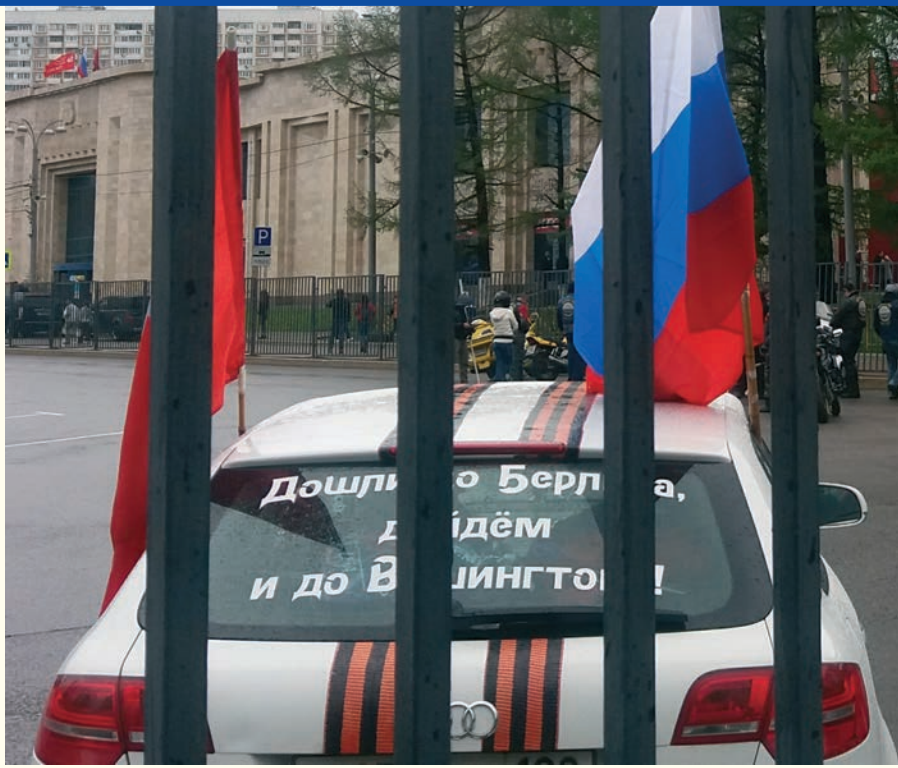
SPPS
Edited by
Andreas Umland
Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society
Vol. 212



Sanna Turoma, Kaarina Aitamurto,
Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover (Eds.)

Religion, Expression, and Patriotism in Russia

Essays on Post-Soviet Society and the State

ibidem

Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society (SPPS) Vol. 213

ISSN 1614-3515

Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society (SPPS)

ISSN 1614-3515

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

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

Editorial correspondence & manuscripts should be sent to: Dr. Andreas Umland, Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, vul. Volodymyrska 42, off. 21, UA-01030 Kyiv, Ukraine

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

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

Recent Volumes

205 Ksenia Maksimovtsova
Language Conflicts in Contemporary Estonia, Latvia, and Ukraine
A Comparative Exploration of Discourses in Post-Soviet Russian-Language Digital Media
With a foreword by Ammon Cheskin
ISBN 978-3-8382-1282-1

206 Michal Vit
The EU's Impact on Identity Formation in East-Central Europe between 2004 and 2013
Perceptions of the Nation and Europe in Political Parties of the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia
With a foreword by Andrea Petö
ISBN 978-3-8382-1275-3

207 Per A. Rudling
Tarnished Heroes
The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in the Memory Politics of Post-Soviet Ukraine
ISBN 978-3-8382-0999-9

208 Kaja Gadowska, Peter Solomon (Eds.)
Legal Change in Post-Communist States
Progress, Reversions, Explanations
ISBN 978-3-8382-1312-5

209 Paweł Kowal, Georges Mink, Iwona Reichardt (Eds.)
Three Revolutions: Mobilization and Change in Contemporary Ukraine I
Theoretical Aspects and Analyses on Religion, Memory, and Identity
ISBN 978-3-8382-1321-7

210 Paweł Kowal, Georges Mink, Adam Reichhardt, Iwona Reichardt (Eds.)
Three Revolutions: Mobilization and Change in Contemporary Ukraine II
An Oral History of the Revolution on Granite, Orange Revolution, and Revolution of Dignity
ISBN 978-3-8382-1323-1

211 Li Bennich-Björkman; Sergiy Kurbatov (Eds.)
When the Future Came
The Collapse of the USSR and the Emergence of National Memory in Post-Soviet History Textbooks
ISBN 978-3-8382-1335-4

212 Olga R. Gulina
Migration as a (Geo-)Political Challenge in the Post-Soviet Space
Border Regimes, Policy Choices, Visa Agendas
With a foreword by Nils Muižnieks
ISBN 978-3-8382-1338-5

Sanna Turoma, Kaarina Aitamurto,
Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover (Eds.)

RELIGION, EXPRESSION, AND PATRIOTISM IN RUSSIA

Essays on Post-Soviet Society and the State

ibidem
Verlag

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

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

ISBN-13: 978-3-8382-1346-0

Printed in the EU

Table of Contents

Contesting Cultural and Religious Identities in Russia: An Introduction

Sanna Turoma and Kaarina Aitamurto
University of Helsinki

Keywords: identity politics, nationalism, patriotism, masculine identities, Russian Orthodox Church, religious communities, state cultural policies

This edited volume is a revised reprint of a 2016 special issue, which gathered a group of specialists to analyze recent developments in Russian politics of religion and culture for *Transcultural Studies: A Journal in Interdisciplinary Research*. Compiling the special issue took place in the immediate aftermath of the events, which shaped Russia's civil society in the first years of the 2010s: the protests during the 2011–2012 election cycle and the subsequent tightening of political control, the anti-Maiden frenzy, and the annexation of Crimea, followed by the intense anti-Westernism of the Kremlin rhetoric. All this underscored the "conservative turn", which many analysts observed as the major shift in Russian domestic and foreign policy with two watersheds: President Vladimir Putin's 2007 "Munich speech" and the nomination of Metropolitan Kirill (Gundiaev) of Smolensk as the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2009.[1]

These conservative developments and trends, however, are not unique to Russia. Only a year after the special issue was published, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the president of the United States, embodying what his opposition sees as a change toward an increasingly nationalist, isolationist, racist, and misogynist society. Incidentally, the common thread between Western and

1 See M. Suslov and D. Uzlaner "Dilemmas and Paradoxes of Contemporary Russian Conservatism: Introduction" in M. Suslov and D. Uzlaner (eds.), *Contemporary Russian Conservatism: Problems, Paradoxes and Dangers* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2019).

Russian far-right movements has also drawn scholarly attention.[2] The rise of radical conservatism and rightist ideology has become an acknowledged and researched fact worldwide.[3] In various European countries, nationalist and ultraconservative parties have gained significant victories in recent elections. These parties share a common populist rhetoric, which juxtaposes the common, "good" people with impudent minorities claimed to threaten the majority by compromising their every-day sense of security as well as economic and cultural stability. This kind of populist rhetoric extolls the nation and idealizes the people, and imagines both as curiously homogeneous. The essentialist conceptualization of a national identity at the center of far-right political programs, puts the "protecting" of that identity from outside influences high on the agenda.

In Russia, these rightwing views have found their way into a legislative document, which incorporates cultural policies into a "national security strategy". This strategy, launched in 2009, has emerged as an overarching matrix of Russia's social and political reforms.[4]

The turn toward conservative values in Russia has been reinforced by introducing legislative initiatives on religion, sexuality, and culture, which politicize areas of life commonly perceived as private and expected to be free of state control. Writing as recently as 2017 in response to Misha Gabowitsch's research on non-(or anti-) governmental social networks, Alexander Etkind foresaw the "full shut-down of the Internet in Russian territory" as the only threat to this grassroots political activism; yet, the idea seemed like "an apocalyptic project… discussed in semi-official circles".[5] However, the

2 See M. Laruelle *Entangled Far Rights: A Russian-European Intellectual Romance in the Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018).

3 J.F. Drolet and M. C. Williams, 'Radical conservatism and global order: international theory and the new right', *International Theory* 10(3), (2018).

4 'Strategiia natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii do 2020 goda'. Kremlin.ru, 13 May 2009 http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/424 (accessed 17 June 2019).

5 A. Etkind 'Genres and genders of protest in Russia's petrostate', in *Cultural Forms of Protest in Russia*, eds. B. Beumers, A. Etkind, O. Gurova, and S. Turoma (Farnham: Routledge, 2017), p. 9.

plan to restrict citizens' access to Internet services, more specifically to foreign service providers, took a step toward official realpolitik in May 2019. The Russian government's plan to establish an alternative domain name system in case Russia is cut off from the World Wide Web – either by its own initiative or by foreign forces – was backed up by a legislative act signed by President Putin.[6] The law, presented as a security strategy, will ensure the continuing governmental investment in planning and building an infrastructure for isolating *Runet* (Russian-language Internet) from the global web. Considered for a long time a platform for maintaining freedom of expression in Russia, digital and social media are now the targets of a new legislation, which gives the government potentially limitless means for controlling digitally mediated political opinion.

In 2013, the new law on "insulting religious feelings," was introduced. This law makes all criticism of the "traditional" religions or "traditional" religious institutions susceptible to criminalization and thus sets restrictions to freedom of speech. At the same time, it does not necessarily work to the advantage of the religious communities. It is seldom applied to protect minority religions and in the case of such bigger confessions as Orthodox Christianity or Islam, it may block critical discussion that is vital for their development. Further restrictions for criticism and expressions of dissent are set by the law that penalizes expressions that can be claimed to show "disrespect toward the authorities". This law, which came into force in 2019, effectively restricts political discussions, but also jeopardizes the accountability of the officials.

Cultural Policies as Conservative Identity Politics

The legislative text, which captures the ideational foundation of the current leadership's promotion of conservatism, and which, as such, deserves a more detailed analysis, is the presidential decree for a new cultural policy. Publicized as a draft in the spring of 2014 on the Russian Ministry of Culture website, the guidelines for "state

6 For the text in Russian, see http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201905010025 (accessed 5 June 2019).

cultural policies" caused a fierce debate among Russians involved in the cultural and intellectual production.[7] The fact that the document subjugated "family relations" to state policies received particularly harsh criticism from liberal Russians. Despite the debate, however, the document formed, with some revisions, the basis of a decree (*ukaz*) signed by President Vladimir Putin on Dec 24, 2014.[8]

The president's decree understands culture as a system of values and institutions, which produce and preserve these values. Moreover, Russia's culture is seen on a par with Russia's natural resources. This naturalized conceptualization delivers culture as a fundamental force for Russia's civilizational authenticity (*tsivilizatsionnaia samobytnost'*).[9] Culture is a foundation of a unified "mentality of the Russian people" (*mentalitet rossiiskogo naroda*), the production of which is the goal of Russia's cultural policy, as outlined by the decree. The document uses the term "Russian people" but not in the form familiar, for instance, from the 19th century sources, i.e. ***russkii*** *narod*. Instead, the document speaks of ***rossiiskii*** *narod*, expanding the symbolic field of national significations

7 See, for instance, I. Kalinin 'Kul'turnaia politika kak instrument demodernizatsii', Neprikosnovennyi zapas 98(6) (2014): http://www.nlobooks.ru/node/5648 (accessed June 15, 2016); the writer D. Bykov 'Zelenye chelovechki rossiiskoi kul'tury', Novaia gazeta (9 April 2014) http://www.novayagazeta.ru/columns/63084.html (accessed 15 June 2016); on the response of the Institute of Philosophy at Russia's Academy of Science, R. Saakov, 'Filosofy protiv Medinskogo: novaia kul'turnaia politika', BBC Moscow (16 April 2014) http://www.bbc.com/russian/society/2014/04/140416_russia_new_culture_concept (accessed 15 June 2016); and an interview with Mikhail Shvydkoi, the special advisor to the President of the Russia Federation on International Cultural Relations on Ekho Moskvy, an independent radio station: Kseniia Larina and Vitalii Dymarskii, 'Kul'turnaia politika kak novaia ideologia?' Ekho Moskvy (2 May 2014) http://echo.msk.ru/programs/year2014/1310258-echo/ (accessed 15 June 2016).

8 'Osnovy Gosudartvennoi kul'turnoi politiki', http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d526a877638a8730eb.pdf (accessed 15 June 2016).

9 For the uses of "culture" in this naturalized sense in the political speech of Russia's leading politicians, see I. Kalinin, 'Carbon and Cultural Heritage: The Politics of History and the Economy of Rent' in 'Modernization and Russian Culture', Special Issue of *Baltic Worlds*, eds. S. Turoma and K. Lehtisaari, 2–3 (2014): 65–74. http://balticworlds.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/BW-2-3-2014-TEMA-uppslag.pdf (accessed 15 June 2016).

to relocate the Russian people in the realm of geopolitical identity building.

The "Guidelines" make great claims about the ability of culture to unify Russia's multinational citizens and instill a sense of Russian national pride in them across ethnic and religious boundaries. At the same time, echoing the 1960s Soviet concept of the Soviet people (*sovetskii narod*), the "Guidelines" emphasize the role of the Russian nationality as a cornerstone of this imagined community by identifying "the Russian language and the great Russian culture (*russkaia kul'tura*)" as a "unifying factor of the historical consciousness of the multinational Russian people (*rossiiskii narod*)".[10] For the "great Russian culture" the document uses the traditional *russkii* evoking *russkaia kul'tura* as an ethnocultural totality, whereas the people are, again, imagined as forming a transnational *rossiiskii* community.

The vacillation between *russkii* and *rossiiskii* in the "Guidelines" is symptomatic of the "ambiguous terminology," which Marlene Laruelle has recently recognized as the Russian leadership's strategy for avoiding "a definite stance on the national identity of Russia".[11] It supports those analysts who maintain that Vladimir

10 *Osnovy*, p. 2. On the concept of the "Soviet people", sovetskii narod, in the 1960s, see S. Turoma, 'Imperiia re/constructed narratives of space and nation in the 1960's Soviet culture,' in *Empire De/Centered: New Spatial Histories of Russia and the Soviet Union*, eds. S. Turoma and M. Waldstein (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 245 et seq; for more on the topic, see F. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge ad the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 316–318. On Benedict Anderson's influential concept "imagined community", see B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

11 See Marlene Laruelle's recent deliberation on Russian nationalism in 'Russia as an anti- liberal European civilization', in *The New Russian Nationalism*, eds. P. Kolstø and H. Blakkisrud (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 276. Pål Kolstø, on the other hand, has interpreted the shift in Putin's speeches from the state-centered rossiiskii to the ethnocultural russkii as a change in his position toward ethnonationalism. The turning point, according to Kolstø, was the President's speech at the Russian Federal Assembly on March 18, 2014 after the annexation of the Crimea. See P. Kolstø, 'The ethnification of Russian nationalism', in *The New Russian Nationalism*, eds. P. Kolstø and H. Blakkisrud (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 18–45, esp. pp. 18–19, pp. 38–39.

Putin has not made nationalism his main agenda, but who claim that his popular appeal draws on the promotion of conservative values, which aims at delegitimizing Russian liberals and nationalists alike. Meanwhile, the terminological ambivalence leaves room to invoke, and possibly, operationalize the construct of a value-based community of Russians beyond the Russian state borders, the Russian-speaking *russkii mir*—"Russian world"—without subscribing to the diverse ethnonationalist causes voiced by various intellectuals and/or radical mass movements.[12]

The agencies whose practices the "Guidelines" will direct include a wide range of administrative bodies, which govern a broad spectrum of Russian life including education, science, arts and cultural production, civil activities, community and youth services. It remains to be seen how the decree is implemented in the long run by Russian policy-makers at national or regional levels and how it will affect the work of administrative units, institutions, and state organizations. It is clear, however, that in addition to setting a framework for preserving, developing, and disseminating the value-based understanding of *russkaia kul'tura*—Russian culture—the Kremlin policies establish state patriotism as a foundation for Russia's cultural production, including the educational system. The policies offer tools for practicing conservative identity politics in the name of "traditional Russian values". The policies will most likely be reinforced by a federal law, as the Ministry of Culture has launched an initiative for introducing new legislation "On Culture", which, according to the Ministry's website, will draw on the 2014 decree.[13]

This kind of conservative identity politics promoted by the state leaves little room for the idea of intersectional categories such as gender or sexual orientation to be considered as a justifiable subject position in the making of the "mentality of the Russian people".

On the distinction of state-centered and ethnocultural nationalism, see, for instance, B. Rogers, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 98–101.

12 Laruelle 2016, p. 275

13 https://www.mkrf.ru/press/current/kontseptsiya_proekta_federalnogo_zakona_o_kulture/ (accessed 5 June 2019).

The Orthodox Christian religion, on the other hand, is granted a large space to maneuver within cultural policies. The guidelines acknowledge Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and "other religions and faiths traditional for our Fatherland" as having an "impact on the formation of national and cultural self-understanding of the peoples in Russia". At the same time, however, the document highlights the primary role of Russian Orthodoxy (*pravoslavie*) in "the formation of the system of Russia's values".[14] In other words, it singles out the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) as the leading institution among the religious communities in the country and establishes it as the main religious authority on the conservative value agenda.

Orthodoxy and Orthodox Culture Contested

The representatives of the Orthodox Church often use the concept of Symphony to describe the harmonious nature of the co-existence and cooperation between the Russian state and the Church. Historians generally agree that the close alliance of Imperial power and the Orthodox Church made the latter vulnerable in the early Bolshevik years, as the Church was associated with the oppression of the Czarist regime. In the later Soviet period, yielding to cooperation with the state became a survival strategy, which was manifest, for example, in the way the Church promoted Soviet interests in international arenas. Again, the cooperation was a disadvantage for the Church after the change of regime, and even today the ROC has not carried out a process of lustration as many of the Churches in ex-Socialist Europe have done. The late Patriarch Aleksi II aimed at keeping the Church independent of the state and separate from state politics. The new Patriach Kirill has adopted a more active role in the Church's relations with the Russian state.[15]

Since the end of the 2000s, the status and political influence of the ROC has become stronger in Russian society. This is usually

14 Osnovy, p. 2.

15 For this, see E. Namli, 'Pravoslavnoe bogoslovie i iskushenie vlast'iu', *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 32(3) (2014).

seen as a result of two developments: on the one hand, the political elite has expressed increasing keenness to affiliate itself with the Church; on the other hand, the Church has projected its authority more forcefully into the spheres of education, social services, military, and the penal system. However, there is a scholarly debate about the nature of the Church and state relations: how much does the ROC ultimately influence political decision-making, or is the state taking advantage of the increasingly close ties to achieve its own goals?[16] The Ukrainian crisis has definitely not been in the interests of the ROC, which has lost ground in the area.

At the same time, as Boris Knorre demonstrates in his article on the culture of war and militarization within political Orthodoxy, there are powerful actors in the ROC, who have not only actively supported but even promoted the war in Ukraine. As the contributions to this volume attest, there are diverse voices within the Orthodox Christian community and even inside the institution of the ROC. In his contribution Boris Knorre argues that those engaged with questions of militarized Orthodoxy do not represent the highest elite of the Church and have occasionally been rejected by the Church, as in the dismissal of the ultra-conservative Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin. Yet, the militaristic interpretation of Orthodox Christianity and the mission of the Church are influential not only within the ROC, but also in Kremlin politics.

Surveys indicate that even though around 70% of the citizens identify themselves as Orthodox Christians, only a small minority of Russians go to church regularly, participate in religious services or consider religion to have a significant role in their life. According to a Levada Center survey, only 24% of Russians think that the Church should influence decision-making on the governmental

16 For this, see E. Namli, 'Pravoslavnoe bogoslovie i iskushenie vlast'iu', *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 32(3) (2014).

level.[17] In other words, there are those who consider themselves Orthodox Christians but do not identify with its official institutions or support the ROC's close ties with the Russian state.

In addition to the "cultural conflicts" between secularists and religious traditionalists, or the resistance to the clericalization of Russian society, several recent debates can also be seen as a struggle for the right to re-interpret and reinvigorate religious traditions. The (in)famous Pussy Riot trial is one such case. In the closing statement of the trial, Yekaterina Samutsevich stated that the aim of their performance was to suggest that "Orthodox culture belongs not only to the Russian Orthodox Church, the Patriarch and Putin, but that it may also side with civic rebellion and protest in Russia".[18] Nevertheless, judging by the response in Russian mainstream media, Samutsevich or Pussy Riot are not generally recognized as legitimate participants in the public negotiation of the essence of Orthodox Christianity.

In his contribution to this volume, Mikhail Suslov recognizes a conservative core within the Orthodox Christian community, since, as he argues, "the Church's supply of traditional values has met with increasing demand from a conservative majority from below, as well as from the conservative elite from above."[19] Suslov

17 'Religioznaia vera v Rossi', *Levada-tsentr* (26 September 2011) http://www.levada.ru/2011/09/26/religioznaya-vera-v-rossii/ (accessed 24 May 2016): 'Tserkov' i gosudarstvo', *Levadatsentr* (19 February 2016) http://www.levada.ru/2016/02/19/tserkov-i-gosudarstvo-2/ (accessed 24 May 2016).

18 "Yekaterina Samutsevich: Closing Statement at the Pussy Riot Trial", (8 August 2012) http://eng-pussy-riot.livejournal.com/6352.html (accessed 24 May 2016).

19 This is supported by Vyacheslav Karpov and Rachel L. Schroeder's recent assertion that the repressive reactions by the ROC and state in the Pussy Riot case, for instance, "were congruent with an intolerant public sentiment towards opponents of the ROC", in R. L. Schroeder and V. Karpov, 'The crimes and punishment of the "enemies of the Church" and the nature of Russia's desecularising regime', *Religion, State and Society* 41 (3) (2013). Meanwhile, Vyatcheslav Karpov and Elena Lisovskaya, for instance, argue that the current "desecularization" of Russian society is mainly operated "from above". V. Karpov and E. Lisovskaya, 'Orthodoxy, Islam, and the desecularization of Russia's state schools', *Politics and Religion* 3 (2) (2010). See also K. Aitamurto, 'Protected and controlled. Islam and "desecularisation from above" in Russia', *Europe-Asia*

analyzes Orthodox Christian cultural production, concluding that the Church has failed in its attempts to create cultural products with Orthodox content for the popular taste, and, thus, the ROC is in a position where it has "dominance without hegemony". Moreover, as Suslov demonstrates, within the ROC there are diverse views about the relationship between religion and culture and about understanding of what religious or "Orthodox culture" should entail.

Despite the dissonance within the ROC about an understanding of what "Orthodox culture" is or how it could be capitalized as a viable strategy to display and produce religious identity, the Church and Orthodox Christian activists often seem to agree on what Orthodox culture should **not** be. This becomes apparent in Irina Kotkina's and Susan Ikonen's contributions, which address conflicts triggered among Christian audiences by recent products of visual culture and performing arts. As these contributions manifest, the ROC and Orthodox activists have been successful in attempts to censor what they consider to be anti-religious cultural products. Analyzing the scandal around the production of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in Novosibirsk in 2014—this was Timofei Kuliabin's controversial production which made the national news and created an extensive media hype—Kotkina argues that the ROC was instrumental in causing a moral panic, which the state officials could use for censorious claims.[20] Discussing the reception of *Leviathan*, Andrei Zvyagintsev's award-winning 2014 film, Susan Ikonen claims that the Orthodox-minded activists, complaining about the "anti-Russian" or "anti-orthodox Christian" nature of the film, have a

Studies 68 (1) (2016): 182–202. Gulnaz Sharafutdinova uses the term "sovereign morality" to describe the discursive turn of the new "morality politics" in Russia and argues that the phenomenon is orchestrated by the Kremlin. G. Sharafutdinova, 'The Pussy Riot affair and Putin's démarche from sovereign democracy to sovereign morality', *Nationalities Papers* 42(4) (2014): 615–621.

20 Cf. fn. 12 with references to research that indicates that there are efforts to manipulate the Russians' religious sensibilities from above.

"growing self-assurance that their voice will be heard by the highest authorities". Both contributions point to the quintessential role of social media and digital communication in mobilizing patriotic and religious sensibilities in today's Russia.[21]

Patriotism and Masculine Identity Formations

Andrei Makarychev's as well as Tomi Huttunen and Jussi Lassila's contributions address questions of patriotism and nationalism, and the disputed line between the two. In political philosophy, definitions of patriotism often distinguish it from nationalism as an alternative ethos for "a stable, well-functioning polity."[22] Nationalism is seen as a political doctrine, which can mobilize masses and destabilize society, whereas patriotism is an unmobilized sentiment of loyalty and affection. Nationalism implies political agency, whereas patriotism renders citizens as objects. Readjusted to George Orwell's classic formula, nationalism is aggressive, patriotism is defensive. This, again, conjures another dichotomy typical of patriotic and nationalist discourse: it is always about us vs. them, our patriotism is their nationalism.[23] States can also mobilize patriotic sensibilities to utilize them for the needs of state-centered nationalism.[24]

Research on post-Soviet nationalism is a burgeoning field which privileges conceptualizations of state-centered and ethnocultural nationalisms. Both are crucial for understanding contemporary Russian society, as is what Rogers Brubaker has termed "homeland nationalism".[25] By this he means state-centered nationalism, which bases its claims on the idea of an ethnonational unity

21 For more on this, see *Digital Orthodoxy in the Post-Soviet World: The Russian Orthodox Church and Web 2.0*, ed. M. Suslov (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2016).

22 See Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/patriotism/ (accessed 15 June 2016).

23 See M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), pp. 55–59.

24 Pål Kostlø's recent analysis of Vladimir Putin's speeches points to the President's turn toward ethnonationalism from the earlier statist position. Cf. fn. 5.

25 R. Burbaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 5.

beyond the state borders. "Russian world" (*Russkii mir*) is an example of this.

In critical close-readings of popular films about the Chechen wars of 1994–1996 and 1999–2000, Andrei Makarychev shows how people in these films are represented in battlefields in conditions to which he adapts Giorgio Agamben's concept of "bare life" that is "a life without any mediating role of public institutions or legal mechanisms". To conceptualize the state's role in the patriotic production of culture, Makarychev makes the Foucaultian distinction between sovereign and bio-political power, with the former referring to territory and the latter to population. The Russian state has successfully capitalized on the "bio-political solidarity" between people in crisis, and this, according to Makarychev, forms the "core element of quasi-ideological constructs of patriotism, transformable to the vague and loosely articulated ideas of the 'Russian world' as a family-like organic community, or Russia's civilizational self-sufficiency."

Despite some female characters being present in the films Makarychev analyzes, the world in these war films is predominantly masculine. The same can be said about the materials Tomi Huttunen and Jussi Lassila analyze in their discussion of Zakhar Prilepin and the National Bolshevik movement. Coining the concept of "catachrestic politics", Huttunen and Lassila attempt to make sense of the paradoxes of the movement and its political practices and identifications, which blur the distinctions of established political activity. The authors' thesis is that the dislocated significations at the core of catachrestic politics had their roots in the 1990s social and political turmoil and stemmed from "Russia's weak socio-political institutions, which facilitate and sustain the space for the self-purposeful radicalism and non-conformism". Huttunen and Lassila's article, like Makarychev's, identifies the same crucial moment for the post-Soviet masculine identity formation.

Shunning the use of "nationalism" in his analysis of war films, Andrei Makarychev refers to the well-researched fact of Russia's historical oscillation between national/ist and imperial/ist politics

and identity formation, expressed in the semantic difference of *russkii* and *rossiiskii*, as discussed above.[26] Instead, Makarychev prefers Serguie Oushakine's concept of "patriotism of despair," which Oushakine uses to describe the first post-Soviet generation and the sense of loss and abandonment felt acutely in identity formation and cultural practices of the time. It is this patriotic despair, i.e. the sense of affection in the absence of its object, which in addition to aphasia has engendered both nostalgia and radical nationalism in post-Soviet Russia. All these also contribute to the disjointed and volatile "catachrestic politics" and its masculine identification processes, described by Huttunen and Lassila in their discussion of Prilepin's literary and political activity.

Religious Minority Identities

In recent years, Russian authorities have tightened their religious policies, especially concerning minority religions. Religious publications form a majority in the list of banned literature while numerous religious organizations have been closed down on the basis of anti-extremist laws.[27] Such evaluative dichotomies as "traditional" and "non-traditional," or "official" and "non-official" are widely used by authorities to differentiate organizations seen to cooperate with the state from those that are regarded as potentially dangerous. Though suppressing grass-root religious activism seems to be

26 For the semantic differences of *russkii* and *rossiiskii*, see also S. Franklin and E. Widdis, "'All the Russias…?'" in *National Identity in Russian Culture,* eds. S. Franklin and E. Widdis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 5, and Laruelle 2016, pp. 275–76. For discussions of Russian identity formations on the national vs. imperial axis, see R.G. Suny, 'The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, "National identity", and Theories of Empire', in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin,* Eds. R. G. Suny and T. Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 23–66; S. Turoma and M. Waldstein, 'Empire and Space: Russia and the Soviet Union in Focus', in *Empire De/Centered: New Spatial Histories of Russia and the Soviet Union*, eds. S. Turoma and M. Waldstein (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 1–28.

27 M. A. Ledovskikh. (ed.) *Ostorozhno, ekstremizm! Analiz zakonodatel'stva o protivodeistvii ekstremistskoi deiatel'nosti i praktiki ego primereniia.* (Voronezh: Tsentr zashchity prav smi, 2013).

in line with the centralization of power and other processes that undermine the development of Russia's civil society, Geraldine Fagan argues that the oppressive religious politics is not necessarily coherently planned and managed from the top, but an outcome of the administrative culture and the legacies of the Soviet period.[28]

The changes in legislature as well as its implementation, and the repudiation of the rulings by the European Court of Human Rights, give evidence to the fact that in managing religious diversity, the Russian state has chosen the traditionalist idea of the "Russian world" over liberal governance.[29] However, this politics is inefficient, as Marat Shterin argues, since the anti-constitutional trends in religious policies and the tendency to see diversity as a social problem point to the weakness of the state's institutions rather than the strength of its centralized power. Thereby, Shterin draws attention to the role of different political and religious elite groups, which claim to have state authority, but whose actions may actually further erode state institutions.[30]

In the political elite's rhetoric, the role of religions is often positively emphasized as safeguarding societal morality. In 2012, the newspaper *Nezavisimaia gazeta* published an article by President Putin, titled 'Russia: The National Question,'[31] in which he wrote that "we are counting on an active involvement in the dialogue of Russia's traditional religions [in the formation of national policies]. The foundations of the Christian Orthodox Church, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism—with all of their differences and peculiarities—include basic shared moral, ethical, and spiritual values: compassion, reciprocity, truth, justice, respect for elders, family and work values." These attributes exclude many forms of religiosity and, more

28 G. Fagan. *Believing in Russia—Religious Policy after Communism* (London: Routledge, 2013).

29 M. Shterin 'Friends and Foes of the "Russian World": The Post-Soviet State's management of Religious Diversity', in *The Politics and Practice of Religious Diversity. National Contexts, Global Issues.* ed. A. Dawson. (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016).

30 Ibid.

31 V. Putin. 'Rossiia: natsional'nyi vopros', *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 23 January 2012. This article significantly guided the content of the 'The Concept of National Migration Policy until 2025'.

importantly, they advance an instrumental understanding of religion.

Nevertheless, this understanding of religion guides the way religious communities define their identities and strategize their activity. The restrictions imposed by the state's religious policies have numerous consequences for religious organizations. The tightened religious politics compels religions, especially minority religions vulnerable to oppressive measures, to emphasize their loyalty and patriotism. The display of patriotism by religious organizations, for example, may limit the multiplicity of voices within them, while it is used as leverage in negotiations with the state.

Despite the restrictions and the societal pressure for "traditional" forms of religiosity within centralized, hierarchic institutions, the religious life in post-Soviet Russia has been characterized by growing diversity. Elena Ostrovskaya's contribution about Orthodox Jewish and Lubavitch Hassidic communities in St. Petersburg demonstrate this persuasively. These communities have created their own way of life, culture and transnational complexity. The Lubavitchers limit their contacts with the surrounding society, but at the same time, the community is an example of a minority religion, which has been successful in renegotiating its relation with the state.

Despite the fact that Lubavitchers make up a mere five percent of the Russian Jewry, their Chief Rabbi has a high profile in Russian media and is often seen to represent the entire Jewish community at state events.[32] At these official events, the hierarchies and values in Russian religious policy are displayed and reinforced. The ROC, of course, features prominently in all these state events, which reinforces the Russian state's celebration of Russia's culture as a foundation of its civilizational distinctiveness, something the "Guidelines" also underline. The presence of a religious leader of an Orthodox Jewish community does not undermine these celebrations but supports the state leadership's conservative value agenda and the conservative identity politics promoted in the "Guidelines".

32 Shterin 2016.

Bibliography

Aitamurto, K., 'Protected and controlled: Islam and 'desecularisation from above' in Russia', *Europe-Asia Studies* 68(1) (2016): 182–202.

Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

Billig, M., *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995).

Brubaker, R., *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Burbaker, R., *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Bykov, D., 'Zelenye chelovechki rossiiskoi kul'tury', Novaia gazeta, 9 April, 2014: http://www.novayagazeta.ru/columns/63084.html (accessed 15 June 2016).

Drolet, Jean-François and Williams, M.C., 'Radical conservatism and global order: international theory and the new right', *International Theory* 10(3), (2018): 285–313.

Etkind, A., 'Genres and genders of protest in Russia's petrostate', in *Cultural Forms of Protest in Russia*, eds. B.Beumers, A.Etkind. O.Gurova and S. Turoma (Farnham: Routledge, 2017), 1–15.

Fagan, G., *Believing in Russia – Religious Policy after Communism* (London: Routledge, 2013).

Franklin, S. and Widdis, E., 'All the Russias…?' in *National Identity in Russian Culture*, eds. S. Franklin and E. Widdis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–8.

Hirsch, F., *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

Kalinin, I., 'Carbon and cultural heritage: the politics of history and the economy of rent', *Modernization and Russian Culture*, special issue for *Baltic Worlds*, eds. S. Turoma and K. Lehtisaari, 2–3 (2014): 65–74.

Kalinin, I., 'Kul'turnaia politika kak instrument demodernizatsii', *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 98(6) (2014): http://www.nlobooks.ru/node/5648 (accessed 15 June 2016).

Karpov, V. and Lisovskaya, E., 'Orthodoxy, Islam, and the desecularization of Russia's state schools', *Politics and Religion* 3(2) (2010): 276–302.

Kolstø, P., 'The ethnification of Russian nationalism' in *The New Russian Nationalism*, eds. P. Kolstø and H. Blakkisrud (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 18–45.

Larina, K. and Dymarskii, V. 'Kul'turnaia politika kak novaia ideologia?' *Ekho Moskvy* (2 May 2014) http://echo.msk.ru/programs/year2014/1310258-echo/ (accessed 15 June 2016).

Laruelle, M. 'Russia as an anti-liberal Russian civilization' in *The New Russian Nationalism*, eds. P. Kolstø and H. Blakkisrud (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 275–294.

Laruelle, M., *Entangled Far Rights: A Russian-European Intellectual Romance in the Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018).

Ledovskikh, M. A. (ed.). *Ostorozhno, ekstremizm! Analiz zakonodatel'stva o protivodeistvii ekstremistskoi deiatel'nosti i praktiki ego primereniia.* (Voronezh: Tsentr zashchity prav smi, 2013).

Namli, E. 'Pravoslavnoe bogoslovie i iskushenie vlast'iu', *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* 32(3) (2014): 12–41.

Osnovy gosudarstvennoi kul'turnoi politiki (Guidelines for state cultural policies) http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d526a877638a8730eb.pdf. (accessed 4 June 2019)

Papkova, I. 'The contemporary study of religion, society and politics in Russia: a scholar's reflections', *Religion, State and Society* 41(3) (2013): 244–53.

'Religioznaya vera v Rossi', Levada-tsentr (26 September 2011) http://www.levada.ru/2011/09/26/religioznaya-vera-v-rossii/ (accessed 24 May 2016).

Richters, K., *The Post-Soviet Russian Orthodox Church: Politics, Culture and Greater Russia* (London: Routledge, 2012).

Saakov, R. 'Filosofy protiv Medinskogo: novaia kul'turnaia politika', BBC Moscow (16 April 2014) http://www.bbc.com/russian/society/2014/04/140416_russia_new_culture_concept (accessed 15 June 2016).

Schroeder, R. L. and Karpov, V. 'The crimes and punishment of the 'enemies of the church' and the nature of Russia's desecularising regime', *Religion, State and Society* 41(3): 284–311.

Sharafutdinova, G. 'The Pussy Riot affair and Putin's démarche from sovereign democracy to sovereign morality', *Nationalities Papers* 42(4) (2014): 615–621.

Shterin, M. 'Friends and foes of the 'Russian world': the post-Soviet State's management of religious diversity'. In *The Politics and Practice of Religious Diversity. National Contexts, Global Issues*, ed. A. Dawson. (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 29–48.

Simons, G. and Westerlund, D., (eds.) Religion, Politics and Nation-building in Post-communist Countries (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).