

RUSSIAN DIASPORA  
AND  
THE POLITICS OF RUSSIAN NATIONALISM  
IN THE POST SOVIET ERA

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## ABSTRACT

### RUSSIAN DIASPORA AND THE POLITICS OF RUSSIAN NATIONALISM IN THE POST SOVIET ERA

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This thesis examines how Russian political elites and intellectuals have approached the issues of Russian nation and diaspora since 1991. This thesis observes that while Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin claim to advocate a civic definition of a nation in the boundaries of Russia; they extend the definition of Russian nation to cover the 'Russian diaspora' as well. This thesis argues that the inclusion of the term Russian diaspora in Russian discourse of nationalism has paved the way for developing a consensus about Russia's new identity among its political elites and intellectuals. Accordingly, Russia which is defined as a homeland of ethnic Russians identifies itself as the protector of the rights of Russians in ex-Soviet republics. Moreover, this diasporic politics has been used to legitimate the Russian engagement in the internal and external affairs of post-Soviet states. Nevertheless, as this thesis demonstrates, ethnic Russians residing in the post-Soviet states have significant diversity in terms of their political orientations towards Russia.

There are five parts in this thesis. After the introduction, the first chapter explains the role of Russian diaspora in the politics of Russian nationalism under Yeltsin and Putin. While the second chapter examines intellectual approaches to the issues of Russian national identity and diaspora, the third chapter focuses on the conditions of ethnic Russians in the post-Soviet states. The final part is the conclusion.

Keywords: Russian nationalism, Russian diaspora, nationalizing states, citizenship, ethnicity.

## ÖZ

### SOVYET SONRASI DÖNEMDE RUS DİASPORASI VE RUS MİLLİYETÇİLİK SİYASETİ

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Bu tez, 1991 sonrasında Rus siyasi elitlerinin ve entellektüellerinin Rus milleti ve diasporası meselelerine nasıl yaklaştıklarını araştırmaktadır. Tez, Boris Yeltsin ve Vladimir Putin'in Rusya sınırları içinde ulusun sivil tanımını savduklarını iddia ederken Rus milleti tanımını Rus diasporasını içerecek şekilde genişlettiklerini düşünmektedir. Bu tez, Rus diasporası kavramının Rus milliyetçilik söylemine dahil edilmesinin Rusya'nın yeni kimliği konusunda siyasi elitler ve entellektüeller arasında bir oydaşmanın oluşmasına yol açtığını ileri sürmektedir. Buna göre Rusya, etnik Rusların anavatanı olarak tarif edilmektedir ve Moskova kendisini eski Sovyet Cumhuriyetlerindeki Rusların haklarının koruyucusu olarak tanımlamaktadır. Ayrıca bu diaspora politikası Rusya'nın yeni bağımsızlığını kazanan Sovyet sonrası devletlerin iç ve dış işlerine müdahalesini meşrulaştırdığı savunmaktadır. Bununla beraber, tez yeni bağımsızlığını kazanan Sovyet sonrası devletlerde yaşayan Rus nüfusun politik yönelimlerinde önemli farklılıklar barındıklarını göstermektedir.

Tez beş bölümden oluşmaktadır. Giriş olan birinci bölümü, Yeltsin ve Putin dönemlerinde Rus milliyetçilik siyasetinde Rus diasporasının rolünü inceleyen ikinci bölüm takip etmektedir. Üçüncü bölüm Rus ulusal kimliğine ve diasporaya yönelik entellektüel yaklaşımları araştırırken, dördüncü bölüm yeni bağımsızlığını kazanan

Sovyet sonrası devletlerde yařayan etnik Rusların konumuna odaklanmıřtır. Beřinci blm ise sonu kısımdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler : Rus milliyetilięi, Rus diasporası, ulusallařan devletler, vatandaşlık, etnisite.

**To My Family.**  
**For their trust and encouragement.**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In present international system based on nation-states, Russia as a state which has a huge imperialistic tradition and socialist past presents a very unique example in the studies of nationalism. While Russia's universalistic, religious and imperial discourse had taken precedence over particularistic, secular ideology in the course of Tsarist Russia; internationalist proletariat movement, in other words, universalistic language of socialism has superiority over nationalist discourse throughout Soviet era.<sup>1</sup> Many scholars claim that Russian political elites and intellectuals have sought to preserve the historic Russian state in its imperial form until the end of Soviet Union, because they were imperialists rather than nationalists. But, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the requirements of the contemporary international relations forced Russian political elites and intellectuals to define who the Russians are, what the Russian nation is and what the boundaries of Russia are in the nation building process. Hence, this thesis examines contemporary politics of Russian nationalism, the Russian diaspora in the post-Soviet states, and their interactions.

#### 1.1. Scope and Objective

This thesis focuses on the approaches of Russian political elites and intellectuals towards Russian nation and its diaspora as off 1991; especially on the four ways the Russian nation is nowadays defined: 1) The Russian nation in the context of the Union Identity, 2) The Russians as a nation of Eastern Slavs, 3) The Russians as a

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<sup>1</sup> David G. Rowley, "Imperial Versus National Discourse: The Case of Russia", *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2000, pp.23- 32.

community of Russian speakers, 4) The Civic definition of the Russian nation. While Yeltsin and Putin declare that they are in favor of the civic definition of a nation within its borders, the policies they pursued concerning the Russians in near abroad have been omitted this sense of community. Thus, this thesis presumes that Russian diaspora, the twenty-five million people who suddenly found themselves beyond the borders of Russia with the demise of the Soviet Union, is an essential element in defining the new Russian identity. The premise 'Russian diaspora' paved the way for Russian political elites and intellectuals to define Russia as the ethnic homeland for Russians.

On the other hand, the Russian population residing in near abroad developed different interpretation of "homeland". Factors such as the years of their settlement in the newly independent post-Soviet states, their role in the economic life, mixed marriages, cultural distance between them and titular nations, the size of their population in the host states, the closeness of their settlement to Russian border or the nature of the nation building process in the newly independent post-Soviet states contributed to the perceptions of homeland amongst Russian populations. Therefore, this thesis examines how Russian political and cultural elites built the Russian nation according to the Russian diaspora. It further focuses on the self-identification of Russians who lived abroad and considers their relations with the nationalizing regimes of the newly independent post-Soviet states and Russia.

## **1.2. Literature Review**

Due to the fact that this thesis is based on the premises of nationalism and diaspora, this part reviews the approaches to nationalism and the main features of the diaspora. Over two centuries, nationalism has played a vast role in shaping world politics. The apparent success of nationalism in mobilizing political support since the eighteenth century, have brought about great improvements in nationalism studies in recent years. Nevertheless, there is yet no consensus on what exactly the term is supposed

to denote. Disagreement over the question of whether nationalism derives from modernity or antiquity generates the uncertainty of its future.

There are different approaches on the underlying causes of nationalism. The primordial approach argues that the history of a nation can be traced back over centuries in order that group ties based on blood, race, language, residence, religion, and custom are superior to any other ties such as ideology, class etc. This is why, this approach points out that nation has existed for a long time. “There were earlier periods when the nation knew greatness; earlier heroes and golden ages which can inspire members of the nation in the present.”<sup>2</sup> The problem in this approach is that nationalism as a doctrine is very modern and as a politics is also very modern. Until eighteenth century political action was justified in dynastic and religious term. This approach has recently been promulgated by Anthony Smith.

He argues that if one wants to understand the shape of a modern nation and its nationalism, he must trace their origins and formations over long periods of time; nationalism being necessarily and naturally built on much older ethnic communities. Moreover, Smith tries to demonstrate that many ethnics have been transformed in to nations. An Ethnic is defined as “a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories one or more common elements of culture, including an association with a homeland, and some degree of solidarity, at least among the elites.”<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, according to Smith, Nation means “a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, agreeing with modernists that nationalism is a phenomenon that dates from the later eighteenth century, Smith conceives that “in practice, the ‘modern nation’ incorporates several features of pre-modern ethnic and owes much

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<sup>2</sup> John Breuilly, “Approach to Nationalism” in *Mapping the Nation* (ed.by Gopal Balakrishnan), London: Verso, 1996, p.149.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Smith, “Ethno-Symbolism and the Study of Nationalism” in *Nations and Nationalism* (ed.by Philip Spencer and Howard Wollman), Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2005, p.25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* , p. 24.

to the general model of ethnicity which has survived in many areas until the dawn of the modern era”<sup>5</sup>. Most nations are based on ethnic ties, sentiments, and folklore, setting the ground for later nation-formation.

Highlighting the relationship between ethnic identities and national identities, Smith concludes that nationalism is rather a real than a constructed movement. He hints at modernity shaping the form taken by national identity. Hence, nationalism is a form of manipulation used by political elites. Nevertheless, he claims that nationalism cannot be invented since it can only succeed when it appeals to a human group with shared myths, legends, symbols, history, homeland and feeling of community belonging.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, Smith appears to find a middle way between nationalists who consider the nation is an ancient form of state and those who assert it is a modern phenomenon.

The modernist approach considers the nation as an essentially modern phenomenon which emerged at a particular time and space in history. According to the modernist approach, nations are creations of modernity, because their very existence requires an industrial society with a high level of literacy and mass communication. Modernist scholars can be distinguished with those who focus on social-cultural transformation such as Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Miroslav Hroch and those who focus on political transformation such as Eric Hobsbawm, John Breuilly in industrialization process.<sup>7</sup>

Ernest Gellner, the most influential scholar of this approach, views that nations and nationalism are modern phenomena; which are the products of the requirements of the growth-oriented industrial society. According to Gellner, there are three

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<sup>5</sup> Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986, p.18.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>7</sup>See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983; Miroslav Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe”, Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, 1996; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993.

fundamental stages in societal history: the pre-agrarian, the agrarian and the industrial. In pre-modern societies, elites and food-producing masses were always separated along cultural lines. On the other hand, modern society grounded on the division of labor requires a mobile, literate, technologically equipped population; a culturally homogenized community. In this framework, the only entity capable of providing such a numerous groups with a standardized public education system is the modern state. Therefore, nationalism is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization which provokes the spread of standardized 'high cultures' instituted through state-financed educational systems. In other words, this system prepares people to survive under conditions in which the division of labor and social mobility were highly advanced.<sup>8</sup>

Based on these theses, the nation is the product of the transformation from agrarian societies to modern societies. Nationalism "is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent"<sup>9</sup>. In this process, "nationalism takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures."<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, nations are not natural entities; they result and derive from industrialization.

In contradiction to Gellner, Miroslav Hroch insists that nations are real anthropological formations because the rise of nationalism and modern industrial society are not bound in time. Nevertheless, he is involved in this part of the study because he really stressed on the social-political aspects of societies' transformation. He divides any given national movement from its beginning to its successful conclusion into three structural phases according to "the character and role of its activists and to the degree of national consciousness in the ethnic group at large"<sup>11</sup>. During Phase A, the initial period, the activists focus on the researches and the

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<sup>8</sup>Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983, pp.40-48.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.49.

<sup>11</sup>Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe", Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.), *Mapping the Nation*, London: Verso, 1996, p.81.

dissemination of linguistic, cultural, social and sometimes historical features of the non-dominant ethnic group. But, they hold no particular political and national implications. In phase B, the body of pioneers of the national idea launches a political campaign in their ethnic group with agitating ‘awaken’ national consciousness in order to create a future nation. Hroch also stress on the importance of social-economic factors in the development of nationalism during Phase B, such as industrialization and urbanization. The transition from Phase B to Phase C occurs when nationalist programs acquire the mass’ support. In this final stage, the movement is divided into conservative-clerical, liberal and democratic wings.<sup>12</sup> According to Hroch, national communities can only be invented by intellectuals if objective precondition for the formation of nation already exists.<sup>13</sup>

Another scholar who draws attention to social-political transformation in the modernization process is Benedict Anderson. He considers nationalism as a ‘cultural artifact of a particular kind’.<sup>14</sup> He claims that these artifacts were created by the end of the eighteenth century when discrete historical forces crossed. But, once it was created, not only did it become capable of being transplanted to different social terrains but as well of being in harmony with different political and ideological ideas.<sup>15</sup> In order to respond the question of how nationalism created such strong ties, this author, firstly gives a definition to the term “nation”.

According to him, a nation is an imagined political community in terms of limits and sovereignty. It is a creation since, even though the members of the nations will never know most of their group, they live with the image of communion. The nation is limited because each nation has boundaries and beyond it exist other nations. The concept of sovereignty was brought about as Enlightenment and Revolution were demolishing the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained dynastic realm. At last, a nation

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.81.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.79.

<sup>14</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983, p.4.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

is a community, because it conceals inequality and exploitation, and suggests deep comradeship.<sup>16</sup> However, this description paves the way for another question: how did these imagined communities emerge.

According to Anderson, the main role in creating imagined communities was played by print capitalism. Those print languages laid the bases for national consciousness in three distinct ways. Firstly and foremost, they unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernacular. Secondly, print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language. Thirdly, print-capitalism created languages-of-power more advantageous than the old administrative vernaculars.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the coalition between Protestantism and print-capitalism mobilized public opinions for politico religious purposes. With the decline of religions, the rise of print-capitalism and the interactions between capitalism, technology and human linguistic diversity made it possible to imagine a new type of community, namely: a modern nation. Such an imagined community comes to serve vital psychological and economic needs under the peculiar modern conditions of secular capitalism.

In parallel line with Gellner and Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm views the nation neither as a primary nor as an unchanging social entity. The modern nation and everything related to it derive from modernity. Nationalism exists as a function of a particular kind of territorial state at a given stage of technological and economic development.<sup>18</sup> Since the French Revolution, nationalism as a political program means exercising sovereign control within the defined borders and over a homogeneous population.

Hobsbawm claims that the nation and nationalism are products of social engineering. In order to explain the elements of such a social engineering, he uses the premise 'invented traditions'. To Hobsbawm, when a rapid transformation of a society

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<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.44-45.

<sup>18</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.10.

demolishes the social order established by old traditions, the invention of new traditions can happen.<sup>19</sup> In this sense,

Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.<sup>20</sup>

Invented traditions belong to three intermingled types:

a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of a groups, real, or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relation of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, values system and conventions of behavior.<sup>21</sup>

These national traditions can be created by political elites who use nationalism to manipulate public opinion. Consequently, nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms make nations.

While Hobsbawm regards nationalism as a product of social engineering, John Breuilly highlights the essentially political aspect of nationalism. Considering nationalism is a consequence of modernity, he argues that nationalism is best understood as an especially appropriate form of political behavior of the modern state and its system.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the term 'nationalism' refers to "political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist argument"<sup>23</sup>. A nationalist argument lays its bases on three assertions: "a. Nations have peculiar characters. b. The interests and values of a nation are of prior importance compared to any other interests and values. c. A nation must be as

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<sup>19</sup>Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Inventing Tradition" in *The Invention of Tradition* (ed.by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.4.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9.

<sup>22</sup>John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p.2.

independent as possible. This usually at least requires the attainment of political sovereignty.”<sup>24</sup>

Breuilly's first assertion also plays a very important role in the identification of Diasporas. In his very detailed study of diaspora, Robert Cohen points out that one of the common features of Diasporas is the strong ethnic group consciousness. Based on a sense of distinctiveness and very sustainable, it flows from shared History and the belief in a common fate.<sup>25</sup>

To Cohen, dispersal from original homeland, often traumatically, two or more regions; alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions create diaspora. A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements; an idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation are shared by the members of a diaspora. A sense of empathy and solidarity come out with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement. The development of a return movement gains collective approbation. Moreover, a troubled relation with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance might strengthen the development of a return movement.<sup>26</sup>

Considering the above-mentioned features of a diaspora, this thesis contends that it is difficult to conceptualize Russian people residing near abroad as in the manner that they constitute diaspora.

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Robin Cohen, *Global Diaspora: An Introduction*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997, p.26.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

### 1.3. Argument

This thesis studies the Russian national identity formation after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Throughout the Tsarist era and Soviet period, Russians have a weak sense of nationhood. In the aftermath of the USSR's dissolution on 31 December 1991, Russian governmental cycle had to embark on the road of nation building. Not only did they claim to define 'who the Russian people are' and 'where the boundaries of their land spread' but they also fostered people's sense of belonging to one specific community via the creation of new political institutions capable of inspiring loyalty to the state. In this concept, Russian political elite seeking legitimacy for a new form of state seemed to stand for a civic definition of the Nation. In other words, Russian people have been defined as all citizens of the Russian Federation, regardless of their ethnic and cultural background.

On the other hand, with the break-up of the Soviet Union, twenty-five million Russians<sup>27</sup> found themselves out of their motherland without moving. In the earliest years of the Russian Federation, the Russian government, dealing with economic and political problems, did not consider them as an integral part of the Russian nation. Since the government failed to create new institutions and symbols able to strengthen the civic definition of the Russian nation, and since the opposition wing which defined the Russian nation according to ethnic criteria, has gained strong support, the Russian government extended the definition of the Russian nation, including to it the premise 'Russian diaspora'.

Accordingly, this thesis argues that the premise 'Russian diaspora' is constructed by political elites and intellectuals of Russia. As Charles King and Neil Melvin contend, diaspora politics played an important role in making definition of nation. Thus, diaspora politics provided a means for regrouping for the political elite following the 1991. In other words, the invention of the Russian ethnic community beyond the

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<sup>27</sup>Graham Smith, "Transnational Politics and the Politics of the Russian Diaspora", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, May 1999, p. 500.

Russian Federation paved the way for developing a consensus about Russia's new identity. Russia was defined as an ethnic homeland, a state with responsibilities towards its community residing in the newly independent post-Soviet states.<sup>28</sup> The re-conceptualization of Russian population in near abroad as 'Russian diaspora' meant the connection of these people to Russian proper, a collective memory and myth about a common homeland.<sup>29</sup>

Once Russia is defined as the historical homeland of all Russians, Moscow identified itself as the protector of the rights of Russians in ex-Soviet republics. Therefore, this thesis highlights the fact that the invention of a Russian diaspora legitimated the Russian engagement in the internal and external affairs of newly independent states. The Russian diaspora is seen as an instrument of domination in the Eurasian region. Likewise, intellectuals who desire to establish a Russian empire point out ethnic Russians who stayed out of Russian Federation, as the reason for a future Eurasian Empire. In their visions of a future Russia, they come to the conclusion that the borders of Russia should be re-drawn, including the areas where ethnic Russians live. Thus, they argue that the problem of the Russian diaspora can only be solved by unifying the regions where ethnic Russians settled into a Russian empire.

As a matter of the fact, both Russian political elites and cultural elites view the Russian diaspora as a homogeneous group and define Russia as the national homeland for ethnic Russians. On the other hand, a survey shows that a considerable proportion of Russians in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus identify their states of residence as their homeland.<sup>30</sup> This thesis views that the Russian diaspora has a significant diversity in terms of political orientations. In order not to become a homogeneous group, Russian populations residing in newly independent post-Soviet states developed reflections in various ways towards the Russian

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<sup>28</sup> Charles King and Neil J. Melvin, "Diaspora Politics: Ethnic Linkages, Foreign Policy, and Security in Eurasia", *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 3, p.120.

<sup>29</sup>Igor Zevelev, *Russia and Its New Diasporas*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, p.4.

<sup>30</sup>Lowell W. Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver, "The Motherland Is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad", *World Politics*, Vol. 55, Jan. 2003, p.297.

Federation and their host states. As mentioned before, factors such as the years of their settlement in a newly independent post-Soviet state, their role in economic life, mixed marriages, cultural distance between them and titular nations, their size of population in the host states and closeness to the Russian border or the nature of Russian policies towards them, contribute to differentiations among Russian populations. Furthermore, this thesis considers that the attitudes of nation builders in newly independent post-Soviet states towards Russians have profound impact on the self-identification of the Russian diaspora. Particularly, citizenship laws and language policies of governments in newly independent post-Soviet states are determinative in Russians' identity formation.

In short, this thesis contends that Russians in newly independent post-Soviet states do not constitute a homogeneous group. Their attitudes towards the states of residence and Moscow differ from one to another. Accordingly, while a part of the Russian populations chose to migrate to the Russian Federation, others prefer to stay in the states they live in.

#### **1.4. Research Method**

In the analysis of this thesis, a qualitative research technique has been used together with a comprehensive literature review. In line with the objectives of this thesis, documents published by Russian official sources from 1991 to 2007 and speeches made by Russian presidents have been investigated in details. As part of the literature review, books, academic journals and reports have been utilized.

## **1.5. Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is composed of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which explains the scope and objective, the argument and the research method of the thesis. In the second chapter, the construction of Russian nationhood following 1991 and the role of Russian diaspora in politics of Russian nationalism are explored by focusing on policies pursued by Yeltsin and Putin. It shows that while Yeltsin and Putin seemed to stand for a civic definition of the Nation, focusing on the land, the people and the borders, they extended this definition including to it the premise 'Russian diaspora'.

In the third chapter, intellectual approaches to Russian national identity and diaspora are researched. Five Russian intellectuals, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Valery Tishkov, Alexander Dugin, the leader of Communist Party Gennadii Zyuganov, right wing leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy are picked as cases. Their definitions of Russia and Russian nation by giving special room for Russian diaspora are explained.

The fourth chapter examines the relationship between nationalizing regimes in the newly independent post-Soviet states and their Russian populations; thus aims at showing plurality of Russian diaspora. Latvia-Estonia, Ukraine-Belorussia, Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan and Russian diaspora in these states constitute cases for this part. In this framework, this chapter seeks that how Russians are being defined by nationalizing states. Are they being defined as a part of the new nations or are they seen as alien elements? To what extent the Russians are satisfied and dissatisfied with their new status in these nationalizing states, what kinds of reflections (such as outmigration, integration so on) developed by Russians living in these states, which factors contributed to their perception of homeland are studied.

The last chapter is the conclusion chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ROLE OF DIASPORA IN THE POLITICS OF RUSSIAN NATIONALISM

In the aftermath of the USSR's dissolution on 31 December 1991, Russian political elites had to define 'who are the Russian people' and "where are the boundaries of their land'. In the case of Russian Federation, these issues are complicated by the specific geographical, historical and political circumstances. Russia has traditionally been the center of the empire. The lack of the natural boundaries between center and periphery, in contrast to the British and French cases, caused the confusion over the boundaries among politicians and intellectuals. Therefore, policies applied by Tsarist Russia and Soviet Union prevented to develop Russian national consciousness strongly, thus the definition of the Russian people.

In this context, Russian political elite and intellectuals identified Russian nation differently, regarding its history, its boundaries and its people. Vera Tolz presents five ways in which Russian nation is defined after the end of Soviet Union.<sup>31</sup>

The Union Identity: The Russians are defined in terms of imperial mission and their mission is to create supranational empire. The advocates of this idea see the common history (coexistence within one state for centuries) as the ground for maintain a multi-ethnic state within the borders of USSR. According to them, Russian Empire and USSR were a 'unique civilization'. For this reason, it is impossible for its people to survive outside the structure of the USSR. In saying so, they do not accept the 1991 borders and view demise of the Soviet Union as a negative event. Due to the fact that they laid great importance to the Russia's history and see a common past as the reason for co-existence in one state; they strongly oppose the civic definition of the nation.

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<sup>31</sup> Vera Tolz, *Russia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.237-244.

The Russians as a community of East Slavs: This view regards the Russians as a nation of all Eastern Slavs, including Ukrainians and Belarusians, because of sharing ethnic, cultural similarities and common past. By late 1993, the majority of Russian nationalist intellectuals start to speak about Slavic brotherhood of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. In the same line with Unionists, the advocates of this view reject the idea that membership of a nation can be voluntary. Because, they consider primordial ties as essence of a nation.

Fundamentalist nationalists, including the extreme nationalists and communists, believe in Union identity or Slavic definition of Russia. They claim Russia's borders must be arranged again either to extend beyond the Russian Federation or to be narrowly confined to the areas populated by ethnic Russians in Russia. Even though extreme nationalists and communists disagree on some points; they agree that Russia's history is very significant to Russia's future and the West was to blame for the collapse of Soviet Union.<sup>32</sup>

The Russians as a community of Russian-speakers: With the end of the Soviet Union, 25 million Russians and 5 million Russian speakers who are the people of other nationalities were found themselves out of the Russian Federation. In this context, some intellectuals saw these people as a part of divided Russian nation, regardless of their ethnic origin.

Those who define Russian identity linguistically can be categorized under the title of pragmatist nationalists. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, they championed the defense of Russian-speakers in the near abroad. In same way with fundamentalist nationalists, they consider Soviet and Russian historical legacies as important values and aim to restore country's former prestige. The pragmatist nationalist view advocates a 'unique but non-expansionist' foreign policy which would gain Russia a great power status without having empire.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions*, London: Routledge, 2003, p.35.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.35-36.

Racial definition of Russians: According to this definition, blood ties constitute the basis of a common identity. This view argues that Russians should protect themselves from the harmful influences of other ethnoses.

Civic definition of nation: “A civic Russian (Rossiiskaia) nation, comprised all of the citizens of the Russian Federation, regardless of their ethnic and cultural background, united by loyalty to the newly emerging political institutions and to the constitution.”<sup>34</sup>

The liberal Westernizers are the most visible advocates of this idea. They reject the nationalist search for a unique Russian ‘national idea’ or a separate Russian path which can pave the way for recreation of an empire.<sup>35</sup> Liberal Westernizers argue that Russia should be a civic state and were in agreement that the 1991 borders of Russian Federation should be protected. Moreover, they believe that Russia’s history has little importance for the future of the country and viewed the collapse of the USSR as a positive event.

Regarding different definitions of Russian nation, this part of thesis examines how questions of Russian identity have been answered under Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin in the context of their diasporic politics.

## **2.1. The Role of Diaspora in the Politics of Russian Nationalism under Boris Yeltsin**

On 12 June 1991, Boris Yeltsin became President of Russia when, for the first time in history, Russia chose its president in a popular vote. Under his presidency, according to Vera Tolz, three approaches to nation-building can be identified. First of all, after Yeltsin took office, he attempted to define a nation in civic terms – as a

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<sup>34</sup> Vera Tolz, *Russia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.238.

<sup>35</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions*, London: Routledge, 2003, p.34.

nation of rossiiski, a community of citizens of the Russian Federation regardless of their ethnic origins. Second, the definition of the Russia nation as Russian Federation citizens plus ethnic Russians and Russian speakers residing in the newly independent post-Soviet states was made. Finally, a common eastern Slavic identity and Union identity were applied. Regarding the process in which the definitions of nation had been changed, this chapter divided in to three periods.

Between the autumn of 1991 and late 1992, in order that the Tsarist era and Soviet period gave Russians a weak sense of nationhood, President Yeltsin seeking legitimacy for the new state tried to create a civic identity which means non-ethnic definition of Russian nation hood.<sup>36</sup> Yeltsin's government aimed at de-ethnicized state building and strengthening the civic definition of the nation. In this framework, the government did not promote ethnic definition of a nation in 1991-1992. The Russian citizenship law, adopted on 28 November 1991, defines a citizen of Russian Federation in civic terms by calling a citizen as rossiiski instead of russkii. This definition demonstrates that Russian government views its people in the context of civic identity. The law recognized all people who live in the border of Russian Federation as its citizens at the time law adopted. In addition, the law allowed all citizen of USSR who live outside of Russian Federation as of 1 September 1991 to obtain Russian citizenship by simple process, if they don't have the another citizenship from newly independent states. Therefore, the law gave right these people to move Russia until 2000. Until the autumn of 1992, Andrei Kozyrev, Russian former foreign minister, repeated that Russian and Russian speakers in the newly independent post-Soviet states did not cause a problem for Russian government.<sup>37</sup> Russian speaking settlers in the ex Soviet republics were not seen as a part of the Russian (rossiiskaia) nation, which was defined in territorial and political terms.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Peter J. S. Duncan, "Contemporary Russian Identity between East and West", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 1, 2005, p.277.

<sup>37</sup> Vera Tolz, *Russia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.252-253.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p.253.

One of the main reasons why Russian government disregarded Russian population in near abroad depends on the context of the new Russian foreign policy. Although there had been deep disputes over the Russian foreign policy between the different branches of the government, throughout this period official foreign policy was set primarily by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Andrei Kozyrev. He was from the school of Pro-Western Liberals. This school conceives that during the Cold War, Russia acted against its own interests. It must now do everything to become an integral part of the West. The West is perceived as the only viable and progressive civilization in the world. The main threats to Russia's "true" identity come from its economic backwardness and its association with non-democratic countries, especially with some of the former Soviet allies. Only by incorporating Western institutions and by joining the coalition of what is frequently referred to as the community of "Western civilized nations", Russia will be able to solve its problems.

In this context, the task of the Russian diplomacy was to cooperate with Western world in many areas. It was conceived that Russia as a great power had a duty to work with the great powers through international organizations such as the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe(OSCE) in order to deal with the threats to international stability. As a result of this new foreign policy concept, Russia as a state which aimed at improving its relation to the West paid little attention to the newly independent post-Soviet states. According to Neil Melvin, the newly independent post Soviet states were evaluated that they took primary responsibilities for the predominantly Russian settler communities. For this reason, despite the fact that there were clear historical and kinship ties between Moscow and Russians residing ex-Soviet republics, a specific Russian policy towards the settler populations seemed unnecessary.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, they were not viewed as an integral part of the Russian nation. The Russian government supported the idea that Russian population residing in the newly independent post-Soviet states should take citizenship of their host states. Any problem between host states and Russian population should be solved within the republic or through international

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<sup>39</sup> Neil Melvin, *Russians beyond Russia: The Politics of National Identity*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995, p.11.

forums such as the UN and the OSCE. In saying so, Moscow demonstrated that Russian foreign policy did not persuade interference in the internal affairs of its neighbors.<sup>40</sup>

This policy of the government was questioned in a short time by opposition. Opposition was divided into two groups: Soviet/ Russian chauvinist (the Red/Brown alliance), a movement composed of communists and so-called Russian patriotic forces; and the statist, former members of Democratic camp. The perceptions of members of the Red/Brown alliance and the Statist to Russian population in near abroad were different. Yet they shared the same idea that Russian state and Russian settler communities outside were bound to each other. The basic responsibility of Russian state was to defend this population.<sup>41</sup> While the Red/Brown alliance viewed the territories of the former USSR as the natural boundaries of Russian state, the Statist believed that the Russian Federation had a dominant role to play within the former USSR because of its special interests. Moreover, for Red-Brown alliance, the settler issue demonstrated the need to reunite this area under a single state. To the Statist, although Russians in the ex-Soviet republics constitute very important issue in Russian foreign policy, it is not an instrument for justifying an annexation of neighboring territories.”<sup>42</sup>

In addition to the criticisms directed to Yeltsin by opposition; the introduction of a law on citizenship in Estonia which refuses to grant automatic citizenship to people arriving there in the Soviet era and their descendants, chaos in Moldova and growing tension in Ukraine during the summer 1992 generated Yeltsin’s government to question its diasporic policies in tandem with Russia’s place in the world. The publication of the new Russian military doctrine’s draft in the late summer 1992 gave the first signal towards the change in Russian diasporic politics. “The draft version of Russia’s new military doctrine identified the violation of the rights of Russians outside the Russian Federation and of those who identify ethnically and culturally

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<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.11-12.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, p.141.

with Russia' as a casus belli."<sup>43</sup> At the end of the October 1992, the Baltic States were warned against 'ethnic cleansing'. Therefore, Russia postponed military withdrawal from the region. As a reason behind the postponement was cited the failure of the Baltic States to protect rights of the Russian minorities.

Between early 1993 and late 1994, the way Russian nation and Russian people in near abroad defined was the product of the domestic struggle for political legitimacy. In late 1992, the Russian government decided to abandon its adherence to de-ethnicized nation and state-building. Due to the fact that civic definition of nation was very novel in Russia and the support for the opposition forces was increased; the government attitudes towards the identification of Russian people and Russian speaking people in the near abroad changed. During this period, Russian government adopted more active policies for protecting Russian settlers in near abroad. First of all, the success of the Zhirinovskiy in parliament election held on May 1993 and the critics made by nationalist and neo-communists against government policies towards Russian speaking people in near abroad forced Yeltsin to appropriate the opposition's definition of the nation. The Russian nation was defined in linguistic terms by opposition wing. It gained support widely because this definition had a long tradition behind it. This definition laid the ground for perception Russian nation as the community of the Russian speakers in near abroad for whom Russian Federation was homeland. The protection of Russians abroad became one of the most important goals of the Russian foreign policy.

According to Sergei Stankevich, who became political advisor of Yeltsin in September 1992, Russia's relation with diaspora was central for the future of Russian state and society. At the end of the 1992, he became the main spokesman of government on the settler issue. Stankevich argued that the main goal of Russian foreign policy was to protect stability around existing borders. This could be secured either by protecting the rights of Russian settlers or building close ties between Russia and its diaspora. The settlers who ethnically connected to Russia were clearly

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<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, p.142.

part of Russia's responsibility although the territories where they live were considered part of independent states. He views that Russian population residing in ex-Soviet republics could only be protected through international agreements. Russia should aim at concluding such agreements with the other newly independent states. Never the less, Stankevich conceives that the settlers should not be seen as a potential problem for Russia. They could be encouraged to stay the countries where they are residing, because they could be powerful tools for Russian influence.<sup>44</sup>

Claiming that Russia had responsibilities for Russian population in near abroad, Moscow attempted to be recognized as the 'guarantor of peace and stability on the territory of the former USSR' in March 1993.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, in Foreign Policy Concept which was adopted in April 1993, '...ensuring the strict observance of individual human rights and minority rights in the countries of the near abroad, particularly the rights of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking populations'<sup>46</sup> was determined as one of the most important foreign policy tasks. In addition, the consular sections of Ministry of Foreign Affairs expanded within the CIS and Baltic States in order to develop links with the Russian –speaking communities.

Due to protect Russian settler abroad, the idea of dual citizenship was started to be considered as an effective tool by Yeltsin's government in 1993. According to Zevelev, in the eyes of Russian officials, the advantage of dual citizenship for Russians was viewed in three fold. First of all, as mentioned before, Russian government accepted the civic definition of a nation. On this occasion, instead of establishing special ties with co-ethnics, Russian government aimed to protect Russian nation without exacerbating ethnic conflict. Second, because of Russian economy was not able to stand for the mass immigration flow, Russia supported dual citizenship which could provide some security and peace for Russian settlers in their host states. Ultimately, existence of Russian population in near abroad was seen as an

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.143.

<sup>46</sup> Andrei Melville and Tatiana Shakleina, *Russian Foreign Policy in Transition: Concepts and Realities*, Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005, p.27.

instrument either for affecting the policy of neighbor states or dominating the region.<sup>47</sup> In this concept, a new Russian policy focused on building political, economic and cultural links to the diaspora by establishing provisions for dual citizenship and developing international/bilateral agreements for protecting the rights of Russian-speaking minorities.<sup>48</sup> The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation adopted in November 1993 defined ‘the suppression of the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of citizens of the Russian Federation in foreign states’<sup>49</sup> as an ‘external military danger’. Accordingly, Russian government laid a basis for justifying its military intervention as defense.

The speech made by President Yeltsin in his 1994 New Year Address approved that Yeltsin administration now paid more attention twenty five million Russian populations in near abroad in comparison to the past:

Dear compatriots! You are inseparable from us and we are inseparable from you. We were and will be together. On the basis of law and solidarity, we defend and will defend your and our common interests. In the New Year, 1994, we will do this in greater resoluteness.<sup>50</sup>

Following the speech of Yeltsin, Foreign Minister Kozyrev declared that the protection of the rights of compatriots was the main task of Russian foreign policy and, therefore, dual citizenship was the most effective tool for reaching this goal.<sup>51</sup>

According to Graham Smith, Yeltsin administration viewed Russian population in near abroad as main pillar in defining Russian national identity in referring them as Russian compatriots. Russia became the ‘historic homeland’ of all Russians.

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<sup>47</sup>Igor Zevelev, *Russia and Its New Diasporas*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, pp.133-134.

<sup>48</sup>Neil Melvin, *Russians beyond Russia: The Politics of National Identity*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995, p.19.

<sup>49</sup>*The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/russia-mil-doc.html>.

<sup>50</sup>Neil Melvin, *Russians beyond Russia: The Politics of National Identity*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995, p.15.

<sup>51</sup> Igor Zevelev, *Russia and Its New Diasporas*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, p.135

Moscow made it clear that it has responsibilities to protect Russian settlers in ex-Soviet republics.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, dual citizenship was seen most effective instrument for defending compatriots abroad.

In 1994, the idea of dual citizenship was started to be supported by building special relations with Russian settlers in near abroad by Russian governments. On 31 August 1994, government adopted a document named as 'On Measures to Support Compatriots Abroad'<sup>53</sup>. In this document, strategic line of Russian policy on the issue of compatriots was defined as support for compatriots to integrate political, economic, social life of the newly independent states and to adopt local culture while preserving their distinctive culture. In order to strengthening cultural ties with compatriots, it was mentioned that Russia aimed at conducting negotiations with the administrations of newly independent states for establishment of Russian language radio, television and Russian cultural centers. The document also called for economic cooperation between Russia and ex-Soviet states. Even though Russian government showed its willingness to cooperate in the fields of economic and culture with the governments of newly independent post-Soviet states, this document did not guide effective tools for coordination among governmental bodies. In short, the document pointed out that protection of the economic, political, social, cultural and civil rights of the compatriots must be diplomatic and economic. It suggested the use of international mechanisms in the matter of protecting human rights and minority rights and in some cases, economic pressure due to defense compatriots. Thus, this document provided moderate support to Russian compatriots. Moreover, it aimed to avoid mass immigration of compatriots to Russia.<sup>54</sup>

Beginning from 1994, Presidents of Russia established a practice of annual address to Federal Assembly. In these speeches the president articulates key points of internal

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<sup>52</sup> Graham Smith, "The Masks of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism", *Royal Geographical Society*, 1999, p.491.

<sup>53</sup> *On Measures to Support Compatriots Abroad (O merah po podderzhke sootchestvennikov za rubezhom)*, <http://www.russiane.org/law/46.html>.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*.

and foreign policy. In his first address “Consolidation of the Russian Government” in February 1994, Yeltsin focused on the issue of compatriots. Instead of encouraging them to come back Russia; he implied that Russia should help them to settle their life in the states where they live. Yeltsin noted that “Everywhere, where our compatriots reside, they should feel that they are full and equal citizens.”<sup>55</sup> He concluded that interests of the Russians who are living in these countries can be secured if these countries obey the rules recognized in the field of human rights and minority rights. In addition, in order to protect the rights of the Russians in near abroad Yeltsin stressed that Russia would pursue its interests via international organizations.

As a result, the period between 1992 and 1994, Russian government laid great importance the issue of diaspora, mainly because of either that diaspora became the instrument for domestic legitimacy or diaspora politics laid ground for Russia to engage with the internal affairs of newly independent states.

On the other hand, throughout this period, to set up arrangements for dual citizenship was disagreed by all the newly independent states, which feared that dual citizenship would undermine their nation building efforts, but Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. The dual citizenship agreement was reached with Turkmenistan in December 1993 and Tajikistan in September 1995. But it must be considered that the number of the Russian diaspora in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are the smallest among in the newly independent post-Soviet states. In order that Russian policy towards the Russian diaspora in near abroad collapsed, in which the idea of the dual citizenship was seen most influential Russian government revised its politics. Three points could be demonstrated as reasons for the failure of the idea of dual citizenship. Regarding that big percent of Russian diaspora reside in Ukraine and Kazakhstan; the strong resistance of Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma against dual citizenship and the failure of Yeltsin’s government to sign document about dual citizenship with Kazakhstan destructed Russian policy towards Russian diaspora. In addition, the introduction of exclusionary citizenship legislation in Latvia (1994) after Estonia

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<sup>55</sup> Address of the President of Russia Boris Yeltsin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, “*Consolidation of the Russian Federation (Ob ukreplenii Rossiiskovo gosudarstvo)*”, <http://www.intelros.org/lib/elzin/1994.htm>.

(1992) demonstrated the failure of the Russian policy in protecting rights of its compatriots. Moscow accused both of Estonia and Latvia for making 'social apartheid' and 'ethnic cleansing' toward Russian settlers. Russia also threatened to impose economic sanctions. It showed its unwillingness to withdraw troops from Baltic States because of the violation of the rights of Russian settlers.

According to Vera Tolz, after the virtual collapse of Russian proposal for dual citizenship in 1995, Russian had revised its policy as following:

Firstly, there was a partial return to the idea of a common Union identity; secondly, it tried to strengthen a common Eastern Slavic identity; and finally (and simultaneously), it sought to reinforce a new civic identity by searching for a unifying national idea, to create a bond between all citizens of Russian Federation and increase their loyalty to the new state.<sup>56</sup>

Vera Tolz argued that Russian government started attempts to establish Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) citizenship in 1996 instead of setting dual citizenship. CIS citizenship was seen as an instrument which could strengthen Union identity of Russians and the other peoples of the former USSR. In this framework, in May 1997, the presidents of Russia and Belorussia signed a Charter including that two countries should introduce common citizenship. In December 1999, two countries signed a treaty on creating a Union state.<sup>57</sup> Despite the fact that Russian government had desire to set a similar arrangement with Ukraine, the leadership of Ukraine resisted this idea.

Union and Slavic identities gained popular support among Russian Federation citizens. For this reason, Vera Tolz points out that efforts to strengthen CIS and Slavic integration by Yeltsin were most intensive during his presidential campaign in 1996. Once he won the election, Yeltsin again focused on the policies which aimed at fostering civic definition of nation.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Vera Tolz, *Russia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.254.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.252-253.

<sup>58</sup> Vera Tolz, "Forging the Nation: National Identity and Nation Building in Post-Communist Russia", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 6, 1998, p.1010.

Two years after adoption of the document ‘On Measures to Support Compatriots Abroad’, Russian government announced more concrete guidelines for supporting the compatriots abroad on 17 May 1996. In the document entitled ‘Program of Actions to Support Compatriots Abroad’<sup>59</sup>, for the first time, the premise diaspora was used widely. It is said that

as a result of disintegration of Soviet Union and establishment of new independent states, millions of compatriots found themselves to be separated from boundaries of Russian Federation. They have to live and determine their own destiny in the difficult politic, economic, social, cultural, psychological conditions and they need assistance and support from the states where they reside and Russia.<sup>60</sup>

It also stated that political difficulties confronted by compatriots were provoked in relation to the fact that ‘newly independent states are being formed as nation states of self-determined titular nations’<sup>61</sup>. Moreover, the document pointed out that ‘the issue of compatriots is the most important factor in formation of relations between Russia and the participants of CIS and Baltic states’<sup>62</sup>. It called for safeguarding legal, political, economic, cultural rights of compatriots by states where they live. In turn, Russia as the successor of the USSR is ready to assist the governments of the newly independent post-Soviet states in fulfilling these tasks.

One of the important elements of this document was the announcement that the policy of support to compatriots abroad never means implicit refusal of their right to return Russia. Therefore, ‘main two goals of Russian policy toward compatriots’ was described as following: Ensuring integration of compatriots into the life of states where they reside while preserving the cultural identity of compatriots, and the right of them to return to the historical homeland.<sup>63</sup> Never the less, this program did not introduce instruments for return of compatriots and their settlement in Russia.

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<sup>59</sup>*Program of Actions to Support Compatriots Abroad (Programma mer po podderhke sootchestvennikov za rubezhom)*, <http://www.friends-partners.org/partners/valery/humright/hr960512.html>.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*.

Moreover, by calling for 1) negotiations on the legal status of compatriots, 2) arrangements bilateral and multilateral agreements with participants of CIS and Baltic states, 3) maintenance of negotiations on Russian language for being accepted as second state language, this document aimed integration of Russian diaspora in to newly independent post-Soviet states under better conditions.

In his annual address to the Federal Assembly in 1997, Yeltsin pointed out that

The key task of Russian foreign policy was and will be the protection of the rights of our compatriots who lives abroad. The principal concern derives from the situation of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia, Latvia and a number of other states. The leaders (of these states) should understand clearly that we are in favor of good relations with neighbors, but we never disregard legitimate rights of compatriots.<sup>64</sup>

In 1998, Yeltsin focused on the same point by saying that ‘the main element of our Baltic policy is the concern for the realization of legitimate rights of our compatriots abroad’<sup>65</sup>. Moreover, he mentioned that ‘despite the efforts of Russia and some European institutions, this problem in relations with Estonia and Latvia still has not been solved’. In the course of 1998, Moscow periodically protested against the attitude of Latvia towards its large Russian minority. In his last speech to the Federal Assembly in 1999, Yeltsin declared that

The policy of Russia on the protection of legal rights of our compatriots remained constant. We don’t remove the problem of discrimination against the Russian-speaking population in Estonia and Latvia from the agenda. Russia will insist on that these countries modify their approaches to the problem of human rights according to the requirements determined by UN, OSCE, and the Council of Europe.<sup>66</sup>

The premise ‘compatriots’ was used widely in the legal documents; however, the proper definition of it had not been made until May 1999. The ‘Law on the State

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<sup>64</sup> Address of the President of Russia Boris Yeltsin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, “*The Order in the Authority- The Order in the Country ( Poryadok Vo Vlasti-Poryadok Vo V Strane)*”, <http://www.intelros.org/lib/elzin/1997.htm>.

<sup>65</sup> Address of the President of Russia Boris Yeltsin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, “*With Common Efforts to the Developing of Russia (Obshhimi Silami- K Podemu Rossii)*”, <http://www.intelros.org/lib/elzin/1998.htm>.

<sup>66</sup> Address of the President of Russia Boris Yeltsin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, “*Russia at the Brink of Epoch (Rossiya na Rubezhe Epoh)*”, <http://www.intelros.org/lib/elzin/1999.htm>

Policy of the Russian Federation Concerning the Compatriots Abroad'<sup>67</sup> adopted on 24 May 1999 defined compatriots as following (Art 1, p. 2): a) Russian citizens permanently residing abroad; b) former USSR citizens, residing in the states which had been a part of the USSR, that became citizens of these states or became stateless; c) emigrants from Russian state and USSR that became citizens of the foreign state or became stateless; d) descendants of the people from the above categories, except the descendants of the titular ethnicities of the foreign states. Never the less, this definition is very ambiguity since it refers to the any of former citizen of USSR regardless ethnicity as compatriots whereas it excludes descendants of ethnic Armenians, Georgians, who were nationals of Russia, from context of compatriots. Rather than approaching the premise compatriot congruently, this law, first of all, was adopted by considering the political value of compatriots. Despite the fact that the notion of compatriots includes mainly ethnic Russians, the Russian government hesitated to mention this directly because of its multi ethnic structure.

In sum, Yeltsin's government failed in conducting congruent diasporic politics. However, the diasporic politics was seen a way to legitimize Russian engagement in to internal and external affairs of newly independent states. By pointing out cultural, linguistic, educational, and political rights of the Russian diaspora; Russian government was able to define its post imperial designs in humanitarian terms.

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<sup>67</sup> *The Law on the State Policy of the Russian Federation Concerning the Compatriots Abroad ( Rossiiskaya Federatsiya Federalniy Zakon o Gosudersivennoi Politike Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Otnoshenii Sootechestvennikov za Rubezhom)*, <http://www.mid.ru/nsdgpch.nsf/215bdcc93123ae8343256da400379e66/51efd81cd0b2a328c325722e0048e320?OpenDocument>.

## **2.2. The Role of Diaspora in the Politics of Russian Nationalism under Vladimir Putin**

Composing strong national identity, creating stable political, social and economic system are the major tasks of the newly established states which desire to build strong state. Throughout his presidency, Yeltsin advocated bringing democratic values to Russian Federation. However, he failed neither in creating new symbols which could present common values for the Russian people in nation-building process nor forming stable economic and political conditions. In this context, to establish a strong state took presidency over the democratic state for the people of the Russia and, thus, Putin was voted by them. In his first address to Federal Assembly on 10 June 2000, Putin showed his awareness of the expectations of Russian people by saying that ‘Russia’s only real choice should be the choice of a strong country, strong and confident’<sup>68</sup>.

In order to create a strong state, Putin has seemed to advocate a civic and non-ethnic definition of Russian nation. Considering the multi-ethnic structure of Russian Federation, Putin, first, has strived to disseminate a sense of common values and identification which are necessary to construct a civic nation. He has drawn attention to the unity of Russia engendered by cultural traditions, moral and spiritual values, and common historical values. At the same time, Putin expressed that Russia is in the beginning of a new spiritual development, which is vital to integrate multi ethnic people of Russia to new state. In order to ensure unity of Russian people, tri-color flag was accepted as the national flag while double-headed eagle became the new national anthem. Keeping the tsarist flag and eagle as national anthems, ‘Putin sought to build a Russian multi-ethnic identity on the basis of positive elements

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<sup>68</sup> Address of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, July 7, 2000, “The State of Russia: A Way to an Effective State”, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/russia/2000/russia-000710a.htm>., July 7, 2000, “*The State of Russia: A Way to an Effective State*”, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/russia/2000/russia-000710a.htm>.

within both imperial and the Soviet traditions, and create a consensus'<sup>69</sup>. Therefore, he reorganized federal nature of Russian Federation in introducing seven super-regions which don't have ethnic connotations.

In his each speech to Federal Assembly, Putin reiterated that the 'only source and bearer of power in the Russian Federation is its multiethnic people'<sup>70</sup>. In the same way, he described the Russia 'as a union of many peoples and cultures and the idea of a common community, a community in which people of different nationalities and religions live together, has been at the foundation of the Russian peoples spiritual outlook for many centuries now.'<sup>71</sup>

Putin's advocacy to a civic nation does not mean that the domestic policies he has followed supported this idea completely. In contrast, according to John Dunlop, Putin is sponsoring a new imperial project which aims at bringing ethnic Russians superiority over non- Russians. He points out that the decree ordering the creation of seven federal districts within Russia recasts this aim. Because the governors of these districts are being appointed by Putin, they become instruments for taking control of finances, taxation, security services in these regions. In addition, centralization of state by downgrading the status of autonomous republics, Putin regime ignores the non-Russians' representation and protection, which is mainly directed towards Islamic populace.<sup>72</sup> As John Dunlop, Peter Duncan concludes that 'Putin nationalism was state-centered and in some ways imperial'<sup>73</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> Peter J. S. Duncan, "Contemporary Russian Identity between East and West", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 1, 2005, p.287.

<sup>70</sup> Address of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, May 26, 2004, [http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2004/05/26/1309\\_type70029type82912\\_71650.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2004/05/26/1309_type70029type82912_71650.shtml).

<sup>71</sup>Address of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, April 26, 2007, [http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/04/26/1209\\_type70029type82912\\_125670.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/04/26/1209_type70029type82912_125670.shtml).

<sup>72</sup> John B. Dunlop, "Russia under Putin: Reintegrating "Post-Soviet Space", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, No.3, July 2000, pp.45-46.

<sup>73</sup> Peter J. S. Duncan, "Contemporary Russian Identity between East and West", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 1, 2005, p.294.

On one hand, Putin has committed with existing border of Russian Federation and referred to people as 'Rossiiski' which defines multi-ethnicity of Russia. On the other hand, Putin, as Yeltsin, extended civic definition of a nation to ethnic Russians and Russian speaking population in near abroad to cover the premise 'compatriots'. Generally, the attitude of Putin toward compatriots and the states where compatriots reside is perceived as a part of his imperial policy. In fact, while he was prime minister, Putin signaled his future policies towards the newly independent states. For instance, he strongly supported the treaty signed Yeltsin and Belarusian president Lukashenka on 8 December 1999, which created a new Union State composed of Russia and Belarus. In this context, Zevelev argues that Russia's post-imperialism took neo-imperialistic course which means desire to impose certain control over domestic and foreign policies of newly independent states.<sup>74</sup> In this part of the study, the role of compatriots in Russian domestic policy and in Russia's foreign policy towards the states in near abroad under Putin's presidency is evaluated. In this period, Putin took control over foreign policy and established the tough control over parliament. Thus, domestic struggle among political actors did not have big influence in constituting and conducting Russian policy toward compatriots throughout Putin's presidency.

As of 2000, the attitude of the Russian government toward Russian diaspora and the states where the compatriots reside has been drawn in the context of pragmatism. Giving precedence national interests in foreign policy making, Putin viewed compatriots either as a tool for solution to demographic and economic crisis Russia has faced or an important instrument for improving relations with newly independent states.

At this point, it is noteworthy to say that Putin seemed to consider all 'Russian speakers' living in CIS and the Baltic states, regardless of citizenship, to be

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<sup>74</sup> Igor Zevelev, "Russia's Policy toward Compatriots in the Former Soviet Union", *Russia in Global Affairs*, No. 1, January-March 2008, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/22/1174.html>.

‘compatriots’<sup>75</sup>. Indeed, the absence of ethnic connotations in definition of compatriots does not mean that Pan-Orthodox Slavic concept of nation was excluded. Dealing with the Chechen problem in the country, Putin preferred to use moderate rhetoric which could not trigger ethnic nationalism in Russia.

In the first years of presidency, Putin followed the same rhetoric with Yeltsin toward compatriots. In his address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on 3 April 2001, Putin stressed that Russia would defend the rights and interests of Russians abroad.

The hundreds of thousands of Russians living and working outside this country must be sure that Russia will not abandon them, we will protect their personal rights, protect their families from possible violations of the law and from unlawful pressure and help uphold their human dignity. No one should be allowed to apply a selective version of human rights and freedoms based on people’s passports, and our diplomats should be not only active in such cases, but also show professional firmness and take effective action.<sup>76</sup>

The Concept of Support to Compatriots Abroad by the Russian Federation at the Present Stage signed by President Putin in 2001 depicts the priority of the state policy of Russian Federation towards the compatriots abroad as follows: 1) to provide comprehensively assistance for compatriots, 2) to secure their rights and freedoms plus other legitimate interests on the basis of international law, 3) to preserve and develop ties with compatriots and their organizations.<sup>77</sup>

This document, in addition, defines the compatriots as persons, who are ‘permanently living abroad, but connected with Russian history, ethnic, culture, language and spirit; trying to keep own Russian originality and, feeling for a need to maintenance contacts and cooperation with Russia’<sup>78</sup>. Moreover, it introduces basic directions of state policy for supporting compatriots abroad: 1) To use of the

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<sup>75</sup> John B. Dunlop, “Russia under Putin: Reintegrating “Post-Soviet Space”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, July 2000, p. 43.

<sup>76</sup> Address of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, April 3, 2001, [http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2001/04/03/0000\\_type70029type82912\\_70660.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2001/04/03/0000_type70029type82912_70660.shtml).

<sup>77</sup> *Concept of Support to Compatriots Abroad by the Russian Federation at the Present Stage (Konseptsiya Podderzhki Rossiiskoi Federatsii Sootechestvennikov za Rubezhom Sovremennom Etape)*, <http://www.msrs.ru/commandpapers/commandpapersRF/26.html>.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

international mechanisms and procedures of maintenance and protection of the rights and fundamental freedoms of the person, including the rights of the persons belonging to minority. 2) To give financial and economic support to compatriots residing in the newly independent post-Soviet states. 3) To develop the ties and contacts in the fields of humanitarian, cultural, educational, scientific and information. 4) To ensure the rights of free movement and resettlement to Russia on a voluntary basis or by virtue of force majeure. 5) To support public organizations and associations of compatriots. 6) To support socially unprotected groups of the Russian diaspora.

Even though the document includes a part for explaining mechanisms to support compatriot, it does not present concrete tools. Moreover, in the same way with the policy adopted by Yeltsin's administration, the document stresses that Russian policy aims at adaptation and integration of compatriots in to life of the states where they reside plus restrain uncontrolled migration of them to Russia. But it does not mean that Moscow opposes their resettlement of its territory. It points out that

Russia, in accordance with its international obligations and national legislation, is prepared to accept compatriots who migrate on the voluntary basis and as a result of the existing of extraordinary situations in the countries where they reside in present time, in to its territory<sup>79</sup>.

The official discourse on compatriots abroad gradually started to change since 2000. Yeltsin's viewed issue of compatriots as a problem which Russia should take an active part. As of 2000, the Russian speaking population in near abroad was perceived as a resource in Russian domestic and foreign policy.

For the first time, the new policy of Russia was signaled at the opening of Congress of Compatriots held on 11 October 2001. At this congress, Putin described the tasks of Moscow towards compatriots as preserving the national culture, helping uphold human rights and protecting them against discrimination. Moreover, Putin emphasized that in conducting a constructive dialogue with foreign partners compatriots abroad must help Russia which is becoming integral part of the world

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

community and world economy.<sup>80</sup> In saying so, Putin demonstrated that compatriots are no longer issue for legitimizing domestic policies. In contrast, now they are resource for furthering cooperation with the states in near abroad. This policy, also, meant that Putin's regime began to perceive compatriots as a mechanism for having influence on domestic and foreign agendas of the newly independent post-Soviet states.

In addition, at the Congress, Putin explained that Russia is interested in return of Russians to Russia due to economic and moral considerations and the entire range of problems Russia confronts today.<sup>81</sup> Thus, a perception of compatriots as beneficial migrants in the political discourse were started be given a place.

In 2002, the Basic Guidelines of Russian Federation's Support to Compatriots Abroad for 2002-2005 was adopted by the Decree of President. According to this document;

Basic directions of Russian Federation's support to compatriots abroad at the present stage include measures on creating effective mechanisms of cooperation between Russian state and the Russian diaspora in the protection of the rights and freedom of the compatriots living abroad, preservation of their legitimate interests and ethno-cultural originality, promotion of their role either in the expansion of Russia's cooperation with the foreign states or development democratic reforms in Russian Federation<sup>82</sup>.

In this context, it is possible to say that Moscow now perceived compatriots as Russia's people in other states. Moreover, they have the role for increasing cooperation between Russia and neighboring states. In addition, as Concept of Support to Compatriots Abroad, this document also mentioned that Russia stand not only for adaptation of compatriots in to life of the states they live but also restraining uncontrolled migration.

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<sup>80</sup> Address of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin at the Opening of the Congress of Compatriots, [http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2001/10/11/0001\\_type82912type84779\\_137328.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2001/10/11/0001_type82912type84779_137328.shtml).

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>82</sup> *Basic Guidelines of Russian Federation's Support to Compatriots Abroad for 2002-2005 (Osnovnii Napravleniya Podderzhki Rossiiskoi Federatsii Sootechestvennikov za Rubezhom na 2002-2005 godi)*", [http://www.mosds.ru/Dokum/dokum\\_rosOsn2005.shtml](http://www.mosds.ru/Dokum/dokum_rosOsn2005.shtml).

It is noteworthy to say that since the beginning of 2000, the issue of immigration started to have big influence on the policies of Russian Federation towards the compatriots abroad. Due to decline of population and work force shortage, Russia needed the immigrants. Moreover, a massive influx of migrants from South-East Asia plus post 9/11 and Russian domestic realities generated strong feelings of fear among Russian policy makers. Migration became a main security issue and was perceived as a threat to stability and integrity. In order to solve this dilemma, following 2000, the Russian government started to signal their willingness to accept large numbers of Russian speaking population, who are affiliated to Russian culture and tradition, next period. At the end of the 2002, Putin pointed out that

We were in a better situation compared with other countries, as we had an obvious reservoir, from which we could take people for Russia. These people have our mentality, often speak Russian as their mother-tongue; we have common cultural and confessional routs.<sup>83</sup>

None the less, the New Law on Citizenship of Russian Federation adopted on May 2002 made complicated acquiring Russian citizenship for the Russian speaking population in near abroad. The new Law demands (A. 13 P.1 a-c) a proof of legal permanent residence for at least five years and of legal source of income.<sup>84</sup> In addition, considering the Russian legislation on the issue of migration since the beginning of 2005, Nadzeya Zhukava concludes that Russian Government was failed in introducing congruent amendments and establishing mechanisms for controlling migrations. This inefficient policy of Russia resulted in combating migration as a whole instead of controlling it; thus made process of obtaining work permit harder for Russian-speaking population as well.<sup>85</sup>

The paradoxical attitude of Russian policy toward compatriots regarding, primarily, migration policy can be explained in relation to its domestic policy. Russian

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<sup>83</sup> Maria Nozhenko, *“Motherland Is Calling You! Motives behind and Prospects for the New Russian Policy on Compatriots Abroad”*, <http://www.lfpr.lt/uploads/File/Current/Nozhenko.pdf>.

<sup>84</sup> *Federal Law No. 62-FZ on Russian Federation Citizenship*, <http://www.legislationline.org/legislation.php?tid=11&lid=591>.

<sup>85</sup> Nadzeya Zhukava, *“The Russian Federation: New Immigration Pole in Eurasia”*, <http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/research/SchoolOnEuro-MedMigration/2006pdfs/Paper%20Zhukava.pdf>.

Federation has been established 17 years before. As soon as Putin took office, he has strived for consolidating strong national states. Nevertheless, Russia has still faced of the issue of definition of who the Russians are. Putin seemed to conduct domestic policies which can unify the multi ethnic people of Russia by mid 2000s. But the migration flow meant to introduce disintegration elements to consolidated Russian community while solving demographic and economic problems.

In this concept, until the adaptation On Measures to Support Voluntary Migration of Compatriots Living Abroad to the Russian Federation<sup>86</sup> in 2006, Moscow could not present congruent policy toward compatriots on the issue of their resettlement to Russia. This document approved that support for voluntary migration of compatriots abroad is one of the most important solution of the Russia's demographic problem. Moreover, it introduces seven years program. Accordingly, the purposes of the program are defined as;

stimulation and the organization of the process of voluntary migration of compatriots to Russian Federation on the basis of promotion of its attractiveness to the subjects, and also compensation of the natural population decrease in the country as a whole and in its separate regions by attracting immigrants for constant place of residence in the Russian Federation.<sup>87</sup>

On the other hand, Russia is not interested in only return of compatriots, but also in skilled migration, educated and law-abiding people to come to Russia.<sup>88</sup> In addition, Russian government paid attention to their resettlement in specific regions of Russian Federation. The document identifies three main categories of regions for resettlement. The category A includes strategically important Russian frontier regions, which are characterized by a reduction in the population. The category "B"

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<sup>86</sup> Decree of the President of Russian Federation on 22 June 2006 No. 637 “*On Measures of Support Voluntary Migration of Compatriots Living Abroad to the RF (O merah po okazaniu sodeistvii dobrovolnomu nereceleniyu v Rossiiskuyu Federatsiu sootchestvennikov prozhivayushih za rubezhom)*”, <http://www.mid.ru/ns-dgpch.nsf/1a268548523257ccc325726f00357db3/060971e2945d5856c32571a2003d355f?OpenDocument>.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>88</sup> Address of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, May 10, 2006, [http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2006/05/10/1823\\_type70029type82912\\_105566.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2006/05/10/1823_type70029type82912_105566.shtml).

includes the territories, where major investment projects are implemented. Thus, these territories require the mass attraction of migrants because of the absence of labor force in local market. The regions where sustainable social and economic development has been going on and reduction of population is observed are called as category C. The program points out that all migrants are given state guarantees and social support. In turn, Moscow asked for a special certificate of a participant of the state program at least for two years which bounds compatriots to the regions where they settle.<sup>89</sup>

None the less, the document is insufficient on some occasions. The definition of compatriots is very vague due to the definition of them as those who ‘brought up in the tradition of Russian culture, speak Russian; do not want to lose links with Russia’<sup>90</sup>. Therefore, in accordance with the program, twelve regions (Krasnoyarsk, Khabarovsk, Primorsky Krai, Amur, Irkutsk, Kaliningrad, Kaluga, Lipetsk, Novosibirsk, Tambov, Tver and Tyumen) have been fixed to take in compatriots wishing to resettle in Russia. However, those regions include most under populated areas. So, it is unclear that which incentives will convince people to move there. In addition, these regions include Far East or Siberia where mass immigration of Chinese is going on. Thus, compatriots are forced to live in regions where Russian citizens would not like to move. Finally, although Moscow offers financial benefits (in 2007, 4.7 billion rubles allocated in addition to fund from local budgets) to compatriots willing to resettle in Russia, it is clearly far from enough. As a result, while Moscow tried to welcome 50.000 people to Russia in the first half of the year, only ten families had arrived.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Decree of the President of Russian Federation on 22 June 2006 No. 637 “*On Measures of Support Voluntary Migration of Compatriots Living Abroad to the RF (O merah po okazaniu sodeistvii dobrovolnomu nereceleniyu v Rossiiskuyu Federatsiu sootchestvennikov prozhivayushih za rubezhom)*”, <http://www.mid.ru/ns-dgpch.nsf/1a268548523257ccc325726f00357db3/060971e2945d5856c32571a2003d355f?OpenDocument>.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Igor Zevelev, “Russia’s Policy toward Compatriots in the Former Soviet Union”, *Russia in Global Affairs*, No. 1, January-March 2008, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/22/1174.html>.

In 2006, two more documents have been adopted: The Program Work with Compatriots Abroad for 2006-2008 and The Russian Language Federal Target Program (2006-2010). The interpretation of three documents adopted in 2006 was given place in the Review of Foreign Policy of Russian Federation published by Foreign Ministry in 2007. Moscow decided that 342 million ruble from the federal budget will be used for reaching the goals of the Program Work with Compatriots Abroad in 2007, which focus on mainly legal defense and social security of compatriots. Moreover, 1.58 billion rubles was earmarked for the implementation of the Russian Language Program.<sup>92</sup>

After adaptation of these documents, it became obvious that Russia views the compatriots as an internal political resource in order to solve its problems of depopulation and work force shortage.

To sum up, the evaluation of Russian policy toward compatriots between 2000 and 2007 shows victory of pragmatism over the imperial heritage.<sup>93</sup> Conceptualizing Russian people in near abroad as compatriots/diaspora, Moscow views them as its people in the newly independent post-Soviet states. Thus, Russia identified itself as protector of the rights and freedom of compatriots living abroad. This perception provided Russia to influence domestic policies of newly independent states. In doing so, Russia secured its interest in near abroad. Moreover, Russia's diasporic politic has paved the way for solving internal problems. Moscow aimed economic development in depopulated regions by promoting the resettlement of mainly ethnic Russians residing in the newly independent post-Soviet states.

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **INTELLECTUAL APPROACHES TO RUSSIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND DIASPORA**

A wide ranging and frequently confused debates on the Russian state and Russian nation has blossomed among the Russian intellectuals since 1991. Most of the ideas which have been presented to define Russian nation and Russian borders come to the conclusion that Russia should have to fulfill its traditional geopolitical task by widening its borders through Eurasia. In such a conception, Russian traditions, past and values are viewed to legitimize for creating a new-Russian empire. On the other hand, a few ideas seem to wish a Russia for and of ethnic Russians. These ideas request redrawing of Russian borders as well. Moreover, there exists a rival concept which accepts the current borders of Russian Federation and defines Russia nation as the sum of all the citizens of the state.

This part of the thesis focuses on intellectual's approaches to Russian identity and diaspora. In this concept, perceptions of Russian nation and diaspora put forward by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Valery Tishkov, Alexander Dugin, the leader of Communist Party Gennadii Zyuganov, right wing leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky are been observed.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn is one of the most important figures in Russian intellectual history due to his views challenging the imperialistic tradition. He is considered as the founding father of ethno-nationalism in modern Russia. Solzhenitsyn argues that Russian's empire building process in the course of the history as waste of people and

sources. In this concept, he advocates a Russia of and for Russians, and declares that Russian nation should be congruent with the Russian state.<sup>94</sup>

In opposition to ethno nationalistic understanding of Solzhenitsyn, Tishkov who has been for the recent years as one the contributors to academic and political search for a formula for a new Russia advocates the idea that Russian nation building process should be based on the principle of civic nationalism. Russia must be a nation-state but not ethnic Russian's national state. It must be rossiskii state including all citizens of Russian Federation. Tishkov is in favor of de-ethnicized nation-building within Russian existing borders by dissemination of common civic values and symbols among citizens of Russian Federation.<sup>95</sup>

While Solzhenitsyn and Tishkov differ from Russian imperialistic tradition in their definition of Russian nation and state; Dugin, Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy lay great importance to territorial expansion of Russia through Eurasia for restore a new Russian empire. In their project, Russia as only being an imperial power in Eurasia can provide security, sovereignty and national revival of its people and entity. Although, Dugin, Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy have similar vision for Russia's future, their approaches to Soviet past, Russian culture, ethnicity etc. have differences.<sup>96</sup>

In short, this chapter illustrates visions, scenarios and models of Russian nation and state in the eyes of Russian intellectuals.

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<sup>94</sup> John B. Dunlop, "Russia: Confronting a Loss of Empire, 1987-1991", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 108, No. 4, Winter 1993-1994, p.621.

<sup>95</sup> Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, London: SAGE, 1997, p.12.

<sup>96</sup> See Thomas Parland, *The Extreme Nationalist Threat in Russia: The Growing Influence of Western Rightist Ideas*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005, p.128-129, A.P. Tsygankov, "Mastering Space in Eurasia: Russia's Geopolitical Thinking after the Soviet Break-up", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 36, 2003, p.125.

### 3.1. Alexander Solzhenitsyn: A Russia of and for Russians

Alexander Solzhenitsyn is considered as the founding father of ethno-nationalism in modern Russia. He is one of the most important figures in Russian intellectual history due to his views challenging the imperialistic tradition.

Solzhenitsyn's interpretation of nationalism on the ground of ethnicity presents radical departure from Russian imperial tradition. He conceives Russian's empire building process in the course of the history as waste of people and sources. In his book *How Shall We Reconstitute Russia*, Solzhenitsyn declares that Russia should disband itself of being an empire which destroys the spiritual and bodily salvation of ethnic Russians.<sup>97</sup> In the book, *Rebuilding Russia*, Solzhenitsyn proposes that Russia should give up its empire and outlines a program for building Russian national state as it was case in Europe. In other words, he advocates a Russia of and for Russians, and declares that Russian nation should be congruent with the Russian state. Russian nation-state should separate itself from other nationalities and pursue its cultural and political development. In this concept, David Rowleys points out that if Ernest Gellner's definition of nationalism – 'it is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit must be congruent'<sup>98</sup> - is considered as valid, Solzhenitsyn truly deserves to be named as 'Russian nationalist'.<sup>99</sup>

Solzhenitsyn, primarily, focuses on 'preservation of people' in building Russian national state. According to Solzhenitsyn, 'the people, the nation, represent an organic whole, a unity, a marvelous and mysterious web of links, of traditions and of historic memory. Everything that breaks or weakens this organic unity is harmful to

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<sup>97</sup> John B. Dunlop, "Russia: Confronting a Loss of Empire, 1987-1991", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 108, No. 4, Winter 1993-1994, p.621.

<sup>98</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> David G. Rowley, "Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Russian Nationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 1997, p.327.

the nation's soul and body.”<sup>100</sup> At this point, it is worthy to say that his definition of nation draws upon the heritage of classical Slavophilism in nineteenth century.

As Slavophiles, Solzhenitsyn has a conservative outlook with respect of traditional Russian values and Orthodox culture. He regards these values as founding elements of Russian nation. Therefore, Solzhenitsyn shares with the same idea with Slavophiles in terms of being hostile to Western politics and economy. In building Russian nation state, he relies on Russian tradition, values and excludes politic, economic principles of West because they don't have a Russian source. Moreover, Solzhenitsyn blames West for the historic fate of Russia, and its moral and political decay.<sup>101</sup> According to Daniel Mahoney, Solzhenitsyn respects the spiritual and intellectual resources of Western tradition while rejecting the scientism, atheism, and subjectivism that identifies human progress with the triumph of secular humanitarianism.<sup>102</sup>

In this framework, Solzhenitsyn does not pay attention to Western style of democracy in governing Russian national state due to the fact that democracy is embedded in secularism.<sup>103</sup> In his view, democracy does not allow greatest moral and spiritual elevation. In the Harvard Address<sup>104</sup> in 1978, Solzhenitsyn mentioned that modern Western States were created on the principle that governments are meant to serve man and men lives to be free to pursue happiness. He maintains that when every citizen has been granted the desired freedom and material goods under this regime; why and for what one should risk its life in defense of common values and nation. He concludes that such a principle leads to destruction public spirit, civic

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<sup>100</sup> Michael Confino, “Solzhenitsyn, the West and the New Russian Nationalism”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, 1991, p. 616.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 629.

<sup>102</sup> Daniel J. Mahoney, “The Continuing Relevance of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn”, *Society*, November/December 2003, p. 67-68.

<sup>103</sup> Michael Confino, “Solzhenitsyn, the West and the New Russian Nationalism”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, 1991, p. 615.

<sup>104</sup> Alexander Solzhenitsyn, at Harvard Class Day Afternoon Exercises, June 8, 1978, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/augustine/arch/solzhenitsyn/harvard1978.html>.

courage and, thus morally inferior community. He views that Western style of political system genders the diminution of man's responsibility to God and society. Therefore, for Solzhenitsyn 'democracy is a sham because it is based on the principle of voting and elections. But elections –the heart of the system's legitimacy- are a grotesque hypocrisy, and the rule of the majority over the minority is a false ideal'.<sup>105</sup>

In building Russian national state, Solzhenitsyn evaluates 'ethical authoritarianism' as the best political system for Russia; and advocates local self government along the lines of traditional Russian concept. This regime would allow the greatest moral and spiritual elevation, because society would be completely separated from state and government in such a regime. Basically, this separation means that the sphere of politics would not be interfering in moral and spiritual sphere.<sup>106</sup> To Solzhenitsyn, the authoritarian regime with moral foundations would not need political parties. Moreover, the multi- party democratic system is unsuitable for Russia in order that parties are destructive to unity of Russian nation. Solzhenitsyn's political plan for Russia includes the establishment of national, non-party authoritarian state. According to Michael Confino,

Solzhenitsyn's brand of nationalism appears to be oriented toward an internal regeneration of the Russian nation (conceived as self-centered and closed entity) and the 'retrieval' of its culture and history. To that effect the best political regime is deemed to be an authoritarian one, based on 'law and order' and on religious values.<sup>107</sup>

Solzhenitsyn's ethno-nationalistic program, also, demands the redrawn of borders of Russian Federation including area of settlement of Russian people and Eastern Slavs. Thus, Solzhenitsyn's ethno-nationalism brings the issues of Russian diaspora and 'false' Soviet borders in to agenda. In his book, *The Russian Question at the End of the Twentieth Century*, Solzhenitsyn declares that the trouble is not that USSR broke up. As a matter of the fact, USSR was collapsed along the false Leninist borders by creating largest diaspora in the world. He argues that in a day Russian people lost 25

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<sup>105</sup> Michael Confino, "Solzhenitsyn, the West and the New Russian Nationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, 1991, p.615.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.617-618.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p.629.

million Russians-18 percent of entire Russian nation- who found themselves abroad without moving land of their fathers. The collapse of USSR was inevitable; however, Russia should have declared its disagreement with the borders due to preserve the rights of negotiations in the future.<sup>108</sup>

Solzhenitsyn's project of Russian national state includes reunification with Russian diaspora and the territories of Ukraine, Belarus, and northern Kazakhstan. In *Rebuilding Russia*, Solzhenitsyn insists that territorial boundaries of Russian Federation should be redrawn due to give territories that had historically been Russian to Russia. For instance, he points out that northern part of Kazakhstan includes the parts of Siberia and the Ural region which had been traditionally Russian. If Kazakhstan wants to be separated from Russia, it should get only southern part where Kazakhs are majority. Moreover, Solzhenitsyn sees Belarus and Ukraine as part of Russia and advocates preserving their unity with Russia.<sup>109</sup> In *The Russian Question at the End of the Twentieth Century*, Solzhenitsyn supports possible degree of unification in various areas with Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan and invisible borders among these countries.<sup>110</sup> However, in his book, *How Shall We Reconstitute Russia*, Solzhenitsyn states that Ukrainian people should not held in union with Russia by force. Rather, the populace should be free to express its will through via local referendums.<sup>111</sup>

Considering the Russian diaspora in near abroad, Solzhenitsyn prescribes different policies in relation to where they settled. In *The Russian Question at the End of the Twentieth Century*, he supports resettlements of those Russians wishing to leave Central Asia and Transcaucasia to Russia while proposes dual citizenship to those

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<sup>108</sup> Igor Zevelev, *Russia and Its New Diasporas*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, p.54.

<sup>109</sup> David G. Rowley, "Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Russian Nationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 1997, p. 324.

<sup>110</sup> Igor Zevelev, *Russia and Its New Diasporas*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, p.54

<sup>111</sup> John B. Dunlop, "Russia: Confronting a Loss of Empire, 1987-1991", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 108, No. 4, Winter 1993-1994, pp.621-622.

who prefer to stay in this region. In the case of Russians from the Baltic States, he urges Russian leader to demand these states to act in accordance with international standards of human rights and national minority rights. On the other hand, Solzhenitsyn attitude towards non-Russians in Russian Federation is to some degree troubling. He contends that non-Russian people settling in those autonomous regions, whose borders are fully enveloped by the Russian republic, will have to share the future fate of Russian people; though their ethnic, economic, religious needs maximum attention. Those minority peoples of Federation who enjoyed external borders could secede from Russia if they prove the will of secession from Russia through a plebiscite.<sup>112</sup>

To David Rowley, concerning the Solzhenitsyn's ethno-nationalistic program, four quite striking character appears. 1) Solzhenitsyn loses no opportunity to find fault with the west. He is hostile to western politics, economics and culture. 2) He makes no proposal for reshaping Russian government that does not have a Russian source. 3) Being remarkably caustic about democratization, Solzhenitsyn appears as proponent of authoritarian regime. 4) His attitudes toward minorities within Russia – and toward Russian minorities in former Soviet Republics- are somewhat troubling.

In this framework, David Rowley concludes that Solzhenitsyn's proposal for the Russian nation state on the principle of recovering old Russian traditions is far from being liberal. Nevertheless, his Russian nationalism progressive and moderate; Westerners have no reason to fear Solzhenitsyn's program.<sup>113</sup> In the same line with David Rowley, Igor Zevelev, also, considers Solzhenitsyn's project as humanistic, inclusive and moderate in order that his major concern is to preserve Russian people, tradition and values.<sup>114</sup> On the other hand, Michael Confino argues that the way Solzhenitsyn interprets past and future is derived from a series of connected

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p.622.

<sup>113</sup> David G. Rowley, "Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Russian Nationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp.322-329.

<sup>114</sup> Igor Zevelev, *Russia and Its New Diasporas*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, p.53.

historical myths, each of them confirms the others. This is the case in the course of the history which transforms history in to politics and makes it the locomotive of nationalism and chauvinism.<sup>115</sup>

Lastly, Solzhenitsyn is distinguished from the Russian-right wing chauvinists by opposing the messianic concept of Russian imperialism and relying heavily on Russian traditions and moral values. He stands for anti-imperialism due to the fact that he wants the Russian nation to be congruent with the Russian state instead of rebuilding Russian Empire.

### **3.2. Valery Tishkov: Rossiskaia Nation instead of Russkii Nation**

Being for the recent years as one the contributors to academic and political search for a formula for a new Russia, Valery Tishkov advocates the idea that Russian nation building process should be based on the principle of civic nationalism. Tishkov is the director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology at the Russian Academy of Sciences, but as mentioned before he has also been active in politics. In 1992, he was minister of nationalities in Yeltsin's government and his some thoughts found places in Yeltsin's official statements and in constitution approved in December 1993. Tishkov concept of 'nation as co-citizenship' was included in the Yeltsin's annual address to Russian Duma in February 1994. Nevertheless, Tishkov resigned from his position due to his views were not gained strong support by political circle.

Tishkov relies on the constructivist school of thought and draws his thought on modern theories of nationalism. He sees an ethnic group not as naturally determined but as a modern social construction. Tishkov points out that

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<sup>115</sup> Michael Confino, "Solzhenitsyn, the West and the New Russian Nationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 26, 1991, p.632.

ethnicity as a means employed by a collectivity in its efforts to gain material or political advantages in the social arena and ethnicity based on academic and political myths that are created, propagated, and often manipulated by elites seeking recognition and power.<sup>116</sup>

In this concept, Tishkov conceives that cultural and political elites who follow certain interest and goals play a central role in the development of ethnic identities. Never the less, the role played by elites does not necessarily manipulative. In the process of identity formation, ethnic identities can emerge and remerge in accordance with changing power structures. Every community is a varied cultural mosaic. States create loyalties and construct ethnic identity either by focusing on some elements while ignoring others in the cultural system or establishing cultural institutions which forms the perception of ethnic identity. In Tishkov's view, this reciprocal process between cultural mosaic and power-holders defines the border of ethnic groups. In short, following the modernist theories of nationalism, Tishkov concludes that ethnic identities are intellectual and social artifacts which are created by manipulating historical differences in culture and creating myths, concepts. Thus, ethnic identities are very modern phoneme.<sup>117</sup>

The approach of Tishkov to nationalism presents very different point of view in Russian social tradition which is heavily dominated by primordial ideas. In his book *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame* , at first, Tishkov shows the reader that the Russian (and Soviet) social science tradition see the ethnicity as an objective 'given' entity with inherent features such as territory, language, recognizable membership, and even a common mentality.<sup>118</sup> Regarding the new Russian nationalist movements, Tishkov argues that those nationalist legalized their expansionist tendencies by referring primordial ideas. "The new Russian nationalists clothed hegemonic motives with emotional rhetoric about impending extinction of the Russian people and the degradation of their traditions

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<sup>116</sup>Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, London: SAGE, 1997, p.12.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

and culture.”<sup>119</sup> Moreover, this nationalist understanding gained support in Russia is due to geopolitical factor. With the collapse of Soviet Union, 25 million Russians emerged as diaspora in the newly independent post-Soviet states. The situation of Russians in ex-Soviet states triggered ethno-nationalism. In addition, the collapse of the central, full-employment economy and the redistributive state contributed to heighten ethno-nationalism.<sup>120</sup>

In this framework, Tishkov regards the ethnic nationalism as the greatest problem to reform and liberal modernization in the Russian Federation. Being disagreed that nationalism is always present, Tishkov comes to the conclusion that ‘the major obstacle for Russia to become a ‘normal’ state is not an ethnic mosaic per se but a real ‘fire in a brain’ seeded by elitist social engineers into mentality and language concerning ethnicity and nationality issues’<sup>121</sup>.

For countering the ethnic nationalism grounded in Russian society and political – intellectual elite, Tishkov advises Russian authorities to give priority to creating a Russian nation with a shared, supra-ethnic identity. In other words, citizenship-oriented nation-building is necessary to counter the ethno national ideas found throughout Russian society. Russia must be a nation-state but not ethnic Russian’s national state. It must be rossiskii state including all citizens of Russian Federation. It is clear that Tishkov argues for de-ethnicized nation-building within Russian existing borders.

A formula (a multi-cultural nation based on dual non exclusive loyalties –cultural/ethnic and state/civic- for the citizens) like this would imply a strategy of gradual de-ethnicization of the state and of de-etatization of ethnicity, without questioning the existing system of ethno-territorial autonomies.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p.234.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p.235.

<sup>121</sup> Valery Tishkov, “What is Russia? Perspectives for Nation-Building”, [http://www.valerytishkov.ru/cntnt/publikacii3/knigi/the\\_mind\\_a1/what\\_is\\_ru](http://www.valerytishkov.ru/cntnt/publikacii3/knigi/the_mind_a1/what_is_ru).

<sup>122</sup> Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame*, London: SAGE, 1997, pp.259-260.

In such a state, basic principle is to respect for individual rights. Nevertheless, individual rights are not sufficient without additional mechanisms defining and providing collective rights. By establishing those mechanisms which protect human rights and preserve cultural mosaic, a democratic system for governing multi-ethnic Russia would be possible.

In order to create a civic nation of all citizens of the Russian Federation, Tishkov suggested various proposals. Accordingly, he points out that the dissemination of common civic values and symbols among citizens of the Russian Federation is crucial. In Tishkov's view, only shared values, symbols can make a state viable. In other words, state should create new state symbols such as flag, herald, anthem which are meaningful for all citizens of Russia regardless their ethnicity. Moreover, state should encourage the dissemination of those symbols. Thus, the meaning of Russia as a national state can be re-defined. The best starting point in political symbolism is a national idea of 'Rossia' as a national state of 'Rossians' which includes all citizens of Russian Federation. This would destroy the ethnic understanding of Russian nation. Tishkov regarding history, culture and political life of Russia argues that to create new symbols in Russia is possible. For instance, he points out that the term nation in its international meaning had been widely used in political and everyday language in Russia. Moreover, words, like 'national anthem, court of arms, interests, army, security,' or 'Yeltsin is a leader of nation', 'Kremlin is a symbol of nation' are permanently used in public discourse without causing public resistance.<sup>123</sup>

Tishkov's second suggestion in nation- building process is related to administrative system. Due to the fact that 18 million out of a total 27 million of the non-Russians lives outside ethnic autonomous areas, federalism should not be ethnically based. Rather extra-territorial ethnic and cultural autonomy should be established.<sup>124</sup> To Tishkov, for many of those non-Russians living Russian Federation, ethnic/cultural

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<sup>123</sup> Valery Tishkov, "What is Russia? Perspectives for Nation-Building", [http://www.valerytishkov.ru/cntnt/publikacii3/knigi/the\\_mind\\_a1/what\\_is\\_ru](http://www.valerytishkov.ru/cntnt/publikacii3/knigi/the_mind_a1/what_is_ru).

<sup>124</sup> Vera Tolz, *Russia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.249-250.

and civic identities may peacefully co-exist. In fact, there exists a great degree of cultural cohesion and of a sense of common identity among the Russian population. The Russian language is the case. Although Russia is such a large country populated by those who have different background, all people can speak Russian language. It points out that Russia is more culturally homogenous than many other states considered being nation states.<sup>125</sup>

Finally, Tishkov advises that laws on national minorities should not be based on the assumption that collective rights have priority over individual rights, which was in the case of Soviet Union. Instead of talking rights of the people, the laws should be in accordance with the December 1992 UN Declaration on the rights of individual, belonging to national, ethnic, religious and language minorities. Political parties playing ethnic cards should be banned. In addition, the representation of members of ethnic minority's federal organs of the power should be legally safeguarded.<sup>126</sup>

While Tishkov was the minister of nationalities in 1992 his some ideas mentioned above were included 'On the concept of nationality policy in the Russian Federation' at the Federal Cabinet's meeting on July 30, 1992 presided by Boris Yeltsin. For the first time, the Russian reformers had to talk about how to create a civic identity in Russia. On the other hand, Russian authorities were not ready discussing the premises and formulas such as co-citizenship, civic identity, cultural pluralism, consociation democracy. Nevertheless, Tishkov views July 1992 as an important step in re-evaluating nationality issues on a top political level. The Constitution approved in December 1993 gave a place for Tishkov's idea by extending and guarantying integrity and rights of Russia's republics.<sup>127</sup>

To sum up, Tishkov's project is based on the idea of promoting a civic nation through the creation and stabilization of new state's symbols and institutions within

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<sup>125</sup> Valery Tishkov, "What is Russia? Perspectives for Nation-Building", [http://www.valerytishkov.ru/cntnt/publikacii3/knigi/the\\_mind\\_a1/what\\_is\\_ru](http://www.valerytishkov.ru/cntnt/publikacii3/knigi/the_mind_a1/what_is_ru).

<sup>126</sup> Vera Tolz, *Russia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.249-250.

<sup>127</sup> Valery Tishkov, "What is Russia? Perspectives for Nation-Building", [http://www.valerytishkov.ru/cntnt/publikacii3/knigi/the\\_mind\\_a1/what\\_is\\_ru](http://www.valerytishkov.ru/cntnt/publikacii3/knigi/the_mind_a1/what_is_ru).

the borders of Russian Federation. In other word, his vision is to create a citizenship united by an identity and commitment to Russia as a political community. Accepting the present borders of Russian Federation, Tishkov favors in development of relations with neighboring states by regarding them as fully independent entities. In his view, the issue of Russian diaspora is considered as politically insignificant. He suggests Russian diaspora to Russian diaspora in to host states. The strategy of the political elites toward the diaspora should be based on this idea as well as on defense of their human rights in accordance with international agreements, assist in cultural projects, and help for those who chose to migrate to Russia.

### **3.3. Alexander Dugin: Creation of Eurasian Empire Led by Russians**

In present day Russia, Alexander Dugin is the most leading proponent of the Eurasianism. In the late 1980, Dugin began to make a name around Pamiat which was ultra nationalist and anti Semitic organization. Leaving Pamiat, he joined National Bolshevik Party. In 1996, Dugin became the candidate for parliamentary election, but received less than 1 percent of votes. In 1998, he broke with the party due to disagreement with its leader. In 2001, Dugin established socio-political movement named Eurasia whose goal was to formulate national idea for Russia. In May 2002, the movement was transformed in to political party, but collapsed soon and in 2003, Dugin found the Eurasian International Movement. Since Putin took office as president, the popularity of Dugin and his Eurasianist view have increased. As of 1990, Dugin has published many books and articles about Eurasianism. Besides publishing *Den, Zavtra*; he has edited journals such as *Elementy*, which printed articles on European rightist movements and ideologies of the twentieth century, *Milyi Angel, Evraziiskoe obozrenie*.

Regarding the questions of what is Russian nation and what are the borders of the Russia, Dugin answers these questions in the context of Eurasianism which pays great attention to geopolitics. In this framework, Dugin views history as a struggle

for global hegemony between two civilizations, each the antithesis of other: continental and maritime. Each power which aims at global supremacy has to dominate Eurasian continent which is the heartland of the world. As being heart of the heartland, Russia has advantages to take control over Eurasia. For this aim, Russia must mobilize its all resources.<sup>128</sup> Thus, in Dugin's view, being a continental power which is located among Asia, Europe and Middle East, Russia's geopolitics has to be Eurasianist.

In order to win in this geopolitical struggle, Dugin calls Russia to rebuild its empire. He argues that Russia without being empire cannot survive. Russia has an imperial tradition which contradicts the Western style of national state. In Europe, society was transformed from empire to nation-state. In turn, Russia has never been a state in terms of Western perception. Russia's imperial tradition did not bring the borders as European states have. At this point, Dugin argues that because of its imperial mission, Russia should expand its territory through Eurasia.<sup>129</sup> He lays great importance to territorial expansion for renewal of Russian national identity. In this concept, Dugin sees Russian Federation as a temporary formation in a global geopolitical struggle. He conceives that Russia as only being an imperial power in Eurasia can provide security and sovereignty of its people and entity.

In rebuilding Russian empire, Dugin points out that Russia should constitute geopolitical alliances with Germany, Iran and Japan. The Pan-European, the Pan Asiatic and the Pan-Arab sub empires will make up a great anti-Western continental bloc. The imperial Russia will be the center of this bloc which will reach out the seas and oceans in the north, south and the east. The rejection of Atlanticism, US

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<sup>128</sup> A.P. Tsygankov, "Mastering Space in Eurasia: Russia's Geopolitical Thinking after the Soviet Break-up", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 36, 2003, p.123, Graham Smith, "The Mask of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism", *Royal Geographic Society*, 1999, p. 483.

<sup>129</sup> Dmitry Shlapentokh, "Dugin Eurasianism: A Window on the Minds of the Russian Elite or an Intellectual Ploy", *Study East European Thought*, Vol. 59, 2007, p.230.

hegemony, values of liberalism and capitalism will be the common policy of this geopolitical bloc including different civilizations.<sup>130</sup>

In creating multi-ethnic and multi-religious Eurasian Empire, Dugin relies on ethnic Russians and Orthodoxy. Implying that Russia has a privileged position in this bloc because of its geostrategic location, he points out that Russian people, also, have superiority over other ethnic groups. Russians are superior, because they are the bearers of the unique Eurasian empire. In this concept, he evaluates Orthodoxy as the founding institution of Russian distinctiveness. However, to Dugin, it will be gross mistake to think Russians as racially minded people who are concerned only about the well-being of their ethnic. In fact, Russian identity is trans-ethnic and even transnational. Therefore, the interests of the Eurasian empire will be given priority in compare to interests of any people. Thus, Dugin argues that regarding the Russians, such a prioritization is not necessary since the interests of the empire and interests of the Russian people are common.<sup>131</sup>

In other words, although Dugin rejects the idea of a Russian national state, he gives a central role in the future Eurasian empire to Russia and Russians as a nation. Russian people who are the responsible for creating Confederation of Empires are considered *primus inter pares* among all the nationalities of Russian Federation. Russians who are ‘the empire’s constitutive nation’ can benefit from sovereignty, because ‘Russian exist as the only national community within in supra national imperial complex’<sup>132</sup>. On the other hand, the non-Russian peoples may benefit only from cultural autonomy, but not from sovereignty. In addition, the reason why Dugin stands for

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<sup>130</sup> Thomas Parland, *The Extreme Nationalist Threat in Russia: The Growing Influence of Western Rightist Ideas*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005, p.128-129, A.P. Tsygankov, “Mastering Space in Eurasia: Russia’s Geopolitical Thinking after the Soviet Break-up”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 36, 2003, p.125.

<sup>131</sup> Alan Ingram, “Alexander Dugin: Geopolitics and Neo-Fascism in post-Soviet Russia”, *Political Geography*, Vol. 20, 2001, p.1037, Dmitry Shlapentokh, “Dugin Eurasianism: a Window on the Minds of the Russian Elite or an Intellectual Ploy”, *Study East European Thought*, Vol. 59, 2007, p. 231.

<sup>132</sup> Marlene Laruelle, “Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right?”, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/OP294.pdf>.

giving cultural autonomy to each ethnic group is due to globalized liberalism which has negative impacts by destructing differences between people. Dugin argues that harmful aspects of modernity can be avoided by restoring the all the religious and ethnic identities in the Empire.

Considering the idea that Russia and Russian people are dominant in Dugin's future multi-ethnic Empire, Thomas Parland argues that Eurasianism is not only focused on the imperial idea, but also to some degree influenced by the racist aspects of ethnocentric national patriotism.<sup>133</sup> In parallel line with Thomas Parland, Alan Ingram points out that 'despite the historically conflictual relationship between geopolitics and fascism, Dugin can in certain ways be considered a neo-fascist as well as geopolitician'<sup>134</sup>. On the other hand, Dugin does not describe himself as ethno-nationalist. According to him, in present time, the Russian nationalism is divided into two groups: Pan-Slavists and monarchists, who have an ethnocentric and politically outdated vision of Russia; and the Eurasianists, Communists and pro-statists, who give priority to great state power over ethnic feeling, and who are above all focused on the future. Dugin condemns ethno-nationalism and chauvinism and considers them dangerous for Eurasian Empire. He believes that he distinguishes the question of identity from the question of nationalism. In addition he acknowledges that he has never been a proponent of any return to past. He does not talk about Soviet nostalgia but about the future.<sup>135</sup> Dugin demonstrates this point as the reason for him to break with other nationalist figures.

Nevertheless, Dugin's explanations related to reemergence of the Eurasian Empire and to Russian's privilege position in the Empire genders him to be evaluated either as the proponent of those who aims at restoring of Soviet Empire or ethno-nationalist. Moreover, Dugin's explanations about Russians who found themselves

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<sup>133</sup> Thomas Parland, *The Extreme Nationalist Threat in Russia: The Growing Influence of Western Rightist Ideas*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005, p.130.

<sup>134</sup> Alan Ingram, "Alexander Dugin: Geopolitics and Neo-Fascism in post-Soviet Russia", *Political Geography*, Vol. 20, 2001, p. 1029.

<sup>135</sup> Marlene Laruelle, "Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right?", *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*, pp. 13-14.

out of the borders of Russian Federation and unity of Slavs contributed this understanding.

Considering the fact that with the end of Soviet Union, 25 million Russians stayed out of the borders of the Russian Federation, Dugin calls for restoring the Empire and former Soviet Union's status as a superpower by including all regions where ethnic Russian settle. His project presents a way for Russia to unify with Russian diaspora in the newly independent post-Soviet states and Slav countries. Dugin evaluates Russia in a broader concept representing all the Russians living in the ex-Soviet countries. Thus, his geopolitics became a new panacea for Russian nationalist.

Consequently, Dugin claims that his Russian nationalism is more related to territorial expansion than ethnic nationalism. But, he implicitly thinks Russian ethnicity as superior to the other nationalities of Russian Federation in his project of building Confederation Empires. He sees territorial expansion as an instrument for the renewal of Russian national identity and dignity; and empire-building as a historical mission for Russians who in the course of history found empires in Eurasia.

### **3.4. Vladimir Zhirinovsky: Aggressive Russian Nationalism**

Vladimir Zhirinovsky is a great imperialist and nationalist. Since the establishment of Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), he has been leader of it. LDPR is a liberal party in name. However, it demonstrates features of extreme right wing. The strategy of the LDPR is based on populism. Accordingly, it aims at gaining political influences via elections. It is generally accepted that without Zhirinovsky, there would not been existed such a party. To Thomas Parland, the popular image of this

party is made up by the colorful statements of Zhirinovskiy. LDPR has been one-man show.<sup>136</sup>

In summer 1991, when Zhirinovskiy opposed Yeltsin in the presidential election, his Party came third with six million votes (7.8 percent). But, Zhirinovskiy's great breakthrough came in parliamentary election in December 1993. LDPR entered the Russian Duma as largest party with seventy representatives by garnering about 13 millions of votes (23 percent). Since then, the supports for Zhirinovskiy and his Party have declined because of general disappointment in personality of him and the main stream Russian party's adaptation of nationalist ideology which is close to Zhirinovskiy's rhetoric. Yet Zhirinovskiy has succeeded to stay in agenda by making statements drastically.

Zhirinovskiy as a great imperialist and nationalist would like to be seemed as geopolitical thinker and strategist. Zhirinovskiy's vision is to restore an empire within the borders of the USSR and even to expand it. In 1992, he declared that Russia should restore its borders by including Baltics, Poland, Finland, and Alaska. Before the election in 1993, Zhirinovskiy promised to restore Russia's border as in 1913, moreover, to expand it by Indian Ocean; due to save Russia's national pride. In his book *Last thrust to the south*, Zhirinovskiy describes his strategic priority as stretching borders of Russian Federation from southwards to Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.<sup>137</sup> Thus, he declares that Russia should reestablish its geopolitical power towards the south. In present time, Zhirinovskiy believes that south of Russia is a dire threat of Pan-Turkism and Islamic fundamentalism.

In order to achieve restoring empire, Zhirinovskiy advocates an aggressive chauvinism. He considers that Russia should strengthen its military power. When Russia has a strong army, other countries will start to respect Russia. Military power and economic embargo will force ex-Soviet republics unification with Russian

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<sup>136</sup> Thomas Parland, *The Extreme Nationalist Threat in Russia: The Growing Influence of Western Rightist Ideas*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005, p.90.

<sup>137</sup> Graham Smith, "The Mask of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism", *Royal Geographic Society*, 1999, p.485.

Empire. As it is obvious, Zhirinovsky's rhetoric is quite aggressive and warlike. In his opinion, the territory of the former Soviet Union belongs to Russia. Russia is obliged to take it all back by activating its military and economic power. Moreover, Zhirinovsky asserts that such a project would solve the question of diaspora. By the time reunification with ex-Soviet Republics is achieved, Zhirinovsky suggest assisting to Russians in near abroad. At the same time, economic sanctions and threats of military invention against the newly independent states should be conducted.<sup>138</sup>

Regarding the domestic politics of Russian Empire, Zhirinovsky comes to the conclusion that this new Empire would be Russian in name, however, ethnically diverse, as in the case of Tsarist Empire. The administrative division of the empire would not be based on neither national nor ethnical principle. Indeed, administrative principles would be applied. In Zhirinovsky's project, the empire based on the administrative principle would provide the melting pot of different nationalities. Moreover, this arrangement would guarantee political stability, territorial unity. It would avoid the emergence of separatist tendencies.<sup>139</sup> The powerful state with its strong army led by Russians would avoid ethnic conflict among nations of empire. In his vision, Russian language, culture and Orthodoxy would dominate a future multi-ethnic empire. Thus, Zhirinovsky envisages ethnic Russians' Eurasian empire in which Russian culture would assimilate other cultures.<sup>140</sup>

To Thomas Parland, Zhirinovsky's ideology was neither national socialist nor fascist. It resembles more closely dictatorship of the Latin America type – authoritarianism with great pretensions and small resources. Overall, Zhirinovsky advocates an eclectic rightism including some important elements of National Socialism.

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<sup>138</sup> Igor Zevelev, *Russia and Its New Diasporas*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, p.71.

<sup>139</sup> Thomas Parland, *The Extreme Nationalist Threat in Russia: The Growing Influence of Western Rightist Ideas*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005, p.146.

<sup>140</sup> Zhirinovsky in his Words: Excerpts from the Final Thrust South, 4 February 1994, [http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/upload/90640\\_1.pdf](http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/upload/90640_1.pdf).

Basically, his interpretation of geopolitics derives from a nationalist socialist point of view.<sup>141</sup> As Thomas Parland, Alan Ingram calls Zhirinovskiy dictator. Ingram concludes that in Zhirinovskiy's view, the state vies with the nation as the ultimate value in politics. Rather than the people, it is the state (primarily the army) led by Zhirinovskiy is presumed to take the active role in Russia's development.<sup>142</sup>

Accordingly, Zhirinovskiy's aggressive rhetoric includes long term geopolitical scheme. This geopolitical scheme flows from two points: 1) the reestablishment of Russian Empire, 2) the new repartition of the world. In order to restore empire, Zhirinovskiy declares that Russia should take entire territory of Soviet Union back. He sees near abroad as colonies of Russian empire. Viewing the territory of Soviet Union as the part of the new Russian empire in the new repartition of the world in to spaces of influences, Zhirinovskiy concludes that other great powers is to free act in their appointed sphere.

Zhirinovskiy and his geopolitical rhetoric genders Russian democratic to conceive him as warning example of the danger of fascism. Although he denies that he is not fascist, Zhirinovskiy's national socialist interpretation of geopolitics caused him to be compared with Hitler. That is the reason why he is, generally, called as ultra nationalist or fascist.

In order that Zhirinovskiy advocates imperialistic and liberal perspective of Russian tradition and stays loyal to Soviet nostalgia, Zhirinovskiy differs from Solzhenitsyn and Tishkov. As mentioned before, Solzhenitsyn is called as ethnic nationalist and imagines Russian state for Russian ethnicity while Tishkov is named as civic nationalist and stands for inclusive understanding of Russian state. Zhirinovskiy with his aggressive geopolitical views can be labeled not only as imperialistic but also ethnic nationalist. Since Zhirinovskiy declares the superiority of ethnic Russians over other nations, his geopolitical perception for restoring empire would gender the problem for those who have not 'Russian origin' settling in Russian land.

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p.92.

<sup>142</sup> Alan Ingram, "A Nation Split into Fragments: The Congress of Russian Communities and Russian Nationalist Ideology", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 4, June 1999, p.701.

In short, the division between Zhirinovskiy and the ethnic and civic nationalist is clear in order that Zhirinovskiy interprets everything related to restore empire. In the *Russian Question*, Solzhenitsyn ridicules Zhirinovskiy's imperial project by considering it 'extravagant, foolish pronouncement calling for extending Central Asia to the Indian Ocean, Poland, the Baltic, and the Balkans'.<sup>143</sup>

On the other hand, Dugin's geopolitical thought basically does not differ from Zhirinovskiy's discourse. Dugin insists on that he is not committed the Soviet past and everything in his view related to future while Zhirinovskiy is loyal to Soviet heritage. None the less, it is obvious that Dugin's and Zhirinovskiy's vision of new Russian empire draws upon the imperialistic tradition of Russia. They view Eurasia as territory which has always belonged to Russia.

### **3.5. Gennadii Zyuganov: Ethnic Russians as First among Equals**

The parliamentary election of 1995 and the presidential election in 1996 pointed out the end of the period of LDPR's role as the leading nationalist force in Russia. In 1995 parliamentary election, Gennadii Zyuganov and his party – Communist Party of Russian Federation (CPRF) - established in 1993 received 15.4 million votes (22 percent). In 1996 presidential election, Zyuganov garnering about 30 million votes (40 per cent) narrowly lost to Boris Yeltsin. Since 1996, Zyuganov and CPRF has become the major opposition wing in Russian Duma with commitment national-imperial rhetoric.

Zyuganov, a pragmatist and more or less moderate Russian politician, played an important role in transforming the CPRF to nationalist party. Never the less, Zyuganov does not style himself as a nationalist. Rather, he defines himself as a

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<sup>143</sup> David G. Rowley, "Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Russian Nationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No.3, p.327.

patriot, in line with the nation building rhetoric of Soviet Union.<sup>144</sup> Zyuganov replaced Marxism-Leninism with the new ideology of 'Russian state patriotism' in transforming CPRF to nationalist party. The new ideology of the party gives priority to state interests, geopolitics and Orthodoxy drawing upon Russian past and tradition.

In Zyuganov's word, the state is 'the thread of continuity in Russian history and the key factor in the development of the country'<sup>145</sup>. By giving the priority of the state interests over the society, Zyuganov considers state not only as an instrument for social organization but also a spiritual principle. In other words, spirit of the people does not constitute the nation rather the state as being a product of a particular cultural mentality and tradition presents the nation. For this reason, the state, with its leading role, has a special role in emergence of character of Russian people and continuity of Russian history. Zyuganov contends that Russian national identity refers loyalty to Russian state, moreover to be part of Russian *narodnost* (statehood).<sup>146</sup> As Geir Flikke points out that national idea of the patriots is not clear in terms of whether it is based on ethnic model (*russkii*) or a citizenship model (*rossiiskii*). It is possible to say that Zyuganov and CPRF have accepted an ambiguity context of 'Russian' identity which is based on unbroken history of Russia. Moreover, it is close to a transnational identity as was in the case of Soviet Union.<sup>147</sup> In this context, it is worthy to mention that CPRF mixes the symbols of the Soviet period with Russian empire.

According to Zyuganov, Russian and Soviet history is single and indivisible due to the fact that they derive from the same sources. Those sources might be understood in terms of spirit (the spirit of Orthodoxy, statehood and community) and territory

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<sup>144</sup> Pal Kostoe, *Political Construction Sites: Nation-building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States*, Colorado: Westview press, 2000, p.209.

<sup>145</sup> Thomas Parland, *The Extreme Nationalist Threat in Russia: The Growing Influence of Western Rightist Ideas*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005, p.97.

<sup>146</sup> Geir Flikke, "Patriotic Left-Centrism: The Zigzags of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51(2), Mar. 1999, pp.289- 290.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289-293.

(territory of ‘Russians’ and of others who became the part of Russian history culturally and historically). Evaluating Russian history by emphasizing the continuity of Russia and Russian idea beyond 1917, Zyuganov declares that the Russian nation is primordially communist. He argues that communist values of Russian society come from 2000 years before. These values ‘are in tune with the age old Russian traditions of community and collectivism, and keeping the fundamental interests of the Fatherland’<sup>148</sup>. As a result, Zyuganov sets historical link among communism, Russian society and Russian space. He points out that collectivism and common interests have been given priority over individualism and private in the course of Russian history. Zyuganov Fatherland has been always a space for communism due to the fact that Russian people with their cultural values have always been bound up communal spirit.<sup>149</sup>

To Alan Ingram, Zyuganov’s role is crucial in forging an ideological concept which brings nationalism and communism together. This concept presumes that communism could only be defended through co-existence of nationalism and patriotism.<sup>150</sup> Accordingly, Zyuganov brought the understanding of ‘us’ and ‘they’ in to the center of CPRF’s program. While ‘us’ represents the patriots and defenders of a sovereign Russian empire with ingredient of communism, ‘they’ refers the enemies of the state and Russian nation. Zyuganov sees his party as the defender of the broad opposition which aims at resistance ethno centric understanding of the word Russian.”<sup>151</sup> On the other hand, as Zyuganov replaced communist ideology based on class struggle with nationalism and rebuilding of Russian empire, he gets closer the same line with Dugin and Zhirinovskiy.

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<sup>148</sup> Graham Smith, “The Mask of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism”, *Royal Geographic Society*, p.487.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>150</sup> Alan Ingram, “A Nation Split into Fragments: The Congress of Russian Communities and Russian Nationalist Ideology”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 4, June 1999, p.700.

<sup>151</sup> Geir Flikke, “Patriotic Left-Centrism: The Zigzags of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 2, March 1999, p.278.

In order to reach the goal of Russian idea, Zyuganov's national, patriotic ideology requests Russia to reemerge as a great power in the territories of Soviet Union. Relying on the Russia's imperial legacy and great power attitude, Zyuganov declares that Russia has to create its specific geopolitical, ideological, national and economic features in a strong state which would encompass Eurasia. Zyuganov contends that Russia would be a great power by reestablishing communism and fulfilling its geopolitical task. Referring Russian history, Zyuganov argues that Russia has always struggled to secure its regional hegemonic power in the Eurasian land. In his book *The Geography of Victory*, Zyuganov reiterates geopolitical tradition of Russia as a Eurasian empire and advocates establishing a self-sufficient economic, cultural, political unit in the Eurasia. He believes that Russia, only, can survive as a Eurasian Empire. Thus, it would guarantee its geopolitical interests and security against the West.<sup>152</sup> In sum, Zyuganov's vision is to restore a Eurasian empire in the leadership of Russia.

In this concept, to Zyuganov, Russia's geopolitical security is to share same political sphere with its Slavic brethren, Ukraine and Belarus, Russians residing in near abroad and those other peoples who give value to communism.<sup>153</sup> In *Derzhava and Za gorizontom*, Zyuganov emphasizes that the Ukrainians and Belarusians are part of Russian nation. He also considers all Russians and Russian speakers abroad as an integral part of the Russian nation. He comes to the conclusion that 'without the reunification of the divided Russian people our state would never rise from its knees'<sup>154</sup>.

Considering the present day, Zyuganov declares that Russia's geopolitical battle is to resist Western economic, political and cultural impacts. Russia should become a counter-force against the West's hegemonic aspirations. By returning communist

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<sup>152</sup> A.P. Tsygankov, "Mastering space in Eurasia: Russia's Geopolitical Thinking after the Soviet break-up", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 36, 2003, p. 121.

<sup>153</sup> Graham Smith, "The Mask of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism", *Royal Geographic Society*, p. 486.

<sup>154</sup> Vera Tolz, *Russia*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 257.

past and bolstering its economic and military power, Russia can only achieve to struggle with Western influences and hegemony. For that aim, he advises that state directed modernization on the principle of renationalization of the economy should be established. Moreover, the rule of socialist welfarism should be conducted. In cultural space, Zyuganov is in favor of forbidden of films, book, and advertisements imported from West. According to Thomas Parland, Zyuganov's negative attitude towards Western influences presents ethnocentric and traditionalist nationalism.<sup>155</sup>

To sum up, Zyuganov can be considered as a cultural nationalist with a geopolitical agenda. To Zyuganov, Russian nation has Slavic identity. Therefore, Orthodoxy is the key element in identifying Russian nation. In future Eurasian Empire, Russians would be first among equals. Yet Zyuganov's vision does not exclusive for those who shared the same fate with Russian people in the course of centuries. He is a part of the Russian imperial tradition. In his view, Russian nation and its unique civilization can only be saved from its ruin by fulfilling its geopolitical task which means restore order in Eurasian land. When Russia establishes its empire in Eurasia, Russia will become the counter force of West. In other words, Russian status as a great power requests challenging Western economic, political and cultural impact in the world. In the new empire, Russia would return its origins by bringing economic, politic system which derives from Russian tradition.

Zyuganov's geopolitical vision shares the same ambitions with Dugin and Zhirinovskiy. On the other hand, Zyuganov's ideas are more committed with Russian values and traditions. Therefore, Zyuganov and Solzhenitsyn to the some degree applied to some sources of Russian history and create the myths which are the reasons for establishment new Russian state or empire.

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<sup>155</sup> Thomas Parland, *The Extreme Nationalist Threat in Russia: The Growing Influence of Western Rightist Ideas*, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005, p.100.

Table 1: Views of Russian Intellectuals<sup>156</sup>

	<b>V. Tishkov</b>	<b>A. Solzhenitsyn</b>	<b>V. Zhirinovsky/ A. Dugin</b>	<b>G. Zyuganov</b>
Geopolitical Borders	Fixed	Slavic Lands	Russian Empire	USSR
Cultural Identity	Pluralist	Russian(Russkii)	Russian (Russkii)	Pluralist but Russians as first among equals
Type of State	Federation	Nation State	Empire	Confederation of Soviet States
Attitude towards Russians in the near abroad	Encourage them to be citizen of country of residence	Incorporated the lands settled by ethnic Russians in to Russia	Incorporated the lands settled by ethnic Russians in to Russia	Incorporated the lands settled by ethnic Russians in to Russia
Attitude towards the post-Soviet states	Non-threatening	Reunification with the territories of Ukraine, Belarus, and northern Kazakhstan	Threatening them until they are reintegrated into a larger Russia	Threatening because they are increasingly influenced by capitalist geopolitical powers
Attitude towards the West	Friendly, in favor of cooperation	Hostile to Western politics, and economy	Openly hostile towards USA but less so towards Europe because it may become an ally in Russian-USA geopolitical struggle	Openly hostile: West is a foreign culture

<sup>156</sup> Developed from Graham Smith, *The Post-Soviet States: Mapping the Politics of Transition*, Arnold: London, 2002, p. 54.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RUSSIAN DIASPORAS IN THE POST SOVIET-STATES

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the political elites and intellectuals of the newly independent states have heavily focused on nation building and state building process by redefining political and cultural system of their emergent polities. Throughout post-Soviet borderland states, nationalizing tendency amongst the new regimes in power has occurred. According to Roger Brubaker, this has derived from the fact that political elites in each successor state aimed at having to secure a dominant place for their nation within the cultural, economic and political life of their ‘historic’ homelands.<sup>157</sup>

Based upon the claim that the titular nation is the only legitimate homeland nation within the political space that it shares with other ethnic groups, such nations aspire to becoming the ‘state of and for a particular ethno cultural core nation whose language, culture, demographic position, economic welfare and political hegemony must be protected and promoted by the state.’<sup>158</sup>

In this context, Graham Smith argues that there are three nationalizing projects<sup>159</sup> constructed by nation builders of ex-Soviet republics. At first hand, nationalizing political elites destructed symbols, political institutions and representatives of Soviet power from the political and social sphere. Graham Smith calls this process as de-Sovietization. Specially, in the case of Baltic states, the policy of de-Sovietization removed the Communist Party from the political scene and radically transformed the main political institutions and symbols of Soviet era. Throughout this period, new national symbols and political institutions which define national interest are established. Therefore, this process has gone hand in hand with hatred towards the

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<sup>157</sup> Graham Smith and Andrew Wilson, “Rethinking Russia’s Post –Soviet Diaspora: The Potential for Political Mobilization in Eastern Ukraine and North-East Estonia,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 5, 1997, p.846.

<sup>158</sup> Graham Smith, *The Post Soviet States: Mapping the Politics of Transition*, London: Arnold, 2002, p.74.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.76-77.

‘former colonizers’. In other words, Russians were perceived as part of neo-imperial Russia. Thus, the political elites of nationalizing states have conducted policy of de-Sovietization in tandem with de-colonization and de-Russification.

Afterwards, political elites and intellectuals were involved in process of reinventing the social boundaries. In this process, politicians distinguished the homeland nation from other minorities by depicting ‘self’ and ‘other’. National identities were established in terms of oppositions by either a common origin such as homeland, language, community or a common experiences, for instance, colonized/colonizers, immigrants/indigenous, or both. Thus, throughout nation-building process, nationalizing states identified Russians as the colonial power while Russians residing in these states reshaped their identity and survival opportunities. In addition, the depiction of ‘us’ and ‘other’ in nationalizing states engendered reinvention of a supposed pre-colonial golden age for the homeland nation, which could provide unity among members of titular nation.

Finally, nationalizing tendency was based upon the idea that ‘a more homogeneous polity dominated by one national culture is essential to the post-colonial state’s political and economic modernization’<sup>160</sup>. Political elites contended that homogenization of linguistic, cultural and educational sphere is essential to run a more effective national economy and state bureaucracy. Moreover, a uniform and standardized national culture would produce a more loyal and harmonious citizenry. In this framework, if Russian diaspora wants to become part of the political, social, economic life of the states they reside, they must learn language of the titular nation. On the other hand, the promotion of a titular language has met serious difficulties in the ex-Soviet republics since Russian speakers compose of not only by ethnic Russians but also those non-titulars who speak Russian. Particularly, attempts to build new nation on the ground of a titular culture and language create threats for the Russian diaspora. These attempts ignore Russian culture and traditions; and exclude Russians’ participation to political and social life. For instance, the language policy of Latvia requires all inhabitants to speak Latvian as a condition of becoming citizen.

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<sup>160</sup>*Ibid.*

It does not give official status to Russian language. As a result, Russian settlers who don't speak Latvian are excluded from the political and economic system of Latvia.

Confronting with the policies of nationalizing states, the members of Russian diaspora have developed reflections in varying ways. The plurality of diaspora in terms of political orientation demonstrates that Russian diaspora is not a homogeneous group. Factors such as the years of their settlement in newly independent post-Soviet states, their role in economic life, mixed marriages, cultural distance between them and titular nations, their number in the host states and closeness to the Russian border, Russian policies towards them contribute plurality of Russian diaspora.

While Russian settlement was very old in Ukraine, most Russians immigrated in to Latvia and Estonia since World War II. Diaspora Russians are employed in industry and technical professions with higher salary in Central Asia, while blue collar Russian workers dominate the Baltic region. There is significant cultural distance between titular nations and Russian diaspora in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, while in Ukraine and Belarus, Russians share Slavic identity with the majority. In the northern Kazakhstan, northeastern Estonia, parts of Ukraine which are major areas for concentration of Russian population, Russian diaspora pursues political ambition to establish autonomy and in some cases irredentist claims. On the other hand, the Russians who are dispersed in cities can only strive for cultural autonomy. With regard the Russian Federation, as mentioned before, Russian officials define Russia as the 'external national homeland' of these Russians and see Russia as the protector of the rights of the Russians settled in other post-Soviet states. Despite the fact that the Russians do not constitute homogeneous group, Igor Zevelev argues that there are two basic features that all Russians living in these states share: 'namely, the feeling of connection with the Russian culture and the existence of an external homeland.'<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Igor Zevelev, *Russia and Its New Diasporas*, Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001, p. 92.

At this point, it is worthy to focus on the explanations of Lowell Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver in order to analyze Russian diaspora' perceptions of homeland in details. In contrast to Zevelev's conclusion that all Russians in newly independent post-Soviet states see Russian Federation as their external homeland, they identify possible homelands' perceptions of Russians living out of Russian boundaries. They argue that an individual or group could have several possible homelands: External homeland, internal homeland and mixed (external-internal homeland).

In the case of external homeland, a minority does not perceive its state of residence as its homeland. In fact, the group views a region which is out of the boundaries of its country of residence or state as its true homeland. While in some cases, the perception of external homeland could engender secessionist claims; it, generally, could lead the government of the external homeland to act on behalf of the minority groups. If there is a basis for claim of discrimination towards the minority, the external homeland may apply the diplomatic, economic, military pressure on the states where its minority settles.

The internal homeland refers to a part of the state of residence. In such a situation, the minority views a region as its national homeland and demands political control over that territory. The territory is, also, thought as the national homeland of the majority. This perception of the homeland emerges in a state that includes a sizeable and concentrated ethnic minority. Hence, the thought of internal homeland could fuel secessionist drives and causes ethnic conflicts within the state of residence.

In mixed situation, a minority group sees the homeland as comprising both a part of the state of residence and external homeland or state. Such perception of homeland can pave the way for irredentism, in which members of the minority strive for the secession of a region of their state of resident and its unification with the external

homeland. For instance, the Russians who live in northern part of Kazakhstan consider both this region and Russia as their homeland.<sup>162</sup>

Table 2: Russians in the Soviet Successor States, 1989

Republics	In Thousands	In Percentage of Total Population
Estonia	475	30.3
Latvia	906	34.0
Belarus	1.342	13.2
Ukraine	11.356	22.1
Kyrgyzstan	917	21.5
Kazakhstan	6.228	37.8

(Source: Lowell W. Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver, “The Motherland Is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad”, *World Politics*, Vol. 55, January 2003, p.293.)

After giving place for theoretical perspective of Lowell Barrington, Eric Herron and Brian Silver in the studies of Russians residing in near abroad, it is crucial to concentrate on their surveys of types of identification among ethnic Russians in Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In their survey, Russians in these countries were asked the question of ‘What do you consider to be your homeland’. Depending on the responses, Barrington, Herron and Silver come to the conclusions that: First, few Russians in these states view a part of their state of residence to be their homeland. Considering the fact that there are sharp ethno regional divides in Kazakhstan (northern Kazakhstan versus the rest of the country) and Ukraine (the east of Ukraine and Crimea versus the rest of Ukraine), this was unexpected result. Second, few Russians living outside of the Russian Federation consider Russia as their homeland (fewer than one-quarter of the ethnic Russian respondents in these states identified Russia as their homeland). Third, a few conceive a part of the state of residence and Russia in combination as homeland. Moreover, the mixed variant is

<sup>162</sup> Lowell W. Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver, “The Motherland Is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad”, *World Politics*, Vol. 55, January 2003, p.293.

simply not an option of the Russians in these four countries. Indeed, compared to other options, a considerable proportion of these Russians identify their states of residence as their homeland. While 52.5 percent of respondents in Kazakhstan and 57.8 percent of respondents in Kyrgyzstan see their current state of residence to be homeland, this percentage is 29.7 in Belarus and 38.0 in Ukraine.<sup>163</sup>

In addition, Russians in these countries were asked the question of ‘Do you consider yourself part of a national minority in (name of country)’. According to Lowell Barrington, Erik Herron and Brian Silver, the premise national minority is important as it refers that these minorities are involved in ethnic politics and interested in minority rights.

It (national minority) means that they have a national identity and see themselves either as (1) a nation within their state of residence and thus desire political control of a particular part of that state or as (2) part of a larger nation that already has its own territory (the external national homeland)<sup>164</sup>

According to answers, 9.2 percent and 18.8 percent of respondents in Belarus and Ukraine claimed to be part of a national minority. On the other hand, 59.3 percent and 67.0 percent of respondents in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan see themselves as the part of national minority. To Lowell Barrington, Eric Herron and Brian Silver, this result could seem to imply that Russians in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are attached to Russia or claim control of a part of their residence of state. Although this opinion can be true in the case of northern Kazakhstan, it is obviously not the case for Kyrgyzstan. They argue that cultural distance between Russians and titular nations in Central Asian states promote a feeling of belonging to national minority among Russians. Moreover, Russian’s historical tie to their states of residence is also important factor in their identification as national minority.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Lowell W. Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver, “The Motherland Is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad”, *World Politics*, Vol. 55, January 2003, p.297.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p.298.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

Table 3: Sense of Belonging to a ‘National Minority’ by Ethnic Russians in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine

	Belarus	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Ukraine
Yes	9.2	59.3	67.0	18.8
No	87.5	32.3	28.5	65.7
Difficult to say	2.6	8.1	4.4	12.2
No answer	0.8	0.3	0.1	3.3

(Source: Lowell W. Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver, “The Motherland Is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad”, *World Politics*, Vol. 55, January 2003, p.299.)

In sum, this chapter examines the relationship between nationalizing states and their Russian diaspora. Latvia-Estonia, Ukraine-Belarus, Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan and Russian diaspora in these states constitute cases for this part. In each subtitle, nation-building processes in these states named in the title are elaborated regarding their definition of citizenship. By concentrated on the citizenship policies of these states, it is aimed to figure out that how Russians are being defined by nationalizing states. Are they being defined as a part of the new nations or are they seen as alien elements? Moreover, due to the fact that the language policies have a big significance in identity formation, each state’s language policy is explored. What kind of results for Russians in political and economical life is brought by language policies of these states is researched. Finally, to what extend the Russians are satisfied and dissatisfied with their new status in these nationalizing states, what their political orientations are (such as outmigration, integration so on), which factors contributed to their perception of homeland are examined.

#### **4.1. Ethnic Russians in Latvia and Estonia**

The situation in Estonia and Latvia presents different case from other Soviet successor states due to the interwar independence of these states and international non-recognition of their incorporation in to Soviet Union. With the independence, nationalizing regimes of these states argued that they are not new states; they are successor states to the interwar republics. Declaring continuity with their interwar republics, the political elites in Baltic states aimed at establishment of states whose citizenry had already existed. Thus, governments in Latvia and Estonia disregard to construct an initial body of citizens which could link Russians living in this region with the newly independent states as a part of the nation. Restoration of citizenship status of interwar citizens and their descendants were determined as the basis of citizenship policy by nationalizing regimes in these states. In other words, while national liberation movements in Baltic were characterized by anti- imperialism and anti-communism; the nation building process in Baltic states was marked by exclusion of Russians. Russians have been seen as the reason of repression during the Soviet era. Despite the fact that the Russians in these states demonstrated growing support for the independence between 1989 and 1991, the independence led rapid rise of ethnic nationalism and thus, exclusion of Russians from being part of nation on the legal ground.

According to Arunas Juska, the rise of ethnic nationalism in Baltic states derived from four reasons. First, the breakup of Soviet Union changed dramatically the balance of power between ethnic communities in the newly independent post-Soviet states. Once independent was gained, national government no longer needed to support of Russians as allies. Second, ethnic nationalism in Estonia and Latvia was driven by the fears about the commitment of the Russians to the cause of independence. Following the Second World War, the share of the titular nation in the total population dropped from 90 percent to 60 percent in Estonia and from 75 percent to 52 percent in Latvia. This situation was conceived by those political elites of these states that ethnic Russians could control the power in the republics via

democratic system. Third, the existence of Soviet army in the region, also, fuelled ethnic nationalism. Any protest of Russians against the regimes of these states could be supported by army. Hence, this situation could engender destabilization in the republics. Finally, nationalist parties manipulated ethnic nationalism for forcing ethnic Russians to leave these republic and winning electoral support.<sup>166</sup> In this context, Arunas Juska argues that the attempts of the nationalists to secure predominance of titular nation over ethnic Russians resulted in the creation of exclusive ethnic democracies in the Baltic states:

If the reforms result in a democracy for one ethnic group, whereas members of other ethnic groups are excluded from participation in the polity, economy, or social life of the society, then a system of 'ethnic democracy' would evolve in the successor states of the USSR.<sup>167</sup>

Concerning with the preservation of superior position and status of the titular nation in political legislature, public administration, cultural and economic life; the political elites of Baltic republics deprived Russians of participation in politic and economic life. According to Graham Smith, exclusionists codified Russians in three ways in Estonia and Latvia in order to legitimize the exclusion of them who settled in these states throughout Soviet-period. Soviet era settlers were identified as illegal migrants. The incorporation to Soviet Union was pointed out as involuntary. Thus, those who settled in to Estonia and Latvia during this period were illegal migrants. As labeling diaspora illegal migrants, it was, also, aimed at preservation of state power in the hands of homeland-nation. In this concept, for instance, following the 1995 elections in both countries, there were respectively six or seven Russians in their parliaments comprised by 101 representatives. In addition to denial of Soviet era settlers from the automatic right to citizenship, Russian empire and Russians were indicated as responsible for the nation repression. Estonia's Law on Aliens in June 1993 is, specially, product of this perception. At last, Russian settlers were also identified as a threat to the cultural self-preservation of titular nation. It was argued that because of the cultural genocide resulted by Soviet rule, Estonians and Latvians

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<sup>166</sup> Arunas Juska, "Ethno-Political Transformations in the States of the Former USSR", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, May 1999, pp. 535-536.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p.524.

had the right to protect the special relationship between nation and historic homeland. As a consequence of this understanding, the criteria of naturalization of non-citizens were hardened.<sup>168</sup>

At this point, it is worthy to explain the process of naturalization of non-citizens in Baltic states and thus discriminative policies Russian diaspora have encountered. As mentioned before, the political elites in Estonia and Latvia established citizenship policy by regarding only citizens of their interwar republics and their descendants. Accordingly, all those Russians who settled there during the Soviet period (1940-1991) were labeled as foreigners. The Baltic states which have not granted automatic citizenship to Russians announced that Russian settlers were eligible to become citizens through naturalization. According to Estonia's February 1992 citizenship law, before a migrant qualifies two years residence and one year waiting period have to be fulfilled. Latvia's 1994 citizenship law requires a ten year residency.<sup>169</sup> Moreover, 1994 law on citizenship in Latvia introduced a quota system which was named as naturalization window. According to this system, the numbers of non-citizens to be naturalized was limited. In June 1994, the Latvian parliament announced that 2000 person could be naturalized in each year.<sup>170</sup> Latvian regime held a referendum in August 1998 on the question of naturalization because of being criticized by European Union. After referendum, naturalizing windows were abolished. However, numerous restrictions on non-citizens remained in force.<sup>171</sup> In Estonia, also, an important restriction to non-titular groups was brought by Law on Aliens adopted June 1993. The law decreed that those who wish to pass Estonia's border with Russia, had to register as 'aliens' within two years (later prolonged to

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<sup>168</sup> Graham Smith, "Transnational Politics and the Politics of the Russian Diaspora", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1999, p.513.

<sup>169</sup> Graham Smith, Aadne Aasland and Richard Mole, "Statehood, Ethnic relations and Citizenship", ed. by Graham Smith, *The Baltic States: The National Self-Determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, p.188.

<sup>170</sup> Graham Smith, "Transnational Politics and the Politics of the Russian Diaspora", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1999, p.513.

<sup>171</sup> Michelle E. Commercio, "Exit in the Near Abroad: The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan", *Problems of Post Communism*, Vol. 51, No. 6, November/December 2004, p.24.

four years), and to apply for citizenship or leave the country.<sup>172</sup> In order that over four-fifth population living in the north-eastern Estonia belongs to the diaspora, this law was especially significant for them. Despite the fact that some amendments on this law were made because of Western pressure, Estonian government legitimized this law on the ground of effective monitoring of its non-citizens. Nevertheless, Alien Law was amended to guarantee work permit to all aliens who had settled to Estonia prior to 1 July 1990 and had been registered as permanent resident; since CSCE's pressure has growth.<sup>173</sup>

Protecting superior position of titular nation through citizenship legislations in the political area, the nationalizing elite in Estonia and Latvia, also, brought condition of proficiency in the state language to those who apply for citizenship. With this arrangement, to secure indigenous culture of majority and roll back Russian influence were aimed. In 1992, Latvia passed a law which defines Russian language as the language of interethnic communication. Moreover, this law declared that use of Latvian is mandatory in many spheres of communication. It called for the creation of a "language police" system consisting of a State Language Center, an Inspection Board, and a Language Commission. With the law on state language introduced in 1999, all languages designated as foreign but Latvian and Livonian. As Michelle Commercio noted, from a legal standpoint, the status of Russian language became equivalent to Chinese and Arabic.<sup>174</sup> The linguistic nationalism in Estonia, also, tends to place increasingly strict demands on the Russian diaspora to learn the titular language. In short, the language policies in Estonia and Latvia constitute major barriers for Russian diaspora to become citizens. Therefore, the adaptation of the core nation language as the state language ensures the institutional and cultural dominance of the titular nations over non-titulars in these states.

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<sup>172</sup> Graham Smith, "Transnational Politics and the Politics of the Russian Diaspora", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1999, p.512.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> Michelle E. Commercio, "Exit in the Near Abroad: The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan", *Problems of Post Communism*, Vol. 51, No. 6, November/December 2004, p. 25.

Despite the fact that Russians in the Baltic states do not constitute a homogeneous group and thus, their attitudes towards the states of residence differ from one to another; a few issues such as the status of Russian language, the discriminative policies pursued by nationalizing regimes in economic and political spheres unite them. For instance, one survey shows that over four-fifth of the diaspora in Estonia and Latvia viewed the requirements of citizenships were unfair.<sup>175</sup> Although Russian diaspora in the region have confronted difficulties of negotiating in many issues with the political elites in Estonia and Latvia, many of them have not seen immigration as an option. The number of the Russians who preferred to leave Estonia and Latvia was about 100.000 between 1991 and 1998.<sup>176</sup> Generally, it is argued that higher living standards in Baltic region than Russia caused Russians to remain in the states of residents. Then, which type of reactions was developed by Russians who decided to stay in Estonia and Latvia? Which reasons were influential in determining reactions? How are Russians' self-identifications?

At first hand, it is necessary to point out that Russians who immigrated in to Latvia and Estonia during the Soviet period are technical elite and employed in economic management, administration and science. In his study in 1992, Aadne Aasland contends that Russians settling in Latvia in Soviet-era were well integrated in to Latvian society. However, the imperial identity among subgroups of Russian population is very common. In the case of Estonia, one survey shows that Russian population in this state generally empire-minded people: 37 percent of Russian respondents said that they felt homeless with the end of the Soviet Union. While Russians in Estonia feel on some occasions close to Russians in Russia, they also separate themselves from Russians in Russia by pointing out certain characteristic traits. In the survey conducted by R. Rose and W. Maley in 1993, it was found that

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<sup>175</sup> Graham Smith, *The Post Soviet States: Mapping the Politics of Transition*, London: Arnold, 2002, p. 83.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

fifty percent of all Russian respondents in all three Baltic states mostly identified with their city while 29 percent listed 'Russian' as their first identity.<sup>177</sup>

This heterogeneity about self-identification of Russians reflected their behaviors following the end of Soviet Union. One part of the Russian population settling in Estonia and Latvia disagreed to establish organizations which could pursue their interests in these states. It was argued by them that organization set up on Russian ethnic origin could trigger the ethnic conflict with titular nation. Nevertheless, as a reaction to discrimination, Baltic Russians have formed organizations to express and preserve their interests in Estonia and Latvia. In compare to Latvia, the reactions of Russians in Estonia were much stronger. For instance, the introduction the Law on Alliance met with strong resistance in the northeastern part of Estonia. In addition, a referendum on the question of political autonomy for this region was organized in 1993.<sup>178</sup> Despite the fact that there is a strong sense of homeland-identity among Russians in northeastern Estonia and many of them feel uncomfortable about their presence within Estonia, this has not taken the shape of support for irredentism. On the other hand, one of other strategy followed by Russians in northeastern Estonia was to take Russian citizenship.<sup>179</sup>

Some Russians in Estonia and Latvia who have been excluded from the public sector moved in to private sector and constituted new Russian business elite in these states. Although these Russians pursue their own self-interest rather than ethnic concern, they also provide financial source for diasporic politic. As they met difficulties and restriction in running economic sphere because of discriminative policies conducted by titular nation, their support has been increasing for the organization protecting the right of the Russians.

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<sup>177</sup> Pal Kostoe, "The New Russian Diaspora – An identity of Its Own", <http://folk.uio.no/palk/identity.htm>.

<sup>178</sup> Arunas Juska, "Ethno-Political Transformations in the States of the Former USSR", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, May 1999, pp. 535-536.

<sup>179</sup> Graham Smith, Andrew Wilson, "Rethinking Russia's Post –Soviet Diaspora: The Potential for Political Mobilization in Eastern Ukraine and North-East Estonia," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 5, 1997, pp.856-857.

Lastly, younger generations of Russians are seemed to invest their time and resources in becoming citizens rather than engaging collective action. In order to benefit from the economic advantageous and to get a position in labor market, the increasing number of Russians living in Estonia and Latvia strive for learning the language of titular nation. Moreover, Russians show more interest in sending their kids to state's schools rather than Russian colleges. However, as Graham Smith argues that it should not be assumed that the willingness to become citizens (and for this reason, learning the state language) will lead to de-politicization of ethnic Russians.<sup>180</sup>

#### **4.2. Ethnic Russians in Ukraine and Belarus**

The territories of Ukraine were incorporated gradually into Tsarist Empire and later into the Soviet Union throughout last three centuries while the territory of Belorussia was never imagined apart from the Tsarist Empire and Soviet Union by 1991. Ukrainians and Belarusians share the Slavic identity with Russians. There was no discrimination against ethnic Slavs in the Soviet Union. Thus, Ukrainians and Belarusians were able to have high positions in the military, state and party bureaucracy in Soviet era. This historical process paved the way for their integration into Russian society, policy, and culture strongly. Ethnic boundaries, cultural and linguistic features of Belarusians and Ukrainians became so similar to Russians.

In the case of Belorussia, as a consequence of this fact, Belarusians developed the weakest national consciousness among the ex-Soviet republics. In the process of break-up Soviet Union, Belarusians did not have a strong mass nationalist movement. After the independence, the premise of Belarusian identity was started to be constructed. But, the difficulty for the Belarusian government is how to build a

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<sup>180</sup> Graham Smith, "Transnational Politics and the Politics of the Russian Diaspora", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1999, p. 519.

nation which lacks a distinct historical and ethnic background. The majority of Belarusians do not feel that they constitute a nation different from Russia, with its own unique language, culture and history. The failure of policy makers in nation-building process has led President Alyaksandr Lukashenko to seek reintegration of Belorussia with Russia since he took office in 1994.

Although Russians and Ukrainians have lived together for centuries, Ukraine did have a mass independence movement which was, also, supported by Russians residing in this state. After the independence, formation of state in independent Ukraine was grounded on a coalition between Ukrainian speaking nationalist from the Western part and ethnic Russians from the Eastern Ukraine. According to Arunas Juska, the willingness of Ukrainian nationalists to share power with Russians derived from partly high degree of assimilation of Ukrainians. Because of assimilation, Russian-Ukrainian ethnic division in terms of common ancestry did not coincide with cultural and linguistic division. Moreover, attempts by the Ukrainian nationalists to secure Ukrainian ethnic hegemony would generate hatred and envy, not only among ethnic Russians but also Russified Ukrainians.<sup>181</sup> Besides these factors, Russians with more than 11 million populations have a big role in running national economy. In other words, the mass immigration of Russians which would be caused by ethnic policies pursued by nation-builders could threaten national survival.

The result in Ukraine, in Juska's word, was the creation of consociationalism. "Consociationalism develops in ethnically divided societies when none of the elites from different ethnic groups have enough resources or power to subordinate other ethnic groups, and when each ethnic group needs their opponent's resources for their survival."<sup>182</sup> Ukrainian nation builders avoid ethnic hierarchy in governance by sharing equally power with Russians in government. Thus, Ukrainian nation building was based on the definition of inclusive, civic nation.

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<sup>181</sup> Arunas Juska, "Ethno-Political Transformations in the States of the Former USSR", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No.3, May. 1999, pp.543-544.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p.528.

According to Ukrainian citizenship law introduced on 8 October 1991, all those residents on Ukrainian territory at the time the law adopted were granted citizenship.

Article 1 of the Ukrainian citizenship law:

Persons who at the time of entry into force of this Act were residents of Ukraine, irrespective of origin, social and property status, race and nationality, sex, education, language, political views, religious conviction, birth nature of occupation, who are not citizens of other states and who do not object to acquiring citizenship for Ukraine.<sup>183</sup>

Ukrainian statehood and citizenship are based on a territorial and non-ethnic definition. Moreover, no significant restrictions are placed on political activity of non-Ukrainians. Liberal laws are come in to force in formation of parties established by minorities. These policies pursued by leaders of Ukraine keep national minorities integrated in to state. Therefore, leaders of Ukraine have gained support of them. Thus, Ukraine provided a positive model for Russians in contradiction Estonia and Latvia where the Russian diaspora are discriminated.

In parallel line with Ukraine, the citizenship in Belorussia is based on zero-option law. According to citizenship law of Belorussia which came in to force 12 November 1991, persons who were permanent residents of Belarus on the day this law adopted remain citizens of Belarus.<sup>184</sup> Because of the adaptation of civic definition of a nation, Russian ethnic identity is not under a threat in Belorussia. Therefore, the linguistic policy of government of Belorussia secures the significant place of Russian culture in the society. Due to the fact that Russian population in Belorussia is more than one million (thirteen percent of the total) and 1.5 million Belarusians in Belorussia are linguistically Russified<sup>185</sup>, Russian was introduced by the leaders of Belorussia as a state language on a par with Belarusian following a referendum in May 1995. Moreover, in a survey conducted in 1992 in Eastern Belorussia demonstrates that more than sixty percent of respondents are not respectful to

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<sup>183</sup> Lowell Barrington, "The Domestic and International Consequences of Citizenship in the Soviet Successor States", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 5, July 1995, pp.740-741.

<sup>184</sup> *Citizenship Law of Belarus*, [http://www.multiplecitizenship.com/wscl/ws\\_BELARUS.html](http://www.multiplecitizenship.com/wscl/ws_BELARUS.html).

<sup>185</sup> Pal Kostoe, "The New Russian Diaspora – An identity of Its Own", <http://folk.uio.no/palk/identity.htm>.

Belarusian language.<sup>186</sup> In short, Russian culture and Russian ethnic identity in Belorussia are in secure. Russians in Belarus feel like at home.

The linguistic policy of Ukraine differs from Belorussia. The first government of Ukraine chose to promote Ukrainian language and culture. By doing so, the spread of Russian language has been stopped and Ukrainian has become the main language in the political life of Ukraine. The linguistic nationalism pursued by Ukrainian elites was resisted not only by Russians but also a part of the titular nation speaking Russian language as mother tongue. The governments of Ukraine confronting the resistance against their linguistic policies chose not to exclude the use of Russian language in the region where Russian-speakers are majority<sup>187</sup>.

At this point, it is worthy to say that regional rather than ethnic differences have been the greatest problems in Ukraine. The political orientation of Ukrainians living in Western Ukraine differs from the Ukrainians and Russians settling in Eastern Part. Western Ukrainians are more nationalistic and their political identification is European. On the other hand, Eastern Ukrainians is more Russified and conservative. In the Eastern part of Ukraine, Russian settlements are centuries old and closeness to Russian border strengthens the influence of Russia over this region. So, the cultural distance between Ukrainians and Russians living in this area is very short. Their political orientations are very similar. A big proportion of Ukrainians living in this area adopted Russian language as their mother-tongue. In other words, loyalty to Russian and Ukrainian culture works in favor of the former in Eastern Ukraine.

In addition, disappointment with the economic policies of the first Ukrainian government led to the rise of pro-Russian sentiments in the Eastern Ukraine, especially in Donetsk and Luhansk. This growing disappointment is due to the fact that many Russians supported independence of Ukraine for economic reasons. The leaders in Donetsk and Luhansk arranged a consultative referendum in 1994. A big

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<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Peter J. S. Duncan, "Ukraine and the Ukrainians" in *The Nationalities Question in the post-Soviet States* (ed. by Graham Smith), London: Longman, 2. ed., 1996, p.205.

proportion of participants voted in favor of closer ties with Russia and the CIS, plus limiting the gradual Ukrainization of these regions.<sup>188</sup>

Besides this division between Eastern and Western Ukraine, the situation of Crimean peninsula contributes the regional differences in Ukraine. In Crimea, two thirds of population is formed by Russians. While having strong historical and cultural links to Russia, Russians in this region have developed a unique self-identification. In 1991, Crimea was granted status of an autonomous republic within the republic of Ukraine. In 1993, as ethnic tensions gradually increased between Kiev and Crimea, the leaders of Crimea took a course towards unification with the Russia. This situation, also, escalated tensions between Kiev and Moscow, especially in Sevastopol where Russian Black Sea fleet was based.<sup>189</sup>

While significant segments of the political community in Crimea has strived for more independence, it is generally argued that

An independent Republic of Crimea is more a means than an end, the end being reunification with Russia (either in the larger, tsarist or the smaller, modern version). The many separatist movements of Crimea seem to have a much clearer idea as to which state they do not want to belong to (Ukraine) than as to what they want to put in its place.<sup>190</sup>

To sum up, the adaptation of civic nationalism and liberal policies by the governments of Ukraine is very contributive for non-titulars to integrate into Ukrainian political, economic and social life. For this reason, many Russians living in Ukraine do not prefer to immigrate to Russia. On the other hand, the closeness of Ukrainian culture to Russian culture, the large population of Russian diaspora in this state and Russified Ukrainians plus situation in Crimea has negative impacts in building separate Ukrainian national identity. However, the similarity of Russian culture to Ukrainian culture creates problem for Russians in self- identification as

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<sup>188</sup> Arunas Juska, "Ethno-Political Transformations in the States of the Former USSR", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, May 1999, pp.544-545.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Pal Kostoe, "The New Russian Diaspora – An identity of Its Own", <http://folk.uio.no/palk/identity.htm>.

well. For instance, N.M. Lebedeva asks but does not reply the question of whether Russians are in Ukraine a diaspora or a part of the Ukrainian people. The answer of Paul Kostoe is both, as few Russians in Ukraine view any contradiction between those two identities.<sup>191</sup>

Table 4: Views of Homeland by Russians in Belarus and Ukraine

	Belarus	Ukraine
Belarus	29.7	
Belarus and City or Region	3.1	
Belarus City	7.1	
Belarus Region	2.2	
Ukraine		38.0
Ukraine City		3.0
Ukrainian Region(except Crimea)		0.0
Crimea		2.7
Russia	21.3	16.4
Russia and City or Region	1.3	0.0
Russian City	5.4	0.0
Russian Region	7.7	2.0
USSR/Former USSR	6.5	14.3

(Source: The question for Ukraine is: “What do you consider to be your homeland?” For Belarus, it is: “Tell me, please, what you consider to be your homeland?” Lowell W. Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver, “The Motherland Is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad”, *World Politics*, Vol. 55, January 2003, p. 296.)

### 4.3. Ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

The imagined sense of national community in the states of Central Asian was created and developed throughout the Soviet period. The policy which was pursued in the early years of Soviet Union geographically divided Central Asia in to five nationalities based on republics. This division led the construction of homeland-

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

nation identities amongst the people whose sense of identity was shaped by tribal organization previously. No previous experience of definition of a national identity in a sovereign territory had been exercised by the political elites of Central Asia. For that reason, to establish a sense of post-colonial identity have created difficulties for the governments in Central Asia.

In Kazakhstan, political elites who search for a post-colonial national identity either reinvented the pre-colonial histories by elevating epochs and past heroes or created golden ages. Moreover, the Kazakh government has aimed at bounding past to present by symbol building. Similarly, nationalizing elite in Kyrgyzstan have recreated as a nation through imagined traditions and reshaped history.

Exploring pre-colonial past, nation builders in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have produced hatred towards Russians domination in the region. Thus, the new nationalism in these states reacted to Russification of region and condemned the Soviet past. However, the envy towards Russification of these countries and Soviet past has not been oriented towards the exclusion of Russians living in these republics by the new regimes of these states. Three major factors could be pointed out as reasons of inclusive policies towards ethnic Russian: First, the size of the ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are significant. Exclusive policies could trigger ethnic conflict between titular nation and ethnic Russians. Second, the role of ethnic Russians in running economy is crucial. The mass immigration of them could result collapse of national economies in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Finally, economies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are dependent heavily on Russian Federation. The exclusive policies toward ethnic Russians could increase Moscow's pressure on these states. Consequently, after independence new regimes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan did not favor in exclusive policies towards ethnic Russians.

With the independence, the autocratic regimes led by moderate leaders were formed in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Arunas Juska described these regimes as a mixture of ethnocratism and consociationalism. These regimes include ethnocratic features due to the fact that ethnic Russians have limited participation in the government and state

bureaucracy controlled by the clans. On the other hand, these regimes have features of consociationalism; because the leadership of these states agreed to share the power with the ethnic Russians. Ethnic Russians enjoy cultural autonomy and equal citizenship and voting rights.<sup>192</sup>

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan adopted a zero-option citizenship policy that automatically identified all permanent residents as citizens of the republic regardless of their ethnic origins. A law on citizenship enacted in Kyrgyzstan shortly after the Soviet Union's collapse, established the equality of all citizens before the law. Accordingly, Russians legally have the same rights and privileges as Kyrgyz.<sup>193</sup> Moreover Kyrgyzstan's president, Askar Akaev refused to introduce a law which claimed that land was the property of 'the Kyrgyz people' in 1991.<sup>194</sup> Akayev viewed that this law could have a destabilizing effect between titulars and non-titulars in Kyrgyzstan.

In Kazakhstan where inclusive citizenship law is adapted, the constitution of 1993 opened with the words, 'We, the people of Kazakhstan'. Following this address, the first article maintained that Kazakhstan was to be 'the Kazakhs people's form of statehood'.<sup>195</sup> While the premise of *people of Kazakhstan* showed that Kazakhstan was imagined on the basis of not ethnic but civic terms; the use of *Kazakh people* formed a contradiction to civic understanding of a nation. In the new constitution written in 1995, the formulation was changed as 'We, the people of Kazakhstan, united by common historical fate, have created statehood on the ancient land of the ethnic Kazakhs'.<sup>196</sup> On the one hand, it seems that nation-builders of Kazakhstan had taken a significant step away from ethnically based nationalism by decreeing *people of*

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<sup>192</sup> Arunas Juska, "Ethno-Political Transformations in the States of the Former USSR", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, May 1999, pp.542-543.

<sup>193</sup> Michelle E. Commercio, "Exit in the Near Abroad: The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan", *Problems of Post Communism*, Vol. 51, No. 6, November/December 2004, pp. 24-25.

<sup>194</sup> Graham Smith, *The Post Soviet States: Mapping the Politics of Transition*, London: Arnold, 2002, p. 91.

<sup>195</sup> Pal Kosto, *Political Construction Sites: Nation-Building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States*, Oxford: Westview Press, 2000, p.129.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

*Kazakhstan*. On the other hand, the reference *ancient land of the ethnic Kazakhs* could be interpreted as an expression of ethnocentric nation-building.

The policies pursued by Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani regimes in defining citizens were rather successful, because the ethnic situation in these two countries was stabilized. In addition to citizenship policies, the language policies contributed the stabilization in these republics. In contrast to Latvia and Estonia, knowledge of the titular language was not required for being citizens by the regimes of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Thus, the linguistic nationalism has not been perceived as glue amongst citizens in these states where there is a big cultural gap between titulars and Russians.

After independence, Kyrgyzstan's language policy promoted balance between the promotion of Kyrgyz and the protection of Russian. The 1989 law on the state language required the use of Kyrgyz in the spheres of communication while designated Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication. Confirming Kyrgyz as the state language, the law secured the preservation and development of Russian language.<sup>197</sup> A decree published by the government in 1994 expanded the use of Russian language in the spheres of communication. It declared that office works in all state agencies, organizations and institutions plus technical, planning, and financial documentation could be carried out in the Russian language. Moreover, the use of Russian was permitted in the areas where predominantly populated by Russian speakers.<sup>198</sup> In 2000, Russian was given the status of Kyrgyzstan's official language. Thus, Russian has the equal status with Kyrgyz.<sup>199</sup>

In the case of Kazakhstan, the Constitution of 1993 declared Kazakh language as the state language. It gave Russian language the special status as 'the social language

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<sup>197</sup> Michelle E. Commercio, "Exit in the Near Abroad: The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan", *Problems of Post Communism*, Vol. 51, No. 6, November/December 2004, p.25.

<sup>198</sup> Annette Bohr and Simon Crisp, "Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz", in *The Nationalities Question in the post-Soviet States* (ed. by Graham Smith), London: Longman, 2. ed., 1996, p.394.

<sup>199</sup> Michelle E. Commercio, "Exit in the Near Abroad: The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan", *Problems of Post Communism*, Vol. 51, No. 6, November/December 2004, p.25.

between people'.<sup>200</sup> In 1995, the new Kazakh constitution upgraded the status of Russian to an official language.<sup>201</sup>

In the case of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the main reason for the adaptation of inclusive citizenship and preservation of Russian culture is due to significant role of Russians in economy. On the Kazakh steppes and in the Kyrgyz valleys, Russian peasants have been tilling the soils for generations. In these states, rural dwellers formed by substantial parts of the local Russian groups. In addition, the Russian population is very large in urban areas. They dominate industrial sector. After independence, political power has reside mainly with the ethnic Kazakhs and Kyrgyz while the industrial sector has maintained to rest on Russians. Attempts made by regimes in these states have aimed at ethnic Russians to remain in order to prevent the collapse of large sections of national economies. In other words, attempts to include the Russian diaspora as citizens of republics were derived from two points: 1) the importance of ethnic Russians in the modernization of economies of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan 2) the dependence of these states to Russian Federation in economic sphere.

Despite the fact that accommodative policies of Kyrgyz regime towards ethnic Russians, many Russians have chosen to immigrate to Russia between 1989 and 1993. The migration was due to economic decline and decrease in living standards. Russian repatriation to the Russian Federation had significantly diminished the size and socio-economic position of the ethnic Russians stayed in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, insufficient economic conditions and the absence of an independent business community have challenged economic survival of Russians in this state. Increasing support for Islamization, inter-clan rivalry and conflict are also reasons for Russian to leave Kyrgyzstan.

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<sup>200</sup> Ingvar Svanberg, "Kazakhstan and Kazakhs" in *The Nationalities Question in the post-Soviet States* (ed.by Graham Smith), London: Longman, 2. ed., 1996, p. 327.

<sup>201</sup> Graham Smith, *The Post Soviet States: Mapping the Politics of Transition*, London: Arnold, 2002, p. 91.

While the massive immigration of Russians creates problem in economic field for Kyrgyzstani regime; massive exit plus irredentism of Russian settling in Northern provinces forms the fear for regime in Kazakhstan. There is a big social-cultural gap between Kazakhs and Russians. Therefore, the large numbers of Russians live in northern part of Kyrgyzstan where adjacent to Russia. As a result, the Russians in this state have closer ties with Russian Federation. It is possible to argue that irredentism can come to agenda for ethnic Russians living in northern part of Kazakhstan as Kazakh nationalism raises.

Table 5: Views of Homeland by Russians in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan
Kazakhstan	52.5	
Kazakhstan and City or Region	2.1	
Kazakh City	3.8	
Kazakhstan Region	0.3	
Kyrgyzstan		57.8
Kyrgyzstan and City or Region		0.7
Kyrgyz City		2.3
Kyrgyz Region		0.0
Russia	18.1	18.0
Russia and City or Region	0.6	0.5
Russian City	1.3	0.8
Russian Region	2.4	1.4
USSR/Former USSR	3.9	4.1

(Source: Lowell W. Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver, “The Motherland Is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad”, *World Politics*, Vol. 55, January 2003, p. 296. The question for Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is: “Tell me, please, what you consider to be your homeland?”)

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, political elites and intellectuals of the Russian Federation had to focus on nation building and state building process by redefining what the Russian people is and which the Russian borders are. Throughout this process, Yeltsin and Putin claimed to stand for a civic definition of Russian nation. The Russian nation was defined as the body of all citizens of the Russian Federation, regardless to ethnic and cultural origins. Considering the fact that the Russian Federation is multi-ethnic and multi-religious, the definition of the nation as “Rossiskaia” instead of Russian prevented mass ethnic conflicts, except in isolated regions such as Chechnya.

Never the less, the success of Zhirinovsky who identifies the Russian nation in the context of the acceptance of ethnic Russians in parliamentary election held in 1993 demonstrated that civic nationalism was very novel for the people of the Russian Federation. Moreover, the civic definition of the Russian nation did not gain important support from political and cultural elites. As a result of a wide range of frequently confused debates on Russian state and nation, intellectuals came up with the idea that the Russian nation was divided because of historical borders. Thus, the 25 million ethnic Russians -18 percent of entire Russian nation- who suddenly found themselves beyond the borders of the Russian Federation were considered as members of the Russian nation.

As of 1993, this ethnocentric interpretation of the Russian nation made resonance in political discourse. The Yeltsin government extended the definition of the Russian nation, including to it the twenty-five million ethnic Russians settled in newly independent post-Soviet states. Therefore, the term ‘Russian diaspora’ was shaped by political and cultural elites since 1995. Although this premise basically refers to

ethnic Russians residing in ex-Soviet republics, it became interchangeable with such terms as 'Russians and Russian-speakers' or 'compatriots' because of political concerns.

This thesis argues that conceptualizing the Russian population in near abroad as a diaspora is not appropriate. In contrast with a classical diaspora, the Russian migration was voluntary, and encouraged by Tsarist and Soviet policies in order to create buffer zones in Baltic States and Caucasus. The migration of Russians was partly promoted by state. Moreover, some Russians were separated from their homeland as a result of boundaries' changes. According to Neil Melvin and Charles King, referring to any trans-border ethnic group as a diaspora is not appropriate,<sup>202</sup> especially considering groups that found themselves 'abroad' because of changes in international borders such Russians.

In addition, the ethnic group consciousness amongst members of the Russian population in the ex-Soviet states was weakly developed. A probing example is the weakness of communal organizations. Furthermore, while solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement is common to most classical diaspora, Russians have not succeeded to establish such social networks across state borders. As a consequence, Russians expatriates' intellectual and political influence on their homeland is less flagrant than any classical diaspora's. They provide their homeland with no ideological, financial or political support. On the opposite, Russian politicians tend to use the diaspora to legitimize the Russian Federation's political and foreign policy actions.<sup>203</sup>

Lastly, the development of a return movement is not strong among Russians living in newly independent post-Soviet states, regardless to Russians' troubled relations with their hosts in Baltic states, Ukraine (Crimea) and Moldova (Trans-Dniestria). Only

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<sup>202</sup>Charles King, Neil J. Melvin, "Diaspora Politics: Ethnic Linkages, Foreign Policy, and Security in Eurasia", *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 3, p. 113.

<sup>203</sup>Graham Smith, "Transnational Politics and the Politics of the Russian Diaspora", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, May 1999, p. 502.

2.1 million Russians, most of them from Central Asia, have resettled in Russia between 1991 and 1998.<sup>204</sup>

In this prospect, this thesis views the Russian diaspora as an invention of Russian political and cultural elite. The invention of the premise Russian diaspora mainly developed a consensus about Russia's new identity; it became the homeland of the Russian ethnic and the protector of Russians' rights in ex-Soviet republics. Especially, after Putin took presidency. The idea that Moscow was responsible for Russian populations' security in near abroad has been frequently used to legitimize Russia's engagement into internal and external affairs of ex-Soviet republics. Thus, the attitude of Putin toward the Russian diaspora and states where the Russians reside has been drawn in the context of pragmatism. Moreover, the invention of the term "Russian diaspora" is crucial for intellectuals committed to Russia's imperialistic tradition, in order to define the ideas of the Russian nation and state. They consider ethnic Russians as their people settled in ex-Soviet republics. Hence, the notion of "Russian diaspora" has been developed as pretext for Russia's territorial expansion through Eurasia.

The premise 'Russian diaspora' is based on the assumption that Russians in newly independent post-Soviet states constitute a homogeneous group with a strong ethnic group consciousness. Contrarily, the thesis argues that the Russians residing in newly independent post-Soviet states are distinct one to another. As Russians constantly renegotiate the meaning of nationality accordingly to the policies pursued in newly independent states, identity boundaries are being reshaped. Moreover, regional features forces Russians to adopt various attitudes towards the Russian Federation and their host states.

In brief, this thesis leads to the conclusion that while the ethnic patron attempts to diasporize the Russians in ex-Soviet republics, the Russians living in newly independent post-Soviet states have various ways to codify their relationships with both Russia and nationalizing regimes.

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<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

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