	-interview on 31/10/2011
5	ROD, St. Petersburg	ROD member			-interview on 9/12/2011 -he offered a fresh point of view from the perspective of a member that does not have organizational responsibilities
6	DPNI, <i>Russkie</i> , Moscow	<i>Russkie</i> leader1	Pamyat'		-interview on 21/12/2014 -Charesmatic leader -has been detained various times, and has been in pre-trial detention since 2014 for economic issues. He considers his persecution political and targeted.
7	NSI, <i>Russkie</i> , St. Petersburg	<i>Russkie</i> leader2	RNU		- interview on 13/12/2014
8	The Other Russia (former NBP), Moscow	The Other Russia leader1			-interview on 6/10/2011 - he is currently fighting in Donbas
9	The Other Russia (former NBP), St. Petersburg	The Other Russia leader2			-interview on 1/11/2011 - he was released on restraining order for his political activities (Strategy 31) when we met
10	Russian Imperial Movement (RID), St. Petersburg	RID leader		RONs	- 2 interviews on 26/11/2014 & 29/11/2014 - he offered me an extensive overview over the roots of: the Russian nationalist movement; key nationalist figures; the relations between different organizations; especially St. Petersburg's scene, -also on socio-political issues Russian society is facing and the role of the Orthodox faith
11	League of Moscow's Self- Defense (LOM), Moscow	LOM leader		<i>Russkaya Plataforma</i>	-interview on 14/12/2011 - short after our interview, LOM's leader Daniil Konstantinov got arrested on suspicion of a street knife murder in 2011 and spent 2,5 years in pre-trial detention. He was sentenced with hooliganism and left free because of an amnesty. The organization ceased its activities after Konstantinov's arrest.

Appendix 3. Area Experts Respondents, September – December 2011

	Name	Institution	City	position	Observations
1	Alexander Verkhovsky	SOVA center	Moscow	head	-interview on 3/11/2011 - he informed me about popular and unpopular figures of Russian nationalist scene, about hate crimes, about repression against nationalists after the crucial points of Manezh & Kondopoga events, the relationship between hooligans and nationalists
2	Vladimir Pribylovskii	PANORAMA center	Moscow	head	-interview on 14/10/2011 -he is the author of many biographies of political figures, including nationalist leaders -he informed me about the whole nationalist-patriotic scene
3	Boris Kagarlitsky	Institute of Globalization and Social Movements (IGSO)	Moscow	head	-interview on 10/10/2011 - focus on Russia's socio-economic and political situation
4	Valentina Uzunova	Kunstkamer, St. Petersburg	St. Petersburg	Expert on extremism	-interview on 25/10/2011 -the authorities consult her for banning publications that can be considered extremist
5	Mikhail Sokolov	European University St. Petersburg	St. Petersburg	sociologist	- interview on 1/11/2011 - he has written his PhD thesis on RNE and has published on russian nationalism
6	Vladimir Gel'man	European University St. Petersburg	St. Petersburg	historian	- interview on 27/10/2011 - focus on broader political context
7	Viktor Shnirelman	Russian Academy of Sciences	Moscow	historian	-interview on 4/10/2011 -he sketched out the most important nationalist actors, contributing thus to the selection of my case studies

Appendix 4. Case studies' map

Organization	founders	Other members	“Well-known” former members	Organizations that emerged after internal schisms	Coalitions
<p><i>Pamyat'</i> active 1978/1980-2003 (Vasil'ev's death)</p>  <p><i>Illustration 11: Logo of Pamyat'</i></p>	Dmitrii Dmitrievich Vasil'ev	Kim Andreev (president of council)	Aleksandr Belov, Vladimir Basmanov, Aleksandr Barkashov, Aleksandr Dugin	Igor' Sychev's <i>Pamyat'</i> , Nikolai Filimonov's <i>Pamyat'</i> , Konstantin Smirnov-Ostashvili's <i>Pamyat'</i> , Georgii Boroviko's <i>Pamyat'</i> , RNPTS, Aleksandr Shtil'mark's Black Hundred, Aleksandr Barkashov's RNE	
<p>RNE (1990)/ OOPD RNE (since 1995)/ movement “Aleksander Barkashov” (since 2006)</p>  <p><i>Illustration 12: Logo of RNE</i></p>	Aleksandr Petrovich Barkashov	Valerii Emel'yanov (spiritual father), Aleksandr Chulin, (security chief), Grigorii Trofimchuk (Saratov leader, appointed in regional parliament in 2000), Oleg Kassin (Barkashov's deputy), Yurii Vasin (leader of Moscow branch)	Rogozin, Krivov, Kochetkov, Makarikov, Denisov, Nikitenko, Fedorov	Russian Orthodox Party, Russian National Movement of the North-East, RNSRP, RV, brother Evgenii and Mikhail Lalochnik's RNE, Barkashov's Guards.	RNS with Russian Guard and <i>Rus'</i> ; National Block with: Vladimir Davidenko's <i>Savior</i> , Revival, RPP, LZND
NBP (1994-2005)	Aleksandr Dugin, Eduard Limonov, “Egor” Letov, Sergei Kurekhin	Aleksandr Averin (spokesman, Moscow), Andrei Dmitriev (spokesman, St. Petersburg)	Aleksandr Dugin Eurasian Movement (1998-2001), Eurasia Party 2001, IEM (since 2003)	IEM, The Other Russia	The Other Russia (since 2006)

 <p><i>Illustration 13: Logo of The Other Russia</i></p>					
<p>DPNI (2002-2011)</p>  <p><i>Illustration 14: Logo of DPNI Russkie (since 2011), Party of Nationalists (since 2012)</i></p>  <p><i>Illustration 15: Logo of Russkie</i></p>	<p>Aleksandr Belov, Vladimir Basmanov</p>	<p>Vladimir Ermolaev (head of Moscow branch), Semen Pikhatelyov (head of St. Petersburg branch), Denis Tyukin, Dmitrii Bobrov (spokesman in St. Petersburg and NSI leader)</p>	<p>Andrei Kuznetsov, Vladimir Tor</p>	<p>Russian DPNI, DPNI-RGO</p>	<p>Russkie with: NSI, RID, SRN, RFO <i>Pamyat'</i>, NDP; RND with: NAROD, ROD, and Great Russia Party; member of Dmitrii Rogozin's Great Russia</p>
<p>ROD (2005)</p>  <p><i>Illustration 16: Logo of ROD</i></p> <p>Civil Platform party with RGS (since 2012), NDP (since 2012)</p>	<p>Konstantin Krylov, Nataliya Kholmogorova, Viktor Militarev, Tat'yana Shlikhter</p>	<p>Egor Kholmogorov, Andrei Kuznetsov (head of St. Petersburg branch)</p>		<p>Vyacheslav Makarov's, Viktor Militarev's, Tet'yana Shlickter's, and Mikhail Denisov's ROD</p>	<p>8th of June Pact with: DPNI, Great Russia, NAROD; Declaration of Russian national organizations (led by DPNI & Russian Image), also signed by: RONS, RID, NSI; RGS platform, with: Russian Image, RFO <i>Pamyat'</i>, NDA, Just Cause, NDSM; <i>Russkaya Platforma</i> with: New Force, RID, GCD RNS, Siberian News Agency, LOM; Civil Platform with RGS</p>

Appendix 5. Migration policy changes (2002-2011)

	2002	2003	2006	2007	2010	2011
Legal status	Introduction of several types of status: temporary visitor, temporary resident, permanent resident, foreign worker, foreign entrepreneur, military status, foreigner with special status, refugee and asylum seeker				2 new types of migrant workers: patent holders and highly qualified specialists	
Residence permit	Temporary and permanent			Introduction of medical certificate that proves that the applicant is not infected by HIV, leprosy, tuberculosis, and some sexually transmitted diseases	Need for medical insurance	Visa denial for those that have committed a crime twice, easier for highly qualified professionals
Citizenship	Restrictive: 5 years prior residence with no more than a 3-month break, legal job, command of Russian language. Equal rights for CIS and third countries nationals	Easy for CIS nationals, qualified workers, refugees and asylum-seekers				
Work permit	Obtaining of work permit on the basis of job offer and invitation from an employer who has licence from FMS		Liberalization for CIS: visa-free workers can apply for a permit by themselves	ban of foreigners as salespersons in retail markets, introduction of medical certificate that proves that the applicant is not	Need for medical insurance	

				infected by HIV, leprosy, tuberculosis, and some sexually transmitted diseases		
quota		Introduction of quota for non CIS workers (under non visa-free regime)		Introduction of quota also for CIS workers- extremely high (6 million work permits), quotas in specific sectors, regions and countries of origin	Reduced from 6 million to 1.8 million work permits	Selection of migrants depending on their age, education, professional qualification, ability to adapt to changes
Registration	Within 3 days from arrival		Simplified in place of stay			Simplification of registration procedures, electronic registration
Return of compatriots living abroad			Compensated transportation costs, full access to social services lump-sum allowance			
Stricter penalties	For organizing illegal immigration, for illegal entry, human trafficking, and participation in extremist communities		For employers			

Sources: Agrba 2011; Doff 2011; Chudinovskikh *et.al.* 2010: 24-26; Domnitskaya 2011; Yakhina 2011; Chislova 2010; Ioffe & Zayonchkovskaya 2010: 23; Nozhenko 2010; Human Rights Watch 2009: 24ff.; Ivakhnyuk 2009: 39, 55;), author's processing.

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