

up perspectives to compliment the more elite-oriented contributions of the present volume. Kolstø and Blakkisrud's volume is timely and important, and it should be considered obligatory reading for anyone interested in the topic.

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The New Russian Nationalism: Imperialism, Ethnicity and Authoritarianism 2000–15 is a timely volume that presents readers with a rich and up-to-date analysis of the content of, contestation over, and consequences of Russian nationalism under Putin. The editors brought together the very top names in the study of Russian nationalism from North America, Europe, and Russia, and the end result is an impressive collection of chapters analyzing issues such as changes and continuity and nuances of public opinion in Russia; the (dis)similarities between historical, early post-Soviet, and most recent debates over Russian national identity; the relationship between growing authoritarianism and the recent ethnification of Russian nationalism; the role played by religion, television, economics; and more.

In a short response essay it's not possible to equally engage with the arguments in each chapter; so this comment will primarily focus on the chapters comprising the second part of the book that analyzes state-level Russian nationalism under Putin (and less on the first part of the volume that focuses on society-level Russian nationalism).

The main thrust of most of the chapters focusing on state-level Russian nationalism is that it has taken a turn toward a more ethno-centrist position under Putin's third term, in contrast to more statist state-level nationalism under Yeltsin and initially under Putin. An important exception here is Laruelle, who argues that Putin's recent emphasis on protecting the interests of *russkie* is not really an expression of Russian ethnic nationalism but, rather, that *russkii* terminology refers to a civilizational and cultural understanding of Russianness, and as such represents a historical continuation rather than a change in the official views. Blakkisrud's chapter also offers an important nuance by pointing out that recent ethnicification in the official discourse constitutes not a clear-cut ethnonationalism, but what he calls a simultaneous "narrowing in and widening up" (256) – that is, emphasizing the importance of ethnic Russians within the federation, while defining ethnic *russkii* identity in broader cultural terms, which blurs the external borders of the "self" and allows reaching out to Russian-speaking diasporas in neighboring states.

The chapters of the volume identify several causes behind more ethno-centric official expressions of nationalism after 2011, and especially after 2014, as manifested most starkly by the annexation of Crimea and the official justification of this move. These causes include the growth of labor migration from the non-Slavic former Soviet republics in the 2000s, spurred by Russia's economic recovery, and the associated increase in migrantophobia in the Russian population; the Russian diaspora in the neighboring states; and threats to the regime manifested in the anti-Putin political protests of 2011, the recent economic downturn and resulting drop in Putin's popularity; as well as the 2014 Euromaidan events in Ukraine perceived as threatening to the authoritarian governance model constructed by Putin. With ethnic threads always present to some extent in the official rhetoric and officially voiced nation-building options, the regime turned to ethnic nationalism more explicitly after the 2011 protests and especially after the Euromaidan victory in Ukraine in an effort to boost popular support. These arguments are developed in nuanced and convincing ways in several chapters of this volume, most comprehensively in those by Kolstø, Hale, and Blakkisrud, and also Pain and Rutland. While it is certainly plausible that all of these factors contributed to ethnicization of Russian nationalism, one could take issue with some of the postulated causal relationships. For example, migration from the "near abroad" to Russia was at very high levels in the early and mid-1990s, putting great strain on the Russian state, which was then in the midst of economic crisis. The Russian and Russian-speaking diasporas in the "near abroad" were arguably also in a more precarious position during the immediate post-Soviet years in comparison with the late 2000s, with bloody conflicts ranging in several former Soviet republics and legal measures downgrading the privileged status of the Russian language and in some cases denying citizenship access for the Russian speakers coming into being. It then remains puzzling why the Yeltsin government stuck with the less ethno-centric official nationalism than Putin has done in recent years.

In addition to the causes of recent ethnicization of Russian nationalism, another interesting theoretical issue raised by this volume is the relationship between official expressions of nationalism by state leaders and domestic and foreign policies pursued by these leaders. Differently put, does the content of nationalism have causal consequences for state policies, or do rhetorical expressions of nationalism, while admittedly worthy of a study in and of themselves, at the same time have only limited causal impact on state policies? In the case of Russia this dilemma is all the more pertinent because what constitutes ethnic and what constitutes non-

ethnic in the Russian context is ambiguous and complex – something that is acknowledged virtually without exception by the volume’s contributors, who further show that the ethnic/non-ethnic boundary has always been blurred in official policies, and that state leaders have always toyed with ethnic nationalism at least to a degree, even when they pursued purportedly statist as opposed to ethnic policies. So if in Russia there is a broad “menu” of varieties of nationalism that can be taken up by state leaders and presented for public consumption, the question remains whether the recent greater emphasis on ethnic terminology in official rhetoric actually helps to explain the dramatic events of the recent years – from authoritarian consolidation domestically after the 2011 protests to the 2014 annexation of Crimea and support for separatism in the Donbas conflict. Differently put, were these policies a direct outgrowth of the ethnification of nationalism in Russia, or were they developed for reasons that possibly had little to do with the content of nationalism, being driven instead by, for example, geopolitical objectives of maintaining power in the “near abroad” or the goal of eliminating domestic political challenges to the regime, with ethnification rhetoric from state leaders being merely a wrapper used to package these policies for presentation to the Russian public? And how can we tell if the latter or the former is the case? If the latter is the case, the fact that articulated state-level nationalism has become more ethnic might not be particularly consequential for dramatic changes in Russia’s state domestic and foreign policies that developed at the same time. If we further consider the fact that Russian public opinion itself has fluctuated, and deeper probing, as done by a number of chapter authors in this volume, shows that a survey response may contain a complex underlying attitude (e.g. a migrantophobic large-N survey response may coexist with more benign attitudes to migrants expressed through an in-depth interview, as Kosmarskaya and Savin’s chapter shows; or Hale and Alexseev’s point that attitudes on ethnic pride and ethno-centrism did not spike before the Crimea annexation), this further calls into question the relationship between public nationalism, state-level nationalism, and state policies. Given that these questions carry themselves throughout chapters of the volume, the volume would have benefited from a concluding chapter relating findings of individual chapters to this set of theoretical questions.

Another broader issue that the volume’s chapters on state policies should be commended for addressing – but where the analysis could have also been extended further – is classification of the varieties of Russian nationalism. Kolstø’s leading chapter offers a parsimonious typology of Russian nationalism in a two-by-two table, which will be a handy tool for both scholars and classroom instructors. Kolstø’s two-axis model (23) creates four ideal types of Russian nationalism, based on whether the interests of the state or the interests of the Russian ethnic group are the main concern (x axis), and whether nationalism is expansionist (“‘empire’ oriented”), or “‘core’ oriented” (focused on the existing borders of the Russian state) (y axis). The author finds that over time Russian nationalism has become simultaneously more ethnic and more core-orientated. The theoretical model is compelling and parsimonious, but some of the facts on the ground do not fit the model neatly, not least the annexation of Crimea and the expansion of Russian territory. With the annexation of Crimea the Russian state territory expanded for the first time in the post-Soviet period, and this territorial expansion took place while nationalism supposedly became more “core”-oriented, while no territorial expansion was even attempted, let alone executed, during the earlier post-Soviet years when “empire”-oriented nationalism was stronger.

The shift along the x axis, from more statist to more ethnic, could also be problematized by asking what more ethnic and more civic policies actually look like? To be sure, references to ethnic Russians as the “state-bearing” or “state-forming” people of the federation have grown in official speeches and state documents in recent years, as several chapters

document, Blakkisrud's most thoroughly. But beyond this rhetoric and a new State Strategy on Nationality Policy adopted in 2012 (analyzed by Blakkisrud), one could contend that not much has changed as far as the content of state policies: the ethno-federal structure of the state has not been dismantled, privileges for ethnic Russians have not found their way into state laws (at least not explicitly), and ethnic non-Russians not just inside but also outside Russia could still claim affiliation to the Russian state by virtue of being "compatriots" – the notoriously and, as I have argued elsewhere, purposefully, ambiguous legal category that relies on one's stated affinity with Russian language, culture, and "spiritual connection" with Russia (Shevel 2011). Since April 2014, Russian-speaking compatriots are further entitled to Russian citizenship under simplified rules, but it is debatable whether this policy illustrates a more ethnic-oriented approach since it neither singles out ethnic Russians, nor precludes more "imperial" interpretations, along the lines of Blakkisrud's "widening up" notion, as it reaches to fuzzily defined compatriots outside Russia's state borders. These issues notwithstanding, the volume is bound to become an invaluable reference for both researchers of Russian nationalism and for instructors teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. Its timely content, thematic breadth, and theoretical issues raised will provide rich material for analysis and discussion for years to come.

Reference

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The changes in the Kremlin's domestic and international policy after Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency in 2012 surprised both officials and academics around the world. In response, there is a growing body of literature addressing the questions "Who is Mr. Putin really?" and "What is his endgame?" (see Hill and Gaddy 2013 and others). Putin is indisputably able to drive Russia's social and political changes. What has yet to be determined is how Putin dictates these changes and how his policies are enacted. Understanding Vladimir Putin's personality and his domestic political goals are necessary, but not sufficient to identify the driving forces behind Russian politics and international policy. The ease with which Putin has been shaping Russia's development cannot be explained by the authoritarian nature of the regime alone. It is essential to analyze broader underlying trends, including developments in public opinion and discourses of national identity. These trends made the annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine both conceivable and natural (Hopf 2016). Contrary to widespread belief, Putin does not shape public