

Russian State Visions of World Order and the Limits to Universal
Liberalism

by

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Abstract

This work uses a critical historicist methodology to explore the limits to liberal democratic universalism and US hegemony at both the material and ideational level by way of the example of the Russian state in the Putin era. It contributes to scholarship within the areas of critical International Political Economy (IPE) and Cultural Political Economy (CPE) by examining the prevalence of intersubjective ideas in mediating, representing, and legitimating profound social, economic and political transitions. Furthermore, this work examines how a powerful state outside of the Western liberal democratic core challenges precepts of world order through the development of an indigenous vernacular.

As the Russian state becomes selectively integrated into the global capitalist political economy, it would appear that there is little discursive space for articulating Russia's *samobytnost* or uniqueness. However, Russia's integration into the global capitalist political economy and renewed significance in global politics have involved considerable state involvement, which is reflected in the Russian state's attempts to articulate a response to liberal democratic universalism and American hegemony. In this response, the Russian state both rejects Western triumphalism by appealing to nativist ideas and cultural frames and seeks to demonstrate that it meets the criteria of a democratic polity in its own right. This combination of statism, nativist ideas, cultural frames, and questioning the moral and practical legitimacy of Western democratic and liberal criteria provides the basis for what may be considered Russian alternative understandings of world order.

Such understandings also may be considered as the Russian state's attempt to fashion a form of common sense about global political life and in the process create both internal and external legitimacy for its centralizing and state-strengthening initiatives within a competitive capitalist global political economy. Concepts and ideas derived from Russian culture, history, thinking and statecraft – Eurasianism, multipolarity, great power, and sovereign democracy – are deployed by Russian officials. Together these comprise a vocabulary to express dissatisfaction with the fundamental premises of liberal internationalism, thereby signifying that liberal capitalist sociability has not become fully engrained amongst the Russian elite or society as a whole.

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Chapter One – Introduction and Methodology

The introductory chapter proceeds as follows. Section One consists of an introduction, during which I situate my dissertation thematically. In Section Two I state my research problem and questions. Section Three is comprised of the methodology. Section Four contains key concepts of this work and a rationale for their use. The chapter concludes with Section Five, in which I outline the structure of the work.

1. Introduction

In this dissertation, I explore the limits to liberal democratic universalism and US hegemony at both the material and ideational level by way of the example of the contemporary Russian state. As the Russian state becomes selectively integrated into the global capitalist political economy, it would appear that there is little discursive space for articulating Russia's *samobytnost* or uniqueness. However, Russia's integration involves considerable state involvement, which is reflected in the Russian state's attempts to articulate a response to liberal democratic universalism and American hegemony. In this response, the Russian state both rejects Western triumphalism by appealing to nativist ideas and cultural frames and demonstrates that it meets the criteria of a democratic polity in its own right. This combination of statism, nativist ideas, cultural frames, and questioning the moral and practical legitimacy of democratic and liberal criteria provides the basis for what may be considered Russian alternative understandings of world order.

This is a dissertation about the relationship between the Russian state and Russian understandings of world order in the era of Vladimir Putin. Such understandings of world order are the intersubjectively-held, or produced, beliefs that have accompanied a

resurgent Russia under Putin. It is therefore a thesis that accentuates the intersubjective dimension in contemporary state building amid the transitional Russian political economy. In suggesting here that beliefs are *produced* by the state, my contribution gauges the role of the state in preparing its citizenry according to certain understandings and requirements of its initiatives within world order. As it engages with historical materialist and historicist modes of analysis, my project reflects an interest with the state's role vis-à-vis social forces and its attempts to articulate a consensus about Russia's place in, and nature of, world order. The Russian state strives to produce a relatively coherent set of concepts about world order, which it attempts to establish as a new normal, common sense thinking about global affairs to rival liberal internationalism. It then attempts to convince the Russian citizenry and the external world of the veracity of such concepts. Thus I conceive of the Russian state as a collective agent which, in addition to its authoritative, bureaucratic and coercive role in administering the Russian economic base articulates a palpable and palatable vision of national political and economic life. In addition to its role of organizing the Russian economy along a combination of statist and market principles, the Russian state (exemplified by the Putin regime) develops concepts and ideas that render these moves intelligible according to longer Russian intellectual and cultural legacies. My research concern is how the Russian state, exemplified by the Putin regime, develops and utilizes the terminology of "culture" – understood as purported tendencies, shared intersubjective meanings and familiar frames – as a means of rendering political decisions intelligible and acceptable.

My dissertation also reflects my view of the state's coercive and consensual role as being embedded within certain cultural and historical understandings. Situated within

the field of International Political Economy (IPE), the dissertation embodies a concern with the relationship between the domestic and international and upholds the argument that the two may only be understood dialectically. Moreover, it develops out of reflections upon a specific body of literature found in IPE – that which focuses on the phenomenon of world order, global capitalism and the internationalization/transnationalization of the state – and dissatisfaction with some of its theoretical and practical implications when it comes to investigating developments beyond the mature capitalist core. As such, the dissertation grows primarily out of a series of discussions within the field of IPE and is particularly concerned with examining specific national-cultural contexts in which the transition to a market economy occurs. It is concerned with cultural and national representation amid capitalist development in post-Communist Russia, the role of political authority in securing transition in real economic and social conditions, and what this might tell us about the state of world order. By national representation I mean the manner in which the nation and its members have been imagined and conceptions of their unity and purpose, in this case, amid a new form of society. The thesis is born of an extended engagement with historical materialist and historicist readings of comprehensive social, political and economic change and is therefore focused upon and most interested in issues of profound historical transformation.

I develop a synopsis and critique of the materialist precepts of world order thinking in critical IPE in Chapter Two. For the purposes of locating the project here, it is sufficient to allude to the strengths and insights as well as the shortcomings of this literature. This literature, which develops the thinking of Robert Cox in various ways, is

implicitly concerned with the extension of American hegemony over the global periphery in transforming statist regimes to liberal-capitalist models (and in some cases the role of European capital in transforming its sphere of influence). The transnational variant of this literature, represented by scholars such as William Robinson and the Amsterdam School, conceives of social relations across national borders as the primary motor for global political and economic change, particularly by way of transforming and disciplining national units within the global periphery. In doing so this literature is able to perceive the constitution of social classes across borders and escape narrow methodological nationalism and tell us much about the nature of contemporary transformations in the global political economy.

Nonetheless, these insights warrant further reflection. Where does Russia fit in the context of understanding America's role in global systems management? Historically, where does the Soviet Union's attempt at forging a state-socialist alternative world order fit amid theorizing on the American world order? And if in fact post-socialist Russia is in the process of adopting a liberal-capitalist, or state-capitalist, or quasi-capitalist order, what does this look like and how has it been accomplished? Crucially, as it pertains to Russia, what does the disassembling of the Soviet empire, a prolonged transition to a market economy and the reconstitution of political authority look like? Rendering all national states that are deemed peripheral to the global capitalist core comparable comes at the cost of specificity and overlooks fault lines within the US-led global liberal democratic project. Furthermore, broad comparative sweeps mask the history, geopolitical considerations, ideologies and representations impacting affected states. On the one hand, only on a most generic level is Russia comparable to fellow

post-Soviet states and other “transitioning” economies, due to its size, geopolitical position, imperial history and aspirations to global prominence. On the other, Russia faces broad systemic pressures and resulting political struggles while selectively integrating into the global political economy. My dissertation is an investigation of how the Putin regime has reconciled the imperatives of political economy in world order and elements of Russian particularity through selective appeals to what we may call Russian alternative understandings of world order.

My entry into the question of world order comes through an analysis of the ideological limits of liberal internationalism in Putin’s Russia. In particular, I examine elements of Russian alternative understandings of world order, which reflect at once a challenge and accommodation to this liberal internationalism. Putin’s Russia presents us with a case which manifests the failure of any easy transmission of the ideas associated with a Western-inspired liberal democracy. Components of world order as articulated by the Russian state are a reflection of a perceived need to offer a vision of Russia in the world which captures Russia’s reputed uniqueness and reflects a wealthier, more assertive and “sovereign” Russia than was evident in the immediate post-Soviet period. This is by no means a straight forward process: for example, ideas about a modern, democratizing and market friendly Russia, which is increasingly integrated into global economic structures, have also figured prominently in Putin’s readings of world order, particularly during his first term as president. However, the uncontested adoption of Western liberal ideology deemed to correspond with American liberal hegemony did not occur, as a particularly Russian “filter” was tacitly or overtly employed to shape understandings of global political life and Russia’s place within it. In addition to

reflecting material conflicts arising out of economic competition and military threats, Russian understandings of world order display a thoroughly intersubjective or ideational component, whereby global political life is translated through shared understandings of moral appropriateness, legitimacy and manageability. An investigation of these understandings forms the basis of this dissertation.

The focus on Russia is derived in part from my perception that broader sentiments of Western-centrism can be detected even in critical IPE. Conceptions of an American-based world order are at the heart of neo-Gramscian and sympathetic theorists' vision of the world. There are good reasons for this, not the least of which comes by way of the personal and professional situations of such theorists. Robert Cox's perspective was powerfully informed by a life of international civil service and William Robinson's formulations were largely developed in an intense engagement with Latin America, its NGOs and ground-level political struggles. Absent from or tangential to such thinking is the Soviet/Russian universe. Indeed, Cox's world order is at best half the story, with an alternate Soviet-led world order serving as the material and ideological counterweight to American initiatives during the Cold War.

Through my dissertation I hope to add to this discussion some considerations about the need to understand wider processes concerning a particular space vis-à-vis the broader world economy through mediating devices: particular national political economies and the intersubjectively held or produced beliefs which sustain them, which can be examined on the terrain of representations of national social orders and the role of the citizenry within these. My research concern is that the broad strokes of critical IPE, while providing concepts and empirical research intimately tied to wide-scale

transformation, miss the particularities of place. This is in itself hardly a controversial observation but it is one that has ramifications for how the international/transnational is conceived. If in fact the Russian state is being internationalized/transnationalized – what does this look like? How are state and society being reconstituted in light of broader global transformations? How are material orders represented and understood through shared intersubjective content? Does this itself constitute a threat to an American-led world order or can it be understood as simply one of its appendages? How are people (i.e. Russians) to behave in this setting and understand their place in the world?

My project, therefore, contributes to a needed discussion between the world of Russian studies and the theoretical innovations of critical IPE. Furthermore, the project reflects a pro-longed engagement with historical materialist and historicist scholarship on social change, with a particular emphasis on issues of representation, ideology and subjectivity. I do not adopt the postulates of critical IPE without some hesitation; I believe that a focus on the Russian sphere leads to challenges to some of the basic assumptions and intuitions brought to the discipline in its North American and European variants. This is by no means an easy project given the real historical initiative, found in the form of the Soviet Union, of a state-based counter hegemony to global capitalism. It is not unreasonable to suggest that a degree of uneasiness surrounds the Marxist legacy in Russia – after all, as a method of political praxis, did the Russians not try that already? Did it not fail? And yet the broad terrain of Marxist-inspired critical political economy is the proverbial elephant in the room: rendered taboo in Western reflections of the Soviet legacy, it remains a robust theoretical universe that may lend powerful insights to phenomena in the transitional period, including questions of base-superstructure, broad

historical transformation, and the complex relationship between political authority, economy and society.

2. Problem Statement, Research Question and Temporal Parameters

In this research, I propose to examine Putin-era Russia by way of conceptions of Russian state, society and nation amid contemporary world order, as well as the nature of this world order itself. It is therefore designed to understand the creation, existence or perpetuation of national-intersubjective ideas amid concrete transformations in Russia's social and political order and the production of new and reinvented concepts which accompany that order. The Russian case demonstrates that significant fault lines within contemporary world order exist at the material and ideational level. In the process, it provides clues as to what a post-hegemonic world order may look like from a Russian perspective.

The research questions I pose are situated with one eye on the Russian leadership's ability to interpret its place within world order and the other on how it understands and represents this order itself. How are we to understand state sanctioned representations of Russia in the Putin era, and how do these representations stand in relation to the advent of a capitalist economy and social order? How has political authority cultivated particular intersubjective understandings to legitimize both its role within society and Russia's place in the world? What does the terrain of national representation tell us about contemporary Russian state building and how do we conceive of contemporary world order in light of this terrain?

This dissertation has been developed to meet the following objectives. Firstly, my intent is to bring critical scrutiny and a larger cultural component to the critical IPE

literature through a specific case, Russia. In doing so, my objective is to assist in incorporating the phenomenon of Russian post-communist transitions into contemporary IPE thinking through granting critical attention to a specific national form. Specifically, I examine representations of state and society amid a transition to some form of capitalist society, and the state's role in developing the imagery, concepts and ideas deemed suitable for the purposes of this order. The project therefore addresses a lacuna in IPE literature whereby the ideational, intersubjective and cultural aspects of profound transitions are advanced through a more intensive engagement with Russian studies. Secondly, this dissertation is a contribution to the emerging sub-discipline of Cultural Political Economy by developing an understanding of cultural representations in the case of the Russian transition.

The temporal period covered for this project consists of the two presidential administrations of Vladimir Putin (2000-2008), which I refer to as the "Putin-era," although the appropriate background is given to investigate certain ideas and tendencies which predate, yet figure prominently in, this period. I acknowledge that powerful arguments can be made about the long-run historical antecedents to Russia's contemporary global position, including relative "backwardness" and the late development of capitalist, and then socialist, projects of national modernization amid prevailing world orders.¹ There is no good reason to avoid incorporating this into a purportedly historical analysis other than to cite the limits dictated by concerns for feasibility and my desire to focus on the post-communist period and contemporary questions. Furthermore, my analysis is focused on the period prior to Dmitry Medvedev assuming the Russian presidency and the global financial crisis, both of which occurred

in 2008. To analyze these two developments would introduce a greater degree of complexity; they cannot be treated in considerable detail in this work.

3. Methodology

Rationales for employing particular methodologies in the social sciences range from the reasonable and informed to the dogmatic. The debate concerning the appropriateness of focusing solely on Russia, the former members of the Soviet Union, or assimilating both into wider comparative/positivist accounts of “democratic transition” is not new and scarcely resolvable here (see Schmitter & Karl, 1994; Bunce 1995 and 1999). The legitimacy of single cases is also firmly established within the universe of social science research. Single cases are indeed warranted as phenomena in their own right, as *intrinsic case studies* that are interesting for their own unique qualities (Berg, 2001). For the field of IPE, *national* cases are far from obsolete, as they serve as prisms through which broader global forces may be viewed. They are therefore helpful in extending discussions on particular theoretical orientations. With its historicist / historical materialist methodologies, my approach straddles what Eckstein (1975; see also Blaikie, 2000, pp. 219-225) refers to as the *configurative-ideographic* and *heuristic* case studies. In the former, a descriptive account is given to provide understanding of a phenomenon under examination. In the latter, a case is examined to provide tentative understandings towards the development of theory. A certain caveat applies here, though, with a rejection of positivist methodologies: generalizable knowledge is not sought here nor understood as the appropriate standard for this project, yet appropriate attempts are made to provide tentative explanations within the case studied. Therefore, it is erroneous to view this as a purely descriptive exercise and I am uncertain as to whether

typologies within the social sciences consulted thus far aptly capture the logic of historical research.

An appropriate methodological strategy is required to understand complex and far reaching transformations. An historicist conception of historical materialism is sensitive to historical change, contingency and social agency. It contains insights into the shared ideational and cultural frames through which political, economic and social orders are attained. Furthermore, it views historically specific, particular social formations as the broader configurations in which human action is patterned. The conception of historical materialism offered here envisions a politics based on the material necessities of life, the production and obtainment of such necessities, and the social relations that develop in this process. Sensitive to shared cognitive frameworks, this brand of historical materialism eschews economism and determinism and defends a non-reductionist reading of the relationship between economic base and political superstructure while redirecting attention to shared representations in understanding the prospects for collective social action.

Aspects of the historicist IPE approach bear a certain resemblance to the configurative approach as outlined by Katznelson (1997) with important distinctions. The configurative approach suggests that variables are cojoined in specific historical instances. Therefore, it rejects the positivist inclination to seek universal hypotheses. Furthermore, direct univariate causation is impossible to determine; variables are co-extensive and reciprocal. Actors are not atomistic, unfettered and rational but embedded in an institutional milieu. An approach to historical inquiry within the configurative tradition therefore similarly emphasizes the institutional milieu within which actors think

and act. Historicist IPE similarly acknowledges historical complexity, with the important added condition of consciousness, perception and agency. In its critical variant, historicist IPE asks how political, economic and social institutions come about by way of the balance of social forces and how ideas about collective social life endure despite radical political and economic transformations. Thus it is charged with the normative task of determining the role of social power in political institutional arrangements.

In developing configurative and contextual accounts of social action and meaning, an historicist historical materialism is skeptical of isolating individual variables for cause-effect analysis. Interpretive actions are required both on the part of the scholar and social actors to comprehend the generation of intersubjective human meanings while offering a limited and weaker, non-determinative form of the cause-effect mechanisms of social change. Historicist historical materialism and historicist IPE both scrutinize the subject/object divide, which posits that external reality discloses itself fully to a rational mind capable of deploying objective categories in the process of measuring and distilling social reality.

The “case” of Russia warrants particular attention for a number of reasons: 1) as the primary inheritor of Soviet institutions; 2) as a self-declared global power, wherein ideas of Russia’s international prestige and significance resonate widely; 3) as a site where alternative ideas about world order are produced; 4) as nonetheless representing a lacunae in conceptions of global change from an IPE standpoint. A single case is warranted here, particularly given the size and complexity of the case!

How does one study intersubjective ideas? The task is daunting to the researcher in the uncertainty it presents. Cultural representations, symbols and understandings are

shared, produced, rejected and challenged by all members of a national political community, to varying degrees. As such, the terrain of cultural production is vast and, for all practical purposes, limitless. My research question has necessitated that I focus upon and thoroughly analyze a handful of concrete instances deemed emblematic or most powerful in expressing the phenomenon of national intersubjective ideas, while linking these to a theoretical understanding and empirical display of the contemporary nature of the Russian political state. While this could legitimately come in the form of, for example, artistic production, literature and developments in popular culture, such aspects are not given a predominant place here. These forms are relevant to the current study insofar as shared normative and ideational frameworks are crucial for understanding the particular political orders. Indeed, investigating non-state sanctioned cultural production guards against reducing nationalism to instrumental attempts by state authorities to produce the nation by instead seeking the substance of nationalist understandings in society itself. Furthermore, examining cultural ideas produced from a wider array of sources would allow for a more expansive concept of power. Nonetheless, as I am specifically concerned with the role of political authority in the maintenance and production of social cohesion and national meaning amid a complex social, economic and political transition, I have confined my attention to certain specific acts of governing officials. I focus on that which is undertaken and produced by political authority. The research strategy employed, therefore, is to analyze the content of Russian government documents, reports and initiatives and presidential speeches to detect the executive/state's understandings of the nation. From this we can determine what the state holds as important conceptions and attributes for itself and its citizens in times of transition.

A note on terminology is warranted here. As it pertains to questions of foreign policy and corresponding understandings of world order, I use the terms Putin's regime, Russian officials, the Russian state and the executive somewhat interchangeably. I am operating under the assumption that while the production of foreign policy concepts and ideas invariably involves a complex of actors and institutions, the president bears an overwhelming amount of responsibility for the formulation of foreign policy in Russia (see Trenin and Lo, 2005). While the Russian state is characterized formally by a dual executive structure comprised of the presidential administration, on the one hand, and prime minister and ministries on the other, the precise relationship between the two remains murky (Sakwa, 2008e). While foreign and domestic policy ideas may come from a variety of sources during the period in question, they are invariably given the presidential stamp of approval by Putin. Thus, when representatives of the Russian state spoke about foreign or domestic policy during Putin's presidency, it may be assumed that there was either tacit or explicit approval from Putin.

I examine documents and speeches produced by the Putin regime to determine what components constitute the administration's conceptions of Russia in world order and how this state of affairs is represented to the Russian population and politicians. Given this intention, I have focused primarily on statements that resonate with ontological and moral/ethical significance. That is to say, I am purposefully seeking concepts that serve to reflect the nature of contemporary world order, Russia's status in this order and the legitimacy of this order.

Seeking understandings of world order in the vast array of documents and speeches presented by the Russian state as well as synopses of these documents and

speeches may be misleading: these do not have as their primary intent a demonstration of a Kremlin position on world order alone. Rather, they are, on the one hand, comprehensive statements on multiple aspects of Russian political economy and society, as well as both the internal and external challenges facing the government. The comprehensive aspect is most evident in the case of the annual Addresses to the Federal Assembly. On the other hand they are also very specific statements and positions offered by Russian officials for very specific purposes and to very specific audiences. It is not always clear, perhaps, how an individual statement or document contributes to a Russian conception of world order.

Nonetheless, my choice to impose such an analytical framework – that is, searching for understandings of world order in the statements, speeches and documents produced by Russian officials – was made on the assumption that we can find important regularities and ambiguities within these statements and that these tell us something about the Russian state’s understanding of world order. When deemed appropriate, I have included longer quotations so as to present ideas in greater context. In so doing, I hope to preserve the integrity of the statements without reducing the words to a simplified code. That is to say, I do not wish to simply count up the number of times Russian officials speak about, for example, a great power Russia without giving a broader sense of how they conceive of this term and how it is imbued with significance in a contemporary manner. To paraphrase Clifford Geertz (1973), one simply does not go to the trouble of accumulating considerable amounts of material from the Russian government only to count particular words. One could employ a strictly quantitative methodology to determine the prevalence of certain “buzzwords” in Putin’s discourse (see Godzimirski,

2008, for example), however, my analysis proceeds from the judgment that reconciling Russian particularity with the nature of contemporary world order is a question worth asking. Proceeding from this assumption permits some degree of abstraction from particular documents, which enables tentative conclusions about common prevalent themes, while the particularity of much of the work is retained.

While I engage with Neo-Gramscian scholarship in this dissertation, I depart from the neo-Gramscian understanding of state as political plus civil society. When I employ the term Russian state, I refer to its political authority, headed by the president and comprised of those supportive of his vision of Russia in world order. I do this out of methodological necessity as I investigate the role that such a group plays as a socializing force in offering a particular state sanctioned vision of world order. I would have preferred to explore in greater detail the link between this Russian political state and the vast complex of civil society institutions, economic elites, the Russian Orthodox Church, think tanks, technocratic experts, bureaucratic fractions and the media, but such a project is overly ambitious for a dissertation. Indeed, in confining myself largely to Putin and his regime, I was ensured of a relatively accessible stock of information which demonstrated state views on the matter of contemporary world order.

If one may see Putin's regime as increasingly fusing political and economic power in Russia (Stent, 2008),² ideas produced by the regime become explicitly attached to political – economic imperatives. In a period of continued transformation of the Russian political economy, what are the recurring ideas and conceptual frameworks utilized by the Russian state? This question follows from my conception of representations, which has a threefold purpose. Firstly, how has the Russian state

interpreted prevailing trends in the global political economy and its place within it? Secondly, how does the Russian state appeal to Russian particularities when representing so-called “objective” material facts? Thirdly, how can we understand world order and the corresponding domestic component in Russia as a normative vision on the part of the Russian state and a project that it seeks to implement amid contemporary constraints and opportunities?

Also, I wish to highlight the role of Putin’s regime as shaper and framer of understandings of world order. This is somewhat of a departure from the Gramscian understandings of an extended state, which involves both political society and civil society, or coercion and consent. Nonetheless, it is a more accurate reflection of my methodology, the examination of statements of representatives of the political state itself, and my research objectives: to determine how the state itself understands and represents Russia’s place in contemporary world order.

Insofar as post-president Putin foreign policy and understandings of world order display continuity with the area most under examination, it is assumed that they remain largely shaped by the era of Putin’s presidency. Although we can speculate about the extent to which Putin continues to shape foreign policy as prime minister (indeed, the extent to which he retains all forms of executive authority), the inner workings of Russian elite circles and political negotiations stemming there from remain beyond the scope of my analysis. Indeed, this is a perennial problem of Kremlinology: how do experts make plausible inferences about Russian elite negotiations based on scattered clues?

Avoiding such speculation on the inner workings of Kremlin power and the extent to which Putin represents a particular faction may lead to an incomplete theorization of

the problem of Russian (political) state power. Nonetheless, this is beyond the scope of my analysis. Indeed, it reflects a genuine problem about how such information is made available, particularly to a Western public.

Ascribing coherence in foreign policy to a comprehensive Putin plan is also partly due to the somewhat mythical insistence upon the cohesion of such a plan, whether it pertains to foreign or domestic policy. Such an insistence is partly misleading. For example, Russian thinking on multipolarity unquestionably predates Putin's presidency. Furthermore, no single political figure can determine the intersubjective ideas used to understand political phenomena. Yet such figures can be popularly thought of as being capable of such an undertaking, which is part of the very power of Putinism itself.

My choice of prevalent themes was made upon an initial reading of major speeches and documents, including the annual speeches to the federal assembly, which represent a significant component of the Russian government's vision of itself and its priorities and are meant for consumption by Russian society, Russian politicians and anyone who cares to access them. I came to such a decision after engaging with various secondary sources and attending numerous conferences in which advocates and detractors made ostensibly objective and disinterested assessment of the state of affairs in Russia. Given that the Putin era has been greatly politicized, much commented upon, and of intense interest to scholarly audiences in both Russia and beyond, it is difficult to conceive of an analytical and conceptual framework completely from scratch, as it were. Cox's dictum that theory is always for someone and some purpose often appears in the practice of Russian studies and the intellectual production accompanying it. Indeed, given the highly politicized nature of Russian studies, where research interests and

conceptual frameworks appear to be influenced by the very question of whether one is a Russophile or Russophobe, any purported objectivity in one's conceptual apparatus is often a pretense that evaporates quickly during discussion sessions.

The nature of social research suggests that there is no clean abstraction away from one's preconceptions and the social, cultural and professional environment in which he or she acts. Any *a priori* move to determine what is important prior to engaging in the source material leaves an indelible mark on the research process itself. Inducing categories from a strict reading of empirical sources prevents one from situating such sources in a broader environment and hypothesizing on their significance. While both of these approaches might tell us something, they lack a sense of reflexivity on the part of the scholar. In other words, the analysis undertaken here involves a threefold negotiation between source material, secondary material, and personal judgments on my part. I find it difficult to conceive of historicized and admittedly reflexive research in any other fashion than to acknowledge this from the onset of my engagement with source materials.

I originally conceived of organizing the material into the "external" and "internal" components of world order, but this proved to be a difficult task. There is considerable overlap between these and they are often linked discursively within official thought. In other words, the external and internal are frequently invoked by scholars and Russian officials alike as two sides of the same coin: external conditions of world order necessitate a particular response on the part of the Russian political state, while the purported characteristics of Russian domestic state and society are thought of as necessary, celebrated for their uniqueness, or deplored as an impediment to Russian state efforts to articulate a place within contemporary world order.

I have attempted to capture both continuity and context in the themes. On the one hand, the themes of the chapters recur across different time frames. On the other, the themes are what may be called permissive signifiers – malleable concepts that vary in substance according to how they have been employed to explain a variety of phenomena. In such a way, the durability of certain aspects of state thinking is revealed despite what we can assume to be the need to tackle and offer new solutions to new problems, as well as Russia’s shifting position in contemporary world order. Drawing out the multiple strands of a Putin era conception of world order enables one to highlight the ambiguities inherent in state views while avoiding oversimplification. Indeed, we may both seek out prevalent themes and question the internal coherence and stability of Putin’s vision as it pertains to Russia’s international position and domestic transformation.³

With this method in mind, it is important to consider historicist precepts of knowledge production, which I speak to further in the following chapter. It was only possible to search a variety of databases by imposing certain limitations. My methodological choice was to seek out certain concepts that I deemed important after an initial engagement with both empirical and theoretical material. In my judgment, concepts such as Eurasianism and civilization, multipolarity, great power and sovereign democracy are significant in the production of knowledge about Russian state and society that eclipses a mere frequency count of “buzzwords.” An objective content analysis may in fact tell us what Putin spoke about the most in his speeches, press releases and so on. However, this alone does not tell us the significance of these concepts.

It is my intent to demonstrate both the frequent occurrence of certain key concepts while surmising that these contribute to particular Russian state understandings of world

order that depart from Western liberal precepts. The selection of these concepts also reflects a limitation to the academic writing process, namely the need to categorize and extract themes from an immense volume of literature and data, material which primarily came to be known to me through searching using particular key words. In the production of one's dissertation there can be no entirely objective process which is not conditioned by pre-selection mechanisms and the exercise of judgment to determine what is significant and what is not. A second dissertation could be written by accumulating, standardizing and coding the marginal notes and material excised from the current work.

The work was further conditioned by my abilities to work in the Russian language. My ability to translate from Russian to English is limited. I believe that I successfully did this (while also consulting with native speakers, nonetheless) for the section on "Concept 2020" in Chapter Six. Furthermore, I have translated shorter documents that appear sporadically throughout my dissertation. I acknowledge that having an even greater number of original Russian language sources would be optimal. However, I do not feel the project is compromised. Firstly, the project is located within the fields of IPE and International Relations (IR) as opposed to Russian Studies; IPE and IR necessitate a less intensive engagement with Russian language sources. My primary theoretical engagement is with English language scholarship on world order and global capitalism.

Secondly, I have consulted a substantial range of Russian authors and experts who have either written in or been translated into English. I examine in detail sources from three databases.⁴ Two – the World News Connection and the Current Digest of the post-Soviet Press – consist of articles that have been pre-selected by an editorial team for their

perceived significance and subsequently translated. Multiple articles that appear on these are segments of the original (the same can be said for Kremlin.ru). I chose a third – Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty’s (RFERL) Russian content – for its accessibility and depth. Numerous articles on RFERL focus on the abuse of power allegedly perpetrated by the Russian state and its representatives. For this reason, I treated material from this source more carefully. While sound bites and events were ably demonstrated in all sources, they often came with a fair amount of editorializing. If theory is always for some person and some purpose, as Robert Cox would suggest, so too is the production of knowledge on Russia.

Thirdly, I have consulted numerous works produced and translated by the Russian state itself. By heavily utilizing work that has been both *produced* and *translated* by the Russian state, I have relied on material that is consciously selected and scrutinized by state organs and presumably embody the result of a vetting process in which political authorities are sensitive to political messaging. I therefore take as axiomatic the notion that the Russian state wishes audiences to see this particular representation of itself in the English language. Nonetheless, I do not have the ability to undertake a comparative analysis of the Russian and English sections of the Kremlin.ru website and others from which official statements and documents are taken. Such an analysis may reveal a considerable difference between the two both in volume of material available and meaning.

4. Concepts and justifying their use

The central concept of this work is world order. I follow Cox in conceiving of world order as a configuration of global political and economic life characterized by a

particular constellation of material forces that can be apprehended at any particular historical conjuncture; however, the forces comprising a world order are diachronic in nature, changing over time. Cox (1986) advocates examining global politics within three spheres of activity: 1) *social forces* (reflecting the organization of production); 2) *forms of state* (reflecting state-society complexes); and 3) *world orders* (the configuration of forces bearing upon states) (pp. 218-221; Cox, 1987; Bieler & Morton, 2004). World orders are best understood historically and investigated according to the extent to which they are stable. World orders, such as the *pax Britannica* (mid 19th century until World War II) and *pax Americana* (post World War II until the contemporary period), will exhibit periods of greater, lesser, or no hegemonic leadership according to the particular constellation of material capabilities, ideas and institutions (Cox, 1996b). While I sketch Russia's material position in world order, for the purposes of this dissertation I am explicitly concerned with the production of ideas by Russian political authority. These ideas contribute to Russian alternative understandings of world order. It is my contention that the actions of the Russian state in the Putin era suggest new fault lines that may potentially signify the emergence of a post-hegemonic era, or at least an era in which American hegemony is contested in new ways.

My approach to the main concepts in this work follows Jenson's (2010) notion of polysemic concepts and ideas. A polysemic idea is that which has multiple meanings and possible interpretations. Polysemic ideas can be helpful for the purposes of consensus building in that they may be utilized to bring together numerous and disparate people and groups who are nonetheless positively oriented towards the idea. While a polysemic idea may have both scientific and common sense meanings, its strength is found precisely in

its ambiguity and capacity to be somehow relevant or meaningful to multiple groups with multiple positions. Polysemic ideas are therefore useful in attempts to construct ideological cohesion, consensus and legitimacy.

That a concept may be polysemic is not dissimilar to Gramsci's notion of common sense. For Gramsci, common sense shapes and constrains perception and must be recognized and overcome in order to see the broader field of political possibilities. A philosophy of common sense comprises the following:

the conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is in development. Common sense is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space. It is the 'folklore' of philosophy, and, like folklore, it takes countless different forms. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is (Gramsci, 1971, p. 419).

Indeed, "Common sense is a chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions, and one can find there anything one likes (Gramsci, 1971, p. 422). Moreover, common sense "is an ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept, and that to refer to common sense as a confirmation of truth is a nonsense."(p. 423). We can view Gramsci's critique of common sense as an attempt to spur "intellectual and moral reformation," not valorize or pander to existing beliefs (A. Robinson, 2006, p. 76).

I suggest that Putin has attempted to forge a new common sense about Russia's place in world political affairs. A Putin-era understanding of world order may be said to be comprised of a number of polysemic ideas derived from Russian cultural and political practices and thinking. As I demonstrate, these are sufficiently ambiguous to allow for broad consensus while being sufficiently specific to enable them to coalesce around a national, post American-hegemonic understanding of global affairs. Moreover, often

referenced to explain objective criteria and moral/ethical approaches to global affairs, these concepts are filled with positive content to demonstrate that a post-hegemonic world order is both in formation and morally defensible. Finally, these concepts valorize Russian national interests and Russia's return to global significance. This may be seen as an attempt to redress the concerns of a sufficient enough number of Russian elites and officials who deemed Russian national interests and great power status to have been compromised during the tumultuous 1990s (see Mankoff, 2009).

My selection of concepts was influenced first and foremost by my research imperative. As I am focusing on Russia's *alternative* understandings of world order, I have looked for potential fault lines of American hegemony within the statements and practices of Russian officials. Indeed, we can find in Putin's regime numerous statements of Russia's cultural affinity with Europe, or its support of liberal market principles. In my opinion, these offer no significant challenges to contemporary world order. The concepts I have chosen to explicate in the final four substantive chapters (Eurasianism, multipolarity, great power and sovereign democracy) express levels of Russian dissent, dissatisfaction and alterity.

The concepts I have chosen constitute neither a timeless essence of the Russian imperial character (see Pipes, 2004), nor abstract phenomena independent of time and space. I have attempted to locate them in the context of Russia's Putin-era state building project, a time during which the Russian national political economy enjoyed a tremendous growth and recovery from the moribund state of the 1990s. It is also a time characterized by the recentralization of authority in the Russian political system and revalorization of the role of the Russian state in political, social and economic

development. In Appendix A, I have developed a timeline of events that reflect the resurgent and increasingly statist Russia. The main concepts under investigation constitute the common sense of the Putin era insofar as they uphold these ends. Furthermore, as I demonstrate, these concepts are sufficiently ambiguous so as to speak to the broad sentiments of Putin era state building and resurgence while also covering specific policy decisions, announcements, etc. Also, I have chosen these concepts because they have been the subject of considerable academic and intellectual scrutiny and/or are representative of longer trends of Russian political and intellectual production. Furthermore, the concepts were chosen according to methodological limitations outlined above.

The chosen concepts can also be found in statements offered and material produced by the Russian state. The 2008 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, for example, uses these concepts and their analogues to express Russia's improved position in international affairs and contemporary state priorities. The Concept states, for instance, that "It is for the first time in the contemporary history that global competition is acquiring a civilizational dimension which suggests competition between different value systems and development models within the framework of universal democratic and market economy principles." Moreover, "As the constraints of the bipolar confrontation are being overcome, the cultural and civilizational diversity of the modern world is increasingly in evidence. A religious factor in shaping the system of contemporary international relations is growing, inter alia, as regards its moral foundation." The concept defends the right of a number of rising states (the "Troika" – Russia, India and China; BRIC – troika + Brazil) to manage world development; the

common civilizational heritage of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and its member states; the creation of a polycentric (multipolar) world order, which is the result of a more equitable distribution of development resources across multiple power centres; a strengthened Russian state, economically strong, transitioning away from resource dependence towards an innovative economy and resolving “social problems”; and a revalorizing of the role of the sovereign state, which is to be defended against the “arbitrary interference” of others. It is significant to note for the purposes of this thesis that the Foreign Policy Concept also signals Russia’s intentions to influence how others view it:

In public diplomacy, Russia will seek its objective perception in the world, develop its own effective means of information influence on public opinion abroad, strengthen the role of the Russian mass media in the international information environment providing them with essential state support, as well as actively participate in international information cooperation, and take necessary measures to repel information threats to its sovereignty and security.

This thesis should be taken as a demonstration of how the Russian state has proceeded to do this very thing during the Putin era.

I have imparted unity on these concepts largely out of analytical feasibility. As a form of common sense cultivated by Russian officials, Putin era understandings of world order are at times fragmentary and incoherent, in that particular words and concepts crop up in official documents, unofficial documents, specially selected works which the Kremlin elects to place on its website for the purposes of public consumption, seemingly rehearsed speeches and off-the-cuff remarks by Putin and other Russian officials.

Whether or not they are inconsequential, as Gramsci suggests, is a matter for debate. I suggest that they are consequential precisely because they offer a conception of world order in line with Russian aspirations for renewed significance and authority in global affairs. They represent an official Kremlin sanctioned line of thinking meant to increase

social solidarity, stability and cohesiveness under the aegis of a mighty state, all elements which the Putin regime deemed as underpinning its legitimacy in the Putin era.

Eurasianism and multipolarity are treated here as expressions of Russia's geopolitical protest against American hegemony and unipolarity. Classical and contemporary Eurasianism express a deep reservation about the moral, ethical and cultural legitimacy of Western and American hegemonic dominance. Multipolarity is treated here as the Russian alternative to American unipolarity and a system comprised of objective and subjective, existing and potential qualities. I have treated great power status as the expression of the desire for a strong Russian state. However, the term is also thoroughly historicized. In the contemporary period, Russian "greatness" must necessarily reflect the state's development imperatives amidst broad trends of globalization – economic and geopolitical competition. While also reflecting national development imperatives, sovereign democracy is treated here as the synthesis of multiple concepts, a master signifier for articulating Russia's right to autonomy in global affairs and a way of redirecting Russia's purported cultural tendencies to more productive and industrious ends.

5. Structure of this work

There are six substantive chapters (Chapters Two through Seven) and a conclusion (Chapter Eight). The six substantive chapters are organized into two broad sections. Chapters Two and Three are comprised of the theoretical and historical fields within which my dissertation is situated: critical IPE and the material dimensions of Russia's place in world order. Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven contain the specific concepts under investigation and are comprised of both scholarly reflections on each

chapter's central concept and an empirical demonstration of how these concepts have been employed by the Putin regime.

Chapter Two consists of my engagement with historical materialist and historicist IPE literature. It provides a review of this scholarship and then offers a critique of the manner in which it envisions world order. In so doing, it provides the space for me to intervene directly into the scholarship. In this chapter I lay out the terrain of critical IPE studies and offer a critical-historicist approach to examining large scale transitions, an approach that acknowledges the significance of intersubjective ideas, reflexivity and the material parameters that constrain ideas. This approach is informed considerably by Robert Cox's conception of historical structures and Cultural Political Economy's insistence on the semiotic and material elements of political economy. I acknowledge the significance of historical materialist scholarship, broadly conceived, in understanding questions of world order while arguing the need to pay greater attention to the intersubjective and material dimensions of national political economies on the periphery of the global capitalist core.

Chapter Three consists of an empirical and theoretical demonstration of the material parameters of Russia's post-communist transition, its position in world order, including its resurgence under Putin and limits to this resurgence, as well as Putin's consolidation of authority. This chapter demonstrates how Russia's post-communist transition and subsequent resurgence under Putin has been conceived in Russian studies' scholarship, and provides a synopsis of Russia's material position in world order, which serves as the background for the material in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Four consists of a demonstration of how key thinkers perceive Russia's civilizational difference from the West, beginning with the "classic" Eurasianism of the 1920s to the contemporary age. Eurasianism is a key concept often used to conceive of Russia's geopolitical orientation towards the Asian continent. While Putin cannot be considered a "Eurasianist" in any simplistic sense, the civilizational thinking of Eurasianists colours Russian state discourse. It may be considered as a novel Russian contribution to questions of world order. My intention in this chapter is to review this broadly conceived Eurasianist position, as well as the propensity in certain Russian circles to defend the existence of geopolitical difference according to purported cultural attributes.

Chapter Five locates Russia's geopolitical position within world order through a theoretical and empirical demonstration of the concept of multipolarity. I trace the significance of multipolarity as a concept in academic literature and in Russian state discourse. I demonstrate how the Putin regime has attempted to construct a multipolar world order of multiple power centers and sought to redefine world order in multipolar terms. The significance of multipolarity lies in its ambiguous position between an objective state of affairs and a project that the Russian state would like to implement through its actions and constant advocacy.

Chapters Six and Seven deal with Russia's national developmental imperatives. In both cases I treat the concepts under review not as abstract entities but those which the Putin regime has filled with content consistent with its goals for national development. In Chapter Six, I scrutinize the concept of great power. Rather than relying exclusively on either material or ideational criteria, I examine how the Putin regime has conceived of

great power in terms of modern development imperatives. In Chapter Seven, I examine the concept of sovereign democracy popularized by Vladislav Surkov, a prominent figure and ideologue in Putin's regime. In this chapter, I provide a brief demonstration of thinking about Russian political culture and the Russian idea as a means of asserting Russian cultural and political particularity. While some have suggested that Putin exemplifies, or should exemplify, the attainment of such a national idea, his thinking may be better conceived of as liberal conservative, in line with his statist orientations. Nonetheless, one element of Putin's public appeals has been his emphasis on solidarity, autonomy and a unique Russian identity. These ideas are evident in the work of Surkov and the idea of "sovereign democracy." As they pertain to the Russian state, appeals to the unity and uniqueness of the Russian people and state are helpfully thought of in conjunction with national development imperatives. Chapter Eight concludes the thesis.

¹ For an explanation of the Soviet Union's development of "real socialism" amid a hostile world order, see Cox (1996a). For interesting attempts to assimilate the Soviet experience into World Systems Theory, see Luke (1985) and Boswell & Chase-Dunn (2000). For a useful comparison between 19th century and late 20th century Russian/Soviet reforms as domestic responses to improve / shore up international standing, see Bunce (1993).

² Stent suggests that this process be understood as creating "Russian Inc." "In this system, political and economic elites are symbiotically connected, and the Kremlin officials who manage the affairs of state also manage and largely control the state's major economic assets. The chairmen of the boards of most of Russia's strategic industries, including energy companies, are either members of the presidential administration or holders of high government office, often making it difficult for an outside to discern how much ostensibly commercial decisions are driven by political interests. Moreover in this system it is difficult to differentiate national from personal interests" (p. 1092).

For Mankoff (2008) the state's growing hold on economy will limit the development of factions. The Kremlin inner circle has become thoroughly cross-fertilized with the boards of Gazprom (which has included Dmitry Medvedev and German Gref), Rosneft (Igor Sechin), Transneft (Viktor Khristenko, Minister of Industry and Arkady Dyorkovich, Presidential Administration Official).

³ Evans (2008), however, argues that Putin's actions have been guided by core values and principles which were delineated even prior to his taking the Office of President; among these are that Russia is fundamentally oriented to Europe, insofar as it is essential for Russia's national interests; that economic growth and modernization in a paradigm of state dominant development are essential to Russia's survival in a "Hobbesian" world; that Russia upholds the universal values of democracy though through the prism of particular values, namely an emphasis on state sovereignty; and that Russian society requires a "fundamental unity of values" by all sub-groups so as to avoid internal disintegration.

⁴ Following APA style convention, I have not indicated when these articles were retrieved, as the databases are stable and unlikely to change.

Chapter Two – Historicism, Historical Materialism, Intersubjectivity and International Political Economy

1. Introduction

The first goal of this chapter is to formulate a historicized basis for incorporating intersubjective meaning into analyses of broad political and economic transitions. The second goal of this chapter is to consider whether the main methodological tenets of world order literature are sufficient to understanding the Russian post-communist transition, the building of state capitalism and Russia's resurgence. Accomplishing these two goals contributes the theoretical underpinning to my dissertation's central purpose of understanding the creation, existence or perpetuation of national-intersubjective ideas amid concrete transformations in Russia's social and political order and the production of new and reinvented concepts which accompany that order. The Russian case demonstrates that significant fault lines within contemporary world order exist at the material and ideational level and it provides clues as to what a post-hegemonic world order may look like.

This chapter lays the foundations for my theoretical framework via a critical engagement with "critical IPE." Much of this literature can be referred to as "Gramsci-inspired," a reflection of Robert Cox's influence that acknowledges that a range of debates within the corpus prevents the unproblematic designation of "neo-Gramscian."¹ To acknowledge a broad stream of work that is in a variety of ways sympathetic to the Coxian research project, the term world order literature may even be used. I conceive of Cox's methodological innovation to be contributing to a "critical-historicist" position, which is best conceived of as considering intersubjective ideas within material parameters while taking seriously the need to gauge the researcher's intentions in

undertaking the research. It is to this range of literature that I wish to make my main contribution with this dissertation.

I use my review of world order literature to examine the place of cultural and intersubjective ideas within a historicist and historical materialist sensitive framework. I place particular emphasis on Robert Cox's notion of historical structures and insights from the field of Cultural Political Economy (CPE). I seek to develop a more meaningful place for the production of intersubjective ideas – understood as meanings shared by a particular social group and conditioned by shared cultural and historical experience – while still maintaining the significance of the “material” base to set the limits of the possible. I do this by exploring concepts within Coxian historicism and CPE and advocate for a robust approach to the investigation of intersubjective meaning that takes into consideration both the “semiotic” (intersubjective) and “extra-semiotic” (social and material) factors without reducing meaning to either exclusively. Taking the semiotic and extra-semiotic factors into consideration in my project necessitates examining the ways in which Russian officials employ ideas from Russian culture and history as a means to interpret and express the parameters of contemporary world order and Russia's place in it.

I am comfortable with calling my approach critical historicist with certain cues taken from historical materialism. I allow for the multiple forms of intersubjectivity that inform political collectivities at given points in time. This approach takes material factors seriously without reducing shared ideas in a crude fashion. While a historical materialist approach is most concerned about the place of social forces in the process of production, I also seek to understand the pedagogical role of the Russian state as

producer of concepts and ideas corresponding to its real or desired place within that order. The Russian state organizes to produce a relatively coherent set of concepts about world order that it attempts to establish as a new sort of normal, common sense thinking about global affairs that rivals liberal internationalism. It then attempts to convince the Russian citizenry and the external world of the veracity of such concepts.

The present chapter is the first of two major reviews of pertinent theoretical material and proceeds as follows. In Section Two, I consult critical IPE and other literature to situate my approach to understanding intersubjective ‘ideas.’ I do this in the terrain between historicism and historical materialism. In Section Three, I interrogate some of the assumptions of globalizing capitalism stemming from critical IPE world order literature and build the case to consider what a plural world order amidst globalizing processes may look like. Section Four serves as a summary to the chapter.

2. Between Historicism and Historical Materialism

Prior to considering the specificities of the Russian case, I here lay out the theoretical terrain within which the dissertation is situated. The approach offered here seeks an historicized account of structures and transformations with sensitivity towards both the synchronic (static – at a point in time) and diachronic (over time) aspects of social totalities and their interactions within a broader global system.² The materialism is reflected in an account of politics based on the material necessities of life, the production and obtainment of such necessities, and the social relations that result from this process, be they domestically, internationally or transnationally situated. I am therefore comfortable with a materialist conception of culture – one that seeks the material conditions of cultural production and its condensation in subsequent political and social

orders (see Williams, 2005) without reducing culture to purely material considerations. This may be helpfully referred to as a “critical materialist” conception of culture, whereby the predominant attention is paid towards the generation of cultural meaning from material structures (for example, the state) and social forces (see Aitken, 2004).

Historical materialist scholarship proceeds from the understanding that the history of capitalism, its encounter with other modes of production, and the manner in which it is constitutive of broader political relationships can tell us important things about social reality and the conflict that inheres within and across social spaces.³ Furthermore, asserting the primacy of the *historical* in historical materialism requires us to examine the historical specificity of particular social formations, the factors surrounding their genesis, and the contradictions contributing to their potential dissolution or transformation – both in progressive and degenerative sense. Such an account of historical specificities must always accompany any discussion as to the nature of purportedly “global” capitalism (van der Pijl, 2005; Meiksins Wood, 2002; Sutcliffe, 2002).

Robert Cox’s work has been of particular importance in the development of a “critical” orientation to historical IPE and IR more generally. Critical theory in IR/IPE is given its name because, as Cox (1986) explains “it stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about” in order to transform it. This is in contrast to problem-solving theory, which “takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action” (p. 208). This is not uncharacteristic of the early reception of Cox in mainstream IR, which emphasizes that neo-Gramscian scholarship challenges orthodox IR precisely on the basis of its proponents’ commitment to

examining the role of intellectuals in knowledge production (Tooze, 1990). For Cox, neo-realism is the quintessential problem-solving theory in that it understands (then) contemporary world order in ahistorical fashion and offers a static mode of analysis that precludes any investigations into its origins.

This broadly conceived conception of critical theory is to be distinguished from the Habermasian Critical Theory strain in IR, of which Andrew Linklater is perhaps the most prolific contributor. For many, however, critical theory suggests a wider movement within the field, encompassing Marxist, hermeneutic, post-structural, post-modern, scientific realist and feminist approaches (Mittleman, 1998; Smith, 1996). While critical/post-positivist scholarship has somewhat fuzzy boundaries, it is frequently situated as a protest movement against dominant strains of scholarship within the discipline, developing in large part as a reaction to the scientific-positivist aspirations of mainstream IR. The reception and categorization of critical and post-positivist scholarship has been influenced by the somewhat imprecise and misleading divide within IR scholarship in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, whose pace was set by Robert Keohane in his seminal 1988 article, "International Institutions: Two Approaches." Here, Keohane makes the distinction between "rationalists" – who employed positivist methodologies and adhered largely to assumptions of states as unitary, rational actors – and "reflectivists" – whose binding force is found in their commitment to understanding intersubjectivity and the mutual-constitutiveness of actors and institutions, as well as the impact of cultural norms and practices (pp. 381-82). This characterization of the discipline primarily reflects developments within American IR and, arguably, obscures the various origins, trajectories and divisions within "reflectivist" orientations. This is

especially clear when it comes to the grouping of Marxist inspired scholarship with disparate academic orientations that focus differently, if at all, on questions of political economy.

Arguably, Cox's emphasis on historical transformations makes his conception of critical scholarship distinct from others. In order to escape the uncertain terrain from which critical scholarship in IR/IPE emerged and where, in many cases, it still rests, I use the term "critical-historicist." This suggests an emphasis on viewing large-scale historical transformations in the global political economy. It seeks to avoid some ambiguous terminology, as "historicist" in the Coxian sense differs somewhat from the more self-consciously reflexive historicism as detailed below. Historical inquiry in IPE deploys a methodology predicated on viewing the "diachronic" aspects of international and domestic structures, that is their evolution, dissipation and transformation over time, as well as (but not exclusively) a "synchronic understanding" that involves "contemplating the coherence of a social relationship within its own [static] terms" (Sinclair, 1996, p. 8). Social/political totalities are therefore understood both in terms of their long-term transformations, which can only be grasped through broad historical inquiry, as well as the practices which govern their operations at any particular point in time.

This critical-historicist method of inquiry seeks to bridge the understanding/explaining divide in IR (see Hollis and Smith, 1990), offering an analysis that examines the regularities of human conduct in historical limitation, while also seeking to ascertain both the generation of intersubjective human meanings (understanding) and a limited and weaker, non-determinative form of the cause-effect

mechanisms of global change (explanation).⁴ Cast in historical terms, any explanation that may be offered is imperfect, conditional and susceptible to change, which avoids the precepts of positivist knowledge formation.⁵ Here is not the place to pursue the often maddening debate about positivism in IR. Nonetheless, I deliberately avoid using the term epistemology in reference to positivism for the confusion it may engender.⁶ My primary concern is that in the field of IR, positivism bears connotations as a broader commitment to scientific prediction vis-à-vis more interpretive forms of analysis and those which examine the exercising of power and questions of legitimacy.

Positivist approaches stand in direct contrast to historical modes of inquiry, with the latter's insistence upon historical specificity, the changing nature of social reality over time, and a particular relationship between the researcher and the historical record that obviates any clean subject/object distinction. Historical knowledge contrasts with that generated by empiricism and positivism insofar as its practitioners: 1) reject the subject/object divide (on this point see also Gill, 1993); 2) reject the fact/value distinction; 3) reject both methodological and ontological individualism; 4) reject causation between events in favour of an understanding of the meaning of historical change; 5) reject universal laws; 6) adopt a comparative historical method – comparing past and present to guide present social action (Langley, 2002, p. 19). Proponents of an historical approach to IPE openly acknowledge the need to understand both the consciousness of and conditions facing historical actors and the place of the analyst in the reconstruction of history through chosen forms of analysis (see Amoore et al., 2000; Germain, 1997). If the first aspect of a critical-historicist method as I have outlined is its attempt to understand large-scale historical transformation, the second is a reflexive

positioning whose holders are cognizant of the historical limitations to thought in both historical actors and the researcher her or himself.

That the consciousness of the researcher is an active determinant in the process of social and historical inquiry is well captured by E.P. Thompson. Thompson (1978) writes:

The real object ... is epistemologically inert: that is it cannot impose or disclose itself to knowledge: all that takes place within thought and its procedures. But this does not mean that it is inert in other ways: it need by no means be sociologically or ideologically inert. And, to cap all, the real is not 'out there' and thought within the quiet lecture theatre of our heads, 'inside here.' Thought and being inhabit a single space, which space is ourselves (p. 18).

Historical inquiry, therefore, presupposes a meaningful question posed by the inquirer, and, often, the deployment of methodological and theoretical devices to help capture the phenomenon under question. This follows from E.H. Carr's (1961/1983) suggestion that the mind of the historian enters into a relationship with the historical record, thusly obviating a strict subject/object dualism. Against charges of idealism, whereby historical interpretation remains arbitrary and premised *entirely* upon the discretion of the inquiring scholar, Carr suggests that history is not wholly created from the historian's mind and that all interpretations are not equally valid by way of this dialogue between the historian and the historical record. Though a strict objective history remains impossible so long as the historian decides which questions to ask, a purely subjectivist position is therefore eschewed based on the deep consultation with historical evidence.

Such a position has important affinities with historical materialist scholarship that focuses on the historicity of capitalism. If the historicist position articulated by Carr is defined by a rejection of completely arbitrary accounts of history by way of insisting upon the veracity of the historical record (through its relationship with the historian), historical materialism insists upon both the unity of capitalism (in that, such as it exists, it

remains a coherent system) and the specificity (in terms of its historical contingency) of capitalist processes against post-modern assertions of the primacy of discourse, text and plurality (Meiksins Wood, 1995). In both cases, *both* historical interpretation *and* historical action are constrained and informed by the material parameters of human existence.

Here I overview two ways of approaching the question of how meaning and interpretation are constrained by material parameters: historical structures and the semiotic/extra-semiotic model found in Cultural Political Economy. Within the subdiscipline of IPE, the analytical category of historical structures is best articulated in the work of Robert Cox and related “neo-Gramscian” scholarship (see also Gill, 1993). For Cox (1987), historical structures “mean persistent social practices, made by collective human activity, and transformed through collective human activity” (p.4). Structures are to be understood as produced by human agents and meaningful primarily insofar as they reflect collective human understanding in particular epochs. Structures are therefore repeated social practices which acquire a certain human objectivity, shaping human activity though not determining it in any mechanistic or straightforward sense. What begin as subjective practices become intersubjectively held beliefs among a group of people, acquiring in the process a certain human objectivity insofar as they represent consensus positions on matters of social significance (Bieler & Morton, 2001; Ives, 2006). Some critical scholars in the Coxian tradition emphasize the salience of Gramsci’s philosophy of praxis when advocating for the adoption of transformative political projects. Such projects are to be realized through particular agents and their situated knowledge (Rupert, 2003; 2005; 2006; Cox, 2002). This precludes an abstract

individualism that stands outside of the historical process and particular social and cultural formations.

Historical structures and intersubjective ideas yield meaningful content used to substantiate and articulate shared historical experiences. However, they may also serve as the means through which political “reality” is distilled and articulated as a means to generate legitimacy. Shared intersubjective understandings may be captured and utilized by political authority to circumscribe the field in which debate occurs and in which political life is to be apprehended. The strength of officially sanctioned discourse is that it demonstrates both considerable regularity, in that it deploys concepts consistently enough to preclude alternative political horizons and possibilities, and ambiguity, in that diverse and seemingly unrelated phenomena may be said to confirm the legitimacy of the discourse itself. Jenson’s (2010) notion of polysemic concepts and ideas is relevant in this regard. A polysemic idea is that which has multiple meanings and possible interpretations. In the present work, I stress that polysemic ideas may be helpful to fashion consensus by organizing political reality into a flexible, but circumscribed, picture of political reality meant to appeal to numerous and disparate people within a national political community. Polysemic ideas contain both scientific and common sense meanings; however, I suggest that they are most interesting to us here as containing enough ambiguity and capacity to be somehow relevant and meaningful to multiple groups with multiple positions.

That a concept may be polysemic is consistent with Gramsci’s notion of common sense. As I suggested in the introductory chapter, for Gramsci, common sense shapes and constrains perception. As a “chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions,” (Gramsci,

1971, p. 422), common sense lacks scientific legitimacy or consistency, yet its contents are frequently invoked by political authority to confirm our suspicions about political and social life. Hence, while we can suggest that the persistence of intersubjective ideas means that Russian responses to the advent of capitalism and democracy may be radically different from those of people in mature capitalist democracies, on the other hand we can suggest that political authority will seek to mold and shape these ideas to ensure its continued centrality and legitimacy in contemporary political life.

Though a Coxian framework brings explicit attention to the role of ideas and ideology, it would be a mistake to accord “ideas” a foundational analytical or ontological importance in historical analysis. Cox and those sympathetic or supportive of his form of analysis offer primarily historical rather than philosophical analyses. As such, they emphasize an ontology of historical change and the transformative possibility of human action. While a prominent constructivist approach to IR might wonder whether international political reality is in fact “ideas all the way down” (Wendt, 1999), analysis in the Coxian-historicist/neo-Gramscian sphere is better conceived as retaining a commitment to understanding the correspondence between prevailing ideas that govern political orders and the material interests which lie behind them, which are nonetheless imperfectly translated through symbolic, cultural and emotive representations. Ideas are not sought as the metaphysical or ontological origins of political and social life, but rather as the cultural realm of understanding and contestation, through which such political and social life is rendered meaningful and intelligible. Nor are analyses predicated on the discursive practices behind the production of identities themselves sufficient for understanding the actions of social and political actors (Laffey, 2000). Nonetheless, for

historicist scholarship, investigating shared social understandings, or intersubjective ideas, is a crucial facet to understanding the potentialities for historical change, as shared cognition is as important to the material order of social relations which it defends or challenges.

The negotiation between intersubjective ideas and material forces figures prominently in Cox's particular reading of historical materialism, one that refuses to view material circumstances as completely *determinative* of social forms and social action. Structures in this reading are therefore not taken as part of a general ontology that is insensitive to human agency, consciousness and historical change. This is in contrast to other historical materialist readings in which structures are nothing other than capital's attempts to subordinate labour and discipline labour in the production process (Bonefeld, 1992; see also Burnham, 2002). Such readings neglect the cognitive and institutional structures that mediate historical change (Bieler & Morton, 2003).

For an historical, international, and broader cultural reading this is insufficient, for it refuses to posit the existence of historical structures outside of the class struggle, or the various institutional and intersubjective orders which mediate economic relationships. Yet such recognition is crucial when seeking to understand resistance to economic globalization, as this resistance is always culturally-embedded (see Chin & Mittleman, 1997). This dissertation thus defends a notion of structure which emphasizes that behaviour is structured according to rules and tendencies, but not automatically caused by such structures. This is similar to Amin and Palan's (1996) concept of historicized political economy, which:

forces an understanding, simultaneously, of how continuities are maintained and how societies evolve and change, with both aspects drawing upon subtle interactions between 'agents in institutions' and 'institutions in agents'. The latter

metaphor draws attention to the structured influences on individual behaviour (from class, race and status to schooling, collective memory and ideology). The former metaphor highlights the dual aspect of institutions as products of collective rationalities (from laws and hard associational rules to conventions and tacit codes of conduct) and conscious actor interaction (from leaders and elites to groups in opposition and conflict). Thus, a historicized international political economy, at its best, moulds a broadly based institutionalist perspective that assimilates the distinction between structure and agency, to account for the fixity and flow of social evolution (pp. 211-12).

A similar notion is eloquently captured by E.P. Thompson in his polemic against the overly deterministic elements of Louis Althusser. In *Reading Capital*, Althusser (2006) famously declared:

the structure of the relations of production determines the *places and functions* occupied and adopted by the agents of production, who are never anything more than the occupants of these places, insofar as they are the 'supports' (*Träger*) of these functions. The true 'subjects' (in these sense of constitutive subjects of the process) are therefore not these occupants or functionaries, are not, despite all appearances, the 'obviousnesses' of the 'given' of naïve anthropology, 'concrete individuals', 'real men' - but *the definition and distribution of these places and functions. The true 'subjects' are these definers and distributors: the relations of production* (p. 180).

Thompson (1978) asserts:

The whole of life goes forward within 'structures' of such visible and invisible rules, which prohibit this action and assign a special value to that... When the rules of a game have been read or inferred, we can then assign to each player his role or function in the game. He is (in terms of those rules) the game's carrier, an element within its structure – a half-back or a goal-keeper. In exactly this sense we can say that a 'worker' is the bearer of productive relations; indeed, we have already defined her in this way when we called her a 'worker', rather than a 'second violin'. But we must take the analogy further. For we do not go on to say that the goal-keeper is *being gamed*, or the capitalist is *being capitaled*. This is what Althusser... would wish us to say. Althusser offers us a pseudo-choice: either we must say that there are no rules but only a swarm of 'individuals', or we must say that the rules *game* the player. The difference between "playing" a game and being gamed illustrates the difference between rule-governed structuration of historical eventuation (within which men and women remain as subjects of their own history) and *structuralism* (pp. 152-53; All italics are in the original).

Cox's materialism is also not straightforward. Germain (2007) defends the influence of "historical idealism" – a study of patterned human collective *mentalités* found in modes of human subjectivity and intersubjectivity – on Cox. In this reading,

human consciousness is not reducible to the material bases but rather intersubjective ideas are intertwined with material structures, and understanding the diachronic and synchronic aspects of large scale historical change requires a careful empirical investigation of both at a given conjuncture and over time. This position is not universally shared, however. Morton (2006b; 2007), for example, seeks to foreground class struggle and production in critical readings of IPE.

Loosely-situated within a wider historical-materialist camp, Coxian historicism is premised upon an understanding that limitations to transformation are to be found in the existing material order, referring both to material relations between states and the material conditions of the production which give rise to social relations and condition political forms.⁷ It is the very parameters of material life, domestically and internationally, as well as the power relations these entail and entrench through ideology, that warrant careful attention in analysis. Furthermore, recognizing a role for “ideas” in historical analysis permits that analytical weight be given to the manner in which the various material aspects of production and inter-state relations are mediated and asserted through intersubjective understandings.⁸ How such material phenomena are represented and accepted is of equal importance – that is, the representation of historical change is as crucial as the material parameters themselves.⁹

CPE attempts to bridge the material/ideational divide in political economy without reducing emergent social phenomena to either. CPE practitioners go beyond discourse analysis to examine the semiotic-material nexus of political economy. According to Jessop & Sum (2001), the intellectual leadership behind the Lancaster School of Political Economy, CPE may be considered as involving the following:

a critical, self-reflexive approach to the definition and methods of political economy and to the inevitable contextuality and historicity of its claims to knowledge. It rejects any universalistic, positivist account of reality, denies the subject-object duality, allows for the co-constitution of subjects and objects and eschews reductionist approaches to the discipline. However, in taking the 'cultural turn,' political economy should continue to emphasise the materiality of social relations and the constraints involved in processes that also operate 'behind the backs' of the relevant agents. It can thereby escape the sociological imperialism of pure social constructionism and the voluntarist vacuity of certain lines of discourse analysis, which seem to imply that one can will anything into existence in and through an appropriately articulated discourse. 'Cultural political economy' should recognize the emergent extra-discursive features of social relations and their impact on capacities for action and transformation (p. 94; see also Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008).

The contribution of the CPE approach is found in its rejection of transhistorical analysis and insistence upon the significance of path-dependency, history and institutions in shaping social outcomes; its acknowledgment of the significance of the 'cultural turn' and the centrality of the production of intersubjectivity; and its emphasis on the co-evolution of semiotic and extra-semiotic (material) processes on social formations (Jessop, 2004; Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008; Jones, 2008). Textual/ discourse analysis alone is insufficient to understand social totalities; rather, the semiotic aspects – intersubjective meaning – must be understood with the extra-semiotic (material) elements of the natural and social world (Jessop, 2004). This approach builds on critical semiotic analysis to determine the manner by which mechanisms of selection “select and consolidate radically new practices and ... stabilize routine practices.” Social reproduction is ensured through the variation, selection, retention and reinforcement of particular discourses and practices, which are then selectively recruited, inculcated and retained through particular social organizations and institutions (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008, p. 1159).

CPE seeks to avoid “soft cultural economics” and “hard political economy.” The latter is found in deterministic Marxism, neo-classical economics and approaches that reify and naturalize the economy without considering how it is constituted through practices at different scales at a given point in time. The production of intersubjective meaning helps ensure institutional stability and enables state intervention (see Jones, 2008). When addressing the significance of culture in political economy, a critical CPE approach must not overlook the disruptive aspects of economic systems. Furthermore, it must reject an ‘imperialist culturism’ which sees actors’ positions being comprised entirely of cultural meaning, in the process negating the constitutive and restraining effects of systems (Sayer, 2001).

CPE builds on Jessop’s strategic relational approach to state theory, which rejects any general theory of the state in favour of historically and temporally situated processes and struggles associated with complex institutional ensembles.¹⁰ In this reading, the state is a social relation, whose unity and coherence is always in a state of flux and subject to both structural impediments and competitive dynamics. While the state is not an abstract entity, it structures outcomes of the struggle of competing factions (Jessop, 1990; Glassman, 1999). The notion of a stable state entity is subordinated to a process-based account of political struggle and strategy. Jessop’s related concept of “state project” is best understood not by referring to what the state is as such, but rather what its proponents do to impart a form of unity upon complex social formations.¹¹ Jessop (1990, p. 9) argues that the concept of state project is intended to acknowledge that disunity of a state and hence the need to (and difficulty of) imposing a functional unity upon state organs. Such a process-account of the state sees state concepts as prone to fits of unity

and disunity and thus constantly reformulated according to various directives.¹² The state thereby imparts a degree of cohesion over fractious class and class relevant forces (see Poulantzas, 1973) and is inconceivable without an eye to the social struggles that undergird, and, in a sense, produce it. “State effects” – the processes and practices by which the state is demarcated from society – are integral to this process; an investigation of such denaturalizes the states and instead asks how the state is constantly produced and reproduced through material and discursive distinctions. The abstract appearance of the ‘state idea’ cannot be dissociated from the material practices of the state (see Mitchell, 1999).

A CPE approach directs us to examine the intersubjective element of state-produced ideas without disavowing the coercive and consensual role of the state. CPE elaborates on the notion of the state as a social relation by examining in greater detail the extent to which discursive practices couple with institutional practices to factor into the shaping of identities and subjectivities of the state system itself (Jessop & Oosterlynck, 2008). CPE informs my attempts to outline the contours of Putin era state building and detail the manner in which both state and society have been *represented* and acted upon emerging from the disintegrative social and political entity of the 1990s. In investigating the activities of the Putin regime, I wish to examine how the Russian state has sought to impart unity and consensus on Russia’s position within world order.

A critical-historicist examination of the extension of capitalist market and production relations would proceed in the space between an un-mediated view of class struggle and an overtly formal view of global and national institutions that elides questions of power and representation. An analysis cast in critical-historical terms

permits an examination of such relationships as instantiated in concrete historical forms across Western and non-Western contexts. Furthermore, on the terrain of IR and IPE scholarship, this might mean analyzing the determinative aspects of the international state system without reducing historical transformations to either the economic base or political superstructure. An historicist approach to examining the global political economy would point towards the political, social and cognitive “structures” through which global capitalism is mediated without rendering it a static, ahistorical entity or the unfolding of a particular logic. A corresponding conception of materialism – material parameters and the intersubjective understandings which enable or threaten particular political projects – is that which is adhered to in this analysis.

3. Critical IPE, World Order, and Globalizing Capitalism

My dissertation topic emerges out of debates within critical IPE concerning globalizing capitalism. Through this work I add to this discussion some considerations about the need to understand wider processes concerning a particular space vis-à-vis the capitalist world economy through mediating devices: particular state-society complexes and associated representations. This reflects my suspicion that a prominent shortcoming to the world order literature is its treatment of the non-Western world with a degree of homogeneity and crudeness. The Russian post-communist transition is a unique phenomenon in its own right that might belie some of the assumptions of critical IPE. My research concern is that the broad strokes of critical, Gramscian-inspired IPE, while providing concepts and empirical research intimately tied to wide-scale transformation, may miss specific instances. This is in itself hardly controversial, but it does have ramifications for how the international is conceived.

To start here we first must consider what is meant by internationalization and transnationalization. Robert Cox (1987) provides a helpful conception of the process of internationalization, when he writes:

The internationalizing of the state is the global process whereby national policies and practices have been adjusted to the exigencies of the world economy of international production. Through this process the nation state becomes part of a larger and more complex political structure that is the counterpart to international production. The process results in different forms of state corresponding to the different positions of countries in the world economy. The reshaping of specific state structures in accordance with the overall international political structure is brought about by a combination of external pressures (external, that is, to particular countries though arising within the overall international political structure) and realignments of internal power relations among domestic social groups. Like the internationalizing of production, the tendency toward the internationalizing of the state is never complete, and the further it advances, the more it provokes countertendencies sustained by domestic social groups that have been disadvantaged or excluded in the new domestic realignments (p. 253).

A particular state is the site of two encounters in the pressure to transform its political and economic apparatus: an *external* relation and an *internal* struggle of domestic social forces. For Cox (1987) the internationalizing of the state occurs through: “a process of interstate consensus formation regarding the needs or requirements of the world economy that takes place within a common ideological framework”; that “participation in this consensus is hierarchically structured”; and “the internal structures of states are adjusted so that each can best transform the global consensus into national policy and practice, taking account of the specific kinds of obstacles likely to arise in countries occupying the different hierarchically arranged positions in the world economy.” (p. 254). Internationalized investors utilize or influence the state apparatus in order to facilitate accumulation. Accordingly, a state subjected to pressures of internationalization witnesses struggles for influence in its component parts between those seeking greater and those seeking lesser internationalization (Glassman, 1999).

The concept of transnationalization serves to emphasize to an even greater degree the extent to which accumulation is constituted across national jurisdictions. In this reading, accumulation erases the “inside” and “outside” of global capitalism. Transnational social forces operate in multiple national jurisdictions simultaneously. The transnational does not constitute a “level” as understood in IR in conventional fashion (i.e. national level; international level; European level), but rather extends across and links different territorial levels (Van Apeldoorn, 2004). American political intervention and democracy promotion have been the processes by which transnationalization has occurred in the Global South via integrative mechanisms that link local and global accumulation (Robinson, 1996).

The key political question to be taken from the transnationalizing problematic is to what extent the hegemony of one state is achieved through the active reformulation of another state’s domestic regime, and how transformative power is operative *through* other states, rather than simply *vis-à-vis* other states, through the activity of such “transnationalized kernels.” In this sense, exchange and productive relations are transformed in a host site through the actions of embedded groups, who themselves hold certain affinities and share certain objectives with wider transnational forces. A shift from internationalization to transnationalization signifies a *partial* eclipse of conventional ontologies of individualized nation-states within the international states system through a greater focus on the constitutive social relations between and through states and the suggestion of greater transnational functional integration of capitalist relations.

States become crucial battlegrounds between various fractions. More recent transnational historical materialism theorizing emphasizes that a new division is

emerging between national and transnational class fractions. That is, those who rely primarily on transnational circuits of capital for accumulation and profitability – a transnational capitalist class (TCC) – and those who rely primarily on national circuits. This division cuts across and is transposed upon previously discernible national fractions of industrial, commercial and financial capital (W. Robinson, 2004, pp. 34-37; see also Gill & Law, 1989; Gill, 1993). In other words, the crucial class division in the contemporary age of globalization is between those who seek greater openness in *all* national economies due to their particular accumulation needs and those who seek to close national borders and rely on the protection of the state for profitability and viability. This signifies to Robinson an eclipse of national-territorial configurations of capitalist rule. In this understanding, the American state serves as the "*point of condensation* for pressures from dominant groups to resolve problems of global capitalism and for pressures to secure the legitimacy of the system overall" (W. Robinson, 2005, p. 569).

This formulation, though helpful, remains incomplete, particularly as it pertains to Russia. On the one hand, the social relations of capitalist production *extend* across numerous states and perform integrative functions that defy a territorial logic of power. This is the theoretical insight of Hardt and Negri (2000), who posit the “smooth” space of global capital and the collapse of any distinguishable inside and outside of capitalism. It is also William Robinson’s (2004), in his conception of the transnational state (TNS) as an amalgam of institutions and actors that serves as a consolidated, authoritative entity separate from territorially demarcated states. The TNS is, therefore, the institutional form of TCC rule.

Yet establishing that there is an analytical divide between transnational and national capitalists can neither tell us the relative power of the two, nor fully consider *non-capitalist* or *imperfectly capitalist* forms. On the other hand, then, crucial social relations remain buttressed and forwarded by powerful state formations, which seek preferential treatment and advantage for their nationally-based capitals (or other modes of production) and have the capacity to react against the encroachment of what remains “foreign” (and threatening) capital. Furthermore, the activities of capitalists (or statist economic elements) take place in particular national contexts in which greater legitimacy is sought.

While internationalization/ transnationalization are helpful analytic concepts to express a state’s adjustment of the global political economy and the composition of wider social relations, they are best conceived as allowing an interesting empirical question in the case of Russia concerning the extent to which such processes occur alongside Russian state capitalism and Russian political authority’s reemphasis on Russia’s sovereignty in global affairs. The Russian state has presided over the national political economy’s integration into the global political economy, managing the contradictions and conflicts inherent in this broad transformation while attempting to build consensus within Russian society. The increasingly international basis for accumulation for large firms has coexisted with the Putin regime’s perceived need to reconstitute the Russian’s state’s domestic authority, legitimacy, capacity and security and favour Russian private and state capital. Somewhat paradoxically, the Russian political economy has become further integrated into the global political economy while Russian political authority has sought to develop a public philosophy and understanding of world order that emphasizes

Russia's legitimate claims to sovereignty in global politics and the right to conduct its affairs in a manner of its own choosing. The continued transition towards a market economy has intersected with the crisis of governability stemming from the 1990s and the Putin project of reconstituting central authority and managing globalization processes to strengthen Russia's relative position amongst states and challenge American unipolarity. The Russian state,¹³ resisting a strong version of the American hegemonic neoliberal imperative, retains and accumulates lucrative and productive assets; gives preference to Russian state and private capital while setting rules for Western investors; and challenges the geographical spread of the Western bloc – i.e. through active stances against NATO expansion to Ukraine and Georgia.

The internationalization/transnationalization problematic is simply one component of a configurative understanding of world order. In an application of his conception of historical structures to the study of global political and economic relations, Cox (1986) emphasizes the need to understand historical structures and the configuration of world politics through analyzing the interplay of material capabilities, ideas and institutions.¹⁴ This typology is then applied to investigate three spheres of activity: 1) *social forces* (reflecting the organization of production); 2) *forms of state* (reflecting state-society complexes); and 3) *world orders* (the configuration of forces bearing upon states) (Cox, 1986, pp. 218-221; Cox, 1987; Bieler & Morton, 2004). World orders are best understood historically and investigated according to the extent to which they are stable. For examples, world orders – such as *pax Britannica* (mid 19th century until World War II) and *pax Americana* (post World War II until the contemporary period) –

exhibit periods of greater, lesser, or no hegemonic leadership according to the particular constellation of material capabilities, ideas and institutions (Cox, 1996b).

During periods of strong hegemonic leadership, “concepts of control” – the world view of a particular hegemonic class, which is embedded to define the limits of the possible for society at large (van der Pijl, 1998, p. 51) – are prevalent and innocuous. This occurs at the international level, as well.¹⁵ It is my assertion that during the Putin era, we can see powerful fault lines develop within Russian state and society whereby the hegemonic position of the United States has been challenged in spite of the fact that the Russian political economy is increasingly capitalist and integrated within structures of the capitalist global political economy. In fact, Russian officials cultivate an indigenous vernacular to express dissatisfaction with the fundamental premises of liberal internationalism and American hegemony, thereby signifying that liberal capitalist sociability has not become fully engrained amongst the Russian elite or society as a whole and that Russian elites have not fully accepted a lesser role in international political life.

Cox (2002) has recently broadened the scope for investigating the ideational, cultural and intersubjective aspects of contemporary world order through an appeal for understanding how global transformations are filtered through civilizations and socio-cultural consensus. Civilizations are not-territorially bounded entities and not subject to laws of development; rather, they reflect a correspondence between intersubjective ideas and material conditions, without being reduced to the latter. Cox’s call for a plurality of civilizations is based on his recognition of the Western pretense to universal civilization, which is found in post-Cold War triumphalism, and the propensity for concentrated

American power to enforce this civilization throughout the world. Furthermore, the existence of multiple civilizations is obscured by the pretense of neo-liberal globalizing imperatives. Civilizations are the historical dimension of culture and entities of the long duree; not only are they the products of the historical dimensions of intersubjective consciousness, they are the spheres in which alternative futures can be imagined. In this dissertation I remain agnostic on whether the Russian challenge to Western liberal hegemony should be viewed as a progressive or regressive development. Other IR scholars are less reserved on this front.¹⁶ Instead, I wish to demonstrate the ideas with which the Russian state articulates and questions this order through appealing to the intrinsic qualities of Russian civilization.

The internal “state-society complex” and interstate political relationships are examples of the “extra-semiotic” conditions that must be considered when assessing the significance of intersubjective meaning. The domestic encounter between various social forces does not occur in a vacuum but in and through manifestly political relationships within the international system. Therefore, while a framework of “states as such” – politically and territorially sovereign units – cannot adequately capture transborder productive and economic relations, one may trace these relations as they are instantiated in a variety of state forms in any given historical epoch, under particular world orders. These state forms, though partly constituted by transnational forces, nonetheless vie with one another for supremacy in the world order. American hegemony is precarious, as the continued integration of national states into a pacified Lockean heartland of liberal-democratic states is met historically by Hobbesian contender states (van der Pijl, 1998). The history of capitalist expansion is thus marked by an economic relationship – capital’s

unequal exchange with labour – and a political relationship – “an unequal exchange between the capital rich and the capital poor, including between wealthy and poor countries” (Boswell & Chase-Dunn, 2000, pp. 20-21). This becomes particularly important to any attempt to comprehend how various non-capitalist spheres have encountered political and economic forces stemming from national political “elsewheres.” As I argue throughout this work, the incomplete incorporation of the Hobbesian contender state of Russia into the Lockean liberal democratic pact will yield geopolitical speculation, a mixture of compromise towards, accommodation to and rejection of the core’s dictates, and a corresponding vernacular developed to express this situation.

Hegemony in the Coxian/neo-Gramscian tradition is understood as first constituted in a particular territorial state before extending outward to establish hegemony across other states. While such a conception allows us to consider international political, economic and social relationships stemming from a dominant state, it is incomplete. A full appreciation of hegemony requires a greater investigation of ideas, consciousness, interactive knowledge systems and the historical process (Gill, 1993). Furthermore, critical scholars must challenge the easy assumption that hegemony diffuses from North to South or from core to periphery (Pasha, 2006). Specific attention must be paid to concrete historical entities and the multifaceted relationship that ethno-national units have with global political economy. The “state” has different connotations everywhere, and such connotations are not immediately swept aside as units become incorporated into the global political economy (van der Pijl, 2005). Historicist approaches should resist the urge to apply Western Eurocentric generalizations to the

historical process of state formation and instead look at the historical specificity of states (Bilgin & Morton, 2002). The status of weak, peripheral or semi-peripheral states has been poorly understood in much contemporary critical IPE scholarship about world order (Worth, 2008). World order analyses have failed to understand the complexities of primitive accumulation and the export of capitalist sociality from the historical capitalist heartland to the global periphery (Shilliam, 2004). Further attention could be paid to the manner in which domestic social orders constitute any particular (national) state apparatus in the reformulation of policy and legal frameworks.¹⁷ Importantly, developments out of the ashes of a previously-viable *counter-hegemonic* world order warrant closer scrutiny than world order thinking has hitherto afforded.

We would do well to consider such criticisms of world order thinking when examining Russia's prolonged transition from the Soviet Union to greater incorporation into the global political economy. A deeper look at the intersubjective ideas accompanying Russia's transition is warranted: this transition has been met by the persistence and resurrection of pre-Bolshevik conceptions found in Russian cultural, historical and philosophical traditions, which resonate within contemporary thinking and discourse. Russian thinkers and elites pay considerable attention to establishing a world order that looks radically different from that which is constituted by American unipolarity or hegemony. As the national political economy becomes (however imperfectly) integrated into the global political economy, Russian elites continue to seek a world order in which Russia has greater authority. Furthermore, long standing traditions of the Russian/Soviet state's propensity to intervene into the domestic political economy as a means of improving its own international standing (Bunce, 1993) suggest that while the

Russian political economy is subjected to the same challenges of capital accumulation and wealth creation, such processes are managed with an eye to the state's relative international standing. In other words, in the case of Russia, the general imperative of accumulation intersects with persistent challenges faced by the state to modernize and develop the economic infrastructure of a semi-peripheral power as well as the historical question of reconstituting and consolidating the post-communist Russian state.

Such an approach to Russia enhances our understanding of world order. It would involve investigating particular state-society complexes and national cultural representations to better understand global transformations in a contemporary setting. This is of crucial importance in the case of post-communist Russia amid the uncertainty of its transitional social, political and economic order and therefore in need of greater critical scrutiny. Furthermore, a focus on historical structures suggests that collective social action can and may take place at any particular level of analysis. In this sense, both the pressures exerted by the global system on a particular place and the many forms of resistance or contestation, progressive or otherwise, can be acknowledged. The relationship between the particular and the global in this sense is better understood as dialectical as opposed to determinative in any unidirectional fashion.

4. Theoretical Approach and Its Application to the Russian Case

In this dissertation I remain committed to understanding the material base of the prolonged Russian transition from the position of a Soviet state socialist counter hegemon to a form of state capitalism in an emerging multipolar world order. However, I seek to contribute to critical IPE literature by challenging an overtly materialist conception of global capitalism and world order with that which is historicized through the experiences,

practices and interpretations offered by the Putin regime. In other words, I seek to understand both the material processes of Russia's integration into a capitalist global political economy as a resource dependent, executive-led form of state capitalism and the intersubjective understandings and state-sanctioned representations of Russian national political life and world order that accompany these processes.

My critical reading therefore operates along two lines. First, I want to understand the ways in which the executive of an increasingly significant national political economy, which historically has existed outside of the capitalist core of the global political economy, is offering a vision of world order that questions the postulates of American liberal democratic hegemony. Second, I want to understand how this executive has sought to legitimate its own practices within Russian society and insulate itself from criticisms from without.

My investigation is premised neither on an economistic reading of the extension and consolidation of class forces across national boundaries, nor on an "imperialist culturalism" that explains all social developments according to purported cultural properties. Instead, it considers both the "semiotic" (intersubjective) and "extra-semiotic" (social and material) elements of Russia's transition, the consolidation of state capitalism under Putin, and the Putin regime's corresponding dissatisfaction with a world order predicated on liberal democratic precepts and American hegemonic leadership. A purely materialist reading is incapable of capturing Russia's uneasy and sometimes antagonistic relationship with liberal capitalist democracies and its leaders' stubborn ambitions for power and influence in global affairs. Furthermore, explaining the practices of the Putin regime according to purportedly archetypical characteristics of

Russian political culture is insufficient to understand the manner in which culture has been mobilized to suit the imperatives of political economy.

Russia's absorption into the capitalist global political economy has come as a "Hobbesian contender state" operating vis-à-vis the "Lockean heartland" of US-led liberal capitalist democracies. Hence, this dissertation is a reflection on how Russia did not become a liberal, democratic, capitalist prototype and seamlessly fit into an American conception of liberal democratic world order on material or ideational levels. In historicizing the notion of world order and examining it by way of the words and practices of the Putin regime, I investigate the manner in which geopolitical and geoeconomic contestation has been represented by the Russian state through a geocultural lens. The Putin regime has used the language of cultural difference to consolidate and legitimate regime state capitalist practices and challenge the liberal democratic precepts of American unipolarity and hegemony. In other words, the Putin regime is animating a series of concepts to contest American hegemony on an ideational and material basis through a deeper, but selective, engagement with ideas associated with Russian particularity.

Collectively, I call these state-sanctioned concepts Russian alternative understandings of world order. They are comprised of a series of polysemic ideas and constitute a form a common sense that serves as the Putin regime's preferred representation of national and global political and economic life. Representatives of the Russian state draw on a deeper tradition of Russian cultural, political and philosophical thinking to articulate Russian particularity and sanctify a form of executive-led state capitalism. This permits two insights that augment purely material readings of the

phenomenon in question. First, the purportedly exceptional or anomalous practices of the Putin regime may be understood according to a wider and deeper array of Russian thinking and practices. Second, the Putin regime seeks to render its contemporary practices intelligible based on the argument that it legitimately represents Russian society because of its attentiveness to, and re-creation of, such traditions.

5. Summary

In this chapter, I outlined a critical historicist approach to understand world order phenomena. Such an approach incorporates intersubjective meaning into an analysis of broad political and economic transitions without reducing phenomena to ideational or material components. Furthermore, I highlighted theoretical and practical shortcomings to the world order literature in understanding a “peripheral” case such as Russia. In the next chapter, I provide a synopsis of Russia’s material position in contemporary world order. This position is the backdrop against which Russia’s alternative world order concepts must be understood.

¹ For a helpful overview, see Worth (2008) and Bieler & Morton (2004).

² Note the distinction raised by Morton (2003) in defending Gramsci’s purported “absolute historicism”, by which one may examine current political and social questions through historical ideas against “austere historicism”, by which the historian or thinker analyzes ideas exclusively in their historical context.

³ Meiksins Wood (1995) defends a version of Marxist scholarship in the historical materialist tradition vis-à-vis accounts of unilinear capitalist evolution. She argues in favour of “a historical materialism that allows no pre-ordained and unilinear sequence, in which the origin of capitalism – or any other mode of production – is something that needs to be explained, not presupposed, and which looks for explanations not in some transhistorical natural law but in specific social relations, contradictions and struggles” (p. 6).

⁴ This conception builds on a number of historicist IPE scholars, notably Cox. A very helpful summary is found in Bieler & Morton, 2001.

⁵ According to Smith (1996), positivism entails the following: 1) logicism – that an objective confirmation of scientific theory should conform to deductive logic; 2) empirical verificationism- that only those statements which are empirically verifiable or falsifiable (synthetic) or true by definition (analytic) are considered scientific; 3) the enforcement of a theory and observation distinction- in that observation and theories are separate, with observations being theory-neutral; and 4) a Humean theory of causation- a causal relationship is established through the discovery of invariant temporal relationship between observed events (p. 15).

⁶ This follows from Colin Wight's insistence that positivism is a philosophy of science: it contains several ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. Positivism is therefore not simply "an epistemology"; rather, according to Wight, it does not privilege any particular epistemological stance (pp. 30-35).

⁷ Richard Falk (1997) refers to Coxian thinking, along with the work of E.H. Carr and Hedley Bull, as comprising a "critical realist tradition" within IR (pp. 39-45).

⁸ Morton (2006b) emphasizes the manner by which historical meaning is derived from concrete social formations, as opposed to a post-Marxist 'discursive' rendition of Gramsci's contributions.

⁹ I thank Randall Germain for this point.

¹⁰ For epistemological purists, the inclusion of Jessop in a historicist reading of historical materialism may be grounds for concern given his reliance on realist epistemological premises. These are not differences that warrant charges of incompatibility. See Mark Smith (2000) for a helpful review of the complex epistemology of Bob Jessop's state theory.

¹¹ A similar approach, though that without an eye to the economic 'base', may be found in Joel Migdal (2001). By way of his "state in society" approach, Migdal scrutinizes the state's ability to impart unity and standardization upon a complex social order.

¹² Jessop (1990) adds, "To understand the never-ending and ever-renewed process of state formation it is not enough to examine its institutional building blocks. We must also consider the 'state projects' which bond these blocks together with the result that the state gains a certain organization unity and cohesiveness of purpose. A state without these properties is a state only in name. It does not exist" (p. 353).

¹³ See Chapter One for my explanation of what I conceive of as the Russian state in this dissertation.

¹⁴ Cox has been accused of over-emphasizing the material side of this 'trialectic' (Jessop and Sum, 2001)

¹⁵ Whether Gramsci's work can be used unproblematically to capture hegemony at the international level has been vigorously debated within critical IPE. Germain and Kenny (1998) question whether the "new Gramscians" have adequately interpreted Gramsci's work, as they dispute that Gramsci's concepts can be legitimately "internationalized"; that is, used to explain phenomena beyond the level of a national state-society complex. The authors are adamant in insisting that Gramscian concepts of hegemony, civil society, and cultural understandings are efficacious only within national contexts. Rupert (1998) refutes the claim that Gramsci be considered primarily applicable to the nation-state. Morton (2003) defends the reflexive purposes of Gramsci's purported absolute historicism, by which the historian or thinker analyzes ideas exclusively in their historical context, thereby suggesting that his thoughts and concepts can be applied fruitfully to understand the international level. Murphy (1998) suggests that the Gramsci most relevant to the study of international relations is the one who theorized and sought solutions to the problems facing Italy in its development in the early 20th century amidst a broader capitalist economic and political order, as opposed to the one who simply focused on issues of statism. Morton (2007) presents Gramsci as a more sophisticated spatial and scalar thinker. Sassoon (2001) argues that Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and passive revolution are relevant and helpful to theorize globalization. Jessop (2006) provides an in-depth analysis of the manner by which Gramsci's understanding of politics was inherently and complicatedly "spatialized." I prefer to view the matter in a manner similar to Cox (1983): Gramsci's works are themselves thoroughly historicized and potentially capable of offering insights into contemporary international relations.

¹⁶ Martin Shaw (2004), for example, conceives of the Global Western State, an authoritative power bloc comprised of NATO states and allies, in relatively benign terms, whereas the likes of Russia and China are quasi-imperialist contenders who do not enjoy the same legitimate use of violence.

¹⁷ One notable attempt to scrutinize thinking on internationalization through an examination of domestic social forces can be found in Baker (1999). Through a detailed examination of Britain, Baker criticizes the internationalization literature for its imprecise handling of its core concept and ignoring the domestic base of internationalized power.

Chapter Three – From Crisis, to Recovery, to “Sovereign Integrationist”: Examining Russia’s Post-Communist Transitional Political Economy

1. Introduction

Since the collapse of communism, the building of a market economy in Russia has been characterized by a strong executive hand. As the terms and conditions of private ownership are often determined by the Russian state, which itself has assumed ownership or control of lucrative productive assets, Russian “state capitalism” bends some of the fundamental tenets of neoliberal globalization while not being entirely incompatible with the precepts of a market economy. In the Putin era, a degree of stability and predictability has been coupled with an emergent state-produced normative order, as the Putin regime has sought a place for Russia in the contemporary global political economy. It has rejected many of the precepts of world order: Western, liberal-democratic ideas are displaced by those derived from Russian history and philosophy, primarily those which emphasize autonomy, sovereignty, and Russia’s inherent right to determine national development priorities and practices. These ideas are central to any reflection on Russia’s emergence from the Soviet system, through a period of disorder and turmoil in the 1990s into a world order deemed by the Putin regime to necessitate geopolitical might, the state’s command of resources and economic competitiveness as prerequisites for the Russian state’s well-being. I call this position “sovereign integrationist,” one in which the Russian state articulates the need to manage globalization processes and internal political developments according to its own terms while selectively integrating into the global political economy.

In this chapter, I examine Russia's transitional political economy in the 1990s – its incomplete and imperfect adoption of free market principles, institutions and normative order – as well as Russia's purported resurgence under Putin. While at the level of national political economy, Putin era Russia has undoubtedly witnessed an improvement in its overall material conditions, it remains imperfectly integrated into the global political economy, dependent upon the extraction and sale of resources and severely uncompetitive in the production of goods.

Nonetheless, the Russian political economy is now host to a relatively stable set of norms and understandings regarding the terms of accumulation: the Russian state, exemplified by the presidential administration, is the arbiter of who controls major productive assets. Domestic capital is to acknowledge the undisputed political supremacy of the Kremlin in Russian domestic affairs. International capital and political forces are to acknowledge Russia's right to construct a domestic political system in a manner of the Kremlin's choosing. Russia is imperfectly integrated into the global political economy: it remains challenged by a semi-peripheral status that suggests resource extraction's dominant role in the state's and economy's well-being, the persistence of geoeconomic/geopolitical struggle against the core, and the crafting of a centralized political structure to manage economic and political tensions inherent in Russia's prolonged transition to a market economy. These elements are investigated in this chapter and form the material basis by which Russia's alternative world order concepts are to be understood.

This chapter is the second of two in which I undertake my major engagement with theoretical material. In Chapter Two, I situated my work within international political

economy and historical materialist literature, arguing for the need to elaborate on questions of world order by analyzing the cultural content inherent in alternative visions of world order. In the current chapter, I outline Russia's material position in world order and the contemporary global political economy as well as the limitations inherent in this position. This material position serves as the basis from which the world order concepts elaborated upon throughout this thesis originate. These concepts are meant to provide alternative Russian understandings of world order and contribute towards the transition to a post-hegemonic world order, a world order that Russia see itself as a significant actor in.

In this chapter, I examine the place of Russia as a sovereign integrationist in the global political economy during the Putin era using the following progression.

In Section Two, I consider Russia as one of a number of states that combine illiberal (by Western pluralist standards) political practices at the regime level with some facets of market developments. In the case of Russia, this tendency developed in spite of the initial expectation in the post-Soviet period by the Yeltsin government, American state, and international financial institutions (IFIs) alike that Russia would follow the twin tracks of liberal-democratic and capitalist development.

In Section Three, I demonstrate the chaotic nature of the post-Soviet transition and suggest that this period was characterized by an absence of both the legitimacy and institutional/routinized basis for market practices. Putin era efforts to consolidate authority and legitimacy are to be understood on this basis.

In Section Four, I consider how the Putin project consists of bringing order to the post-Soviet state of affairs and providing a stable normative order. However imperfect

by Western standards, this normative order consolidates capitalism by providing a relatively stable set of expectations and assumptions by which accumulation can occur in Russia, albeit to the dismay of those seeking unfettered access to invest in Russia's lucrative assets. This order makes political and economic decision making and competition dependent upon the assent of the presidential administration and prioritizes Russia's supposed national interests over other concerns. Russian state capitalism proceeds on this basis.

In Section Five, I demonstrate the precarious position that Russia as "sovereign integrationist" occupies in the contemporary global political economy. This position is characterized by an over-reliance on mineral resources, severe uncompetitiveness of manufacturing, increased autonomy vis-à-vis IFIs and only partial incorporation into global economic structures. A summary of the chapter follows in Section Six.

2. The Russian State amidst the Transition toward a Market Economy

History has enabled us to declare that the Russian transition from the Soviet period has violated the expectations and hopes of normative liberal theory. Early post-Soviet thinking was dominated by the democratization theory of the "transitologist", "consolidologist" or "orthodox" schools found in comparative and Russian studies, which view the phenomenon of political transition in post-communist societies as one that may be compared to earlier democratic transitions in Southern Europe and Latin America. According to this line of thinking, post-communist transitions may be seen as a part of a wider series of regime changes that may be studied with the same conceptual tools, irrespective of the geopolitical or culture specificity of the political entity in question (Schmitter & Karl, 1994).¹ Transitologists use generalist and positivist methodologies

that abstract and plot a number of variables supposedly common to all transitioning regimes.

This school of thinking cannot account for fundamental differences between post-communism and other transitions – in the nature of authoritarian rule, modes of transition, the international context of transition and the transitional agenda. Such differences render post-communist and other states beyond being comparable in any meaningful sense (Bunce, 1995 & 1999). Furthermore, post-communist states themselves varied considerably in their transition experiences according to internal and external processes, making the very category of post-communist state questionable (Agh, 1999). Contrary to their assertions of using an objective, positivist methodology, orthodox approaches to democratization remain overtly normative, as they seek the means by which authoritarian regimes achieve pluralism at the elite and party level without assessing the material conditions accompanying such transitions (see Waylen, 1994). Orthodox approaches to democratization neither appreciate the challenging task of constructing civil society and liberal institutions in societies that were hardly independent of the state, nor account for the role of ethno-nationalism in filling the normative void left by the collapse of a communist “state-sustaining ideology,” which in turn undermined liberal democracy in the early post-Soviet period (Schöpflin, 1991, 1995 and 2000).²

More importantly, perhaps, with a focus on how best to achieve stable institutions, domestic political stability and political pluralism, democratization literature also cannot acknowledge that capitalism has been built in Russia historically from the state downward and collectivist orientations and anti-market sentiments remain powerful

in Russian society (Nesvetailova, 2004b). Indeed, when viewed in terms of the *longue duree*, the imperatives of state building have trumped capital accumulation in Russia—one cannot examine Russia without understanding how geopolitics, self-preservation, and leaders' attempts to attain parity with the West have led to state incursions into the political economy (Derluguian, 2001).³ Russia's historical experience has coincided with a compelling trend in the global political economy in recent years, and one which democratization theory has been incapable of accounting for – the emergence of a series of non-liberal, non-democratic, if not quasi-authoritarian, forms of state whose representatives selectively adopt liberalization initiatives alongside sovereign dictates in order to manage globalization processes for national interests.

While it would be misleading to state that Russia's experience with democracy has been categorically poor, we can state that its engagement with Western (neo)liberal democratic and economic norms has been contentious in the post-Soviet era. Russia's integration into the global political economy following the collapse of the Soviet Union would not take place according to the strong liberal reading of globalization: unfettered market access, robust pluralism and diminished state ownership or management of productive industries. The reassertion of the state's presence in the Russian economy does not represent the abandonment of a broadly liberalizing and marketizing path, but simply re-embeds the state in the process of creating a market economy, wherein it establishes the political legitimacy and social base required for further liberalization and economic restructuring (Nesvetailova, 2005). Indeed, Russia may be on the vanguard of demonstrating the twinning of liberal economic reforms and authoritarian political inclinations: the illiberal and exceptional (i.e. the manifestation of sovereign entitlement)

aspects of Putin's presidential administration were elements of Putin's liberal market reforms (Prozorov, 2008). Traits deemed exceptional to the Russian case and indicative of an inability to apply purely market and pluralist political methods are rather to be thought of as the norm for a number of non-Western states outside of the reach of Western hegemony.

Russia's adoption of the model of "development state", comprised of state directed long term development, state mobilization of resources to achieve development within the general framework of a market economy, and political authoritarianism, facilitates the national political economy's adaptation to global competition while distancing it from the Western model of liberal democratic capitalism (Ferdinand, 2007). In this present situation, Russia is caught between two tendencies: the fact that central leadership is buoyed by other states' dependencies on its resources and the regime's expressed desire to liberalize the domestic economy, trade and investment climate while gradually reducing government control over productive assets (Zhuplev, 2008). Putin era Russia exhibits what at first glance appear as contradictory tendencies: the prolonged introduction of a capitalist economy, the continued questioning of the liberal postulates of globalization, and continued suspicion over the existence of an independent capitalist class that operates outside of the control of state mechanisms (Sakwa, 2008a).

Russia is part of a large group of emerging non-Western states who, through the use of sovereign wealth funds and state corporations, are coming to threaten Western predominance in the global political economy. While such states are sometimes representative of nationalist impulses and overtones, they are better understood as adhering to the strategy of acquiring assets and accepting the inherently competitive

nature of accumulation. The increased prevalence of “statist globalizers” should not be construed as completely hostile to foreign capital, however. In spite of highly visible acts by Putin that threaten the ability of foreign firms to acquire productive assets in Russia, the country reveals the deepening of ties between foreign capital and Russian state capital. Nationalistic overtures on the part of the Putin regime and Russian elites are at best part of the story, as Russian firms are becoming integrated into transnational networks (Harris, 2009).⁴

While the Putin era is distinct for the increasing centralization of authority (see this chapter, below), it cannot be said that Yeltsin era Russia was a successful case of the spontaneous development of liberal economic practices. Coercive measures by the Russian state, particularly in the position of the Russian president, have accompanied Russia’s adoption of market principles since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Contrary to assertions of the viability of Russia’s liberal project of democratic elections and a burgeoning civil society (Weigle, 2000), critical scholars highlight the decidedly undemocratic measures required to push forth free market reforms in the face of strong resistance. This came through the increasingly autocratic rule of Yeltsin and intense collaboration with IFIs. The drive to free markets in the immediate post-Soviet era in Russia was a top-down process, a move that constituted the de-socialization and de-democratization of Russian post-Soviet transition for the purposes of the longer term consolidation of the market economy. The process is referred to by Gowan (1999, p. 189) as “inverted Leninism” and by Reddaway & Glinski (2001) as “market Bolshevism.”

Neo-Gramscian scholarship focuses on the hegemonic consolidation of liberalizing regimes as aspects of a broader project of transnational class power, highlighting the affinities between the Russian domestic political regime and international, primarily American, interests.⁵ Neo-Gramscians locate the late Soviet era and early post-Soviet Russian transition in the context of a Western hegemonic project and the diffusion of Western cultural norms, with Yeltsin forging the stability under which a new hegemonic project of capitalist accumulation could occur. Nonetheless, acute political fragmentation, economic turmoil and lawlessness within post-Soviet Russia prevented any clear legitimacy of a hegemonic project within civil society. Yeltsin's Russia in turn served to partially legitimate the *global* project of neo-liberalism, despite the fact that efforts at instilling a mature capitalist class for whom liberal-democracy provided the accepted social, political and economic norms were only partial at best. In Gramscian terms, Yeltsin may then be viewed as a "Caesarist" quasi-dictator, an authoritarian and executive-led response to an impasse in the struggle between social forces (Worth, 2005, pp. 93-112; see also Lester, 1995 and 2000).

This project combined the continued authority and rule of Soviet-era *nomenklatura* system of controlled, hierarchical bureaucratic appointments with international and organic intellectuals; the latter assisted Yeltsin's regime in delegitimizing potential counter-hegemonic projects found in those opposed to Yeltsin's rule, de-socializing and de-democratizing the Russian post-Soviet transition for the purposes of the longer term consolidation of the market economy. Economic liberalization and altered domestic power relations in post-Soviet Russia and the former Soviet sphere can be understood as a part of a wider "globally constituted process" of

capitalist restructuring along neo-liberal principles with the involvement of international financial institutions (IFIs) and the United States (Bedirhanoglu, 2004). In the early 1990s Russian shock therapists, IFIs and American leaders combined with the intellectual leadership of Harvard professor Jeffrey Sachs⁶ to usher in domestic institutional reform towards an open free market economy with the understanding that this would clear the vestiges of state socialist rule. Russian reformers and international colleagues sought price liberalization and financial stabilization prior to the privatization of industry in order to alter power relations within the post-Soviet Russian society. They sought deep cuts in government subsidies to industry (thereby rendering them uncompetitive), creating a market for resources. Enterprises would become dependent on private investment/credit. In the absence of subsidies, economic activity would become commercialized, with the assumption that foreign capital would enter. Foreign capital plus a nascent class of entrepreneurs would then displace rent-seeking managerial elite and state officials (N. Robinson, 2004a, p. 26).

Putin's "negotiation" with the oligarchs and efforts to construct a strong central authority may have changed the equation envisioned by early Russian reformers, IFIs, US leadership and liberal intellectuals. Nonetheless, it is possible to view the Yeltsin and Putin years as a definitive settlement on the question of private property in post-Soviet Russia, ensuring that, save for in the most exceptional cases, the rules of the game for private ownership of productive and lucrative assets have been established without the possibility of a full scale reversal to state socialized ownership.

3. Disintegration and the Shaky Terrain of Russian Capitalism

The authoritarian and international elements of Russia's initial post-communist transitions were coupled with the exceptional nature of Russian "capitalism" in the post-communist transitional period. The post-Soviet Russian political economy cannot be understood as a mature capitalist system, in which norms, laws and processes associated with the ownership of private property are largely internalized and uncontested, but one beset with a number of challenges. One must look at Russian state and society as a continuation of Soviet foundations to determine the extent to which post-Soviet conditions represent a "smooth" space within which capitalism can operate, for either domestic or international interests.

Non-monetarized social relations did not simply dissolve with the Soviet Union. Rather, they constituted a phenomenon which continued into the post-Soviet period in spite of attempts to instill market discipline in the forging of new forms of socio-economic coordination. This condition was exacerbated rather than resolved by actions undertaken to promote liberalization. The monetarist drive along with financial liberalization in the 1990s created severe liquidity problems in the industrial sector and the emergence of barter trade, non-payment and other forms of endogenous credit creation in Russia which were decidedly not indicative of a monetary economy (Krueger & Linz, 2002; Nesvetailova, 2004a). In light of this imperfect monetarization, the new elite in post-Soviet Russia is a complex and uneasy mix of a "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" (which must be understood in light of the historic importance of the bureaucracy in Russia) alongside a banking/speculative sector, with close ties to international finance. Together, this suggests "a peculiar symbiosis of the traditional corporate-bureaucratic

order with the power of comprador and usurer capital” (Nesvetailova, 2004c, pp. 52-54). The contemporary Russian political economy remains thoroughly infused with bureaucratic ownership and management at all levels, as liberal commentators are quick to lament (Shevtsova, 2007, pp. 118-131).

Russia continues to violate the liberal utopia of purely market transactions unfettered by political irrationality or obstinacy. Russian reformers and their international counterparts felt that if successful, the introduction of a market economy could undermine particularist relationships by universalizing exchange relations and subjecting those who hold economic resources to market discipline (N. Robinson, 2004b, pp. 9-12). This has not yet fully occurred in post-Soviet Russia. Market institutions (money and corporate ownership) have functioned at a transactional but not juridical level. Such a “shallow marketization” results from an imperfect grafting of a free market order on society itself. The unstable social foundations of monetary and corporate orders complicate attempts at rational, universal ordering (Woodruff, 2000). This is particularly troublesome for international organizations seeking to instill relevant institutions, as it acts as a powerful disincentive for foreign investment in Russia. Contracts are still not consistently adhered to and property rights remain imperfectly guaranteed by law; the personal power of the executive to settle disputes between contending factions bares similarities to an historical pattern of development stretching deep into pre-Bolshevik Russia (Hedlund, 2008). The systematic accumulation of capital – that is, a fully-institutionalized and routinized process free from particularist relations and intervening political authority – is not a reality in post-Soviet Russia. The national political economy

continues to be beset by imperfect monetization and market relations, making any smooth operation of capitalist production or exchange relations difficult.

If post-Soviet Russia was not fully capitalist in terms of the use of money for exchange and accumulation, neither was it from the standpoint of production: the majority of wealth in the 1990s was not derived from the creation and appropriation of surplus value. Rather, we can think of Russia's still emerging political economy as containing elements of a "predatory/extractive system":

The central role played by the Soviet inheritance suggests that Russia has an unusual kind of predatory social formation, in which the basis of the property income of the dominant class is not the present labor of the population, as is normally the case in a class system, but rather, indirectly, their past labor under the former Soviet state socialist system. This past labor, together with the gifts of nature, enables this class to derive a large income out of surplus value created in world capitalism. Perhaps the best term for this system is a predatory/extractive system, whose property-owning class is a mixture of landlords, merchants, money-lenders, speculators, revenue-skimmers, misappropriation of public funds, and extortionists, along with some capitalists (Kotz, 2001; see also Lane, 2000).

Contemporary commentary reinforces the view that the Russian political economy remains largely extractive in nature, with low level of investment going towards diversifying the production base (Wood, 2007). This notion is reflected in figures presented later in this chapter, which demonstrate the uncompetitive nature of Russian production and Russia's reliance on the extraction of resources.

Transitional Russia was indeed a risky place for capital, evidenced by the massive capital flight of the 1990s (Mauro & Loungani, 2001). The speculative nature of post-Soviet "capitalism" is reflected in patterns of foreign direct investment (FDI) that did occur. *Vis-à-vis* all post-Communist states, FDI in Russia was comparatively lower in the post Soviet-period (i.e. 1989-2001) both per capita and as a percentage of GDP. Furthermore, that which did enter Russia as "foreign" money was often in the form of repatriated capital that once exited the country through capital flight. The above suggests

that the impact of FDI in Russia has been relatively low (N. Robinson, 2004a, pp.27-29). The influx of short term portfolio inflows and the absence of long term foreign investment in the productive sector reinforce Russia's peripheral status and suggest that it is not yet fully integrated into the dense webs of investment indicative of the capitalist core (Nesvetailova, 2004b). The relative absence of FDI in post-Soviet Russia suggests a low or selective transnationalization of production. Such transnationalization, which is the central theoretical and empirical observation of transnational historical materialists like William Robinson (2004), did not occur systematically in Russian space during the initial post-Soviet period. Rather, it is at best a protracted phenomenon that has occurred while the Putin regime has subordinated foreign investment to the security imperatives of the Russian state and the accumulation imperatives of Russian state and private capital. Such "material" indicators are telling of the particular state of Russian capitalism.

Of equal importance is the manner in which capitalism has developed under conditions of social disintegration, demographic collapse and an incomplete or uncertain normative/ institutional order. The Putin regime's attempt to instill such an order has been significant. The profound hardships experienced by much of the Russian population during the 1990s warrant a chapter of their own. A comprehensive review is not possible here, but certain macro trends warrant consideration. Scholars have attempted to discern the relationship between the systemic crisis witnessed in Russia in the 1990s⁷ and the increase in poor health conditions as well as a corresponding increase in mortality rate. Using data from the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey, Zohoori et al. (1998) document the increase in poverty and a corresponding increase in per capita alcohol consumption,⁸ obesity and stress during the period of 1992-96. These are deemed to be

partly responsible for the increase in mortality rates in this period. The economic transformations initiated with shock therapy had a multifaceted negative effect on the population's health: specifically, the long term psychological stress brought on by the declining standard of living as well as numerous pathological processes initiated by the collapse in routine and normal activities (B.G. Velichkovskii cited in Rimashevskaiia & Korkhova, 2004, p.9). The sharp rise in mortality rates in post-Soviet Russian can also be attributed to psychological stress, which was the direct result of the shock created by the profound and abrupt economic transition (Shkolnikov et al., 1998). Others postulate that about half of "excess mortality"⁹ in Russia in the post-Communist period may be due to the economic impoverishment, social inequality and political breakdown associated with Russia's systemic crisis (Chen, Wittgenstein & McKeon, 1996), although a precise number is impossible to compute. With such developments, unfettered liberalism is perceived by many Russian citizens as a destructive and disintegrative phenomenon. Putin's ascent to power must be understood in the context of the social strain and state collapse of the 1990s.

4. Putin's Statism

The severe strain experienced in Russian society was accompanied by the collapse of state institutions and the general state of lawlessness in Russia in the transition period (Popov, 2000; 2001; 2007; Shlapentokh, 2003). One may think of Russia's early transitional, post-socialist political economy as a "chaotic social formation", wherein institutional coordination, governing institutions and social cohesiveness were lacking (Lane, 2000). This includes the absence of both a cohesive value system for Russian capitalists and any coherently articulated dominant bourgeois

class interest (Lane, 2000; Hanson, 1998). One may speak also of the “privatization” of government by narrow economic interests and the concomitant neo-patrimonial state as an emergent phenomenon in the 1990s with a particular logic of its own (Popov & Dutkiewicz, 2006; Yakolev, 2006; Hellman et al., 2000). Putin’s efforts to restore the state’s coercive, administrative and fiscal capacity were central tenets to his presidencies. A reconstituted state with strong central authority and a corresponding aura of moral and practical legitimacy would come to dominate the Putin era and form the basis for political and economic competition.

Putin’s centralization of authority and purportedly authoritarian tendencies have been interpreted by scholars in a number of ways. Some see the restoration of central authority under Putin as necessary given Russia’s recent post-communist instabilities and diminished state capacities. According to this line of thinking, Putin’s historic task was to reverse the trend of the 1990s in which the Russian state lost its capacity to govern as it was privatized and “leased” to a group of oligarchs that had emerged from the state’s privatization scheme. Putin’s group was determined to restore the integrity of the state, the “traditional and central engine of social development in Russian history... In order to accomplish this project, they had to link the state and accumulation into one undivided whole of social power” (Dutkiewicz, 2009, n.p.). The state became the main agent of accumulation in this schema, in particular through oil and gas production, transit and sale. While it is possible to conclude that state capitalism in Russia is a marked improvement over the chaotic capitalism that prevailed during the 1990s (see Lane, 2008), less convincing is the more paternalistic defence of the “power vertical” – understood as a chain of command from the president to local government (Nicholson, 2001, p. 871) –

that suggests that Putin's moves were necessary due to the fact that Russia has not yet achieved the level of social development necessary to use democratic institutions responsibly (Stepashin, 2008).

Western criticism of Putin proceeds in part from holding Russia to an unreasonable liberal standard and not taking into consideration the profound difficulties that Putin inherited from the Yeltsin period (Bingham & Clark, 2007). There is some truth to the assertion that divergent American/Western and Russian understandings of democracy – whereby American understandings stress the de-concentration of power while Russian understandings stress efficient decision making and coherent policy outcomes – are at the root of Western criticisms of Putin's authoritarian backsliding. According to this logic, the most pressing issue facing Putin was to restore the legitimacy of what had been a failing state and the capacity of its institutions following the chaotic period of Russia Yeltsin era “quadruple revolution” – political, economic and social change accompanied by the search for a new national identity. Having restored the state's ability for coherent policy, Putin was viewed by many Russians as a democratic leader, and the widespread support for a strong state may be understood in this manner (Willerton, 2007).

Putin may be viewed through a Gramscian lens as a Caesar – one who takes authoritarian measures to cover up instabilities arising from civil society. While this is the first step towards establishing a hegemonic position, it does not constitute hegemony, as the requisite amounts of coercion and consent are lacking. Furthermore, Putin's Caesarist strategy may be viewed as strong – in which case he has successfully consolidated a coherent state mechanism in line with an underlying vision – or weak – in

which reactionary attacks aimed at self-preservation become the norm. In either case, the Caesarist strategy requires an accompanying ideology. For Putin, this has consisted of drawing from sources of both a *zapadnik* (Westerniser) and *derzhavnik* (nationalist) orientation in his consolidating of a centralized state mechanism which nonetheless seeks incorporation into a more open global political economy and the attracting of foreign direct investment (Worth, 2009).¹⁰

Putin's personality-based leadership and recourse to 'para-constitutional' and 'para-political' strategies suggest severe limitations and a shallow institutionalization of the regime in political society. This constitutes an unstable scenario. The options beyond Putin's presidency are greater pluralism and the move to a deeply engrained constitutional practices or an overt turn towards authoritarianism (Sakwa, 2008). Putin exemplifies an exceptional personality in Russian politics and is indeed the beneficiary of personality cult status. His personal decisions obscure what are the actual formal powers of the president. As such, Putin remains the dominant member of the Russian leadership as prime minister (White & McAllister, 2008).

A central tenet of the Putin regime was to set the parameters of the oligarch-state relationship, whereby an individual's right to accumulation was predicated on political fealty to the Kremlin. One must understand the relationship between oligarchs and the Russian state in the 1990s first in order to appreciate Putin era developments. Central to an understanding of the transitional political economy is the role of the so-called "oligarchs" that rose to prominence in the 1990s. The term oligarch became central to public discourse in Russia in 1995 during the loans for shares program and Yeltsin's 1996 presidential run, during which a number of Russian oligarchs acquired stakes in

Russian firms in exchange for loans. Nonetheless, the emergence of the oligarchs predates the loans for shares programs: individuals began amassing fortunes in Russia in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Barnes, 2006; Kryshtanovskaya & White, 1996 and 2005b; Aage, 2005; Johnson, 1997).

Conventional thinking holds that the apex of oligarchical power in the 1990s meant a conflation of economic and political power under powerful individual economic actors (see for example Kryshtanovskaya & White, 2005), but that oligarchical power was subsequently challenged by the Russian state. In this reading, Putin's recourse to statist or authoritarian tendencies was the result of his confrontation with the oligarchs. Putin famously stated to the oligarchs in July of 2000 that he would not interfere with their business practices provided that they refrained from political adventures. The arrest of Yukos CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsky in October 2003 sent a strong signal that oligarchs were no longer able to have guaranteed access to the Kremlin nor could they challenge the Kremlin politically (Goldman, 2004). This is frequently interpreted as Putin strengthening the state apparatus against the independent power of oligarchs, thereby asserting a degree of independence in public authority over economic interests, as well as presidential power over "capitalist-bureaucratic elites" (Sakwa, 2005, pp. 40-44). For some, the advent of state-centralism and state dominance of business under Putin is unprecedented – both vis-à-vis contemporary middle income countries and otherwise comparable historical transitions under de facto one party rule (Hanson & Teague, 2005).¹¹

While these assessments are helpful, assertions of oligarchy versus state require further thinking. In such thinking, the fundamental contradiction in the emerging

political and economic order is to be found between an independent, sovereign political authority and economic interests acting discretely or in tandem against state authority. Studies that question the easy demarcation of state and economy are helpful to shed new light on the problem. However, state and economic interests do not have a clear institutional separation, even after Putin's "renegotiation" with the oligarchs. Rather, with some notable exceptions, we can see in Putin the guarantor of property acquired by Russian elites in the 1990s and the emergence of a form of neo-patrimonial capitalism (Wood, 2007; Volkov, 2002).

While the imperatives of liberal reform have been subordinated to Putin's statist and populist orientation, the possibility of a reversal of the marketization and liberalization of the Russian economy remains highly unlikely. Putin occupies a dual role. First, he is responsible for socializing corporations to be more responsible in fulfilling their broader social obligations (for example, paying wages and contributing to infrastructure). Second, he is responsible for putting populist measures into place for unpopular liberal reforms. This is witnessed, for example, in general political commitments, such as vowing to raise standards of living in the midst of increasing social inequality (Oversloot, 2006).¹² Moreover, Putin's efforts serviced the needs of domestic and international actors and foreign capital for consistent accumulation in Russia. An important element of Putin's project, therefore, was to build the institutional infrastructure to enable a functioning market economy, a point that had been missed by the neoliberal shock reforms of the early 1990s (Mommen, 2004). In other words, achieving "stability" in the Putin era was a fundamental prerequisite to the further marketization and liberalization of the Russian political economy.¹³

Putin's engagement with the oligarchs constituted one measure to re-assert the Kremlin's power. His power vertical was an executive heavy strategy for the consolidation of the Russian state. The establishment of Putin's power vertical has been well documented and is considered by some a central feature of his authoritarian backsliding. Arguably, Putin initiated what was to become a discernible trend of consolidating the presidential administration's power in the spring of 2000 when presidential envoys were sent to the seven newly created federal districts to bring regional legislation in line with federal laws. In 2004, the reform of the Federation Council meant that it would now be made up of appointed representatives from regional executive and legislative branches whereas hitherto, it had been comprised of the governor and speaker of the regional legislature. This move ensured that the Council no longer served as an instrument for regional lobbying. Finally, after the school attacks in Beslan in 2004, Putin decreed that governors be Kremlin-appointed rather than elected, with only formal approval from regional legislatures. Preference would be given to those who held a majority in regional legislatures, thereby further consolidating United Russia's (Putin's party: see Chapter Seven and below) power in the regions (Oversloot, 2007; Sukhov, 2008).

A broader, and generally pejorative, term for Putin's centralizing initiatives is "managed democracy."¹⁴ This is commonly understood to include the reestablishment of central political power, control over the media, the marginalization of State Duma parties, and the reliance upon ideas of Great Russian nationalism (Beer, 2009). It also includes the growing affiliation between Putin and the United Russia party. For some, managed democracy was brought about by the 2003 Duma victory of United Russia, which

solidified its status as the party of power, a status that has only been augmented since then, with Putin becoming head of United Russia (Wegren & Konitzer, 2007). Indeed, United Russia has benefited from being so closely associated with Putin. For example, Putin was widely portrayed as “national leader” during the 2007 State Duma elections, during which pro-regime pundits urged Russians to vote for United Russia irrespective of their party allegiances in order to express confidence in Putin.¹⁵ During the latter years of Putin’s presidential tenure, his close association with United Russia blurred the distinction between executive and legislature and invited questions of both the competitive nature of Russia’s national parties and whether the Russian president was becoming supported by a parliamentary majority. Loyal to the Kremlin, United Russia’s further entrenchment in national political life suggests an increasingly compliant Duma that refrains from obstructing presidential initiatives.

United Russia has taken it upon itself to adopt Putin’s Plan and is quick to defend his national economic priorities.¹⁶ In May of 2007, then head of United Russia Boris Gryzlov interpreted Putin’s Plan as: 1) having Russian development correspond with Russia’s status as a unique civilization; 2) building a competitive economy, which entails moving beyond a dependence on resources towards greater innovation; 3) ensuring a new quality of life for Russian citizens, which entails the continuation of priority national projects, wage increases and pension reform; 4) establishing civil society institutions; and 5) ensuring Russia’s continued development as a sovereign state in a multipolar world order (Kostenko, 2007). Putin’s managed democracy and corresponding plan therefore reflect an effort at creating a national consensus over national economic development

priorities, an effort which is closely monitored by presidential authority and the continued support of the most dominant Duma party.

These tendencies have been accompanied by the increased involvement of security forces, or *siloviki*, in Putin's inner circle, a trend that began early in his tenure as Russian President. A comprehensive definition of the term is offered by Renz (2006):

The term *siloviki* denotes personnel in the Russian force structures (*silovye struktury*), that is, in Russia's armed forces and uniformed services. In recent years the term *siloviki* has acquired a more precise meaning, describing politicians with a force-structure background, who have come to power under the leadership of Vladimir Putin. There are 10 institutionally distinct force structures in contemporary Russia. These are the Ministry of Defence, the Interior Ministry (MVD), the Ministry for Emergency Situations (MChS), the Justice Ministry (Federal Prison Service—FSIN), the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), the Federal Anti-Drugs Service (FSN), the Federal Guards Service (FSO), the Federal Courier Service (GFS), and the Agency for Special Programmes under the President (GUSP) (p. 203 footnote).

From 2000-2007, funding for those structures responsible for security and law enforcement grew threefold, whereas funding for those responsible for national defence grew approximately twofold. Military spending comprised 80 percent of the power ministries' budget in 1992. In 2007, it comprised only 56 percent. In other words, security and law enforcement – or, the consolidation of domestic state power and coercion capabilities – grew at a considerably greater rate than national defense during Putin's presidencies (see Taylor, 2011, especially Chapter Two, pp. 36-70).

A strong reading of the increased presence of security forces in Putin's team holds that Russia is experiencing the rise of a "militocracy." The growth of the *siloviki* in Russian federal political elite circles as well as regional politics and business during Putin's first presidency has been well-documented (Kryshtanovskaya & White, 2004). This interpretation holds that Putin is the result of a conscious effort by Russian elites to establish a security-conscious president, a "reanimated Yuriy Andropov,"¹⁷ who would

consolidate Russian society, restore public order and strengthen state power (p. 291). Though such an assertion carries strong pejorative connotations, it does not deviate from the frequently-observed central objective of Putin's presidencies: the building of a strong state through an intentional act to increase the state's coercive capacity, a move deemed by the regime as a prerequisite to establishing institutional order and capacity (Taylor, 2011). Furthermore, a securitization approach to the understanding of Russia's domestic politics under Putin convincingly demonstrates that that which may be considered the stuff of "normal" politics became increasingly perceived and portrayed as a threat against the Russian state, nation, economy, and so on during the Putin era (Bacon, Renz & Cooper, 2006).¹⁸

It is not entirely misleading to suggest the predominance of two Kremlin clans – the *siloviki* and liberals – in Putin's court, both of whom believe in a strong, if not authoritarian, state, and differ predominantly on economic matters (Kryshtanovskaya & White, 2005).¹⁹ This thesis may be something of an oversimplification, however. More appropriate may be the suggestion that at the end of Putin's presidency, there existed three prominent clans within United Russia that form the basis of his support: 1) the Petersburgers, headed by Boris Gryzlov, which includes both social conservatives and liberals and many founders of Unity²⁰; 2) the non-Petersburgers oriented around Vladislav Surkov, which includes multiple high ranking United Russia personnel as well as the youth wing; 3) the non-Petersburger founders of Unity comprised of protégés of Sergei Shoygu (Tulskiy, 2008). Whether the constituent members of all of these groups can be easily divided into *siloviki* or liberal is debatable.

A less alarmist assessment of the place of the *siloviki* in Putin era Russia holds that their presence in Putin's inner circle is more the result of "under-institutionalised mechanism of elite recruitment" (Renz, 2006, p. 907). Evident under both Yeltsin and Putin, this style of elite recruitment is highly personalized and proceeds from the president's need to strike a balance favourable to him. Personal ties and loyalty are the most significant factor determining a person's likelihood to be recruited into elite circles. Furthermore, the *siloviki* themselves have performed diverse functions and are unlikely to represent a common "military mindset" and influence policy uniformly to this end.

5. Russia's Imperfect Integration into the Global Political Economy

In this section I outline Russia's position in the contemporary world order and consider some of the broad trends of the Putin years. On the one hand, Russia's material position has undoubtedly improved during the Putin era. On the other, despite the "great power" rhetoric offered by the Putin regime (see Chapter Six), Russia remains in a somewhat precarious and peripheral position in the global political economy due to its over-reliance on the extraction and sale of primary resources. Lacking a competitive manufacturing center and only recently entering the World Trade Organization (WTO) after a long and conspicuous absence, the Russian political economy is only imperfectly integrated into the global political economy. It also lacks the demographic health required of a stable and competitive national political economy.

Russia's wealth undoubtedly increased during the Putin era, as the domestic political economy was the beneficiary of high commodity prices, the devaluation of the rouble following the 1998 financial crisis and the increase in the price of oil (Hanson, 2007). Russia averaged 6.9 percent annual growth in GDP from 1999-2008 (OECD,

2009, p. 21; see Appendix B). Furthermore, Russia's reliance on external finance was greatly reduced: in 1998, Russia's external public debt was 58.4 percent of its GDP. In 2008, it was 2 percent (OECD, 2009, p. 24; see Appendix C). Russia's current account surplus grew from \$35.4 billion (US) in 2003 to \$102.3 billion (US) in 2008.

Furthermore, its reserves (including gold) grew from \$76.9 billion (US) to \$427.1 billion (US) in the same period of time (World Bank, 2008, p. 3; 2009, p. 2; see Appendix D).

The stabilization fund was created on January 1, 2004 to collect export duties and extraction tax from the price of oil exceeding initially \$20, and then \$27 per barrel. The intent of the fund was to sterilize the vast sums of money entering Russia and ensure macroeconomic stability, and it was relatively successful in keeping inflation low despite growing current account surpluses. The fund reached \$150 billion by the end of 2007, approximately 10 percent of Russian GDP. In February 2008 this fund was divided into a Reserve Fund, with which future budget shortfalls could be cushioned and a National Welfare Fund, which would be invested in blue-chip companies (Sakwa, 2008e, pp. 303-04; Tabata, 2007).

The Russian state has become increasingly involved in the oil and gas industry. Critics of Putin are quick to point out the correlation of the suppression of political freedoms in Russia (as measured by Freedom House political rights survey) and rising energy prices (Ortung, 2009). However, the Russian state's involvement in oil and gas is not so straightforward and must still be subjected to scrutiny. Majority state owned companies were responsible for 15 percent of Russia's overall oil production in 2004. By 2007, this figure was 40 percent. Russian oil and gas are dominated by two majority state-owned entities – Gazprom (and Gazprom Neft) and Rosneft – and three privately

controlled companies – Lukoil, Surgutneftgaz and Tyumen Oil Company-British Petroleum (TNK-BP). Gazprom and Rosneft and their affiliates made major acquisitions throughout 2005-2007. Throughout this period, the Russian state used coercive pressure to challenge the ownership of those who were deemed as political adversaries (e.g. Khodorkovsky) while also acquiring assets through market means (Hanson, 2009; Pleines, 2009). Nonetheless, Russian oil and gas firms may have more private ownership than international trends suggest should be the norm. Only four out of the top twenty oil and gas companies in the world have majority private ownership (Pleines, 2009; Hanson, 2009). This suggests the capacity of politically loyal elites to collect resource rents amidst selective direct state control of resources (Hanson, 2009), if not the existence of a sophisticated rent management system under Putin predicated on the Kremlin asserting control over administrative and information resources (Gaddy & Ickes, 2010).

Putin ended his tenure as Russian president overseeing a considerably wealthier Russia, one that had vastly improved its terms of trade in the global political economy, and one that had drastically lessened its dependence on external finance. Russia had the second greatest increase in military spending (as a percentage of its own starting point) amongst frequently cited leaders of a multipolar world (see Chapter Five): the BRIC countries,²¹ US, Japan, Germany and France (see Appendix E). Russian military spending remains second in this group as a percentage of GDP (see Appendix F), suggesting that the increase in military spending over 1999-2008 reflected the growth in Russia's national economy.

Post-Soviet Russia's re-integration with the global political economy was, and to a great extent remains, imperiled by the uncompetitiveness of industry. This is

exemplified by data on Russia's current lack of competitiveness in global markets and its over-reliance on the export of raw materials. Russia remains overwhelmingly dependent on the export of oil, gas, and other natural resources. In 2007, Russian raw-materials based industries (oil, gas and metals) constituted approximately 80 percent of total exports (Hanson, 2007, p. 874).²² The country has a Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA)²³ in crude materials or those subject to primary processing (Cooper, 2006a) but Russian manufacturing remains uncompetitive. Russia has no RCA in manufacturing and high technology compared with other BRIC countries, Turkey and the United States.

During the Putin era, Russia remained an exception to international economic integration as the largest national economy to be excluded from the WTO. While WTO Ministers finally adopted Russia's terms of entry on December 16, 2011 at the 8th Ministerial Conference in Geneva, Russia's long and conspicuous exclusion from the organization presents a difficult case without a simple answer. Russia's economy has undoubtedly become more open due to reforms undertaken as part of the process for WTO accession. As part of its accession commitments, the Russian government has agreed to a complex mix of tariff reductions, the liberalization of financial services, banking and securities (despite the active protests of the Russian banking and insurance sectors) and the telecommunications industry (Tarr, 2007). Indeed, the Putin regime was successful in reaching a compromise between Russian sectoral lobbies, the Russian government and the WTO Working Group on Russia's entry in 2006 (Dykes, 2009). Nonetheless, subsidies to Russian agriculture, technical barriers and issues surrounding Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (used as non-tariff protections by Russia numerous times since 2003) were long contentious (Tarr, 2007; Aslund, 2010). Russia's short term

need to join the organization was diminished in the 2000s by the fact that oil and gas transactions, upon which the Russian state is reliant, are largely unaffected by WTO rules and procedures (Aslund, 2010; Dykes, 2010).

Russia exemplifies many traits of a semi-peripheral country, however, one that underwent industrialization outside of the capitalist world system. Russia's semi-peripheral status has led to the pursuit of two contradictory strategies: struggling against exclusion in the global political economy and struggling against exploitation by the core. The former involves finding a niche in the global division of labour, which entails greater exploitation by the core. The latter involves retaining or developing a division of labour autonomous from the capitalist world economy (Simon, 2009b). Russia's peripheral status is reinforced by foreign investment patterns – the influx of short term portfolio inflows and the absence of long term foreign investment in the productive sector (Nesvetailova, 2004b). The reliance on export revenues is exacerbated by a chronic deficiency of investment capital in Russia, a structural condition that may be traced to the Soviet period (Robinson, 2009). Nonetheless, since Primakov's time as foreign minister, Russian diplomats and policy makers have sought to craft Russia's foreign policy in a manner that prevents Russia from becoming a mere appendage of the West or an economy that simply supplies natural resources to the global political economy (Mankoff, 2009).

In other words, Russian elites have resisted being relegated to a position of inferiority in the global division of labour, although the Russian state has struggled with the imperative of state-led development to prevent an over-reliance on mineral and energy wealth.

The Russian economy continues to be perceived as being closed to foreigners and highly controlled by the Russian state. According to international surveys, Russia continues to lag in terms of economic freedom, market attractiveness, corruption, opacity and competitiveness (for a summary, see Zhuplev, 2008). The World Bank's 'Doing Business' rankings, a composite ranking demonstrating the ease of doing business in a national economy demonstrates that it is becoming more difficult to conduct business in Russia:²⁴ Russia was ranked 96th out of 175 countries in 2006 (Hanson, 2007, p. 872). In the 2011 report, Russia ranked 123rd out of 183 countries.²⁵ The existence of a Russian preference for domestic capital is revealed by current data on barriers to FDI.²⁶ Barriers preventing FDI access to national markets are considerably higher than the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average (OECD, 2009, p. 164). A May 2008 Russian law on strategic industries stipulates that the foreign purchase of controlling stake in firms in 42 strategic sectors requires special authorization from a government commission. This commission is headed by now Prime Minister Putin. Furthermore, foreign actors are strictly limited in their ability to acquire equity in Russian state-controlled conglomerates (OECD, 2009, p. 18; Pleines, 2009).

However, business confidence in Russia exists in spite of such perceptions. A sufficiently stable set of informal rules has emerged to keep business confidence high. This is predicated on "nativism" – a revealed preference for Russian national (as opposed to only statist) capital – and the fact that business has demonstrated loyalty to the Kremlin. Russian authorities are unwilling to permit an independent social base that may challenge the state but are not necessarily hostile to private capital as such. Although there remains uncertainty over where the state draws the line at what constitutes a

“strategic sector”, the contents of which they are willing to assume control over for the purposes of national security, should businesses not challenge the state, they may be relatively secure in their property rights (Hanson, 2007).

Russian health and demographic challenges were inherited by the Putin regime from the 1990s. In spite of a considerable increase in growth of the Russian economy as a whole during the Putin era, the country is facing inherent limitations in its pursuit of great power status. According to Cooper (2006a) Russia is in fact “de-developing.” Research and development, military power, education spending and high technology have declined since 1990. Attempts to include Russia within the BRIC designation are dubious on demographic grounds: Russia faces population decline whereas other BRICs can expect continued population growth. Negative demographic trends – decreasing life expectancy and increased health problems in the population – are eroding Russian human capital and negatively affecting its potential to become an innovative economy (Cooper, 2006b). Its demographic challenges jeopardize the Russian government’s current plans for economic development. Citing US Census Bureau statistics, which estimate a drop of 20 million, or one-fifth, in Russia’s working-age population by 2030, Eberstadt & Shah (2009) demonstrate how the demographic crisis in Russia constitutes a veritable disinvestment in human resources capacity. They speculate that this will in turn frustrate the Putin regime’s ambitious projections, made in 2007, of quadrupling the country’s GDP over the next two decades, which would enable Russia to become the world’s fifth largest economy.

The country’s health and well being as well as the demographic renewal of the country figure prominently in the Russian government’s stated intention of developing

into an innovative economy. In his 2008 State Council Speech on Russia's Development Strategy through to 2020, Putin (2008) suggested that an overreliance on energy resources and primary goods prevents a rise in Russian living standards and compromise the country's security. The speech states, "The only real alternative to this scenario is to follow a path of innovative development based on one of our biggest competitive advantages – realisation of our human potential." The requirements of such an innovative scenario require active intervention of the Russian government to secure the health, well-being, productivity and human capital potential of its population.

The growing HIV/AIDS crisis in Russia compromises the social, economic and military foundations required to fulfill the country's great power aspirations (Ambrosio, 2006). Russian hard power in the form of military force is potentially threatened by the demographic problems, as well. An expected prolonged decrease in the cohort of 15-19 year old Russian males decreases the Russian military's available pool for personnel (Twigg, 2004).²⁷ Not only is the real decrease in the number of available conscripts a concern for Russian national security, so too is the working ability of the available conscripts. Serious health problems, including HIV-AIDS, affect military readiness by both reducing the number of draft eligible men to serve and the ability of those serving to perform strenuous tasks (see Peterson, 2002-03), and necessitate that a growing percentage of the military budget be allocated to provide for the medical and psychological health needs for those draftees and soldiers deemed unfit for duty (World Bank, 2005).

Russia's economic potential is compromised by the population's poor health. Absenteeism is higher than in the EU-15 countries (10 days per year as opposed to 7.9).

Absence due to sickness entails a direct cost (benefits paid) as well as indirect costs (lost productivity). Rates of chronic disease and alcoholism impact the labour supply, as workers with these afflictions are more likely than healthy workers to retire early or lose their jobs, subsequently drawing on state pensions. There is a profound impact on the family resulting from both the death of a household member (leading to increased alcohol consumption and depression) and chronic illness of a family member (leading to the loss of household income) (World Bank, 2005, pp. xix-xx). A depression in economic production alongside a rise in health expenditures associated with continued growth in infectious diseases in Russia will have profound effects on social stability (Feshbach, 2005).

6. Summary

In this chapter, I outlined Russia's material position in world order and the contemporary global political economy as well as the limitations inherent in this position. I did so by positioning Russia as a sovereign integrationist, a state which articulates the need to manage globalization processes and internal political developments according to its own terms while selectively integrating into the global political economy. The Russian state is one of numerous states that combine illiberal (by Western pluralist standards) political practices with broad market developments. This tendency developed in Russia spite of the initial expectation in the post-Soviet period by the Yeltsin government, American state, and IFIs alike that Russia would follow the twin tracks of liberal-democratic and capitalist development.

Furthermore, Putin era efforts to consolidate authority and legitimacy are to be understood against the backdrop of the chaotic and incomplete nature of Russian

capitalism that developed in the 1990s, a period that lacked both the legitimacy and institutional/routinized basis for market practices. However maligned by Western liberal-democratic standards, Putin created a normative and institutional order and a relatively stable set of expectations and assumptions by which accumulation can occur in Russia. Russian state capitalism proceeds on this basis of this order: political and economic decision making and competition are dependent upon the assent of the Kremlin. The Kremlin in turn prioritizes Russia's national interests over other concerns.

Finally, Russia occupies an improved (over the 1990s) although precarious position in the contemporary global political economy, a position marked by the over-reliance on mineral resources, severe uncompetitiveness of manufacturing, increased autonomy vis-à-vis IFIs and only partial incorporation into global economic structures. This material position serves as the basis from which the world order concepts elaborated upon throughout this thesis.

In this chapter, I provided a synoptic sketch of Russia's material position in the contemporary global political economy as well as the limitations inherent in this position. This was the second of my two chapters in which I undertook an extensive literature review.

The following chapter is the first of two in which I examine the geopolitical parameters of Russian understandings of world order in the Putin era. In the following chapter, I investigate the tradition of Eurasianism and how its contributions have been selectively incorporated into Russian officials' arguments for the distinctiveness of Russian civilization.

¹ See also O'Donnell, Schmitter & Whitehead (1996) and Huntington (1991).

² According to Schöpflin, Soviet communism's position as a "state-sustaining ideology" was precarious: perceived economic and technological failures in the Soviet Union undermined the state's legitimacy, particularly when ethno-national affective bonds between state and society were absent. The emergence of a previously suppressed ethno-nationalism challenged the emergence of a democratic political system in post-Soviet Russia.

³ Derluguian suggests that Russia was capable of achieving strategic parity with the West three times: under Ivan IV ("the Terrible") in the 16th century; under Peter I and Catherine I (both "the Great") in the 18th century and under Stalin and Khrushchev in the 20th century. In each case, the state orchestrated massive incursions into Russian society at the expense of an enormous number of lives.

⁴ According to Harris, most conspicuous in this regard is numerous Western banks financing *Rosneft* for the latter to acquire components of Yukos after its breakup by the Russian state.

⁵ Attempts at viewing transitional political economies in Central and Eastern Europe through the "internationalization" lens include Shields (2003 and 2006) on Poland and Petrovic and Solingen (2005) on the Czech Republic. Shields is noteworthy here for his attempt to view Polish transnational class formation with deeper historical range, with particular focus paid to the development of domestic groups with affinities to broader interests in transnational accumulation.

⁶ On Sachs' proposed institutional reform as accompaniment to shock therapy, see Gowan (1999, pp.192-199)

⁷ Russia may have been more unfortunate than other transitioning economies. Examining a range of transitional economies in the early 1990s, Brainerd (1998) concludes that increases in the death rate in some countries is a result of the *success* of such reforms, measures in indicators such as GDP growth and the inflation rate.

⁸ For an argument about the social origins of unhealthy lifestyle practices and its corresponding affect on high mortality rates in Russia, see Cockerham (1997). See also Cockerham (2006), in which the author argues that heavy drinking a normative practice found amongst working class Russian men, wherefrom it spreads to the wider Russian culture and is reproduced across time. Russia lacks a middle class which promotes healthy lifestyles and stigmatizes excesses in drinking and smoking.

⁹ This refers to the mortality rate of a group that is above that of comparable groups.

¹⁰ See also Neumann (1996) for a prolonged discussion of the *zapadnik/dherzhavnik* tradition in Russia.

¹¹ For a contrasting view, however, see Shleifer and Treisman (2004), for whom Russia represents a "normal" middle income country in key political and economic indicators.

¹² It is also evident in the specific example of the highly unpopular Benefits Bill of 2006, which monetized social benefits previously enjoyed as in kind or subsidies. Putin ensured the delivery of billions of dollars to provinces and cities to ease the adjustment while continuing with the bill (Oversloot, 2006).

¹³ That Putin's actions were conducive to growth is not uniformly accepted. McFaul and Stoner-Weiss (2008) challenge the notion that authoritarian government or "market authoritarianism" is conducive to stability and economic growth. They attribute Russia's economic turnaround to fiscal austerity and the reduced role of the state introduced by Minister Primakov government following the 1998 collapse. According to Hanson (2007), the functioning of Putin's "weak state authoritarianism" should be called into question due to an absence of any of Weber's tripartite definition of political legitimacy: traditional (Hanson sees as 'traditional authoritarianism'), procedural ('modern democratic proceduralism'), and charismatic ('charismatic utopianism').

¹⁴ Mandel (2005) offers a different interpretation of managed democracy, with Gramscian overtones about the weakness of state and oligarchical bourgeoisie in civil society, thereby leading to authoritarian drift: "Managed democracies' retain the trappings of democracy and tolerate, to varying degrees, political rights and organized political opposition. However, those in control of the apparatuses of state violence do not hesitate to violate the law and accepted democratic norms to ensure the continuity of their tenure" (pp. 117-118).

¹⁵ Furthermore, according to the prominent pro-Kremlin pundit Vitaliy Ivanov, a United Russia victory in the then upcoming elections would provide Putin with a mandate to continue as 'national leader' (OSC Media Aid, 2008). Surkov himself suggested that United Russia's achievements be linked with Putin's name in order to remind Russian voters that a vote for United Russia was in fact a vote for the continuation of Putin's plan (Levchenko, 2007).

¹⁶ Capitalizing the Plan in Putin's Plan is keeping with a convention in Russian journalism and commentary.

¹⁷ The authors suggest that the myth surrounding Andropov was that had he been given enough time, he could have prevented the USSR's dissolution, raised living standards, thwarted conflict and organized crime.

¹⁸ The list includes the conflict in Chechnya, restriction of religious freedoms, the economy (post-Khodorkovsky), migration, terrorism and the activities of the *siloviki*.

¹⁹ Kryshatanovskaya & White (2005, p.1070) offer a full list of the *siloviki* and liberals in the Russian government structure in 2005. Vladislav Surkov and Boris Gryzlov, both of whom appear in this chapter due to their prominence in espousing elements of Sovereign Democracy and Putin's Plan, accordingly, are counted in the liberal camp, which suggests that they encourage free market and entrepreneurial activity although are not disinclined to advocating for a powerful Russian state in the abstract, nor the nationalization of strategic sector in particular, provided that these are done in accordance with the law.

²⁰ Unity was one of two parties (along with Fatherland – All Russia) that merged to form United Russia in 2001.

²¹ A 2003 Goldman Sachs report first coined the term BRIC to refer to Brazil, Russia, India and China as large population countries with sufficiently dynamic economies, attributes that would make them increasingly important global actors before the year 2050 (Cooper, 2006a).

²² According to Rutland (n.d.) Russian economy diverges from the oil curse model by having a degree of pluralism in the oil industry, having large reserves of both oil and gas, by having numerous metal barons distanced from Moscow's control and having state power prepared to act against oil wealth (8-10). On the latter point: "The 'Russian curse' of statism overlaps and supplants the 'resource curse,' in complex and unpredictable ways that may diverge from predication based on the experiences of other countries" (p. 10).

²³ RCA is a particular country's share of world export in a particular good divided by its share of total world exports.

²⁴ In the 2011 survey, the ease of doing business overall ranking was comprised of the following factors, with Russia's ranking in parentheses: starting a business (108), dealing with construction permits (182), registering property (51), getting credit (89), protecting investors (93), paying taxes (105), trading across borders (162), enforcing contracts (18) and closing a business (103).

²⁵ Available at: (<http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>).

²⁶ "The indicator for barriers to foreign direct investment measures the extent to which legal restrictions apply on foreign acquisition of equity in public and private firms in general, and in the telecommunications and airlines sectors in particular" (OECD, 2009, p. 164).

²⁷ Twigg cites US Census Bureau in displaying that the cohort of 15-19 year old Russian males, having peaked at 6.4 million in 2004, would plummet to 3.2 million in 2016, increase to 3.7 million in 2027-28, and then continue descending to 2.6 million by 2050.

Chapter Four – Russian Eurasianism as Alternative World Order Thinking

1. Introduction

In this chapter I examine how certain Russian thinkers and politicians alike have conceptualized Russia's place in the world and thought about world order through the broad Eurasianist paradigm, which alleges the distinctiveness of Russian civilization as Eurasian civilization, and, to varying degrees, Russia's unsuitability for seamless integration into a Western (and particularly American)-led democratic and capitalist world order. Rather than envisioning a Russia that participates fully and cooperatively in a Western-led world order, Eurasianists envision multiple variations of a particularly Russian role and place within the contemporary international political economy, drawing on a variety of Russian and non-Russian intellectual and political traditions in the process. This chapter draws upon the legacy of thinking about Russia's geopolitical distinctiveness and the propensity for certain Russian thinkers to conceive of the geopolitical parameters of world order in terms of cultural and civilizational particularity. It provides a theoretical and historical background to the question of geopolitical/civilizational distinctiveness upon which subsequent chapters build.

Eurasianism and related thinking about how contemporary world order is constituted by discrete civilizations, each with its own cultural, moral, religious and geographical content, seep into the Putin regime's discourse. I do not venture to answer whether or not Putin is a Eurasianist or Western leaning. Rather, in this chapter, I view the long trend of Eurasianist thinking, Eurasianism's revival in the 1990s in revisionist, disaffected and dissatisfied circles and Eurasianism as a strain of thinking selectively appropriated by the Putin regime. The ideas comprising this world order thinking are to

varying degrees absorbed, rejected and re-articulated by the Putin regime in an effort to achieve a hegemonic position and ideological consensus at home. In spite of reflecting a commitment to an autarkic, revisionist and/or national-particular conception of Russia, the themes associated with Eurasianism are often employed by the government amidst more technical policy pronouncements. In other words, Eurasianism serves as a polysemic concept for Russia's alternative understandings of world order insofar as it broadly signifies skepticism towards Russia's embrace of the West, improving Russia's geopolitical and geostrategic position, and questioning the moral legitimacy of Western universalism.

This chapter serves as the historical/conceptual backdrop of the Russia "civilization question" as it pertains to world order. That is, it serves to elucidate a trend in Russian thought and political discourse whereby world order is thought to be comprised of discrete geo-cultural entities. It complements the following chapter on multipolarity by demonstrating sources of Russia's cultural and moral critique of unipolar hegemony. It proceeds in the following manner. Section Two involves a discussion of the scholarly context of contemporary Eurasianism: the original Eurasianism of the 1920s and 1930s and three thinkers of contemporary Eurasianism – Lev Gumilyov, Aleksandr Panarin and Aleksandr Dugin – who represent the most prolific contributors to the body of work since the original Eurasianists. Section Three establishes the context in which Eurasianism emerged in Russia in the 1990s: the prominence of debates on geopolitics and civilizations in Russia in the aftermath of the Soviet breakup, to which Eurasianist orientations represent a considerable contribution. In other words, Eurasianism may be considered part of a broader orientation of Russian society towards

thinking of world order in terms of geopolitical competition, geopolitical identity, and civilizations. Section Four demonstrates how the Putin regime ascribes moral, cultural and civilizational content to the question of world order in a manner consistent with Eurasianist precepts. Section Five is a summary of the chapter.

As my intention is to demonstrate “alternative” world order thinking, or that which the Russian state utilizes to challenge the Western-led world order, the theme of “Westernism” or “Atlanticism” remains somewhat underdeveloped in this chapter. Philosophical Westernism has a significant place in 19th century Russian thought (see Utechin, 1964, pp. 91 -127). My treatment of Westernism as a post-Soviet geopolitical orientation is captured in Chapter Five, in my demonstration of Aleksei Kozyrev and Boris Yeltsin’s pursuit of integration with Western-led institutions in the immediate post-Soviet period. Atlanticism is understood here as a pejorative term used by the more strident defenders of Eurasianism in the post-Soviet period and largely a caricature of undesirable traits meant to embolden the Eurasianist position.

The concepts and ideas associated with Eurasianism are significant for a critical historicist reading of Russian alternative understandings of world order for four reasons. First, they represent a longer tradition and particular form of Russian dissatisfaction with Western hegemony and dominance. Second, they contribute to a powerful and multifaceted post-Soviet Russian protest movement against the geopolitical dominance of the United States and a call for the restoration of Russian empire. Third, they offer a cultural and civilizational reading of past and contemporary world orders that contrasts to a form of liberal democratic internationalism that purports to operate as an abstract form of global good. Fourth, they serve as a wellspring of ideas and sentiments that have been

selectively co-opted by the Putin regime in its efforts to turn contemporary discussions of global conflict into one that asserts the primary significance of cultural appropriateness, civilizational distinctiveness, and cultural aggression. The Putin regime is then to be seen as a collective actor which is seeking to sanctify a world order in which cultural and civilizational particularity is insulated through the practices of multipolarity and a corresponding protection of national development models.

2. The Scholarly Context of Contemporary Eurasianism

A note on my preferred terminology is warranted. A Eurasianist tradition is discernible as a broad body of ideas originally elaborated by émigré Russian writers in the 1920s and 1930s, which focused on Russia's unique geographical identity, including parts of Europe and Asia, as well as its relationship vis-à-vis Europe. While a dispute remains over the exact novelty of the tradition in the longer context of Russian ideas, as well as the extent to which newer proponents of a Eurasianist position exhibit doctrinal coherence amongst themselves and original Eurasianists, there are enough important similarities to warrant usage of the term in a broad sense. For the sake of clarity, "original Eurasianism" denotes the initial elaboration of Eurasianist ideas. "Contemporary Eurasianism" is here used as a broad term signifying subsequent attempts to elaborate upon or utilize Eurasianist concepts. It can be further distinguished into two categories. "Neo-Eurasianism" denotes subsequent and primarily post-Soviet attempts to develop these ideas in a comprehensive manner. It is primarily, but not entirely, post-Soviet because of the need to trace the intellectual heritage to the Soviet-era ethnologist Lev Gumilyov, whose influence and popularity in contemporary Russia cannot be overstated. Neo-Eurasianism is developed most notably by the thinkers Aleksandr

Panarin and Aleksandr Dugin. Here, then, neo-Eurasianism therefore refers to the various post-Soviet attempts at elaborating Eurasianism ideas in a more comprehensive philosophical or political doctrine. I use the term Eurasianist /Eurasianism in a more general fashion as suggesting any inclination to a broadly Eurasianist orientation – that is to say, an orientation towards a geographical identity and related notions of Russian/Eurasian particularity in any number of spheres – political, cultural, ethnic, geo-economic etc. – without necessarily having a full commitment to a more elaborate position. This is in keeping with popular practices. For example, Vladimir Putin would hardly be called a neo-Eurasianist, as he exhibits no continual orientation towards a comprehensive Eurasianist doctrine. However, he may exhibit Eurasianist inclinations in suggesting that questions of multipolarity and unipolarity have a cultural, civilizational and moral dimension. Hence, there can be many Eurasianist sentiments and positions exhibited in post-Soviet Russia; neo-Eurasianism, however, is a greater intellectual and/or political commitment.

A comprehensive review of original Eurasianism is beyond the scope of this chapter, although certain affinities between classic and contemporary Eurasianists and relevant aspects of original Eurasianist thinking are highlighted. Original Eurasianism here refers to the work of Russian émigré writers of the 1920s and 1930s, which emerged in 1921 with the publishing of *Ishkod k Vostoku* (Exodus to the East), a collective volume published by four men who can be considered as the first Eurasianists: Prince Nikolay Sergeevich Trubetskoy, a linguist; Pyotr Nikolaevich Savitsky, an economist and geographer; Pyotr Petrovich Suvchinsky, a music critic and Georgy Vasileyvich Florovsky, a theologian. Several subsequent Eurasianist joint volumes would follow, and

Eurasianism attained a degree of popularity amongst Russian exiles living throughout Europe in the 1920s and 30s.

Original Eurasianism followed trends in late 19th and early 20th century Russian thinking in which the Orient represented an increasingly important object of speculation and inspiration (Laruelle, 2007). Literary and artistic developments in the early 20th century Russian Renaissance were replete with a rejection of 19th century materialism. Prominent invocations of Russia's identifications with Asia may be found in the symbolists Andrey Bely and Alexander Blok, as well as the futurist poet Velimir Khlebnikov (Riasanovsky, 1967, pp. 63-69). Original Eurasianism may be considered a unique contribution to the Russian history of ideas whose originality lay in its founders theorizing the contribution of Mongol political rule to the history of the Russian state, providing an extended and radical critique of Western colonialism. Furthermore, original Eurasianism constitutes a theory of revolution that saw the Bolshevik success as the logical resolution of a historical dichotomy introduced by Peter I's reforms, which posited an urban, governing, administrative elite based in Saint Petersburg who absorbed European rationalist ideas against a communally-oriented Russian people who remained steeped in the Orthodox faith (Maruzek, 2002). Early Eurasianists moved beyond previous critiques of Europe, including those of the Slavophiles, defenders of Official Nationality, and arch conservatives Constantine Leontyev and Constantine Pobedonostsev, which still had Russia identifying with Europe in a "fraternal" conflict (Riasanovsky, 1967).

In certain crucial respects, original Eurasianism reflects the nineteenth century division between Westernizers and Slavophiles. Savitsky maintained the distinction in an

article entitled “Two Worlds,” published in the second Eurasian symposium (1922). The two worlds consisted of, on the one hand, that of Russian spirituality represented by authors such as Nikolai Gogol and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, the Slavophiles, the philosophers Vladimir Solovyev and Constantin Leontyev, and on the other, that of the Westernizers, such as writer/critics Nikolai Dobrolyubov and Dmitri Pisarev, the theorist N.K. Mikhaylovksy, and the broader world of positivism, scientism and nihilism. The key distinguishing characteristic between the two is the former’s anti-state religiosity and the latter’s belief in the power and significance of the state, which inspired, *inter alia*, the Bolshevik revolution (Riasanovsky, 1967, pp. 58-60; see also Paradowski, 1999, p. 21).

Insofar as they posit irreconcilable civilizational conflict between Russia (now as Eurasia) and the West, the Eurasianists resemble Nikolai Danilevsky, the pan-Slav writer whose magnum opus, *Russia and Europe*, divided humanity into distinct cultural types according to naturalistic principles. Danilevsky developed a theory of cultural and civilizational types as principle divisions of humankind, analogous to different species of a genus. For Danilevsky, civilizations were closed areas between which values were incapable of being transmitted. Danilevsky is to be credited with conceiving of Russia as a cohesive “natural-geographic region” upon which a historical-ethnographic unity – the Russian-Slav people – was based. This vision was opposed to the idea that Russia constituted two geographic halves – the European and the Asiatic – a notion held by many Russians since Peter the Great’s time (Bassin, 1991, p.11). For Danilevsky, the driving force of history was to be found in the divide between the Romano-Germanic people, who used coercive tactics and suffered from pretensions to universality in seeking to reproduce all other cultures in their image, and the Slavic type. Only the Slavic

culture/civilization, of which Russia was the largest member and therefore guarantor of its integrity, had the capacity for a fully balanced civilization which included religious, cultural, political and social and economic endeavours (See Utechin, 1964, pp. 86-87; Riasanovsky, 1967; Laruelle, 2007, pp. 21-23).

The original Eurasianists spoke of the dying of the West and imminent rise of the East. The Eurasianists' body of work may thus be considered a prolonged critique of Europe and an attempt to distance Russia from the European sphere both culturally and geographically. In the Eurasianist vision, Russia is conceived as a distinct geo-cultural entity outside of the sphere of European civilization. Russia as Eurasia is viewed as comprising an original and independent zone in which Russians/Slavs, Finno-Ugric and Turkic people combine to establish a culture that is neither reducible to that of Russian-Slav, nor compatible with that of Europe.

Eurasianists were centrally concerned with understanding the Russian Revolution. The original Eurasianists distinguished two main aspects to the Russian Revolution. First, it represented the culmination of the Westernizing trend in Russian history initiated by Peter the Great's reforms. For the Eurasianists, this constituted not only a rebellion against God for the sake of secular aims, but the beginnings of a deep division between an educated elite and government and the mass of Russians. Secondly, the Revolution destroyed the old order and brought popular forces into Russian political life. However, being foreign to the Russian people, Bolshevism served only a temporary function and would be replaced by Eurasianism, an organic and religious ideology closer to the outlook of the Russian people. Supplanting the Bolsheviks, Eurasianists' would ensure the stability of an "organic" Russian statehood (see also Mazurek, 2002).

Despite their initial hostility towards the Bolshevik regime, the original Eurasianists' relation to Bolshevism is a source of debate. While noting ambiguities within the movement, Shlapentokh (1997) argues that the original Eurasianists eventually accepted the Soviet regime after perceiving the Soviet regime's increased nationalism; in particular, the Eurasianists came to support Soviet corporate-authoritarianism, which they deemed the appropriate model of government for Russia. For Senderov (2009), classical and contemporary Eurasianism are parallel forces, to be understood as variants as Bolshevism, presumably for their mutual anti-liberal, statist and ideocratic¹ qualities. Riasanovsky (1967) notes that Eurasianists exhibited considerable ambivalence toward Bolshevism. Nonetheless, Eurasianism would represent the arrival of a successful and quintessentially Russian ideocracy – the reign of a comprehensive idea, employed by a ruling class (in this case the Eurasianists) and safeguarded by an autocratic state.

In the aftermath of World War I, Eurasianists advocated that Russians identify with colonial peoples, with the former leading the latter in a general revolt against European colonialism. The Russian revolt against the West and European dominance would be strengthened by enlisting the support of colonial peoples in a more general revolt. In his 1920 book *Europe and Mankind* Trubetskoy argues that European colonization did not bring universal civilization and progress, but rather constituted a form of domination of colonizer over colonized. Eurasianists regarded it not as the triumph of Enlightenment ideals and progress, but instead as disingenuous on the part of the colonizers, who imposed their culture on others. Trubetskoy defended cultural relativity and particularity, with a now defeated and weakened Russia at the head of a colonial revolt against the “Romanogermanic colonizers” (Riasanovsky, 1967, p. 56).

Eurasianism may therefore be understood as a revolt against Europe, a revolt which takes place under the auspices of a benign Russian hegemony. However, it may be understood as a revolt advocated by Eurasianists as a means to safeguard Russia's then weakened position vis-à-vis Europe (Bassin, "Classic Eurasianism"). In this sense Eurasianism can be understood as a defense of the territorial integrity of the Russian empire amid an age of great geopolitical upheaval, uncertainty, and Russian weakness. Its similarities to contemporary Eurasianism in both content and context should be noticeable.

Contemporary neo-Eurasianism is represented by three prolific authors: Lev Gumilyov, Aleksandr Panarin and Aleksandr Dugin. Of the three, the last has attracted the most interest primarily due to the fact that he is still living and producing material at a prolific rate and has consciously sought to position himself as the leading figure in Eurasianist theorizing. Furthermore, Dugin's public support for Putin (which has vacillated considerably over the past decade) and the affinities between a Eurasianist world order and certain orientations of the Putin regime, in its most statist and isolationist moments, necessitate greater coverage. Dugin's extreme position has also attracted considerable interest from Western scholars, who are often quick to discern affinities between Putin's alleged authoritarian proclivities and Dugin's defense of anti-liberal, if not wholly fascist, forms of statecraft.

Gumilyov's main contribution to the Eurasianist canon is to be found in his objectivist theorizing on ethnicity: for Gumilyov (1990), ethnicity is an objective reality, a biological feature. Social, economic and linguistic forms do not alone determine an ethnic grouping, as they are prone to variation in history and not of objective causes. Nor are ethnic groupings reducible to race. For Gumilyov, ethnic groupings (ethnoi; singular

= ethnos) are products of nature and undergo a process of ethnogenesis, which takes place over 1200-1500 years, the lifespan of an ethnos. During this period there is a series of stages: ascent (300 years), acme (300 years), a stage in which human pressures are destructive (150 years), and Inertia (600 years). During this latter stage, “the ethnos accumulates technological means and ideological values yet dies internally... (It) no longer has any cultural or natural concerns... (It) experiences homeostasis, during which the dying ethnos either disappears or becomes... a relic” (Laruelle, 2008, p. 69). Ethnoi display the quality of *passionarnost*, or drive, to act upon one’s environment, consolidate the group, and propel it through the ethnogenetic cycle. During this process, as natural phenomena, ethnoi are subject to laws of entropy, and their drive and energy diminish (Bassin, 2009, p. 135; Paradowski, 1999; Gumilyov, 1990, Chapter 5).

For Gumilyov ethnicity is organized hierarchically. The ethnos is the central unit, roughly analogous to a national grouping that fuses through historical, geographical and biological processes and differentiation (Gumilyov, 1990, p. 44). Underneath them are subethnoi (subsidiary groupings, which are incapable of surviving without the unity imparted by an ethnos), above which are superethnoi. A superethnos is: “a group of ethnoi that has arisen at the same time in a region and which manifests itself in history as a mosaic unity of ethnoi” (Gumilyov, 1990, p. 106). Superethnosy are major groupings of ethnoi, fused through shared cultural experiences and affinities and capable of achieving world historical significance (Bassin, 2009, p.136). There were seven superethnoi in Eurasia/Soviet Union: Russian, Steppic, Circumpolar, Muslim, European, Buddhist, Byzantine (Caucasian Christian) and Jewish. Only two of these – the Russian and Steppic – *only* inhabit the area of Eurasia/Soviet Union. Hence, for Gumilyov, the

history of the Russian Empire is the history of these two superethnos converging on the Russian steppe (Laruelle, 2008, p. 71)

Superethnos are subject to the process of ethnogenesis as well. The interaction between ethnic and superethnic groups is determined by the quality of complementarity of the two (Gumilyov, 1990, pp. 176-178). This could be either positive (*polozhitel'naya*), by which commonality, fraternity and coexistence between *ethnosy* emerged, or negative (*otrilsatel'naya*) by which discord and confrontation emerged. This only partially applies to superethnos, Gumilyov argues, because they are naturally predisposed to mutual negative complementarity. Ethnogenetic cycles of the superethnos determine global relations: in the early stages of ethnogenesis, a superethnos is inclined towards territorial expansion and conflict with others (Bassin, 2009, pp. 136-38).

Though his writings are well known in contemporary Russia, Gumilyov is not immune to criticism: his aspirations to create a scientific-naturalistic conception for the development of human *ethnosy*, combined with his developing a hierarchy for such groupings are controversial. His work has been criticized for its methodological shortcomings, including his alleged propensity to disregard distinct historical documents, episodes and facts in his elaboration of a general theory of ethnicity (Shnirelman & Panarin, 2001). Shnirelman and Panarin (2001) write, “[Gumilyov]² was not the ‘father of ethnology’ but the prophet of dilettantes and xenophobic half-educated people – the kind of people who are filled with a furious desire to provide humanity with a new version of universal history” (p. 15). Gumilyov’s *episteme* was the subordination of history and ethnology to the natural sciences. For Gumilyov, the subjectivity of an historian, as well as the manner in which a people of an age interpret and understand their

own actions, mitigate against the development of an objective history. A group of people is subject to natural laws and largely devoid of free will; Gumilyov's thought may consequently be understood as "naturalism against humanism" (Laruelle, 2008, pp. 60-65). Gumilyov has been accused, therefore, of using a natural-scientific basis to justify the degradation of certain ethnai (Paradowski, 1999).

Gumilyov's thinking also provides the basis for a Russian imagining of the ethnic basis for contemporary geopolitics. One may draw on Gumilyov's thinking in different ways depending on the extent to which one wishes to emphasize the compatibility or incompatibility of certain ethnic groups or, indeed, civilizations in their mutual conduct. It has proved useful to Russian ethnic nationalists who wish to affirm the privileged place of ethnic Russians within the Russian Federation. Given that Gumilyov's thinking posits that ethnic groupings rise and fall according to natural cycles, it is not immediately certain how it translates into meaningful lessons for contemporary Russian statecraft.

The work of the late Aleksandr Panarin, former Chair of Political Science at Moscow State University's Philosophy Department, is integral to the development of post-Soviet Eurasianism. A comprehensive overview is not possible at this time, as accessible English language material on Panarin and his philosophy remain rare. However, some critical contributions of Panarin warrant attention here.³

Panarin developed his contributions to neo-Eurasianism as a philosophical component to rehabilitating Russia, with a particular emphasis on Russia's role in maintaining a global system of checks and balances and thus resisting American-led unipolar globalization efforts. Solovyev (2004) writes:

The primary objective for Panarin ... is not to 'return' the former Russian territories or to unite the Eurasian space under Russian's leadership. The key task is to transform the unipolar world order into something else, either a

multipolar or a bipolar structure. It is the restoration of the system of checks and balances on the world scale and the prevention of a purely hegemonic model of world order that Panarin views as Russia's main objective (p. 91).

In Panarin's works, Russia is to be understood as a civilization unto itself, whose moral basis is found in Russian Orthodoxy. Civilizations are irreducible entities, to be understood spatially with no temporal standard for analysis. This means that civilizations are not to be slotted on a continuum from archaic to modern. Nor are we to assume that civilizations which are not yet modern are destined to become so.

Eurasian pluralism entails the safeguarding of regional and national-cultural rights under an autocratic state. In *Revansh istorii: Rossiiskaya strategicheskaya initsiativa v XXI veke* (The revenge of history: The Russian strategic initiative in the 21st century), Panarin calls for the moral and religious-based rejection of Westernism through, among other things, a "spontaneous people's conservatism" (an ascetic disavowal of materialism and commercialism) and "ecological abstinence" (see Bazhanov, 1999). Panarin's work is replete with an extreme cultural relativism: a strong reading of his work would imply that communication and moral judgment across discrete civilizations is impossible. Russia therefore reserves the right to reject Western development models and indeed has a moral duty to safeguard a polycentric world order. The Putin regime echoes this sentiment when calling for an international political architecture and normative order to accommodate and legitimate different development models.

Unquestionably, amongst all contemporary Eurasianist thinkers, the work of Aleksandr Dugin, a publicist, strategist and thinker of myriad interests, has attracted the most attention in the West. Western approaches to the study and analysis of Dugin and his philosophy range from trivializing to alarmist.⁴ While it is wrong to characterize Dugin as the exclusive or even primary contributor to contemporary Eurasian doctrine,

the sheer amount of attention given Dugin, the prolific nature of his writings and his ambitions in creating a broader Eurasianist movement all necessitate an investigation into his work and history. Furthermore, a study of Dugin's trajectory is a study in how ideas of the staunchly revisionist elements in post-Soviet society initially arrayed against the western leaning tendencies of Yeltsin have become selectively de-radicalized and incorporated into state discourse.

A brief biography of Dugin⁵ serves as a useful indicator of the broad range of political affiliations he has pursued over the past thirty plus years. In 1988 he joined *Pamiat'*, the ultranationalist organization of the *perestroika* era. He quit the following year, allegedly due to its monarchism and anti-Semitism. In 1990-91 he founded the institutions *Arktogaia Association*, the group most responsible for establishing and supporting Russian contact with thinkers in the Western European New Right movement, and *The Center for Meta-Strategic Studies*. Dugin, through *Arktogaia* and *Den'*, was instrumental in the radicalization of Russian nationalism in the early 1990s (Mathyl, 2002). Furthermore, Dugin and the entire *Arktogaia* group, in cooperation with the Western European Right, served as the source for the ideology of the National Bolshevik Party (NBP). With such influences, the NBP deliberately sought to create and foster a nationalist youth counter culture with itself at the center. *Arktogaia* withdrew from the party following a dispute between Dugin and NBP founder Eduard Limonov in 1998. *Arktogaia's* precursor was the "metaphysical underground" Yuzhinskiy Circle. This group of dissidents was founded in 1960s around the Russian poet and writer Yuri Mamleyev. Dugin joined the circle in 1980, long after Mamleyev had emigrated to the United States, a time in which the mystical writer Yevgeniy Golovin was introducing

occult and Integral Traditionalist, Conservative Revolutionary and Fascist works into the group. The group also included Geidar Dzhemal', the Islamic traditionalist (Shekhovstov, 2008).

Dugin may be viewed as simply one amongst many “metaphysical radicals” to emerge in Russia in the 1990s: thinkers who are allegedly conditioned by Russia’s “disruptive and catastrophic” historical dynamics to conduct continual metaphysical speculation in the attempt to create entire social orders. With such a prioritization of radicalism and totalizing thinking, the seemingly incompatible Marxist, nationalist and religious doctrines in post-Soviet Russian are easily synthesized (Epstein, 1996).

Dugin also drew closer to the CPRF and became a prolific contributor to *Den'*, the Russian nationalist periodical (subsequently renamed *Zavtra*). In 1993-94 he became the ideologist for the NBP (leaving in 1998). In 1995 Dugin ran in national Duma elections in a suburban constituency outside of Saint Petersburg, receiving less than one percent of the vote. 1997 saw the publication of his widely influential *The Foundation of Geopolitics: Russia's Geopolitical Future*, which he appears to have written with the help of General Igor' Rodionov, Minister of Defence of Russia in 1996-97. In 1999 he became Adviser to the Duma Spokesman, Communist Gennady Seleznev. On April 21, 2001, he founded the *Evraziia* movement, the purpose of which being to formulate a new Russian idea. Of the movement, Dugin stated: “Our aim is not to achieve power, nor to fight for power, but to fight for influence on it. Those are different things” (Laruelle, 2008. p. 111).

From the Analytical Department of the Movement Eurasia on evrazia.org, which remains available at the time of writing (Feb 26, 2010) we find that the Eurasianists

openly embrace a pursuit of ideocracy. The movement's political platform is written as such:

Wealth and prosperity, a strong state and an efficient economy, a powerful army and the development of production must be instruments for the achievement of high ideals. The sense of the state and of the nation [which were previously discussed: the uniqueness of Russian Slav-Orthodox civilization expanded to include Eurasian elements; state in the form of Empire] can be conferred only through the existence of a "leading idea." That political regime, which supposes the establishment of a 'leading idea' as a supreme value, was called by the eurasists [sic] as '[sic] 'ideocracy' from the Greek 'idea' and 'kratos', power. Russia is always thought of as the Sacred Rus', as a power (derzhava) fulfilling its own peculiar historical mission. The eurasist world-view must also be the national idea of the forthcoming Russia, its 'leading idea.'

On May 30, 2002, *Evrasiia* was transformed into a political party, described by Dugin as having a "radical centrist" orientation. According to Sedgwick (2004), "This new position... was centrist in that it endorsed President Putin as a patriot who appeared committed to the restoration of Russian power and receptive to the idea of Russia as a Eurasian power. It was radical in that Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism was central to the Eurasia movement, and in that the liberal elements in Putin's political program were tolerated rather than endorsed" (p. 234). In 2003, Dugin both flirted with the leftist (albeit Kremlin supported) party *Rodina* and had his fallout with them, as he claims to have held disdain for the monarchist tendencies of leaders Dmitry Rogozin and Natalia Narochnitskaia. In November 2003, *Evrasiia* was transformed from a political party into the "International Eurasianist Movement", an NGO seeking to become an international think tank influencing governments in Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan (see also Laruelle, 2009). Dugin displayed an initial enthusiasm for Putin, but has allegedly become disappointed with him due to the presence of liberal figures in the now prime minister's entourage.

Dugin has been prolific in a wide range of media, as well. He has been, at various times, an editor of the journals *Elementi*, *Milyi Angel*, *Evraziiskoe obozrenie*, *Evraziiskoe vtorzhenie*. He wrote and presented weekly one hour radio broadcast *Finis Mundi* in 1997, prohibited after commenting favorably on Boris Savinkov, an early 20th century terrorist. In 1998 he participated in creating “New University”, at which he subsequently lectures, whose curricula include Traditionalist and occultist teachings. Since 2005, Dugin has anchored *Landmarks*, a weekly broadcast on geopolitics on the Orthodox television channel *Spas* (savior).

A remarkably succinct, though incomplete, history of the “neo-eurasist” ideology remains on the “Analytical department of the Movement Eurasia” on Dugin’s evrazi.org website. It is, if nothing else, a fairly clear indication of the movement’s self-identification and self-understanding. The movement portrays itself as an inheritor of the Eurasianist legacy but adapted to contemporary purposes through the incorporation of, among other things, traditionalism, the origins of sacredness, “the search for the symbolic paradigms of the space-time matrix” (the study of ruins, mythology), Western geopolitics, a conservative interpretation and incorporation of the new left, and third way economics through the prism of autarchy of the “great spaces.” Its history is distilled neatly into five stages, the contents of which reveal a wide range of positions and influences. The first stage (1985-90) has Dugin involved with the conservative-patriotic, as well as monarchist, forces and highlights the influence of traditionalism on Eurasianist thinking. The second stage (1991-93) has a reconsideration of the Soviet period from the perspective of national-bolshevism and left-wing Eurasianism, the rising popularity of Eurasianism amongst the patriotic opposition and intellectuals, as well as various

interpretations of Eurasianism on the part of authors and thinkers. The third stage (1994-98) has the development of neo-Eurasian “orthodoxy” – an increasingly anti-Western, anti-liberal, anti-globalist position, in what are considered Dugin’s main works, the creation of *Arktogaia*’s website, a proliferation of publications a referencing of Eurasianism in the programs of the CPRF, LDPR and NDR (New Democratic Russia). The fourth stage (1998-2001) involves a shift to the centrist position, which may be understood as closer affiliation with government position (especially under Putin), support for Yevgeni Primakov as Prime Minister, a distancing from opposition stances and increased media presence. The fifth stage (2001-02) contained the foundation of the Pan-Russian Political Social Movement EURASIA and the declaration of full support for Putin and the process of transforming the movement into a party.

The above is interesting not merely as an historical artifact but an indication of the broad circles that Dugin’s Eurasianism has been a part of and the vacillations in his ideology, influences and tactics. Dugin’s biography is revealing in its wide array of intellectual and political influences on the thinker. With such an eclectic mix of influences and various shifting positions from flirting with monarchist, fascist and communist standpoints, to a more politically astute “radical centrist” position, how is it possible to categorize Dugin’s contribution to Eurasianism?

It is potentially misleading to think of Dugin as a direct intellectual descendent of original Eurasianists, given the extent to which he is influenced by multiple strands of thinking. For one, he is influenced by European Integral Traditionalism. Integral Traditionalism is a line of religious thinking originating with French born Muslim Rene Guenon and Anglo-Ceylonese metaphysician Ananda Coomaraswamy, which rejects

modernity outright in favour of a distant past during which the “perennial wisdom” of spiritual truths was revealed during a transcendental unity of all religions. Whether Dugin’s traditionalism is earnest or opportunistic is a source of debate (see Shekhovstov and Umland (2009); Shekhovstov (2008); Sedgwick, (2004)). Guenon and Evola’s Traditionalism holds that the pre-modern person had access to a spiritual experience that has since been clouded by modern institutions. The New Right’s political philosophy is an extension of this thinking, consisting primarily of an aesthetic critique of modernity. In Russia, the political positions of its various supporters and ideologues have a propensity to vary considerably (see Sokolov, 2009).

Furthermore, Dugin is influenced by “conspirology,” or the study of the secret histories behind global political conflicts. Dugin’s adherence to conspirology has him offering a secret history of the Soviet Union wherein a Eurasianist order opposes an Atlanticist order. The occult war between them culminated in the August 1991 putsch (Laruelle, 2008, p. 120).

Dugin is also evidently influenced by Western geopoliticians Halford Mackinder⁶ and Karl Haushofer.⁷ Flashes of geographical determinism found in Dugin, as well as his representing a perennial conflict between land- and sea-based powers, owe much to Mackinder. Dugin has adopted and adapted for Russian purposes Mackinder’s general theory of geographical causality, wherein historical development is largely immune from human activity. Mackinder (1904) suggested that his time saw the end of the expansion of Western European maritime powers (the Columbian age) and a newfound ability of Russia to organize and defend its Eurasian territory. Russia constituted the Pivot Area of world politics:

that vast area of Euro-Asia which is inaccessible to ships, but in antiquity lay open to the horse-riding nomads, and is to-day about to be covered with a network of railways? There have been and are here the conditions of a mobility of military and economic power of a far-reaching and yet limited character. Russia replaces the Mongol Empire. Her pressure on Finland, on Scandinavia, on Poland, on Turkey, on Persia, on India, and on China, replaces the centrifugal raids of the steppemen. In the world at large she occupies the central strategical position held by Germany in Europe. She can strike on all sides and be struck from all sides, save the north. The full development of her modern railway mobility is merely a matter of time. *Nor is it likely that any possible social revolution will alter her essential relations to the great geo-graphical limits of her existence.* Wisely recognizing the fundamental limits of her power, her rulers have parted with Alaska; for it is as much a law of policy for Russia to own nothing overseas as for Britain to be supreme on the ocean” (pp. 434-6).

Later, in his 1943 work, Mackinder offers the following definition of the

Heartland, deemed the area by which the geopolitical future of humanity would be decided: “The Heartland is the northern part and the interior of Euro-Asia. It extends from the Arctic coast down to the central deserts and has as its western limits the broad isthmus between the Baltic and Black Seas” (p. 597). The Heartland approximates the territory of the USSR, with the exception of “Lenaland”, a vast forested area in Eastern Russia which is centered on the Lena river and lies East of the Yenisei River (pp. 597-99). He writes primarily with the intention of detailing how to subdue Germany with an Atlantic coalition of Britain, France and the United States and a Heartland Soviet Union, while warning of the vast power and defensive capabilities of the USSR: “All things considered, the conclusion is unavoidable that if the Soviet Union emerges from this war as conqueror of Germany, she must rank as the greatest land Power on the globe. Moreover, she will be the power in the strategically strongest defensive position. The Heartland is the greatest natural fortress on earth. For the first time in history it is manned by a garrison sufficient both in number and quality” (p. 601).

Dugin is also influenced by Weimar-era German thinkers of the “conservative revolution” (Carl Schmitt, Ernst Junger, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck) and the

francophone New Right (Alain de Benoist, Jean Thiriart, Robert Stauckers). Dugin has penned openly fascist works. Indeed, one need not look further than the title in one important case. In “Fascism: Borderless and Red” Dugin (2006) emphasizes socialist aspects in his version of fascism. He suggests that fascism is not national capitalism, and that any association of national capitalism with fascism resulted from an unfortunate historical necessity to accommodate national capital. Fascism for Dugin is a heroic, idealistic and revolutionary nationalism, the combination of “right wing” cultural—political factors (“traditionalism, faithfulness to the soil, roots, national ethics”) with “left-wing” economic principles (“social justice, limitation to the market forces, deliverances from ‘credit slavery,’ prohibition of stock market speculation, monopolies and trusts, [and] primacy of honest work” [p. 508-9]). Russians are historically suited to a socialist orientation and are, according to Dugin, “longing for freshness, for modernity, for unfeigned romanticism, for living participation in some great cause” (p. 509). Dugin’s flirting with fascism and the Weimer Right (Luks, 2009) has led critics to suggest that he is more fascist than Eurasianist (Umland, 2007, 2009a, 2009b; Shekhovstov, 2008). Conversely, his eclectic intellectual pursuits render his commitment to a more robust fascism dubious (Gregor 2006a, 2006b). For present purposes, his speculation on geopolitics receives the most attention, as they are a significant part of a wider tendency in post Soviet Russia of contemplating the geopolitical basis of world politics.

3. Eurasian and Post-Soviet Thinking about Geopolitics

Conceived of as an intellectual movement, Eurasianism may be understood as a series of intellectual attempts to establish an integrated ideological doctrine. In this line of thinking, divisions within the movement are primarily manifested as various schools of

thought competing with one another for readership and significance. Eurasianism as intellectual movement is comprised of three trends: that inspired by Gumilyov, which includes Dugin; that created by Edouard Bagramov, former member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's (CPSU's) Central Committee and creator of the journal *Eurasia, Peoples, Cultures and Religions (Evraziya, Narody, Kultury, Religii)*, whose mandate was to promote cultural alliance and ethnic fusion between Slavs and Turkic people; and finally, a plethora of smaller movements and publications, including *Literary Eurasia (Literaturnaya Evrazia)* (Laruelle, 2004, p. 118). In such a presentation, Eurasianism is primarily that which occurs in the sphere of academic and literary production and there is little mention of the contemporary political significance of the movement (see also Laruelle, 2008).⁸

There are grounds for rejecting the notion that any mere mention of Eurasia or a pragmatic orientation towards Eastern Russia or Asia constitutes a Eurasianist position or the wholesale adoption of certain radical Eurasianist philosophical and normative tenets (see Laruelle, 2007 for such skepticism). Nonetheless, when conceived of as a broader interest towards geopolitics, Eurasianism encompasses a great deal more territory. Eurasianism's position within the post-Soviet Russian discussion on geopolitics and geoidentity leads to a certain amount of confusion: while not all geopolitical discussions involve self-identified Eurasianists, Eurasianism has been used haphazardly to describe a wide array of Russian statist and anti-western positions. These positions express degrees of dissatisfaction with Russia's post cold war international position and exhibit healthy amounts of skepticism towards, if not outright condemnation of, Russia's wholesale adoption of Western norms and its integration into Western-led liberal democratic

institutions. Eurasianism is therefore a polysemic concept that signifies both the comprehensive/philosophical and geopolitical/ geostrategic arguments about Russia's position in contemporary world order. In its most generic usage, Eurasianism signifies a commitment to continental orientation in foreign policy, a turn away from the West and a Russia that serves an integrative if not hegemonic function on the Eurasian continent. More comprehensive articulations of Eurasianism emphasize the civilizational distinctiveness of Russia and a moral imperative to resist unipolar Western, or primarily American, world order. The Putin regime selectively deploys the language to capture a real skepticism towards a wholesale embrace of the West and to appeal to recalcitrant elements of Russian society. A lack of philosophical comprehensiveness and flair for eschatological speculation does not render certain expressions of Eurasianism meaningless. Rather, that Eurasianism as a concept has such considerable appeal is testament to its success as a galvanizing ideological force and means of expressing Russia's position in the contemporary global political economy for a diverse range of thinkers, political actors and writers in the popular press. A turn to Eurasianism's place within geopolitical debates is therefore warranted. Both Eurasianism and the broader Russian geopolitical protest against Russia's post-Cold War international position serve as a common sense about global affairs that is selectively appealed to by the Putin regime.

Dugin's primary work, *Foundations of Geopolitics (Osnovy geopolitiki)*,⁹ was allegedly written with the assistance of General Nikolai Klokotov of the General Staff Academy, suggesting that his ideas on geopolitics found a receptive audience in Russian military circles (Dunlop, 2004, p.43). For Dugin, geopolitics is both an objective science

in the narrow sense – geophysical realities determine the course of politics – and a more encompassing “synthetic” discipline, which incorporates geography, history, demography, theology, ecology and the occult. It is a metadiscipline, a system of disciplines, an all encompassing *weltanshaunng* according to which all natural and human phenomena are to be interpreted. Most of all, it is a means to restore the grandeur of Russia as hegemon of the Eurasian space.

Dugin’s geopolitical worldview is predicated on a fundamental division between land-based, continental powers (tellurocracies) and sea-based powers (thalassocracies). There is irreconcilable conflict between the land and sea based powers, between the Heartland and the World Island. Dugin’s work is essentializing in the extreme, ascribing particular and oppositional qualities to land and water powers (Ingram, 2001).¹⁰ Previous global conflicts to which Russian was a part, once stripped of historical vacillations of ideology, are at their core examples of this conflict.

According to Dugin, Russia’s mission is to lead the continental powers against the sea-based powers. How it is to do this is not entirely clear, however. There are two separate and somewhat contradictory tendencies comprising Dugin's Eurasian New World Order. The first is the interaction and association of four "gloeonomic belts" or "zones": macro-regions formed through the consolidation of Big Spaces (*bol'shie prostranstva* – a Russian translation of the German *Grossraum*), whereby the larger spaces are hegemonic over the smaller. Equality and mutual recognition amongst the four gloeonomic belts – Euro-Africa, Asia-Pacific, America and Eurasia – are combined with an alliance of the three macro-regions against the United States. This concern with American hegemony is the second tendency, a tendency which trumps all other concerns

(see Shlapentokh, 2001; 2007a; 2007b). Dugin's geopolitics is fundamentally oriented towards assembling a series of alliances and "axes" to resist American unipolar hegemony. A Euro-Asian Empire from Dublin to Vladivostok would be realized through a series of axes: Paris-Berlin-Moscow, Tehran-Moscow and Tokyo-Moscow (see Bassin, 2008; Dunlop, 2001, pp. 108-115; Laruelle, 2008, pp. 115-120). In its most extreme variant, the parameters of Eurasia is ultimately decided by whether a country, irrespective of geographic location, adopts an anti-American (and therefore pro-Eurasian) stance: "To the extent that any country or region of the globe is consciously oriented against American hegemonic designs, then as far as [Dugin] is concerned, it is de facto already a part of Eurasia" (Bassin, 2008, p. 293).

The logic of Dugin's anti-American Eurasian empire is well-captured in the following selection from *Evraziiskii vzgliad*:

In such a broad understanding, Eurasianism takes on a new and unprecedented significance. Now it is not only a sort of national idea for a new postcommunist Russia (as intended by the movement's founding fathers...) but also a broad program of universal planetary significance, which goes far beyond the boundaries of Russia and the Eurasian continent itself. *In the same way that the concept of 'Americanism' can today be applied to geographical regions located far beyond the limits of the north American continent, so "Eurasianism" indicates a special civilizational, cultural, philosophical, and strategic choice, which can be made by any member of the human race, regardless of what national and spiritual culture they may belong to* (quoted in Bassin, 2008, p. 294).

In addition to the geographical component of Eurasianism, a group may be said to be Eurasianist simply by virtue of its disposition towards Atlanticism. Religions are interpreted based on the extent to which they fit into a particular conception of the Eurasianism-Atlanticism binary. *Evraziia* has depicted traditional Islam, Sufism, Shi'ism and Orthodox Christianity as "spontaneously Eurasian", while Catholicism, Protestantism

and “U.S. sponsored radical Islamism” as representative of Atlanticism (Laruelle, 2008, p. 118).

The geographical parameters of the classical conception of Eurasia roughly equate to those of imperial Russia. Dugin's Eurasia is more ambiguous, varying according to perceived geopolitical necessity. That is, the borders of Eurasia are predicated on a number of scenarios envisioned by Dugin as possibilities for constructing a counter-hegemonic project against the United States. In his geopolitical vision is found a contrast to original Eurasianists. Dugin and other contemporary Eurasianists claim to be heirs to the intellectual tradition established by the classical Eurasianists. However, these similarities may be mostly superficial, including the view of Russia (or Russia-Eurasia) as a single cohesive civilization on the Eurasian landmass, formed after centuries of cultural interactions; a fundamental incommensurability with the West; a divergence from narrow ethnic Russian nationalism – Eurasian identity consists of both an "upper" consolidated portion as well as "lower" ethnic-national ones; and that the two came to fruition in times of profound geopolitical upheaval (Bassin, 2008).

Its tenuous relationship to original Eurasianism notwithstanding, contemporary Eurasianism is significant within post-Soviet Russia as both a polarizing and galvanizing force. It is polarizing insofar as its adherents articulate an ideological position as irreconcilably distinct from Westernism. It is not unreasonable to consider the main ideological divide in Russian geopolitical orientation since the middle of perestroika to be between Westernisers and Eurasianists. The former, broadly speaking, are inclined to highlight the universal validity of pluralist-democratic and liberal economic norms. The latter stress a unique continental identity for Russia that is simultaneously neither East

nor West but which straddles both, exhibiting elements of cultural and civilizational particularity (see O'Loughlin, 2001).

Eurasianism may be thought of as galvanizing insofar as it constitutes a pole around which seemingly disparate and potentially antagonistic political forces gather: in a general sense, it developed significantly in the early 1990s and enjoyed popular usage as an ideology capable of uniting a diverse range of anti-liberal and anti-democratic elements, including monarchist, Communist, nationalist and fascist forces seeking a restoration of the Soviet empire (Mathyl, 2002, p. 68). Indeed, the prominence of Dugin is a testament to the widely perceived need for a particularly Russian geo-identity among such a disparate group of anti-liberal forces. Such an affinity between Russian conservatives and communists is less startling to Russian commentators, however and not confined to the political landscape of the 1990s alone. Rabotiazhev and Solov'ev (2008) write that "As far back as the nineteenth century, a certain spiritual kinship existed between Russian socialists and conservatives, based on their idealization of communal forms of social life and their rejection of Western liberal bourgeois civilization." Both socialist Aleksandr Herzen and romantic conservative Konstantin Leont'ev alike despised the Western bourgeoisie; both Slavophiles and Populists believed in the messianic role of Russia (p. 29).

Such affinities were evident between Russian conservatives and communists in the 1990s. After becoming the common ideological glue for various "red-brown" groups – the increasingly nationalistic Communists and various extreme right wing groups in the early to mid 1990s – and a means for anti-regime forces to express broadly anti-liberal and anti-democratic sentiments, Eurasianism has since come to signify a broader Russian

rejection of a world order ensured by American unilateralism and liberal-democratic institutions. Hence, Eurasianism as geopolitical speculation signifies a series of disparate positions, not all of which have strong affinities with the more elaborate Eurasianist doctrine of the likes of Dugin, Gumilyov or Panarin.

Geopolitical thinking was fashionable amongst the anti-Yeltsin opposition in the early to mid 1990s, among them LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov. Zhirinovskiy's most clearly formulated geopolitical treatise is to be found in his *Last Thrust to the South (Poslednii brodok na iug)*, written in 1993.¹¹ For Zhirinovskiy, the sphere south of Russia has been the country's main source of problems throughout history and requires Russian hegemony and pacification. He advocates that Russia annex the territory of the former Soviet Union as well as Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey in order to strengthen its Southern border, pacify troublesome nationalities of the regime, obtain access to warm seas and restore Russian great power status. Not only will Russia do its part in its own neighbourhood, but in fact a new world order will exist wherein the civilized northern states (Russia, the European Union, the USA and Japan) will rule as great empires over the south (see Umland, 2008; Dunlop, 1994; Kipp, 1994). This conception of northern expansion to the south is inspired by the German geopolitician Karl Haushofer (Thom, 1994).

Zhirinovskiy's LDPR echoed Duginesque geopolitical themes in the 1990s, advocating an authoritarian, centralized, expansionist state in which federalism is discarded and inclusion is defined by Russian ethnicity. World order is constituted by multiple civilizations; this, and not American hegemony, is the more appropriate form to safeguard the "white" civilization. A more specific reading derived from the Last Thrust

to the South has northern states (one of which is Russia) dominate the southern states; in fact, this does not really fall short of formal incorporation into empire. The Russian neo-imperial state is at first protectionist at home, creating competitive sectors and the necessary infrastructure to marshal the economy's transition to a more market based model (Kipp, 1994).

Likewise, the CPRF became increasingly preoccupied with geopolitics during the 1990s. Re-oriented towards geopolitics, national security and national interests by Aleksei Podberezkin, head of the national-patriotic think tank Spiritual Heritage, and under the domination of the "superpower-patriotic" wing, the party espoused a Eurasianist understanding of world politics (without explicitly calling it such), wherein the world is viewed through the Duginesque (and Mackinderesque) prism of intractable conflict between maritime and continental powers.¹² Russia must align with other Eurasian powers in order to defend its national interests against the unilateral hegemony of the United States. The party came to express certain affinities with Russian conservatives through a focus on reconstituting the Soviet Union and viewing the divide in Russian politics in the 1990s through the prism of patriotic statist and anti-patriotic Westernizers. Under Zyuganov, they borrowed from 19th century conservative thinkers such as the pan-Slavist Danilevsky, K.N. Leont'ev, as well as Ivan Il'in and Pyotr Savitsky (Rabotiazhev & Solovev, 2008). As Russia's most viable and enduring party of the 1990s, the CPRF therefore vacillated between an anti-systemic revisionist voice and a legitimate parliamentary force (Flikke, 1999).¹³

Zyuganov has been noted for subordinating Marxist terminology to the imperatives of patriotism and national development. He advocates a Russian renewal

based on the heroism of the Russian people based on its timeless qualities of strict adherences to moral precepts, collectivism and selfless labour. This is to take place under a strong state – in fact, a “majestic and powerful state.” Russia is infused with the historical responsibility of resisting the West and its immorality and materialism and charged with the responsibility of ensuring a balanced world order (see Gregor, 1998 and Lester, 1997). In 1994 Zyuganov stated:

By unifying the ‘red’ ideal of social justice, which is in its own way the earthly substantiation of a ‘heavenly truth,’ namely that ‘all are equal before God,’ with the ‘white’ ideal of nationally conceived statehood, understood as the form of existence of the centuries-old holy ideas of the people, Russia will obtain, at last, the long craved-for social consensus of all strata and classes as well as restore supreme state power, bequeathed to it by tens of generations of ancestors, acquired through their suffering and courage, and sanctified by the grief of the heroic history of the fatherland! (quoted in Vujacic, 1996, p. 147).

While the LDPR and CPRF echoed Eurasianist themes, Eurasianists cannot take sole responsibility for geopolitical speculation in Russia. Eurasianism is part of a broader Russian debate on geopolitics that emerged in the 1990s. While critics have noted Dugin’s propensity to reinscribe Russia’s past in Eurasianist terms (see Senderov, 2009, p. 37), it should be noted that Dugin’s propensity to re-interpret the Cold War as a primarily geopolitical rather than ideological struggle is not without precedent. Hauner (1990), for example examines the “Soviet Eurasian Empire” in the context of Mackinder and Haushofer’s theories and the so-called “Heartland Debate,” a debate with certain traction within the Soviet Union. In 1990, Igor Malashenko (1990: 46; quoted in Kerr, 1995) of the CPSU International Department stated:

The confrontation of the continental power which controls the heart of Europe, and the coalition opposing it, is by no means confined, geopolitically, to a contest between East and West, socialism and capitalism (or ‘totalitarianism’ and ‘liberal democracy’ in Western parlance), as it has quite often been made out over the last few decades, but is an element of genuinely global politics. Properly speaking, the very terms ‘East’ and ‘West’ also reflect in a way, if inadequately,

the fact that it is not only ideological rivalry or even a clash of social-political systems but also a de-ideologised geopolitical confrontation.

Deemed inappropriate during the Soviet period due to its association with thinkers deemed connected with Nazi and fascist thought (Kolossoff & Turovsky, 2001), speculating on geopolitics became fashionable in Russian intellectual and political circles after the fall of the Soviet Union. As Solovyev (2004) notes, however, this has not always taken the form of rigorous scholarly practice and may therefore be considered more of a vocational than scientific pursuit.¹⁴ Nonetheless, a wide array of Russian politicians and thinkers became preoccupied with geopolitics during the 1990s, including conceiving of Russia's national security in terms of geopolitical language and methodologies (Erickson, 1999). Official discourse in the late 1990s was replete with references to geopolitics and reflected some degree of geopolitical realism, of which Yevgeni Primakov was representative (Wohlforth, 2006, pp. 269-270). Whether viewing world affairs through a prism of geopolitical antagonisms comprises a new common sense in Russia is debatable: Russian citizens have not simply accepted these official accounts. Rather, they hold a complex mix of geopolitical affiliations as determined by a number of demographic indicators, exhibiting a range of geopolitical orientations and affinity towards areas of the former Soviet Union, Westernizing orientations, Slavic Union with Belarus and Ukraine, and more aggressive visions of the restoration of Soviet space under Russian leadership (O'Loughlin & Talbot, 2005). On the whole, however, they take little interest in the geopolitical writings of the post-Soviet period in Russia (O'Loughlin, 2001) and the receptiveness of Russians to simplified geopolitical storylines offered by Russian officials varies (O'Loughlin, O Tuathail & Kolossoff, 2004a, 2004b).

Geopolitical concepts developed in Russia may be considered as integral to Russian understandings of world order in the decade following the Soviet break-up. Accepting that Eurasianism geopolitical orientations enable it to be classified alongside communists and patriots (Wohlforth, 2006), four currents of geopolitical thinking are discernible in the decade following the Soviet break up: 1) Eurasianism; 2) Westernism; 3) a moderate nationalist-isolationist position predicated on Russian Orthodoxy, Slavic Union and withdrawal from the Caucasus and Central Asia; and 4) a pragmatic academic school of geostrategy, which incorporates elements of the three: an understanding of Russia's geographical position between Russia and Asia, as well as its civilizational characteristics; the importance of mutually beneficial relations with the West; and pragmatism (Kolossoff & Turovsky, 2001). Post-Soviet Russia has also witnessed the emergence of a new field called ethno-geopolitics, or *etnogeopolitika*, which "argues that ethnicity – in all its various manifestations – represents the most fundamental force driving the political life of the 21st century. This is understood as universal principle, operating with equal intensity on the arenas of regional, national and international politics." According to ethno-geopoliticians, ethnicity is entirely objective. Humans belong to invariable *etnosy* – ethnic units which are comprised of shared ethnic characteristics, themselves predicated on biology and a form of socio-biology. An individual *etnos* has an "organic attachment to its own native region or homeland, identified by ethno-geopoliticians variously as its *Lebensraum* (*zhiznennoye prostranstvo*), its 'ethnic space' (*etnicheskoye prostranstvo*), or its 'endemic field' (*endemicheskoye pole*). It is through the occupation of this space that the existence of the

group is materialized, so to speak, and the bond between the two has an existential character” (Bassin, 2009, p. 133).

Seeking an objective and biological basis to the interaction of ethnic groups was central to the work of Lev Gumilyov, as I have demonstrated. Ethno-geopolitics as a field represents the formalization of the relationship between principles of ethnicity and their interaction within geographic entities. The terminology associated with ethno-geopolitics appears strongly influenced by the work of Gumilyov, although the precise problem of ethno-geopolitics was first formulated in Russia by philosopher Yuriy Boroday (Bassin, 2009, p. 134).¹⁵ Adherents of Ethno-geopolitics have developed the concept of *ethnosistema* (ethnic system): a collection of individual *etnosy* joined together in a single entity. It is similar to Gumilyov’s concept of *superetnosy*, save for its insistence on the principle of non-conflictual (*bezkonfliktnaya*) ethnic hierarchy: each ethnic system is comprised of a civilizational vertical, on which ethnicities occupy different rungs depending on their level of social maturity (*sotsial'naya zrelost'*). The *etnodominanta* resides at the top of the hierarchy, a hegemon of sorts within the system, guaranteeing stability. In Gumilyov, the *superetnos* was comprised of freely associating *etnosy* (Bassin, 2009, p. 143).

A more nuanced approach to Eurasianism as a strategic geopolitical orientation suggests that four distinct groups are discernible: expansionists, including Dugin and Zhirinovskiy, who view Russia as culturally incompatible with the West and fundamentally expansionist in nature; Civilizationists, including Zyuganov and other communist politicians, as well as the author Nikolai Nartov, for whom Russia is a self-sufficient civilization in need of restoration of former Soviet space¹⁶; Stabilizers,

including former Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov and the academic Kamaludin Gadzhiyev, for whom Russia's role in Eurasia is stabilizing the region in an informal manner, and who advocate a "multivector" foreign policy in defense of Russia's national interests; and Geoeconomists, for whom economic prosperity and social development are key threats to Russia's security. For these thinkers (e.g. Sergei Rogov, Vladimir Kolosov, and Nikolai Mironenko), a Eurasian orientation is viable insofar as Russia utilizes its position in Eurasia to promote transregional development (Tsygankov, 2003b; see also Tsygankov, 1998).

Contained within such a taxonomy is a statist orientation to Eurasianism, exemplified by Primakov (see also Smith, 1999; for a contrasting view, see O'Loughlin, O Tuathail & Kolosov, 2005). The mix of statism and Eurasianism is referred to by Rangsimaporn (2006) as "pragmatic Eurasianism" (p. 372). Eurasianism as Russian foreign policy retained a traditional geopolitical orientation toward the control and defence of territory; however it was complemented by an acute awareness of the emergence of Asia as a regional economic powerhouse (Kerr, 1994). Thus, Eurasianism as a foreign policy orientation serves as a contradistinction to Atlanticism or a Western leaning policy orientation advocating that Russia integrates into Western led institutions. An orientation towards Central and East Asia is popularly received as a Eurasianist position. Russian moves to consolidate the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) are treated as a Eurasianist foreign policy in some circles (see Torbakov, 2004). According to some scholars, then, proponents of contemporary Eurasianism advocate a foreign policy wherein Russia rejects integration into American

unipolar world and advocates for the creation of multiple power centers, for example (the EU, Japan, India, Israel, Turkey, Iran; China is possible, but treated with greater reservation; see Shlapentokh, 2007a, p. 228). Manifested in the foreign policy orientation of the Russian state, Eurasianism may be viewed as a foreign policy strategy for Russia predicated on a balancing orientation, if not a degree of contempt, towards American hegemony.

In spite of Central Asia's increasing geo-strategic importance to a number of powerful states, some Western scholars and commentators see Russia's vying for influence in Central Asia as anachronistic. In this line of thinking, Eurasianism is simply synonymous with imperial designs and revisionist tendencies on the part of much of the Russian intelligentsia (see Clover, 1999; Thom, 1994). However, Russians are not alone in imagining the intensification of geopolitical competition over the Eurasian space in the post-Soviet period. One may look to Brzezinski (1997), for whom the pacification of Russia through encouraging free market practices and a decentralized state is integral to Eurasian security.

In addition to being part of a larger Russian discussion on geopolitics, Eurasianists are part of a wider trend to consider the how civilizations comprise world order. In other words, Eurasianists deem geopolitics as partly constituted by civilizational and cultural qualities. To varying degrees, Eurasianists invoke notions of the cultural and civilizational particularity of Russia and the irreconcilability of different cultures. For Eurasianists, a defence of international cultural plurality serves as a means of articulating the desire for Eurasian sovereignty, the guarantor of which is Russia, against the purported homogenizing tendencies of a Western-led globalization (Patomaki

& Pursianisian, 1999). Holding such a position is Valery Tsepalo (1998), former Belarusian ambassador to the United States, who entreats Western support for the soft integration (EU style) of Eurasian space under Russian leadership, ostensibly to provide stability to Central Asia and prevent the internal disintegration of Russia.

For many Eurasianists, globalization is simply an extension of American unilateralism and hegemony that results in cultural homogenization. Russia must resist this, both for the sake of preserving its own ethnicity and for defending a form of federalism in the Eurasian space within which individual ethnicities may be preserved in commonwealth form (Shlapentokh, 2007a, pp. 232-33). Chief among neo-Eurasianists in this regard is Panarin, for whom culture is reduced to ethnicity. Panarin articulated a vision of global ethnopluralism, juxtaposing it against a world of one-dimensional cultural values (Perunova, 2008). It is reasonable to ask the extent to which talk of “culture” in the Eurasianist paradigm is placed in the service of geostrategic terms, whereby culture serves as a unifying element to court other countries against Western hegemony (Rangsimaporn, 2006).

Debates about the inter-civilizational nature of the global political economy have been prominent in Russia since the breakup of the Soviet Union. It has not fallen to the Eurasianists alone to speculate on the cultural specificity of civilizations. One particular manifestation of this is to be found in Russian responses to Samuel Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations thesis, which asserts the fundamentally incompatible, rivalry laden and conflict ridden nature of geo-cultural civilizations. The themes inherent in Huntington resonate with longer Russian intellectual traditions. Indeed, there is a similarity between Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations thesis and the arguments of Nikolai Danilevsky, the

pan-Slavist who postulated the fundamental irreconcilability between Russia and the West in his work (Shlapentokh, 2007c). The Clash of Civilizations thesis has resonated widely across the spectrum of post-Soviet Russian foreign policy discourses and multiple groups have engaged with it (Tsygankov, 2003). The notion of an international order being constituted by a plurality of civilizations is not an inherently conservative or revisionist idea in the Russian spectrum. For Russian liberals, civilizational pluralism is an integral component to global stability (Tsygankov and Tsygankov, 1999).

4. The Moral Imperative of Multipolarity: Polarity as a Moral, Cultural and Civilizational Concern

Those articulating a Eurasianist response to questions of world order in Russia may therefore be thought of as occupying places on a broad continuum from relatively mundane and technocratic issues of economic policy, to strategic themes regarding the Russian state's external and internal political and economic orientation, to more ambitious attempts at articulating nothing short of a Russian post-communist *weltanschauung*: a comprehensive and integral vision of Russian life, infused with religious, geographical, philosophical, cultural and political meaning. Eurasianism can encompass both the more philosophically adventurous strains of scholarly activity and certain concrete orientations of Putin's administrations (Hahn, 2002). Furthermore, direct praise for Eurasianism has been uttered in the highest echelons of the Russian state. For example, in August 2005 during a speech at the millennial celebration of Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, then-president Putin paid tribute to Gumilyov and his brand of Eurasianism. Putin affirmed that the Russian state's "imperial conscience" was adopted from the Mongol Golden Horde, which was prevalent in Tatarstan (See RFE/RL Newsline for August 25, 2005).

The extent to which the many facets of Eurasianist thinking have influenced Putin's administrations in terms of concrete political orientation and policy decisions remains a source of constant debate. One need not look to such an orientation and decisions to gauge the significance of these various strands of geopolitical discourse for Putin's regimes, though. On some level they provide the stuff of a new common sense language about Russia's place in the world that may be utilized by those seeking to articulate a political vision for Russia that has the country entrenched either between West and East or even aligned against the former. The Putin project – with its fluctuating moves between accepting a Western-led world order and directly challenging it – is not immune from these processes. This is particularly the case when the Putin regime seeks to articulate the moral, cultural and civilizational content of the contemporary world order. Therefore, themes associated with Eurasianism – including the extent to which world order is constituted by discrete civilizations and how this order is threatened by aggressive liberal universalism – leach into the discourse of the Putin regime. Furthermore, these themes are reference points frequently used by Russian commentators.

When speaking about Russian foreign policy objectives, Russian officials consistently invoke the need for a more inclusive framework for governing the global economy and security mechanisms. Russian officials also are at pains to establish that Russia's international conduct is bereft of ideology. This is to say that contemporary Russian practice is the opposite of that which occurred in the era of Soviet internationalism, when the regime allegedly sought to transform the world in its image. Russian commentators have developed this argument in the context of the contemporary

division between multipolar and unipolar world orders.¹⁷ For example, Bordachev (2009) argues that there exists a tacit acceptance of multiple development models amongst the world powers, and that the era of liberal transformation is over. This view is shared by Russian officials. In the multipolar/polycentric world order, Russia is often presented as the champion of collective efforts among nations. An emblematic statement in this regard is offered by Sergei Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister. After suggesting that a polycentric world order is emerging, Lavrov goes on to say that collective efforts are required to solve development problems. He contrasts such efforts to the period of liberal capitalist triumphalism in the aftermath of the Cold War. He states:

During the well-known period of euphoria immediately following the end of the Cold War, the ideas of sustainable development were unjustifiably forgotten, buried in oblivion. Furthermore, an attempt was made to return to pure liberal capitalism, encumbered neither by any moral consideration nor by an understanding of social or any other responsibility. We can see what this has led to. So sustainable development, alongside a search for ways out of the current crisis, constitutes a significant part of a unifying agenda for the world community.... (quoted in Oganessian, 2009, p. 2).

In the rhetoric of Russian officials, economic and financial crises are often attributed to unipolarity. Unipolarity is in fact responsible for a whole host of undesirable occurrences. Lavrov once again states:

Needless to say, the global financial and economic crisis has demonstrated the imperfection of the modern mechanisms and methods of regulating world economic ties, their obvious inconsistency in the context of the present day reality. It would not be an exaggeration to say that it arose from the economic unipolarity that had been artificially cultivated and that had created a deep imbalance in the entire system of international economic ties (p. 3).

One of the ostensible reasons for this is to uphold the principle of national-state sovereignty in the international system for the purposes of protecting national development models, in contrast to American strategies of democracy promotion. Russian officials are quick to contrast their desire to uphold such principles while

insisting upon the propensity for states' political, cultural, and social systems to be unjustly transformed under American-led liberal capitalist hegemony.

Russian officials have suggested that efforts by the United States and its allies to promote democracy and liberal transformation are directed at Russia itself. One such example is the debate surrounding the containment of Russia. The opening salvo in this debate came from Yulia Tymoshenko's article, which appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in 2007. In this article, Tymoshenko (2007) pleads with the West for a unified stance against Russia to check its expansionism (which is of a genetic nature for Russia). Contemporary Russia is seen as "heir to a remorseless imperial tradition" and currently preoccupied with "restoring influence in, if not control of, its lost empire". In his response entitled "Containing Russia," Sergei Lavrov (2007a) suggests that the contemporary attempts to contain Russia are born of differing American and Russian aspirations in the international sphere. Whereas the United States wishes to transform governments in its own image, Russia is a champion of "the Westphalian standard of state sovereignty."

Often without naming a culprit as such, Putin has frequently criticized other international actors for appealing to democratic and civilizing principles as a means to control Russian affairs. This position has become increasingly noteworthy since the so-called Coloured Revolutions on Russia's periphery: The Rose Revolution in Georgia, following elections in 2003, leading to the ousting of Eduard Shevardnadze and the presidency of the pro-American Mikhail Saakashvili; The Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, during which Russia openly supported Viktor Yanukovich for president yet witnessed the victory of Viktor Yushchenko, and therefore another pro-American

executive on its periphery; and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan of 2005, which saw the ousting of the pro-Kremlin Askar Akayev.

The following selection from Putin is noteworthy:

There has been an increasing influx of money from abroad being used to intervene directly in our internal affairs. Looking back at the more distant past, we recall the talk about the civilising role of colonial powers during the colonial era. Today, 'civilisation' has been replaced by democratization, but the aim is the same – to ensure unilateral gains and one's own advantage, and to pursue one's interests (2007 Address to the Federal Assembly).

Here, once again, democratization is perceived and portrayed as an instrument for the extension of foreign power, an appeal to universal norms but the accruing of benefits and power to particular interests. The ostensibly 'civilizing' imperative of Western liberal democracy is hegemony by another name.

The invectives towards American unipolarity offered by Putin and others have at times taken on a cultural and civilizational dimension. In this fashion, Putin's discourse takes on a decidedly Eurasianist hue. In other words, the unipolar hegemon has been portrayed as an act of the preponderant power refashioning civilizations in its own image. It is this inattentiveness to the natural diversity of human civilization, which is constituted by discrete civilizations, which produces instability and conflict in a unipolar world.

In a 2005 speech to the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Foundation, Putin asserted:

Attempts to remake present-day civilization – which god created to be multifaceted and diverse – in accordance with the barracks principles of a unipolar world order are extremely dangerous. The more persistently and effectively the creators and proponents of this idea pursue these attempts, the more mankind will face dangerous imbalances in economic and social development and the global threats of international terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking.

Furthermore:

Never in the history of mankind has dictatorship, especially dictatorship in international affairs, solved these kinds of problems, nor can it. Even if this dictatorship is wrapped up in the attractive packaging of pseudodemocratic

phraseology, it is incapable of solving problems of a systemic nature. On the contrary, it will only exacerbate them” (both in Dzaguto, 2005, p. 9.)

One thus sees the continued use of civilizational and cultural plurality in the speeches of Russian officials. Sergei Lavrov (2008) insists upon the fundamental “cultural and civilizational diversity” of the contemporary world and the corresponding need for the acceptance of plural social development models. How should this be taken? Such speech of the inherent virtues of cultural and civilizational diversity are conjoined with the defense of a multipolar world against US hegemony, which is to be understood as both military aggression and the aggressive exporting of liberal capitalist development. Here, Russia finds itself on the defensive and amongst a group of powers that are distrustful of the liberal fundamentalism espoused by the United States.

Aggressive liberal transformation is deemed by Russian commentators as the root cause of global instability. Borrowing the language of both the Clash of Civilizations and Eurasianists, Russian commentators are quick to highlight that overstepping the bounds of one’s civilization precipitates conflict between civilizations. Conflict between states is therefore akin to conflict between larger cultural identities, and the enmity between these is largely of an ideational nature: one civilization compels another to accept its ideas. This notion is captured by Aleksandr Tsipko (2001), who suggested that the US’s striving for global dominance, which is itself an affront against Christian civilization, and its neglect of the plurality of civilizations, was the cause of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The solution to avoiding such future attacks:

is to abandon the attitude that gives rise to the most dangerous and fanatical forms of terrorism: the desire of today’s liberal civilization to refashion all of humanity and make everyone conform to its liberal ideas. Yes, we are the inheritors of Christian civilization, and we have the right to our own choice... But we... do not have the right to impose our own ways of thinking and acting on other peoples. There isn’t a lot we have to do in order to avoid the predicted war between civilizations. We simply need to keep our noses out of places where

we're not invited and learn to respect the value and self-worth of another civilization, allowing it to develop according to its own traditions (pp. 11-12).

Such talk of cultural and civilizational exclusivity (in that civilizations are irreducible to a common substratum from which universal norms can be derived) and plurality (in that such units are therefore destined to coexist, to their mutual exclusion) arguably resonates with the work of Gumilyov and Panarin. Furthermore, in the current framework it is analogous to at least one of the major intentions behind classic Eurasianism: Russia's throwing itself in with the lot of those victimized by European colonialism, purportedly acting in solidarity against the aggressive "Roman-Germanic" civilization.¹⁸

Furthermore, Russian officials frequently appeal to the need to protect the civilizational diversity inherent in the contemporary world order, a condition that is similarly threatened by presence of a unipolar hegemon. The moral imperative extends to safeguarding the rights of a multitude of discrete civilizations against American or Western hegemonism, democracy promotion and the use of force. Liberal capitalism, therefore, is viewed as a failed political project that operates both through coercion and as an ideological weapon. In either case, these are directed against the sovereign integrity of political states and the ethical-moral integrity of particular cultures constituted as civilizations. Russia is one of the aggrieved parties disdainful of this liberal capitalist aggression and pledges to construct an order in which the aforementioned political entities (states, cultures and civilizations) have sovereign authority over their own political, economic and cultural affairs.

Lavrov (2008) offers the following depiction:

Unfortunately, some of our partners are still unable to understand that the world radically changed with the end of the Cold War. Bipolar confrontation was a

conflict within one civilization, since the opposing forces were products, even though different ones, of the same European liberal thinking. At present, at issue is competition and the need to reach agreement at the intercivilizational level also. Therefore, the "rules of the game" in globalization and world politics should be a product of intercivilizational consensus. This seems clear and natural to us, if only due to the historic experience of Russia's existence as a multiethnic and multireligious state. We would like to see all of our Western partners finally give up any illusions on the eternal nature of their domination in all aspects of international affairs (see also Lavrov, 2009).

The point I wish to emphasize is that in the language of the Putin regime, the overtly material (i.e. economic and military) and the overtly ideational (the intersubjective ideas constituting cultures, civilizations, and various political subjectivities) are often intertwined. This leads to the potential for immense conceptual confusion and conflation. On the one hand, multipolarity is a condition in which states as such are the major actors, an order reflecting material capabilities. However, on the other hand, as evidenced in Lavrov's formulation, states are also the bearers of civilization, as he argues that intercivilizational accord is both required if the multipolar condition is to be obtained and a reflection of that order. A multipolar world is therefore required to enshrine an equitable division of political and economic resources amongst political states, as well as protect particular civilizations from foreign ideas and aggression. The domination of international affairs, to echo Lavrov, is at once a reflection of material power and a civilization's ethos. With such talk of civilizational incompatibilities and the need for civilizational consensus, the language of Eurasianists seeps into the discourse of Russian officials.

The civilizational dimension of a multipolar world order is captured by Sergey Rogov (2007), director of the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of the United States and Canada. Though not of the Putin regime per se, his conception of multipolarity is in line with that offered by Lavrov above:

A tendency toward multipolarity with new features is growing stronger in the world today. First, it is multipolarity in an age of globalism. It encompasses practically all regions of the planet. Second, not only Western but other civilizations are represented among the leading centers of strength. The present model of multipolarity has a multi-civilization basis. Third, the difference in the parameters of the might of the different centers of strength is nullified by nuclear weapons. Almost all, and in the future probably all, centers of strength will have a means of deterrence like nuclear weapons. Fourth, the new polycentric system lacks common rules of the game, norms, and institutions that could effectively regulate the interaction of the centers of strength -- either cooperation or rivalry.

Talk of the global plurality of civilizations is not the exclusive domain of Eurasianists. To the extent that the Russian state and executive have established a dividing line in global politics, it is now between those in favour of plural development models against an aggressive liberal hegemon in the United States. The language is subtler – it is not Danilevsky-like talk of a genetic difference between Russian and another civilization, nor that of Panarin’s insistence on religious pluralism. Russian officials speak of allowing multiple civilizations, cultures and development models to exist as a matter of principle. Nonetheless, there is a tension between defending the integrity of sovereign states and insisting upon the virtues of great powers that safeguard civilization.¹⁹ Such a tension is evident in Russia’s foreign policy, which is premised on: checking American power through appeals to both civilizational and state sovereignty; pursuing a multi-vector foreign policy; consolidating the CIS region under Russian hegemony; pursuing national advantage while integrating into the global political economy; and engaging pragmatically with any and all potentially helpful partners.

There is a propensity for Russian commentators and officials to portray themselves as defenders of civilization. For example, Sergei Lavrov suggests that the US has failed in its role as international custodian: “Instead of developing a dialogue between civilizations, supporting modernist forces in the Middle East and filling the security vacuum in the region, almost the reverse has been done” (Karaganov, 2006, p. 7). Russia

and its would-be partners would seek to repair the civilizational rift through unifying practices. Thus, speaking to the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy on March 18, 2007 on the topic of the Islamic world, Lavrov suggested that Russia, as well as China and India, have pursued a “unifying policy... that should become the key factor and guarantee against a civilizational rift in the world.” Employing the “policy of force” in the Middle East and acting unilaterally in the region, while ignoring the reality of the multipolar world, have failed (RFERL Newslines, March 20, 2007).

Official Russia defends a plurality of civilizational models while warning of the dangers of the liberal universalism inherent in a unipolar world order. A desirable world order for the Putin regime reflects international cultural plurality, tolerance and accommodation. Ostensibly, this is in contradistinction to a perceived propensity on the part of the United States to impose liberal values by force throughout the world. In this reading, Russia is the defender of civilizational tolerance, and overt political domination is sometimes understood through the prism of cultural values, rather than in the realm of materialist indicators.

5. Summary

In this chapter, I presented the Russian Eurasian world order alternative to Western or American led world order. I examined the original Eurasianism of the 1920s and 1930s and three thinkers of contemporary Eurasianism – Lev Gumilyov, Aleksandr Panarin and Aleksandr Dugin, who represent the most prolific contributors to the body of work since the original Eurasianists. Furthermore, I established the context in which Eurasianism emerged in Russia in the 1990s: the prominence of debates on geopolitics and civilizations in Russia following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Also, I

demonstrated how Eurasianist-inspired talk of civilizations and the dangers of liberal universalism seeps into the Putin regime's discourse, primarily in the form of warning against the dangers of civilizational hegemony.

Eurasianism may be considered part of a broader orientation of Russian society towards thinking of world order in terms of geopolitical competition, geopolitical identity, and civilizations. Eurasianism is a matter of importance to world order thinking and provides a series of polysemic concepts meant to explain or encapsulate different explanations. While I do not argue that the Putin regime adopts a strong "Eurasianist" position or can be considered Eurasianist in any consistent and meaningful way, Eurasianism's meditations on cultural and civilizational particularity come to inform Russian officials' statements on world order. In such a way, it contributes to a common sense understanding of world order that insulates the Russian state's development imperatives.

This chapter served as the first of two in which I examined Russian geopolitical concerns. It complements the following chapter on multipolarity by providing the "ideational" counterpart to the Putin regime's material calculations of polarity. It provided the historical/conceptual backdrop of the Russian "civilization question" as it pertains to world order. In the next chapter, I view how the Putin regime selectively uses the concept of multipolarity to articulate a whole host of desirable attributes about a post-hegemonic world order.

¹ "The Eurasians believed in ideocracy, that is, in the reign of an idea, implemented by a ruling party representing the idea. The model government should be demotic, broadly supported by the people and

acting in the interests of the people, but not democratic. Communist Russia and Fascist Italy were ideocracies, weakened, however, by the fact that their master ideas had no ultimate spiritual and religious sanction. Eurasianism was to become the successful ideocracy of Eurasia” (Riasanovsky, 1967, p. 51).

² Here and elsewhere I have changed “Gumilev” to “Gumilyov.” I feel that the latter is a more accurate transliteration of the Russian.

³ The following synopsis is derived from Laruelle (2008), unless otherwise stated.

⁴ Clover (1999) gives a somewhat alarmist account of the pervasiveness of contemporary Eurasianism, with Dugin as the main ideologue and threat.

⁵ The following is derived primarily from Laruelle (2008, pp. 107-144) except where otherwise noted. For a succinct political biography of Dugin, see also Dunlop (2001, pp. 92-106). For a helpful examination of Dugin’s trajectory, see Sedgwick (2004). Sedgwick portrays Dugin’s metamorphosis from Soviet dissident, to an infiltrator of reactionary organization Pamiat, to cementing the “red to brown” opposition with his Neo-Eurasian thinking, to finally a “radical centrism”: supporting Vladimir Putin and entering the political mainstream.

⁶ See Bassin & Aksenov (2006) for a review of the influence of Mackinder in post-Soviet Russian thinking on geopolitics. See also Sloan (1999), in which the author assesses Mackinder’s Heartland Theory according in a broader attempt to understand the relationship between geography and international relations.

⁷ See Wolkersdorfer (1999) for a discourse analytic study of Haushofer’s work, following the assertion that geopolitics ought to be viewed as a discursive and not geo-materialist phenomenon.

⁸ In this and other works, Laruelle presents a series of in depth accounts of Eurasianism’s leading figures. Schmidt (2009) charges that this comes at the expense of being able to determine the significance of Eurasianism as a political movement.

⁹ For summaries of *Osnovy geopolitiki*, see Ingram (2001) and Dunlop (2004). For an evaluation of Dugin’s work as “geopolitical revolution” and paligenetic rebirth, see Shekhovtsov (2008).

¹⁰ Ingram (2001, p. 1035) lists these essential oppositions as follows. Belonging to continental land powers and maritime powers, respectively: Earth-Water; Land-Sea; Continent-Island; Tellurocracy-Thalassocracy; Heartland-World Island; Rome-Carthage; Russia/USSR-England/USA; Eurasianism-Atlanticism; Space-Time; East-West; , North-South; Hero-Trader; Ideocracy-Democracy; Warrior/Socialist-Capitalist; Tradition-Modernity; Traditional Religion-Antichrist.

¹¹ Umland (2008) maintains that Zhirinovskiy’s entry into federal politics in 1993 influenced a change in his foreign policy from revolutionary expansionism to restorationist expansionism, in line with certain dictates of political correctness.

¹² See Bassin & Aksenov (2006) for a review of Zyuganov’s *The Geography of Victory: Foundations of Russian Geopolitics*, which borrows extensively from Mackinder.

¹³ Hashim (1999) offers a democratic transitions analysis focusing on the anti-system quality of the CPRF and the corresponding argument that the party constituted a threat to the democratic consolidation of Russia in the late 90s. In an investigation of Gennady Zyuganov’s attempts to unite nationalist and communist forces from 1990 to the mid 1990s, Vujacic (1996) argues that in combining leftist ideas of social justice and the rightist idea of a strong state, the CPRF leader is best understood as being in the intellectual tradition of national socialists and other 20th century European thinkers of the extreme right, such as Charles Maurras and Enrico Corradini.

¹⁴ Solovyev (2008) suggests that Russian geopolitical analysis may be divided into two camps: traditionalists, for whom international political life remains a struggle for power and the control of resources, and revisionists, who seek other ways of understanding the organization of global space. Among the traditionalists Solovyev counts Dugin and Panarin. Among the latter he counts K. Pleshakov, V.L. Tsymburskiy, K.E. Sorokin, K.S. Gadzhiev, V.A. Kolosov and D.N. Zamyatin.

¹⁵ Mukharyamov (2004) offers a similar telling in differentiating between a “substantialist” approach to the study of ethnicity and international relations, pioneered by Yuri Boroday, in which the primary units of geopolitics are ethnically-based nation states, and an “instrumentalist” or “relational” approach, which is constructivist inspired and denies the ontological status of ethnicity.

¹⁶ V. Tsymburskii is a prolific writer on geopolitical themes who may be included in this grouping, as well. He suggests the existence of a “Russian island”, an “ethno-civilizational platform” as the basis of Russian geographical identity. The core of this is comprised of primarily of Russian territory west of the Urals and Siberia. Such a concept can be viewed in contrast to the more expansionary understandings of Russia as

Eurasia; for Tsymburskii, Russian state priority should be for the intensive internal development of this area as opposed to establishing Russian hegemony over the entire “Heartland.” See Bassin and Aksenov (2006) and Solovyev (2004).

¹⁷ It remains unclear whether the rejection of the unipolar system constitutes Russia (and others) delinking from the West, with Russia attempting to create its own Moscow-centered system. For an argument about Russia delinking from the West, see Trenin (2006).

¹⁸ Shlapentokh (2007) sees a similarity between Huntington’s clash of civilizations thesis and the arguments of Nikolai Danilevsky, the pan-Slavist who postulated the fundamental irreconcilability between Russia and the West in his work.

¹⁹ I thank Randall Germain for noting this tension.

Chapter Five – Russia and a Multipolar World Order

1. Introduction

I have two main objectives in this chapter. The first objective is to present multipolarity as a key concept within Russia's alternative understandings of world order. The second objective is to present multipolarity as a polysemic concept meant to foster legitimacy for the Putin regime's understanding of world order. In this chapter I analyze the Putin regime's use of multipolarity and its penchant for approaching questions of world order through the concepts and values associated with multipolarity. The concept of multipolarity has figured prominently in the Russian government's understanding of the desirable world order in the post-Soviet period. Multipolarity is a concept used prominently by the Putin regime as a means to express dissatisfaction with liberal internationalism and American hegemony. It functions as a polysemic idea and a means to establish "common sense" about global political affairs: the multipolar world order is at once an emergent objective condition, a project to be implemented, and a technical response to the questions of global governability, an improved vision of world order purported to function better than American unipolarity.

My treatment of multipolarity as a polysemic concept used to foster consensus and legitimacy while expressing regime intentions differs from other scholarly approaches which seek to find its objective material referent in world affairs. Given this, I argue, multipolarity and the corresponding critique of unipolarity are less interesting as abstract concepts than the way they are utilized to capture or exemplify Russia's desired conception of world order in the period under question. This chapter thus interrogates the concept of multipolarity as it has been employed both in political practice and scholarly

reflection pertaining specifically to Russia. A more detailed presentation of empirical material appears later in the chapter. I demonstrate that statements by Putin and other Russian officials are replete with references about the creation of a multipolar world order. This is particularly the case when speaking to a variety of foreign political actors and organizations deemed to be either hostile towards or dissatisfied with American global stewardship.

The two previous chapters serve as backdrops against which multipolarity is to be understood: Chapter Three outlined the material parameters of Russia's semi-peripheral standing and imperfect integration into the global political economy and Chapter Four outlines the ideational and moral content to be found in Russia's dissatisfaction with American unipolarity. This chapter proceeds as follows. In Section Two I examine theoretical and conceptual issues associated with polarity and Russia. Here, I highlight the realist – materialist precepts underlying much of the thinking about polarity as it pertains to world order. In Section Three I bring out the significance multipolarity has in the imaginations of Russian political figures in the post Cold War era. Section Four provides an analysis of Russian officials' speeches and documents. I analyze the range of attributes ascribed to multipolarity and unipolarity by the Putin regime. Section Five serves as a summary of the chapter.

The concepts and ideas associated with multipolarity are significant for a critical historicist reading of Russian alternative understandings of world order for four reasons. First, they represent a reading of world order that is deemed preferable to unipolarity by Russian elites. Second, during Yevgeni Primakov's time as foreign minister, they came to signify a compromise position between overt anti-Westernism and the failed project of

Russia's incorporation into liberal internationalism in the early 1990s. Third, and in spite of this longer trajectory, they are deemed intrinsic to a Putin-era international strategy for Russia. Fourth, they comprise a form of common sense about world order offered by the Russian state insofar as they signify multiple ethical, material and technocratic improvements over unipolarity. Russian state notions of multipolarity are based partly on the objective redistribution of wealth and, possibly, influence to a series of "power centres" that exist beyond the Western core, and thereby serve as a reflection on American unipolarity as an anachronistic, if not desperate, practice. However, multipolarity also serves an idea for an improved form of global governance that the Putin regime broadcasts to any and all political and economic actors, thereby rendering the idea as that which may contribute to a more desirable and better functioning form of world order.

2. Scholars' Interpretations of Russia and Polarity

The view of multipolarity offered by Russian officials suffers from conceptual slippage, whereby numerous entities are deemed constitutive of the multipolar order, and there is a blurring of the subject/object distinction. Multiple states and organizations have been enlisted in Russia's multipolar project, a project which contains several potentially irreconcilable objective and subjective criteria. Furthermore, Russian officials suggest that the construction of a multipolar world order constitutes a moral imperative. In this section I focus on scholarly interpretations as these display greater conceptual precision in their understandings of polarity than do Russian officials and their "plain speak" about a multipolar order. Nonetheless, I emphasize that multipolarity is helpfully

understood as a flexible concept meant to garner legitimacy for a post-hegemonic world order.

Russian realist scholars¹ differ from Russian liberal IR scholars predominantly in their emphasis on the role of power centers within world order as opposed to that of democratic norms and institutions. They are preoccupied with understanding with the characteristics of the contemporary world order and the development of an appropriate strategy for Russia within it. At the same time, they are a heterogeneous group reflecting a range of methodological approaches. Three positions can be discerned: 1) the world is multipolar, or at least in the process of becoming so (Primakov's position) 2) the world is unipolar in its structure; 3) the world is constituted by "pluralistic unipolarity." The last position is attributed to Aleksei Bogaturov and entails viewing one collective pole of the United States and G-7 countries. Although Russian realists differ in their interpretations on polarity, they generally acknowledge the United States' power superiority and advocate that Russian geostrategy be understood in terms of national interest. This necessitates an emphasis on sovereignty as a defensive principle against US intervention (Shakleyina & Bogaturov, 2004).

The main concept for Russian realists is the pole ("*polyus*"), which is understood as a power center with military, economic and political potential which seeks to regulate global processes (Shakleyina & Bogaturov, 2004, p. 38 note 2). This position is not far from one of Russian officials' frequently employed understandings of the term. It differs however from the pluralist, "interdependent" understanding of the term "power centers." In this line of thinking, which is influenced by Joseph Nye, power centres are both nation states and "power brokers" (which include non-state entities). In this line of thinking,

contemporary Russia may be considered a power broker due to its current account surplus, foreign currency reserves and foreign policy role (Subacchi, 2008; see also Klepatskii, 2003). A pluralist multipolar world permits states to pursue national interests in a manner that rigid bloc formations do not afford, through regional and sub-regional engagement.² A correlate to this position is the belief that poles are not states as such, but rather conglomerations of economic interests, “united around the most powerful centers of attraction and growth.” While not presently such a center, Russia has the capacity to become so if it manages its own internal development appropriately (Lukyanov, 2010, p.24)

Numerous scholars understand Russia’s pursuit of multipolarity as a means to achieve regional and global balances of power. Conventional thinking holds that multipolarity is best understood as a concept and strategy used to express Russia’s dissatisfaction with American hegemony and unipolarity. Whether this entails the Russian leadership’s desire to definitively balance against the United States and thereby transfer from a unipolar to multipolar world order (Ambrosio, 2001) or to use multipolarity as a bargaining chip vis-à-vis the United States and the West (Solovyev, 2008), remains a source of debate. Furthermore, in addition to using multipolarity as a strategy targeting the United States at the global level, Russia has pursued multipolarity in East Asia as a means of reasserting its diminished influence and ensuring a stable environment in which to restore its great power status (Rangsimaporn, 2009).

American neorealist scholars predict that Russia will engage in balancing behavior against the United States. Waltz (1997) and Layne (1993) defend the neorealist position that unipolarity threatens other states and prompts balancing behaviour against

the unipole. An innovation to the neorealist position can be found in the concept of “soft-balancing”: Russia may in fact be one of a number of major powers that are unlikely to engage in hard balancing measures against the United States, but are already engaged in those which “do not directly challenge U.S. military preponderance but that use nonmilitary tools to delay, frustrate, and undermine aggressive unilateral U.S. military policies.” Instead, soft balancing tactics entail utilizing international institutions and a variety of economic and diplomatic measures to stall American power (Pape, 2005, p. 10). Wohlforth (1999) offers a contrasting position, arguing that a unipolar system undergirded by overwhelming American economic, military, technological and geopolitical preponderance produces bandwagoning incentives to would-be challengers and remains durable. States such as Russia are to be dissuaded from pursuing balancing initiatives.

Russia has not been in a position to offer direct challenges to American power since the fall of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, a trend is evident since Yevgeni Primakov’s tenure as Russian Foreign Minister, which began in 1996, whereby Russian elites have rejected a strong liberal integrationist position and have instead sought the return of great power status (Mankoff, 2009). Since that period, Russian thinkers and leaders have acknowledged that American power is waning and that American hegemony is showing signs of unraveling. Nonetheless, this realization has not prompted Russia to launch an outright challenge to American interests. Rather, it has prompted discussions about how to best secure the appropriate international environment in which Russia’s internal development can be achieved (Yefremenko, 2010). Since Primakov’s tenure as foreign minister, Russian leaders have increasingly acknowledged that multipolarity – the

coexistence of multiple power centres – is both an objective condition and that which must be exploited for Russia’s national interests. As such, Russian leaders have employed multipolarity as a flexible concept to assess developments within global political and economic affairs and to legitimize Russia’s resurgent, although precarious, place in this order. I now turn to the development of this “common sense” position in post-Soviet Russia.

3. Origins of the Multipolar Question: Gauging its Significance in the Russian Imagination

Multipolarity is a concept deemed to hold particular significance for members of the Russian state and commentators during the post-Cold War era, beginning with former Foreign and Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov and figuring prominently in Putin’s understandings of Russia’s place in world order. Multipolarity has been frequently employed to codify Russia’s foreign relations in the post-Cold War era. Russian officials perceive other states according to their willingness to contribute to the construction of a multipolar world order. Furthermore, multiple states and multilateral organizations are appealed to by representatives of the Russian state in their attempts to fashion a multipolar world order.

Primakov, who served as Russia’s foreign minister from January 1996 until September 1998 and Russia’s prime minister from September 1998 until May 1999, is credited with having developed a distinct multipolarity doctrine. In fact, multipolarity is frequently treated synonymously with Primakov’s approach to foreign affairs (see Ambrosio, 2005a and 2005b; Katz, 2006). The Primakov Doctrine is widely considered to advocate balancing against the United States and a more assertive and independent

Russian foreign policy, which was designed in order to establish more equal relations between Russia and the United States (Ambrosio, 2001). This balancing consists of cultivating Europe-oriented relations, developing a Russia-Germany-France axis, and building stronger relations with China, India and the Islamic world. Primakov sought to achieve regional power balances. This included stabilizing contacts with the former Soviet republics, engaging actively in conflict resolution in the former Yugoslavia, Iraq and the Middle East, and openly opposing the NATO campaign against Slobodan Milosevic. Primakov also attempted to extend Russia's diplomatic influence into other world regions (see Kolossov & Turovsky, 2001, pp. 160-161).

Primakov is often considered to represent a shift in Russia's international orientation from the liberal internationalist position of Aleksei Kozyrev, Boris Yeltsin's Foreign Minister until 1996. There is some debate over the extent to which Primakov's advent symbolizes a distinct break from Kozyrev's liberal internationalism (Kuchins, 2001) or whether the drift towards statism occurred late in Kozyrev's tenure (Ambrosio, 2003; Lynch, 2002).³ It is similarly misleading to ascribe the invention of the term multipolarity to Primakov, as numerous scholars have suggested that Kozyrev himself was cognizant of the idea, anticipating multipolarity while pursuing strategic partnership with the United States (Mikhailenko, 2003; see also Klepatskii, 2003; Rangsimaporn, 2009). Indeed, Russia spoke of the need to counter U.S. hegemony in 1993 (Ambrosio, 2001). Multipolarity was not foreign to Soviet thinkers, either: in the mid 1960s the concept of multipolarity was increasingly utilized in the Soviet literature as a means to theorize the growing significance of other states within the ostensibly bipolar Cold War international system (Rangsimaporn, 2009).

Nonetheless, Primakov's symbolic importance is unquestioned. He is associated with having orchestrated a shift from Russia's eager embrace of Western civilization, institutions and norms (having returned to the fold after a seventy year hiatus during the Bolshevik "interregnum") to a more independent statist position (O'Loughlin, 2001). Primakov's statism and multipolar orientation were enshrined in the 1997 National Security Concept of the Russian Federation (see Wallander, 1998). Primakov's multipolarity has been received as a *via media* between the overtly pro-Western approach exhibited by Kozyrev and the extreme anti-Westernism indicative of the Soviet period (Newsline, Jan 9, 1997). Scholars have exhibited the propensity to associate multipolarity with the practice of Eurasianism. Russia's "turn to the east" in foreign policy under Primakov has been considered as a "pragmatic Eurasianism" in action (Rangsimaporn, 2006, p. 378). Similarly, Russia's deepening of ties with Central Asia – through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) – has also been construed as both a Eurasian orientation as well as a commitment to multi-polarity (Torbakov, 2004).

Multipolarity, therefore, is a durable and flexible term in the Russian lexicon. Although it is misleading to see a clean break between the liberal internationalist position of Kozyrev and the multipolar position of Primakov, multipolarity begins to find greater expression in Primakov as a solution to Russia's dissatisfaction with its diminished international status in the post-Soviet period, a tendency which persisted into the Putin era. The following is a fairly indicative statement of Primakov's position in 1996:

Russia in her transition from the bipolar world to the multipolar one should play the role of a counterweight to the negative trends that are appearing in international affairs. In the course of this transition not all power centers,

determining this multipolarity, have yet formed. And somebody wants to dominate this situation. (quoted in Turner, 2009, p. 163).

Multipolarity has been presented as the rationale underlying Russia's relations with multiple states since the 1990s. The mutual pursuit of multipolarity, however ill-defined, has characterized the Sino-Russian relationship since the mid 1990s. Primakov's arrival as Russian Foreign Minister in 1996 and the development of a strategic partnership with China in 1996 constituted a move from the West for both countries, after which "the official rhetoric of the two countries oscillated between promoting a multipolar world order and denouncing the current unipolar system" (Turner, 2009, pp. 162-163).⁴ The language of multipolarity occurs frequently in Russian-Chinese agreements. In 1997 China and Russia signed the "Joint Russian-Chinese Declaration about a Multipolar World and the Formation of a New World Order." In 2001 the two countries signed the Sino-Russian Treaty on Good Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation, which included their declaration to promote "a just and fair new world order."⁵ Putin and Chinese President Hu Jintao signed a joint declaration in which they expressed support for a multipolar world on May 27, 2003 (RFERL Newline May 28, 2003). Furthermore, the pursuit of multipolarity has been a main objective for both Russia and China within the SCO, as well as its precursor, the "Shanghai Five."⁶ The Bishkek Declaration, signed in 1999 by the Shanghai Five did emphasize a commitment to political and military cooperation in the "general trend" towards multipolarity (see Turner, 2009).

It is therefore tempting to consider Russia as pursuing a multipolar world order along with China, with Primakov being the first to initiate this strategic direction for Russia. However, the extent to which either China or Russia is willing to risk open

confrontation with the United States through the “multipolar threat” is debatable (see Dong, 2007). While some are enthusiastic about the SCO’s role as a counterweight to American hegemony (see for example, Dubnov, 2003), China and Russia remain somewhat ambiguous and uncertain as to the extent to which the SCO constitutes a military and political alliance to counter American unipolarity (Turner, 2009). The combination of China, India and Russia has been frequently considered as a cornerstone to an emergent multipolar world order since Primakov’s tenure as Russian Foreign Minister. One manifestation of the Primakov doctrine is the pursuit of the “strategic triangle” of Russia, China and India, which Primakov first made during a December 1998 visit to India (Ambrosio, 2005b). However, multipolarity is an ambiguous term for Russia, India and China, although all appear as vocal advocates for a multipolar world at various points over the past twenty years and have grounds for dissatisfaction against American unipolarity (see Kuchins, 2001).

In spite of the aforementioned assertion that the Primakov doctrine constituted a turn from the Western world, that Russia was pursuing multipolarity in the European sphere during the Primakov era is also evident. Multipolarity as pursued by the members of “the Great European Troika” – Russia, France and Germany – was suggested by Yeltsin, with the use of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as a means to undermine NATO in Europe (RFERL Western Press Review, March 9, 1998). Primakov has also been viewed as representing a position of “official geopolitics,” which emerged from geopolitics as protest (neo- Eurasianist and Communist positions) and represented simultaneously the desire for Russian inclusiveness in the Western-led world order and a reproach of Western unilateralism during a time of Russian state weakness

(Solovyev, 2008). In other words, in addition to signifying a break from Kozyrev's liberal internationalism, Primakov may be understood as incorporating and representing elements of the geopolitics of protest, whereby the Russian state reasserts its national interests in the international sphere while lessening its dependence on the West and a subordinate position in Western world order.

Multipolarity clearly constitutes a way of thinking about world order that predates Putin. That said, Putin, members of his regime and Russian academics have frequently extolled the virtues of a multipolar world. Putin and his supporters have insisted that the pursuit of a multipolar world does not entail an overtly anti-American position, an idea reiterated by some scholars (e.g. Klepatskii, 2003; Solovyev, 2008; Ambrosio, 2005a). Putin is reported to have issued a decree to amend the 2000 National Security Concept in order to put more emphasis on the concept of the multipolar world (RFERL Newline, January 13, 2000). The belief that Putin initially represented a serious attempt at establishing a multipolar world is not universally shared (see Bulavinov, 2002). Putin's pursuit of the multipolar option has vacillated along with the shifts in the global political environment and changes in Russian foreign policy strategy. Lost in contemporary talk of a "Resurgent Russia" is the fact that it was not completely out of the question that despite strong opposition from many Russian elites and Putin's eventual refusal, Russia was still being courted as a junior partner to the global hegemon (Verlin, 2003).

After the attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001 and Putin's subsequent, and well-documented, embrace of the United States,⁷ Russia's call for an anti-hegemonic coalition became somewhat muted, with the dividing line in world politics now coming between the civilized nations and the terrorist organizations that

threatened them. Observers have noted the conspicuousness of Russia's muted response to the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty in December 2001, which had long been held as the "cornerstone" of Russia's strategic stability and security, the absence of which would result in a new round of a strategic arms race (Felgenhauer, 2001; Lo and Trenin, 2005). In this period, not only was the overt pursuit of multipolarity somewhat implausible, but such unilateral actions on the part of the United States were tolerated by the Putin administration.⁸

During the Putin era, a Russian commitment to a multipolar world order was viewed frequently through the prism of a pragmatic foreign policy in which the state does not commit itself to permanent blocs (see for example, Lukyanov, 2010). It is at once a means of overcoming the perennial Russian debate over whether it belongs in the East or West and a means to direct resources to inward development as opposed to external commitments. This notion is captured by Klepatskii (2003):

In the context of globalization and a multipolar world, Russia cannot permit itself a one-sided orientation towards only one pole. To choose the West or the east, Europe or Asia, is a false dilemma. Russia's choice of a multipolar world system absolves it from the need for confrontation in a union with someone against someone else. Since such a necessity does not seem likely, at least in the next 15 to 20 years, Russia can concentrate its efforts on resolving domestic problems, and foreign policy should provide the optimal conditions for this.

Indeed, subtle differences in the language used by Russian officials may be utilized to make the idea of multipolarity palatable and avoid charges that it constitutes an aggressively revisionist position. Such is the position of Sergei Karaganov (2004). He emphasizes that while signaling what is effectively the same condition, the difference between "multi-vector orientation" and "multipolar orientation" is largely strategic: the former being a less politically loaded version of the former. Karaganov writes:

In this connection, a notable fact is that the president pronouncedly used the term "multi-vector orientation" when defining the direction of Russian foreign policy.

It is no secret that the alternative term "multipolar orientation," which was permanently applied by our external partners and compatriots, is quite unambiguously aimed at opposition to the United States, which costs quite dearly. "Multi-vector orientation" is much more practical.

However, as I show, Putin gravitated towards a more vocal criticism of unipolarity in his second term, during which time multipolarity became synonymous with counterbalancing American power. Invectives against the unipolar condition became the most pronounced in the period of Russia's resurgence, when it acquired greater material resources with which to project Russian power and influence in the world (see Monaghan, 2006).

Russian officials continued to appeal to numerous states in their attempts to establish a multipolar world during Putin's presidencies. In addition to China and India, Russia has enlisted other major and emerging states in constructing multipolarity. Larger second-tier states – those who have the capacity to translate economic power into political authority – are considered by Russia as significant assets, the power centers or poles by which multipolarity can be constructed in the struggle against American unipolarity. Such centers are frequently invoked as the emerging alternative to the present state of unipolar dominance.

Numerous states (and, in the case of the European Union, a larger entity of pooled sovereignty) have been considered by Russian officials as the component pieces to the emerging multipolarity. Upon affirming that Russia was a European country culturally, Putin stated, "I, for one, believe that the world can only be multipolar... Only a multipolar world can have internal energy and stimuli for its development" Furthermore, he named China, India, Japan, South Africa, and Brazil as the "other poles of world civilization." (RFERL Newslines, October 27, 2004). Likewise, Europe has been

considered by Russian officials as a component of the multipolar system: Foreign Minister Lavrov suggested that it remained important for Russia for Europe to be a power center in the multipolar system (RFERL Newline, Jan 4, 2005). Former Defense Minister Igor Sergeev told Japanese officials that Japan had a major place in the new multipolar world and that it ought not to feel isolated by Russian overtures towards China and India (RFERL Security Watch, December 4, 2000). A communiqué on the Russian Foreign Ministry's website reflected Russian and Brazilian Foreign Ministers' adherence to multipolarity: "Our frank talks demonstrated a high level of political dialogue and a closeness of positions on a wide spectrum of world problems. We confirmed our countries' adherence to the establishment of a democratic and multi-polar world order on the basis of the UN Charter and international law" ("Russian, Brazilian Foreign Ministers Confirm Adherence to Multipolar Order," 2003).

Putin skillfully addresses the audience to whom he is speaking. As it pertains to the notion of multipolarity, this suggests his propensity to play up the multipolar nature of a contemporary or soon to be realized world order within audiences that are either overtly hostile or at best lukewarm towards America's global stewardship. This is evident in Putin's propensity to interpret a wide array of developments in multiple states, not simply larger poles or power centers, as indicative of these states' commitment to multipolarity. Such states are subsequently enlisted into the multipolar camp.⁹ In spite of the suggestion that a multipolar condition is best understood as a form of world order involving multiple authoritative decision makers (viz. political states), Russian officials and Putin routinely appeal to a variety of institutional forms, political entities and political relationships for the multipolar enterprise. In other words, Putin can be seen to

court partners and participants for the multipolar vision in a variety of forms. It may be within a trilateral project for example, between (China, Russia and India or Russia, France and Germany); a bilateral state-state project (China and Russia; India and Russia); as some form of institutional pooling of sovereignties in which Russia participates (for example the CSTO, which involves a degree of Russian hegemony); and as some sort of regional agency or civilizational entity that Russia seeks to engage (for example the Islamic World; Latin America). This list is by no means exhaustive. With the above examples, I merely intend to display that in the Kremlin's imagination, any and all political entities, not simply states, may nominally partake in the building of a multipolar world. Deemed by Russian officials as the legitimate structure in which numerous states and institutions are situated, multipolarity is considered a form of common sense about global political and economic life.

Russian officials are intent on representing themselves as defenders of a multipolar world order to which any and all states may contribute.¹⁰ In an interview with Cubavision and the Prensa Latina News Agency, Putin suggested that Russia is indeed in agreement with Cuba that the current composition of the world order is unjust. Russia and Cuba share the same desire for a democratic world order (against American unilateralism). Putin would offer a similar interpretation of Russia's relationship with Venezuela: "I am absolutely sure that Venezuela can play a very important role in several key areas of development in the modern world. It applies to the coordination of our efforts with Venezuela and other Latin American countries towards creating a modern multi-polar world" ("Statement for the Press...", 2001). Putin congratulated Austrian President Thomas Klestil and Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel on the adoption of

the law on Austria's permanent neutrality. The message read, in part, "Russia has always viewed the neutrality policy as an integral part of the European strategic stability and has traditionally supported it. In today's world, permanent neutrality is a vivid example of versatility in shaping a multipolar world, a significant contribution to ensuring security on a non-block basis" ("Vladimir Putin Congratulated Austrian President...", 2000). Furthermore, Putin affirmed Russia's and Yemen's mutual interest in shaping a multipolar democratic world order ("Beginning of Talks with President Ali Abdallah...", 2002). The broad geographical distribution of the aforementioned states suggests that Putin was intent on constructing multipolarity on a basis beyond Russia's traditional sphere of influence (e.g. CIS).

Russian officials extend the invitation to participate in a multipolar world order beyond states, however powerful or weak, great or small. That Russian officials enlist numerous political entities in the pursuit of multipolarity suggests a somewhat more complicated picture of what constitutes a multipolar world order. This notion predates the Putin era. For example, in Primakov's understanding, the CIS constituted a potentially "powerful centre" in the post-Cold War multipolar order (RFERL Newline, July 30, 1996). That any and all entities may partake in the multipolar world order was suggested by President Medvedev during an interview with Indian television:

When we consider multi-polarity from the political point of view, even given the existence of such fundamental institutions as the United Nations, diverse regional associations such as the SCO where India has an observer status, other organizations, for example regional ones, there is always a chance to intensify our work in the format of the so called BRIC¹¹, i.e. four fastest growing economies of the world. *All these components constitute elements of the multipolar world* ("Interview for Indian Television Channel Doordarshan," 2008; my italics).

The implication is that all multilateral venues of which Russia is a part, regardless of the degree of formalized activity and decision making authority they represent, become forums in which Russia may pursue the agenda of multipolarity.

Nonetheless, such active promotion of a multipolar world order extends to various international forums which do not include Russia as a formal member. The geographic scope and the varying mandates of the entities to which Russia appeals for support in the multipolar initiative are impressive. During the signing of Russia's first cooperation agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov considered ASEAN an "important partner in creating a multipolar world and a common regional security system" (RFERL Newslines, December 12, 2005). Putin has enlisted MERCOSUR in the construction of a multipolar world order and the upholding of the primacy of international law and the United Nations (UN) in guaranteeing global security ("President Vladimir Putin sent a message..., 2007"). In a meeting with Hugo Chavez, Putin stated "Latin America is becoming a very important link in the chain of the new multipolar world that is taking shape and we will pay more and more attention to this direction of our economic and foreign policy" ("Putin offers nuclear help to Chavez..., 2008). Putin also enlisted the League of Arab States ("Putin objects to use of force..., 2007) and a united Europe into the multipolar project. In short, Putin and Russian officials have implicated traditional allies, major powers, minor states, and various multilateral political and economic organizations in the formulation for a multipolar world order.

4. Unipolarity, Multipolarity, Polarity: Common Sense Understandings of Global Politics

Three points are developed in this section. Firstly, Russian conceptions of multipolarity are the result of dissatisfaction with American unipolarity. Secondly, Russian officials conceive of multipolarity as both a willful act on the part of the Russian state as well as an emerging state of affairs, seemingly independent of political volition. Thirdly, Russian officials consider multipolarity as a more efficient international system. As a polysemic concept, we can expect multipolarity to mean multiple things, and we can expect some ambiguity in the way that the terminology is employed. As suggested above, the Kremlin's position on multipolarity represents at once an emerging (objective) condition, a moral imperative and a project to be implemented in order to improve global security and governability. As such, the subject/object distinction becomes blurred. The ambiguous treatment of the concept of multipolarity in more popular and political circles suggests its importance as a common sense understanding of global political affairs.

In this section I evaluate the subjective, ethical and moral attributes that Russian officials have ascribed to both unipolarity and multipolarity. In so doing, my intent is to show that the Russian portrayal of polarity is something more than an objective state of affairs based on the calculus of power relations or emerging economic centers. In arguing for the emergence of or the need to create a multipolar system, Russian officials have deemed that multipolarity constitutes an improvement over unipolarity according to multiple lines of reasoning, which I demonstrate.

Putin's and Russian officials' position on multipolarity proceeds on three fronts. Firstly, they offer an analysis of emerging objective material conditions in the world order, whereby the Western countries are losing their position of dominance vis-à-vis

emerging states (such as those that comprise the BRICs: Russia, China, India, Brazil, and South Africa). The following quote from Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (2007b) is emblematic of this phenomenon. In Lavrov's opinion:

The emergence of new economic growth centers deprives the West of its monopoly on globalization processes and leads to a more equitable distribution of resources. The economic potential of these centers is converted into their political influence thus reinforcing multipolarity.

The objectively emerging multipolar world order is represented in both tangible figures – for example, the increasing share of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) now produced in such states, as well as the likelihood of a still greater share in the future – and allusions that contain little substance. In other words, multipolarity has been viewed by Putin's regime as an objective condition due to the redistribution of wealth from the West to other states and as a call for the architecture of global institutions to change accordingly.

Secondly, a multipolar world order represents something of a moral imperative that falls upon the Russian state to achieve. Russia is obliged to help construct a multipolar world order, to more accurately reflect the redistribution of wealth (and potentially power and influence) to non-Western states and as a desirable end in itself. In order to preserve the democratic principle at the international level, a veritable pluralism of sovereign decision makers needs to be recognized challenging the hegemonic position of the United States and its allies.

Thirdly, multipolarity remains a means of rendering a whole host of international phenomena governable. The incessant appeals to a multipolar world order offered by Putin and other representatives of the Russian state are a means of garnering support for the multipolar project of governance and security provision. In addition to being

frequently invoked as a project to be created to combat ethically questionable unipolarity, multipolarity is offered as an efficacious way to organize international governance. In such formulations, the attainment of a multipolar world order promises political solutions: it will enable the global community to successfully address a whole host of undesirable phenomena, which are both the result of unipolarity and inappropriately managed by unipolarity. The justification for a multipolar world order, therefore, is that it simply works better.

Multipolarity can in part be understood as a reflection of Russia's dissatisfaction with American unilateralism. Accordingly the list of positive attributes applied to multipolarity has been arrived at through a simple inversion of the negative traits associated with unipolarity. In advocating a multipolar world order, then, Russian officials are presenting a picture of a more just and equitable, as well as a better functioning, world order.

A frequent understanding of multipolarity employed by the Kremlin is that of a condition in which multiple political states or political authorities participate in making decisions on matters of global politics, security and economics. It is frequently cast as an alternative to a unipolar world order, in which there is a lone decision maker and arbiter of the global good. This commonsense view of multipolarity/unipolarity – the existence of multiple or single centers of authority – is also prevalent in the Russian media. Consider the following commentary on Moscow as Washington's friend. In the United States' 2002 National Security Concept, Moscow is deemed as part of a purported global consensus whose members recognize the importance of democracy and capitalism. The nature of this consensus did not escape the scorn of Russian commentators:

In effect, the strategy implies that America is becoming the primary and only political decision making center, while the elites of other countries will find it necessary for the foreseeable future to fight for the opportunity to represent their peoples interests in that center in the very same way that envoys from the provinces currently try to extract subsidies in Moscow's corridors of powers" (Fedyukin, 2002, p. 5).

Multipolarity may thus be viewed as a Russian-led dissent against American unipolarity. Russia is commonly depicted as growing increasingly dismayed by America's recourse to unilateral decision making throughout the 1990s.¹² In the late 1990s fear of US unilateral domination became a consensus position within Russian elite circles (Mikhailenko, 2003). The multipolar world is equated with stability, cooperation and global security and entails neither anarchy nor 'zero-sum' security policy (Bordachev, 2009). This is emblematic of the propensity of advocates of the multipolar position to ascribe a list of positive qualities to the multipolar world order without elaborating on the rationale or any theoretical underpinnings. In its practical usage among some Russian commentators, then, the multipolar world order is better simply because it is inclusive and because the United States'-centered unipolarity is inherently unstable, dictatorial, and incapable of resolving the world's most acute security crises.

Russian criticism of American unipolarity was forceful during the high period of Russia's resurgence, and is captured emblematically in Putin's 2007 "Munich Speech,"¹³ which is detailed below. This speech has been broadly received as indicating that Russia had achieved significant enough strength to stand up to the West in a manner that it had been incapable of since the end of the Cold War (Yefremenko, 2010). Furthermore, it signals the Putin regime's disillusionment with an explicitly integrationist foreign policy and a renewed focus on constructing Russian national power (Lukyanov, 2010). Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, special representative of the Russian president for the development of relations with the EU, stated his interpretation of Putin's Munich speech as being,

“Gentlemen, Russia is back, and it must be reckoned with.” He then offered the following interpretation of contemporary world order:

We are unhappy about the fact that Russia has been pushed out of the foreground in world politics in recent years. The basic trend is to turn the world -- which objectively, by virtue of globalization, is becoming increasingly multipolar -- into a unipolar world in which all the rules of the game, the rules of life, the rules of behavior are defined by just one player, who, moreover, does not care about the code of laws enshrined in international law. That is what we categorically disagree with. Many others also disagree with it, only they say so quietly, as we used to do previously, in the days of the Soviet Union, in our own kitchen (Sergey Yastrzhembskiy: Gentlemen, Russia Is Back!).

An extended description of unipolarity can be found in Putin’s “Munich Speech” (“Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy,” 2007). Not only does this description contain the frequently used common sense understanding of unipolarity as a lone center of authority and force, but numerous subjective, moral and technical concerns are raised:

[W]hat is a unipolar world? However one might embellish this term, at the end of the day it refers to one type of situation, namely one centre of authority, one centre of force, one centre of decision-making.

It is world in which there is one master, one sovereign. And at the end of the day this is pernicious not only for all those within this system, but also for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within.

And this certainly has nothing in common with democracy. Because, as you know, democracy is the power of the majority in light of the interests and opinions of the minority.

Incidentally, Russia – we – are constantly being taught about democracy. But for some reason those who teach us do not want to learn themselves.

I consider that the unipolar model is not only unacceptable but also impossible in today’s world. And this is not only because if there was individual leadership in today’s – and precisely in today’s – world, then the military, political and economic resources would not suffice. What is even more important is that the model itself is flawed because at its basis there is and can be no moral foundations for modern civilisation.

Furthermore, during the Munich Speech, Putin suggested that Russia’s concerns with the United States were based on a balance of forces: “the system of international relations is just like mathematics. There are no personal dimensions.” This allowed Putin to agree

with a report that the United States' efforts at missile defense were not directed at Russia, but it nonetheless constituted a threat to Russia. While the then Russian President considered George Bush his friend and a decent person, he nonetheless felt compelled to recognize the symmetries and asymmetries involved with the initiative and Russia's options for response.

What are the objective and subjective dimensions of polarity – do Russian officials conceive of polarity “objectively”, that is, as the sum of impersonal forces and a condition compelling them to act in accordance with certain laws? To what extent does multipolarity constitute a desirable state of affairs? And to what extent is the unipolar condition deemed responsible for a host of failures and shortcomings? In short, to what extent can we conceive of the multipolar condition as unfolding according to some impersonal logic, and to what extent can we consider it as a project actively sought out and to be implemented by the Russian state?

One prominent line of thinking by Russian officials understands the multipolar world order held as a desirable project, the creation of which is a major task of the Russian government. As the previous section showed, such a stance predates the Putin era. In October of 1998, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated that Russia's main task was to be active “in the creation of a democratic multipolar world order” (de Weydenthal, 1998). In August 1999 Yeltsin himself suggested that the main task of Russia's foreign policy lay in “the creation of a multipolar world order that must be based on the principles and norms of international law and the mutual interest of all states” (RFERL Newslines, September 1, 1999). In other words, the multipolar world order would be brought into being based on the conscious actions of Russian officials.

Establishing a multipolar world order has been portrayed as the desirable response to the increased propensity of the United States to establish unipolar domination through force. Take for instance the 2000 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation:

There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States. In solving principal questions of international security, the stakes are being placed on western institutions and forums of limited composition, and on weakening the role of the U.N. Security Council.

The strategy of unilateral actions can destabilize the international situation, provoke tensions and the arms race, aggravate interstate contradictions, national and religious strife. The use of power methods bypassing existing international legal mechanisms cannot remove the deep socio-economic, inter-ethnic and other contradictions that underlie conflicts, and can only undermine the foundations of law and order.

Russia shall seek to achieve a multi-polar system of international relations that really reflects the diversity of the modern world with its great variety of interests.

Taking into account mutual interests is the guarantee of effectiveness and reliability of such a world order. The world order of the XXI century must be based on mechanisms of collective resolution of key problems, on the priority of law and broad democratization of international relations.

Here we see a whole host of negative qualities attributed to the unilateral actions of the United States in contrast to a multipolar world order. A multipolar system is known predominantly as the opposite of unipolar aggression, a state of affairs that more accurately reflects a plurality of interests in the modern world. The Russian government thus portrays itself needing to contribute to the constitution of a multipolar world order to more effectively address contemporary problems of global systems management. Such a contribution is seen as a benevolent act that reflects both the technical requirements of global governance and a normative imperative to improve a conflict ridden state of affairs.

To assume its rightful place as a great power and as one of a number of “influential centers of a multipolar world” is conceived to be in Russia’s national interests. As a result, states that seek to “counteract its strengthening as one of the

centers of influence in a multipolar world” are considered a threat to Russian national security (2000 National Security Concept). Russia’s 2000 Military Doctrine also views the multipolar world in terms of national security. Amongst the main external threats to Russia are “attempts to ignore (infringe) the Russian Federation’s interest in resolving international security problems, and to oppose its strengthening as one influential center in a multipolar world.” The multipolar world is the appropriate international matrix to accommodate an influential Russia. It is also envisioned as that which must be actively constructed by Russia and other rising powers. In 2002, then head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), Sergei Lebedev, stated to *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* that “there are people abroad who sympathize with Russia and support its striving to form a multipolar world and to secure global and regional balances of power” (RFERL Newline, December 20, 2002). In 2004, Sergei Ivanov, then Minister of Defence, praised India as a strategic partner which “fights against international terrorism not with words but with deeds, and shares a number of our political viewpoints regarding the need to construct a multipolar world, taking into account the interests of all states, especially major ones” (RFERL Newline, October 13, 2004).

While multipolarity in part is seen as a willful act by powerful states acting in concert in order to challenge American hegemony, multipolarity does not necessarily constitute the formation of anti-hegemonic coalitions (see for example “Interview with French Television Channel TF-1,” 2003). Russian officials have been adept at tempering their desire for a multipolar world with an insistence that such a pursuit does not constitute an attempt to form an anti-American bloc. This notion was expressed by Yevgeni Primakov in April 2003, during a period in which the Russian position retained

the post-September 11th partnership with the United States while simultaneously opposing the American invasion of Iraq. According to Primakov, Russia must avoid “at any price... jumping into anti-Americanism,” as good relations with the United States remained critical to Russian security. Furthermore, without a bloc of its own, Russia could not jeopardize the alienation of European partners who were also in favour of a multipolar world. According to Primakov, taking a hard anti-American stance would push such unnamed countries “back into America’s embrace” (RFERL Newslines, April 7, 2003). Nonetheless, American actions in Iraq were construed as a failure of the unipolar model. This also created an opportunity to advance the multipolar agenda due to the split engendered between the United States and European allies. Primakov suggested that the Iraq crisis was a step toward the formation of a multipolar world “because Europe stood up to America” (RFERL Security Watch, April 30, 2003).

Multipolarity has been portrayed by Russian officials as brought into being by powerful states recognizing their mutual advantage in such an order without creating formalized security alliances or new institutional mechanisms. Alexander Yakovenko (2005), official spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry, wrote upon a trilateral meeting of Russia, India and China that the three countries were deemed to be part of such a multipolar world order:

It is also important to note that the idea of a trilateral dialogue was [originally]¹⁴ advanced at the very height of the Balkan crisis and, probably because of that, was initially viewed by many people as a kind of spontaneous reaction by Russia to the unilateral actions that the US and NATO were taking in Europe at the time. Life has shown that interpretation to be wrong. *It is perfectly obvious that the three countries’ interest in cooperation with one another is transparent and based on the intrinsic merit of such cooperation, and that it is not directed against other countries* (p. 9) (Italics added).

Upon the announcement of a joint position held by Russia, France and Germany against the United States' use of force in Iraq, Putin suggested:

for the first time in postwar history an attempt was made to resolve a complicated, acute international security problem outside the bloc. This, in essence, to my mind, can well be regarded as the first steps towards the creation of the very same multipolar world of which we have so much spoken. ... We aren't creating any axes. I consider that this is but the first little building block in the construction of a truly multipolar world ("Interview with French Television Channel TF-1, 2003").¹⁵

In addition to serving as a project to combat American unipolarity, multipolarity frequently has been portrayed by Russian officials as a nascent state of affairs, an eventuality just beyond the horizon, which will necessitate a change in how global political and economic life is conducted. The logic behind the emerging multipolar world is often unclear, however. Russian officials have not always been so specific in naming the mechanism or logic by which the multipolar world order is set to emerge; rather, it exists as a condition situated within the realm of possibility, not yet realized but invariably close at hand. Russian officials have been keen to insinuate that American unipolarity is anachronistic and ill-suited to the rise of non-Western states. Unipolarity could only be clung to through the use of coercion, whereas multipolarity more accurately captured this shift in the global redistribution of power, wealth and influence.

The following is a selection from the 2000 National Security Concept of the Russian Federation. It details the Russian government's analysis of the then prevailing state of affairs in the system of international relations:

The world situation is characterized by a system of international relations undergoing dynamic transformation. Following the end of the bipolar confrontation era, two mutually exclusive tendencies came to prevail.

The first of these tendencies manifests itself in the strengthened economic and political positions of a significant number of states and of their integrative associations and in improved mechanisms for multilateral governance of international processes. Economic, political, science and technological, environmental and information factors are playing an ever-increasing role.

Russia will help shape the ideology behind the rise of a multipolar world on this basis.

In this formulation, the objective and the subjective elements of multipolarity coincide. The multipolar condition is a result of particular states increasing their respective positions in the global economic and political order. Importantly, according to the Russian government, Russia will contribute to the ideology that is required to bring the multipolar order into existence. Based on such comments, it is difficult to determine which is leading and which following: impersonal processes and factors that contribute to the rise of political states or an enabling ideology that contributes to the legitimacy and desirability of such an order.

The document continues and lists the second tendency:

The second tendency manifests itself in attempts to create an international relations structure based on domination by developed Western countries in the international community, under US leadership and designed for unilateral solutions (primarily by the use of military force) to key issues in world politics in circumvention of the fundamental rules of international law.

In the uncertain state of affairs, America remains insistent upon the construction of an international architecture to facilitate the West's domination. The point worth highlighting here is that according to the Russia government, in the midst of various processes which lead to the rise of states (and presumably non-Western states at that), American attempts to reassert hegemony are anachronistic and ill-suited. Hegemony does not occur naturally from preponderant American power but instead consists of a misguided attempt by the United States to compel rising states to toe the line by recourse to the use or threat of force.

The idea of American coercion suppressing the emergence of a multipolar order is reiterated in the Review of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, published in March, 2007:¹⁶

Efforts to create a “unipolar world” through the imposing of certain political systems and models of development while disregarding the historical, cultural, religious and other unique traits of development of the rest of the world, as well as the arbitrary use and interpretations of norms and principals of international law continue under the flag of war, with new threats and challenges...

The myth about the unipolar world definitively collapsed in Iraq. The very model proved unworkable, as it was not built and could not be built on the moral foundation of contemporary civilization. Another testament to this is the impossibility of claims of sole leadership by somewhat equal military, political and economic powers. The need for collective leadership of the most powerful states, which bear a special responsibility for the state of affairs in the world, grows in these conditions.

This notion of American unipolarity as a failed political, intellectual and moral project is situated frequently in a trajectory of post-cold war development. In this narrative, the Russian government depicts the bipolarity of the Cold War, evident through super power rivalry and mutually assured destruction, as having been eclipsed by America’s (unsuccessful) attempt at establishing a unipolar system (see the “Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy,” 2007). The attempt to recreate a unipolar world is viewed as contributing to global crises as well as restraining Russia as it pursues its legitimate interests as a rising power. Putin captured these sentiments in January 2007, stating:

After the bipolar world and the confrontation between two systems ended, someone got the illusion that the world had become unipolar and that any problems could easily be solved from one center.

But that has turned out to be wrong. This approach increases the number of crises and restricts opportunities for their resolution.

Russia’s economic and military potential is growing in these conditions, and a competitor, which had been once written off, is emerging in the world...

It seems to me that this is the main reason behind the criticism of Russia – unwillingness to take into account Russia’s legitimate interests and the desire to force it into a place that someone else has determined (World News Connection, January 24, 2007).

According to Russian officials, the United States would do better to drop its pretensions to unilateral leadership and instead realize the reality of multipolarity and its

place in it. That multipolarity had become a reality is a position stated with some frequency in 2007. For example, Sergei Lavrov stated in April of 2007:

There is no doubt that someday the United States will find its niche in the multipolar world in harmony and competition with other states, but clearly this will take time. All of America's friends – and we regard ourselves as ones – should help the United States to make a 'soft landing' in multipolar reality (World News Connection, April 30, 2007).

The Russian government thus portrays itself as contributing to an idea more in line with emerging tendencies and the redistribution of wealth and power to non-Western countries. Russian officials have frequently referred to economic criteria when arguing that a multipolar world is emerging or on the horizon. In this depiction, the economic growth of non-Western states, including Russia, results in a global redistribution of wealth. This notion is clearly expressed in the aforementioned Review of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation:

The increasing processes of globalization, in spite of their contradictory consequences, led to the more even distribution of resources, influence and economic growth, *laying an objective foundation for the multipolar construction of international relations* (italics added). The strengthening of collective and legal principles of international relations continues on the basis of the recognition of the indivisibility of security in the contemporary world. The significance of the energy sector factor, as well as access to resources, grew in international politics. The international position of Russia was considerably strengthened. Strong, more confident in itself, Russia became an important component part of the positive shifts changes in the world.

In 2007, multiple documents and speeches highlighted how objective processes of globalization resulted in a stronger basis for multipolarity and that a resurgent Russia was now in a better position to capitalize on this. Centers of economic growth may see their economic might translated into political clout and thereby create a multipolar system, although the terms of this system are sometimes vague. Take, for example, Putin's declaration during the "Munich speech" in February of 2007:

The combined GDP measured in purchasing power parity of countries such as India and China is already greater than that of the United States. And a similar calculation with the GDP of the BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India and China – surpasses the cumulative GDP of the EU. And according to experts this gap will only increase in the future.

There is no reason to doubt that the economic potential of the new centres of global economic growth will inevitably be converted into political influence and will strengthen multipolarity (“Speech and the Following Discussion...,” 2007).

In addition to being the result of an increase in political and economic clout of multiple centers, multipolarity is often portrayed by the Russian government as a condition of interdependence amongst major powers, or simply ‘centers.’ Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reiterated these views in a speech on April 30, 2007:

The emergence of new economic growth centers deprives the West of its monopoly on globalization processes and leads to a more equitable distribution of resources. The economic potential of these centers is converted into their political influence thus reinforcing multipolarity. Multilateral diplomacy, in various forms – including parliamentary diplomacy and international cooperation via NGOs – is playing an increasing role as the most important method of regulating international relations at the global and regional levels. (From World News Connection, April 30, 2007)

Primakov reiterated the theme, citing the EU’s growth rate as being greater than that of the United States, and therefore contributing to the condition of multipolarity. Primakov stated, “This is not a return to the multipolar world in the form it had prior to World War II. Its present specific feature is the strengthening of the interdependence of centers based on globalization” (RFERL Newslines, February 1, 2008). Multipolarity is also understood as resulting first from economic processes and then being consolidated interdependence amongst “centers” and NGOs. A condition of interdependence is emerging alongside the growth of multiple poles.

The primary significance of the multipolar world order is to ensure against the alternative scenario: Russia’s marginalization in an American led and “NATO-centric” world order. In other words, a multipolar world order is envisioned in terms of hard-

military security threats and capabilities and as a form of checking the expansion of the NATO bloc, which is commonly viewed in Russia as dominated by American interests. That the multipolar world provided the scenario for greater Russian authority in the world was conveyed by Yeltsin in May of 1998, when he suggested that Russian diplomats and politicians had more of an opportunity to influence global events in a multipolar world (RFERL Newswire, May 12, 1998). Primakov also stated in February 2001 that Russia must promote a multipolar world order so as to avoid marginalization in a NATO-centric world (RFERL Security Watch, Feb 12, 2001).

At the same time, the multipolar world is more than an opportunity for Russian influence. Russian officials have equated the multipolar world as appropriate for achieving global and collective security. Documents from the Russian Federation and speeches from Russian officials have presented the need for the development of a security architecture that corresponds to the emerging or actual multipolar reality. Russian officials often suggest that the unipolar condition constitutes an acute crisis for global security. The following selection from Putin's Munich speech, included at length, goes into further detail of the dangers of unipolarity:

Unilateral and frequently illegitimate actions have not resolved any problems.

Moreover, they have caused new human tragedies and created new centres of tension.

Judge for yourselves: wars as well as local and regional conflicts have not diminished... And no less people perish in these conflicts – even more are dying than before. Significantly more, significantly more!

Today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of force – military force – in international relations, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts. As a result we do not have sufficient strength to find a comprehensive solution to any one of these conflicts. Finding a political settlement also becomes impossible.

We are seeing a greater and greater disdain for the basic principles of international law. And independent legal norms are, as a matter of fact, coming increasingly closer to one state's legal system. One state and, of course, first and

foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations.

Well, who likes this? Who is happy about this?

In international relations we increasingly see the desire to resolve a given question according to so-called issues of political expediency, based on the current political climate.

And of course this is extremely dangerous. It results in the fact that no one feels safe. I want to emphasise this – no one feels safe! Because no one can feel that international law is like a stone wall that will protect them. Of course such a policy stimulates an arms race.

The force's dominance inevitably encourages a number of countries to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, significantly new threats – though they were also well-known before – have appeared, and today threats such as terrorism have taken on a global character (“Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy,” 2007).

In short, unipolarity is a destabilizing force and thus provokes a series of anticipatory moves on the part of threatened states. In contrast, a multipolar world order would bring with it promises of a unified security regime. For example, during an August 2007 summit of the SCO in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Putin stated that “Russia, like the other [SCO] states, advocates strengthening the multipolar international system, which ensures equal security and development opportunities for all countries. We are convinced that security in an increasingly globalized world must be unified, and that all attempts to tackle global and regional problems ‘on one’s own’ have no future.” There is no indication of the precise nature of a unified security arrangement in a globalized world; rather, the positive qualities are attributed to the multipolar world order by virtue of it being the opposite of unipolarity. The notion that multipolarity can counter international anarchy is somewhat of a conceptual innovation of Russian officials in the Putin era. In contrast, multipolarity reflects a democratic principle, plurality (if not outright consensus) and a genuine state of interdependence amongst states and a plethora

of economic and political institutions to mitigate a condition of anarchy between states in the global political system.

Russian officials, and certainly Putin himself, have suggested that the unipolar world order is untenable from a pragmatic point of view. In other words, in the Russian imagination, the unipolar world constitutes an unworkable form of global governance. Having failed to achieve security in zones of conflict, the unipolar world order has been proven to be insufficient for the challenges of the post 9-11 era. According to this logic, American unilateralism and unipolarity is undesirable not because it represents a situation in which the American state acts as the lone source of authority in global affairs and accrues a disproportionately high amount of power and prestige. Rather, it is undesirable because it simply does not work. Putin demonstrated this thinking when speaking to an Iranian journalist in 2007:

We are in favour of a multipolar world, and we think, I personally am deeply convinced, that the unipolar world – even if someone wanted to build it as a model – has already failed to materialize. We can state that this has already failed to materialize and cannot be built in practice.

Not a single nation, even the largest one, can solve all global problems on its own. It will not have enough resources – either financial or economic, or material, or political – and today this is becoming clear... The examples of Afghanistan and Iraq only confirm this point...

We propose to boost the role and significance of the universal international organize such as the UN, to boost the role and significance of international law and strictly observe the principles of international law and the sovereignty of the states, taking decisions on the basis of consensus...

This is hard work, but only through such work can one achieve long-term results and stability in world politics (World News Connection, October 16, 2007).

Furthermore, Putin stated that NATO's eastward expansion "does not help create an atmosphere of confidence in the world and in Europe. Modern threats – such as terrorism, drug trafficking or organized crime – cannot be resolved within the framework

of such an organization. It is necessary to improve the confidence and cooperation on a multilateral basis – this is what is really needed” (RFERL Newline October 17, 2007).

Sergei Lavrov offered similar sentiments. Urging ‘broad multilateral cooperation,’ Lavrov suggested:

it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the ultimate foreign policy objective of the US administration is to perpetuate America’s sole leadership in world affairs *despite the fact that countering terrorism and other new challenges and threats can be objective (sic) achieved solely on the basis of broad multilateral cooperation* (World News Connection April 30, 2007).

While Russian officials have acknowledged the inherently competitive nature of the international system, their belief is that multipolarity does not lead to confrontation. A more negative scenario is one in which the United States, or the West, dominates as global monopolist. This situation is untenable as it entails the ideological and material suppression of other states. Lavrov (2007c) stated in a May 2007 article:

The paradigm of contemporary international relations is rather determined by competition in the broadest interpretation of the word, particularly when the object of competition is value systems and development models. However, this is not at all equivalent to confrontation. The novelty of the situation is that the West is losing its monopoly on the globalization process. This explains, perhaps, attempts to present the current developments as a threat to the West, its values, and very way of life.

Furthermore, Lavrov refuted the idea that the alternative to unipolarity was a chaotic system of international relations and instead offered a model for governance and security provision predicated on informal leadership and international institutions:

I cannot agree with the opinion that a real alternative to a “unipolar world” is “chaotization” of international relations due to a “vacuum” of governability and security.¹⁷ I would rather speak of vacuum in the consciousness of national elites, because, as we have witnessed on other occasions, it is unilateral reaction – particularly, the use of force – that has increased the likelihood of conflict in world politics while fueling old problems. This is how the conflict space expands in global politics.

It is understandable that many people across the Atlantic still cannot make themselves say the word “multipolar.” But it is absolutely groundless to suggest that multipolarity increases the likelihood of confrontation. Yes, there emerge new centers of force; they compete with each other, among other things, for

access to natural resources. However, things have always been this way, and there is nothing fatal about it.

Emerging trends of informal leadership amongst the world's leading states – in addition to international institutions, most importantly, the United Nations – offer ways for solving the governability problem in the contemporary world. It is another matter altogether that – in this case – individual pretensions to truth, be it by the U.S., the European Union or Russia, are simply ruled out (2007c).

During much of his first presidency, Putin toed the line between the establishment of a multipolar world and the courting of a partnership with the United States. As is evident in the following exchange with a French reporter, Putin emphasizes that a multipolar world can be pursued without risking Russia's relationship with the United States, which is here expressed as a personal friendship between Putin and former President George W. Bush. Putin suggested that “if we want the world to be more predictable, more prognosticated, and then safer, it has to be multipolar, and all the participants of international intercourse have to abide by certain rules, namely, the rules of international law” (“Interview with French Television Channel TF-1,” 2003). Inherent in the thinking of Russian officials is that a multipolar world order signifies an improvement over a unipolar world order as it is representative of multiple states' interests, permitting the input if not complete autonomy, of plural decision makers, bound by international law. It is not uncommon for Russian officials to describe a multipolar world order as democratic. “Russia is building a democratic society and seeks to be part of a democratic, multipolar world order,” Putin stated in June of 2002 (RFERL Security Watch, June 18, 2002).

The following is a rather long excerpt from “The Delhi Declaration on Further Consolidation of Strategic Partnership between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India”, which occurred in Delhi on December 4, 2002:

Enduring ties of friendship, trust and confidence and commonality of interests confer on Russia and India a unique capability to contribute to *the evolution of a new world order, which would be stable, secure, equitable and sustainable and will be based on the respect for the principles of the UN Charter and international law* (emphasis added). To fulfill this vision, both sides would endeavour to strengthen relevant international institutions and mechanisms. Both countries reaffirm that now more than ever before there is a need for the international community to commit itself to the UN and multi-lateralism.

The new world order, undergirded by UN and other international institutions, is given a host of positive attributes: stability, security, equity and sustainability. The aforementioned Delhi Declaration combines the notion of UN “efficiency” and the potentially more representative nature of a multipolar world order:

Both countries favour strengthening of UN’s central role in promoting international security in a multi-polar world. They stand for enhancing the efficiency of the UN and its Security Council and making them more reflective of the contemporary geo-political and economic realities and rendering them more representative of the interests of the vast majority of the UN members by completing the process of rationally reforming the Organisation based on the broadest consensus of its member-states. In this context, Russia reaffirms its support to India as a strong and appropriate candidate for permanent membership in an expanded United Nations Security Council.

The logic is that the UN facilitates the multipolar world by acting as the institutional means by which global decision making can occur. We can assume that the unacknowledged contrary to this is the contemporary America-dominating system and the propensity for American unilateral behaviour. A more inclusive UN will sanctify a multipolar world order and strengthen the democratization of the world order in the Russian point of view.

For Russian officials, a multipolar world order represents a consensus position amongst a number of states. When asked whether there was anything sensational in the contents of a communiqué from a meeting between Russian, Indian and Chinese Foreign Ministers in 2007, Foreign Minister Lavrov said, “Naturally. Don’t the phrases – a multipolar world, the democratization of international relations, multilateral diplomacy as

a key to everything, the need to seek a collective solution to all problems without dual standards, resisting terrorism – sound familiar? President Putin spoke of the same things in Munich.” He continued, “This goes to prove that what he said is on everyone’s mind, many countries have been speaking of that for long and consistently” (World News Connection, February 16, 2007). The Russian position on multipolarity and the associated instruments of international relations are envisioned as representing a consensus amongst important powers, with Russia having helped to bring about this consensus position. A multipolar world order is also seen to ensure a “balanced” environment in which states can pursue their national interests. “Russia will determine its place in the world on its own and will seek to make the world balanced and multipolar, so that the interests of all its members are respected,” Putin declared in January of 2007 (World News Connection, January 24, 2007).

The following excerpt is noteworthy. During an interview on Indian television, Putin is presented with three question regarding Russia’s role in the world:

QUESTION: How do you perceive Russia’s role in the present world order? Some people say that Russia is again taking on the characteristics of a superpower and will aspire to increase its influence in the world. Is this how you see the situation? What is your sense of the prospects for Russia’s foreign policy?

VLADIMIR PUTIN: A superpower is a cold war term. When people today say that Russia aspires to have this status, I interpret it in the following way: they want to undermine trust in Russia, to portray Russia as frightening, and create some kind of image of an enemy. Because those who want to continue with previous policies, with cold war policies, require an enemy. Without an external enemy it is difficult to have order in your own house. Without an external enemy it is difficult to achieve military discipline among one’s own allies and to convince them to make sacrifices that, in fact, are not necessary. Russia is in favour of a multipolar world, a democratic world order, strengthening the system of international law, and for developing a legal system in which any small country, even a very small country, can feel itself secure, as if behind a stone wall. In which any country, including a very small one, is not afraid and in which a superpower cannot break the rules with impunity for its own, and often egoistical, interests.

Russia is ready to become part of this multipolar world and guarantee that the international community observes these rules. And not as a superpower with special rights, but rather as an equal among equals. And this is why we also need economic and military power – namely to help guarantee the respect for international law and equal rights among all participants of the international community (“Interview for Indian Television Channel Doordarshan..., 2008”).

First, Putin evades the charge that Russia is seeking superpower status. The term superpower, according to Putin, is used in the pejorative against Russia to conjure up a boogeyman that does not respect international norms and the rights of other states. It is done in a self-serving manner by those for whom a resurgent superpower Russia makes a convenient and necessary enemy. This dovetails into a defence of the multipolar world order, which is joined by other conditions: a democratic world order, strengthened international law, a legal system protecting the sovereignty of states. Russia is indeed represented as the steadfast guardian of this order. Having established that it is not a superpower, Putin turns the epithet onto an unnamed foe who nonetheless will be incapable of transgressing the moral and legal imperatives of this law-based multipolar world.

5. Summary

In this chapter, I examined theoretical and conceptual issues associated with polarity and Russia and demonstrated the propensity for much thinking on the question of polarity to adhere to realist and materialist precepts. Against this backdrop, I examined the significant role the idea of multipolarity has played in the imaginations of Russian political figures in the post Cold War era, with a particular emphasis on Yevgeni Primakov and Vladimir Putin. I then analyzed the range of attributes ascribed to multipolarity and unipolarity by the Putin regime. Russian officials blur the subject/object divide in their presentation of multipolarity as adhering to both objective and subjective

criteria. As Russian officials deem multipolarity responsible for an improvement in global political life along a number of subjective, objective and technical dimensions, it can be argued that it serves as a new “common sense” way of thinking about global affairs and as a viable, desirable, and natural heir to the American unipolar moment.

This chapter was the first in which I undertook an extensive analysis of primary sources dealing with a key concept in Russian officials’ understanding of world order. It takes as its backdrop the material position of Russia in contemporary world order and Russia’s ideational and normative revolt against unipolarity, which was demonstrated in the preceding two chapters. In the following chapter, I examine the polysemic idea of great power and the manner in which it was animated in the Putin era to safeguard statist development imperatives while contributing to legitimating the Putin regime’s practices.

This and the previous chapter explored Putin’s geopolitical vision and Russia’s dissatisfaction with liberal internationalism. The following two chapters demonstrate how Putin’s regime uses both new and familiar concepts to articulate national development imperatives within this order while redirecting purported Russian cultural tendencies to serve productive ends.

¹ To an English speaking audience, Aleksei Bogaturov and Pavel Tsygankov are amongst the most recognizable Russian realist scholars.

² Cheney (2008) likewise uses a somewhat vague understanding of multiple poles serving as centers of political and economic power, albeit alongside one superpower.

³ Ambrosio (2003) suggests that three stages are discernible in the Russian foreign policy in the 1990s: From 1992-93, Russia was part of the American led Western hegemonic coalition. From 1993-96, still under Kozyrev, Russia attempted to assert its independence from the hegemonic coalition. From 1996-2001, under both Primakov and his replacement Igor Ivanov (as well as President Putin), Russian foreign policy officially promoted a multipolar international system to balance against American power.

⁴ See also RFERL Newslines of April 23, 1997, which reports on the two countries signing multiple agreements which affirmed their desire for a multipolar world and the formation of a new world order.

⁵ The strategic partnership contained within this treaty should be put in context, however. As Merry (2003) notes, Russia has used the term strategic partner with great frequency in the post-Soviet period and designated India, Europe, and even the United States as such. Strategic partnerships should not be

construed as strategic alliances, in which participating members have binding military obligations to one another and a coordinated strategy in global affairs. On this last point, see also Kuchins (2001).

⁶ The Shanghai Five (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) held its first meeting in April 1996 in Shanghai. This was the precursor to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which formed on June 7, 2001 with the addition of Uzbekistan. Its Charter was signed in 2002.

⁷ Putin's support for the "War on Terror" is well-documented. Putin offered immediate rhetorical support and condolences to the United States after the attacks on September 11th. Despite initially protesting against the presence of US/NATO troops in Central Asia, Russia acquiesced, allowing what were to be temporary American bases in Central Asia. Russia also shared information with the United States about Taliban capabilities and AL Qaeda activities, provided military and logistical assistance to the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, and offered diplomatic and political support for American actions. Russia also agreed to close its Soviet era bases in Cuba and Vietnam. Putin was rewarded for his efforts by the creation of the "NATO @ 20" format during the 2002 Russia-NATO summit: Russia would be given a seat at the newly formed NATO-Russia council and equal role in policy formation. This was viewed by the Russians as an improvement over the Clinton-era "19 plus 1" structure, wherein NATO members would discuss matters amongst themselves and then present to Moscow and the Permanent Joint Council. See Ambrosio (2003).

⁸ On May 14, 2002 Russia supported sanctions against Iraq. RFE/RL speculated at this point that a new pro-West and economically pragmatic Russian foreign policy was replacing attempts at multipolarity. The author deems this a defeat for the multipolarity position on the basis that Primakov had been Russia's most vocal supporter of Iraq at the United Nations throughout the 1990s and Russia skillfully protested against sanctions on Iraq as a means of increasing its influence in the UN (RFERL Newline - July 11, 2002).

⁹ Implying that foreign leaders subscribe to the multipolar vision occurred during the Yeltsin era. In September 1997, Yeltsin and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak issued a joint declaration in which they affirmed their commitment to the creation of a multipolar world (Newline September 24, 1997).

¹⁰ It is not insignificant that many of the following statements come from the Kremlin's own website. Of special significance are the press releases offered by the Kremlin in which a selection of a longer document, interview or report has been offered. If the Kremlin has elected to include a statement about multipolarity or a democratic world order in its short selection from a larger engagement with the public or media, it may be assumed that they deem this important.

¹¹ See the previous chapter for a discussion of the BRIC designation and its suitability as a grouping of emerging national economies.

¹² Ambrosio (2001) suggests that Russia became increasingly dismayed at the American use of force in Afghanistan, Sudan and Iraq in 1998 and against Serbia in 1999. Russia's 1999 military doctrine criticized attempts to form a unipolar world through the use of military superiority and the preponderance of one super power.

¹³ This was Putin's address to the Munich Security Conference on February 10, 2007.

¹⁴ Russia first raised the prospect of a trilateral dialogue in 1998.

¹⁵ This appears to represent a broader tendency of considering practical engagements with other states as building blocks in a multipolar order. A Kremlin press release of July 8, 2003 reads as follows: "President Putin expressed confidence that the Russian-French military exercises in the Norwegian Sea would become one of the first practical moves towards international security based on a multipolar world." (kremlin.ru). The volitional component of multipolarity was similarly stated by former French President Jacques Chirac, who during a June 2008 G-8 summit defended "his vision of a multipolar world order, in which the United States [is] not the sole dominant power." According to Chirac, this multipolarity was not a state of affairs granted by Washington, but rather "a reality created by national power" and should be considered a volitional act of major powers. Chirac continued, "The unwillingness of the Europeans to create military forces that need to be reckoned with or economies that are dynamic and healthy is the reason that the multipolar world they desire doesn't exist" (Chhor and Slaba, 2003).

¹⁶ The translation is my own, with input from Marina Sabanadze.

¹⁷ The notion that a unipolar world will be replaced by chaos is held by The Council on Foreign and Defense Policy. The Council's 2007 report *The World Around Russia: 2007* states:

Instead of a unipolar world, where the domination of one superpower has evoked so much apprehension among other countries, we will be faced with a new reality – not "multipolarity," which is so dear to so many, but rather growing chaos and a vacuum of governance and security. This vacuum may begin to be

filled only by the end of the forecasted period – and only if the political classes of leading nations realize the need to overcome their disunity and traditional distrust, rise above their own egoistic prejudices, and start building a new system of universal security (pp. 6-7).

Furthermore, “Today, there is no force or a combination of forces in the world that could compensate for a weak America. Therefore, reduced U.S. influence will not bring about a classical multipolar world; rather, an increasing vacuum of governability will hit international relations” (p. 101).

Chapter Six – Russia as a Modern Great Power

1. Introduction

Appeals to *derzhavnost*, a Russian term that belies straightforward translation into English, are replete throughout the Putin era. The term best approximates great power nationalism in English, with connotations of a strong state at home and abroad. In the 1990s, Russia's diminished domestic output, loss of international stature and domestic uncertainty following the collapse of the Soviet empire, were met with talk of the country's return as a great power. Putin has made the restoration of Russian great power a key consideration of his foreign and domestic policy objectives (see for example Katz, 2005) and such talk has resonated widely in Russian society and served an integrative function amongst elites (Mankoff, 2008). Consensus around Russian self-perception as an independent great power initially emerged during the middle Yeltsin years and intensified in the Putin era in tandem with Russia's stronger international position (Mankoff, 2007).

This chapter serves two purposes. First, it challenges the notion that Russia's pursuit of great power status may be understood in purely material, ideational or cultural terms. Instead, the idea of great power serves as a sort of "common sense"¹ thinking about Russia's role in contemporary world order. Secondly, it demonstrates how the concept of great power has been animated in the Putin era to secure statist development imperatives and encapsulate criteria befitting a modern, competitive state.

While I demonstrate that great power rhetoric was frequent during Putin's presidential administrations, alone this tells us little about what great power status may entail and what concrete political imperatives it may serve. In keeping with the theme of

this dissertation, I argue the very imprecision with which it is used suggests that it may come to signify multiple things for multiple parties and that its meaning is largely determined by the group employing it and the purpose it is intended to serve. It serves as another polysemic concept used to substantiate and legitimate a Putin era understanding of world order while serving the needs of Russian political economy. In other words, while the idea of great power has been filled with much positive content by academics, Russian officials and commentators, I conceive of it as a means to enshrine and legitimate Russian state development priorities and its increased clout in world affairs. Putin's appeals to Russian greatness served two ideological functions. First, it was to redirect enthusiasm for a Russian greatness predicated on imperial fantasies, evident in the 1990s in the words and works of the likes of Zyuganov, Zhirinovskiy and Dugin (see Chapter Four). Second, it served as a means to advocate for Russian economic and social "modernization" under the stewardship of a powerful and legitimate Russian state. In this way talk of greatness contributed to a social consensus around a new basis of accumulation to succeed the Russian energy and resource dominated economy.

This chapter builds upon Chapter Three's empirical and theoretical demonstration of the limitations of Russia's resurgence. In spite of experiencing considerable growth during the Putin era, the Russian economy remains beset by problems that limit great power aspirations. Notably, demographic challenges and a seemingly perpetual "semi-peripheral" status hamper Russia's ability to ascend to the first tier of advanced national political economies. While the two previous chapters expressed Putin's geopolitical vision and the manner in which Russia seeks to challenge liberal internationalism, this

chapter and the next demonstrate how Putin's regime uses both new and familiar concepts to articulate its development imperatives within this order.

The chapter is organized in two main sections. Section Two reviews interpretations of the concept of great power status, with an emphasis of its significance for contemporary Russia. These approaches are grouped under three orientations. The first is materialist, in which Russian great power status is predicated on material capability and economic well-being. The second is cultural essentialist, in which Russian great power practice is considered endemic to Russians' thinking about themselves. The third is constructivist, in which aspects of a great power are constituted by international norms and, to some extent, Russia's longing to be accepted in international society.

Section Three analyzes how Russian officials have utilized the concept of great power to express aspirations towards Russia's social and economic development. I examine how Putin and his regime have emphasized Russia's integration into the contemporary global economy. Then I demonstrate how they have come to view great power status according to criteria required for economic and social development. I then investigate "Concept 2020,"² a document that comprehensively states the Putin regime's modernization vision, as an example of this vision for a modern great Russia. Here, I argue that rather than simply view Concept 2020 as a prosaic example of economic development, it can be understood as being laden with qualitative criteria by which the Putin regime seeks legitimacy while defending this particular vision of a modern great Russia. A summary of the chapter follows.

The Russian notion of great power is meaningful to a critical historicist reading of Russian alternative understandings of world order for two reasons. First, the notion of

great power has a longer pedigree within Russian thinking and is often invoked to celebrate quasi-imperial trends, state majesty and strength. It therefore resonates both as a lamentation of Soviet imperial collapse and as a celebration of Russia's renewed significance in global affairs. Second, it serves two important ideological functions for the Putin regime. It redirects enthusiasm for a Russian greatness predicated on imperial adventurism to one that is predicated on social and economic modernization under the stewardship of a powerful and legitimate state. It also comes to signify the Putin regime's desire to forge a competitive unit within the global political economy.

Therefore, in historicizing the notion of great power for present purposes, one may view how the Putin regime has added a series of criteria for a "modern" great power – namely, the imperative for an increasingly competitive state-directed market economy within an increasingly competitive capitalist global political economy. Russian "greatness" cannot be achieved until the national political economy transitions from a reliance on the extraction and sale of hydrocarbons and resources to a situation in which it occupies a higher rung on the international division of labour. Russian citizens are entreated to contribute to such greatness by dint of their intellectual, creative and physical labour.

2. Conceptual Considerations of Great Power Status

One way to consider Russian great power is through materialist criteria – i.e. military means and economic power. Explicitly materialist perspectives will question whether Russia can be considered a great power according to its having met certain economic or military criteria.

What might it mean to qualify as a great power based on military prowess?

According to offensive realism, great power status is determined by a state's relative

military capability. To be considered a great power, a state must be capable of engaging in warfare against the most powerful state in the world (Mearsheimer, 2001). According to this line of thinking, the lone criterion for great power status is military prowess and the capacity to utilize it against the most militarily powerful state. Putin is considered to have sought to enhance Russia's capability of projecting power on a regional and global basis. Regionally, this entailed Putin's pursuit of a Russian-led security complex, comprised of Russia and the CIS countries (Nygren, 2008). Russia's main foreign policy priority is to remain a great power vis-à-vis the former Soviet states and is expressed through a number of institutional mechanisms such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), as well as the Single Economic Space (SES). The corresponding objective is for Russia to dominate affairs in the region by creating structures that are inclusive of its neighbours and excluding other great powers (Oldberg, 2007).

The "securitization" of Russian foreign policy – pursuing economic growth as a means to enhance power projection capability – is one trademark of Putin era foreign policy (Lo, 2003). In this line of thinking, economic growth is the means by which Russia increases its international standing.³ Conversely, according to some analyses, Russian economic growth and potential is the main indicator of great power status. Russian claims to great power status have been permanent throughout the Putin era but have in recent years come to acquire a stronger economic dimension, whereby great power status is buttressed by economic growth (Oldberg, 2007; Ziegler, 2008). While economic growth witnessed during the Putin years may grant Russia some degree of

great power status (viewed in economic terms), this status remains qualified due to challenges affecting its military and demographic health (Stent, 2008).

Russia's international power has become increasingly predicated on its ability to leverage oil and gas resources. Putin has long viewed the Russian resource sector as key to Russia's long term growth and modernization and return to great power status, a theme which he emphasized in scholarly writing even prior to his presidency (Balzer, 2005; Feklyunina, 2008). Russian foreign policy is oriented towards Russia leveraging its position as a major producer and exporter of hydrocarbons to exert greater influence in global politics (Rich, 2009). The economic power and corresponding political influence Russia gains from its control of oil and gas distribution may in fact be more significant than the country's "hard" military power (Goldman, 2008). Russian oil and gas constitute one component of Russia's growing use of soft power initiatives under Putin. Such soft power includes the use of cultural affinities, consumer goods, economic growth and preferential lending in the CIS realm (Hill, 2006; Tsygankov, 2006; Lomagin, 2007; (RFERL April 24, 2006 and December 05, 2005).

That Russia is a great power due to its economic prowess is not an idea that is universally shared. Russia's self-declared status as "energy super power" is insufficient for building a modern and competitive economy in all sectors, however. To attain sustainable "great power" status, Russia must leverage its existing status of energy exporter and raw material into an economy that is more competitive and innovative in multiple sectors. Russia faces numerous challenges in parlaying its resource wealth into political power (Rutland, 2008). Superficially, Russia has the attributes to be considered a great power: economic growth, a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, an

advanced nuclear arsenal, activist leadership in Putin, and energy resources and raw materials. Nonetheless, it remains a declining power due to military disarray, an economy heavily reliant on oil, gas, and natural resources, population decline and health crises, an unwieldy geographic expanse, and a bureaucratic-business elite over which the executive exhibits little effective control (Rumer & Wallander, 2003-04; Menon & Motyl, 2007; Ambrosio, 2006). Furthermore, it is not clear that Russia deserves to be classified with other emerging economies, let alone “great powers,” based on economic strength and dynamism. Though it aspires to be included in the BRICs, Russia faces challenges as a declining power incapable of competing with the likes of Brazil, India and China (Hurrell, 2006; Macfarlane, 2006; Chapter 3 of this work).

Russia’s great power aspirations constitute a compromise position that reflects Russia’s diminished influence in the post-Soviet world. Great power status is to be differentiated from superpower status, which Russia can no longer achieve due to a series of military, social and economic crises (Fakiolas & Fakiolas, 2004). Putin era Russia may be better considered as trying to stabilize and reverse the trends coinciding with its precipitous decline, which began in the 1970s and 1980s and proceeded throughout the 1990s. According to this thinking, Russia is only beginning to have the capacity to lay the foundations of a great power, stabilizing the external environment in order to proceed with state-ordering priorities initiated under Putin: consolidating executive authority, restoring the involvement of the state in the economy, asserting central control over the regions and preventing the loss of territory. These constitute not the behaviour of an emerging power but rather customary practices of statecraft in

Russia, witnessed under previous Russian and Soviet governments during periods of domestic weakness (Macfarlane, 2006; Umbach, 2000).

Cultural essentialist positions suggest that Russia is incapable of existing in a form other than that of a great power. One way to understand frequent references to Russian great power is as a lamentation on the bygone era of Soviet might, the tacit acknowledgement of the country's diminished position in global affairs and nostalgia over its former influence. In the words of Legvold (2007):

Russia has worn its great power status on its sleeve, and, when it is called into question, its leaders and essayists sink into a narcissistic preoccupation with the country's decline... *Derzhavnost*... has a meaning all its own, one missing from the English language, simply because the phenomenon is missing. Only the Russians in moments of distress revert to an affectation of great-power standing – that is, asserting their natural right to the role and influence of a great power whether they have the wherewithal or not (p. 114).

Indeed, for Legvold, Russian *derzhavnost* resonates across the post-Soviet Russian political spectrum and constitutes a syndrome that dates back to “the beginning” of Russia. It is difficult not to infer from the analysis that *derzhavnost*, at least for some, constitutes something of an invariant cultural trait, a Russian affliction that remains particularly prevalent during periods of state weakness and upheaval.

Such readings of *derzhavnost* resemble Western views of Russian cultural path dependence, emphasizing Russians' supposed preference for social and political stability and political centralization, their conservative and risk-averse tendencies, a desire for order and security stemming from a profound aversion to chaos, and their overly pessimistic and cynical view of political man, amongst other things (Keenan, 1986). According to this line of thinking, contemporary Russian values are inherently conservative, reflecting the desire for stability and protection under the aegis of a great power (Pipes, 2004). Similarly, a commitment to achieving great power

(velikoderzhavnost) status is in fact a cultural archetype which shapes Russian perceptions of the country's role in the international sphere, irrespective of its own internal conditions. Geopolitical position, military capabilities, resources, intellectual and spiritual potential give a timeless quality to Russian great power status (E. Batalov in Shakleyina & Bogaturov, 2004, p. 49; Shlapentokh, 2001). Amongst some Eurasianists, Russia is believed to be predisposed to expansion with an "historical genetic code for empire building" (Shlapentokh, 2007, p. 230). Such arguments proceed from the position that there is something inherent in the Russian national character inimical to the pursuit of democracy and associated norms and attitudes, with a pursuit of greatness necessitating a centralized, if not autocratic, structure, imperial expansion and cultural chauvinism.

According to theorists with a constructivist orientation, a great power identity influences Russia's international conduct. In this line of thinking, great power status is inherently intersubjective: both great power peers and smaller states confer legitimacy upon would be great powers according to social criteria. These criteria are determined by prevailing international norms. A liberal reading of this position holds that international institutions and new forms of governance are necessitated by the patterns of interdependence which result from globalizing processes. These institutions socialize weaker states into the acceptance of such norms. This further entails that liberal values are diffused throughout the network of institutions and states that adopt and emulate these processes will be rewarded correspondingly. In such a framework, Russia, as well as other BRIC countries, will come under increasing pressure to adapt to liberal standards, and may either elect to do so or be prone to blocking coalitions within their societies,

which include powerful interest groups who wish to resist liberalization and appeal to older ideas and ideologies as a means of legitimizing their position (Hurrell, 2006, pp. 6-8). Seeking recognition as a great power without adopting liberal norms of conduct is a precarious venture. Yet this scenario has confronted Russia throughout its history. Since the mid-19th century, the Russian state has failed in achieving recognition as a great power from the civilized powers due to the former's failure at successfully adopting indirect rule as a rationality of governing. Putin's statist tendencies are coming at precisely such a time that Western Europe has abandoned norms of state sovereignty (Neumann, 2008).

According to constructivist positions, Russia's international conduct has been predicated historically on its self-image as a great power (Hancock, 2007). There are variations on this theme. One holds that the idea of great power is central to Russia's understanding of itself vis-à-vis the West since the early 19th century. Events deemed indicative of Russian revisionism (through, for example the 2008 conflict with Georgia), are better understood as part of a longer series of attempts by Russian politicians to conduct great power politics at the international level. In this reading, great power politics is largely a historical constant in Russian foreign policy conduct, with the one notable anomaly of the Soviet Union's pursuit of super power status during the Cold War (Rich, 2009). The early to middle years of Putin's presidential tenure can be characterized as influenced by an international identity of a great-power normalizer, which consists of a concentration on state authority, cooperation with the West, and the projection of influence in the former Soviet region. Such a normal great power does not seek balancing behavior against the US, nor does it behave like an empire in the

independent states of its periphery, but rather relies on diplomacy and soft power to obtain its objectives (Tsygankov, 2005; see also 2006 and 2007b). Russia's superpower self-image informs the predominant Russian perspective on missile defence, which is global strategic stability and the preservation of nuclear balance with the United States (Kassianova, 2005).

Russia seeks great power capabilities and recognition as a means to legitimate its conduct and differentiate this conduct from outright imperialism. Russian "democratic statist" appeal to notions of Russia as a great power as a means to stabilize the near abroad without having imperial ambitions (Smith, 1999; Tsygankov, 2003). According to this logic, great power status also confers greater legitimacy upon Russia and greater responsibility in global affairs, which would entail compromising its own narrow national interests at times for the sake of global stability (Lukyanov, 2007). The Russian "responsibility" to stabilize its periphery is tantamount to fulfilling broader obligations to manage world order and does not constitute a form of imperialism.

Great power status has also been understood as reflecting Russia's ambition for increased prestige and greater inclusion and participation within a variety of international economic forums while not being bound by the rules stemming from multilateral institutions (Oldberg, 2007; Mankoff, 2007). The prestige inherent in a great power and its recognition internationally enables Russia to be increasingly relevant in global affairs (Katz, 2005). Within this conception is the insinuation that international political life is increasingly conducted on the basis of sovereign great powers protecting their respective interests (Whitmore, 2007).

3. Great Power as Russia's Aspiration to Social and Economic Development

Missed in much of the speculation of Russia's great power status are the economic and social criteria envisioned by Putin as necessary components of a modern great power. While I do not wish to present a hierarchy of components associated with Russian great power status, I want to draw attention to the manner by which Russian officials admonish Russian society to reach its creative and productive potential in order to join the ranks of global great powers. In this section, I examine Putin's and Russian officials' propensity to use great power rhetoric to express aspirations towards Russia's social and economic development. Activated to suit Russian state development imperatives, the notion of great power ceases to be a cultural artifact or reflection of economic or military prowess. Rather, it comes to represent a series of criteria befitting a modern and competitive national political economy and the basis for capital accumulation. Great power is therefore a polysemic idea, a common sense notion to capture Russia's desired place in global affairs. The concept is employed by the Putin regime to build consensus, encourage productivity and create state capitalist sociability. To demonstrate this idea in this section, I first consider how the pursuit of great power is deemed intrinsic to the Putin era. I then emphasize the centrality of Russian economic competitiveness to Putin's idea of statecraft. I conclude this section by demonstrating how economic and social modernization has been explicitly tied to the concept of Russian great power, including an extended consideration of Russia's Concept 2020.

While appeals to Russian great power have enjoyed a certain prominence during the Putin era, the concept has a longer history. Documents produced by the Russian state between 1993 and 2000 emphasized that Russia inherited great power status from the

USSR in the form of nuclear potential and permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (Kassianova, 2001). Yeltsin publicly declared that Russia is a great power and the idea of Russia as a great power has been accepted within diverse political circles since that time (Erickson, 1999). In fact, Russia's aspiration to great power status, understood here as its ability to project influence into the former Soviet sphere, can be considered the one constant in post-Soviet geopolitical thinking across a broad spectrum of thinkers. Former Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov, advocate of a great power Russia, declared in 1996 that "Russia was and remains a Great Power. Her foreign policy should correspond to that status" (quoted in Rangsimaporn, 2006, p. 377).

Nonetheless, a prevailing impression is that great power rhetoric increased during Putin's presidency and remains axiomatic to his professed vision of Russia in global affairs (see for example "Results of Putin's Presidency at Mid-Term Examined"). Indeed, Putin employed great power talk early in his first presidency. In an interview with the German publication *Welt am Sonntag* on June 10, 2000 (Quoted in Nicholson, 2001, p. 870), Putin is quoted as having said that "Russia is not haggling for the status of a great power. It is one. This is determined by its great potential, history and culture." In 2000, after talks with Greek President Constantinos Stephanopoulos, Putin noted that "Russia may be in crisis, it may have a hard time, but in terms of its status, economic potential, territory, population, science and education of its population, Russia has always been a great power" ("Putin Says Russia was, Will Be Great Power," 2000).

Putin has partly played to the fact that the concept of great power has considerable resonance within Russia. Putin has been called upon to reassert Russian great power. For example, following the December 2003 State Duma elections, National Strategy

Council co-Director Iosif Diskin stated that Putin should adopt the role of missionary in initiating a new historical project of a great Russia. Diskin said, "History has left us no other choice. Russia can only be great" (RFERL Newslines, January 5, 2004). During the Putin era, Russian politicians of all stripes understood that the concept must be successfully assimilated in order to articulate programs for Russia's future in the global political economy. One such example is arch-liberal Anatoli Chubais, former co-chair of the Union of Right Forces (1999-2003) and Yeltsin-era advocate for liberalization. In his 2003 report, Chubais articulated the notion of a Russian liberal empire, which reconciled great power ambition and nostalgia with liberal economic tenets ("Russia: Chubais 'Liberal Imperialism' Report Seen as Bid for Presidency," 2003). Ideas of "great power-ism" (*derzhavnichestvo*) had previously been anathema to Russian liberals, but the emerging discursive field under Putin was such that one ignored great power talk to one's own political peril.

For pro-regime Russian elites, the pursuit of great power status is a means of stemming Russia's marginalization in global affairs. In March 2001, Gleb Pavlovskii, political consultant and former adviser to President Putin, suggested that "the West is benevolently pushing us into a kind of eternal post-Soviet ghetto," a trend that Putin was seeking to reverse by restoring Russian great power status (RFERL Newslines, March 5, 2001). Kremlin officials have also been quick to deny that the pursuit of great power status entails a revisionist position vis-à-vis contemporary world order. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated that Russia today "does not have imperial or great power ambitions" by which it would challenge the international system (RFERL Newslines, July 25, 2001). Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov noted that "Russia does not have a

great power complex, but nor does it have an inferiority complex" ("Russia to Adequately Answer to Challenges and Threats – Lavrov," 2007). Elsewhere, Lavrov (2007) has emphasized that Russia does not aspire to superpower status but rather seeks to be received as a leading state whose opinions are considered in matters of global politics.

It is not uncommon to consider that Russia's pursuit of great power status constitutes a critical component of Putin's own national project, one which can serve as an overarching concept for contemporary political life in Russia. Putin articulated a form of the nation building project and the consolidation of Russian national identity at the end of the previous millennium. This was captured in the so-called "Millennium Speech", wherein Putin (2000) stipulated the need to reconcile Russian particularities and "traditional values" – patriotism (pride in Russia's accomplishments as a great power), "statism" and "social solidarity," – with "supranational universal values", including peace, security, a law based society and market relations. Scholars have noted Putin's success in creating a Russian national identity that combines elements of the Soviet past as well as contemporary elements. Putin has been considered in the line of Russian liberal statist (*gosudarstvenniki*), whose vision of Russian identity incorporates notions of a strong state, great power Russia, order, patriotism and liberal elements. From the onset of his first administration, Putin pursued a foreign policy which insisted upon Russian autonomy and an integrative form of patriotism predicated on Russian diversity and statism (Godzimirski, 2008; Tsygankov, 2005; Evans, 2008, Sakwa, 2008). It has been suggested that Medvedev eschews talk about Russia's great power status in favour of emphasizing the need for civic participation in building a more democratic polity

(RFERL Newslines, Jan 28, 2008). In other words, it is commonly portrayed that Putin and the notion of great power are synonymous and coterminous.

Derzhavnost resonates in Russian political life as a celebrated expression of Russia's return to prominence within the global political arena. On June 12, 2006 during the commemoration of the day that Russian sovereignty was declared, precipitating the unraveling of the Soviet Union, up to 46,000 youth supporting the Russian government were bussed into Moscow. They wore identical t-shirts and demonstrated with slogans such as "Russia is and will be a great power" (as reported on RFERL Newslines, June 13, 2006). Nonetheless, there are reasons to believe that the concept is understood by the Russian public in highly qualified terms. A majority of Russians list a developed modern economy as a prerequisite to great power status. Nearly half of Russians do not think that Russia should regain superpower status (Kornya, 2007; see also RFERL Newslines, January 24, 2007).⁴ According to a poll released by national public opinion studies center VCIOM in January of 2007, Russians polled determined that the main traits that distinguish a great power were: an advanced economy (55 percent), the citizens' wealth (36 percent); a strong army (24 percent), advanced science and high technologies (20 percent); democracy and human rights (7-10 percent). In the same survey, 46 percent of respondents believe Russia has the capacity to regain superpower status within the next two decades. Currently deserving of great power status are Japan (27 percent), Germany (25 percent), the European Union (24), China (23 percent), Britain (21 percent), France (13 percent) and Russia (12 percent). ("Many Russians Certain Their Country Will Regain Superpower Status," 2007).

If *derzhavnost* has some sort of mythical resonance, large numbers of the Russian public nonetheless remain capable of affixing specific, somewhat technocratic and economic criteria to the notion. This reflects the imperatives of the Putin regime. In crucial respects, Russian ideas about “greatness” in the Putin era were not predicated on an inherent Russian entitlement to power, recognition and empire. Rather, they were predicated on successfully reclaiming Russian economic well-being and social consensus under the aegis of a powerful state. The legitimacy of the Putin regime was partly predicated on commitments to ensure a level of social and economic development on par with modern developed states. Such commitments, alongside the building of the infrastructure for a competitive state capitalism, constitute a Russian third way. In this formulation, imperial nostalgia for a great power Russia is to give way to allegiance to a modern great power which is more competitive, efficient, industrious and stable.

Ideas about Russian greatness in the Putin era are therefore informed by three distinct trends. First, Putin acknowledges that intense competition constitutes the norm faced by national political economies and their constituent components. If Russia is to retain its greatness, it is to do so by acting correspondingly to the competitive pressures of the global political economy. Economic competitiveness and a broader sense of Russia as meeting international standards and developing managerial competence in all spheres of social, economic and political life have shaped Putin’s vision for Russia’s international conduct. For Putin, this concern represents a means for Russia to regain great power status and essential for its future security. Putin stated the following in his 2002 Address to the Federal Assembly⁵:

The principle feature of the modern world is the internationalization of economy and society. And in these conditions, the best world standards become the most important criteria of success. Standards in everything: in business, in science, in

sport. In economic growth rates. In the quality of how the state mechanism works, and the professionalism of the decisions we pass. And only when we not only meet the best standards in the world, but when we create these standards ourselves – only then will we really have the chance to become rich and strong.

Second, Russian greatness is to be informed by an imperative to social and economic modernization, which can serve as the basis for Russian accumulation, competitiveness and wealth for a Russian post-resource dependence development strategy. Third, great power is to be undergirded by social consensus and trust in the state mechanism.

Employing the language of Russian “greatness” is a means of rendering the Russian state’s adjustments to global economic conditions more palatable and palpable. In crucial ways, Russian greatness resembles not Russian distinctiveness or cultural particularity but a way of coding a Russian response to the competitive pressures faced by national political economies across the globe. In this respect, Russia is not unlike other rising powers which must seize upon whatever development opportunities exist within globalization. Hence, the idea of great power here signifies the condition of a number of emerging non-Western states which, in the Kremlin’s opinion, stand to benefit from the redistribution of wealth associated with globalization. Russia’s potential is therefore circumscribed by the same opportunities and constraints for development experienced by other would-be great powers such as China, India, countries of the Asian-Pacific region, ASEAN member states, and key countries in Latin America, all of whom aspire to be great powers in their own right in fifteen years, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (“Foreign Minister Lavrov Says Russia To Remain Great Power, 2005”).

Central to Putin’s understanding of the global political economy is the importance of increased competition as a stimulus for domestic industries and the need to develop

pragmatic relations with multiple partners. Putin has set about reconciling Russia's development needs within the competitive structures of the global economy. In his 2002 Address to the Federal Assembly, Putin asserted:

We are building constructive, normal relations with all the world's nations – I want to emphasise, with all the world's nations. However, I want to note something else: the norm in the international community, in the world today, is also harsh competition – for markets, for investment, for political and economic influence. And in this fight, Russia needs to be strong and competitive. I am certain: the development of the Russian economy is only possible if we are guided by the harsh requirements of the world market, and occupy new niches in it.

Russia, therefore, is not inoculated from the competitive pressures stemming from integration in the global political economy and its composite economic and political components must meet exacting global standards. To not respond to such pressures would be to Russia's peril. In the 2003 Address to the Federal Assembly, Putin asserted unconditionally that economic independence and competitiveness are keys to reviving Russia's place within contemporary world order, as the largest threat facing Russia is seen to lie in its being surrounded by economically more powerful countries that have the capacity to force Russia out of markets. Similarly, Russia's lack of economic sovereignty was manifested in its continued reliance on international financial institutions:

I think that our ultimate goal should be to return Russia to its place among the prosperous, developed, strong and respected nations.

But this will only be possible when Russia gains economic power and when it no longer depends on the favours of the international financial organisations or on the unpredictable ups and downs of the foreign trade situation.

We can achieve this kind of Russia only through sustainable and rapid growth, growth drawing on all factors, internal and external, traditional and modern, Russian and foreign.

And finally, sustainable and rapid growth is only possible if we produce competitive goods. Everything we have must be competitive -- goods and services, technology and ideas, business and the state itself, private companies

and state agencies, entrepreneurs and civil servants, students and teachers, science and culture.

In this line of thinking, Russia's well-being and its global strength are not predicated on its inherent right to great power status. Rather, they are predicated on the capacity of Russian capitalists, backed by the Russian state, to succeed in a climate of global competition. In other words, the Putin regime has set about reconciling Russia's development needs within the competitive structures of the global economy. Then defence minister Sergei Ivanov stated in 2006, "Our country cannot maintain the status of a great power based solely on the vastness of its territory and the richness of natural resources. The only solution is to develop competitive products and to conquer world markets." This process would enable Russia to transition from a raw materials-based economy to that of innovation ("Russia: Special Award Ceremony for Best Defence Sector Ideas," 2006). In his 2002 Address to the Federal Assembly, which may be considered Putin's clarion call for an internationally competitive Russia, he asserted:

Today, the countries of the world compete with each other in all economic and political parameters: in the size of the tax burden, in the security level of the country and its citizens, in guarantees for protecting property rights. They compete in the attractiveness of the business climate, in the development of economic freedoms, in the quality of state institutions and the effectiveness of the legal system.

Competition has indeed become global. In the period of weakness – of our weakness – we had to give up many niches on the international market. And they were immediately occupied by others. No one wants to give them up just like that, and no one is going to, which is shown by the situation on the markets for oil, steel, air transport and other goods and services.

The conclusion is obvious: in the world today, no one intends to be hostile towards us – no one wants this or needs it. But no one is particularly waiting for us either. No one is going to help us especially. We need to fight for a place in the "economic sun" ourselves.

Russia is incapable of advancing into the upper tier of economically powerful states so long as it continues to lag in productivity and technological sophistication. The severely uncompetitive nature of Russia's manufactured goods (see Chapter 3) prevents Russian

firms from successfully competing in global markets and relegates the Russian political economy to an inferior position in the international division of labour.

According to Putin, Russia must overcome the two-pronged Soviet inheritance of inefficient resource allocation and outmoded production technology. For Putin, a modern great Russia is one that does not necessarily demonstrate military might, but which prevents itself from being relegated to the periphery of the global political economy. Russia must accumulate investment, capital and technology and realize entrepreneurship in all spheres of the economy. These ideas are elaborated upon in Putin's 2006 Address to the Federal Assembly:

We can make a more detailed examination of our place in the world economy. In a context of intensive competition, scientific and technological advantages are the defining factors for a country's economic development. Unfortunately, a large part of the technological equipment used by Russian industry today lags not just years but decades behind the most advanced technology the world can offer. Even allowing for the climate conditions in Russia, our energy use is many times less efficient than that of our direct competitors.

Yes, we know that this is the legacy of the way our economy and our industry developed during the Soviet period, but it is not enough just to know. We have to take concrete steps to change the situation. We must take serious measures to encourage investment in production infrastructure and innovative development while at the same time maintaining the financial stability we have achieved. Russia must realise its full potential in high-tech sectors such as modern energy technology, transport and communications, space and aircraft building. Our country must become a major exporter of intellectual services.

Of course, we hope for increased entrepreneurial initiative in all sectors of the economy and we will ensure all the necessary conditions for this to happen. But a real leap forward in the areas that I just mentioned, all areas in which our country has traditionally been strong, gives us the opportunity to use them as an engine for growth. This is a real opportunity to change the structure of our entire economy and establish for ourselves a worthy place in the international division of labour.

Russia has sought to normalize its relations with foreign states by suggesting that its actions reflect international norms stemming from geo-economic and geo-political competition, which Russia must acknowledge in order to ensure its very survival.

Contrary to the interpretations of liberal political economy, wherein state involvement in

the economy is derided as producing the inefficient allocation of productive resources, Putin defends a vision wherein the Russian state aggressively supports private or state owned entities. In the 2007 Address to the Federal Assembly, Putin stated that regarding its relations with other states, Russia is not “arrogant” but will “defend our economic interests and make use of our competitive advantages in the way that all countries around the world do.”

Not only is the exercising of state power not anomalous in the contemporary global political economy, it is the norm. Russia is not unlike other states which seek out their respective niches in a competitive economic climate. The Russian state is to support its business abroad to ensure fair treatment,⁶ as Russia’s economic well-being is predicated upon developing globally competitive industries. Thus, Russia is by no means exceptional as it is compelled to engage in the same competitive struggle facing all nations and firms. It is exceptional insofar as it must overcome the Soviet legacy and accept the broad framework of capitalist competition. Accordingly, Russia has ceased to entertain thoughts of a counter-systemic position and simply aims to do the same thing that all other states do – albeit, more successfully. In other words, although Russia is in many respects preoccupied with attaining or maintaining great power status, it nonetheless must accomplish it by giving tacit or explicit acknowledgement to the norms of international competitiveness for national political economies. On the one hand, portraying the Russian state as central to ensuring the Russian economy’s international economic competitiveness, Russian officials challenge neo-liberal orthodoxy. On the other, the acknowledgment of the broad tenets of market competition suggests that Putin’s Russia has accepted the realities of global capitalism.

According to Russian officials, Russia must tend to internal development priorities in order to compete in a geopolitically and geoeconomically hostile international climate. The following selection from Putin's February 2000 "Open Letter to Voters," gives an indication of how Russia's great power standing would differ in the Putin era from atavistic attempts at empire. The internal strength of Russia, its economic well being and the well being of its citizens are offered as the primary criteria for great power status. While Russian greatness persists in spite of the fact that Russia no longer comprises an empire, it is enhanced by focusing on internal development priorities as opposed to aggressive international conduct. The external, imperial aspect of Russian greatness is to be eschewed in favour of internal development. In this letter, Putin stated that Russia's priority ought to be "to pursue our foreign policy in keeping with our national interests. In fact, we have to recognize the primacy of internal goals over external ones." Russia's internal weakness prevented it from realizing its great power potential. In this letter, Putin continued with, "Where weakness and poverty hold sway, there can be no great power. It is time to understand that our place in the world, our wealth and our new rights depend on our success in dealing with our internal problems." Sergei Ivanov, former defence minister and deputy prime minister, has echoed these sentiments, stating: "Russia will be unable to enjoy further successful development as a great world power without resolving a number of internal problems." Ivanov went on to note:

Russia is a leading world power, it will remain so. Not only by virtue of the size and might of the army but primarily by virtue of the economy and intellect. As far as problems go -- there are a great many of them: People in our country drink a lot, corruption in our country is pretty highly developed, regrettably. And without resolving these problems -- problems that we ourselves need to resolve for ourselves, and not for someone else -- we will not be able to develop

successfully any further, or as successfully as we all would want (in “Russia: Ivanov News Conference”).

During his two presidential terms, the construction of a modern great power was at the basis of Putin’s legitimacy. In fact, to reach full “greatness”, Putin exhorted Russia to demonstrate national unity, social solidarity and faith in his state building project. In the 2003 Address to the Federal Assembly, Putin ascribes various attributes to great power status which are consonant with the broad contour of his state-building project, including a civil society emerging from a reduced state, political parties serving the cause of national unity, and the consolidation of society as the basis of national power.

In exchange for the public’s demonstration of national unity and social solidarity under the aegis of the Russian state, the Putin regime has offered improved material conditions. In fact, it may be said that Putin’s social contract with Russian society was comprised of a perceived responsibility of the state to provide stability and improve the material conditions and quality of life of its citizenry. In his 2004 Address to the Federal Assembly, Putin asserts that the government’s main goal “is to bring about a noticeable rise in our people’s prosperity.” Later, in his 2008 State Council Speech on Russia’s Development Strategy through to 2020, Putin (2008) declared that “(o)ur biggest achievement is the stability that enables us to make our plans, calmly go about our work and start our families. People once more have confidence that life will continue to change for the better.”

Nonetheless, the Russian citizenry is not to be the passive recipients of the state’s initiatives. Putin has entreated Russian society to participate in the creation of a Russia that is recognized and respected on the world stage. Putin’s 2003 Address to the Federal

Assembly may be viewed as a rallying cry to Russian citizens to assume responsibility towards achieving a powerful and respected state and society and to work towards a future replete with the characteristics of modern states (a flourishing civil society, stable democracy, fully guaranteed human rights, civil/political freedoms, a competitive market economy, protected property rights). Accordingly, Russian development is not predicated upon naked power but rather on Russia's ability to display the traits required of a modern great power and its continued competitiveness in the contemporary global political economy. In appealing to great power status, Putin entreats Russian citizens to contribute to Russian greatness by dint of their intellectual and physical labours. In this formulation, the increase of the material well-being of Russians is a prerequisite to greater material resources available to the Russian state and capitalists insofar as this well-being is a reflection of productivity, innovation and competitiveness. A great power is purported to possess such traits.

The fruit of greatness is promised the Russian populace in exchange for its daily toil and its efforts for the betterment of Russian state and society. Vladislav Surkov, Deputy Head of the Presidential Staff and Kremlin ideologist, had the following to offer when asked whether Russia had regained its great power status. In this passage, Russian great power is not seen as an existing state of affairs but rather one that will come about through the labour of Russian citizens, its intellectual and productive labours and the continued modernization of the economy. The Russian state, therefore, is seeking to wean its citizenry off of resource dependency and the windfalls associated with rising global energy prices and create a nation of producers, inventors and innovators. Surkov states:

Whether Russia's great history has a great sequel depends on us, its citizens. Today's greatness is not undisputed, tomorrow's is not obvious. President Putin constantly reminds us that what is on our agenda is not universal leisure, leisure while we talk about a great country, but active modernization work.

And indeed things in Russia do not seem too bad. But so far what is great is not so much the goals we are seeking to achieve and the values we are seeking to assert as the prices for hydrocarbon raw materials, he noted. It seems that the sparkling economy is invigorating and refreshing. But if and when it goes flat we will see the worth of its outcomes -- frothy ambitions, bubbling rhetoric, and a hollow prosperity.

We are losing time as we ponder the import of equipment when it is more important to import knowledge and its carriers -- scientific workers, engineers, and managers. To teach our own people, to teach teachers above all and to teach scientists. So that in 5-10-15 years' time Russian specialists are able to create a new energy industry for themselves, new transport and communications systems, and a new medicine...

Knowledge is power. We must lay the foundations of an economy of knowledge, since this is a question of the state's survival in the post-hydrocarbon era, whose advent is inevitable.

We must convert our good fortune into knowledge in order to continue Russia's upward path into the future, into the top echelons of creative nations who guide history.

And from there it is but a stone's throw to greatness. ("Surkov Calls for Russia's Intellectual Development," 2006).

As a component of Putin's power base, United Russia has also extolled the virtues of a great power Russia and sought to establish the regime's legitimacy on this basis.

The main precursor to United Russia, the Unity party, which was Putin's supportive faction in the Duma during his time as acting president, sought to attract members from across the political spectrum through its appeal for the restoration of Russia's great power status (RFERL Feb 2, 2000). In the December 2007 parliamentary elections, considered in some circles as a referendum on Putin's policy orientation,⁷ the party ran on Putin's manifesto "The Putin Plan -- a worthy future for a great country." The strategic aim was to build Russia into a great power. Russia's future, according to this document, was as a unique civilization and great power (Reuters Factbox, 2007). The document, which was formally adopted by United Russia during its eighth congress on October 1, 2007, also

formed the basis of Medvedev's candidacy for President in early 2008 ("Medvedev Goes to Elections with 'Putin's Plan'," 2008). During the party's 7th congress, held in December of 2006, United Russia's leader Boris Gryzlov prefaced his assertion of the necessity of great power status by stating that "the party's main goal, or even mission, is to ensure a decent life for Russian citizens and to strengthen the state." He went on to suggest that "We need a great power that occupies a worthy place in the world... Only a state that is able and ready to protect its sovereignty can pursue policies in the interest of its citizens; sovereignty and democracy in today's world are interconnected much more closer than at any previous moment in history" (in Grinberg, 2007, p. 1). These sentiments were echoed by the first deputy speaker of the State Duma, member of United Russia's General Council Presidium and chairman of its ideological commission Oleg Morozov. Morozov referred to the Party's mission to restore Russia's great power status (RFERL Newline, July 25, 2006).

However, great power for United Russia is more than a gesture towards Russia's purported uniqueness or that which is required to ensure Russian sovereignty. Great power status also signifies social development initiatives undertaken collaboratively by the president and United Russia. United Russian leader and former Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov responded to Putin's 2007 state of the nation address by suggesting that "the address has formulated a long-term consistent action plan, the strategy of consolidating Russia as a great power." Consolidating Russia's great power status would entail collaboration between the executive and parliamentary levels and multiple initiatives and including elements of social policy: pension reform, housing policy, and highway

construction, as well as investment in sea and airports (“Putin Sets out Plan to Strengthen Russia as Great Power-Opinion,” 2007).

Russian authorities have also enlisted public participation in the crafting of Russia’s great power project. The Public Chamber, formed as a consultative body to elicit public input into government laws and projects, oversaw an effort to solicit proposals for how Russia could “breakthrough into a great-power future.” The Derzhava all-Russia competition of intellectual projects was cofounded by the Unity for Russia foundation, which includes multiple high ranking United Russia members on its board of trustees, and the journal *Strategiya Rossii*. The contest solicited input for four categories “Great Power” (constitutional arrangement), “Flourishing Power” (economics and regional development), “United Power” (social development, culture, tolerance), and “World Power” (international cooperation and defense policy) (“Russia: Public Chamber Sponsors ‘Great-State’ Breakthrough Project,” 2006).

In short, for the Putin regime, the imperative of economic and social modernization serves as the basis upon which contemporary Russian greatness is to be decided and its own legitimacy secured. Ideas about economic and social modernization find their greatest expression in *Concept 2020*. However these themes, as well as the desire for a comprehensive strategy for Russia’s development, have been central to state-sanctioned discourse during the Putin era, and one may look back to Putin’s speech given on the eve of the millennium to find the seeds of the 2020 concept. Whether modernization – complex social change accompanying the transition from overreliance on the energy and raw materials sector – has occurred in Russia remains an open question (see Dutkiewicz, 2009).⁸ What is important are the continuities between this speech,

particularly in Putin's assertions of the need for Russia to undergo vast social, economic, and technological change in order to be competitive in the contemporary age, and present calls for Russia's modernization.

Putin's millennium speech, "The Modern Russia: Economic and Social Problems", is a helpful place to start to discern Putin's views on Russian modernization. In this speech, Putin (2000) asserts the global shift to a post-industrial society, in which he affirms the centrality of information sciences, telecommunications and science-intensive technologies to growth, the need for management and organizational acumen in human affairs, and high standards in education, training, and business (p. 231). This theme of technological innovation is not limited to post-Soviet Russia. Rather it reflects the oft-recurring concern of Russian and Soviet officials of their country's relatively backwards standing vis-à-vis the West.⁹ Nonetheless, it would be of particular importance during the Putin-era.

In the same document, Putin suggests that communism failed to develop Russia into a "prosperous country with a dynamically developing society and free people" and warns of the dangers of further upheavals by "radical" political forces (communist, national-patriotic, or radical liberal). The only option is evolutionary steps toward the adoption of the global norms of democracy and market economy. Nonetheless, Putin stipulates the need to reconcile Russian particularities and "traditional values" – Patriotism (pride in Russia's accomplishments as great power), "Statism" and "social solidarity," – with "supranational universal values", including peace, security, a law-based society and market relations (pp. 233-34).

Russia's economic success would be realized by way of a 15-20 year development strategy; the emergence of the state as "an efficient coordinator of the country's economic and social forces"; a reform strategy focused on encouraging foreign investment; an industrial policy predicated on the development of high technologies and science-intensive commodities; multiple forms of economic management; an effective financial system; a crackdown on organized crime; Russia's full integration into world economic structures, with the Russian state actively supporting the foreign activities of Russian firms.¹⁰ Such economic success would serve the purpose of improving the living conditions of Russians while eradicating poverty by increasing disposable incomes. Furthermore, such a development strategy would necessarily support science, education, culture and health care, in a manner befitting a country that aspires to "the summits of world civilization" (Putin, 2000, pp. 235-6). Thus Putin set the precedent for a vision of normal politics via the marginalization of supposedly atavistic tendencies in Russian political life and the willingness to join the course of contemporary global society.¹¹

Putin (2008) elaborates on the theme of resource dependence and speaks somewhat more concretely about what he envisions as Russia's innovative development path. He states:

If we continue on this road [relying on energy resources and primary goods] we will not make the necessary progress in raising living standards. Moreover, we will not be able to ensure our country's security or its normal development. We would be placing its very existence under threat. I say this without any exaggeration. The only real alternative to this scenario is to follow a path of innovative development based on one of our biggest competitive advantages – realisation of our human potential. We need to make full and effective use of people's knowledge and skills so as to continuously improve technology, improve our economic results and raise the quality of life in our society in general. But I want to make it absolutely clear that the pace of innovative development must be substantially faster than it is today.

Such an innovative scenario requires active intervention by the Russian government to secure the health, well-being, productivity and human capital potential of its population. To this end, Putin further declares that “human development is the main goal and essential condition for progress in modern society. This is our absolute national priority now and in the future.” This entails investment in Russia’s human capital, the development of its national education system, increasing state and private participation in scientific research and development, and stemming population decline (Putin, 2008). It is possible to see Russia’s commitment towards education and human capital development as part of a broader “social investment perspective” indicative of a post-neoliberal consensus sought by international policymakers (Jenson, 2010).¹²

Recently approved by the Russian Government, “Concept 2020”¹³ (“Konsepsiya dolgosrochnovo...”) is a comprehensive plan for transforming Russia’s economy from one reliant primarily on the export of raw materials to one that is socially and economically modern, innovative and competitive in all sectors. Concept 2020 suggests that Russia can become one of the top five economies in the world by creating the conditions for competition and innovation in all sectors of the Russian economy (p. 7). Furthermore, the document ambitiously envisions Russia transforming into a society that meets the standards, and enjoys the corresponding benefits, of its counterparts in advanced industrial societies. It offers a comprehensive statement of the social contract implied in Putin’s vision of development and can be seen as a form of state guided development, whereby the Russian state guides the transformation of Russian society into one capable of sustaining market mechanisms, productivity and innovative development within a broadly capitalist paradigm. In his 2008 Address to the Federal Assembly,

President Medvedev suggested that Russia's economic policies as enshrined in Concept 2020 are based on institutions, investment, infrastructure, innovation and intellect.

Concept 2020 foresees increased global economic competition accompanied by increased geopolitical rivalry, particularly around the control over raw materials, energy, water, and food resources. In this context, Russia's low level of technological development renders it vulnerable. The plan envisions a structural reorganization of the global economy, whereby regional economic unions coexist with continued globalization. Regionalism is seen as a protective measure amidst strains between powerful centers and continued disparities between them (pp. 3-5). Russia's engagement with the world is to come through state support for Russian business interests to access external markets and safeguard their rights abroad. At the same time it underscores the importance of further economic integration with the Eurasian Economic Community and Russia's emergence as a leader in international finance, particularly within the Eurasian sphere (pp. 151-57). Concept 2020 also calls for Russia to be an active member in both the WTO and OECD (p. 22).

Concept 2020 envisions a "multi-vector" approach to international economic relations (p. 9) and lists a series of specific and tangible targets in various countries and regions in the global economy (pp. 157-163). The call for engagement with multiple regions of the world would seem, at least on paper, to temper the prospects for an aggressive, autarchic, isolationist or somehow overly "unique" Russia meeting its own self-declared development priorities.

Concept 2020 envisions the exhaustion of the current model of energy-dependent development and stipulates the need for Russia's increased global share in high

technology goods, intellectual goods and services, along with its increasing its competitiveness in the traditionally important fields of energy provision, transport and agriculture (pp. 148-150). Concept 2020 cites the emergence of an “innovative socially oriented type of economic development,” a scenario whereby modernization first occurs in the Russian economy’s traditional sectors – oil and gas, raw materials, agriculture and transport – and is followed by the spread of technological innovations to further industries. This culminates in the creation of a knowledge based economy where high technology and knowledge industries/services account for a share of the GDP comparable to that of oil and gas (p. 11). More specifically, this scenario is comprised of six components:

- 1) The development of human potential in Russia and human capital. This includes improving the quality of life of Russian citizens, while stabilizing and eventually increasing the population, and overtures towards the social rights and material prosperity of Russians.
- 2) Creating a competitive institutional environment to attract capital into the Russian economy and stimulate entrepreneurial activity, including a reduction of state role in the economy and the self-organization of the business community, transparency in business, etc.
- 3) Economic diversification based on innovative scientific and technological development, including the development of a national innovative system, which is based on the advancement of Russian scientific research and development and its translation into high-tech sectors and a knowledge economy.
- 4) The strengthening and expansion of Russian industry’s traditional competitive advantages in energy, agricultural sector, transport and the processing of natural resources.
- 5) The expansion and strengthening of Russia’s external economic position through increased share in foreign markets and a stronger position in the international division of labour (through the attraction of capital, technology and personnel). This includes integration of Eurasian space and Russia becoming an international financial center. This also entails diversifying Russia’s external relations so as to mitigate against future global risks.
- 6) A new concept for the spatial development of Russia, whereby regional disparities are reduced through the increasing of each territory’s competitive potential (pp. 12-16).¹⁴

2020 therefore signals the intention to create a Russian economy that is competitive in traditional and new sectors, through the incorporation of advanced technology and the development of human capital.¹⁵ Concept 2020 correspondingly emphasizes the need for Russia to adopt the institutional framework befitting a state overseeing and fostering a competitive national political economy with the hopes of creating a secure investment climate, including securing private property rights, reducing seizures of property, reforming the Russian court system, fighting corruption, increasing transparency, reducing the state's intrusion into economic activity and its control of property and enabling market entry for private actors (pp. 82 – 86).

In Concept 2020, state corporations, which frequently receive scorn from Western commentators, are seen as transitory entities:

the transitional form summoned to assist the consolidation of state assets and increase the efficiency of their strategic management. As these problems are being solved and the institutes of corporate regulation and financial markets are being strengthened, a number of state corporations should become joint-stock with further full or partial privatization, while a number of state corporations, established for a certain term, should cease to exist (pp. 88-89).

Concept 2020 therefore insists upon the goal of establishing private-public-partnerships, wherein the state acts as coordinator of collective attempts at realizing social priorities but is not the lone actor responsible for their success or direction. Rather, its role is to guarantee the political and economic rights of private actors and firms. The document calls for a considerable reduction in the role of the state in economic affairs to areas of national defence and security, the support of Russian business in foreign markets, the establishment of private-state partnerships in investment risk reduction, research and development, infrastructure and transport (pp. 16-19). Concept 2020 urges the formal removal of the state from more and more sectors of the Russian economy, redefining its role as direct owner to industries deemed necessary for Russia's national defence while

elevating private firms and society at large to the status of equal partners in a new social compact. The document's emphasis on the partnership of state, the private sector, and society at large in attaining Russia's development goals may be seen as a version of the Russian Third Way.

Putin's scenario for development and return to great power on the basis of international competitiveness, therefore, would call for a liberal managerialism (liberal insofar as a commitment to market mechanisms is declared; managerial insofar as the state is seen as setting priorities and coordinating activities with industrial policy) to render Russian manufacturing and industry more competitive and technologically sophisticated in a more integrated and competitive global economy. Such an integrationist path would come via the coordinating efforts of the state. The combination of liberal free market reforms, state coordination and investment, and the increase in the general well-being of the Russian populace constitute a powerful formula within the context of broader Russian political discourse, occupying much discursive space in the process and contributing towards the legitimacy of the Putin regime.¹⁶

4. Summary

Ideas about restoring Russia's great power status constitute a form of 'common sense' thinking about the world. According to those who defend Russia's great power pursuits, Russia was, is, and will be a great power. It is thus customary for supporters of Russia's great power pursuits to defend a vision of global politics in which Russia engages with other great powers as equals. Although there are grounds for questioning the claim that Russia has achieved this end, it is important to recognize that the rhetoric of Russian great power appears frequently in the Putin regime's public statements and

resonates across a wide spectrum of both Russian political actors and the Russian public. I have worked to show that the Putin regime frequently uses great power language to express its objectives for national economic development.

These objectives come with the realization of the inherent limitations of Russia's resource-driven development model and the expressed desire for Russia to assume an elevated place in the global division of labour. Such a position requires the development of 'human potential,' or, increasing Russia's technological and creative base in order to produce more competitive goods and services for the global economy. 'Greatness' is also predicated on an elevated standard of living for a larger number of Russian citizens, an idea that has a central place in Putin's social contract with Russian society. Hence, Russian great power is not merely a cultural artifact or suggestive of atavistic, authoritarian or undemocratic tendencies on the part of the Russian state. Rather, the notion is implicated in state strategies to render Russian political economy more internationally competitive and encourage a form of increased national welfare in a broadly market-based economy.

This chapter has followed that within which I examined the 'external' conditions of a multipolar world order. I have examined the concept of great power with an understanding that it has important connotations of the type of national development that is to be secured by the creation of a multipolar world order. Furthermore, in this chapter I build on Chapter Three's empirical and theoretical demonstration of Russia's semi-peripherality and the limits to the Putin era Russian resurgence.

This chapter is the first in which I examine how both old and new "cultural" concepts have been employed by the Putin regime to articulate its national development

imperatives. In the following chapter, I examine the notion of sovereign democracy, which may be considered a novel contribution of the Putin regime and publicly attributable to Vladislav Surkov. Surkov and other regime representatives have used sovereign democracy to further sanctify Russia's autonomy in global affairs while attempting to discern contemporary conditions for a state's autonomy. Within this conception we find further admonishing of Russian society to reach its creative and productive potential and contribute to Russian prosperity and greatness.

¹ For a preliminary attempt at a Coxian-inspired account of Russia's status within contemporary world order, wherein the ideational element is comprised of Russia's common sense thinking about the world, see Hopf (2010).

² "Konsepsiya dolgosrochnovo sotsial'no- ekonomicheskvo razvitiya Rossiyskoy federatsii na period do 2020 goda" (2008). The full name may be rendered the "Concept of the Long-term Social and Economic Development of the Russian Federation for the Period until 2020." It will hereafter be referred to as Concept 2020.

³ This "securitization" of Russian foreign policy for Lo is at direct odds with suggestions of the prioritization of economic gains in Russian foreign policy under Putin, whereby foreign policy initiatives are subordinated to the imperative of economic growth. The securitization perspective upholds the preeminence of geopolitical concern and the subordinating of economic endeavours to the logic of geopolitics. In other words, growing economic clout will enable Russia to exert political influence throughout the globe.

⁴ Specifically, 47 percent of respondents to the survey in question suggested that Russia should not seek to regain its Soviet-era superpower status, but rather should content itself with becoming one of the 10-15 most economically and politically influential states. 34 percent are set on superpower status and 12 percent think that Russia is still a great power. Herein is the problem of terminology associated with Russian power: does superpower status entail great power status? Is a great power something less than a superpower? By what criteria are either or both decided?

⁵ For stylistic reasons, I prefer not to cite the various Addresses to the Federal Assembly parenthetically when they are better introduced in a lead sentence. They appear frequently throughout this work. They are all listed in the bibliography under the Russian Government webpages section ("Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (2000-2007)").

⁶ Then Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov suggested that the contemporary world order necessitated Russian diplomatic efforts to support Russian business abroad and prevent the discrediting of Russian enterprises in foreign markets. This came upon the signing of an agreement signed by Ivanov and Arkady Volsky, President of Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs on Jan 29, 2003 (in Aglamishyan, 2003, p. 17).

⁷ The impression that the December 2007 Duma elections constituted an election on Putin's policies is widespread. According to Vitaly Ivanov, Vice President of the Russian Center for Political Trends, during this referendum there was neither an alternative to Putin himself (as his departure would be exploited by "foreign democratizers," "home-grown lovers of the street 'movement' and "establishment oppositions") nor his policy course. Furthermore, Putin alone enabled Russia to break free from the 1990s, allowing for "the elimination of the repulsive Sodom that presented itself as "democracy" and "freedom," the imposition of at least relative order, a real improvement in the life of the absolute majority of our citizens, and Russia's

reassertion of itself as a great power” (“Russian Pundit Sees ‘No Alternative’ to Putin and His Policies,” 2007).

⁸ Dutkiewicz states that “Everyone now is talking about modernization and modernity in Russia. Such talk has become fashionable for radio hosts and newspapers. The problem is that there is no comprehensive economic modernization underway. Whether we like it or not, Russia is today a largely de-industrialized, resource dependent country with no serious base for technological innovation. Except the enormously powerful energy sector and high-tech pockets of the military industry, it is not internationally competitive.” For Dutkiewicz, 2000-2005 resembled the “stabilization/consolidation” period of the Putin-led Kremlin “trusteeship” that completed the historic task of reconstituting the basis for state rule in Russia by wedding accumulation to the state. This group, however, has failed to move beyond “stabilization/consolidation” to usher in an era of modernization.

⁹ The acquisition and industrial application of technology is not a concern limited to post-Soviet Russia: Luke (1985) highlighted the Soviet Union’s historical dependence on imported technology; while Castells (2000) asserted that rigidities within Soviet statism contributed to its inability to properly develop a successful “information technology paradigm”, hastening the spread of the technological gap between itself and leading industrial states (p.36).

¹⁰ If economic modernization is integral to national interest, so too does it constitute an objective of the Russian state’s actions beyond its borders. Indeed, the latest Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (2008) asserts, somewhat vaguely, that the modernization of the national political economy is a foreign policy objective in its own right, and “favorable external conditions must be created for this end.”

¹¹ According to Tsygankov (2007a), it remains possible to situate Putin’s thinking within a “Euro-East” civilizational paradigm, as opposed to a more explicitly Western or Eurasian paradigm.

¹² The extent to which Russian actions may be considered as reflecting a broader post-neoliberal moment will be considered in the concluding chapter.

¹³ The author would like to thank Marina Sabanadze and Viktoriya Neadow for their guidance with translating the Concept 2020 document. Mistakes and omissions remain the lone fault of the author.

¹⁴ The end result is a new paradigm for development, evident in the following: “Russia will be able to realize its potential abilities and occupy a deserved place among the leading world countries only by having fully embodied the formula “democracy – the person – technology” into the practice of everyday life” (p. 28).

¹⁵ This thinking is encapsulated in the following: “The increase of national competitiveness is a complex task, the success of which is determined by the development of human capital, economic institutions, the realization and strengthening of Russia’s already existing competitive advantages in energy, raw materials and transport infrastructure, as well as the creation of new competitive advantages connected with the diversification of the economy and the formation of a powerful scientific-technological complex and knowledge economy” (p. 108).

¹⁶ As Prozorov (2008) argues, “Putin’s articulation of liberal reformism with the patriotic rhetoric and its presentation as a ‘logic of normal life’ is taken to have established a hegemonic constellation, within which the opposition is gradually deprived of any discursive capacity” (p. 189).

Chapter Seven – Putin, Surkov and Sovereign Democracy

1. Introduction

Sovereign democracy is a synthetic concept that borrows liberally from others investigated in this work. It further substantiates both multipolarity and the great power principle, suggesting that only a handful of powerful states are truly sovereign and that hegemonic states ‘manage’ weaker ones. Likewise, it serves as further critical commentary on Western liberal universalism, seeking to universalize the sovereign right of all states to choose national development systems and not be subject to international interference or moral suasion. It echoes Eurasianism in seeking to formulate and legitimate national political systems on the basis of cultural attributes. Furthermore, in a manner consistent with the Putin regime’s speculation on the contemporary basis for Russian great power, sovereign democracy admonishes Russians to marshal intellectual, productive, moral and creative powers in the service of Russian national development initiatives. Sovereign democracy represents an attempt to foster productive civic solidarity under a consolidated Russian state apparatus.

Sovereign democracy is therefore another polysemic concept with which the Putin regime seeks legitimacy in international and domestic circles. It may be considered central to Russian alternative understandings of world order. In delineating this concept, this chapter serves two purposes. First, it removes assessments of the Putin regime from the terrain of cultural essentialism and predetermination. Instead, it demonstrates how appeals to Russian uniqueness serve to legitimate Putin’s political and economic project. Second, it investigates how sovereign democracy challenges universalizing liberal

hegemony by offering a principle for statehood in global affairs while simultaneously turning speculation about Russian culture to more instrumental and productive ends.

This chapter begins with a critical reflection on what some scholars believe to be the enduring features of Russian political culture and the continued appearance of the Russian idea. Putin's detractors have been quick to suggest that the former president exemplifies enduring undemocratic elements of Russian political culture. After critically examining these ideas, I consider Putin's use of elements of Russian political culture as a means of defending the involvement of the state in multiple spheres of Russian social and economic life. The selective appeal to Russian cultural traits is better conceived of as consistent with Putin's public philosophy and liberal conservative orientation, rather than as exemplifying a Russian cultural predisposition. I also examine the Putin regime's attempts to instill notions of Russian solidarity and consensus in a society in which wealth and status are unequally distributed. This has at times entailed a negation of Russian exceptionalism and at other times its celebration. Both of these tendencies converge in the concept of sovereign democracy, an idea whose contents are examined here through a presentation of the ideas of Vladislav Surkov, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office since 1999 and the man credited with developing the term. On the one hand, sovereign democracy serves as a defensive principle employed to protect Russia's Putin era political system from foreign criticism, particularly after the so-called "coloured revolutions" (see Chapter Three). On the other, it serves as an attempt to rouse public support for, and participation in, Russia's development beyond its reliance on raw materials.

When aimed at the international level, the sovereign democracy argument consists of a double move. The first component sees Russia assert its right to pursue its own unique social, economic and political system, as power is vested with Russian society and protected by the Russian state. The second is that this is what all nations do. In other words, Russia may be unique in the nature of its sovereign democracy, but it is normal insofar that it is exercising its right to self-determination. According to this argument, Russian particularity should be seen as particularity amongst equals, all of whom ought to be insulated from the corrosive tendencies of expansionist nativist ideologies, including that of liberal democracy.

Sovereign democracy is a significant concept that contributes to a critical historicist reading of Russian alternative understandings of world order for four reasons. First, it is a novel concept developed by the Putin regime to express dissatisfaction with the advent of American influence into Russia's historical periphery. Second, it sanctifies the place of powerful, sovereign states and contrasts them against "managed" democracies, which are those states that are influenced by hegemonic states. In so doing, the Putin regime seeks to displace the frequent criticism of its own "management" practices in Russian political life in favour of a reading that celebrates its return to "sovereignty" in global affairs after a period of weakness. Third, it sanctifies the universal sovereign right of all states to choose their national development systems, which are derived from particular cultural systems. Fourth, it serves as means to celebrate the cultural particularity of Russia while simultaneously attempting to redirect talk of Russian culture towards more productive and industrious ends. The Putin regime, therefore, has animated the discussion of sovereign democracy as a means of

admonishing the Russian citizenry to marshal its collective intellectual, productive, moral and creative power towards Russian state modernization and development initiatives.

This chapter is the second of two in which I examine notions that are integral to depicting the Putin regime's development imperatives. In conceiving of these chapters, my intention is to display notions commonly deemed to be integral to the thinking and conduct of Russian political officials not as abstract, a-historical concepts but those which are filled with the positive content of contemporary development imperatives and political rationales.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In Section Two, I offer critical reflections on of Russian political culture, the Russian idea, and Liberal Conservatism. In Section Three, I examine selected remarks offered by Putin in which he defends statism and solidarity. Here I demonstrate how Putin represents the necessity of statism and conditional sovereignty to a wider Russian audience. In Section Four I turn to the idea of sovereign democracy and examine the works of Vladislav Surkov. A summary of the chapter follows in Section Five.

2. Political Culture, the Russian Idea and Liberal Conservatism

The "Russian idea" is a discernible tradition in Russian thinking in which Russian political life is animated by particular features associated with such an idea is a notion found in both Russian and Western thinking. According to Billington (2004), the Russian idea is endemic to Russian nationality (*narodnost*), beginning with Dostoyevsky, sustained in the works of Vladimir Solovev (who "sought a peaceful and spiritual identity for a Russia that would exercise an essentially nonviolent and apolitical role amongst the nations" (p. 24)), and later Nikolai Berdyaev (whose writings suggested

“the essence of the Russian nation lay in the spiritual striving of its creative thinkers and artists”, replete with a providential mission and Christian destiny (p. 25)).

For Berdyaev (1948), the Russian idea is a spiritual brotherhood, a spiritual community that seeks its realization not through compulsion but through free association. It possesses both a hatred of power and quasi-anarchic disposition towards both the state and organized church power, though its spiritual foundation is found in Russian Orthodoxy. In the form articulated by Berdyaev, it is eschatological, bent on the attainment of the Kingdom of God, and anthropocentric, concerned with the question of man. It finds its foundation in the Russian Orthodox Church but is manifested in the writings of great Russian thinkers. At its core are a suspicion of power and an assertion of the messianic potential of the Russian people. It is at once an absolute that stands outside of historical development and subject to historicization as different authors contribute to it at different times, thereby enhancing and refining the notion.

The broadest meaning of the Russian idea is “the conviction that Russia has its own independent, self-sufficient, and eminently worthy cultural and historical tradition that sets it apart from the West and guarantees its future flourishing” (McDaniel, 1996, p. 11). The Russian idea negates Western modernity by borrowing tendencies from romantic conservatism. These included: “rejection of egoistic utilitarianism; the desire for community; the suspicion of private property; the hatred of formalism in social relations, especially as concerns law; the desire for a state that will protect the subject against social elites...” (McDaniel, 1996, p. 24).

The Russian idea is considered to influence Russian attempts to construct alternative development paths (McDaniel, 1996, pp. 27-28). The Russian idea has been

presented as both a typological model and an ideal. This could take the form of the denial of a meaningful Russian cultural tradition, such as that found in the 19th Century Russian writer Pyotr Chaadaev, who declared that Russia had not contributed anything meaningful to world cultural development due to its backwardness. And yet, the notion of such a tradition still generated rival cultural models that sought to capture Russia's uniqueness: "victory was to those who advocated a special Russian path oriented around a separate set of values and founded on a different pattern of institutions" (McDaniel, 1996, p. 30). The Russian idea is not merely an idea, rather it is manifested in all social action and political practice.

The Russian idea is also comprised of positive content. Firstly, Russia is understood as a society predicated on ultimate values (McDaniel, 1996, pp. 33-40). This notion is infused with Christian sentiments of attaining redemption through suffering and aims at the complete transformation of human life. Truth becomes unitary and compulsory, and the beliefs informed by such a truth override interests. Preferences are not formulated as explicit, rationally-pursued interests. Rather, "the belief in consciousness, will, and values over interests, incentives, and abstract rules has been an enduring trait of modern Russian society" (McDaniel, 1996, p. 39).

Secondly, the Russian idea represents a higher form of community (McDaniel, 1996, pp. 40-46). This involves the shared participation in the *rod* (kin/clan) and *sobornost*: "a symphonic unity among individual, family, and society, in which all elements contributed to the development of each other" (McDaniel, 1996, p. 41), an idea inherent in Russian Orthodoxy. This community was ostensibly formed in opposition to other communities, and is therefore strictly demarcated ('we' versus 'they'). Such

sentiments are exemplified in the *mir* – the village assembly – and self-sufficient village economic life. While this community is ill-suited to urbanization and modernization, it was foundational to the Russian idea and opposed to law, abstract associations and formal organizations (McDaniel, 1996, pp. 44-45). Thirdly, the Russian idea contains the principle of equality of outcomes (McDaniel, 1996, pp. 46-51). In this conception, the *narod* “people” becomes a moral category and the unsullied nature of the common people is held in contrast to “bourgeois contamination” (McDaniel, 1996, p. 49). Finally, the Russian idea contains the idea of ‘the good state,’ wherein politics is practiced as truth. Democracy is insufficient to meet this end, and hence post-Soviet defenders of Slavophilism, monarchism and communism have upheld this element of the Russian idea as preferred to democratic proceduralism (McDaniel, 1996, pp. 51-55).

The Russian idea continues to animate contemporary discussions of Russian political practice. This is particularly the case among conservative Russians, who argue the need to re-inscribe the Russian idea into contemporary reality through a commitment to Russian history, rediscovering and preserving moral and spiritual values associated with Russian Orthodoxy, and practicing qualitative development (*obustroistvo*) as opposed to imperialism (Chubais, 2007).

A precise reading of the Russian idea therefore situates the notion in a longer continuum of conservative Russian political thought. Less precise variations on the theme suggesting that Russian politicians are seeking to employ a Russian idea are also evident. These may be potentially misleading given the sometimes anarchical, eschatological and messianic qualities of the Russian idea. For example, Urban (1998) suggests that Yeltsin initiated a committee to oversee submissions for a new “Russian

idea” in 1996. However, the solicitation was for a new “idea for Russia” (*ideia dlia Rossia*) rather than “Russian idea” (*Ruskaia ideia*) (Smith, 2002). The former avoided the connotations of great Russian chauvinism with the added stipulation that all Russian citizens (*Rossiani*) and not just ethnic Russians (*Russkie*) participate.

Hence, there is a distinction to be made between *a* Russian idea and *the* Russian idea. It has been suggested that Putin’s policies constitute a form of a new national idea for Russia, predicated on the assertion of great power status, nationalism, orthodoxy and the rejection of Western standards of democracy and human rights, ideas that do not square well with the Russian idea, save for the fact that they constitute a form of Russian distinctiveness. The symbolic components of this Putin era national idea include the Duma’s adoption of the Tsarist double-headed eagle as state emblem, the restoration of the Soviet national anthem, although with new lyrics, the replacing of the November 7th Bolshevik national holiday with a November 4th holiday commemorating the 1612 defeat of the Poles, references to Russian philosopher Ivan Ilyin, and promoting the 2007 reconciliation between the Moscow patriarch and the head of the Russian Orthodox Church abroad (Stent, 2008, pp. 1089-91).

This is in line with both Russian and Western tendencies to view post-Soviet politics through the prism of cultural tendencies (see Chapter Four). Broad ascriptions of cultural tendencies to both Russian and non-Russian societies are not relegated to philosophical speculation but also assume importance in political analysis. Russian political scientists exhibited interest in culture as a reaction against the economistic and universalistic tendencies of Soviet Marxist thought. Subsequently, “political culture” was deemed as compatible with 19th and early 20th century Russian thinkers for whom

reflection on Russian history and culture was central. This has influenced a tendency for Russian political scientists to treat culture in a methodologically and theoretically similar fashion – speculatively and immune from scientific verification (Malinova, 2007, pp. 38-39).¹

The following long passage captures the more generic traits of the renewed interest in Russian culture and the corresponding cultural attributes of a more representatively Russian political and development project:

In public discourse, ‘political culture’ is most frequently used broadly, as a synonym of ‘national character,’ ‘mentality,’ and ‘national’ (civilizational) features in general. Then again, such ‘loose’ usage of the term is not rare in the scholarly literature either. The result is that speakers or writers usually reproduce a list of ‘commonly recognized’ characteristics of Russian political culture that goes as far back as the nineteenth century. Typically, the list includes a propensity for authoritarian power and the recognition of state dominance; the absence of the ability to self-organize; adherence to collectivism, equality, and fairness; and legal nihilism. The origin of the distinctive traits characterizing Russian political culture is related to the country’s geography, climate, history, religion, and civilizational type. As a rule, politicians who oppose the West more or less strongly and advocate ‘our own path’ of development and an independent (of the West) foreign policy, choose this interpretation” (Malinova, 2007, p. 46).

Similarly, it is not uncommon for Western pundits to argue that after the brief interregnum of the Yeltsin years, during which Russia moved closer to the Western camp in its pursuit of liberal-democratic norms, the Putin years signified a return to the more recognizable features of the Russian mentality. This line of thinking deems a centralized and unaccountable political authority, the weakness or absence of rule of law and the institution of private property, and a great power mentality coloured by messianism as intrinsically Russian features derived from history, geography, culture and religion (Kuchins, 2009).² Moreover, these features are considered as evident in the Putin era, during which the Russian state resumes its inherently imperialist and expansionist nature and a complicit population that seeks security in greatness (see Pipes, 2004). According

to this line of argumentation, Russian political culture is both the product of history and immune to historical development, variance and uncertainty. Due to culture proclivities, Russia is patently incapable of being democratic, pluralist and accepting of a prevailing global liberal democratic consensus.

Though the statist elements of Putin are well-documented, if contested (see Chapter Four), whether Russia has exhibited an historical predisposition towards authoritarianism is questionable (see Lukin and Lukin, 2005). Though Putin has been thought of as contributing to a new Russian or national idea, his public philosophy may be better thought of as “liberal conservative.” Liberal conservatism is a tradition in Russian political thought traceable to four prominent figures: Boris Chicherin, Pyotr Struve, Semyon Frank and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. For such thinkers, nationalism is not incompatible with liberal precepts of individual freedom, however such freedom is not necessarily safeguarded by pluralist democracy, a concept that these thinkers are ambivalent towards, at best. Liberal conservatives, who have historically defended the state as the main agent of change in Russian history, have also long derided the *intelligentshchina* – intellects without a sense of responsibility for social problems (Boobbyer, 1998).

Liberal conservatism is exemplified in the work of Alexei Ulykaev, a leader of the Union of Right Forces, who wrote “The Right Turn (*Pravy Povorot*) in Russian politics,” in which he claims that “Right Forces” (contrary to liberals or democrats) could overcome the dualisms of Russian politics in the 1990s – reform vs. stability, liberalism vs. statism, pro-West vs. patriots – in order “to offer a strategy that combines the positive values of both terms in the opposition, synthesising reforms and social stability, the

strong state and the free economy, international integration and patriotic values (Prozorov, 2005, pp. 125-26). In other words, liberal conservatism may be viewed as a means to synthesize liberal ideas with conservative patriotic ideas and render market democracy more palatable to a Russian public.

Putin's liberal conservatism is comprised of three elements: developing a strong state to restore order; overcoming Russia's backwardness through market reforms; and reviving Russian nationhood (Nicholson, 2001). It may be considered as a relatively coherent strategy to incorporate liberal elements into a statist doctrine while stripping liberalism of the negative connotations associated with term through the 1990s. After an initial overtly liberal period, Putin began to bring policy and ideology more in line with the Russian "public political ideal," a notion that stresses the centrality of a powerful state, headed by a strong leader, which held broad responsibilities in politics and economics, including state ownership of major industrial sectors. The state would be responsible for raising standards of living and improving the welfare system and should seek peace in international affairs while maintaining its power and influence (Lukin, 2009).³

A liberal-conservatism synthesis is evident at the symbolic level, as well. Putin was successful in overcoming the Yeltsin era gridlock over the symbolic aspects of Russian statehood. Yeltsin's attempt to adopt the Russian flag, state coat of arms and national anthem into law failed in January 1998, with a plurality of the Duma voting to retain Soviet era symbols. Yeltsin authorized the use of state symbols by decree. The adoption of the national anthem in 2001, which combined new lyrics and the Soviet anthem, as well as the adoption of the tricolor flag and coat of arms of imperial Russia,

on the one hand, and the Soviet red flag as the flag of the Russian Armed forces, on the other, were indicative of a more consensual atmosphere between liberals and statistes (Kolsto, 2006).⁴

State sanctioned and produced discourses that involve cultural content, both Russian and Western, are better thought of as reflecting this liberal conservative orientation than exemplifying an innate Russian cultural predisposition. In other words, rather than seeking to determine whether contemporary Russian state practices are born of invariant Russian cultural traits, a more interesting and relevant question to a political economy analysis is how Russian authority appropriates and deploys the language of culture in a manner consistent with its political and economic objectives.

3. Putin on Statism and Solidarity

Material found in Putin's annual addresses to the Federal Assembly substantiates the notion that the Russian leader exemplifies a liberal-conservative orientation. Through his annual addresses to the Federal Assembly, Putin constantly reiterates the democratic choice that Russia has made. This may come at times with some provisions, notably the sovereign nature of democracy, or, the fusing of ostensibly liberal and conservative principles. Without referring to it as such, the following statement by Putin is an appeal to the sovereign democracy principle as he wishes to portray it to a broader Russian audience. In other words it is sufficiently vague in asserting the importance of building a democracy with Russian characteristics. In 2005 Putin stated, "The democratic road we have chosen is independent in nature, a road along which we move ahead, all the while taking into account our own specific internal circumstances" (2005 Address to the Federal Assembly). In the same address, he manages to come across as a staunch

defender of freedom and democracy in the first instance, followed by an appeal to the unity which a sovereign state offers:

I consider the development of Russia as a free and democratic state to be our main political and ideological goal. We use these words fairly frequently, but rarely care to reveal how the deeper meaning of such values as freedom and democracy, justice and legality, is translated into life.

Meanwhile, there is a need for such analysis. The objectively difficult processes going on in Russia are increasingly becoming the subject of heated ideological discussions. And they are all connected with talk about freedom and democracy. Sometimes you can hear that since the Russian people have been silent for centuries, they are not used to or do not need freedom. And for that reason, it is claimed our citizens need constant supervision.

Many thought or seemed to think at the time that our young democracy was not a continuation of Russian statehood, but its ultimate collapse, the prolonged agony of the Soviet system.

But they were mistaken.

That was precisely the period when the significant developments took place in Russia. Our society was generating not only the energy of self-preservation, but also the will for a new and free life. In those difficult years, the people of Russia had to both uphold their state sovereignty and make an unerring choice in selecting a new vector of development in the thousand years of their history. They had to accomplish the most difficult task: how to safeguard their own values, not to squander undeniable achievements, and confirm the viability of Russian democracy. We had to find our own path in order to build a democratic, free and just society and state.

In the above statement, Putin suggests that the preservation of Russian state sovereignty was the most significant achievement of the post-Soviet era, in spite of the difficulty in attaining this status. Furthermore, Russian democracy is a unique accomplishment, novel in Russian history and predicated on realizing a distinct set of practices that suit Russian conditions. In such a manner Putin utilizes the language of Russia's special path to political development. He eradicates any antinomies to be found in the historical processes of state building and democracy. The notion of democracy is highly collectivist in nature, synonymous with society as a whole choosing its path and developed in tandem with the need for self-preservation. There is no mention of the mechanism to be employed to achieve this, but according to Putin, Russia has settled

definitively on a path of democratic development and state preservation in spite of suggestions that Russia is fragile and ill-suited for democracy.

Putin has displayed considerable flexibility in deploying the sovereignty motif. In 2004 he offered the following:

It is far from everyone in the world that wants to have to deal with an independent, strong and self-reliant Russia. Political, economic and information pressure have become weapons in the global competitive battle today. Our efforts to strengthen our state are sometimes deliberately interpreted as authoritarianism.

In this respect I want to say that there will be no going back on the fundamental principles of our politics. Commitment to democratic values is dictated by the will of our people and by the strategic interests of Russia itself. Russia's greatest competitive asset and the main source of its development is its people. Making our country strong and prosperous requires ensuring a normal life for all our people, those people who are producing quality goods and services, are enriching our national culture and building a new country (2004 Address to the Federal Assembly).

Putin often reminds Russians that the path they have chosen is one of democracy, with power vested in the people who are prepared to engage in productive activity to building a new Russia. At the same time this is quickly followed by suggestions that the Russian society remains inadequate to the task of self-governance. In particular, unnamed political groups that harbor selfish agendas, as well as NGOs that receive financing from foreign foundations, are ill suited to acting in the best interests of Russian society. Putin states:

I would like to say a few words about the role of non-political public organisations. In our country, there are thousands of public associations and unions that work constructively. But not all of them are oriented towards standing up for people's real interests. For some of these organisations, the priority is to receive financing from influential foreign foundations. Others serve dubious group and commercial interests. And the most serious problems of the country and its citizens remain unnoticed (2004 Address to the Federal Assembly).

In other words, not all autonomous civil associations are truly autonomous and capable of working in Russia's national interest. The state therefore remains responsible for

gradually transferring responsibility to civil society and arbiter of what constitutes actions performed in the public good and what does not.

Putin's liberal conservatism is further manifested in his propensity to synthesize Russia's openness to the world and patriotism, concepts that remained firmly ensconced in opposing camps during the 1990s in the Yeltsin-Kozyrev led liberals and a variety of groups dissatisfied with Russia's post-Soviet position and its early embrace of Western institutions, norms and practices, including Zhirinovskiy's liberal democrats, Zyuganov's communists, and neo-Eurasianists of various hues. Putin has attempted to fuse these historic antinomies of post-Soviet Russian political practice in an official state discourse. In other words, democracy and patriotism oriented towards a strong state no longer appear as fundamental opposites in Putin. He therefore draws selectively on patriotism, democracy and a host of purportedly Russian characteristics to occupy an unassailable position within the discursive field of Russian politics. In 2000, Putin stated:

The unity of Russia is strengthened by the patriotism inherent in our people, by cultural traditions and common historic memory. And today in Russian art, in theatre and the cinema, there is a growth of interest in Russian history, in our roots and what is dear to all of us. This, without doubt – I, at any rate, am certain of this – is the beginning of new spiritual development.

The democratic organization of the country and the new Russia's openness to the world, do not contradict our uniqueness or patriotism, and do not hinder us from finding our own answers to issues of spirituality and morals. And we do not need to look for a national idea specially. It is already ripening in our society. The most important thing is to understand the kind of Russia that we believe in and the kind of Russia we want to see (2000 Address to the Federal Assembly.)

Putin acknowledges Russia's purported cultural and spiritual uniqueness in multiple instances. However, such uniqueness is not to serve as the ontological or moral basis for Russian autarchy, messianism or exceptionalism in world affairs. Rather, its uniqueness is to be preserved even while Russia pursues engagement with the world. As Putin noted in 2007:

Having a unique cultural and spiritual identity has never stopped anyone from building a country open to the world. Russia has made a tremendous contribution to the formation of European and world culture. Our country has historically developed as a union of many peoples and cultures and the idea of a common community, a community in which people of different nationalities and religions live together, has been at the foundation of the Russian people's spiritual outlook for many centuries now (2007 Address to the Federal Assembly).

Moreover, Putin downplays the more speculative aspects of the Russian idea in favour of a more pragmatic orientation for Russia's uniqueness. While Putin engages on topics of the moral and spiritual unity of the Russian people, he tempers this with an appeal to the needs of Russian development. The following selection is noteworthy for the manner in which Putin seeks to re-orient thinking about the Russian national idea to matters of a more pragmatic and constructive nature:

Here in Russia we have this old tradition, a favourite pastime, of searching for a national idea. This is something akin to looking for the meaning of life. It is, generally speaking, a useful and interesting pursuit, and also one that is never-ending. Let us not launch into discussions on such matters today.

But I think that many of you will agree with me that in working towards the goals we have set, making use of everything new, modern and innovative in doing so, we must and we also will rest our endeavours upon the moral values that our people have forged over the more than 1,000 years of their history. Only in this case will we be able to set the right course of development for our country, and only in this case will we achieve success.

No matter what times we have lived through, be it revolutionary upheavals or the stagnation years, we have almost always yearned for change. True, each of us has our own idea of what kind of change we need, our own priorities, our own preferences and dislikes, and our own vision of the past, present and future. This is natural and understandable, for we are all different.

But there is also something that unites us all without exception: we all want things to change for the better. But we do not all know how to achieve this. You and I, all of us present here at the Kremlin today, are not only duty-bound to know how to achieve this, but are duty-bound to do everything possible to come up with plans for practical, concrete action. We must do everything we can to convince the majority of our citizens that these plans are effective and to genuinely involve them in this constructive process (2007 Address to the Federal Assembly).

Here, Putin offers tacit acceptance of the legitimacy of the national idea as a Russian practice without pursuing it. Rather, he focuses his listeners' attention on the

realization of pragmatic goals by way of all that is “new, modern and innovative,” which is to be accompanied by the moral unity of the Russian population. The one trait that is concretely listed as pertaining to “all of us” is the desire to change for the better, a desire which is only realized through practical action rather than speculative excess. In such a portrayal, Russia loses any particular attributes and becomes simply another country whose citizens will realize betterment only by thoroughly engaging in mundane pursuits.

On numerous occasions Putin has entreated the Russian population to preserve their moral and spiritual unity. To be sure, this is a common device for leaders appealing to a population. There are aspects of the Russian case which deserve consideration, however. In his Open Letter to Voters, dated February 25, 2000, Putin entreats Russians to find a national program based on moral principles, which a Russian citizen “first acquires in the family and that form the very core of patriotism.” The precise nature of this program, and the state’s particular role in delivering it, is curious, and represents an early attempt at a patriotic-liberal synthesis on the part of Putin. In this document, the state is meant to serve as the guarantor of the uniform application of law across the country. This is to take the form of a veritable “dictatorship of law,” which ensures the state will operate as a public authority and not be subjected to the whims of both the “bandits” of the criminal world and attempts by others “to privatise their authorities for their own benefit”). The rhetoric of dictatorship of law, however, is tempered here by overtly liberal appeals to “protect the market from unlawful invasion both by bureaucrats and criminals” and reward lawful activity in the marketplace so that it may be deemed as more lucrative than illegal activity. In other words, Russia requires a fully functioning,

de-personalized government authority in which market transactions can operate with regularity and uniformity.

Putin appeals to the Russian populace to display collective sociability and national unity, forsaking particularist agendas and social and political divisiveness. Liberal overtures often accompanied these sentiments, most notably in the early years of Putin's presidency. It is reasonable to suggest that this component of Putin's early years, as liberal cheerleader, are often lost in commentary on his perceived attack on individual property rights, media freedom, and unbridled pluralism. Putin's "authoritarian" or statist inclinations were therefore complemented by flourishes of pro-market rhetoric, as well as admonitions to individual responsibility, creative potential of the individual, and entrepreneurship.

In the 2003 Address to the Federal Assembly, he stated:

Over the next decade, we must at least double our country's gross domestic product. Doubling the GDP is a systematic task, and naturally a large-scale one. It requires profound analysis and specification of existing approaches to economic policies. But what we need above all else is once again the consolidation of political forces and society, the consolidation of all the authorities, a union of our best intellectual forces, the support of our social and political structures and the co-operation of parliament and the government. We need to search together for the best ways to solve this truly strategic and vitally important historical task for Russia.

I am certain that Russia already has all the conditions to organise and carry out such tasks. The possibilities exist for truly embarking on the large-scale construction of a modern and strong economy and eventually building a state that will be competitive in every sense of the word.

Putin thus sought to link moral and spiritual unity and to harness them to the process of national development. He appeals to Russian spiritual unity by contrasting the chaotic period of the 1990s to the (then) contemporary age, when Russia is taken as being united under the aegis of the state. The following selection from 2007 is a customary Kremlin interpretation of the post-Soviet transition period:

Our country at that time was deeply divided by complex social conflicts, confrontation between parties and ideologies. Separatism represented a real threat to Russia's security and territorial integrity. And as if this were not enough, resources for resolving the country's most urgent and vital problems were in drastically short supply...

We have worked together for many years to overcome the serious consequences of the transition period, to overcome the negative effects of far-reaching but not always straightforward transformation (2007 Address to the Federal Assembly).

The same document demonstrates themes of harnessing the popular will to carry out the actions required for development, the preservation of the spiritual, cultural, moral unity of people, and the primacy of the sovereign state as an instrument to meet these goals.

Thus Putin stated:

The spiritual unity of the people and the moral values that unite us are just as important a factor for development as political and economic stability. It is my conviction that a society can set and achieve ambitious national goals only if it has a common system of moral guidelines. We will be able to achieve our goals only if we maintain respect for our native language, for our unique cultural values, for the memory of our forebears and for each page of our country's history (2007 Address to the Federal Assembly).

Putin has appealed to Russian citizens, politicians and officials alike to put their trust in the state as a mechanism that serves the interests of all Russians and acts as guarantor of national wealth and well-being. In this conception, the Russian state is viewed as the primary vehicle for representing all social interests and the primary target for political loyalties. In 2007, Putin stated:

It is my conviction that our country will take its deserved place in the world, and we will be able to preserve our statehood and our sovereignty, only when our citizens see and feel for themselves and are confident that all of the state's endeavours aim at protecting their vital interests, at improving their lives and bringing them greater prosperity and security. Only when our people are able to feel proud of their country. Each citizen should feel that he is a part of the nation, involved in its fate. And each citizen should be able to improve his own life through lawful means and add to our labour. All of us who are involved in administrative, public, and all the more so political work, bear particular responsibility (2007 Address to the Federal Assembly).

Putin deployed the language of Russian uniqueness, statism and solidarity as a means to generate legitimacy for his state building efforts and the historic task of

rendering democratic ideas and market reforms palatable for a Russian populace for whom such ideas and reforms were associated with the chaos and uncertainty of the 1990s. Talk of Russia's unique path was shorn of its speculative excesses and discursively linked with socially productive purposes. Russian society was directed away from divisiveness, apathy and lawlessness and directed towards the common good and mutual responsibility. These notions are further enshrined in the concept of sovereign democracy, which I now examine.

4. Vladislav Surkov, Sovereign Democracy, and the Emergence of a Russian Post-post-Communist Public Philosophy

Putin era Russia finds the moral legitimacy for pursuing its “unique” path to economic, social and political development in the concept of sovereign democracy. Its most vocal proponent is Vladislav Surkov, whose work should be considered as an attempt to articulate a Kremlin-approved ideology, a means of distilling contemporary global and national political developments in a matter that is consistent with the Putin regime's own understandings of national and global political life. In this portion of the chapter, I delineate the main components of Surkov's thinking, which represents one important way of articulating Russia's place in the contemporary global economy. The aim is to make this a new common sense understanding by Russian elites and the Russian public at large. The most prominent and frequently debated element of Surkov's thinking is sovereign democracy, a polysemic idea that seeks both to relativize the notion of democracy in a manner consonant with the purported political, social and cultural characteristics of the Russian nation while at the same time universalizing it as an appropriate standard for political practice in contemporary global affairs. In other words, sovereign democracy is a defense of Russia's particularity against universalizing liberal

notions of democracy. It may be read as an extensive meditation on Russia's post-communist experiences with democracy and a blueprint for international relations in a post-hegemonic era. Furthermore, it is a notion that has been employed by Surkov and other members of the Putin regime to reorient purported Russian cultural tendencies to more productive ends.

Surkov has risen to prominence as the most recognizable representative of contemporary Russian state ideology. Widely considered as the Kremlin's chief ideologist (OSC Media Aid, 2008), Surkov has served in Russian military intelligence (Vitebskaya, Livotkin & Politov, 2006), held senior positions at both Menatep and Alfa Bank during the 1990s, and has been a Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office since 1999, becoming First Deputy in 2008 ("Vladislav Yureyevich Surkov," n.d.). Surkov has emerged as an oft-cited member of successive presidential administrations and was named in a 2005 survey of Russian political elite as the second most powerful man in Russia ("Spiegel Interview with Kremlin Boss Vladislav Surkov," 2005).

He has published widely and allegedly harbours ambitions to become Russia's foremost contemporary public philosopher, a figure who seeks to articulate and divine a path to a restored Great Russia. In embracing the role of public philosopher, Surkov seeks to make contemplation serve a productive purpose, by marrying philosophical themes with the developmental imperatives facing the contemporary Russian political economy. For example, while releasing a collection of essays entitled *Texts 97-07*, which contain his most important musings of that ten year span, Surkov admonished philosophers to turn their speculations towards useful ends:

It seems to me that the worst thing of all is if, for instance, intellectual life flourishes here, and then all of a sudden... Right now we all seem to have been making an effort, and suddenly there was a blossoming, the philosophers started coming, and they 'gushed forth', so to speak, and that was it, nothing but philosophers. It's sad. ... It seems to me that it's important that we not get borne back in that direction, into the sphere of pure ideas, that we toss out a mooring line to bring us back to earth and start to produce at least a little, at least something... To be honest, I don't care what it is, just something other than pumping various liquids out of the ground. It seems to me that if this kind of public philosopher were to be found among us, he doesn't have to be a Francis Bacon, but would remind us all of the importance of scientific experiment, applied technology, very down-to-earth, understandable, tangible things, this is very important (in Samarina, 2008).

As the Kremlin's *eminence grise*, Surkov is active in numerous political circles and public fora as a promoter of the sanctity of the Russian state and advocate for the contemporary unity of the Russian nation. It is difficult to overestimate Surkov's role in relaying Kremlin ideology to the Russian public. Surkov's writings constitute virtually the only source of knowledge of Russia's official ideology and the Kremlin's national political strategy (Tretyakov, 2006). He has also been referred to as "the godfather of United Russia" (Radzikhovsky, 2006), retaining close ties with the party.

If Putin's liberal conservative orientation may be seen as an attempt to incorporate and synthesize disparate ideas for the purposes of dominating discursive space, so too can Surkov's work. Hence, it is possible to see two dominant tendencies in Surkov: 1) "Surkovism", which is more moderate, reformist and modernizing and involves advocating Russia's integration in the world economy; and 2) "The Surkov Doctrine", a neofundamentalist, anti-democratic apology for isolationism and tsarism (Malashenko, 2008). Surkov's ambiguity is further evident in the wide array of criticisms and accolades granted to him by Russian public figures and intellectuals. For example, one of Surkov's programmatic articles, "Russian Political Culture: The View from Utopia," led to disparate responses from prominent Russian public figures and intellectuals. It was

condemned for emphasizing centralization, a global mission for Russia, and appeal to the special historical features of the Russian people in the advent of capitalist relations in Russia (Barshchevskii, 2008; Bogdanov, 2008). It was criticized as an apology for the status quo, but not without its virtues (Remchukov, 2008). It was questioned for its assertion that authoritarian modernization can ensure sustainable development (Bovt, 2008). It was hailed for suggesting that democracy must occur within the bounds of Russian political culture, however not at the expense of universal human values (Primakov, 2008). It was praised for foregrounding national cultural factors in the development of national political life and systems, a view now purportedly shared by none other than Francis Fukuyama (Orlov, 2008). It was welcomed as reflecting United Russia's core principles of moderate centrism and pragmatism (Gryzlov, 2008). And it was somewhat strangely used as the basis for a polemic against the West for impeding Russia's democratic and free development (both now and in the past) (Zhirinovskiy, 2008).

Through his writings and speeches, Surkov provides a Russian critique of liberal universalism and seeks to sanctify Russia's place within a global political order of sovereign powers. He seeks to mobilize Russian culture for the purposes of national development and appeals to Russian cultural particularity to restore civic pride and insulate against criticisms of Russian authoritarianism. As a self-declared public philosopher, Surkov seeks to wed well understood concepts in Russian cultural, literary and intellectual production to the restoration of Russian sovereignty, Russia's purportedly unique democratic character, and the need for civic responsibility in the construction of a greater Russia. It is this latter theme that eludes Western commentators, who frequently

suggest that Surkov's ideas represent little more than an apology for authoritarianism. Although there is some legitimacy to the interpretation, an exclusive focus on this aspect erases other aspects of Surkov's thinking, including what may be described as a pedagogical role whereby the Russian citizenry is admonished to participate actively in Russian political and economic life and abstain from pursuing the easy riches of resource rents or state patrimony. The foregrounding of political economy and aspirations for Russian development in Russian conversations about culture is a crucial element of the ideological-pedagogical role that Surkov adopts in his contemporary work.

Surkov has been considered emblematic of Russia's democratic statist camp (Sakwa, 2008d), which is liberal conservatism by another name. A more critical position on Surkov views him as vacillating between a more moderate pole and that which embraces authoritarianism (Malashenko, 2008). It would appear that he self-identifies with the first assessment. During a talk at the Russian State Humanities University, an institution renowned for producing Russian liberals, Surkov declared, "There are liberal-minded young people in this hall, and I would like to give some pieces of advice to the beginning liberals, one of whom I consider myself." His advice consisted of admonishing those in the room to not confuse personal opinion with public opinion, "hope to make your native country happy with the help of foreign governments," speak of freedom, justice and democracy using the words of others; befriend Bolsheviks and finally wish bad things to their Motherland (Ilyichev, 2007a). In other words, to the extent that Surkov may be declared a liberal, it is a highly conditional form of liberalism that subordinates concepts to the peculiar needs of a "sovereign" Russia.

Surkov views United Russia as occupying this terrain in contemporary Russia. For instance Surkov asserted that United Russia is “on the conservative end of the spectrum, and we are trying to strengthen this position. The left wing already has plenty of supporters; three of the four parties in the parliament [the Liberal Democratic Party; the Communist Party; and Just Russia] are patriotic leftists. From that perspective, United Russia represents both liberal and conservative values, in a uniquely Russian sense” (“Spiegel Interview with Kremlin Boss Vladislav Surkov,” 2005). Positioning United Russia as a hegemonic, moderate party crowded by leftist patriots is in line with Surkov’s defence of the party as an important vehicle in establishing sovereign democracy in Russia. Furthermore, in seeing similarities between Putin’s liberal-conservative position and those of both Surkov and United Russia, we can posit that contemporary pro-regime Russian political institutions and thinkers exhibit a fairly consistent ideological position and work with a degree of uniformity in representing Russia as a sovereign democracy. United Russia’s position within sovereign democracy, as envisioned by Surkov, is elaborated upon below.

Given the ambiguous manner in which sovereign democracy is treated by Surkov, it is somewhat difficult to settle on its core attributes. Okara (2007) suggests that the four priorities of sovereign democracy include: 1) "civic solidarity as a force preventing social and military conflicts" ; 2) "the creative class as society's leading stratum replenished in the course of a free competition of citizens and envisioning innovative approaches and synergies on the part of creative groups of people" ; 3) "culture as an organism of nation building and ideological influences"; 4) "education and science as sources of competitiveness making the [knowledge economy] an important priority." Okara is

correct in suggesting that the concept assumes the same civic nation building importance as that offered by conservative Russian Count Sergei Uvarov, who, as Minister of Public Education in the 1830s and 1840s, declared the Orthodoxy-Autocracy-Narodnost triumvirate the basis for public education in Russia.

However, sovereign democracy is also defined by virtue of what it is not and by virtue of the concrete situation of having to legitimate the contemporary Russian political system. In a press conference given during the 2006 G-8 Summit in Saint Petersburg, Surkov asserted that sovereign democracy was the inverse of managed democracy, a term that has often been employed disparagingly by critics of Putin's regime to suggest the overly-centralized, if not authoritarian, nature of Russia's political system. To Surkov, managed democracy entails something quite different: a democracy that has sacrificed its sovereignty and is managed by external forces. Managed democracy constitutes "a pattern of ineffective and externally controlled economic and political regimes which some global influential centers seek to impose by force and cunning on all nations with no exceptions" ("Russia is a Sovereign Democracy"). The timing of this statement is crucial. The concept may be considered direct response to the "coloured revolutions" (see Chapter Four and below), which the Putin regime perceived as being orchestrated from abroad.

Using the sovereign democracy concept, Surkov turns the concept of managed democracy – a term often used pejoratively against the Putin regime to criticize the over centralization of authority in Russia – on its head. In this line of thinking, Russia has not dangerously drifted from Western liberal democratic norms. Rather, these liberal democratic norms do not exist in a pure state and cannot be considered outside of the

national political context in which they operate. Furthermore, according to Surkov, *all* democracies, and not just Russia's are managed (Sakwa, 2008d). This is particularly the case for states that are controlled by external powers, such as the beneficiaries of Western technical assistance and money. Surkov stated:

I will try to give my own definition of "managed democracy," which has become, also thanks to journalists, a fashionable term in Russia and outside it. In my opinion, managed democracy is a cliché that is being forced by certain centers of global influence on all nations without distinction. It involves economic and political regimes that are ineffective and can therefore be controlled by outside powers. This is our interpretation of managed democracy. I will not name the countries we think are managed democracies. You know them ("News Conference of Presidential Aide Vladislav Surkov," n.d.).

Against this Surkov provided what may be considered the minimalist conception of sovereignty, alluding to the creation of an open society in Russia but more importantly stressing the significance of a democracy's freedom from manipulation by outside forces.

He stated:

As for Russian democracy, it is true that we often describe it as sovereign democracy. That does not have any special meaning apart from the fact that we are building an open society but will not forget that we are a free nation and want to remain a free nation in the family of free nations, and to cooperate with others according to fair rules, without accepting external management. That's it ("News Conference of Presidential Aide Vladislav Surkov," n.d.).

Central to the notion of sovereign democracy is the idea that Russia retains the ability to conduct its own internal affairs and develop a political system while remaining free from external influence. Surkov isn't alone in expressing this notion. Sergei Markov, a member of the Public Chamber, suggested:

The term [sovereign democracy] means, first of all, that Russia will be a democratic country. Second, it means that Russia will govern itself by its own domestic and foreign policy and that policy will not be chosen by the US Government, the European bureaucracy, nor the head of a huge transnational corporation. We are establishing that our sovereignty does not conflict with democracy, bearing in mind that we should carry on normal ideological work, as the Americans and Europeans do (in Samarina & Varshavchik, 2006).

This is in contradistinction to the 1990s, when, according to Surkov and defenders of the sovereign democracy idea, Russia was considered incapable of making its own sovereign decisions due to outside interference on the part of Western countries. According to Surkov, any semblance of independence enjoyed by Russians during this period was mitigated by the fact most were incapable of fully exercising their freedom (Zakatnova, 2006a). It is in this context that Russian reforms gave democracy pejorative connotations for many Russians as the concept was associated with reckless free market reforms and deemed detrimental to sovereignty and national well being. According to Andrey Isayev, a prominent United Russia member, the utility of the term sovereign democracy is to be found in its serving as a corrective to the notion of democracy evident in Russia during the 1990s during its time of “national humiliation” (in Samarina & Varshavchik, 2006). The external sovereignty of sovereign democracy is to be defended by military competency. Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov stated, for example, that there are few truly independent democratic countries in the world – the USA, EU, China, India, Russia and Brazil, with South Africa approaching such a status. The ability to defend themselves is seen as critical to enabling their respective citizenries to determine national development priorities (“First Deputy PM Ivanov,” 2007).

Sovereign democracy acquired another layer of meaning in light of the so-called colour revolutions, which the Putin regime saw as involving Western powers in bringing democratic regimes to power at the expense of pro-Kremlin incumbents. Russian political analyst Sergey Markov suggested that the term emerged during Russia’s fight against Ukraine’s Orange Revolution (Kostenko, 2006). According to Surkov, all objections to Russia’s purported drift from democracy have malicious intent behind them.

He stated that “When people talk to us about democracy, they are thinking about our hydrocarbons” (Yevgrafova, 2006). In other words, behind the Western liberal criticism of Russian authoritarianism lays deep resentment at the resurgent Russian state’s ability to control Russian energy resources. To demonstrate this notion, Surkov has also invoked the legacy of Che Guevara, suggesting that he drew inspiration from Guevara’s 1960 speech on political sovereignty and economic independence (Zakatnova, 2006b).⁵

While Russia as a sovereign democracy is to defend itself against the hostile intentions of foreign countries, Surkov takes care to also remind people that sovereign democracy does not entail an isolationist position. This is consistent with Putin’s assertions of a Russia that is more open to the world. When a Reuter’s reporter suggested in 2006 that Russian-style sovereign-democracy was doomed to failure and that Russia ought to simply construct a democracy akin to that found in the West, Surkov replied:

Those who can benefit from it are trying to create the impression that sovereign democracy implies self-isolation and some exotic Russian variant of democracy... The word ‘sovereignty’ just emphasizes that our elite should not forget that while building an open society, we have to preserve our self-identity, we should not dissolve and fall under external control. No one says that we should not listen to those who have a rich experience of democracy. We keep listening, and we are responding in a very constructive way. Moreover, we borrow much from Western experience and accept it with gratitude because we find it useful. It is very useful for our political culture, which is inclined to oversimplify the political process, that countries with old democratic traditions keep reminding us of the goals and objectives of this political system (“News Conference of Presidential Aide Vladislav Surkov,” n.d.).

The West’s experience in democracy may be of only passing interest to Surkov and the Kremlin. The West’s technological and intellectual resources, conversely, are viewed by Surkov as indispensable to Russia’s development. While the Putin regime bristles at the thought of Western democracy promotion influencing domestic politics in Russia and its neighbours, it unequivocally welcomes the resources which enable Russia to ease its dependence on raw materials and reach a higher level of development. In “The

nationalization of the future,” Surkov detailed the role that the West is to play in relation to a sovereign, democratic Russia as the supplier of intellectual resources and technologies:

Remaining a part of Europe, holding onto the West, is an essential element of the building of Russia. After all, there are intellectual resources there without access to which it is impossible to modernize our country. Cooperation in the realms of science, technology, higher education, and multinational corporations in research-intensive and high-tech sectors could link our economy with the European and transatlantic economy more securely and beneficially than the primitive supplying of raw materials can (in Dulman, 2006, p. 6).

While asserting Russia’s right to its own unique system, Russian officials have nonetheless sought to draw international comparisons so as to establish that Russian practices are in line with international norms. For example, members of the Putin regime have defended the role of United Russia as the dominant party in the Russian State Duma. First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov drew a comparison with Japan, stating in 2007 that sixty years of one party dominance in the country had not jeopardized democracy: “Would anyone see this as a reason to call it not a democratic (nation) but a totalitarian regime in which one party has seized power and has held it for decades, not letting anyone come near it? The answer is no.” (Interfax, June 6, 2007).

Elsewhere, Surkov stated:

As for the foundations of this nascent national ideology, I think they will not differ fundamentally from common European values and models. Of course, the Russian version of European culture is different from European culture, just as the German, French or British versions differ from it. Like it or not, we consider ourselves part of Europe; this is how we see Russia in the world, and we hope that our neighbours and partners will eventually accept our view (“News Conference of Presidential Aide Vladislav Surkov,” n.d.).

Although critics of sovereign democracy suggest that the concept remains an apology for the status quo and disregards the need for party competition, Surkov has maintained that contemporary Russia has produced a healthy party system in which four

parties compete (United Russia; Just Russia; the Liberal Democratic Party of the Russian Federation; the Communist Party of the Russian Federation). He nonetheless is clear in his desire that United Russia and Just Russia emerge as the two predominant parties into the future. This entails meeting a certain number of criteria that resonate with the idea of sovereign democracy: that parties guarantee that they are not funded by foreign states and “dance to their tune”; that they do not engage in extremism and “naked populism”; and that should they come to power, they vow not to disrupt Russia’s political system (Motalev, 2008).

According to Surkov, the immaturity of Russia’s opposition parties threatens to destabilize Russia’s political system. Surkov suggested that without a viable, constructive opposition party, Russia runs the risk of being overrun by anti-systemic forces. In 2006, Surkov declared that “there is no alternative major party; our society doesn’t have a ‘second leg’ onto which it can shift its weight when the first one goes numb.” Having declared that the three other parliamentary parties : the Liberal Democratic Party, the Communist Party, and Rodina (who merged with the Russian Party of Life and the Russian Pensioners Party in October, 2007 to form Just Russia) all constituted left-leaning parties with a patriotic orientation. These parties were in need of moderation and modernization in order to become credible alternatives, according to Surkov: “It’s possible that at some point, once this spectrum that we can call leftist and patriotic has undergone transformation, once it has been modernized and gotten some younger blood and incorporated sound transitions of social democracy and healthy patriotism, something could emerge from this” (“Freedom is Something you Have to Get Used to,” 2006, p. 10).

One element of sovereign democracy, therefore, is a “mature” parliamentary system in which “legitimate” parties have accepted the fundamental tenets of Russia’s political system: fealty to the Russian state and a renouncement of anti-systemic tactics. Surkov’s vision of pluralism, therefore, is highly qualified. That Surkov is not universally considered a staunch defender of pluralism in a parliamentary democracy is hardly surprising. Russian liberals attack Surkov’s political system as pluralism within *Putin’s* regime, wherein various views are debated, while genuine parliamentary pluralism is absent due to parliament increasingly becoming an extension of the regime (Samarina et al., 2006, p. 7).

Furthermore, Surkov suggests that other aspects of Russia’s social and political system remain insufficient for supporting a viable democracy. He stated that “Until our elite is capable of self-organization, we will always experience a certain excessive presence of the state in our daily life. In order to minimize this presence, which is not always pleasant, we simply must decide more ourselves... Common values, cooperation and rivalry of parties and social groups, social dialogue, and self-organization by the ruling people, well-to-do-white collar workers, and thinking people – that is what Russia needs.” In the same speech, Surkov credited the lack of civic power over government in broad swathes of society as the reason for the failure of the 1917 provisional government in Russia (Surkov quoted in Ilyichev, 2007a). Until a viable, politically astute public is formed in Russia, the country remains susceptible to tragic revolutionary flair ups (“Surkov Condemns Revolutions,” 2007). Elsewhere, Surkov has suggested that Russia remains vulnerable to both bureaucratic and oligarchic coups, both of which would seek

to shield Russia from the competitive nature of the global political economy (Ilyichev, 2006a).

The democratic elements within sovereign democracy are therefore accompanied by a certain paternalism that suggests that Russian society remains too immature for democracy and runs the risk of anti-democratic revolutions should the state not insulate it from these possibilities. This position is not uncommon amongst defenders of Russia's "power hierarchy": Russia has not achieved the level of social development to use democratic institutions responsibly. This purported lack of social development is reflected both in the propensity for extremists to undermine the state and the lack of civic engagement on the part of the Russian populace (see Stepashin, 2008). In this vision, the Russian state performs a double role: protecting Russian society from narrow interests and inculcating civic participation and civic responsibility in Russian society. A teaching aid produced by Surkov for students and instructors at the Modern Humanities, entitled, "Fundamental trends and prospects for the development of modern Russia" (*Osnovnyye tendentsii i perspektivy razvitiya sovremennoy Rossii*), likewise valorizes the Russian state in its role of preserving the Russian nation. In the work, Surkov deems the state as having been historically necessary to curtail the influence of the Russian oligarchy and prevent a "soft takeover" of Russia (Samarina, 2007).

In spite of offering a qualified defence of party competition in the State Duma, Surkov remains an unapologetic defender of United Russia. Surkov is the Kremlin's watchdog over United Russia (Levchenko, 2007), and supports United Russia's long term stability, stating that a hegemonic United Russia is necessary for Russian economic and political stability (Romanov, 2008). United Russia has been quick to suggest that one

party rule is not anathema to democracy. Boris Gryzlov (2008), then speaker of the Duma and prominent United Russia figure, defended United Russia as a conservative party premised on moderate centrism, pragmatism and being representative of Russian society. United Russia is to provide the requisite political stability to guide Russia's transition, a practice that has been undertaken in China, France and Japan, as well.

Surkov has echoed this sentiment. For instance in a speech to the 2009 "Strategy 2020":

Let us imagine what things would be like right now if our political system were more loose-jointed, more rickety, if it were more in the spirit of the 1990s than in the spirit of the 2000s. What would start happening right now, on the threshold of a crisis, with the distribution of all this state money and much else? So much trouble would be kicked up that, afterward, someone who greatly dislikes freedom would come along and would impose order for the next 100 years. You know, we could try to imagine one more time doing what we did in the nineties: If we all drank our fill and went on a spree and smashed furniture. Or maybe we have had enough? Maybe we should try somehow to get by without wrecking furniture and without rampaging?

And while it seems to me that there are a lot of drawbacks in the fact that a single party is dominant in our country, it is my profound conviction that there are far more pluses in this fact today, because if we had entered the zone of turbulence in a more unbolted condition, I assure you that the damage that the state and society would suffer would have been far greater ("Transcript of Surkov Speech," 2009).

Both Surkov and United Russia openly defend the development of a conservative ideology in Russia, and Surkov supports the notion that United Russia be considered the party of conservative ideology in Russia (Kostenko et al., 2008). Nonetheless United Russia, which seeks to encompass a broader range of the political spectrum in Russian politics, is internally divided along a number of strategic directions.⁶ Surkov has attempted to deflect credit for the term sovereign democracy from himself onto United Russia. For example, he declared at a United Russia media forum in October 2006 that "I would like to recall that, at a meeting with United Russia's Duma faction in July [2006], the president cited as one of the party's achievements the formation of its own vision of Russia's political development as a sovereign democratic state" (in Ilyichev, 2006b, p. 7).

United Russia has proven enthusiastic to the task. The idea of sovereign democracy has been adopted by United Russia, having been taken as the basis of the party's program (Bilevskaya & Samarina, 2008). Indeed, United Russia would like to play a central role in rendering sovereign democracy more popular. During a United Russian discussion entitled "Sovereign democracy: from idea to doctrine," the deputy secretary of the presidium of the party's general council, Oleg Morozov, stated that "The goal of our work is to make [sovereign democracy] simple for every party member, and later for every citizen. The doctrine should 'descend' to the level understood by the housewife." This sentiment was supported by Mikhail Vinogradov, a political scientist with connections to the party, who adds that such an effort to make the term more accessible was in line with Surkov's expressed desire to bridge the gap between public and government with the concept of sovereign democracy (Ilyichev, 2006c).

In defending the role of United Russia as the centerpiece of the Russian political process, Surkov suggested that the party should act as a sort of intermediary between the national leader and Russian society and perform the role of facilitating public debates in the country (Bilevskaya, 2008b). It has likewise been suggested by Russian commentators, that the "Surkov phenomenon" is a positive development in Russian political life, and that his continued demand is needed both for elite self-definition and as a means to translate regime political objectives to the Russian populace (Malashenko, 2008).

For Surkov, sovereign democracy does not carry with it simply negative power in the form of freedom from external interference. Instead, it suggests a form of civic engagement in political, social and economic processes in Russia. This is predicated on a

civic-oriented interpretation of a rehabilitated Russian national cultural legacy.

Sovereign democracy is a tempered defence of statism, insofar as the state exists only as a manifestation of collective will of the Russian nation. According to Surkov, Russia has the formal trappings of a democracy (parties, a free media, elections) but lacks a populace that has a fully developed civic orientation (Zakatnova, 2006a). A consolidated and centralized Russian state served the necessary historic task of preserving Russian sovereignty against oligarchical self-enrichment but will remain legitimate in the future only insofar as it facilitates Russia transition to the next stage of social, political and economic development (Surkov, 2006)

In other words, Russia's statist tendencies must be cojoined by active national civic engagement if Russia's development goals are to be realized. In fact, Surkov envisions sovereign democracy as a means of mitigating an overbearing statism: he has elaborated on the precise nation-building components needed to prevent an over-reliance on the state as the arbiter of the political good, distributor of economic resources and primary agent of development. Based on the ideas of modernization inherent in sovereign democracy, Surkov opines:

Will Russia master the nation-preserving method of democracy to overcome those crises [of "spasmodic" development, the over-bureaucratization of the economy and the limitations of the raw materials economy]? Or will it, as usual, resort to ruinous and ruthless statism? Or will it capitulate and collapse? Optimistic answers assume national solidarity based on shared values of freedom, justice and material well-being.

Preserving the nation, the people, can become a goal and a means of renewal. It can become a program for humanizing the political system, social relations and the culture of daily life. It can become a habitual practice of taking a respectful approach toward the dignity, health, property and opinion of every individual (in Dulman, 2006, p. 6-7).

If sovereign democracy includes the promise of sovereignty from moral suasion, interference and belligerence on the part of Western democracies, it also calls for the

expression of Russian popular sovereignty and seeks to legitimate the activities of the Russian state on this basis. The Russian nation is considered the sovereign power upon Russian territory, of which state institutions are deemed representative. In his article “The nationalization of the future,” Surkov writes:

The supreme independent (sovereign) power of the people (democracy) is called upon to meet these aspirations and demands [for national association] at all levels of civic activity, from individual to national

...The discourse on sovereign democracy in Russia is in keeping with the provisions of the Constitution stating that, first, ‘the repository of sovereignty and the single source of authority in the Russian Federation is its multiethnic people,’ and second, ‘no one may appropriate power in the Russian Federation.

This leads to the conclusion that

...it is possible to define sovereign democracy as a model of political life in which the governing authorities, their agencies, and their actions are chosen, formed and guided solely by the Russian nation [*rossiiskaya natsia*] in all its diversity and unity, in the interests of achieving material well being, freedom and justice for all of the citizens, social groups and peoples that make it up. As for national feelings, in this dimension the concept of sovereign democracy seeks to express the strength and dignity of the Russian [*rossiisky*] people through the development of a civil society, a secure state, a competitive economy, and an effective mechanism for influencing world events (in Dulman, 2006, p. 6).

Sovereign democracy therefore serves as a collectivist interpretation of democracy, which is based on popular will and preserved in global society vis-à-vis other democracies. A sovereign democracy is animated through the creation of a national symbolic order. For Surkov, it is of paramount importance that Russians adopt their own ideology and system of meanings, of which sovereign democracy is an integral part: “If we in Russia do not create our own discourse, our own public philosophy, and our own national ideology that is acceptable to a majority of the citizens, we will simply be disregarded and no one will talk to us... If the people themselves do not produce images and do not send messages to other peoples, then they do not exist in the political and cultural sense” (in Samarina & Varshavchik, 2006).

For Surkov, culture and statehood are understood as the determining factor of a nation's destiny. However, as demonstrated below, Surkov valorizes Russian culture while nonetheless seeking to reorient it to the purposes of political economy. The first step in Surkov's cultural program is valorizing Russian culture and suggesting that contemporary efforts to construct democracy in Russia are necessarily constrained, if not determined, by cultural factors. Surkov (2006) asserts:

The new building of Russian democracy is constructed on the historical foundation of national statehood. We may argue about specific features of layout and decoration. Some like the imperial and others the petty bourgeois [*meshchanskii*] style; yet others are keen on futuristic experiments. But whatever changes we may make to the design of our home, its main proportions and distinguishing features are, it seems to me, predetermined by the fundamental categories and matrix structures of our history, national consciousness and culture (pp. 10-11).

Democracy is not an ideal or abstract process, but constrained by national culture and to be realized within a nation's corresponding institutions. Surkov is quick to suggest that Russian political practice has its roots in European civilization, but a particularly Russian version thereof. Democracy must be developed in these conditions. According to Surkov (2006), democracy "is viable to the extent that it is natural – that is, national. Our democracy is viable if it does not reject Russian political culture but is part of it, developing not in defiance but together with it" (p. 11). It is not simply democracy, but all political practices which must adapt to Russian conditions in order to survive. The reforms of Peter the Great, Paul I, Bolsheviks and the 1990s democratic reformers "succeeded only insofar as they were perceived as native to Russia, as acceptable to Russian culture. Anything incompatible with the life of our culture or harmful to its foundation was painfully rejected" (p. 18).

In this sense, culture is determining of the nature of political practice itself as well as the success which political initiatives are likely to experience. It would not be

unreasonable to accuse Surkov of practicing a strong form of cultural determinism, which appears at times to be biological in nature. Surkov (2006) writes:

Each of us has, and all of us together have, many possible futures—but not infinitely many. The range of possible futures is limited by the genetic formula of our national culture.

Certainly, a culture is a living organism. Its boundaries, its inner space, and even its foundations are elastic, mobile, and permeable. But the unique combination of certain of its qualities is invariably and persistently reproduced on all scales and at all levels of society, and at all times.

I repeat: culture is fate. God commanded us to be ethnic Russians [*russkie*] as well as citizens of Russia [*rossiiane*]. Such we shall remain. We will take the problems into account and exploit the advantages of our national character and our political culture to create a competitive economy and a viable democracy (p. 18).

Surkov therefore appropriates features of Gumilyov's Eurasianism through suggesting that though cultures interact and adapt according to the interactions of the societies that carry them, they are naturalistic phenomena with inborn limitations. Russian political culture therefore manifests several "archetypical and ineradicable properties" (Surkov, 2006, p. 11). Quoting Russian intellectuals Ivan Il'in, Nikolai Berdyaev and Yevgeni Trubetskoy, Surkov asserts that "Russian cultural consciousness is portrayed as clearly holistic and intuitive and is contrasted with mechanistic, reductionist consciousness. Typically, albeit controversially, the Russian mode of thought is contrasted not simply with reductionism but with reductionism as a Western mode of thought. In other words, there is a geopolitical subtext" (Surkov, 2006, p. 11).⁷ According to Surkov, this propensity to holism is manifested in tendencies within Russian political practice. Russians exhibit the desire for wholeness – political, territorial and spiritual – through the centralization of power. They adhere to a form of political idealism, whereby the ideal goal must be retained in order to animate social activity⁸ and a secular form of messianism – seeking a role for Russian in global affairs – is required to

animate national political life.⁹ Finally, Russians support “the personification of political institutions,” whereby charismatic personality dominates (Surkov, 2006, pp. 12-14).

However, after accepting a deterministic reading of Russian culture, Surkov then performs the second step to his cultural program: correcting aspects of Russia’s cultural tendencies that inhibit industriousness, productivity and patient systems building. While Russian political authority must reflect certain inborn characteristics of Russian culture, so to must it acknowledge the shortcomings of Russian culture when faced with the imperative of national development. For example, Russian idealism is reflected in the propensity of Russians to seek easy solutions and engage in speculative excess. The following extended quote from Surkov (2006) captures this notion.

One acquaintance of mine says, “What you can’t do in two weeks, you can never do.” That’s very much our way of thinking: everything, at once, here and now; two weeks, five hundred days, communism in 1980. If it doesn’t work out, the idealist gets angry and falls prey to depression and to the cynicism of disillusionment. The Petrine reforms, the reveries of February 1917, Bolshevik megaprojects, perestroika [fall into this category], as do the liberal reforms, dreams of the marvelous Kitezh¹⁰ of Russian capitalism. All are conducted in haste, bedazzled by an idea, in extraordinary irritation with viscous reality; in despairing certainty of the approaching collapse of the old world (the monarchy, bourgeois democracy, the Soviet regime) with its tedium, violence, poverty, and injustice; in naive hope of a splendid new life in which everyone will lie down for a well-deserved rest (earned through suffering)—leaving all work and all worry to the almighty doctrine, the world revolution, universal human values, the invisible hand of the market, and other magical spells. Such is the simple eschatology.

Hence the cramps and convulsions of great leaps—an unpleasant way of moving. Even today there are those who promise to increase pensions fourfold or wages fivefold right away. Others demand yet more democracy, while poorly understanding what democracy is. They have thought up their own simple image and want reality to correspond to it—and without delay.

Do it quickly, give us the soonest possible relief, so that we can return to contemplative torpidity (p. 17).

Sovereign democracy is offered as that which corresponds most accurately with Russian political culture and what is required to guide the Russian nation to the next stage of development in spite of these limitations. One of Surkov’s principal works,

“Russian political culture: the view from Utopia,” begins as a treatise on national political culture and ends with a call to move Russia up the scale on the international division of labour. It does so by appealing to two notions. First, the international place of a nation is decided by cultural superiority, which serves as the condition for a series of epiphenomena. Second, Russia’s cultural potential and its historic accomplishments are currently denigrated due to the country’s inability to marshal its intellectual and human resources for the sake of economic output. Surkov (2006) states:

Culture and education have not yet become the basis of the economy or of politics and as before are regarded as unprofitable social programs, peripheral to the raw-materials complex. There is no understanding that political, economic, and military advantages have no separate existence: they are always components and consequences of cultural superiority.

Let us consider the world economy as a large factory. In this factory there is a workshop for primary processing, where unskilled workers toil in the midst of dust and fumes. There is an assembly shop where people in white coats, the workers’ aristocracy, produce completed articles. There is a bookkeeping office and a design bureau, where specialists with a higher education work. There is a management and board of directors. Here sit the most intelligent individuals.

Where is our place in this international enterprise? It is unlikely that anyone in the world would turn to us for new technology, high-quality financial services, efficient management, movies that will be successful at the box office, or fashionable clothing. People come to our country to buy oil, gas, and the notorious round timber. Thus, in the worldwide division of labor we are not the engineers, the bankers, the designers, or the producers and managers. We are the drillers, the miners, the lumberjacks. So we are rather dirty-faced fellows from the working-class suburbs. Of course, any kind of labor is honorable, but all the same—why? After all, we consider ourselves a highly educated and highly cultured nation. What are we, with our education, our cum laude diplomas, doing feeding the mosquitoes in the oil-bearing swamp? We are such cultured and talented people, compatriots of Nikolai Gogol, Igor Stravinsky, and Ilya Prigozhin—to be sweating in the quarry and at the coalface. Perhaps we have not grown to the heights of our national culture. Perhaps not all is well with education (p. 23).

Russia must harness cultural resources in order to successfully realize a transition to the post-industrial society and “become the white-collar workers in the worldwide division of labor and occupy an important place in the global hierarchy” by pursuing idealistic goals pragmatically, acknowledging culture, science and education as crucial

elements in the production process and supporting knowledge workers, and attracting foreign experts (Surkov, 2006, pp. 25-26).

Russian culture is at once something that must be defended and legitimized vis-à-vis other cultures and something to be developed for economic competitiveness in a post-industrial age. Russia must participate actively in discussions about what constitutes cultural significance at the global level. According to Surkov, Russia's national and cultural contributions are to be elevated to equal status with the West. Legitimation of Russia's culture is alone insufficient, though. For Surkov, Russia must adopt a culture of innovation and creativity. In other words, culture is to serve the imperative of economic modernization. Surkov continues from the above passage with the following:

Certain competitive advantages inherited from the USSR (obvious in the fields of energy, communications, defense and education) should be used for the sustained development of a globally significant national economy. Intellectual mobilization to boost promising sectors, access to the scientific and technical resources of great economies, and the adoption of a sophisticated culture of research and production can become key objectives for schools, universities, foreign policy, and international scientific and industrial cooperation. The educational system is the same kind of infrastructure for the future knowledge based-economy as pipelines are for today's oil-based economy...

We are obligated to build the basis of a culture of innovation, a system of creation unique knowledge, because knowledge is power and capital for the preservation of the nation.

We are obligated to convert our economy based on raw materials into one based on intellect, so as to pave the way for Russia to move upward, into the future, into the community of creative nations that shape history (in Dulman, 2006, p. 6).

In other words, Russia's creative, intellectual and cultural resources are deemed integral to the health and well-being of the country and indispensable to enabling a transformation from a resource-dominated to a knowledge-based economy. Surkov takes this activist orientation towards an innovative economy to various circles within Russian society. At a meeting with members of NASHI ("Ours"), a pro-Kremlin youth group, Surkov stated:

It is not enough to try to raise the level of consumption: we must raise people's desire to change the world. The 'innovation economy' will be nothing more than empty words if the state does not make it a priority to grow our human capital. We must find people, acquire people, deal with people on an individual basis, and spend loads of money on this. If you see a gifted boy or girl, you must bring him close – let him be somewhere next to you – give him his first 8 kopecks so that he can experiment with some little piece of iron; praise him; show him respect (in Arkhipov, 2008).

Elsewhere, Surkov has stated:

I have experience of working with youth movements. When you ask them where they want to ride the elevator to, they honestly answer – to Gazprom. If we regard this as the place to which everybody should aspire, it is sad. It is necessary to understand what our society is – is it Gazprom in a box, or something more complex... Gazprom is precisely the company where state and commercial opportunities intersect. But this does not mean that we must build all our elevators to go there. These elevators need to go not to Gazprom and not even to the State Duma; these elevators need to exist in the world of science and technology, the world of free enterprise and innovative art (in Romanov, 2008).

Surkov deploys sovereign democracy in defense of Russia's adaptive responses (strong statehood and personalized political institutions) to cultural predispositions.

Through relativizing the notion of democracy, in that it is only realizable through national-cultural contexts and corresponding institutions, sovereign democracy therefore serves to defend the Russian state from foreign critics, particularly those who lament Russia's deviation from liberal democratic norms. Furthermore, sovereign democracy is deemed as the legitimate expression of the popular sovereignty of the Russian people. Finally, while sovereign democracy legitimizes a semi-naturalized Russian cultural disposition, it nonetheless seeks to subtly (and not so subtly) redirect "cultural" energies to more productive purposes and the creation of a knowledge based economy.

5. Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed how thoughts about Russian political culture and the Russian idea have been attributed to Putin. While some have suggested that Putin exemplifies the attainment of a specifically Russian national idea, his thinking may be

better conceived of as liberal conservative, in line with his statist orientations. Nonetheless, one element of Putin's public appeals has been his emphasis on solidarity, autonomy and a unique Russian identity. These ideas are particularly evident in the work of Vladislav Surkov and the idea of sovereign democracy, which asserts Russia's innate right to develop under the auspices of a paternalistic but benevolent state and declares that national autonomy in cultural, political, social and economic imperatives constitutes the standard by which international political and economic life is to be conducted. As they pertain to the Russian state, appeals to the unity and uniqueness of the Russian people and state are helpfully thought of in conjunction with national development imperatives and attempts to marshal the intellectual resources of the Russian people toward socially-productive ends. While Surkov strives to reconfigure international political life as that which is comprised of distinct national cultures, it is perhaps more useful to political economy analyses to consider the extent to which Russian culture has become the handmaiden of political economy in his thinking.

This was the second of two chapters in which I demonstrated how members of the Putin regime have used cultural motifs and culturally-infused ideas to legitimate national development imperatives both domestically and internationally. A conclusion to this thesis follows in the next chapter.

¹ For a distinction between the anthropological and psychological approaches to political culture in Russia, see Fleron (1996). For an elaboration of the distinction between psychological and anthropological approaches, see Tucker (1973).

² According to Kuchins (2009) such enduring features of the Russian political mentality were geographically determined, whereby the Russian state's seemingly endless expansion to the East was facilitated by the permissive geography of the Eurasian steppes. The imperial state then adopted authoritarian and centralized features as a means of ensuring the loyalty of subjugated populations, which had been formally incorporated into the empire. It also includes shades of the Third Rome argument, the alleged basis of the Russian idea. In the late 15th century after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans,

Moscow was urged by Christian and political figures in the West to become a Third Rome as a bulwark against Ottoman expansionism. The notion of Moscow as Third Rome became a powerful myth at the heart of Russian ideas of Russian messianism, due to which Russia became responsible for the salvation of the world.

³ According to Lukin (2009), the features of this public political ideal are the following (all quoted):

1. There should be a powerful state with broad responsibilities both in politics and economics, and headed by a strong leader.
2. The main goal of this powerful state should be to increase people's living standards.
3. State ownership should be maintained in major industrial sectors, such as the defense industry, the energy sector, machine building, and metallurgy.
4. Private property should be introduced in trading, agriculture, and possibly some sectors of light industry, such as food processing and textile production.
5. The state welfare system (healthcare, education, pensions) should be not only maintained, but also significantly improved. The government should increase its attention and provide more funds.
6. Some civic rights should be granted to the people, among them freedom of movement both within the country and abroad, the right to own property, freedom of opinion, and freedom of religion. Other rights and freedoms were not seen as that important.
7. The government should stop ideological interference in private life and morality; a milder governmental or public control over moral norms should be introduced instead.
8. Foreign policy should be peaceful, excluding any possibility of confrontation between The Soviet Union (Russia) and other countries. The Soviet Union (Russia) should pragmatically cooperate with any country for mutual benefit.
9. The Soviet Union (Russia) should maintain its position as an influential world power and use its influence to secure world peace and prosperity. (pp. 69-70)

⁴ For an examination of the political battles pitched by elites around the transformation of Soviet-era monuments in post-Soviet Russia, see Forest & Johnson (2002).

⁵ During a July, 2006 national business forum entitled "Economics of a sovereign democracy: How Russian can grow faster," Surkov read the following excerpt from Che Guevara's speech:

There are republics, which have all the formal characteristics of sovereign republics, but which depend on the all-encompassing will, directly on the Standard Oil Company or some other oil monopoly, or on the tin kings, or on the coffee traders. The domestic political system that every people has, allows them in one degree or another to exercise their sovereignty, or else totally disallows them from doing so. And this must be a question that concerns only this people. National sovereignty means, first of all, the right of a country to see that no one intervenes in its life, the right of the people to have that government and way of life which are most suitable to them. But all these fragments of political sovereignty, of national sovereignty, are a fiction, if they are not backed up by economic independence. We must win the sovereignty of the country, and we must take it away from those who are called monopolies. (in Zakatnova, 2006b).

⁶ As noted in Bilevskaya (2008a), United Russia is comprised of three debate clubs: The Center for Social Conservative Policy, the November 4 Liberal Conservative Club and the State Patriotic Club.

⁷ "According to this version, in our intellectual and cultural practice synthesis predominates over analysis, idealism over pragmatism, imagery over logic, intuition over rationality, the general over the particular. This, of course, does not mean that the Russians lack analytical capabilities or that the nations of Western Europe lack intuition. It is a matter of proportion. Let us put it this way: the Russian is more interested in the time and less in the design of the alarm clock" (p. 12).

⁸ Surkov states:

Idealism is the main thing that, in the future as in the past, will – it appears – launch the Russian world into new orbits of development. If the ideal goal is lost from sight, social activity is slowed down and disorganized.

Intrinsic to the Russian outlook, I would say, is a romantic, poetic long-sightedness. It has an indistinct perception of what is nearby – a rickety fence, a bad road, the litter in the nearest gateway – but a detailed knowledge of what shines in the distance, of mirages on the horizon. Paying more attention to the wished-for than to the real, this vision of things leads to a quest for the sole truth, for supreme justice. It creates a sense if not of

exclusivity then of being special, different from one's neighbors. This sense of being different is both appealing and extraordinarily inspiring. This search for a special truth of one's own, this need to live by one's intellect, compels one to act with marked independence. The whole history of Russia since the reign of Ivan III [1462–1505] is a demonstration of intellectual independence and state sovereignty (p. 14).

⁹ “Intrinsic to idealism is the desire to turn to one's faith, messianism. The Third Rome and the Third International were messianic conceptions. To be sure, messianism is now irrelevant to us, but the mission of the Russian nation requires clarification. Unless we affirm a role for Russia in the community of nations (whether a modest role or a prominent one is a matter for discussion), unless we understand who we are and why we are here, our national life will be deficient” (p. 14).

¹⁰ Kitezh is a town in Russian folklore, mythical for having resisted a Mongol invasion by submerging into Svetloyar Lake.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

The concluding chapter proceeds in the following manner. First, I restate the analytical and substantive contributions of this work by summarizing the major arguments and themes in each chapter. Second, I anticipate possible criticisms of this work and explore directions for future research.

1. Summary and Substantive Contributions

Much critical IPE in the historical materialist tradition underdevelops ideas associated with geopolitical and geocultural difference, or at best renders these largely dependent on capitalist relations of production. This is but one part of the story. It is my assertion that during the Putin era, we have witnessed the development or prolongation of powerful fault lines between the Russian state and the capitalist global political economy, whereby universal liberal tenets and the hegemonic position of the United States have been challenged in spite of the fact that the Russian political economy is increasingly capitalist and integrated within structures of the capitalist global political economy. In fact, Russian officials cultivate an indigenous vernacular to express dissatisfaction with the fundamental premises of liberal internationalism, thereby signifying that liberal capitalist sociability has not become fully engrained amongst the Russian elite or society as a whole. I have preferred to view this phenomenon in the contours of a broad historical question: what are the various compatibilities and contradictions in Russia's prolonged integration into a capitalist global political economy after the fall of the Soviet Union? It is unsurprising that imperial nostalgia and ideas about Russian cultural or civilizational particularity that largely predate the contemporary period should resonate in the present age in spite of the fact that Russia's economy increasingly operates on market

principles. Nonetheless, a political economy analysis must insist that such ideas are never entirely independent of the imperatives of political economy. Hence, we have seen these ideas reformulated and rearticulated by the Putin regime in order to foster legitimacy in Russian society and support national development imperatives.

In this dissertation, I explored the material and ideational limits to liberal democratic universalism through the example of the Putin era Russian state and its alternative understandings of world order. The Russian case is significant to contemporary studies of world order, as the Russian state resists a strong version of the American hegemonic neoliberal imperative, retains and accumulates lucrative and productive assets, gives preference to Russian state and private capital while setting rules for Western investors, and challenges the geographical spread of the Western bloc – i.e. through active stances against NATO expansion to Ukraine and Georgia. Though the Russian state has become selectively integrated into the global capitalist political economy and distanced itself from the turbulent 1990s, it remains set on articulating its *samobytnost*’ or uniqueness. At a purely material level, therefore, contemporary Russia represents a limit to the easy spread of Western power and influence.

Russia’s integration into the contemporary global political economy is one that involves considerable state involvement and an unwillingness to wholeheartedly accept liberal-democratic precepts. Correspondingly, under the Putin administration the Russian state sanctioned a statist response to Western liberal democratic universalism while claiming that it meets the criteria of a modern, competitive and democratic state. The Russian state has simultaneously rejected Western triumphalism by appealing to nativist ideas and cultural frames and seemingly felt compelled to demonstrate that it meets the

criteria of a democratic polity in international society. State-produced Russian alternative understandings of world order are inflected with three qualities: 1) statism; 2) a demonstration of the Russian state's uneasy relationship with global capitalism, whereby a strong version of liberal democratic norms and unfettered markets are criticized as components of American hegemony at the same time as the competitive nature of the contemporary capitalist global political economy is acknowledged; and 3) nativist ideas and cultural frames which sanctify purported Russian national/civilizational cultural values and practices. Such alternative understandings constitute a form of common sense thinking about global affairs for the Putin regime. Such thinking is comprised of a series of polysemic ideas that challenge liberal democratic triumphalism while granting the Russian state sufficient latitude to determine its internal form of government. Nonetheless, such thinking also represents a considerable departure from the comprehensive counter systemic position of the Soviet Union.

State produced Russian alternative understandings of world order are comprised of intersubjectively held, or produced, ideas and beliefs that have accompanied political consolidation and socio-economic transition under Putin. Throughout this dissertation I have used a critical historicist approach to accentuate the intersubjective dimension in contemporary state building amid the transitional Russian political economy while remaining attentive to the material base of Russia's participation in the global economy and the governing challenges that have resulted. The Russian state produces a relatively coherent set of concepts about world order that it attempts to establish as a new normal, common sense thinking about global affairs that rivals liberal internationalism. Though I agree with the neo-Gramscian premise that hegemony involves a degree of both coercion

and consent, my focus in this work has been on the latter part of the formula. In particular, I have focused on the Russian state's attempts to manufacture consent in the Putin era. In recycling, conveying and producing ideas about world order, the Russian state engages in acts of persuasion, attempting to convince the Russian citizenry and the external world of the veracity of such concepts.

I have employed an approach that allows multiple forms of intersubjectivity to inform political collectivities at given points while taking material factors seriously. While an orthodox historical materialist approach might be more concerned about the place of social forces in the process of production, I have broadened my approach to understand the pedagogical role of the Russian state as producer of concepts and ideas about world order. We can conceive of the Russian state as having an authoritative, bureaucratic and coercive role in administering the Russian economic base and also articulating a palpable and palatable vision of national political and economic life. In addition to its role of organizing the Russian economy along statist principles, the Russian state, exemplified by the Putin regime, develops concepts and ideas that seek to render these moves intelligible according to longer Russian intellectual and cultural legacies and acceptable according to the dictates of common sense.

In focusing on the cultural and ideational aspects of Russian alternative understandings of world order, I have sought to avoid viewing Russia's gradual incorporation into the capitalist global political economy as merely the extension of capitalist relations from the core into a previously outlying space. To augment materialist conceptions of world order and global capitalism, I have sought to demonstrate how the Putin regime developed and utilized notions of culture – understood as purported

tendencies, shared intersubjective meanings and familiar frames derived from Russian historical experience – as a means of rendering political decisions intelligible and acceptable. This may smack of a degree of instrumentalism, whereby culture is the handmaiden of political authority and exploited to realize political and economic objectives. The ideas that animate our collective political and economic life may in fact go all the way down, as constructivists argue; however, this portrayal is incomplete. In their coercive and consensual roles, states employ ideas to serve a number of strategic objectives, one of which being to constantly create and recreate social legitimacy. Emerging from the communist period, the Russian state has been active in establishing a coherent set of norms and ideas about Russia’s domestic and international life. Its representatives draw on deeper Russian traditions, which are then packaged and repackaged to suit present objectives. While I argue that Russian cultural content infuses alternative Russian understandings of world order in the contemporary age, I reject a deterministic reading of culture which holds that Putin somehow exemplifies a quintessentially Russian form of political practice (see Pipes, 2004).

With this work, I have contributed to debates about world order through an analysis of the ideological limits of liberal internationalism in Putin’s Russia. I have examined elements of Russian alternative understandings of world order, which reflect at once a challenge and accommodation to this liberal internationalism. Putin’s Russia presents us with a case which shows the failure of an easy transmission of the ideas associated with a Western-inspired liberal democracy. This is partly due to the historical association of liberal democracy with state implosion and social disorder in the 1990s in Russia. It is partly due to geopolitical concerns. What are frequently presented by

Western commentators, technocrats or politicians as either benign or enlightened ideas bring with them profound implications for the perceived security and integrity of the Russian regime. Furthermore, such ideas mask a geopolitical and economic imperative behind the extension of American hegemony in realms formerly of the Soviet Union. Components of the world order articulated by the Russian state reflect a perceived need to offer a vision of Russia in the world which captures Russia's reputed uniqueness and reflects a wealthier, more assertive and "sovereign" Russia than was evident in the immediate post-Soviet period. It is a state that is more and more capable of challenging the march of the American-led Western bloc to the East while nonetheless adapting to the exigencies of a capitalist global political economy. In Russia, the uncontested adoption of Western liberal ideology deemed to correspond with American liberal hegemony did not occur as Western pundits would have liked: the Putin regime has developed – tacitly and explicitly – a particularly Russian "filter" to shape understandings of global political life and Russia's place within it. In addition to reflecting material conflicts surrounding economic competition and military threats, Russian understandings of world order display a thoroughly intersubjective or ideational component, whereby global political life is translated through shared understandings of moral appropriateness, legitimacy and manageability. Such understandings are not mere culture archetypes consistently and perennially manifested in political practice; rather, they are animated and re-directed to articulate regime imperatives and facilitate an acceptance of a particular form of Russian state capitalism and centralized political rule.

My engagement with historical materialist and historicist IPE in this dissertation has served two fundamental purposes. Firstly, I developed a literature review of this

scholarship in order to lay out the terrain to which I wish to contribute. Secondly, I sought to critique this literature and some of its enduring shortcomings in envisioning world order. I have offered what I have called a critical-historicist approach in examining the case of Russia and a large scale social, political and economic transformation. This approach acknowledges the significance of intersubjective ideas, reflexivity and the material parameters that constrain ideas and has been informed by Robert Cox's conception of historical structures and Cultural Political Economy's (CPE) insistence on the semiotic and material elements of political economy. In my project, probing such questions means examining the ways in which Russian state representatives employ ideas from Russian culture and history as a means to interpret and express the parameters of contemporary world order and Russia's place in it. I have acknowledged the significance of a broadly conceived historical materialist scholarship in understanding questions of world order while arguing for the need to pay greater attention to the intersubjective and material dimensions of national state-society complexes on the periphery of the global capitalist core. Studies of profound historical transitions cannot be adequately served by materialist premises alone.

I have striven to offer an empirical and theoretical demonstration of the material parameters of Russia's post-communist transition, its position in world order, including its resurgence under Putin and limits to this resurgence, as well as Putin's consolidation of authority. The building of a market economy in Russia has been accompanied by a strong executive hand. The Russian case suggests that state capitalism is not entirely incompatible with broad market imperatives, if we take a strong statist response as providing the stability that enables market mechanisms to take root in some form. In the

Putin era, a degree of stability, predictability and growth has been coupled with an emergent state-produced normative order. The Putin regime has sought to instill a stable normative order while overcoming both the profound divisions and material hardships witnessed in Russian society in the 1990s. Russian officials have rejected many of the precepts of contemporary world order seeking to replace Western, liberal-democratic ideas with those derived from Russian history and philosophy, especially those which emphasize autonomy, sovereignty, and Russia's inherent right to determine national development priorities and practices.

The major concepts around which the substantive chapters develop – Eurasianism; multipolarity; great power and sovereign democracy – are treated ambiguously within the discourse of academics and Russian officials alike. These concepts contribute to a form of common sense cultivated by Russian officials and are frequently presented in a manner in which their meaning is taken for granted but never fully articulated. These concepts are buried in the text of official Russian state documents and feature prominently in press releases and sound bites offered by Russian officials. Taken together, they comprise a vision of world order in line with Russian aspirations for renewed significance and authority in global affairs. They represent the Kremlin's desire for external legitimacy as well as social solidarity, stability and cohesiveness under the aegis of a mighty state.

While the concepts I have chosen are ambiguous and contested, I have imposed a certain unity on them for analytical purposes. They follow from my intention to demonstrate their polysemic quality, in that they offer some degree of scientific legitimacy while allowing for numerous common-sense interpretations (Jenson, 2010).

Eurasianism and multipolarity have been considered in this work as broad expressions of Russia's geopolitical protest against American hegemony and unipolarity. The Putin regime has seized upon classical and contemporary Eurasianism's deep reservations about the moral, ethical and cultural legitimacy of Western and American hegemony. Multipolarity has been treated in this work broadly as the Russian alternative to American unipolarity and a system comprised of multiple power centers. This is consistent with the Putin regime's general treatment of the notion. However, multipolarity also exhibits a wide array of objective and subjective, existing and potential qualities. I have treated great power as the expression of the desire for a strong Russian state. However, it should also be treated in a thoroughly historicized manner rather than be conceived as a cultural archetype that informs Russian statecraft. In the contemporary period, Russian 'greatness' has therefore reflected the state's development imperatives in an environment of geoeconomic and geopolitical competition. Of all of the concepts, sovereign democracy has proven to be the most ambiguous. While also reflecting national development imperatives, sovereign democracy has been treated by Surkov and the Putin regime as a synthesis of multiple concepts: a master signifier for articulating Russia's right to autonomy in global affairs; a way of valorizing the cultural basis of national political practices; and a way of redirecting Russia's purported cultural tendencies to more productive and industrious ends.

These ideas reflect Russia's emergence from the Soviet system, through a period of disorder and turmoil in the 1990s into a competitive world order in which a combination of geopolitical might and economic competitiveness are prerequisites for well-being in what is perceived to be a hostile global political, economic and security

environment. At the same time, while Putin era Russia has undoubtedly witnessed an improvement in its overall material conditions, it remains imperfectly integrated into the international political economy, over-reliant on the extraction of raw materials and severely uncompetitive in the production of goods. Russia's difficult position in the global political economy is exacerbated by its semi-peripheral status, its imperfect integration and demographic challenges.

I have demonstrated how certain Russian thinkers have perceived Russia's civilizational difference from the West, beginning with the "classic" Eurasianism of the 1920s to the contemporary age. While Eurasianism constitutes a comprehensive, philosophical, cultural, social and, at times, religious doctrine on geographical difference, it resonates in different ways in the post-communist period. On the one hand, it remains a key concept for expressing Russia's civilizational difference with the West and signals the country's unwillingness or inability to seamlessly integrate into an American-led world order. In contemporary parlance, Eurasianism also signifies a commitment to a continental orientation in foreign policy, a turn away from the West and a Russia that serves an integrative if not hegemonic function on the Eurasian continent. While Putin cannot be considered a "Eurasianist" in the robust meaning of the word, the civilizational thinking of Eurasianists continues to colour Russian state discourse and provides Russian officials with a readymade discourse to valorize Russian difference and express dissatisfaction with Western liberal triumphalism. Eurasianism resonates in contemporary Russian state thinking insofar as geopolitical difference remains portrayed as a matter of cultural and moral concern.

I have also sought to spell out Russia's geopolitical position within world order through a theoretical and empirical demonstration of the concept of multipolarity. Multipolarity is a concept whose significance in academic literature and in Russian state discourse is well established. The Putin regime has attempted to construct a multipolar world order and sought to redefine world order in multipolar terms. The significance of multipolarity lies in its emergence as a new form of common sense thinking to rival Western liberal internationalism. The Russian state's treatment of the term reflects its ambiguous status: multipolarity is purported to reflect both an objective state of affairs resulting from the global redistribution of wealth away from the capitalist core and a project that the Russian state would like to implement through its actions and constant advocacy, presumably because it meets their security interests.

Multipolarity has been accorded great significance by Russian politicians, Russian scholars and Western scholars alike. Consistent with the orientation of my dissertation, I have come to see multipolarity as interesting not as an abstract concept but as that which has been utilized by Russian officials to somehow capture or exemplify Russia's desired conception of world order. Geopolitics may have at its basis material calculations of power and influence, but such ideas are conveyed with a sense of moral purpose and in a form that is palatable to a wider audience, as the usage of the concept of multipolarity demonstrates. Advocating for a democratic multipolarity is Russian officials' way of embedding a common sense thinking about global affairs and the natural state of affairs that is to succeed American unipolarity. It is at once an emerging, objective condition, a moral imperative, and a project to be implemented to ensure global security and governability. The cultural correlate to a multipolar world – that is, that which a

multipolar world order protects and sanctifies – is the notion of cultural and civilizational diversity. In a manner similar to past and present Eurasianist scholars, the Russian state expresses geopolitical concerns through the language of civilization, morality and culture.

Likewise, appeals to great power status are replete throughout the Putin era. And although we may understand the Putin regime's frequent references to great power status as a lamentation on the bygone era of Soviet might as Russia suffers diminished status and influence in the global political arena, I have argued that it is helpful to conceive of Russia's great power pursuits as a manifestation of common sense thinking about contemporary world order. Great power is a frequently-employed and oft-occurring intersubjective idea about Russia's place in contemporary world order and the very imprecision with which it is used suggests that it is somewhat of an empty vessel to be filled with whatever criteria Russian officials, commentators and academics ascribe to it.

Great power as a concept sits somewhat uncomfortably between the material and ideational. On the one hand, it is said to exemplify Russia's return as a viable actor in contemporary global affairs with increased economic and military clout. On the other hand, there are no clear criteria for what constitutes a great power. Furthermore, the pursuit of great power status entails a desire for recognition by the Russian state from other would-be great powers. As I have shown, it also carries with it many cultural connotations coming from Russian intellectual traditions. I have argued that it is useful to conceive of great power in terms of Putin's modern development imperative. Viewed in such a light, great power ceases to be simply a cultural artifact or endemic quality of Russian statecraft but rather that which must be activated and reactivated to ensure Russia's greater competitiveness in the global political economy. Far from being simply

an historical archetype, the elements of which the Putin regime reproduces due to culturally predetermined proclivities, Russian greatness is invoked in the service of the Putin regime's attempts to build a modern and competitive political economy.

Great power is therefore a notion whose malleability and persistence suggests its continuing ideological function. As I have demonstrated, it has functioned as a means by which Russia's global aspirations are articulated, serving as a sort of common sense thinking about Russia's role in contemporary world order. I acknowledge that connotations of cultural and civilizational distinctiveness remain within pronouncements of Russia's great power status; however, I assert that a critical political economy perspective is better served by considering how cultural motifs are utilized to serve the imperatives of state-capitalist growth, accumulation and the creation of general sociability and productivity. Members of the Putin regime have linked the notion of great power with the promise of social development under the aegis of a powerful, sovereign state, while nonetheless utilizing a number of "tools" consistent with the social investment imperatives of other states.

A multipolar, if not multicivilizational, world order comprised of great powers is the external condition that serves as a correlate to Russia's pursuit of sovereign democracy and sovereign development. Multipolarity may be considered as the international principle foregrounded by the Russian state so as to preserve the integrity of the sovereign democracy paradigm on a global level. Furthermore, for the Russian state, sovereign democracy represents a need to pursue and speak about a multipolar world order in which sovereign states need not follow the dictates of the American hegemon,

instead pursuing their own purportedly culturally and historically appropriate model of development.

It is not uncommon for Western pundits and scholars to argue that after the brief interregnum of the Yeltsin years, during which Russia moved closer to the Western camp in its pursuit of liberal-democratic norms, the Putin years signified a return to the more recognizable and enduring elements of Russian political culture (see Kuchins, 2009). In this line of argumentation, peculiarly Russian features, including authoritarian and centralized features of the Russian state, are derived from history, geography, culture and religion, deemed perennial and explicitly manifested in the Putin era. Against the cultural determination inherent in such arguments, I have sought to understand how elements of Russian political culture have been utilized by the Putin regime as a means of articulating Russia's domestic political order, particularly the defence of "statist" tendencies – the involvement of the state in multiple spheres of Russian social and economic life and the presence of a centralized and powerful state. I have argued that the Putin regime has selectively referred to Russian cultural tendencies as a means to consolidate Russian identity in a manner that is consistent with its objectives to consolidate the Russian political system and develop the Russian political economy. The Putin regime's appeals to cultural motifs do not merely constitute musings on the timeless qualities of Russian political culture. Instead, appeals to Russian cultural tendencies comprise the wedge used by the Putin system to advocate productivity, innovation and modernization to the Russian citizen.

A particular form of modernization and the preservation of a statist orientation to governing converge in the concept of sovereign democracy, a concept that is most

forcibly articulated by Vladislav Surkov. The sovereign democracy argument consists of a double move in which Russia first asserts its right to pursue its own unique social, economic and political system and that this in fact is what all nations do. Russia may be unique in the nature of its sovereign democracy, but normal insofar that it is simply pursuing self-determination. According to this argument, Russian particularity should therefore be seen as particularity amongst equals, all of whom ought to be insulated from the corrosive tendencies of expansionist nativist ideologies, including that of liberal democracy.

2. Reflections, Possible Criticisms and Future Directions

In this work I have brought critical scrutiny and a larger cultural component to the critical IPE literature through the lens of Russia. My objective in doing so was to address the historical phenomenon of Russia's arduous and conflict ridden post-communist transition into contemporary critical IPE thinking. I hope that this project is helpful in addressing what I perceive to be a lacuna in critical IPE literature whereby the ideational, intersubjective and cultural aspects of contemporary transitions to capitalism are dismissed or underexplored.

It may appear to some that for a work that acknowledges the significance of a broadly conceived historical materialist scholarship, this dissertation lacks a robust and consistent Marxist lexicon. There are good reasons for this. I have conceived of this work not as Marxist but offering a Coxian-inspired critical historicist orientation. I shy away from offering an overtly Marxist interpretation nonetheless acknowledging the emancipatory potential inherent in much Marxist scholarship.

I have sought to develop a strand in the Coxian tradition that is more overtly concerned with intersubjective ideas. While I would refrain from calling my approach historical idealism (Germain, 2007), I nonetheless acknowledge that human consciousness is not reducible to material, economic bases but instead intertwined with material structures in complex, sometimes contradictory, and historically contingent ways. While my focus has been on uncovering the ideas that contribute to alternative Russian understandings of world order, I believe that work on Russian social forces and the contemporary Russian social formation can fruitfully build on this dissertation. This work should include an investigation on how progressive Russian social forces and scholars have attempted to reconcile their skepticism of the Putin phenomenon with a distaste for American hegemony and neoliberalism.

Focusing on ideas associated with world order in this dissertation has precluded me from probing deeper into the relationship between Russian state and society. Furthermore, such a focus has precluded me from further exploring the role of social forces in Russian society and what I assume to be their complex and contradictory relations with the Russian state. While I engage with neo-Gramscian scholarship in this dissertation, I depart from the neo-Gramscian understanding of state as political plus civil society. I have referred to the Russian state largely as political authority, headed by the president and comprised of those supportive of his declared vision of Russia in world order. While I recognize that this is somewhat reminiscent of Weberian historical sociology, the move is done out of methodological necessity. For the sake of this dissertation, I have been primarily curious about the role that the Russian state has played

as a socializing force, and how it has sought to manufacture stability and consent in a period of profound social, economic and political transformations.

My preference for future research is to explore in greater detail the link between this Russian political state and the vast complex of civil society institutions, economic elites, the Russian Orthodox Church, think tanks, technocratic experts, bureaucratic fractions and the media, but such a project is overly ambitious for a dissertation. In other words, an investigation that more conscientiously addresses the multitudinous state-society relationships, as well as state practices of support and co-optation of social forces, would be a reasonable development from the present work.

I have provided what is to my mind only a broad sketch of the material parameters of the Russian political economy's position within the contemporary global political economy: resource dependency, uncompetitive manufacturing, and state forms of ownership and control. I have portrayed Russian statism partly as a defensive response to prevent Russia from occupying an inferior position within the international division of labour. Consistent with its strategy of multipolarity, Russia will likely continue to politicize the BRICs framework as a means to press for greater inclusion in global political decision and mute criticism of its internal political order (Roberts, 2010). This depiction, however, does not do full justice to the role of foreign capital in Russia, the place of Russian capital internationally, or the complex relationship between Russian capitalists and state officials (on the latter point, see Volkov, 2008). An investigation into national and international bases of accumulation for "Russian" capital is needed. Furthermore, an extended analysis of the contradictions within Russia's modernization debate from 2009 to the present would be a useful undertaking. Extending all of these

lines of inquiry would be helpful to further elaborate on Russia's material position in world order and the contradictions within the Russian social formation. Such an analysis would complement and possibly challenge prevailing interpretations on "official" Russia's position in foreign policy matters.

Furthermore, the complex relation between the Russian state and former Soviet republics has admittedly received insufficient attention in this work. The Russian state's attempts to exert hegemony over geopolitically contested areas along its periphery require a better understanding, as such efforts no longer exemplify the practices of a formal empire (see Tsygankov, 2006). The present work can be elaborated upon to develop an investigation into Russian state practices into its periphery, particularly Central Asia and the Caucasus, which may proceed along the following lines: the Russian state's role in energy production, transit and sale; the articulation of cultural and historical affinities in Russia's claimed sphere of interest; and the use of direct coercion and force. Such an investigation would tell us much about the new geopolitical, geopolitical and geocultural fault lines in contemporary world order.

The extent to which Russia is "Russifying" World Bank and IMF discourse is a meaningful one and should be pursued in future research. Furthermore, a more detailed examination of the Russian case and where the national political economy fits within various "stages" of neoliberalism is warranted, although beyond the scope of this study.¹ This work can also be developed fruitfully in the context of broader debates about global neoliberalism. During this dissertation, I was admittedly preoccupied with demonstrating the "diachronic" aspect of Russia's transition from state socialism to an uneasy place within a broadly capitalist, US-dominated world order. In this trajectory, I have

suggested that Putinism is a form of a Russian third way meant to reconcile the divisions between liberal/democratic, statist and anti-systemic forces in Russian society; encourage a state-capitalist sociability; and place Russia on a path to a broadly conceived market economy. Another useful approach to understanding the Russian state in the contemporary global political economy is an extended consideration of global policy discussions on neoliberalism and post-neoliberalism in light of Russia's particular historical trajectory from powerful, state-socialist empire to a "normal," albeit powerful, state in the global political economy. Furthermore, an investigation into the extent to which we may consider contemporary Russian social policy as neoliberal in nature or otherwise is certainly warranted.

Unquestionably, my lack of fluency in the Russian language has informed, and limited the scope of, this work. For example, I was precluded from consulting a greater array of sources. This is particularly noticeable in my treatment of Eurasianism. At the time of this writing, only one of Gumilyov's major works that I deem relevant to this study has been translated into English. None of Panarin's has been. Dugin is the most frequently cited Eurasianist in contemporary English language literature: for this reason, debates about Eurasianism in English-language scholarship often take a sensationalist hue. Regrettably, I cannot with ease follow the debates of Russian academics.

Nonetheless, I have sought to mitigate the effect that a lack of fluency may have by situating the work within IPE and IR, which have no disciplinary prerequisites for language. My primary theoretical engagement is with English language scholarship on world order and global capitalism, and this is the broad body of scholarship to which I wish to contribute. Furthermore, I have consulted Russian authors and experts translated

into English and a number of works produced by the Russian state itself. This suggests to me that a “Russian perspective” is somewhat accounted for. Nonetheless, a conceivable extension of this work may be found in a more comprehensive treatment of Russian debates, for example those found in journals such as *Russia in Global Affairs*. While I have accounted for considerable material from this journal in the present work, a systematic and genealogical analysis of the debates internal to this journal would provide a finer-grained analysis of the disagreements and fault lines within Russian public academics’ positions on world order.

The accessibility or inaccessibility of Russian perspectives prompts a more relevant question: the extent to which a researcher can ever adequately know or understand a culture of which he or she is not part for a significant period of time. While I am critical of positivist methodologies for abstracting away from human communities in their attempts to recognize complex historical changes, I acknowledge that to do otherwise presents a challenge to any external researcher short of the committed anthropologist. To the best of my abilities, I have consciously attempted to “get inside” of Russian ideas without holding them to the standard of Western liberal democracy. Yet, such ideas are derived from practices, history and contemporary social struggles to which I can only be an outsider.

Nonetheless, I have approached Russian ideas as having something significant to say about Western-led world order in the contemporary period. I have come to this work with a healthy skepticism towards the intentions of Western liberal democracies in global political and economic life. I am conscious of the manner in which Western liberal and democratic ideas can serve to legitimize less noble economic and political imperatives.

Be they from the Russian state or otherwise, lamentations from multiple Russian sources on aggressive Western practices masquerading as liberation have long resonated with me for this reason.

My critical orientation leaves me concerned about social inequalities in post-Soviet Russia and the prospects for coercive power from both state and market. This dissertation is far from an apology for Russian state practice during the Putin era. However, I acknowledge the profound difficulties Russian state and society have experienced in attempting to restore Russian state capacity, develop representative public institutions and forge a post-Soviet order in which Russian citizens have material necessities, social peace and social stability. It is hoped here that Russian efforts for national well-being and a functioning and broadly legitimate political and social order are realized, although I hesitate to offer any prognostications or prescriptions as to what this might or ought to look like.

Finally, it is hoped here that Russian lamentations about universal liberalism and American hegemony, be they stemming from the Russian state or otherwise, can serve as a reminder to us in the West who in many ways have long acclimated to the rule of capital and whose representative political institutions, while signifying important historical achievements born of social struggle and contestation, are far from mere technocratic fixes for those on the periphery of global capitalism and threatened, alienated or dislocated by its advance.

¹ The literature that deals explicitly on contemporary global and national social policy is divided on the question of whether such policy represents: a new form of “roll-out” neo-liberalism, whereby the negative externalities of 1980s retrenchment efforts necessitated new active forms of social intervention to subject populations to market discipline (Peck & Tickell, 2002); the exhaustion of neoliberalism and its

replacement by a “social investment perspective,” which prioritizes economic participation and productivity (Jenson, 2010); the increased rhetoric of social inclusion as a legitimizing face of neoliberalism (Porter & Craig, 2004); or a proliferation of broadly liberal responses across different national contexts (“intrusive liberalism,” which is reminiscent of neoliberal’s emphasis on individualism and low-state involvement); “inclusive liberalism,” which emphasizes human and community capital developments; and “revitalizing social citizenship,” which envisions a greater role for the state in redistribution [Mahon & Macdonald, 2010; see also Mahon, 2010]).

Appendices

Appendix A

Timeline

This timeline is derived in part from Tsygankov, 2010 and Shevtsova, 2007.

1991

July: Warsaw Act is disbanded

August: Coup against Gorbachev occurs

December: Russia, Ukraine and Belarus establish the Commonwealth of Independent States

Gorbachev resigns as president of the USSR.

1992

May: Russia signs the CIS Collective Security Treaty and joins the IMF and World Bank.

1993

September 21st: Yeltsin announces Decree N1 400, disbanding the Russian parliament and introducing presidential rule. Vice President Alexander Rutskoi and Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov lead parliament in disobeying this directive.

October 3rd and 4th: Yeltsin dismantles parliament with the use of tanks and the leaders of the opposition are imprisoned.

December 12th: Russia holds elections to the new parliament (State Duma) and a referendum on the new constitution, which introduces super-presidentialism to the Russian Federation.

1994

April 20th: The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is created, cementing a Russian led effort to form a post-Soviet security alliance.

December 1st: The first Chechen war begins as Russian troops enter Chechnya.

1995

July 29th and 30th: An agreement for the peaceful settlement of the Chechen conflict is signed, although soon to be violated by both sides.

August: NATO launches airstrikes against Bosnian Serbs after the shelling of Sarajevo; Russian-Western relationship deteriorates.

1996

January 9th: Yevgeni Primakov is the new foreign minister, replacing Andrei Kozyrev.

February 1st-6th: Organized by Boris Berezovsky, Russian oligarchs meet in Davos and the World Economic Forum and decide to aid Yeltsin in his efforts at reelection.

Spring: Yeltsin strikes a deal with oligarchs: “loans for shares” is initiated.

June-July: Yeltsin emerges victorious after two rounds of presidential elections.

1997

April: Russia and China sign “Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and the Formation of a New International Order.”

May 12th: The first Chechen war officially ends with the signing of a peace treaty between Yeltsin and Chechen general Aslan Maskhadov.

May 22nd: Yeltsin and Belarusian President Lukashenko sign the charter of union between Russia and Belarus.

1998

May 16th-17th: Russia officially becomes a member of the G8.

Summer: Russian financial crisis. The IMF and World Bank issue credit to Russia.

August 17th: Russia experiences financial collapse and default.

September: Primakov becomes prime minister.

1999

March 17th: Vladimir Putin is appointed the new secretary of the Security Council.

March: NATO forces launch air strikes against Serbia. While en route to Washington, now Prime Minister Primakov turns around midflight, returning to Moscow to protest U.S. actions against Serbia.

March 19th: The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland become NATO members in the first NATO enlargement after the end of the Cold War.

May: Sergei Stepashin assumes the post of prime minister, replacing Primakov.

August 16th: Vladimir Putin is confirmed as the new prime minister.

September 30th: The second Chechen war begins as Russian troops enter Chechnya

December 14th: Putin is appointed by Yeltsin as his successor.

December 31st: Yeltsin leaves the presidential post.

2000

January 10th: New Concept of National Security is adopted by Russia.

March 26th: Putin is elected President of the Russian Federation.

May 13th: Seven super-regions (*okrugs*) are created by Putin, which are to be governed by presidential representatives. This would come to be widely regarded as the first of many moves to establish Putin's "power vertical."

June 13th: Oligarch and media baron Vladimir Gusinsky is arrested.

November: New state symbols are created and the Soviet anthem returns (with new lyrics).

2001

April 3rd: NTV, once owned by Gusinsky and widely regarded as the most powerful independent television channel, ends.

April 12th: United Russia is created through a merger of "Unity" and "Fatherland" parties.

June 15th: The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is created.

Fall: Putin offers assistance to Bush after the September 11th attacks and cooperates with the United States in its preparations for war in Afghanistan.

December 13th: The United States withdraws from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, a treaty which was widely considered in Russian circles as the cornerstone of Russian strategic stability and security.

2002

Summer: Washington praises Russian-US relations as "the best in history."

May 28th: The NATO-Russia Council is formed.

2003

February-March: U.S.-Russian relations are complicated by differing approaches to the Iraq war. The U.S. invades Iraq on March 19th.

October: Anatoli Chubais, the head of Russia's state electrical company, states that Russia's main priority is to build a "liberal empire" in the former USSR.

October 25th: Mikhail Khodorkovsky, CEO of Yukos, is arrested.

November 22nd-23rd: The Rose Revolution occurs in Georgia, bringing Mikhail Saakashvili to power.

December 7th: Parliamentary elections occur. Liberal parties are defeated and United Russia wins a majority of the seats.

2004

January 1st: The Stabilization Fund is created in order to sterilize the vast sums of money entering Russia in the midst of higher international energy prices.

March 14th: Putin is reelected to his second term as president in a landslide victory.

March 29th: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia join NATO.

Summer: Khodorkovsky and Group Menatep CEO Platon Lebedev are brought to trial. The Russian government sells Yuganskneftegaz, the largest component of Yukos.

September 26: Putin proposes eliminating the election of governors.

November-January (2005): The Orange Revolution occurs in Ukraine in response to Viktor Yanukovich's initial victory in the November 21st presidential run-off. A revote is mandated by Ukraine's Supreme Court for December 26th. Viktor Yushchenko is declared the victor on January 23rd.

2005

Spring: Pro-Kremlin youth groups are formed with Kremlin assistance (*Nashi, Molodaya Gvardiya, Mestnye*).

March 13th: The Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan brings about the collapse of pro-Kremlin Askar Akayev's regime.

May: Russia supports Uzbekistan's government during the latter's suppression of wide scale rioting.

May 31: Khodorkovsky and Lebedev are convicted and sentenced to nine years in jail.

June: Russia, China and India discuss the prospects of a strategic partnership.

July: The U.S. Congress approves \$85 million in funding to support "Russian democracy."

November 29: CSTO adopts a decision, initiated by Russia, to create a peacekeeping force.

December 29th-January 1st: Gazprom raises the price of gas for Ukraine.

2006

January 12th: The Duma adopts amendments to the Nongovernmental Organizations Law, which severely restricts the activity of NGOs in Russia.

January 22nd: The Public Chamber, a Kremlin-created entity meant to represent Russian civil society, convenes for its inaugural meeting.

October 9th: Gazprom announces its intentions to explore the Shtokman gas field without foreign partners.

October 28th: “A Just Russia,” a moderate left pro-Kremlin party, is created under the leadership of Federation Council speaker Sergei Mironov.

November 12th: A referendum on independence and presidential elections are held in pro-Russian South Ossetia, a Georgian-held territory.

November 23rd: Alexander Litvinenko, a former FSB officer granted asylum in the UK, dies from poisoning by the rare element polonium-210.

2007

February 9th-10th: The Munich Conference on Security Policy is held, during which Putin delivers his notorious “Munich Speech.”

April 26th: Putin threatens to unilaterally suspend Russia’s compliance with the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty unless NATO members ratify the agreement.

July 17th: Russia declares a moratorium on its compliance with the CFE Treaty.

2008

February: The Stabilization Fund is split into the Reserve Fund and a National Welfare Fund.

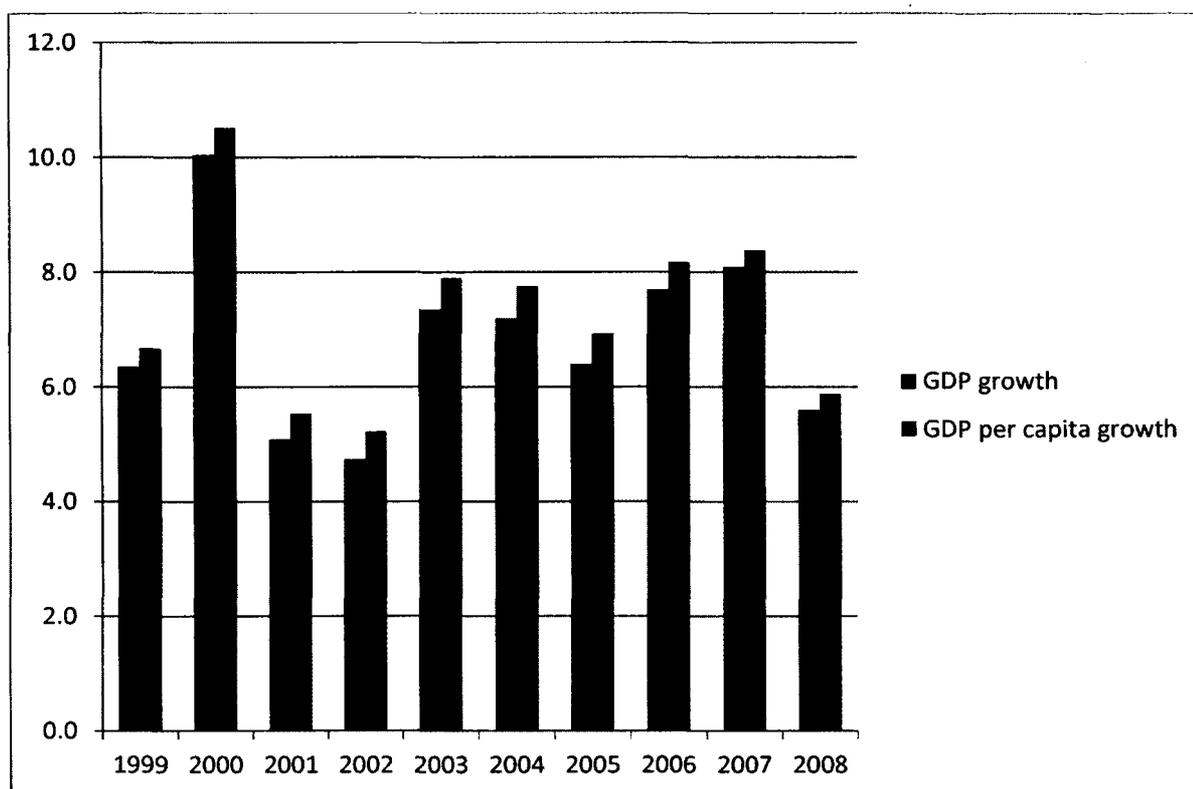
March: Dmitriy Medvedev is elected president.

April: Russia blocks Georgia and Ukraine from pursuing NATO’s Membership Action Plan.

August: Russia-Georgia War.

Appendix B

Russian GDP growth, 1999—2008



	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
GDP Growth	6.3	10	5.1	4.7	7.3	7.2	6.4	7.7	8.1	5.6
GDP Per Capita Growth	6.7	10.5	5.5	5.2	7.9	7.8	6.9	8.2	8.4	5.9

Average GDP growth, per annum, 1999-2008= 6.9 % Per capita = 7.3 %

Derived from OECD, 2009, p. 21

Appendix C

Russian External Public Debt, as a percentage of GDP

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
58.4	76.0	49.5	36.2	30.2	24.6	17.8	10.7	4.9	3.6	2.0

Derived from OECD, 2009, p. 24.

Appendix D

Russian current account surplus and reserves, in US dollars (billions)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Current Account Surplus	35.4	58.6	84.2	95.6	76.6	102.3
Reserves (Including gold)	76.9	124.5	182.2	303.7	476.4	427.1

2003 – 2007 Derived from World Bank, 2008, p. 3

2008 Derived from World Bank, 2009, p. 2

Appendix E

Military spending

Figures are in US \$m., at constant 2008 prices and exchange rates

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2008*
Russia	21800	29700	33000	36600	39000	40600	44200	48400	52500	58300	267
United States	363170	377228	380271	426982	485975	529673	554930	563549	578340	616073	170
Brazil	18049	19550	22531	22947	18306	19021	20581	21310	22983	23302	129
China	29400	31200	38400	44400	48500	53100	59000	68800	77900	86200	293
India	21198	21874	22636	22566	23070	26773	28295	28465	28866	32334	153
Japan	47150	47496	48009	48496	48596	48225	47888	47347	47124	46296	98
Germany	52331	51487	50646	50790	50095	48557	47798	46695	46740	46759	89
France	63434	62707	62496	63779	65716	67520	66096	66449	66673	66009	104

*as percentage of 1999

Source for Appendix E: Compiled from the database at www.sipri.org on December 13, 2010

Appendix F

Military spending as percentage of GDP

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Russia	3.4	3.7	4.1	4.4	4.3	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.5
United States	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.4	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.3
Brazil	1.7	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
China	1.9	1.8	2	2.1	2.1	2	2	2	2	2
India	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.6
Japan	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	.9	.9
Germany	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.3
France	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.3

Source for Appendix E: Compiled from the database at www.sipri.org on December 13, 2010

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