

Representations of otherness in Russian newspapers: the theme of migration as a counterpoint to Russian national identity

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Abstract

This article examines the coverage of migration topics in a selection of Russian newspapers with nationwide circulations in the first six months of 2005 and tries to answer to the question: how does the Russian national press represent people and features which are significantly different from so-called Russian character and national identity?

The analysis is based on three main themes: immigration, the national project, and Russians abroad. The coverage of immigration addresses issue of Russian and Russian-speaking minorities in the former Soviet republics; immigrants, refugees and displaced persons on territories of Russia; and labour force decline and 'brain drain' from the Russian Federation. The discourse on migration is conducted within the framework of the developing national project on construction of a new identity for Russia and Russians. The national project is expressed in terms of the consolidation of Russian society and creation of unified values.

The conclusion is that representatives of 'others' who differ from Russians significantly in terms of language and culture or who are territorial outsiders are represented in the press in three main ways. Firstly, there is a benevolent attitude expressed in terms of traditional ties to sisters and brothers from the fifteen Soviet republics. Secondly, there is a predominantly aggressive stance towards those who are seen as not wanting to assimilate or not wanting to engage with Russia and regard it as the older brother. Representations of the Chinese and the Baltic states fit this category. Finally, there is an ambivalent response, mainly in relation to stories of Russians abroad in Europe or North America, toward the interactions between Russian and non-Russian attitudes, values, etc. When the question of Russian national identity surfaces, there is a consistent message but it is differently articulated according to the diversity of the Russian press.

Introduction

This article examines the coverage of migration topics in a selection of Russian newspapers with nationwide circulations.[1] The choice of topic reflects the growing significance of migration issues in contemporary Russian society and their importance in current politics. President Putin's state of the nation address in 2004 included reference to questions of immigration in the recent period. He set a target to double Russian gross national product. But it became apparent that it would be impossible to achieve because of the lack of labor force. Immigration is one of the ways to improve the supply of labour. In the press we find discussion of the possibility of easing barriers to immigration from the East, but there is a strong fear of uncontrollable inflow.[2] Putin is also concerned with a question of the depopulation of Russia. Maternity benefits were increased on two separate occasions in 2004-2005.

Recent press coverage provides rich material for the analysis of representations of the Russians and others, including attitudes towards the Russians in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), of explanations for migration, and ideas about how development can accommodate new

forms of diversity and how the authorities promote Russian national identity at home and abroad. The Duma's Committee on Defense proposed revising the content of the school curriculum to include lessons in patriotism based on military-style discipline, while others have proposed including an introduction to Russian Orthodoxy.[3] Some articles question the identity of wealthy 'new Russians' who carry the image of Russia abroad. This image is disliked by the state and causes much indignation among ordinary people. The president is clearly concerned about the questions of the Russian national identity and perception of Russia as a nation. For example, the television channel 'Russia Today', financed from the state budget, was created in 2005 to promote a positive image of Russia in the West.[4]

The representation of social differences is another challenge to journalists in Russia. The differences emerged because of the major new population movements, restructuring of social hierarchies, and internationalization of labour markets since *perestroika*.

Russian journalists also faced institutional changes which have transformed the practices of journalism in the post-Soviet period, notably the realignments of the political, economic, and journalistic fields since the early 1990s. The press in Russia is increasingly politically dependent and economically vulnerable; this is likely to be reflected in the representations of the powerful and the powerless.

Where do these popular figures and stereotypes come from? How are they linked to the sources of power, and how are they changing during the transformation of Russian society? Migration in this context refers to the mobility of all groups in the population away from their places of origin. Clearly, it includes legal and illegal labour migration, such as the movement from the former Soviet republics to Russian cities. It also includes the relocation of Russian entrepreneurs (oligarchs and others) and their businesses outside the country, thus creating new diasporas. Some migration follows more established patterns, such as the mass emigrations of Jews to Israel or ethnic Germans to Germany. In each case, the representation of migration and mobility articulates categories of otherness. Representation of otherness through the migration topic is the reverse side or counterpoint to the process of the construction of the Russian national identity, which itself is a complex composite of traditional, Soviet, post-Soviet, and even postmodern ideas. In this paper we will attempt to answer the question of how the Russian national press represents the people and features that are significantly different from the so-called Russian character and national identity.

Our understanding of representation broadly follows the works of Stuart Hall and others who interpret the process as a discursive practice in a 'cultural circuit' involving institutional processes, forms of language and repertoires of meaning.

However, Hall's theoretical assumptions need to be adapted to the fluidity of contemporary Russian conditions. These assumptions also need to recognize the active, state-sponsored, national project to create a self-image for the society as a whole, to help it overcome the crisis of national identity under the conditions of political and economic instability, migration and cultural transformation. It cannot be taken for granted that there is a stock of ready-made representations or that existing categories are adequate to interpret new forms. For example, there have been multiple representations of 'new Russians' since the expression first appeared in the late 1980s, and the term still has no fixed meaning after more than 15 years. The process of reducing attributes to simple ciphers and caricature is common: gold bracelets and shiny raspberry colour jackets signify new Russians. But there is more than this in the creation of 'the spectacle of the others'. The analysis also draws on the recent works on the representation of ethnicity, race and social differences. The article, then, builds on a cognitive-constructivist paradigm that implies that people form circuits of perception and estimation through an interpersonal discourse or a simulated media discourse. Thus some of the movement is from 'below', as a form of adaptation to chaos. On the other hand it is also spread from 'above' as ideology, a method of control and manipulation. Media discourse is important both for what it reveals about these circuits and for what it itself contributes to the character of society by mobilizing awareness, anxieties, and fears.

The press sample and method of analysis

The analysis is based on reporting in the four of the most popular Russian newspapers in the six month period between 1 January and 30 June 2005, namely *Kommersant*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, and *Novaya Gazeta*. They all are papers with national circulations, daily publication

(except for *Novaya Gazeta*, which appears twice a week), and comparable size. They have varied ownership, editorial policies, and readership, as well as different emphasis on migration topics. These differences make for some interesting comparisons.

Rossiyskaya Gazeta (www.rg.ru) has been the official newspaper of the government of the Russian Federation since 1990. It publishes official documents, proceedings, and decrees. It also contains news, reports, and interviews with statesmen as well as informed commentary on documents. According to sociological surveys, it is read by conservatively-inclined adults who take a balanced view.[5] It gives a politically correct view on questions of migration. This is an ideal model of interpretation of events from the point of view of the federal government.

Kommersant (published since 1992) is the leading business newspaper (www.kommersant.ru), generally adopting a line that is critical of the government and interested in investigating business and political corruption. Its editorial policy is to promote free market economy. And yet, in a typical critical phrase used in other media, *Kommersant* defends ‘the feudal Byzantine corrupt style of business a la Berezovsky’ – not surprisingly, given the proprietorial influence of Berezovsky, an oligarch in exile. However, the emphasis on business freedom does not necessarily mean support for every entrepreneur or all forms of business.

Komsomolskaya Pravda (www.kp.ru) is the successor to the original *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published since 1925. It was relaunched with a new format in 1999 and in recent times it has become a populist newspaper, concentrating on everyday life and appealing to ordinary experience. More often than the other newspapers, it uses binary distinctions in texts about migration and tends to reflect as well as shape the public perception.

Novaya Gazeta (www.novayagazeta.ru), established in 1993, is oppositional to the government and the official press. It is pro-Western, advocating a civilized, democratic style of a politics. Its staff come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and it has a reputation for independent journalism.

These are the general characteristics and editorial positions of the newspapers in the sample. However, our main purpose is to identify the representations of Russian national identity through stories of migration. A number of themes relevant to migration were covered in every newspaper. For example, there was frequent coverage of refugees from the north Caucasus and Beslan, the life of oligarchs, and relations with the Baltic countries.[7] Other themes do not appear in each newspaper but reflect the particular editorial emphasis – whether official or oppositional to mainstream politics. Newspapers may use the same stereotypical representations, but from different perspectives, and supply negative or positive evaluations of the same phenomenon. *Kommersant* gives the most attention to Russian migrants who are connected to business and occupy important positions. The business of the Russians abroad (oligarchs) is a central theme, occurring in every issue and sometimes several times. For example, a very popular theme concerns acquisitions abroad by Russian companies, which often means oligarchs. Special column on oligarchs’ lifestyles cause annoyance among readers, both rich and poor. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* contains the least amount of material on migration issues, but it published two special issues on the subject during this period.

Using article headlines and summaries as the initial sample, the texts from the online database for each newspaper was examined for content connected with migration issues (not limited to keywords). The result was to exclude the majority of business, cultural and sports pages. The most relevant articles were readily identified by content referring to refugees, migration, immigrants, etc. But others were identified by economic problems connected with the changing labour force or the politics of the Russian Federation in relation to the CIS countries. A major article in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* is likely to trigger articles on the same theme in other newspapers, so certain key themes received significant coverage in all four newspapers in the sample: for example, Beslan refugees and oligarchs abroad. The coverage of other stories reflects the editorial position and emphasis of the newspaper. Thus *Novaya Gazeta* has more emphasis on stories about Chechnya and relations with the Baltic countries. Not surprisingly for a business newspaper, *Kommersant* paid a great deal of attention to the Yukos story and the Khodorkovsky case, which reached its climax at the end of the sample period. *Novaya Gazeta* also prioritized this story (with a dedicated column) but from a political perspective. Labour market and migration issues figure most prominently in the *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. Our analysis of migration

theme is based on a selection of articles that reflects the interest in these broad areas. From 2004 to 2006, we systematically examined the content of newspaper articles and conducted content analysis and discursive analysis. Some of the data (in Russian) can be found in our research archive.[8]

Following Hal[9], we emphasize three approaches of stereotyping: the first is the reduction of everything about a person to certain traits, which are often exaggerated or simplified. The second is the strategy of splitting, which divides the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and the unacceptable. This feature of stereotyping symbolically fixes boundaries and sets up a symbolic frontier between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', 'us' and 'them'. It facilitates the bonding together of all of 'us' who are 'normal' into one imagined community and it sends the 'others' into symbolic exile. Thirdly, stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power. The domination and classification of subordinates is then linked to domination. Power is usually directed against the subordinate or excluded group. As Hall stated, the three approaches are not mutually exclusive, especially considering that the first approach represents metonymy and the second, an evaluation.

The press can be instrumental in creating and perpetuating stereotypes since it possess the powers of reduction and splitting; the final feature of stereotyping, an inequality of power, is effectively perpetuated by the first two. Within stereotyping, then, there is a connection between representation, difference, and power. In the framework of media discourse the text will not reveal power in terms of direct physical coercion or constraint, but we can discover power in representation of someone or something in a certain way; the power to mark, assign and classify; of symbolic power; of ritualized expulsion. Symbolic power and, in some cases, symbolic violence become visible through representational practices. We now consider this discourse from the point of view of three areas of representation. They engage with the hierarchy of power at different levels and with different protagonists.

Immigration in the popular press

According *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* and pro-state *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the Russian government is currently facing the following fundamental problems: policies towards countries containing Russian and Russian-speaking minorities; immigrants, refugees and displaced persons on territories of Russia; and labour force decline and 'brain drain' from the Russian Federation.

Komsomolskaya Pravda published two special issues on Migration ('Will Russia be empty of Russians?' on the 4th and 6th May 2005). The first issue is devoted to depopulation and the second to the new labour force. These issues provide interesting material for research on representations, in part because they include dramatic examples of techniques of manipulation used by journalists. It is useful to begin by identifying the use of these techniques in the popular press, where they are blatant, in order to detect their more veiled form in the other newspapers. The first issue poses the question: who will be living on the territory of the Russian Federation by the mid 21st century? It reports that demographic forecasts create grounds for anxiety. Specifically, the report projects a rapid growth of Asian population in RF, with descendents of people from Middle Asian republics outnumbering native Russians by year. The text creates a climate of fear through its vocabulary (the 'problem' is 'urgent' and 'accelerating'); through the use of subheadings that invoke a future horror with allusions to children's folklore ('horrible future' is used in 5 subheadings in the first issue, 2 in the second); and the suggestion that, improbable though it might be, the nightmare could come true. The scientific information is attributed to UN sources, which show that the largest exporters of labour to RF are Armenia (in first place) and Azerbaijan and Georgia (in the second place). It concludes: 'These ideas might be thought to be the invention of a Russian nationalist but unfortunately, it is not absolutely so'. The article demonstrates the concept of Russian identity being under threat--from within itself and from dilution by immigration. The causes of the Russian population decline are not attributed to the poorly implemented economic reform process or to state policies, as they ought to be. Instead the high male death rate is blamed on the widespread alcoholism; the low birth rate is said to be the fault of women who choose not to have children or decide to delay childbirth.

The Immigration special issue of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* furthers the climate of fear by equating influx of immigrants with influx of Islam.[10] Despite the fear-mongering, Russia depicts itself as being half way between xenophobic Europe and cosmopolitan America, because it has a history of managing co-

existence of multiple people. 'We' are the Russian state and society; immigrants are 'they', outside. This issue is not an analysis of specific migrant phenomena but is essentially a re-statement of the problems with assignment of causes and blame. Stylistically, the article uses repetition and exaggeration. Grammatically it adopts the present tense and imperative mood. It imitates a dialogue by using question and answer sequences, but offers alternatives without a real choice. The main conclusion, echoing the frequent exhortations of the Russian president, is that we all have to 'work together' and we should offer all Russians residing in the CIS countries an opportunity to return to Russia.

It is implied that those unwilling to assimilate through language and culture remain outsiders. The article shows that population/migration issues are approached from the perspective of Russian national identity. In this respect *Komsomolskaya Pravda* has some similarities with *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* but with a populist emphasis.

The construction of the text can be understood by analogy with transaction analysis[11], which is used in psychology to represent the mental structure of the person in terms of three components (the child - the parent - the adult). Applying this idea, the *Komsomolskaya Pravda's* Migration issue is constructed as a conversation between a child and a parent/teacher. Such monologue-like conversation assumes both passivity of the child who should not think but needs to obey, and full awareness and confidence of the correctness on the part of the parent. In contrast, an 'adult' conversation assumes an appeal to common sense, reasoning, and argument. In this article we find instead 'childish' emotions and feelings on the one hand, and values of the parent on the other, which aspire to raise the level of moral behaviour, one of the characteristic features of Soviet pedagogy. The feelings we encounter are fear, pain, hopelessness, frustration, despair, melancholy, and envy. For example, 'it is hurtful' (to be just one of a number of nationalities), 'we can't avoid it' (our future), 'look at the USA' (there is a chance to match its success). The article suggests that the future may be shaped by something stirring in the public consciousness, but not clearly recognizable yet. The 'parent' or teacher's voice teaches ('I assure you'), defines limits ('it would be desirable to warn of attempts'), intimidates ('miracles generally do not happen', meaning that you should not hope that the problem will go away), convinces and gives instructions ('it is enough that', 'for this it is necessary', 'compare', 'consider'), forces ('it all becomes more and more difficult'), explains ('the reasons are as follows'), and summarizes ('so', first, second).

The article creates an appearance of adult conversation, for example, through references to experts and sources. However, neither experts nor sources are named. There is also no adult dialogue in the text. Argument is replaced with expressions such as 'everyone knows', 'the answer is obvious', 'the answer has been familiar for a long time', and 'as usual'. The presence of visual material in the form of charts and colour illustrations works in a similar way, leaving unanswered questions about the contents (for example why there are no Kirghiz migrants in the list of migrant worker groups).[12] The story resembles a moral tale told by the teacher, familiar in its narrative and injunctions. But in this case, after generating tension by posing multiple dilemmas (working harder or having more children; raising pensionable age or accepting immigrants) the writer does not offer a resolution. In fact, the basic metaphor revealed by our analysis of the vocabulary is an impasse or deadlock.

In response to the question in the title of *Komsomolskaya Pravda's* Migration issue ('Will Russia be empty of Russians?'), Russia is taken to mean the human resources of those who possess Russian language and culture. Those who introduce "another's language, another's customs, or isolation of national communities, disrespect for the Russian district which is sheltering 'them'" cannot be accepted, since the purpose given in the text is the 'preservation of Russian people on whom the state stands'. It becomes clear that the author has been assigned or has chosen to write about citizenship not as a question of birth but as question of culture and fidelity to the national idea of the state, as declared in official statements. The 'parental' voice in the text explains how Russian culture and language are essential for national identity through an appeal to the historical evidence that 'the Russian nation was initially formed from an amalgam of tribes' and that 'at the end of the 19th century only three quarters of the officers in the imperial army were Orthodox Christian, and only a little more than a half the hereditary noblemen were Russian-speaking and that the tsars (not to mention tsarinas, who almost invariably were German by birth) were very conditionally Russians. They became Russian by accepting the common language and culture. But then the 'childish' response is the example that 'in Israel, in Germany, in Finland if you have somehow proved yourself to be Jewish, German or Finnish by birth, you receive a high-grade citizenship immediately.' By implication the future of the Russian state does not offer the privilege of

citizenship as a birthright. Attention then turns to the ability to assimilate into 'our' culture, as well as the binary classification of favorable and unfavorable features of the migrant 'others'.

So this article appeals to feelings and not reason. The illusion of reason is cultivated, but the reader encounters contradictions as well as unsupported opinions. It concludes that the time is ripe for a re-birth of the 'supranational' idea echoing Soviet national policy. Note that this is emphatically not an expression of right-wing political Russian nationalism; in fact the article includes some anti-nationalist sentiment. The rhetoric uses some familiar schemas of communication between author and reader. The first is the reference to an undefined external 'threat'. The rhetorical question 'Perhaps the external threat will force us to unite?' suggests an older circuit of perception, acting to stimulate the reflex responses of former Soviet citizens to external dangers. Two further popular Russian themes appear in the text: the idea of a deep but undefined identification with Russia's 'soul', and hope for the strong authoritative hand--an opportunity for citizens to show fidelity to a central power.

Thus, the analysis above demonstrates the methods used by popular press to create fear surrounding the issue of 'other.' Prominent among them is the use of emotionally-laden language and simulated dialog, which relies on the dynamics of 'parent-child' rather than 'adult' interaction. These articles also introduce the notion of 'true' or 'real' Russians: those who are Russian by language and culture as opposed to those merely born on the territory of the Russian Federation to citizens of foreign countries or Russia's peripheral (and not "truly" Russian) regions. It appears that the state will not confer citizenship by birth, but will continue to insist on a cultural litmus test.

The official press: the Russian national project

Although the nature of the national project is somewhat difficult to define precisely, there is a clear example of the official rendition of the 'Russian national project' in an interview with the president of North Ossetia in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (19 Jan 2005).[13] Its form is atypical and stylistically complex, yet still hints at the possibility that the article may have been influenced by Moscow advisers. A Caucasian view is likely to be viewed as having more natural authority than a view directly from Moscow. The nature of the national project was expressed in terms of the consolidation of Russian society and unified values. The president of the Caucasian republic spoke about the Russian national project as being built not in opposition to the Caucasus, but including it. Dealing with the Caucasus problem is a major headache for Russian politics, and this interview attempts to express the possibility of peaceful relations with Caucasians despite the wave of Caucasian terrorism. It is an effort to make a step towards the people of the Caucasus, but finely tuned to Russian body politics rather than the situation in the region. The article challenges the reader with a statement on the tragedy of Beslan, accusing those 'who are undecided, whoever still has any illusions about the prospects and probable consequences of displacing Russia from the Caucasus of "sitting on two chairs" as citizens of Russia in public and hating everything connected with Russia in private'.

From this article it is possible to identify the following elements and structure of attitudes toward various aspects of interethnic relations in the Russian Federation. First of all, the article refers to attitudes of 'hostility' to foreigners. The 'growth of phobias and ethnically focused violence over the country' is identified as a serious threat. But it also draws attention to racist criminal behaviour among youth and 'skinheads' and criticizes the tendency for the judicial system to underestimate their seriousness. It is evident from the following fragments where the author highlights the serious threat from criminal activity that displays 'a hatred of the foreign'. However, the crimes of skinheads are dismissed as 'domestic hooliganism' and even as 'the contribution of youth to national "revival" and "consolidation"'. According to the author, such crimes are intended to attract public attention. In the press they represent not only concrete instances of violence towards victims, but also symbolic violence towards the wider audience, a kind of symbolic terrorism.

The second feature of attitudes to interethnic relations is revealed by the use of an original German word to designate invited workers 'Gastarbeiter'. In contrast to its meaning in German context, in current Russian usage it has a strong connotation of illegality. 'Gastarbeiter' is used to describe, for example construction workers from Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova as well as parts of the Russian Federation. The author's view of issue becomes clear from the following quotation in which he states that internal Russian migrants 'sometimes appear almost in the position of gastrarbeiters within the boundaries of

their own country'. The third feature of attitudes to interethnic relations is a fear of external threats. Everyone who has the appearance of the 'other' and who is not clearly one of 'us' represents a potential threat. The fourth feature refers to the ongoing reproduction of inequality and ethnic disparities between regions inside Russia; such disparity generates envy and undesirable 'artificial' migration. The fifth feature is the attribution of blame for xenophobia to the vicious circle of military intervention and its consequence, forced migration.

The article contends that all these undesirable features of interethnic attitudes can be overcome with the help of the state national project possessing 'moral power and cultural power'. In the regions (as opposed to the capital and major cities), there is a lack of an 'organizational conductor of the state ideology'--a conductor in the form of an all-Russian movement or network of civil associations, 'whose activity would concentrate outside the machinery of the state and not be a subject to departmental control'. This national project should be independent of pragmatic economic and political considerations. It should not allow itself to succumb to the tendency toward self-blame, the syndrome of Russia's 'historical fault' and guilt which is commonly found in 'studies which reflect other choices and a sense of 'greatness not achieved'.

An article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 'The Russians come back,' discusses return from Russia to Ingushetia of temporary migrants who abandoned their homes in Ingushetia following the disturbances in the north Caucasus in 1990. President Putin is quoted as saying 'nationality is not important' in this re-migration. But the main theme is preferential treatment of Russians, among whom Cossacks are included. The article about the reimmigration of the Russian population constitutes naive propaganda. It is written to call Russians back to Ingushetia, assuring them that they will have no problems on arrival. The article clearly suggests that re-immigration will be a wonderful experience, that everybody is awaiting their return, and that everything necessary is already prepared to make them feel immediately at home: housing, Russian schools for children, even Orthodox churches. The text contains no mention of the current state of Ingushetia's affairs, its problems, or historically problematic relations with the indigenous population.

The text appeals to emotions and nostalgia for a home. Quoting the words of the poet Lermontov, 'These people have lost what they hold most dear --the small native land, the ancestral ground, tombs native and close....' The text is focused on the emotional 'child'. The article supports federal policy of encouraging the return of all refugees irrespective of nationality. Ingushetia is a model for other republics in the northern Caucasus to follow. It amounts to a project of colonization of Ingushetia by Russians because strong regions are necessary for Russia. 'Strong, powerful regions and mighty, consolidated people are necessary for Russia. All of us were, and, unfortunately, still are witnesses of how someone persistently tries to create enmity between peoples who for centuries lived in the world as good neighbors'. The aim of that article is to persuade readers that the return of the Russian-speaking population is guided by good management practices and is in the best interests of all nationalities involved. The article fails to address the real problems of integration and rebuilding of the community. Ironically, the final significant comment is on the subject of religion, specifically Islam: '[it] declares there is one God, [and] we should live in peace. The Koran says that the closest religion to Islam is Christianity'. It illustrates how cynically journalists can use any efforts to make the content conform to the aim.

To summarize, the national project is a response to difficult interethnic relations between Russians and indigenous populations of the peripheral regions. The project aims to create a moral and cultural authority and consolidate the population by creating unified values. Operationally, it is designed to function as a conductor of state ideology, but as a grass-root organization rather than a state-controlled top-down conduit. One of the enterprises that fall within the range of the project is reintroduction of Russian refugees from Ingushetia back into Ingushetia. The purpose of the reintroduction is strengthening of the ties with the peripheral regions; this goal, however, is not realistically weighed against the risks incurred by such movement of the population. Just as in previous section, we encounter journalistic techniques that patently manipulate the opinion.

Russians abroad

In this section we consider examples of the representation of Russians who reside abroad in Western Europe, England, and the US. The characteristics of the Russians in the context of Europe form one of

the most significant themes in every newspaper; such stories can be told either from the viewpoint of the state or the ordinary people. They--oligarchs, sports personalities, the children of the wealthy--are considered to be the new faces of Russia. Reading these articles ordinary readers are likely to experience a mix of emotions: shame for their countrymen's indecent behavior, a certain pride concerning the national sharpness, resourcefulness and cunning, as well as envy regarding luxury and rage at the robbery of Russia. The official attitude is to promote the construction of a middle class identity in opposition to the behavior of the Nouveaux Riches; another goal is to expose dishonest business and display the authority of the state. Therefore, materials about business oligarchs are a good indicator not only of the editorial position of the newspaper but also the discursive construction of the phenomenon of Russians abroad.

Kommersant considers large business to be oppressed by the state bureaucracy and opts to defend the business, noting that the political elite lives just as lavishly as the oligarchs. 'New Russians' are the subject of an article published in the newspaper in January 2005 (N 5 15.01.05), 'New Russians lead the dance'. The article illustrates the interplay between concepts of what is 'Russian' and the behaviour of 'new Russians', using a source from Figaro (Duponchelle 'Les nouveaux Russes font la loi', 14.1.05) and comments on the perception of new Russians as mafiosi, careless spenders, easterners, and distrustful, cunning people. Contrary to a cliché about the mafiosi in black leather raincoats with gold jewellery, these 'new Russians' are already formed as or very quickly become aficionados of Russian traditions and Russian art, so strong is their desire to study the past and again to become its owners. 'Purchase of a Faberge collection by Victor Vekselberg became a world-wide advertising of his name and simultaneously a fine launching pad for all others', says antique dealer Alexis Kugel, who in many respects has anticipated this "new Russian revolution." In 1998, he organized a magnificent exhibition "Art of the Romanovs" — 'three quarters of the catalogue was sold in just one day'.

The *Kommersant* article notes the new Russians' thirst for knowledge of the history of Russia in a context of Europe and desire to own objects that are associated with Russian history. All this speaks of patriotism or, more cynically, the use of historical associations to compensate for a poor image.

Novaya Gazeta is critical of both the state and the oligarchs. The theme of an article titled 'Pound of the Sterlet' (06.06.2005, N40) is the 60 billion of so-called 'Russian dollars' invested in Britain in the last six years. The article is written by *Novaya Gazeta's* correspondent in London, and the construction and stylistics of the text are closer to the British newspapers than other examples. However, the text represents not pure reporting but the imagination of the author on a theme of rich Russians, living in 'Londongrad'. The material satirizes and criticizes the oligarchs. It is designed to capture the dislike of the rich on the part of the audience. 'But the most curious thing is that in London the rich Russians almost always behave much more decently than they do at home. It is noticeable that something in this city constrains their unrestrained natures. Quite likely, this "something" is monetary reasons'. There is also an idea that out-of-control Russians could be civilized by the English order; that Russian 'shirokaya natura' ('wild nature') could be bridled by the English middle class manners.

Komsomolskaya Pravda (12.03.2005) presents an interview with the TV commentator M. Leontiev (well known as one of the most pro-Kremlin journalist supporting theory of West plot against Russia), whose work is characterized by acerbic commentaries deliberately designed to shock his readers. He is quoted as saying in his typical style that: 'The 27 richest people; it is not a rating – this is a verdict. They have defrauded the state. But we are not living in any Cambodia. People see everything. The majority of people experience only one feeling towards them – punishment. Billionaires should understand it. They too are not fools. They have to prepare their response. If in the evening the state were to hint that it would no longer offer protection to oligarchs, then in the morning they will envy Khodorkovsky [a former president of Yukos] because in prison he is protected from the people. These 27 "lucky beggars" should start to worry and think how they can get along with people. But, sorry, paying off with [Faberge's] eggs will not succeed in buying peoples' support.'

The *Komsomolskaya Pravda* article illustrates three things: first, the oligarchs' fear of people's retribution; second the racist distinction between Russian and 'other' (e.g., Cambodia); third the crudeness of the characterization of oligarchs. As we showed above, the oligarchs are a Russian diaspora in 'London-grad' and also in Paris. Their wealth allows them to choose flexible identities according to their business and location of properties, even if the capital originates in Russia. For example,

Khodorkovsky did not choose, like his partner Nevzlin, to be regarded as a Jew and to leave for Israel – he chose Russian identity. For this reason, he commands much popular support.

Many other texts about rich Russians in the pro-Western newspapers *Novaya Gazeta* and *Kommersant* advance the idea that if Russians can bridle their wild instincts (for immediate profits, etc.) they can behave in a civilized way they will be accepted by the Europeans. Journalists write many descriptive articles about new Russians, and the general tendency is to push this phenomenon into existing interpretative frameworks. Thus, oligarchs with their money are considered to be the puppeteers of Russian politics (as in occasional references to Masonic connections or US influences). The Russian reader is familiar with thinking in such categories and in terms of explanations of who stands for any particular ideology, and whose material interests are involved. It could be called ‘vulgar Marxism’. For the Russians, no further explanation is needed. There is an illusion of full understanding of the historical process if you can only identify the director or sponsor of the puppet performance.

An article ‘Exile as return’ (14.03.05) by V.Mozgovoij in *Novaya Gazeta* the exiled oligarch L. Nevzlin, shows the point of view which is not peculiar to the Russian mentality. Nevzlin speaks about the attraction of the American investments. He shows respect for the American president but not for President Putin. ‘We operated and proved by our own example how it is necessary to live in democracy. Because our capital accumulation is transparent. Because we have negotiated for the purchase of a part of Yukos by the American companies. Because we were ready to take on the Russian market with serious foreign capital’. This is a standard representation of international entrepreneurial activity by Nevzlin and he contrasts it strongly with the model that has been gaining ground since Putin came to power. If business is allowed to continue to develop according to principles of open societies, then a strong democratic state will inevitably emerge. In Nevzlin’s view, Khodorkovsky considered himself to be close to the Kremlin’s position and thought that his position was accepted by Kremlin too, that Putin supported the open market and democracy. He was mistaken for they spoke ‘yes’ only to win time - and to cut down the oligarchs’ power, to imprison, expel and destroy them. The contrast is made with American politics, which is seen as plain-speaking. In Russian politics the principle is to dissimulate or conceal. He [a Russian politician] will tell lies, and won’t give a damn (‘spit in eyes - the divine dew’). And the American hears what he hears. If he hears Putin declare democracy — [he thinks] it means democracy. The Russian mentality is inertial and the population is still waiting to become indignant. But the point will come when people will say ‘enough is enough! we won’t live in a cage.’ Nevzlin remarks that this is true, but only if the cage is not a gold cage. ‘In a gold cage it is still possible to keep people in captivity’.

The most common objects of sneers and hate are rich people, businessmen, ‘new Russian’, and oligarchs — and not immigrants. The visual and verbal repertoire is much more rich, varied and more insulting. People believe that they lack an opportunity to move ahead on a social ladder, to raise their standard of living and the social status, because of the existence of rich people. It is thought that the rich impose on the poor the way of life and the rules of survival linked to bribery and connections to the same influential people, etc. The rich are seen as being closer to the nepotistic values of the Orient than to Western values of free market. The problem of social intolerance and hostility toward the rich and successful people is not new. It is necessary to take into account the seventy-year Soviet experience and the traditions in which several previous generations were brought up. Propagation of the state has been based on inoculation of disgust and hatred of ‘material wealth’ and ‘narrow-mindedness’, accumulation of property and money, luxury goods and other private-ownership displays. A very real inequality of the Soviet time was either hidden carefully or justified by political rank. This asceticism in many respects belongs to the character of people who historically lived in poverty. It is one of the qualities actively supported by the Orthodox Church.

Failures and difficulties of the emerging market attitudes as well as an unwillingness to accept that the wreck of real" socialism form the basis of a enduring myth about the undermining of the great Soviet Union by a ‘gang’ of new businessmen, who then became very rich and influential due to the plunder of the state’s (people’s) property. People attribute to oligarchs active participation in ‘great power collapse’, plunder of the national property and other sins. The most dangerous of all accusations is that oligarchs, being guided by doubtful values of ‘the gloomy capitalist West’, agreed with representatives of ‘American imperialism’ to carry out ‘a genocide of Russian people.’ (The expressions date from Soviet era propaganda, but are still in use in today’s communist media). Even insignificant episodes from the

lives of oligarchs are covered, giving readers many opportunities to discuss the enemy. There are also continuing echoes of the old distinction between 'westernizers' and 'slavophiles' in the contemporary discourse.

The critical attitude towards the rich does not mean that the view of the poor is necessarily more favourable. On the contrary, while the rich at least offer some lessons to be learned, the poor are an embarrassment. The attitude towards unemployed people as 'parasites' is a direct heritage of the Soviet past. 'Whoever does not work', a socialist slogan goes, 'does not eat.' Beggars, homeless, former prisoners form the lowest level of the society and are represented in the mass media with mistrust. (It is commonly held, for instance, that many beggars have large incomes). There are examples of journalistic investigations which open cherished secrets of the life of vagabonds as a form of business. Often people think that tramps and beggars are always drunk, dirty, do not want to work, suffer addictions and have spent on drink all their money and possessions. This is linked with the assumption that the majority of these groups are foreigners, mostly Ukrainians, Tadjiks, Azerbaijanis and other non-Russian nationalities. This too derives from the Soviet heritage: an attitude that national minorities are parasites living off the hardworking but innocent and trusting Russian people.

The treatment of the Nouveaux Riches Russians living abroad and the poorest of the poor in the Russian society offers several instructive points regarding the question of Russian identity. First, the new Russian identity is being constructed primarily as a middle class identity, in explicit opposition to the behavior of both the upper class and the lowest class. Values like hard work are emphasized and excesses are ridiculed. The construction process itself, however, relies in some ways on pre-existing racial stereotypes, such as a belief that most members of the lowest class belong to other, non-Russian ethnic groups. The attitude toward the Russian upper class is complicated by the fact that newspaper readers like to associate the business success of the Russian oligarchs with the intrinsic traits of Russian national character, so the business success of the Nouveaux Riches is folded into the new identity.

Conclusion: Immigration special

Having analyzed this sample, it is possible to tell that many texts are directed towards the creation of a new national identity. The discourse on migration is conducted within the framework of the developing national project, dedicated to the construction of a new identity for the Russia and the Russians. In comparison with the British press, for example, the Russian newspapers pay less attention to a question of migration as such. They are most likely to appear either in official statements and accompanying 'colour' (in interviews, opinions, description of cases and similar), or in popularized versions of official statements. The direct spokesperson for the official policies of state is *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, currently the most popular newspaper of Russia, presents the basic ideology for the less intellectual audience. *Kommersant* responds with close scrutiny of state policy and interprets it for business. *Novaya Gazeta* criticizes official policies, as well as corruption and dishonest business. Compared with the rest of our sample, it is especially prone to use language of emotions and feelings and to appeal to old stereotypes and high culture.

The basic approaches and images in representation of a reality of four newspapers

Rossiyskaya Gazeta constructs a generally tolerant attitude towards migration that is consistent with the prevailing legal framework. Migration is treated in many texts as a matter connected with the problem of depopulation. The texts support feelings of national superiority and superpower status; they awaken the imagination of a new form of colonialism in the CIS countries; and they engender hope of restoration of the Soviet cooperation.

According to *Komsomolskaya Pravda* migrants may be seen as a potential addition to the labour force, which will 'develop our territories, master our resources, support pensioners and children'. Texts show common fears and prejudices, and also suggest approaches for coping with them. It is important to learn how advanced countries have solved similar problems; there are suggestions of what may be learned from others' experiences. A lot of comparisons are given.

If in the popular newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* we get lectures and instructions for action designed for a less intellectually-inclined reader, then in *Novaya Gazeta* we find conversation of an intellectual

with an equal partner, who can understand and appreciate the glass-bead game, ironic style, intertextuality and amusement of hints. Looking through articles of *Novaya Gazeta* it is possible to perceive the tendency to be anxious about the condition of culture, preservation of knowledge, language, of mental potential and values of the civilization. The articles also make references to world history and the history of Russia, classical literature and philosophy.

There are significant stylistic variations between the newspapers in the sample. In the most popular articles in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* it is possible to find stylistic features appealing directly to patriotic feelings and moods. There is a similar appeal in *Rosyiskaya Gazeta* but based on more impersonal, generalized arguments from history and cultural tradition. *Kommersant* on the other hand is more likely to offer ambiguous statements, and they are given in the opaque, veiled form. The irony or criticism can be reconstructed if the Russian context is understood. We have not found out ready clichés to describe the emerging phenomena. But we found that journalists try to use old frameworks and, with the exception of *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, interpret questions of migration rather rigidly. The language sometimes verges on being overtly hostile, encouraging fears and primitive instincts.

We have presented evidence that readers of pro-state newspapers are presented with stereotypes of the strong state integrating and assimilating other people and colonizing territory. New patriotism is constructed on the bases of a strong, autocratic concept of the state, the presidency and national institutions, especially the army and the Orthodox Church that are loyal to the state. The national project is expressed in terms of the need to maintain the integrity of the territory (which is why the Caucasus represents a defining case), the cohesion of the people of Russia, and the need to defend the country against the threat of population decline.

The process of representation is constructed through elementary binary distinctions of the following kind. First there is the category of Russia itself, contrasted with the countries of migration and other countries that experience migration issues differently. This is discursively expressed through the parent-child, donor-recipient distinction, where 'we' are the owners of the cultural and historical tradition (the civilization) which defines 'Russianness'. Others may grow up to become part of it. This phenomenon of otherness is ambivalent. Depending on the political context the phenomenon can be redefined. The history of Russia (and its representation in the classical literature) is full of examples of interactions between the Russians and other people. Depending on the topic, journalists use the resources of the past, especially those dating from the 19th century, to analyze today's problems. Having been trained in philological tradition, journalists often display their knowledge of texts associated with high culture as a way of demonstrating their professional competence. This form of intertextuality lends a particular kind of authority in the context of the Russian cultural tradition.

All the articles analyzed here are marked by a tendency to speak from the point of view of superiority. The categorization of 'others' and discourse about them helps to position Russia in the awareness of readers. 'Others' are judged first of all by their economic success, as well as by other kinds of capital (e.g., cultural capital). Others' advantages are treated by journalists with skepticism, mistrust, and guided by the question whether it is good for 'us'. Russians look at the advantages of others and evaluate themselves, and find indemnification for missing characteristics. However unexpected and excellent others may be, there is a belief that Russians have superior potential and natural capital, an idea that comes from the constantly repeated theme of high culture and a feeling of affinity with great persons who spoke Russian. It is possible that recourse to tradition can be explained as a response to the insecurity and impoverishment of everyday life, as an attempt to compensate for feelings of inferiority.

Journalists representing social diversity and differences are accustomed to the old schemas which center around assigning blame; those schemas are now adapted to new circumstances, and social differences are emerging as more important than national differences. Journalists help to identify new 'others' to help people feel better.

Inter-group attitudes change according to the new social order (e.g., attitude toward Baltic republics since accession to EU and WWII anniversary). The Russians resent interference from others and problems created by outsiders because of insecurity about their own position.

As a general conclusion, we can say that representatives of ‘others’ who differ significantly in terms of language and culture from Russians, or who are territorial outsiders, are shown in the press in three main ways. Firstly, there is a benevolent understanding in terms of traditional ties to sisters and brothers from the fifteen Soviet republics. Secondly, there is a predominantly aggressive stance towards those who are seen as not wanting to assimilate or not wanting to engage with Russia from a subordinate position, to regard it as the older brother. Representations of the Chinese and the Baltic states fit this category. Finally, there is an ambivalent response, mainly in relation to stories of Russians abroad in Europe or North America, about the interactions between the Russians and non-Russians. Pride in Russian achievements is tempered by certain negative images. All these variants could be expressed in terms of the cultural, economic, and political dimensions of the journalistic field. The dynamic of the field is to reconcile the schemas into a common ideology for the Russia’s future. To use a musical metaphor, every time the question of Russian national identity is raised, you can hear, in its unending variety of forms, the same tune, differently modulated and counterposed to otherness. Here we showed how production of these variations is accomplished.

Notes

¹ Part of EU INTAS Young Scientist Fellowship project on discourses of migration in the press in the UK and Russia, 2005-2007.

² According to a report in *Kommersant*, 1% of St Petersburg land has been sold to Chinese (10.06.05).

³ *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 18.01.05.

⁴ *Kommersant* No. 103, 08 June 2005. Headline from patriotic hymn of WW 2 ‘stand, great country ...’ The new TV service is described as ‘spetzpropaganda’

⁵ Data is presented on the site of this title.

⁶ For example Anna Politkovskaya, an internationally-known critical journalist, was a special correspondent for *Novaya Gazeta*.

⁷ YUKOS, The Chechen Republic, Northern Caucasus, Depopulation, Israel, Terrorists, Kazakhstan, Labour, Patriotism and identity, The future, Shuttles, Migration, Masons, Nationalists, Anti-Semitism, GNP, The control and censorship of the state, Yachts for the president, Registration of immigrants, relations with Ukraine and CIS.

⁸ <http://anna12012007.narod.ru/links3.html>

⁹ Hall, Stuart. 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. L.

¹⁰ Said, Edward W. 1997. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, NY.

¹¹ Britannica Online Encyclopedia: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/602347/transactional-analysis>

¹² Illustrations are executed in an entertaining manner – cartoon style and with photos of children, women, and characters of an animated film based on A.Lindgren story «Carlsson on the Roof».

¹³ ‘The Russian national project. The answer to threats of xenophobia and terrorism’. Alexander Dzasokhov, the president of Republic of Northern Ossetia. 19 January 2005.

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