

Engendering the Boundaries of Belonging:
The Moscow Popular Press in the Reimagination of the Russian Nation

by

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Abstract

The rise of racism in post-Soviet Russia, once the center of a multinational union that claimed to have forged an inviolable ‘friendship of the peoples,’ demands a serious investigation. This thesis contends that Moscow’s popular press has played a critical role in the manufacture, legitimization, and perpetuation of a climate of ethnic intolerance in Russian society. Over the course of the post-Soviet period, the nation’s most popular newspapers, as represented by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, and *Argumenty i Fakty*, have employed familial, gendered, and sexualized tropes in their Slavocentric reconceptualization of the Russian nation and Moscow, and concomitant exclusion and racialization of non-Slavic ‘Others’. Chapters explore these publications’ discourses on women’s reproduction, ethnic minority children, interethnic marriages, Russian masculinity, and the media-constructed ‘hypersexual’ non-Slavic male ‘Other,’ as potent and anxiety-ridden expressions of their increasingly ethnocentric and racialized renegotiation of the post-Soviet boundaries of national belonging.

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Introduction.

From the streets of Kondopoga¹ to the markets of Moscow², the intensification of ethnic Russian nationalism, xenophobia,³ and racism in post-Soviet Russia has captured the attention of observers both inside and outside the country. Violent and murderous attacks against visible ethnic minorities are recorded by human rights organizations virtually every day.⁴ Activists accuse local and central authorities of turning a blind eye to the endemic corruption of police who supplement their salaries by combing the streets looking for visibly non-Slavic citizens and immigrants from whom to extort bribes for

¹ In the autumn of 2006, a violent anti-Caucasian pogrom was ignited in the small Karelian town of Kondopoga after a bar room brawl between ethnic Russian and Chechen residents turned deadly. Businesses owned by non-Russians were ransacked, and on September 3, more than 2,000 of the town's residents gathered in the main square demanding the forced expulsion of all 'Caucasians' from the region. The local authorities were criticized for doing little to quell the violence in the first few days of the conflict. While nationalist groups, such as the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI), used the crisis to gain national exposure and promote their xenophobic platform. Pogroms directed against 'Caucasians' also erupted in Stavropol in 2007. See: Galina Kozhevnikova, "Osen' 2006: Pod Flagom Kondopogi," Tsentri-Sova, January 4, 2007, available at <http://www.xeno.sova-center.ru/29481C8/883BB9D>.

² Ethnic minorities working at Moscow's markets have become the targets of racially-motivated attacks. One of the most deadly attacks occurred in 2006, when an ultranationalist group exploded a bomb at Cherkizovskiy market killing 14, and injuring fifty, mostly immigrant workers. See: "Racist bombers sentenced to life for market blast," Russia Today, May 15, 2008, available at http://rt.com/Top_News/2008-05-15/Racist_bombers_sentenced_to_life_for_market_blast.html.

³ Here xenophobia is understood as the expression of fear, suspicion, hostility, and intolerance towards groups which are perceived in the public consciousness as 'strangers'. A particular form of xenophobia is ethnophobia, in which intolerance is specifically directed against 'ethnic groups' and those loosely grouped together as ethnic 'Others.' The most common manifestations of ethnophobia in contemporary Russian society include 'Caucasophobia,' which refers to xenophobia directed toward non-Slavic minorities from the Transcaucasus region, and the related 'Chernophobia,' which is derived from the Russian word for black, *chernyi*, and connotes animosity and expressions of intolerance toward persons of colour. In terms of ideology and practice, these manifestations of ethnophobia are virtually indiscernible from racism in that they seek not only to differentiate, but also to subordinate. See: Aleksandr Iskandaryan, "Black-phobia," Novoe Vremia, September 1996, 20-22.

⁴ According to Sova-Centre, a Moscow-based organization that monitors hate crimes in Russia, 2008 marked the deadliest year on record for racially-motivated violence in the country, with 97 murders (57 of which were committed in the capital region) and no less than 525 beatings. Sova contends that the actual number of racially-motivated attacks is much higher than these figures suggest as a result of endemic underreporting. While there is increasing evidence that prosecutors are ready to identify racial motivations when investigating crimes, and in recent years courts have been more inclined to issue convictions for hate-related violent crimes, the number of hate crimes committed in Russia still far exceeds convictions. Galina Kozhevnikova, "Radikal'nyi natsionalizm v Rossii I protivodeistvie emu v 2008 godu," Tsentri-Sova, February 19, 2009, available at <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/29481C8/C84DCA7>.

alleged registration infractions.⁵ The proliferation of anti-immigrant and extremist organizations throughout the country leaves one with the disturbing impression that a revival of a vibrant civil society in post-Soviet Russia is linked to a resurgence in chauvinistic ethnic Russian nationalism.⁶ Mainstream politicians play the ethnic nationalism card during election campaigns.⁷ The central authorities, in spite of repeated warnings of the threat that ethnic intolerance poses to the unity of the Russian nation,⁸ allowed a campaign to be conducted against ethnic Georgians living in the country during the Russia-Georgia crisis of 2006, which saw police raids of Georgian-owned businesses, unlawful searches of Georgian homes, and the targeted expulsion of 2,300 ethnic Georgians from the country.⁹ This discriminatory operation was followed by the tightening of the country's immigration regime and a ban on foreigners working in the nation's markets and kiosks, measures which were overwhelmingly supported both by nationalist groups¹⁰ and the Russian public.¹¹ Ethnophobic sentiment appears as a serious

⁵ For example see: Amnesty International, 'Dokumenty!' Discrimination on grounds of race in the Russian Federation (London, Amnesty International, 2003) and Open Society Institute, Ethnic Profiling in the Moscow Metro (New York, OSI, 2006). The pervasiveness of such discriminatory practices should not be attributed to economic considerations alone. Sociological surveys show ethnic intolerance to be particularly widespread among law enforcement officials. For example, a 2003 study conducted by Levada Centre found that 73 percent of the Ministry of the Interior (MVD) employees polled viewed ethnically non-Slavic immigrants negatively. See: Emil Pain, "Xenophobia and Ethnopolitical Extremism in Post-Soviet Russia: Dynamics and Growth Factors," Nationalities Papers 35, no. 5 (2007): 900-1.

⁶ Aleksandr Verkhovskii ed., Verkhi i nizy russkogo natsional'izma (Moscow: Tsentr Sova, 2007).

⁷ While the LDPR's Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is perhaps the nation's best-known entrepreneurial nationalist, one cannot forget about the xenophobic rhetoric of Dmitry Rogozin, the former leader of Rodina and current Russian envoy to NATO, whose party attracted international attention in 2005, when one of their campaign ads for the Moscow City Duma elections was pulled from the air for its none too subtle promise to 'clear the streets of migrant trash.'

⁸ For example see: "Putin faces up to racist scourge," BBC Online, May 9, 2006, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4755163.stm> and "Kremlin official says xenophobia could destroy Russia," RIA Novosti, November 20, 2006, available at <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20061120/55822256.html>.

⁹ See: Human Rights Watch, Singled Out: Russia's Detention and Expulsion of Georgians, October 2007.

¹⁰ VTsIOM, "Putin sposobstvuet rostu ksenofobii," October 10, 2006, available at http://wciom.ru/arkhiv/tematicheskii-arkhiv/item/single/3353.html?no_cache=1&cHash=3c9fdfd5

¹¹ Seventy-five percent of respondents in a nation-wide poll were supportive or very supportive of restrictive measures against foreigners in the sphere of retail trade, particularly in the markets. An overwhelming ninety-one percent of respondents from Moscow and Saint Petersburg were in favour of the

and growing problem in the Russian Federation. According to a 2006 poll, 58 percent of Russians support the enforcement of restrictions on representatives of different ethnic groups living in their region, with ethnic minorities from the Caucasus receiving the most hostile response.¹² Critically, intolerance of ethnic minorities is pronounced within all strata of Russian society, irrespective of educational status, income level, political views, or age.¹³

The virtual normalization of ethnophobia in contemporary Russia, once the center of an empire which proclaimed to have found the cure for racial discrimination, demands a serious investigation. In searching for the roots of Russia's mounting xenophobia, analysts have pointed to a variety of interdependent factors, including: the legacy of misguided Soviet nationalities policies;¹⁴ the scourge of war and instability in the Caucasus region and the attribution of numerous terrorist attacks throughout the country to 'Chechen bandits';¹⁵ the nearly two decades of largely unregulated and poorly managed mass migration into the country;¹⁶ the failure of the central authorities to

move, claiming that they were tired of their markets being controlled by people of different ethnicities. VTsIOM, "Press-Vypusk No. 588: Rynki bez Inostrantsev," November 30, 2006, available at http://wciom.ru/no_cache/arkhiv/tematicheskiiarkhiv/item/single/3663.html?cHash=487326b8be&print=1.

¹² FOM, "Natsionalisticheskie nastroyeniia v segodniashnei Rossii," April 20, 2006, available at http://bd.fom.ru/report/cat/internat_ro/of061623

¹³ See: Lev Gudkov and Boris Dubin, "Svoeobrazie russkogo natsionalizma. Pochemu v nem otsutstvuet mobilizuiushchee, modernizatsionnoe nachalo" Pro et Contra 9, no. 2 (2005): 6-24 and Valerii Solovei, "The Revolution of Russian Identity," Russian Social Science Review 49, no.4 (2008): 65-7.

¹⁴ Valery Tishkov and Martha Brill Olcott, "From Ethnos to Demos: The Quest for Russia's Identity," in Russia after Communism, eds. Anders Aslund and Martha Brill Olcott, 61-90 (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999) and Meredith L. Roman, "Making Caucasians Black: Moscow Since the Fall of Communism and the Racialization of Non-Russians," Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics 18, no.2 (2002): 1-27.

¹⁵ Moscow Helsinki Group, Nationalism, Xenophobia and Intolerance in Contemporary Russia, (Moscow: MHG, 2002), 19-24 and John Russell, "Terrorists, bandits, spooks and thieves: Russian demonisation of the Chechens before and since 9/11," Third World Quarterly 26, no.1 (2005): 101-16.

¹⁶ Renald' Simonian, "Problemy Trudovoi Migratsii v Rossii: Ot Korruptsii k Ksenofobii," Vlast' 11 (2007): 89-94.

meaningfully unite the nation along civic lines;¹⁷ the crisis of identity felt by the nation's majority ethnic Russian population following the collapse of the Soviet empire and the mounting 'ethnicization' of their collective identity in the post-Soviet period;¹⁸ and the overwhelming sense of insecurity and disillusionment unleashed by the nation's turbulent and less than equitable economic and political transformations.¹⁹ Lev Gudkov, a leading Russian sociologist at the Levada Center, argues that when hopes for a 'better life' after the collapse of the Soviet Union failed to materialize for the majority of Russian citizens, the nation fell into a collective depression, with ethnic minorities emerging as convenient scapegoats for a multitude of post-Soviet societal ills.²⁰ Transferring the blame for the country's and one's own personal problems onto visible minorities developed as a psychological coping strategy for the nation's numerically superior but humiliated ethnic Russian population.²¹

Moscow's popular press fulfils a powerful epistemic function in Russian society. The media are influential in any given society because they, in conjunction with other elites who also have a prominent voice in their discourses, help to construct and transmit society's central cultural images, ideas, and symbols, as well as the nation's narratives and myths.²² Beyond our personal experiences, the media often furnish us with the frames, facts, concepts, and definitions from which we construct our worldview.²³

¹⁷ Andrei Riabov, Samobytnost'-vmesto modernizatsii: paradoksy rossiiskoi politiki v poststabilizatsionnuu epokhu, (Moscow: Gendal'f, 2005), 52-4.

¹⁸ Solovei, 56-79.

¹⁹ Emil Pain, "Etnopoliticheskii Extremizm v Rossii: Sotsial'no-kul'turnye istoki i prichiny neeffektivnosti prinimaemykh mer protivodeistviia," in Etnicheskaia situatsiia I konflikty v gosudarstvakh SNG I Baltii, eds. V. Tishkov and E. Fililpovaia, 19-30 (Moscow: IEA RAN, 2005).

²⁰ Lev Gudkov, Negativnaia identichnost': Stati 1997-2002 (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2004), 121-168.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 468-73.

²² Frances Henry ed., Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-Language Press (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 15 and Teun A.. Van Dijk, "New(s) Racism: A Discourse

Surprisingly however, little attention has been paid to the media's responsibility for the construction and maintenance of xenophobia and racism in Russian society. This study contends that Moscow's popular press, through the dissemination of demeaning and demonizing depictions of non-Slavic minorities and Slavocentric imaginings of the post-Soviet nation and its capital, plays a critical role in the manufacture, legitimization, and perpetuation of a climate of ethnic intolerance and discrimination in the Russian capital and beyond.

Moscow's popular press, as an influential actor in the dynamic post-Soviet nation-building project, is intimately involved in establishing and policing who is the 'We' in the 'imagined community' of the Russian nation and who is the 'Other'. As an imperative means of the dominant culture's ideological production, the capital's popular media discourses not only reflect society's ethnocentric consensus, but also help to construct, reproduce, and indeed, legitimize it. The nation's most popular papers, through their agenda-setting and discursive functions, have the power to construct social problems and (mis)represent social groups. Negative images and ideas about ethnic minorities circulated in the capital's press play a divisive role in society and act to regulate the access of these groups to cultural, social, economic, and political power in the nation.²⁴ In other words, the prevalence of discriminatory discourses in the Russian print media is not just a symptom of xenophobia and racism in Russian society, such discourses also act to

Analytical Approach," in Ethnic Minorities and the Media, ed. Simon Cottle, 37 (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000).

²³ Teun A. van Dijk, "How 'They' Hit the Headlines: Ethnic Minorities in the Press," in Discourse and Discrimination, eds. Geneva Smitherman-Donaldson and Teun A. van Dijk, 237-8 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988) and Robert Stein, Media Power, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), xi.

²⁴ van Dijk, "How 'They' Hit the Headlines," 241.

legitimize, reproduce, and structuralize ethnophobic and racist cognitions and practices within society.

The precise relationship between press discourse and public perception is complex and the subject of ongoing academic debate.²⁵ Communications theorists Valerie Alia and Simone Bull contend that the media should not be considered as the ‘controlling will’ in the nations and communities that they serve.²⁶ This study recognizes that the readers of Moscow’s popular press are neither passive consumers of the discourses produced in such publications nor a homogenous uncritical mass. The relationship between media discourse and audience reception should be conceived of as a dynamic dialogue, with readers actively involved in investing their own personal meaning to the representations offered to them by the press. In fact, media studies suggest that consumers are much more likely to read papers and accept arguments that validate their preexisting views.²⁷ This analysis contends that Moscow’s popular press reflects, reinforces, and has the power to (re)shape ethnophobic attitudes within the Russian public.

The powerful role of the capital’s press in shaping negative public perceptions of ethnic and religious minorities has been confirmed by a number, albeit small, of Russian studies. A survey, conducted in 1992 to measure Russian Muscovites’ perceptions of non-Russian ethnic groups living in the capital, uncovered growing antipathy toward Azeris, Chechens, Georgians, and Armenians, with a significant portion of those polled

²⁵ For example see: Alec G. Hargreaves, “Media Effects and Ethnic Relations,” in Media and Migration: Constructions of mobility and difference, eds. Russell King and Nancy Wood, 23-37 (Routledge, New York, 2001).

²⁶ Valerie Alia and Simone Bull, Media and Ethnic Minorities (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005), viii.

²⁷ For example see: Hart Albarracin, et al. “Feeling Validated Versus Being Correct: A Meta-Analysis of Selective Exposure to Information,” Psychological Bulletin 135, no. 4 (2009): 555-588.

forming their negative opinions about these ethnic groups primarily from what they had read in the press (44%).²⁸ A study on Islamophobia in Moscow found that Muscovites, with the most hostile views towards Islam, had little personal contact with Muslims and heavily relied on the media in forming their views on the religion and its followers.²⁹ Media focus group experiments conducted by Russian sociologist, Igor Kuznetsov, found that Muscovite readers displayed overtly ethnophobic reactions to newspaper articles featuring ‘Caucasians’ as the perpetrators of crime, a response which was absent when participants were presented with items featuring ‘Slavic’ individuals in the same offending roles.³⁰ The Russian media likewise appears to play a critical role in legitimizing and normalizing the open expression of intolerance in society. For example, participants in media focus groups conducted by the Russian Fund for Public Opinion (FOM) claim that negative portrayals of non-Slavic ethnic minorities in the press give them the confidence to publically disclose their antipathy toward “non-Russians.”³¹

My decision to focus on Moscow’s popular press, as represented by the nation’s three top-selling newspapers, was based on a desire to look at those publications that attract the largest audiences and have the potential to most significantly influence public perceptions. Amid dwindling sales and profits in the Russian print media industry, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, and *Argumenty i Fakty* have managed to do more than just stay afloat. In fact, they have sustained or even increased their circulation over the post-Soviet period and have developed popular on-line and remote

²⁸ “‘Chechenskaia Problema’ v Otsenkakh Moskvichei,” (Muscovites’ Opinions on the ‘Chechen Problem’), *MK*, January 12, 1993, 2. Also see: Iskandaryan, 20-22.

²⁹ K.E. Petrov, “Vliianie sredstv massovoi kommunikatsii na uroven’ islamofobii v sovremennom rossiiskom obshchestve,” in *Islamofobii v Moskve*, ed. E.S. Il’ina, 57-74 (Moscow: Ippolitova, 2003).

³⁰ Igor Kuznetsov, “‘Litsa kavkazskoi natsional’nosti’ v ‘mnogonatsional’noi’ Moskve,” *Polit.ru*, November 30, 2006, available at <http://www.polit.ru/science/2006/11/30/kavkazvda.html>.

³¹ For an example of one such study see: FOM “Gruziny v Rossii. Media Fokus-Gruppa,” October 19, 2006, available at <http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/d064126>.

access versions of their products to broaden their appeal in an increasingly digital media market. In their continual quest for wider readership and greater revenues, these publications often resort to tabloid-style journalism. However, as respected Moscow State University media studies professor, Ivan Zassoursky, reminds us, the often sensationalized coverage of issues in these publications should not distract us from the considerable influence they wield over public opinion.³²

While all of the papers are privately owned and are formally independent of the Kremlin, they remain in the administration's good favour.³³ Their coverage avoids direct criticism of the central administration (although they regularly expose corruption and incompetence in bureaucracy at lower and local levels) and as such, their journalists are given preferential access and their editors-in-chief are invited on overseas trips with the President and his administration.³⁴

Komsomolskaya Pravda (KP) is the nation's most popular daily newspaper and the admitted favorite of former President and current Prime Minister Putin.³⁵ Currently, it has an impressive average daily readership of over two million, including half a million in the capital. On Fridays, when *KP* publishes a lengthier 'weekend' edition known as the "Tolstushka," readership reaches more than six million nation-wide, including over 800,000 Muscovites.³⁶ In 2006, the paper was sold by long-time owner Prof-Media, run by oligarch Vladimir Potanin, to ECN's Media-Partner, the media arm of an energy

³² Ivan Zassoursky, *Media and power in post-Soviet Russia* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 226-9.

³³ Alexei Bessundnov, "Media Map," *Index on Censorship* 37, no.1 (2008): 185.

³⁴ Oleg Panfilov, *Putin and the Press: The Revival of Soviet-style Propaganda* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2005), 11-12.

³⁵ Oleg Panfilov, "Iazyk Vrazhdy v SMI," *Tsentr Ekstremal'noi zhurnalistiki* November 12, 2006, available at http://www.cjes.ru/about/?pid=10&pub_id=364&lang=rus.

³⁶ For an up to date breakdown of the readership of various newspapers in Russia, Moscow, and other cities please see TNS Gallup Media's National Readership Survey available at <http://www.tns-global.ru/rus/data/ratings/press/>.

company which has close links to the majority state-controlled energy giant Gazprom.³⁷ Russian civil society groups such as Sova Center, the Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations, and the Demos Center contend that *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Moskovskii Komsomolets* are two of the most xenophobic publications in the nation's mainstream press.³⁸ The fact that these two newspapers are also the top-selling dailies in Russia suggests that there is more than ample consumer demand for the type of sensationalized and discriminatory discourses these papers are producing.³⁹

Moskovskii Komsomolets (MK) has been the most popular daily paper in the nation's capital since 1993 and is second only to *KP* for readership across Russia. In both 1993 and 1998, more than one million copies of the paper were sold in the capital region each day.⁴⁰ Currently the paper reaches over 800,000 Muscovites over the age of sixteen, with approximately 1.3 million daily readers Russia-wide.⁴¹ Much of the paper's reporting focuses on issues of significance to people living in the capital. It is also noted for its broad support of the policies of the city's long-time mayor Yury Luzhkov.⁴² The newspaper's ownership structure has never been officially disclosed. Allegedly, it has no outside investors, with the majority of shares said to be owned by the paper's long-time

³⁷ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Business Eastern Europe Report*, April 24, 2006, 11.

³⁸ Galina Kozhevnikova, "Rossiiskie SMI kak instrument pooshchreniia ksenofobnykh nastroenii," *Tsentr Sova*, March 9, 2006, available at <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/213716E/21728E3/6F69E89> and Panfilov, "Iazyk Vrazhdy v SMI."

³⁹ However, Sova Centre, which monitors 'hate speech' in the media, contends that ethnophobic articles and racially incendiary language are prevalent features in virtually every newspaper at the federal level. See: Aleksandr Verkhovskii ed., *Iazyk Vrazhdy Protiv Obshchestva* (Moscow: Tsentr Sova, 2007).

⁴⁰ See: "MK stal odnoi iz krupneishikh gazet v Rossii," *MK*, June 25, 1993, 1; Andrei G. Richter, "The Russian Press after Perestroika," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 20, no.1 (1995): 21; and "MK samaia populiarnaia gazeta v Moskve i Moskovskoi Oblasti," *MK*, January 16, 1998, 1.

⁴¹ The average of statistics available from December 2004 to April 2009. See: TNS Gallup Media, *National Readership Survey Data*. Available at <http://www.tns-global.ru/rus/data/ratings/press/>

⁴² "The press in Russia," *BBC News*, May 16, 2008, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4315129.stm>

editor-in-chief, Pavel Gusev.⁴³

With a continuous Russia-wide audience of over 8 million, *Argumenty i Fakty* (*AiF*) is by far the country's most popular weekly newspaper.⁴⁴ In Moscow alone, the print edition of the paper reaches more than 1.6 million people.⁴⁵ *AiF-Moskva*, the Moscow supplement included in every *AiF* sold in the capital region, was also included in this study as it focuses on issues of particular concern to Muscovites and is known for its provocative stance on issues such as immigration and interethnic relations in the capital. In 2002, Promsvyazbank, a subsidiary of Promsvyazbank which is owned by the Kremlin-friendly twin oligarchs Aleksei and Dmitry Ananyev, bought a 76 percent controlling stake in *AiF*'s previously independent publishing house.⁴⁶

I collected early material from *MK* (1993 and 1998) and *AiF/AiF-M* (1993-2002) by manually reading through each issue held in the archives at the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg and the Russian State Library in Khimki between October and December 2007 and transcribing or photocopying relevant articles. I used the information from this research to develop a list of key terms which I applied to a search of the online Factivia database at the University of British Columbia for *MK* (1999 to 2008) and *KP* (2000 to 2008) and of the online East View database at Carleton University for *AiF/AiF-M* (2003-2008).

My decision to cover such a wide swath of the post-Soviet period was deliberately guided by a desire to examine the continuities and divergences in media representations

⁴³ Bessundnov, 185 and "The Press in Russia."

⁴⁴ During the early to mid-1990s the paper had a weekly circulation of between 4 and 5 million. See: Richter, 21.

⁴⁵ The average of statistics available from December 2004 to April 2009. See: TNS Gallup Media, National Readership Survey Data, available at <http://www.tns-global.ru/rus/data/ratings/press/>

⁴⁶ "Promsvyazbank owners acquire total control of 'Trud'," RFE/RL, August 12, 2005, available at <http://www.rferl.org/Content/Article/1143458.html>

of the ‘Other’ across time. Furthermore, the few surveys of ‘hate speech’ in the Russian media that have been conducted by Russian scholars deal almost exclusively with the post-Yeltsin period.⁴⁷ To my knowledge, little or no study has been conducted on how ethnic minorities were conceptualized in the early post-Soviet press. This is a critical deficit which is addressed in my research. While the frequency of negative portrayals of ethnic minorities in the mainstream press appear to have grown in the Putin era, some of the most virulent manifestations of hate speech uncovered in my research were published in the first years following the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁴⁸

The abundance of material collected required me to take a thematic approach to the presentation and analysis of the media’s discourse on non-Slavic ethnic minorities. While a myriad of issues and concerns emerged from the articles collected in my research, a consistent and overarching theme in the Moscow popular press’ discourse is its ethnocentric reconceptualization of the post-Soviet Russian ‘imagined community’.⁴⁹ Specifically, this thesis examines the ways in which the popular press exploits familial,

⁴⁷ In addition to the monitoring of ‘hate speech’ in the Russian press, which has been conducted by Sova Centre since the Fall of 2001, there have also been a few short Russian-language articles on the construction of ethnic stereotypes in the nation’s newspapers. For example see: V.N. Titov, “O formirovaniï obraza etnicheskogo immigranta (analiz publikatsii pressy),” *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniia*, 11, 2003:1-24; Oksana Karpenko, “Iazykovye igry s ‘gostiami s iuga’: ‘Kavkaztsy’ v rossiiskoi demokraticeskoi presse,” in *Mul’tikul’turalizm i transformatsiia postsovetkikh obshchestv*, ed. V.S. Malakhov and V.A. Tishkov, 162-92 (Moscow: Nauk, 2002), and V.M. Peshkova, “Kontent analiz pressy Moskovskogo megapolisa ob azerbaidjanskoi obshchine,” *Demoscope Weekly*, November/December 2004, available at <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2004/0179/analit04.php>

⁴⁸ Sulieta Kusova, Director of the Center for Ethnic and Confessional Issues in the Mass Media, contends that increasing state control of and influence over the Russian media has resulted in a proliferation of hate speech and xenophobic articles in the nation’s press. See: Sulieta Kusova, *Rossiiia mezhdru ‘Nord-Ostom’ i Beslanom: po materialam federal’nikh SMI*, (Moscow, 2005), 55-59. Also see Oleg Panfilov, “Rebirth of Russian Nationalism: State Control of Mass Media is the Principle Cause of the Growth of Xenophobia in Russia,” *Index on Censorship* 35, no.1 (2006): 142-8. While my research supports the prevalence of ethnophobic discourse in the post-Yeltsin press, it would be incorrect to suggest that such articulations were absent or any less vociferous before 2000.

⁴⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991).

gendered, and sexualized tropes in its Slavocentric re-imagination of the nation and Moscow, and concomitant racialization of the non-Slavic 'Other'.

Throughout this paper, I use the term 'Other(s)' to signify those groups that are subjected to a process of 'Othering' in the popular press. 'Othering' refers to the press' discursive practice of creating in-group solidarity and identity ('We', Russians, Slavs, Orthodox, Muscovites) through opposition to and stigmatization of those whom it constructs as alien to, incompatible with, and threatening to the in-group.⁵⁰ This analysis recognizes that 'race' has absolutely no scientific basis in biology, but is rather a category of differentiation that is socially and contextually constructed as essential and natural. It is used as an ideological tool to exclude, oppress, and exploit particular socially constructed groups, and to deny them access to material, cultural, and political resources and power.⁵¹ Racialization then refers to the discursive production and extension of such racial meaning to relationships, social practices, and groups.⁵² The Moscow popular press' racializing discourses of the 'Other' display both elements of what theorists, such as Martin Baker and Etienne Balibar, refer to as 'new racism,' which stresses the alleged irreconcilable and irreducible cultural differences between socially constructed groups,⁵³ as well as those of 'old racism,' which are manifested in articles expressing anxiety over maintaining the 'biological purity' of the Russian nation and its people.

⁵⁰ Anna Triandafyllidou, Immigrants and National Identity in Europe (New York: Routledge, 2001), 5-6.

⁵¹ R. Wodak and M. Reisigl, "Discourse and Racism: European Racism," Annual Review of Anthropology 28 (1999): 176 and Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, Racialized Boundaries (New York: Routledge, 1995), 2-3.

⁵² Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s (New York: Routledge, 1989), 64-5.

⁵³ Martin Baker, The New Racism. Conservatives and the Ideology of the Tribe (London: Junction, 1981) and Etienne Balibar, "Is There a Neo-Racism?" In Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, trans. Chris Turner, (New York: Verso, 1991), 17-36.

If imagining the boundaries of the Soviet nation entailed the manufacture of myths and policies directed at bringing together a diversity of ethnic, religious, cultural, and language groups in support of the creation of a unified Soviet People,⁵⁴ then what we are witnessing in the popular post-Soviet press is the discursive unravelling of this process: the construction of a post-Soviet (Muscovite) identity which denies the myths of the past and cultivates its new image on the basis of increasingly ethnoparticularistic privileges and exclusions.⁵⁵ The fault lines created by the collapse of the multiethnic Soviet Union, the emergence of Russia as an insecure if ostentatious sovereign and ostensibly 'empire-less' nation state, and the dramatic demographic decline currently underway in the country are clearly evident in popular media discourse. This discourse, which speaks to an overwhelming sense of anxiety regarding the future of the Russian nation and its ethnic Russian population, reflects existing undercurrents and encourages the growth of xenophobia and racism within society.

The mobilization of familial imagery is a central feature in the press' discursive creation of the nation as a gendered and racialized construct.⁵⁶ Our relation to the national community is expressed through the powerful and essentializing metaphors of kinship and home. Distinguished scholar of nationalism Anthony D. Smith asserts that the family serves as an indispensable vehicle for symbolizing, defining, and organizing the imagined community:

⁵⁴ Francine Hirsch perceptibly refers to this as a process of "creat[ing] an official narrative about the transformation of the Russian Empire into the USSR." Francine Hirsch, "Epilogue," Empire of Nations: Ethnographic knowledge and the making of the Soviet Union (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005): 310.

⁵⁵ Nancy Ries contends that the growing popularity of Russian ethnic nationalism during the final years of the Soviet Union was inextricably linked to a desire by Russians to express disdain for what they saw as the failure of Soviet ideals of internationalism. See: Nancy Ries, Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997): 177-8. This derision and inversion of Soviet norms in the construction of a post-Soviet national identity is a process which continues to this day.

⁵⁶ Patricia Hill Collins, "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation," Hypatia 13, no.3 (1998): 62-82.

A linkage between family and nation reappears in nationalist mythologies and testifies to the continuing centrality of this attribute...The nation is depicted as one great family, the members as brothers and sisters of the motherland or fatherland, speaking their mother tongue. Most important it is myths of common ancestry not any fact of ancestry (which is often difficult to ascertain) that are crucial...The sense of 'whence we came' is central to the definition of 'who we are'.⁵⁷

However, defining 'who we are' also involves delineating 'who we are not' and 'who is not a part of us.' Nationalism serves not only as a homogenizing discourse, but also as a differentiating and classifying one.⁵⁸ As feminist theorist, Anne Phillips, contends, the family metaphor not only brings us together, but also sets us apart from others, "draw[ing] the boundaries between my family and yours, pulling us inexorably into ghettoized confines."⁵⁹ The nation implies not only inclusivity, but exclusivity; not only boundaries of belonging, but of segregation; not only physical and symbolic borders that unite 'a people', but also those that divide, differentiate, and degrade people(s).

An exploration within the imagined community itself reveals a multitude of fissures within, along, and between socially-enacted modes of power. The nation-as-family is encoded by a series of gendered, raced, and classed privileges and silences. It is imagined as a household headed by the nation's racially privileged men, in which both men and women, depending on their racial and social classification, are exhorted to accept and perform their 'natural' roles. In spite of the rhetoric of internal unity, it is an axiom that the domination of certain groups requires the subordination of others.⁶⁰

Feminist theorist of nationalism Anne McClintock suggests that the family trope plays a vital role in the mythologization and rationalization of discriminatory and

⁵⁷ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (New York: Penguin, 1991), 79, 22.

⁵⁸ Katherine Verdery, "Whither 'Nation' and 'Nationalism'?" *Daedalus* 122, no. 3 (1993): 38.

⁵⁹ Anne Phillips, *Democracy and Difference* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 33.

⁶⁰ Zillah Eisenstein, *Hatreds: Racialized and sexualized conflicts in the 21st century* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 21-43.

oppressive national (and imperial) projects.⁶¹ Thus, if nations are sites of both inclusivity and exclusivity through which various forms of normativity and difference are constructed, the ‘nation-as-family’ metaphor serves as “an indispensable figure for sanctioning social hierarchy...and legitimizing exclusion...within a putative organic unity of interests.”⁶² The mobilization of familial imagery in national projects throughout history has had tangibly negative consequences for both those constructed as *a part of* and *apart from* the national family. In the context of the popular media discourse examined in this study, it is evident that the boundaries of the post-Soviet imagined community increasingly are being drawn along ethnocentric lines, privileging the membership of Slavs in the national family, while denigrating or denying the claims of ‘Othered’ non-Slavic citizens and immigrants alike.

During the Soviet period, official discourse fashioned relations between the diverse peoples of the multinational socialist state as a harmonious friendship of peoples (*druzhiba narodov*). Soviet internationalism was depicted as an indestructible force, fusing the nation’s more than 100 different ethnic groups into an inclusive family within a common home. Soviet political scientists, Albert Nenarokov and Aleksandr Proskurin, proclaim in their optimistically titled book, *How the Soviet Union Solved the Nationalities Question*:

As social antagonisms disappeared under socialism, so did national strife and racial inequality and oppression in every form...The socialist nations that have emerged in the USSR have formed a new historical community of people – the Soviet people...Today it would be no exaggeration to say that a feeling of being members of one family prevails among Soviet people.⁶³

⁶¹ McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” *Feminist Review* 44 (1993): 61.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 64.

⁶³ Albert Nenarokov and Aleksandr Proskurin, *How the Soviet Union Solved the Nationalities Question* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1983) quoted in Craig Calhoun, “Nationalism and Civil Society: Democracy, Diversity and Self-Determination,” *International Sociology* 8, no. 4 (1993): 401.

While the belief and experience of being an equal member of a collective Soviet people certainly existed for many former citizens of the Soviet Union,⁶⁴ critics argue that the mobilization of familial metaphors to engender the Soviet nation as a society free of ‘ethnic’ prejudice and discrimination conveniently served to both conceal and legitimize the existence of unequal power relations between Russians and the non-Russian peoples. As historian Meredith Roman contends, despite the persistence of Soviet propaganda which underlined the equality of national groups small and large in the country, in practice, it was Russians who occupied the top tier in this ‘friendship of peoples.’⁶⁵ According to her, the supremacy of Russians in the Soviet Union was “euphemized or sanitized” by “framing it in positive ‘familial’ terms.”⁶⁶ The ‘great Russian people’ were conceived as ‘mentors’ and ‘elder brothers’ to their ethnically non-Russian ‘younger brothers’ in the Soviet family, who were expected to learn from and show eternal gratitude to their older sibling.⁶⁷ Indeed, it was ethnic Russians who were habitually singled out in the official pronouncements as “the first among equals of the fraternal peoples” of the Soviet Union.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ As Jeff Sahadeo notes in his study of Soviet Asian migrants’ experiences living in post-war Moscow and Leningrad, “many [, though not all,] Soviet migrants remember their experiences with fondness, considering themselves proud citizens and arguing that the ‘friendship of peoples’...promoted by the regime accurately reflected the harmony they experienced at the heart of the USSR.” Jeff Sahadeo, “Druzhiba Narodov or second-class citizenship? Soviet Asian migrants in a postcolonial world,” Central Asian Survey 26, no. 4 (2007): 560.

⁶⁵ Meredith Roman, “Making Caucasians Black: Moscow Since the Fall of Communism and the Racialization of Non-Russians,” Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics 18, no. 2: 4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 4

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8. Roman suggests the seeds of today’s hostilities were embedded in the very structure of the Soviet Union’s nationalities policies. She claims, that while suppressing overt manifestations of violent and institutionalized racism like those seen in Russia today, Soviet-style affirmative action policies were based on an assumption that non-Russians were indebted to their Russian elder brother for their civilized existence. This arrangement, she asserts, was bound to result in the devaluation of these groups following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

⁶⁸ This particular phrasing comes from a seminal 1982 article that appeared in the CPSU’s main theoretical and political journal *Kommunist* written by Richard I. Kosolapov, the journal’s editor-in-chief at the time.

In the post-Soviet era, these paternalistically-couched articulations have given way to overtly ethnoparticularistic and even racist discourse in mainstream Russian society, including the popular press. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, and associated spread of ethnic nationalism throughout and between the former republics of the multinational empire dealt the final blow to the image of the Soviet *narod* as an inviolable ‘friendship of the peoples’. The collapse of their ‘collective home,’⁶⁹ abdication and derision of their ‘collective purpose’ to build a bright communist future, deterioration of ‘collective ties,’⁷⁰ and conflictual re-readings of the ‘collective past,’ have in many cases combined with exclusive and discriminatory re-imaginings of the ‘newly’ independent nations of the Soviet Union. In the Russian Federation, the former ‘younger brothers’ (and sisters) of the ex-Soviet republics, and in particular the non-Slavic peoples hailing from the Caucasus and Central Asian countries, are excluded from the press’ increasingly Slavocentric re-conceptualization of the ‘family’ that is the Russian nation.

See: R.I. Kosolapov, “We are the Soviet People,” *Kommunist* 12 (1982) quoted in *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia: from Lenin to Gorbachev*, ed. Robert Vincent Daniels (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1993), 323. As Terry Martin points out, the first articulation of Russians as the “first among equals” appeared, during the era of Stalin’s rehabilitation of Russian culture in the 1930s, in a lead editorial in *Pravda* published on February 1, 1936. Martin notes that, “after this editorial, ‘first among equals’ became a standard Soviet epithet for the Russian people.” Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 452. This euphemism, as exemplified by Kosolapov’s articulation, saw a notable resurgence in the later years of the Soviet Union in correlation with a rise in ethnic Russian nationalism. On this topic also see: Hirsch, 309-12.

⁶⁹ If we are to better account for the incongruities of Soviet nationalities policies, which simultaneously promoted the unity of the multinational Soviet people, ethnic particularism and ethnoterritorial federalism, as well as ethnic Russians ‘special role’ in the Union, this ‘collective home,’ as Yuri Slezkine suggests, might be better conceived of as a ‘communal apartment,’ with the various national republics and regions represented by separate rooms and the Russians occupying a central place in the apartment’s communal kitchen and grand hall. Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a communal apartment, or how the Soviet state promoted ethnic particularism,” *Slavic Review* 52, no. 2 (1994): 414–452.

⁷⁰ Or conversely, frustration at the perseverance of intrusive/cumbersome, infrastructural, military, and/or socio-political ties/obligations from the Soviet era.

Slavic women's reproduction, sexual behaviour, and perceived vulnerability to non-Slavic males figure prominently in the popular press' ethnocentric and anxiety-ridden reconceptualization of the national family. The prevalence of such concerns corresponds with gendered readings of nationalism, which assert that women and their bodies play vital roles in the construction and maintenance of imagined communities. Feminist scholars, Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, offer a valuable framework for exploring the ways in which women are materially and metaphorically mobilized within ethnonational and racializing projects, as evidenced in the discourse of Moscow's popular press. Firstly, women, through their childbearing, act as the biological reproducers of the members of ethnonational and racial collectivities. Secondly, as the primary socializers of young children, women are frequently cast in nationalist imaginings as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture. Thirdly, women are held responsible for recreating, or failing to recreate, the boundaries of ethnonational and racial groups, depending on with whom they choose to engage in intimate relationships and have children. Finally, as the 'nation-as-woman' trope suggests, women are frequently exploited as symbolic signifiers of ethnonational and racial communities, representing both their distinctiveness and susceptibility to violation by outsiders.⁷¹

The first chapter approaches the popular press' discourse on women's reproduction and mothering as a rich field for exploring its increasingly Slavocentric reimagination of the Russian nation and its capital. Throughout history and across nations, the construction of women as the 'mothers' of the national collective has had the

⁷¹ Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, "Introduction," *Woman-Nation-State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 7-10.

oppressive effect of placing their reproductive behaviour at the centre of nation-building strategies.⁷² The gendered demands of national reproduction also frequently construct and reveal power relations along lines of 'race'. As in the case of Moscow's popular press, discourse which stresses women's 'duty' to bear and rear children for the national good is often directed only at specific women.

Amongst the litany of crises said to plague the post-Soviet nation, the significant decline in the birth rate, and the resultant decrease in the size of the nation's 'native population' (*korennoe naselenie*), are frequently cited causes for alarm in contemporary media and other elite discourses. The media's problematization of below-replacement fertility amongst the nation's women, who are exclusively imagined as Russian or Slavic, intimately intersects with racially-charged anxieties concerning the dilution (*razmyvanie*) of a distinct Russian/Muscovite culture and the very dying out (*vymiranie*) of the Russian nation. The press' pronatalist coverage is aimed at overcoming the country's 'one-child-per-family' norm, with ethnoparticularistic appeals emphasizing the importance of replenishing the nation's dwindling population with only 'Russian' and 'Slavic' babies. While 'Russian/Slavic' women are celebrated as the 'nation's mothers' and encouraged to fulfill their maternal/patriotic duty, 'non-Slavic' women (immigrants and Russian citizens alike) are cast as the 'overly-fertile' mothers of the 'Other' – or '(M)Others' – whose maternity is maligned and whose children are constructed as posing a demographic, cultural, and economic threat to the Slavocentric reconceptualization of the nation and its capital.

⁷² Catherine Hall, "Gender, Nationalisms and National Identities: Bellagio Symposium, July 1992," *Feminist Review*, 44 (Summer, 1993): 100.

Since ‘ethnic’ and ‘racial groups’ are imagined through allegedly natural norms of purity, the sexualized body is vital to delineating the limits between ‘us’ and ‘them’.⁷³ Sex represents both sanctity and danger, with ‘their’ sexuality most commonly portrayed as threatening the chastity of ‘our’ members and with it the inviolability of ‘our’ ethnic group/nation.⁷⁴ As such, the surveillance and proper management of ‘our’ women’s bodies and their sexual behaviours features as an imperative goal of all ethnonational and racial projects. In Russia, the popular press’ efforts to convince Russian women to embrace their ‘natural’ role at the centre of the family contain a racial undercurrent: Russian women, as the valuable biological and cultural reproducers of future generations, and critical boundary-markers for their ‘ethnic’ group, should be making families and having babies exclusively with Russian or Slavic men.

The second chapter examines the changing discourse on ‘mixed marriages’ and ‘families’ in the post-Soviet popular press. During the Soviet era, official policy and the state-controlled media supported interethnic unions as a critical vehicle for achieving the merger of the nation’s various ethnic groups into a collective ‘Soviet people.’⁷⁵ In particular, Russian women, who chose to marry and have children with non-Slavic men were conceptualized as essential pillars of Soviet internationalism (*russkaia zhenshchina – oplot internatsionalisma*’), literally drawing together the nation’s various peoples under

⁷³ As critical theorist, Tessie P. Liu, contends: “The centrality of reproduction in racial metaphors, especially in the transmission of common substance through heterosexual relations, allow us to see that the functioning of race as a social category rests on maintaining control over sexual behavior.” Tessie P. Liu, “Race and Gender in the Politics of Group Formation: A Comment on Notions of Multiculturalism,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 12, no. 2 (1991): 158.

⁷⁴ Joane Nagel, “Racial, Ethnic, and National Boundaries: Sexual Intersections and Symbolic Interactions,” *Symbolic Interaction* 24, no. 2 (2001): 126.

⁷⁵ For example see: Adrienne Lynn Edgar, “Marriage, modernity, and the ‘friendship of nations’: interethnic intimacy in post-war Central Asia in comparative perspective,” *Central Asian Survey* 26, no.4 (2007): 581-99. Specifically, Edgar observes how Soviet theorists viewed marriages between Russian women and Muslim men from Central Asia as an important force for ‘modernizing’ (i.e. Russifying) the Soviet periphery and bringing this historically ‘backward’ region into the Soviet mainstream.

one roof and into one family. However, views on interethnic marriage have undergone a significant transformation since the collapse of the socialist empire, with the increase in unions between ethnic Russian women and non-Slavic men from the former Caucasian and Central Asian republics depicted in the popular press as a highly undesirable and worrisome trend. No longer viewed as a vehicle for assimilation, the press constructs the 'Russian woman' and the nation she represents as being increasingly vulnerable to the 'degenerative' acculturating forces of the '*inorodtsy*' (peoples of a foreign race) and '*inovertsy*' (peoples of non-Orthodox faith) from the periphery. The regularity with which the 'problem' of intimacy and wedlock across ethnicized boundaries is discussed in the media, as well as the growing concern over the 'genetic' and 'existential' consequences of such relationships for ethnic Russians as a group, are indicative of a polarization of Russian society along racialized lines.

What has been dubbed as 'a crisis of Russian masculinity' likewise plays an important role in the negotiation of post-Soviet gendered and racialized relations. The media, appropriating the very real and personal challenges faced by individual men navigating the transformations of post-Soviet reality, hyperbolically and contextually portray the ethnic 'Russian male' as a dying species, a hopeless alcoholic, a failed breadwinner (*kormilets*), an emblem of national humiliation, and an increasingly unsuitable mate for Russian women. The press often perilously juxtaposes this pathetic figure with a caricature of the male 'Other,' whose alleged vitality, sobriety, virility, and success in adapting to the economic transition is used to humiliate and enrage the Russian male ego. Gisela Brinker-Gabler and Sidonie Smith, in their perceptive analysis of the intersectionality of gender, race, and national identity, offer a valuable lens for

interpreting the role of the racialized male 'Other' in the popular press' discourse on post-Soviet Russian national identity and the crisis of Russian masculinity:

If the right working of the nation is the right working of masculinity enforced, then threats to the nation are represented as emasculating...[I]n times of instability, nationalist discourses turn history and destiny into sexualized scenarios...[with] the nation imagined as a masculine body sapped of its lifeblood, corrupted by contaminating influences, weakened, stripped of its independence and autonomy, emasculated. In such times, threats to healthiness and purity of the body politic are identified with the 'foreign' or the 'alien' within."⁷⁶

The construction of the male 'Other,' as the bearer of a competing masculinity and contender for the hearts and hands of Russian women, is a critical theme in the press' discourse on mixed marriage, the inverse image of which can be found in the media's demonizing representations of the racialized male 'Other' as 'the rapist of the nation's women.' Philip Cohen reminds us that racializing discourse is rarely consistent in its depictions: "racist codes behave opportunistically according to an economy of means; they choose those signs which do the most ideological work in linking – and naturalizing – difference and domination within a certain set of historical conditions and representation."⁷⁷ Whether exploited as a figure of fetishistic desire or demonized as a symbol of degenerate danger, the sexuality of the male 'Other' is portrayed in the capital's popular press as posing a menace to the 'proper working of the Russian nation' and 'the proper enforcement of Russian masculinity.'

The final chapter turns to an examination of the media's deconstruction of the male 'Other' as a triumphant foil to the defeated 'Russian man' through articles which conversely construct him as a morally deviant and hypersexual being. Sexuality forms a

⁷⁶ Gisela Brinker-Gabler and Sidonie Smith, eds., Writing new identities: gender, nation, and immigration in contemporary Europe (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 15.

⁷⁷ Philip Cohen, "The Perversions of Inheritance," in Multi-Racist Britain, ed. Philip Cohen and Harwant S. Bains, 14 (Hampshire: Macmillan Education, 1988).

critical arena for both the construction of societal normativity and the ascription of otherness.⁷⁸ In addition to the regulation of the sexual behaviors of 'in-group' members, sexual denigrations of the 'Other' are a critical mechanism by which the boundaries between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' are constructed, maintained, and defended. As Joane Nagel contends:

It is the sexualized nature of things ethnic, racial, and national, that heats up discourse on the values, attributes, and moral worth of 'us' and 'them', that arouses passions when there are violations of sexual contact rules, that stirs reactions when questions of sexual purity and propriety arise, that sparks retaliations when threats to sexual and racial boundaries are perceived.⁷⁹

In Moscow's popular press, the racialization of the male 'Other' is accomplished in part through the persistent publication of articles depicting the 'Southern/Asian' man as a pervasive sexual threat to Russian woman. In its most explosive manifestation, the enemy 'Other' is symbolically and literally cast as the rapist of the nation and its women. Feminist theorist, Jan Jindy Pettman, warns that the mobilization of the metaphor of 'rape of the feminized homeland,' to represent national vulnerability, humiliation, or defeat, often confuses the rapes of actual women with an attack on the nation, and in the process appropriates these women's pain into masculine power politics.⁸⁰

In fact, Moscow's popular press constructs the demonized male 'Other' not only as a threat to the sanctity of the Russian woman/nation, but also as a bold challenge to the masculinity and power of the Russian male. As critical theorist, Julie Mostov, contends, because nationalist imagery casts women as a symbolic collective, carrying in their

⁷⁸ Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, (New York: Routledge, 1991), 217.

⁷⁹ Joane Nagel, "Ethnic Troubles: Gender, Sexuality and the Construction of National Identity," in *Nation and National Identity: The European Experience in Perspective*, eds. Hanspeter Kriesi et al., 95 (Zurich: Ruegger, 1999).

⁸⁰ Or as Tessie P. Liu writes: "women's bodies [become] the contested terrain on which men buil[d] their political regimes." Liu, 163.

bodies the communal love and honour of 'the nation', the rape of individual women only becomes significant in nationalist discourse when it is carried out by an enemy male and configured as a violation of the nation and as an insult to its men.⁸¹ In the capital's popular newspapers, the painful experiences of real women victimized by sexual violence are appropriated as tragic emblems of masculine/national honour, presented as a failure of the nation's sons to protect the nation's daughters, and experienced as masculine/national humiliation. In order to restore the 'proper' balance of power in society's hierarchy of gendered-racialized relations, which sees the Russian man as the master of his women, family, city and nation, the press contends that decisive, including violent, force must be taken against the alleged offending male 'Other'.

The dissemination of these types of discourses by the nation's most popular publications plays a significant role in the construction, perpetuation, and legitimization of a climate of intolerance against non-Slavic minorities living in the Russian Federation and its capital city. The ethereal idiom of national imaginings, even those which are blatantly discriminatory in composition, can often distract us from the institutional solidity of their effects.⁸² The Moscow popular press' manufacture and promulgation of racializing and ethnonationalist discourses reaps untold damage and pain in the everyday lives of real people, as well as for Russian society as a whole.

⁸¹ Julie Mostov, "Sexing the nation/desexing the body: Politics of national identity in the former Yugoslavia," in Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation, ed. Tamar Mayher, 92 (New York, Routledge, 2000).

⁸² Rob Nixon, "Of Balkans and Bantustans: Ethnic Cleansing and the Crisis in National Legitimation," in Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives, eds. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat, 81 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

Chapter One. '(M)Othering' the Nation: Conceiving the Post-Soviet Body Politic through Discourse on Women and Reproduction.

"I want to talk about what is most important to us all: about love, about women, about children, about the family, and about the most serious problem facing Russia today – the demographic problem...[N]o amount of migration will resolve our demographic problems if we do not also put in place the conditions and incentives for encouraging the birthrate to rise here in our own country...I propose a program to encourage childbirth. Our aim should be to support young women and families to have at least a second child...[However], we cannot solve the problem of the low birthrate without changing the attitudes within our society to families and family values. The scholar, [Dmitry] Likhachev, once wrote that 'love for one's homeland, for one's country starts with love for one's family.' It is imperative that we restore these time-honoured values of love and care for family and home."

- President Putin in his 2006 Address to the Federal Assembly⁸³

"If we are unable to increase the birthrate then we will be forced to take in between 400 and 500 (and later on even 800) thousand migrants a year in order to compensate, at least in some measure, for our population losses...However, if we try and substitute our natural population decline with migrants from different ethnic groups, which are typically known for their high birthrates, then we will very soon end up with a different country – different in terms of ethnic composition and its very purpose. Assimilation will not occur. They will live on our territory but separate from us."

- Dr. Vladimir Arkhangelskii, Senior Research Associate of the Centre for the Study of Population Issues at Moscow State University in an interview with Komsomolskaya Pravda.⁸⁴

"Our misfortunes, as ethnic Russians, result from the fact that we have so few babies. I myself have three daughters and I have told them that each of them should have at least a minimum of two children. Only then will we stop degenerating as a nation (natsiia)."

- Vladimir Strizhko, resident of Moscow, published commentary in Komsomolskaya Pravda.⁸⁵

⁸³ Vladimir Putin, "Poslanie Federal'nomu Sobranniiu Rossiiskoi Federatsii," May 10, 2006, available at http://archive.kremlin.ru/appears/2006/05/10/1357_type63372type63374type82634_105546.shtml

⁸⁴ Iuliia Zhukovskaia, "Retsept protsvetaniia strany ot uchenykh: Rodi troikh – spasi Rodinu," (Scientists' recipe for the well-being of the country: Give birth to three and save the Motherland), *KP*, May 15, 2006, 6-7.

⁸⁵ Sergei Chugaev, Maksim Chizhikov, Boris Markov and Dar'ia Aslamova, "Evropa perekhodit v Islam," (Europe is converting to Islam), *KP*, May 26, 2006, 8-9.

Amid a demographic decline in the ‘native population’ (*korennoe nasilenie*) of the Russian Federation, or what has been hyperbolically and ethnocentrically referred to in the media as ‘the extinction of the ethnic Russian nation,’ (*vymiranie russkoi natsii*), gaining and exercising influence over the minds and bodies of the nation’s potential ‘mothers’ has become an increasingly important concern of those in power. In 2006, following years of scaremongering in the nation’s popular media, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a strategy to confront “the most serious problem facing Russia today – the demographic problem,” in which measures to encourage the country’s women to have more babies assumed primary importance.⁸⁶ The ‘politics of reproduction,’⁸⁷ in which the ostensibly private activities of childbirth and childrearing intersect with and are harnessed to the very public concerns of nation and people-building, represent an essential component of what Foucault would call the ‘biopolitics’ of post-Soviet Russia.⁸⁸

Women’s reproduction has emerged as a fertile site in the reimagination of the post-Soviet Russian nation. However, if as theorists, Susan Gal and Gail Klingman, suggest, one of the main ideological and political purposes served by drawing attention to matters of reproduction in post-Soviet states has been to “remake the category of ‘nation’ and its boundaries,”⁸⁹ then delineating whose reproduction belongs and whose does not belong within the ‘nation redefined’ is of critical importance. While nationalist projects

⁸⁶ “Poslanie,” May 10, 2006.

⁸⁷ Faye D. Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, “The Politics of Reproduction,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 20 (1991): 311-343.

⁸⁸ French philosopher Michel Foucault developed the term ‘biopower’ to describe the diverse technologies of power (or biopolitics) developed and employed by the modern state to achieve the subjugation of individual bodies and exercise control over its population, conceived of as a governable social body. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 133-59. Foucauldian notions of biopower/biopolitics are acutely evident within the (ethnocentric) pronatalist discourse discussed in this chapter.

⁸⁹ Susan Gal and Gail Klingman, *The Politics of Gender After Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 21-22.

objectify the sexuality, reproduction, and ‘motherwork’ of all women, feminist theorist, Jan Jindy Pettman, reminds us that “the category ‘woman’ fractures along lines of power, identity, and difference.”⁹⁰ Different nationalisms have pursued different reproductive politics at different times, but always by distinguishing between ‘their own’ and ‘other’ women and between good and bad mothers.⁹¹

This chapter explores the ways in which the Moscow popular press’ discourse on reproduction and maternity is mobilized in its Slavocentric reimagination of the post-Soviet Russian nation and its capital city, and in its concomitant demonization of the ‘Other.’ While the childbearing and mothering of Slavic women are encouraged, valorized, and appropriated as a national resource, the fertility and maternity of women constructed as being outside of the imagined community, including racialized female immigrants and citizens of the Russian Federation, are discouraged, devalorized, and demonized as a threat to the national collective.

The press’ vision of the ideal national family explicitly excludes the ethnically non-Slavic former ‘younger brothers’ (and sisters) on the post-Soviet periphery. Its discourse likewise marginalizes certain visible ethno-religious minority groups, who while living within the official ‘political boundaries’ of the Russian state as citizens of the Russian Federation, nevertheless are excluded from the ethnocentrically imagined national collective, or at best, precariously situated on its edges. The press extols ‘Slavic’ women as the ‘nation’s mothers’ and exhorts them to fulfill their maternal duty, while maligning ‘their’ women as the mothers of the ‘Other,’ or ‘(M)Others,’ whose

⁹⁰ Jan Jindy Pettman, “Boundary Politics: Women, Nationalism and Danger,” in *New Frontiers in Women’s Studies: Knowledge, Identity, and Nationalism*, eds. Mary Maynard and June Purvis, 193 (London: Taylor & Francis, 1996).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 192.

reproductive capacity and children it deems detrimental to the nation. As critical theorist, Eithne Luibheid, posits, the media's dissemination of anxiety-provoking images and discourses concerning 'their' women's reproductive capacities constitutes an alternative and relatively unrestricted means of promoting racial thinking in contemporary societies:

Reference to childbearing does not carry the same social condemnation as reference to skin color, hair, eyes, or other criteria on which racist discourses have often seized. But discussion of childbearing nonetheless enables racial imagery—with links to biology, culture, economy, and nation—to be crafted, consolidated, and circulated.⁹²

This chapter heeds Luibheid's call to analyze the issue of 'childbearing,' not only from the perspective of 'gendered labour,' but also in terms of 'racial labour,' as it relates to the physical and symbolic reproduction of the post-Soviet Russian nation as a Slavocentric construct.⁹³

The first part of this chapter explores how Moscow's popular press, aligned with political, academic, and cultural elites, has placed the reproductive behaviour of the nation's majority Slavic women at the centre of the demographic debate. Soviet-era concerns about the nation's falling fertility and women's reluctance to perform their 'natural' role as mothers have acquired a sense of overwhelming urgency and racialized meaning in the post-Soviet press. The media's growing demand that Slavic women submit themselves and their bodies to the biological reproduction of the Russian nation forcefully reveals what critical theorists, Geraldine Heng and Janadas Devan, have termed as "the anxious relationship in the fantasies obsessing state patriarchy between

⁹² Eithne Luibheid, "Childbearing against the state? Asylum seeker women in the Irish republic," Women's Studies International Forum 27, no. 4 (2004): 341.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 343.

reproducing power and the power to reproduce.”⁹⁴ Slavic women who ‘refuse’ to bear children are scorned in the press for denying their feminine nature, being corrupted by Western values, and conspiring in the disintegration of the ethnocentrically-imagined Russian nation, which is increasingly ‘forced’ to rely on ‘undesirable’ non-Slavic immigrants to compensate for its dwindling and aging ‘native population’ and labour force. In the context of the Moscow popular press’ discourse, the gendered demands of national reproduction are intimately linked to the creation and maintenance of racialized boundaries of national belonging and exclusion.

The second part of this chapter examines the Moscow popular press’ (mis)representation of ‘their’ women’s reproduction and mothering as an essential part of its racializing discourse. Articles demonize non-Slavic immigrant women and racialized female citizens as inferior mothers and irresponsible breeders, who cannot legitimately reproduce the Russian nation. The press presents ‘their’ women’s childbearing as ‘overly excessive’ and posing a threat to the ‘ethnodemographic stability’ of the Russian nation and its capital, ignoring and distorting readily available information on the fertility rates of different ethnic groups living in the Russian Federation that contradicts its discourse. Articles and their ‘expert sources’ encourage and legitimize racial thinking within the Russian public by differentiating between the biological reproduction of ‘our’ women and ‘theirs’ and by framing such difference in terms of an antagonistic ‘procreate or perish’ demographic race between and ‘Slavs’ and ‘Non-Slavs.’ The anxiety of being ‘swamped’ by non-Slavic ‘Others’ is mobilized in the press’ discourse to advocate for discriminatory immigration and pronatalist policies, which would limit the number of such groups in the

⁹⁴ Geraldine Heng and Janadas Devan, “State Fatherhood: The Politics of Nationalism, Sexuality and Race in Singapore,” in *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia*, eds. Aihwa Ong and Michael G. Peletz, 201 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

nation. Just as the racialized '(M)Other' is cast as a threat to the sanctity of the Slavocentrically imagined community, so too are her children.

The final section of this chapter consists of an analysis of the Moscow popular press' portrayal of 'children of migrants' as a discursive manifestation of 'cultural racism.' The media propagate an ideology according to which the cultural differences between Russians and non-Slavic migrants from the former Soviet republics (groups once conceptualized as members of the same cultural community and Soviet people) are constructed as irreducible and irreconcilable, precluding 'their' successful integration into Russian society.⁹⁵ The eruption of violent protests by marginalized ethnic minority youth on the outskirts of Paris in the fall of 2005, sparked widespread concern in Moscow's most popular papers about the potential 'destabilizing threat' of Russia's own 'immigrant youth' population. The nation's schools have emerged as critical battlegrounds in the media's representation of the clash between 'Russian/Muscovite' and 'their' cultures. Articles emphasize the utter incompatibility of 'our' and 'their' traditions, values, and beliefs and stress the near impossibility of successfully integrating 'their' young people into 'Russian' or 'Moscow' society. 'Their' virtual unassimilability is presented as a danger to the Russian nation and the privileged position of the Slavic majority. Furthermore, the capital's press 'rationalizes' societal intolerance and discrimination of non-Slavic children (and their parents) as a natural response to 'their' provocative behaviour and as a legitimate form of defense of Russian civilization.

The roots of today's media discourse on women's reproduction and gender roles can be traced back to the Soviet era. Concerns about the protracted decline in fertility

⁹⁵ Etienne Balibar, "Is There a Neo-Racism?," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, eds. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, trans. Chris Turner, 17-36 (New York: Verso, 1991).

rates within the Northern and Western parts of the Soviet Union first emerged during the late 1960s and early 1970s when Soviet demographers began to draw the authorities' attention to the issue. The Soviet leadership's concerns with demographic decline in the European regions were primarily of an economic and geopolitical nature, as state planners were forced to grapple with the impact it would have on the size and age structure of the country's future labour and armed forces.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the growing disparity in birthrates between the Union's traditionally Slavic and Muslim republics, while a more sensitive and less openly discussed issue, also caused a sense of unease within the central Soviet establishment, which expressed a need to maintain a certain 'ethnodemographic balance' between the Slavic and non-Slavic populations of the multiethnic state.⁹⁷

Given the tenets of Soviet ideology, official commentary concerning the differential fertility rates of the multiethnic peoples of the Soviet Union emphasized measures to increase births in European parts of the country, rather than focus on the pattern of higher fertility rates in Central Asia.⁹⁸ While the relative freedom of expression afforded to Soviet citizens during the period of *glasnost* provided Russian

⁹⁶ Michele Rivkin-Fish, "Anthropology, Demography, and the Search for a Critical Analysis of Fertility: Insights from Russia," American Anthropologist 105, no. 2 (2003): 291.

⁹⁷ Helen Defosses, "Population Policy in the USSR," Problems of Communism 22, no. 4 (1973): 41-55. Union-wide fertility rates were still well above the replacement rate of 2.1 births per women, at 2.8 in 1960 and 2.26 in 1990. However, Soviet elite became increasingly worried about the long-term trend and the wide regional and ethnic disparities in the birthrate. The Northern and Western regions of the USSR displayed a pattern of fertility decline similar to the process underway in other European nations, while the demographic characteristics of the Central Asian republics continued to resemble those of South Asian nations. By 1980-81, total fertility in the Russian and Ukrainian republics was below the replacement level at 1.9 births per woman, while in the Tajik republic it was 5.6, in the Turkmen republic 4.9, and in the Uzbek republic 4.8. While fertility declined in each of the former republics following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the same general pattern of disparity in birthrates continues to this day. See: Micheal S. Teitelbaum and Jay Winter, "The End of the Soviet Empire," in A Question of Numbers: High Migration, Low Fertility and the Politics of National Identity, 92-98 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998). However, as is discussed later in this chapter, within the Russian Federation itself, there is little divergence in the birthrates of different ethnic groups.

⁹⁸ Teitelbaum and Winter, 97-98.

nationalists with the opportunity to publically express anxiety over the comparative decline in the Slavic population,⁹⁹ before the collapse of the Soviet Union, mainstream discourse on the demographic processes underway in the country was notably muted in terms of ethnic sentiment.¹⁰⁰

The legacy of Soviet gender relations also influences contemporary discourses. During the Soviet period, patriarchal and pronatalist objectives remained pervasive behind a semblance of women's 'emancipation' from the shackles of the bourgeois family construction. The inconsistencies between the rhetoric of Soviet gender policies and the real life experiences of many Soviet women have been well documented.¹⁰¹ In addition to participating as full-fledged members of the nation's labour force,¹⁰² Soviet women were expected to assume the primary burden of responsibility in the domestic sphere (i.e. mothering and housework). While state-subsidized nurseries and daycares provided mothers with a certain level of support in balancing their paid versus unpaid labour,¹⁰³ women were saddled with a 'triple burden' of employment, domestic work, and raising children.

⁹⁹ See: Jeff Sahadeo, "Druzhba Narodov or second-class citizenship? Soviet Asian migrants in a postcolonial World," *Central Asian Survey* 26, no. 4 (2007): 568-69.

¹⁰⁰ Michele Rivkin-Fish, "From 'demographic crisis' to 'dying nation': the politics of language and reproduction in Russia," in *Gender and national identity in twentieth-century Russian culture*, eds. Helena Goscilo and Andrea Lanoux, 153 (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

¹⁰¹ For example see: Katarina Katz, *Gender, Work, and Wages in the Soviet Union: A Legacy of Discrimination* (New York : Palgrave, 2001); Mary Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989); and Gail Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1978).

¹⁰² On the eve of its collapse, the Soviet Union had the highest female labor force participation rate of any industrialized nation. More than 85 percent of working-age women were engaged in full-time work or study, and women constituted 51 percent of the entire workforce in the USSR. See: Gail Lapidus, "The Interaction of Women's Work and Family Roles in the USSR," *Women and Work: An Annual Review* 3 (1988):88.

¹⁰³ In the post-Soviet era, the collapse of government funding for childcare centres and the emergence of expensive private daycares has made balancing work and family life even more challenging for many women. See: Tatyana Teplova, "Welfare State Transformation, Childcare, and Women's Work in Russia," *Social Politics* 14, no. 3 (2007): 284-322.

Bearing children, particularly from the mid-1930s on, became an essential and expected duty of Soviet women to the state. Russian feminist, Olga Lipovskaya, is frank in her description of the importance attributed to mothering in Soviet definitions of 'woman's work': "The cult of motherhood has always played an important role in our society. A childless or infertile woman was always considered 'less of a woman,' someone who had not fulfilled the most important task of her life."¹⁰⁴ The conservative "back to the home" movement, which emerged during the late 1970s and gained greater momentum under Gorbachev,¹⁰⁵ remains as a pervasive force in post-Soviet society.¹⁰⁶ Its patriarchal insistence that women return to their natural mission within the home and family is forcefully echoed in the popular press today.

However, Soviet-era concerns with declining birthrates have assumed an overtly catastrophic and ethnonationalistic tone in Russia's contemporary press. Apocalyptic visions, equating Russia's low fertility to impending national extinction, fill the pages of Moscow's most popular papers. In the midst of a 'demographic crisis of existential proportions,' Russian women (that is to say explicitly ethnic Russian and other Slavic

¹⁰⁴ Olga Lipovskaya, "The Mythology of Womanhood in Contemporary 'Soviet' Culture," in Women in Russia: A New Era in Russian Feminism, ed. Anastasia Posadskaya, 128 (New York: Verso, 1994).

¹⁰⁵ In his 1987 book, *Perestroika*, Gorbachev discusses how the Soviet state might improve the conditions of the nation's women by enabling them to "return to their purely womanly mission within the home and family." Indeed, the Soviet leader suggests that women's 'equal' participation in the workforce is at the root of numerous problems in Soviet society: "Women no longer have time to perform their everyday daily duties at home...many of our problems...are partially caused by the weakening of family ties and slack attitude to family responsibilities." Mikhail Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 117. While analysts suggest that this movement was motivated primarily by economic concerns (i.e. women's return to the domestic sphere would help to ameliorate some of the inevitable 'lay-offs' necessitated by the restructuring of inefficient and overstaffed state-controlled industries), such articulations made by the Soviet leader provided the conservative patriarchal movement, which emerged in the final decades of the Soviet Union (and persists to this very day) with greater leverage to advocate for the restoration of traditional gender roles in society, and in particular, women's primary role within the home as wives and mothers.

¹⁰⁶ For an insightful analysis of the gender backlash which developed in the Russian republic during the final decades of the Soviet Union, see: Barbara Alpern Engel, "New Russians, New Women?," in Women in Russia: 1700-2000, 250-68 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

women) have come under mounting pressure in the media to assume their ‘natural’ role as mothers. In the words of Russian sociologist, Olga Issoupova: “the ethnic Russian nation (*russkaia natsiia*) has replaced the socialist state as the altar of maternal sacrifice.”¹⁰⁷

Anxiety regarding Russia’s dwindling ‘native population’ places the reproductive capacities of the nation’s women at the centre of the press’ demographic debate. As feminist writer, Kerry Howely, reminds us, “in times of collective insecurity, empty wombs are cast as either a cause or a symptom of a state supposedly in decline.”¹⁰⁸ In Russia, the popular press’s concern with increasing the moribund fertility of ‘our Russian women’ speaks to an overwhelming sense of perceived crisis in society: a crisis of demographic decline; a crisis of the Russian family; a crisis in gender relations; a crisis concerning the hegemonic position of ethnic Russians on the territory of the Russian Federation; in fact, a crisis regarding the very identity and survival of the Russian nation. As Julie Mostov contends, while ethnocentric visions of the nation only revere the maternity of ‘our’ women, all women’s bodies must be surveilled and controlled.¹⁰⁹ In Moscow’s popular press ‘motherhood’ is presented as the essence of a Russian woman’s existence, a role that ‘nature’ and ‘her people’ compel her to perform.

The (under)reproductive capacities of the nation’s women are a prominent theme in the press’ discussions of the nation’s demographic decline. “Without an explosion in the birthrate, Russia will consist of only 77 million people in 50 years,” writes the capital’s most popular daily, *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, in a characteristic article

¹⁰⁷ Olga Issoupova, “From duty to pleasure? Motherhood in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia,” in *Gender, state, and society in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia*, ed. Sarah Ashwin, 44 (New York: Routledge, 2000).

¹⁰⁸ Kerry Howely, “Baby Bust!” *Reason*, July 2008, 29.

¹⁰⁹ Julie Mostov, “‘Our Women’/ ‘Their Women’ Symbolic Boundaries, Territorial Markers, and Violence in the Balkans,” *Peace & Change* 20, no. 4 (1995): 519.

concerned with the demographic crisis.¹¹⁰ “Today the typical Russian woman only gives birth to an average of 1.25 children. As it stands there are 1.7 times more coffins in our country than baby carriages,” cautions the country’s most read daily, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*: “In order to save the nation from extinction we need to be producing at least 2.15 children per women. And if Russia is to be restored to her original size, our women need to give birth to three.”¹¹¹ The nation’s top-selling weekly paper, *Argumenty i Fakty*, likewise holds Russian women accountable for the degradation of the country’s (ethnocentrically imagined) population: “In the country’s demographic crisis, it is specifically ethnic Russians who are dying out so quickly....Our Russian broads (*russkie baby*) just don’t want to have the babies [we need...]to preserve the nation.”¹¹² The ‘abnormally insufficient’ reproduction of Russian women is ‘confirmed’ in the media by the nation’s leading demographers. In one such typical articulation, Dr. Boris Khorev, Moscow State University Professor and author of the Communist Party’s platform on demographic politics, exclaims: “Virtually no one else in the world gives birth to fewer children than ethnic Russian women.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Vladimir Bykov, “Rossiia na snosiakh,” (Russia under demolition), *MK*, May 17, 2006, 4-5.

¹¹¹ Andrei Sedov, “Rozhai Detei – Spasai Rossiuu!” (Give Birth to Children – Save Russia!), *KP*, October 28, 2004, 6-7. For a similar articulation see: Zhukovskaia, “Retsept protsvetaniia strany ot uchenykh: Rodi troikh – spasi Rodinu,” *KP*, 6-7.

¹¹² Sergei Maksimovich, “Pora brosat’ pit’,” (It’s time to quit drinking), *AiF*, January 3, 2001, 12-13. This article likewise draws attention to another key ‘culprit’ in the demise of the ‘Russian nation’ – the hypermortality of the Russian male, a theme which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. For a similarly ethnocentric articulation of the gendered blame game surrounding the demographic crisis discourse, see: Dmitrii Polukhin, “Rossiia ostanetsia bez russkikh? Kto budet zhit’ na territorii nashei strany v seredine XXI veka?” (Will Russia be left without ethnic Russians? Who will be living on the territory of our country in the middle of the 21st Century?), *KP*, May 3, 2005, 4-5: “Russian men drink and therefore die young. Our women drink less, and as a rule, they tend to live on average 13 years longer. But our women are no less guilty than our men for the fact that our numbers are shrinking.”

¹¹³ Boris Khorev, “Cherez 100 let ot nas ne ostanetsia dazhe russkogo dukha!” (In 100 years, not even a trace of our Russian spirit will remain!), *KP*, November 21, 2000, 8-9. The alleged ‘singularity’ of Russian women’s under-reproduction is likewise supported by other elite in the press. For example, in an interview with *MK*, the Director of the National Centre for the Study of Population Issues, Valerii Elizarov likened the failure of “Russian women” to have more children to a form of “demographic suicide” and called on the government to do more to increase the birthrate among the “native population.” See: Mikhail Rostovskii,

If in the media's ethnocentric discourse Slavic women are extolled as the chosen biological reproducers of the Russian nation, then those who resist this 'natural' duty are chastised for being selfish, unpatriotic, and unwomanly. Articles express exasperation with Russian women who put their concerns ahead of the needs of the nation. "Today we are witnessing the virtually unmanageable extinction of our nation," writes *MK*, "and the gravest tragedy of all is that our Russian women, in spite of all attempts at persuasion, refuse to give birth."¹¹⁴ Or in another representative article "patriotically-minded" women are reminded of their role in preventing the "depopulation of the Russian nation" and "infiltration of traditional Russian lands by non-Slavic peoples": "You say you really want to help yourself and your country?! Then give birth!"¹¹⁵

The media, as part of the post-Soviet 'gender backlash' aimed at restoring the 'natural' balance of relations between men and women, pursue a connection between the low fertility of the nation's women and a crisis in the Russian family.¹¹⁶ "Today's family is in a deep state of crisis...Our women aren't interested in having babies...and the

"Opusteet Rossiia: My budem umoliat' tadjikov u nas porabotat?" (Russia is being depopulated: Will we be begging Tajiks to come and work for us?), *MK*, June 30, 2006, 3. Even Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn chose to turn the 'moribund fertility' of "ethnic Russian women" into an existential concern in his book, "The Demise of Russia," which he was invited to promote on the pages of *AiF*. See: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn "Krik Dushi – "Chem nam ostavleno dyshat'?" (A Soulful Plea – What do we have left to keep on breathing?"), *AiF*, May 27, 1998, 12-13.

¹¹⁴ Anastasiia Kuzina, "Nas malo, I my v tyubeteikakh," ("There are few of us and we're all wearing tiubeteiki), *MK*, December 4, 2006, 3. A 'tiubeteika' is a traditional cap worn throughout Central Asia and by other Muslim and Turkic peoples. Through the headline and in the article itself, this author, like many of her colleagues, deliberately constructs a link between the 'failure' of Russian women to have more babies and the inevitable 'colonization' of Russian lands by non-Russian peoples.

¹¹⁵ Rostovskii, *Opusteet Rossiia*, *MK*, 3.

¹¹⁶ Critically, a connection between the nation's falling birthrate and a perceived crisis of the family is also made at the official policy level. In the "Concept of the Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation from the period up until 2025," signed by President Putin in 2007, the 'institute of the family' and its 'spiritual and moral traditions' receive special attention. The government policy focuses on "strengthening the institute of the family, including the revival and support of the spiritual-moral traditions of family relations" as well as "propagandizing the value of families which have several children...and creating a positive example of the family in society which consists of an officially married [and heterosexual] couple having several children." Kontseptsiiia Demograficheskoi Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii na Period do 2025 goda, Moscow, October 9, 2007, available at <http://document.kremlin.ru/doc.asp?ID=41941&PSC=41941&PSC=1&PT=3&Page=2>

country's population has begun dying out at the most terrifying speed" proclaims a characteristic article.¹¹⁷ The sanctity of the family, ostensibly weakened by 'misguided gender experiments' during the Soviet era – which "emasculated" men, by placing the state at the head of the nation's households, and distracted women from performing their 'purely womanly mission' within the home, by recruiting them into the labour force – is now depicted in the press as being under attack from the globalizational threats of Western feminism, consumerism, and individualism. "The family has practically disappeared," proclaims *KP* in typical articulation:

Sociologists believe that we have undoubtedly and irrevocably inherited the European tradition of producing few children, setting life's priorities according to the following order: career, purchase of an apartment and a car, and then children – one unit (*shtuka*).¹¹⁸

The steady decline in Russian fertility rates, which demographic transition theory (DTT) suggests is an inevitable result of Russia's modernization and socioeconomic development,¹¹⁹ is pessimistically presented in the Moscow popular press as a sign of Russia's physical and moral degeneration and an abandonment of 'traditional' Russian values in place of 'alien' Western norms. While racialized non-Slavic immigrants and citizens have emerged in the post-Soviet era as the critical internal 'Other,' 'the West,' be it in the form of Europe or America, persists as a vital external 'Other' in the (re)definition of the Russian national character, inspiring both admiration and contempt.

¹¹⁷ Irina Finiakina and Svetlana Tsikulina, "Spaset li Rossiia liubov' za den'gi?" (Will Russia be saved by love for money?), *MK*, May 15, 2006, 3-4.

¹¹⁸ Nikita Mironov, "K seredine veka tret' Rossii vymret," (One Third of Russia Will Have Perished By Mid Century), *KP*, June 19, 2008, 4-5.

¹¹⁹ For example see: Sergei Zakharov, "The Russian Federation: From the first to second demographic transition," *Demographic Research* 19 (2008), 907-72. Of course the socio-economic dislocation caused by the transition to market economics appears to have accelerated the decline in fertility rates during the 1990s. It is also important to note critics have challenged DTT for its cultural relativism and its assumption that historical change can be adequately characterized by a linear, dichotomized vision of preindustrial and modern stages based on the typical European/North American pattern of development. See: Rivkin-Fish, "Anthropology, Demography, and the Search for a Critical Analysis of Fertility," 289-90.

In the context of the Moscow popular press' pronatalist discourse, faulting the infiltration of corrupting Western influences into Russian society for the nation's falling birthrate enables the media to detach the nation's demographic experience from the global pattern of development, and allows them to suggest that such a trend might be reversed through the 'restoration' of the patriarchal family model and traditional 'Russian' values. "In Europe the irrepressible propaganda of individualism and the cult of a life of pleasure in which children are seen as just a nuisance have taken over, and in Russia, this Western family model is becoming ever more entrenched," argues a representative article from *AiF*:

Today in Moscow, just as in Paris or London, women are giving birth at 25, 27, and even 30 years of age. The bonds of the family are weakening as well: for every 10 marriages in the past several years there have been 7 divorces. It is telling that we have more educated women than we have educated men. 30% of all children come into God's world outside of marriage.¹²⁰

The revival of Russia's religious roots, exclusively envisioned as Russian Orthodox, also figures importantly in the popular press' proposed remedy to the nation's 'crisis in the family' and lagging fertility. "It is near impossible to increase the birthrate in an atheistic society," contends Dr. Igor Beloborodov, one of the country's leading demographers and Director of the Institute for Demographic Research, in one representative *KP* article that argues for the "introduction of a foundational course in Christian Orthodox culture within the school curriculum" as an important component of the nation's demographic strategy.¹²¹ Similar statements are supported by figures from

¹²⁰ Vyacheslav Kostikov, "Na Zlobu Dnia: Kak vypravit' 'kachestvo' sem'i," (Today's Beef: How to improve the 'quality' of the family) *AiF*, November 23, 2005, 8. Also see: Mironov, "K seredine veka tret' Rossii vymret," *KP*, 4-5: "Women in Russia are not refusing to have children as a result of poverty, but rather because children will interfere with them fully enjoying the fruits of the second wave of the consumer revolution in Russia."

¹²¹ Aleksandr Kots, "Kak Rossiia budut spasat' ot vymiraniia? (How will Russia be saved from extinction?)," *KP*, October 15, 2007, 4-5. The introduction of religious education in public schools has been

the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) who are given a privileged platform in the nation's mainstream media.¹²²

Moscow's popular press depicts Russian women, who place their careers and individual interests ahead of marriage, motherhood, and other domestic concerns, as complicit in the destruction of the traditional patriarchal family,¹²³ an institution seen as vital to the national well-being. Articles portray the nation's childless women as corrupted by 'feminist values' and 'consumer culture' imported from the West. "What exactly do we need to do so that our women start to have more babies? Why are our traditional family values being progressively replaced by the Western cult of 'safe sex'?" questions *AiF* in a typical example.¹²⁴ "Today's generation of women want to make money and enjoy life, not change dirty diapers. Now they have their own ambitions, careers, education, and are competing with men for their own place under the capitalist

a persistent goal of the Russian Orthodox Church since the collapse of the Soviet Union and was met with support by the Putin administration. In a 2007 speech delivered at a meeting with Russian Orthodox clergy, Putin explicitly linked the nation's demographic crisis to the degradation of traditional family values and religious tenets and urged religious organizations to work with the state to address these issues, including through the development of religious education in schools. See: V. Putin, "Speech at a meeting with Russian Orthodox Clergy," November 17, 2007, available at http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/speeches/2007/11/19/2325_type82912type84779_151562.shtml. In July 2009, President Dmitrii Medvedev approved the introduction of a state-funded "Foundations of Religious Culture" curriculum for Russian middle schools. The course was introduced in 18 pilot regions in September 2009, and is expected to be rolled out throughout the country at a later date. Depending on the availability of courses within each region, which is a major concern amongst early critics, students and their parents will be able to choose between studying the fundamentals of Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, or a combination of all of Russia's four officially recognized 'traditional' religions. See: "Russian president supports religion education in schools," *RIA-Novosti*, July 21, 2009, available at <http://en.rian.ru/society/20090721/155576886.html>.

¹²² For example see: Ol'ga Vandysheva, "V zhenskikh konsul'tatsiakh vse razgovory – o Putine," (In the Women's Clinics all the talk is about Putin), *KP*, May 12, 2006, 3; Dar'ia Aptekareva, "Rodit' ili ubit'?" (To give birth or to murder?), *AiF*, November 2, 2005, 45; and Dmitrii Steshin, "Rossii ob"iavlennaya demograficheskaya voyna" (A demographic war has been declared against Russia), *KP*, January 10, 2006, 5.

¹²³ According to Russian academic, Elena Pakhomova: "when people speak of a state of crisis in the institution of the family in Russia, what is meant, first and foremost, is the patriarchal model of the family...the emancipation of women and all of the social and economic and moral changes that have gone hand in hand with it have undermined (although not eliminated) the foundations of authoritarianism, and, as a consequence, they have led to a change in matrimonial behavior, a rise in the number of divorces, increasing extramarital affairs, children born out of wedlock and so on." E.I. Pakhomova, "Is It Reasonable to Speak of a Crisis of the Family?," *Russian Social Science Review* 48, no. 5 (2007): 80.

¹²⁴ "Galvnaia Tema: Kak nam sberech' narod?" (Main Topic: How can we save our people?), *AiF*, May 17, 2006, 6-7.

sun,” writes *KP*.¹²⁵ Or in another article, a senior research associate from the National Centre for the Study of Population Issues supports the idea that Muscovite women’s mounting ‘materialism’ is at the crux of their declining ‘maternalism’:

Children are just not in style these days. We surveyed Muscovite women and asked them to rate what was more important to them – material well-being or having two children. The children came out on the losing side! We need to cultivate a consumer trend for having children. If we were able to successfully market beer to the public, maybe we could do the same with children?”¹²⁶

Framed as putting their personal cares, careers, and consumer needs ahead of matters of the home and hearth, Russian women who choose not to become mothers are reproached in the media for denying their very nature, their maternal instinct,¹²⁷ and their feminine duty to the nation.

The issues of abortion and birth control likewise feature in the press’ discourse. A woman’s choice in reproductive matters is increasingly coming under attack in the media, in the midst of the post-Soviet demographic panic and traditionalist ‘gender backlash’ (See Figure 1). “Before no one planned children, God just gave them to us,” writes *KP*, in one of many articles recommending a ban on the ‘propagandizing’ of so-called Western reproductive health strategies in the Russian Federation, in order to stimulate the birthrate.¹²⁸ The popular media are also actively engaged with nationalist elites in the

¹²⁵ Kots, “Kak Rossiia budut spasat’ ot vymiraniia?” *KP*, 4-5.

¹²⁶ Zhukovskaia, “Retsept protsvetaniia strany ot uchenykh: Rodi troikh – spasi Rodinu,” *KP*, 6-7.

¹²⁷ Rebecca Kay uncovers similar recriminations in her study of women and the renegotiation of Russia’s post-Soviet gender relations. Rebecca Kay, “Chapter 3: Born to be Mothers? Motherhood as Every Woman’s ‘Natural Calling’,” in *Russian women and their organizations: gender, discrimination, and grassroots women’s organizations, 1991-96*, 65-108 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

¹²⁸ Dmitrii Steshin, “Zagranitsa nam pomozhet. Ne rozhat” (Those overseas will help us...to not have babies), *KP*, November 1, 2006, 3. The belief that the ‘West’, through organizations like ‘Planned Parenthood,’ is conspiring in the depopulation of the Russian nation is not an uncommon theme in Moscow’s popular press. Such blatantly anti-Western declarations fail to acknowledge that although abortion is still the most common form of birth control in Russia today it was even more prevalent (and legal, except for a brief period under Stalin) during the Soviet period. For some other examples see: Kots, “Kak Rossiia budut spasat’ ot vymiraniia?” *KP*, 4-5 and Steshin, “Rossii ob”iavlennaya demograficheskaya voina”, *KP*, 5. Even in such ostensibly ‘anti-Western’ articles it is possible to see an ‘anti-migrant’

process of delegitimizing abortion as an option in women's decisions regarding their reproductive health.¹²⁹ The childbearing capacities of Russian women are framed as belonging as much to the nation as they are to each individual woman. Women who chose to have abortions become collaborators in the nation's demise. "Our nation's gene pool (*genofund*) has been butchered in the abortion clinics," exclaims a representative article in *MK*.¹³⁰

The prevalence of abortion is presented at once as a national tragedy, an aberration, an embarrassment on the world stage, and as a decisive factor in the nation's demographic decline. "Abortions are twice as common in Russia as births," exclaims *MK*: "According to WHO statistics, we outstrip the USA by a factor of 8, England and France by 10, and Finland by 20. Moreover, as a result of unsuccessful abortions, 20% of our families have lost the ability to become parents. Every five years the country loses up

discourse. For example, in "A demographic war has been declared against Russia," Dmitrii Steshin supports the views of the controversial Orthodox Deacon Andrei Kuraev who is quoted as saying: "I do not understand how it is possible to be shouting on every street corner about the demographic crisis in the country and importing all these migrants here and at the same time condone the work being done by these 'Centers for Family Planning'?"

¹²⁹ In 2003, the Ministry of Health placed the first restrictions on abortion since the Stalin era. Since that time, state policy has been aimed at decreasing the availability of abortion to women in the country. The 2003 amendment significantly restricts women's access to abortion after 12 weeks, only approving the procedure in cases of medical necessity, rape, imprisonment, the death or severe disability of the woman's husband, or a court ruling stripping a woman of parental rights. See: Robert Greenall, "Russia turns spotlight on abortion," *BBC News*, September 16, 2003, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3093152.stm>. In fact, Russia's current demographic concept, which was introduced in 2007, focuses on reducing the nation's women's reliance on abortion as a part of its pronatalist goal of increasing the birthrate. Exactly what lengths the government is willing to go to, are as of yet not entirely clear. However, since 2007, several other restrictions have been put in place. Now women seeking an abortion within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy undergo a mandatory consultation with a state social worker to discuss the reasons for seeking the procedure and sign a document confirming that they understand all the potential risks related to the procedure. See: Anna Kukartseva, "Rozhat'? Ne Rozhat'?" (To give birth? To not give birth?), *KP*, October 31, 2007, 7. The Duma is also currently reviewing legislation which would ban private clinics from performing abortions and prevent public advertisements for the procedure. See: Anna Arutunyan, "Duma to Ban Abortion Ads," *Moscow News*, April 24, 2008, available at <http://www.mnweekly.ru/news/20080424/55325991.html>.

¹³⁰ "Nam nikogda ne vstat' s kolen?" (Will we ever get up from our knees?), *MK*, January 22, 2001, 4.

to one million mothers.¹³¹ In Moscow's popular press, women's reproductive health is subjugated to ensuring that the nation's women bear more and healthier children.¹³² As *KP* succinctly states in one representative article:

We don't need to be planning our families, but rather having babies, and at a breakneck pace, while it is still not too late. Otherwise in 5 to 10 years, the demographic catastrophe in Russia will become irreversible and we will be forced to let in even more migrants than we already do. Doctors at the women's clinics shouldn't be helping women to have abortions, but rather persuading every healthy and secure woman to have more children.¹³³

In its coverage of the 'demographic crisis,' Moscow's popular press constructs Russian and other Slavic women as the preferred mothers of the nation, responsible for its physical and cultural reproduction. The media urge them to have more children to save the 'Russian' family and nation from extinction. Those who fail to perform their maternal duty are scorned in the press, which depicts them as being unpatriotic, self-absorbed, corrupted by Western values, and complicit in the disintegration of the Russian homeland.

However, the media's symbolic leap from 'demographic decline' to 'extinction of the Russian nation' is driven by much more than the rhetoric of a patriarchal backlash in gender relations, which exhorts women to perform their 'natural' and 'national' duty as mothers. It is also emblematic of a racially charged reconceptualization of the post-Soviet

¹³¹ Ekaterina Puchugina, "2/3 rossiian – zhertyv aborta" (2/3 of Russian citizens are the victims of abortions), *MK*, March 27, 2008, 4.

¹³² The popular media's concerns about a 'crisis of infertility' amongst the nation's women attributed to the 'overuse' of abortions is framed less as a women's health issue than it is as an immediate and long-term threat to the nation's ability to reproduce itself. For example see: "Kazhdaia shestaia zhenshchina besplodna," (Every sixth woman is infertile), *MK*, July 16, 2004, 6; Ol'ga Izvekova and Tat'iana Toropova, "Pochemu v Rossii ne rozahaiut?" (Why are we not giving birth in Russia?), *AiF*, July 23, 2003, 9; Nikita Krichevskii, "Rossiia, kotoruiu my...vymiraem" (Russia, which we...are driving into extinction) *MK*, January 24, 2007, 3; Ol'ga Grekova, "Ne ver', ne boisia, ne plodi," (Don't believe, don't be afraid, don't reproduce!) *MK*, July 27, 2006, 4; Aptekareva, "Rodit' ili ubit'," *AiF*, 45; and Viktor Solov'ev, "Chto budet s 'Rodinoi'?" (What will happen to 'Rodina' [the Motherland]?), *AiF*, February 1, 2006, 13.

¹³³ Steshin, "Rossii ob'iavlena demograficheskaia voina," *KP*, 5.

body politic, that delineates exactly which ‘people’ can and cannot legitimately save the ‘dying nation.’¹³⁴

In the discourse of Moscow’s popular press, bearing and rearing children is conceived not only as a form of gendered labor, but also in terms of ethnonational and racial labor, as it pertains to the reimagination, regeneration, and replication of the Slavocentric body politic. As demographic historian, Michael Teitelbaum, notes in his characterization of the ethnocentric framing of ‘fertility panics’ in other countries, “there is never a shortage of humans, only perceived or relative shortages of particular kinds of humans.”¹³⁵ In the popular press’ ethnocentric reimagination of the Russian nation, neither increased immigration of non-Slavs, nor the childbearing of the ‘(M)Other’ can counter the country’s demographic demise. An increase in the ‘population’ (*naselenie*) of the Russian Federation is seen as something entirely different from a solution to the extinction of the ‘Russian people’ (*russkii narod*)¹³⁶ or the ‘Russian nation’ (*russkaia natsia*), “conceived in both demographic and racial terms.”¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Critically, several scholars have noted a symbiotic correlation between the ‘restoration’ of patriarchal gender roles and the rise of ethnic nationalism in many post-communist societies. The late feminist theorist and activist, Žarana Papić, frequently spoke of the dangers of a masculinist revival across the post-socialist space for both women and visible minority groups: “The most influential concept in post-communist state building has been the patriarchal nation-state concept... Various forms of ethnic nationalism, national separatism, chauvinist and racist exclusion or marginalization of old and new minority groups are, as a rule, closely connected with patriarchal, discriminatory and violent politics against women, and their civil and social rights, previously guaranteed [*sic.*] under the old communist order.” Žarana Papić, “Europe after 1989: ethnic wars, the fascisation of social life and body politics in Serbia,” *Filozofski Vestnik*, 2 (2002): 193-4. Also see: Peggy Watson, “The Rise of Masculinism in Eastern Europe,” in *Mapping the Women’s Movement: Feminist Politics and Social Transformation in the North*, ed. Monica Threlfall, 216-31 (New York: Verso, 1996).

¹³⁵ Michael Teitelbaum, “Sustained Below Replacement Fertility: Realities and Responses,” *Population Bulletin of the United Nations: Below Replacement Fertility* 40 (New York: United Nations, 1999), 162.

¹³⁶ For an example of this type of formulation in Moscow’s popular press, see: Galina Sapozhnikova, “Budut li russkie chtit’ Koran i est’ ris palochkami? Nado li nam boiat’sia naplyva ‘zheiltykh’ i ‘chernykh’?,” (Will Ethnic Russians follow the Koran and eat rice with chopsticks? Should we fear the flood of ‘yellows’ and ‘blacks’?) *KP*, July 7, 2003, 4-5: “We cannot solve our nation’s demographic crisis by resorting to mass immigration. What we need is an increase in the native birthrate. After all, a population (*naselenie*) is not the same thing as a people (*narod*).”

¹³⁷ Leo Chavez, “A Glass Half Empty: Latina Reproduction and Public Discourse,” *Human Organization*

The popular media frequently juxtapose Russian women's moribund fertility against the threat of a growing population of 'undesirable' ethnically non-Slavic peoples. These 'Othered' groups, most often presented as migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia, are depicted in the press as both 'culturally incompatible' and 'overly fertile.' However, the media's discourse is not just a matter of xenophobic anti-immigrant rhetoric. Its anxiety is racially-charged and is directed even at citizens of the Russian Federation, such as Chechens, Ingush, and other visibly non-Slavic minority groups, whom the press excludes from its ideal imagining of the national community.

The popular press faults Slavic women's 'failure' to biologically reproduce the nation, for leaving 'historic Russian lands' vulnerable to the 'flood' of 'culturally incompatible' non-Slavic immigrants from the South and East. *MK* forges a direct link between the reluctance of Russian women to bear more children and the increased presence of "blacks" (*chernye*) in the Russian nation:

One of the reasons for the massive inflow of illegal and legal migrants into Russia is the catastrophic demographic situation our country is in. So don't be surprised to see so many Caucasians and Central Asians on our streets and don't try and say that no one invited them here. They have come here because we are decreasing in number every year, and nature will not let such a void go unfilled. Is there any escape? There is only one: Give birth!¹³⁸

While in *AiF*, the Russian public is emphatically warned: "If today we continue to ignore the serious threat posed by the fertility crisis in our country, then tomorrow our

63, no. 2 (2004):173–189.

¹³⁸ "Sokrashchenie Maloletnikh" (The depletion of young ones), *MK*, January 26, 2006, 3. This type of articulation has been a common feature in *MK* for many years. For example, an article published in 1999 proclaims: "Whether you like it or not, given our women's exceedingly low birthrate it is an objective fact that future generations of Muscovites are slated to be filled by immigrants, their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. You can relate to Caucasians in any number of ways, but you cannot ignore them. So, if the expansion of these migrants in Moscow is something that bothers you, then there is only one thing to do: Go forth and multiply! Everything is in your hands." "Na semi kholmakh: Cherez polveka merom Moskvyy stanet azerbaidzhanets?," (On the seven hills: In fifty years will the Mayor of Moscow be an Azeri?), *MK*, October 8, 1999, 3.

population, traditions, culture, history, in fact, the entire Russian people (*russkii narod*) will be washed away by the tsunami of peoples from the South (*iuzhnikh narodov*).”¹³⁹ In erecting barriers against this ‘existential threat,’ the paper advises that “each of our women needs to have a minimum of three children.”¹⁴⁰ The press’ concerns with low fertility and population loss are revealed as fears about the death of the nation ethnocentrically framed. The decline in birthrates among ‘ethnic Russians’ is presented as an ominous sign of their impending loss of power and privilege over the territory of the Russian Federation, and even of their literal physical and cultural disappearance. In such constructions, the very fate of the nation hinges on the reproductive decisions of ‘Russian’ women.

The commentary of leading academic, cultural, and political figures invited to ‘speak’ in the nation’s press lend a sense of credibility and legitimacy to the media’s ethnophobic discourse on the ‘demographic crisis.’ In *KP* for instance, the demographer, Dr. Beloborodov, warns the public that: “A policy to increase the population of Russia by bringing in more culturally alien (*inokul’turnikh*) migrants would be tantamount to the suicide of the Russian nation.”¹⁴¹ In another article, one of the country’s prominent pronatalists, Dr. Khorev, cautions that “if ethnic Russian women are unable to raise their

¹³⁹ Georgii Zotov, “Tema Nomera. Parizh: Rebiata! Ne Moskva l’ za nami?” (Theme of the Issue: Paris: Guys! Will Moscow be next?) *AiF*, November 16, 2005, 4. Or in another representative article, rife with rhetorical twists, *AiF* warns of the dangers of relying on what it calls “foreign sex” (*chuzoi seks*) to solve the nation’s demographic problems and urges the state to do more to raise the ‘native’ birthrate: “All the more often we are being reminded of the frightening truth regarding the threat to our national (*natsional’naia*) security [posed by] the ‘wasting away’ of our population...But compensating for the deficit of Russia’s native population by drawing on our passionate (*liubveobil’nykh*) neighbours to the South is pregnant (*chrevato*) with a multitude of dangers: the dilution of our distinctive national character and our culture and the withering away of our traditional Orthodox roots. Even today in the schools of scores of cities across the country, fair-haired boys and girls have become the minority.” Viacheslav Kostikov, “Seks v bol’shom gorode. I pochemu etogo seksa vse bol’she, a detei vse men’she? (Sex in the big city. Why is there more of this sex all the time and even less children?)” *AiF*, July 16, 2008, 7.

¹⁴⁰ Zotov, “Parizh: Rebiata! Ne Moskva l’ za nami?” *AiF*, 4.

¹⁴¹ Kots, “Kak Rossiia budut spasat’ ot vymiraniia?”, *KP*, 4-5.

fertility to well above the replacement level, then by the end of the 21st century, Russians (*russkikh*) as an ethnic group (*etnosa*) will simply cease to exist.”¹⁴² In an effort to forestall the ‘extinction’ of Russians as an ethnic group and prevent the repopulation of Russian territory by non-Slavs,¹⁴³ Khorev makes a desperate appeal to Russian women: “Please, give birth, regardless of anything and everything.”¹⁴⁴ Mikhail Leontiev, one of Russia’s most popular political analysts and anchor for First Channel’s television program “Odnako,” emphatically proclaims on the pages of *KP* that “Ethnic Russians will be swallowed up by the immigrant expansion if we don’t start making babies.”¹⁴⁵ Articles likewise feature the commentary of controversial, if popular, nationalist politicians who play on the public’s concerns about the nation’s alleged ‘birth dearth’ and ‘immigrant glut’ for political gain and publicity. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the leader of Liberal Democratic Part of Russia (LDPR), defended his party’s failed legislative attempts to introduce a ten year ban on abortion, lower the legal age for women entering into marriage from 18 to 15, and institute a prohibition on the departure of women of childbearing age from Russia, with the following remarks in *MK*:¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Khorev, “Cherez 100 let ot nas ne ostanetsia dazhe russkogo dukha!” *KP*, 8-9.

¹⁴³ According to Khorev, the process of ‘de-russification’ is already under way: “Right now Caucasians, Central Asians, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabs, and Negroes are coming into Russia. These are the very peoples that are taking the place of the Russian ethnic group and will number between 50 and 60 million by the end of the century. I am by no means at all a chauvinist or a nationalist, but I am very upset for the Russian *ethnos*.”

¹⁴⁴ Khorev, “Cherez 100 let ot nas ne ostanetsia dazhe russkogo dukha!” *KP*, 8-9. Earlier on in the article, the professor states that unless the situation with the birthrate improves, the state may be forced to take more ‘drastic’ measures. Dr. Khorev’s comment show just how far some pronatalists are willing to go to increase the ‘native’ population instead of resorting to immigration: “With such an extremely low birthrate, the Russian population simply cannot reproduce itself...If the situation does not improve, let’s hope to God that it will not be this way, our society may be forced to take very serious measures. One of them for example is to ban abortions. Or perhaps a tax on childlessness will be introduced. Moreover, there will be some type of an order requiring each woman – that is each and every one – to give birth to no less than three children – without regard to who the father may be.”

¹⁴⁵ Chugaev et al., “Evropa perekhodit v Islam,” *KP*, 8-9.

¹⁴⁶ Also see: Na Pozitsii Devushka Ublazhala Boitsa,” (Young Girl Comforts Soldier in the Field of Duty), *MK*, September 28, 2000, 5.

We were attempting to bring the public's and the authorities' attention to the fact that we are facing a demographic catastrophe in our country...If we don't act now what will the face of Russia look like in 20 to 30 years? 100 million Chinese and 50 million Southerner-Caucasians?!"¹⁴⁷

Or, in an interview with *AiF*, Dmitry Rogozin, the then leader of Rodina (Motherland) and Russia's current envoy to NATO, promoted his party's 'Preserving the Nation' program with the following statements:

It is utter nonsense that the extinction of the Russian nation is a 'natural process'. Our opponents have offered to open up the flood gates to migrants and swamp us with the millions-strong mass of 'guests from the South'. But this cannot be the solution to our demographic problems...It is entirely possible to increase our native birthrate instead.¹⁴⁸

While the press explicitly encourages stimulating the birthrate of 'Russian' women, the fertility of the female 'Other' is conversely demonized, deemed excessive, and depicted as posing an existential threat to the ethnodemographic stability of the 'Russian' nation (see Figures 2 and 3). The media's discourse exemplifies what cultural anthropologists, Ginsburg, Rapp, and Colen, have termed as 'stratified reproduction,' or the hierarchization of 'mother-work' (i.e. women's roles in biological and social reproduction), so that it is empowered for some, in this case the privileged Slavic majority, but stigmatized for others, particularly marginalized groups like immigrant women and women of colour.¹⁴⁹ In Moscow's popular press, it is non-Slavic migrant women from the former Caucasian and Central Asian republics, as well as non-Slavic

¹⁴⁷ "Vnebrachnye deti Zhirinovskogo," (Zhirinovsky's Out-of-wedlock Children), *AiF*, November 15, 2000, 20.

¹⁴⁸ Solov'ev, "Chto budet s 'Rodinoi'?", *AiF*, 13.

¹⁴⁹ See: Ginsburg and Rapp, 311-343; Shellee Colen, "'Like a Mother to Them': Stratified Reproduction and West Indian Childcare Workers and Employers in New York," in Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction, eds. F. D. Ginsburg and R. Rapp, 78-82 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); and Rayna Rapp, "Gender, Body, Biomedicine: How Some Feminist Concerns Dragged Reproduction to the Center of Social Theory," Medical Anthropology Quarterly 15, no.4 (2005): 468-70.

Muslim women who are citizens of the Russian Federation, who most frequently appear in the role of the demonized female 'Other.' Through the manufacture and legitimatization of public discourse that stratifies and racializes maternity, demarcating exactly which women can and cannot rightfully reproduce the Russian nation, Moscow's popular press plays a critical and divisive role in the propagation of discriminatory ethno-particularistic imaginings of the national community.

The press mobilizes the image of the '(M)Other' as a powerful instrument in the creation, naturalization, and hierarchization of categories of difference between 'us' and 'them'. 'Otherness' is both symbolically and literally reproduced through her body. As critical literary theorist, Laura Doyle, contends, discourses of maternal supremacy/inferiority are inextricably connected to those of racial supremacy/inferiority.¹⁵⁰ In Moscow's popular press, 'motherhood' is constructed as the highest calling for the nation's 'Slavic' women, while the '(M)Other' is depicted as being utterly inferior in her maternal role. The press encourages 'Slavic' women to have many more children than they currently do, while the maternity of 'their' women is problematized as a threat to the 'Russian nation's' demographic, cultural, and economic capital.

The media malign the sexual and reproductive behaviour of the 'Other' as being 'immoral,' 'carnal,' and 'disorderly.' Articles liken the birth of the children of non-Slavic migrants in the capital city, much like they do with the phenomenon of immigration, to an undesirable and uncontrollable force of nature. 'Their' reckless reproduction is depicted as a product of their 'backward' culture and 'animal nature':

For the peoples of Eastern ethnicities that have inundated our region, contraception is a concept, which to this very day, is unheard of and considered to

¹⁵⁰ Laura Doyle, *Bordering on the body: The racial matrix of modern fiction and culture* (New York, Oxford UP, 1994), 19-20.

be in contravention of religious tenets [*sic*]... The families left waiting in their homelands don't act as a deterrent to casual sexual encounters. Nature and animal instinct just take over... The result is that the hospitals and orphanages surrounding Moscow are being pelted by a never-ending downpour of the fruits of migrant love.¹⁵¹

The capital's popular press portrays the '(M)Other,' and in particular non-Slavic migrant women,¹⁵² as irresponsibly conceiving and discarding her kin. "Perverse Women of the East: Why has Moscow been filled up by abandoned infants from Central Asia?" proclaims the headline of one typical article.¹⁵³ In another piece, *MK* writes: "It is no secret that the majority 'producers' of abandoned children in Moscow are migrant women from the former Southern republics."¹⁵⁴ Articles depict 'their' women as being totally negligent in their childbearing. "As a rule, these kinds of mothers come to us at the very last minute, when they know that there is nothing left to do but give birth," complains the head doctor of a Moscow maternity hospital in an interview with *AiF-M*, "and since they usually haven't sought even the most basic medical attention during their pregnancy, we are forced to struggle with a lot of problems – difficult births and children born with various infections."¹⁵⁵ In addition to questioning the "maternal instinct" of these women, the press presents this "worrisome trend" as "an utter tragedy for the city and citizens of Moscow," forced to foot the bill for the care of the "more than 800 children deserted in

¹⁵¹ Svetlana Logvinova, "Podkidysh: Russkaia zhenshchina piat' mesiatsev vykhazhivala ditiia gastarbaiterskoi liubvi," (Foundling: A Russian woman spends five months taking care of a child born of guest worker love," *MK*, August 3, 2005, 3. For another illustrative example see: Kostikov, "Na Zlobu Dnia: Kak vypravit' 'kachestvo' sem'i," *AiF*, 8.

¹⁵² Critically, the reproductive behaviour of Slavic migrants does not seem to concern the press.

¹⁵³ Zhanna Golubitskaia, "Izvrashchennye zhenshchiny Vostoka: Pochemu Moskvu zapolnili broshennye mladentsy iz Srednei Azii?" (Perverse Women of the East: Why has Moscow been filled up by abandoned infants from Central Asia?), *MK*, September 13, 2006, 3.

¹⁵⁴ Svetlana Logvinova, "Gonka na vyzhimanie," (Race for Survival), *MK*, November 22, 2006, 4. As the headline suggests, this article is likewise concerned with the supposed 'demographic race' in which Muscovites are being slowly 'squeezed' out of their majority position by non-Slav migrants.

¹⁵⁵ Artem Simonov, "Malyshei po sotne v mesiatse," (Hundreds of little ones a month), *AiF-M*, November 8, 2006, 36.

the capital's maternity hospitals by their migrant mothers each year."¹⁵⁶ Both the migrant mothers and their children are labeled as "spongers" (*nakhlebniki*), taking advantage of a system which should be used for the exclusive benefit of 'Muscovites'.¹⁵⁷ The mothering of the 'Other' is also denigrated through the dissemination of articles depicting 'their' women as complicit in the exploitation and murder of their own children.¹⁵⁸ "Every day millions of Muscovites are forced to witness the horrible crime of children being murdered in our city," exclaims *MK* in one such article:

They number in the thousands, or perhaps, even in the tens of thousands...these beggarly women of Eastern appearance sitting on the snow-covered sidewalks in their tattered rags with children in their arms... In the frosts of winter, [the children] are silent, desperately holding on tight to the ones who brought them into this world. The first to die are those who haven't even reached their first birthday...Why is the capital of Russia being flooded by beggars from foreign (*chuzhikh*) countries, who are 'murdering' their children in our plain view?¹⁵⁹

Critically, it is through articles like these that the 'spectacle' of the racialized '(M)Other' is created, communicated, and corroborated in the public domain.¹⁶⁰ The capital's popular press constructs a demonized image of 'their' women that both reflects and reinforces unequal power relations in society. The media stigmatize non-Slavic

¹⁵⁶ "Zlatoglavuiu obzhivaiut kukushata," (Abandoned babies are making themselves at home in the golden-domed city [i.e. Moscow]), *MK*, May 13, 1999, 3.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Depicting 'their' women as exploiters and murderers of their own children is a frequent theme in the press' denigration of the '(M)Other'. For a selection of other illustrative examples see: "Tsiaganka-Nishchenka procila podaiania s mertvym rebenkom," (Gypsy Women-Beggar Asked for Alms with a Dead Child in Her Arms), *MK*, March 11, 1993, 1; "Tadzhichka otrezala golovu mertvomu rebenku, chtoby on ne ozhil," (Tajik woman cuts off the head of her dead child so that he couldn't be resuscitated,) *MK*, April 23, 2002, 1; or "Gost'ia stolytsy ubila detei," (Female guest of the city kills her children), *MK*, September 4, 2002, 1, in which an Azeri women, depicted as having difficulties adjusting to capital life, kills her two children.

¹⁵⁹ Svetlana Meteleva, "Proshchai, malysh," (Farewell, little one), *MK*, December 6, 2002, 3. The 'othering' of female migrants in the article is also accomplished by attributing distorted Russian to the Tajik mothers interviewed. For a similar articulation see: Marina Tumarkina and Ekaterina Pichugina, "Nishchikh s det'mi poprosiat iz Moskvyy," (Beggars with children will be asked to leave Moscow), *MK*, February 16, 2006, 1.

¹⁶⁰ Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the Other," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall, 223-90 (London: Sage, 2003).

migrant women as the source of social problems, which are more likely a result of their social, economic, and racial marginalization in Russian society.¹⁶¹ Articles cast the privileged Russian/Muscovite majority as victims, forced to observe and pay for the ‘degeneracy’ of the ‘(M)Other,’ while the endemic exclusion, subjugation, and discrimination of such women in Russian society is willfully ignored. It is through the press’ racializing discourse that ‘their’ women are publically and collectively degraded as irresponsible breeders and unfit mothers.

Additionally, the press explicitly contrasts the ‘maternal incapacity’ of ‘their’ women to the ‘feminine compassion’ of ‘ours’. In one such illustrative article, *MK* recounts the story of a 58 year-old ethnic Russian woman who discovers and adopts a malnourished baby boy abandoned by the Uzbek migrants working on her farm. “The kind and empathetic heart of this Russian (*russkaia*) woman would not allow her to abandon this infant in the same way that its unfit migrant mother had,” *MK* writes.¹⁶² The paper details how, in his “new Russian (*russkaia*) family,” the little boy is “lovingly smothered with warmth, care, and undivided attention, something it is doubtful he could have even dreamed about if he had been with his birth mother.”¹⁶³ Through articles like this, Moscow’s popular press constructs the female ‘Other’ as an inherently inferior

¹⁶¹ For example, the press discourse disregards the significant barriers faced by migrant women of colour in accessing prenatal care in Moscow and chooses to frame their ‘failure’ to ‘seek out’ such services as a reflection of their unsuitability as mothers. A recent report suggests that approximately 80 percent of the Central Asian migrants currently working in Russia lack access to basic healthcare, with migrant women facing particularly formidable limitations in this respect. See: Erica Marat, Labor Migration in Central Asia: Implications of the Global Economic Crisis (Washington: The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, May 2009), 30-32. The marginalization of migrant women and their reproductive rights is a problem throughout the world. As Heide Castaneda notes in her analysis of the situation in Germany: “Pregnancy is an especially vulnerable time for undocumented women, who must locate health care resources, which can ultimately heighten their visibility and deportability.” Heide Castaneda, “Paternity for Sale: Anxieties over ‘Demographic Theft’ and Undocumented Migrant Reproduction in Germany,” Medical Anthropology Quarterly 22, no. 4 (2008): 341.

¹⁶² Logvinova, “Podkidysh,” *MK*, 3.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

mother to the ‘Russian woman,’ a misrepresentation which is mobilized as a justification for ‘their’ exclusion from the Russian national family.

In the press’ racializing discourse, the specter of the maligned ‘(M)Other’ persists as a danger to the Slavocentrically imagined community. The media create anxiety surrounding the allegedly divergent birthrates of ‘our’ women and ‘theirs’ and constructs her ‘excessive childbearing’ as posing an existential threat to the ‘Russian nation’ (see Figure 4). “There are already no ethnically Russian children in the kindergartens,” misleadingly exclaims the headline of a typical *KP* article which expresses alarm over the ethnodemographic consequences of “Russian women’s reluctance to reproduce on the one hand and the abundant fertility of ‘their’ women on the other.”¹⁶⁴ *AiF-M* depicts non-Slavic migrant women as “taking over” (*zameshchaiut*)¹⁶⁵ the reproductive duties of Muscovite women, “irrevocably changing the face of the city” in the process.¹⁶⁶ Other articles reveal that the media’s apprehension about the fertility of the racialized ‘(M)Other’ encompasses not only ‘immigrant’ mothers, but also marginalized non-Slavic female ‘citizens’ of the Russian Federation:

In her categorical refusal to reproduce herself, Russia has become... a dying nation. Or, to be more precise, we should say Slavic Russia. During the past ten years in Chechnya (in spite of 2 wars!) the birthrate has risen. What are we to do? There is only one solution – to give birth to our own children.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Dmitrii Stepshin, Anna Dobriukha, and Vladimir Borsobin, “V detskikh sadakh russkikh detei uzhe net...” (There are already no ethnically Russian children in the kindergartens...) *KP*, October 18, 2004, 4-5. This article likewise portends the demise of the ‘Russian nation’ as the end result of ‘their women’s’ ‘hyper-fertility’ and ‘Russians’ ‘lagging birthrate’: “We will be faced with an arithmetic inevitability: the country’s very name – ‘Russia’ - will become rather hypothetical and perhaps little more than a joke.”

¹⁶⁵ ‘*Zameshchat*’ In this construction the word takes on a dual meaning of both ‘substituting’ the births of Muscovite women and ‘taking over the duty’ of Muscovite women who are failing to produce enough children.

¹⁶⁶ Ekaterina Bychkova, “Moskve bez migrantov ne prozhit? Nepravda!” (Moscow cannot survive without migrants? Nonsense!), *AiF-M*, June 7, 2006, 20-21.

¹⁶⁷ Sapozhnikova, “Budut li russkie chtit’ Koran i est’ ris palochkami? Nado li nam boiat’sia naplyva ‘zheltykh’ i ‘chernykh’?,” *KP*, July 7, 2003, 4-5.

In the ethnocentric discourse of Moscow's popular press, the "extinction of the Russian nation" is explicitly linked to "the country's rapidly changing ethnic composition," in which the 'low birthrate' of the Slavic majority is ominously contrasted with the 'burgeoning fertility' of increasingly visible ethnic minority citizens and migrants.¹⁶⁸

The capital's popular press confrontationally frames the 'divergent' fertility rates of 'our' and 'their' women in terms of a 'demographic race' for survival and dominance over Russian land and resources. The country's Slavic/Orthodox population is cast as being on the losing side in a 'battle of the cradles,'¹⁶⁹ waged by allegedly more fecund ethno-religious groups. Articles are infused with the anxiety-ridden and provoking rhetoric of competition, conquest, and conflict.¹⁷⁰ For example, a typical article from *MK* presents the 'excessive fertility' of Moscow's 'Southern guests' as a means of demographic and cultural conquest over the Northern capital and its vulnerable 'hosts':

These 'Caucasian guests' have become too numerous over the past several years. If they are given another two to three years of active tropical propagation, they will swallow up Moscow in its entirety and decisively institute their own laws of the land. Then us Muscovites will begin to shriek in 'their manner,' walk around in 'white slacks and shirts,' and munch away at their 'greens and melons.'¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Mironov, "K seredine veka tret' Rossii vymret," *KP*, 4-5. As in the majority of articles, here the nation's fertility crisis is ethnocentrically framed: "Only a boom in the birthrate will save us from a demographic crisis that threatens to wipe out a third of Russia by the middle of the century...In our country right now Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan have the highest birthrates. Then there are the migrants. Of the 101 thousand Muscovites born last year, almost a third were children of migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia."

¹⁶⁹ Here I borrow the term 'battle of the cradle' coined by feminist theorist Jill McCalla Vickers to describe the process by which nationalist elites co-opt the biological reproductive capabilities of the nation's women and attempt to regulate who, when, how many, and whose children women will bear for the good of the nation. See: Jill McCalla Vickers, "At His Mother's Knee: Sex/Gender and the Construction of National Identities," in *Women and Men: Interdisciplinary Readings on Gender*, ed. Greta Hoffmann Nemiroff, 485 (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1990).

¹⁷⁰ Donald Horowitz, a preeminent scholar of international ethnic conflict studies, observes that allusions to war are often found in the rhetoric of ethnic groups who feel threatened by the fecundity of competing groups. See: Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 175-9.

¹⁷¹ Iuliia Kalinina, "Pokoreniie Kavkazom" (Conquest by the Caucasus), *MK*, July 26, 2001, 3.

The press also constructs the ‘differential fertility panic’ as a hostile competition between Orthodox Christianity and Islam. The popular media ethnocentrically conceptualize Russia as an Orthodox nation under demographic siege, with the bearers of the Russian Orthodox faith, envisioned as the rightful inhabitants of holy Russian lands, succumbing to an increasingly fertile indigenous and immigrant Muslim population.¹⁷² In one representative article, *KP* writes that:

Russia, having preserved the Orthodox faith for 1000 years, is increasingly becoming a Muslim country. Not one of the peoples (*narody*) following the tenets of the Koran has diminished in numbers during the years of the ‘Russian Scissors.’¹⁷³ ... Whereas, in general, it is the Slavic peoples, Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians that are declining in numbers... Our niches are being captured by Ingush and Chechens, striking with a fertility rate truly fantastical for the 21st Century... Today there are already 20 million adherents of Allah in Russia, but scientists predict that by the year 2050, there will be as many Muslims in our country as there are Christians. So why do we continue to let Muslim migrants into our country?... If the next generation do not start to have twice as many children as today’s mothers, then we will have to finally place a cross on top of our country. That is to say, a specifically ‘Russian’ (*russkii*) cross.¹⁷⁴

Similar anxiety was displayed in the popular media’s reaction to the opening of the first ‘Muslim maternity hospital’ in Moscow in 2005, which it framed as a powerful symbol of the alleged demographic race underway in the heart of the nation and as a potent sign of Muslims’ perceived unwillingness to integrate into Moscow society.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² The construction of Russia as an Orthodox nation is deliberately exclusive of Muslims (as well as other religious groups living within the country) who have lived within the territory of what is now the Russian Federation for over a millennium and who currently comprise between 8 and 10 percent of the citizenry of the Russian Federation. See: Shireen T. Hunter, *Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2004), 42-45.

¹⁷³ ‘Russian Scissors’ (*russkyye nozhnitsy*) is a term used to refer to the phenomenon of high mortality and low birthrates in the Russian Federation. When grafted on a chart, the natural population decline looks like a pair of open scissors, with deaths on the rising blade and births on the descending one. The first time deaths crossed births on the natural population growth charts in Russia was in 1992, signaling the beginning of what is now almost two decades of sustained natural population decline. This phenomenon is also referred to as the ‘Russian Cross’ (*russkii krest*). In this, and many other articles, the word ‘Russian’ in the term ‘Russian Scissors/Cross’ implies an ethnic, rather than purely civic meaning.

¹⁷⁴ Sedov, “Rozhai Detei – Spasai Rossiuu!” *KP*, 6-7.

¹⁷⁵ For example see: Ol’ga Vandysheva, “Moskva v Khidzhabe,” (Moscow in Hijab), *KP*, December 16, 2005, 7; Aleksandr Kots, “V Moskve poiavilis’ islamskie kvartaly: Demografy opasaiutsia povysheniia

The popular media likewise construct the increase in births of ethnically non-Russian children in the nation's capital as "dangerously upsetting the delicate ethnic balance" of the country's largest and 'most important' city.¹⁷⁶ "Moscow prepares for pogroms" reads the headline of one representative *KP* article, which confrontationally presents a decline in Moscow's (still overwhelmingly) ethnic Russian majority as a direct "threat to the level of tolerance between ethnic groups living in the capital," one which is "likely to result in the increase of interethnic violence."¹⁷⁷

At times, the popular press even provides an unrestricted national platform to those who advocate a violent response to the 'Other's' perceived demographic aggression. For example, in an interview with the Cossack chieftain for the Azov region of Russia, *MK* gives voice to a particularly intolerant message. The paper describes how the chieftain, given the "catastrophic demographic situation" of his people, decided to issue a directive to all the women of reproductive age in his clan to have no less than five children.¹⁷⁸ While noting that such measures sound drastic, *MK* agrees that they are necessary, given the 'demographic war' being waged by the nation's 'ethnic enemies.' The chieftain, as he turns to the map of Russia hanging in his office, begins:

At night I lie awake thinking about what else I might do the save not only Azov but all of Russia from extinction. The Chinese have us in the underbelly and on

plotnosti musul'man v otdel'nykh paionakh stolitsy," (Islamic quarters have appeared in Moscow: Demographers warn of the increased density of Muslims in specific regions of the capital), *KP*, November 15, 2007, 4-5; Zotov, "Tema Nomera. Parizh: Rebiata! Ne Moskva l' za nami?," *AiF*, 4; and Bychkova, "Moskve bez migrantov ne prozhit? Nepravda!," *AiF-M*, 20-21.

¹⁷⁶ Sergei Chernikh, "Moskva gotovitsia k pogromam" (Moscow prepares for pogroms), *KP*, August 8, 2005, 4. Critically, 'preserving the nation's ethno-demographic balance' has become an increasingly familiar slogan amongst high-level Russian politicians and bureaucrats. See: Viktor Shnirel'man, "Migrantofobiia i kul'turnyi rasizm," *Ab Imperio* 2 (2008): 294-96.

¹⁷⁷ Chernikh, "Moskva gotovitsia k pogromam," *KP*, 4. For another illustrative example which associates the 'tipping' of the nation's 'ethnodemographic' balance with the inevitable increase in interethnic violence see: Bychkova, "Moskve bez migrantov ne prozhit? Nepravda!," *AiF-M*, 20-21.

¹⁷⁸ Ekaterina Sazhneva, "Ataman, Rodi nam syna: Na Tikhom Donu iz zhenshchin gotoviat spetsnaz i mnogodetnikh materei," (Ataman, Birth us a son: On the Quiet Don they are turning women into Special Forces and mothers of multiple children), *MK*, February 3, 2006, 4.

our other flank we have the Caucasians and the Arabs. Each of these religious others (*inovertsy*) has about ten children in each family. Even if we kill one of these enemies, another five will sprout up in his place. So what can we Slavic brothers do to fight such demographic aggression? The only thing we can do is begin to reproduce ourselves at the same pace as them!¹⁷⁹

The reproductive capabilities of Slavic women are appropriated as a technology of demographic defense, wielded by the nation's men against the fertile enemy 'Other.'

In fact, the 'weaponization' of women's reproductive capacities appears as an increasingly common and dangerous trope in the nation's popular press.¹⁸⁰ Articles liken the fertility of racialized non-Slavic women to offensive weapons of war, their wombs metaphorically constructed as vital arms in a demographic assault waged against the 'Russian nation' (see Figure 5). For example, with the launch of the second war in Chechnya, the Moscow edition of *AiF* ran a highly incendiary article warning its readers that the 'excessive fertility' of Chechens and other peoples of the Caucasus posed as serious a threat to the stability of the (Russocentrically imagined) nation, as the war itself:

The threat of demographic expansion has become the most critical risk for Russia's national security. For the inhabitants of the mountains, the interests of kin have always prevailed over the interests of the state; the women there gave and continue to give birth enthusiastically and often; even after Stalin's repressions and 13 years of exile the Chechens managed to completely restore the number of their people; while ethnic Russians, having already been diluted as a result of mixing with other ethnicities, are now giving up their one and only son in the family to the war in the Caucasus.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Sazhneva, "Ataman, Rodi nam syna," *MK*, 4.

¹⁸⁰ For some other illustrative examples see: Logvinova, "Gonka na vyzhimanie," *MK*, 4: "Migrant women from the South are preparing an explosion in the capital— a demographic one that is;" Elena Semenova, "Natsional'nyi vopros rukami ne trogat'! U druzhby narodov ne byvaet postoiannoi osnovy," (You can't touch the ethnic question! The friendship of the peoples can't last forever), *AiF*, February 27, 2008, 16, in which the alleged hyperfertility of Muslim women is faulted for "breeding a culture of aggression" amongst its believers; and Dina Rubina, "Evropu vzorviut...matki arabskikh zhenshchin" (Europe is being blown apart...by the wombs of Arab women), *AiF*, December 19, 2007, 3: "If Russia's hopes to avoid the same terrifying fate [as Europe], ethnic Russians must begin to multiply as much as possible."

¹⁸¹ Liudmila Proshak, "Goriachaia Tochka: Chto budet s Rossiei cherez 50 let?," (Hot Topic: What will Russia be like in 50 years?" *AiF-M*, October 20, 1999, 3.

The article depicts the women and children living in a “refugee camp”¹⁸² that was visited by the author, not as innocent civilians forced to flee their homes by the violence surrounding them, but rather as co-conspirators in a covert demographic war waged against the Russian majority:

Here, you can see the young women with infants in their arms and older women with a flock of youngsters clinging to the hem of their skirts. Many of them have rounded bellies. It is obvious that they are already getting ready to give birth to their third or fourth child... Doesn't it appear that having driven out the fighters from Chechnya and having taken these refugee ‘peoples of Caucasian nationality’ into every nook and cranny of Russia, that tomorrow we will be faced with a much more frightening problem? When the very land will no longer be ours and ethnic Russians will have to be placed on the endangered species list?¹⁸³

Troublingly, the article concludes by suggesting that the state begin regulating the sexual reproduction of its citizens on the basis of ethnicity, in order to ensure that Russia does not win the war in the Caucasus only to lose the ‘war of the wombs.’

In fact, the media frequently exploit the fear of being ‘swamped’ by the ethnic ‘Other’ to advocate for policies that would limit the physical number of such groups in the country. In addition to ongoing calls for the implementation of a stricter immigration regime, articles argue for the development of differential pronatalist strategies designed to encourage the active reproduction of the ‘right kind’ of people, while discouraging births among those groups deemed as ‘undesirable.’¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Here, as in the everyday discourse, ethnically non-Russian citizens of the Russian Federation from the Caucasus region who are forced out of their homes are referred to as ‘refugees’ (*bezidentsy*) rather than as internally displaced persons (*vynuzhdennye pereselensty*). Such attribution highlights the fact that these people are conceptualized not as citizens of the Russian Federation but as foreigners. As a result of their ethnic background, they are discursively constructed as being outside of the legitimate boundaries of the imagined community, and as such, their reproduction is perceived as a threat rather than a service to the nation.

¹⁸³ Proshak, “Goriachaia Tochka: Cto budet s Rossiei cherez 50 let?,” *AiF-M*, 3.

¹⁸⁴ Similarly discriminatory discourses and practices are evident in other nations facing below replacement fertility levels and large-scale immigration. For example, in her study of Malian migrants in Paris, Carolyn Sargent discusses how an explicitly antinatalist discourse coexists with otherwise pronatalist French policies on family size. Women considered to be authentically ‘French’ are encouraged to reproduce, while

In his 2006 annual address to the Federal Assembly, President Putin called the nation's attention to the 'fertility crisis' in the country and instructed the government to develop a strategy to encourage female citizens of the Russian Federation to give birth to more children. The pronatalist package, which came into force on January 1, 2007, offers a range of financial incentives to those mothers and expectant mothers who have Russian citizenship, including: increases to the monthly child subsidy and state-guaranteed maternity leave benefits; the provision of a certificate to help off-set the costs associated with prenatal care at state-funded clinics; and the introduction of a one-time 250,000 rouble¹⁸⁵ 'baby bonus' (*materinskii kaptial*) for women bearing a second child or successive child.¹⁸⁶ This money is disbursed three years after the child's birth and can be put towards the his/her education, improving the family's housing conditions, or deposited into the mother's pension fund.¹⁸⁷

Moscow's popular press met Putin's announcement with overall enthusiasm, taking it as a sign that the Kremlin was finally paying due attention to an issue it had been pressing for well over a decade.¹⁸⁸ However, the media's pronatalist zeal was also marked

the medical practitioners in her study implicitly and explicitly discourage the birth of many children to Malian women. See: Carolyn F. Sargent, "Lamenting the 'Winter' of French Fertility: Politics, Power, and Reproduction among Malian Migrants in Paris," *Curare* 29 (2006): 71–80. Or, in her analysis of population policies in the United States, which implicitly favor middle-class white women as 'desirable' mothers of the nation in contrast to working-class women and women of color, Patricia Hill Collins writes that the state apparatus aims to "increase fertility for more desirable segments of the population and decrease fertility of less worthy citizens." Patricia Hill Collins, "Producing the Mothers of the Nation: Race, Class and Contemporary US Population Policies," in *Women, Citizenship and Difference*, eds. Nira Yuval-Davis and Pnina Werbner, 119 (London: Zed, 1999).

¹⁸⁵ After being indexed to account for inflation, as of January 1, 2010, the baby bonus amounted to 343,000R. See: "V.V. Putin provel zasedanie Prezidiuma Pravitel'stva RF," December 10, 2010, available at <http://premier.gov.ru/events/4351.html>.

¹⁸⁶ However, the bonus is only paid out once to each woman, regardless of how many consecutive children she decides to have.

¹⁸⁷ See: Federal'nyi Zakon RF 'O dopolnitel'nykh merakh gosudarstvennoi poderzhki semei, imeiushchikh detei," available at http://www.rost.ru/health/health_doc1_9.pdf.

¹⁸⁸ Outside of the popular press, many experts expressed doubts about the magnitude or lasting effect of this policy on the nation's native birthrate. The general prediction was that offering 'maternity capital' for a second child might result in a small but transient increase in the birthrate, as women who were already

by racial thinking. The government's plan sparked concern that such measures would stimulate births among the 'wrong women'. "Our demographic policy ought to be more discriminating... We need to improve the quality of the population, not just increase the quantity," argued *AiF-M* in an article with ethno-eugenic overtones: "With the increase in the child subsidy, there is little doubt that births will rise in families of non-Russian migrants coming from those regions where having many children has always been a tradition."¹⁸⁹ In the days and weeks following the announcement, Moscow's popular press featured 'experts' who candidly expressed dismay that government incentives would simply exacerbate the 'divergent' fertility rates of Russia's majority Slavic

planning on having another baby decided to have one earlier rather than later to take advantage of the government's benefit package. According to many Russian demographers, the small spike in the birthrate seen following the announcement of the government's pronatalist package, which was seized upon by the authorities as proof of the policy's success, had less to do with women's responsiveness to the stimulus and more to do with the country's underlying demographic processes. In fact, the implementation of Russia's pronatalist measures happened to coincide with an increase in the number of women reaching their peak childbearing years (the generation of women born during the baby boom of the mid 1980s). Demographers predict that in about five years time, the birthrate will begin a renewed decline as the relatively large generation of women born during the 1980s move out of their most fertile years and are replaced by the significantly smaller generation of women born in the tumultuous 1990s, when the birthrate dropped to well below replacement levels. Furthermore, as the emerging middle-class in Russia continues to grow, specialists suggest that they will be less inclined to have more children. For example see: Sergei Zakharov, "Rossiiskaia Rozhdaemost' – Dolgozhdanii Rost?" *Demoscope Weekly*, November 2008, available at <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2008/0353/tema01.php>; Nabi Abdullaev, "Boosting Population a Vague Science," *The Moscow Times*, July 11, 2008, available at <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/368867/index.html>; Sergei Balashov, "Russians: an Endangered Species The Government's Much Vaunted Efforts to Halt Depopulation Have Hardly Made a Dent in the Problem," *Russia Profile*, April 28, 2009, available at <http://www.russiaprofile.org/page.php?pageid=Culture+%26+Living&articleid=a1240941436>; and "The Russian Federation. Demography. Opinion and Commentary: A Nonmonetary Issue," *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, May 28, 2006, Available at <http://dlib.eastview.com/sources/article.jsp?id=9763170>. As demographic historians, Michael S. Teitelbaum and Jay Winter, remind us, "there is very little evidence to suggest that [pro-natalist] economic incentives have ever reversed long-term demographic trends. In some cases, policies have helped to accelerate an already existing trend, but there is no evidence that government can turn around behavior as complex as that relating to childbearing." Michael S. Teitelbaum and Jay Winter, "A Pretext to Panic," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no.5 (2004): 152.

¹⁸⁹ Bychkova, "Moskve bez migrantov ne prozhit? Nepravda!," *AiF-M*, 20-21. While the government's pronatalist inducements only apply to women who are citizens of the Russian Federation (in and of itself a reflection of the state's preference for increasing the birthrate amongst citizens of the Russian Federation as opposed to all women living permanently and legally within the country), articles, such as this one from *AiF-M*, promoted the idea that non-citizens of the Russian Federation would somehow be able to capitalize on this program. In other articles, the 'wrong' potential beneficiaries of the government's pronatalist policy are clearly understood to be naturalized immigrant women and other ethnic minority women citizens of the Russian Federation.

population and certain ‘undesirable’ ethnic groups. “Yes, there will be a demographic effect,” affirmed Dr. Evegeni Gontmakher, Director of the Centre for Social Research, in an interview with *KP*, “but it will be primarily in the Caucasus where there has never been a problem with the birthrate.”¹⁹⁰ “Moscow’s specialists in ‘women’s affairs’ and ‘progeny’ only expect to see specific types of expectant mothers (*spetsificheskikh rozhenits*) in the wake of the President’s promises,” asserts another article: “A flood of pregnant migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia who have settled themselves in capital,” clarifies an anonymous obstetrician at one of Moscow’s women’s clinics, “but native Muscovite women, in all likelihood, will continue to give birth to just as few children as before.”¹⁹¹ Moscow’s popular press and its ‘expert’ commentators are clear in their assertions that an increase in the birthrate of ‘such people’ cannot be the solution to the nation’s demographic crisis.¹⁹² Critically, the published commentary of readers differed little from that of the ‘experts.’ For example, in the print edition of *KP*, one female reader contends: “Of course people will start having children. But the important matter is who will be giving birth and who the children will be. Above all else we have to convince ethnic Russians to have more babies.”¹⁹³

In fact, the ethnic subtext of the government’s pronatalist policies continues to be hotly debated in the popular press by the nation’s academic elite. For example, in July 2009, *KP* drew national attention to a speech given by the deputy head of the Institute of

¹⁹⁰ “Liubov’ i den’gi spasut Rossiiu?” (Will love and money save Russia?), *KP*, May 12, 2006, 4.

¹⁹¹ Vandysheva, “V zhenskikh konsul’tatsiyakh vse razgovory – o Putine,” *KP*, 3.

¹⁹² For example, in the preceding article, the journalist’s follow-up question to the obstetrician is: “What exactly need to be done to solve the demographic situation then?” Vandysheva, “V zhenskikh konsul’tatsiyakh vse razgovory – o Putine,” *KP*, 3.

¹⁹³ Ibid. Or, in another example from the print edition of *MK*, a reader declares: “Now the Caucasus will become completely insolent! They already breed like rabbits as it is, and now they’ll have more reason than ever. There won’t be any ethnic Russians left. That’s all that’s been accomplished here.” Finiakina and Tsikulina, “Spaset li Rossiiu liubov’ za den’gi?,” *MK*, 3-4.

Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), Dr. Vladimir Lavrov, in which he argued that government incentives to have more children should only be offered to ethnically Russian women, whose fertility rates he claims as lagging dangerously below those of the non-Slavic peoples of the Russian Federation.¹⁹⁴

However, it is critical to note that readily available statistics refute the media's construction of 'their women' as 'excessively fertile'. The 2002 census showed birthrates for all ethnic groups residing in the Russian Federation to be below the world average of 2.55 children for each woman.¹⁹⁵ In spite of the impression given in the nation's popular press, ethnic Azeri, Armenian, Georgian, Tajik, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, and Turkmen women recorded in the census, just as ethnic Russian females, display below replacement fertility levels.¹⁹⁶ Looking at the official figures, the 'fantastical fertility' of Chechen women, reported in *KP*, *MK*, and *AiF*, turns out to be just at replacement levels, with approximately 2.1 children born to each woman of reproductive age.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, the slight differences in fertility rates that do exist between various ethnic groups living in the Russian Federation are becoming progressively less pronounced, as young women, irrespective of their ethnic background, are deciding to have fewer children and are having them later in life than previous generations.¹⁹⁸ The same pattern is evident in the birthrates of different ethnic groups living in Moscow. According to the Centre of

¹⁹⁴ Aleksandr Belaev, "V Ekaterinburge nashli retsepty spaseniia Rossii," (In Ekaterinburg they've discovered the secret to saving Russia," *KP*, July 16, 2009, 3.

¹⁹⁵ Itogi Vserossiiskoi perepisi naseleniia 2002, "Zhenshchiny otdel'nykh natsional'nostei po chislu rozhdennykh detei," available at http://www.perepis2002.ru/ct/html/TOM_12_06.htm. The only exception was amongst the Didoitsy women who had an average of three children each. The Didoitsy are an ethnic sub-group of the Avars residing primarily within Dagestan and comprising less than 0.5% of the country's total population.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. The fertility rates for women according to ethnicity recorded in the 2002 census are as follows: Russian (1.4); Tartar (1.7); Azerbaijanis (1.8); Armenians (1.6); Georgians (1.4); Tajik (1.7); Uzbek (1.6); Kyrgyz (1.5); Kazakh (2.0); Turkmen (1.4).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ V.N. Arkhangel'skii, *Factory Rozhdaemosti* (Moscow: Teis, 2006), 120-126.

Demography and Human Ecology of the RAS, the popular press' assertion that specific non-Slavic minorities living in the capital exhibit 'above average fertility rates' is nothing but a myth, as the birthrates of all ethnic groups in Moscow are comparable.¹⁹⁹

Additionally, demographic studies from a range of developed countries show that fertility levels for women migrating to a nation with a lower birthrate than their home country tend to eventually 'converge' with the fertility rates of 'native born' women, as first, second, and subsequent generation immigrant women become economically, socially, and culturally integrated into the receiving society.²⁰⁰ Given this cross-national pattern, and the fact that Russia's existing ethnic minority populations already display low and declining rates of fertility, it is reasonable to suggest, that over time, recent immigrant populations will also begin to adopt the fertility preferences exhibited in Russian society.

Critically, this type of information is totally absent from the press' discourse. In fact, the 'differential fertility panic' promoted in the nation's most popular papers appears to be based on ethnophobic perceptions and manipulated data, rather than on statistical evidence and thoughtful analysis. In a country where ethnic Russians still comprise approximately 80 percent of the overall population and over 84 percent of the capital's permanent residents, articles that fault the 'hyper-fertility' of 'their women' for the 'dilution' (*razmyvanie*) and even 'extinction' (*vymiranie*) of the 'Russian nation' seem both excessively insecure and deliberately provocative. The media's reporting on issues of reproduction and fertility creates dangerous divisions between 'us' and 'them,' feeding

¹⁹⁹ Olga Vendina, "Moskva Etnicheskaia: Grozit li gorodu gettoizatsiia?" *Naselenie & Obshchestvo*, 84 (September 2004): 1.

²⁰⁰ For example see: Charles F. Westoff and Tomas Frejka, "Religiousness and Fertility Among European Muslims," *Population and Development Review* 33, no. 4 (2007): 785-809; Laura E. Hill and Hans P. Johnson, "Fertility Changes Among Immigrants: Generations, Neighborhoods, and Personal Characteristics," *Social Science Quarterly* 85, no. 3 (2004): 811-826; or Jochen Mayer and Regina T. Riphahn, "Fertility Assimilation of Immigrants: Evidence from Count Data Models," *Journal of Population Economics* 13 (2000): 241-262.

into irrational fears of those cast as ‘Others,’ and contributing to a climate of anxiety in society, within which ethnic intolerance and racism flourish.

Significantly, non-Slavic children have also become the target of the media’s xenophobic and racist rhetoric. The press’ representation of these children, most frequently subsumed under the telling catch-all phrase of ‘children of migrants,’²⁰¹ figures importantly in its discourse on the multifarious threats posed to the Russian nation by the maternity of the racialized ‘(M)Other’. Just as ‘she’ is constructed as being outside of the legitimate boundaries of belonging and a threat to the sanctity of the Slavocentrically imagined community, so too are her children.

The Moscow popular press’ demonization of ‘children of migrants’ was particularly visible in the midst and aftermath of the civil unrest which engulfed France in the autumn of 2005. The event was framed in the Russian media as an ethnic riot instigated by the disaffected children of North African/Muslim immigrants living in the economically depressed *banlieues*²⁰² of Paris. The ‘riots’ received intensive coverage in Russia’s popular press, with the overwhelming message being that the same kind of

²⁰¹ The word ‘migrant’ is used rather loosely in both media and popular discourse, often serving as a term for a person from a visible minority group regardless of their citizenship status. As such, the so-called ‘children of migrants’ discourse encompasses children who may very well be citizens of the Russian Federation, but who are constructed as ‘outsiders’ because of their ‘visible’ difference from the Slavic majority. For example, in one rare article, which gives a voice to the victims of racialized discrimination, a mother of an Armenian child, whose family has a centuries-long history in the capital, explains how her son and her family are referred to by Slavic Muscovites as ‘migrants’ because of their Armenian ancestry. In fact, she says that while being labelled a ‘migrant’ in one’s home city and country is insult enough, it is less offensive than the multitude of racial slurs hurled at her family and her son: “My son is constantly being harassed. In kindergarten they used to call him ‘the little black beetle,’ in school a ‘khachik’ (i.e. a highly offensive epithet in Russian usually used to describe a person from the Caucasus region), and on the street, pardon the vulgarity, ‘a black ass’ (*chernozhopyi*). . .Excuse me, but our ancestors arrived in Moscow more than 300 years ago.” “Litso moskovskoi natsional’nosti,” *MK*, 3.

²⁰² *Banlieue* is the French word for a residential area on the outskirts of town. However, in everyday speech, the phrase *les banlieues* is frequently used to describe the low-income housing projects around Paris and other large French cities which are populated primarily by immigrant communities and their French-born children and grandchildren. In the media and popular discourse *les banlieues* are constructed as zones of urban decay, violence, crime, poverty, and ethnic ghettoization. See: A.G. Hargreaves, “A deviant construction: the French media and the ‘Banlieues’,” *New Community* 22, no. 4 (1996): 607-18.

violence could easily erupt in Moscow and other Russian cities with large immigrant populations. Critically, a majority of the Russian public appeared to support the pessimistic view presented to them by their media.²⁰³ A nationwide survey taken during the ‘disorder in France’ showed that 62 percent of Russian citizens, and 79 percent of those living in Moscow, believed that “similar riots were likely to occur in Moscow.”²⁰⁴

KP featured a doting interview with the far-right French nationalist politician, Jean-Marie Le Pen, in which their journalist refers to him as a “prophet” for predicting the explosion of ethnic tensions in France and preaching against the immigration of ‘culturally alien’ migrants into the country. In this article, Le Pen explicitly declares “the events in France...a wake-up call for Russia.”²⁰⁵ *AiF*, reporting from the “burning French capital,” offered its readers an analysis of how the events in Paris “remind one of the future that awaits large cities throughout Russia.”²⁰⁶ “The same troubles will begin in Moscow when the children of today’s illegal workers grow up,” the paper attests.²⁰⁷ *AiF-M* likewise reacted to events in the suburbs of Paris by spreading anxiety over the presence of ‘ethnically non-Russian’ children, collectively subsumed under the category of migrants, in the capital city:

[T]he pogroms in Europe have been initiated by **THE CHILDREN OF MIGRANTS**... Where is our guarantee that the children of migrants in Moscow

²⁰³ A poll conducted by the All-Russia Centre for Public Opinion (VTsIOM) found that 88 percent of Russians were following the development of events in France during the ‘crisis’ with even higher rates of interest in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. VTsIOM, “Press-Vypusk No. 349: Immigranty i Besporiadki: Fransuzskie uroki dlia Moskvyy,” December 1, 2005, available at http://wciom.ru/arkhiv/tematicheskii-arkhiv/item/single/2047.html?no_cache=1&cHash=d005bfe927

²⁰⁴ VTsIOM, “Immigranty i Besporiadki.” Similar results were recorded in a poll conducted by the Fund for Public Opinion (FOM). See: FOM, “Massovye besporiadki vo Frantsii,” November 11, 2005, available at <http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/dd054623>.

²⁰⁵ Dar’ai Aslamova, “Zhan-Mari Le Pen: Sobytiia vo Frantsii – Zvonok dlia Rossii,” (Jean-Marie Le Pen: The events in France are a wake-up call for Russia), *KP*, November 14, 2005, 5.

²⁰⁶ Zotov, “Tema Nomera. Parizh: Rebiata! Ne Moskva l’ za nami?,” *AiE*, 4. Interestingly, this article likewise features an interview with Le Pen.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* Also see “Zhgut Parizh. Sgorit Moskva?” (They’re burning down Paris. Will Moscow burn too?), *AiF*, November 9, 2005: 4-5.

won't decide to grab a 'Molotov cocktail' in their hands?...According to the Department of Education, there are currently more than 6 thousand Azeris, 5.7 thousand Armenians, more than 2 thousand Georgians, and another 10 thousand children of 'non-Russian' ethnicity studying in our kindergartens and schools... When they grow up, how will these teenagers behave themselves in Moscow? [emphasis in original].²⁰⁸

The capital's popular press seized upon this so-called violent revolt by immigrant youth in Paris, as a potent symbol of 'Europe's failure' to deal with its 'immigrant problem.'²⁰⁹

Ignoring many of the underlining causes of unrest in France, including the endemic marginalization of ethnic minority youth, Moscow's press encouraged Russian authorities to take a "tough line with migrant children" in order to avoid "an explosive 'Paris-type' war on the outskirts of town."²¹⁰ Articles warned of the dangers of falling prey to the same "idealistic but naive political correctness" and "illusions of integration" that had allegedly led Europe down the road of ruin.²¹¹

In fact, the media's discourse on 'children of migrants' emphasizes the utter incompatibility of 'our' and 'their' cultures and the near impossibility of integrating these young people into 'Russian' or 'Moscow' society. Articles depict 'their children' as "entering into our monastery with their alien rules,"²¹² and as invaders and degraders of

²⁰⁸ Dar'ia Maratynkina, "Tema Nomera: Deti Migrantov," (Theme of the Issue: The Children of Migrants), AiF-M, November 16, 2005: 23-24.

²⁰⁹ The Moscow popular press frequently warns against Russia 'becoming like Europe' which it constructs as being overrun by culturally incompatible immigrants. For some illustrative examples see: Maksim Chuzhikov, "Belaia rasa v Evrope stremitel'no ischezhaet," (In Europe the white race is progressively disappearing), KP, February 10, 2004, 5-6; Galina Sapozhnikova, "Budut li russkie chtit' Koran i est' ris palochkami? Pochemu Evropa pochernela?" (Will Ethnic Russians follow the Koran and eat rice with chopsticks? Why has Europe gotten darker?) KP, July 9, 2003, 4-5; Chugaev, et. al., "Evropa perekhodit v Islam," KP, 8-9.

²¹⁰ Andrei Riabtsev and Dmitrii Steshin, "Uchytelnytsa, sadys ka mne na kalenka!" (Teacher, come end sit on my nee!), KP, December 8, 2005, 4-5.

²¹¹ Iuliia Kalinina, "Plokhiaia Igra," (A Dangerous Game), MK, November 11, 2005, 3. For other illustrative examples see: Dar'ia Maratynkina, "Tema Nomera: Deti Migrantov," AiF-M, 23-24; and Chugaev, et. al., "Evropa perekhodit v Islam," KP, 8-9.

²¹² This phrase is taken from the common Russian saying "v chuzhoi monastyr' so svoim ustavom ne khodiat," which is translated as 'you don't go into another's monastery with your own (monastic) rules,' and expresses something akin to the English saying "when in Rome, do as the Romans do." The media

'Russian/Muscovite' culture, traditions, and norms.²¹³ Papers caution the public that "the integration of these culturally alien migrants and their children into our society is a myth – it is impossible in principle."²¹⁴ In attempting to assimilate the children of migrants, the press warns that Russians risk losing their cultural identity, privilege, and power in the nation: "Bringing in elements of their own culture, these migrants wash away the culture of the receiving society...leaving them in a position to demand their own representation in the organs of power."²¹⁵ In such articulations, the Russian nation is conceptualized as an ethnically, religiously, and culturally homogenous construct. The Russian national identity is projected as if it were a unique genetic inheritance, whose sanctity requires the exclusion and marginalization of 'Others'.²¹⁶ The press constructs non-Slavic migrants from the former Soviet republics, and their children, as the bearers of an inferior and conflictual national culture, which threatens to dilute the Russian national identity and ultimately challenge the cultural, political, and economic dominance of ethnic Russians in the nation.

Critically, the media place the lion's share of responsibility for growing ethnic isolationism and antagonism in the nation's capital at the feet of 'migrant children' and their parents, whom they depict as resisting integration into Russian society. "Young Muslim migrants in the capital don't want to integrate into our secular society," attests

frequently capitalize on this saying to construct a sense of 'cultural invasion' by 'guests from the South' and their children who are depicted as 'being disrespectful' of the 'host society's culture' and as highly resistant to assimilation. For example, also see: Viacheslav Kostikov, *Nauchit'sia byt' russkim*, (Learn to be Russian), *AiF-M*, December 20, 2006: 24.

²¹³ Buravchikova, "Moia tvoia ne ponimaet. I ne sobiraetsia ponimat'," *AiF-M*, 23-4.

²¹⁴ Egor Sokolov, "Chuzhie migranty ili svoi mladentsy?" (Alien migrants or our little children?), *MK*, August 29, 2008, 4.

²¹⁵ Zotov, "Tema Nomera. Parizh: Rebiata! Ne Moskva l' za nami?," *AiF*, 4.

²¹⁶ Etienne Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, trans. Chris Turner, 55 (New York: Verso, 1991).

KP.²¹⁷ “More often than not, it is the migrants themselves that don’t want their sons and daughters to study with children from different ethnic groups,” writes *AiF-M*, “They prefer to live amongst their own people and this is why we are beginning to see the development of monoethnic regions in the capital.”²¹⁸ The Moscow press ethnocentrically reads the presence of young women in *hijab* in the capital as an overt symbol of defiance (as opposed to an individual and private decision regarding religious observance), and as a sign of ‘their’ unwillingness to observe the dominant Moscow society.²¹⁹ “Assimilation is a beautiful idea that is ineffectively realized in practice,” proclaims Dr. Beloborodov, the Director of the Institute of Demographic Research, in an interview with *KP*, in which he attacks the opening of private Muslim kindergartens and schools in “Moscow’s burgeoning Islamic enclaves”²²⁰ as “pure demagogy, a desire to ethnically isolate themselves” from the rest of the population.²²¹

Likewise, the growing presence of ‘their children’ in Moscow’s public school system is also constructed in confrontational terms. On the one hand, the media accuse the parents of non-Russian children attending schools with ‘ethno-cultural components’ of deliberately isolating their children and preventing their assimilation into Russian society.²²² On the other hand, the press maligns ‘migrant children’ who attend regular

²¹⁷ Kots, “V Moskve poiavilis’ islamskie kvartaly,” *KP*, 4-5.

²¹⁸ Maratynkina, “Tema Nomera: Deti Migrantov,” *AiF-M*: 23-24.

²¹⁹ Kots, “V Moskve poiavilis’ islamskie kvartaly,” *KP*, 4-5. Similarly confrontational discourses regarding the Islamic practice of veiling also have become prevalent in other Western nations.

²²⁰ The alleged ‘ethnic ghettoization’ of the Russian capital as a result of migrants’ and visible minorities’ supposed unwillingness to integrate has become an increasingly frequent theme in the press. For some other examples see: Polukhin, “Rossiia ostanetsia bez russkikh?,” *KP*, 4-5; Ol’ga Grekova, “Prekrasnoe neDaleko,” (The not so far off beautiful future), *MK*, January 5, 2002, 4-5; and Iuliia Zhukovskaia, “Russkaia Moskva ostanetsia tol’ko na zapade? (Will Russian Moscow only remain in the western part of the city?) May 27, 2005, 6-7.

²²¹ Kots, “V Moskve poiavilis’ islamskie kvartaly,” *KP*, 4-5.

²²² See: Dar’ia Buravchikova, “Moia tvoia ne ponimaet. I ne sobiraetsia ponimat’,” “Me and you, we don’t understand each other. And we’re not about to start,” *AiF-M*, October 11, 2006, 23-4; Andrei Riabtsev,

schools for imposing their ‘foreign culture’ on and disrupting the education of ‘our’ children. A fatalistic discourse of intolerance and incompatibility emerges in which both segregation and integration/assimilation are deemed impossible solutions to the nation’s ‘migrant problem’.

Moscow’s schools have become a central focus of the media’s disparaging discourse on migrant children. The increasing visibility of ethnically non-Russian children (of migrants) in the nation’s educational institutions is taken as a ‘worrisome’ sign of ‘their’ and their parents’ intentions to stay in the country and on their own terms. In one typically paternalistic article, the Moscow reading public is advised that: “Today, there are already approximately 100 thousand children of migrants in the capital’s schools. However, instead of taking advantage of this opportunity given to them by the city to become real Muscovites, many of them are bent on imposing their own ‘beliefs’ on our schools.”²²³ Critically, the media couch the hypothetical acceptance of non-Slavic children of migrants into Russian/Moscow society within an overarching (and overpowering) discourse of ‘their’ cultural inability or defiant unwillingness to assimilate.

The popular press portrays ‘their’ culture as ‘backward,’ ‘criminal,’ and ‘incompatible’ with the norms of ‘civilized’ Russian/Muscovite/Slavic society. Articles present the children of non-Slavic migrants as ‘ungrateful guests,’ who refuse to accept

“Kto meshaet detiam migrantov stat’ nastoiashchimi moskvichami?” (Who is preventing the children of migrants from becoming real Muscovites?), *KP*, October 5, 2006, 5.

²²³ Riabtsev and Steshin, “Uchytelnytsa, sadys ka mne na kalenka!” (Teacher, come end sit on my knee!), *KP*, 4-5. The headline of this article also highlights the alleged incompatibility of ‘their’ behaviour with the accepted norms of Russian society. The title refers to an incident in which a young Azeri student allegedly approached his teacher and asked her to come and sit down on his knee. In addition to the inappropriateness of the request, which is furthermore formulized in the familiar tone (using the familiar tone with a teacher is considered to be highly disrespectful in Russian), the paper emphasizes the ‘difference’ of this young boy by attributing heavily accented/distorted Russian to him.

and abide by the traditions and rules of the ‘host society.’ The media construct ‘their’ presence in the nation’s educational institutions as posing a degenerative threat to the dominant culture and a challenge to the privileged position of the Slavic majority. “The children of migrants have brought their low and foreign culture into our schools,” exclaims one typical article:

Their ‘hot-tempered’ Eastern laws, where any kind of insult is answered by spilt blood and young girls are taken prisoner (and this is the 21st century!), fit poorly with our Slavic traditions, as well as with our country’s Criminal Code. Why should Muscovite children, raised in a totally different culture, be forced to live in their own homeland according to rules that are alien to them?²²⁴

The media depict this “flood,” of ‘culturally-deviant’ migrant children washing into ‘our’ schools, as diluting the quality of education available to ‘our Russian’ children. “In some regions of the county, the children of migrants comprise up to 80 percent of the students in classes,” claims *KP* in a typical ethnocentric articulation: “They don’t pay attention in class and prevent the ethnic Russian (*russkie*) children from learning. In other words, our children have now lost the right to an education in their own country.”²²⁵ The press presents the ‘problem’ of migrant children in the nation’s school system in terms of a loss of privilege for those in the ethnic majority. Russian children, constructed as the rightful inhabitants and future leaders of the Russian nation, are assumed to have a greater right to an education than those in the minority. The popular media’s

²²⁴ Buravchikova, “Moia tvoia ne ponimaet. I ne sobiraetsia ponimat’,” *AiF-M*, 23-4.

²²⁵ Sapozhnikova, “Budut li russkie chtit’ Koran i est’ ris palochkami? Nado li nam boiat’sia naplyva ‘zheltykh’ i ‘chernykh’?,” *KP*, July 7, 2003, 4-5. For other articles expressing concern over the degradation of the quality of education available to ‘our children’ as a result of the increased presence of ‘migrant children’ see: “Otkritoe pis’mo Ministru obrazovaniia i nauki RF Andreiu Fursenko,” (An open letter to the Minister of Education and Science of the RF, Andrei Fursenko), *MK*, November 14, 2005, 8; Nadezhda Arabkina and Elena Dobriukha, “Ia ot tebia dureiu!” (Because of you, I’m turning stupid!) *MK*, August 23, 2006, 5; Ekaterina Bychkova, “Ia russkii by vyuchil...tol’ko zachem?” (I would learn Russian...but what for?), *AiF-M*, March 12, 2008, 14.

prioritization of ‘Russian’ children’s education is further ‘legitimized’ by articles which stereotype ‘their children’ as highly undesirable students:

The problem of children of migrants has become a very serious one. Their Russian is very poor, many of them are two to three years behind grade level in fundamental subjects, and this ends up holding our children back. When teachers try to discipline these migrants in ways that our children are used to, things can end up very badly for the teachers indeed! You just try and guess how an adolescent from the mountains (*gorskii nedorosl’*) reacts to receiving a failing grade (*dvoiku*).²²⁶

Furthermore, the press depicts these ‘difficult students’ as imposing a financial drain on the nation’s school system and taking advantage of resources which ought to be reserved for the benefit of tax-paying citizens. “The education of children of migrants isn’t being paid for by their home country or by the companies inviting their parents to work in Moscow, but rather out of the capital’s budget,” complains *KP*.²²⁷ This type of sentiment is supported by the published commentary of readers, such as a Muscovite father, who is quoted as saying: “I don’t think that we should be teaching any migrant children in schools that are run on money paid by Muscovites. We work, honestly pay our taxes, and they come and expect to have everything handed to them on a silver platter!”²²⁸

The media promote an image of perpetual conflict in the nation’s schools, with ‘their’ “wild” (*dikie*) and “uncontrollable” (*nepravliaemye*) children depicted as a pervasive threat to the native population: ‘our’ children, teachers, and parents alike.²²⁹ “I saw with my own eyes one day how a Caucasian schoolboy pushed an eighth-grade girl

²²⁶ Riabtsev, “Kto meshaet detiam migrantov stat’ nastoiashchimi moskvichami?” *KP*, 5.

²²⁷ Andrei Riabtsev, “Kto meshaet detiam migrantov stat’ nastoiashchimi moskvichami? Prodolzhenie.” (Who is preventing the children of migrants from becoming real Muscovites? Continuation), *KP*, October 6, 2006, 5. Also see: Riabtsev and Steshin, “Uchytelnytsa, sadys ka mne na kalenka!” *KP*, 4-5 and Maratynkina, “Tema Nomera: Deti Migrantov,” *AiF-M*: 23-24.

²²⁸ Riabtsev, “Kto meshaet detiam migrantov stat’ nastoiashchimi moskvichami?”, *KP*, October 6, 2006, 5.

²²⁹ Buravchikova, “Moia tvoia ne ponimaet. I ne sobiraetsia ponimat’,” *AiF-M*, 23-4.

into a corner against her will and started to shove his hand up her skirt,” recounts one parent in a *KP* article, “But the teachers are afraid to intervene, knowing that they [‘Caucasians’] will take revenge on them.”²³⁰ Or in *AiF-M*, the public is ‘informed’ of a pattern of incidents which attest to the takeover of Russian schools by the migrant ‘Other’:

In one school, some older students – immigrants from the Caucasus – specifically targeted their Russian classmates, forcing them to be their slaves. They made them wash the floors, make breakfast for their ‘masters,’ and do their homework for them. In another school an ‘Eastern’ boy fell in love with a Russian girl who didn’t respond in kind. ‘Never mind,’ retorted the mountain boy’s father, ‘When you turn 14 we will just steal you. That’s the way we do things.’ The girl’s frightened parents were forced to transfer her to a different school. ‘In our class, there are about ten Azerbaijanis and just as many Armenians. They have divided into clans and they openly fight between each other. Meanwhile, the Russian children, who have become the minority in our schools, are forced to witness these incidents,’ one reader told us.²³¹

The media construct the nation’s schools as a symbolic battleground in a zero-sum clash between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ In this vitriolic discourse, the children of migrants are demonized as ‘cultural invaders’ and the capital’s teachers are exhorted to serve as ‘cultural warriors’:

True, we must teach all children. Teach, but not surrender (*podchiniat’sia*) to them. Schools have always had to find a way to deal with troublemakers and children with behavioural problems. But today these are not just your average hooligans, but bearers of a fundamentally different culture. We shouldn’t support them [non-Slavic migrants] in penetrating and taking over all spheres of our lives. It just happens that our schools represent one of the first borders to be defended in this invasion.²³²

²³⁰ Riabtsev and Steshin, “Uchytelnytsa, sadys ka mne na kalenka!” *KP*, 4-5.

²³¹ Buravchikova, “Moia tvoia ne ponimaet. I ne sobiraetsia ponimat’,” *AiF-M*, 23-4.

²³² *Ibid.*

It is through such one-sided and antagonistic discourses that places of learning – one of the most valuable societal institutes for promoting mutual understanding, tolerance, and integration of peoples of different backgrounds – are transformed into sites of conflict.²³³

Critically, the media explain growing societal intolerance and discrimination toward non-Slavic migrants and their children in Russia as a natural and expected response to ‘their’ allegedly provocative conduct and resistance to assimilation: “The problem is the aggressiveness of many of these immigrants and their children – their unwillingness to accept the morals and behavioural norms of the place where they now live. That is why we see a furious xenophobic reaction from the native population. It all starts with them,” argues one article.²³⁴ “As long as these bands of migrants continue to control our schools according to their laws of the mountain (*po zakonam gor*), how can we even start to have a conversation about internationalism or tolerance?” questions another typical article.²³⁵ If migrants and their children find Russians/Muscovites to be hostile, and the conditions for their successful integration to be particularly disadvantageous, then the press contends that they have no one but themselves to blame. In Moscow’s popular press, the targets of racial discrimination are scapegoated as the root source of society’s intolerance, a discursive strategy which enables the dominant

²³³ However, it must be noted that the Moscow Department of Education has begun to take a proactive stance in developing policies aimed at assisting the children of migrant workers in the capital to succeed in school and better integrate into society. They have developed Russian as a Second Language curriculum and training programs for teachers, which are currently being rolled out in the capital’s school system and are expected to lead the way for the development of similar programs in school districts across the country. For example see: Iu. A. Goriachev, et al. *Integratsiia migrantov sredstvami obrazovaniia: opyt Moskvy*, (Moscow, Etnosfera, 2008). However, problems appear to arise in the implementation of MDE policies within individual schools. Not all school directors are compliant with the Department’s guidelines which assure equal access to education for all children living in Moscow. Furthermore, in spite of the existence of some programs, much more needs to be done to promote an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance of diversity within the Moscow school system.

²³⁴ Riabtsev, “Kto meshaet detiam migrantov stat’ nastoiashchimi moskvichami?” *KP*, 5.

²³⁵ Riabtsev and Steshin, “Uchytelnitsa, sadys ka mne na kalenka!” *KP*, 4-5.

culture to obfuscate and perpetuate modes of exclusion, subordination, and exploitation to their benefit.

Such inflammatory media representations contribute to the creation and legitimization of a climate of intolerance within Russian society toward migrant children and other children from visible minority groups. The marginalization and discrimination of visible minority groups and their children is a serious problem both inside and outside of the nation's schools. In spite of the Moscow Department of Education's guarantee to provide all children living in Moscow, regardless of their citizenship or registration status, with the right to a primary education, children of migrant workers are frequently denied equal access.²³⁶ A study, carried out by one of the capital's pedagogical institutes, revealed that over half of the students training to become teachers held a negative view of non-Slavic migrants and said that they would not want to have the children of such migrants in their classes.²³⁷ Ethnic Georgian children studying in Moscow's schools were singled out for surveillance by the authorities during the anti-Georgian campaign of

²³⁶ Hayley Jarvis, "Rights abuses of Russia's migrant builders and their families," SOS Children, February 12, 2009, available at <http://www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/charity-news/rights-abuses-russia-migrants-.htm>. Also see: E.V. Tiuriukanova and L.I. Ledeneva, "Migrants' Children's Orientations Toward Acquiring a Higher Education," Russian Education and Society 48, no. 5 (2006): 73-90. Such discrimination is even commented on in the popular press, but with a rather sympathetic ear for those doing the denying. For example see: Mariia Liamina, "V Moskovskikh shkolakh detiam predlagaiut kupit' propisku," (In Moscow's schools children are being told to buy registration), MK, August 18, 2006: 4. In other cases, the (frequently violable) right of migrant children to education is derisively dealt with in the press: "How many times does the MDE have to explain it: any child living in Moscow ought to be studying in school. Have there been any doubts that this is exactly what is happening? Quite the opposite, educational institutes have been calling the editor complaining that Muscovite children are having a difficult time learning, and that half the class speaks Russian with an accent! Maksim L'vov "Pochemu pedagogi ne khotiat učit' detei migrantov? Shkol'nye direktora otkazyvaiut dazhe sem'iam s moskovskoi registratsiei," (Why do pedagogues not want to teach the children of migrants? School directors are even refusing to enroll children from families with Moscow registration), KP, March 28, 2007: 6-7.

²³⁷ Maratynkina, "Tema Nomera: Deti Migrantov," AiF-M: 23-24 and Andrei Riabtsev, "Kto meshaet detiam migrantov stat' nastoiashchimi moskvichami?" (Who is preventing the children of migrants from becoming real Muscovites?), KP, October 5, 2006. Also see: Ekaterina Panova, "'Svoi' i 'Chuzhie' ucheniki: predstavleniia peterburgskikh uchitelei ob etnicheskikh razlichiiakh i grannitsakh russkosti," Ab Imperio 3 (2006): 355-88.

October 2006.²³⁸ Visible minority children have likewise become the target of violent hate crimes. In one high profile case, a nine year-old Tajik girl, walking through the streets of Saint Petersburg with her father and her 11 year-old cousin (who were also wounded in the attack), was stabbed to death by a group of skinhead youth.²³⁹ Although the media cannot be held directly responsible for the violent acts of such individuals, its discriminatory discourses do play a critical role in fostering the ethnic intolerance which enable such violence to flourish in Russian society. It is telling that in a study, which revealed that three-quarters of Moscow high-school students polled viewed Caucasian immigrants and the very idea of Moscow as a multinational city in a negative light, researchers cited negative portrayals of ethnic minorities in the popular media as a significant factor in the construction of these students' intolerant opinions.²⁴⁰

Moscow's popular press, in conjunction with other elites (demographers, academics, politicians, cultural figures) has succeeded in constructing an ethnophobic panic surrounding the sphere of 'reproduction' and the 'extinction of the Russian nation.'

²³⁸ The anti-Georgian campaign erupted following a dispute between the antagonistically-inclined Russian and Georgian governments in the autumn of 2006. During the height of the crisis, several Moscow police districts ordered public schools to produce information on Georgian children for investigation purposes. The MDE, acting as a voice of reason (and advocate for the rule of law) in this particular case, issued a public statement criticizing the police directives and clarifying its policy that all children, regardless of ethnic background, have the equal right to study in Moscow's schools. Unfortunately, many school directors, wary of disobeying police instructions, provided authorities with the information requested. See: Human Rights Watch, *Singled Out: Russia's Detention and Expulsion of Georgians*, October 2007, 37-39 and "Department obrazovaniia Moskvi zastupilsia za gruzinskikh detei," (The Moscow Department of Education stands up for Georgian children," *Lenta.ru*, October 6, 2006, available at <http://lenta.ru/news/2006/10/06/departament/>.

²³⁹ The city court's ruling, which found eight of the defendants guilty of 'hooliganism' as opposed to racially-motivated murder, and which dropped the charges against the ninth defendant altogether, drew international attention and caused outrage and condemnation amongst the nation's human rights and ethnic Diaspora communities, who had hoped that the barbarity of the incident would force the authorities to take a tougher stance on racially-motivated attacks. For example see: Claire Bigg, "Russia: Sentences In Tajik Girl's Slaying Spark Public Outcry," *RFE/RL*, March 31, 2006, available at <http://www.rferl.org/content/Article/1067292.html>.

²⁴⁰ G.G. Abdulkarimov, "Etnicheskie stereotypy shkol'nikov," *Obrazovanie v Sovremennoi Shkole*, 4 (2002): 35-45. Also see Petr Ivanchenko, "Natsional'nyi vopros v Moskve," *Segodnia.Ru*, July 7, 2005, available at <http://www.segodnia.ru/print.php?s=0&n=880>.

Opinion polls reveal that the public consider ‘demographic threats’ to be some of the most ominous dangers facing Russia today. In a 2005 national poll, the ‘extinction of the Russian population as a result of the low birthrate’ and the ‘colonization of Russia by people of different ethnicities’ were cited as two of the five most dangerous threats facing the country in the new millennium.²⁴¹

The dangers of promoting a vision of the Russian Federation (and Moscow) which privileges Slavic identity, validates stratified reproduction, and denies the incorporation of non-Slavic (immigrant) children into the imagined community, are as manifold as they are maleficent. Not only does the press’ ethnocentric and discriminatory discourse serve to seriously damage existing relations between the multiethnic and multiconfessional peoples of the Russian nation, but it also threatens to seriously impede the ability of the country to successfully attract and integrate future immigrants and their children into Russian society. Like all developed nations, Russia is undergoing a demographic transition which is in large part characterized by a low (or falling) birthrate. Over the coming decades, immigration will become increasingly important to the nation’s overall demographic, economic, social, cultural, and geopolitical standing. In fact, solving the nation’s ‘population problem’ without recourse to increased immigration is utterly unattainable.

Large scale immigration, if managed effectively by the state, far from heralding the extinction of the Russian Federation will be its saving grace. Rather than propagandizing ethnoparticularist notions of the nation and discourse which demeans the ‘motherwork’ of ethnic minority women, the popular media would better serve the public

²⁴¹ The three other major threats facing the nation were cited as economic collapse, terrorism, and ecological disaster. See: VTsIOM, “Press-Vypusk 208: Chego boiatsia nashi sootchestvenniki,” May 13, 2005, available at http://wciom.ru/arkhiv/tematicheskiiarkhiv/item/single/1259.html?no_cache=1&print=1

by facilitating dialogue which might foster greater understanding and tolerance in a country, which rather than disappearing, is destined to become increasingly diverse in the coming decades.

Figure 1.



Graphic reads: “In Russia for every 100 births there are 122 abortions! Heinous. However in 1990 there were 1.7 times more abortions – 206 for every hundred births.”

A woman’s choice in reproductive matters is increasingly coming under attack in the Moscow popular press. As a part of its ‘gender backlash’ and ethno-demographic panic, the media urges Slavic women to fulfill their maternal duty to the nation by having as many children as possible.

Source: Iuliia Zhukovskaia, “Retsept protsvetaniia strany ot uchenykh: Rodi troikh – spasi Rodinu,” (Scientists’ prescription for the prosperity of the country: Give birth to three and save the Motherland), *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 15, 2006, 6-7.

Figure 2



The caption of Figure 2 reads: “I wouldn’t give up the happiness of being a mom for anything!”

Source: Anna Kukartseva, “Rozhat’? Ne Rozhat?” (To give birth? To not give birth?), *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, October 31, 2007, 7.

Figure 3



The caption of Figure 3 reads: “Does a woman like this still have the right to be a mother?”

Source: Irina Romancheva, “Imeet li pravo opustivshaiasia zhenshchina byt’ mater’yu?,” (Does a woman that has let herself go still have the right to be a mother?), *AiF- Moskva*, December 4, 2002, 5.

In the media’s discourse of stratified reproduction, the image of the nation’s ‘mother’ is depicted exclusively as a white Slavic woman. For these particular women, ‘motherhood’ is lauded as their natural calling, their grandest vocation, and their maternal obligation to the nation. Conversely, the maternity of the racialized (M)Other is demonized and constructed as posing an existential threat to the ethnocentrically imagined and demographically vulnerable Russian nation.

Figure 2 of a contented ‘Slavic’ mother-to-be comes from a pronatalist piece discussing the newest measures taken by the government to limit access to abortion. While Figure 3, featuring an ethnically-non Russian mother holding her child, accompanies an article concerned with sterilization and preserving the health of the nation, which asks whether or not all women should have the right to bear children. In a ‘motherhood’ discourse, which is overwhelmingly pronatalist when it comes to the maternity of Slavic women, the racially charged subtexts of articles such as these are difficult to ignore.

Figure 4.

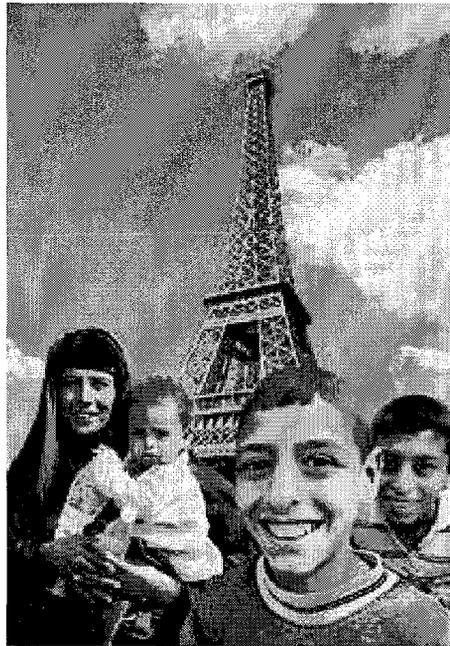


Lead caption reads: “Make a daughter or son – Fulfill your duty as a citizen.”

The popular press urges the nation’s women to fulfill their patriotic (maternal) duty to the Russian nation. It not pure coincidence that Tajikistan and Azerbaijan (at 3.68 and 2.1 children per woman of reproductive age, respectively) are presented as ‘leading nations’ for fertility rates in this chart, with Russia, Moscow and Moscow region, which exhibit ‘below replacement’ fertility levels, at the bottom. In the media’s discourse on ‘reproduction’ and the ‘demographic crisis,’ Russia (Moscow) and its ‘native population’ are constructed as being on the losing side in the ‘battle of the cradles’ with the former brotherly neighbours to the South.

Source: Iuliia Zhukovskaia, Retsept protsvetaniia strany ot uchenykh: Rodi troikh – spasi Rodinu,” (Scientists’ recipe for the well-being of the country: Give birth to three and save the Motherland), *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 15, 2006, 6-7.

Figure 5.



In the press, the childbearing capabilities of migrant women and women of colour are symbolically ‘weaponized’ and constructed as posing an existential threat to Russian nation. In the above image featured in a *Komsomolskaya Pravda* article, which attests that the alleged ‘Islamification’ of Europe is just a sign of what is in store for Russia itself, we find the following provocative caption: “Migrants have already conquered Paris, London, and Berlin without firing a single shot. What lies ahead – Moscow perhaps?”

Source: Sergei Chugaev, Maksim Chizhikov, Boris Markov and Dar’ia Aslamova, “Evropa perekhodit v Islam,” (Europe is converting to Islam), *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 26, 2006, 8-9.

Chapter Two. From a Vehicle of Assimilation to a Threat to the ‘Russian Nation’: The Reconceptualization of ‘Mixed Marriages’ in Moscow’s Popular Press.

“Russia has been hit by a tidal wave of bachelors from the countries of the CIS.”

- “Tikhaia Seksual’naia Interventsiia. Muzhchiny iz byvshikh bratskikh respublik telom zarabatyvaiut sebe na zhizn’,” (The Covert Sexual Intervention. Men from the former brotherly republics are using the body to make a living for themselves), *MK*, December 19, 1998, 3.

“A Black Hole...Georgians, Armenians and Azeris make up more than 30% of the grooms in interethnic unions with Muscovite women...According to [researchers’] prognosis, at such a rate our gene pool will be entirely changed over the course of eight generations.

- Dmitrii Pisarenko, “Moskva-Reka – Soliaris ili ‘chernaiia dyra’?: Tret’ smeshannykh brakov v stolitse – s vykhodtsami s Kavkaza,” (The Moscow River – Solaris or a ‘black hole’?: One third of mixed marriages in the capital are with immigrants from the Caucasus), *AiF-M*, March 19, 2003, 4.

“The Russian man has been destroyed – in the moral, spiritual, and emotional sense of the word. The decades of equality between men and women have accomplished their dirty deed – women have learned how to survive without a man in many spheres of their lives. Democracy, equal rights, feminism, and the whole lot of it have led to the fact that men have stopped being REAL men – defenders, pillars of strength, masters of their domain if you want to get right down to the heart of it. The singular reason why Russian women are turning to Islam is this: they want to have a real man by their side.”

- Irina Rudenko, “Pochemu russkie zhenshcheny prinimaiut islam?,” (Why are Russian women converting to Islam?), *KP*, August 29, 2004, 6-7.

Media representations and societal opinion concerning interethnic marriages, often referred to as ‘mixed marriages’ (*smeshannie braki*) in Russian, have undergone a dramatic shift since perestroika and the resulting collapse of the Soviet Union. The Soviet regime highlighted the prevalence of ethnically mixed families as a critical indicator of the success of the regime’s nationalities policies, heralding the eventual obliteration of bourgeois ethnic distinctions as part of the creation of a communist society.²⁴² Today however, the popular press depicts the growing prevalence of interethnic marriages in Russian society, specifically those between ethnic Russian women and non-Slavic men from the former Caucasian and Central Asian republics, as a highly undesirable and worrisome trend.

This chapter examines the Moscow popular press’ negative reconceptualization of the role of mixed marriages in post-Soviet Russian society as a potent expression of its anxiety-ridden Slavocentric re-imagination of the Russian nation. The issue of “who bed[s] and who wed[s] with whom”²⁴³ has become a critical matter of public inquiry in the post-Soviet popular press, precisely because of the fundamentality of sex and marriage to the creation and maintenance of ethnic, racial, and national boundaries of belonging and exclusion, or what critical theorist, Joane Nagel, has dubbed as

²⁴² Of course, the officially expressed aims of Soviet nationalities policies, which inevitably changed over the course of the state’s socio-economic and political development, often differed from their implementation and individuals’ personal encounters with them. Critics point to Russocentric assimilative elements behind the rhetoric of the friendship of the peoples, while others suggest that the state’s nationalities policies, far from diminishing ethnic stratification, actually contributed to the very rise of ethnic nationalism within the Union’s fifteen republics and the downfall of the Soviet Union. For example see: Terry Martin, “The friendship of the peoples,” in *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, 432-60 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Meredith Roman, “Making Caucasians Black: Moscow Since the Fall of Communism and the Racialization of Non-Russians,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 18, no. 2 (2002): 3-8; and Ronald G. Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993).

²⁴³ Ann L. Stoler, “Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures,” *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 636-37.

“ethnosexual frontiers.”²⁴⁴ Policing the ethnic composition of individual families is seen as being vital to the genealogy and pedigree of the nation. The popular press’ promotion of a traditionalist-pronatalist agenda, as discussed in the previous chapter, contains a racial undercurrent: Russian women, as the biological and cultural reproducers of future generations and as crucial boundary-markers for their ‘ethnic/national’ group, should be making families and having babies exclusively with Russian or Slavic men. Conversely, the press interprets mixed marriages between Russian women and non-Slavic men as dangerous transgressions of the ‘ethnosexual’ boundaries separating ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The post-Soviet racialization of the ‘younger brothers,’ from the former Caucasian and Asian Soviet republics, is accomplished in part through the press’ divisive discourse on the dangers ‘mixed unions’ pose to Russian women, Russian men, and the ‘Russian nation’ itself.

The first section of this chapter provides a brief overview of the officially sanctioned discourse on interethnic marriages during the Soviet period, which supported such unions as a critical vehicle for merging the nation’s various ethnic groups into a collective ‘Soviet people,’ and contends that such views have undergone a dramatic reversal in the post-Soviet period. Popular media representations and public opinion polls display a growing societal intolerance toward mixed unions between Russians and former co-nationals from the Southern and Asian Soviet republics.

The second section turns to a more detailed examination of the post-Soviet

²⁴⁴ “[E]thnosexual frontiers [are] the erotic and intimate borderlands that lie at the intersections of racial, ethnic, and national boundaries. . . [They] are sites of fantasy, stereotyping, and race baiting [which are] surveilled and supervised, patrolled and policed, regulated and restricted, but regularly are penetrated by individuals forging sexual links with ethnic and national ‘others.’” Joane Nagel, “Racial, Ethnic, and National Boundaries: Sexual Intersections and Symbolic Interactions,” *Symbolic Interaction* 24, no. 2: 127-8.

popular press' negative reconceptualization of mixed marriages. Newspapers depict interethnic/interfaith unions as posing a multitude of dangers to the Russian people and to what is ethnocentrically imagined as their nation. Articles present the growing number of marriages between, 'Russian Orthodox' women and 'Caucasian and Central Asian Muslim' men in contemporary Russian society, as a serious threat to the survival of ethnic Russians and their traditional faith. If during the imperial and Soviet periods intermarriage with Russian women was seen as an important instrument for assimilating the non-Orthodox/non-Russian peoples of the empire/union, then today the press alternatively constructs the 'Russian woman' and the nation she represents as utterly vulnerable to the destructive acculturating forces of the '*inorodtsy*' (peoples of a foreign race) and '*inovertsy*' (peoples of non-Orthodox faith) from the former periphery, who 'without invitation' have come to claim their place in the once great centre of their collective home. Articles also express concern over the degenerative eugenic consequences of mixed relationships for ethnic Russians as a group. The media present the 'blood mixing' of Slavic women with Southern and Asian men in the capital as deleterious to the health and genetic fitness of Moscow's Slavic population. Its preoccupation with 'blood' and 'genes' reveals an objection to mixed unions, which arises not only from a concern with cultural degradation (expressions of cultural racism), but also from the fear of miscegenation (manifestations of biological racism). The children who result from liaisons across racialized divides also provoke anxiety in the press concerning the permeability of the boundaries separating 'us' from 'them.' The growing presence of 'mixed children' in contemporary Russian society threatens to lay bare the artificiality of socially-constructed oppositions, such as 'Slav' vs. 'Black';

‘native population’ vs. ‘non-native’; and ‘host’ vs. ‘guest’ upon which contemporary discriminatory discourses and practices of domination/subordination depend.

Consequentially, articles display a nervous concern with the ‘proper classification’ of ‘these children.’ The Moscow popular press’ discourse on marriage and sex across ethnicized/raced divides is intimately intertwined with a paranoid insecurity about the identity, primacy, and future of the majority ethnic Russian community within the Russian Federation, and in particular, the standing of the ethnic Russian male.

The final section of this chapter turns to an examination of this latter theme: the press’ interpretation of mixed marriages between Russian women and non-Slavic males as a worrisome indication of the failure of the ‘Russian man’ in the eyes of the nation’s Slavic women, and as a direct challenge by the male ‘Other’ to the power and privilege of ethnic Russian males. Soviet-era concerns about the demoralized state of the nation’s men have assumed an overtly ethnocentric and utterly catastrophic tone in the contemporary press’ discourse. Moscow’s popular press appropriates the very real and serious social, economic, health, and identity challenges faced by individual men navigating the transformations of post-Soviet period, turning them into an anxiety-ridden discourse of ‘ethnic Russian masculinity in crisis.’ The media hyperbolically and contextually portray the ethnic Russian male as a dying species, a hopeless alcoholic, an irresponsible child, a failed breadwinner (*kormilets*), an emblem of national humiliation, and an increasingly unsuitable mate for Russian women. This pathetic figure is often perilously juxtaposed with a caricature of the male ‘Other,’ whose alleged vitality, sobriety, virility, and success in adapting to the economic transition is used to humiliate and enrage the Russian male ego. The constructions of the male ‘Other’ as the bearer of a

competing masculinity to the defeated 'Russian man' and as a contender for the hearts and hands of 'Russian women' emerge as prominent and explosive tropes in the popular press. Such themes are intimately connected to the perception that Russian men are losing their patriarchal claim over 'Russian womanhood' to their 'former younger brothers' from the South, and with it their traditional power and privilege in the gendered and racialized hierarchy of the nation. However, demonizing depictions of the male 'Other' are never far from the surface in the media's discourse on mixed marriages, which still privileges relationships between 'Russian men' and 'Russian women' and degrades the notion of legitimate and successful marriages between 'our' women and 'their' men.

From the mid-1930s until the breakup of the Soviet Union, official state policy celebrated interethnic marriages as proof of the indestructible 'friendship of the peoples' and as living symbols of the multiethnic nation's progressive march toward a bright future as a unified 'Soviet' people.²⁴⁵ Under Khrushchev, it was argued that unification of the various ethnic groups living in the Soviet Union would unfold in two stages. The first would be their 'coming together' (*sblizhenie*), followed by their complete 'merging' (*sliianie*). Within Brezhnev's administration, this two-stage process was replaced by the more accessible idea of the cultivation of an 'all-Soviet identity' and development of the 'Soviet person' (*sovestskii chelovek*).²⁴⁶ Within both of these approaches, however, 'mixed marriages' were considered a vital vehicle for realizing the merger of Soviet ethnic groups and were officially encouraged.

²⁴⁵ Adrienne Lynn Edgar, "Marriage, modernity, and the 'friendship of nations': interethnic intimacy in post-war Central Asia in comparative perspective," *Central Asian Survey* 26, no. 4 (2007): 584.

²⁴⁶ Nikolai Botev, "The Ethnic Composition of Families in Russia in 1989: Insights into the Soviet 'Nationalities Policy'," *Population and Development Review* 28, no. 4 (2002): 699-700.

In a speech commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Soviet Union, Brezhnev chose to highlight the millions of mixed marriages in the country as evidence of the great achievements of the nation's nationalities policy.²⁴⁷ In academic publications, Soviet scholars drew connections between the alleged eradication of ethnic discrimination, decline of religious affiliation, and emergence of a unique Soviet culture and identity, with the increase in interethnic marriages throughout the country.²⁴⁸ Although post-Soviet analyses imply that ethnic endogamy was much more prevalent in the USSR than politicians and statisticians were willing to admit, they also acknowledge a progressive trend towards greater exogamy,²⁴⁹ as well as increasing public approval of multiethnic unions.²⁵⁰ Indeed, survey data suggests that mixed marriages were generally well accepted within the Soviet Union, with anywhere between 66 and 85 percent of citizens polled in All-Union studies in the post-war period approving of such relationships.²⁵¹

Significantly, mixed marriages were also promoted through the state-controlled press. On the eve of perestroika, newspapers, including the Soviet-era editions of the

²⁴⁷ L. I. Brezhnev, *O Piatidesetiletii SSSR*, (Moscow: Politizdat, 1973), quoted in Botev, 681.

²⁴⁸ Dmitry Gorenburg, "Rethinking Interethnic Marriage in the Soviet Union," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 22, no. 2 (2006), 149.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 148-49. Post-Soviet examinations likewise show that mixed marriages involving Russians were most common with other Slavic groups than with the traditionally Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union. See Botev, 688-89.

²⁵⁰ However, several Soviet scholars have documented that support for interethnic unions, which may have been interpreted as an undesirable vehicle of assimilation and/or threat to traditional culture, varied across republics and between and within ethnic groups. For example, recorded support for mixed marriage was noticeably lower in the Central Asian republics than in other parts of the Union. See: A.A. Susokolov, "Etnosi pered vyborom," *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniia* 6 (1988): 32-40, quoted in Botev, 683. Moreover, an ethnographic study of Tartars living in Leningrad showed that 90 percent of those who spoke Russian at home approved of mixed marriages, while just 53 percent of those who spoke Tartar at home held the same view. See: Galina Starovoitova, "Etnicheskaia gruppa v sovremennom sovetskom gorode: sotsiologicheskie ocherki (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987), 97, quoted in Jeff Sahadeo, "Druzhiba Narodov or second-class citizenship? Soviet Asian migrants in a postcolonial world," *Central Asian Survey* 26, no. 4 (2007): 572.

²⁵¹ Botev, 683. While it could be suggested that such polling might have been aimed at producing results which supported the officially promoted ideology of the Communist Party, it is also reasonable to assume that such views were indeed well established amongst the public, precisely as a result of the dominant societal discourse which promoted mixed marriages and the friendship of the peoples as a valuable norm of Soviet society.

popular publications examined in this study, were still singing the praises of Soviet internationalism and paying tribute to those families engaged in bringing the diversity of the nation's people under one roof. In one such representative article from 1984, *AiF* proclaims that:

Interethnic marriages are the most clear and undeniable manifestation of the internationalist position of our youth. After all, it is within the home, and particularly in familial and spousal relations, that conservative ethnic traditions and prejudices are most virulent. Already in the USSR, 15 percent of families are ethnically mixed and we are witnessing an increase in the number of such unions. This tendency is particularly noticeable within youth construction sites,²⁵² where young people are being given a much greater opportunity to engage in internationalist association. In fact, sociological investigations highlight our young peoples' overwhelming support for interethnic marriage in practically every republic.²⁵³

Given the progressive attitudes and actions allegedly displayed by the public, and in particular those of Soviet youth, the article rather optimistically concludes that "the ultimate resolution of all questions in the sphere of interethnic relations... will be made possible through the unbreakable internationalist unity of the Soviet people - our Soviet patriotism."²⁵⁴

This is not to suggest that hostility toward such unions was totally absent during the Soviet period. In fact, evidence of societal discrimination experienced by children in the Soviet Union based on their 'mixed' backgrounds,²⁵⁵ the circulation of *samizdat*²⁵⁶

²⁵² The mention of 'youth construction sites' is a reference to the mass construction projects organized throughout the Soviet Union by the Komosomol, the youth wing of the Communist party. These projects, each of which brought together hundreds of young volunteers from various republics and different ethnic backgrounds, were clearly designed and promoted as a means of 'building of communism' in both a literal and ideological sense, with the forging of interethnic understanding, friendships, and families equally encouraged alongside the development of leadership and labouring skills and a collective work ethic.

²⁵³ Aleksandr Balitskii, "Internatsional'izm Sovetskoi Molodezhi. Norma Nashei Zhizni," (The Internationalism of Soviet Youth. A Principle of Our Life), *AiF*, March 13, 1984, 6.

²⁵⁴ Balitskii, "Internatsional'izm Sovetskoi Molodezhi," *AiF*, 6.

²⁵⁵ Charles Quist-Adade, In the shadows of the Kremlin and the White House: Africa's media image from communism to post-communism (Lanham: University Press of America, 2001), 60-68 and Oksana Karpenko, "'Byt' 'natsional'nym': strakh poteriat' i strakh poteriat'sia. Na primere tatar St. Peterburga," in

attacking mixed marriages for ‘random hybridization’ during the late Soviet period,²⁵⁷ and the perestroika pronouncements of increasingly brazen fascists, who in their right-wing publications openly condemned intermarriage between Russian women and the traditionally Muslim peoples of the USSR,²⁵⁸ suggest that ‘racial’ concerns about such relationships existed to a certain extent outside of the officially-sanctioned discourse.

However, it was not until the disintegration of Soviet Union and state restrictions on the central press that such extreme views would emerge as legitimate topics of public interest and debate in the so-called ‘democratic press.’ In fact, the contemporary popular press’ overtly hostile reading of ‘mixed marriages’ couldn’t stand in starker contrast to Soviet-era articulations. Articles increasingly portray intimacy and wedlock across ethnic boundaries as detrimental to the cultural unity and biological continuity of the nation, as well as a troublesome rejection of ethnic Russian men.

Societal views on mixed unions in the Russian Federation likewise reflect a sharp reversal of purported Soviet trends and an increase in levels of interethnic intolerance.²⁵⁹ A 1994 poll of Muscovites showed that only 45.3 percent of respondents viewed interethnic marriages positively; a major decline from approval ratings recorded before

Konstruktirovanie Etnichnosti: Etnicheskie obshchiny Sankt-Peterburga, eds. V. Vornokova and I. Osval’d, 49 (St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo ‘Dmitry Bulanin’, 1998), quoted in Sahadeo: 569.

²⁵⁶ ‘*Samizdat*’ Literally ‘self-published’ material which was developed and circulated outside of official channels during the Soviet era in order to evade state censorship.

²⁵⁷ S. Enders Wimbush, “Great Russians and the Soviet State: the dilemmas of ethnic dominance,” in Soviet Nationality Policy and Practices, ed. Jeremy Azrael, 354 (New York: Praeger, 1978), quoted in Sahadeo: 569.

²⁵⁸ John Bushnell, Moscow Graffiti: Language and Subculture (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 152.

²⁵⁹ Acceptance of interethnic marriage is frequently used by social scientists as a measure of tolerance in society. For example see: Murat Somer, “Cascades of ethnic polarization: Lessons from Yugoslavia,” Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 573, no. 3 (2001): 127-151; Matthijs Kalmijn, “Intermarriage and homogamy: Causes, patterns, trends,” Annual Review of Sociology 24 (1998): 395-421; J.W. Berry and Rudolf Kalin, “Multicultural and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada: An Overview of the 1991 National Survey,” Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science 27, no. 3 (1995): 301-320; and Abby L. Ferber, White Man Falling: Race, Gender, and White Supremacy (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998): 17-18.

the collapse of the USSR, but not nearly as disconcerting as the numbers expressed just two years later when the survey was repeated.²⁶⁰ By 1996, only 23.6 percent of Muscovites surveyed had a positive view of mixed marriages, with those describing themselves as ethnic Russians expressing noticeably lower levels of support than other ethnic groups in the capital (22 percent versus 38.7 percent for all other ethnic groups combined).²⁶¹ Studies suggest that a respondent's aversion to interethnic unions is greatly dependent on the specific ethnic groups involved. A 2005 Russia-wide study showed particularly high levels of intolerance toward 'mixed marriages' with 'migrants' from the Caucasus region and Central Asia. In fact, the levels of intolerance displayed in relation to such unions were higher than in any other category of question in the survey designed to examine societal opinions on immigration and interethnic relations.²⁶²

This intolerance is reflective of a variety of interconnected factors, including: the erosion and derision of Soviet ideals of internationalism following the break-up of the USSR; the ethnicization of the identity of ethnic Russians in the post-Soviet era; and an overall insecurity on the part of the majority Russian population with the increasing ethnic and confessional heterogeneity of modern Russian/Moscow society, in the face of

²⁶⁰ Ol'ga Vendina, "Migranty v Moskve – Rost Etno-Kul'turnogo Raznoobraziia ili Sotsial'noi Napriazhennosti?" ed. Zh. A. Zaionchkovskaia, *Migratsiia i Urbanizatsiia v SNG i Baltii v 90-e gody*, (Moscow: Tsentr Izucheniia Problem Vynuzhdennoi Migratsii SNG, 1999), 298. Also see: G. A. Zaikina and E. V. Foteeva, "Mezhnatsional'nyi brak v Massovom Soznanii," *Vestnik Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk* 66, no. 4 (1996): 296-304.

²⁶¹ Vendina, "Migranty v Moskve," 298.

²⁶² Lev Gudkov, "Smeshchennaia agressiia: Otnoshenie rossiian k migrantam," *Vestnik Obshchestvennogo Mneniia* 80, no. 6 (2005): 76-77. To the question, "I would not want one of my close relatives entering into a mixed marriage with a migrant from..." those surveyed responded: one of the Republics of the Caucasus – 71% and one of the Central Asian Republics – 72%. A 30 percent disapproval rating for marriages with a migrant from Ukraine was also recorded during the survey. However, this 'anomaly' appears to have more to do with the timing of the survey, in the bitter aftermath of the Orange Revolution, than with a consistent trend of growing societal intolerance toward Ukrainians as an ethnic group. Indeed, a transient deterioration in relations was noted in other studies at the time. In the media discourse on 'mixed marriages,' Ukrainians, along with Belarusians, are most commonly treated as 'Slavic brothers' and 'one of their own,' with whom marriage poses no threat or particular concern.

the so-called ‘demographic crisis’ affecting ethnic Russians. However, it stands to reason that the media’s divisive discourse on ‘mixed marriages’ not only reflects growing public opposition toward these unions, but also plays a critical role in framing and legitimizing such intolerant positions within society.

The popular press’ ‘problematization’ of interethnic unions speaks to an anxious concern about the purity, preservation, and primacy of ethnic Russians in the Russian nation: the same ethnic Russians who happen to constitute these newspapers’ primary audience and consumer base. In fact, articles on the topic of mixed marriages often provoke impassioned responses from the public. “Once again our readers have affirmed that the topic of ‘ethnicity and sexuality’ in its ‘Caucasian angle’ is the most burning (*zhguchaia*) issue in Russia today,” proclaims *KP* in an article specifically concerned with Chechen men and their Russian brides.²⁶³ Published reader responses support the popular press’ concern and antipathy toward such unions. “Russian women shouldn’t get married to Caucasians!!!” bluntly and emphatically exclaims one female reader who identifies herself as an ethnic Russian.²⁶⁴

Headlines forge a direct link between the increase in mixed marriages and the purportedly negative ethno-demographic shifts taking place in Russian society. “In 2050 there won’t be any ethnic Russians left in the capital – Geneticists have completed a study that reveals whom Muscovite women are marrying,” cautions the headline of an article in *KP* concerned with and by the increasing number of interethnic unions being

²⁶³ Aleksandr Gamov, “Na russkoi zhenit’sia? Da, shehas! Rasbizhalsia...” (Marry a Russian girl? Yeah right! Not very likely...”), *KP*, January 17, 2006, 8. Here the author’s choice of ‘zhguchaia’ has a double meaning. In addition to referring to a ‘hot’ or ‘controversial’ issue, the term, which is derived from the Russian verb ‘zhech’ (to burn), is also frequently used in the everyday racialized discourse to refer to ‘blacks’ (ie. zhguchii briunet/kavkazets/paren’ s iuga), whose temperaments are said to be ‘hot,’ and physical attributes (skin colour, hair, eyes) marked as ‘dark’ or ‘burnt.’

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

consecrated with ‘Caucasian’ men in the nation’s capital.²⁶⁵ Here, as in many other articles, the media use the term ‘Muscovite women’ as a synonym for ‘ethnic Russian women living in Moscow;’ a discursive technique which is emblematic of the press’ ethnocentric recasting of post-Soviet Moscow as a city for Slavs (see Figures 6 and 7). *MK* warns of a “Covert Sexual Intervention” by “men from the former brotherly republics” whom it presents as taking the places of ‘Russian grooms’ who are “dying out like mammoths.”²⁶⁶ While *AiF-M*, in an article accompanied by the headline, “Muscovite women are increasingly getting married to Caucasians,” laments that the “growth in interethnic marriages” will irrevocably alter the “anthropological look” of the capital’s population: “the average Muscovite of the future will be a brunette with distinctly visible features akin to those of either a Caucasian or an Asian.”²⁶⁷

A growing number of articles draw attention to the ‘issue’ of ethnic Russian women marrying Muslim men and converting to Islam.²⁶⁸ In the popular press’ discourse,

²⁶⁵ Aleksandr Boiko “V 2050 godu v stolitse ne ostanetsia russkikh – Genetiki proveli issledovanie ‘Za kogo vykhodiat zamuzh moskvichki,” (In 2050, there won’t be any ethnic Russians left in the capital – Geneticists have completed a study that reveals whom Muscovite women are marrying), *KP*, January 20, 2003, 4-5.

²⁶⁶ “Tikhaia Seksual’naia Interventsiia. Muzhchiny iz byvshikh bratskikh respublik telom zarabatyvaiut sebe na zhizn’,” (The Covert Sexual Intervention. Men from the former brotherly republics are using the body to make a living for themselves), *MK*, December 19, 1998, 3.

²⁶⁷ Dmitrii Pisarenko, “Moskvicha vstrechaiut po...litsu: Moskvichki stali chashche vykhodit’ zamuzh za kavkaztsev,” (First impressions of a Muscovite are made according to...his face. Muscovite women are increasingly getting married to Caucasians) *AiF-M*, February 19, 2003, 3. Here the headline is a play on the Russian saying ‘vstrechaiut po odezhke...provozhaiut po umu,’ translated as ‘A person’s clothes make the first impression, but it is only their intellect that can leave a lasting one,’ or something akin to the English saying ‘Clothes alone do not make the man’. The author’s intent is to highlight the growing importance of visible or ‘phenotypic’ traits as markers for identifying who is and is not a true Muscovite. This article is another example of the racialization of the discourse of belonging in the Moscow popular press.

²⁶⁸ For other illustrative examples see: Irina Rudenko, “Pochemu russkie zhenshcheny prinimaiut islam?,” (Why are Russian women converting to Islam?), *KP*, August 29, 2004, 8-9; Galina Sapozhnikova, “Pochemu russkie prinimaiut Islam? (Why are Russians converting to Islam?), *KP*, October 20, 21 and November 26, 2003, 6-7; Viacheslav Kostikov, “Na Zlobu Dnia. Shaitan Poputal: V Rossi v usloviiakh demograficheskogo krizisa cherez 20 let tret’ naseleniia mogut sostavliat’ musul’mane,” (The Beef of the Day. The devil’s to blame. Given the conditions of the demographic crisis, in 20 years, one third of the population in Russia could be comprised of Muslims), *AiF-M*, December 14, 2005, 10; Igor Sergeev, “Russkie Musul’manki: Pochemu moskovskie devushki prinimaiut islam?” (Russian Muslims: Why are

the terms ‘Orthodox’ and ‘Muslim’ serve not only as indicators of religious identity, but also as markers of ethnic and cultural difference.²⁶⁹ The media construct all ethnic Russians, regardless of their individual religious belief, as being born into the Orthodox faith. Russian women, mobilized as critical markers of the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ who abandon this sacred birthright by entering into marriage with the religious ‘Other,’ are portrayed in the press as betraying not only their faith, but also their people and their nation. Journalists voice their disapproval of Slavic women adopting, what one particular *MK* article labels, “the enemy’s faith.”²⁷⁰ The press warns of the harmful impact such interfaith unions²⁷¹ will have on the future position of ‘Russians’ and ‘their Orthodox faith’ in the nation, suggesting that the Russian Federation is progressively

Muscovite girls converting to Islam?), *MK*, December 11, 2003, 4; Aleksandr Kolpakov, “Pravoslavnie prinimaiut islam,” (Orthodox Christians are converting to Islam), *MK*, May 22, 2002, 5; Polina Ivanushkina, “Zhena na odnu noch’,” (A Wife for One Night), *AiF*, February 21, 2007: 66; and Zhanna Golubitskaia, “Moskva prinimaet islam. Sredi stolichnykh musul’man vse bol’she etnicheskikh russkikh,” (Moscow adopts Islam. There are increasingly more ethnic Russians amongst the capital’s Muslims), *MK*, March 12, 2009, 3.

²⁶⁹ The press’ ethnicization of ‘Orthodox’ identity is reflective of post-Soviet societal trends. Scholars describe the revival of Orthodox affiliation among ethnic Russians as a predictable response to the crisis of ethnic Russian identity which was unleashed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, its ideological constructs, and the socio-economic turmoil which ensued. For example, see: Svetlana Ryzhova, “Tolerance and Extremism: Russian Ethnicity in Orthodox Discourse of the 1990s,” in *Religion and Identity in Modern Russia: The Revival of Orthodoxy and Islam*, eds. Juliet Johnson et al., 65-90, (Burlington VT, Ashgate, 2005). Recent research shows that while over 80 per cent of ethnic Russians identify themselves as Orthodox, only 7 per cent of these people say they pray often or go to church once a month or more. As the respected Russian social scientist, Alexander Verkhovsky, suggests, Orthodox Christianity, as the dominant religion of ethnic Russians, appears to serve as a professed identity for the overwhelming majority, rather than as a confessed faith. Alexander Verkhovsky, “Who is the enemy now? Islamophobia and Antisemitism among Russian Orthodox nationalists before and after September 11,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 38, no. 2 (2004): 127-43.

²⁷⁰ Ekaterina Sazhneva, “Russkaia rana Korana. Oni smenili imena, rodinu i vziali veru vraga,” (The Koran’s Russian Wound. They changed their names, their homeland, and adopted the enemy’s faith), *MK*, April 6, 2007, 3. The Council of Russian Mullahs issued an official complaint regarding Sazhneva’s incendiary article and the paper was pressured into issuing a public apology. See: “MK prinosit izviniia musul’manam,” (MK apologises to Muslims), *Interfax*, April 9, 2007 accessed on June 28, 2009 at <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=print&div=5862>.

²⁷¹ I found no evidence in my research of a similar concern voiced in the press over interfaith unions between ‘Orthodox’ women and men practicing religions other than Islam.

being turned into an ‘Islamic state’ (see Figure 8).²⁷² Articles of this kind ignore the historical position of Islam and its peoples in the Russian nation, as well as the complexity of relations between Orthodox Christianity and Islam, which feature not only competition, but also commonality, coexistence, and cooperation.²⁷³ Instead, the two religions are dangerously constructed as the irreconcilable faiths of two separate civilizations and peoples destined to clash.²⁷⁴

In one particularly inflammatory example from *KP*, the outspoken Deacon Andrei Kuraev,²⁷⁵ when asked to provide his ‘expert’ opinion on the matter, equates mixed unions between ‘Russian Orthodox women’ and ‘Caucasian Muslim men’ as a form of ‘race suicide’:

In reality, interethnic marriages are a form of genocide of the Russian people! When our women get married to Caucasians, they enrich other peoples (*narody*) with their genes. As a result, the Russian race (*natsiia*) is weakened! After all, the children of a Russian woman and a Dagestani²⁷⁶ man will be Dagestani, and moreover, Muslims.²⁷⁷

Given the “depressed state” of the Russian people and the Russian Orthodox Church, which he views as having lost their historical ability to assimilate those from other

²⁷² Dmitrii Steshin, “Stanet li Rossiia islamskoi? Po prognozam ekspertov, k 2050 godu polovina rossiian budut ispovedovat’ islam,” (Will Russia become an Islamic country? According to expert prognoses half of all Russian citizens will practice Islam by 2050), *KP*, October 20, 2006, 6-7.

²⁷³ See: Alte Staalesen “Orthodoxy and Islam in Post-Soviet Russia: Opposing Confessional Cultures or Unifying Force?,” in *Nation-Building and Common Values in Russia*, eds. Pal Kolsto and Helge Blakkisrud, 301-325 (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004).

²⁷⁴ The ‘clash of civilizations’ theory, popularized by the late political scientist, Samuel Huntington, is frequently alluded to and used as an ‘analytical lens’ in articles discussing the role of Islam and Muslims in Russia and its capital city.

²⁷⁵ Kuraev teaches at both the Moscow Spiritual Academy and within the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Moscow State University.

²⁷⁶ Here the Deacon uses the term ‘Dagestani’ as if it were a distinct ethnic descriptor. In actuality, the historic peoples of Dagestan are comprised of a plurality of different ethnic and language groups. Avars, Dargins, and Lezgins from the Northern Caucasian language group, make up approximately 75% of the population.

²⁷⁷ Nikita Mironov, “Migrant dlia moskvichki – luchshii zhenikh? On galaten, ne p’et i pashet za troikh!” (Is a migrant the best groom for a Muscovite woman? He’s valiant, doesn’t drink and toils for three!), *KP*, August 31, 2007, 6-7.

cultures and religions, Kuraev calls on ‘Russian’ women to refrain from entering into relationships with Muslims as a necessary means to “prevent the extinction of ethnic Russians and their traditional faith.”²⁷⁸ He likewise suggests that additional measures, such as the creation of an official state ministry to monitor and discourage interethnic marriages, which he misleadingly contends already exist in nations like Israel, should be instituted in Russia as well.²⁷⁹

The Deacon’s apocalyptic abhorrence of interfaith marriages, although an extreme manifestation, reflects a real sense of diminished power and insecurity felt in much broader circles in Russia. His incendiary comments were published in the nation’s most popular paper as a legitimate argument against mixed unions and his views have been supported by other figures within the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC).²⁸⁰ Kuraev has

²⁷⁸ Ibid. A more detailed explanation of can be found in a short article written by Kuraev which can be accessed on his personal blog: “Mezhnatsional’nye i Mezhrefigioznye Braki,” March 23, 2009, available at <http://diak-kuraev.livejournal.com/15175.html>.

²⁷⁹ Mironov, “Migrant dlia moskvichki – luchshii zhenikh?,” *KP*, 6-7. While there is no such official ministry in Israel, interfaith unions are certainly a highly divisive topic in the nation. In fact, as in many other countries in the region, Israel has no provisions for civil marriages. As such, individuals from different faith communities wishing to get officially married often face enormous barriers and are increasingly traveling outside of the country to wed, as Israel legally recognizes civil unions entered into in other countries. For example see: “In Mideast, interfaith couples travel to Cyprus to wed,” *USA Today*, October 19, 2009 accessed on October 30, 2009 at http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2009-10-18-cyprus-weddings_N.htm.

²⁸⁰ For example, Father Daniil Sysoev, author of the book, *Brak s Musul’maninom* (Marriage with a Muslim), warns that if marital unions between Russian women and Muslim men continue to increase in number “the Ancient Enemy will come in the gates of our fortress without the slightest resistance,” adding that Russia is currently engaged in a battle “between the People of the Holy Scriptures and the people of jihad,” quoted in Dzhannat Sergie Markus, “Utverzhdanie, budto ‘v Rossii u pravoslavnykh net problem s musul’manami’ dezinformatsiia,” *Portal.Credo.Ru*, September 19, 2007, available at <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act?=authority&id=830>. Others, such as the well-respected Orthodox missionary, Father Sergei Rybko, frame their opposition to such unions in less confrontational language: “The truth of the matter is that the laws of the Orthodox canon prohibiting marriages to people of different faiths retain their importance today. Observing them would help to avoid the mass of problems that might result from such marriages and would help to keep families together.” “Sviashchennosluzhiteli o mezhrefigioznykh brakakh,” *Regions.Ru*, January 19, 2009, available at <http://www.regions.ru/news/2191066/>. Other Orthodox leaders interviewed in the article express similar views to Father Sergei. However, the Muslim leaders cited in the article appear to have a much more optimistic outlook on such unions, referring to these relationships as a “positive” and “natural” result of “living in a multinational and multi-confessional state.” My observations are by no means meant to suggest that the ROC as an institution or the majority of its leaders and followers support or ascribe to Islamophobic views like those of Kuraev and Sysoev. However,

continued his outspoken condemnation of ‘interfaith’ and ‘interethnic’ unions, receiving wide media coverage and support in the process.²⁸¹ In fact, he has become an increasingly important intellectual and spiritual figure in Russian society, bestowed with numerous awards and distinctions. He was recently chosen as the lead editor in the development of the school textbook, “Foundations of Orthodox Culture,” which will be used to teach the ‘Orthodox’ component of the new “Foundations of Religious Culture” curriculum developed for Russian middle schools and recently approved by President Medvedev.²⁸² Kuraev’s growing popularity and recognition in society suggests that his religio-ethnocentric and anxiety-laden views of mixed marriage have struck a chord within certain segments of the Russian public and elite.

If in the past, the ‘Russian woman’ was conceptualized and acted, through intermarriage, as a critical vehicle for assimilating the diverse peoples of the Russian/Soviet empire, then in today’s popular media discourse she is conversely presented as being highly vulnerable to the destructive acculturating forces of the ‘Other.’ In late imperial Russia, in spite of religious canon which officially forbade marriage between Orthodox believers and ‘*inovertsy*’ (adherents of a different faith), “the complete assimilation of peoples through intermarriage was not particularly controversial in Russian officialdom or educated society, as long as it was preceded by conversion to

it is important to note that neither Kuraev nor Sysoev were reprimanded by the ROC for their incendiary remarks.

²⁸¹ Both Kuraev’s comments in KP and the short article written in 2009 were widely republicized in other media formats. Kuraev was also invited to discuss his views on mixed marriages in a prime-time television interview on the national channel NTV. See: “Shkola Zlosloviia,” NTV, June 23, 2008.

²⁸² See: Marina Lemutkina, “Zachem Pravoslavnym Uchebnik?,” MK, July 6, 2009, 3; Elena Novoselova, “Redaktsionnyi sovet uchebnika ‘Osnivy pravoslavnoi kul’tury’ vozglavit Andrei Kuraev,” Rossiiskaia Gazeta, July 2, 2009, available at <http://www.rg.ru/2009/07/02/shkola-site-anons.html>; and “Russian president supports religion education in schools,” RIA-Novosti, July 21, 2009, available at <http://en.rian.ru/society/20090721/155576886.html>.

Orthodoxy.”²⁸³ In her study on interethnic marriage in post-War Soviet Central Asia, Adrienne Lynn Edgar likewise argues that Russian women, through intermarriage, were slated to play an integral ‘modernizing’ role in the Sovietization (i.e. cultural Russification) of the ‘backward’ Muslim periphery.²⁸⁴

However, the Soviet era idea of ‘the Russian woman as a pillar of internationalism’ (*‘russkaia zhenshchina – oplot internatsionalisma’*) has undergone a dramatic transformation since the collapse of the socialist empire. In post-Soviet discourse, the ‘ethnic Russian collective,’ despite comprising the overwhelming majority of the population in the Russian Federation, is commonly constructed as operating from a position of weakness, as an inferior reflection of its glorious past, and as constantly under threat from ‘Others’ eagerly waiting to take its place.²⁸⁵ This sense of vulnerability is likewise expressed as an erosion of the historical ‘assimilating ability’ (*‘assimiliatsionnaia sposobnost’*) of the Russian people, language, culture, and faith. In this context, the ‘Russian woman’ (and the ‘people’ (*narod*) she represents), rather than serving as a vehicle for the Russification of ‘others’, is constructed as being defenseless against the degenerative assimilative forces of the ‘*inovertsy*’ and ‘*inorodtsy*’ (peoples of a foreign race), over whom Russians formerly claimed to assert their authority.

This fear of being assimilated by the ‘Other’ appears as a theme in numerous articles on mixed marriages. The press contends that an ‘unequal playing field’ in the realm of interethnic marriages leaves not only Russian/Muscovite women, but also

²⁸³ Robert P. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 174.

²⁸⁴ Edgar, 581-99.

²⁸⁵ For some representative examples of this discourse outside of the media, see: Mikhail Rutkevich, “O sud’bakh russkogo etnosa” (On the Fate of the Russian Ethnic Group”), *Svobodnaia mysl’* 21, no. 1 (2004): 56-63; Viktor Kozlov, “Vymiranie Russkikh” (The Extinction of Ethnic Russians), *Vestnik Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk* 65, no. 9 (1995): 771-77; and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Rossia v Obvale* (Russia in Collapse), (Moscow: Russkii Put’, 1998).

Russians/Muscovites as an ethno-cultural collective, vulnerable to assimilation at the hands of the male 'Other':

Immigrants from the Caucasus are more than happy to take a Muscovite wife, but the opposite situation is a very rare occurrence indeed. The same Caucasians hardly ever allow their daughters to get married to a young man of a different ethnicity, including Russians... The end result of such a trend is clear: in the not too distant future Moscow will become the capital of Caucasian rather than of Russian culture.²⁸⁶

Occasionally, one comes across less overtly inflammatory, if nevertheless ethnocentric, articles, which suggest that marriage to the 'Other' is possible, but only in cases where Russians' cultural absorption by the 'Other' can be guarded against. For example, a director of a support program for migrants in Moscow bluntly advises *KP*'s female readership:

It is only possible to get married to those Caucasian men who agree to stay and live with you in Moscow, who will speak with you in Russian, and who will send your children to a Russian school. If he asks you to go back to his homeland with him... don't agree! They come from an entirely different culture with different traditions. Experience shows that our women cannot survive this type of experience.²⁸⁷

However, the majority of articles warn Russian women of the "high improbability of building a successful relationship [or family]" with 'their' men because of the "incompatibility of our cultures" and "their unwillingness to adopt the Russian way of life."²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ "Na semi kholmakh: Cherez polveka merom Moskvy stanet azerbaidzhanets?," (On the seven hills: In fifty years will the Mayor of Moscow be an Azeri?), *MK*, October 8, 1999, 3. Also see: Aleksandr Gamov, "Ramzan Kadyrov: Esli krasivaia russkaia, mogu I zhenit'sia: Pervyi vitse-prem'er Chechni predlagaiut vvest v respublike mnogozhenstvo," (Ramzan Kadyrov: If she is a beautiful Russian woman, I could marry her too: The first vice-premier of Chechnya wants to legalize polygamy in the republic), *KP*, January 14, 2006, 8; and Gamov, "Na russkoi zhenit'sia? Da, shchas! Rasbizhalsia...," *KP*, 8.

²⁸⁷ Mironov, "Migrant dlia moskvichki – luchshii zhenikh?," *KP*, 6-7.

²⁸⁸ Aleksandr Stepanov and Iurii Red'kin, "Egiptianin ubil russkuiu zhenu iz-za revnosti," (Egyptian murders Russian wife out of jealousy), *KP*, September 3, 2008, 4.

Anxiety expressed in Moscow's popular press toward the growth of 'mixed unions' in society stems from more than a perceived threat of cultural erosion (articulations of cultural racism). The papers examined in this study, in a manner similar to Kuraev's 'genetic' rationale against 'inter-faith' marriages,²⁸⁹ also voice concern about the deleterious impact of 'mixed' relationships on the so-called 'Russian' or 'Muscovite' 'gene pool' (expressions of biological racism). Such anxiety rests upon the false premise that 'Russians' (or even more bizarrely, 'Muscovites') comprise a distinct biological entity, which is vulnerable to contamination by degenerative foreign material. The press' alarm regarding the threat posed by intimate liaisons across the 'ethnic divide' speaks to what Benedict Anderson has described as the central preoccupation of the "racist imagination", which "dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations."²⁹⁰ Indeed, the 'eugenic anxiety,' buried within much of the discourse on the demographic crisis in Russia today, is strikingly evident in media discussions about the threat posed by mixed unions (and the children of such unions) to the ethnic composition and health of the nation's future generations. It is through such mainstream media depictions that one can see how membership in the imagined community is increasingly being imagined along 'biologically racial' lines.

For example, in a *KP* article, which portends the inevitable disappearance of ethnic Russians from the nation's capital, it is not only the cultural but genetic impact of mixed unions that are said to play a decisive role. The paper writes:

²⁸⁹ Kuraev proclaims that through mixed unions the "biological composition of the Russian people" is being "replaced by the 'dark' and more dominant genes" of "the Caucasian peoples." "Mezhnatsional'nye i Mezhrefigioznye Braki."

²⁹⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 149.

Already today, 22 percent of marriages involving Muscovite women are mixed. These unions are being consecrated between young Russian ladies and the representatives of very specific ethnic groups (Dagestanis, Azeris, Tadjiks, Kazakhs and Georgians and other peoples from the Caucasus and Asia)... These ethnic groups that have come to conquer (*zavoevyvat*) Moscow bring with them not only their foreign traditions and culture, but also their genes.²⁹¹

“The genetic system of Moscow is open like it never has been before,” writes *MK* in an article anxious about what it sees as the covert derussification of the nation’s capital: “It is a kind of ‘melting pot’ in which the ‘DNA’ of all people is ‘boiled’ altogether, and for the most part, today’s initiators of ‘blood mixing’ are male immigrants from the Caucasus who are getting married to our women.”²⁹² In another article, Dr. Olga Kurbatova, a professor of biology and a lead researcher at the Moscow-based Vavilov Institute for Genetics, provides readers with a purportedly academic basis for concerns regarding matrimony between Russian women and those she refers to as “migrants from Transcaucasia and the Northern Caucasus” region.²⁹³ She warns that:

Within ten generations, the flow of genes through the father’s line will lead to an outcome in which 70% of the gene pool of Russians (*russkikh*) in Moscow will contain ‘alien’ (*chuzhikh*) genes. The anthropological look of the population throughout the Moscow region will be irrevocably altered.”²⁹⁴

The press alarmingly contends that intimate unions between ‘Muscovite women’ and ‘Southern men’ threaten to undermine not only the numerical superiority, but also the genetic fitness of the capital’s Slavic population. Mainstream newspapers warn of the

²⁹¹ Boiko “V 2050 godu v stolitse ne ostanetsia russkikh,” *KP*, 4-5. *AiF-M* employs a strikingly similar construction in an article likewise concerned with the ‘genetic’ impact of mixed marriages on the capital: “Southern migrants bring to the city not only their traditions and dialects, but also their genes.” Dmitrii Pisarenko, “Moskva-Reka – Soliaris ili ‘chernaia dyra’?: Tret’ smeshannykh brakov v stolitse – s vykhodtsami s Kavkaza,” (The Moscow River – Solaris or a ‘black hole’?: One third of mixed marriages in the capital are with immigrants from the Caucasus), *AiF-M*, March 19, 2003, 4.

²⁹² “Na semi kholmakh: Cherez polveka merom Moskvyy stanet azerbaidzhanets?,” *MK*, 3. For a similar articulation from *MK* see: “Moskve pora zanovo obruset,” (The time has come to Russify Moscow again), *MK*, December 19, 1998, 3.

²⁹³ Mironov, “Migrant dlia moskvichki – luchshii zhenikh?,” *KP*, 6-7.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

degenerative risks of ‘interracial’ sex. Employing rhetoric reminiscent of articulations of Social Darwinism, *KP* cautions that when the “genes of Southern men,” who come from “distinctly separate ecological niches than us,” are mixed with the genes of Russian women, it poses a serious threat to the health of their ‘mixed’ offspring.²⁹⁵ Having attempted to discredit beliefs held by some about the potentially positive effects of ‘mixed progeny,’ the country’s most read newspaper contends that by having children with such men, Russian women are endangering the health of their kin and their nation’s future generations:

Although some people claim that children born out of mixed marriages are more beautiful and intelligent than others, scientists do not support this type of opinion. However, what we do know for sure is that these migrants from the Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasia share a host of genetic anomalies. Of course, when kept amongst themselves they do not appear as anomalies. One of these is a gene that brings about sickle-cell anemia. In layman’s terms, this is a disease in which the red blood cells begin to disintegrate and the blood begins to ‘die’. Another gene changes the structure of hemoglobin, and, if a child inherits both of them, he is given a death sentence. These two mutant-genes may have protected our Southern neighbors from malaria. But what do we need them for?²⁹⁶

KP advises its ‘Russian’/’Muscovite’ female readers that “there are other equally compelling reasons to reconsider rushing into mixing your blood with a Caucasian man.”²⁹⁷ Employing pseudo-scientific arguments and questionable data to support racialized segregation of the intimate sphere, *KP* proclaims:

The genes of Caucasians are susceptible to AIDS. Russian and American scientists recently uncovered that 14 percent of Russian residents, even after being infected with HIV, remained healthy. It turns out that there is a gene in the blood of ethnic Russians (*russkikh*) that interferes with the virus’s ability to attach itself to and infect cells. Caucasians (*kavkaztsy*), on the other hand, very rarely have this gene. In fact, ethnic Georgians don’t have it at all. But Muscovite residents have an untold amount of them. So, if a Muscovite woman who possesses this gene

²⁹⁵ Boiko “V 2050 godu v stolitse ne ostanetsia russkikh,” *KP*, 4-5.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

conceives a child with a Georgian, then her offspring will forever lose this natural genetic defense against AIDS [emphasis in original].²⁹⁸

The media's discourse on 'diseases of the blood,' attributed to supposed 'evolutionary' and 'ecological' variations between the 'Russian' peoples of the North and the 'Caucasian' peoples of the South, and the 'dangerous incompatibility' of 'mating' between these two groups, is mobilized to construct a 'naturalized' or 'biological' view of difference between 'us' and 'them' that is allegedly supported by science.²⁹⁹ It is not surprising that this particular article was reproduced as propaganda on the websites of several ultra-nationalist and racist groups in Russia.³⁰⁰

An equally racially-charged message is propagated in *AiF-M*. Having acknowledged Moscow's long history of attracting people from neighboring cities and villages, the paper suggests that this once "natural" and "healthy" process of migration and genetic evolution has been displaced by a type and magnitude of diversity which threatens to turn the capital's prized "gene pool" into a "swamp."³⁰¹ Critically, the paper's specific concern is with the "genetic burden posed to Moscow's native

²⁹⁸ Ibid. The alleged 'results' of this study, for which KP provides no citation, also seem to be at odds with the reality of the current HIV epidemic in the Russian Federation, with UNAIDS estimating a 1.1% infection rate for adult citizens between the ages of 15 and 49. See: UNAIDS, *AIDS in the Commonwealth of Independent States* (New York, United Nations, 2008), 25-7.

²⁹⁹ Incursions of the social sciences into the field of medicine have resulted in a number of critical studies on the relationship between disease and 'race' which bare relevance to the discourse evidenced in articles such as this. For example, Melbourne Tapper, in his compelling analysis of the construction of sickle cell anemia as a 'disease of the black body,' states that: "Medical science and anthropology have used sickling to claim the racial distinctiveness of 'blacks' and 'whites' and to represent this distinctiveness as the product of a specific genetic structuration - an indisputable fact." Melbourne Tapper, *In the Blood: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 3. Such work reminds us that, even in the era of so-called 'new racism' (in which 'genetic-based' arguments of 'race' are said to have been largely replaced by processes of racialization that focus on exploiting 'culturally' defined differences between 'ethnic groups'/'races'/'us' and 'them'), academic discourse, or its (mis)representation in the press, continue to serve in the reification of biological conceptions of 'race' as 'natural' and supported by 'science'.

³⁰⁰ The article was reprinted in its entirety as propaganda on the sites of organizations such as The National Patriots of Russia (NPR), Russian National Unity (RNE) and the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI). The article was also used as a source in an incendiary article in the nationalist newspaper *Zavtra*. See: Maksim Rudnev, "Legalizovannaia Nenavist' (Legalized Hate), *Zavtra*, April 1, 2003, 12-13.

³⁰¹ Pisarenko, "Moskva-Reka – Soliaris ili 'chernaiia dyra'?", *AiF-M*, 4.

population” by our women intermixing with the “peoples of Transcaucasia and Central Asia” who it claims “have a higher incidence of blood diseases than Slavs.”³⁰² “Today, Georgians, Armenians, and Azeris make up more than 30% of the grooms in mixed unions,” the paper contends: “and, as such the capital’s medical professionals need to be ready to deal with the fact that the spectrum of inherited diseases will change.”³⁰³ *AiF-M* adds that the capital’s fitness also is threatened by the alleged “educational deficiencies” of those migrants making their way to the capital.³⁰⁴ The frequent anti-immigrant argument, which contends that the ‘wrong’ type of people are flooding into Russia, is given a eugenic slant in this *AiF-M* article on ‘mixed marriages,’ with allegedly ‘inferior’ migrant stock blamed for sullying the capital’s ‘gene pool’:

As is well known, not even the brightest light can escape from a ‘black hole.’³⁰⁵ Once you have entered it, everything gets mixed up, and the genetic memory of your offspring is lost forever – this is a kind of pay-off for those migrants from the South who come to ‘conquer the capital’. There is a reason why they say that Moscow is turning into a swamp that swallows everything up...we need to protect her waters and ensure that they are kept clean.”³⁰⁶

The media’s discourse of ‘genes’ and ‘blood’ creates powerful, if erroneous, notions of ‘biological’ distinctions between the socially-constructed groups of ‘Caucasians’ or ‘Central Asians’, and ‘Russians’ or ‘Slavs.’ Such ‘knowledge’ easily lends itself to the classification of these groups as differentiated ‘races.’ Meanwhile, the metaphorization of ‘the raced community’ through the essentializing imagery of ‘blood,’ ‘water,’ and ‘space’ speaks of this ‘community’s’ inherent vulnerability to contamination,

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁵ Given the racialized connotation of the term ‘black’ (*chernyi*) in contemporary Russian discourse, the article’s use of the metaphor of a ‘black hole’ to depict the increasingly ethnically diverse Russian capital, seems to be a deliberate provocation.

³⁰⁶ Pisarenko, “Moskva-Reka – Soliaris ili ‘chernaiia dyra’?,” *AiF-M*, 4.

infiltration, and occupation, and the attendant need to discriminate and segregate to maintain its biological purity.³⁰⁷

Articles like these also reflect another prevalent racializing trope in the press: the denigration of the ‘Other’ as an incubator of diseases that pose a grave threat to the health of ‘Russians’ and other ‘rightful citizens of Moscow.’³⁰⁸ While the press’ discourse on disease serves to delineate alleged ‘racial differences’ between Russians and non-Slavs, it is also mobilized to inferiorize such ‘non-Slavic peoples’ as contaminated. Such discourse has had a decidedly negative impact on interethnic tolerance in the capital. For example, a 2005 study conducted by the Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics found that 96 percent of Moscow students believed that the presence of immigrants from the Caucasus region in Moscow had a negative impact on the capital’s overall health and sanitary conditions.³⁰⁹

Depictions of children resulting from intimate encounters across the ‘racial’ divide also appear as an unsettling feature in many articles. During the Soviet era, official discourse praised children of mixed unions as being “more fully steeped in the spirit of internationalism,” and, particularly when such children chose a Russian identity for themselves, as living examples of the ‘progressive’ (assimilative) power of the Soviet

³⁰⁷ Uli Linke, *Blood and Nation: The European Aesthetics of Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999): vii-xi.

³⁰⁸ For a brief selection of some illustrative examples of this discourse see: “Sifilitiki vyshli iz-pod kontroliia,” (Syphilitics have gotten out of control), *MK*, February 9, 1993, 1; “V Moskve – novaia bolezni,” (A new disease in Moscow), *MK*, July 7, 1993, 1; “SPID v Moskve prinimaiut razmery epidemii,” (AIDS in Moscow is taking on epidemic proportions), *MK*, August 29, 1998, 1; “Privivki Budut Delat’ Nasil’no,” (Vaccinations Will be Carried Out by Force), *MK*, August 13, 1993, 1; “Pokupaia rosy, Mozhno Zarazit’sia Tuberkulezom,” (Buying Roses You Could Get Infected with Tuberculosis), *MK*, March 27, 1998, 12.

S. Osipov, “Vtoroe Prishestvie Tuberkuleza,” (The Second Coming of Tuberculosis), *AiF*, September 1, 1993, 9.

³⁰⁹ Petr Ivanchenko, “Natsional’nyi vopros v Moskve,” *Segodnia.Ru*, July 7, 2005, available at <http://www.segodnia.ru/print.php?s=0&n=880>

nationalities policy in the creation of an All-Soviet people.³¹⁰ In today's increasingly ethnocentric press, such children represent a destabilizing threat. Not only do the children of 'mixed parentage' provoke concern regarding the degeneration of 'Muscovite' or ethnic Russian stock, but also the permeability of the boundaries separating 'us' from 'them'.³¹¹ If the press attacks interracial relationships for their potential role in blurring such boundaries, then the children that result from such unions are the corporeal embodiments of this vulnerability. Their existence threatens to destabilize the construction of 'race' as a biologically relevant category and lay bare the artificiality of socially constructed oppositions mobilized in contemporary discourses and practices of domination and discrimination; oppositions such as: 'Russian' vs. 'Caucasian'; 'Slav' vs. 'Black'; 'Muscovite' vs. 'migrant'; 'native population' vs. 'non-native'; and 'host' vs. 'guest,' upon which contemporary national (and local) identity discourses, privileging 'Russian' domination over Russia and its political, cultural, and economic resources (and 'native Muscovite' domination over Moscow and its resources) depend.

Articles reflect an anxious preoccupation with the 'proper classification' of such children. For example, in an article concerned with the "offspring" of "blood mixing" between "Russian women" and "Caucasian men", *MK* writes: "The passports³¹² of these

³¹⁰ Edgar, 589. Although, as previously mentioned, such official discourse did not preclude the existence of prejudice and discrimination leveled against children of mixed background during the Soviet era.

³¹¹ For an enlightening analysis of the threat of 'mixed' children and the role of miscegenation anxiety in the colonial order, see: Ann Laura Stoler, "Chapter 4. Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: Cultural Competence and the Dangers of Métissage," in Carnal knowledge and imperial power: race and the intimate in colonial rule, 79-111, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

³¹² In the Soviet Union, parents were required to 'choose' and declare the ethnicity (*natsional 'nost'* which in Soviet terminology and contemporary Russian parlance implies ethnicity) of their children which was recorded in their internal passport and in other official documents. In 1997, the Yeltsin administration, citing European standards of human and civil rights, decided to eradicate the 'nationality' entry from newly issued Russian Federation passports. However, the end of passport nationality, as this article suggests, has only been one step away from, rather than a complete abandonment of, societal and elite definitions of 'ethnic identity' along fixed primordial (and even racialized) terms. See: Dominique Arel, "Fixing

half-bloods (*polukrovki*) may record them as ethnic Russians, but only the Devil (or God?) knows what is really in their genes.”³¹³ *KP*, on the other hand, contends that “it is difficult to believe that children from such mixed marriages will consider themselves Russian (*russkimi*). The genes of the ‘mountain people’ (*gortsev*) are dominant, so finding a blonde or a fair-haired child in a mixed family is very rare.”³¹⁴ While some articles claim that it is the children from mixed marriages themselves who will naturally ‘choose’ to identify as ‘non-Russian’, others point to the powerful role of society in the ascriptive classification of children of such unions as irrevocably outside of the ‘Russian community.’³¹⁵ For example, *MK* writes: “It is particularly difficult for those born with black hair, swarthy skin and dark eyes. The guardians of order (*striazhi poriadki*)³¹⁶ categorically refuse to recognize such people as ‘native Muscovites’.”³¹⁷

In certain articles, one can also detect a sense of compassion for the plight of children from mixed backgrounds confronted by rising discrimination in Russian society. In one such article, which not only testifies to the severity of racism faced by children of interethnic unions in contemporary Moscow, but also displays a rare criticism of the

Ethnicity in Identity Documents: The Rise and Fall of Passport Nationality in Russia,” Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism 30, no.1/2 (2003): 125-136.

³¹³ “Na semi kholmakh: Cherez polveka merom Moskvy stanet azerbaidzhanets?,” *MK*, 3.

³¹⁴ Boiko “V 2050 godu v stolitse ne ostanetsia russkikh,” *KP*, 4-5.

³¹⁵ Throughout the media’s discourse on ‘mixed children’ we can see how the Soviet legacy of passport nationality and the primordial conceptualization, and institutionalization of ethnic difference have made the concept of a complex, continually, and contextually negotiated ‘hybrid’ identity particularly difficult for post-Soviet society to relate to and accept. This mindset continues to hamper the capacity and willingness of society to successfully integrate immigrant communities and welcome diversity. Ethnic markers may have been removed from the nation’s passports, but it has not been erased from people’s minds or the national imagination. The retention of the nationality category in the 2002 census, which only allowed respondents to choose one ‘ethnic’ identity from a limited list, is just one official example of this. See: Gorenburg, 155-59.

³¹⁶ ‘*Striazhi poriadki*.’ In general, this term is used to refer to law enforcement officials. However, within the context of this article, the phrase encompasses a broader meaning, including police who are involved in the ethnic profiling of and discrimination against visible minorities, as well as ethnic Russian Muscovites, who are conceived of as the rightful inhabitants of the nation’s capital.

³¹⁷ “Litso moskovskoi natsional’nosti” (A Person of Muscovite Nationality), *MK*, April 13, 2001, 3.

intolerance directed against them, a *KP* journalist laments what she calls the appearance of ‘second-class’ children in Moscow. Visiting one of the capital’s many orphanages “flooded with the unplanned progeny of Slavic women and Caucasians coming to the capital to work,” the author stumbles upon Moscow’s dirty little secret: no one wants to adopt what have come to be known as “half-blood” children.³¹⁸ Holding a healthy three month-old little girl in her arms, a nurse interviewed at the orphanage says:

I doubt that anyone will take her. She’s been with us for three months now and no one even bothers to look at her adoption file because she has a Caucasian last name...It’s the same problem with all of them. Potential adoptive parents just take one look at these children and say: ‘What do we need a little black one for? We’d rather wait a bit longer and when there’s a fair-skinned child we’ll take it.’...If they have Caucasian blood in them they just don’t want to have anything to do with them.³¹⁹

However, in what is otherwise a relatively tolerant article, particularly in comparison to the predominance of commentary produced by her colleagues, the author makes a concerted effort to ensure that not all of the blame falls on the majority ethnic Russians that so openly reject these children. The author likewise expresses contempt for the ‘Caucasian’ fathers, imagined in both the ‘biological’ and the ‘symbolic’ sense (i.e. not only the men who have fathered these children, but all male representatives of the ‘Caucasian’ collective who are said to have a responsibility for their ‘ethnic kin’), who are said to have abandoned them. She lambasts ‘Caucasian’ men, whom she accuses of doing “a beautiful job courting,” but then discarding the little ones that result from their intimate encounters as being “the children of Russian whores”:

Where are you Caucasians who claim to take so much pride in your genetic predisposition to love children? Why are you not willing to come and take care of those who more than anyone else need your strength and defense? You accuse

³¹⁸ Iaroslava Tan’kova, “V Moskve poiavilis’ detei ‘vtorogo sorta’” (‘Second-class’ children have appeared in Moscow), *KP*, February 9, 2004, 6-7.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Slavic mothers of ‘being ready to do it with anyone who is available, and then turn around and throw their children away.’ Well, show us that you are any better than these mothers.³²⁰

In this way, even in an ostensibly ‘anti-racist’ polemic, the children of ‘mixed unions’ are exploited as pawns in an antagonistic discourse which constructs ‘us’ against ‘them’ and ‘them’ against ‘us.’ In doing little to douse (and perhaps even fanning) the flames of ‘interethnic’ discord, such articles fail to mold societal opinion into anything less discriminatory than that with which these children are already faced. In fact, visible minority children in the Russian Federation, just like adults, have become the targets of societal discrimination and even racially-motivated attacks.³²¹

Miscegenation anxiety likewise reflects unease regarding the ability of the ‘Russian male’ to control the chastity of ‘the Russian woman’ in the face of the racialized male ‘Other’. In one particularly telling example, published in the joke section of *MK*, humour is employed as a socially sanctioned outlet for expressing racialized insecurity:

A Russian woman gives birth to a little black (*chernen’kii*) baby boy. The doctor sends the female nurses’ aide (*sanitarka*) to speak with the woman’s husband and explain that it is conceivable that a mutation (*mutatsiia*) could have taken place. The aide walks up to the husband and says:

- Your son was born all black.
- What?! – yelled the husband in shock.
- Don’t worry. We just need to wash³²² the mutation away!³²³

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Such violence has likewise been specifically targeted against children from ‘mixed unions.’ For example see: “Mixed-race girl stabbed in Russia,” *BBC Online*, March 26, 2006, accessed March 25, 2007 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4848158.stm>

³²² Anne McClintock’s reading of the concept of ‘dirt’ as “that which transgresses social boundary” is likewise useful in deciphering the coded meaning of discourses like this which metaphorize miscegenation with images of dirt and disorder. See: Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 152-3.

³²³ “Anekdoty,” (Jokes), *MK*, January 19, 1993, 2.

Jokes like this uncover the very powerful role of humour in constructing and policing raced and gendered boundaries between groups. As such, folklorist, Alan Dundes, urges us: “Don’t be deceived by the façade of humor. People joke only about what is most serious....Where there is anxiety, there will be jokes to express that anxiety.”³²⁴ Here, miscegenation is presented as an immoral and disorderly threat, not only to racial hierarchy but also to Russian male patriarchy.

In fact, what has been described as a ‘crisis of Russian masculinity’ features as a powerful trope in the media’s anxiety-ridden discourse on mixed marriages and the fate of the Russian nation (see Figure 9). The growing trend in marriages between Russian women and non-Slavic men, rather than being acknowledged as the expected result of increased ethnic heterogeneity in Moscow and Russian society, is instead read as a damning critique of ‘Russian’ masculinity. If growing numbers of ‘our’ women are getting married to ‘their’ men, then the press interprets this as a disconcerting symptom of the failure of the ‘Russian man’ in the eyes of the nation’s women, who are “rejected by [the nation’s female] consumers in much the same way as Russian products.”³²⁵

The roots of today’s exaggerated concerns with ‘the Russian male’ can be traced back to the final decades of the Soviet Union and the appearance of a discourse which suggested that ‘misguided’ Soviet experiments in gender equality had led to the

³²⁴ Alan Dundes, Preface, *Cracking Jokes: Studies of Sick Humor Cycles & Stereotypes* (Ten Speed Press: Berkley, 1987), vii.

³²⁵ Sonja Luehrmann, “Mediated Marriage: Internet Matchmaking in Provincial Russia,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 56. 6 (2004): 867. In this article, Luehrmann is writing exclusively about women from the Russian provinces seeking to marry men from overseas with the aid of internet matchmaking services. However, her observations that Russian women employ a critique of the ‘Russian man’ in justifying their decision to find a mate elsewhere, is useful for this analysis as well. Indeed, concern over Russian women marrying ‘foreigners’ outside of the country also feature in the popular press. For example see: Dmitrii Steshin, “Strana vymiraet, a devushki begut za granitsu,” (The country is dying out, but our girls are still running for the border), *KP*, August 18, 2006, 4-5.

‘infantilization,’ ‘effeminization,’ and ‘demoralization’ of the nation’s men.³²⁶ The emergence of the ‘crisis of masculinity’ discourse in Soviet society both coincided and was intimately connected to the conservative ‘back to the home’ movement, discussed in the previous chapter, which urged the nation’s women to return to their feminine and maternal destiny in the domestic sphere. Proponents of both of these views contended that the regime’s alleged emancipation of women, which enjoined female citizens to labour in both the public and private spheres, perverted the ‘natural order’ of gender relations, making men out of women and women out of men. The policies of the ‘paternalistic’ Soviet state³²⁷ were criticized for depriving men of their traditional leadership role within the family, displacing them as the source of patriarchal authority over women, and denying them the ability to fully express social initiative and masculine independence.³²⁸ Stripped of his traditional privilege, the central means of self-realization for the new Soviet man was to be his work – a venture which was invariably harnessed within a rigid ideological and bureaucratic hierarchy and to the overall development of the socialist state.³²⁹

³²⁶ The very first articulation of this idea in the Soviet Union can be traced back to 1970 when *Literaturnaia Gazeta* first began to publish a series of articles on the subject. See: Igor S. Kon, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia: From the Age of the Czars to Today*, trans. James Riordan, (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 149. In the post-Soviet era, what was once primarily a concern of elite discourse has exploded into the mainstream. Also see: Anna Temkina and Elena Zdravomyslova, “Gender Studies in Post-Soviet Society: Western Frames and Cultural Differences,” *Studies in East European Thought* 55 (2003): 53; Sarah Ashwin, ed., Introduction, *Gender, state, and society in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1-29; and Eliot Borenstein, *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 43-50.

³²⁷ For a discussion on the role and lasting impact of ‘paternalistic’ socialist regimes in altering traditional gender relations and expectations within individual families and in society as a whole, see: Katherine Verdery, “From Parent-state to Family Patriarchs: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Eastern Europe,” *East European Politics and Societies* 8, no. 2 (1994): 229-32.

³²⁸ See: Anna Rotkirch, *The Man Question: Loves and Lives in late 20th Century Russia* (Helsinki, University of Helsinki Press, 2000); Rebecca Kay, *Men in Contemporary Russia: The Fallen Heroes of Post-Soviet Change?* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 11-14; Sarah Ashwin and Tatyana Lytkina, “Men in Crisis in Russia: The Role of Domestic Marginalization,” *Gender & Society* 18, no.2 (2004): 193.

³²⁹ Sergei Kukhterin, “Fathers and patriarchs in communist and post-communist Russia,” in *Gender*, ed. Ashwin, 80.

As such, the post-Soviet man might have been expected to welcome the new opportunities opened up to him, by the collapse of the overbearing communist regime, to reclaim his patriarchal prerogative. However, particularly in the early years of transition, such expectations presume that the nation's men were in a position to 'perform' the traditional 'masculine' responsibilities abandoned by the state, in what can only be characterized as an unfamiliar, unpredictable, and unforgiving social and economic environment.³³⁰

The tumultuous transformations unleashed in the decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union caused significant challenges for men and women alike. However, several Russian and Western scholars have commented that the nation's men seem to have had a particularly difficult time redefining themselves in the uncertainties of the post-Soviet economy, because their masculine identities were so intimately bound to the status of 'worker' in the Soviet economy and 'breadwinner' (*kormilets*) in the domestic sphere. Irina Korovushkina observes that "men seemed to have had more problems [negotiating] their masculinity because they were compelled – both by the country's leadership and by women – to perform the traditional role of breadwinner in the disintegrating economy" while "[w]omen, who were officially encouraged to 'carry out their womanly mission' and stick to their traditional roles as mothers and housewives, ...experienced less pressure of this kind because their income was not seen as a [direct] measure of their femininity."³³¹ The idea that today's 'crisis of Russian masculinity' derives from the incongruity of gendered norms and the ability of most men to perform them in the chaotic post-Soviet environment is supported by Barabra Alpern Engel:

³³⁰ Ashwin, "Introduction," *Gender*, 20.

³³¹ Irina Korovushkina, "Paradoxes of Gender: Writing History in Post-Communist Russia 1987–1998," *Gender & History* 11, no. 3 (1999): 570.

The introduction of the market economy brought a celebration of masculinity ...reward[ing] such masculine traits as competitiveness and aggressiveness. But in this new environment, where what you could buy determined who you were, most men were losers, not winners... Now millions of men had lost their jobs or found themselves, like women, unable to support their families in the positions for which they had prepared for years, their education and skills having lost their value and their workplace no longer serving as a source of goods or services. Accustomed to defining themselves through their nondomestic roles, husbands found it more difficult than their wives to adopt family-based survival strategies.³³²

As Russian sociologist, Marina Kiblitckaya, contends, many of these failed breadwinners increasingly turned to self-destructive practices like binge drinking³³³ to 'cope' with the loss of status and variety of indignities thrust upon them by the post-socialist order.³³⁴ Unfortunately, the current generation of male workers, adversely affected by the latest crisis of Russian capitalism, appears to be following the same detrimental pattern.³³⁵

The nation's health and demographic indicators starkly evidence the significant difficulties men continue to face in dealing with the stress and socio-economic dislocation of the protracted transition.³³⁶ Men in the Russian Federation have been dying younger, drinking more, and committing suicide in greater numbers since the collapse of

³³² Barbara Alpern Engel, "Chapter 13: New Russians, New Women?" in *Women in Russia, 1700-2000*, 264-5 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³³³ The ability to consume large amounts of alcohol can be said to serve as an accepted and even expected means of performing 'masculinity' in Russian culture. See: Kay, 22-25.

³³⁴ Marina Kiblitckaya, "'Once we were kings' Male experiences of loss of status at work in post-communist Russia," in *Gender*, ed. Ashwin, 90-104.

³³⁵ See: David Zaridze et al. "Alcohol and Cause-Specific Mortality in Russia," *The Lancet*, 373.9682 (2009): 2201-14 and Anya Ardayeva, "New Reports Find Alcohol and Tobacco Deaths in Russia Too High," *Voice of America*, August 24, 2009, available at <http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-08-24-voa28.cfm>.

³³⁶ As noted in a report by the World Bank, the stress of the transition and men's 'unhealthy' reaction to it are critical factors in understanding the phenomenon of increased mortality amongst a nation's working-age male population outside of war: "Russia's current situation clearly exemplifies a reversal of the epidemiological transition as the economic stress of the past 15 years and a prolonged period of highly unhealthy lifestyles and environments not only halted progress in improving health status, but shortened life expectancy, particularly among working-age males. This situation defines a new pattern of the epidemiological transition that deviates from that experienced by a number of western countries where age-specific NCDs [Non-Communicable Disease] rates declined and life expectancy grew." World Bank, *Dying Too Young: Addressing Premature Mortality and Ill Health Due to Non-Communicable Diseases and Injuries in the Russian Federation* (Washington: World Bank, 2006), xiii.

the Soviet Union, leading to what the UNDP has called a “Russian phenomenon of hypermortality among working-aged men.”³³⁷ The process of decline in average life expectancies, which began in the 1960s as a result of lagging socio-economic development and reactive rather than preventative Soviet health strategies, dramatically accelerated during the ‘era of reforms’ and is particularly pronounced amongst men.³³⁸ If in 1989, the average male residing in the RSSFR could anticipate living to 64.2 years of age, by 1994, life expectancy for the post-Soviet Russian male citizen had plummeted to just 57.5 years.³³⁹

Women live an average of 12-14 years longer than men in Russia.³⁴⁰ Such a significant gender gap suggests that specific behavioral factors are implicated, rather than factors related to the external environment or overall adequacy of the health care system which affect men and women to relatively similar degrees.³⁴¹ Alcohol consumption – which greatly varies between men and women, even amongst those living in the same households – and its direct and indirect negative consequences, appears to be the major contributing factor behind this gendered longevity gap.³⁴²

³³⁷ United Nations Development Programme, Demographic Policy in Russia: From Reflection to Action (Moscow: UNDP, 2008), 9.

³³⁸ UNDP, 24-30.

³³⁹ Goskomstat, Demograficheskii ezhegodnik Rossii 2002, (Moscow: Goskomstat Rossii, 2002), 105.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁴¹ The gender gap in life expectancies is significantly more pronounced in Russia than in other G-8 countries, where it ranges between 5 and 7 years. World Bank, 11.

³⁴² See: Andrey Korotayev and Darya Khaltourina, “The Russian Demographic Crisis in Cross-National Perspective,” in Russia and Globalization: Identity, Security, and Society in an Era of Change, ed. Douglas W. Blum, 37-78, (Washington, D.C., Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 2008); Timothy Heleniak, “Russia’s Demographic Challenges,” in Russia’s Policy Challenges: Security, Stability, and Development, ed. Stephen K. Wegren, 207-09, (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2003); S. Tomkins et al. “Prevalence and socio-economic distribution of hazardous patterns of alcohol drinking: study of alcohol consumption in men aged 25–54 years in Izhevsk, Russia,” Addiction 102, no. 4 (2007): 544-53. Such a hypothesis appears to be at least circumstantially supported by evidence from the anti-alcohol campaigns of the Gorbachev era (1984-87), which saw a decline in male mortality due to violent deaths, particularly from homicide and road traffic accidents; a trend which was subsequently reversed after the measures collapsed. See: Vladimir Shkolnikov and Alexander Nemstov, “The Anti-Alcohol Campaign and Variations in Russian Mortality,”

The current ‘alcoholization’ of the nation’s population, and in particular its men, is considered to be one of the most significant factors in the country’s demographic decline.³⁴³ Indeed, President Dmitry Medvedev³⁴⁴ has vowed to take renewed and serious measures to improve the situation and recently proclaimed that “the problem of alcoholism” in Russia represents “one of the main causes of our high mortality rate” and is an issue which “has taken on the proportions of a national disaster.”³⁴⁵ In spite of the relatively impressive economic growth witnessed over the past decade and increased government attention to healthcare and social reform, the average life expectancy for men in the country still lags far behind pre-reform levels at just 61.4 years of age recorded for 2007.³⁴⁶ Indeed, mortality among working aged men in Russia is still 3-5 times higher than in other countries with similar economic development indicators.³⁴⁷

Improving the grave position of many men in Russian society has become a central focus of public dialogue and policy goals concerning Russia’s demographic

in *Premature Death in the New Independent States*, eds. J. L. Bobadilla et al., 239-61, (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1997).

³⁴³ Ardayeva, “New Reports Find Alcohol and Tobacco Deaths in Russia Too High,” *VOA*.

³⁴⁴ The self-destructive behaviour of the nation’s men and the ensuing crisis of mortality among working-age males was also a commonly expressed concern in former President Putin’s major addresses. For example in his 2005 annual address he stated “I would like to speak to another subject which is difficult for our society – the consequences of alcoholism and drug addiction. Every year in Russia, about 40,000 people die from alcohol poisoning alone, caused first of all by alcohol substitutes. Mainly they are young men, breadwinners.” President Vladimir Putin Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, The Kremlin, April 25, 2005, available at http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029type82912_87086.shtml; Or when speaking to the Valdai Club in 2006: “Our high death rate is due to the fact that a lot of people, mostly men in the 25-50 age group, die from non-natural causes such as alcoholism, drinking bad quality alcohol, road accidents, work-related accidents and so on.” President Putin in a Meeting with Participants in the Third Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club, September 9, 2006, available at http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2006/09/09/1209_type82917type84779_111165.shtml; Also see: President Vladimir Putin, Speech at the Session of the Presidential Council for Implementing Priority National Projects and Demographic Policy, March 7, 2007, available at http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2007/03/07/1231_type82912_119330.shtml.

³⁴⁵ President Dmitry Medvedev, “Transcript of Meeting on Measures to Reduce Alcohol Consumption in Russia,” August 12, 2009, available at http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2009/08/12/1845_type82912type82913_220798.shtml.

³⁴⁶ Goskomstat, *Demograficheskii ezhegodnik Rossii 2008* (Moscow: Goskomstat Rossii, 2008), 103.

³⁴⁷ UNDP, 28.

decline. However, the expressly ethnic framing of this issue in the popular press suggests that racial anxiety concerning the dominant position of ethnic Russian males in Russian society, rather than general health and population concerns, is the driving force behind its coverage. The media hyperbolically portray the ethnic ‘Russian male’ as a dying species, an aberration of ‘modern’ society, a hopeless alcoholic, a failed breadwinner (*kormilets*), a substandard lover, an emblem of national humiliation, and an increasingly unsuitable mate for the nation’s women. Soviet era concern with ‘the crisis of masculinity’ has assumed an utterly catastrophic and ethnocentric tone in contemporary media debates.

It is difficult to ignore the media’s fixation on ethnically Russian men as the weakest link in the nation’s ethno-demographic future. “Ethnic Russian men are dying out in what should be the prime of their lives,” laments *MK*.³⁴⁸ “It is specifically ethnic Russian males that are dying out so quickly,” contends *AiF*: “in terms of male life expectancy we fare no better than most African nations.”³⁴⁹ “In Moscow today, the ‘weaker sex’ lives on average 12 years longer than men,” reads a particularly anxiety-ridden report: “Such a massive difference in life expectancies for men and women is utterly unacceptable for a developed nation. It poses a threat to the capital’s demographic and genetic safety. In the very near future, Moscow may become a city of widows, traders³⁵⁰, and half-bloods.”³⁵¹

The press disparages the ‘Russian man’ as a hopeless drunk who turns to despair and the bottle in the face of adversity. He is accused of drinking himself and his nation

³⁴⁸ Elena Egorova “Obrechennaia Natsiia” (Doomed nation), *MK*, August 24, 1999, 3.

³⁴⁹ Sergei Maksimovich, “Pora brosat’ pit’,” (It’s time to quit drinking), *AiF*, January 3, 2001, 12-13.

³⁵⁰ Here the term ‘traders’ (*torgovtsy*) is made in reference to ‘Caucasian’ males who are stereotyped in the media and popular discourse as merchants/speculators that unfairly monopolize trade at the nation’s markets.

³⁵¹ “Na semi kholmakh: Cherez polveka merom Moskvyy stanet azerbaidzhanets?,” *MK*, 3.

into an early grave. “Our nation is dying out at an incredible speed. In 200 to 300 years there won’t be any ethnic Russians left on the planet.” warns *AiF*:

But our nation’s hypermortality cannot be explained as a result of economic factors. The highest life expectancies for men are seen in Ingushetia and Dagestan, which are obviously not the wealthiest regions in the country! Moreover, it wasn’t our women and children who started to die out at a massive rate, as has happened in other nations as a result of poverty, rather, it has been our working-age men...The sad truth is that every third Russian man dies at the hands of vodka, while more than half of the nation’s working-age men leave this world in an inebriated state...If we continue to go on pretending like nothing is happening to us, ethnic Russians will eventually disappear, just like the mammoths.³⁵²

This perilous predilection for alcohol is constructed as a national disgrace, blamed for “dragging the nation back to a situation not seen since the days of feudalism – men dying out in what should be their prime working years – a travesty which has never been seen in any other developed country in the world.”³⁵³ The ‘Russian man’ is depicted as a loathsome and self-indulgent child and derided for his reckless behavior and lack of concern for his own and his nation’s well-being:

If you look at things carefully, it turns out that not all of our problems are a result of the weakness of our domestic economy and health care system...It’s just that our simple Russian man (*prostoi russkii muzhik*) loves to get drunk. When he gets drunk, he loves to go for a drive in his car or play around with a variety of sharp and dangerous objects, without really thinking about the consequences.³⁵⁴

³⁵² Ol’ga Kostenko-Popova, “‘Russkii Krest’ – v butylke? Ili kak nam spastis’ ot vymiraniia,” (‘Russian Cross’ in the bottle? Or how to save ourselves from extinction), *AiF*, May 31, 2006, 6. For similar articulations see: Ol’ga Kostenko-Popova, “Na zlobu dnia. Nedostupnaia Vodka – Bol’she Detei?” (The less accessible vodka– the more plentiful children?), *AiF*, June 7, 2006, 9.

³⁵³ Maksimovich, “Pora brosat’ pit’,” *AiF*, 12-13.

³⁵⁴ Ibid. This section of the article is placed under rather sarcastic ‘play on words’ heading ‘Innocent Victims’ (in Russian this is written as ‘neVINNYE zhertvy’ with VINNYE being the adjectival form for wine (ie. winy, vinous) which calls into question the ‘innocence’ of the victims and places emphasis on the role of alcohol and alcohol abuse in the staggering mortality of Russian men. Also see: Dmitrii Polukhin, “Rossiia ostanetsia bez russkikh? Kto budet zhit’s na territorii nashei strany v seredine XXI veka?” (Will Russia be left without ethnic Russians? Who will be living on the territory of our country in the middle of the 21st Century?), *KP*, May 3, 2005, 4-5: “The root of our nation’s hyper-mortality problem is the drunkenness of our Russian men...We drink vodka, we drink it until we lose consciousness, we drink everywhere – at work, while driving the car, in our homes. And if there is no vodka then we’ll drink anything that burns: moonshine (*samogon*), industrial spirit, window cleaning fluid, cologne, glue....”

The degraded state of the ‘Russian man’ is also blamed for exacerbating the nation’s so-called ‘birth dearth.’ “Where have all of our men gone?!” KP asks disconcertingly: “Russian women are yelling out with one voice: “Who should I marry and have a child with? There simply aren’t any real men left!”³⁵⁵ The media depict the nation’s women as being particularly critical of their men. If women are not having as many children as the state needs to solve its demographic woes, then men are to blame, suggests one female reader whose comments were chosen for publication in *AiF*:

You tell us to have more babies. But who should we have them with? Take a good look around you. The kind of men who are able to support a family, the kind of men who make you feel like you are protected by a stone wall, have long since disappeared. Now, they all want to find a strong woman to lean on!...The days of the Russian heroes (*russkie bogatyri*)³⁵⁶ are gone, long gone. Today, little boys are being raised to be effeminate and spoiled.³⁵⁷

The alleged grievances of the ‘nation’s women’ are ‘validated’ by those in positions of power. In *KP* for example, Nina Ostanina, Deputy Head of the State Duma Committee for Women and Families, offers readers the following explanation for why Russian women are searching out ‘foreign men’ for husbands: “We already have 10 million more women in our country than we do men. In addition to this our men have become spiritually needy. In terms of intellect many [though not all] of our men are inferior to

³⁵⁵ Nikita Mironov, “Rossiia vymiraet, potmou chto v strane ne ostalos’ muzhchin,” (Russia is dying out because there are no men left in the country), *KP*, June 25, 2009, 6-7. As in other articles, the alleged grievances of the ‘nation’s women’ are forcefully, if rather one-sidedly, validated by the press: “There are only 22 million men between the ages of 20 and 40 – that is to say, potential husbands – left in Russia today. Of these 22 million, approximately 700 thousand are in prison. Another 2.1 million are officially registered alcoholics (but we can only imagine just how many others are just not officially registered). There are also 503 thousand drug addicts registered with the health authorities. But according to the UN numbers, 2.5 million Russian citizens are frequent users of narcotics and the majority of them are men under the age of 40. In other words 5.3 million of these potential husbands have already fallen off the deep end.”

³⁵⁶ *Russkie bogatyri*: In Russian folklore, these are the epic heroes and defenders of the Russian nation and its people.

³⁵⁷ “Obratnaia Sviaz’ ‘Ot kogo Rozhat?’,” (Reader Response: Who to have children with?), *AiF*, July 5, 2006, 10.

women.”³⁵⁸

Emasculating representations of the ‘Russian man’ are also powerfully ‘substantiated’ and ‘legitimized’ in the media by other Russian men. For example, in the national edition of *AiF*, Aleksei Chenyshov, a Deputy in the State Duma, contends that Russian men have become an embarrassment and a burden to the nation and its womenfolk. Solving the country’s demographic problems, he suggests, will only be achieved through policies aimed at turning the nation’s males into ‘normal men’: “It would be a good idea to put in place just one fully-comprehensive federal program focused on finding and then developing normal men, who would be ready to save their Fatherland, to support and please their women, and to increase the birth rate.”³⁵⁹

The ‘Russian man’ is also frequently portrayed in the popular press as failing to live up to his gendered duty as the primary breadwinner in the family. He is lambasted for being lazy and a burden on the nation and its women. Critically, this feeble figure is often perilously juxtaposed with the image of the male ‘Other,’ whose alleged sobriety and comparative success in navigating the economic transition are used to humiliate and shame the Russian male ego.³⁶⁰ The following example provides an idea of the general ‘tone’ of this prevalent discourse.³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Dmitrii Steshin, “Strana vymiraet, a devushki begut za granitsu,” (The country is dying out, and girls are running for the border), *KP*, August 18, 2006.

³⁵⁹ Sergei Repov and Aleksandr Fufyrin, “Natsional’nii seks-proekt,” (National sex project), *AiF*, December 14, 2005, 2. The media ‘hit below the belt’ in other articles which suggest an expressly male trace” (*muzhskoi seld*) behind the failure of the Russian nation to reproduce itself, namely a crisis of infertility and impotence amongst Russian males. Such emasculating articles depict the ‘Russian man’ as incapable of lifting himself or his nation out of the demographic abyss. For some examples see: “Muzhchiny i demografiia: pora podnimat’!,” (Men and Demography: It’s time to raise it [the issue]!), *MK*, September 18, 2006, 5; “U moskvicha sperma zhidkaia, potomu sho Rodinu ne liubit,” (A Muscovite man’s sperm is watery, because he doesn’t love his homeland), *KP*, April 15, 2002; “Koren’ strasti il’ pechali?” (The Root of Passions or Sorrow?), *MK*, December 11, 1998, 4.

³⁶⁰ According to Russian sociologist Elena Meshcherkina, “To be a man in Soviet society was to have a place in a rigid hierarchy, and individual men were forced to adapt to this hierarchy. In this sense, the social standing and identity of an individual man was defined by his position in relation to the state. This

It is our men who have let the situation with migrants get to this point. They don't want to work. Instead they have hung themselves around the necks of their wives and their mothers. Our men are only capable of dreaming about important, high-paying positions. It is because of them that all of these other jobs requiring hard work have been opened up to immigrants: drivers, traders, loaders, and builders. They don't consider these positions prestigious enough for them.³⁶² Only our men are capable of drinking themselves into ruin, sitting around wearing a hole in the couch, using the pointlessness of life and the inability to realize oneself as a smokescreen. 'Where can a man realize himself when the 'blacks' have taken over everything?' they complain.³⁶³ All of them are just hanging off us women. I

subordination was keenly experienced at a subjective level." In the post-soviet era, however, Meshcherkina attests that "horizontal relations between individual men have assumed a far greater importance, and now men who want to succeed have to define their position in relation to their peers. That is, they are striving for success in a new hierarchy of their own creation." Elena Meshcherkina, "New Russian men, Masculinity regained?," ed. Ashwin, 105-6. Within the context of the 'crisis of Russian masculinity' then, the use of ethnic male 'Other' in the role of 'successful kormilets' as a competing masculine foil to the 'Russian man' is a dangerously powerful trope.

³⁶¹ For some other illustrative examples from the other papers analyzed in this study see: Evgenii Dodolev, "Vyzov Nashim," (Calling on our men), *MK*, February 24, 1993, 4: "Look around and see who we have in Moscow – the entire Caucasus and Central Asia. Yes, we all hate having them here, but at least they work around the clock and earn money for their families, whereas **our Russian man is a lazy bear**.... Now, as for you Russian men paying attention to this article, and I have no doubt that you are. Dear Slavs! Try and redeem (*otmyvaites*' i.e. wash yourselves clean) yourselves! If you can [emphasis in original]"; and "Ne stav by bezhentasmi, ne razbogateli by..." (If they didn't become refugees, they wouldn't have gotten rich), *AiF*, February 9, 2000, 9: "In expressing our dislike for Caucasians and complaining about the negative influence they have had on our lives, we forget to notice how much better they are than us. Their men don't get stinking drunk like pigs. Sure they come on to our Russian gals, they bother us, but when it comes to their own women, they would slit the throats of anyone who even dared. Their men know how to earn money and feed their families, but ours just sit around complaining and being envious... So, I'd like to pose the question to our men: who do you suppose are the real 'churki'?" 'Churka' (or 'churki' in the plural) literally means 'a piece of wood' in Russian. It has become a rather common and highly racialized slur directed primarily at Central Asians, as well as at other visibly non-Slavic minorities. The term conveys the image of being 'as dumb as a piece of wood,' an expression of the racist imagination which constructs 'Eastern' peoples as being both intellectual and cultural inferior to Slavs. However, in the context of the 'crisis of Russian masculinity' this derogatory slur is redirected at the Russian man for demoralizing effect.

³⁶² Outside of the discourse on 'the crisis of Russian masculinity,' however, the media tend to accuse the 'massive inflow of migrants' from the former Soviet periphery 'who are willing to work for kopecks' of destroying formerly respectable and decent-paying professions. For example see: Dmitrii Potseluev, "Priezhaia rabsila," (Immigrant labour resource/slave labour), *AiF-M*, November 28, 2001, 6; Galina Sheikina, "Nepolnyi Spisok," (Unfinished List), *AiF-M*, November 29, 2006, 22; Marina Ozerova, "Nechistaia rabsila," (Unfair labour resource/slave labour), *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, October 19, 2006, 3; or Ekaterina Bychkova, "Moskve bez migrantov ne prozhit? Nepravda!" (Moscow cannot survive without migrants? Nonsense!), *AiF-M*, June 7, 2006, 20-21.

³⁶³ Indeed, such complaints figure as an important and prevalent discourse in the media's depiction of 'Caucasian' males' alleged 'occupation' of the nation's marketplaces and concomitant displacement of Russian men as the rightful 'masters' (*khoziaeva*) of this and other economic spheres. For a few illustrative examples see: Natal'ya Killesso, "Lokal'naia Voina na Usachyovskom Rynke: Sramnoe Mesto," (Localized War at Usachyovskii Market: A Shameful Place), *MK*, July 31, 1993, 8; O. Govorova, "Ia ne ponimaiu...Neslavianskii Bazar," (I Don't Understand...Non-Slavic Bazaar.) *AiF-M*, June 30, 1999, 6; Dmitrii Pisarenko, "Gorozhane: Bomzhi raspolzaiutsia po Moskve," (City Folk: The Homeless Creep Through Moscow), *AiF-M*, August 21, 2002, 4; Ol'ga Vlasova, Slavianskii Pozor, (Slavic Disgrace,) *MK*, October 21, 2002, 2; and Artem Simonov, "Odin v Pole: Kak Vyzhit' Fermeru v Podmoskov'e," (Alone in the Field: How Can a Farmer Survive in Moscow Region), *AiF-M*, August 30, 2006, 28. Male readers'

try to imagine what would happen one day if all of these immigrants were deported and our men discovered that there was no one around to trade, build, drive 'marshrutki'³⁶⁴ or the metro trains, clean the streets... They would just roll their eyes, yell out 'it's not prestigious!' and send us women out to do the work!³⁶⁵

The construction of the non-Slavic male 'Other' as the bearer of a competing masculinity to the weakened 'Russian man' is a prominent and explosive theme in the popular press. The media's discursive racialization of the male 'Other' is as complex as it is opportunistic, combining both elements of fear and envy, projecting both feelings of anxiety and allure. In the context of the 'crisis of Russian masculinity,' the 'Other' is mobilized as a triumphant foil to shame the Russian male, as a symbol which both reflects and perpetuates Russian male insecurity. The perceived challenge of the male 'Other' to the gendered and racialized hierarchy of the nation is brought to the forefront in the popular press' discourse on 'mixed marriages.' Articles focus on the movement of predominantly male migrants into the capital as posing a distinct challenge to Muscovite/Russian male power and privilege over 'Russian womanhood'. According to *MK*:

The overwhelming majority (70-85%) of migrants are men of working age. This is a very serious problem for the native male citizen. As sociologists say, 'aboriginals' come to view these newcomers as competitors in the 'sphere of relations between the sexes.' This is just one more argument which explains the natural growth of nationalism in our society.³⁶⁶

responses likewise reflect such concerns. For example, in one representative letter written to *AiF* by a Russian Muscovite claims that the roots of the nation's demographic crisis stem from the authorities' unwillingness to protect the rights and culture of the 'native' population from the invasion of people deemed as 'aliens': "All of the trading spots in the more or less profitable places in our markets are 'controlled' by Caucasians and they are totally unconcerned with the survival of the 'formerly native' (*byvshego korennyim*) population in a given region...soon we will be living in a country that will be ruled by a band of aliens (*inorodtsy*) with their own laws and traditions." "Obratnaia Sviaz' 'Ot kogo Rozhat?'," *AiF*, 10.

³⁶⁴ 'marshrutki' These passenger van taxi/buses are an increasingly common mode of transportation in many Russian cities and towns.

³⁶⁵ Galina Sapozhnikova, "Budut li russkie chtit' Koran i est' ris palochkami?" (Will Ethnic Russians follow the Koran and eat rice with chopsticks?) *KP*, July 23, 2003, 5.

³⁶⁶ Ekaterina Pichugina, "Moskva dlia nemoskvichei," (Moscow for non-Muscovites), *MK*, May 3, 2006, 1.

Anxiety regarding the 'gender imbalance' of migration into Russia, or the presence of 'too many of these men' in our cities with 'too few of their own women,' is compounded by fears about the opposite process underway in Russian society. The 'hypermortality' and catastrophic state of the 'Russian man' has left 'Russian women' with little choice but to start looking for marriage partners elsewhere. "Demographers predict an increase in mixed marriages," contends *MK*: "There are simply not enough suitable grooms in the capital to go around, so Muscovite women are increasingly getting married to immigrants."³⁶⁷

The assumption of these deliberately provocative articles is that the ethnically 'Othered' male, be he a migrant or a 'second-class' citizen of the nation,³⁶⁸ is eagerly waiting to take the place of and gain the upper hand over his disgraced male competitor. "For a Caucasian man, a Russian wife is most importantly a symbol of high status. They see her as prestigious," writes an 'academic' commentator for *KP*.³⁶⁹ As in colonial imaginations, the contemporary press' racialization of the male 'other' is constructed in parallel with the supposed superiority of 'white/Russian womanhood' and the perceived

³⁶⁷ Nadezhda Arabkina, "Mirovoi 3-i 'E'," *MK*, September 1, 2006, 4. For a similar articulation see: Vladimir Bykov, "Rossiia na snosiakh," (Russia under demolition), *MK*, May 17, 2006, 4-5: "According to the latest population census there are 10% less men in Russia than there are women. Moreover, men who are able to support a family are entirely few and far between. It is no wonder we see an increase in our women getting married to immigrant men."

³⁶⁸ For example, in Nikita Mironov's article, "A migrant for a Muscovite woman – the best groom?," the author interviews a young man, Timur, who came to the capital from a village outside of Nalchik, the capital city of the Karbino-Balkar Republic in Southern Russia. While studying at Moscow State University, Timur explains how he fell in love with and got married to a Russian schoolmate. Throughout the interview Timur is referred to as 'a migrant,' 'a Muslim,' and 'a Caucasian,' but never as 'a citizen of the Russian Federation.' The author likewise casts suspicion on the sincerity of Timur's feelings for his Muscovite bride, with the interview being placed under the heading: "Timur doesn't want to head back to his mountain village." Such articles highlight the explicit racialization of the discourse on migration and Russian citizenship in the popular press. In this discourse, the Caucasus (and its non-Russian inhabitants) is constructed as being outside of the cultural boundaries of the imagined nation (though nevertheless a political and territorial part of the Russian Federation) with a particular set of ethnic minority citizens being relegated to a category of 'second-class citizenship.'

³⁶⁹ Mironov, "Migrant dlia moskvichki – luchshii zhenikh?," *KP*, 6-7.

vulnerability of the ‘Russian man’s’ domination of her body posed by the presence of the ‘covetous’ male other.³⁷⁰

Indeed, the anxiety of ‘Russian men’ is deliberately stoked on the pages of Moscow’s popular press. Articles employ zero-sum frames depicting Russian men as losing their traditional claim over ‘Russian womanhood’ to the encroaching male ‘Other’. “There certainly are grounds for Russian men to be concerned,” writes *KP* in one such representative article, “last year alone 22 percent of all Muscovite women getting married in the capital did so in an interethnic union with a Southerner.”³⁷¹ “With what exactly are Caucasians attracting our dames?” asks *KP* in one article.³⁷² After brazenly noting that it has little to do with “exactly what you are all thinking about right now – the hypersexuality of Caucasian men,” the article takes yet another jab at Russian manhood:

The modern Russian woman makes her choice pragmatically: men from the South don’t drink and have been far more successful at adjusting to the topsy-turvy wrong-side-out reality of our new life...A woman, after all, is thinking about her nest, about how she can have a baby, and then take care of that child. In this situation, it can only be Russian men, having lost the battle for Russian women, who are unhappy.³⁷³

‘Academic opinion’ is frequently mobilized to lend an air of ‘objectivity’ and ‘legitimacy’ to this emasculating discourse. “Our girls are getting married to Caucasians because they, as a rule, don’t drink, earn good money, and most importantly, take on the full responsibility of providing for a large family,” claims Dr. Olga Makhovskaia, a lead researcher at the Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences and director

³⁷⁰ For example, Franz Fanon, captures the anxiety of the ‘colonizer’ as a result of the proximity of the racialized male other to his ‘woman,’ which threatens to compromise the very order of colonial/racialized power: “The look that the native turns on the settler town is a look of lust... to sit at the settler’s table, to sleep in the settler’s bed, with his wife if possible. The colonized man is an envious man.” Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (London: Penguin, 1963), 30, quoted in Anne McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family,” *Feminist Review* 44 (1993), 62.

³⁷¹ Sapozhnikova, “Budut li russkie chtit’ Koran i est’ ris palochkami?,” *KP*, 4-5.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

of a program offering social and psychological support for migrants.³⁷⁴ While a leading geneticist tells *KP* that, “Russian-Muscovite women instinctively seek out men who are in a position to support offspring, and in the capital, many of the migrants from Transcaucasia and the Northern Caucasus region are involved in economically profitable niches.”³⁷⁵ “According to Muscovite women, Caucasians are better at courting than Russian men,” writes *KP*.³⁷⁶ A statement which is buttressed once again by the views of Dr. Makhovskaia, which are particularly worrisome given her professional role as a support worker for migrants in the capital :

The majority of migrants from the South are men in the prime of their life, and they need women in a purely physiological sense. That is why they lay it on so thick. They present you with flowers and presents and court us with style. As a rule, you’d be hard pressed to find a Russian man who will do such things.³⁷⁷

Critically however, the media’s use of the ‘ethnic male foil’ to deride the ‘Russian man’ is crafted in such a way as to preserve the hegemonic discourse which privileges relationships between ‘Russian men’ and ‘Russian women’ and degrades the notion of successful and legitimate relationships between ‘our’ women and ‘their’ men. For example, Dr. Makhovskaia’s statement regarding the superior courting abilities of ‘migrant’/ ‘Caucasian’ men, is immediately and explicitly qualified *by her* in the following paragraph:

Of course, after the wedding everything quickly changes. A Muslim man will not tolerate any opposition from his wife. He might even forbid her to leave the house! Our women very often suffer in these types of marriages. Furthermore, Muscovite girls are increasingly getting married to Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Kyrgyz men. Many of these grooms already have families back in their historical homelands and even continue to support them by sending home money. As a rule, these marriages are consecrated according to Muslim tradition (*nikokh*). With no

³⁷⁴ Mironov, “Migrant dlia moskvichki – luchshii zhenikh?,” *KP*, 6-7.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

stamp in his passport, the ‘*dzhigit*’³⁷⁸ can go and get married for a second time.”³⁷⁹

Indeed, many articles warn that interethnic marriages are being used by unscrupulous migrant men as a means of gaining access to residency permits, citizenship, and the material assets of their trusting, if naïve, Russian brides.³⁸⁰ In one particularly telling example, *MK* provides Aleksandr Rybkin, a sociologist from MSU, with a public platform to vent his fury over the alleged opportunism of “former brothers from the South” at the expense of Russian womanhood (and Russian immigration laws):

The number of [interethnic] marriages is growing each year, and in the majority of cases, the immigrant grooms are entering into them for self-serving purposes. Their ultimate goal is clear: to stay in Moscow at any cost and to get their registration (*propiska*). Many of them very quickly upon arrival find themselves a lonely and gullible woman with children, gain their trust, and, after a short period of courting, they persuade their girlfriend to make the relationship official by getting married. The most surprising thing is the ease with which these grooms

³⁷⁸ *Dzhigit* – Is a word of Turkish origin used in the Caucasus and in Central Asia to refer to a skilled horseman or a brave man. However, in contemporary Russian it is also used as a derogatory term leveled at men from both of these regions.

³⁷⁹ Mironov, “Migrant dlia moskvichki – luchshii zhenikh?,” *KP*, 6-7.

³⁸⁰ For some other illustrative examples see: “Odna aferā – I delu venets,” (One con (offer) and it’s down the aisle), *MK*, September 18, 1999, 3; Dmitrii Pisarenko, “Pochem Miloserdie?” (What’s the damage?), *AiF-M*, September 3, 2008, 13; and Evgeniia Borodina, “Vai, molodets! Armianin perecelil v Moskvu poltory sotni odnosel’chan,” (Let’s go, good man! An Armenian resettles 150 of his fellow villagers in Moscow), *MK*, May 24, 2004. On the other hand, fake marriages (*fiktivnie braki*) in which Muscovites knowingly and willingly enter into marriage with non-residents for money so that their ‘spouse’ can get around the city’s restrictive residency permit system are a relatively common occurrence in the capital and many other Russian cities (as indeed it was in the Soviet era). While people from all different backgrounds enter into such arrangements, it is specifically marriages of convenience between Muscovite women and non-Slavic men that have emerged as a hot topic of debate in the capital’s press. The press expresses alarm for the potential of such schemes to undermine the ability of the state (or Moscow) to control who can and cannot claim the rights and privileges of legitimate membership in the imagined community that is the Russian Federation. Articles, policing the actions of Russian women, consistently warn about the dangers of entering into such unions and criticize those who do as shamelessly compromising themselves and their nation in the process. The press’ ‘fake marriage’ discourse is also used to call into question the ‘authenticity’ of all romantic relationships between Russian/Muscovite women and non-resident men from the former Southern and Asian republics. For some illustrative examples of this discourse see: “Skol’ko stoit Rodina?” (How much for your homeland?), *MK*, October 7, 2000, 3; Aleksandra Maiantseva, Vyidu zamuzh za migranta. Dorogo! (I’m getting married to a migrant. For a mint!), *KP*, December 26, 2006, 8-9; Dmitrii Kafanov, “Fiktivnye braki pererastaiut v kommunal’nye voiny,” (Fictitious marriages turn into communal wars) *MK*, September 10, 2007, 1; “Fiktivnyi brak zakonchilsia massovym ubiistvom,” (A fictitious marriage turns into a mass murder), *MK*, March 10, 2004, 1; and “Brat’ia-azerbaidzhantsy reshali kvartirnyi vopros s pomoshch’iu iada,” (Azerbaijani-brothers solve their apartment troubles with the aid of poison), *MK*, March 11, 2005 1.

manage to get registered in the city through their brides' place of residence. As soon as he's achieved this, the once sweet lover and the caring papa turns into a tyrant and a despot... The more brazen of them actually try to steal their new wives' homes out from under them. As a result, these deceived Russian (*russkie*) women end up on the street with their children, while the real family of the immigrant-husband, having made their way to the capital, takes over her apartment.³⁸¹

In such constructions, the 'true colours' of the 'Caucasian'/'Central Asian'/'migrant'/'Muslim'/'Prince Charming' only become clear after 'our'/'Russian'/'Muscovite' 'Damsel in Distress' already has been lured into the trap (see Figure 10).

A related device can be seen at work in numerous other articles,³⁸² including the following example from *KP*, which likewise serves as a potent illustration of the discourse of 'patriarchal gender restoration' being openly promoted in the post-Soviet press. It is the depravity of the 'Russian man' that is stressed as the motivating factor for Russian ladies to 'look outside of their ethnic group and traditional faith' for a suitable partner:

The Russian man (*muzhik*) has been destroyed – in the moral, spiritual, and emotional sense of the word. The decades of equality between men and women have accomplished their dirty deed – women have learned how to survive without a man in many spheres of their lives. Democracy, equal rights, feminism and the whole lot of it have led to the fact that our men have stopped being REAL men – defenders, pillars of strength, and masters of their domain if you want to get right down to the heart of it.³⁸³ The singular reason why Russian women are turning to Islam is this: they want to have a real man by their side. Don't get me wrong: I'm not saying that all Muslim men are real men and that all Russians are dirty rags.

³⁸¹ "Tikhaia Seksual'naia Interventsiia," *MK*, 3.

³⁸² For another example in which the media denigrate the image of the Muslim male 'Other' after having used him as a foil with which to humiliate the 'Russian male,' see: Sapozhnikova, "Pochemu Russkie Prinimaiut Islam?," *KP*, October 20, 2003, 6-7.

³⁸³ In this articulation, *KP* pays homage to the now infamous masculinist manifesto of Russian writer and essayist Viktor Erofeev, who in a provocative article concerning the crisis of Russian masculinity published in a 1995 edition of the Russian gentlemen's magazine 'Andrei', proclaims that the gender experiments of the Soviet era and the encroachment of Western feminism into Russian society have caused the death of the Russian man: "The Russian man does not exist. That is to say, the concept has been preserved in the language by inertia, out of mental laziness, but essentially, it's a phantom, a chimera, a specter, a myth." Viktor Erofeev, "Polet 'oblaka v shtanakh'," *Andrei*, 6 (1995): 44-46, quoted in Borenstein, 44-45. Erofeev's essay later appeared in a book of collected essays on the same topic, *Muzhchiny*, in 1997.

But you must agree that the majority of our men are wimps in life. Our women are tired of fighting for themselves; they want to live under their husband's wing as if protected by a stone wall. They believe that they see this hopeful pillar of strength in Muslim men.³⁸⁴

Having used the image of the male 'Other' to disparage the 'Russian man,' the female author turns to her personal experience in a relationship with a 'Muslim man,' which is discursively reified as a 'likely' experience for 'other Russian women':

At the beginning of the relationship I was totally infatuated. He made all the decisions. He was firm and strict, and a real master. I could just relax and not really think about anything. I could just let go of any responsibility and just be a woman. But after two weeks, I got sick of that kind of life. He was not really concerned about me – my feelings, thoughts and hopes. For him, the only person that existed was himself – the great and the mighty – and I was supposed to just willingly accept everything that he came up with. True, his self-absorbedness never got to the point of utter absurdity (I was lucky to end up with a more or less civilized one), but only his own interests mattered to him.³⁸⁵

In sum, she claims that "Muslim men are no better than our own!" Suggesting in fact, that the 'devil' one knows, is better than the 'devil' one doesn't: "Our girls are seduced by their manliness, pride, and iron-clad character, but they don't see what is behind it all. We have utterly different mentalities."³⁸⁶ And as such, this article, like so many others, metaphorically kills two 'turkeys' with one stone. The 'Russian man' has been disgraced, yet the ethnically 'Othered' male, stripped of his 'exotic' mystique and exposed as being from a culture diametrically opposed to 'ours,' is deemed (even in his 'most civilized' form) to be utterly unsuitable for Russian women.

The denunciation of such relationships is forcefully buttressed by the abundance of articles recounting tales of tragedy, violence, and death inflicted on Russian women at

³⁸⁴ Rudenko, "Pochemu russkie zhenshcheny prinimaiut islam?," *KP*, 8-9.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

the hands of their ethnically non-Russian/non-Orthodox mates.³⁸⁷ Russian women who entertain crossing ‘ethnosexual’ boundaries are cautioned about the possible dangers of such actions. “Be careful girls. Muslim men are unpredictable,” reads a typical warning in *KP*, “Almost all of the love stories I have witnessed ended up the same way: in jealous beatings, bruises, and divorce.”³⁸⁸ Those who enter into such relationships leave themselves open to accusations of betraying their own self-worth, their people, and their nation. In the following example from *MK*, Russian women enticed by the alleged material wealth of ‘Caucasian men’ are pointedly reminded by the press of their responsibility to safeguard their (and their nation’s) honour and purity: “Now then tell me, young ladies, what you are thinking about entering into relationships with these generous Southerners – generous not so much with their money as with their [sexually transmitted] illnesses?”³⁸⁹ Demonizing images of the male ‘Other’ are never far from the surface in the media’s discourse on mixed marriages and the crisis of Russian masculinity.

³⁸⁷ For some other illustrative examples see: Valerii Volkov and Iuliia Gorozhaltsan, “Zona Riska: Nevesty na Eksport,” (Zone of Risk: Brides for Export), *AiF-M*, March 3, 1999, 3: “Marriages with Eastern men are the most problematic for Russian women.”; “Mariia Mishkina, “Ukradennaia doch’ nashla mamu cherez 11 let,” (Stolen daughter finds her mom after 11 years,) *KP*, January 12, 2009: “Having kidnapped the six year-old Aigun’ from home, her Azeri father took the young girl away from her Russian mother and back to his home in Azerbaijan.”; Ekaterina Sazhneva, “Liubov’ Tsepiakh: Russkikh nevest kavkaztsy strigut nalyso, chtoby potom otravit’ v rabstvo,” (Love in shackles: The Russian Brides of Caucasians are Shaved Bald Before Being Forced into Slavery), *MK*, August 12, 2005; Iurii Red’kin, Aleksandr Stepanov and Tat’iana Frolova, “Egiphtianin ubil zhenu-rostovcahnku, zastukav ee s ljubovnikom,” (Egyptian kills his Rostov-wife having caught her with a lover), *KP*, September 2, 2008; Marina Gridneva, “Rusogolovaia Shakhidka: Kuda i zachem uvoziat moskovskikh devushkek?” (The Fair-Headed Female Suicide Bomber: Where to and for what purpose are they shipping out Muscovite girls?), *MK*, April 30, 2004: “Girls with a Slavic appearance are in especially high demand. The [men from the Caucasus] lure them in with romance and lies and then they kidnap them. Getting out once they have you is near impossible... Any Muscovite girl could become the next fair-headed female suicide bomber, someone’s daughter, sister, bride-to-be.”

³⁸⁸ Iaroslava Tan’kova, “Kak ia vyshla zamuzh za egiphtianina,” (How I Married an Egyptian), *KP*, November 3, 2005, 4.

³⁸⁹ Yelena Egorova and Yana Zhilyaeva, “Boites’ Kavkaztsev, Plody Prodaiushchikh: Opasnyi Persik,” (Be Fearful of the Produce/Sex-Selling Caucasian: A Dangerous Peach), *MK*, September 9, 1993, 2.

The celebrated Russian philosopher, Nikolai Berdiaev, once claimed that “the mysticism of race and blood is alien to Russians.”³⁹⁰ However, the anxiety-ridden and racially charged discourse of belonging evidenced in the Moscow popular press’ representation of mixed marriages suggests that traditional assimilationist discourses, which emphasized the importance of the ‘Russian’ spirit (*duhka*) as the principal requirement for membership in the ‘Russian national family’ have been eroded. Through the prism of the press, a long history of ‘Russian universalism’ appears to be giving way to increasingly racialized constructions of ‘us’ (*svoi*) and ‘them’ (*chuzhoi*), that preclude the integration of specific ethnically non-Russian peoples into the ‘community of compatriots’ on the basis of ‘religio-cultural incompatibility,’ and view the ‘intermixing’ of such groups with Russians as a form of ‘miscegenation.’ Whether mobilized as a fetishistic foil to the Russian male in crisis, or depicted as posing a degenerate risk to the cultural and genetic composition of the ethnocentrically imagined community through his relationships with ‘our’ women, the male ‘Other’ is portrayed in Moscow’s popular press as dangerously upsetting the hierarchy of gendered and racialized relations in post-Soviet Russian society. Mixed marriage, once officially hailed as a desirable vehicle for the merger of the multinational Soviet people, has been diametrically reconstructed in the post-Soviet popular press as an existential threat to the Russian nation and a confrontational challenge to Russian patriarchy.

³⁹⁰ Nikolai Berdiaev, Russkaja ideia: Osnovnye problemy russkoi mysli XIX veka i nachala XX veka, 2nd ed. (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1971), 255.

Figures 6 and 7.

In the Moscow popular press, it is the ‘ethnically Russian woman’ and the ‘Non-Slavic’ man who are the primary objects of concern in discussions on ‘interethnic marriages’. Articles both linguistically and pictorially construct the ‘Muscovite woman’ as being synonymous with ‘the ethnically Russian female resident of Moscow.’ This discourse follows the post-Soviet trend of symbolically recasting Moscow as an ethnically Russian city.



Figure 6 Reads: “Interethnic Marriages in Moscow”

Russian Female - Ukrainian Male: 23% (1955) 12.3% (1995-2005)
 Russian Female - Belorussian Man: 9.3% (1955) 1.7% (1995-2005)
 Russian Female - Jewish Man: 10.3 % (1955) 4.4%(1995-2005)
 Russian Female - Georgian Man: 1.2% (1955) 8.7%(1995-2005)
 Russian Female - Azerbaijani Man: 1% (1955) 6.8%(1995-2005)
 Russian Female - Armenian Man: 2.9% (1955) 11.9%(1995-2005)
 Russian Female – Other ethnic groups in the Caucasus: 0.2% (1955) 4.4 % (1995-2005)

Source: Nikita Mironov, “Migrant dlia moskvichki – luchshii zhenikh? On galaten, ne p’et i pashet za troikh!” (A migrant for a Muscovite woman – the best groom! He’s valiant, doesn’t drink and toils for three!), *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, August 31, 2007.



Figure 7 Reads: “Who is the Capital Girl Sweeter On?”

(The structure of interethnic marriages in Moscow between 1995 and 2005)

Russian Female - Ukrainian Male: 12.3% (1995-2005)

Russian Female - Armenian Man: 11.9%

Russian Female - Georgian Man: 8.7%

Russian Female - Azerbaijani Man: 6.8%

Russian Female – Other ethnic groups in the Caucasus: 4.4 %

Russian Female - Jewish Man: 4.4%

Russian Female – Tartar Man: 3.6%

Russian Female - Belorussian Man: 1.7%

Russian Female – Mordvin Man: 0.16%

Source: Nikita Mironov, “Migrant dlia moskvichki – luchshii zhenikh? On galaten, ne p’et i pashet za troikh!” (A migrant for a Muscovite woman – the best groom! He’s valiant, doesn’t drink and toils for three!), *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, August 31, 2007.

Figure 8.

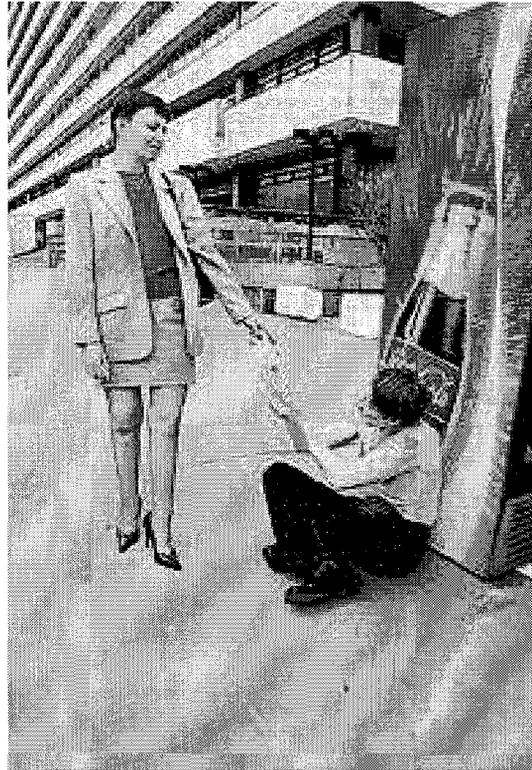


The caption to Figure 8 reads: “This is what *Snegurichka* will look like in the coming decades if we continue to be afraid of discussing touchy subjects.”

KP envisions the *Snegurichka* (the iconic snow maiden from Russian fairytales and female helper to *Ded Moroz*, the Russian version of Santa Claus) of the future. Russian women emerge in the popular press as primary boundary markers between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ with mixed marriages seen as posing a grave threat to the religious and cultural identity of the ethnocentrically imagined Russian nation.

Source: Galina Sapozhnikova, “Pochemu russkie primaiut islam?,” (Why are Russians converting to Islam?), *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, November 26, 2003.

Figure 9.



The caption for this photograph from a *KP* article on the nation's demographic crisis and growth of interethnic unions reads: "Better to be single, healthy, and prosperous, than poor and sick with a man like this."

Hyperbolic depictions of the 'degraded Russian male' appear as a familiar trope in the media's anxiety-laden discourse on mixed marriages.

Source: Dmitrii Polukhin, "Rossiia ostanetsia bez russkikh? Kto budet zhit's na territorii nashei strany v seredine XXI veka?" (Russia will be left without ethnic Russians? Who will be living on the territory of our country in the middle of the 21st Century?), *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 3, 2005.

Figure 10.



‘Mixed Marriages,’ the ‘Crisis of Russian Masculinity,’ and the ‘Ethnic Foil’.

In the above cartoon, which accompanies an article on ‘mixed marriages’ in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, a caricature of a wealthy ‘Southerner’ tries to convince the iconic female heroine from Russian fairytales, Vasilisa the Beautiful/Vasilisa the Wise, to marry him. Meanwhile the ‘Russian hero’ of this tale, the Janus-faced, Ivan the Fool/ Ivan the Prince, is occupied fighting the three-headed dragon. The readers are left to decide for themselves whether or not he is valiantly fighting to win Vasilisa’s hand in marriage, as in fairytale lore, or rather busy battling with his own demons. In his ‘Caucasian-accented Russian’ the ‘Southern man’ states: “Marry me Vasilis, and you will have everything.” It is unclear whether or not this Russian beauty is indifferent to this Southerner’s ‘generous’ offer or whether she is simply playing coy. However, it is the anxiety-ridden message of this and other such articles that, ‘Russian’ women, having been let down by ‘their’ men, are increasingly handing themselves over to the male ‘Other’. This trend is depicted as posing a serious threat to ethnic Russians and their preeminence in the nation.

Source: Aleksandr Boiko, “In 2050, there will not be any ethnic Russians left in the capital – Geneticists have completed a study that reveals who Muscovite women are marrying,” *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 20, 2003.

Chapter Three. (T)Racing the Boundaries of the Russian Nation: The Construction of the 'Hypersexual' Male 'Other' as a Threat to Russian Womanhood and a Challenge to Russian Masculinity.

"The local police have captured a criminal gang consisting of five Caucasians. The gang specialized in robbery throughout Moscow. After 'work' the Caucasians would entertain themselves by taking advantage of young girls...On Thursday evening, the Caucasians, as per usual, lured a 21 year-old female Muscovite to their place and all together jumped on her. They raped the young girl over the course of a 24 hour period in all possible manners, even to the point of using a bottle. After that the rapists carved an obscene phrase into her skin. By some miracle the poor girl was able to secretly escape from this hell on earth (prison). In the freezing cold and wearing only a skirt, she fought her way to a military post from which she was able to call the police."

-*"Band of Caucasian Rapists Captured (Skhachina banda kavkazskikh nasil'nikov) Moskovskii Komsomolets, October 26, 1993, 1.*

"It was in the hallway of her building that the two swarthy lads from the Caucasus ran into her. They grinned at her in an intimidating manner and asked: "What would you like honey, some cognac, some chocolate?" "Nothing at all," she replied and walked away. It was around one o'clock in the morning when she suddenly heard the sound of scraping metal. She saw the blade of a knife quietly running down the crack between her apartment door and its frame. Then the lock popped out and one of those very same Azeris now stood in front of her."

-*"Na pervyi vzgliad liubov' ne zla," (At first sight love is not cruel), Komsomolskaya Pravda, January 30, 2004, 6.*

"These 'churki' are regularly raping my female acquaintances and we are obliged to take vengeance on this 'chernomaz'!" Orlov's [a young skinhead] eyes burnt with a righteous rage as he was speaking to us and his friends.

- Sergei Fekliunin, "Skinkhedy otvetiat za bazaar," (Skinheads will take care of the bazaar), *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, April 29, 2008, 3.

The 'crisis of Russian masculinity' propagated by Moscow's popular press not only depicts the Russian man as failing in his role as a partner and provider for Russian women, but also in his duty as defender of Russian womanhood against the sexual and violent advances of the racialized male 'Other'. This chapter turns to an examination of the popular press's construction of the 'Southerner'/'Asian' male 'Other' as a hypersexual being, who poses a threat to ethnic Russian women and a direct challenge to Russian masculinity. Far more than a lurid fixation, the press' preoccupation with presenting the male 'Other' as a pervasive sexual threat to Russian women and an overt challenge to the power and privilege of Russian men speaks to an overwhelming concern about the maintenance of boundaries between 'us' and 'them.'

As critical theorist, Nira Yuval-Davis, suggests, sexualized demonologies of the male 'Other' reflect a deep sense of anxiety felt by men within the hegemonic collectivity concerning their preeminence in the gendered and racialized hierarchy of the nation: "while viewing the 'Other' as inferior and uncivilized, [they] also fear and envy him, attributing to him omnipotent sexuality and lust...[As such], the myth of the 'Other' as a rapist appears as a common tale in many racialized contexts."³⁹¹ In the context of Moscow's popular press, the mythologization of the male 'Other' as a rapist of 'our' women can be seen as the inverse image of the 'Other' as a triumphant foil used to shame Russian men. This powerful racializing trope is mobilized in the press to delegitimize the notion of the 'Other' as a bearer of a competing masculinity and to motivate Russian men into taking decisive, including violent, action against the enemy 'Other.'

³⁹¹ Nira Yuval-Davis, Gender and Nation (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), 51.

The first section of this chapter details the process by which Moscow's popular press participates in the (re)production and perpetuation of racializing stereotypes, which portray the male 'Other' as a morally-deviant hypersexual being. This negative sexual ascription serves not only to demonize ethnic minority males, but also acts as an extremely powerful means of juxtaposing 'our' group against 'theirs'. The contemporary press' persistent publication of graphically explicit and ethnically-pointed depictions of non-Slavic males from the former Soviet republics as the 'rapist of our women' are mobilized in the construction, surveillance, and defense of the boundaries of belonging and exclusion in Russian society. In essence, the media's pathologization of the sexuality of the male 'Other' serves to construct 'him' as a danger to 'our' community: a situation which necessitates the enforcement of 'their' segregation from 'us', and particularly from 'our' women.

However, as the second part of this chapter details, the press' construction of the racialized male 'Other' as the 'rapist of our women' is presented not only as a threat to Russian women, but also as a bold challenge to Russian masculine/national honour. In the discourse of the capital's popular newspapers, the bodies of Russian/Muscovite women come to symbolize the purity and vulnerability of the ethnocentrically imagined Russian nation/Moscow, which the press depicts as being under constant threat of invasion and domination by foreign males. The same language of boundary maintenance is used to describe the violent penetration of individual and national bodies, the protection of these individual bodies symbolizing the defense of ethnicized and geographical borders and vice versa.³⁹² But if women serve as critical symbols of the

³⁹² Abby L. Ferber, *White Man Falling: Race, Gender, and White Supremacy* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 99-100.

national community, then it is men who are most often portrayed (or expected to perform) as its agents.³⁹³ When women's bodies are cast in the role of boundary markers between 'our' group and 'theirs,' a violation of these bodies is patriarchally read as an attack on the nation's men and their ability to fulfill their role as protectors of national honour. Moscow's popular press appropriates the painful experiences of real women victimized by sexual violence as tragic emblems of masculine/national honour defiled and degraded by the enemy male 'Other.' The alleged failure of Russian men to protect their women from violation by the enemy outsider is projected as masculine/national humiliation.

Critically, the press is also involved in promoting violence as an antidote to this perceived sense of impotence. Articles present Russian men, who are willing to use decisive force against the alleged violating 'Other,' as restoring the 'proper' balance of power in gendered-racialized relations, which sees the 'Russian man' as the master of his women, family, city, and nation. Vulnerability, violation, and vengeance in the name of 'our' women emerge as potent images in the popular press's racialization of the male 'Other.'

Denigrating stereotypes of the 'Southern' male as 'hypersexual' have a long and sensationalist history in the Russian imagination, (re)produced in folklore, literature, film, everyday speech, jokes, and today, in the news media.³⁹⁴ In his analysis of ethnic humour in Russia, Emil Draitser demonstrates just how deeply ingrained the image of the 'oversexed' and 'morally-depraved' 'Southerner', most often depicted as a Georgian man, has become in the nation's jokes and folklore.³⁹⁵ He suggests that this

³⁹³ "Editorial: Nationalisms and National Identities Issue," *Feminist Review* 44 (1993): 1-2.

³⁹⁴ Dmitrii Gromov, "Mezhnatsional'naia napriazhennost' v Moskve," *Svobodnaja Mysl'* 2 (2008), 137.

³⁹⁵ Emil A Draitser, "Chapter 2: 'I didn't buy my drivers license: My brother gave it to me for my birthday' Russian Jokes about Georgians and Other Southerners," in *Taking Penguins to the Movies: Ethnic Humor*

characterization is derived in part from popularly held misconceptions about the physiognomy of 'Caucasian' men:

Some Russian men still share an ancient belief...according to which the size of a man's nose signifies the size of his phallus, and therefore his reproductive ability...According to one Russian saying, 'an aquiline nose means a prick like a club' (*nos s gorbinkoi, khui dubinkoi*) – that is, a man with such a nose possesses great erection capability. The Russians see the Georgians as hook-nosed, and so endowed with great sexual prowess.³⁹⁶

The 'size' of a 'Southern' man's wallet also appears as an apprehensive feature in ethnic jokes.³⁹⁷ The alleged, and ostensibly undeserved, wealth of 'Southerners,' who are commonly presented in the press and other popular discourses as getting rich off the backs of the poor Russian people, is perceived as providing such men with the power to seduce 'Russian' women. The concern engendered by such assumptions is deflected against the 'Southern' male 'Other' through racializing jokes (and other forms of social discourse) which depict him as an uncultured, animalistic, sadistic, violent, materialistic, insatiable sexual being – in essence, a creature driven entirely by his unbridled passions and carnal appetites. These same anxieties and demonizing scripts are evident in the racializing discourses of Moscow's popular press, which through both 'jokes' and 'news,' (re)construct the male 'Other' as a loathsome, if at times intimidating, adversary to 'our' men and as an unacceptable sexual threat to 'our' women.

Although ethnic humour, much like political satire, was a well-established and particularly relished form of 'entertainment' during the Soviet period, these type of jokes were 'told' largely outside of the official public forum: between friends and neighbours, in *samizdat*, and, depending on one's place of employment, within the work collective.

in Russia 35-55 (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1998). Also see: Viktor Raskin, Semantic mechanisms of Humour (Hingham: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1985), 168-170; 194.

³⁹⁶ Draister, 49.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 50-53.

However, with the break-up of the Soviet Union and the concomitant removal of ideological restraints on the press, ethnic humour was thrust onto the public scene as a 'legitimate' form of collective entertainment. Racializing jokes, which exploit stereotypes of the Southerner as 'oversexed' and 'uncultured,' emerged as a particularly popular feature in *MK*. As early as 1993, the paper began to publish this type of disparaging material in its "Satire and Humour" (*Satira i Iumor*) rubric.³⁹⁸ The viciousness of such denigrating humour in the post-Soviet period, as can be seen in the following example from *MK*, is no laughing matter:

A young Russian girl is travelling in the private sleeping compartment of a passenger train when, all of a sudden, the door opens. In walks a Georgian man who takes one look at her and immediately starts to get undressed. Once he is naked, the girl says to him:

-“Wow! What a hairy chest³⁹⁹ you have. I already have goose bumps up and down my back!

In complete silence, the Georgian lies down on his sleeping berth and falls fast asleep. In the morning the young woman turns to him and says:

-“What happened last night?! I was under the impression that you were going to come on to me.”

-“No, I'm sorry my dear,” the Georgian responds. “I've had gonorrhea fifteen times, syphilis five times...the last thing that I need is to get goose bumps on my back!”⁴⁰⁰

In a particularly aggressive manner, this 'joke' exploits a number of entrenched racial stereotypes about the 'Southern male.' The Georgian is depicted as sexually promiscuous, morally degenerate, and diseased, as well as unintelligent, and/or having a poor command

³⁹⁸ For example see: "Satira i Iumor," *MK*, May 15, 1993, 4, which featured the following joke: "A Georgian tourist in Paris disappeared right after having learned from the tour guide how to say in French: 'Madame, I want you. And the sooner the better!'. "

³⁹⁹ 'Southern' men are also presented as being 'hairy' and 'gorilla-like' in the collection of jokes assembled by Raskin and Draister. Such disparaging imagery not only reinforces the stereotype of the 'Southern' man as 'hyperlibidinous' but also suggests that his 'abnormal' sex drive is derived from his inherently 'animalistic' nature.

⁴⁰⁰ "Goriachaia Piaterka Anekdotov 'MK,' (The 'Hot Five' Jokes from 'MK'), *MK*, August 10, 2002, 5.

of the Russian language (either he doesn't know what 'goose bumps' are, or doesn't know the word for them in Russian, or both). However, this *'anekdot'* also underscores another central concern of the racist mind: the thought that 'our' women might be sexually attracted to 'them.' While the image of the 'hypersexual' male 'Other' serves to denigrate and racialize 'Southerners,' it simultaneously reflects and reinforces anxiety surrounding the stability and primacy of Russian masculinity and patriarchy. The vulnerability of 'our' women (whether consensual or coerced) to the 'hypersexuality' of the male 'Other' is a powerful trope in the media's racializing discourse (See Figure 11).⁴⁰¹

The popular press' fixation on the 'hypersexuality' of the male 'Other' likewise speaks to a related sense of insecurity about the maintenance of gendered and racialized boundaries and power relations between 'us' and 'them.' As such, the media frame everyday contact between 'our' women and 'their' men in terms of threatening sexualized scenarios. The press portrays 'Southern' and 'Asian' men as 'crossing the line' in their behavior toward 'our' women. Articles express indignation at the "Southern habit of leering at Russian (*russskikh*) women with their eyes."⁴⁰² Their 'inappropriate

⁴⁰¹ In some more recent examples, the traditional script, which casts the proverbial 'Georgian' as the butt of all sexual jokes directed at men from the Caucasus region, has been expanded to reflect the lexicon of contemporary racializing discourses, which feature ostensibly 'ethnically-neutral' markers such as 'guests/guestworkers/migrants from the South/Asia,' as the objects of derision. However, such markers clearly serve as euphemisms for non-Slavic men from the Caucasus region and Central Asia. We can see this kind of discourse at work in the following example from *MK*:

A guest from the South asks a person walking by:

- "Tell me where is this area 'a Hundred Bucks'?"

- "What?!"

- "They told me that all the beautiful girls in Moscow can be had 'in the area of a hundred bucks...' (*v raionye sto baksov*, i.e. for about a hundred dollars).

Source: "Goriachaia Piaterka Anekdotov 'MK'," (The 'Hot Five' Jokes from 'MK'), *MK*, September 18, 2006, 5.

⁴⁰² Galina Sapozhnikova, "Budut li russkie chtit' Koran i est' ris palochkami? Nado li nam boiat'sia naplyva 'zheltykh' i 'chernykh'?", (Will Ethnic Russians follow the Koran and eat rice with chopsticks? Should we fear the flood of 'yellows' and 'blacks'?), *KP*, July 7, 2003, 4-5.

manner' of interaction with 'Russian/Muscovite' women is said to be unbecoming of their status as 'guests' in what is constructed as 'our' Russian homeland and capital.⁴⁰³ "It's not as if we dislike these Tajiks for no good reason," claims one *MK* journalist in an article that defends the validity of stereotypes of the 'Other' as sexually deviant: "These youngsters from Central Asia who come and work in our city openly harass our girls – many of my girlfriends and colleagues tell me about this."⁴⁰⁴ Reporters 'corroborate' such accounts, relaying their allegedly personal grievances to the reading public:

There are the uninvited advances of the drunken Caucasian in the sleeping car of the train. The numerous instances of "Hey beautiful, come on let's go for a ride together" shouted from behind the wheel of his imported car, and other more indecent 'come ons' from these men that are unfortunately all too well known by us ladies.⁴⁰⁵

In one provocative *MK* article, "Conquest by the Caucasus," the city of Moscow, personified as a woman, is depicted as being as defenseless as her female residents to the lascivious advances of the 'invaders from the South,' who have come to conquer her with an animal-like passion. Her marketplaces are said to have been unjustly captured and defiled by 'them,' turned into places of shame where 'our' women are forced to endure 'their' improper glances:

Everywhere, absolutely everywhere, are clusters of Caucasian men standing or sitting around on cardboard boxes the way that they like to do. They babble and shriek like ravens, impudently looking down their noses at us, groping at our women with their greasy eyes.... Woe is Moscow who has been handed over for defilement by the vigorous brigades of insatiable and relentless 'guests from the Caucasus.'⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ For some illustrative examples of the 'guest'/'host' discourse in relation to 'our' women see: Mikhail Romanov, "Kuda devat'sia migrantam?" (What should we do with migrants?), *MK*, September 28, 2006, 3-4 and Iuliia Kalinina and Vladislav Novikov, "Chuzhie," (The Others), *MK*, August 13, 1996, 2.

⁴⁰⁴ Ol'ga Grekova, "My za mif'?", (Do we believe in myths?), *MK*, September 10, 2007, 5.

⁴⁰⁵ "Lysukha u skotomogil'nika," (A Fowl in the Animal Cemetery), *MK*, April 1, 2002, 5.

⁴⁰⁶ Iuliia Kalinina, "Pokorenie Kavkazom," (Conquest by the Caucasus), *MK*, July 26, 2001, 4-5.

The so-called 'Southerner-controlled' marketplace emerges as a particularly vulnerable zone of contact between Slavic women and the hypersexual racialized 'Other' in the press. Articles express disdain for the "disrespectful manner" in which 'our' women are treated by "the uninvited guests from the Caucasus who behave as if they were hosts."⁴⁰⁷ 'Caucasian' traders are depicted as harassing their Russian female customers with "their inappropriate and sexually explicit brand of Eastern humour"⁴⁰⁸ and with "their slimy glances, and all too familiar tone of address."⁴⁰⁹

Moral outrage regarding 'their' alleged occupation of 'our' marketplaces converges with anxiety over 'their' perceived power to dominate 'our' women. The press portrays the economically-vulnerable Slavic women hired to perform the 'face-to-face' trade at the nation's bazaars as being particularly exposed to the 'lascivious nature' of their wealthy Southern bosses. As cultural anthropologist, Caroline Humphrey, observes, non-Russian merchants often hired Russians and other Slavs to sell their products in the country's markets after the collapse of the Soviet Union because of growing public hostility toward foreign traders.⁴¹⁰ In Moscow's popular press, this hostility is overtly expressed as an aversion to dealing with 'blacks.'⁴¹¹ In 2007, the media's pervasive demonization and the public's adamant disapproval of the non-Slavic trader culminated

⁴⁰⁷ Natal'ya Kileso, "Lokal'naia Voina na Usachyovskom Rynke: Sramnoe Mesto," (Localized War at Usachyovskii Market: A Shameful Place), MK, July 31, 1993, 8.

⁴⁰⁸ Ol'ga Vlasova, "Slavyanskii Pozor," (Slavic Disgrace), MK, October 21, 2002, 2.

⁴⁰⁹ Kalinina, "Pokorenie Kavkazom," MK, 4-5.

⁴¹⁰ Caroline Humphrey, The Unmaking of Soviet Life (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 49.

⁴¹¹ The media present these 'Slavic women' as providing a more palatable 'fair-skinned' cover for the reviled 'blacks' who are said to really be in control of the nation's market commerce. "The dark-haired Caucasian traders simply hire prim and proper Slavic women, whose appearances do not upset the eyes and whose accents do not grate on the ears, to sell their goods," reads a typical example from MK. A.N., "OMON Prekhodit i Ukhodit...Chevo-To Khochetsia: To Li Poriadka, To Li Ananasov," (OMON Comes and Goes...We Want Something: Either Order or Pineapple), MK, October 12, 1993, 1. For some other illustrative examples see: Dar'ya Martynkina, "Rynochnyi Liud," (Market Folk), AiF-M, January 29, 2003, 3, and Valerii Buldakov, "Torguiut Cherez Podstavnykh," (They're Trading through Cover People), AiF-M, June 4, 1993, 1.

in the Putin administration's introduction of discriminatory legislation, which banned non-Russians from working in the country's markets.⁴¹² Ironically, the government's xenophobic policy increased the likelihood of non-Russian merchants hiring Slavic women to sell their wares. "A saleswoman's salary is totally dependent on the kindness of her boss (*khozyaina*),⁴¹³ writes one female *AiF-M* journalist who claims to give her readers an inside look into what really goes on between the Caucasian 'masters' of the market and their Slavic 'hired help': "But if you agree to work both **the day and the night shift** for your Azeri boss he might offer to pay you up to fifty thousand [roubles] a month [emphasis in original]."⁴¹⁴

Sociological focus groups show that Muscovites frequently explain their antipathy towards 'Southern' men as a result of the allegedly improper way in which 'they' interact

⁴¹² On October 5, 2006, then President Putin ordered the Russian government to take decisive legislative measures to bring order to the nation's markets, by ridding them of "criminal gangs, many of them ethnic," and by reorganizing trade to better protect "the interests of the 'native population' of the Russian Federation." Governmental Decree No. 683, which was approved by the State Duma in its first reading on November 15, 2006, instituted a prohibition on foreigners working in pharmacies and stores which sell alcohol on January 1, 2007, and the phasing-out of foreigners working as sellers at the nation's markets and kiosks, with the complete ban coming in to force on April 1, 2007. See: V.V Putin, "Vystupitel'noe slovo na sedanii Soveta po realizatsii prioritnykh proektov I demograficheskoi politike," October 5, 2006, available at <http://archive.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2006/10/112066.shtml> and "Postanovlenie Pravitelstva Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 15 Noiabria 2006 g. N.683 g. Moskva ob Ustanovlenii na 2007 god Dopustimoi Doli Inostrannykh Rabotnikov Iсползуemykh Khoziaistuiuschimi Sub'ektami Osuschestvliaiuchimi Deyatelnost' v Sfere Roznichnoi Torgovli na Territorii Rossiiskoi Federatsii'," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, November 16, 2006, available at <http://www.rg.ru/2006/11/16/kvota1-doc.html>. However, since the legislation only affects those involved in front-line trade with the public, as opposed to producers and distributors, it appears that it was primarily aimed at removing non-Slavic faces from the nation's markets.

⁴¹³ The author, as in many other articles, plays on the various meanings of the Russian word '*khoziain*.' Depending on the context, the word can be translated into English as 'master,' 'owner,' 'boss,' or 'host,' but it always denotes a person in a position of power.

⁴¹⁴ Viktoriia Leonenok, "Zona Riska: S Kem Torguiut – S Tem I Zhivut," (Zone of Risk: The People They Trade With Are the People They Live With)," *AiF-M*, August 13, 1997, 3. Concern regarding 'Caucasian' bosses taking advantage of the 'Slavic' women working for them at the market also appears as a frequent theme in *MK*. For one illustrative example see: Nataliia Galimova, "Rynok Naiznanku: Zhurnalistka 'MK' Porabotila Na Kavkaztsev," (The Market Inside-Out: An 'MK' Female Journalist Worked for the Caucasians), *MK*, April 4, 2002, 6-7, in which the author recounts her uncomfortable experience of being sexually propositioned by her Azeri boss at the market on numerous occasions, including in her very first conversation with him.

with 'our women/girls'.⁴¹⁵ Some of the most virulent expressions of hostility come from Moscow's youth. In a study conducted with Moscow high school students on their feelings toward non-Russian migrants in the capital, the alleged 'sexual' threat posed by the 'Southern' man was a frequent focus of both young male and female pupils' dislike of 'Caucasian' migrants.⁴¹⁶ Significantly, the study uncovered that very few of these youth had personal social contact with any of the various ethnic groups from the Caucasus region living in Moscow, and formed much of their opinions about 'Southerners' from what was being written and said about them in the media.⁴¹⁷

The media's demonization of the male 'Other' as a threat to the nation's women is likewise accomplished through an 'Orientalising' discourse that portrays Southern/Asian men as bringing the 'backward' and 'immoral' traditions of their homeland, such as 'bride snatching,' to the 'modern' and 'civilized' capital of the Russian Federation. Fears of sexual and cultural degeneracy converge in such articulations. It is not only the 'Muscovite girl' whom the press paints as a victim, but the city of Moscow itself, held prisoner by 'immigrants' who impose their 'foreign' (lack of) culture on the capital and its 'native population.' "Bride snatching is in their blood," exclaims *MK* in an article which expresses outrage at the alleged kidnapping of a 15 year-old Muscovite girl by a

⁴¹⁵ Leokadiia Dobizheva, Iurii Artiunian, and Igor' Kuznetsov, "Vykhodtsy iz Zakavkaz' iav Moskve: Kto Oni?," *Demoscope Weekly*, January 2007, available at <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2007/0271/tema03.php>.

⁴¹⁶ V.K Mal'kova, L.B. Ostapenko, and I. A. Subbotina, "Moskva Mnogonatsional'naia: Konflikt ili soglasie? Chast' 1. Po dannym oprosa moskovskykh shkol'nikov," *Issledovaniia po prikladnoi i neotlozhnoi etnologii* 111 (1998): 1-26. Female students expressed sentiments such as: "I hate Azeris. They are disgusting, dirty and stupid people. They are constantly coming on to us girls. It has become impossible to walk down the street without being disturbed." While teenage boys articulated hostility toward 'migrants from the South' as posing a 'sexual' threat to 'their' girls in statements such as: "It's the way that they look at our girls! They look them over as if they are in a store, meticulously checking out the merchandise." Similar results were recorded in a study with Moscow teenagers conducted between 2002 and 2005. See: V.S. Sobkin and E.V. Nikolashina, "Otnoshenie moskovskikh podrostkov k migrantam: kul'turnaia distantsiia, vremennye sdvigi, natsional'naia samoidentifikatsiia," in *Sotsiokul'turnye Transformatsii podrostkovoi subkul'tury*, ed. V.S. Sobkina, 112-38 (Moscow: Tsentr Sotstiologii Obrazovaniia, 2006).

⁴¹⁷ Mal'kova et al., 16.

“hot-blooded Caucasian classmate.”⁴¹⁸ The article warns its readers that bride-snatching and other “uncivilized traditions of the mountain peoples” are set to become an increasingly common occurrence in what is circuitously referred to as a ‘Russian Orthodox’ capital:

Unfortunately, it looks as if here in the golden-domed (*zlatoglavoi*) capital, where temperamental immigrants from the South are becoming more numerous each year, that Caucasian traditions, including those which are semi-criminal, will become something of a customary feature of life in the capital.⁴¹⁹

The figure of the feminized ‘prisoner of the Caucasus,’ whether imagined as one of ‘our’ vulnerable women or the personified Russian nation and capital, emerges as a powerful trope in the media’s construction of the Caucasian ‘Other’ as a potent sexual threat. From its first articulation in Aleksandr Pushkin’s famous 1822 narrative poem, up until the present day, the ‘Prisoner of the Caucasus’ has persisted as a critical motif in the Russian national imagination, as a way of ‘knowing,’ demonizing, and dominating the threatening ‘Other.’⁴²⁰ However, in its current manifestation, the image so long associated with Russian conquest and desire in a perilous land has been turned on its head. The press contends that a reversal of a centuries-long history, in which Russians were engaged in subjugating the Caucasian periphery, is now underway in the former

⁴¹⁸ Sergei Mashkin and Elizaveta Oleinikova, “Kalym – delo ugovnoe: 15-Letnuiu shkolnitsu pokhiliti pod venets,” (Bride price a criminal affair: A 15 year-old school girl was taken hostage down the aisle), *MK*, January 10, 2004, 3.

⁴¹⁹ Mashkin and Oleinikova, “Kalym – delo ugovnoe,” *MK*, 3. For similar articulations see: “Muzhchina troe sutok nasiloval izbrannitsu, ubezhdaiya byiti za nego zamuzh,” (Man rapes the girl of his picking over the course of three days, trying to convince her to marry him), *MK*, September 3, 2003, 1. In which a 27-year old “monster,” “evil-doer,” “bandit,” “Dagestani” man, “living in the capital without registration,” is accused of ‘snatching’ a 20 year-old “Russian girl,” whom he beats and rapes, in hopes that she will submit and become his wife; or “Nevesta ponevole: V stolitse nachali vorovat’ moskvichek,” (A bride against one’s will: In the capital they have begun to steal Muscovite girls), *MK*, October 9, 2002, 1: Which details the kidnapping of a “Muscovite girl” by a “hot *dzhigit*” from “the backwaters of Georgia.”

⁴²⁰ For an intriguing analysis of the ‘prisoner of the Caucasus’ theme throughout Russian cultural history, from Aleksandr Pushkin’s classic poem to articulations in Post-Soviet cinema, see: Paula A. Michaels, “Prisoners of the Caucasus: From Colonial to Postcolonial Narrative,” *Russian Studies in Literature* 40, no. 2 (2004): 52–77.

Russian metropole, with ‘Southerners’ coming to claim their victory over the nation’s demoralized capital and its women.⁴²¹ Contemporary associations with the image are often those of defeat, shame, impotence, and vulnerability experienced by Russians themselves.⁴²² Articles such as “Muscovite Woman becomes a Prisoner of the Caucasus in a Sauna” in which a “band of evil-doers (*zlodei*) from the mountain republics” are accused of kidnapping a random young Muscovite mother, assaulting her in a public bathing house, and then burglarizing her apartment in front of her five-year old daughter, serve to construct the nation’s women as utterly vulnerable to the ‘criminal’ male ‘Other.’⁴²³

In fact, the media regularly forge connections between ‘their’ alleged ‘ethnic mentality’/‘traditions’ and grievous crimes committed against ‘our’ women and children.⁴²⁴ Articles present the rapes and murders of young girls and women by individual men, as if such atrocities are a direct manifestation of the intrinsic depravity of ‘their’ culture. In an article headlined “Cultural Invasion,” an *AiF-M* journalist poses the following question to her readers: “They say that one should never go into another’s monastery with their own rules. But what exactly do the torrent of uninvited guests who

⁴²¹ For example see: Kalinina, “Pokorenie Kavkazom,” (Conquest by the Caucasus), *MK*, 4-5. In fact the headline of this article is a play on words, involving an inversion of the traditional phrase ‘Pokorenie Kavkaza’ or ‘Conquest of the Caucasus’ into ‘Conquest by the Caucasus.’

⁴²² The nation itself is often depicted in the press as a captive of the Caucasian periphery. For a recent example see: Marina Perevozskina, “Rossiia – Kavkazskaia Plennitsa,” (Russia – Prisoner of the Caucasus), *MK*, February 13, 2009, 3-4.

⁴²³ “Moskvichka stala kavkazskoi plennitsej v saune,” (A Muscovite woman becomes a prisoner of the Caucasus in a sauna), *MK*, June 4, 2002, 1. For some other examples see: “Plennitsa sumela posadit’ pokhittitelja pod zamok,” (Female captive managed to put her kidnapper under lock and key), *MK*, January 13, 2004, 1; or “Moskvichka stala zalozhnicsei, pustiv v kvartiru gostia s iuga,” (Muscovite woman becomes a hostage after letting guests from the South into her apartment), *MK*, April 16, 2004, 1.

⁴²⁴ For another illustrative example see: Ekaterina Bychkova, “Ostryi Ugol. Pochemu my ne liubim ‘Lits Kavkazskoi Natsional’nosti,” (Hot Topic: Why we don’t like ‘Peoples of Caucasian Nationality’), *AiF-M*, July 30, 2003, 6-7: “According to their laws, when a girl turns 15, she can be stolen and forced to live with the young groom’s family. The reaction of the under-aged bride’s family is of little interest to them – just as they are indifferent to the Russian (*rossiiskie*) laws according to which you and I attempt to live.”

are coming to us from Asia and the Caucasus make of this?”⁴²⁵ Exercising the assumption of collective guilt by ethnic association (*what do they make of this*), she contends:

We think of them as guests, but the situation has long since changed. Let’s just take a look at events which have taken place in the capital over the past several weeks. An Azeri man brutally murdered his pregnant lover, explaining his actions by saying that he could not stand the thought of his child, even one born out of wedlock, growing up in a foreign culture. The Muscovite girl who was raped after hailing a taxi at night couldn’t have expected that the driver, as a result of his ethnic temperament, would decide: ‘She got into my car. Therefore, she is a woman of loose morals.’ We have heard a lot about the story of the 11 year-old Russian girl in the capital awaiting a baby from a 21 year-old Tajik migrant...But all of this could have been avoided if the Grandmother of this girl knew that in the homeland of the people she let into her apartment, eleven is considered the age of sexual maturity. It is clear that the principles and traditions of a different culture have come to the capital...Let’s just admit it: we have an immigrant problem that, for some time now, has become a threat to each and everyone of us.⁴²⁶

Such media representations support Theresa Wobbe’s assertion that the mythologized power of the ‘minority male’ to violate ‘our’ women is constructed in tandem with the erection of boundaries of cultural belonging and difference.⁴²⁷ The dividing line between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is also indicative of the limits of social obligations and norms. ‘Our’ culture, mentality, and morals are associated with the absence of (sexual) violence; while ‘theirs’ are constructed as being alien, irreconcilable to ‘ours,’ and perceived as dangerous. In Moscow’s popular press, the construction of the ‘Southern’/‘Asian’ male as the bearer of an alien culture, symbolically places him outside of the moral responsibilities of Russian society and imbues him with the power to violate: while persistent representations of him in the ‘news’ as ‘the rapist of our women’ reify and conflictualize the socially constructed boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them.’

⁴²⁵ Dar’ia Martynkina, “Tema Nomera: Kul’turnoe vtorzhenie,” (Topic of the Issue: Cultural Invasion) AiF-M, June 15, 2005, 6-7.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Theresa Wobbe, “The Boundaries of Community: Gender Relations and Racial Violence,” in Crossfires: Nationalism, Racism, and Gender in Europe, eds. Helma Lutz, Ann Phoenix, and Nira Yuval-Davis, 88-104 (London: Pluto Press, 1995).

In fact, the popular press' demonization of the male 'Other' as morally and sexually depraved is nowhere more impassioned than in the torrent of 'crime articles' centred on 'their' alleged rape and murder of 'our' women and children. Throughout the post-Soviet period, these types of articles have become a major feature of commercially profitable reporting in Moscow's increasingly 'tabloidized'⁴²⁸ popular press. In addition to meeting the public's demand for such 'information,' the frequency, gratuitous detail, and ethnically-pointed nature of these depictions suggest that these types of articles are also meant to frighten, humiliate, infuriate, and mobilize public outrage against the male 'Other.'

The following discussion is not an analysis of actual sexual assault in Moscow/Russia, but rather serves as a demonstration of the way in which alleged sexual assaults by the male 'Other' against 'Russian/Muscovite' women are depicted in the capital's popular press as part of its 'Othering' and racializing discourse. Russian law enforcement agencies do not produce statistics on crimes, sexual crimes included, according to the ethnic background of the accused, but rather according to place of residence and citizenship.⁴²⁹ As such, it would be difficult to empirically show whether or not the media over-represent non-Slavic males in the role of rapists. However, even if such statistics were available, the objectivity of the information would still present itself

⁴²⁸ 'Tabloidization' is a term used in critical media studies to refer to the erosion of journalistic principles and balanced coverage in media and a shift toward producing entertainment-style, sensationalized, and usually more profitable material. See: Colin Sparks and John Tulloch eds., Tabloid Tales: Global debates over media standards (Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

⁴²⁹ Ekaterina V. Utkina, "Prestupnost' priezhhikh v g. Moskve I ee preduprezhdenie," (Ph.D. diss., Moskovskii Universitet MVD RF, 2006), 75-79.

as an issue, particularly given the documented problem of ethnic profiling by Russian law enforcement officials.⁴³⁰

Headlines read: “Murderer and Rapist of 15 year-old School Girl is Captured. It is a Guest Worker who came to Moscow from Uzbekistan;” “Guest Workers from Tajikistan Rape a Muscovite Woman over the Course of Five Days;” “Band of Caucasian Rapists Captured;” and “Tajik Street Cleaner Tries to Rape a Young Girl, Luring his Victim into the Bushes with Ice Cream.”⁴³¹ Articles expressly emphasize the ‘ethnicity’ of the accused, as if the ethnic background of an alleged perpetrator is considered as a (or the central) cause of the criminal behaviour.

For instance, in the following illustrative example from *MK*, which details the rape and murder of Muscovite twin sisters by ‘four men,’ it is only the ‘two Azeri brothers’ allegedly involved in the crime, who are brought to the attention of readers. The article is silent on the ‘ethnicity’ of the other two suspects; in fact, beyond stating that there were four men involved in the crime, there is no other mention of the ‘non-Azeri’ alleged assailants. Furthermore, the supposed ‘leader’ of the gang, one of the two ‘Azeri brothers,’ is named and singled-out for his ‘insatiable brutality’:

17 year-old twin sisters from Moscow became the victims of a band of four rapists-murders, two of which were bothers and ethnic Azeris. The young men offered to give the girls a ride home. When the girls agreed, the men drove the poor things out to the forest where they tied them up and raped them. When the girls threatened to tell the police about what happened, the monsters stabbed the

⁴³⁰ For example see: Amnesty International, ‘Dokumenty!’ Discrimination on grounds of race in the Russian Federation (London, Amnesty International, 2003) and Open Society Institute, Ethnic Profiling in the Moscow Metro (New York, OSI, 2006).

⁴³¹ Khairbek Almaev, Shamil’ Dzhemakulov, and Aleksandr Boiko, “Ubiitsa i nasil’nik 15-letnei shkol’nitsu poiman. Eto gastarbaiter, priekhavshii v Moskvu iz Uzbekistana,” *KP*, October 24, 2008, 1; “Gastarbaitery iz tadzhikistana nasilovali moskvichku piat’ sutok,” *MK*, July 30, 2005, 1; “Skhachina banda kavkazskikh nasil’nikov,” *MK*, October 26, 1993, 1; “Dvornik-tadzhik pytal’sia iznosilovat’ devochku: Svoiu zhertvu on zamanil v kusty morozhenym,” *KP*, May 20, 2005, 6.

two girls. But this wasn't enough for the Azeri leader of the gang, Azer Gasanov, who began to disembowel the two, already lifeless, young women.⁴³²

While all of the papers analyzed in this study feature damaging depictions of the male 'Other' in the role of the rapist of our women and children, *MK*, with its predilection for printing graphic front page accounts stands out from the rest in this regard. Such articles go well beyond the bounds of 'newsworthiness,' even for a paper which specializes in sensational 'crime chronicles'. These 'news' accounts are in fact emblematic of a racially charged genre, whose rhetoric serves not only to 'inform' or even 'entertain' the public, but also to threaten, enrage, and fan the fires of interethnic discord in Moscow society.

In spite of the disturbing nature of such articles, it is of critical importance to reproduce a sample of them in this text, in order to convey the types of representations of the male 'Other' constructed by the nation's most popular papers and presented for consumption to the public on an ongoing basis. The frequency of articles casting non-Slavic men as sexual predators cultivates an impression that the very presence of the male 'Other' in 'our' city places all of 'our' women and children at risk. The reading public is consistently exposed to articles which 'advise' them that:

- The male 'Other' randomly attacks young Muscovite women in the middle of the day without concern for who is watching:

A Tajik migrant tried to rape a Muscovite woman right in front of her two young children in the elevator of their building... The young Asian, with a 'wild' look on his face... unexpectedly ran into the entrance of the young mother's building and jumped into the elevator just as the doors were closing. The four year-old girl and five year-old boy were trapped together with their mother, but neither the children's tears nor the victim's pleas seemed to bother him... He punched the

⁴³² "Sester-bliznetsov ubili brat'ia-betonshchiki," (Concrete-laying brothers murder twin sisters), *MK*, December 28, 2001, 1.

poor woman in the stomach several times, ripped off her clothes and attempted to rape her.⁴³³

- He is behind the wheel of that car 'our' women flag down hoping to get home safely:⁴³⁴

A Caucasian driver making extra money as an unofficial taxi in Moscow tried to rape his female passenger. The Muscovite woman decided to put up a fight, so the monster (*izverg*) poured gasoline over her, set her on fire, and dumped her by the side of the road. The young woman received burns to over 90% of her body and is in critical condition...Police were able to track down and arrest the 53 year-old Azeri immigrant.⁴³⁵

- He hunts down 'our' women while they are shopping in their local markets, which are constructed as being occupied by the racialized male 'Other':

Four rapists from Tajikistan, who brutally demoralized a young Russian girl over the course of three days, have been caught by police...On March 7 of this year, the 24 year-old Muscovite decided to go to the market to buy some gifts for her close family and friends ahead of the holiday [i.e. International Women's Day].⁴³⁶ A 21 year-old Tajik, working as a porter at the market, noticed the attractive young girl amid the crowd of shoppers and started to follow her. However, when the young lady categorically declined to engage this worrisome stranger in conversation, the sadist began to beat her with his fists. Having broken her nose, the Asian dragged her down into the sewers...[where] three other Tajik migrants were waiting. For three whole days these scumbags (*negodiai*) took turns raping the young woman after they had finished work.⁴³⁷

⁴³³ "Nasil'nik napal na moskvichku na glazakh ee detei," (Rapist attacks Muscovite women right in front of her children's eyes), *MK*, May 23, 2007, 1. Also see: "Zadushennui studentku tadjik-nasil'nik podvesil na derevo," (Tajik rapist hangs the body of the strangled young female student from a tree), *MK*, October 14, 2004, 1.

⁴³⁴ In Russia, using 'unofficial taxis' (*lovit' chastnika*) is a common way for people, including women on their own, to get around, and is not viewed in the same way as 'hitchhiking' is in the West. Official taxicabs, in large part run by criminal organizations, charge exorbitant fees, and after public transit is closed for the night, hailing down a car for a fee is often times the only option available to people. Furthermore, in spite of the relatively well-developed and affordable public and burgeoning private transit system in cities like Moscow, many people, even during business hours, prefer to flag down and pay a passing driver to get them to their destination rather than take transit.

⁴³⁵ "Novosti, Slukhi, Sensatsii," (News, Rumours, Sensationalism), *AiF-M*, April 18, 2008, 4. Also see: "Plennitsa sumela posadit' pokhititelia pod zamok," *MK*, January 13, 2004, 1.

⁴³⁶ The timing of the attack, on the eve of International Women's Day, which is celebrated as a major holiday in Russia (as well as in other post-Soviet states) dedicated to the honour of all women, is highlighted in this and other newspaper articles which covered this specific attack, in order to illustrate the utter depravity of the racialized male 'Other' who, whether out of ignorance or pure contempt for 'our' women, chooses to demean them on such a day.

⁴³⁷ "Nasil'niki troe sutok muchili zhertvu pod kryshoi liuka," (Rapists tortured victim for three days underneath a manhole cover), *MK*, March 12, 2004, 1. KP likewise featured graphic coverage of this attack, see: Iuliia Shamilova, "Iznasilovannaia Moskva: Dve tret' seksual'nykh prestuplenii v stolitse

- He assaults 'our' women in their own homes. There is nowhere in 'our' city that Muscovite women are safe from his brutality:⁴³⁸

Ringin on the doorbells of random Muscovite women, the Azeri bandit would present himself as a municipal housing authority worker or as a neighbor... The resident from Baku would rob and rape his Muscovite victims... then threaten that if they told anyone about what had happened to them he would return to finish them off.⁴³⁹

- He believes himself to be above 'our' laws, assaulting 'our' female police officers and playing 'us' for fools:

A group of seven immigrants from Central Asia who robbed and raped two female police officers in Kuz'minki park were captured on Friday. This was the way in which these guest workers decided to celebrate the birthday of one of their comrades... The drunken Asians beat the women, grabbed their purses, necklaces, and earrings, and then dragged their poor victims into the bushes where they raped them... The authorities immediately began to search for the Asians at the nearest construction sites, markets, and even through employee lists of the municipal housing authority... Remarkably almost all of the accused 'forgot' how to speak Russian during their interrogations.⁴⁴⁰

- He is a merciless pedophile who preys on 'our' children:⁴⁴¹

sovershaiut gastarbaitery," (Raped Moscow: Two thirds of all sexual crimes in the capital are committed by guest workers), KP, March 29, 2004, 4-5.

⁴³⁸ Also see: "Nasil'nik vernul'sia na mesto prestupleniia, chtoby vyspat'sia," (Rapist returned to the scene of the crime to catch some sleep), MK, June 4, 2006, 1; "Man'iak iz Azerbadzhana karaulil zhenshchin v pod"ezdakh," (Sexual maniac from Azerbaijan laid in wait for women in apartment entrance ways), MK, December 13, 2006, 1; "Nasil'nik iz Baku grozil zhertvam potopom," (Rapist from Baku threatened his victims with a water leak), MK, February 7, 2006, 1; "Na pervyi vzgliad liubov' ne zla," (At first sight love is not cruel), KP, January 30, 2004, 6.

⁴³⁹ "Nasil'nik prikhodil k zhertvam kak k sebe domoi," (Rapist approached his victims as if he was entering his own home), MK, November 3, 2006, 1.

⁴⁴⁰ "Nasil'niku podarili na den' rozhdeniia sotrudnits militsii," (The rapist was given female police officers for his birthday), MK, July 17, 2006, 1. In this and other articles, we see how 'rapists' are identified: though round-ups and line-ups of guest workers who are called under suspicion simply on the basis of their ethnic background. Amnesty International contends that 'confessions' are not infrequently extorted from ethnic minorities in police custody. See: 'Dokumenty!', 31. While such observations are in no way meant to deny the legitimacy of the stories and pain suffered by the children and women who have been violated, given such racial profiling, one wonders just how many of these accused 'rapists' are simply taking the fall for the real perpetrators.

⁴⁴¹ For a small sample of other articles featuring the ethnic 'Other' in the role of a pedophile see: "Muzhchina iznasiloval devochku na glazakh ee prababushki," (Man rapes girl in front of her great grandmother), MK, November 21, 2007, 1; "Stroiteli iz srednei azii nasilovali shkolnitsu troe sytok," (Builders from Central Asia raped a schoolgirl over the course of three days), MK, August 19, 2003, 1. "Peodfily napadaiut na detei sred' bela dnia, (Pedophiles attack children in broad day light), MK, October

This past summer Sashenka⁴⁴² turned six years old. The Tajik guest workers, living in the adjacent room of the dormitory where she lived with her family, raped her just a couple days after her birthday. It all occurred in broad daylight, literally two steps away from her mother who was putting her youngest child down for a nap. ‘Sasha ran out from their room to come and find me,’ her mother explained with tears streaming down her face. ‘Her lips were all bruised, they had squeezed her mouth shut. She told me that the men hurt her, and that they would cut off her head if she tried to tell anyone.’...When we arrived at their apartment, Sashenka was cowering under her baby brother’s crib. Her mother says that the little girl hides there as soon as she hears the voice of any man she does not know.”⁴⁴³

- He is a callous fiend who deliberately seeks out the weakest members of ‘our’ society:

An Uzbek rapist preying on under-aged girls from troubled families was arrested during the week by police...The immigrant from Uzbekistan sought out homeless and neglected children, hoping to avoid being punished for his crimes...According to the Asian’s testimony, he specifically targeted girls he believed that no one would be willing to stand up for.⁴⁴⁴

- He is a depraved animal whose sexual aggression knows no bounds, ruthlessly attacking and demoralizing ‘our’ elderly women:⁴⁴⁵

The court has sentenced a Tajik man to 20 years in prison for raping an 82 year-old Muscovite woman. The scumbag first hit his elderly victim over the head with

22, 2002, 1; “Iznasilovannaia devochka skonchalas’ ot zarazheniia krovi,” (Young girl who was raped dies as a result of a blood infection), MK, November 17, 1998, 1; “Izvrashchenets iz Tadjikistana zamanil devochku v lovushku s pomoshch’iu morozhenogo,” (Pervert from Tajikistan lures young girl into his trap with the aid of ice cream), MK, June 21, 2005, 1; “Nasil’niki podkaraulili devochku po puti iz shkoly,” (Rapists hunt down young girl on her way home from school), MK, December 21, 2007, 1; “Devochku iznasilovali po doroge iz shkoly,” (Young girl raped on the way home from school), MK, February 25, 2004, 1; and Aleksandr Khinshtein, “Uvoziat, B’iut, Ubivaiut...Nashe Budeshchee – Zhivoi Tovar...,” (They Take You Away, Beat You, and Kill You...Our Future as Human Cargo), MK, May 22, 1993, 8.

⁴⁴² Sashenka and Sasha are both diminutive forms of the name Aleksandra in Russian.

⁴⁴³ Dmitrii Steshin, “Iz-za ‘rasseiannosti’ sledovatel’ia nasil’nik vydet na svobodu?” (Will the rapist go free as a consequence of the detective’s ‘absent-mindedness?’), KP, November 19, 2004, 6-7.

⁴⁴⁴ “Kadyrov nasiloval tol’ko plokhikh devochek,” (Kadyrov only raped bad girls), MK, July 28, 2006, 1. For similar articles featuring non-Slavs in this role see: “Gastarbaitery iz Tadjikistana iznasilovali devushku s ranimoi dushoi,” (Guest workers from Tajikistan rape a young girl with a wounded soul), MK, October 25, 2007; “Vokzal’nyi spasitel’s okazalsia nasil’nikom,” (Train station saviour turned out to be a rapist), MK, March 13, 2006, 1.

⁴⁴⁵ In her insightful analysis of Serbian media representations of so-called ‘nationalist’ rapes of Serbs by Albanians in the lead-up to the war in Kosovo, Wendy Bracewell likewise notes how the alleged rapes of so-called “a-sexual” victims such as elderly women, were seized upon by the press as evidence of the enemy’s depravity and intent to attack and humiliate the Serbian people rather than the individual victim themselves. See: Wendy Bracewell, “Rape in Kosovo: masculinity and Serbian nationalism,” Nations and Nationalism 6, no. 4 (2000): 573.

an empty beer bottle and then raped her... The poor soul lived alone in her own apartment on the neighboring street and went out that night to collect empty bottles and cans. The monster snuck up behind her, covered her mouth, and raped her. The elderly woman was unable to survive the humiliation of it all, and after two weeks, died in the hospital.... The 27 year-old Tajik had been living in Moscow for only a couple of months before the crime.⁴⁴⁶

- He cannot be trusted in 'our' homes. Renting out a room to the male 'Other' is fraught with danger:⁴⁴⁷

This week a savage event occurred in the west of the capital. An Uzbek guest worker, who was renting a room in the apartment of a Muscovite woman, raped her three year-old little girl.⁴⁴⁸

- He cannot be allowed into 'our' families. Muscovite women entering into relationships with the male 'Other' are risking their children's safety:

A horrific case involving the desecration of an 11 year-old girl who was raped by her stepfather and his brother was closed during the week in the Moscow city court. Over the course of two months, the Azeri, under threat of her death, forced his stepdaughter to have sex with him, bragging about it to his brother. One day the uncle also raped the little one, and she became pregnant. The girl's mother was living in a common-law relationship with the Azeri man.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁶ "Stroitel' poluchil 20 let v kolonii za iznasilovanie starushki," (Construction worker receives 20 years in prison for raping old woman), MK, November 13, 2004, 1. For other examples in which the ethnic 'Other' is graphically depicted as raping elderly women see: "Pensionerka stala zhertvoi uzbekana-sil'nika v 82 goda," (Elderly woman of 82 years falls victim to an Uzbek rapist), MK, January 11, 2007, 4; "Rabotiaga iznasiloval edva zhivuuu starushku," (A worker raped a barely living old woman), MK, March 30, 2004, 1; "Molodoi rabochii iznasiloval i ubil pensionerku," (Young worker raped and killed female pensioner) MK, October 07, 2003, 1; "Nasil'nik atakoval starushku na detskoj ploshchadke," (Rapist attacked old woman at a children's playground), MK, April 10, 2006, 1; and "Starushku iznasilovali, poka ona khodila za gribami," (Old woman was raped while she was gathering mushrooms), MK, July 23, 1999, 1.

⁴⁴⁷ Significantly, non-Slavs from the Caucasus and Central Asia often face discrimination when trying to find housing in Moscow and other cities in Russia. Advertisements printed in newspapers and flyers offering apartments for rent frequently feature statements like: 'No blacks/Caucasians' or 'Will only rent to Russians/Slavs.' The press, which is indeed complicit in allowing such material to be published, has even commented, if rather unsympathetically, on this form of blatant discrimination. For example see: Tat'iana Poliakova, "Khoziava kvartir ne liubiat 'kavkaztsev', detei i zhivotnikh," (Apartment landlords don't like 'Caucasians', children or animals), AiF-M, December 21, 1996, 3.

⁴⁴⁸ "Kvartirant iznasiloval trekhletniuu doch' khoziaiki," (Lodger rapes female owner's three year-old daughter), MK, December 13, 2005, 1. Also see: Shamil' Dzhemakulov and Khairbek Almakaev, "Pedofil-kvartirant nasiloval 7-letniuu doch' khoziaev," (Pedophile-lodger rapes the owners' 7 year-old daughter), KP, February 22, 2008, 5.

⁴⁴⁹ "Devochka zaberemenela ot pedofila-nasil'nika," (Young girl impregnated by pedophile-rapist), MK, June 21, 2004, 4. For additional articles which portray 'Caucasian' stepfathers as pedophiles see: "Otchim dva goda nasiloval shkol'nitsu, chtoby sdelat' ee nastoiashchei zhenshchinoi," (Step-father rapes schoolgirl over the course of two years in order to turn her into a real woman), MK, November 2, 1999, 1; and

- He is everywhere. 'Our' people, even 'our' men, cannot find respite from his violent sexual appetite, not even in the once peaceful countryside outside of the capital:

You can't hide from these beasts in the countryside. Even the primordial and formerly tranquil Egor'evskii region [outside of Moscow] has been hit by a wave of violence. In just one month three violent sexual crimes have been committed here. In the middle of July in the light of day, a 6 year-old girl was raped. Just a week later in another village in the region a 17 year-old girl was sexually assaulted. And in the latest incident – utterly barbaric – two disturbed maniacs robbed and raped a young soldier from the local garrison on his way back to headquarters. The most alarming and disturbing fact is that, in all three cases, the crimes were committed by 'guests' from the near abroad... The men from the surrounding villages have promised to kill all the '*churki*,' and the authorities, trying to stave off a crisis, have moved all of the Tajik guest workers out of the area for the time being.⁴⁵⁰

Such 'news' has a deleterious impact on interethnic relations in and beyond the capital. The deluge of articles emphasizing the specifically non-Slavic 'face' of rapists in Moscow is the critical material which serves to 'confirm' racializing myths about the 'animal sexuality' and 'inherent criminality' of the male 'Other'. A central tenet in the media's racialization of the male 'Other' as 'the rapist of our people' is the complicit failure to differentiate between an alleged individual rapist and his ethnic background, which bears no particular relevance to the crime. Research conducted in the field of critical media studies contend that the use (and in particular proliferate use) of ethnic markers in crime reporting contributes to the racialization of entire ethnic communities, as the allegedly threatening and deviant actions of single persons become associated in the public eye with specific ethnic groups.⁴⁵¹ A 2000 study conducted with Moscow

"Otchim prevratil priemnykh docherei v seksual'nykh rabyn'," (A stepfather turned his adopted daughters into sex slaves) *MK*, May 27, 2004, 1.

⁴⁵⁰ Iulia Goncharova, "Sama Vinovata!" (It's her own fault!), *MK*, September 1, 2004, 5-6.

⁴⁵¹ For example see: Teun A. van Dijk, "How 'They' Hit the Headlines: Ethnic Minorities in the Press," in *Discourse and Discrimination*, eds. Geneva Smitherman-Donaldson and Teun A. van Dijk, 221-62 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988); Peter Teo, "Racism in the News: A Critical Discourse Analysis of

youth argues that negative media representations of immigrants from the Caucasus region and Central Asia have played an important role in these young people's high level of association (78 percent of those surveyed) with the growing presence of such minority groups in the capital and an increase in crime.⁴⁵²

The Moscow popular press is likewise involved in the construction and assignment of collective guilt, with entire ethnic communities portrayed as complicit in the 'cover-up' of rapes of Russian women. For example, in an article about a Russian man trying to track down his wife's alleged Azeri rapist, the leaders of the local Azerbaijani Diaspora, assumed to speak for all ethnic Azeris, are depicted as being contemptuous of 'Russian' women as the man purportedly involved in the actual attack:

Every day he [the aggrieved husband] would try and negotiate with the Azeri Diaspora, knowing full well that the object of his hate was hiding amongst them. 'We will find him and punish him ourselves!' his Azeri brethren proclaimed. For a long time he believed them. That is up until the day they began to laugh at him and told him straight to his face that any Russian woman could be bought and had for a banana [emphasis in original].⁴⁵³

Or, in another illustrative article, which accuses the leaders of another local Azerbaijani ethnic organization of harbouring an Azeri man accused of sexually assaulting a Russian girl, *KP* contends that all hopes of negotiating a deal to hand the suspect over to the authorities are bound to lead to nothing because: "Azeris would never give up one of their own, especially not to outsiders (*chuzhakam*). They live in our

News Reporting in Two Australian Newspapers," *Discourse and Society* 11, no. 7 (2000): 7-49; Marcel Lubbers, Peer Scheepers, and Fred Wester, "Ethnic Minorities in Dutch Newspapers 1990-5: Patterns of Criminalization and Problematization," *International Communication Gazette* 60, no. 5 (1998): 415-31; and Ted Chiricos and Sarah Eschholz, "The Racial and Ethnic Typification of Crime and The Criminal Typification of Race and Ethnicity in Local Television News," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 39, no. 4 (2002): 400-420.

⁴⁵² Mariia Gerasimova, "Etnicheskaia tolerantnost' i etnicheskie stereotypy podrostkov," in *Rossia: Transformiruiushcheesia obshchestvo*, 43-68 (Moscow, Kanon, 2001).

⁴⁵³ Galina Sapozhnikova, "Budut li russkie chtit' Koran i est' ris palochkami?" (Will Ethnic Russians follow the Koran and eat rice with chopsticks?) *KP*, August 7, 2003, 4-5.

country according to their own laws and will continue to do so because no one is willing to stop them.”⁴⁵⁴ It is through such discourse that entire ethnic groups are collectively demonized and held culpable for the rapes of individual women by individual men.⁴⁵⁵

Critically, the Moscow reading public appears to have become conditioned to expect the ‘Caucasian’/ ‘Asian’ male ‘Other’ to be behind the rape of ‘our’ women. For example, in one recent article concerning the discovery of two raped and murdered Muscovite girls, published in the print and online version of *KP*, no mention of a suspect is made.⁴⁵⁶ However, given the commentary posted on the newspaper’s website, it appears as if the majority of readers, at least those who use the internet to read and comment on the ‘news,’ have already passed judgment: “They were killed by Asians. There’s no doubt about it! That’s what I think,” writes one person. “They were killed by peoples of Caucasian nationality. It’s so obvious! Again blacks!!” attests another. “As long as there are people here whose ethnic culture sings the praises of muggings, thievery, murder, and rape this kind of thing will keep on happening,” adds a different reader. The list goes on. Amidst the barrage of self-assured incendiary remarks, one can find the odd voice of caution: “You must all be privy to the details of the investigation to be able to so assuredly tell us what the official version of events is,” contends one such commentator.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ Dmitrii Steshin, “Doch’ sviashchennika krichala OMONu: ‘Ne beite papu, on menia zashchishchat’ prishel!’,” (A priest’s daughter shouts at the Special Police Force: ‘Don’t beat my papa, he only came to defend me!), *KP*, August 2, 2008, 8-9.

⁴⁵⁵ Readers’ letters submitted for publication in the press likewise support such depictions. For example, see: Galina Sapozhnikova, “Budut li russkie chtit’ Koran i est’ ris palochkami?” (Will Ethnic Russians follow the Koran and eat rice with chopsticks? Readers’ responses) *KP*, July 23, 2003, 6-7.

⁴⁵⁶ “V podmoskovov’e v kollektore nashli tela dvukh zadushennykh devushek,” (The bodies of two strangled young women were found in the sewer in Moscow region), *KP*, February 8, 2009, 3.

⁴⁵⁷ Commentary accessed online on February 26, 2009 at <http://www.kp.ru/online/forum/news/198534/>

Overtly racist nationalist groups capitalize on the moral panic of ethnicized rape stories produced by the press. Incendiary articles found in the popular media are directly reposted on their websites and avidly discussed in their forums, providing these groups with purportedly unbiased and factual support for their racialization of the ‘Other’ as an inborn ‘pervert’ and an intolerable threat to ‘our’ women and ‘our’ nation. With the media’s assistance, the image of the ‘Caucasian’/‘Central Asian’ as a rapist/pedophile has emerged as a prevailing trope in extremist organizations’ gamut of hate propaganda (For example see Figures 12, 13 and 14). Moreover, the press is involved in directly publishing the incendiary commentary of representatives from such organizations. For example, Aleksandr Belov, founder and former leader of the well-organized and increasingly popular Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI), has been invited to share his views in all of the newspapers analyzed in this study. In the following representative excerpt from *KP*, Belov is given an opportunity to propagate the image of the male ‘Other’ as an innate rapist. When asked the intentionally provocative question “Are foreigners a nuisance in your life?” Belov provides the following response: “In my life, yes!...Yesterday when I was walking in the park with my child, I noticed how a group of three Tajiks, all hopped-up on drugs, were staring at him as if he were their next potential rape victim.” Enabling extremists to pose as reputable commentators in the mainstream press and providing them with an uncritical platform to promote their views to the general public does a great disservice to society.

In fact, demonizing depictions of the male ‘Other,’ circulated and legitimized in the press, have become so ingrained in the collective imagination that they have emerged as a popular motif in other mainstream social media: television crime and drama serials,

pulp fiction, and even in the realm of ‘political’ and ‘high literature.’ For example, Dmitrii Sokolov-Mitrich, a long-time reporter for the Russian newspaper *Izvestia* and chief editor for the weekly journal *Russian Reporter*, recently produced a best-selling book, *Netadzhikskie Devochki, Nechechenskie Mal’chiki*, (Non-Tajik Little Girls, and Non-Chechen Boys), which capitalizes on the media’s criminalization of the ethnic ‘Other.’ The work is comprised of an analysis of a collection of articles produced in the nation’s popular press, depicting members of ethnic minority groups as the perpetrators of crimes against the ethnic majority, including an entire chapter which is devoted to the sexual assault of Russian women by non-Slavic men. The author, who dubs his book an ‘anti-fascist polemic,’ explicitly labels such attacks as “hate crimes committed by non-Slavs against the ethnic Russian majority” and urges the public to “turn their attention and outrage toward the dark [non-Slavic] side of fascism” plaguing Russia today as opposed to purely focusing on its “light side” [Slavic skinheads].⁴⁵⁸ The media likewise played an important role in the inspiration for and endorsement of Valentine Rasputin’s novel, *Doch’ Ivana, Mat’ Ivana* (Ivan’s Daughter, Ivan’s Mother), which was honoured with the Presidential Award for Literature in 2003.⁴⁵⁹ The novel centres on the rape of a fifteen year-old Russian girl by a ‘Caucasian’ at a local market. Invited to promote his book on the pages of *AiF*, Rasputin, who suggests that the storyline was based on an actual crime that was widely publicized in the press of his native Irkutsk, explains that the novel also serves as a metaphor for the “social rape” unleashed upon the nation by the

⁴⁵⁸ Dmitrii Sokolov-Mitrich, *Netadzhikskie Devochki, Nechechenskie Mal’chiki*, (Moscow, Iauza, 2007), 3.

⁴⁵⁹ Boris Voitsekhovskii et al., “U Marininoi poiavilis’ ‘Soavtory’!,” (Book Reviews), *KP*, March 2, 2004, 12-13.

“Caucasian strangers” who have “occupied our markets” and who “behave themselves as if they are the masters of this land, without any respect for our traditions or our laws.”⁴⁶⁰

The conflation of the rapes of women with the symbolic rape of Russian society by the enemy ‘Other’ also emerges as a frequent tactic in the discourse of Moscow’s popular press. As Jan Jindy Pettman suggests, the eroticizing of the nation as a loved woman and the mobilization of rape as a metaphor for expressing a sense of national vulnerability and violation, reveals how deeply ingrained the depiction of homeland as a female body is in the nationalist mind, and exposes how critical women’s bodies are to the delineation and maintenance of nationalized and racialized boundaries of belonging and difference.⁴⁶¹ The capital’s popular press appropriates the alleged rapes of real women in its construction of the figurative rape of Mother Russia/and the feminized city of Moscow by the invading immigrant ‘Other’.⁴⁶² “Wretched is a capital that cannot protect herself,” proclaims one illustrative article with the provocative headline: “Raped Moscow: Two Thirds of all Sexual Crimes in the Capital are Committed by Guest Workers.”⁴⁶³ In this piece, the nation’s capital is likened to a defenseless and disgraced woman, defiled by the hordes of migrants from the former Soviet periphery who fill her markets and construction sites: the same ‘Caucasian’ and ‘Central Asian’ migrants the

⁴⁶⁰ Iuliia Shigareva, “V. Rasputin: ‘Bez derevni my osiroteem’,” (V. Rasputin: Without the countryside we will be orphaned), *AiF*, April 19, 2004, 3.

⁴⁶¹ Jan Jindy Pettman, “Boundary Politics: Women, Nationalism and Danger,” in *New Frontiers in Women’s Studies: Knowledge, Identity, and Nationalism*, ed. Mary Maynard and June Purvis, 188 (London: Taylor & Francis, 1996).

⁴⁶² In Russian, the word for Moscow (*‘Moskva’*), just as with Russia (*‘Rossiia’*), is a feminine gendered noun and has historically been personified as a woman. See: Valentina Zaitseva, “National, Cultural, and Gender Identity in the Russian Language,” in *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*, eds. Helena Goscilo and Andrea Lanoux 31-2 (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

⁴⁶³ Shamilova, “Iznasilovannaia Moskva: Dve tret’ seksual’nykh prestuplenii v stolitse sovershaiut gastarbaitery,” *KP*, 4-5. The article provides no source for its statistical claim. However, its incendiary message struck a chord with extreme nationalist and racist groups in Russia. Following its publication, the article was posted as propaganda on the websites of several organizations, including DPNI, Slavianskii Soiuz, and Soiuz Russkogo Naroda.

article depicts as brutally raping Moscow's female residents. In a text fraught with post-imperial angst, the author mobilizes a symbolic connection between the actual rapes of Muscovite women allegedly committed by the male 'Other,' and the unlawful penetration of the nation's capital by the migrant masses (exclusively imagined as male) from the former brotherly republics, in order to argue for stricter measures to control what is portrayed as a threatening (if economically essential) subaltern immigrant class:⁴⁶⁴

Our wealthy capital ought to be able to protect itself from social ills (*iazvy*), such as the very presence in the capital of these hundreds of thousands of labourers from the periphery of the former USSR who are bearers of an alien culture. But in this city with unlimited possibilities, there is no one who is able to establish any borders. Those who used to come to the capital, because at that time it was the powerful centre of their own county, still persist in coming. They are like the absent-minded man who out of inertia returns to the house which he sold a long time ago - a home which kept him rather well-fed I might add. The strategy of "kick the whole lot of them out in the next 24 hours to only the devil knows where" is no longer going to work. No one is going to give up the resource of cheap labour and none of us are willing to take their places. But a working man must eat, sleep, and satisfy his sexual urges. People aren't worried about what an illegal eats or where or with whom he sleeps. That is, until it affects them. A guest worker is like an invisible man and an invisible man can do anything he pleases. So how can we defend our Muscovite women from this violence?⁴⁶⁵

Articles like this construct powerful boundaries of difference between 'Muscovites' and their 'former younger brothers,' where as the author of this article contends, the current immigration regime and economic necessity cannot. However, such denigrating

⁴⁶⁴ In Moscow's popular press, the subaltern is not only spoken for but imbued with a multitude of nefarious traits. For example, in the following quote from a Moscow criminal investigator published in *AiF-M*, the alleged rape of Muscovite women by non-Slavic guest workers is paternalistically attributed to their educational, cultural, and civilizational 'backwardness' which erupts in a kind of 'subaltern envy' directed against our women: "We need to remember that the guestworkers that are coming to Moscow to do this illegal and heavy labour are poorly educated... Their poverty does not offer them the opportunity to buy a prostitute, and their level of education doesn't enable them to interest a woman in a civilized manner. In addition to this, they can clearly see the difference between their slave-like living conditions and the Moscow luxury." Galina Metelitsa, "Man'iaki: Gastarbaitery – Potentsial'nye Nasil'niki," (Sexual Maniacs: Guest workers are potential rapists), *AiF-M*, August 13, 2003, 6. For a similar articulation see: Egor Sokolov, "Chuzhie migranty ili svoi mladentsy?" (Alien migrants or our little children?), *MK*, August 29, 2008, 4. Whether in the role of the undeservedly wealthy trader or the envious indentured-laborer, the racialized male 'Other' is consistently presented as a sexual threat to Russian women.

⁴⁶⁵ Shamilova, "Iznasilovannaia Moskva: Dve tret' seksual'nykh prestuplenii v stolitse sovershaiut gastarbaitery," *KP*, 4-5.

descriptions only serve to intensify the sense of vulnerability created by the enduring physical presence of these former male compatriots in the Russian capital. Recast as the bearers of an irreconcilable culture and a pervasive sexual threat, the press presents the ‘Caucasian’/‘Central Asian’ male as posing a serious danger to the sanctity of Moscow and all of her mothers and daughters.

Significantly, the press emphasizes the respectability and innocence of ‘our’ female victims allegedly desecrated by the male ‘Other.’ Journalists make concerted efforts to relay to their audience that these women ‘did nothing to provoke an attack’.⁴⁶⁶ Unfortunately, this is not always the typical response that women who have been sexually assaulted in other contexts (say by Russian men) are confronted with in the media and in society as a whole.⁴⁶⁷ However, within the context of the racialized rape narrative, ‘our’ women symbolize the ‘purity’ of the community violated by the male ‘Other’ and must be presented as such. In one representative article, which details the alleged rape of the daughter of a Russian Orthodox priest by an Azeri vendor at the local market, the author makes a point of assuring his readers that the victim was indeed ‘the ideal young Russian woman,’ a Madonna and not a whore:

Of course the idea crossed my mind that the victim might have turned out to be a rather sexually mature vixen, bursting out of her clothing with a difficult to ignore womanly figure and a belly-button piercing. Boy was I wrong. In front of me sat a waif-like, empyreal creation with the eyes of a wounded deer. [She] grew up in a

⁴⁶⁶ For example, in another *KP* article the author makes a point of highlighting the family-mindedness and academic achievements of a rape victim: “Natal’ia, a straight-A student, arrived in Moscow from Vladimir to help see off her mother who was going on a trip overseas. That very evening the 20 year-old girl was supposed to take the train back home. She didn’t even get a chance to take in the sights around the city. Instead, Natasha was kidnapped and brought to a dilapidated make-shift barrack off of Amin’evskii Highway by three illegals from Tajikistan.” Shamilova, “Iznasilovannaia Moskva: Dve tret’ seksual’nykh prestuplenii v stolitse sovershaiut gastarbaitery,” *KP*, 4-5.

⁴⁶⁷ For example see: Lynne Attwood, “‘She was asking for it’: rape and domestic violence against women,” in *Post-Soviet women: from the Baltic to Central Asia*, ed. Mary Buckley, 99-142 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Of course, such misogynistic interpretations of rape are not exclusive to the Russian context.

traditional Christian Orthodox family. At only 15 years of age, she was already finishing up her schooling, two years ahead of the standard program. The way she spoke Russian was remarkably flawless, with a clarity of speech that would make any first-rate linguist jealous.⁴⁶⁸

As this example demonstrates, the story of a 'Russian'/'Muscovite' female rape victim in Moscow's popular press is not just her story. Her very personal pain is publicized and appropriated by the media in its demonization of the male 'Other.' In this article, her youthful innocence and frailty project her as vulnerable, while her modesty, piety, and giftedness characterize her as being worthy of defence. Her image serves as a metaphor for the moral virtue, spiritual purity, and cultural value of the Russian community denigrated by the alien 'Other.' Moreover, her experience of being sexually assaulted is explicitly portrayed through a lens of masculine suffering, shame, and anger. The author contending that: "Our conversation was just as painful for me as it was for the father of such a beautiful young lady. It was as if I was pulling out my own teeth listening to it."⁴⁶⁹

As critical theorist, Julie Mostov, asserts, nationalist discourse denies the specificity of female experience by giving larger symbolic meanings to the signifier of rape; the crime of rape does not acquire meaning until it is committed by a foreign intruder, and is constructed not as a crime against an individual woman, but specifically as a crime against the group to which the victimized woman is assumed to belong.⁴⁷⁰ In the ethno-nationalist discourse of Moscow's popular press, the sexual violence suffered by real woman is symbolically co-opted as a vicious attack on the entire community (imagined as Russia or Moscow). The defilement by the enemy male 'Other,' of what is constructed as a heart-wrenching monolithic grouping of 'our' vulnerable

⁴⁶⁸ Steshin, "Doch' sviashchennika," *KP*, 8-9.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Julie Mostov, "'Our Women'/'Their Women' Symbolic Boundaries, Territorial Markers, and Violence in the Balkans," *Peace & Change* 20, no. 4 (1995): 523-4.

“womenandchildren,”⁴⁷¹ is conceived as a desecration of the national, racial, and patriarchal order, which places the bodies of ‘our’ national women/girls under the control and protection of ‘our’ national men.

However, if Moscow/Russia is personified in such discourse as a woman vulnerable to violation by foreign males, with the actual bodies of Muscovite/Russian women mobilized as symbolic boundary markers in this struggle, then it is Muscovite/Russian men who are often accused in the press of failing to defend the purity of their women/nation/capital. As critical theorist, V. Spike Peterson, contends, the ‘women-as-nation’ metaphor contains an implicit understanding that men who are unable to defend either from assault, have lost their claim to that body and that land.⁴⁷²

The alleged failure of Russian men to protect their women and nation from the violating ‘Other’ is a common feature in the press. Articles, playing on the entrenched trope of ‘Russian masculinity in crisis,’ depict the Russian/Muscovite male as having relinquished his role as the master of his own city/country. “If a guest puts his feet up on the table then the host is to blame,” states one article concerned with the inability of Russian men to prevent the ‘penetration’ of Moscow by Caucasian men.⁴⁷³ “Only the dogs have the courage to raise their voices near the marketplace seized by the people of Caucasian nationality. The local men no longer feel themselves the masters of their

⁴⁷¹ The term, ‘womenandchildren,’ was first coined by feminist and critical theorist, Cynthia Enloe, in a groundbreaking article in *The Village Voice*. In this article she deconstructs the way in which the ‘piteous’ images and ‘heartbreaking’ stories of real Kuwaiti women and children, allegedly raped and victimized by the ‘enemy,’ were constructed as a single helpless entity and co-opted by the masculinist-militaristic project in the call to arms in the Gulf War. Cynthia Enloe, “Womenandchildren: Making Feminist Sense of the Persian Gulf Crisis,” *The Village Voice*, September 25, 1990, 29-32. This construction is also useful in the context of this discussion, in which the media appropriate the real suffering and pain of individual women and children as a collective symbol of national disgrace, which requires the nation’s men to come to their defense and wreak vengeance on the racialized enemy ‘Other,’ constructed as the perpetrators of such offenses.

⁴⁷² V. Spike Peterson, “Gendered nationalism,” *Peace Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 80.

⁴⁷³ Kalinina, “Pokorenie Kavkazom,” MK, 4-5.

neighborhood,” writes *MK* in an article, which depicts the alleged ‘takeover’ of a vegetable market in Moscow by the demonized male ‘Other,’ as particularly threatening to female residents: “Elderly women have long since stopped taking the risk of going for walks with their infant grandchildren in the public square nearby the market” while “the girls living in the dormitory by the market...where the Caucasians prowl without restriction...keep buckets by their bedsides during the night so as to avoid going to the toilets.”⁴⁷⁴

In another illustrative example, the press depicts the feminized city of Moscow as a Mother forsaken by the city’s corrupt officials. Symbolically cast as her cruel and shameless sons, Moscow bureaucrats are depicted as handing over their mother and closest kin (the city and fellow Muscovites) to the alien onslaught (the immigration of non-Slavs into Moscow) for material compensation. This ‘ultimate betrayal’ evokes the ‘ultimate insult’ from the author who questions the very ‘ethnic’ identity of these “rootless” (*bezrodnye*)⁴⁷⁵ traitors:

One would just like to ask the bureaucrats who have so callously handed over Moscow to these vigorous Caucasians who position themselves here as if they were at home, colonizing entire apartment blocks with their countless relatives, and turning our beloved city into something resembling a Southern outpost: ‘Are you not even the slightest bit sorry for her? Are you men so rootless (*bezrodnye*) that you are ready to hand over your very own Mother for quick personal gain?’

⁴⁷⁴ Kileso, “Lokal’naia Voina na Usachyovskom Rynke: Sramnoe Mesto,” *MK*, 8.

⁴⁷⁵ ‘*Bezrodnye*’ literally means ‘without kin/relatives’ in Russian. In Soviet times, the term ‘rootless cosmopolitan’ (*bezrodny kosmopolit*) was widely used as an anti-Semitic slur, particularly against Jewish intellectuals, who were accused of being unpatriotic and marked as lacking ‘Russian’ character. See: Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin’s Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), 494. In the context of this article, this traditionally anti-Semitic epithet takes on an anti-Caucasian tone. Russian scholars, Viktor Shnirel’man and Aleksei Levinson, observe that today’s demonizing depictions of ‘Caucasians’ (the new primary enemy ‘Other’ in society) often closely resemble those which historically have been levelled against Jews in Russia. However, this is not to say that anti-Semitism is no longer a problem in Russian society. See: Shnirel’man, Viktor, “SMI, ‘Etnicheskaya prestupnost’” i Migrantofobiya,” in *Iazik Vrazhdy Protiv Obschestva*, ed. A. Verkhovskii 107-49 (Tsentr Sova: Moscow, 2007) and Aleksei Levinson, “Kavkaz podo mnoiu: Kratkie zametki po formirovaniu i prakticheskomu izpol’zovaniu ‘obraza vraga’ v otnoshenii ‘lits kavkazskoi natsional’nosti,” in *Obraz Vraga*, ed. Lev Gudkov, 276-301 (Moscow: OGI, 2005).

Perhaps, they are not real Muscovites at all and are in fact themselves native sons of the South and Asia. Perhaps it is for this very reason that they cannot comprehend how Moscow ought to be. They don't feel the same way about her as those of us who were born in her [Moscow] and who have lived in her and can feel her. Perhaps this is why they believe as if they have lost nothing and have nothing to grieve about.⁴⁷⁶

In a country/city depicted as having been 'handed over to strangers,' Russian women likewise express anger at the 'failure' of average Russian men to defend their honour and that of the nation. "The downfall of Russia is a direct result of the apathy and treachery of our men," writes a female reader of *KP* whose letter was published in the paper:

How many times have I seen Caucasian men on the street or on public transit behaving themselves in an inappropriate way with our women, and all around Russian men are just standing there and turning their eyes the other way. These hooligans have gotten totally out of control. They now occupy entire regions, knowing full well that they won't meet any opposition. Really, it is only women who are ready to stand up and defend themselves and their children.⁴⁷⁷

The voices of female victims, muted in other contexts, come to the fore in articles denouncing the nation's unsuccessful protectors. "These Caucasians cross over permissible boundaries when they see that our men will not punish them for doing so. They do not respect us and they are not afraid of us," asserts one "Russian woman" in an article which graphically details how she was allegedly kidnapped, beaten, raped, and held in indentured slavery by two Azeri men in "her native Russian town."⁴⁷⁸ While this article constructs a particularly inflammatory image of the male 'Other,' it is critically combined with a scathing attack on 'the Russian man' who allows such depravity to persist with impunity. "We have stopped being the masters of our own cities," decries the

⁴⁷⁶ Kalinina, "Pokorenie Kavkazom," *MK*, 4-5.

⁴⁷⁷ Galina Sapozhnikova, "Budut li russkie chtit' Koran i est' ris palochkami?" (Readers' responses) *KP*, July 23, 2003, 6-7. Similarly contemptuous and anxious articulations were contained in other women's correspondence sent into *KP* in response to Sapozhnikova's series of provocative articles.

⁴⁷⁸ Ekaterina Sazhneva, "Liubov' v tsepiakh: Russkikh nevest kavkaztsy strigut nalyso, chtoby potom otravit' v rabstvo," (Love in shackles: The Russian brides of Caucasians are shaved bald before being forced into slavery), *MK*, August 12, 2005, 3.

MK journalist, “No brave hunter came to rescue this Red Riding Hood (*Krasnaia Shapochka*) from the cruel gray wolf.”⁴⁷⁹ Instead, the article laments how the victim’s Russian boyfriend, and “would-be saviour...never comes to her rescue.”⁴⁸⁰

In other articles, the critique of the Russian male is focused on his ‘fecklessness,’ and his ‘demoralized’ and ‘emasculated’ state. In the following graphic example, which correspondingly plays on racializing stereotypes of the ‘Other,’ the press portrays the Russian male as utterly incapable of defending himself, let alone the nation’s women, from the irrepressible sadistic and bestial sexual appetite of the morally-depraved, criminal male ‘Other.’ While such gratuitous representations serve to forcefully denigrate the ‘Southern male,’ they are equally damning in their depiction of the masculinity of the ‘Russian man,’ overpowered by the degenerate ‘Other’ in his own home. After having a few too many drinks, a Russian ‘host’ and his Dagestani ‘guest’ get into an argument at the Russian man’s apartment with horrific consequences:

In the fight the Dagestani proved to be stronger. Feeling his sense of superiority he pushed his Russian friend to the floor and raped him! Well perhaps it was an unexpected realization of his love for this man? Or perhaps this Southerner was recalling his prison habits? Savagery! The victim was totally demoralized. The lustful scoundrel then finished his friend off with a hammer and a saw. But of course that was not enough for him. The sadist then ran out into the street and jumped onto a woman passing by. The women screamed and ran to the police... who finally restrained (*obuzdali* i.e. bridled) the sexual maniac.⁴⁸¹

The perceived powerlessness of the emasculated Russian man to defend his women/nation/honour from the threatening male ‘Other’ emerges as a consistent feature

⁴⁷⁹ The Russian victim is likened to the heroine of the famous fairytale in the article because her captors, in their efforts to humiliate her and strip her of her femininity, are said to have shaved off all of her long brown hair and placed a red cap on her head: “A woman means absolutely nothing to us. You should know that we are going to rape you and then we will sell you into slavery, you Russian bitch!” cried Katerina’s crazed Azeri captors as they slashed off her long hair, adorning her shaved head with a dirty red cap.”

Sazhneva, “Liubov’ v tsepiakh,” *MK*, 3.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸¹ “Potseluy Smerti,” (The Kiss of Death), *MK*, January 24, 1998, 8.

in the press' anxiety-ridden nationalistic discourse and is conveyed to the public in various and often non-conventional forms. In the following example (which appeared in a 1993 edition of *MK* amidst calls to tighten restrictions on the entry and residency rights of 'non-Muscovites' and in particular non-Slavs in the capital), the author employs the *chastushka*, a popular literary genre in Russian folk and joke culture somewhat akin to the limerick in English, in his discussion of the threat posed by the ethnic male 'Other' to women in the capital and the feminized city of Moscow itself.⁴⁸²

The author is highly critical of his 'own' people. In the piece, the men and women of Moscow, weakened and demoralized by the collapse of the Soviet empire and the tumultuous transition which ensued, are left vulnerable to humiliation and desecration at the hands of the enemy 'Other.' The nation's men – represented by the drunken father, who behind a guise of hospitality and gullibility is willing to hand over his dearest kin to the highest bidder – are presented as having lost all sense of honour. The nation's women, symbolic of the city of Moscow herself – illustrated by the disheveled daughter who is afflicted by the same 'disease' as her father – have been abandoned by their men and are left as easy prey for the threatening male 'Other.' In this particular expression, a prosperous Korean trader plays the role of the foreign enemy, but the author's venomous remarks are clearly directed at all "Eastern" and visibly different "guests of the capital." Critically, *MK* presents violent retribution against the 'Non-Slavic Other' as a solution to the Russian man's sense of failure.

⁴⁸² Andrei Dobrynin, "Satira i Iumor: K Vvedeniiu Vizovogo Rezhima v Moskve," (Satire and Humour: On the Introduction of a Visa Regime in Moscow), *MK*, April 3, 1993, 4.

To the Introduction of a Visa Regime in Moscow¹

Andrei Dobrynin

[1] A Korean selling onions at the market quietly said to me: "You me find girl good"² and he showed me thirty rubles.

[2] I rushed home without haste, wanting to help out the Korean, and told my little girl, who was groaning from a hangover: "Upsy-daisy, daughter.

[3] A wealthy trader would like to help you with your hangover,³ so give it a try, my dearest⁴ to come to love him at least a little.

[4] So what if he has a bit of a crooked snout, - Just brush those sorts of trifles away, he seems to be a good enough guy, a smiley sort of fellow."

[5] I brought the Korean back to our apartment, and out of modesty left for the pub. But when I came back home again, the Korean was nowhere to be found.

[6] My little daughter was drunk and snoring, with flies crawling all over her. On the side table in a puddle of port wine, I spotted the thirty roubles.

[7] I thought it was a deposit, but he decided that that was the price for thoroughly enjoying himself with a virgin body. Those measly kopeks were the payment in sum.

[8] I couldn't sleep the whole night, brooding over the insult in the ominous dark. But in the morning I spotted the covetous Korean in the vegetable aisle.

K Vvedeniiu Vizovogo Rezhima v Moskve

Andrei Dobrynin

[1] *Koreets, torguiushchii lukom, Na rynke mne tikho skazal: "Naidi mne khoroshii devchonka", I tridsat' rublei pokazal.*

[2] *Domoi Ia otpravilsia tut zhe, Zhelaia koreetsu pomoch', I dochke, kriakhtiashchei s pokhmel'ia, Skazal: "Podnimaisia-ka, Doch'.*

[3] *Zhelaet bogatyi trgovets Khvorobe tvoei posobit', Tak ty postaraisia, rodnaia, Malen'ko ego poliubit'*

[4] *A to, chto on chut' kosorylyi, - Makhni ty na eto rukoi, On paren'-to vrode khoroshii, Ulybchivyi paren' takoi."*

[5] *Privel Ia koreitsa v kvartiru I skromno v pivnuiu ushel, Kogda zhe vernul'sia obratno, Koreitsa uzhe ne nashel.*

[6] *Upivshis', khrapela, dochurka, I polzali mukhi po nei; Na stolike v luzhe portveina Uvidel Ia tridsat' rublei.*

[7] *Ia dumal, chto eto zadatok, A on rassudul, chto tsena, Nateshivshis' devich'im telom Za eti kopeiki spolna.*

[8] *Vsiu noch' Ia ne spal i obidu Leleial vo mrake nochnom, A utrom skupogo koreitsa Uvidel v riadu ovoshchnom.*

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>[9] I could feel the hatred choke up in my throat and I barely managed to squeak out: “You want to stamp on a Father’s pride for a measly thirty roubles?!”</p> <p>[10] Who gave you the right to consider us less than people? To defile⁵ my little girl For a paltry thirty roubles?!</p> <p>[11] There’s no need to smile, bitch, your disgusting little smirk.” But he kept on grinning – and, my friends, I just couldn’t hold myself back.</p> <p>[12] I gathered up the last dregs of my broken-hearted strength and for a long while dragged the face of this Eastern guest along the pavement.</p> <p>[13] Let these guests come⁶ to the capital -They will be greeted warmly here. But, unfortunately, they all too often, conduct themselves in reproachful manner.</p> <p>[14] We will show understanding, and try to find a common language. But in the case of similar actions, we will wipe it out at the source.</p> | <p>[9] <i>Mne nenavist’ gorlo sdavila, Ia ele sumel prosheptat’: “Ty khochesh’ za tridsat’ tselkovykh Ottsovskie chuvstva toptat’?!“</i></p> <p>[10] <i>Kto dal tebe pravo tokoe, Chtob nas ne schitat’ za liudei, Chtob dochku moiui tarakanit’ Za tridsat’ nichtozhnykh rublei?!</i></p> <p>[11] <i>I nechego lybit’sia, suka, Protivna ulybka tvoia.” No on prodolzhal ulybat’sia – I ia ne sderzhalsia, druz’ia.</i></p> <p>[12] <i>Sobral Ia poslednie krokhi Nadorvannykh starcheskikh sil I dolgo vostochnogo gostia Litsom po asfal’tu vozil.</i></p> <p>[13] <i>Pust’ gosti stremiatsia v stolitsu – Ikh primut privetlivo tut, No chasto oni, k sozhalen’iu, Sebia nedostoino vedut.</i></p> <p>[14] <i>My budem vykazyvat’ chutkost’, Yazyk s nimi obshchii iskat’, No fakty podobnykh postupkov My budem i vpred’ presekat’.</i></p> |
| <p>1. I have translated the piece without attempting to preserve the meter or rhyme of the original in order to better convey the literal meaning of the text.</p> <p>2. The distorted Russian is intentional and is a common rhetorical device employed in the press to stress the utter ‘foreignness’ of the speaker, their inability to integrate into ‘our’ society, as well as to disparage their intelligence.</p> <p>3. Here there is a second meaning, equivalent to ‘disease’ i.e. her (and the nation’s) sickness is alcoholism. The word ‘<i>khvoroba</i>’ is an archaic form of the word for disease, ailment, illness, but it and its derivatives have come back into use, particularly in the context of so-called social illness and the disease of alcoholism. For example, the verb <i>khvorat’/zakhvorat’</i> is contemporary slang for ‘suffering the effects of a hangover.’</p> <p>4. Here the use of the term ‘<i>rodnaia</i>,’ with connotations of kinship, homeland, one of our own, as opposed to an equivalent such a ‘<i>doragaia</i>’ (dear), underscores the author’s intent to imbue the image of daughter with the symbolism of the nation.</p> <p>5. In Russian, the verb, <i>tarakanit’</i> is a crude way of conveying ‘to have sex with.’ It is derived from the root word ‘<i>tarakan</i>’ or cockroach, which is also used as a slur in Russian for men of colour.</p> <p>6. The verb ‘<i>stremiat’sia</i>’ also conveys the meaning of ‘to aspire to, to come with a goal or a dream in mind,’ which asserts the excentionality and desirability of the capital. a community worthy of defense.</p> | |

The author of this *chastushka* makes his point disturbingly clear: To salvage his sense of masculine self-worth and regain his 'rightful' role as master of his homeland and womenfolk, the injured and deflated 'Russian male' must be ready to use decisive force to punish the 'non-Slavic guest' for his insolent transgressions. As feminist writer, Cynthia Enloe, contends, "nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope, [with] anger at being 'emasculated'...the natural fuel for igniting nationalist movements."⁴⁸³ In Moscow's popular press, the 'rape' of 'our' women/nation/city by the violating 'Other' is expressed as a loss of masculinity for the nation's men, depicted as failing in their role as defenders of national honour. Ominously, in articles like this, the press presents violent retribution against the 'Other' as an expected and accepted means of masculine redemption.

Sensationalist media coverage of cases, such as the rape and murder of fifteen year-old Ana Beshnova in October 2008, is often followed by violent retributions against non-Slavic minorities in the city. The young Muscovite girl's tragic death aroused massive public outrage when the media reported that police had arrested and charged an Uzbek guest worker with the crime. The on-line forums of *KP*, *MK*, and *AiF-M* were filled with the racially-inflammatory commentary of incensed readers.⁴⁸⁴ Moscow's popular press was inundated for weeks with graphic articles on the girl's final hours, expressing moral outrage at the monstrosity of the crime and fanning the flames of ethnic discord in the process.

In direct violation of investigative procedure, as well as the suspect's right to a fair trial, *KP* was invited to join investigators when the accused was taken back to the

⁴⁸³ Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 45.

⁴⁸⁴ For but one example from *KP* see: <http://www.kp.ru/daily/forum/article/395637//>

scene of the crime for a reenactment of events. Details from the accused man's confession, pictures of him guiding police around the crime scene, images of Ana's grieving mother, and a highly emotive and inappropriate photograph of the young girl's body lying under a black tarp with one of her lifeless arms left uncovered, were printed as an exclusive in the paper, while a video of the proceedings was posted by *KP* on its website (See Figures 15, 16, 17). Newspaper accounts focused on the utter barbarity of the crime and the 'Asian's' alleged lack of remorse:

The Uzbek street cleaner (*dvornik*) raped the poor young girl throughout the entire night. Having pummeled her with powerful blows to the kidneys, she was unable to fend him off. According to the monster himself, during the entire time Ania⁴⁸⁵ quietly whimpered: "Mommy, help me!" After all, the building where she and her mother lived was not more than a hundred meters away. 'I let her go just as it was getting light out,' admitted the rapist. 'She had difficulty getting up. She zipped up her jeans, and then started to yell that she was going to tell her mother everything, that she would write up a report with the police. That was when I threw her back down to the ground and I started to beat her again.' The scumbag then decided to do away with Ana once and for all. He strangled her with the sleeves of her own sweater. Satisfied that Ana had stopped breathing, the Asian guest worker just walked away and went to sleep in the building next door.⁴⁸⁶

After the media hailstorm so graphically 'ethnicized' the tragedy, Ana was transformed into a martyr by Russian ultranationalists, the most violent of which promised to avenge her death.⁴⁸⁷ Skinheads swarmed the area where she was killed, plastering buildings and lamp posts with their slogans and symbols. Extremist groups organized a rally outside of Beshnova's home, proclaiming "Ana [as] a symbol of contemporary Russia and Moscow, raped and murdered by aliens (*chuzhaki*) every

⁴⁸⁵ Ania is a diminutive form of the name Ana in Russian.

⁴⁸⁶ Aleksandr Boiko, "Pered Smert'iu Ania Beshnova krichala: 'Momochka, pomogi!'," (Before dying Ania Beshnova was crying out 'Mommy, help me!'), *KP*, October 27, 2008, 4-5.

⁴⁸⁷ Svetlana Osadchuk, "Migrants flee Moscow District after Sex Killing," *The Saint Petersburg Times*, November 21, 2008, available at http://www.sptimes.ru/index.php?action_id=2&story_id=27661.

day.”⁴⁸⁸ The 2008 ‘Russian March,’ a demonstration held by ethnic Russian nationalist groups in various cities across Russia every November 4th on the Day of National Unity, was dedicated to Beshnova’s memory.⁴⁸⁹ Racially-motivated attacks against Central Asians and other visible minority groups in the capital began to climb dramatically in the months following Beshnova’s death.⁴⁹⁰ In one particularly horrific assault, the severed head of a murdered Tajik migrant was dumped in a garbage can outside of the Mozhaisk District administration building, located just meters from the scene of the young girl’s murder. A previously unknown group, calling itself the Militant Organization of Russian Nationalists, later claimed responsibility for the attack in an email, which included a photo of the victim’s decapitated head as proof.⁴⁹¹ In the letter, the group makes specific reference to the attack on the “occupier from Central Asia” as a demonstration of their resolve to fight against the “Caucasians and Asians who rape Russian children and

⁴⁸⁸ “Russkii Marsh budet posviashchen Ane Beshnovoi,” APN, October 30, 2008, available at <http://www.apn-spb.ru/opinions/article4195.htm>

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.* The Day of National Unity was enacted as an official holiday by then President Putin in 2005 in commemoration of the popular uprising which expelled the Polish-Lithuanian occupation force from Moscow in November 1612 during the Time of Troubles. However, the holiday has largely been overshadowed by the activities of extremist nationalist groups. Ana’s tragic death continues to be exploited by racist groups in Russia. DPNI recently erected a memorial to her at the scene of the crime and has called for the street on which she lived to be renamed in her memory and a national holiday to be instituted in her honour. See: “Aggressive Manifestations of Xenophobia in the RF from January to October 15, 2009,” Moscow Bureau on Human Rights, October 23, 2009 available at <http://antirasizm.ru/index.php/mbhr-chronicle>.

⁴⁹⁰ See: Khairbek Almakaev, “Na zapade stolytsy ubit turkmen: skikhedy mstiat za Aniu Beshnovu? Vchera vecherom v Moskve soversheno neskol’ko napadenii na priezzhikh,” (A Turkmen killed in the West of the capital: Are skinheads taking revenge for Ania Beshnova? Yesterday evening in Moscow there were several attacks on migrants), KP, November 5, 2008, 3; “Natsionalisty otrezali tadhiku golovu , soobshchiv, chto sleduiushchim budet chinovnik,” (Nationalists Cut-off the Head of a Tajik Man, Warning that the Next [Victim] will be a Bureaucrat), AiF, December 12, 2008, 3; and Michael Schwirtz, “Migrant Worker Decapitated in Russia,” New York Times, December 13, 2008, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/13/world/europe/13russia.html>.

⁴⁹¹ Aleksandr Boiko, “Na meste gibeli devochki nashli golovu ubitogo migranta,” (The head of a murdered migrant found at the murder site of young girl), KP, December 12, 2008, 3. In English see: “Tajik alarm after Moscow murder,” BBC Online, December 12, 2008, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7780468.stm>

women, rob and kill our peaceful people.”⁴⁹² The fall-out from the sensationalist and ethnically-pointed coverage of the Beshnova murder demonstrates the power of the press to exacerbate ethnic intolerance and aggravate racial violence in Russian society.

Even after this vicious attack, the popular press continued to publish incendiary articles collectively depicting ‘Central Asians’ and other non-Slavic migrants as potential rapists. The following example from *KP*, in which an investigative reporter spends three days living with a group of Central Asian migrants working in Moscow as street cleaners, appears to be deliberately designed to revive public outrage and fan xenophobic sentiment surrounding the Beshnova tragedy. Instead of taking the opportunity to give an authentic voice to individuals from a group that has all too often been demonized, marginalized, and exploited in society, the author chooses to appropriate ‘their voices’ to perpetuate the same dangerous and racializing stereotypes seen elsewhere in the media. Recounting how the men would relax after a long day at work, the journalist writes:

At nine in the evening the Tajik street cleaners, Dzhamal and Aziz, called me over to take a break with them. We each bought a bottle of beer for ourselves and headed over to the outdoor ice rink.

-“Look at those gurls!” said Aziz smacking his lips, as he began to devour the two little girls with his eyes.

- “And where are your women?” I asked

- “At home. In our homeland.” Dzahamal said, sadly shaking his head...

But I don’t want to sympathize with these poor devils living in Moscow without womanly attention. I still can’t get out of my mind the way they were staring at those young girls with their greedy eyes. The memory of the 15 year-old Muscovite girl, Ania Beshnova, who was raped and killed by an Uzbek street

⁴⁹² The letter was later published online and can be still accessed at the following address:
<http://news.nswap.info/?p=15004>

cleaner, is still far too fresh... 70 percent of all rapes in Moscow are committed by migrants.⁴⁹³

The publication of such material not only provides fodder for the propaganda machine of extremist groups (See Figure 12), but also legitimizes racialized thinking in the mainstream.

However, organized racist groups are not the only ones who are involved in such brutal attacks against ethnic minorities.⁴⁹⁴ In 2008, Aleksandr Kuznetsov beat to death a Central Asian student, whom he claims he caught in the act of trying to sexually assault his eight year-old stepson. The media rallied the public behind the vigilante father, labeling him as a national hero.⁴⁹⁵ Kuznetsov, who turned out to have a rather lengthy criminal record, received a reduced sentence of two and a half years opposed to the minimum of five that the prosecutor had requested. Meanwhile, the family and friends of the young man who was killed by Kuznetsov insist that they still do not believe that there

⁴⁹³ Rinat Nizamov, "Kak Ia rabotal dvornikom v Moskve," (How I worked as a street cleaner in Moscow), *KP*, February 20, 2009, 4-5.

⁴⁹⁴ Although, according to both Russian and Western scholars who have conducted research on Russia's racist and skinhead movements, the threat of 'non-Russian men,' and in particular, so-called 'blacks,' to the purity of Russian/Slavic women is a critical component of their ideology and propaganda, and a commonly cited justification for violence against minority groups. For example see: S.V. Belikov, *Skinkhedy v Rossii*, (Moscow: Akademia, 2005), 50-3; Gromov, 146-47; and Hilary Pilkington, "Farewell to the *Tusovka*: Masculinities and femininities on the Moscow youth scene, in *Gender, Generation and Identity in Contemporary Russia*, ed. H. Pilkington, 253 (London, Routledge, 1996). Articles which depict attacks or incitements to attack men from the Caucasus and Central Asia by self-proclaimed racists on the grounds that they pose a sexual threat to Russian women are also seen in the press. For example see: Viktoriia Zav'ialova, "Zachem vy, devochki, natsistov liubite?" (Why do you young girls love Nazis?) *AiF-M*, March 8, 2000, 3; Svetlana Meteleva, "Neobyknovennyi Fashizm," (Not your average fascism), *MK*, April 23, 2002, 3; Ol'ga Demidova, "V bande tol'ko devochki," (There were only girls in the gang), *MK*, October 8, 2002, 1; Sergei Fekliunin, "Skinkhedy otvetiat za bazaar," (Skinheads will take care of the bazaar), *MK*, April 29, 2008, 3.

⁴⁹⁵ For example: Irina Brykina, "Otets zabil pedofila do smerti, spasaia synishku," (Father beats pedophile to death to save his young son), *KP*, January 29, 2008, 4; Kristina Vazhenina, "Otnimite u man'iaka nadezhdu! Na sniskhozhdenie i tem bole – na pomilovanie," (Take away a sexual maniac's hope for leniency or even worse sweeping it under the rug with the help of bribes), *AiF*, February 6, 2008, 14; Irina Molchanova, "Ubiitsa pedofila budet sidet'," (Pedophile-killer will be sent to prison), *MK*, November 8, 2008, 1. Even the anchorman for *Vremia*, the nightly news program on First Channel and the nation's most watched television program supported Kuznetsov's actions and asked the nation's viewers to think of themselves as parents and honestly consider if they wouldn't have done the exact same thing if they were in the position of the young boy's stepfather. *Voskresnoe Vremia*" *First Channel*, February 3, 2008.

ever was an attempted sexual assault, convinced that it was a convenient cover for what was really a racially-motivated attack.⁴⁹⁶

In other articles, the press directly condones ethnically-targeted violence as the natural and necessary response to the ‘enemy’s’ presumed disrespect of ‘our’ women.⁴⁹⁷ While the press disparages and emasculates Russian men who fail to protect the nation’s women, those who exercise decisive force against the alleged violating male ‘Other’ are extolled as ‘real men,’ unafraid of restoring the ‘proper’ balance of power in the nation’s gendered and racialized relations. In one such articulation, *KP* describes how an “average Russian man,” driven to the edge by the alleged rape of his wife by an Azeri man, goes on an indiscriminate shooting spree at the local market to exact revenge and reclaim his sense of masculine pride. The article is written primarily from the perspective of the husband, who was too busy working to protect his wife, and is driven mad by the shame of what happened in his absence:

His name is Dima.⁴⁹⁸ He and his wife have a wonderful marriage, with two children and a peaceful life. But one day he has to go out of town on business and she is returning home late from her mother’s birthday celebrations by herself. The walk home from the bus stop should have been nothing at all, but then she heard footsteps behind her and turned to see a Southern-looking man pulling a knife out of his pocket. And so she goes, as if under hypnosis, into some filthy entranceway, where he does his dirty deed, at the same time as removing her gold jewelry. Having heard about what happened, Dima cannot sleep for two whole days, and then he decides to take action.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁶ Irina Brykina, “Aleksandr Kuznetsova, ubivshego pedofila, posadili na dva s polovinoi goda,” (Aleksandr Kuznetsov, who killed the pedophile, was sentenced to two and a half years), *KP*, November 7, 2008, 3.

⁴⁹⁷ For some other illustrative examples see: “Pedofil zamani 6-letnuiu devochku plovom,” (A pedophile lures in 6 year-old girl with plov), *MK*, August 9, 2004, 1; “Krovopolitie na diskoteke” (Bloodbath at the discothèque), *MK*, July 10, 1993, 1; “Militsioner dazhe na pliazhe vstupil v boi s kavkaztsami,” (Even at the beach a police officer steps into a battle with Caucasians), *MK*, August 2, 2006, 1.

⁴⁹⁸ Dima is the diminutive form of the name Dmitry in Russian.

⁴⁹⁹ Sapozhnikova, “Budut li russkie chtit’ Koran i est’ ris palochkami?” *KP*, August 7, 2003, 4-5.

Critically, the article contends that this is not just the story of one Russian woman and man, but rather symbolic of the story of the entire nation under siege by the enemy male 'Other,' or what the article terms "the flood of yellows and blacks."⁵⁰⁰ "Here we see the root cause of nationalism in our country," the author writes.⁵⁰¹ If 'we' are so intolerant of 'them,' then this article contends it is a direct result of 'their' insolent criminal behaviour. Believing it impossible to find justice through conventional channels, Dmitry decides to take matters into his own hands. The author describes how on February 23 or Day of the Defenders of the Fatherland, a major holiday in Russia dedicated to the honour of men who serve their nation, Dmitry takes his gun down to the local market and opens fire on random 'Caucasians,' who as a result of their presumed ethnic background he deems complicit in the rape of his and other Russian men's wives:

He injured two Azeris and killed another one. In prison they jokingly christened him 'the poacher' or the man who got caught hunting without a license. But his actions were deemed justified by all, even by the prison warden and guards. Of the 8 years he received as a sentence, he only ended up serving 4.⁵⁰²

Dmitry feels no remorse for his actions, the author notes.⁵⁰³ More importantly however, there is no criticism of his actions by *KP* and absolutely no mention of those injured and killed at the market as being the innocent victims of one man's misplaced and racially-targeted rage. On the contrary, the article's author contends that the ends justified the means, reminding her readers that: "ever since that event, the number of rapes committed in the town where Dima lives have declined dramatically."⁵⁰⁴ In this way, the tragic story of one woman's rape, avenged through the violent actions of her husband,

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

who is transformed by the press into an admirable defender of the Fatherland and the women under its protection, is read by millions and becomes the story of the nation. It is a story of 'their' sexual deviance against 'us'; a story of 'our' justified punishment of 'them'; a story of the 'Russian host' taking back his home from the 'Southern guest'; a story of masculinity regained by recourse to indiscriminate racial violence, masked as a natural reaction and a legitimate form of national defense.

The Moscow popular press' sexual demonization of the male 'Other' is a critical mechanism by which the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are constructed, maintained, and defended. By participating in the manufacture of a fallacious moral panic alleging the rape of the nation's women by the racialized male 'Other,' Moscow's popular media are implicated in encouraging ethnic intolerance in society. By framing this 'panic' as a direct challenge to Russian men and their duty as the protectors of Russian womanhood, Moscow's popular media are complicit in the incitement and legitimization of racially-targeted violence.

Figure 11.



Caption reads: "He said that he's your official dealer!"

The vulnerability of Russian women (whether coerced or consensual) to the 'hypersexuality' of the 'Caucasian' male 'Other' is a powerful trope in the media's racializing discourse and plays a critical role in mediating the anxiety felt by 'Russian men' struggling with the post-Soviet transition.

Source: *Argumenty i Fakty- Moskva*, February 14, 1996, 16.

Figure12.



Slavic Union Propaganda Poster entitled “Migrants equal Violence/Rape.”

This image was posted on the group’s website under the heading “Panic: 70% of rapes in Moscow are committed by migrants!” The poster was likewise accompanied by articles taken from the mainstream press, including articles from *KP*, which suggest that immigrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia are responsible for the majority of rapes in Moscow.

Source: Slavic Union Website (<http://www.demushkin.com>).

Figure 13.

- Сынка-то в России на десять лет посадили! За изнасилование!
- Настоящего батыра вырастили, мать!



DPNI Propaganda Poster entitled “The Immigrant’s Parents.”

Dialogue Reads:

- They’re putting our dear son away for a ten year sentence! For rape!
- You’ve sure raised a real Batyr (i.e. an honourable title, coming from the name of a renowned warrior in Turkish and Mongol folklore), mother!

Source: Main DPNI Website (<http://www.dpni.org>)

Figure 14.



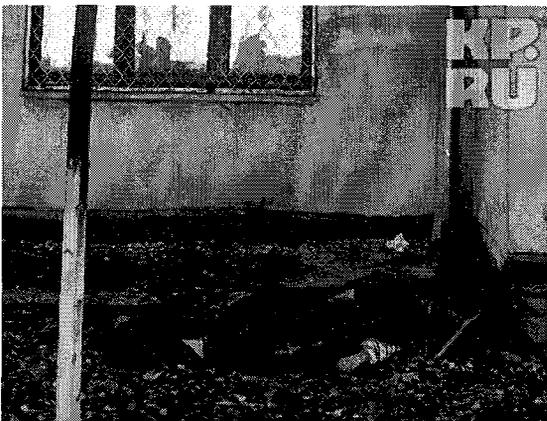
DPNI Propaganda Poster entitled "The Immigrant-Pedophile"

Pedophilia does not have a nationality (i.e. ethnicity).
Pedophiles do [have an ethnicity].

80% of rapes of children are committed by immigrants: people coming from the
Caucasus and Central Asia.

Source: Main DPNI Website (<http://www.dpni.org>)

Figures 15, 16, and 17.



The media's sensationalist and ethnically-pointed coverage of the rape and murder of Ana Beshnova was followed by an upsurge in violent hate crimes against visible ethnic minorities in Moscow. Ultra-nationalist groups transformed the young girl into a martyr for their cause, while the online-forums of papers such as *KP*, *AiF*, and *MK* were flooded by the racially-inflammatory commentary of enraged readers. Such events demonstrate the power of the press to provoke racial intolerance in Russian society.

These photos were published in a *KP* exclusive, in which the paper's reporters were invited to join investigators while the accused was taken back to the scene of the crime for a re-enactment of events.

Source: Aleksandr Boiko, "Pered Smert'iu Ania Beshnova krichala: 'Momochka, pomogi!'" (Before dying Ania Beshnova was crying out 'Mommy, help me!'), *KP*, October 27, 2008, 4-5.

Conclusion.

The Moscow popular press is playing a critical role in the rise of ethnophobia and ethnic Russian nationalism in contemporary Russian society. The injurious images and discriminatory discourses produced in the nation's most widely read papers not only reflect intolerant and ethnocentric sentiment and practices in society, but also help to (re)produce and legitimize them. Specifically, this work has examined how the capital's press mobilizes familial, gendered, and sexualized tropes in its increasingly Slavocentric reimagination of the post-Soviet nation and in its exclusion and racialization of the non-Slavic 'Other'.

The first chapter demonstrated that the realm of women's reproduction has become a major focus of the press' ethnoparticularistic reconceptualization of the post-Soviet body politic and denigration of the 'Other'. Soviet-era concerns with declining birthrates and the perceived reluctance of the nation's women to perform their 'natural' role as mothers have acquired a catastrophic tone and new racialized meaning in the discourse of the post-Soviet press. The media explicitly construct Russian and other Slavic women as the chosen mothers of the nation and urge them to bear and rear more children for the sake of their people. The nation's press disparages those women who refuse to fulfill their maternal obligations, presenting them as being unwomanly, corrupted by Western values, and complicit in the extinction of the ethnocentrically-imagined Russian nation.

The media explicitly fault Slavic women's 'failure' to adequately reproduce the nation, as leaving 'historic Russian lands' vulnerable to what it constructs as a 'flood' of 'culturally incompatible' and 'overly-fertile' non-Slavic immigrants from the South and

East. Such ethnophobic discourse is likewise reflected in Moscow popular press' misrepresentation of the non-Slavic female 'Other,' including racialized female immigrants and citizens of the Russian Federation, whose maternity it maligns and whose 'excessive' fertility it constructs as posing an ethnodemographic, cultural, and economic threat to the Russian nation and its capital. The press' discourse of stratified reproduction, which simultaneously encourages, valorizes, and appropriates the 'motherwork' of Slavic women as a national resource, while discouraging, demonizing, and disavowing that of the '(M)Other,' is intimately linked to the construction and maintenance of racialized boundaries of national belonging and exclusion.

The capital's popular press likewise excludes 'her' children from membership in the imagined community. Articles emphasize the utter incompatibility of 'our' and 'their' culture, values, and beliefs, stressing the near impossibility of successfully integrating 'their' young people into 'Russian' or 'Moscow' society. Renouncing a history which once united the diverse peoples of the former Soviet Union, while drawing divisive and one-sided lessons from 'Europe's trouble' with the 'children of immigrants,' Moscow's popular press presents the public with an image of 'Caucasian,' 'Central Asian,' and 'Muslim' children (whom it presumes, often incorrectly, to be the children of migrants) as virtually unassimilable, aggressive, and a threat to the privileged position of the Slavic majority. The prevalence of such discourse in the nation's most popular papers dangerously serves to 'rationalize' 'their' marginalized position in society and 'legitimize' societal intolerance and discrimination toward 'them.'

The second chapter examined the press' reconceptualization of the role of mixed marriages in post-Soviet Russian society as a potent expression of its ethnocentric and

anxiety-ridden reimagination of the Russian nation. Contemporary media representations and societal views on interethnic unions have undergone a significant transformation since the collapse of the Soviet Union. If during the Soviet period official policy supported such relationships as a vehicle for merging the nation's various ethnic groups, then today the increase in marriages between ethnic Russian women and non-Slavic men, from the former Caucasian and Central Asian republics, is conversely depicted in the popular press as posing significant dangers to the Russian people. The frequency with which the media discuss the 'problem' of intimacy and wedlock across ethnicized frontiers, as well as the growing concern over the demographic, cultural, and eugenic effects of such relationships for ethnic Russians as a group, are emblematic of a polarization of Russian society along racialized lines.

The popular press' anxious preoccupation with mixed marriages also reflects unease about the standing of the ethnic Russian male in the nation. Soviet-era concerns with the 'demoralized state' of the nation's men have assumed a hyperbolic and overtly ethnocentric tenor in the discourse of the contemporary press, with an increase in marriages between Russian women and non-Slavic males interpreted as a definitive sign of the failure of the 'Russian man' in the eyes of the nation's Slavic women. The construction of the male 'Other' as the bearer of a competing masculinity to the enfeebled 'Russian man' is a provocative theme in the press' discourse on mixed marriage: one which is closely connected to the belief that Russian men are losing their patriarchal claim over 'Russian womanhood' to the 'unwelcome guests from the South,' unsettling the gendered and racialized hierarchy of the nation, which sees the 'Russian man' as the master of his woman, family, city, and nation. However, degrading representations of the

male 'Other' lie close to the surface in the media's discourse on interethnic marriages, which privileges relationships between 'Russian men' and 'Russian women' and demeans the idea of successful unions between 'our' women and 'their' men.

The third and final chapter centered on the popular press' discursive deconstruction of the male 'Other,' as a triumphant foil to the deflated 'Russian man,' through the dissemination of articles which conversely mythologize him as a pervasive sexual threat to and rapist of the nation's women. The media's sexualized denigration of the 'Caucasian/Asian' male was shown to be a powerful mechanism for constructing, conflictualizing, and racializing the boundaries between 'us' and 'them.' Articles forge fallacious and pernicious links between their 'culture' and 'inappropriate,' 'immoral,' and 'criminal' behavior toward 'our' women. The press' persistent publication of graphic and ethnically-pointed 'news' accounts, alleging 'their' sexual assault of 'our' women, dangerously serves to construct associations in the public domain between their 'ethnicity' and the propensity to rape. In its racialization of the male 'Other' as 'the rapist of our women/nation,' the press appropriates the alleged sexual assaults of Russian women as symbols of masculine/national honour defiled by the enemy 'Other.' The press lambasts the 'Russian male' for failing in his role as protector of the sanctity of Russian womanhood and the boundaries of the ethnocentrically imagined community, goading him to take decisive and even violent action against the enemy 'Other' for his alleged transgressions. The circulation of such prejudicial and inflammatory material in the nation's popular press fuels the anger and ethnic intolerance of readers, as well as the hateful propaganda of racist organizations.

Such discriminatory discourses do not confine themselves to the printed page. A clear line of distinction cannot be drawn between the demeaning and antagonistic representations of ethnic 'Others' circulated in the popular media and the ethnic intolerance which increasingly pervades mainstream Russian society. One cannot easily decouple the symbolic violence embedded in the racializing articles of the nation's press from the racial violence erupting in cities and towns across the Russian Federation. These types of media representations serve to damage and conflictualize existing relations between the multiethnic and multiconfessional peoples of the Russian nation, to legitimize the exclusion and exploitation of visibly non-Slavic minorities living and working in the Russian Federation, and to severely complicate the ability of the nation to form an effective immigration strategy which could attract and integrate existing and future immigrants and their children into Russian society.

This study has provided a detailed analysis of, and drawn much needed attention to, the role of the Moscow popular press in the production of damaging discriminatory and ethnocentric discourses, in its exclusivist renegotiation of the post-Soviet boundaries of national belonging. Further research in this area could serve to provide an even greater understanding of the role of the media in contributing to the growing problem of ethnic intolerance in contemporary Russian society, as well as potential avenues for addressing this issue. This examination contended that the commentaries of leading political, cultural, and academic figures, who are invited to 'speak' in the nation's press, often serve to lend a sense of credibility and legitimacy to the media's ethnophobic discourse. The relationship between the prevalence of xenophobic material in the Russian press and the role of the political elite in promoting/curbing such discourses could benefit from a

closer investigation. The application and efficacy, or rather lack thereof, of existing criminal and civil legislation⁵⁰⁵ and professional normative codes,⁵⁰⁶ to curb the dissemination of such incendiary messages in the media, also deserves a thorough examination.

While it is clear that such material serves to sell papers, responding to and feeding into a consumer demand for sensationalist and xenophobic articles, the ramifications of promoting such discriminatory and racializing discourses, in an increasingly diverse nation like the Russian Federation, are too divisive and dangerous to go unchecked. In 2001, the low-circulation but respected and independent Moscow-based paper, *Novaya Gazeta*, decided to expose a policy of ethnic profiling among the capital's police. It disclosed to the public an official order from a Moscow district police chief calling for special criminal investigations to be directed against certain non-Slavic ethnic groups in the city.⁵⁰⁷ This exposé displays the power of the press to act as a force for social justice in Russian society. While Moscow's popular papers are first and foremost businesses that

⁵⁰⁵ Existing relevant criminal and civil legislation include: Articles 74 and 282 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation; Articles 4 and 51 of the Federal Law on Mass Media; and the Law on Combating Extremist Activity. Regulation of the media in Russian society is an area of considerable contention. While the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe has urged the Russian government to develop and impose a wider range of sanctions against media in contravention of the nation's hate and defamation laws, some human rights associations point to the political misuse of current legislation by the authorities and contend that the imposition of further restrictions would just lead to further abuses by the state rather than a decrease in the prevalence of incendiary material in the press. See: "Russian Media Official Disagrees with European Anti-Extremism Recommendations," *World News Connection*, May 17, 2006. Available through <http://web.ebscohost.com> and Alexander Verkhovsky, "Anti-Extremist Legislation, its Use and Misuse," *Tsentri-Sova*, May 7, 2008, available at <http://xeno.sova-center.ru/6BA2468/6BB4208/B577A2C>.

⁵⁰⁶ According to the Russian Union of Journalists' "Code of Professional Ethics for a Russian Journalist": "A journalist understands fully the danger of limitations, persecutions and violence, which his/her activities may provoke... and in fulfilling his/her professional duties he/she counteracts extremism and restriction of civil rights on any basis including sex, race, language, religion, political or other views as well as social or ethnic origin. A journalist respects the honour and dignity of the people who become the objects of his/her professional attention. He/she refrains from any derogatory allusions or comments in relation to race, nationality, skin colour, religion...and is unconditionally obliged to avoid offensive expressions which may harm the moral and physical health of people." See: *Soiuz Zhurnalistov Rossii*, "Kodeks professional'noi etiki rossiiskogo zhurnalista," Available at <http://www.ruj.ru/about/codex.htm>.

⁵⁰⁷ See: Open Society Institute, *Ethnic Profiling in the Moscow Metro* (New York, OSI, 2006), 48.

must make money in order to survive, there nevertheless exists a professional code and a moral imperative for Russian journalists and the Russian media as a whole, to at the very least avoid the perpetuation of prejudice and interethnic intolerance in the society that they serve.

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