RUSSIAN, RUSSIFIED, OR ALIEN ENEMY OTHER? RUSSIAN ETHNIC BOUNDARIES AND NATIONALIST VIOLENCE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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By

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ABSTRACT

The thesis, titled **RUSSIAN, RUSSIFIED, OR ALIEN ENEMY OTHER? RUSSIAN ETHNIC BOUNDARIES AND NATIONALIST VIOLENCE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**, analyzed the problems of inter-ethnic violence in the Russian Federation—a long-standing problem that bedeviled the Czars, Soviet authorities, and now the leaders of the Russian Federation. Tensions between Russians and people from the northern Caucasus region and Central Asians are most acute in heavily Russian populated areas of northwestern, central and southern Russia. Over the past decade there have been numerous incidents of ethnic violence by Russian nationalists against the non-Russians in these areas, including attacks on people, destruction of property, security crack downs, and deportations targeting specific ethnic groups. The thesis analyzed the process of ethnic boundary hardening and interactive factors that increase Russia’s ethnic tensions. The thesis also described a moral justification for our involvement in this problem, the centers of influence in Russia and beyond that can be brought to bear, and actions that outsiders can take to help Russia address its ethnic tensions and improve its governance.

The thesis used interdisciplinary research from anthropology, history, political and social science, legal issues, demographics, religion, and economic analysis to answer four empirical questions that identified the process of ethnonational boundary formation in Russia, the interactive causes for the escalating ethnic violence, societal problems created by boundary formation processes, and which institutions have influence to
address these problems. It also answered two human value questions that identified what can be done and what is needed to resolve the issues peacefully, whether outsiders should get involved to protect the minorities under attack in Russia, and what actions they should take.

The thesis was arranged in five chapters. Chapter One established the terminology and methodology used to answer the research questions. The method created a theoretical framework on the process of ethnic boundary formation, focused on Russia via a synergistic analysis of the theoretical perspectives of Anthony D. Smith on the ethnie roots of identity, Walker Conner’s discussions of ethnonationalism, Prasenjit Duara’s theory of the process of “hardening” ethnic boundaries, and Fredrik Barth’s theories of ethnic boundary maintenance and interaction.

The framework integrated the theoretical insights to identify and elaborate on the interactive causes of escalating political violence in Russia by analyzing diverse categories of data to explore the context and interactive causes under which nationalists are committing violence. The study included a contextual analysis of the history of the USSR from 1920-1991 and the Russian Federation since 1992 and ethnic boundary formation processes in Chapter Two, and identification and analysis of interactive factors that are driving the tensions to ethnic violence in Chapter Three. Each category was important to answering the research questions and exploring the embedded social and political contexts that have led to the crystalizing events, polarizations and the increase of xenophobic violence in Russia.
Having identified the characteristics, patterns, and trends of ethnic boundary formation, political violence, and contextual factors that are driving the processes of ethnonationalism and boundary hardening, and the interactive factors that are raising ethnic tensions in Russia, the thesis then offered ethical and policy prescriptions to reduce the tensions and violence. Chapter Four identified institutions inside and outside Russia that have capability and responsibilities to reduce the pressures on boundary formation processes and decrease the interactive factors that are contributing to the ethnic violence. Chapter Five identified the moral responsibility that affects this problem, and a recommended list of actions and policies that the Russian government and outsiders should take to address the sources of ethnic violence, lower the tensions, and encourage trust building that will foster conditions for peaceful coexistence among Russians and non-Russians in the Russian Federation.
A FOREWORD...

The thesis represents the latest stage of my educational journey, and the culmination of eight years of academic work that started in May 2008 with my acceptance into the DLS program at Georgetown. I would never have accomplished this project on my own and have many people to thank.

I first offer my thanks to God, who gave me curiosity, perseverance, the abilities to read both for enjoyment and research, a good memory for details, and a place on the Earth in 20th-21st century America with freedoms that all should enjoy but few do. I am blessed in many ways and try never to forget that.

Second, I thank my family, with a special emphasis on thanking my wife, Karla. She has been very patient with me on this project, always urges me to check my math on conclusions, and makes sure I include the human side of anything I am thinking or writing. Karla gave up many, many hours and weekends to this project, and always provided me with a strong sounding board. When I met her when I was 18 over 35 years ago, I knew I’d found someone who I wanted to walk life’s road with me. She makes me be a better person and encourages me to use my knowledge for good purposes. I try.

I also want to thank my children—Moria, Cassie and Wyatt—for their interest and support of my work. We lost a lot of time that I hope now to make up. The two sons I have added—Sean (Moria’s husband) and Kevin (Cassie, and soon)—are also a source of support, interest in my work, and sounding boards. The kids keep me young, and their achievements spurred me to keep on with this project.

To my DLS Committee—Eric, Marjorie and Joe—it has been a very long road and without you I could never have even started on the Thesis. I cannot repay you for your support, mentorship, time, and shared knowledge, except by perhaps helping others as you have helped me. Eric, I owe you. The entire DLS department at Georgetown has been supportive, and I must specifically mention Anne Ridder and Dr. Frank Ambrosio for their help to me. The DLS program and the people in it have inspired me all along.

I also thank my parents, Don Sr. and Sandra, and my wife’s parents, Ken and Shirley, for their efforts to raise and mentor me into a strong, thinking person. There are also some very special people I have met along life’s path who inspired me to read, write and think. Gertrude Foster, my great aunt, Barb Karst, my high school English teacher, and many many others. I am indebted to my friend Matt Gentry for his relentless support and encouragement—from Hawaii. He could have been on a beach, instead he was up at the crack of dawn listening to my latest ideas and urging me on. I think Matt wanted this Thesis more than I did at some points…he kept me going. Friends never let you fail.

Last, but not least, I need to thank my Russian teachers and there have been many. Learning Russian opened up the knowledge of the history and society in a way that would not be possible for me to access otherwise. Ella MacKay owns a special place in my heart, she pushed me very hard, praised me when I deserved it, and expressed deep pride in me. Lyudmila Lebedeva pushed me hard and taught me much.

Lastly, I need to thank a particular Russian teacher from 1986, who encouraged me to read Nicholas Bethell’s book *The Last Secret*. A few days later, when I told her I had finished it, she told me her father was an ROA officer under General Vlasev that was handed over to the Red Army in May 1945 in Austria. She had fled the USSR with her father, mother and family as the Germans retreated. She witnessed the hand-over of these men, and heard machine guns echoing for several days afterward. She cried as she told me this story, 41 years after that event occurred, because she knew her dad was killed there. She thanked me profusely for reading the book, in that it was his story, too. It was not about the ROA for her. I am ashamed to have forgotten her name, because her story inspired me to think deeper about history, wonder about its dark alleys and corners, and consider events that can mean different things to us based on our ethnic identities and perspectives. It was an impulse that propelled me to read, write, think, and chase knowledge about Russia, where the past is troubled, deep, and emotional. It is a fascinating journey.
CHAPTER ONE
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE PROBLEMS OF ETHNICITY AND
CONFLICT

Introduction

The interdisciplinary research project, hereafter referred to as “the thesis,” analyzed the problems of inter-ethnic violence in the Russian Federation—a long-standing problem that bedeviled the Czars, Soviet authorities, and now the leaders of the Russian Federation. Tensions between Russians and people from the northern Caucasus region and Central Asians are most acute in heavily Russian populated areas of northwestern, central and southern Russia. Over the past decade there have been numerous incidents of ethnic violence by Russian nationalists against the non-Russians in these areas, including attacks on people, destruction of property, security crack downs, and deportations targeting specific ethnic groups. The thesis analyzed the process of ethnic boundary hardening and interactive factors that increase Russia’s ethnic tensions. The thesis also described a moral justification for our involvement in this problem, the centers of influence in Russia and beyond that can be brought to bear, and the actions outsiders can take to help Russia address its ethnic tensions and improve its governance.

Terminology

Having established the reasons for writing, it was important to establish the terms of reference for the terminology that were used in the thesis. When looking at nationalism, it is especially important: in Terminological Chaos, distinguished American Humanist Award winning political theorist and anthropologist Walker Connor said that
confusion over terms related to ethnonationalism is a key barrier to understanding the phenomenon. The thesis relied on Connor’s analysis and historical sociologist Anthony D. Smith, historian Prasenjit Duara, anthropologist Fredrick Barth, and others for the identification of the key terms that were used throughout the thesis.

- “State” in the thesis means a specific geopolitical governing unit. For example, Russia is a state in Eurasia covering 18 million square kilometers and having a population of 143 million people.¹

- “Nation” is an abstract term. Connor defines it as “a social group of people who share a common ideology, institutions and sense of homogeneity… a sense of belonging associated with a particular territory considered to be peculiarly its own.”² He also noted that “the prime perquisite is subjective and consists of the self-identification of people with a group—it’s past, present, and, what is most important, it’s destiny.”³ People’s decision to identify with a group and what they believe about their ethnicity—i.e., their kinship and belief in the group’s separate origin and evolution—are important ingredients in ethnonationalism.⁴ Connor’s definition of nation—a voluntary choice by people to self-identify with an ethnic group and its space in time—was used in the thesis, focused on the issue of nationalism in Russia.

- The thesis does not use the term “nation-state,” a confusing term that combines the terms “nation” (a group sharing a common ideology, institutions, and sense of homogeneity) neatly aligned within the borders of a “state” (a specific geopolitical governing unit). This is rare and Connor called the term a non-sequitur…writing in 1971 he noted that only 12 states in the world had geopolitical borders that matched their nations.⁵

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² Connor, Ethnonationalism, 92-3.

³ Ibid., 4.

⁴ Ibid., 93.

⁵ Connor, Ethnonationalism, 96.
This number included Yugoslavia and the USSR—both of which have since collapsed and were replaced by numerous successor states. In Russia’s case, ethnic Russians account for roughly three-quarters of the population and a large Russian diaspora lives outside the Russian Federation in former Soviet states. It is not a “nation-state.”

- “Nationalism” is a loyalty to one’s self-identified ethniconsciousness or affinity/kinship group. It is not the same thing as patriotism to a geopolitical state. It is marked by a striving for some level of self-determination and can mean seeking a state or a homeland or at least a measure of autonomy from the dominant ethnic group. As opposed to ethnicity, it is marked by a willingness to put oneself at risk to defend the nation, including risking injury, arrest/prison, or even death.

- “Ethnicity” is defined as a mildly politicized presentation of ethnic differences and/or the construction of a cultural difference. The “us vs. them” aspect can be present in ethnicity but it is minimal. It may be self or other defined, i.e. the people themselves may not have identified their group’s uniqueness. Thus it differs from nation, which is self-defined.

- Barth identifies an “ethnic group” as an entity that (1) is biologically self-perpetuating, (2) shares fundamental cultural values and norms, (3) has its own unique communication and interaction within the group, and (4) has a distinct membership that identifies itself and is identified by others. This is the definition the thesis used for the term.

- “Crystalizing events” are key political events that cause people who had previously thought of themselves as mildly aware of their ethnicity to become dramatically defensive and passionately angry. After a crystalizing event, they become the fulcrum of more radical brands of nationalism.

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6 Definitions of “ethnicity” and “nationalism” are as stated by Professor Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer in Anthropology 480, Georgetown University, September 11, 2011. *Ethnicity* (defined by Benedict Anderson in Imagined Communities as a person’s mild to strong attenuation and emotional attachments to an ethnic group identity/distinctiveness, ethnic pride, and a strong awareness of group’s distinctive language, culture, religion, history, etc.) and *nationalism* (defined by theorists Walker Connor in Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding and Ernst Gellner in Nations and Nationalism as the striving for an ethnically pure state or homeland for the group in question). Nationalism can include a willingness to act and risk everything (even life) to back up these claims and “defend” one’s ethnic group and homeland.

7 Ibid., and Connor, Ethnonationalism, 102-3.


Connor discusses ethnonationalism as the advocacy of, or support for, the interests of a particular ethnic group, especially with regard to its national independence or self-determination.  

**Research Questions.** Regarding the problem of Russia’s inter-ethnic tensions and violence, the thesis used interdisciplinary research—including history, social science, political science, anthropology, and applied ethics—to answer four empirical research questions and two values questions. The empirical questions were:

- Q1: What is the process of ethnonational boundary formation in Russia?
- Q2: What are the interactive factors for the escalating ethnic violence?
- Q3: What societal problems are being created by ethnonational boundary formation processes in Russia?
- Q4: Which institutions have influence to address these problems?

The values questions were:

- VQ1: What can be done/what is needed to resolve the issues peacefully; more precisely, what policy measures should the Russian

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government enact to fulfill its responsibilities\textsuperscript{11} to protect minorities from attacks by Russian nationalists?

- \textbf{VQ2:} Should outsiders get involved to protect the minorities under attack in Russia? If so, who and to do what?

\textbf{Methodology.} The methodology for the thesis included a four-part approach:

\textbf{First} was the development of a theoretical framework on the process of ethnic boundary formation, focused on Russia. It included a synergistic analysis of the theoretical perspectives of Anthony D. Smith on the \textit{ethnie}\textsuperscript{12} roots of identity, Walker Conner’s discussions of ethnonationalism, Prasenjit Duara’s theory of the process of “hardening” ethnic boundaries, and Fredrik Barth’s theories of ethnic boundary maintenance and interaction.

\textbf{Second}, the thesis’ framework identified and elaborated on the interactive factors of escalating political violence and analyzes diverse categories of data to explore the reasons for the violence. Each category was important to answering the research questions and exploring the embedded social and political set of contexts that have led to the crystalizing events, polarizations and the increase of xenophobic violence in Russia.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{11} Refers to applicable UN Charters regarding protections and treatment of minorities by the recognized government within its UN-recognized territory. Russia, as a UN member, has agreed to abide by the agreements.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ethnie} is a French term which is a union of cultural differences and a sense of historical community; see page 8 of thesis.

\textsuperscript{13} “Crystalizing event,” as described in Chapter One; from Mandelstam Balzer, “From ethnicity to nationalism,” \textit{Social Legacy}, 58.
\end{footnotesize}
Third, based on the causal analysis of the characteristics, patterns, and trends of ethnic boundary formation, political violence, and contextual factors, the thesis identified outcomes of concern related to the processes of ethnonationalism, boundary hardening and interactive actors of ethnic tensions in Russia that have resulted in violence by Russians against some non-Russians.

Fourth, the thesis offered steps to take to reduce the pressures of ethnonationalism, and interactive factors that are hardening ethnic boundaries within the multiethnic Russian state between Russians and non-Russians. This included a recommended list of actions and policies the Russian government should take to address the ethnic violence to protect non-Russians, lower the tensions, and encourage trust building that will foster conditions for peaceful coexistence.

We now turn to the development of the interdisciplinary theoretical framework that bounded the analysis about ethnic tensions and nationalism in the Russian Federation, aided by insights of Smith, Connor, Duara, Barth, and other researchers.

Anthony D. Smith and the Ethnie Roots of Identity

In *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (1986) historical sociologist Anthony D. Smith—one of the founders of the interdisciplinary field of nationalism studies—analyzed the differences between ethnic groupings and nations, noting that the “idea of nationhood is made of myths and distortions.” He felt there are symbiotic elements that create ethnic identity myths that could lead to the formation of a nation: “There can be no identity without memory, no collective purpose without myth, and identity and purpose are
necessary elements of the concept of a nation.” Noting political scientist John Armstrong’s work on ethnic communities, Smith believed that understanding the power of myth, symbol and memory is foundational to understanding “the most perplexing feature of investigation into ethnic and national phenomena: the curiously simultaneous solidity and insubstantiality of ethnic communities and nations.”¹⁴

To analyze the formation of ethnic identity as the basis for nation-forming, Smith used ethnie—a French term which is a union of cultural differences and a sense of historical community. According to Smith, it is a simultaneous cultural individuality and shared history of culture. Ethnies are not based on objective factors, such as genetic, geographic, or political aspects. They are the subjective creation of a sense of common ethnicity. Smith believed that ethnies are based on sedentarization, nostalgia along the lines of what historian and political scientist Benedict Anderson called a “yearning” for a lost past, organized religion, and interstate warfare including mobilization, sacrifices for the group, bonding, and myth making. Ethnie have six components—a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity. According to Smith, the unique ethnic features associated with an ethnie harden over time. The members share the unique features. These can change, and thereby limit and condition the interactions of succeeding generations and guide the actions of the members. These six components provide a

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working definition of ethnicity, separate from political, class, and religious identifications.\textsuperscript{15}

In *Ethnic Origin*, Smith noted that analysis of *ethnie* and a number of subjective factors—collective will, attitude and sentiments and the “more permanent cultural attributes of memory, value, myth, and symbolism”—tell us more about the distinctive qualities and qualities of a national (ethnic) community than can be gleaned from objective factors such as population size, economic resources, communications systems, and bureaucratic centralization. Understanding premodern *ethnie* and the durable aspects of ethnic communal identity that conveys shared meanings and experiences among people and over generations (such as sacred texts, shrines and tombs; art, dress, music, poetry, language, hierarchy, and other symbols) and the core of myths, memories, and symbols that transmits an ethnic identity over time is the key to understanding the nation that arises from them.\textsuperscript{16}

Smith said that ethnic ties, once formed are extraordinarily persistent and resilient and reflect the bases that formed them: the myths, memories and symbols that have evolved over time. Myths and symbols are exemplified by customs, dance, and art that provide a common ancestry that is venerated by succeeding generations. These “guard the borders” of the community, and show who is “in” it. Current members obey, and future members revere, the symbols and myths. Resistance and renewal also protect

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 21-2, 22-30 and 32-9.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 3, 4 and 14-15.
ethnicity. According to Smith, this includes recovery of lost territories associated with the group, rediscovery of the past through archeology and cultural renewal, and defense of the group from military threats, socio-economic challenges, and contact with other cultures. Smith assesses that the transition from *ethnie* to nation requires politicization, communal memory via priests and scribes, creation of a territorial homeland, and citizenship/ inclusion. This path reflects Anderson’s “imagined community:” an imagined collective entity, including who belongs there and how the members are to act. The process underscores the “antiquity of nations…nations need heroes and golden ages.”17

In *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (2002), Smith stated that the key to understanding nations and nationalism is having insight into the “persisting frameworks and legacies” of cultures and ethnic ties throughout history, as opposed to seeing them as a consequence of a shrinking globe and increasing interdependence. Nationalism depends on specific cultural and historical contexts; the nations evolving through history are based on pre-existing and highly specific cultural and ethnic formations. Globalization does not cause nation-formation or nationalism; instead, it offers a venue for updating of ethnic pasts and the re-casting of cultures. Smith stated that we must trace the underlying territorial and ethnic contexts and see a wider historical context for cultural and political communities to understand the proliferation of ethnic fragmentation, explosive racial conflict, xenophobic racism and nationalism. This perspective gives observers insight to

17 Ibid., 41, 49, 50-7, 153-171 and 213.
understand the underlying emotional depth and social hold of nationalism— and the resurgence of ethnic nationalism at a time when objective conditions such as a shrinking globe, increasing contacts between groups, and fast communications would seem to render it obsolete. Without a perspective that accounts for the enduring power of pre-modern ethnic symbolism and modes of organization, we could misdiagnose the reasons for nationalism and not see the continuing appeal of national identity. 18

Smith credited the ability of nationalism to survive and grow in a more interconnected world to the “chameleon-like ability” of nationalism to morph and meet the perceptions and needs of ethnic communities and their factions and individuals. The cultural unit of a nation is not always congruent with the political unit. As we noted in the terms of reference earlier, the locations of nations and the geopolitical borders of states often do not match. Economic explanations for nationalism do not hold up, either. Smith saw a limited correlation between technological advances and economic success and the rise of ethnic and political domains. He felt there is also no link between economic stagnation/decline and the emergence of nations, as was discussed by Connor in 1984. 19

Smith stated that nationalists see the nation as a community of history and destiny— and that history requires and produces a national destiny. He referred to Anderson’s analysis that the destiny of each nation is to recreate its spirit in modern terms and under transformed conditions. Smith also believed that the group’s attachment


19 Ibid., 13 and 27-8.
to a homeland is vitally important to nationalism; history, destiny, attachment and 
homeland reinforce each other in a quest to return to roots. He stated that not all 
nationalism desires statehood or independence—some nationalists simply seek cultural 
autonomy for their group, for example. Overall, the goals of nationalism are national 
unity and autonomy in a public culture. Smith found a commonality between the types of 
policies inspired by nationalism, and felt that nationalism is a single set of phenomena 
despite the ideological differences in its forms.²⁰

Smith termed his outlook to be “ethno-symbolist,” one who emphasizes the role of 
individuals and their ideals in nationalism. Rational and irrational concepts mix in 
nationalism—an analyst can define a nation and nationalism in psychological terms, but 
lack the ability to explain them in objective terms. Smith warned that we cannot rely 
solely on either rational or subjective factors to understand it, disagreeing with 
anthropologist Ernst Gellner’s dismissal of subjective factors, i.e. the social 
psychological variables of nationalism. Smith felt a combined approach is required, and 
agreed with Connor that one must consider both objective and subjective factors to 
understand nationalism. Subjective, cultural, social, and social psychological elements 
such as emotion, will, symbol, memory, and felt kinship are key. Nationalism is not 
confined to the political sphere; nation-forming is associated with cultural identity, social 
harmony, and moral purpose and these are independent of political action or expression. 
Movements of cultural regeneration—a form of cultural nationalism—are not modern

²⁰ Ibid., 33, 35-7, and 45.
phenomena. “Culture” and “identity” should not be severed from premodern institutions; these provide the bases for subsequent nations.\textsuperscript{21}

In \textit{Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era}, Smith warned that focusing just on elites’ nationalism or “everyday” nationalism by non-elites is problematic; either can be distortive. While narratives tend to be developed by elites, the narratives and associated images require an emotional connection, i.e., “a truth content” that strikes a chord with the masses and leads them to contribute to the process of constructing the nation. This symbiosis illustrates the power and durability of nations and nationalism. The relationship between narratives, acceptance of truths, and the emotional power of the past are important parts of nationalism. The bonds involve collective conduct and people will create an affinity and a moral connection to their nation that extend beyond a common language and shared religion. Smith said that other ethno-symbolists have envisioned the process of nation-formation as a collection of cultural identities that evolve over a long past and are linked to the present. Relationships between the past and present create cultural continuity, recurrence, and reinterpretation. Smith identified these factors as critical to the resilience of nationalism. Continuity with the previous cultural group identity is found in collective proper names, language, and ethnic “landscapes” that can linger long through the past and into the present. Recurrences of \textit{ethnies} and nations are a cultural resource and a form of human association that have appeared throughout history—and there can be breaks and changes. \textit{Ethnies} can be stronger in one area and weaker in others. How groups later reinterpret these \textit{ethnies} shows the relationship

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 72, 77, and 81-2.
\end{footnote}
between the past, present and future as nationalist elites rediscover “authentic” histories and seek links to previous golden ages.\textsuperscript{22}

In *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Smith argued that nations precede nationalism; the sentiment of belonging is the initial criteria of nationhood. This is not a modern development. He cited historian Adrian Hastings, who argued that the preconditions for nations existed well before the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century, i.e. the “modern” period. According to Hastings, the “deep cultural resources” of language, ethnicity and religion provide sources for nation-formation and nationalism. The historical and structural bases of nationhood, such as ethnicity, language, and religion support nationalism. Civic nationhood comes later. Ancient nations—Egypt, Greece, and Israel—all had attachments and association with certain territories, language, and religion, and modern nationalists later harvested the group’s golden ages for symbols and myths.

Smith believed these older nations represented ethnic categories— and offered a common origin and history, solidified through intermarriage, kinship myths, rituals, and symbols. These can turn into a full-fledged ethnic community—an *ethnie*—in a named human population with myths of shared origins, common culture, a link to a homeland, and a sense of solidarity. The *ethnie* provide the ingredients for nationalism. Patterns emerge, such as ethnic categories, networks, and communities. The process of developing ethnic categories is ongoing in Africa, Asia, and Europe. There is no predetermined end state to this evolutionary process. What makes nationalism real to people is the discovery and use of their collective memories, symbols, myths, values, and traditions, based on

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 85 and 89-91.
these histories, and their subsequent voluntary identifications with a group. This is the inner realm of *ethnies* that must be understood to understand nationalism.23

Lessons from *Ethnic Origins* Applicable to the Thesis

In *Ethnic Origin*, Smith said that the roots of nationhood are formed by the choice of people to self-identify as members of a nation and hold close the nation’s associated symbols, myths, and homeland. Having made the choice, people take on the cultural and ethnic identities associated with the group. The key elements for forming an ethnic community/identity are memory of an ethnic identity having existed over time, *myths* that illustrate the uniqueness of the group, and a *historical destiny/purpose* for the ethnic group to fulfill. Smith said that ethnic identity is simultaneously hard and malleable: “the curiously simultaneous solidity and insubstantiality of ethnic communities and nations.” Ethnic identities are durable once formed, but the boundaries of the identity can shift and flex.

Myths, memories, and symbols are the vital components of ethnic identity that enable it to hold up over time. People make a subjective choice to share the group’s myths, memories and symbols in order to be included in the group. *Ethnie* are the building blocks of an ethnic group, and are comprised of an association with a group’s name, a myth of origin, shared history, a homeland, and a sense of oneness with the group. *Ethnie* are removed from political, class and religious identities—and efforts to analyze ethnicity through those lenses distort an understanding of what drives ethnic

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23 Ibid., 102, 104, 106-7, 109-10, 112-18 and 127.
nationalism. Ethnic ties are very strong once they are formed, and symbols and shared hardships deepen the ties and form the group’s boundaries. Ethnic responses rally the group to defend it from threats such as war, socio-economic stresses, and/or increased cultural contacts. These also further define and distinguish the ethnie.

Myths, memories, symbols, a sense of oneness with the group, and the idea of a homeland are key features of ethnic identity to analyze in Russia’s case. Russians distinguish themselves from non-Russians and feel the need to defend Russian “space” from “invaders.” Myths and symbols are important to Russians and non-Russians, especially as they struggle over the Soviet legacy. These insights answer Q1: What is the process of ethnonational boundary creation in Russia? and Q2: What are the interactive factors for the escalating ethnic violence?

Lessons from Nations and Nationalism

Smith showed that ethnic identity and nationalism are able to stay alive over time as people continue to identify with the myths, memories, homeland, and symbols tied to their ethnic identity. Interpretation and storylines of myths and memories wobble over time, but they endure and may or may not align with political, economic, and social considerations. Economic and political considerations may exacerbate or ease ethnic identities and tensions between groups. They do not, however, cause or form the identities. Nationalisms each their unique stories and conditions, but the underlying requirements of myth, memory, symbols, and homeland are the same for all cases. These elements are required precursors to establish an ethnic identity and keep it alive and resilient. Once ethnic identities exist, they compete with other identities. The end state is
not pre-determined; it does not necessarily lead to calls for independence or ethnic conflict.

Identifying the myth, memory, symbols, and homeland of a group and understanding how the elements of ethnicity and nationalism relate to other groups helps us to understand tensions and problems associated with it. In Russia’s case, the thesis analyzed the process for the nationalism and boundary formation for Russians and non-Russian groups and the interactive factors that harden the boundaries and cause ethnic tensions. These insights answered **Q1: What is the process of ethnonational boundary formation in Russia?** and **Q2: What are the interactive factors for the escalating ethnic violence?**

Smith’s approach as an ethno-symbolist shows the importance of looking at rational and irrational factors of nationalism. As he said, we can define a nation and nationalism in rational terms, but not explain why it forms or grows in those terms. We must also look not just at the elites or the masses in isolation. It is important to consider how these groups work together to establish and maintain an ethnic identity over time. Smith shows us the symbiosis. Myths and imagery are captured and reinterpreted by elites, such as historians, writers, and poets, but they must resonate with the masses. The willingness of the masses to believe the narratives and make an emotional connection to the identity over time is as critical to nationalism as the myths and imagery created by the elites. This is important for considering identity and reinterpretations in Russia. The changes to identities that were wrought by the implosion of the USSR 25 years ago are still being processed. The elites’ attempt to fashion new myths, symbols, a homeland, and
destiny for Russia and Russians from the Soviet past is an ongoing project. It is an interactive factor of ethnic tensions.

Smith’s statement that there is no predetermined destination for ethnic identity and its evolutionary processes is also critical to understanding nationalism’s nature: it is a process and not a destination. Nationalists may seek cultural autonomy, protections, and greater power within the state—or have other goals that meet their needs short of the ultimate that will satisfy their needs. When the precursors are in place, including myths, symbols, territory, and a sense of destiny, then ethnies form and the process begins and continues. How generations interpret and engage with these precursors can increase or decrease the pressures for ethnic tensions. This process is ongoing in Russia, and understanding the myths, symbols, territory, and sense of destiny and the power they convey was vital to understanding nationalism in Russia. It provided the context for answering Q2: **What are the interactive factors for the escalating ethnic violence?** having analyzed the causes, the thesis answered Q3: **What societal problems are being created by this process in Russia?**

**Walker Conner and Ethnonationalism**

In *Self-Determination: The Next Stage* (1966) Connor examined the phenomena of ethnonationalism and interethnic violence. In the 1960s, multi-national states were experiencing the power of competing nationalisms, as evidenced by ethnic violence that increased after World War Two (WWII). Connor saw cultural and political consciousness and the tensions associated with them as the main causes of the accelerating ethnic
violence.\textsuperscript{24} This trend seemed counterintuitive at the time. After the war, nationalism was expected to decline as a global world order—overseen by the UN and regional alliances and blocs such as NATO and the Warsaw Pact took hold. Connor felt that “events since WWII clearly establish that national consciousness is not on the wane as a political force, but is quite definitely on the ascendancy…the proven tenacity and emotional power of nationalism make this abstraction a most formidable opponent.”\textsuperscript{25}

Connor saw a number of reasons for this, including overreach by central governments and expansion of global mass communications. In \textit{Self-Determination}, he noted that even totalitarian governments struggled with the problems, despite all the coercive tools at their disposal. Moscow in particular had enormous centralized coercive power and applied it against the problem of ethnic tensions in the USSR but had “failed in its efforts to eradicate nationalism.” While it tolerated non-Russian languages and maintained a “superficial guise” of cultural autonomy, it was simultaneously eroding the “wellspring” of non-Russian cultures such as Islam and angering non-Russians by Russification. As a result, the “enduring Latvian, Uzbek, and Ukraine nationalism posed a problem of a serious magnitude for the Soviets…the enmity of groups towards acculturation represented a more formidable enemy than had been contemplated.”\textsuperscript{26}


\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 24-5.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 14 and 21.
Connor felt that the expanding reach of mass media and peoples also increased their awareness of other groups, further fueling nationalism. He pointed to a 1962 UNESCO study that indicated that 70 percent of the world’s population felt “the meaningful world” ends with their villages. Based on this, an improvement in global communications’ reach and speed would cause more ethnic awareness, contract, and tensions. This would probably lead to “the ethnic hodgepodes in Asia and Africa presenting a whole host of new demands for the redrawing of political borders.”

In Self Determination, Connor noted that by the late 1960s no government had found a successful recipe for resolving the cultural and ethnic tensions associated with nationalism: “Authoritarian and democratic, Communist and non-Communist societies have been similarly affected.” As noted in the Soviet case, authoritarian states struggled with the problems as much as democracies despite all the instruments at their disposal, testifying to the enduring power of ethnic feelings. Connor also described the “opposing maxims” of self-determination: an ethnic group’s right to seek its own state was countered by the right of the multinational state to defend its territorial integrity, internal order, and to legislate against separatism, which would be seen by the state as “treasonable acts.” Thus, the state’s right to keep its territorial boundaries intact ensured that the solution most likely to release ethnonational tensions—separation and the group’s

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27 Ibid., 18.
28 Ibid., 24.
29 Ibid., 17.
30 Ibid., 19.
ability to protect itself within its own geopolitical state—was closed off. He assessed that multinational states, when pressured, tended to be less democratic in response to the growing threat of nationalistic movements, further increasing ethnic tensions.

Connor explored the power of emotion in nationalism in *Self Determination*, noting that it is strong enough to push aside rationality regarding the practical matters of independence. Small territorial size and the difficulty of self-governance seemed to offer no match for the emotional power of self-determination in those cases where the sentiments of the national group were decisive. How minority groups have been assimilated into a multinational state also affects their “resistance levels.” Connor observed that if the minority people had been completely conquered, had disproportionately smaller numbers resisting assimilation, and large numbers of people voluntarily immigrating into the country, as in the U.S. case, assimilation had a better chance of success. Conversely, if the situation pitted two large and neighboring ethnic groups, each claiming title to the territory, assimilation would be much less likely.

Connor believed that many analysts seemed to misunderstand the sources of ethnonationalism and underestimate its power. Assumptions that ethnic identity would be of short duration and wither away after WWII due to the growth of markets, industries, and towns, and eventually of literacy and mass communication, and that ethnic

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31 Ibid., 20 and 24.

32 Ibid., 21.
loyalty was compatible with loyalty to the state had proved faulty.  
In *Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?* (1972) Connor gave numerous causes for this. The idea that modernization dissolves ethnic loyalties was contradicted by the facts. By 1970, multiethnic states around the globe faced ethnic identity problems and borders were being challenged by ethnic pressures. Instead of helping to resolve ethnic tensions through greater awareness of other groups, faster communication exacerbated the tensions. Groups and members were becoming more aware of the distinctions between themselves and others. Connor argued that a large source of confusion about ethnonationalism was the term “nation-state,” as nation and nationalism includes the loyalty to one’s ethnic group/nation, not necessarily to the state/geopolitical entity. Connor felt that calling a non-homogenous country a nation-state ignored the key difference in the loyalties.

*Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying* identified and emphasized the emotional power of ethnonationalism, which Connor felt was underrated or ignored by empirical analysis. He felt that ethnic strife was too often “superficially” connected to language, religion, customs, economic inequity, etc. Connor assessed that the basis of ethnic conflict was instead tied to a deeper, enduring “basic identity” which manifested itself in the “us vs. them” syndrome: “cultural assimilation need not mean psychological

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34 Ibid., 35-7.

assimilation.”  

He did not think that economic factors were key influences on the emotionalism of ethnic nationalism; nationalists do not care about economic realities. As in *Self Determination*, Connor also cited the U.S. case for assimilation as a source of confusion about the true impetus of assimilative processes: a person’s choice for or against inclusion. The state and the majority group cannot force the unassimilated to relinquish their cultures. If pressed, the unassimilated resists vigorously, leading to “cultural imperialism”—physical or psychological coercion by the majority group—and even stronger resistance. Connor saw the refusal to assimilate as a common feature in ethnic struggles...most of these situations featured “two or more large groups, each ensconced in a territory that it considers its traditional homeland and cultural preserve and refusing to assimilate.”

In *Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying*, Connor again pushed back on the notion that rapid, global communications would homogenize populations and decrease ethnic disharmony. Instead, he felt that the opposite had occurred: “there is little evidence of modern communications destroying ethnic consciousness, and much evidence of their augmenting it.” Perceiving assimilation as a one-way process was also a mistake; the time and events prior to the age of the nation state was important to understand. He discussed the inability or unwillingness of most inhabitants to identify beyond their

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36 Ibid., 46.  
37 Ibid., 47.  
38 Ibid., 50.  
39 Ibid., 51.
ethnic group and its impacts on nationalism: “The ethnic nation may well constitute the outer limits of that identity.” These misunderstandings, and a lack of awareness about the emotional power of ethnic identity, led to symptoms of ethnic disharmony being diagnosed as its causes.

In *Eco- or Ethnonationalism?* (1979) Connor further analyzed the influence of economics in ethnic tensions, stating “the growing tendency of peoples to resent and resist being ruled by those deemed to be aliens appears to operate quite independently of the economic variable” and the “causal connection between economic forces and ethnonationalism should not be inferred simply from the fact of coexistence.” The USSR offered an instructive example. Centralized economic planning in the hands of national and republic leaders and planners enabled Soviet authorities to consistently raise economic growth rates in non-Russian republics above the average for the Union for half a century, yet ethnic problems persisted. Economic discrepancies between two ethnic groups could exert a “major but indirect influence,” especially if the discrepancy led to a significant inward or outward migration from an ethnic homeland. Using Switzerland as a case in point, he said that an “invasion of the economic homeland because of an ethnic boom is even more incendiary than an outmigration.”

40 Ibid., 54 and 56.


42 Ibid., 152.
On economic issues, Connor identified “the willingness of people to accept a lower living standard, rather than allowing immigration, is a remarkable testament to the primacy of ethnonational sentiment over economic considerations.”

Connor believed the emotional pull of ethnic homelands trumps logic for adherents: “The magnetic tug of an ethnic homeland and the desire to preserve its ethnonational integrity can thus counter economic incentives.” Ethnonational groups agitate for independence with the realization that it will lead to a worsened economic state; the “emotional tug” of a homeland, even if it is too small to be viable economically, compels them to pursue it.

Connor pointed out in *Eco- or Ethnonationalism* that political powers clearly understand the emotional power of ethnonationalism and try to access it. For example, even as Marxist-Leninists in the USSR disparaged nationalism as a hold-over from capitalism, they appealed to it in their propaganda in the 1920s. Summing up in *Eco- or Ethnonationalism*, Connor stated that “ethnonationalism is not independent of the economic variable; economic factors are more likely to serve as a catalytic agent, exacerbator, or choice of battleground. Marxist-Leninists have discovered that, when forced to choose between national and class loyalty, people are most apt to opt for the former.”

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43 Ibid., 154.

44 Ibid., 155-6.


46 Ibid., 161.
In *Ethnonationalism in the First World: The Present in Historical Perspective* (1975), Connor discussed the phenomenon of ethnonationalism in Western Europe. Instead of stability, long observable trends showed that emotions over ethnicity were boiling up there too. He pointed to the examples of the Basques, Bretons, Welsh, and other groups as part of “a natural and predictable stage in a process that has been underway for approximately two centuries.” These struggles were entered into on the “philosophical notion of the right to rule is vested in the people is linked to a particular, ethnically defined people; the conviction that one’s own people should not be ruled by those deemed as aliens is a potential challenger to the legitimacy of multinational structures.” Time had not diminished the yearning for ethnic autonomy in the first world, nor the rejection of rule by those they deemed to be aliens.

In *Ethnonationalism in the First World* Connor turned again to his observations of inter-ethnic contacts resulting from modernization and rapid, global communications. The Information Age’s improvements in communication had “acted as catalysts for ethnonationally inspired demands” and made people more aware of history and self-determination movements. He underscored that he felt the effects on ethnic tensions were catalytic, not causal. Ethnic strife was not predicated on language, religion, customs, economic inequity or some other tangible element. While the past need not be prologue,

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48 Ibid., 170-2 and 174.

49 Ibid., 178-9.
the example of Alsace Lorraine, where ethnonationalism resurfaced in 1970 after disappearing earlier, was illustrative of an abiding resentment of rule by aliens (which Connor felt never disappears).\textsuperscript{50}

In \textit{Ethnonationalism} (1984), Connor observed that the underlying cause of ethnic disharmony was the “ethnonationalist bond.” Many had failed to appreciate its “emotional depth” and the power kinship that transcended socioeconomic classes and the boundaries of geopolitical states. As already noted in \textit{Ethno- or Ethnonationalism}, politicians understand its power and make appeals to it. However, analysts avoid it because the bond is emotional and non-rational. Analysts approaching the emotional power of the bond through reason mistake symptoms for causes, as symptoms can be analyzed empirically and emotions cannot. The bond reflects the choice of believers who accept a myth of common descent; this is what creates a “nation.” Facts matter less than perceptions of facts when it comes to the bond; people act on the perception and not necessarily on a fact.\textsuperscript{51} In \textit{Ethnonationalism}, Connor explored categories of states that suffered from ethnic conflict and associated nationalisms. The USSR, for example, was a “multi-homeland, multinational state,” with numerous ethnic homelands and Russians as a majority in many. These competing nationalisms, trapped within the border of a state, left the state unstable and riven with ethnic tensions. Ethnonationalism neither presaged

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 180 and 182.

state independence nor led to “meaningful autonomy.” It merely created a situation in which further ethnic conflict was likely.\textsuperscript{52}

In \textit{From Tribe to Nation?} (1988), Connor delved further into the emotional and irrational foundations of ethnonationalism. A nation refers “to a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related…it can be defined as the largest grouping predicated on a myth of common descent. There is a five tiered hierarchy described by cultural anthropologists: family, band, clan, tribe, and nation…the nation is a self-defined entity.”\textsuperscript{53} Given the subjective nature of national consciousness, it is not only enormously difficult to tell when, but sometimes even if, a nation has emerged. Far more consequential are perceived physical differences between the two peoples, a formidable barrier to the inculcation of the myth of common ancestry which the government tries to cultivate.\textsuperscript{54}

Connor noted that nation formation is an unfinished process in Europe, citing historian Eugene Weber: “We have seen, in short, the nation is not a given reality but as a work in progress, a model of something at once to be built and to be treated for political reasons as already in existence.” Governments, intellectuals, and other elites have often anticipated national consciousness and treated it as a reality long before it was evident.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 74, 78, and 83.


\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 217-19.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 220 and 223.
He also noted that nation-formation is a process, not an occurrence. It is a subjective concept, a point in the process at which a sufficient portion of a people has internalized the national identity so as to cause nationalism to become an effective force for mobilizing the masses which does not lend itself to precise calculation. It is also a recent process—any assessment that a nation existed prior to the late nineteenth century should be treated cautiously.56

In Beyond Reason: The Nature of the Ethnonational Bond (1993), Connor further examined the cognitive dissonance that complicated our understanding of ethnonationalism. Nationalism and patriotism refer to two distinct loyalties. Nationalism is an emotional bond to one’s ethnic group, and patriotism is loyalty to the state and its institutions. In most cases, these do not coincide and can compete for the allegiance of the individual.57 Using the USSR as a case in point, Connor said Gorbachev discovered that a sense of loyalty to the USSR for 70 years was no match for the sense of nationalism demonstrated by nearly all of the peoples of the Soviet Union, even including the Russian nation. The Soviet Union, which had a comprehensive, intensive, and multigenerational program to replace nationalism with Soviet patriotism, failed to inculcate that patriotism across all ethnic groups.58 In addition, objective/tangible criteria, such as common language, territory, religion, and the like, are insufficient to determine whether or not a group constitutes a nation.

56 Ibid., 223-4.


58 Ibid, 196-7 and 208.
Connor refined his ideas on the core aspects of ethnonationalism in *Beyond Reason*: “The essence of a nation is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it from all nonmembers in a most vital way. It is not what is, but what people perceive what is, that influences attitudes and behavior. A subconscious belief in the group’s separate origin and evolution is an important ingredient in national psychology. At the core of what he called “ethnopsychology” is a sense of shared blood; those who mobilize nations understand this and appeal to it.” Nationalism is a mass phenomenon: “It is not the leader, but the mass instinct to which he or she appeals, that interests us.” He pointed out that a diaspora can play an integral role in ethnonationalism. A shared sense of ancestral ties can become enmeshed in foreign policy and raise the issue of divided loyalties if important segments of the group are separated by political borders.

Connor, in *Beyond Reason*, emphasized the irrationality and emotionalism of ethnonationalism: “The dichotomy between the realm of national identity and that of reason has proven vexing to students of nationalism. The national bond is subconscious and emotional rather than conscious and rational in its inspiration. It can be analyzed but not explained rationally.” Missing the nature and impetus for ethnonationalism could lead to faulty logic and misdiagnosis: “Failure to understand the psychological wellsprings of the nation most certainly contributes to the tendency to undervalue the potency of

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59 Ibid., 197.

60 Ibid., 198.

61 Ibid., 202.
nationalism.”\textsuperscript{62} He also noted that an ethnic homeland is less a geographic area than an emotional “home” for an ethnic group, stating “There is a spiritual bond between nation and territory.”\textsuperscript{63}

In Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding (1994), Connor said that the right of “self determination of nations”—supported by statesmen creating global governments like the League of Nations and the UN-- was never intended as a universal right. Nonetheless, it has been appropriated “by any group desirous of repudiating foreign rule” to gain independence and/or autonomy.\textsuperscript{64} He notes that the desire is strong and enduring--“the refusal of people to accept political rule by those deemed to be aliens”—and has created an explosion of political separatism and conflict in multinational states across the globe since the 1940s based on ethnicity, language, geographic bifurcation, colonial influences, religions, and cultural differences.

**Lessons from Connor’s Ethnonationalism and Is a Nation, State, Ethnic Group…**

Russia, like the USSR before it, is a multi-homeland, multinational state. It has 23 ethnic homelands, republics and autonomous regions (okrugs).\textsuperscript{65} Although Russians are

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 207.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 203-5.

\textsuperscript{64} Connor, “Ethnonationalism,” Ethnonationalism, 5.

\textsuperscript{65} Two republics in the North-Western Federal Okrug (Kareliya and Komi), two in Southern Federal Okrug (Adygeya and Kalmykiya), six in North Caucasus Federal Okrug (Chechen, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Karbadino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkess, and North Ossetia-Alaniya), six in the Volga Federal Okrug (Bashkortostan, Chuvash, Marii-El, Mordovia, Tatarstan, and Udmurt), two in Urals Federal Okrug (Khanty-Mansii and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrugs), four in Siberia Federal Okrug (Altai, Buryatiya,
the majority in many of these homelands and in the Russian Federation, there is no Russian “republic” or homeland for Russians. This makes Russian nationalists feel that Russians are disadvantaged. Competing nations and nationalisms are trapped within the geopolitical borders of the multinational Russian Federation, much like the USSR before it. As Connor assessed, this is a precondition where continuing ethnic competition and tensions between groups is very likely.

In *Is a Nation, State, Ethnic Group*...Connor noted that the experience of an ethnic group of being ruled or invaded by aliens and resistance are key features of ethnonationalism. The experience of many minorities in Russia under rule by Russians through history, and Russian complaints about recent immigrant “swarming” of “Russian” areas in the northwest, west, and some southern areas of the Russian Federation, is part of the context for understanding ethnic struggles in Russia. Additionally, Connor noted in *Is a Nation, State, Ethnic Group*...the willingness of people to act irrationally against their own economic interests in defense of their nation—an important insight to consider when thinking about ethnic tensions in Russia.

**Lessons from Connor’s *Ethnonationalism in the First World, Beyond Reason, and From Tribe to Nation***

In *Ethnonationalism in the First World*, Connor noted that global communications have “acted as catalysts for ethnonationally inspired demands,” making people ever more aware of their ethnic group’s history, efforts at self-determination, and feeling threatened by other groups. The Information Age has not been a causative agent for ethnic tensions,
but Connor showed the power of increased communications and contacts add to the tensions. In the Russian case—given its size and remoteness—Information Age communications allows rapid, persistent and biased coverage of ethnic incidents spanning the Russian Federation’s 11 time zones, affording volume, depth, and timeliness of information flows that would have been inconceivable even a decade ago.

In *Beyond Reason*, Connor noted the choice, the emotional bond, the “certainty” of unique origin, destiny and shared blood are all critical elements for understanding nationalism. In the Russian Federation, Russians and other ethnic groups are struggling over identities and history. For Russians, using Russian Orthodox religion as an identity, discussing Russia’s destiny, and remembering the blood that was shed in defending Russia from Hitler and other invaders are parts of the context that leads nationalists today to defend Russia from *chuzhii* (Russian, translation: enemy alien Other), aka “invaders.” *Beyond Reason* describes the challenge of rationally analyzing the irrational national bond, the psychological and spiritual associations with myths, symbols, and homeland. The bond may be analyzed--but not explained--in rational terms. Misdiagnosing the bond and the impetus for ethnonationalism can mislead observers into seeing the symptoms as causes.

In *From Tribe to Nation*, Connor assessed that nation-formation—everywhere—is a work in progress; it can shift, stall, fall apart, not lead to independence or secession, or be redefined by its members. Assuming nation-formation will lead to a specific outcome and that the process cannot be reversed or collapse is erroneous. That means tensions can
ebb and flow as well. He also reminds us that the geopolitical borders encompassing a multiethnic state such as Russia, or the borders around its 23 ethnic homelands, were artificially constructed in the 1920s and don’t completely correspond to the areas where ethnic groups live. Ethnic tensions have resulted. Unless the borders change, the people and the tensions are locked in by them. The refusal to be ruled by aliens has a tenacious, emotional power. Assimilation is much harder than governments realize. As proven in the Soviet case, it can endure despite decades of concerted, central government efforts to address it. No country has found the magic solution to abate the problems of cultural and ethnic tensions.

Connor also noted that economic factors are catalysts and “exacerbators” of ethnonationalist violence, but these are not the causative factors of nationalism. Economic competition in Russia between Russians and non-Russians is an interactive factor for rising tensions. The role it plays in ethnic tensions is an important consideration to understanding the problems Russia is facing with nationalism.

**Prasenjit Duara’s Rescuing History From The Nation**

In *Rescuing History from the Nation* (1995), Duara analyzed China’s history to investigate “soft” and “hard” ethnic boundaries. A “soft” boundary between ethnic groups is a space accompanied by mild awareness of cultural differences. Duara assesses that this scenario is the norm in the world; he asserted that ethnonationalism is rare, but once it arises it hardens ethnic boundaries which are difficult to relax. Key to the
boundary question is the idea of the \textit{nation}, not as a territorial, sovereign nation-state but a composite of different visions and narratives of community.\footnote{Prasenjit Duara, \textit{Rescuing History From The Nation} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 15-16.}

Viewing the nation as a territorial nation-state assumes that a History of the nation exists, with a fairly straight line of events and progress that evolved from an ancient time to the present. Duara contends that this paradigm reproduces many assumptions. In the case of China, the focus of \textit{Rescuing History}, this either obliterates the narratives of minorities or appropriates them into the overarching History of the main ethnic group of the nation-state. A centralized, statist narrative thus has destroyed and buried alternative paths to a modern nation, freeing nationalists to falsely claim a collective nationalist subject within the state for their own political agendas. The Historical grand narrative can be tied to a Hegelian “telos of self-consciousness”—implying the Historical nation-state is the inevitable outcome at the end of history.\footnote{Ibid., 23-7.}

Instead, Duara called for considering alternative narratives of minorities and other conceptions of community and belonging beyond any grand narrative, which he called “history.” This approach unlocks contested meanings and continuing uneasiness in the nation-state between ethnic groups, showing stresses about the Historical grand narratives to which not all members subscribe. This uneasiness stresses the boundaries between those “inside” the Grand narrative of the nation-state and those “outside” of it. Considering alternative narratives also offers insights into bifurcated histories,
“transactional meanings” that appropriate, repress, and reconstitute meanings conveyed from the past, and tracing how meanings have been transformed over time. This examination raises questions about the History of the nation-state and identities assumed to be original, exclusive, and cohesive. It also raises questions about the hard boundaries emplaced against those presumed to be the Other in the nation-state.68

In *Rescuing History*, Duara challenged what he felt were two fundamental assumptions in most studies of nationalism. The first was the “privileging of the nation as a cohesive collective subject.” Instead of being an overarching “nationalism of the nation,” Duara felt that the nation is merely a venue where various representatives contest and negotiate with each other. Second, Duara disagreed with the assumption that nationalist consciousness is a unique or unprecedented form of consciousness. It is simply one type of identity among many, and is “changeable, inter-changeable, conflicted, or harmonious with the others” through time.69 This consciousness is not necessarily helpful to the nation-state. Duara felt the relationship among other identities is more complex than Connor had described. Nationalism does not transcend societal divisions or create a larger identity. Perspectives are varied; instead of overriding the nation, they help to define and constitute it.70

68 Ibid., 229-31, 233-4 and 236.
69 Ibid., 7-8.
70 Ibid., 9-10.
In Rescuing History, Duara argued that analysis of nationalism should move beyond the large political movements to get at the causes. It needs to encompass peoples’ “nation views” and alternative narratives of history to capture the nation’s essence. Other aspects—such as gender and gender roles in politics—need to be considered as well to understand the roots of nationalism. Adding in these aspects, it becomes possible that political identities are not fixed but shift and nationalism is a relational identity. Thus, the nation (no matter how old) is not the logical end state of a goal envisioned from the outset, but a configuration in time that includes some groups and excludes or marginalizes others. The “national self” is a relationship among constituents…the national “self” is defined at any point in time by the Other. Others can be historical or potential. Duara felt that potential Others are most deserving of our attention because they reveal the principles that creates nations—“the willing into existence of a nation which will choose to privilege its difference and obscure all of the cultural bonds that had tied it to its sociological kin”.71

Duara contended in Rescuing History that seeing the nation as the logical outcome of a linear, progressive “History” (i.e., overarching grand narrative) coming out of Enlightenment History and Hegelian logic. This view offers “a false unity of a self-named subject that evolves through time.” In this view, different ethnic groups are closer to the end state than others; all, however, are traveling the same path. “History” is privileged over other forms of experiencing and describing time as history; the stories of

71 Ibid., 10-11 and 15.
groups outside the construct are unintelligible. The modern state and History are inseparable. Duara felt the histories of China, India, Japan, and France, if viewed through History and assuming the nation-state tells the story of that nation, ignores important histories and narratives that tell a broader, more inclusive, and comprehensive nation-story.\footnote{Ibid., 4, 19, and 28-9.}

Duara wrote that History is never able to completely bridge the gaps between the past during which there was no nation, and the present where there is one. Using multiple narratives of community in regions of China and India in *Rescuing History*, Duara showed that History was a retrospective construction of the past to serve present needs—nationalist histories provide for myths and History suppresses unpleasant events. He also challenged Anderson and Gellner on the relationship between print media and nationalism, i.e., the “radically novel and modern nature of nationalist consciousness.” Duara felt that print media was not the only, or even the primary, instrument that enabled Han Chinese to develop a sharp sense of the Other. Preliterate societies also had oral traditions and capabilities to participate in a national myth. Thus Gellner and Anderson may inaccurately privilege modern societies as the only social form of generating political self-awareness and national identity as a distinctly modern mode of consciousness. Duara also noted that there were premodern narratives of community with which people identified historically. These can continue into the modern nation.
Periodically reenacted, these narratives provide material to mobilize the newer community.\textsuperscript{73}

*Rescuing History* also stated that “culturalism” is a criterion defining a community--membership in rituals and cultural activities embodies an allegiance in a community. In China’s case, Duara noted that there was an ethnic component (Han) and a cultural value set that was established by Chinese elites. In China’s case, non-Han “barbarians” were able to join the Han community through imitation, education and by distinguishing themselves from other barbarians that did not adhere to the Han cultural values. This example showed the possibilities of an Other eventually joining a majority community while Others could not through a process of hardening social and cultural boundaries around a particular configuration of self. Duara felt that this process was relevant to historical and also modern communities, showing how cultural resources can be mobilized in a transformation from barbarian outsider to inclusion. This process showed that societal communities are not well-bounded entities. The communities possess various and mobile boundaries that demarcate dimensions of life.\textsuperscript{74}

Thus, cultural boundaries may be soft or hard. Duara argued in *Rescuing History* that soft boundaries help to identify a group but do not prevent the group from adopting the cultural practices of another. Groups may share across some boundaries but not others. Hard boundaries form identities and stop the sharing; the perceptions of

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 15 and 51-6.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 58 and 60.
community are transformed and a proto-nationalism is formed. Duara believed that a key aspect of the hardening process occurs when one group imposes a narrative of descent and/or declares a norm for cultural practices, which he called “discent.” This process differentiates self from the Other, mobilizes the community, and hardens the boundary of perception of what the community is and who is included in it. Discent favors the culture, religion, language, and common historical experiences of the community, and heightens self-consciousness of the differences of the Others, making them seem alien. The process waxes and wanes. Certain aspects of the culture form a base and new aspects emerge as “hard” or “soft” edges, further shaping the composition of the community. Understanding bifurcated history helps the observer to see when cultural aspects emerged and when boundaries hardened aside from a dominant narrative. Duara stated that a group’s self-awareness evolves over time through cultural mobilizations, narratives and boundary formation. Boundaries may stay soft and can be negotiated.  

75 Lessons from Duara’s *Rescuing History from the Nation*

Duara’s analysis and research of the processes of community formation and boundary creation in China suggests that the formation of nations is a work in progress in the world. There is no Historical destination—the process can shift, stall, and fall apart/suffer a break. The aspects that bound cultural identities can be soft. When alternative narratives and points of view are ignored, and one group imposes a narrative of descent and discent, communities mobilize and boundaries harden. In Russia’s case, the Soviet and even Czarist past are up for interpretation. Efforts by Russians to co-opt

75 Ibid., 65-9.
the USSR’s achievements and symbols including the defeat of Nazis, making the USSR a superpower, and scientific achievements that ignore the contributions of non-Russians to Soviet achievements. Russian interpretations of history and “progress” also clash with memories of others. Non-Russians view some aspects of Soviet History from different historical perspectives than do Russians.

Duara’s *Rescuing History* also reminds us that who is “in” or “out” of a nation can change. During the Soviet era, Ukrainians seemed much “closer” to Russians culturally than has been the case since the conflicts over the Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Yet the history of Russian and Ukrainian nations has also been very difficult, including the Soviet-created famines of the 1930s and Ukrainian nationalist struggles during and after WWII. No Historical narrative can bridge this divide completely, and the gaps cause ethnic tensions. For example, Russian nationalist claims about Kiev’s turn to the West and “oppression” of Russians ignores past Russian abuses against Ukrainians.

Symbols of Soviet History are deployed in the conflict to highlight identities and discredit others. The appearance of the figure of WWII Ukrainian political activist Stepan Bandera at anti-Ukrainian Russian nationalist rallies brings up memories of Ukrainian collaboration with the Nazis against the USSR and discredits Ukrainian efforts to escape Russian political influence and grow closer with the West. Sometimes who is “out” does not change over time, but boundaries can become softer. Chechens have been *chuzhii* to Russians for hundreds of years, but 19th literature by Tolstoy and Lermontov saw the good in Chechen values and even questioned Russian values. Even in the post 9/11 world
of terrorism and two Russian wars in Chechnya, there are Russian writers who see the same things. How those histories are told, and if they are told, influences group boundaries.

Duara encourages readers to poke and prod at Historical grand narratives, and realize that other narratives exist. Unpleasant truths, inconvenient facts, and alternate possibilities have been squeezed out of the grand narrative. The Others have their own narratives and resent being caricatured, downplayed, stereotyped, or ignored and push back. In China’s case, Duara mentions Taiwan and Hong Kong as proof that the grand narrative in China has outliers. In Russia, there are numerous groups that disagree with Russian interpretations and are pushing back. The rehabilitation of Stalin and the way his era is depicted in textbooks hardens boundaries. Duara, in Rescuing History, shows us that the boundary making process between groups is ongoing, fluid, and always up for renegotiation. The past is an extremely powerful ethnonational force, as Connor and Smith described. Duara offered an interesting perspective for studying boundary formation as a process, with ethnic tensions in Russia as the outputs that show whether the boundaries are soft or growing harder.

**Fredrik Barth’s Ethnic Groups and Boundaries**

In Ethnic Groups and Boundaries (1969 and updated in 1998), Barth argued that although ethnic groups have shared identities, common history, and traditional cultural heritages, these features do not explain ethnic phenomena. Understanding how instability within ethnic groups is produced by internal social organization and mechanisms, and
how these instabilities affect boundaries between ethnic groups, provides insight into ethnic boundary formation. The boundaries are persistently maintained between ethnic groups over time, and the related mechanisms are always morphing as result of change in and around the groups. They are modified over time, but boundaries endure and delineate ethnic identities. Barth felt the processes involved were multi-level, simultaneous, and continuing, affecting how people self-identify, how outsiders are perceived as obeying “the rules,” and how outsiders elect to interact with the primary group.

In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* Barth argued the ethnic identity is a matter of how groups organize themselves around a set of similarities that determines who is inside the group and who is outside. The process of organization was unique to each group, in constant flux, and up for negotiation by the individuals and associated groups. The results of the process marked the boundary between groups; distinctive cultural differences between groups, which he felt were often erroneously studied as the discriminators. These are simply the outputs of the organizational process. Ethnic identity is both a process of self-identification and group interaction, i.e. how others in the group respond and interact with that individual. Barth assessed the most import cultural features were boundary related—the individual knows the rules of what it means to be inside the group and the group sees that an individual is “playing the same game” as everyone else in the group.
Barth felt that the Information Age discredits the idea that cultural identities are the result of geographical and social isolation. People and information have been flowing rapidly across the planet, and yet ethnic identities persist. Rather, ethnic identities grow because of social organization processes in contact with other identities—not because of the absence of such contacts. Barth believed that boundary maintenance issues indicate that the social organization process is always in flux and is contested—a dynamic that allows the ethnic identity to morph and adapt to change and persist.\textsuperscript{76}

In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Barth argued that ethnic groups are not isolated islands in an archipelago. They are instead intermixed and intertwined in geographic spaces and maintain their identities through their own unique social organization processes that keep checking and changing the rules of the game to create a distinctive group. This is not a static set of identifiers. The features that we can see in a group are the ones that the group and individuals feel are important and hold insiders accountable for and these can change over time. Ethnic identity is exclusive and depends on the maintenance of a boundary. The cultural features of that boundary may change, but the nature of the identity of those inside it will always force a boundary to demarcate who is in or out.

Being seen as “in” fosters social interactions within the group in a way that is completely different from those judged to be outside. People on the inside interact with outsiders differently than they do with insiders. If a person wants to be included in the group, he/she must act in ways that the group’s insiders will embrace, and avoid acting in

\textsuperscript{76} Barth, *Ethnic Groups*, 9-14.
ways that offend insiders or highlight one’s outsider attributes. Barth also felt there are gradients of “inside-ness” that affect interactions. Regarding group interactions, the greater the differences between values, the greater the constraints on behavior. Ethnic groups are inter-dependent; their interaction hardens or softens boundaries.  

Barth showed that the creation of positive bonds between ethnic groups depends on what he termed the “complimentarity” of their cultural features. If there is low or no complimentarity, interactions will be limited and involve ethnic identity. He felt that in multi-ethnic states, boundary maintaining mechanisms are often highly effective, establishing constraints on status and social participation. Barth also described a “cultural ecology” which creates interdependence among groups. Some groups find and occupy niches where there is little competition. Symbiosis, related to political and economic expediency, can open up possibilities for group interdependence. Changes in demography can affect inter-ethnic relations. If interdependence is strong, there is likely to be a demographic balance and the majority may seek to proscribe changes. Minorities can act in some areas of society and not in others. Though the state or system may contain different ethnic groups, interactions take place within the framework of the dominant group, statuses, and institutions. Minorities are expected to toe the line.

Facing increased cultural contact and change in multi-ethnic societies, Barth believed that those in minority ethnic groups faced a decision. They could (a) eschew

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77 Ibid., 14 and 16.

78 Ibid., 18-20, 23-4 and 30-1.
their ethnic group and try to become incorporated into the majority, (b) accept a minority status and the cultural features accepted in the larger system, or (c) emphasize their ethnic identity. He also postulated the likely effects of these choices. Attempts to assimilate would probably lead to a low ranking minority in the society. Straddling the fence (i.e., efforts to hang onto the ethic group while taking on desirable features of the majority) was likely to lead to eventual assimilation. The final case—standing apart—was likely to result in ethnic movements such as nativism or new states.79

In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Barth disagreed with the premises about ethnicity set forth by Anderson, Gellner and anthropologist Jack David Eller. He felt that a focus on the effects of colonial regimes ignores how disconnected the administration and rulers were from the local social life. He believed that colonial regimes were extremely unique in how they offer uniform rights and protections across all minority groups in a large region and across population aggregates, far beyond the reach of the normal social relationships and institutions. Cultural relations between ethnic groups were thus free and proliferated under colonialism in ways they would not normally have done. Barth felt that in most political regimes, there is less security than in a colonial regime, with people living under threat of arbitrariness and violence outside their primary community. He believed this insecurity constrains inter-ethnic relations. Thus, regional security is a key variable that affects how ethnic units maintain themselves.80

79 Ibid., 35.
80 Ibid., 36-7.
Lessons from Barth’s *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*

Barth’s thesis that ethnic identity is a result of exposure to other groups and interactions that spark boundary maintenance processes is insightful for analyzing a multi-ethnic state like Russia. For Russians, having a Soviet identity ended when the USSR collapsed. As the ethnic elites of the USSR, this was a disorienting experience. Unlike many other minorities, they had no titular homeland to go “home” to. “Russia for Russians” and “ethnic Orthodox” emerged as possible identities. Russians were also geographically dispersed across the former Soviet lands. As the diaspora returned to the Russian Federation, they found it riven with many of the same ethnic fissures and pressures the USSR had. Crystalizing events, such as the two wars in Chechnya and terror attacks in Russia targeting Russians have spurred nationalism. Other identities have also changed as a result of ethnic interactions since the Soviet Union’s collapse. These remain works in progress. Barth’s theory gives us a tool to examine the “pin-ball” effects of identity and boundaries interacting with each other; this was also noted also by Connor.

Barth showed that who is in or out of an ethnic group depends on values and how well or poorly a group is perceived to obey and conform to the “rules” of behavior of the group. This is a useful perspective to consider. Some Russians complain that *chuzhii* in their “space” are not playing the “game fairly,” disrespecting the “master of the home,” and deviating from their accepted roles. This is a source of ethnic tension, over

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81 “Crystalizing event,” as described in Chapter One; from Mandelstam Balzer, “From ethnicity to nationalism,” *Social Legacy*, 58.
perceptions that the “invaders” are “cheating” and getting ahead in the Russian Federation, while the Russians perceive that they “play by the rules” and suffer. How these perceptions interact is examined in the thesis as part of the boundary creation and maintenance process.

Barth’s theory on the lack of complimentarity between groups and mutual dependence are also useful for considering ethnic tensions in Russia and identification of inter-active factors that contribute to violence. The relationship between Russians and chuzhii is complex. Economic factors in Russia pull in chuzhii migrants to do menial jobs for low wages. Barth’s insights on boundary making mechanisms and status shows how this relates to societal division and group boundary maintenance. The simultaneous acceptance of the chuzhii for menial jobs while rejection of them for being un-Russian reflects a lack of complimentarity between the groups that affects ethnic tensions.

Barth also observes the effect of changes in the demographic balances as a source of inter-ethnic tensions. This is important for analyzing the interactive causal factors of ethnic violence in multi-cultural societies such as Russia. There are Russian fears of “waves” of non-Russian immigrants from the Caucasus region and Central Asia flowing into Russia and that the resulting changes in demographics are prompting resistance and boundary hardening. Assimilation is another aspect to observe. Developments such as Information Age media coverage, open borders, trade, and movement of people and goods, which Barth called “a world of bureaucratic administration, developed communications and progressive urbanization” are more things to consider regarding
their effects on ethnic coexistence. Russian concern about the lack of assimilation by migrants who don’t “understand Russian culture” and are “bringing their culture to Russia” is an important aspect about “rules” and demographic changes and the pressure they place on ethnic relations.

**Applying the Insights of Smith, Connor, Duara, and Barth as a Framework for Analyzing Ethnic Boundary Formation Processes in Russia**

Anthony D. Smith’s *ethnie* roots of identity, Walker Conner’s ethnonationalism, Prasenjit Duara’s theories of the process of hardening of ethnic boundaries, and Fredrik Barth’s theories of ethnic boundary maintenance and interaction provide perspectives to develop an analytical framework to examine the roots of xenophobia and ethnic fueled violence in Russia. With the exception of Conner’s work on the USSR, none of these researchers worked on the Russian problem per se. They described in general how people identify with a group, form groups and identity the boundaries between them, compete with other groups, and how the boundaries between them can grow soft or hard.

In the thesis, Smith’s idea of nationhood being made of “myths and distortions” seems highly relevant to the Russian case, where nationalists spar over inheritance of myths of Soviet greatness, memories, symbols, achievements, and “civilization.” The tensions sparked by Russian nationalists attaching cultural attributes to memory, value, myth and symbolism and privileging Russian rights to Soviet memories above contributions by non-Russians are significant. Smith’s insights into how resistance and

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82 Ibid., 35.

83 Ibid., 35.
renewal heightens ethnic identity is well-suited to analyze how it happens in the Russian case—how Russians feel pressured to protect their identity amidst *chuzhii* immigration into “Russian” homeland, socio-economic challenges, and increased contact between cultures.

Smith also discussed the effect of globalization as a venue for updating ethnic pasts, and the non-congruence of an ethnic group’s political and cultural boundaries. Russians have been exposed to heightened media campaigns in Russia discussing their “space” in Crimea and eastern Ukraine; it has been a pretext for military actions by Moscow to protect Russians in these areas. Smith’s discussions of an ethnic group’s attachment to a homeland is pertinent to the thesis; it is a reason why some Russian nationalists have been willing to wage war on Ukraine and commit violence against dark skinned *chuzhii* migrants inside Russia. Protection of Russian “space” and cultural identity will be analyzed as causes of ethnic violence in Russia. Understanding the relationship between narratives, acceptance of truths, and the emotional power of nationalism is explored within the current Russian context to glimpse the inner realm of Russian nationalism and clearly see what drives it.

Connor’s discussions of “ethnic hodgepodes” and the effect of Information Age communications on nationalism are relevant to analysis of ethnic tensions in Russia. It is a multinational “ethnic hodgepodge” spanning 11 time zones. The emotional power of ethnonationalism is on full display amidst rising ethnic tensions and violence by Russian xenophobes against *chuzhii*. The ethnic tensions in Russia are deeper than language,
religion, economic inequities, and customs. Connor’s thoughts on resistance and resentments fueled by the perceived invasion of the homeland by *chuzhii* migrants apply to the Russian situation. The invasion is a rallying cry for the need to “defend” Russia for Russians. In fact, Russians need the migrants to supplement labor shortfalls and do jobs the Russians won’t do. Their willingness to mistreat the migrants and create economic hardships for themselves, rather than allowing them to stay legally in Russia is a problem that is not unique to the Russian Federation, but it is a big part of the story there. The economic aspects may be catalytic in the Russian case. As Connor noted, this phenomena was the “most remarkable testament to the primacy of ethnonational sentiment over economic considerations.”

Duara’s insights into soft and hardening boundaries between ethnic groups suggests there is a shrinking space between Russians and non-Russians (especially *chuzhii* migrants) in heavily Russian areas of northwest, central, and southern Russia. His analysis of the competitions and gaps in History and histories is valuable for examining the possibility of a centralized narrative of History that appropriates Soviet achievements to Russians, neglects contributions by others, and avoids or glosses over uncomfortable gaps in how Moscow and Russians treated some ethnic minorities in the Soviet era. This may give insights into causes for ethnic violence. The exclusion of *chuzhii* from the narratives of post-Soviet Russia’s History project is a contributing factor to inter-ethnic tensions. The cultural community identified by Russian nationalists, who can participate in “civilization” on Russian space, and who “understands” Russia and its culture, as noted by Putin and other leaders, are key to analyzing the sources of ethnic tensions that
may lead to contribute to ethnic tensions and violence. Duara’s descriptions of the waxing and waning of community identity, and the formation of the cultural base to identify who is in and who is not is part of the boundary formation process in the Russian Federation.

Barth’s observations of “rules keeping”—how well outsiders are perceived as playing by the rules that the majority feels are important—seems particularly relevant to the situation. This is a consistent and significant complaint expressed by Russians against chuzhii. The challenge is identifying the “game” and the rules that Russians are focused on, and perceptions of transgressions by outsiders, especially migrants from the Caucasus region and Central Asia who have migrated to western Russia in large numbers. This seems to be hardening the boundaries between the groups and contributes to the ethnic violence. Barth also notes a cultural ecology in which outsiders occupy niches where there is little competition, and the effects of demographic change on that ecology. Immigration in Russia is changing inter-ethnic dependency, tipping symbiosis on economic and social matters into tensions and violence. Barth also felt that declining regional security is a key variable in ethnic tensions. How the decline in regional security in southern Russia and demographic changes and the other interactive factors—including the economy, political activity, and religious identity boundaries—are contributing to inter-ethnic violence in Russia sets up the questions of VQ1: What can be done/what is needed to resolve the issues peacefully; more precisely, what policy measures should the
Russian government enact to fulfill its responsibilities to protect minorities from attacks by Russian nationalists? and VQ2: Should outsiders get involved to protect the minorities under attack in Russia? If so, who and to do what? What are the centers of influence in Russia to address these problems, how are they doing, and what should be done to alleviate the situation and lower ethnic tensions and violence?

Using the insights of Smith, Connor, Duara and Barth to establish a framework to identify and elaborate the causes of escalating ethnic violence in Russia, the thesis now proceeds to Chapter Two and the historical context of ethnic relations to gain insights into what has happened and how groups have reacted. This experience affects ethnic relations in Russia today, and needs to be more deeply understood for its context.

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84 Refers to applicable UN Charters regarding protections and treatment of minorities by the recognized government within its UN-recognized territory. Russia, as a UN member, has agreed to abide by the agreements.
CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR ETHNONATIONAL BOUNDARY CREATION IN RUSSIA

Introduction

Russia’s ethnic tensions, an enduring legacy left from Czarist and Soviet times, have posed challenges for the Russian Federation since the time of its founding in 1992. These problems have grown more acute in recent years. Ethnic violence against dark skinned non-Russians from the Caucasus region and Central Asians in heavily Russian populated areas of northwestern, central, and southern Russia has increased as Russian nationalists seek to curb immigration and protect the Russian “home” from being “swarmed” by migrants that they call chuzhii (Russian: enemy alien others) and “gastarbeiters.” There have been xenophobic attacks to drive the immigrants out of these areas of Russia. This chapter develops insights from multiple disciplines, including research of history, anthropology, social science, and political science to demonstrate how policies from the Russian “center” (i.e., Moscow, during both the Soviet and Russian Federation eras) created a process that caused resentments in the “periphery” (i.e., non-Russian ethnic groups) that have led to insecurity, nationalism, and ethnic boundary hardening between Russians and non-Russians. These fears and experiences laid the foundation for the ethnic tensions that Russia is experiencing today. The chapter addresses Q1: What is the process of ethnonational boundary formation in Russia?
Indigenization as a Pathway to Communism

Interdisciplinary analysis using history and political and social science reveals how decisions and actions made by Soviet leaders in the first 30 years of the USSR (from the early 1920s through the death of Stalin in 1953) created a historical context that influences the current state of ethnic relations in Russia. History shows that from the very outset of the Soviet era, leaders understood the power of nationalism. Ruling over the territory of the former Russian empire that contained over 100 ethnic groups, leaders sought ways to influence nationalism among these groups to meet their political goals. Lenin and the Bolsheviks also feared nationalism, having witnessed its power in Europe before and after World War I. In *The Affirmative Action Empire*, historian Terry Martin discussed how Lenin used the power of nationalism and resentments against Russian chauvinism during the Russian civil war to further the Bolshevik cause against the Whites. Lenin and Bolshevik leaders also saw nationalism as a dual edged sword, as it represented an above-class grievance that Communism could not address.¹ As stated by Connor in *Eco- or Ethnonationalism*, the Marxists knew that when people were forced to choose between national and class loyalty, the people chose national loyalties.²

Nationalism among many of the ethnic groups of the previous Russian empire was already evident as the Bolsheviks consolidated power after the Russian civil war. Because all societies must go through nationalism as an evolutionary stage on the way to


Communism according to Marxist theory, Lenin and the Bolshevik leaders decided to try a political science experiment to speed the process of nationalism along. By controlling the nationalism process of these groups, they could help the USSR’s ethnic groups to rapidly evolve through this phase, thereby disarming nationalism’s above-class potency.³

Using political and social science as a perspective, analysis of decisions in Moscow shows how Bolsheviks tried to speed up nationalism in the USSR through a campaign of education, new borders, promotion of non-Russian languages, and preferential placement of non-Russians into jobs and leadership posts. Martin called the Soviet Union an ‘affirmative action empire’ for its efforts to conduct, on a massive scale, social and political experiments to raise nationalism and create classes and struggles that the center could then exploit and move the state on the path towards Communism. The experiments (called korenizatsiia, or returning power to indigenous groups) came at the expense of Russians, who were seen as the oppressors and reactionaries that had been previously favored. Under korenizatsiia, Moscow created new administrative territories (republics, krais, and oblasts) based on ethnic groups, encircling home territories for the dominant groups and devolving political power to them to control land and resources. Moscow created schools and printed teaching material in local languages, and elevated non-Russians to leadership positions in the new administrative territorial units. In some areas, there was a dearth of qualified and literate non-Russians to take leadership posts, especially in the Caucasus region and Central Asia. The ethnic groups in these areas were

identified as ‘culturally backward nationalities’ and extra resources and preferences were applied there.\(^4\)

The shocks to the system from *korenizatsiia* introduced increased ethnic awareness, competitions, and tensions. In *From Tribe to Nation*, Connor specifically discussed the Soviet case and the impacts these experiments had on nation forming among the USSR’s groups. The creation of new geopolitical boundaries and elites and elevation of non-Russian languages greatly strengthened national consciousness among the non-Russian groups.\(^5\) Although Barth was not discussing Russia, his thoughts on how changing the “game” and “rules” for groups related to political power, resources and opportunities and the effects on ethnic relations are also useful in this case.\(^6\) The new geopolitical boundaries left the non-majorities trapped in the new territorial units and concerned about new “rules” and power distributions. These changes jolted peoples’ identities and pressured their existing group boundaries. Although he was discussing China, Duara’s theories on identity boundary development and maintenance between groups revealed that this is an evolutionary process that unfolds slowly over time, experience and perceptions.\(^7\) The rapid changes introduced by *korenizatsiia* disrupted the process in the USSR, causing fears, increased competition, and hardening of identity boundaries.

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\(^4\) Ibid., 33.


\(^6\) Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15-16.

\(^7\) Duara, *Rescuing History*, 65-9.
Korenizatsiia also affected Russian identity boundaries and upset the existing “rules” and power arrangements. Russians deeply resented the reverse discrimination against them and korenizatsiia strained their relations with both Moscow and non-Russians. Losing their status as the elites within the state’s political and economic structures was a jolt to Russian identity. This was another example of Barth’s theory of how huge changes to the “game and rules” and threats to the status of a group can result in ethnic tensions. Russians fought with the center and the new elites over jobs and housing, and refused to cooperate and train the non-Russians to take over their posts. Interethnic riots and violence broke out as Russians resisted being shoved aside.

Beyond the local ethnic competitions and tensions that korenizatsiia engendered between groups, there was also geographic differences in how the program played out. Martin’s research showed that korenizatsiia worked better in the western areas of the USSR where local cadres could be rapidly trained for leadership in industry and government. The policy struggled in the east where, as already mentioned, there was a dearth of local non-Russians who could be rapidly trained to step into the roles that Russians had traditionally held in these sectors. Korenizatsiia gave confidence to Ukrainians and increased nationalism, leading to demands for more autonomy from the center. The removal of trained and experienced Russians from leadership posts caused economic disruptions at a time when the Soviets were struggling to rebuild the damages from World War I and the civil war. The Bolsheviks then attempted “functional

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8 Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 13-16.

korenizatsiia” in 1930, offering key technical jobs based on meritocracy. This led to re-
Russification in many areas and a renewed resentment among non-Russians.\(^{10}\) This was
yet another change in the “game and rules” as discussed by Barth and it disappointed,
angered, and confused the non-Russians and increased ethnic tensions.\(^ {11}\)

Martin’s work showed that in the end, korenizatsiia did not achieve what the
Soviets had intended. While it did increase nationalism, there was no rapid progression
through this stage of development to Communism. Instead, it increased ethnic tensions,
adversely affected economic growth, and left resentments and doubts in the periphery
about the efficacy of center-imposed theories. The re-drawing of borders also led to
arguments about territory between Ukraine and Russia, Belarus, and republics in the
northern Caucasus. By 1930, Stalin (now in charge) saw nationalism as a force behind the
resistance to collectivization and failures in Soviet planning. As Ukraine and North
Caucasus areas failed to meet grain quotas (which was the key source of Soviet trade),
Stalin used the Red Army to extract grain from these areas. This campaign, coupled with
poor weather and dislocations to farming caused by collectivization, resulted in a massive
famine in Ukraine in 1932-33. Stalin accused nationalists and reactionaries for causing
the famine (holodomor, “death by starvation”), as well as Ukrainian technical
incompetence in collectivization engendered by their promotion to leadership posts under
korenizatsiia. These events, consolidation of central power, and Russification of

\(^ {10}\) Ibid., 137, 144-50, and 177-9.

\(^ {11}\) Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, 15-16.
leadership in industry and government degraded ethnic relations between Russians and non-Russians even further.\textsuperscript{12}

At the December 1932 Politburo meeting, Stalin spoke of “good peoples” and “enemy peoples.” The latter corresponded to nations located along the periphery of the USSR, suspicious for their ethnic ties to adjacent states, and resistance to the Reds during the civil war and collectivization. The speech indicated that nation building would continue in the areas of “good peoples,” and nation destroying would begin for “enemy peoples.” Stalin targeted the latter for ethnic cleansing and relocation away from their traditional homelands to areas in the USSR’s interior.\textsuperscript{13} Deportations of entire nations got underway in 1930, starting with the Kuban Cossacks after their resistance to collectivization. Ethnic cleansing in the western areas of the USSR started in 1935, spread to all border regions during the Great Terror of 1937, and included the 1944 “punished peoples” deportations. Ethnic cleansing in the USSR continued until Stalin’s death in 1953.\textsuperscript{14}

Nine “enemy peoples” (including the Balkars, Crimean Tatars, Chechens, Ingush, Karachai, Meskhetian Turks, Kalmyks, Volga Germans, and Koreans) were singled out for “punishment,” i.e., ethnic obliteration through deportation and exile. Other “good” ethnic groups, including Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Poles, Ukrainians and Volga

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 177, 273, 278-81 and 292.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 294-5, 298, 305-8 and 312.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 322, 327-8, and 332.
Tatars suffered Soviet oppression and arrest and deportation of entire sections of their societies including political elites, security, military, and religious leaders. The difference between the treatment of the nine “punished peoples” and the others was the objective (genocide for the “enemy peoples” versus reform for the “good”). Some “enemy” groups, including the Caucasus-area Balkars and Chechens and Crimean Tatars, were accused of collaborating with the German army after it pushed deep into the Soviet Union in 1941-42 as the reason for being “punished.”

The thesis uses historical and anthropological sources to show that the ethnic destruction of the “punished peoples” was Moscow’s goal, as reflected by the treatment of the deportees in transit, conditions in the remote “special settlements” where they were sent, and associated death rates. The following accounts of the deportations of three of the “punished peoples” in Caucasus region—Balkars, Tatars, and Chechens—are demonstrative of Moscow-led oppression against ethnic minorities in the Soviet era that damaged relations between Russians and ethnic minorities and hardened the identity boundaries between Russians and non-Russians. In 1991, Human Rights Watch published an analysis called *Punished Peoples of the Soviet Union*. In it, the group stated:

> The central government should ensure that the Soviet public is better informed about the guiltlessness of these peoples, and the appalling injustice done

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to them. The government still has controlling influence over important segments of the Soviet media. The fact is that the rehabilitation took place with minimal publicity, announced only in obscure official journals without mass readership. Soviet leaders have avoided touching on the problem in their speeches.\(^\text{17}\)

This assessment took into account what the Soviet government had done as of 1991, which included Khrushchev’s 1956 speech “rehabilitating” the “punished” groups and also Mikhail Gorbachev’s 1987 crime commission speech in which he admitted Stalin had committed “enormous and unforgivable crimes” but also praised the technical advances the USSR made under collectivization. Gorbachev’s speech said nothing about the millions that died in camps. Valery Tishkov, the former Chairman of the State Committee of RSFSR on Nationalities, noted the adverse and lasting effect of Soviet Union’s handling of the events on ethnic relations between Russians and these groups.\(^\text{18}\)

After the USSR collapsed, Yeltsin did not conduct any further public awareness campaigns on these issues. Putin has approached the issue as Gorbachev did, stating that Soviet leaders took harsh actions in the past but this was part of the price paid for the Soviet Union’s advancement and achievements. The lack of public awareness of the injustices and lack of correction of the record about the collective “guilt” of the “punished” groups that justified the deportations fueled deep distrust towards Moscow and Russians among the survivors, providing national myths, memories, symbols, and

\(^{17}\) Human Rights Watch, *Punished Peoples*, 5-6.

emotions. As Smith discussed in *Ethnic Origin of Nations*, these experiences deepen ethnic identities and fuel nationalism.\(^\text{19}\) The thesis will now examine three cases—Balkars, Crimean Tatars, and Chechens—where the experiences live on as myths and symbols and affect the groups’ relations with Russians.

**The Soviet Experience of the Balkars and Ethnic Identity Boundary Formation**

The Kabardino-Balkaria Republic is located on the northern slope of the central part of the Caucasian Mountains and borders on Georgia, Stavropol Territory, and the Republics of North Ossetia and Ingushetia. The two primary ethnic groups living in the area are Kabards, who speak a Caucasian language, and Balkars, who speak a Turkic language. Both were nomadic tribes that came to the area and settled there before the Mongols invaded the region in the 13th century. From 1516 to 1557 the area of the Republic was under the control of the Ottoman Empire. Later it became a protectorate of the Russian empire. Kabards, who resided in the lowlands, allied with the Russians. The Balkars, who lived in the mountains, resisted the Russians for many years. The Russians established the capital of the region, Nalchik, in 1818 and a large number of ethnic Russians moved there. Over the next century the Balkars struggled for autonomy from Moscow.\(^\text{20}\)

In February 1944 Lavrentiy Beria, the chief of Soviet security and secret police, sent a telegram to Joseph Stalin, the General Secretary of the Soviet Union, accusing the

\(^{19}\) Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, 90.

Balkar nation of collaborating with Nazi Germany to sabotage the Red Army and also seeking to create a unified Balkar-Karachai state under German protection.\textsuperscript{21} Soviet historian Aleksandr Nekrich, in \textit{The Punished Peoples}, revealed the speciousness of Beria’s accusation. Records show a small part of the population, perhaps a few hundred people, may have assisted the Nazis. On the side of loyalty to the USSR, over 5,000 Balkars served in the Red Army and many distinguished themselves in its defense against the German invasion. The Nazi occupation of the area was very short (August 1942-January 1943) and while they were there the Nazis did nothing to win the loyalty of the population. Nekrich showed that in five months of occupation, the Nazis executed 2,053 POWs and 2,188 civilians, stripped food and raw materials, and burned down many settlements.\textsuperscript{22}

Nonetheless, Moscow labeled the entire Balkar nation as traitors and organized their “punishment.” According to historian Otto Pohl, the NKVD\textsuperscript{23} rounded up 37,713 Balkars (men, women, children, elderly, and the disabled) in a single day (March 8, 1944) and loaded them onto trains bound for to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Siberia. The military resources for this campaign were diverted from ongoing combat operations against the Nazis in the USSR, including 17,000 troops and 14 serials of trains.\textsuperscript{24} Reports

\begin{footnotesize}


\textsuperscript{23} Translated: ‘The ‘People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs.’ The NKVD was the Soviet Union’s military internal security force.

\textsuperscript{24} Pohl, \textit{Ethnic Cleansing}, 90.
\end{footnotesize}
show the conditions of transport and settlement upon arrival for the deportees were exceptionally harsh. An estimated 3,500 people died on the trains in transit, and 11,000 died between March 1944 and October 1945 due to typhus, infectious diseases and the harsh conditions in the camps.25 As noted earlier, in 1956 Khrushchev admitted the deportation of the Balkars and other “punished peoples” had been a mistake. The deported Balkars were allowed to return to Kabardino-Balkaria in the 1960s. Returnees found their homes occupied by other people and economic conditions that were decades behind the rest of the USSR.26

Survivors of the Balkar deportation, exile, and the return home vividly remember these events. Magomed Atabiyev, 83 years old and living in a small village in the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic, spoke of the deportation in 2011:

It was March 8, 1944. They came in the morning, one soldier for every house. The soldiers knocked and walked in and said, ‘We are deporting you.’ There was no explanation. Down by the river there were Studebaker trucks waiting to take us away. They couldn’t cross the bridge, so all we could take with us was what we could carry on foot.

At the train station we were loaded into cattle wagons. We traveled like that for 16 days. Now and then they gave us a bucket of soup and five loaves of bread for the whole wagon with 93 people in it. It wasn’t enough. Some people fell ill, some died. The guards would look into the wagons, pull out the corpses and lay them by the rails. No funeral, nothing. And then the train would leave. When we arrived in Kazakhstan it was very cold. We lived in one room, the whole family. We buried many people the first three years. They died from cold.

25 Ibid., 98.

from lack of food. Sometimes we didn’t have the strength to bury them. We got the lowest, dirtiest jobs that no one else wanted.\textsuperscript{27}

Balkar Red Army veterans (those serving on the front and the wounded at home) were also rounded up and deported. In 2011, Mukhadin Murtezov, 108 years old, recalled his experiences:

\begin{quote}
I had fought through the war and had my leg badly injured, so when we arrived in Kazakhstan I was shown more respect than some of the other men. I worked in not such a bad place, a vineyard in the south. But the heat was terrible in summer. Our people couldn’t adapt in the beginning. Eight people died every day.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

**The Soviet Experience of the Tatars and Ethnic Identity Boundary Formation**

The Tatars are geographically dispersed and are among the largest ethnic groups in Russia, with large diasporas in along the Volga River, Crimea, Bashkortostan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. The largest group of Tatars has historically been concentrated in the ethnic Tatar republic, Tatarstan, which is located on the Volga River and is roughly the size of Ireland. It is rich in oil and gas deposits. The capital is Kazan, the largest city in the region (with a population that now exceeds one million people).\textsuperscript{29}

Most of the Tatars are Muslim. Islam was established in the Volga area (later,

\textsuperscript{27}Parfitt, “Old Wounds.”
\textsuperscript{28}Ibid.
Tatarstan) roughly at the same time Kievan Rus (the Russian proto-state) accepted Christianity over 1,000 years ago. Ivan III conquered Kazan in 1552, and Muslim Tatars suffered oppression by czarist and Orthodox Russia. Mosques were destroyed or converted into Orthodox churches, and the Russian Orthodox Church forcibly baptized Muslims. By 1756, 80 percent of all mosques in the province of Kazan had been destroyed. Numerous revolts against Russian rule flared in the region. At times the oppression eased. However, Russian chauvinism and preference for Orthodox Christianity during the Czarist era led to Muslim Tatar religious leaders being persecuted, religious institutions closed, and pressures put against Muslims’ religious education.\(^{30}\)

Moscow’s treatment of the Tatars in the Soviet era was not uniform across the Tatar diaspora. During the Soviet era, Volga Tatars were at first favored under korenizatsiia as discussed earlier in this chapter, and then re-Russified. The Soviets later intensified anti-religious propaganda against Muslim non-Russian groups in the 1930s, leading to the destruction of mosques and arrests of clerics among the Volga Tatars. During the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet government eased up on persecution against religions to rally the people to defend the USSR. Later, the destructions of mosques continued. Of the 28,000 mosques from the Russian Empire period, only about 400 mosques remained by the 1980s. By 1982, only 17 mosques were operating in Tatarstan and there were no Muslim schools in Kazan.\(^{31}\) The Volga Tatars were oppressed, but as a

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\(^{31}\) Dr. N. Devlet, “The Present Situation of the Soviet Muslims: The Example of the Kazan Tatars,”
“good people” under Stalin they were not deported as a group.

The fate of the Crimean Tatars, the second largest concentration of Tatars after the Volga region, was different. They had their own state (Crimean Khanate) for more than 300 years (from the 15th to the 18th centuries AD). The Russia Empire annexed Crimea but the Tatars fiercely refused assimilation and retained their culture, language and Islam. The Crimean Peninsula was the last bastion of the White Army during the Russian civil war, and given the history the Soviet authorities viewed the Crimean Tatars as a threat. “Now in the Crimea there are three hundred thousand bourgeois,” Vladimir Lenin wrote in 1920, referring to the Crimean Tatars. “We will take them, divide them, subjugate them, (and) digest them.” Along with Ukrainians, they suffered grievously during the Soviet-engineered anti-kulak campaigns and famine in the 1930s.32

In early 1944, Stalin accused the Crimean Tatars of collaboration with the Nazis. Nekrich’s research showed there was limited evidence of this. Although the Germans occupied Crimea for a relatively long period by the Germans (October 1941-May 1944) and a small Crimean Tatar émigré delegation travelled to Berlin to discuss an independent Tatar state, it was never set up. As the Germans ran short of manpower they pressured Tatars to help patrol rear areas against Soviet partisans. A total of 1,632 men

had joined up by January 1942, but many of the “Tatar” units included multiple nationalities. Several thousand Crimean Tatars served as *hilfswillige* (volunteers) in non-combat units in logistics roles. Nekrich assessed that at least some of people “volunteered” to help the Germans simply to escape the poor conditions of Nazi POW camps. Independent German war accounts confirm this. For example, Gottlob Biderman, a German soldier who served in the Crimea during 1941-42 and lived in Crimean villages near Sevastopol, specifically said in his memoire that the German POW camps were “a death sentence” and Crimean Tatars joined the units to escape them.\(^{33}\)

There is evidence of solid Crimean Tatar loyalty to the Soviet Union in the war. Pohl’s research showed that 20,000 Crimean Tatars fought in the Red Army against the Nazis.\(^{34}\) Nekrich’s analysis also listed wartime Communist partisan assessments that described the loyalty of the population to the Soviet Union and desertion of entire “Tatar defense” units to the partisans. His work showed that the Nazis treated the Crimean population brutally, refusing to allow self-government, stripping the area of food and war materiel, enslaving thousands of workers that were shipped to Germany, and liquidating 91,678 persons between October 1941 and February 1942. This was not the embrace of a power that was seeking widespread collaboration.\(^{35}\)

Given the indications of loyalty of large numbers of Crimean Tatars to the USSR,


\(^{34}\) Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 113.

and the limited accounts of those who may have collaborated with the Germans, blaming and “punishing” the entire nation for collaboration with the enemy was not justified by the facts. That is what the Soviets did, however. Collaboration was the official reason for their deportation and exile, it been repeated for decades, and continues to be repeated in media today. On April 13, 1944, the NKVD order "On Measures to Clean the Territory of the Crimean Autonomous Republic of Anti-Soviet Elements" and subsequent order of May 11, 1944 resulted in the deportation of 183,155 Crimean Tatars during 18-20 May 1944. It was a massive security operation requiring 32,000 NKVD troops and 67 train echelons. Over 150,000 Crimean Tatars were forcibly removed from their homeland and exiled to “special settlements” in the deserts of Uzbekistan and mines and work camps in Siberia. Pohl’s research showed that 26,775 Crimean Tatars died during transits and in the exile camps between May 21, 1944 and January 1, 1946.\(^{36}\)

Survivor accounts of the deportation reflect grievous human rights abuses. The Soviet government deported everyone: women, children, invalids, Red Army veterans, and even Communist Party members. Survivors reported that the NKVD gave households less than one hour of notice that they were being deported. Families were separated. People were herded a gunpoint onto cattle cars, 50 people per car, along with a few possessions. There was a hole in the floor for a toilet in each car. Men and women were loaded indiscriminately, an affront to Islam. It made personal hygiene impossible. One survivor recounted the story of a girl who died of exploded intestines because she was too

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 115-16.
ashamed to relieve herself on the train. The crowded and unsanitary conditions on the trains rapidly led to illnesses and fatalities. The trains periodically stopped at stations to remove the sick and dead. People traded jewelry and valuables for bread during stops. Children and the elderly died rapidly.\(^{37}\)

Research by anthropologist Greta Lynn Uehling in *Beyond Memory* (2004) provided accounts from survivors that showed the transport was merely the beginning of an arduous experience. Those serving in the Red Army were pulled from their units on the front and sent to coalmines and lumber camps in the Urals. The majority of the deported Crimean Tatars went to Uzbekistan where they worked in factories, farms, and mines, often under dangerous conditions. The Uzbeks met the exiled Crimean Tatars with hostility, as Soviet propaganda had identified them as traitors and Nazi collaborators. As a result, many Uzbeks refused to assist the dislocated Crimean Tatars. Some stoned the deportees upon arrival. The hostility dissipated somewhat after Uzbeks learned the Crimean Tatars were fellow Muslims.\(^{38}\)

The climate of Uzbekistan and poor living conditions of life in the work camps took a heavy toll on the health of the Crimean Tatar exiles. Mass outbreaks of malaria, yellow fever, and dysentery were reported by Soviet authorities among the Crimean Tatars, which were undoubtedly exacerbated by the rough transport, an absence of

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 90-5.

medical care and poor nutrition in the special settlements. As many as 42,000 Crimean Tatars died during five years of exile.\textsuperscript{39} The Soviets also passed laws that mandated that Crimean Tatar, Karachai, Chechen, Ingush, and Balkar children receive their primary education in Russian and proscribed Crimean Tatar language publications between 1944 and 1957. Ali Aliyev was 14 years old when he and his family were forcibly put on a cattle train and moved out of Crimea in 1944. Interviewed in 2014, Aliyev recounted the horrors of deportation and life in exile in a media article and said, “I will never forgive Russia.”\textsuperscript{40}

As mentioned earlier, Khrushchev officially “rehabilitated” the Crimean Tatars along with the other none “punished” peoples in the 1956 speech. Unlike other groups, the Crimean Tatars were not allowed to return to their homeland. In 1954, Khrushchev had transferred the Crimean Peninsula to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Crimean Tatar autonomous territory was obliterated and never re-established. Uehling’s research indicated that Crimean Tatars were stigmatized as traitors in the USSR long after the war. Those who went back the Crimea were arrested and re-deported. The group was able to return to their homeland only during the final years of the USSR.\textsuperscript{41} The annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 opened a new chapter of fears and ethnic tensions between Russians and Crimean Tatars.

\textsuperscript{39} Nekrich, \textit{Punished Peoples}, 90.

\textsuperscript{40} Aliyev, “I Will Never Forgive Russia,” \textit{Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty}.

The Soviet Experience of the Chechens and Ethnic Identity Boundary Formation

Although all of the “punished” groups suffered under deportation and exile, the Chechen’s experience was one of the most difficult in terms of scale and aftermath. In 1944, the Chechens were deported from a homeland that they had occupied for a very long period. Archeological studies indicate that ethnic Chechens have in or near their present territory in the southern Caucasus for 6,000 years (and perhaps longer). The Chechen homeland has changed hands repeatedly since the 1400s, overrun by the Mongols, Ottoman Empire, and Russia (starting in the 16th century AD). In the late 17th century, most Chechens converted to Sunni Islam and religion remains a strongly held, central component of Chechen culture and ethnic identity.

When Moscow began to colonize the northern Caucasus in the early 18th century, Chechens resisted. In 1722, Peter the Great invaded Dagestan and areas adjacent to Chechnya but mountain warriors from Dagestan and Chechnya pushed the Russians out. Over the next 50 years the Russian army continued to raid the area. In 1783, Russia recognized Georgia as a protectorate, gaining a stronger foothold in the region, and occupied Chechnya and other areas of the north Caucasus. The following year, the Chechens rose up in a rebellion and forced out the Russian military. Moscow re-invaded, setting up a pattern of conquest and withdrawal that has continued into the 21st century.  


43 Ibid., 3-7.
Russian frustrations with never-ending Chechen resistance to Moscow’s rule led to numerous deportations. The first was under Russian General Aleksei Yeromolov during 1817-18, and the second happened during the campaign against Chechen warriors led by the folk hero Shamil (1844-50). A third round of ethnic cleansing occurred after the Crimean War (1864), when hundreds of thousands of Chechens and “mountaineers” were deported or forced to leave for Ottoman lands. Other military campaigns, purges and cleanings happened after the Russian Civil War and during collectivization.  

The last deportation, occurring as part of the “punished peoples” campaign of Stalin in 1944, was the largest and remains in living memory. Stalin ordered the entire Chechen nation — nearly 500,000 people — to be deported to Central Asia and Siberia for “mass collaboration” with the invading Nazis. As with the Balkars and Crimean Tatars, historical research by numerous writers showed this accusation was not based on facts. Although the Nazis explored ideas of Muslim resistance in the Caucasus as part of their invasion plan to defeat the Soviets, the Chechens were cool to Nazis and their racial superiority theories. The Nazis invaded northern Chechnya in August, 1942, never captured the entire republic, and they were pushed out by the Red Army within six months. Dunlop noted that archives show “perhaps less than a hundred Chechens chose actively to assist the Germans.”

Pohl noted that there was insurgency and clashes between the Red Army and fighters in Chechnya, which Stalin blamed on Nazi collaboration. These clashes started before the Germans arrived in Chechnya and

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44 Ibid., 16-17, 27-30, 43, 49, 51, and 61.

continued long after they had gone, and Pohl argued they were a continuing resistance to
Soviet rule 20 years after the Civil War.\textsuperscript{46} According to Wood, Nekrich and Dunlop, over
17,000 Chechens fought for the Red Army or as pro-Soviet partisans during the war.
Chechen civilians dug trenches outside Grozny that helped the Red Army stop the
German advance.\textsuperscript{47}

Having been identified as an “enemy people” by Stalin, over 100,000 Red Army
troops and 19,000 NKVD personnel arrived in Chechnya and launched the deportation on
February 23, 1944.\textsuperscript{48} Beria and other Soviet security leaders were in Chechnya and gave
daily updates to Stalin. Survivor accounts give insight into the depravity that Chechens
experienced during the deportation. Dada Baiev, grandfather of Khassan Baiev (the
author of \textit{The Oath: A Surgeon Under Fire}) recounted his experiences many years later:

On the morning of February 23, 1944, the NKVD secret police
summoned all men to the square. In the village of Makazhoi, they announced the
Checheno-Ingush Republic was being disbanded, and the people were being
deported to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for collaborating with the Germans.
Soldiers moved from house to house, pulling women by the hair and throwing
their belongings into the street. They tore apart pillowcases and mattresses,
sending feathers flying, hoping to find money or jewelry. A Chechen Red Army
lieutenant charged at the NKVD troops accusing Chechens of being traitors and
punched one in the face. “I fought at Stalingrad, I rallied to the call: for Homeland
and Stalin.” He was hauled away.

The sound of gunfire echoed around the village. Throughout the highlands
of Chechnya, the NKVD troops shot the inhabitants in out of the way places in

\textsuperscript{46} Pohl, \textit{Ethnic Cleansing}, 84-5.


\textsuperscript{48} Pohl, \textit{Ethnic Cleansing}, 84-5.
cold blood, so as not to be bothered with transporting people to the valley. At a place called Hybakh, the troops herded 600 men, women, and children into a barn, doused it with gasoline, and set it ablaze, the oldest victim being a 104 year old man, the youngest a day old infant. Another massacre took place on the other side of Chechnya at Galanchozh, when bad weather held up trucks carrying about 500 deportees. Impatient, the guards shot the able bodied, then pushed invalids, children and the elderly off a high bank into Lake Galanchozh.

From Vedno, they packed us onto trucks. They took us to the nearest railroad station. Like animals, they herded us onto cattle cars. We were stacked like cigarettes in a pack, men and women standing on the straw together. We held up the babes and children so they wouldn’t get crushed. After days, the stench of excrement and vomit clogged our lungs. We could hardly breathe. Then one by one, people started dying. You’d turn to say something, and the person next to you was dead. The men would carry the corpses over to the corner of the car and lay them like cordwood. The corpses rotted until the train made a stop and they could be thrown out. The moans of the dying and the cries of women grieving for their children rose above the thumping of the wheels. By the time we reached Kazakhstan, after a month on the road, the railroad cars were half empty.⁴⁹

Within a week, the Soviet forces had removed a total of 478,479 Chechens from their ancestral homeland.⁵⁰ The republic was dissolved. Seven districts were renamed with Russian names. Grozny became an oblast (administrative territory), and 500,000 Russians and other ethnic groups were moved into Chechen areas to keep the oil and agricultural sectors going.⁵¹ NKVD files showed a high death rate for Chechens during the deportation and arrival in “special settlements” in Central Asia, where conditions were as bad as those discussed for the Crimean Tatars and Balkars. As many as 200,000

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Chechens perished during the deportation and exile from 1944-48. After Khrushchev’s 1956 speech “rehabilitating” the “punished peoples” the USSR re-established the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and Chechens were allowed to return home. As opposed the rapid and massive deportation, Pohl’s data showed the return home unfolded in successive waves that took place over four years. Chechens began coming back to their homeland in small numbers in 1957. By 1961, over 300,000 Chechens had returned from exile.

**Non-Russian Ethnic Boundary Hardening Process**

The polarization process between Russians and non-Russians, especially since the beginning of the Soviet period through its collapse, can be seen as a crystallization of resentments and conflicts over time as described by Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer in “From ethnicity to nationalism: turmoil in the Russia mini-empire” (1994). She assessed that the process was driven by center (i.e., Moscow driven) versus frontier, with reactions and dynamics by both sides that influence ethnic relations. Mandelstam Balzer showed that the process zigzags, following the inconsistencies of central policies towards the frontier. It is idiosyncratic; Moscow treats each group differently. The responses by the groups, and the state of ethnic tensions that result, also differ. People who were mildly ethnically aware can become much more aware of their ethnic identities as a result of the center-frontier dynamics.

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52 Wood, *Chechnya*, 38, citing Nekrich and Dunlop’s figures and other sources.


54 Mandelstam Balzer, “From ethnicity to nationalism,” *Social Legacy*, 56-60.
As revealed above, Moscow’s relations with non-Russians within the space of 30 years (early 1920s to Stalin’s death in 1953) featured many twists, including korenizatsiia that favored indigenous groups over Russians, re-Russification, collectivization, naming of “enemy peoples,” and the deportation of entire nations. The thesis argues that, along with capricious center-periphery policies, the collectivization and destruction of elites among “good peoples” and the deportations of the “enemy peoples” were crystalizing moments for the groups.\(^{55}\) In *Ethnonationalism’s* “Self-Determination: The New Phase,” Connor noted that all states have coercive powers at their disposal to address nationalism, and the autocratic USSR had more than most. The way Moscow applied these powers led to strong non-Russian nationalism.\(^{56}\)

For the affected non-Russian groups, the wounds of being “punished” remain in living memory and were re-opened in the early 1990s when the details of Operation Lentil (the codename the Soviets gave the 1944 deportations in the Caucasus region) came to light through the release of the KGB’s files. These documents revealed the gaps of Soviet History about the deportations. Instead of punishment as a deserved response for traitorous collaboration, the KGB records showed that Stalin ordered the ethnic cleansing out fears that Turkey would attack the USSR and his belief that the non-Russians of the periphery would be a fifth column for them. The files also showed the meticulous preparations and resources allocated for the operations. At a time when the

\(^{55}\) “Crystalizing event,” as described in Chapter One; from Mandelstam Balzer, “From ethnicity to nationalism,” *Social Legacy*, 58.

Red Army was fighting heavily to push Nazi troops out of the USSR, Stalin diverted huge numbers of troops and equipment to conduct an armed military assault against hundreds of thousands of defenseless non-Russian “enemies” in the Caucasus and Crimea.\textsuperscript{57} This information was not as publicly known before the files opened.

The deportations, exile, and struggles to return home took the identity boundary formation process described by Duara in \textit{Rescuing History From the Nation} to an extreme end of hardness and also created conflicting histories.\textsuperscript{58} For Russians, Soviet History told them for decades that the “punished peoples” were traitors and thus deserved of destruction. As noted earlier, Human Rights Watch stated the USSR never officially acknowledged this past in a way that raised public awareness of the guiltlessness of these groups. Nor has Russia done so. The opening of the KGB files allowed more information to come out, which matched what survivors like Dada Baiev had been telling family members for years. For the nations involved, the files matched the oral histories they had been sharing that reflected boundary hardening as a result of the mistreatment and abuses.

The historical works of Nekrich, Hosking, Pohl, Wood, and anthropologists Uehling and Tishkov provided insights into those histories and the experiences. First was the psychological shock of being rounded up by Russian troops. In the course of a few days, hundreds of thousands of people living normal lives were transformed into dislocated, dispossessed prisoners. Nekrich noted:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{58} Duara, \textit{Rescuing History}, 4, 19 and 28-9.
\end{quote}
Left behind in their homelands from which they were forcibly expelled were their homes, farmsteads, cattle, farm equipment, home furnishings, libraries, personal belongings, money, and clothing. During the first years in the special settlements, they were reduced to the status of disenfranchised and persecuted beggars. The homes of the deportees were taken over by new settlers. Their property was plundered. Their personal belongings were appropriated by those who carried out the deportations — Beria’s MVD agents and the soldiers assigned to the deportation operation…the livestock in the depopulated areas was left without any care or tending and a great many of these animals died.\textsuperscript{59}

The physical deprivation of losing everything and being removed from their homeland was followed by deaths of loved ones, harsh living conditions in the camps, and cultural isolation in exile in an alien land and environment. These experiences created a strong sense of ethnic solidarity against the Soviet state and the Russian oppressors for the “enemy peoples.” This was reflected in many ways, including open defiance in the camps.\textsuperscript{60} Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn witnessed this at first hand. In \textit{Gulag Archipelago}, he wrote:

\begin{quote}
There was one nation which would not give in, would not acquire the mental habits of submission--and not just individual rebels among them, but the whole nation to a man. These were the Chechens...they had been treacherously snatched from their home, and from that day they believed in nothing...the years went by and they owned just as little as they had to begin with. The Chechens never sought to please, to ingratiate themselves with the bosses; their attitude was always haughty and indeed openly hostile.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{59} Nekrich, \textit{Punished Peoples}, 124.

\textsuperscript{60} Geoffrey Hosking, \textit{Rulers and Victims} (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006), 221.

Nekrich’s historical research showed that while they were pariahs under the thumb of their Russian oppressors, the deportees spoke their native languages, turned more deeply to Islam, and banded together to survive.\textsuperscript{62} They refused assimilation. Pohl’s research showed that between 1926 and 1959, the numbers of Chechens and Ingush who spoke a native language other than their titular language barely changed (an increase from 0.3 percent to 1.3 percent) despite the loss of native language schools and any publications.\textsuperscript{63}

As noted earlier, the nightmare did not end with Khrushchev’s “rehabilitation” of the “punished peoples” in 1956. It was a remarkable development in that the Soviets admitted a mistake at all (which was framed as one more excess of Stalin’s personality cult). Poking into it during the Soviet era was a risky business. Nekrich himself was ostracized, lost his university position, expelled from the Party, and eventually fled the USSR for his research on these events and other sensitive areas of Soviet history.\textsuperscript{64}

The move back to the homelands was another painful experience. After “rehabilitation,” the deportees continued to live in squalid, isolated conditions in exile for years. When they were allowed to return, the state provided few resources to assist them. Arriving back in the homeland was a turbulent experience. Chechens, for example, found Russians, Ukrainians, and other ethnic groups that the USSR had moved in living in their

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{62}] Nekrich, \textit{Punished Peoples}, 155.
\item[\textsuperscript{63}] Pohl, \textit{Ethnic Cleansing}, 95-9.
\item[\textsuperscript{64}] Nekrich, \textit{Punished Peoples}, ix-x.
\end{itemize}
homes. This set off outbreaks of ethnic violence in Grozny in the 1950s. Balkars reported similar problems upon their return. The deportees were never remunerated for their losses that resulted from the Soviet “mistake” that caused their deportations. The struggle for groups to survive, ethnic resistance to assimilation in exile, keeping stories alive, and fight to recover their homeland from foreigners on their nationalism fits closely with Smith’s theories about the importance of resistance, homeland and myths to nationalism in *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. He was not writing about the Russia or the “punished peoples” but his theories show the power, emotion, and resilience of these experiences in shaping the key elements of nationalism and ethnic identity boundary formation.

For many years, survivors quietly passed stories along to their children, many of which were born in exile. This changed at the end of the USSR. Tishkov noted a distinct split in Chechen attitudes towards the deportation—before and after *glasnost*’. Before the 1980s, people kept quiet about it in public or euphemistically referred to it as “working on the virgin lands.” After *glasnost*’, it was openly and vividly recalled in plays, books and poems as a genocide. The storytelling kept alive a sense of collective victimization and outrage at Moscow and Russians. As Hosking wrote: “the punished peoples reacted with extreme anti-Russian sentiment and anti-Communist embitterment and also a sense of collective victimization that rendered them irreconcilable to continued

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Soviet and Russian rule.” He credited the independence movements of the “punished peoples” and other nations abused by Stalin to the multi-generational ethnic solidarity they achieved out of the deportation experiences.

When Dzhokar Dudayev began talking about secession for Chechnya in 1992, one in three Chechens was a survivor of the deportation and one in four had been born in exile. He won the presidency in Chechnya that year with 90 percent of voter support. During ceasefire talks between Chechens and Russians in December 1994, Tishkov noted that no matter the question under discussion, the members of the Chechen delegation would remind the Russians that the Chechens had suffered mass deportation. These observations reflect the enduring power of myths and memories and their effect on a group’s nationalism, as Smith stated in Nations and Nationalism.

**The Russian Experience and Ethnonational Boundary Formation**

Interdisciplinary research of the history, political, economic and social aspects of the experience of ethnic Russians shows how these factors shaped their identity boundaries with non-Russians. Soviet policies of the 1920s and 1930s and the reverse discrimination of korenizatsiia, and Russification later, influenced this process. Russian identity and boundaries were also shaped by changes to the populations of the ethnic groups of the Russian Federation. From the 1930s to the end of the Soviet Union in 1992,

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demographic changes to the population of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RFSFR; the territory where most of the Russians live) made the territory less Russian. Millions of Soviet citizens perished during Stalin’s purges, including Russians. Losses in the Great Patriotic War (1941-45) have been estimated at 24 million. It is difficult to know how many of those lost were Russians, as acknowledged by historians Tatiana Mastyugina and Lev Perepelkin of the Russian Center for Strategic Studies. Parsing through Soviet records and censuses, they wrote in *An Ethnic History of Russia* (1996) that the influence of “socio-political disasters” such as the war, political reprisals, and deportations on population growth rates in Russia and the USSR can be presumed to have hit the ethnic Russian population “above all.”

Population changes were also affected by the Soviet Union’s economic, social, and political polices which incentivized the movement of Russians out of the RFSFR (which would later become the Russian Federation). Soviet authorities encouraged Russians to migrate across the USSR to take leading positions in government, military and industry. Moscow offered incentives, including apartments, promotions and higher pay to get people to move. The population growth of the RSFSR lagged substantially behind that of the USSR during the period of 1937-59 due to intensive out-migration from Russia under Russification of Soviet industry and government positions.

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Mastyugina and Perepelkin also noted the transfer of Crimea, a part of the RFSFR, to Ukraine in 1954 also decreased the number of Russians living in the RFSFR.\footnote{Ibid., 66.}

Beyond out-migrations, Russians have experienced numerous large declines in the numbers of their ethnic group over the past century. There were several in the Soviet era due to upheavals related to the civil war, collectivization, purges, and the Great Patriotic War. The largest depopulation started in the early 1960s and continues today. In Russia’s Peacetime Demographic Crisis (2010), political economist and demographer Nicholas Eberstadt analyzed Soviet and Russian Federation data and assessed that Russia, based on health trends, life expectancy, mortality, and birth rates is decades into an unprecedented depopulation that is “relentless, unremitting, and perhaps unstoppable.”\footnote{Nicholas Eberstadt, Russia’s Peacetime Demographic Crisis (Washington: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010), 7.} This depopulation will be examined in Chapter Three as an interactive factor in ethnic tensions between Russians and non-Russians.

Combined, out-migration and depopulation have contributed to Russian population declines and a shrinking percentage of ethnic Russians living in the USSR and the Russian Federation. During 1959-79, while the USSR’s population increased by 25 percent (an annual increase of 1.3 percent), the RFSFR’s population (where Russians have been the largest group) increased 17 percent (an annual increase of .9 percent). The percentage of Russians living in the USSR declined from 53 percent in 1926 to 51 percent in 1989. In 1937, 64 percent of USSR’s population lived in the RFSFR, falling
to 56 percent in 1959, 52 percent in 1979, and 51 percent in 1989. Over the same
timeframe, the populations of non-Russian ethnic groups in the northern Caucasus region
grew, increasing from 1 percent of the population of the Soviet Union to 3 percent by
1989. Religious ratios in Russia also shifted. While the percentage of ethnic Russians,
who primarily identify as Orthodox Christians, declined the proportion of ethnic groups
that are predominantly Muslims increased from 6 percent to 8 percent. In 1993, there
were 148 million people in the Federation. By 2013, the population had decreased to 143
million, and ethnic Russians accounted for most of the decline.75

The population declines among Russians and increases among non-Russians in
Russia have a psychological dimension for Russians. According to Barth and Connor,
large demographic changes can upset existing balances and interactions and spark ethnic
tensions. The theories they developed about this subject and human seems to hold up in
Russia’s case.76 Immigration of non-Russians into Russia is another aspect of population
changes are also influential on ethnic relations and will be analyzed further in Chapter
Three as an interactive factor in hardening of ethnic boundaries.

The Late Soviet-Era Russian Experience in the Near Abroad

As the Soviet Union crumbled, 25 million Russians living in the former Soviet
republics were exposed to explosions of ethnic violence, changing “rules,” and the

75 Mastyugina et al, Ethnic History, 67-9 and 83-4; Eberstadt, Demographic Crisis, 11; Territories

76 Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, 19-20; Connor, “Nation Building or Nation Destroying,”
Ethnonationalism, 154.
declining ability of Moscow to control the situation. As the USSR crumbled, Russians in Central Asia, the Caucasus region, the Baltics witnessed at first hand large-scale ethnic riots which surprised, confused, frightened, demoralized, and disoriented them and left many considering their fates as Russians living among non-Russians outside the Russian Federation.

In one example, years of tension over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia led to three days of rioting in Sumgait, Azerbaijan in February, 1988. Over 30 people were killed and at least 150 more died in subsequent riots between Azerbaijanis (most of whom are Shiite Muslims) and Armenians (predominantly Christians). Massive riots broke out in Baku on January 13, 1990 when Azerbaijanis tried to make Armenians leave the city and the Armenians fought back. A rally of more than 150,000 Azerbaijanis gathered demanded that Communist leaders reassert Azerbaijan’s authority over Nagorno-Karabakh and grant freedom of movement across the USSR-Iran border where many ethnic Azerbaijanis live.

When local security forces tried to disperse protestors, they were attacked. Moscow sent in a large group of security police. They also failed to restore order. Gorbachev declared a state of emergency and sent 26,000 Red Army troops to crush the protesters and end the violence. In three days of military attacks in Baku, over one hundred Azerbaijanis died and nearly 800 were wounded. The Red Army lost 30 troops killed and 90 wounded.\textsuperscript{77} To Russians accustomed to a strong hand in Moscow that

firmly took control over events, the ability of insurgents to challenge the center and the scale of ethnic violence came as a demoralizing, disorienting shock.

Russians in Kyrgyzstan were also exposed to large-scale outbursts of ethnic violence. The Kyrgyz had long had been unhappy about the large numbers of Uzbeks living in and around the city of Osh in Kyrgyzstan’s southwest. Although the republic was only 13 percent Uzbek (1989 census), the entire Uzbek population was concentrated in Osh Province. Under glasnost, an Uzbek-rights group demanded land redistribution, Uzbek autonomy in Osh, and the province’s eventual reunion with Uzbekistan. Local Kyrgyz formed a political movement to assert Kyrgyz rights. In June 1990, when the Kyrgyz-dominated Osh City Council announced a plan for a cotton processing plant to be built on land belonging to an Uzbek collective farm, days of rioting began between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks that led to 320 deaths. Moscow ultimately sent in security forces and imposed a military curfew that ended the violence.

Although the Russians were bystanders watching the violence in Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and other unstable situations (such as the five-year civil war in Tajikistan), the unpredictability and incendiary nature of the ethnic conflicts, scale of violence, and inability of Moscow to master events left diaspora Russians in the republics feeling vulnerable. Speaking directly about the Russian experience, Connor noted in Beyond Reason that what the Russians witnessed was “the ugly manifestations of inhumanity” that surfaced in the wake of glasnost’ and perestroika. Soviet authorities were caught off

guard as “nationalist groups across the entire southern USSR gave vent to their previous pent-up ethnic enmities.” Notably, the outbursts at Osh spooked Russians, who were not attacked, into leaving Kyrgyzstan. Relatively few Uzbeks, who were actually targeted and attacked, left Kyrgyzstan after the 1990 riots. Osh was the Uzbeks’ homeland and they stayed to fight for it.

The imposition of language laws in the new republics added to the disorientation of the Russian experience in former Soviet lands after the USSR’s collapse. Few were fluent in local languages. Although the laws varied in severity and enforcement (generally tougher in the Baltics and less stringent in Central Asia), the elevation of titular languages ahead of/equal to Russian in official status was one more sign of how things had changed for Russians living outside of Russia and the decline in their status. The effect of these changes are addressed by Connor in *Ethnonationalism in the First World*. He was not discussing Russian disorientation in this work, but his discussion of the phenomenon of people’s refusal to be ruled by people they see as an alien ethnic group seems to fit this case. The Russians left the Near Abroad, in a flood.

**Return to Russia: The Russian Experience**

When the Soviet Union collapsed, nearly 25 million Russians were living in the

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Baltics, Ukraine, Belarus, Central Asia, and Caucasus region. For the reasons just described, they moved back to Russia. In *Rulers and Victims* historian Hoskins described the return as a series of challenges for the Russian diaspora, including their arrival in the “homeland” during tough economic times and political chaos. There were limited government welfare benefits for them to help with the moves, and at first there was no guarantees that they would become Russian citizens. They often arrived without possessions, found shelter where they could, and had to compete for permanent housing and jobs with demobilized Red Army troops and displaced workers from collapsed state factories.  

Historian John Dunlop’s research showed the Russian government was caught off guard by the speed and volume of Russians that wanted to return from the new republics after the Soviet Union ended. For example, the Russian government budgeted enough funds to support 250,000 returnees coming back to the Russian Federation in 1992. In that year, nearly 1.3 people million returned, the majority from Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ingushetia. In 1992, almost 250,000 returnees from Chechnya and the Caucasus moved to Stavropol’, Krasnodar, and Rostov in southern Russia alone. The flows became a national security concern. Early in his first term, Yeltsin sent Russian forces to intervene in ethnic clashes in Trans-Dniestria (Moldova) and Abkhazia (Georgia) on the side of Russian nationalists, possibly to show returnees it was safe for Russians to

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stay and thereby curb the flow of displaced persons into Russia.\textsuperscript{83} Once the Russians got to the Russian Federation, many emigrated abroad. Russian migration patterns analysis showed that between the end of the Soviet Union and 2011, roughly 4 million persons permanently emigrated from the Russian Federation. Most left Russia in the years immediately after the Soviet Union collapsed, and have continued to emigrate abroad at a slow but steady pace ever since.\textsuperscript{84}

Sociologist Hilary Pilkington’s field research offers greater details and insights into the experiences and motivations of diaspora Russians who returned to Russia just before and immediately after the USSR’s collapse. She studied nearly 500 returnees who had come back to Russia from the Soviet republics and (later) the newly independent states during 1989-1994. The returnees completed questionnaires and participated in in-depth interviews. Approximately 200 of them had resettled near a city (Ul’ianovsk) in the Volga region, and nearly half of them self-identified as ethnic Russians (the others were primarily Tatars, coming back to Ul’ianovsk—an area that is heavily Tatar). The remainder settled on farms in the rural Orel region, and over 80 percent of them identified themselves as ethnic Russians.\textsuperscript{85}


Pilkington’s research provided a context to consider the movement patterns and impetus for Russian migration. It appears that Russians moved back in waves. The first returnees trickled back into the RSFSR in the 1970s. These moves were planned in advance, as they required Soviet government approvals. This wave involved more men coming back first and then bringing their families, indicative of an economic impetus to migrate. The second and much larger wave moved back during 1991-4, as a response to growing instability and the Soviet collapse. Their motives varied, but interviews revealed fears about their children’s future in the new republics as a driving concern. Few Russians reported experiencing ethnic violence directly, but many spoke of fears of becoming a second-class citizen in the new republics. The second wave of migrations took place rapidly and the moves were less well planned. Overall, more women and children returned in the second wave, suggesting “forced” migrations. According to the returnees, the Russian government response seemed more focused on control than welcoming and supporting the people that were coming back.86

Pilkington’s research revealed that the diaspora Russian respondents who went back to the rural Orel area in the second wave headed there for security (i.e., “it is said that no one starves in Orel.”) The returnees from the same wave who went to the urban area at Ul’ianovsk hoped there would be more jobs in that area. Nearly all of the respondents had sold their belongings to move to Russia and had no plans to return to the republics. Many reported experiencing a “herd mentality” in the departures. When the

86 Ibid., 16-19, 28, 120-3, and 135.
first Russians left the republics, everyone noticed and got nervous about waiting too long and being left behind and joined the flood. Upon arrival in Russia, most reported a noticeable drop in living standards. Many had to take manual labor jobs, and complained about insufficient government aid (which they called “bubble gum” as it was only enough to buy gum for their children). Women were affected the most. Many were skilled workers in the republics, could not find any comparable jobs (or any jobs at all in some cases) and were stranded in poor housing.87

Pilkington’s analysis also revealed an outline of diaspora Russian identity and how the challenges people faced during their return to Russia influenced them. Most returnees felt that the Soviet Union had sent its best and the brightest to the republics, and they were part of a mission to create a Soviet society and lift up and integrate the republics into the USSR. They were proud to be part of the mission, enjoyed a high standard of living abroad, and associated with Russians in the republics that shared similar outlooks. Living among non-Russians abroad offered them experiences with different cultures. Returnees from Muslim areas distinctly noted how much the local Russians in Orel and Ul’ianovsk drank and swore. They also were offended by the laziness of the local Russian workers and incivility of Russian managers. For their part, the local Russians in Orel and Ul’ianovsk looked down on the returnees. In interviews, many said the returnees were snobbish and complainers. Other locals implied that the returnees were cowards who got spooked when things “over there” were actually not all

87 Ibid., 138, 144, 152-4 and 161.
that bad and they should have stayed in the republics and “straightened things out.”

Many returnees interviewed in Pilkington’s field work felt that the USSR was their home, and losing it was the first shock to their identity. The return to Russia was another shock for them. Instead of an idealized homeland, it was an uncultured backwater. Far from feeling welcomed, returnees in the sample groups felt hostility and suspicion from the local Russians, who called them by the name of the republics they had come back from (i.e., the Kyrgyz, the Kazakhs, etc.) and complained they had “swarmed” in and competed for housing and jobs. Pilkington’s work offered important insights into the Russian returnee experience and how it affected and changed the identity boundaries of the returnees and the local Russians who encountered them. Many of the returnees’ responses suggested confusion and unhappiness over their return to Russia, where they ironically felt more alienated in Russia than when they lived abroad: “There we were Russians, here we are not.”

First Chechen War and Russian Humiliation

Another shock to the Russian identity was the rapid loss of great power status when the Soviet Union collapsed. In the waning years of the USSR many republics gained a measure of self-rule. From the collapse of the USSR (December 1991) onward, Chechnya was largely autonomous as Moscow focused on its many troubles elsewhere. Nationalists in Chechnya began making demands for secession from Russia in 1993.

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88 Ibid., 176, 182-9, 191-2.

89 Ibid., 168-71, 173, and 189.
President Yeltsin refused to grant it. When Dudayev was elected President in Chechnya, he declared independence at his inauguration on November 1, 1994 and Russian troops invaded the republic en masse a month later.

Historian Tony Wood, in *Chechnya: The Case for Independence* offered five reasons for the invasion. First, Chechen separatism has never been acceptable to Russia, and Dudayev’s declaration required a forceful response. Second, Moscow tried covert operations to assassinate Dudayev that failed and were publicly unmasked when captured Russian soldiers were paraded on TV. Third, the Chechen government ignored four Russian requests to surrender before large-scale warfare broke out. Fourth, Moscow underestimated the amount of force required to subdue Chechnya and possible overestimated its own combat capabilities. Fifth, the Caucasus region is important to Russian geopolitical interests. In an analogy to the U.S. Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba, Wood showed that Moscow bumbled into war without a good understanding of the strength of Chechen nationalism and willingness to fight.\(^{90}\) There were other possible influences, including hardliners in the Russian government, oil, and Moscow’s frustration with Chechen criminal gangs.\(^{91}\)

Whatever the reasons were, the first Chechen war (1994-96) was a disaster for all

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sides. It shattered the image of Russia as a strong military power as the army suffered from low morale, poor training, weak leadership, inadequate planning, and corruption that led to humiliating defeats. On the other side, Chechnya’s leadership and society united in hatred of Russian invaders and resistance. Chechen militia leaders and fighters had served in the Soviet Army and knew its weapons and tactics. In a huge pre-war mistake, Yeltsin’s government withdrew all Russian military personnel and their families from Chechnya in March 1992 but left the weaponry behind. The Chechens immediately gained a hold of a large arsenal that included tens of thousands of automatic weapons, artillery pieces and railcars and ammunition dumps full of ammunition. They also were able to crack Russian military communications and knew of plans and troop movements in advance.92

After making threats against Dudyaev and attempts to co-opt the small number of Chechens that opposed him, Russian security forces and a few ‘allied’ Chechens launched a failed attack against Grozny on November 26, 1994. Yeltsin declared a state of emergency and sent 23,700 troops and tanks into Chechnya on December 11. The war showed the excellent combat capabilities of Chechen insurgents as they repeatedly ambushed large Russian army formations and killed the poorly trained conscripts. Tishkov wrote about the extreme cruelty exhibited by both sides, fratricide in Russian forces due to poor communications, and indiscriminate artillery bombardments of

92 Dunlop, Russia Confronts Chechnya, 166-8.
Over the two years of combat, Russia lost as many at 90,000 troops—a much higher casualty rate than during the war with Afghanistan. Russia lost more tanks in the battle for Grozny in 1994-96 than the Red Army lost during the monumental battle to conquer Berlin in 1945.

The war left Chechnya in ruins and killed as many as 100,000 people. An OSCE delegate visiting Grozny in early 1995 compared its destruction to that of Dresden fifty years earlier. Tens of thousands of ethnic Russians and other groups left Chechnya as the war approached and after it started due to the break-down of order, violence, and vulnerability to crime in Chechnya. As Russians were the primary experts and technicians running the oil industry, Chechnya’s primary export, their departure degraded the ability of Chechnya’s economy to recover after the war. Chechens were united by the war. Russian society was deeply ambivalent about the war at first and later became politically polarized over it. The media covered Russian mothers traveled to the region to pay ransoms to Chechen kidnappers to free their conscript sons. In 1995, a strong peace movement got underway and demanded an end to the conflict.

The capability of a few thousand Chechen fighters to repeatedly humiliate and outfox tens of thousands of Russian forces was demoralizing to the Russian army and

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94 Dunlop, Russia Confronts Chechnya, 209; Wood, Chechnya, 130.

95 Siren, “Battle for Grozny;” 130; Wood, Chechnya, 75.

96 Wood, Chechnya, 63.
society. The Khasayurt Accords, signed by Russian General Lebed and Chechen Colonel Maskhadov on August 31, 1996, set up a ceasefire that ended combat operations.\textsuperscript{97} Humiliated on the battlefield, Moscow agreed to withdraw its military forces and grant Chechnya de jure independence (which officially renamed itself the Chechen Republic of Ichkeriya the next year). T. Vladimir Lukin, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Duma, made a statement that captured the crystalizing effect of the debacle of the Chechen war on Russian military pride: and identity: “There was a time when Russia was strong but not respected. Then Russia became weaker but respected. Now Russia has become weak and not respected.”\textsuperscript{98}

**Terrorist Attacks in Russia Targeting Russians**

In another blow to Russian identity, Chechen insurgents expanded the warzone and brought the conflict to Russia itself. The Russian government has not been effective in protection operations. In June 1995, Chechen guerilla leader Shamil Basayev led 147 fighters deep inside the Russian Federation and seized a large hospital in the town of Budyonnovsk. Taking nearly 2,000 hostages for four days, Basayev and his fighters thwarted two Russian rescue attempts and negotiated a ceasefire and safe passage home for him and his men.\textsuperscript{99} On October 23, 2002, Movsar Barayev and 40 Chechen fighters

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{97} *Territories of the Russian Federation*, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{98} Siren, “Battle for Grozny,” 96.
\end{itemize}
took 912 hostages at the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow and held them for three days. Russian security services pumped a knock out gas into the hall to storm it, killing all of the Chechen attackers and also 130 of the hostages. On September 1, 2004, 32 attackers (including Chechen fighters including Shamil Basayev) seized 1,100 hostages at a school in Beslan in North Ossetia. They demanded an audience with Russian leaders, the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya, and release of Chechen prisoners. After two days of negotiations, explosions rang out in the school and in the confused situation Russian Special Forces attacked. The gun battle killed over 300 people, including 186 children.

These attacks and others attributed to Chechens (including two Russian airliner bombings in August 2004, attacks on the Moscow subways in 2004 and 2010, and the suicide bombing at the city’s Domodedovo airport in March 2010) targeted ethnic Russians to influence Moscow. They were crystalizing moments for Russians who increasingly saw all Caucasians and chuzhii as potential terrorists who inflict humiliating defeats and target Russians in their homeland. It is likely that Putin sensed this sentiment and used to it gain popularity and raise his stature after Yeltsin lifted him as an unknown as his Prime Minister and acting President when Yeltsin stepped down in 1999. Over the course of three weeks in August and September 1999, three bombs exploded in

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102 Mandelstam Balzer, “From ethnicity to nationalism,” Social Legacy, 58.
Moscow and two more in cities in the Volga and Caucasus regions, killing 301 people and injuring 2,000. Putin rapidly took charge, appeared regularly on TV, and talked very tough about retributions against the terrorists committing these acts.103

Chechen criminals were rapidly blamed in the media for the bombings, fanning fear and anger that united Russians to seek decisive, aggressive action against the perpetrators. Putin vowed to “wipe them out in the outhouse.” Chechnya was targeted as the source of the attacks, and Putin led a war effort that launched a massive bombardment of Grozny and a second invasion in late 1999. Putin’s approval ratings went from 2 percent before the attacks to 45 percent in November 1999. Then FSB agents were caught by local police in the basement of an apartment in Ryazan on September 22, 1999, where it appeared that the FSB agents were planting a bomb. The FSB announced two day later that it had been a civil defense exercise. Media reports described the similarities between the explosives used in one of the Moscow bombings and the explosive material captured in Ryazan (RDX). Russian press opined that the bombings had been inspired by the government to deepen the anti-Chechen mood in the country to start a war in Chechnya and give Putin a boost ahead of elections. Political scientist Karen Dawisha revealed the details of this sordid account in Putin’s Kleptocracy, stating it was not clear if Putin had orchestrated it. But it was clear Putin used the apartment bombings for political advantage and the rationale for the second war in Chechnya, further hardening the

identity boundaries between Russians and Chechens in the process.\textsuperscript{104}

**The Russian Ethnic Boundary Hardening Process**

Sociologist Leokadia Drobizheva, in an article titled “Russian Ethnonationalism” in *Ethnic Conflict in the Post-Soviet World* (1996), analyzed Russia’s post-Soviet experiences and outlined the process of ethnic boundary formation among Russians and non-Russians. She felt it was centered on ethnic competition and consciousness: who are you, where are you, and which group are you competing with? It is influenced by perceptions of ethnic groups seeming to be strong or weak, the homeland and what is happening to it, and the state of Russia as a respected power. Observing the state of play within these factors and their interaction offers a framework for observing their effects on the state of ethnic tensions between Russians and non-Russians.

Drobizheva noted the ongoing tensions started with the “affirmative action” strategies by the Soviets (the term also used by Martin) in the 1920s. This fueled non-Russian nationalism and the rapid rise of intelligentsia and elites and created competitors for socioeconomic and political opportunities. She pointed out that tension over affirmative action and leveling of the playing field is not specific to Russia: when a new group approaches the power of the dominant group, the dominant group makes demands and the rising group becomes fearful it could lose what it has attained. She cited Canada

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 212-14 and 221.
and Belgium as examples of where this has happened besides Russia. Drobizheva also noted in her 1996 article that Russians feel like they were disadvantaged heavily during the Soviet era, and therefore refuse to take blame for Soviet excesses. The Russians perceive they suffered along with everyone else under the Soviets (and perhaps even more). This tracks with current reluctance (even resistance) among Russians to re-evaluate the abuses of the Soviet past while seeking sole credit for its achievements. The struggle over the USSR’s history is an interactive factor in boundary creation and tensions and will be addressed in detail in Chapter Three.

Ethnic tensions in Russia wax and wane and the ethnonational boundary process is not a straight line. As noted by Drobizheva, Russian nationalists were quiet in the 1970s and 80s and appeared favorably disposed towards non-Russians. Looking back from a 2016 perspective, the thesis argues that perhaps ethnic Russians felt more secure in those days atop the Soviet economic and political structures. Today, there are feelings of favoritism that cause Russian backlash, with Russians demanding “affirmative action” and protection for their ethnic group. (The chant of “Stop Feeding the Caucasus,” which translates roughly to “no more welfare for the Caucasus,” has been a common feature of nationalist rallies and complaints). Some Russians, including the extreme nationalists,

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106 Ibid., 132.

107 Ibid., 131.
have impatiently taken the law into their own hands when favoritism is not provided to their ethnic group and take it out on the *chuzhii* migrants in Russia’s cities.

The idea of a Russian homeland and how that space had changed since the collapse of the USSR was another factor in the ethnonational boundary process Drobizheva described.\textsuperscript{108} She assessed that the entire USSR was the perceived homeland of Russians in Soviet times, which is reinforced by what Pilkington uncovered in her analysis of the “felt” history of Russian returnees. The homeland has since shrunk to just the lands of the Federation and the thesis argues that Russians are still processing this development decades after the Soviet collapse. Pilkington’s field work with the Russian returnees showed this. The threat that a part of the Russian Federation seeks to secede (Chechnya), and previous portions of the old USSR want to integrate with the West (including Georgia, the Baltic States and Ukraine) violently intrudes on the imagined homeland that some Russians envision to be theirs. The explosion of nationalism by Chechens, Tatars and other non-Russians and their competition with Moscow for power also triggers “defensive” nationalism by Russians. The violence against *chuzhii* by Russians in the north, central, and some southern areas of the western areas of the Federation offers evidence that Russians feel that these areas are “theirs” and the *chuzhii* have intruded far enough and need to go “home.”

The “rejuvenation” of Russia, according to Drobizheva, is also a factor that influences Russian ethnonationalism. The reversal of Soviet “affirmative action” that favored non-Russians, anti-Russian and anti-center backlashes by the periphery during

\\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 132.
and the chaos and disorientation that followed the USSR’s collapse has been overcome, freeing Russians to again take their historic leadership role in the state. That made sense when Drobizheva wrote it in 1996 and the thesis argues that it holds true today. Russia, which rejects Western models and goes its own way, appears geopolitically strong again under Putin. This is evidenced by its strong economy (at least when oil prices are high), its ability to push NATO and the EU away from Georgia and Ukraine, and recent power projection into the Middle East after the U.S. introduced chaos there through the invasion of Iraq and standing by while radicals overthrew its allies and strong leaders. Even as the economy turns sour, polls show Putin’s popularity remains very high by the standards of Western leaders (82 percent, as of March 2014 when Russia seized Crimea), reflecting their satisfaction over Russia’s return to power on the world stage. Groups that seem to thwart Russia’s return to greatness or pose threats, such as non-Russians from the Caucasus, are impediments and ethnic tensions rise as a result.

Summary

Using insights from history, demography, social and political science and anthropology, this chapter provided an interdisciplinary examination of the influences and processes that have shaped the ethnic boundary formation that shaped Russian and non-Russian identities in the decades immediately preceding the formation of the Russian Federation. These legacies were the historical and social foundation upon which

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109 Ibid., 132.

Moscow had to build a new society upon Russia’s independence in 1992 among the Federation’s 100+ ethnic groups.

The approach provides insight to answer *Q1: What is the process of ethnonational boundary creation in Russia?* For Russians, the process described by Drobizheva involves competition between Russians and other groups. As Soviet control relaxed under *glasnost’* and *perestroika*, non-Russian groups began challenging Moscow for control. As the USSR collapsed, some of these groups became strong enough to separate themselves from Moscow’s control through independence and other groups inside the Russian Federation demanded and received more autonomy under Yeltsin. The massive power loss for Moscow that came from the Soviet implosion was keenly perceived by Russians, the former elite people of the USSR. The loss of control over ethnic conflicts in Soviet space, coupled with the humiliation by Chechens in battle, provided additional shocks to Russian identity that influenced the Russian ethnonational boundary process. Speaking directly about the Russian experience, Connor noted in *Beyond Reason* that what the Russians witnessed in the USSR’s decline in close, painful, and humiliating ways.¹¹¹

The shock and dislocation of the USSR’s collapse was accompanied by the new status of Russians living outside of Russia in the former Soviet states. Marooned in new republics, experiencing outbursts of ethnic violence, and competing with new elites for power and resources was a disorienting experience. Other changes, such as the imposition

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of language laws that elevated local languages over Russian in the new republics, amplified the disorientation. Although they varied in implementation and intent, the language laws were another clear reminder to Russians that they had lost status and power. As Pilkington’s research showed, changes left Russians abroad confused about their future in the republics and fearful for the future of their children. Connor, in *Ethnonationalism in the First World*, noted that people will not be ruled by another ethnic group. It is clear that Russians harbored such fears and went “home.”

Difficulties in processing the changes by diaspora Russians who came to Russia after the Soviet collapse, as examined by Pilkington, showed how steep the learning curve has been. Russians have been confronted by population changes at “home.” These include the decline of their group’s numbers and immigration into Russian “space” by non-Russians. Barth and Connor both offered theoretical perspectives that demographic changes can lead to ethnic tensions. These factors will be addressed in detail in Chapter Three, but suffice it to say here that these changes have contributed to Russian ethnonational boundary formation and ethnic tensions.

For non-Russians, the zigzag experience in center-periphery relations from 1920-1953 was a crystalizing experience. Mandelstam Balzer’s analysis of the process shows how actions by the center influence ethnic boundary formation in frontier groups. Overall the interactions and experiences in this time period hardened boundaries between non-

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Russians and Russians. *Korenizatsiia* introduced changes that increased ethnic awareness, competitions, and tensions. In *From Tribe to Nation*, Connor commented on how changes to existing conditions can strengthen national consciousness and nationalism among groups.\textsuperscript{114} The creation of new geopolitical boundaries, elevation of languages, and new elites added strength to national consciousness among the non-Russian groups. Initiatives from Moscow also changed the existing “game” and “rules” for groups related to political power, resources and opportunities. As we read in Chapter One, Barth theorized that these changes directly affect relations between ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{115}

The new geopolitical boundaries of the 1920s left the non-majorities feeling trapped in the new territorial units, with new “rules” and power redistributions, pressuring peoples’ identity boundaries. Although he was discussing China, Duara’s theories on identity boundary development and maintenance between groups revealed rapid changes can disrupt the process, cause fears, and harden the boundaries between groups.\textsuperscript{116} The “punishment” of deportations caused left a legacy of extreme distrust between the groups and Russians. The Soviet public was told the groups were deported for collaboration with the Germans. The deported groups experienced death, loss, dislocation, and exile from their homelands for their ethnic identity. The experience provided national myths, memories, symbols, emotions, and hardened boundaries towards Moscow and Russians. As Smith discussed in *Ethnic Origin of Nations*, these are

\textsuperscript{114} Connor, “From Tribe to Nation,” *Ethnonationalism*, 223-4.

\textsuperscript{115} Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15-16.

\textsuperscript{116} Duara, *Rescuing History From The Nation*, 65-9.
the building blocks for creating nationalism and deepening ethnic boundaries.\textsuperscript{117} These were the processes and experiences that provide the historical foundation for the ethnic relations, identities, and tensions Russia is experiencing today. The thesis now turns to an examination of the interactive factors driving those tensions in the past decade.

\textsuperscript{117} Smith, \textit{Ethnic Origins}, 90.
CHAPTER THREE

INTERACTIVE FACTORS OF ETHNIC TENSIONS IN RUSSIA

Introduction

Having established the contextual background for the ethnic identity boundary formation processes and hardening between Russians and non-Russians in the Russian Federation, the thesis will now proceed with interdisciplinary research and analysis to examine the interactive factors and causes of ethnic tensions. Using insights from economics, religion, political and social sciences, history, and anthropology, the thesis will analyze the sources of pressure on the boundary formation processes that sour interethnic relations and raise tensions in Russia between groups. This chapter answers Q2: What are the interactive factors for the escalating ethnic violence in Russia? and Q3: What societal problems are being created by the ethnic identity boundary formation processes in Russia?

Russia: Fragile Superpower

Out of the globe’s 177 countries of the Fund for Peace’s Fragile State Index (FSI) analyzed by experts and international agencies, Russia ranked 73rd in 2008 (note: a lower number equates to a less stable country). This was on par with rankings for Swaziland, Djibouti, Tanzania, Cuba, and Venezuela. By 2015, Russia’s FSI rankings had slipped to 68th, on par with Lesotho, Algeria, Israel, and Guatemala.¹ By comparison, Ukraine was

¹ Fund for Peace, World Report 2015, http://fsi.fundforpeace.org (accessed January 3, 2016). Factors of the FSI include social (natural disasters, infant mortality, isolation of ethnic groups, brain drain), economic (wealth gaps and inflation), and political-military (civil-military relations, delivery of public
ranked at 84th in 2015, with the three Baltic States ranked in the 140s, and the U.S. at 158. Of all of these countries in the FSI, only the U.S. and Russia have massive conventional military forces and nuclear weapons stockpiles, significant influence on regional affairs and the global economy, and permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council.

The FSI study suggests that Russia is becoming less stable over time. Many of the factors in the FSI study, such as infant mortality, isolation of ethnic groups, police professionalism, state monopoly on the use of force, and elites and factions are mentioned in the thesis as sources of boundary hardening in Russia and reflect the scale of its problems. Atop the troubled historical context described in Chapter Two, demographic changes, religious and cultural tensions, and political activities are interacting in ways that increase pressures on ethnonational boundary formation processes and ethnic tensions in Russia. The theoretical observations of Smith, Connor, Duara, and Barth about ethnic identity processes, nationalism, and boundaries described in Chapter One, coupled with the crystallization process for Russians and non-Russian ethnic identity boundaries described by Drobizheva and Mandelstam Balzer in Chapter Two, provide a context to analyze interactive factors that are now influencing boundary formation processes that raise tensions between Russians and non-Russians in the

services, police and military professionalism, monopoly on the use of force, elites and factions, and international influence).
Changes in Russia’s Populations and Effects on Ethnic Tensions

As noted in Chapter Two, Barth and Connor both offered theoretical perspectives that demographic changes can increase ethnic tensions. This is happening in Russia. As discussed briefly in Chapter Two, the ethnic Russian component of the USSR’s, and later, Russia’s population, has dropped steadily since the 1960s. In addition to Soviet era outmigration to the republics, there are other reasons for the decline including the state of the county’s health system, high adult mortality rates, decreased birth rates, and outmigration to the West. Russia has lost seven million people since the collapse of the USSR, a loss of the scale that China suffered during “Great Leap Forward” under Mao. Unlike China, where the population stabilized and demographic growth resumed after the “Great Leap” ended, Russia’s population continues to decline. In *Russia’s Peacetime Demographic Crisis* (2010), political economist and demographer Nicholas Eberstadt showed the factors for the decline, including a struggling health care system, high mortality rates, poor health, low birth rates, and steady outmigration of Russians. At the same time, high numbers of non-Russians are migrating into the Russian Federation from the Caucasus and former Soviet states in Central Asia. The Russian population is older,

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2 Crystalizing event,” as described in Chapter One; from Mandelstam Balzer, “From ethnicity to nationalism,” *Social Legacy*, 58.


4 Eberstadt, *Russia’s Peacetime Demographic Crisis*, 4-5.
less healthy, and smaller.

Eberstadt assessed that part of the decline is the result of Russia’s weak health care system. It was not in good shape when the Soviet Union collapsed. Eberstadt’s analysis revealed that the Soviet Health Ministry exercised rigid central control over a large system. In 1989, it allocated 80 percent of national health expenditures, operated 96 percent of hospital beds, and provided 94 percent of ambulatory care services. It officially controlled nearly 4 percent of the USSR’s GDP, not counting an unknown but likely significant amount of “under the table” payments that citizens made to doctors, pharmacies, and hospitals. Still, by 1990 the Soviet health system had many problems, including deteriorated facilities, obsolete technology, inadequate supplies, and poor morale among staffs.5

Getting a sense of the state of Russia’s health system today is difficult. Moscow forced out USAID in 2012 and has imposed heavy restrictions on foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that typically collect data and report on such matters. Eberstadt’s report is the most comprehensive available, and it suggested that in 2005 that Russia’s expenditures on health care systems and how much citizens were using it were roughly equivalent to EU nations. The system appeared to have an adequate number of doctors, nurses, and medical staff. It had problems with collecting health information, fragmented care delivery, old facilities, and investments in systems that

cater to the rich, and high out of pocket costs.⁶ Health outcomes in Russia in 2010 were on par with those of developing nations.⁷ People inside the system are familiar with the problems and have spoken out publicly. Leonid Roshal, one of the country’s most prominent doctors, told a conference in April 2011 with Putin at his side that corruption, bad laws, shortages of medical workers, and government bureaucracy were plaguing Russia’s health care system. He said the Health Ministry treated doctors who cared about the quality of medical attention as “intrusive flies.”⁸

This point of this section is not to denigrate Russia’s health care system or the people working in it or say all of the country’s health problems are caused by the health care system. Rather, the thesis uses this information to show how the difficulties of the system contribute to a decline in Russia’s ethnic Russian population. It is also important to see that even a superb health care system cannot solve Russia’s health problems. Eberstadt’s 2010 research also indicated that Russians were not taking good care of their health, reflected by high rates of cardio-vascular diseases (CVDs) from smoking, alcohol consumption, poor diets, and lack of exercise. Russians also suffered from high rates of strokes and cancers of the lung, stomach, and colon, which are associated with smoking and alcohol use. Drunkenness has long been a problem and is tolerated in Russian society. Rates of per capita alcohol consumption in Russia were approximately 10 liters a

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⁶ Eberstadt, “Russia’s Peacetime Demographic Crisis,” 135-6.

⁷ Ibid., 137-8; USAID, 2010 Europe and Eurasia Health Vulnerability Analysis (6th Report), 11, 44 and 46.

year according to Eberstadt’s study, lower than some European nations but the highest in terms of hard liquor. Much of that liquor was consumed in binge drinking. Russians also had abnormally high rates of workplace and car accidents, and the lowest average life expectancy rate for males (57 years) in Europe in 2010.9 In 2012, the World Health Organization’s (WHO’s) data showed that heart disease killed 737,000 citizens in Russia and that the country had high rates of HIV/AIDS and cirrhosis of the liver.10

Coupled with high adult mortality rates, the percentage of Russians in Russia has been dropping due to low birth rates. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Russia’s birth rates has been in decline since the 1960s and dropped off sharply after the collapse of the USSR. Eberstadt’s research showed that by 2007, the birth rate was 40 percent below the 1988 level. To maintain a stable population, the total fertility rate (TFR) for females should be 1.1.11 The WHO data showed that the Russian Federation’s average TFR rate was 1.5 in 2013, the lowest in 38 countries in Europe. TFR rates in Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia greatly exceeded the national average. In heavily Russian areas in north and western Russia, TFR rates were much lower than the national average and in many areas were at or below sustainment levels. High divorce rates, economic struggles, and

9 Eberstadt, *Russia’s Peacetime Demographic Crisis*, 122-3.


11 TFR rates are from Eberstadt, page 34, citing Goskomstat, The Demographic Yearbook of Russia 2008 (Moscow, FSUE 2008), and table 2.7. TFR calculates the total number of births a typical woman would be expected to have, given age-specific childbearing trends for that group as she passes through childbearing years. The rates do not consider migration. A result above 1.0 indicates the potential for an intergenerational population increase, and a figure below that level suggests the opposite.
increased infant mortality rates have all pushed Russian birth rates lower.\textsuperscript{12} Symbolically, birth rates are an indicator of peoples’ hopes about the future. Very low birth rates among Russians would seem to suggest a decline in hope in the future they see. Poor health care systems, poor health indicators, high adult mortality, and low birth rates have taken a cumulative toll. By the 2004 census, the Russian component of the Russian Federation’s population had declined from 81.3 percent to 79.8 percent, the lowest since the first Soviet census in 1926.\textsuperscript{13} The 2010 census, the most recent available that contains ethnic breakdowns, indicated that Russians made up 79.83 percent of the population.\textsuperscript{14}

Continuing in-migration of Russians from the former Soviet states, as noted in Chapter Two, helps to stabilize the Russian population in Russia. But the departure of Russians from former Soviet spaces also contributes to changing ethnic balances around

\textsuperscript{12} 2013 figure is from WHO’s 2015 report; 2007 figures are from Eberstadt, Russia’s Peacetime Demographic Crisis, 36, citing Goskomstat, The Demographic Yearbook of Russia 2008 (Moscow: FSUE, 2008), table 2.8.

\textsuperscript{13} Timothy Heleniak, “Population, Health, and Migration,” Understanding Contemporary Russia, ed. Mike Bressler and Lynne Rienner (Boulder: University of Colorado Press), 250.

Russia. As shown in Chapter Two, Russians have left the former Soviet republics in large numbers. On December 21, 2015, and article by Moscow journalist Sergey Ryazanov in Svobodnaya pressa outlined the extent of the decrease in an article titled: “The incredibly shrinking Russian world in post Soviet space.” Ryazanov showed that since 1989, the number of Russian speakers in Ukraine has declined by over a third and by one-half in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. In Tajikistan and Georgia, the Russian speaking population has declined by 90 percent in the same time frame.15

The article gave a variety of reasons to explain the decrease in Russian speakers. Some Russians left, others re-identified as locals, etc. Ryazanov also opined that the trend would accelerate. As the need for Russian-language institutions and schools in these countries decline, the remaining Russians feel less at home and leave.16 Russians are not staying in Russia. The EU’s Migration Policy Centre assessed that between 1992 and 2011 four million people emigrated from the Russian Federation. The majority of the moves occurred in the early 1990s and dropped off after that. Departures continue at a steady pace, mostly for Europe, the U.S. and Canada.17 The shrinkage of the Russian “world” affects Russian nationalism by making Russia look less powerful.


16 Ibid.

17 Migration Policy Centre, Russia Report. Annual outmigration data cited therein came from Rosstat figures.
At the same time, the percentage of non-Russians in the Russian Federation is increasing. Large numbers of non-Russian migrants are moving to the heavily Russian areas of northwestern and central areas of Russia. The migrants coming in are primarily from Central Asia and the Caucasus regions. This puts further pressure on the Russian ethnonational boundary formation process as described by Drobizheva and increases ethnic tensions. Russians perceive they are losing the demographic race. According to a speech by President Putin January 2012, there were 9.2 million foreigners in Russia. Almost half had not “registered” were working in Russia illegally. Stating that “working is not the worst thing you could do; there are other ways of making money,” Putin warned that having large numbers of unregistered migrants in Russia opened up opportunities for crime, corruption, distortions of the labor market, and abuse of the migrants. He said that the situation imposes a burden on social services and contributes to “ethnic and other conflicts and excesses.” Cracking down on illegal housing and better coordination among security agencies are needed to curb “those who encourage illegal immigration.”

In the same speech, Putin welcomed Russians to come back into Russia from the

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19 One key aspect of being “legal” or “registered” to work in Russia is having a residency permit, or propiska. The mechanism is a Soviet era hold over that helped to control people’s movements. To get a propiska, one needs to show proof of residency in an area, typically a rental agreement. Unscrupulous property owners sell fake apartment leases that migrants use to get a propiska and become “legal.” Putin called these “rubber apartments” in the speech, acknowledging the issue.

former Soviet republics, and the arriving migrants should speak Russian and be familiar with the country’s laws and norms. “We must give preferences to qualified foreign workers that are compatible with our culture and customs. Russia must not be a country that anyone can enter whenever and however he likes.” He noted that the shortcomings of Russia’s immigration system were causing “overt irritation” and adding to ethnic tensions in Russia. Putin expressed first hand familiarity with these problems: “I know from my personal friends and acquaintances – people are trying to keep indoors during holidays in some big cities. This is very serious.”

The decrease in ethnic Russians in Russia, the large influx of non-Russians, and decease of Russians in the former Soviet spaces are putting pressure on Russian ethnic identity. As shown by Pilkington’s work in Chapter Two, Russians faced multiple psychological shocks related to the shrinking Russian space when the USSR collapsed. First, the idea of the USSR as the Russian people’s homeland was challenged. Now, the idea that the Russian Federation is the Russian homeland is under pressure by demographic changes. As noted earlier, Russian nationalism against non-Russians was dormant in the 1970s and 80s, but re-emerged strongly in the 1990s and 2000s. Smith commented in *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* that nationalism periodically re-emerges in the face of external enemies and threats. Although he was not specifically discussing Russia, these observations seem to fit the situation there as the Russian population declines and “invading” non-Russian migrants seem to pose a demographic threat to the

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21 Ibid.

Russian heavy areas of Russia. Again, Barth and Connor both assessed that large demographic changes can upset existing balances and interactions and spark ethnic tensions. This is happening in Russia. The demographic trends are likely to continue to put pressure on group relations between Russians and non-Russians, especially chuzhii migrants.

**Economic Factors in Russia Affecting Ethnic Tensions**

Changes in Russia’s population are influenced by economic factors that are pulling non-Russian migrants into Russian-heavy areas of northwestern, central and southern Russia. Until 2008, Russia was experiencing a construction boom that attracted large numbers of migrant workers. That slowed due to the 2008 global recession, but even without a boom Russia has an Industrial Age economy with factories, mines, farms, and firms that require a large labor pool. Over time, Russians are not there to fill the pool. Analysis in 2011 by Russia’s Strategy 2020 group indicated that Russia’s working age population could fall by 10 million people by 2025 due to aging. The group estimated Russia needs as many as 900,000 immigrants per year to fill the gaps in the workforce. This is the effect of the grayer, smaller Russian component of the population that Eberstadt described, showing how the economic, population change, and other factors

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25 Ibid.
interact in the process of ethnonational boundary formation and ethnic tensions in Russia.

Non-Russian migrants from Central Asia and Russia’s Caucasus region are filling the labor gaps. The migrants are being pushed by economic hardships, political instability, and conflict in their home regions and pulled to Russia by the availability of jobs and wages that are much higher than they can earn at home. Job opportunities for the migrants are greatest in the cities and areas of the northwestern and central regions of Russia.26 The flow makes Russia the world’s second largest recipient of immigration on the globe.27 Given the population trends, over time there will be fewer Russians in Russia, more non-Russians in areas like Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia, and more unfilled jobs in Russia. Migration of non-Russians into Russia for economic reasons is likely to be a long trend.

Moscow is trying to control the influx of foreign migrants by introducing a three-month entry and exit visa requirement for foreign laborers and imposing Russian language fluency rules on guest workers. People who overstay their visas or repeatedly try to illegally enter Russia can be deported and banned from re-entry for three years.28 People from the Caucasus are Russian citizens, but they need a propiska to be “legal” in


the towns they move to. Moscow is also trying to streamline the process for legal migration, which would help Russians to return to Russia. The greatest ethnic tensions about migration are in Moscow. Many migrants have moved there and they make up as much as two million people of the city’s population of 12.5 million. Press reports in 2011 portrayed Tajik migrants living in a shed in the woods outside the city. Many non-Russian migrants reportedly live like this, sheltering in rail cars or renting apartments that sleep 20 to a room. The migrants in the article said they lined up daily near construction supply centers on the city’s Ring Road, hoping for work. Others were reportedly working garbage collectors, unloading trucks, and harvesting crops. The report stated employers abuse them and short their pay.

Despite the tough life the migrants keep coming, pulled by wages and work opportunities in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other large Russian cities. Migrant remittances account for as much as one-third of national GDPs in Central Asian countries. Russians harbor conflicting emotions over economic migrants and this shows up in polls. SOVA poll analysis from 2013 noted “the idea that Russia needs migrants coexists in the heads of the residents of the country with a xenophobia-motivated lack of desire to see them.” The same poll showed than half of respondents who identified as Russian said Russia needs migrant workers, but 43 percent supported expelling them.

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regardless of their legal status and 82 percent wanted tighter restrictions on immigration. A second large poll in 2013 showed that over three-quarters of polled residents of Moscow opposed giving residence permits to children of migrants, almost 20 percent higher than the overall Russian poll.\textsuperscript{31}

The economic conditions in Russia are a major factor in ethnic tensions. Smith observed in \textit{Nations and Nationalism} that ethnic tensions rise when a group feels threatened in its homeland and must defend it. He said this could include socio-economic factors and increased contacts with another group.\textsuperscript{32} Imposition of language and time limits on arriving migrants and giving preference to people who “are familiar with our customs, laws and norms” as Putin put it in the 2012 speech cited earlier, showed that Russians feel a threat of being overrun by waves of non-Russian \textit{chuzhii} and the state is acting to control the situation.\textsuperscript{33} Barth observed in \textit{Ethnic Groups and Boundaries} those groups’ status and roles are connected to the boundaries set for them.\textsuperscript{34} According to Tolekan Ismailova, a Kyrgyz human rights defender and Director of the International Federation for Human Rights: “there is a culture of racism in Russia that perpetuates the

\textsuperscript{31} At the request of the Norwegian Research Council, the ROMIR polling agency surveyed 1,600 people in the Russian Federation in May 2013. More than 90 percent of the respondents were ethnic Russians, and their attitudes as reflected in that poll were analyzed by the SOVA Center in Moscow at sova-center.ru/racism-xenophobia/publications/2013/09/d27915/ (accessed January 25, 2016).

\textsuperscript{32} Smith, \textit{Nations and Nationalism}, 50-1.

\textsuperscript{33} Putin’s speech at FSB, 2012.

\textsuperscript{34} Barth, \textit{Ethnic Groups and Boundaries}, 17.
stereotype that (chuzhii migrants) are ‘black’ and they do the ‘black’ work in Russia.”

Another sore point in ethnic relations is related to Russian social mores and that migrants are not following these rules. Barth noted in Ethnic Groups and Boundaries that boundaries are tied to “games” and “rules” in society. Groups identify by who is playing the “game,” i.e., fairly competing for power, advantage, resources according to the “rules” of society. If a group sense another group is not playing fairly, ethnic tensions rise. Russians perceive that migrants are corrupting of the police, i.e., the umpires of the “game” and that is a big problem for ethnic relations. Igor Savin, an ethnographer with Russia’s Academy of Sciences, assessed in 2011 that nationalism and xenophobia against Caucasians were being driven by “corruption, the lack of democracy, and a decline in social mobility” for Russians. A Kommersant poll of 1,600 young Russians aged 15-30 in six major cities in northern and western Russia in April 2011 revealed 69 percent of those polled said corruption “especially in the law enforcement organs” was flourishing, causing ethnic tensions “especially when militiamen release criminals for money or on orders from above.” Two of three people polled were “certain that migrants, especially Caucasians, live better as a result of their rapid ability to adapt to the corruption of the


36 Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, 15-16.

authorities.” To what extent non-Russian migrants are able to bribe the police to gain an advantage matters less than the perceptions by Russians that they are doing it. This perceptions fuels Russian ethnonationalism, in the way Barth predicted.

Barth’s observations on the topic of “rules” and “the game” and its effects on nationalism and ethnic tensions also relates to paying taxes, use of social services, and attending schools. Russians complain that migrants and their employers do not pay taxes that are needed to support social services that the migrants are using. Unnamed authorities in Moscow were quoted in late 2014 as saying migrants put a “massive strain” on state resources, particularly the health care system and that migrants seeking medical help costs the city a reported $150 million rubles per year. Large numbers of non-Russian immigrant children attending Russian schools also causes ethnic frictions. Komsomolskaya Pravda reported in May 2011 that up to 60 percent of the pupils in primary schools in Moscow did not speak Russian well, and Russian parents were endeavoring to shift their children to schools with few or no migrant children. Muscovites speak of “white” and “black” classes in schools. In 2013, a news report stated that half or more of the students in some schools in Moscow were children of migrant workers. Teachers at these schools struggled with low Russian language skills of pupils and the

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39 Stracansky, Inter Press.

disruptions caused by departures of migrant students in the spring when they leave for farm work.\textsuperscript{41} The Russian perceptions that \textit{chuzhii} are “free riders” and are degrading the Russian children’s education, contributing to ethnic tensions.

There is a class dimension associated with ethnic tensions between Russians and non-Russians. Russian non-elites are angry that Russian elites are spared the experience of “living” with \textit{chuzhii} migrants in their neighborhoods and schools. Igor Kholomogorov, an ultranationalist and editor-in-chief of \textit{Russkiy Obozrevatel’} journal, stated in May 2011 that nationalism is a “middle class phenomena” in Russia:

The representative of the middle stratum cannot put his child in a normal school because the school is filled up with children who do not know the Russian language and hold back the educational process; he cannot go on the street normally and drink beer with friends without encountering everywhere a criminal danger.\textsuperscript{42}

\textit{A Nezavisimaya Gazeta} article in June 2011 opined that Russian elites were out of touch with manifestations of nationalism and its causes:

Traveling about in official cars…sending their children abroad to study…(they) do not find themselves in places where there are spontaneous clashes between extremists and \textit{gastarbeiers}. Keeping quiet about these problems is to put one’s head in the sand – and to await the next Manezh.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} Paul Goble, “Muscovites Want Their Children to Study In Schools Without Migrants,” \textit{Window on Eurasia} (May 19, 2011) \url{windowoneurasia.blogspot.com} (accessed November 15, 2011).

\textsuperscript{42} Paul Goble, “Russian Nationalism is a Middle Class Phenomena, Kholomogorov Says,” \textit{Window on Eurasia} (May 3, 2011) \url{windowoneurasia.blogspot.com} (accessed November 15, 2011).

\textsuperscript{43} Paul Goble, “Russians Now Feel They are Second Class Citizens in their Own Country, Moscow Writer Says,” \textit{Window on Eurasia} (June 6, 2011) \url{windowoneurasia.blogspot.com} (accessed November 15, 2011). “Manezh” refers to the December 2010 interethnic riot in Moscow’s Manezhnaya Square.
Comments like this suggest that the previously mentioned theories of "cultural ecology" discussed by Barth and the economic aspects of resistance and resentments of the ethnic majority that are fueled by "invasions" of the economic homeland by aliens noted by Smith are already a reality for Russians. The unease reflected in comments and polls show the cultural ecology is distorted. Whatever limits on numbers, roles and jobs Russians accept for чужие has been breached. The migrations continue, Russians are not welcoming of the non-Russians, they see the effects in their schools and neighborhoods, and feel abandoned by the Russian elites who live “above” the problems. Some are taking the situation into their own hands and are acting out. The following four incidents of ethnic violence in Russia--Kondopoga (2006), Manezh in Moscow (2010), Demyanovo (2011) and Birylovo (2013)—all had economic undertones, demonstrative of the edginess of the ethnic competition and Russian identity boundary formation process discussed by Drobizheva and cited in Chapter Two.

Kondopoga is a small town located in Russia’s far northwestern Karelia. A fight broke out on August 30, 2006 between a group of ethnic Russians and Chechens at a restaurant owned by a Chechen man. Two Russians were killed, and angry mobs of Russian youths burned the restaurant and vandalized other Chechen-owned businesses. Local police detained 100 people later, but largely stood by as the Russian mob destroyed the Chechens’ properties. Special Forces of the Ministry of the Interior (OMON) were

44 Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, 15-17; Smith, Nations and Nationalism, 51.
called in to quell the escalating violence. Over 2,000 residents demonstrated in the main square and demanded police arrest and deport all Chechens and Caucasians from the town. DPNI leaders arrived and called on nationalists via the Internet to come to Kondopoga and “clean the streets.” After the attacks, Kondopoga’s Caucasian residents were subjected to document checks and numerous migrants were expelled when they were found to be there illegally.46

One of the largest manifestations of ethnic violence in Russia to date erupted in Moscow on December 11, 2010. After Russian fanatry and Caucasians fought after a soccer match, a Russian man was killed and a young man from the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria was implicated in his death. Large riots ensued in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In Moscow’s Manezhnaya Square, thousands of nationalists, skinheads, and fanatry screamed xenophobic insults, damaged property, and randomly attacked people based on their physical appearance. The protesters stayed for several days and marched on the Kremlin, demanding action on a range of issues, including the end to illegal immigration and “protection” for Russians from migrants.47

On June 22, 2012, a fight broke out in the town of Demyanovo in Russia’s rural Kirov region at a bar owned by a Dagestani family between Russians and local Dagestanis. Crowds of Russians formed and marched on the bar and nearby sawmill (also


owned by Dagestanis), and “carloads” of Dagestanis arrived to support their family and friends. The two sides fought with shotguns, stakes, and clubs. The Russians burned down the bar. The Dagestanis called the police, but they did not respond. The governor flew in, and police established a curfew and brought in “hooligans” for questioning. Local Russians said they were proud their “war” against the “Dagis” had coincided with the anniversary of the start of the Great Patriotic War and accused the non-Russians of molesting women, fighting, and bribing the police. A Russian exclaimed: “They've paid off the police, the authorities, and do whatever they want! And this is our land! We were born here!” A local Liberal Democrat Party of Russia (LDPR) Russian nationalist party member demanded that the Dagestanis apologize “to the people who have nurtured you.”

On October 13, 2013, an inter-ethnic riot exploded in Biryulyovo, a neighborhood in southern Moscow that has numerous factories and a large market and vegetable warehouse that attracted large numbers of migrant workers from the Caucasus. Fights between Russian and Caucasian youths were common in the area, and after a migrant from the Caucasus region killed a Russian, hundreds of Russians stormed the neighborhood streets, attacking Caucasians and burning cars. After the riot, the Interior Ministry detained 1,245 migrants who worked at the Biryulyovo market and closed it down. Local Russians complained that Biryulyovo is “Moscow’s sewer, where the government has put all the waste.” One Russian said:

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If you want to make life better here, you have to close the vegetable warehouse…you do not realize, they [the migrants from the Caucasus] have their own world here: their own banks, restaurants and hotels.

Others complained that the authorities “at the top” of the government get money from migrants in exchange for protection.\textsuperscript{49}

Separated from the rhetoric and accusations, these cases contain elements of the previous mentioned theories about ethnic tensions: Russian and non-Russian competition running amok, a cultural ecology out of balance, fears about how others are playing the “game” and getting ahead unfairly, and ethnic tensions breaking out into violence. Physical attacks, destruction of property, detention and removal represents a form of ethnic cleansing. The tensions also show a lack of rationality about Russian’s economic well-being. This is suggestive of what Connor said in \textit{Eco- or Ethnonationalism} about disconnects between economic benefits and the nationalist urge to defend the group and the homeland.\textsuperscript{50} Russians had a choice to make in Kondopoga, Demyanovo, and Biryulyovo about the economic benefits offered by \textit{chuzhii} businesses and vegetable markets they frequent and depend on. Instead of welcoming the migrants and getting the benefits, the Russians chose to destroy the businesses and push out the migrants.


\textsuperscript{50} Connor, “Eco- or Ethnonationalism,” \textit{Ethnonationalism}, 155-6.
Religious Tensions in Russia Related to Ethnic Identities

Russia is the land of four main traditional faiths: Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. There are signs that relations between Russians (who are primarily Orthodox Christians) and immigrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia (who are primarily Muslim) are under pressure amidst ethnic tensions. This is perhaps the most evident in Moscow, where the construction of mosques is a thorny issue. Prayer services at the Central Mosque, built in 1904, drew thousands of worshippers at the end of Ramadan in 2010. When the mosque filled up, many people knelt on the ground for blocks on the streets outside. In a Moscow suburb, Russians protested the construction of a mosque and carried placards with pictures of those Muslim worshippers kneeling in street that read, “Do we need this?” By comparison, the Russian Orthodox Church has 400 parish churches in Moscow and 200 new ones are planned. A Church spokesman agreed that more mosques are needed but Muslim leaders have failed to discuss their plans with local communities, exciting Russians’ fears.51

The demolition of Moscow’s Cathedral Mosque was a sore point with the city’s Muslims. The old mosque was leveled and a cornerstone for a new mosque was laid in 2005, but no further work was done for years. Some Muslims felt the Cathedral Mosque, built in 1904, was a historic building and should have been preserved. According to Gayar Iskandyaov, the leader of the Tatar’s Foundation for the Development of the Muslim People, “The walls held our prayers.” The city official that approved the

mosque’s demolition said there was confusion over the plans. Symbolically, an Orthodox church standing a block away from the demolished mosque is adorned with a cross with a crescent at its base, symbolizing the victory of Christianity over Islam. After 10 years of construction, the Cathedral Mosque re-opened on September 23, 2015. President Putin was present for the ceremony. It is one of just four mosques operating in the city, where 60,000 or more Muslims come to pray weekly. Sergei Sobyanin, the mayor of Moscow, has gone on the record opposing construction of new mosques because spot checks of identification at worship services show most of the attendees are not legal residents.

Muslim clerics said there are 40 underground mosques in apartments in Moscow. They say the city needs 20-30 new mosques built to adequately support the city’s Muslim population. Plans to build more mosques runs into vehement ethnic Russian resistance, symbolizing ethnic tensions between Russians and dark-skinned Muslim non-Russians in Moscow, which has Europe’s largest community of Muslims and polls have consistently identified it as Russia’s most xenophobic city. In June 2006 at a U.S. conference, historian Robert Crews discussed concerns he had heard from Muslim leaders in Moscow:

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53 McFarquar, Times.

54 Ibid.; Theodore P. Gerber, “Beyond Putin? Nationalism and Xenophobia in Russian Public Opinion,” The Washington Quarterly, Fall 2014, 119. Polling data is from Democracy International Russian election surveys (DIRES), implemented by the Levada Center in February-April 2012 in the Quarterly report. The poll involved a sample of 4,482 respondents who self-identified as ethnic Russians. Quote from the Levada poll analysis: “It is striking how Muscovites consistently stand out as more hostile to all nine (non-Russian) groups compared to other parts of Russia.”
A Word About Russian Polls:

The Russian government has constrained press freedoms and is restricting participation by non-government groups and foreign organizations in polling.

A 2012 law deemed that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that receive foreign funding engaged in "political activity" and must declare all sources of funding and register as "foreign agents." Organizations that fail to do so can be fined up to 500,000 rubles ($15,500). NGO leaders also face fines of up to 300,000 rubles ($9,300).

The leading Russian polling center, the All-Union Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM), was taken over by the government in 2003. Many employees quit, and the head of VTsIOM, Yuri Levada, formed the smaller Levada Center. It remains under government surveillance. Due to government pressures and influence, objectivity in Russian polling data is increasingly difficult over time.


In non-Russian areas of Russia, Orthodox Christian Russians also fear ethnic backlashes. In November 2013, Metropolitan Kirill of Stavropol told a religious council that Russian speakers “often suffer ethnic and religious discrimination” in regions in Russia’s North Caucasus region. “Uncontrolled processes of migration, ethnic conflicts that are often artificially portrayed as trivial rows, lack of jobs, and low education and healthcare standards force Russian speakers to leave their homes and move to other

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Russian Orthodox religion is an ethnic identity for Russians. Lev Gudkov, the head of the Levada Center, discussed a recent poll that showed 78 percent of the Russian Federation’s population considered themselves to be Orthodox, but only 2-5 percent went to church regularly and 27 percent said they believed in God, salvation, and eternal life. This situation seems emblematic of the boundary formation process that Duara explored in Rescuing History From The Nation. Nations with rigid boundaries privilege their differences and develop intolerance and suspicions towards the practices of others. He was not discussing Russians in his theory, but the Russian case proceeds along the path of his logic. The polls suggested that being Russian means a person is automatically Orthodox, whether or not the person follows Church teachings or attend its services. Ethnic identity affiliation with religion is not unique. States such as Poland and Italy have similar identities associated with Catholicism. In Russia’s case, “ethnic Orthodox” is an identifier that implies the Muslim chuzhii, who are not Orthodox, are in the Russian’s “home” and do not belong there.

For Russians, the attacks in Budyennovsk (June 14-19, 1995), apartment bombings in Moscow (1999 and 2000), the Dubrovka theater siege in Moscow (October

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58 Duara, Rescuing History From The Nation, 65-9.
23-24, 2002), Beslan (September 1-4, 2004), suicide airliner bombings over Russia (August 2004), suicide attacks on Moscow subways (March 29, 2010), and a suicide attack on Moscow’s Domodedovo airport (January 24, 2011) had a religious dimension that contributes to ethnic identity boundary hardening. In each case, Islamic militants from Chechnya and the Caucasus region targeted Russian populations. As Barth noted in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, regional security is a variable that affects inter-ethnic relations and boundary formation.\(^{59}\) When security breaks down and the state cannot protect the public, Russians feel vulnerable to attacks, hardening the identity boundaries between them and the *chuzhii*. Insecurity in the Caucasus region further contributes to the growth of Chechenophobia, Islamophobia, and Caucasophobia among Russians.

For non-Russian Muslims, especially those in the Caucasus region, the mix of religious tension and oppressive history has fueled extreme distrust and anger Moscow’s rule over their homelands. There is a backlash against the center and the local symbols and representatives of the center’s coercive power by some frontier groups as part of the process outlined by Mandelstam Balzer as cited in Chapter Two.\(^{60}\) The monopoly on coercive power in Russia is centered in Moscow, and it is carried out in the periphery by Moscow’s local representatives and security forces. As noted by Smith in *Nations and Nationalism*, the center’s use of coercive power influences the growth of nationalism.\(^{61}\) If people feel that state power is being abusively deployed against them and their group,

\(^{59}\) Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 36-7.

\(^{60}\) Mandelstam Balzer, “From ethnicity to nationalism,” *Social Legacy*, 56-60.

they will push back to protect the group. Smith was not describing Russia, but the large-
scale attack in Kabardino-Balkaria in Russia’s Caucasus region on October 13, 2005 was
an instructive case of the center-periphery tensions and how the heavy handed use of
coercive state power can explode into violence.

On that day, 250 people attacked nine police and security buildings in coordinated
daylight raids in Nalchik in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria. The attackers targeted
symbols of state power, including the buildings of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the
FSB, military and other government institutions and the airport. The attack killed 49 law
enforcement agents and military personnel and wounded nearly two hundred personnel
and civilian bystanders; 92 attackers also died. A total of 59 defendants were tried in
2009.\(^\text{62}\) In the case, the Russian government blamed the attacks on Chechen militants
trying to expand their war across the region. Local people argued that the attack was
provoked by repressions against Muslims by law enforcement agencies and Moscow-
leaning local political leaders. According to interviews by members of the human rights
group *Memorial (Pamyat)*, militia brutality and impunity of law enforcement officials
were the main causes of the attack, saying, "The combat against Wahhabism turned into
persecution of Muslims in general."\(^\text{63}\)

Comments by Sufian Zhemukhov, an expert on the North Caucasus region, at a

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Georgetown University lecture in late 2011, provided greater detail on the source of inter-ethnic and religious tensions in Kabardino-Balkaria leading up to the 2005 attack. He said that the reason for the attack was unknown but listed some of his own observations from the region. Tensions grew after the government started monitoring Muslims in 2003 to detect signs of fundamentalism, compiled lists of wahhabists that were based in part on the length of a person’s beard, and conducted raids on apartments. He also cited arrests and torture by security agents to get information on extremists, the strong Christian presence in the police force, and efforts to infiltrate mosques to ferret information on radicalization that stoked local anger at Moscow, its local political cronies and the police. Zhemukhov also noted that Chechen militants were active in the region, but not at the time of the attack.64

Based on these observations and the complaints of locals expressed during the trial of the attackers as cited by Pamyat, it seems logical that the coercive use of state power against local Muslims to gather information on extremism was a large factor in the attacks, offering a proof point for Smith’s theory in a real world situation and showing how this contributes to boundary formation and ethnic tensions.

**Political Developments in Russia and Effects on Ethnic Tensions**

Immigration is an important political issue with Russians, in comparison with other countries. A Gallup global poll on immigration conducted and released in October 2015 indicated that 70 percent of Russian respondents wanted immigration levels to

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64 Sufiyan Zhemukhov, speaking at Georgetown University, November 7, 2011.
decrease.\textsuperscript{65} This tracked closely with Russian polls conducted a decade earlier, which revealed that nearly 60 percent of respondents expressed complete or partial support for the “Russia for Russians” slogans. Over a third supported the deportation of all migrants (legal or illegal) back to their places of origin. This has stayed high over the past decade. A 2005 poll indicated that half of respondents did not want to work with Chechens or that they belonged in Russia at all.\textsuperscript{66}

Illegal immigration is a political hot button for Russian politicians. This was exemplified in the campaign for mayor of Moscow in 2013. Two of the leaders, acting mayor Sergei Sobyanin (who won and is now the mayor) and nationalist Alexei Navalny talked about cracking down on illegal immigration, promising limits in migrants in the city and going after the markets where they work. Sobyanin directed the city police to round up immigrants in the city before the elections, and 1,400 Vietnamese were detained and put in a camp outside the city. Most of them left Russia “voluntarily within days.”\textsuperscript{67}

Beyond running for Moscow’s mayor, Navalny is a leading opposition figure who challenges Putin and the ruling United Russia Party. He is an outspoken nationalist who

\textsuperscript{65}Gallup World Poll (October 16, 2015) \url{http://www.gallup.com/poll/186209/europeans-negative-toward-immigration.aspx} (accessed January 9, 2016). The poll interviewed more than 183,000 adults across 142 countries between 2012 and 2014. Adults worldwide were asked two questions about immigration: "In your view, should immigration in this country be kept at its present level, increased or decreased?" and "Do you think immigrants mostly take jobs that citizens in this country do not want (e.g., low-paying or not prestigious jobs), or mostly take jobs that citizens in this country want?"

\textsuperscript{66}Levada Center polls cited in Mikhail A. Alexseev, “Xenophobia in Russia: Are the Young Driving It?”, \textit{PONARS Policy Memo Number 367}, December 2005, 1-6; the second poll cited was a Levada poll in “Russian Xenophobia,” \textit{Economist}, February 19, 2005.

\textsuperscript{67}Will Englund, “Hardball in Moscow as mayor election heats up,” \textit{Washington Post}, August 26, 2013.
mixes xenophobia with mainstream political topics such as corruption. Navalny is a leader among groups demanding the federal government cut spending on programs going to the North Caucasus republics (i.e., “Stop feeding the Caucasus”). He also directly plays on Caucausophobia. In 2007, he appeared in a video comparing dark-skinned Caucasus militants to cockroaches.  

Illegal immigration is the major social issue for a number of political parties, including the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia, National-Democratic Party, Great Russia, and Motherland. These parties participate in local, regional, and federal elections and have representatives in the Duma. Some politicians feel very comfortable discussing the most extreme measures against chuzhii. For example, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, head of the LDPR party and a populist Duma leader, told a TV interviewer in 2013 that the North Caucasus should be fenced off with barbed wire and births of every third child should be taxed to discourage large families.

Outside the official political sphere, Russia has a large number of extremist, violent xenophobic groups. The government has cracked down on the most violent groups. As of September 2015, 44 radical parties, skinheads, and xenophobic organizations have been under Article 282.2 of Russia’s Criminal Code, including the National Bolshevik Party, Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI), the Russkiye movement, Novaya Sila, Slavic Front, Slavic Union, and Spiritual-Ancestral Power

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69 Lally, Post.
Xenophobic Russian nationalism is a strong sentiment among Russian soccer fans and skinheads. The latter are present in nearly every large and medium sized Russian city, numbering as high as 70,000 throughout Russia. Political figures have used them for their own goals. Yuri Luzhkov, the previous mayor of Moscow, reportedly relied on xenophobic skinheads and nationalists to “cleanse” the capital of migrants and other undesirables, as did officials in Krasnodar, Stavropol and Pskov.

The xenophobes previously enjoyed tacit support from a wide body of Russian society. A 2005 Levada Center poll indicated that nearly 25 percent of people aged 18-to-25 in the survey felt that skinheads posed no threat of interethnic violence. A 2006 poll by the same source indicated that 40 percent of Muscovite students said that skinhead attacks were normal reactions from citizens in response to the terrorist attacks perpetrated in the country. The same poll also indicated that 44 percent of respondents felt that migrants were responsible for the xenophobia they provoked because they conducted themselves in a way that was disrespectful to Russians.

By 2013, the support for ultra-nationalists was dropping. A SOVA poll showed nearly three out of four favored banning skinheads and organizations. However, more than 20 percent those polled said that “migrants beaten up by Russians typically deserve

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70 Stracansky, *Inter Press*.

71 Marlene Laruelle, *In the Name of the Nation: Nationalism and Politics in Contemporary Russia* (Palgrave: Macmillan Publishers, 2009), 63-4; Alexseev, “Xenophobia in Russia,” 1.

72 Ibid., 67-8.

this,” with younger people polling higher on this question. Nearly 60 percent backed the slogan “Russia for the Russians.” Over one third said that when they speak of Russian people, they have in mind only ethnic Russians. A fourth of respondents said they think of ethnic Russians when they think of the Russian Federation. Almost half of Russians surveyed said they supported patrols to remove illegal migrants. In Moscow, 80 percent of respondents approved this measure.\footnote{74 Paul Goble, “Russians Deeply Conflicted on Ethnic Issues, Poll Shows,” \textit{Window on Eurasia} (September 19, 2013) \url{http://russialist.org/russians-deeply-conflicted-on-ethnic-issues-poll-shows/} (accessed January 11, 2016).}

SOVA analysts concluded that the survey showed that in general Russians were very conflicted about their relations with non-Russian immigrants in 2013. They were quite unhappy with ethnic tensions, but had no clear ideas what should be done to improve the situation. The SOVA analysts opined that in Russia, “ethnic nationalism, which requires a mono-ethnic state, coexists with imperialism; an understanding that the country needs migrants coexists with xenophobia, and disapproval of extremist groups coexists with support for anti-migrant actions.”\footnote{75 Ibid.} This conflicted feeling reflects what Connor wrote about in \textit{Beyond Reason}: the ethnonational bond is subconscious and emotional. It can be analyzed but not explained rationally.\footnote{76 Connor, “Beyond Reason,” \textit{Ethnonationalism}, 204.}

The changes in Russian nationalist feelings between the Levada poll in 2005 and the SOVA poll in 2013 reflect the zigzags in the identity boundary process described by
Mandelstam Balzer and Drobizheva. It is not a straight line. Support for ultra-nationalists declines at times, but polls also show many respondents feel that only Russians should live in Russia. Migrants getting “what they deserved” when they get thumped may reflect what Barth discussed in Ethnic Groups and Boundaries about “rules.” Applying his theory to the Russian case, non-Russians who are perceived as not respecting the values and social mores of Russians in Russian heavy areas are being disrespectful, and the physical assaults that ensue represent the hardening of ethnic boundaries.

The opposition to Putin in the 2012 election for his third term as president was an unpleasant surprise for the regime. Nationalist leaders, including Navalny, featured prominently in the opposition, publicly questioning the regime over illegal immigration, aid to the Caucasus, and the Ukraine project. One of the largest polls to examine Russian sentiment towards non-Russians--the Democracy International Russian election surveys (DIRES)--was carried out by the Levada Center in February-April 2012. It sampled of 4,482 respondents who self-identified as ethnic Russians. The poll data showed four main axes of Russian nationalism: anti-western, anti-southern, those fearing a foreign threat, and those who see Russia as a distinct/unique identity. The respondents’ answers overlapped on many issues, but in general the anti-western nationalists distrusted the U.S and Europe and seemed to be supportive of Putin’s actions to make Russia look strong against the West. Anti-southern nationalists were unhappy with the Russian government

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78 Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, 13-16.
on immigration and corruption. Of note, the anti-southern nationalists were among the most vocal opponents against Putin’s 2012 re-election.\textsuperscript{79}

This development tracks with the process of ethnic boundary formation among Russians and non-Russians that Drobizheva outlined (discussed in Chapter Two).\textsuperscript{80} It appears that at the time of the poll, the competition for Russians against non-Russians was heating up, the anti-southern nationalists were unhappy about the government’s allocation of resources to the Caucasus and that the government seemed weak about controlling migration into the Russian homeland. The DIRES poll also showed that some respondents in the anti-southern camp felt that competing with the West harms the economy, diverts resources, distracts Russians from the country’s bigger problems, and provides them no real benefits. The anti-southern nationalists have a message that rallies nationalistic Russians and hardens ethnic boundaries. The emotional power of nationalists that complain about the government regarding immigration and its policies regarding the Caucasus region is a political force that is eyed with concern by the regime.\textsuperscript{81}

Since 2012, Putin seems to be pursuing a multi-front approach to tap the power of nationalism to support his agenda while tamping down nationalist elements that do not. This includes arrests and harassment of prominent anti-southern nationalists, giving media airtime to co-opted anti-western nationalists and slowing down immigration by

\textsuperscript{79} Gerber, “Beyond Putin?” \textit{Washington Quarterly}.


\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
new visa rules and crack downs on migrants in large scale, highly visible sweeps. The
government conducted “Operation Illegal 2014” in St. Petersburg (September 22 –
October 10, 2014) and “Operation Migrant 2014” in Moscow (October 23 – November 2,
2014), during which security forces raided markets, hotels, and workplaces and detained
several thousand migrants. As noted earlier, the Duma also recently passed legislation to
increase penalties on foreigners who overstay their visas.82

Putin has also moved to co-opt the Russian Marches, which take place annually in
early November. The Marches started out as a new holiday in 2007 to show Russian unity
but devolved over the next few years into large, unruly demonstrations of xenophobes
railing against Russia’s enemies, including immigrants. Since 2012, the government has
moved to control the events, marginalize the anti-southern and extreme nationalists
taking part in the March, and promote and highlight the participation of “positive”
Russian nationalism. The Russian Marches of 2014 and 2015 offered opportunities to see
the changes. In 2014, Russian authorities arrested Alexander Potkin, a nationalist leader
and March co-organizer, for fraud and inciting racial hatred. His supporters said he had
been arrested for refusing to publicly support Putin’s foreign policy in Ukraine and
movement of “volunteers” to the conflict. Authorities approved the 2014 March very late
and changed the venue for the center of Moscow to the outskirts suburb of Lyublino. As a
result it was smaller and less organized.83

82 Stracansky, Inter Press.

83 Yevgeny Levkovich, “Nationalism in action: the Russian March,” Russia Beyond the Headlines
(November 3, 2014).
Media coverage of the 2015 Russian Unity Day featured Putin speaking about the history of Russia overthrowing Polish-Lithuanian occupiers in 1612. An estimated 85,000 people marched through the capital and rallied near the Kremlin. The Russian March gathering in Lyubino, which gathered less than 2,000 nationalists who waved Czarist era flags and carried far-right placards, seemed out of step with Russian unity. The government’s take-over of the holiday and demotion of the Russian March as a symbol of Russian unity demonstrates that Putin understands what Smith theorized in *Nations and Nationalism*: the raw emotional power of nationalism that is connected with symbols, myths, memories, traditions, values and rights. Putin senses the power of Russian ethnonationalism and is not leaving that power in the hands of nationalists who may not agree with the regime’s foreign and domestic policies.

**History vs. history: The Role of the Past in Ethnic Identity Boundaries in Russia**

As noted in Chapter Two, the collapse of the USSR in December 1991 was a crystalizing event for Russian nationalism and identity boundary formation. In April 2005, President Putin acknowledged this: "Above all, we should acknowledge that the


85 Smith, *Nations and Nationalism*, 90.

86 “Crystalizing event,” as described in Chapter One; from Mandelstam Balzer, “From ethnicity to nationalism,” *Social Legacy*, 58.
collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and co-patriots found themselves outside Russian territory. Moreover, the epidemic of disintegration infected Russia itself." Repeating a statement made by General Alexander Lebed, in 2007 Putin said: “Anyone who doesn't regret the passing of the Soviet Union has no heart. Anyone who wants it restored has no brains.” A poll in 2011 indicated that nearly 60 percent of Russians regretted the Soviet break-up.

Duara, in *Rescuing History From The Nation*, showed that identity boundaries result from the competition between an overarching History narrative that one group seeks to impose to tell the state’s story, and the numerous smaller histories that contain messy details, dead ends, inconsistencies, controversies, and stories of other groups that do not track with the overarching History grand narrative. Since 2013, Putin has been engaged in a Russian History project that connects Russia’s glory with Soviet achievements. It is a tricky task. The project resonates with Russians but alienates non-Russians who also feel they contributed to the greatness of the USSR. The Great Patriotic War is a major source of Russian pride. In 2009, Marlene Laruelle noted that polls in the

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90 Duara, *Rescuing History From The Nation*, 10-11 and 15.
early 1990s and second half of the 2000s showed that 80 percent of respondents think the war was the major event in Russian history.  

However, a deeper re-examination of Soviet history is anathema to Russians. A poll of 30,000 adults in the Russian Federation in 2011 on the topic of examining Soviet activities related to the Great Patriotic War and “punished peoples” showed 90 percent of respondents were against any referendum “recognizing the Soviet Union as a criminal state.” Russians want the glory and ignore the messy details of Stalin and other Soviet abuses. This unifies Russians but it also hardens boundaries with the groups that suffered from Soviet crimes.

The idea that non-Russians share in the history of past greatness and achievements is a contentious issue between Russians and non-Russians. This occasionally goes on display in discussions between Russians and non-Russians over history. In 2011, researchers set up a roundtable for such discussions between Russians and other ethnic groups. Dmitry Bakharev, the leader of the ultra-nationalist Slavic Force Movement, stated, “over the course of centuries, our ancestors assembled these lands with their blood, worked and defended them…and what contribution to the general development of Russia has been made by the Chechen people?” Bakharev also argued that the Russians, not the Soviets, had defeated Hitler. Zelimkhan Musayev, Chechnya’s Minister of International Relations, responded that the Soviet Union won the Great

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91 Laruelle, *In the Name of the Nation*, 188-9.

Patriotic War “only thanks to trust among peoples.” At another conference in 2011, Aslambek Paskachev, the head of the Russian Congress of Caucasus, rejected complaints he had heard that Russia over-subsidizes the North Caucasus. “Let’s consider who is feeding whom and who has fed whom at various periods of history.” He stated that in Soviet times, Chechnya had sent 21 million tons of oil to the rest of Russia a year, which was used for “rocket fuel for Yuri Gagarin’s flight.”

This squabbling over the Soviet past may seem petty to an outsider, but it is important to nationalists on both sides who gets the credit for the Soviet Union’s achievements. The disagreement is also evidence of Duara’s theory that groups will fight for their histories when they feel that those stories are being suppressed, hardening identity boundaries and tensions. The back and forth represents the competitive aspects of the ethnic identity boundary formation process between Russians and non-Russians that was described by Drobizheva: Who is claiming the achievements? Is Russia being respected? Are the groups strong enough to thwart Russian claims?

The approach of the 70th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in 2015 stirred up memories and identity arguments. Stalin is seen as the architect of the

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95 Duara, Rescuing History From The Nation, 4, 19 and 28-9.

victory by Russians. Plaques and statues were raised in his honor and the city of
Volgograd is renamed Stalingrad on one day every year. “Stalin remains a symbol of
victory in the Great Patriotic War and will be undoubtedly be remembered in a positive
way now,” stated Elena Shestopal, head of political psychology at the Moscow State
University. Alexey Grazhdankin, deputy director of Levada Center, told Kommersant
newspaper that the majority of Russians want to see a strong leader as the country’s head,
and Stalin appears an appropriate example to them.97 Guidelines for Russian textbooks
introduced in 2013, personally reviewed and approved by Putin, present Stalin as a
visionary who brought about rapid modernization, laid the foundation for the Soviet
Union’s scientific achievements and its victory in the war, orchestrated purges “to
liquidate a potential fifth column” and used forced labor to achieve economic
breakthroughs. 98

The gaps in this History include the deportations of the “punished peoples” and
other serious human rights abuses. As theorized by Duara, History enables one group to
reconstruct a past that serves present needs and mobilize its members. The gaps and
imposition of the History hardens boundaries with the groups left outside it, and they will

97 Marina Obrazkova, “Will rehabilitation of Stalin split Russian society?” Russia Behind The
Headlines’ Russia and India Report (April 22, 2015)
http://in.rbth.com/society/2015/04/22/will_rehabilitation_of_stalin_split_russian_society_42751
(accessed January 18, 2016).

98 Leonid Bershidsky, “Russian Schools to Teach Putin’s Version of History,” Bloomberg View
(June 18, 2013) http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2013-06-18/russian-schools-to-teach-putin-s-
compete to ensure their histories are not forgotten or ignored.99 The way these gaps are treated by Russians has the potential to aggravate ethnic tensions. Repeating many of the inaccuracies of the Soviet account of the “punished peoples,” Yuri Alekseyev, the former Deputy of the Russian Federation’s Anti-Terrorism Committee, stated in a press article in September 2015 that Stalin’s deportation of the Crimean Tatars was “not very harsh” given the traitorous behavior of “more than 20,000” members of the ethnic group that sided with the Nazis. “What could he do? He could have wiped them out, following the script of Hitler. He might have left several Soviet divisions on the peninsula and used them over the course of many years to suppress partisans. But this would have meant taking those divisions out of the frontlines fighting the Germans. Instead the Soviet leader chose deportation. Was this harsh? Not very.”100

Summary

Reviewing the comments by Yuri Alekseyev in the preceding paragraph, one wonders what a conversation between him, Ali Aliyev, Mukhadin Murtezov, Magomed Atabiyev, and Dada Baiev on the issues of collaboration, the experience of transport and the camps, and the reality of Operation Lentil would sound like. This conversation would probably be fraught with disagreements, anger, accusations, and recriminations between the Russian and non-Russian sides. Layered on top of a very difficult history of inter-ethnic contact and relations (as described in Chapter Two), there are a number of

99 Duara, Rescuing History From The Nation, 65-9.

interactive factors—population changes, the economy, political activity, and disagreements over history—that are engaged in a process that further strains relations between Russians and non-Russians that tends to hardens boundaries.

Like gears in a machine, the interactive factors spin within the processes described by Mandelstam Balzer and Drobizheva. Immigration is intertwined with economic issues. Religious ethnic identities interact with history and population changes. Political activities are influenced by all of the interactive factors. Actions by the federal government in Moscow and the local governments, which as we have seen are perceived by non-Russians as “Russia” and “Russian,” are a driving influence in the process, and have acted in ways that have affected the perceptions of Russians and non-Russians. These perceptions drive action in a number of ways, influencing the process of identity boundary formation in Russia. Observation of this process is informed by the theories of Smith, Duara, Barth, and Connor as described within each section related to the interactive factors.

The interdisciplinary analysis offered in this chapter relied on economics, religion, political and social sciences, history, and anthropology to analyze the sources of pressure on interethnic relations and what is causing the ethnic tensions to address **Q2**: *What are the interactive factors for the escalating ethnic violence in Russia?* and **Q3**: *What societal problems are being created by this process in Russia?* The socio-political theories of Smith, Barth, Duara and Connor, while not specifically discussing the case of Russia’s problems with ethnic tensions today, offer unique viewpoints and a lens through
which to view the Russian problem from a wider human values perspective. What is happening in Russia with ethnic boundaries is happening in many countries, as the growth of nationalism heats up ethnic tensions.

Clearly, Russia’s population is changing in ways that raise ethnic tensions, as predicted by Smith and Barth.\textsuperscript{101} In Smith’s \textit{The Ethnic Origins of Nations}, he also envisioned that nationalism spikes in the face of external enemies and threats.\textsuperscript{102} As the Russian population declines, for reasons that Eberstadt so effectively laid out, the waves of non-Russian migrants, and especially \textit{chuzhii}, are perceived by Russians as “invaders.” The long-term projections on Russian population trends suggest it will continue to decline. It is equally likely that migrants will continue to flow to Russia for economic reasons. Tensions are apt to be high in the northwestern, central, and some southern areas which have the economic opportunities the migrants look for and where many Russians live and feel is their “home.” Smith observed in \textit{Nations and Nationalism} that ethnic tensions rise when a group feels threatened in its homeland and must defend it and socio-economic factors and increased contacts with another group.\textsuperscript{103} It is no coincidence that Moscow, the most “Russian” of Russia’s cities in terms of perceptions and history, and the destination of many \textit{chuzhii} migrants looking for work, is Russia’s most vehemently xenophobic city according to polls. This should come as no surprise even without the context of the difficult history described in Chapter Two.


\textsuperscript{102} Smith, \textit{Ethnic Origins}, 30.

\textsuperscript{103} Smith, \textit{Nations and Nationalism}, 50-1.
The interactions and perceptions between the *chuzhii* and the Russians are another source of tensions. As Barth discussed in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, group boundaries are tied to “games” and “rules” in society. Russians are watching to see if migrants in their “home” are playing the “game” fairly as they compete for economic and social resources according to the “rules” of Russian society, values, and mores. It seems clear that the Russians do not think so, which makes ethnic tensions rise.\(^{104}\) The idea of corrupting of the police, i.e., the umpires of the “game,” by non-Russians is a particularly abhorrent to Russians. Barth’s observations on the topic of “rules” and “the game” extend to paying taxes, use of social services, and attending schools. Free riding and the failure to “play fair” may be seen in the polls wherein Russians feel like migrants “get what they deserve” when they get attacked. If the *chuzhii* are few, stay in the roles that Russians think they should be doing, i.e., the “black jobs,” and maintain a low social status, ethnic tensions are lower. As Barth observed in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, groups’ status and roles are connected to the boundaries set for them.\(^{105}\) Polls have reflected this, showing that Russians have a grudging acceptance of *chuzhii* as laborers, mixed with a desire to be rid of them. This situation is changing as more migrants arrive and the cultural ecology Barth described becomes unbalanced.

With regard to religion, the situation in Russia seems emblematic of the boundary formation process that Duara explored in *Rescuing History From The Nation*. Russians ethnically identify as Orthodox. The identity is a rigid boundary, privileging the

\(^{104}\) Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15-16.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 17.
differences between Orthodox Russians and Muslims, even if Russians don’t attend services or even believe in the Church’s teachings. The refusal to build mosques in Moscow by Russians shows an intolerance and suspicion towards the practices of the others.\textsuperscript{106} Not being Orthodox is not being Russian for many Russians, if the polls are right. The way Moscow has used coercive powers in the Nalchik case in the years leading up to the 2007 attack reflects what Smith noted in \textit{Nations and Nationalism} and how the use of such power influences the growth of non-Russian nationalism.\textsuperscript{107} Muslims in Nalchik felt targeted by state power, which was being abusively deployed against them and targeted their religious identity. They pushed back, hard, against the center.

Nationalism is a force in Russian politics, and politicians across the spectrum use it for political power and agendas. The identification of illegal immigration as a resonating political issue reflects Russian public concerns. It is another source of ethnic boundary formation. The migrants are targeted by the politicians making promises of getting tough on illegal immigration and are rounded up and deported. But they keep coming, because Russia does not have enough workers and these areas of Russia are where the jobs are. Moscow’s take-over of the Russian Unity Day holiday and demotion of the Russian March demonstrated that Putin understands what Smith described in \textit{Nations and Nationalism}: the raw emotional power of nationalism that is connected with symbols, myths, memories, traditions, values and rights.\textsuperscript{108} 

\textsuperscript{106} Duara, \textit{Rescuing History From The Nation}, 65-9.


\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 90.
nationalism is strong, especially over immigration, and Putin realizes it and seeks to control how that is expressed at high profile events like the Russian March and Unity Day celebrations.

Putin’s Russian History project to connect Russia’s glory with Soviet achievements resonates with Russians but creates tensions in ethnic relations with non-Russians who also contributed to the greatness of the USSR. Duara, in *Rescuing History From The Nation*, showed that this creates identity boundaries and competition between an overarching History grand narrative and the histories that contain messy details, dead ends, inconsistencies, and controversies.\(^{109}\) It is important to nationalists on both sides who get the credit for past achievements. When a group feels it is being left out of the grand narrative, it will fight against being ignored or suppressed. Fights over history and History in Russia also are hardening group identity boundaries.\(^{110}\)

As a postscript to Chapter Three, polling in Russia in 2015 indicated there were signs that ethnic tensions in Russia were easing somewhat. A Levada Center poll found that Russians respondents felt that the likelihood of ethnic conflicts was declining, were less hostile to non-Russians, and were more ready to legalize illegal workers than expel them. Even that bit of good news comes with a cautionary note. Mikhail Remizov, a researcher with the Moscow Institute of National Strategy, opined that in reality nothing has actually changed in Russian society to reduce ethnic tensions. Rather, the change of

\(^{109}\) Duara, *Rescuing History From The Nation*, 10-11 and 15.

\(^{110}\) Ibid., 4, 19 and 28-9.
popular attitudes towards non-Russians was related to decreased media coverage of ethnic violence in favor of “patriotic” coverage of the war in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{111} With a hope that things may have turned the corner, or at least stabilized, the thesis now moves to Chapter Four to address \textit{Q4: Which institutions have influence to address these problems?} and provide insights on how well the institutions are performing.

CHAPTER FOUR

INSTITUTIONS TO PROTECT ETHNIC GROUPS IN RUSSIA

Introduction

The issues of migration, ethnic tensions, and nationalism are prominent today across the globe and are the topic of complicated discussions related to human values. France fights with migrants to close the “Jungle” (a tent city full of migrants at Calais), Sweden and Finland grapple with nationalists and ethnic tensions over Middle Eastern immigrants, and Turkey moves to close its border with Syria to cut off migrant flows. U.S. presidential candidates gain strength from promises of a wall on the country’s southern border. Australia debates the topic of allowing Middle Eastern refugees into the country. The UNHCR recently reported there are more refugees on the move across the globe today than at any point in recorded history.1 It is clear that this situation leads to increases in ethnic tensions in many places.

Given the global context, Russia is not unique for having problems with ethnic tensions and violence associated with migration and nationalism. Given that Russia has 193 ethnic groups and 277 languages, it is no surprise that Russia struggles with ethnic tensions.2 As demonstrated by Chapter Two, Russia has a difficult history that led to ethnic boundary hardening between Russians and non-Russians. Group relations are under strain by interactive factors as examined in Chapter Three. The human values at

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stake in the Russian case include individual and state responsibilities and responses to the treatment of non-Russians living in heavily Russian areas of the Russian Federation.

The institutions, i.e., centers of authority, with power, responsibility, and influence to help resolve the problems of ethnic tensions, boundary hardening, and violence in Russia include the Russian government, Russian Orthodox Church, and individuals. The duties of the Russian government are outlined in both the UN Charter (of which Russia is a signatory) and the Russian Constitution. These legal agreements specify what the Russian government must do to protect non-Russians in the Federation from nationalist-inspired ethnic violence by Russians. The Bible is the guiding force for the Russian Orthodox Church, and it contains guidance on the responsibilities of believers regarding the treatment of foreigners. Russians are the largest ethnic group in Russia and as we saw in Chapter Three they see their identity as Orthodox Christians as a part of their ethnic identity as Russians. This gives the Russian Orthodox Church and its followers a role and responsibilities to address the protection of non-Russians from ethnic violence. There is also a moral dimension to the problem. The political philosophy that guides Russia’s leader Vladimir Putin could increase ethnic tensions against non-Russians.

In this Chapter, the thesis analyzes the roles and responsibilities of these influence centers and how they bear upon the problem of ethnic violence in Russia to answer Q4: **Which institutions have influence to address these problems?**
Russia’s International Agreements: Protecting Non-Majority Groups

Russia has signed numerous international commitments to protect human rights in the Federation. In 1969, the USSR ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In 1973, it ratified two main UN treaties on human rights—the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. After the Soviet collapse, Russia reaffirmed its commitments to these covenants. In 1996, the Russian Federation joined the Council of Europe and later ratified both the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). Russia also signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2001 but has not yet ratified it. 3

Although it was formed to guard against aggression, create the conditions for peaceful interaction between states, and protect human rights, the UN has proven to be weak on handling many of these issues. One major problem related to the protection of “minority” groups is the fact that the UN lacks a precise definition of what a “minority” is. In any major agreement or document discussing wide-ranging issues, one of the first steps is to establish terms of reference. The UN has tried to do this with regard to “minorities” numerous times. In 1949, Article 68 of the UN Charter established the Commission on Human Rights. According to Vladimir Yaroslavtsev, Justice of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, its mission is “to attend to the protection

3 Ibid., 7.
of minorities.” The Commission then established a Sub Commission to define principles to protect minorities. Since that time, there has been no clear UN declaration of what the term “minority” means. The following attempts at this definition have not been ratified, but at least they provide a working basis upon which the UN can act.

- In 1950, UN Document E/CN4/358 stated “the term minority includes only those non-dominant groups in a population which possess and wish to preserve stable ethnic, religious, linguistic traditions or characteristics markedly different from those of the rest of the population.” The minority is required to have a size adequate to develop unique characteristics, and be loyal to the state.

- In 1979, UN Document E/CN4/Sub 2/384/Rev 1 defined “minority” as “a group numerically smaller to the rest of the population of the State, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the State – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.”

- In 1985, UN Document E/CN4/Sub 2/1985/para. 181 identified a minority as “a group of citizens of a State, constituting a numerical minority and in a non-dominant position in the State, endowed with ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from those of the majority of the population, having a sense of solidarity with one another, motivated if only implicitly, by a collective will to survive and whose aim is to achieve equality with the majority in fact and in law.”

- Article 27 of the 1996 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights declared “in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or use their own language.”

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Specific to Russia, the UN has attempted to weigh in against the excesses of military campaigns in Chechnya. In 2000 and 2001 the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) passed resolutions that criticized Russia for human rights abuses in Chechnya, the first time it criticized a permanent Security Council member. It also called on Russia to establish a national commission of inquiry to investigate crimes in Chechnya. A similar resolution in 2004 failed to gather enough votes. Russia ignored the criticisms. After the failed resolution in 2004, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said "all attempts to depict the situation in Chechnya as a human rights problem have been unrealistic." This example exemplifies the limitations of the UN for intervening effectively on matters of human rights violations related to ethnic violence in Russia.

Solving the UN’s problems is beyond the scope of the thesis. The lack of a UN agreed-upon definition of “minority” is raised here to contemplate the difficulty of protecting something that has never been defined by the group. The thesis includes the Russia example to show that the UN, riven by competing interests, has been slow to act when non-majority groups have been under attack by a dominant group. In recent decades, these have included Bosnia Muslims in the former Yugoslavia, Kosovar Albanians in Serbia, Tutsis in Rwanda, Maubere in East Timor, and Yazidis in Syria. In each case, non-majority groups were targeted and attacked by other groups and the UN acted slowly, if at all, to provide protections. While it is unknown if the lack of

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agreement among member states on the term “minority” impeded responses to these outrages, one may assume that the cause of intervention or effective actions has not been helped by it. The UN is an authority with a role in the ethnic problems Russia is having, but it is unlikely to play a timely or effective role to solve them.

**The Russian Constitution and Protection of Ethnic Groups**

The Russian Constitution, ratified on December 12, 1993, contains four specific articles that address protections of ethnic groups, religious beliefs, culture, and languages for groups living in the Russian Federation. Section One, Chapter Two, Article 19 stipulates that “all people shall be equal before the law” and ensures equality of rights and liberties regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, or religion. It is forbidden to put restrictions of citizens’ rights based on social, racial, national, linguistic or religious grounds. Article 26 guarantees everyone the right to determine their national identity, use of native language, and free choice of language of communication, education, and training. Article 29 ensures freedom of thought and speech but bans “propaganda” that incites “social, racial, national or religious hatred.” Propaganda that espouses social, racial, national, religious or language superiority is also forbidden. Article 44 guarantees all the right to participation in cultural life, institutions of culture, and access to cultural values. Landmarks of historic and cultural heritage must be protected.

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These protections continue in Russian Constitution, Section One, Chapter Three. Article 68 declares that the Federation’s state language is Russian language, but grants the republics the right to institute their own state languages that are to be used alongside Russian in federal and local government. All peoples have the right to preserve their native language. Article 69 guarantees the rights of small indigenous peoples in accordance with international law and treaties.\(^8\) In addition, Article 282 of Russia’s Criminal Code proscribes “actions aimed at the incitement of national, racial, or religious enmity, abasement of human dignity, and also propaganda of the exceptionality, superiority, or inferiority of individuals by reason of their attitude to religion, national, or racial affiliation.”\(^9\) As shown in Chapter Three, the Russian government has used it to ban a number of ultra-nationalist political organizations.

These are robust protections. Russia’s integration into the European Council accelerated its efforts to align the legal and criminal code in its Constitution with international norms. Article 3 of the Russian Constitution obliges Russian courts to apply principles and norms of international law and treaties of the Russian Federation, and Article 15 (4) declares the supremacy of international law over Russian law. The 1998 Russian law *On the Ratification of the Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* declared that Russian courts must comply with the European Court on Human Rights (ECHR). In 2003, the Russian Supreme Court resolved that the

\(^8\) Ibid.

liberties of man in conformity with commonly recognized principles and the norms of the international law must be respected in Russia. Russia’s Labor Code also provides protections from discrimination related to housing and work. In March 2011, a Federal Law (Article 7) came into force prohibiting law enforcement organs from ill treatment that targets ethnic minorities.¹⁰

Despite the legal protections in the Russian Constitution for ethnic groups, the abused have little real protection. This was shown in the Minority Rights Group Europe’s (MRGE’s) 2014 Russia report. The MRGE is the European branch of an international NGO that works to promote diversity and understanding between ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups and it conducts detailed studies of group relations in Russia. MRGE’s analysis in the 2014 report was informed by previous years of study and involvement in Russia and other countries on similar missions. The 2014 report included insights from a visit to Russia during January 13-25, 2014 that included meetings with leaders of minorities and indigenous groups, NGOs working on the issues in Russia, analyses by research institutes in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and discussions with current and former Russian public officials and members of organizations working on minority protection issues.¹¹

The MRGE 2014 Russia report described a litany of daily abuses against non-Russians in Russia, especially chuzhii migrants in the heavily Russian areas of the

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¹⁰ Prina, MRGE 2014 Report, 7-8 and 11.

¹¹ Ibid., 22-3.
Russian Federation. Reports of ill treatment by police include ethnic profiling, detention, confiscation of property, extortion of bribes, illegal searches, and periodic raids into immigrant settlements that often include racist insults and beatings. Russians often deny migrants housing due to “non-Slavic appearance.” Ads in papers openly state that “only Slavic persons need apply” for apartments. The propiska requirement mentioned in Chapter Three means that migrants must have proof of housing to register in an area. Without housing, migrants are considered illegal.

State security and military forces often treat non-Russians harshly. Groups have almost no legal protections in these situations. This has an ethnic component, given the two wars and violence in Chechnya (1994-96, 1999-2000, and afterwards) during which Russian and Moscow-allied Chechen forces routinely injured, robbed, detained, abducted, raped and killed Chechen civilians and destroyed their homes and property. Russia did not prosecute any of military personnel for human rights violations in the first war (1994-96). In the second war (1999 through the end of major combat operations in Chechnya 2003; periodic militant attacks continue), Russia’s military prosecutorial office investigated 1,500 criminal cases against Russian soldiers serving in Chechnya. Only 27 low ranking conscripts and kontraktniki (a soldier hired on contract by Russian armed forces) were convicted. Of these, six involved crimes against the civilian population.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 10.

In the highest profile case of military justice against the few Russian officers held accountable for atrocities in Chechnya, the government convicted Colonel Yuri Budanov in 2003 and sentenced him to 10 years in prison for outrageous abuses in the abduction, torture and murder of Eliza Kungayeva (a Chechen teenage girl) in March 2000 near the village of Tangi Chu. Although he was arrested almost immediately after the incident, a conviction came after years of stalled investigations, claims of temporary insanity, a reinvestigation, and international rights groups’ complaints. Budanov was released on parole in 2009 and was a hero to some Russian nationalists. He was murdered in Moscow in June 2011, in an alleged revenge killing by Chechens. These outrages and a lack of judicial redress further harden the identity boundaries between Russians and Chechens.

Legal Venues Outside Russia

Feeling no protection from the Russian government, Chechens have appealed to the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR), i.e. the Strasbourg Court, for legal redress. In early 2003, the ECHR agreed to hear such cases. According to Human Rights Watch, the Court had issued 83 rulings against the Russian government for serious human rights violations in Chechnya by 2009, including torture, disappearances, and executions. By 2014, the ECHR had issued over 200 judgments against the Russian

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government for such violations.\textsuperscript{15}

The details of these cases reveal egregious abuses, including the execution of the family of Zura Bitiyeva, a political activist in Chechnya who worked with the Russian NGO Committee of Soldiers' Mothers. In 2000, armed Russians broke into her home, tied up Bitiyeva, her husband, son, and brother, and shot them all. The Court also found the Russian government liable for the relatives of at least 50 civilians killed by Russian forces in Grozny in 2000 during a large-scale "mop-up" operation. The Court also held the Russian government responsible for the abuses against Sulimovna Gekhayeva and her family. On May 16, 2003, 20 Russian servicemen forcibly entered her home, wrapped adhesive tape around her eyes, nose and mouth, and abducted her daughter and a visitor. They have never been found.\textsuperscript{16}

Chechens pressing their cases against the Russian government in the ECHR have won judgments. In October 2013, the Court ordered the Russian government to pay $1.6 million USD to 13 Chechens whose relatives were killed during an artillery bombardment of Aslanbek-Sheripovo in February 2000. This case marked the first time that the Russian government acknowledged a violation of Article 2 of the European Convention on


Human Rights regarding the use of lethal force against civilians.\textsuperscript{17} In April 2013, the Court awarded Tamara Askhabova $80,000 USD in compensation in a lawsuit against Russia over the 2009 abduction/disappearance of her son. This was the Court’s first ruling to implicate Chechen police in kidnappings during the rule of the republic’s current Moscow-appointed leader, Ramzan Kadyrov.\textsuperscript{18}

Human rights groups are encouraged that Chechens can seek redress in the ECHR, and it is probably the only legal institution where victims can effectively pursue their claims for crimes in Chechnya. But the success is limited. The Court has complained that the Russian government fails to properly investigate crimes, turn over information, and does not cooperate well. The Russian government is the only Council of Europe member that has failed to ratify Protocol 14, a key mechanism that would help the Court to expedite the processing of cases. The backlog slows down resolution of cases.\textsuperscript{19}

The Russian government has paid successful claimants in finalized ECHR cases as required by its obligations as a member of the European Council. This indicates sensitivity to outside attention and a desire to cooperate with Europe to close these cases and decrease attention paid to problems in Chechnya. The ability of Chechens to press future cases against the Russian government in the ECHR is problematic. In late 2015,


\textsuperscript{19} Human Rights Watch, Update on European Court.
the Duma passed a law that the Russian Constitution takes precedence over international court rulings. This law specifically enables Russia’s constitutional court to overturn decisions by international bodies ruling on human rights to "protect the interests of Russia."  

**Religious Influences and Ethnic Group Protections in Russia**

As described in Chapter Three, Russians overwhelmingly identify as Orthodox Christians, giving the religion and the Russian Orthodox Church significant moral influence in society. The Old and New Testaments of the Russian Synodal Bible (Синодальный перевод, “The Synodal Translation Bible”), which is commonly used by the Russian Orthodox Church, contains many statements about how followers are to treat foreigners. In the Old Testament, Exodus 23: 9 states “you shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.” Deuteronomy 10: 19 states “Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. Leviticus 19: 33-34 states: “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” The New Testament also describes how a follower is to treat strangers and aliens. In Ephesians 2: 19, it is written “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of

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21 The Synodal Translation Bible, Exod. 23:9; Deut. 10:19; Lev. 19: 33-4.
the household of God’ and Colossians 3: 13 “Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.”

While the Bible can be interpreted in many ways, these directions could be understood as instructions on how to treat other groups unlike our own, including foreigners and aliens.

Since 1992, the Russian Orthodox Church has made statements on a range of social issues. The most comprehensive was Social Concept (2000)—the Church’s first post-Soviet, comprehensive discussion of its theological principles, outlooks on individual responsibilities, behavior, relationships, and relations with government. In it, the Church defined its view of nation and ethnic identity. “In the contemporary world, the notion of “nation” is used in two meanings, as an ethnic community and the aggregate citizens of a particular country. Relationships between church and nation should be viewed in the context of both meanings of this word.”

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“Social Concept,” or “The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church Document Adopted by the Jubilee Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church,” was the result of discussions between Church leaders during August 13 - 16, 2000 at Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow. The goal of Social Concept was to show the “vitality of the Church after emerging from 70 years of persecution by the godless Communist regime” during which all Church pronouncements required Communist approval. The document represented a statement “from a free Orthodox Church confronting the present global moral issues which all Christians face.” The original document was published by Department of External Church Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000.
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22 Ibid., Eph. 2: 19; Col. 3: 13.

23 Moscow Patriarch, trans. and ed. Father Andrew Harrison, The Orthodox Church and society: the basis of the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church, (Belleville: St. Innocent/Firebird Publishers, 2000),
Social Concept tied religious beliefs to a homeland, stating that Christians share one religion and the “unity of the people of God was secured by their ethnic and linguistic community and their being rooted in a particular land, their fatherland.” Ethnic purity is emphasized. Citing Ezra 9:2, it emphasized that “God Attached great importance … to the preservation of the purity of the blood (of His Chosen people, the Israelites): marriages with foreigners were not approved because in these marriages “the holy seed” was mingled with “the people of those lands.” Social Concept said that while the Church was universal, Christians have a right to national identity and national self-expressions. “Orthodox Christians, aware of being citizens of the heavenly homeland, should not forget about their earthly homeland.” It also declared “the cultural distinctions of particular nations are expressed in the liturgical and other church art, especially in the peculiarities of the Christian order of life. All this creates national Christian cultures.” Believers are to love their earthly homeland and should be ready to give their lives in its defense.24

Social Concept stated that the Russians are the ethnic people of the Christian homeland in Russia. They are to obey both the laws of the homeland and the holy laws of God, and it is a representation of the heavenly homeland on Earth. “The priceless blood of the Son of God has earned that homeland for you. But in order to be members of that homeland, you should respect and love its laws, just as you are obliged to respect the laws of the earthly homeland.” Religious and national patriotism are the same thing in


24 Ibid., Chapter II, Sections 1 and 2.
Social Concept. “Christian patriotism may be expressed at the same time with regard to a nation as an ethnic community and as a community of its citizens. The Orthodox Christian is called to love his fatherland, which has a territorial dimension, and his brothers by blood who live everywhere in the world. This love is one of the ways of fulfilling God’s commandment of love for one’s neighbor, which includes love of one’s family, fellow-tribesmen and fellow-citizens.” Orthodox Christians in the Russian homeland are to be active: defending the fatherland against an enemy, working for the good of the motherland, and care for people through “among other things, participation in the affairs of government.”

At the conclusion of Social Concept’s Chapter Two, the Church asked followers to refrain from nationalism that leads to abuses of non-Russians and non-Christians in the Russian homeland: “At the same time, national sentiments can cause such sinful phenomena as aggressive nationalism, xenophobia, national exclusiveness and inter-ethnic enmity. At their extremes, these phenomena often lead to the restriction of the rights of individuals and nations, wars and other manifestations of violence.” The Church positioned itself as the protector of ethnic non-Russians in the Russian homeland. “It is contrary to Orthodox ethics to divide nations into the best and the worst and to belittle any ethnic or civic nation…the Orthodox Church carries out the mission of reconciliation between hostile nations and their representatives. Thus, in inter-ethnic conflicts, she does not identify herself with any side, except for cases when one of the

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25 Ibid., Chapter II, Section 3.

26 Ibid., Chapter II, Section 4.
sides commits evident aggression or injustice.”

In practice, the Russian Orthodox Church acts and speaks in ways that contradict its lofty goals and protection of non-Russians as described in Social Concept. In October 2013, the Russian Orthodox Church reportedly called for volunteer patrols to help identify illegal migrants in Russian cities. It also supports the Russian government’s efforts to toughen immigration rules against illegal immigration into Russia. After President Putin’s views on reducing illegal immigration to improve Russia’s inter-ethnic relations were published in Nezavisimaya Gazeta in January 2014, Archbishop Vsevolod Chaplin (then the Church’s head of External Relations) publically supported Putin, saying Russians want the immigrants coming in to the state to speak Russian and understand “our culture and state system.” He also supported Putin’s tough line on exposing the “ethnic criminality in corruption.” Chaplin also supported Putin’s about Russians being a “state forming nation,” saying “I hope this idea will be fixed in legislative and political establishments in our country.” Like Social Concept, Chaplin noted there is no space for ethnic hatred and hostility based on anyone’s nationality. People displaying such hostility should be treated “maximally tough” because such conflicts are dangerous for Russia’s future.

Chaplin, one of the Church’s most senior leaders and its public face, has a history

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27 Ibid., Chapter II, Section 4.
28 Englund, Post.
of making nationalist comments, including a call for the Church and the Russian
government to take a more active role in east Ukraine and referring to the Russian
military’s intervention in Syria as a holy war. However, he had earlier criticized Russia’s
political elite for corruption, which crossed a line and it is very likely he was removed
from his duties in December 2015 for that reason. The closeness of the Russian
Orthodox Church with the Russian government and hard line nationalists in senior
leadership posts further degrades the ability of the Church to play a balanced role
between Russians and non-Russians amidst ethnic tension in the country.

Political Philosophy and Inter-Ethnic Tensions in Russia

Little is clear about Vladimir Putin’s political philosophy. Other than realpolitik
to re-establish Russia as a great power, observers have had difficulty discerning the
underpinnings of his vision for Russia in the world. In his December 2012 annual
address the federal assembly, in the middle of a closely watched three-hour speech that
the Russian political elite attend every year, Putin said:

Who will take the lead and who will remain on the periphery and
inevitably lose their independence will depend not only on the economic potential
but primarily on the will of each nation, on its inner energy, which Lev Gumilev
termed passionarnost’: the ability to move forward and to embrace change.

Observers who know about Gumilev, author of a Russian nationalist political
philosophy in the mid 20th century, were surprised to hear Putin plainly mention him in
the annual address. Media outlets later described his use of the word passionarnost’ as a

30 Shaun Miller, “Russian Orthodox church sacks ultra-conservative senior priest,” The Guardian,
father-vsevolod-chaplin (accessed March 25, 2016).
“dog whistle” to Russian ethnonationalists. Gumilev (1912-92) was the son of the famous Russian poets Anna Akhmatova and Nikolai Gumilev (who was shot by the Bolsheviks during the Civil War). Gumilev spent 14 years in Stalin’s camps. Observing the stark conditions and how prisoners interacted in the camps, he developed his idea of *passionarnost*’ which roughly translates to “capacity for suffering.” He felt that society, friendship, and brotherhood were instinctual urges, common to all groups. Great peoples had higher, sustained levels of *passionarnost*’—the individual and group willingness to sacrifice.31

After he was released from camps, he was rehabilitated after his release, went on to get a doctorate in history and geography and published nine books. His political theory held that the Earth’s biosphere and its processes influence the development of groups of people. Arbitrary and unpredictable eruptions of the biosphere create new nations (“ethnic groups”) and civilizations (“super ethnos”). Each has a birth, life and death cycle (which he called “ ethnogenesis”). Ethnic groups and civilizations are young and growing (“the consolidation of the system”), hitting their peak (“the energy overheating phase”), aging (“the collapse phase”), fading (“the inertia phase”), and finally, dying (“the obscuration phase”). Each phase lasts roughly 300 years. What makes an ethnic group or civilization great is its *passionarnost*’ and its staying power depends on the depth of its capacity for suffering and sacrifice. Gumilev developed a complex theory to measure *passionarnost*’ as a quantifiable measure of the mental and ideological energy at the

disposal of a nation at a given time ("pik").

His philosophy held that Europe is an “older” super ethnos than Russia, achieving its “energy” phase hundreds of years earlier than Russia, conquering other lands and groups and launching the Crusades. Europe would have conquered Russia and added it to its territory except for the Mongols. The latter’s super ethnos had been formed by the harsh biosphere of Eurasia, making them fierce warriors with strong tribal solidarity. Thus a small number of nomadic Mongols suddenly appeared in the thirteenth century, conquering China, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Two centuries later they disappeared, merging with the Russians to become the Great Russian super ethnos.

Using pik, Gumilev calculated that Europe entered the “inertia phase” in the 1600s and has been fading ever since. He estimated that Russia is approximately 500 years younger than Europe and is in its “energy phase.” What will happen to Russia and how long it is great depends on the common sense of purpose and willingness to sacrifice to achieve its goals. Gumilev felt that the Russian super ethnos, as the heir to the warrior Mongols and hardy from living in the harsh environment of Eurasia, has a high pik and deep passionarnost’. Thus Russia is destined to rule over the territory and groups of Eurasia.


Gumilev’s theory is a synthesis of nationalism and internationalism, unity of Eurasia, distrust of the West, and recognition of the special capacities and role of Russians. It legitimizes the agendas of Russia’s hard line nationalists, who believe it is Russia’s destiny to exercise control over the territories of the former USSR and that Russians are the region’s elite ethnic group. Putin’s mentioning of Gumilev in 2012 at such an auspicious, closely watched venue as his annual address suggested he had read and possibly believed in Gumilev’s philosophy. One observer noted that Putin had, by mentioning Gumilev and passionarnost’, unexpectedly embraced “chest thumping nationalism, the martial virtues of sacrifice, discipline, loyalty and valor.”

Gumilev’s theory tracked with observations made by Smith in Nations and Nationalism. Although Smith was not talking about Russia, he theorized that perceptions replace reality when it comes to ethnic identity formation. He described association with a place and a long history there, myths, and destiny as the key ingredients of an ethnic identity. Gumilev’s philosophy tracks closely with Russian community’s long existence and association with the wild extremes of the environment of Eurasia, myths of survival and group solidarity in the face of many adversities, and the historical destiny to be the group that rules over the landmass. Gumilev created an ideological framework that fits with perceptions, beliefs, and desires of Russian ethnonationalism.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in March 2014, 15 months after Putin’s speech in which he referenced Gumilev, surprised the U.S. and Europe and seemed to mark a new

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34 Smith, Nations and Nationalism, 81 and 90.
phase of Russian foreign policy. If Putin is a believer in Gumilev’s philosophy, the invasion makes sense as a move to re-assert Russia’s leadership over Eurasia. The development bodes ill for human values in Russia, putting Moscow in a competitive position with the countries and ethnic groups around Russia for primacy in Eurasia. Following Drobizheva’s theory of the process of Russian nationalism, as noted in Chapter Two, a more nationalistic outlook in Russian foreign policy is likely to increase the ethnic tensions in Russia, especially if a group is perceived to be thwarting Russia’s greatness or causing problems for Russians in the homeland. Acceptance of Gumilev’s theories would make it even more likely that the Russian government would act in a nationalistic way that will further raise tensions between Russians and non-Russians.

Summary and Why Get Involved?

The problem of ethnic tensions and abuses against non-Russians in Russia seems intractable, given the difficult history between Russians and non-Russians described in Chapter Two, the interactive factors that are further hardening ethnic boundaries as described in Chapter Three, the lack of an effective international or legal venues to address these problems, and a religious authority—the Russian Orthodox Church—that is heavily aligned with the Russian government and ethnic Russians as the “state forming people in the Russian ethnic homeland” described in this Chapter. Added to that, Russia may be following a political philosophy that seeks to re-establish its dominance over Eurasia, a path that is sure to raise tensions between Russians and non-Russians even

further. Given the state of affairs, an outsider could ask: why get involved at all? If the problem is not bothering us, on what basis should we involve ourselves? It’s Russia’s problem.

Living in 21st century America, far from Russia, one could view the ethnic problems there and feel no need to become involved. But the problems of ethnic tensions in Russia don’t just stay in Russia. The two brothers who conducted the bombing of the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013—Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev—are Chechens. The Tsarnaev family moved from Siberia to Kyrgyzstan, from Kyrgyzstan to Kalmykia, back to Kyrgyzstan, then to Chechnya, back to Kyrgyzstan to flee the war, then to Dagestan, then to the United States. Dzhokhar appears to have been born in Kyrgyzstan. The family’s experience reflects the hellish experience of many Chechens who were displaced by the deportation in 1944 and the two wars and chaos in the region since the USSR collapsed. That experience in no way justifies any actions by the brothers related to the horrible massacre they carried out in Boston, and it is unknown if it played any role. But this history is an undeniable context in their experience that eventually delivered them to Cambridge, Massachusetts. If it happened that way for the Tsarnaev family, the experience has contributed to and spread many hatreds, and the effects of genocides and interethnic tensions can affect people and countries well beyond the groups involved. We turn a blind eye at our own peril.36

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If the ethnic tensions in Russia have the potential to affect us in our country, we—as individuals, members of groups, and citizens of the U.S.—have a self-interest in doing something to reduce them. Beyond that, there is a basic human values issue involved in the problem of ethnic tensions in Russia worthy of consideration: do the tensions threaten peace? Internally, ethnic tensions in Russia could threaten its own stability. Violence has already risen to mild ethnic cleansing of *chuzhii* as witnessed in Kondopoga, Demyanovo and Birylovo. Non-Russians are pushing back, as seen in Nalchik and the terror attacks by Chechens and Caucasians in Russia targeting Russians. This escalation process could be ramped up by unforeseen events, such as a large scale terror attack on a large Russian city or renewal of combat in Chechnya.

The nationalism that is being intensified by the processes of ethnic boundary formation and ethnic tensions between Russians and non-Russians as shown in Chapter Three is not restricted to Russian borders. Russian nationalism was a factor in Russia’s aggression against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. If Russian nationalism intensifies, further regional aggressions are possible, especially if Russia is following Gumilev’s philosophy to become the leader of Eurasia. The annexation of Crimea was the first changing of a state border by force in Europe since 1945. Russia’s armed assault on eastern Ukraine and military aid to insurgents fighting Kiev is deeply destabilizing to the region. Clearly, there is a moral and ethical justification to do what is possible to avoid this.

Beyond the thousands of people that have been killed and displaced by the fighting in eastern Ukraine, the shoot down of Malaysian Air Flight 17 over the conflict zone on July 17, 2014 was direct collateral damage from the conflict. Dutch post shoot-down analysis and reconstruction of the plane showed an SA-11/GADFLY mobile air defense missile hit the plane at 33,000 feet, killing 283 innocent people. This is a combat weapon system that is produced, controlled and operated by state militaries. It appears that Russia, Ukraine, or possibly both countries are not effectively controlling their armories. The violence is unlikely to subside: the Russian government wants to steer Ukraine back into its orbit and Ukraine is resisting. More innocent people will suffer if the tensions that drive Russian nationalism are not reduced. We have a responsibility to ourselves, innocent people, and those suffering to do what we can to help Russia reduce its ethnic tensions and violence.

Clearly the interactive factors and processes driving Russian ethnonationalism need to be understood and, if possible, reduced. Having examined what is driving Russian ethnonationalism and why it presents a human values challenge to Russia and beyond, we will turn in Chapter Five to consider ways to steer things in more positive directions, de-escalate tensions, and engage with Russia and other partners to improve the situation, protect human rights, and promote peace.

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CHAPTER FIVE

METHODS AND MECHANISMS TO DECREASE ETHNIC TENSIONS IN RUSSIA

Introduction

Through interdisciplinary analysis in Chapter Two, the thesis detailed Russia’s difficult historical context and ethnonational boundary formation processes. In Chapter Three, the thesis conducted interdisciplinary analysis of the interactive factors that work within those processes and appear as increasing ethnic tensions. We now turn to an analysis of what is to be done to lower the tensions. Of note, there have been some recent signs of improvement in ethnic tensions in Russia, according to the results of a 2015 survey published by the Levada Center. Responses among Russians indicated areas of improving tolerance towards foreigners: 41 percent of Russians believed that illegal immigrants from neighboring countries should be granted legal status in Russia and given the chance to assimilate. Among respondents, 32 percent said that they felt either hostility or irritation towards “natives of southern republics living in [their] city or district,” a euphemism for immigrants from either the Caucasus or Central Asia. This is lower than the Levada poll in October 2013, when 55 percent expressed the same negative views towards southern immigrants. Also encouraging was the fact that 64 percent of Russians perceived the word “nationalism” in a negative light, and only 20 percent viewed it positively.

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It is not clear why the negative views of “southern immigrants” (i.e., chuzhii) decreased in this recent poll. It could be a combination of the Russian government’s efforts to tamp down anti-southern xenophobia, crackdowns on migrants, and banning of extremist groups as described in Chapter Three. There was still plenty of worrisome data in the poll that revealed a strong nationalistic and sometimes hostile undertone by Russian respondents towards other nationalities: 43 percent wanted immigrants expelled from the country. Nearly seven in 10 Russians believed the government should introduce measures to limit the arrival of migrants into the country. Among the respondents, 40 percent believed that Russians are a “special people” – up from 33 percent 15 years ago.

If the latest poll is accurate, it is possible that some aspects of Russian ethnic nationalism may be waning a bit against chuzhii. This shows how boundaries harden and soften and how the ethnonational boundary process is not a straight line. It also suggests there may be a possible window of opportunity to foster conditions to keep the decreased hostility on a downward trend. This chapter uses interdisciplinary analysis, including treaties and laws, anthropology, history, and political and social science to answer VQ1: What can be done/what is needed to resolve the issues peacefully; more precisely, what policy measures should the Russian government enact to fulfill its responsibilities⁴ to protect minorities from attacks by Russian nationalists? and VQ2: Should outsiders get involved to protect the minorities under attack in Russia? If so, who and to do what?

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⁴ Refers to applicable UN Charters regarding protections and treatment of minorities by the recognized government within its UN-recognized territory. Russia, as a UN member, has agreed to abide by the agreements.
Fears and Factors Influencing Ethnic Tensions and Boundary Hardening

As analyzed in Chapters Two and Three, there are international and national aspects to the process of Russian identity boundary hardening. Drobizheva’s research of the process, discussed in Chapter Two, showed that Russian ethnonationalism is influenced by perceptions of whether Russia is being respected abroad, whether Russia is strong, and competition with other groups at home.\(^3\) If Russians fear that Russia is weak or not being respected, or that Russia’s “space” or influence in the countries of the former USSR is shrinking or influenced by the West or radical Islam, Russian ethnonational boundaries harden. At home, perceptions that non-Russians, and especially chuzhii, are out-competing Russians in traditionally Russian areas, flowing into the areas in high numbers, not following rules and/or disrespecting Russian societal values and mores will have the same effect. There is also a religious component, especially noticeable in Moscow, about encroachment of Islam into Russian Orthodox strongholds, as epitomized by resistance against mosque construction. These developments rally the emotions in an urgent call to repel alien invaders, defend the homeland, and protect the group as theorized by Smith and Connor and noted in Chapters One, Two and Three.\(^4\)

The non-Russian identity hardening process is affected by how the center is treating and interacting with the non-Russians in the frontier (or periphery) as described by Mandelstam Balzer in Chapter Two.\(^5\) Unhappiness over Putin’s efforts to centralize

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power in Moscow and tighten its grip in the periphery via it’s’ proxies, and heavy-handed security actions that target people based on ethnicity and religion are sources of ethnic boundary hardening for non-Russians. Additional sources of distrust and ethnic boundary tensions for non-Russians include mistreatment of chuzhii by Russian xenophobes in Russian heavy areas of Russia, and the lack of integration of migrants as they move to Russian areas where they suffer harassment, racism, and exploitation. Unpunished human rights abuses by the Russian military or its pro-government proxies in the Caucasus region and the exclusionary, nationalist nature of some leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church also serve to harden ethnic boundaries for non-Russians. Outsiders must understand how these processes work and interact to influence nationalism and boundaries before attempting to apply diplomatic, informational, military, and economic means to curb abuses and influence Russian leaders to act in a way that helps to lower the pressures and tensions.

Moral Considerations for Involvement in Russia’s Interethnic Problems

The insights of Plato, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant on the responsibilities of leaders of states to act morally, create and lead just societies, and for citizens of the society to understand their responsibilities on moral actions and treatment of others are applicable to the problems of Russia’s inter-ethnic violence. These insights directly speak to the moral responsibility of the Putin government and ethnic Russians, as the largest group in the state, to act in ways that decrease the ethnic tensions and violence against non-Russians.
Plato wrote the *Republic* in approximately 380 BC. In the work, he defined the ideal for justice, order and character of the just city-state and the moral person living within it. In the just city-state, good governance leads people to moral behavior. Government, and the ruler, must first be just and moral exemplars. The government has a responsibility to recognize it has an obligation to ensure an orderly society. To achieve this, government must educate the citizenry in what acceptable behavior is and lead society to behave that way. People of the society will act as they are taught and led, respect the rights of all members of society, and understand that the government has the obligation to act and lead in a moral fashion and is carrying it out. Through this process, the city state creates a society that is moral and just and continues to be so.\(^6\)

In *Emil or On Education*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), described (in Books I-III) the worst case scenario of Emil, a man who is a “civilized savage.” The education and societal experiences that Emil has experienced leads him to care only about himself, do what is in his own self-interest, and use his skills and training to improve his situation without a concern for his fellow citizens or society. Books IV-V of *Emil or On Education* showed attempts by a mentor to bring Emil into human society, inculcate generosity, empathy, and accept his moral responsibility to be decent towards others.

Rousseau, in *Emil or On Education*, is stating that the failings of Emil to be a moral person reflect the neglect of the duties of the state and his parents to fulfil a moral obligation to ensure that children are raised and educated to respect and accept the rights of others. Rousseau is saying that good governance requires a moral education of the

people that emphasizes to the citizenry that they should respect the rights of others and be responsible members of society. In *Emil or On Education*, the state must lead the process of means of molding a person so that he/she understands *noblesse oblige*—a concept that carries the duties of a good state governor as an exemplar of someone who eschews the entitlement of office to act in a socially responsible way. This example conveys all throughout society down to its members to create a just society. The good governor (ruler) has a moral obligation to exercise the standards of his/her good education and provide for good governance to develop a society that knows right from wrong. By carrying out *noblesse oblige*, of which moral education is a key component, the good governor’s just rule will create moral citizens who will parent their children to also be moral citizens. *Noblesse oblige* extends to all citizens—not just the elites—and lays the foundation where all citizens act justly and live in accordance with others around them. The moral society replicates itself over time as parents teach their children these values.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) considered the problems of European travels and how they were interacting with native groups during European colonization in the 18th century. Among other moral requirements, Kant believed that there needed to be an articulated formula of the minimum standards for the interactions between individuals and groups that guided their behavior. In the third of the Three Definitive Articles of *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,* he wrote that the “the law of world citizenship shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality.” In *The Metaphysics of Morals*,

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Kant said that European had the “right” (German: \textit{recht}) right to visit foreign lands and to offer to engage the native peoples living there. This was understood to be an \textit{a priori} principle of law, involving both the public rights of people in individual interactions with other individuals, between groups, and ultimately the interactions between states.

The right to travel and the conditions of universal hospitality Kant described in these works required at least the specification of at least a minimum set of principles that regulate the interaction of native peoples and the outsiders: the right of universal hospitality, consent by the locals to engage in contact, and foreigners’ right to live alongside the locals. Native peoples had the right to refuse contact. Kant created the idea for the set of formal specifications that would create moral laws to guide the interactions, which at the time he wrote these works had not been formalized. Understanding and respect for these minimal rights would create a basis of trust between groups to enable them to coexist peacefully.\footnote{Immanuel Kant, trans. Ted Humphreys, \textit{Perpetual Peace and Other Essays} (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 1983); Immanuel Kant, trans. Mary Gregory and Jens Timmerman, \textit{Kant: The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).}

Both Plato and Rousseau recognized that the good government flows from the top to the bottom of society. The just leader first recognizes that the government has a moral responsibility to lead society in a way that treats all individuals and groups decently. Key aspects of this are the example the leaders and the government set for the society and also the moral education of the society. The people in the society, having been shown a good example and inculcated with moral values on treatment of others, have the moral obligation to act decently. Kant discussed the need for formalized agreements on
interactions between individuals, groups, and states to create a basis for peaceful
coeexistence. This, at its ultimate development, would include a state’s constitution or set
of laws governing those interactions within the territory the state has sovereignty over.

Plato, Rousseau and Kant never specified what kind of government would carry
out these obligations or that a just government must be a democracy. Good governance in
their eyes did not equate equality; it merely meant equal opportunity in a moral
environment where, top to bottom, everyone acted in a just way and treated each other
decently as individuals and between groups. Within the parameters of moral government
and society as set forth by Plato and Rousseau, the Russian government under Putin has a
moral responsibility to treat Russian and non-Russian groups justly. This starts with the
requirement to act just as leaders, lead society to be just, educate people on moral
standards, and ensure all groups have equal opportunity.

The government and society’s members also have a responsibility to treat
individuals and groups that are not their own in a moral and just fashion. This
requirement is spelled out clearly in the Russian constitution, as identified in Chapter
Four. As we can see from the MRGE’s Russia 2014 report as discussed in Chapter Four,
the Russian government is failing to carry out noblesse oblige: it favors Russians over
non-Russians, is not leading a moral society that creates equal opportunity for all groups,
and has failed to lead ethnic Russians to realize that the other groups in Russia have equal
rights to opportunity. The Putin government understands its obligations to rule Russia
and does so with an autocratic iron first. What is lacking is the velvet glove inside the
iron fist. Putin has created order and improved Russia’s geopolitical standing, but his government has failed to create a society where people live together peacefully, treat each other decently and operate cohesively. This is reflected by the ethnic tensions and violence. Russia inherited a troubled history of relations between groups from the USSR as described in Chapter Two, but has not led in a way that changes those feelings. Nor do ethnic Russians understand *noblesse oblige*; the ethnic violence shows that nationalists feel they have rights and do not have responsibilities to the *chuzhii* that share Russia’s “space.” Non-Russians also fail to understand *noblesse oblige*, as the attacks that target Russians clearly illustrated.

As shown in Chapter Three, Putin and politicians in Russia gain power from Russian chauvinism and play to the tendencies of the nationalists, and also the Russian Orthodox Church which depicts Russia as the homeland of Russians in *Social Concept*. Outsiders need to revisit classics such as Plato, Rousseau, and Kant on the precepts of good governance and creation of a moral society and prod the Russian government to acknowledge its moral responsibilities to rule with both the power of the iron glove and to rule justly with a velvet glove. The susceptibility of Russian society to accept or exclude other groups is already resident in the Christian teachings in the Bible as described in Chapter Four. Most Russians identify as Orthodox Christians. The Church needs to be encouraged to fulfil its Christian responsibility to non-Russians. Since the Russian government is not ruling justly or creating a moral society, outsiders must lend a hand to understand its moral responsibilities and nudge it back in that direction.
Recommendations to the Russian Government and Its Leaders to Reduce Ethnic Tensions in Russia

The thesis turns to analysis of possibilities that could help to improve ethnic relations, soften the boundaries between groups, and help Russia create a moral society. The MRGE’s 2014 Russia report, cited in Chapter Four, compiled a list of reforms and initiatives that the Russian government should take to protect the rights on non-Russians.\(^9\)

The MRGE’s recommendations on promotion of understanding and lower tensions between groups, compliance with international standards on minority protections, improvements to Russia’s domestic legislation, law enforcement, media and education initiatives to foster diversity, and participation by minorities and indigenous peoples in the diversity initiatives could (if adopted) help to lower ethnic tensions and boundary hardening. The recommendations included:

**International Standards**

- Devise a comprehensive implementation plan for the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It also urged Moscow to coordinate closely with regional and local authorities to meet the goals.

- Cooperate with the Council of Europe and the UN to incorporate recommendations on international monitoring into minority and indigenous policies.

**Domestic Legislation**

- Adopt clear anti-discrimination legislation and set up an independent body to monitor instances where people have been excluded from employment, housing, or social services.

- Designate indigenous areas as a “territory of traditional nature use” at the federal

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level via federal legislation and closely collaborate with local officials on projects that may affect indigenous people.

- Cease harassment of NGOs, especially through the “Foreign Agents Law.” These agencies help with development of civil society.
- Create clear legal provisions related to minority and indigenous rights.

Integration and Protection of Vulnerable Minorities and Indigenous Peoples

- Implement programs to socially and economically and socially integrate disadvantaged minorities. For example, eliminate the policy of segregating children in schools.
- Simplify procedures or legalizing migrant workers, ensure all legal workers do not face bureaucratic hurdles to formalize their status, simplify procedures for migrants to register their residency to meet requirements, and eliminate foreign worker quotas.
- Provide citizenship to stateless persons and ensure refugees and asylum seekers are issued legal documentation that allows them to access services and protect basic rights.
- Investigate physical attacks on minority persons and bring perpetrators to justice.

Law Enforcement Reforms

- Train law enforcement officials to eliminate racial profiling and discriminatory practices against minorities including arbitrary fingerprinting and unjustified photographing and data collection. Improve detention conditions and ensure people are arrested and detained in strict compliance with the law.
- Investigate instances of law enforcement officials harassing, mistreating, or illegally detaining minorities. Also investigate corruption and abuse of power allegations and signal this will not be tolerated by severe penalties against those convicted of these violations.
- Ensure law enforcement officials comply with Russia’s “On Police” Law prohibiting mistreatment of minorities and anti-immigrant “pogroms.”

Media Initiatives

- Use media as a means to promote inter-cultural dialogue. Train journalists on reporting on inter-ethnic relations and highlight positive activities of professional journalists avoiding racial prejudice in reporting.
- Involve representatives in decision making about broadcasts and media products
to check for bias and consider cultural sensitivities.

- Prosecute hate speech and publicly denounce xenophobic remarks by public officials.

**Promoting Diversity**

- Provide resources to schools so that they can provide instruction in non-majority languages.
- Ensure indigenous peoples and minorities can access their rights to request education of their children in their native language.

**Participation**

- Streamline mechanisms to incorporate minorities and indigenous peoples into decision-making on local policies.
- Amend legislation to allow people to form ethnic-based political parties.
- Establish mechanisms for political representation of minority and indigenous peoples at local and regional levels.
- Involve indigenous peoples and minorities in decisions on local diversity programs.

The recommendations are all critical to helping Russia improve interethnic relations and play its role as a just and moral leader over Russian society. How much (or whether) the Russian government will adopt any or all of the recommendations remains to be seen. The list is obviously ambitious. Relaxing anti-NGO laws, going after government officials for untoward remarks, deep investigations into law enforcement, and allowing ethnic parties are very unlikely. The latter recommendation is controversial and would require repeal or modification of Russia’s 2001 “Law on Political Parties.”

Allowing ethnic political parties could promote ethnic mobilization, but it would allow groups to take part in the political process and compete to achieve goals. Giving groups a political voice is risky, but they may feel included versus excluded and if so that would
help to defuse ethnic tensions. The alternative, i.e., leaving ethnic parties outside the
political process, seems more likely to develop radical forms that won’t help to deescalate
tensions.

Adoption of even a few of the MRGE’s measures would help to ease ethnic
tensions in Russia. The U.S. and allied governments should press Russia to accept the
recommendations to improve Russia’s social cohesion, raise awareness of Russia’s
diversity, socialize the problems Russia is having with integration, curb widespread
xenophobic attitudes, protect people from outbursts by ultra-nationalists, and foster the
peaceful coexistence of Russia’s ethnic groups. The measures would devolve some
decision-making power from the center to the frontier (periphery), a key aspect to easing
the tensions caused by the process described by Mandelstam Balzer in Chapter Two.10
The measures also improve protections from violent outbursts of xenophobes, reduce the
harassment and abuse chuzhii suffer from law enforcement, and protect NGOs
investigating Russia’s progress on protecting non-Russians.

The proposed measures would also help to peacefully integrate migrants into
Russian area, provide protections from exploitation, and open up venues for legalizing
their status and ensuing abuses against them will be looked into. More favorable media
coverage of cultural issues is a way to call out and shame officials making xenophobic
statements. This would help to ease ethnic boundary hardening by Russians, who
undoubtedly are influenced by biased coverage that tells the bad news about the migrants,
presents news in a way that can sensationalize the problems, and repeat xenophobic

10 Mandelstam Balzer, “From ethnicity to nationalism,” Social Legacy, 56-60.
statements by public figures. Reportage of police being punished for corruption and the perceptions that Russia is developing a better-controlled immigration approach would soften ethnic boundaries and mute Russian ethnonationalism.

**What Can Outsiders Do To Help Russia With Ethnic Tensions?**

As noted, there are a variety of centers of influence to nudge the Russian government to act to decrease ethnic tensions and steer it away from acts that may increase the tensions. These include the diplomatic, informational, and economic influences that should be used to influence events related to ethnic boundary hardening and tensions between Russians and non-Russians in Russia.

The UN is a diplomatic influence center for prodding Russia to do a better job at handling its problems with ethnic tensions and abuse of non-Russian minorities. One step that could help Russia and all the other countries facing similar problems would be to finally define the term “minority.” It is many decades overdue, and Chapter Four showed the working elements of a definition that the UN has developed so far in numerous Commission and Sub Commission hearings. With an unprecedented number of refugees and migrants on the move around the world, it is hard to envision a better point in time to gather world attention and finally render a decision on what a “minority” is. It is hard to gather agreement to act and defend something that remains without a definition.

The UN also needs to continue to monitor Russian actions in Chechnya and press Moscow on abuses. This includes the actions of Ramzan Kadyrov, whom Putin appointed as acting leader of Chechnya. On March 25, 2016, Putin nominated Kadyrov for another
term in office. Kadyrov has a bleak record of human right abuses and is accused of being involved in the murder of Russian opposition political leader Boris Nemtsov. Leaving him in charge makes it very likely those human rights abuses in Chechnya will continue. The Russian government holds extremely tight control over journalism coverage and humanitarian aid work in Chechnya. The UNHCR should push the Russian government to investigate ongoing claims of human rights violations against civilians by Russian and Kadyrov’s security forces in Chechnya and allow press freedom there. If Russia is uncooperative, the UNHCR should consider another UN resolution to criticize Russia. Repeat criticisms of a permanent Security Council member are unprecedented, and the exposure may increase attention to the issue of human rights abuses in Chechnya, forced more news coverage, and nudge the regime to act. The General Assembly’s March 2014 resolution calling upon states not to recognize Russia’s annexation of Crimea was symbolic but important to show that the world stands against this aggression.

Adversarial actions by the UN could anger Russian nationalists who could see Russia being weakened, as well as the Kadyrov regime. A UN resolution against Russian actions in Chechnya and Crimea would show the Chechens who oppose Kadyrov and Crimean Tatars that they are not forgotten or ignored.

The ECHR must ignore the December 2015 Duma rule and continue to hear

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Chechen cases and those of other minorities abused. This should be expanded to hear cases of abuse of Crimean Tatars. The European Council needs to hold Russia to its commitments and press it to honor judgments of ECHR as all member states are bound to do. Any member country could pass laws like the Duma law and render the ECHR impotent, and it sets a bad precedent. Keeping the ECHR venue open for redress of claims of human rights abuse maintains a legal mechanism for Chechens and others to hold the Russian government accountable for its abuses. This is exactly what the 2015 Duma law is trying to preclude.

Pressure from the ECHR could anger Russian nationalists, who may perceive that Europe is interfering in Russia’s internal matters, but it is also clear that Moscow pays attention to developments in the ECHR and responds to it. It gives non-Russians a very real way to hold Russia accountable for abuses, draw attention to them and win remuneration. This makes the ECHR an effective and influential power center to help umpire competition between ethnic groups in Russia in a way that the Russian legal courts cannot or will not do. Leaving non-Russians without an outlet to seek legal redress will almost certainly increase pressure on the ethnonational boundary processes and increase ethnic tensions.

The Council of Europe should also press Russia to fully implement the FCNM, which Russia ratified in 1996. As mentioned in the MRGE 2014 report, Russia is lagging in its effort to give adequate protections and support to non-Russian groups. One area that needs attention is teaching Russian to migrants. Large numbers of non-Russian speaking
non-Russian migrants coming into the heavily Russian areas of Russia is an interactive factor that raises tensions between the groups. This has been an area of concern to both the Russian government and the Russian Orthodox Church, as noted in Putin’s 2014 speech and comments by Archbishop Chaplin about Russians wanting the immigrants coming in to the state to speak Russian and understand “our culture and state system” as noted in Chapter Three.13

There is a lack of adequate numbers of schools to teach Russian to migrants, which is a barrier to integration. In 2011, a report said that there were over 200 groups teaching Russian as a second language to migrants in the city, but they could not hope to serve the hundreds of thousands of migrant children needing the classes.14 The Council should press Russia to open more schools or allow NGOs to assist with the task as part of the FCNM to provide resources to schools so that they can provide instruction in non-majority languages. This was recommended in the MRGE’s 2014 report. Fully implementing the FCNM was a task that Russia promised to do a decade ago. Its failure to do so has left the problems to fester, decreasing the integration of migrants, degrading interethnic tensions, alienating non-Russians, and fueling the emotions of Russian nationalists.

If Gumilev’s theory is in play as Moscow’s geopolitical strategy, the U.S. must anticipate sustained Russian pressure being exerted against countries on its periphery. Washington must continue to develop closer relations with the countries on former Soviet

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13 “Russian Church Supports Tougher Immigration Rules,” Interfax.

territory. The insights from interdisciplinary analysis of history in Chapter Two and Russian perceptions in Chapter Three show that Russian nationalists see the former USSR territory as Russian “space.” Bilateral ties with countries with a large Russian diaspora, such as the Baltic States and Kazakhstan are crucial for thwarting future military opportunism by Russia. U.S. resolve, which is questionable these days, needs to be visibly demonstrated through high level visits of U.S. political and military leaders and forces to show Putin that meddling in these countries will not be tolerated. Putin seeks opportunities to weaken and split NATO. Russian meddling in the Baltics would be a test of resolve to show that NATO guarantees there are not iron clad. Putin has already changed Europe’s map by force in Crimea with no strong NATO response. Lack of resolve to defend the Baltics would gravely damage NATO’s image and further embolden Russia.

Ukraine has already fallen victim to Russian nationalism, and the U.S. and Europe must continue to help it to free itself from Russian domination. Loans, humanitarian aid, assistance with elections and professionalization of police and military forces should continue. Defensive weapons deliveries and military training are long overdue for Ukraine. Sanctions against Russia and individuals involved must stay in force, and Europe and the U.S. need to closely cooperate on this matter and show a united front. Economic pain through sanctions, amidst low oil prices, may help diplomatic pressure to curb expansionist Russian nationalism over former Soviet territory.

**Informational Sources of Influence for Assisting Russia with Interethnic Tensions**
As shown by Smith in *Nations and Nationalism*, perception is reality when it comes to the myths, symbols, and destiny of an ethnic group and its nationalism.\(^{15}\) Broadcast images of the Russian March from 2007-2012 showed large groups of xenophobic political groups, skinheads, and ultra-rightists gathered chanting “Russia for Russians” and “Stop Feeding the Caucasus.” As noted in 2015, media coverage of Russian Unity Day, which occurred at the same time as the 2015 Russian March, showed 85,000 people peacefully marching through the center of Moscow in ethnic clothing and celebrating Russia’s diversity. By contrast, coverage of the 2015 Russian March showed a much smaller crowd on the periphery of the city, looking like extremists and anachronistic imperial supporters.\(^{16}\)

Realizing that this event was a stage-managed production for the regime’s benefit, the coverage of Russian Unity Day 2015 degraded the image of anti-southern Russian xenophobes as out of touch and promotes the image of peaceful diversity as the mainstream. European and U.S. diplomats need to follow up with the Russian government on this event and should appear at future events that positively emphasize Russia’s diversity. These inclusions and good perceptions may help to soften non-Russian ethnic boundaries and take media “oxygen” away from nationalists. This is important, as evidenced in the MRGE 2014 recommendations to use media as a means to promote inter-cultural dialogue and deny air time for hate speech and xenophobic remarks.

\(^{15}\) Smith, *Nations and Nationalism*, 35-7, 45, and 50-1.

\(^{16}\) Katasonova, “Tens of thousands march in Moscow,” *Novosti*. 
Press freedom has been under sustained pressure in Russia during Putin’s tenure. Russia is one of the world’s most dangerous countries for journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that 56 journalists have been killed in Russia since 1992. A high percentage of the journalists killed had been covering politics, war, and corruption before their deaths.\textsuperscript{17} Chechnya and corruption involving Putin or other senior government officials are particularly sensitive and dangerous topics. The murder of Anna Politkovskaya in 2006 was the highest profile example of this danger. Politkovskaya had reported about the human rights situation in the Chechen Republic for the newspaper \textit{Novaya Gazeta} and other abuses, including violence in the army, government corruption, and police brutality. She earned international recognition for her work, but faced intimidation, threats, harassment, and detention in Russia before she was murdered.\textsuperscript{18} The U.S. and European governments need to press Moscow on freedom of the press and protection of journalists. Coverage of sensitive topics gives non-Russians some hope that the abuses against them will not be ignored, and it also holds the government to account to rein in activities that may further harden ethnic boundaries.

There are also writers and researchers who discuss the poor treatment of non-Russians, and are at risk for doing so. As noted in Chapter Two, historian Aleksandr Nekrich, the author of \textit{The Punished Peoples} cited in Chapters Two and Three, was censured and lost his university position in the Soviet era for writing about the 1944

\textsuperscript{17} Committee to Protect Journalists, \textit{56 Journalists Killed in Russia since 1992/Motive Confirmed}, \url{https://cpj.org/killed/europe/russia/} (accessed March 26, 2015).

deportations and Stalin’s failures in the first days of the Nazi invasion of the USSR in 1941. He was an eyewitness to some of the Red Army’s actions in the North Caucasus in 1944 and later delved into the archives to make sense of what he had seen. He dedicated his research “to my countrymen who still believe in justice.” Without his witness, the following account of the deportation in Chechnya and other abuses would never have come to light. In a mountain village, an elderly Chechen man and his daughter in law, holding her infant, refused to board the trucks. An officer ordered a Russian soldier with a submachine gun to shoot all three. The soldier refused, and the officer then shot him and all three Chechens dead. Nekrich wrote, “Did this nameless Russian soldier know that the moment he refused to kill that woman and child he saved the honor of the Russian people? It is not likely that he thought so. He was simply behaving like a human being.”19

Another voice, Khassan Baiev, described in The Oath his life as a Chechen surgeon’s life in Grozny under fire. He stayed true to his Hippocratic Oath and saved Russian troops that were brought to his makeshift clinic that was repeatedly hit and eventually destroyed by Russian artillery.20 Baiev wrote about the efforts by Chechen civilians to spirit Russian conscripts out of Chechnya who had defected to escape the brutality of their unit, and his terror over the abduction and disappearance of his cousin by Russian forces and later finding him in a “filtration camp” for suspected militants. Baiev had to flee Chechnya; he was accused by Russian agents for providing medical aid

19 Nekrich, Punished Peoples, 59.
20 Baiev, The Oath, 114-115, 135-41 and 337-42.
to terrorists. He admitted doing so, after being abducted by extremists to save the life of a guerilla leader and threatened with death if he did not do it.

Like Mikhail Lermontov and Lev Tolstoy before them in the 19th century, Nekrich and Baiev looked at Russia’s wars in the Caucasus and asked: who won, who is the savage, and who is civilized? Their stories show that the struggle in Caucasus is an old problem, long a part of ethnic struggles and boundary formation between Russians and the peoples of that region. This is not offered to equate Baiev or Nekrich with the highest luminaries of Russian literature; the point is that they are telling histories that the government and Russian nationalists do not want told. The U.S. gave refuge to Nekrich and Baiev, and the U.S. State Department should continue to offer sanctuary to truth tellers that offer alternative versions of events in Russia that stray from the official government versions. In this way, we can lower tensions between groups by giving space to histories that push back on History Projects. The suppression of histories is, as Duara theorized in *Rescuing History From The Nation*, a very powerful force that hardens group boundaries.21 Protecting these writers keeps the stories alive, pushes back on Russian nationalist narratives, and offers a venue for the untold stories to get out.

Another way to help address ethnic conflict in Russia is to publicly declare the abuses against the “punished peoples” to be acts of genocide. This approach has worked to influence Turkey. Eighteen countries, including Germany, Greece, and France, identified the mass killings, which the Turkish military carried out during 1915-22 and

killed 1.5 million Armenians, to be genocide. Congress has passed five resolutions since
1920 to recognize the Armenian genocide. Two occurred recently in 2010 and 2015.\textsuperscript{22}

The last one coincided with the 100\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the start of the death campaign.
President Obama refused to sign it out of concerns it would derail progress between
Turkey and Armenia on reconciliation. The two countries signed an agreement in
October 2014 to normalize relations, but Turkey's Parliament has yet to ratify it.\textsuperscript{23}

Nonetheless, the constant pressure on Turkey through Congressional resolutions and
other nations identifying the acts as genocide has likely prodded Turkey to mend its
relations with Armenia.

U.S. Congressional recognition of the “punished peoples” under Stalin as
genocides may yield similar results. There are other opportunities to pressure Russia over
Stalin-era ethnic abuses. The U.S. and Europe should also work with the Ukrainian
government to recognize the holodomor as genocide. As the 75\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the event
approached in 2008, the Ukrainian parliament voted to declare the Soviet-made famine
an act of genocide and sought international recognition for it. The European Parliament
passed a resolution in 2008 that stopped short of using the term “genocide” but
condemned the famine as “an appalling crime against the Ukrainian people” that was

\textsuperscript{22} Cong. Res.140, A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 100th anniversary
of the Armenian Genocide, April 20, 2015, https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-
resolution/140/text (accessed March 6, 2016).

\textsuperscript{23} Kent Klein, “Armenian Genocide Resolution Passes US Congress Committee,” VOA, (March 3,
2010) http://www.voanews.com/content/white-house-urges-congress-not-to-pass-armenian-genocide-
resolution-86373862/113457.html (March 6, 2016).
deliberately planned by Stalin to crush resistance to collectivization.\textsuperscript{24} Recognizing the abuses of Stalin as genocide would fit the UN’s Genocide Convention, which states genocide consists of acts committed “with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.”\textsuperscript{25} As illustrated in Chapter Two, the Soviet Union’s “punished peoples” campaigns were attempts (at least in part) to destroy ethnic groups through physical and cultural deprivation. Even a discussion of it in Congress could prod Russia to confront this difficult history. Russia is very sensitive to these accusations and denies them, but ignoring the abuses enables Putin’s Russian History project to proceed apace.

**Economic Influence to Address Problems With Ethnic Tensions in Russia**

There are economic ways to get Russia’s attention and prod it to act to address the process of ethnic boundary hardening and the resulting ethnic tensions. Russia is preparing to stage a host of high profile sporting events in the next four years, including the World Cup in Moscow in 2018, the University Games in Krasnoyarsk in 2019 and the UEFA Euro 2020 soccer matches in St. Petersburg.\textsuperscript{26} As noted in Chapter Three, xenophobic Russian nationalism is a strong sentiment among Russian soccer fans


(fanaty). They harass dark skinned players in the same way they harass the darker skinned chuzhii migrants. Nuance is not a specialty here; the fanaty simply harass all people of color. Federacion Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) watches for good behavior at soccer games, with diverse teams from all over the world. It has been noting the ethnic tensions in Russia with concern since 2010, when it awarded Russia the 2018 Cup. Dr. Raphael Pankowski, a leader of the Union of European Football Association’s (UEFA’s) Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) Monitoring Centre, accused the Russian Football Union of downplaying racist chants in stadiums, complaining that “Nazi slogans” against black players often interrupt matches. Players complain about widespread hostility and racist slogans targeting minority players during games in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Black players on Russian and foreign teams endure abuse including bananas thrown at them during matches and fanaty making monkey calls. FIFA’s anti-racism task force has noted dozens of discriminatory problems in Russia over the past two seasons.²⁷

In 2013 FIFA introduced tougher sanctions, under which a team can be banned from a tournament for repeated racist offenses by a club or fans. As the racism at Russian soccer matches has continued, FIFA is getting increasingly strident in its warnings to Russia. FIFA’s then-President Sepp Blatter spoke to Putin in July 2014 after Russian fanaty disrupted play during Champions League games in Russia. In March 2015, Blatter

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cited SOVA and FARE reports about the scale of Russian soccer’s racism problems and warned there "must be some sanctions" if the extremism is not addressed well before the 2018 Cup.\(^{28}\) Russia is expected to get $20B USD in benefits from the Cup. FIFA is not the only one worried about its image. Commercial firms that typically advertise at the Cup, such as Anheuser Busch InBev, VISA, Kia and Sony are unlikely to want their images aligned with outbursts of xenophobic nationalism in Russia.\(^{29}\) The U.S. and European governments, as well as other major countries like Brazil and Australia that are leaders in soccer, should work with FIFA to press the Russian government to address the problems of ethnic tensions and outbursts at the matches—or move the games. Symbolically, moving the games to Kiev would be a sharp poke at Russian nationalism on several fronts and give the county a much needed financial shot in the arm. This move would send a very strong message to Russia that it needs to address its problems with ethnic tensions or face losing other high profile sports events.

**Religious Influences to De-escalate Russia’s Interethnic Tensions**

Influencing the Russian Orthodox Church to improve its relations with non-Christian non-Russians in Russia will be difficult. As seen in Chapter Four, its core beliefs (as expressed in *Social Concept*) includes the idea that Orthodox Russians are the


faith bearing core group to rule and defend the Orthodox Russian earthly homeland as a
duty to God. Still, the Bible contains directives to treat aliens and foreigners well, and
spokespeople for the Church always balance nationalist-sounding messages with
entreaties by followers that there is no space for ethnic hatred and hostility based on
nationality.

The World Council of Churches, of which the Russian Orthodox Church is a
member, and other world religious leaders should admonish the Church leaders when
Orthodox leaders join in with the nationalists to identify illegal migrants, as noted in
Chapter Four. Placing ultra-nationalists like Archbishop Chaplin as the Church’s public
face is also a problem for non-Christian non-Russian ethnic groups. His permanent
replacement, as yet unnamed, should be a more balanced figure that demonstrates the
Church’s beliefs that God Loves all people. The World Council of Churches should
criticize the speech of Russian Orthodox Church leaders if it contains nationalistic
comments or seems to speak out against non-Russians. As noted by MRGE 2014 report,
non-Russians should review such comments for sensitivity and speech before they are
aired.

Of note, Pope Francis and Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill I briefly met in
Havana, Cuba on February 12, 2016. This was a historical event, marking the first
encounter between the heads of the Catholic Church and Russian Orthodoxy in nearly
600 years. They had a two hour conversation and signed a 30 point statement pledging
cooperation to protect Christians in conflict zones, opposition to same-sex marriage and
abortion, and unity and dialogue to end schisms among Christians (including those in war-torn Ukraine). The issue of refugees and migration is on the minds of many religious leaders around the world, and a dialogue between Orthodoxy and Catholicism on the subject could help show a commitment to reducing ethnic violence.

Rapprochement with the Catholic Church and commitment to protect Christians in Ukraine may give Pope Francis a greater opportunity to discuss migrants in Russia who face ethnic violence.

**Final Thoughts**

Using interdisciplinary insights from history, political and social science, anthropology, political philosophy, ethnic studies, demography, and law, as well as lessons from the classics on the moral society from Plato, Rousseau and Kant, the thesis examined the processes and interactive factors driving Russian and non-Russian ethnonational boundary formation and nationalism and what must be done to arrest these problems and create a just society in Russia. Only an interdisciplinary approach could yield these insights and integrate the knowledge held in each discipline, specific to the Russian case.

The theories of Smith, Connor, Duara, and Barth theorized how people become ethnically aware, develop boundaries between their group and others, develop nationalism, and increase their competition and struggles with other groups. The thesis applied these theories to the Russian context, and illustrated how the lessons from the theories are evident in rising ethnic tensions, boundary hardening, and violence in Russia.

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today. Insights from Drobizheva and Mandelstam Balzer show the processes of boundary hardening for Russians and non-Russians, and the thesis developed insights into interactive factors that spin like gears within those processes to soften or harden the boundaries, answering Q1: What is the process of ethnonational boundary formation in Russia?

As Connor noted, nation forming is a process and not an occurrence.\(^3\) The process goes on, and the tensions wax and wane as processes run and boundaries harden or soften. The thesis offered a perspective to witness the messy business of how nation forming is at work in Russia today, atop a troubled history from the Soviet era that remains in living memory and the ongoing interactive factors that harden boundaries. As a result of the interdisciplinary analysis, we can identify observable “outputs” of the boundary formation processes such as xenophobia, muddled poll results, complaining by Russians over police corruption and competitions between Russians and non-Russians over aspects of Soviet History. The observables are symptoms of the ethnic boundary forming process and interactive factors, and are not the causes of the tensions. The catalyst for the boundary formation process is, as Connor tells us, the ethnonational bond: a subconscious, emotional belief in the group’s unique origin, evolution, shared blood and ancestry, homeland, and destiny.\(^4\)

The interactive factors described in Chapter Three—changes in population, economic tensions, political influences, and religious concerns are the gears driving the

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\(^3\) Connor, “From Tribe to Nation,” *Ethnonationalism*, 223-4.

hardening of the boundaries, answering Q2: What are the interactive factors for the escalating ethnic violence? Seeing them flare into violence and mild ethnic cleansing in Kondopoga, Demyanova, and Moscow and analyzing why these eruptions occur answered Q3: What societal problems are being created by this process in Russia? These incidents and the other problems associated with boundary hardening and the resulting ethnic tensions tell us that it is well past time to help Russia find ways to dial back the process and tensions. Ultimately, the problem of ethnonationalism and boundary formation in Russia raises a question of state stability. As noted by Connor, people are loyal to their nation but not necessarily to their state.33 As Smith noted, once the ethnic bond is formed, it is extremely reliant and durable.34 These identities exist and are trapped within Russia’s territory and as Connor warned, “multihomeland, multinational states” are inherently unstable and riven with ethnic tensions.35

These problems have festered since the end of the Soviet era. In Chapter Four, the thesis examined Q4: Which institutions have influence to address these problems? The institutions (the UN, the Russian government and Constitution, and the Russian Orthodox Church) are not protecting non-Russian ethnic groups from Russian nationalism and violence and abuse. Russian ethnonationalism is evident in military campaigns in Chechnya, Georgia and Ukraine as Russians defend “Russian space.” More may be coming, if Russian leaders follow Gumilev’s theory about Russia’s destiny in Eurasia.

34 Smith, Ethnic Origin, 16-18.
Ethnic tensions in Russia break out over immigration, religious symbols, perceived insults to Russian values, and resources. Aligning political power to center under Putin’s “power vertical” solves the immediate political challenges for Moscow but it irritates the groups in the frontier and accelerates ethnic tensions. It does nothing to create a just society. Putting Kadryov, a loyal strongman, in charge in Chechnya buys Moscow some time but this is at best a short-term solution. It allows abuses that increase ethnonational boundary hardening and ethnic tensions.

Is there any good news? Yes. Widespread ethnic violence and mass incidents of ethnic cleansing have not broken out yet in Russia. Putin is reining in anti-southern xenophobia. Polls show a decrease in xenophobia since 2014. In 2015, Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany signed the Minsk II accords that outline conditions for cessation of violence in eastern Ukraine. Violations occur but at least Russia and Ukraine are negotiating. No other republics inside Russia besides Chechnya have tried to break free. Russia has received insightful recommendations on how to address its ethnic tensions. Chapter Five discussed the MRGE’s 2014 Russia report, which offers solid ideas to ease tensions, including Russia’s fulfillment of its agreed upon, Council of Europe specified protections for minorities that offers protections of migrants, curbing of abuses against them, an end to police corruption and harassment, and promotion of diversity and sharing of resources and political space. This text answers VQ1: What can be done/what is needed to resolve the issues peacefully; more precisely, what policy measures should the
Russian government enact to fulfill its responsibilities to protect minorities from attacks by Russian nationalists?

Chapter Five also offered a moral rationale for outsider involvement and identified the centers of diplomatic, informational, economic, and religious influence in Russia to combat ethnic tensions and violence. This addressed VQ2: Should outsiders get involved to protect the minorities under attack in Russia? If so, who and to do what? It is up to the Russian government, and specifically Vladimir Putin, to act to ramp down the process of ethnic boundary formation and resulting ethnic tensions in the Russian Federation. It is up to us to know the processes, how they work, why they work, and understand where and how we can do to help.

36 Refers to applicable UN Charters regarding protections and treatment of minorities by the recognized government within its UN-recognized territory. Russia, as a UN member, has agreed to abide by the agreements.
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