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The Issue of Russian Identity

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Introduction

In my research, I will study identity of Russia, its national identity and their meaning for international politics. I also aim to show that identity is important in state construction.

First, I would like to mention that an issue of identity is quite important as it provides certain characteristics of state. It describes state and resolves questions of state identification. It characterizes state in the context of other states. Besides, it constructs an idea of state.

Hopf states that identities are necessary in international politics in order to ensure some level of predictability and order. A world without identities is a world of chaos, a world of uncertainty. Identities perform necessary functions in a society: they tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are. A state understands others according to the identity it attributes to them, and reproduces its own identity (Hopf 1998: 174).

In constructivism, identity is an important creative factor. Identity plays an important role in the world politics. Identities are produced by interactions, institutions, norms and cultures. Identities are important for the construction of the state (Wendt 1992).

Understanding how identities are constructed, what norms and practices accompany their reproduction, and how they construct each other is a major part of the constructivist research program. Constructivism assumes, a priori, that identities are potentially part of the constitutive practices of the state, and so, productive of its

actions at home and abroad. Different states behave differently towards other states, based on the identities of each (Hopf 1998, 174).

Identity of state in international politics is quite important as it characterizes state internally and internationally. Every identity brings in itself a certain knowledge about the state, its internal and external issues, as well as state behavior. Russian state has its peculiar role in the world. It is a huge power, which has its specific national identity and which occupies special position in the world order. To see Russia's development in history, it has undergone many changes, and during the history the state identity of Russia was formed. Dramatic changes, which characterized all the history of Russian Empire were significant and reflected a strong nature of Russian state. Its position in the world order defines Russian state as a global power.

On the other hand, national identity of Russia is very strong. It is based on hundreds years of history, culture and traditions. National identity together with language, traditions, culture, is main characteristic of Russian nation and forms the basis of its self-definition. Russian national identity has therefore certain spiritual and materialistic soil which includes also culture and politics of state. National identity of Russia has main identification character.

Russian identity is very unique in Western civilization. Its peculiarities lie within historical development and its specific features in comparison to Western civilization in general. Russian identity has its own value and is motivated by internal factors, as well as by external factors, for example in the context of the EU, by other neighboring states and world politics. As far as we go further, Russia becomes more developed and interconnected in the world and West. In the context of constructivism, it will sound as a state construction, and a theoretically approved fact.

In case of geopolitics, Russia is in strategic position, in the centre of Eurasia. It is divided with Ural mountains into European and Asian parts. It is a country with huge natural resources, including oil, gas and gold.

Another important issue is Russian Orthodoxy, which influences Russian state and culture, as well as it forms the Russian identity from its side. Phrases like "81% of Russians identify themselves as Orthodox", "To be Russian is to be Orthodox", "The special contribution of Orthodoxy to the history of Russia is the development of Russia's spirituality" are significant. Special status of Orthodoxy over all other religious traditions in Russia is stated. On the other hand the alternatives to the future of Orthodox church are presented, for example, removing the church from the direct participation in politics, as well as keeping the state separated from the church. Thus the place of the church and other religious organizations is challenged in Russia.

The search for Russian national identity is an important trend. Russians have easily identified with standard, dominant Russian cultures - be they Russian Orthodox, Russian Imperial or Russian Soviet. It was other peoples of the empire, in particular Moslem and Western Christian (Roman Catholic and Protestant), who had problems. This is why during hundreds years Russians did not have very strong ethnic identity, whereas their many non-Russian neighbors did. However, this has been changing lately (Ponarin 1999).

Russian national identity has been an important issue especially during the rule of Putin. There is a certain trend towards strengthening a prestige and national self-identity of state. The problem of identity of Russia has been quite actual during the last 15 years and it is connected with the problem of balance of power. New identity of Russia is formed, but there is some uncertainty. Russia is undergoing important changes in politics and it is considered to be a powerful, but quite unpredictable nation.

Official point of view by Igor Ivanov (2001) is that Russia's foreign policy is based on national interests rather than political ideology. He says, Russia believes that the settlement of international problems on a collective basis in strict accordance with the rules of international law will become a fundamental principle of Russian system. The scope of Russia's activities is expanding to include international cooperation aimed at responding to new global threats and challenges (Ivanov 2001: 12-13).

By reflecting its interests in the world politics, Russian state constitutes to the world order of states. It has its specific identity and behavior, therefore it signifies its important role in the world and makes a commitment to world political composition and behavior. Second, ideas and behavior are important in shaping International Relations, and Russia behaves accordingly to international rules.

In my paper, I am going to study the identity of Russia. I will mostly concentrate on how Russia formed its identity in the past and in the present, and I will question, why it is so important to identify Russia as a nation. I will look closer on Russia's history. Besides, I will make a brief description between the view of Russian identity introduced by Russian, as well as Western scholars, who reflect ideas about Russian identity, and I will examine these issues.

Question of identity is quite important because it touches historical, geopolitical and other aspects. Therefore, I will consider these aspects and place them as the most important in the formation of Russian identity. I will use a theory of constructivism to show, how the identity is formed in the aspect of states formation and in the wider context, including the identity of Russia as a peculiar phenomenon in history. My paper will also include the brief observation of the history of Russia, of Russian identity nowadays and the analysis of the official position of Russia in politics. I will therefore examine national specifics, as well as traditions of Russia. Formation of Russian identity is a challenging topic for me. Besides, I will base my research on

other sources of formation of national identity, including views of most well-known Russian politicians.

I see the subject of my study up to date, because of the search of Russian identity nowadays. Due to some changes in the internal and external politics of Russia, it brought some changes in the order of states, as well as it influenced the identity of Russia, the way how the other states see Russian nation, and how the identity in Russia is formed.

I find it an interesting topic because of the constructivist theoretical implications. It is important to see Russia in the context of state formation, in the context of other states, and to see which role does Russia plays in the world politics. It is also important to understand the process, which determines the manner in which Russia interacts. It is interesting, because throughout the history, geopolitics determined Russia's stand in the world, determined its behavior, as well as provided a good economical ground for development.

Methodology

In my research, the main emphasis is on the method, which I am going to use. The main aim is to see how it can be applied in my work, and what generalizations it may bring with it. The *empirical method* which I am going to use in my research is generally meant as the collection of a large amount of data on which to base a theory or derive a conclusion in science. I will use this research method as a class of research methods in which empirical observations or data are collected in order to answer particular research questions. I will start with some priori theories, which I will develop to try to explain and/or predict what happens in the real world.(Moody, 2002) The purpose of the research is to test the theory and possibly refine it. The research questions that I will ask are concerned mainly on what the identity of Russia is, and

how it is viewed by Western and Russian scholars. I will define a theory of constructivism, and apply it to my research question to prove its validity.

I tried to observe some material which explains the main theory on my topic. For example, according to Manheim, the most effective way to find an accurate answer to a research question is to employ established methods of empirical research to investigate the relationships we see in the world. Transforming our general research question into one or several specific ones requires developing some plausible explanations for what we observe.(Manheim 2002:14) One of the first problems in research is to devise ways of getting from the abstract level of our questions to some concrete observation that will allow us to answer them (ibid.:51). When we attempt to create possible explanations for events, we are theorizing or developing a theory. Theory building is the first stage in the research process and why it is essential that we understand the relationship between theory and research (ibid.:15). In my paper, I will question some theories, for example, constructivism, and on its basis, I will try to explain some developments of Russian state and identity. The theory which I am going to develop is the one which will seek the answer to the question: Is there Russian identity? What is Russian identity? What are the values of Russian identity? Where did it come from? My theoretical part will be discussed later on in the work. I aim to show the significance of the research question from the view of IR theory, constructivism. Therefore, I will explain some issues on behalf of my concern of a theory, and will write on the topic of construction of an identity from a theoretical perspective. Later on, I will see how the issue is seen in the eyes of scholars and politicians, as well as I will apply theoretical views on the issues of Russian identity and nation-building, answering the question of construction of identity.

The quest for useful theory begins with the decisions we make about the building blocks of theories: concepts. I will use concepts to observe my theory and give a concrete analysis of my work. I will base my study primarily on concepts, which will represent some idea. First, since we are involved in empirical inquiry the concept must refer to phenomena that are at least potentially observable. This does not mean that all concepts must refer to directly observable things. Some of the most useful

concepts in the social sciences refer to properties we cannot observe directly. (Manheim 2002: 22). Useful concepts have theoretical import. A concept has theoretical import when it is related to enough other concepts in the theory that it plays an essential role in the explanation of observed events (ibid.:23). My concept of this work is to try to explain main questions of Russian identity, how it was established, and how it seen nowadays by Russian and Western scholars, as well as to see how this concept was developed and discussed by Russian politicians in time in Russia, and what kind of perspective I see on the basis of their ideas. My concept is to give significance to the issue of Russian identity, to enlighten it and to give my own ideas in the work. The most significant part is to discuss how the idea is constructed, and to analyze those parts of material, which have been presented. I will try to do a research based on the material, which can be very useful in creating certain concepts and theories, and I will later try to explain, why these, or that sources I found the most valuable and interesting.

I will use a theory testing which is at the center of the research process. Manheim says that because theories are generally developed from bits of knowledge about actual relationships, the tasks of theory testing are essentially those of using the theory to formulate some expectations about other relationships we have not observed and then checking to see whether actual relationships we have already observed, because showing that the theory leads us to expect the very relationships the theory was built to explain would be no test at all. (Manheim 2002: 25) I will use my research material to analyze all the distinctive features of my research question, and will try to put them in order which is will describe all the phenomena of a theory. By doing this, I will observe all the material which is important in my research question, and will make conclusions of those parts of my work which will be the most interesting in categorizing and framing a theory.

Theories, as sets of concepts, assumptions, and propositions, are never finally proved or disproved (ibid, 2002: 26). Theory elaboration is based largely on a process of comparing hypothesized conditions with reality and, once we have results, modifying our theory so that hypotheses that can be derived from it are more and more consistent

with what we observe. (ibid.) I will have a bunch of considerations in my work, which I will choose to be the most significant ones, the ones that will reflect my research question, and the ones that I will consider important. However, I will try to consider those parts of my work which I will later use for theory elaboration, and I will compare theories to describe the phenomenon of Russian identity in the real world.

Selection of an appropriate research method is critical to success of any research project, and must be driven by the research question and the state of knowledge in the area being studied. In general, a combination of research methods may be most effective in achieving a particular research objective.(Moody 2002) In my work, the most important thing will be distinguishing, how the theory works, and how it can be used in my paper to explain phenomenon. The empirical research method in my work will include the research of materials from books, and Internet. I decided not to do an interview type of work, because all the generalizations made during the interviews were already analyzed by scholars before me, and I will present these views on the basis of their researches. However, I have chosen, in my opinion, the most significant observations, and views, to be able to describe the phenomenon of Russian identity from the angle which I find interesting.

In my work, I will use positivism, as well as interpretivism, or the qualitative approach, is a way to gain insights through discovering meanings by improving our comprehension of the whole. The underlying assumption of interpretivism is that the whole needs to be examined in order to understand a phenomena. Interpretivism is critical of the positivism because it seeks to collect and analyze data from parts of a phenomena and, in so doing, positivism can miss important aspects of a comprehensive understanding of the whole. Interpretivism proposes that there are multiple realities, not single realities of phenomena, and that these realities can differ across time and place.

Chapter I. Theoretical Implications

I.1. Identity in Constructivism

Constructivism offers alternative understandings of number of central themes in international relations theory, including: the meaning of anarchy and balance of power, relationship between state identity and interest, and prospects for change in world politics. Constructivism assumes that actors and structures mutually constitute each other; anarchy must be interpreted to have meaning; state interest are part of the process of identity construction; power is both material and discursive; and change in world politics is both possible and difficult (Hopf, 1998:171). For constructivists there is no “logic” of anarchy apart from the practices that create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests rather than another; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process. Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. Anarchy is what states make of it (Wendt, 1992:395). Identities are important, then institutions, balance of power, sovereignty etc. These features form state’s identity. Constructivism insight that anarchy is what state makes of it, implies that there are many different understandings of anarchy in the world. To make an example, in history of Russia, there has always been some attempts to organise “revolution from above”. Some were successful. This anarchic type of behaviour inside of state is an example of what Russian state makes of it.

From constructivist’s point of view, identities are necessary in international politics in order to ensure some level of predictability and order. A world without identities is a world of chaos, a world of uncertainty. Identities perform necessary functions in a society: they tell you and others who you are and they tell you who others are. A state understands others according to the identity it attributes to them, and reproduces its own identity. (Hopf, 1998:174). The way Russia sees itself in the world order is a way in which the state is recognised. It plays on the world stage as a power which has its word to say in the world politics. Identity of Russia produced during the history has been re-valued and judged by politicians. Formation of Russian identity on the world scale is state behaviour. The way it behaves is very important for keeping the

world peace and security. Relations with foreign countries is part of behaviour of Russian state. From the perspective of Constructivists, Behaviour, Interests and Identities of the state interact largely with Ideas, Meaning and the Rules in the context of state system. Therefore, what Russian state produces in the context of its political and economic system, and which rules and ideas it applies to the behaviour and interest of state, it forms largely an identity of Russia.

At the same time, Russian identity has been formed throughout the years of history and historical change. Russian state established itself as a strong power, which role in politics was significantly made-up in history, and gained its continuity in Russian modern state. Russian identity has been produced via many factors, for example Russian people, culture, language, historical events, etc. Its great variety of Russian identity as such has been underlined by historians in Russia and the West.

A state identity is formed in a system of states. Hopf assumes that constructivism, while expecting to uncover differences, identities and multiple understandings, still assumes that it can specify a set of conditions under which one can expect to see one identity or another (Hopf, 1998). In this respect, I would propose that throughout the history of Russia, it has formed its behaviour, interests, and actions in the world. It has gone through many changes. On every phase of change, it has formed its position, and therefore Russian identity in the world system. For example, identity of Soviet Union was understood by a Western world as Russia during the existence of the USSR, despite the fact that the Soviet Union was trying hard not to have that identity. European identities were incomplete until they encountered peoples in the Americas and India respectively. The necessity of difference with an other to produce one's own identity is important (Hopf, *ibid.*). On the other hand, to see the identity of Russia more clearly, we must look on its place in the world system. To say that it is Europe, and to choose the way to analyse it from the European perspective, is a way to get to know Russia in common world system. To see it from different perspectives, it means to accept that Russia has its own specific roots which distinguish it from European states. To know that it has deep roots in history and culture, is to make an understanding of what Russia is itself, to recognise its own national self-identity.

Constructivism assumes that the selves or identities of states are a variable; they likely depend on historical, cultural, political, and social context (Hopf, *ibid.*) Constructivism proposes a way of understanding how nationalism, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, and other intersubjectively understood communities, are each involved in an account of global politics. In case of Russia, these factors are very broad. Russia is a multinational state, with the whole variety of ethnicities, religions, communities, etc. Identity gives Russia its variety and a certain superiority.

An equally important part of the intersubjective nature of international relations is the operation of actors within generally accepted patterns for behavior known as norms. Norms define the context in which the action or decision is being made. In constructivist model, norms provide definition to the theoretical anarchy involved in interstate relations and, as reinforced by compliance in action, will help produce predictability and order particularly between actors whose identities include shared norms. Understanding of the identity, norms and context for the other actor or actors involved. Norms provide the closest approximation to what classical theorists call structure. Constructivist reasoning accounts for and depends on information and the power of discourse for validity. Communicated ideas and information largely define identity. Change in a system of identity and norms can be difficult and slow, but the rising power and availability of information clearly demonstrates that change can occur¹. Russia strictly follows the norms, which states oblige to follow. These norms are compounds of state norms inside of the country, and they work also on the international level. They are usually predictable, sometimes not, which worsens Russian attitude in the world system. These are stable norms, which every day signify the same and work for the enrichment of Russian state. When sometimes norms were not followed as in the Soviet Union, Russia has experienced a full number of sanctions, put on by international institutions. Therefore, for the last ten years, Russia has been a good follower of internationally advised rules and was flexible to all restrictions.

¹ <http://www.ndu.edu/library/n2/n005601e.pdf>

Fundamental to constructivism is the proposition that human beings are social beings, and they are human for social relations. Social relations make or construct people-ourselves-into the kind of beings that we are. We make the world that it is.²(Onuf, 1998: 59) Constructivism holds that people make society, and society makes people. This is a continuous, two-way process. Social rules make the process by which people and society constitute each other continuous and reciprocal. Rules make it possible for us to act on behalf of social constructions. Any stable pattern of rules, institutions, and unintended consequences gives society a structure, recognizable as such to any observer.(ibid.: 59) Rules make agents out of individual human beings by giving them opportunities to act upon the world. These acts have material and social consequences, some of them intended and some not.(ibid.: 64) Statements can fully be applied to Russian state. The number of people who live in Russia is very big, therefore, I may say that Russian people as well as Russian ethnicities make up the identity of Russia, as well as society. Russian people have a big say in politics of the state. Every Presidential elections up to 80 percent of people give their vote for a new president of Russia, and show respectfully their partly involvement into the politics of state. People are what makes societies work, and people create their own politics. Social rules as well as rules on behalf of which people behave fully depend on the policies of state, and people are the ones who make this behavior happen. Russia is nowadays a well-structured society, and all the rules applied to people can be recognized as given in a certain structure to a mechanism of rule inside of society. These new rules are quite important in a sense that they bring order to a given society, and they are a source to avoid chaos.

Institutions make people into agents and constitute environment within which agents conduct themselves rationally. While it is always possible, we more commonly think of agents as operating in an institutional context that gives them at least some opportunities for choice. (Onuf; 1998: 61) Institutions such as balance of power,

² Nicholas Onuf “Constructivism: A User’s Manual” in “International Relations in a constructed world” ed. Vendulka Kubalkova, Nicholas Onuf, Paul Kowert, New York , London,1998.

spheres of influence, and treaties are simple because observers can easily pick them out of an institutional environment characterized by a large number of linked rules and related practices. Agents act as observers when they recognize any institutions as such, no matter how complex it is. Scholars often think of international regimes as something that they are alone can see, while agents can see only the simpler institutions making up the regime. International regimes are hard to see because the rules connecting the institutions that make them up tend to be informal (ibid: 71). International society is heteronomously ruled because states exercise their independence under the principle of sovereignty and under a number of commitment-rules granting them rights and duties with respect to each other. One state's independence is a limit on every other's, and all states' agents accept the unintended consequences that result from their many individual choices. (ibid.: 77) Rules and given to Russia a constitution – norms, they provide a basis of sovereignty in Russia. Russia acts in the world on behalf of its democratic system and norms and rules in the society. Anarchy is a condition of rule in which rules are not directly responsible for the way agents conduct their relations.(Onuf; 1998: 63) All arguments work in the modern Russian state. People in Russian state act on behalf of their needs, and are obliged to follow rules in a society. People recognize institutions, and the interdependence which they find, is fully recognized by them. Russian state is an independent state, and its interaction with other states is fully based on respect of sovereignty. If sovereignty is being broken, one can say that the state is weak. There has been the age of Russian perestroika, when anarchy of power was so much in conflict in politics of Russia and people's minds. However, this change occurred, and showed its fruitful results in the new evolving Russian democratic state.

Constructivist position on relation of agents to structures is that they each constitute the other. Simultaneously, agents and structure enable and constrain each other. Relation of constructivism to structuration is complex. Constructivism debt to structuration is plain enough, but the origin and nature of the differences are important. Rules are central to this process because they make people active participants in society, and they give any society its distinctive character (or structure). Rules define agents in terms of structures, and structures in terms of agents. (Gould; 1998: 80) Agents are, or consist of individuals whose acts materially affect the world. Rules

constituting a society define the conditions under which individual may intervene in the world. Rules make individuals into agents by enabling them to act upon the world in which they find themselves. These acts have material and social effects; they make the world what is materially and socially.(ibid.: 81) The rules, due to which Russia lives, are the international rules, which can be applied to citizens of Russian state. Russia is following international codes of rules, and applies these rules to the institutions, as well as citizens of Russia. International rules are difficult to follow, and Russia used to have some problems, due to the difference in the codes of justice. People are those who make it all happen. Citizens are the ones to establish their own rules, and the ones to obey them.

I.2 International Social Structure

Wendt offers the rival claim that state identity is endogenous to structured interaction among states. The structural of state interaction, systemic factors such as interdependence and the transnational convergence of domestic values, and even the manipulation of symbols in the strategic practice of rational agents all contribute to the formation of collective identities.(Gould; 1998: 102) He approaches that the structures of international politics constrain state behavior; the second argues that international structures affect both behavior and identity. In our case, it is both, Russian state is influenced by international structures.

Identity is shaped by structural constrains and incentives. Such arguments de-emphasize the ways the behavior of agents within structures shapes identity. It pays less attention than it might to the active role people and nations play in the fabrication of their own political identities.(Gould; 1998: 103) Constructivism holds that social structure, by itself cannot serve as the basis for a complete account of identity. Agents and their behavior must also be considered. Speaking is doing, and constructivists maintain that social meanings, institutions, and structures are constructed out of practical linguistic rules.(Kowert; 1998: 104) Here, one should say that people are the ones to create their own world, and the politicians who make it all happen right. Here,

the agents, people, contribute to state policies by being active agents in Russian society. Therefore, the agents, people create its own ways within certain structures, social and political, which shape identity of Russian state.

State identities are constituted in and through relation to global economy. However, state identities are neither fixed nor stable and can only be reproduced through reiterative performances in different terrains. For example, the identity of an internationalist welfare state can be performed through the adoption of particular sets of domestic economic policies as against others (such as emphasizing state planning and the building of a strong public sector as against a set of policies that favors disinvestment by the state). While seemingly distinct, practices in these terrains need to be understood as being part of a larger performance of a particular state identity. (Varadarajan; 2004: 323) Here, we might say that Russia contributes to all before mentioned issues including a global economy, where it has a certain, not the last one position. It is a part of G-8, which decides global problems of the world, such as fight against terrorism and so on. It works on these issues together with some other states, therefore it is a part of a peace economic dialogue. Russia's state's economic and political attitude is introduced every Summit of G-8, and it's state identity, therefore, is showed and not neglected.

Wendt conflates two processes. The constitution of identity in relation to difference does not mean that the constitution of identity necessarily involves the agency and discourse of outsiders, but that it presupposes the existence of alternative identities. A second way in which liberal constructivists downplay the role of difference in identity constitution is by arguing that some state identities, such as democratic, are type identities that involve minimal interaction with 'others', and represent characteristics that are 'intrinsic to the actors', such that 'a state can be democratic all by itself'. In this case, Russia has a big stand in the world politics, and it is an active player. Only 'role' identities, such as enemy, friend, or rival are relational and require the existence of an 'other' state. While it is true that democracy describes a state's internal system of rule and all states may become democratic if they fulfill the socially constituted criteria, democracy as an identity is constituted in relation to difference in two senses:

first, its existence as an identity presupposes the conceptual possibility of non-democracy. Second, in a world where diverse regimes can claim to be democracies and the representativeness and accountability of democratic regimes are internally questioned, the ‘performance’ of a democratic identity entails the discursive differentiation of the ‘fully’ and ‘truly’ democratic self from the ‘inadequately’ and ‘falsely’ democratic other. (Rumelili; 2004). This exists in Russia’s democracy and state behavior. Russia can be seen to have several identities, especially when the formation of the state took place in 1990s. It had its own type of behavior oriented towards newly emerging states. It saw them partly false democratic. Behavior towards the West was different. However, nowadays, Russian state has emerged as newly democratic. Its behavior is to act upon the norms established in the international system, as well as to preserve its own new democratic state identity. State is forming its own identity in time in the world. Construction of this identity is quite important in the world as well for Russia itself, because due to this identity, Russia is accepted in the world.

International social structure represents relatively stable and regularized configurations of rules and roles across the international system (or subsystems). Structures are both regulative and constitutive. They provide understandings (particular types of information), incentives, and constraints for certain behavior (thus shaping and shoving action based on a “logic of consequences”), but also help define (“constitute”) the identities and interests of actors and establish behavioral norms (thereby contributing to action based on a “logic of appropriateness” rooted in social roles and rules). Structure is not a static thing, it is a dynamic product of interaction between agents (it is constantly being produced, reproduced, and transformed by social processes). That said, the more stable a given structure is over time, and the more its components are internalized by agents (that is, treated as “taken for granted” aspects of an “external objective reality”), the more a structure is “institutionalized” and the more resistant it will be to change (i.e., the more it will create “path dependence”). (Rumelili, 2004) Russian state follows rules and norms in the international system. It also develops its own behavior on the international level. Its structure brings in itself a particular set of norms and rules established by state. State is the structure which helps to provide interaction within the system, and Russian state

behaves accordingly to these rules and provides a framework to an institutionalized community. States act on behalf of their interests, and provide consequences of their interests. State preserves its own democratic state identity, and as a result, state establishes its certain position on the state level.

In sum, for Constructivists, agents and structures are co-determined or “mutually constituted.” Structures emerge from the interactions between agents at time “t”, but structures also shape who agents are and what forms their future interactions will take at time. Thus, according to Constructivist ontology, agents and structures are always in a process of becoming³. We can notice the interaction between structures and agents, however, is the basis in interaction put on the level of state rules and state politics. In case of Russia, people are the ones to choose politicians, and they, therefore are the ones to follow national and international rules and norms. The process of making of state identity is, therefore, a result of this interactions, as well as in the making on the international basis and world system’s development.

I.3. Constructivism and World Politics

Constructivism is agnostic about change in world politics. It restores much variety and difference to world affairs and points out the practices by which intersubjective order is maintained, but it does not offer any more hope for change in world politics than neorealism. Constructivist’s insight that anarchy is what states make of it, for example, implies that there are many different understandings of anarchy in the world, and so state actions should be more varied than only self-help. But this is an observation of already-existing reality, or, more precisely, a set of hypotheses about the same. These different understandings of anarchy are still rooted in social structures, maintained by the power of practice, and quite impervious to change. What constructivism does offer is an account of how and where change may occur.(Hopf, 1998)

³<http://www.polisci.umn.edu/courses/spring2004/3835/001/kiosk/3835Week6.pdf#search='identity%20and%20constructivism'>

One aspect of constructivist power is the power to reproduce, discipline, and police. Alternative actors with alternative identities, practices, and sufficient material resources are theoretically capable of effecting change. Contrary to some critics who assert that constructivism believes that change in world politics is easy, that "bad" neorealist structures need only be thought away, in fact constructivism appreciates the power of structure, if for no other reason than it assumes that actors reproduce daily their own constraints through ordinary practice. Constructivist's conceptualization of the relationship between agency and structure grounds its view that social change is both possible and difficult. Neorealism's position that all states are meaningfully identical denies a fair amount of possible change to its theoretical structure. (Hopf, 1998)

In sum, neorealism and constructivism share fundamental concerns with the role of structure in world politics, the effects of anarchy on state behavior, the definition of state interests, the nature of power, and the prospects for change. They disagree fundamentally, however, on each concern. Contra neorealism, constructivism assumes that actors and structures mutually constitute each other; anarchy must be interpreted to have meaning; state interests are part of the process of identity construction; power is both material and discursive; and change in world politics is both possible and difficult. (Hopf; 1998) It's a natural process of every state to change it's system in time, anarchy in Russian state is seen as a relief from stagnation, state practices power, and state is the one to follow the change in internal life of the state. State, therefore, reproduces its nature and rule. In Russian state, actors have practically made change to happen, and brought visible change to its structure. Anarchy must be interpreted, in Russian state, to have meaning and bringing certain results in the process of identity and state construction. Power, in our case, is discursive, and change is historically possible, but difficult.

I.4. Identities and interests

Maja Zehfuss tells that it is the intersubjective, rather than material aspect of structures which influences behavior. Intersubjective structures are constituted by collective meanings. Actors acquire identities, which Wendt defines as 'relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self' (Wendt, 1992: 397; see also Wendt, 1999: 21), by participating in collective meanings. Identity is 'a property of international actors that generates motivational and behavioral dispositions' (Wendt, 1999: 224). Thus identities are significant because they provide basis for interests. Identities are basis for interests and therefore more fundamental (Wendt, 1999: 231). Crucially, conceptions of self and other, and consequently security interests, develop only in interaction (Wendt, 1992: 401; Wendt, 1999: 36).

Identities and interests are not only created in such interactions, they are also sustained that way (Wendt, 1999: 331). Through repeated interactive processes stable identities and expectations about each other are developed. Thereby actors create and maintain social structures (Wendt, 1992: 405), which subsequently constrain choices. Once structures of identity and interests have been created they are not easy to transform because the social system becomes an objective social fact to the actors. Actors may have a stake in maintaining stable identities (Wendt, 1992: 411), due to external factors such as the incentives induced by established institutions and internal constraints such as commitment to established identities (Wendt, 1999: 339).

I should approve the fact that identities are basis for interests, and also a fundamental value. They are develop in interaction between states, between institutions and they are significantly approved to be a fundamental value when the issue of interaction arose. State produces its values, and significantly bases their interaction on the the interests of a particular state, or states, and continues this development and interaction in time, making formation of states a significant value and a process, connecting to which, one relies on the existing framework of identities and behaviors of state. In case of Russian state, its external identity is being viewed as something dangerous in time, and which significantly slowed down its processes of interaction between states.

Nowadays, when Russian state's identity has been changed, Russian state approves to be more open to interactions, however, foreign states, relying on state behavior produce a framework of interaction with Russian state. Maintaining stable identities is difficult due to external factors, and the behaviors of state leads to identity change, is another paragraph from Wendt. Identity in Russia is being transformed inside of the countries due to internal political processes, however, on the international arena, the state identity is being transformed, and Russia doesn't have a big value, if it doesn't change its policies oriented towards foreign states, in the behaviors of institutions, and political practices. Any change is seen in the world politics as something new and destructive, therefore, Russia is obliged to follow international rules to make peace in the country, and fruitful development of its external and internal interactions.

Actors have several social identities but only one corporate identity. Social identities can exist only in relation to others and thus provide a crucial connection for the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures. This type of identity is continuously redefined in processes of interaction. One of the concrete mechanisms of identity transformation which Wendt considers is based on conscious efforts to change identity. As the new behavior affects the partner in interaction, this involves getting them to behave in a new way as well. This process is not just about changing behavior but about changing identity. However, behavior is construed as the key to identity change. The interaction Wendt describes is all about physical gestures. An advance, a retreat, a brandishing of arms, a laying down of arms or an attack are the examples Wendt gives for a gesture (Wendt, 1992: 404; Wendt, 1999: 326–35).

Moreover, there is a problem of disentangling identity and behavior because Wendt claims that it is not just behavior but identity that changes. Yet it is unclear, with respect to an actual case such as the one considered here, what exactly sets apart identity transformation from a mere change in behavior. Although Wendt's claim that the way in which others treat an seems plausible, it is hard to pin down the qualitative difference between the two. After all, in his approach we are forced to infer actors' self-understanding from nothing but their behavior. If an identity matters only in its realization in certain types of behavior, then it is difficult to see what should justify

calling it 'identity' rather than 'behavior'. The idea that identities are relatively stable is certainly of no help as the possibility of identity transformation, of moving from one kind of anarchy to another, is crucial. Identity change is merely about shifting from one relatively stable identity to another.⁴(Wendt; 1999). The change of the identity of Russian state occurred in the 1990s, and a new identity is the way Russia behaves nowadays, and the way the world sees it with own eyes a new Russia state. State identity transformation is quite a stable process, however, for Russian state it was painful.

I.5. National Identity

There is no doubt that nations are historical constructs. They are results of a special European movement and some active nation building elite. Phrases like “the invention of tradition” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) underline this fact. At the same time, nationalist movements have been trying to establish and argue that there is a history, a culture and a tradition from which the nations derive. This ambiguity can also be found in the theorizing of nationalism. The question is to what extent are the nations rooted in a historical and cultural base, or whether these links are merely created by the nation builders.

Anthony Smith's (1983, 1991) theories of nationalism are based on a so-called *ethnie*, which denotes the “core” of a nation. This perception of a common name, ancestry, culture, history and homeland, together with some sort of solidarity, is a necessary condition for a nation according to Smith. From this point of view, Russia nation is based on culture of different ethnics, and these ethnics make a core of a nation. They share the same homeland, Russia. I would propose that many ethnics throughout history made a fundament on which Russian state exists now, however, they had

⁴ Wendt Alexander, “Social theory of international politics”, Cambridge University Press, 1999, in Maja Zehfuss “Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison”, European Journal of International Relations, UK, 2001, Vol. 7(3): 315–348

nothing in common, and it has made Russian ethnical background more strong and more diverse. It is a basis for every state formation to absorb in its territory the number of people with ethnic principles, and therefore, to bring people into one nation. From this perspective, Russian state is a multiethnic state with common national identity and identity of Russian people.

Benedict Anderson's (1991) theory is superior to Smith's, especially "on the workings of an existing community", because it is concerned with identity as a *process*. It is not restricted to one special historical happening (the rise of nations), but it tries to give a more general picture of how a group of people continuously experiences its common identity. His expression "imagined communities" underlies one important feature, namely the on-going process. People have to *imagine* a community, a society, or a common identity, for it to be real. It does not exist unless people think so, unless they feel some sort of solidarity with people they never have met.

In Christopher J. Ullock's (1996) words, Anderson's approach is based on "a metaphysics of becoming" (as opposed to a "metaphysics of being"), something that makes his theory dynamic. It focuses on the process of identity formations and is not limited to its historical origins. This makes the theory more generally applicable, both to kinds of collective identities other than states and to nationalist movements outside Europe which have a totally different historical background.

Russian national identity is based on the hundreds years of history. Historically, it was based on some values, which don't go in contradiction with before-mentioned principles, for example, with a view that nations are historical constructs, or that nation has a core. This core is a stable value, and it significantly reflects the state fundamental principles, as well as it significantly reflects nation-state structure, which is mainly developed due to historical processes inside of the country. Nowadays, national identity in Russia is a matter of discourses and analysis.

Politicians have their own view on national idea of state. People follow common thinking, or the ideology of state, or, nowadays, its basic values, which reflect specifics of Russian state which is different from the rest of the states. However, national identity is a matter, a fundament of state identity, and its core is in the attitudes, ideology, behavior of state, etc. which people construct themselves, and which state follows historically, or basing its behavior on international rules and norms. National idea is a matter of disputes, and its value is to understand Russia as a state, as an entity, as a certain state with specific mentality. National identity is based on these factors, on the core, on history and ideology, and people are the ones who decide about the idea of state and its national identity. In consideration to international practices, Russian state is being viewed as a national power, which certainly is a result of state practices in time.

I.6. Identity as Process

Identity is not something that just is; it can rather be described as a *process*. Collective identities are never stable and objective but always in-the-making. They are subjectively experienced and expressed, a result of social communication and perceptions of Self and Others. A basic insight in all identity theory is the importance of the Other. As a problem in my work, I significantly highlight the issue of identity formation as a process in time, as well as it is a matter of interaction between agents and their attitudes. Their attitudes are expressed in the behavior of states. It is a source of communication of states and their interests. As for the Other, I mention that Russian state is shaped in politics by the behavior of other states.

This is a classic insight from Fredrik Barth (1969:10) who argued that ethnic identities were a result of communication with other groups: "...ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite to the contrary often the very foundations on which embracing social systems are built."

Identities are always a result of communication; they are relational. Those who do not fit into the definitions of the Self are different and may also be excluded, estranged or alienated. They may even be securitized and become enemies. This way the securitization also functions as an identity building process. The Others are securitized because they are considered to represent symbols and values that are incommensurable or threatening to those of the Self-group. This approach does not neglect historical traits (like language, culture and so on). But as long as these have to be interpreted and represented through subjects and through subjective experiences and language, they are subjective social constructs. Here, the most important is the meaning of the Other and state identity. Communication on this level bring in itself the matters of social constructions and interests. States due to their interests are having their interests to act on behalf of them. States are important agents in protecting their identities.

To conclude before-mentioned issues in the work, I will introduce you to my view on Russian identity in the context of constructionists. The main accent is made on state identity formation, and reflects, at some points, issues, which were previously discussed in theoretical part of the work, and which conclude my own ideas on the work, and which give a feedback to the second part of the work in which I will discuss the opinions of Russia and Western scholars, and Russian politicians, which show different opinions on how the identity of Russia is constructed, what are the main priorities in the identity of Russian state, and which show different views on how Russia is being made throughout history and nowadays.

I.7. Concluding theories

National identity as part of Russian identity is a basis of construction of Russian state. Without ideology of state construction, without orientation on the international jurisdictional norms, without its self-definition in the world arena, without connection with the system factors of civilization, without definition of principles and priorities of the state formation there cannot be self-definition of Russia as state, and therefore,

its definition of identity. Formation, or construction, of identity depends on the maturity of society, its ideology and social consciousness of the nation. State as political organization of the society has several factors: existence of the system of institutions, as well as institutions, which make functions of governmental power, law, which strengthens defined system of norms, defined territory, on which the existing system of norms is spread. However, the institution of state-building is based on the values, which define the identity of nation.

The main values of Russian state is considered to be its history, culture, national language, and Orthodoxy. On the basis of historical development, the identity of Russia is built. By the formation of consciousness of nation, by creation of ideology, the ideological identity of Russia is being made. Formation of the identity of nation can be seen in the context of historical development of state.

If we look on the identity as a process, through which the state is being formed, we should look on the processes inside of the country. These are the changing nature of political and economical institutions, which gain its development in quickly changing nature of state, its policies oriented on the formation of state as an entity, etc. On the world arena, these factors are a multipolarity of political world, quickly changing world system, integration processes, communicability. These factors which influence the identity of Russia.

Identity of Russia was for most part is formed by Russian intelligentsia. Trustful relationship of intelligentsia as part of a society has build up people of different epochs of Russian historical development. Culture, as historically defined factor of development of nation, has gained its development in spiritual values of Russian state. That's why, wide entity of Russia is by many means defines the identity of nation, as well as proved its value in the creation of Russian identity in the process of historical development of nation. This process is changing, developing and dynamic. Besides, the factors such as economical and political institutions which change its nature in the

process of state formation can be said to promote the process of construction of state identity.

Religion, as one of the forms of social consciousness, and spiritual values, form the identity of a nation, as well as it influences the process of the identity formation. Russia is a multiconfessional state, however, one of the forms of religious consciousness is being an Orthodoxy. Russian Orthodoxy has difficult history. Officially, the Church is separated from the state. Nevertheless, spiritual values and social consciousness of part of a nation is formed under the influence of Orthodoxy, which reflects in the identity of Russia.

Identity, as a final result of state formation, self-definition of state, is important for perceptance of Russian state on the international level. Contacts, and intercommunication with the state is fully dependent on state identity.

Identity is at first, is formed inside of the country. However, in the last decade, there arose a tendency of influence of the other countries on the identity of the nation. For example, on the identity of Russia the post-Soviet countries are being influenced, as well as there can be notice an influence of such states as European states, USA, China, India, Japan. Russia tries to influence political formation of post- Soviet states, builds new forms of economical networks and structures. This all influence politics in Russia, and builds Russian identity.

Russia, as a part of world institutions, the UN, etc., is in the active international political life. Therefore, Russia is a part of international law. It follows the norms of international justice, and builds its relations with the EU, on the basis of international justice, and codes of jurisprudence. The basis of this cooperation is international relations, international jurisdictional norms and treaties. Regulation of relations between states is being made due to special norms, approved in treaties, which can be changed, but which fully depend on the dynamics of the processes and regulations. New norms, and changing world influences Russian identity, as state. It is formed

inside of the state, and also on the basis of international law and legal basis of international relations.

Chapter II. Views on identity of Russia

II.1. View on history of Russian Identity by Iver B. Neumann

To have a closer look on the history of Russia, I will introduce you to the book of Iver B. Neumann, "*Russia and the Idea of Europe*", 1996. He gives a summary of historical formation of Russian identity from the 18th century up until the end of Perestroika and overview of the views of famous historians and politicians. Neumann stresses that formation of Russian identity was formed throughout the history of Russia with close comparison between European identity, European institutions, culture and interactions between European and Russian states.

Identity of Russia has been formed during all the historical process. According to Neumann, Russia has been trying to relate itself to Europe from the 18 century, but "different perceptions of Europe made it impossible to forge a common Russian identity... Some looked to the East, others to the West" (Neumann, 1996:10). This contradiction exist nowadays, as there is no final decision of where does Russia belong? Ones would say that it is a part of Europe, another would say that because of geographical reasons, it doesn't fully belong to Europe, because the main part of the country is in Asia. Some would say that it is Eurasia.

Russia has been developed a lot in the 18th century. It has become a strong European power during the rule of Peter the Great. The identity became stronger and clearer, as

the contacts with Europe intensified and Russia has become more opened. From that time, it can be said that Russia has put an eye on Europe in terms of development, technologies, economy and politics. Then, it has received a lot of attention from Europe. Then, it has been a strong and powerful European power in terms of trade, etc. Its identity was a strong economic and political power. It was said that Russia belongs to Europe, and new forms of relations were created then. This identity was so strong as it could stand together with Europe for many years to come.

At the same time, the idea of using Urals as a border line to separate its European and Asian parts was proposed by geographer and the first significant Russian historian Vasily N. Tatischev in 1730s (Neumann 1996:12). Up until now, Russia has a separation to European and Asian parts geographically, demographically and economically.

From the beginning of the 19th century, thinkers and officials like Karamzin, Speransky and others look to Europe for ideas to improve Russian political order. Karamzin, another great Russian historian, argued that they are actually weakening Russia, since it is dangerous to tamper with ancient political structures. At the same time, Karamzin saw Russian uniqueness and isolation as something positive. He saw a specific character of Russian state (Neumann 1996, 15).

In 1830s the change of positions happened in the political space. Romantic nationalists gathered under the banner of “Slavophilism”, and those who looked to Europe for political and economic models become known as Westernisers (ibid: 29). The task of Westernisers had set themselves was to show how Russia was already developing along European lines and how it should try to accelerate that development (ibid:35). Slavophiles saw the contemporary Russian state as an extension of this alien principle into the organic body of the Russian nation. European influence to them was Otherness from which Russia must be saved (ibid:33). The official ideology was

represented by minister Uvarov, who proclaimed what was to become known as the doctrine of “official nationality”. The three pillars which were to define official Russia were autocracy (*samoderzhavie*), Orthodox religion (*pravoslavie*) and nationality or nation-mindedness (*narodnost`*) (ibid: 25).

This contradiction between Slavophiles and Westernisers was of great importance and great meaning as for it was a way to see Russia so different already then, when it was choosing it's own way to go. This argument had deep roots in history and in common understanding by people and theoreticians. Some saw it as a European power, the others as a great Russian power. This contradiction has its continuum nowadays, as for people see Russia differently.

During the First World War the question of the relative importance of national and class identities became important, as well as interdependence of Russia with Western Europe. Even between the members of the same political party, for example Bolsheviks, there was no a common point of view on the question: where Trotsky holds that the idea of a Fatherland has no appeal to the European proletariat, Bukharin acknowledges it as a potent force and Lenin stresses the importance of a nation-state (Neumann 1996).

To understand that this new change after the October revolution 1917 in Russia was destructive is to understand the history of Russia then. The Soviet Republic was said to exist for a long period side by side with imperialist states, and to keep good contacts with Europe, still Russia lacked its own position, and lost many of its contacts. Europe became suspicious of Russia, of a country which lost some part of its strong identity. It hasn't get the one in the years to come. It was a new Russia, called Soviet Union, for some seventy years. An attempt to reborn Russian identity in contradiction to Soviet identity was made in 1990s by wide anti-communist opposition including democrats, nationalists and former Soviet officials like Yeltsin, and was made successfully.

After the Second World War, state identities of the Soviet Union, Western Europe and the United States, each rooted in domestic socio-cultural milieus, produced understandings of one another based on differences in identity and practice. The United States balanced against Russia because of the latter's communist identity. The United States understood the Soviet threat, as communist, and itself as the anticommunist protector (Hopf, 1998:180). Self-identity of the Soviet Union then was defined as a fighter against imperialism, led by the United States. Both states had nuclear weapons and strong political power. The context to understand Russia after the Second World War has changed dramatically. It became so different from what it was. The Soviet Union has become a superpower, and an identity of Russia was seen from that perspective. Identity of Russia was formed from its victory in the war, and has put an impact on the self-definition of the state.

In the beginning of 1980s, A. Solzhenitsyn wrote that Russia is morally superior to West European nations, and everybody is responsible for everything, everywhere. Academician D. S. Likhachev concludes that patriotism is indeed a necessity, since “ we are all citizens of our people, citizens of our great Union and citizens of the Earth” (Neumann 1996:147). Again, this period can be marked as a reevaluation of values in the Soviet state, of what Russia is and what it will be. These were an attempts to recover a liberal position of Russia in the world. These liberal views specified in context of the direct assessment of the Western liberal intelligentsia. The Westernisation of Russia was proposed later by Sakharov, and a cooperation with Europe was proposed by Likhachev. Neumann comments this, as the Russia's position on the West has changed, as well as on the capitalist system. The public political space has enlarged, and the Russian debate about Europe with dynamism has reappeared (Neumann 1996:157).

Later on, the relations with Europe were characterised as isolationist. It was stated by Novikov. And there was a need to re-impose them. Novikov came up with the slogan of “Eurasia”. Europe and Russian Westernisers again tried to Europeanise Russia (Neumann 1996: 177). Russia which we see nowadays is heading towards

Europeanization, and Europe which we see nowadays is highly interested in Russia-European relations.

II.2. Historical formation of Russian identity

II.2.1. The view of Russian scholars

Identity was formed both internally by the consolidation of religion, the church, and eventually by a single Muscovite state (from roughly the fifteenth century), and at the frontiers in the struggles with peoples seen to be different. From its beginning, then, Russian identity was bound up with the supranational world of belief, the political world loosely defined by the ruling dynasty, and was contrasted to “others” at the periphery. Religion served in those pre- and early-modern times much as ethnicity does today. Agadjanian says that if not from the very beginning, then in the next few centuries Russian identity became closely tied with religion, a shifting, expanding territory, and the state.⁵

Nicholas V. Riasanovsky in his book “Russian Identities. A Historical Survey” says that in Kievan Russia the political system was certainly pluralistic and to an extent even populist and democratic (Riasanovsky 2005 :19), that the conversion of the Rus of the Greek form of Christianity brought with it the highly developed Byzantine culture, that the new Church was one of the entire state, and at least after 1037, it was subordinate to the patriarch of Constantinople and headed by a metropolitan of Kiev, although Novgorod and some other town also became religious centers. The Kievan state was the state of the East Slavs. It was also a European state. Christian identity of Kievan Russia and Kievan Russians was of course fully explicit. From the victorious and glorious account of the conversion of the Rus in the Primary Chronicle, Christianity stood out as the truth, the right, and the one sure guide for Russia and the Russian people. (ibid.:22) Russian identity during some hundred years between the

⁵ <http://www.molokane.org/molokan/Religion/Agajanian.htm>

decline and fall of the Kievan state and the accession to the throne of Peter the Great survived many things, but Orthodox Christianity remained basic to the Russian identity, not unlike Roman Catholicism in medieval Western and Central Europe (ibid.: 49-50). In Medieval Russia, as in medieval Europe as a whole, intellectual life centered on religious problems, although their ramifications often encompassed other areas of human activity. (ibid. : 53) The Reign of Peter that Great was significant because of the engagement of Muscovy with Sweden, Poland and Turkey. Russia created an impressive navy. Peter the Great changed the government institutions and th entire administrative apparatus of Muscovite Russia. Intellectual climate constituted the leading inspiration of the age. (ibid. : 76) The identity prevailed significantly and constituted Russia as a significant European state. During the Reign of Nicholas I, 1825-1855, the issue of Russian identity was again on the surface. Russia experienced two intellectual transformations, the change from the ideology of the Age of Reason, to Romanticism and Idealism, and the disintegration of the new worldview. (ibid. : 165)

In the Soviet Russia, 1917-1991, the issue of Russian nationalism as part of Soviet ideology is worth to be mentioned. Russian nationalism became more direct in the years of the World War II. The Orthodox Church obtained a patriarch, strengthened its organization, and in general made a certain recovery after what have been one of the most devastating religious persecutions in World history.(ibid. : 219) In foreign policy, the Soviet Union and its East European satellites continued to confront the US and its allies. Most of the world came to be divided between the two camps. The confrontation was a most impressive and lasting demonstration of the mobilized might and hostility of the two sides. (ibid. : 221) The Soviet Union came to be divided into 15 union republics and over a hundred smaller subdivisions based on the Ethnic principle. (ibid.: 222)

II.2.2 The view of Western scholars

John O'Loughlin and Paul F. Talbot talk about Soviet Union. The end as a unified territory and the effect that this disintegration had on the geopolitical imaginations of Russian people. Russian people unlike other post-communist states, which returned to a pre-communist past for symbols of its national identity, Russia faced a crises of identity. The search for a new traditional identity has been ongoing in Russia since 1991, becoming a centerpiece of Putin strategy to resurcate state authority in the wake of Yeltsin years in the Kremlin. Russia has been questioning the national identity. Ordinary Russians sense of national identity has influenced public opinion. The collapse of the Soviet Union generated new mental maps for Russians.(Loughlin and Talbot, 2005: 26) Sparked by NATO expansion, questions of great power conflict, territorial control and influence, and national identity have once again become part of the agenda. Visions of ordinary Russians is based on aspects of identity formation that are rooted in territory. It is a map that shows Russia as a specific territory that does not include the other republics of the former Soviet Union.(ibid. : 28)

If we turn to Graham Smith, who said that Russia has undergone a significant shift in foreign policy since 1993, and reformulation of Russia's foreign policy reflects a more systemic crises of national identity. The place ascribed to Russia within global affairs has become scripted as part of an explicitly geopolitical discourse based on competing representations of Russia bound up with the idea of Eurasia. Based on the notion that Russia should follow its distinctive societal and geopolitical path separately from Europe and the West, its distinctiveness as part of Eurasian civilization constituting a geopolitical bridge between Europe and Asia or simply an alternative to both. The idea of Russia becoming an equal partner of the West was rapidly inscribed in official government discourse. (Smith, 1999: 481) George Schopflin in "Identities, Politics and Post-Communism in Central Europe" says that Identity offers a rationality of its own that neither a universalistic nor a particularistic perspective satisfactorily resolves these problems.(Schopflin, 2003: 479)

II.2.3. The view of Russian Politicians

For all this discussed previously, I can say that there was throughout a history of Russia, a struggle for Russian identity. There were many successful attempts to give Russia its own character, and its own values. It was an important thing. To turn to the identity of Russia nowadays, I will introduce you to Russian political thinking, and will introduce you to the views of Russian politicians. For example, Kazarkin, in his observation of history in conjunction to identity formation nowadays, says that:

“I would talk about how Russia has evolved in a number of spatial settings, from the great expanse of the nation as a whole, to the region, and to the home (prostranstvenno, regional’no, domashne). First, how Russia was formed (sozdavalas’) region by region: Kievan Rus, the northern forested regions, the area along the Volga and the Don, the Urals, and Siberia. During the Soviet period, research and publishing on local history (kraevedenie) was pretty much curtailed, and this tradition has to be restored as we create a new patriotic consciousness, which has to be a living thing. Religion is important, and Russian Orthodoxy definitely falls within the boundaries of this identity. Paganism was also a factor but not as the state religion of a unified Rus, so there was no such thing as “Pagan Rus” (iazycheskaia Rus’) but the pagan beliefs of a number of tribes which varied from region to region. For the past thousand years, Orthodoxy has played a key role in the history of our state and the identity of its inhabitants. We can’t talk about Russia as being something united only by a common language—that wouldn’t be enough to make us a people. And when we talk about the Russian character, of course we have to bring in Russian literature in the broadest sense, the Russian classics. Literature can still be seen as something that holds the nation together (derzhit natsiiu), that appreciates our national identity⁶.

For sure, his view on identity is alike the common existing in Russia view. This view underlines the existing Russian state as an entity, and develops the common view on history of Russia, as well as on the main characteristics of Russian state. It distinguishes a unique Russian nature of state, which is build up in conjunction with

⁶ <http://www.loc.gov/about/welcome/speeches/russianperspectives/perspectives.pdf>

history of Russia, and it promotes common features equal to existing values of the state. This is a general existing view on the problem. To look deeper on the topic, one should pay attention to another politician, Chubais.

Chubais says: ... Russia is experiencing a polysystemic crisis. If the most acute (samyi ostryi) crisis is economic, then the deepest crisis is over ideas and identity. We aren't sure who we are and what our identity is, and until we can do that we won't be able to solve any of our other problems. Some people insist that there is no crisis. Others say that the crisis arose only in 1996, when President Yeltsin announced that we needed a new national idea. A third group says that the crisis arose in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed (kogda rukhnul Sovetskii Soiuz).

I'm convinced that the crisis arose towards the end of the 19th century. Dostoevsky, Berdyaev, Solovyev and other powerful Russian thinkers. . . .wrote extensively about Russian national identity. What kind of crisis was this? And what kind of identity do we have? We can only answer this question when we take into account that we are talking about a process, a dynamic process. . . . We have to talk about what has taken place, what are the tendencies and the lines [of development].

At the end of the 19th century we had a crisis of ideas. . . . Russian identity was built around three principles, three fundamental values: Orthodoxy, imperial policies such as the expansion of the nation's territory, and peasant collectivism (obshchinni kolektivizm). All three principles were unstable (shatalis') at the end of the 19th century. The expansion of land had exhausted itself and come to an end (ischerpalo), as it reached natural limits in the south. Western expansion was pretty much finished by the end of the 18th century. Orthodoxy, like all Christianity, was in the midst of a crisis. Nietzsche wrote about this in Europe and Dostoevsky wrote about it in Russia. And with Orthodoxy in a crisis all sorts of phenomena began to appear—nihilists, terrorists, bomb-throwers (nigilisty, terroristy, bombisty, vse eti -isty), all these types who caused problems for Russia. And the third element, peasant

collectivism, was also in a crisis. As a result of the Stolypin reforms the peasants were leaving the commune (obshchina), and it began to dissolve as a social structure and as a social community (obshchnost')⁷.

I would propose that Chubais is giving another view on the problem. However, in his comments, there are, for most part, interesting ideas on the topic. One should say that it's quite a broad and problematic description of the issue, which explains crisis of ideas in a society. However, his ideas are based on history of the problem, and ideologically constructed issues are a matter of the deep and broad thinking of a politician.

Another politician in Russia, Kara-Murza, says that: what it is that makes Russia possible, what held it together?. . . . I think that there are three forms of integration that hold the community (obshchnost', sotsium) together:

(1) As an ethnocracy (etnokratiia), where the ethnic sign has a unifying power. . . .

(2) The second way is through state service, through a vertical status hierarchy....

(3) The third principle is more contemporary. It's a horizontal integration through the reconfiguring (obustroistvo) of territories and cultures, based on the principle of the nation-state (politicheskaiia natsiia). On the one hand, it's half-ethnic, because the nation is partly an ethnic construct. On the other hand, the nation is built to a significant degree on horizontal ties, while the imperial principle involves a vertical structure. These three principles are of course not mutually exclusive, but at any given moment, one will dominate.

⁷ <http://www.loc.gov/about/welcome/speeches/russianperspectives/perspectives.pdf>

Here, Kara-Murza touches upon the issue of nation-state and defines the building blocks, or its compounds of the state. To be correct in defining these principles, he is using the theory of nation-state, which also can be used in defining a political identity of Russia. Here, we face an interesting statement that integration of the community can include three main principles. I would propose that Kara-Murza explains certain trends in the nation-state formation, and proposes fruitful arguments about political structure of the state, therefore, explaining Russian state identity.

Chubais correctly names the three identity principles that, when taken together, made Russia possible before the Revolution: Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality. Which is the most important? Religious theoreticians, at least the liberal ones, all agree that while the wish was for the principles of Orthodoxy and Orthodox communities (pravoslavnye obshchiny) to guide the nation, in practice it is the imperial principle that has been decisive. It subordinated the church to itself, made the church part of the state (ogosudarstvil tserkov’).

The imperial principle dominated, and it was Peter who made this happen. He brought communal structures into the table of ranks, subordinating them to the interests of the empire. And I think that Chubais is right that Communist identity recreated these structures: instead of Orthodoxy there was Communism, instead of the imperial table of ranks there was the hierarchy of Party committees, and the new Soviet collectivism took a variety of forms. What I can’t say is how one can call this a violation of Russian tradition—it was a continuation of Russian (rossiiskii) tradition. These traditions were winding down, and the Bolsheviks had to use force to maintain this old imperial logic. Andropov and Stalin to an extent modeled themselves on Peter the Great. Whether they did this intentionally or not, they worked in similar ways⁸.

Here, one might say that Chubais underlines three main principles of Russian identity: Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality, giving personal views on the issue. However, in my work, I don’t define Autocracy and Nationality as main principles, that would argue with my whole work argumentation. On the other hand, Chubais is said to

⁸ <http://www.loc.gov/about/welcome/speeches/russianperspectives/perspectives.pdf>

reflect the interests of Oligarchs in Russia. That makes his comments rather interesting from the point of view of a researcher, who is interested in many of different views on the issue.

Kara-Murza says: We've talked about internal identity, self-identity (samoidentichnost') and ways in which Russia has not completely worked this out. Now we are talking about external identity (vneshniaia identichnost'), Russia on the outside (Rossiia vovne), how the country positions itself in the international sphere. The conflicting, mutually exclusive conceptions of how to describe the present situation belong to three basic groups.

(1) The first idea is that Russia is Europe, that it is genetically descended from Christian civilization, albeit in its Eastern variant, so it's Eastern Europe. Variants of this idea see Russia as a Europe that is underdeveloped (nedorazvitaia), sick (bol'naia), failed (neudavshaiasia), or just-born-but-already-corrupted (tol'ko nachavshaiasia rozhdat'sia no uzhe isporchennaia). There is also the belief that Russia is the best Europe (luchshaia Evropa), to use an expression coined by Georgii Fedotov ..., the idea that Russia is Europe is the one that I agree with.

(2) The second idea is that Russia is Eurasia, and in this sense, a Eurasia in opposition to Europe. Lev Gumilev believed that in a certain sense the Russian and Turkic peoples complemented each other, that the Russians were simultaneously Slavic and Turkic. From this you get neo-Eurasians, the interest in Chingiz Khan as part of the Russian genetic constitution (genotip), the opposition of Eurasia and Europe. In this conception, Christianity doesn't play much of a role. . . .

(3) The third idea is one that comes from the early Slavophiles and can be traced from there to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: Russia is neither West nor East, Russia is the North, the idea of the northerness (severianstvo) of Russia. Russia is not Europe, but it also has no relationship of any kind to Asia. Russia is the North, it is

Orthodox, directly in opposition to Europeanness with its Latin confession, and to Islam.

These are three powerful conceptions, existing in opposition to each other, with little in common. While there are moments in history when they were brought together by (za schet) the imperial idea, they could only be united through force (nasil'stvennym sposobom). . . . How could you harmonize these identities in a non-coercive way? I completely agree with Professor Aksiuchits that this country is Christian at its base (po genotipu), but in the 20th century there are massive problems of a culturological nature. Judging by the classic theoretical works, civilizations are formed on the basis of one religion (tsivilizatsii konstatiruiutsia bazovoi religiei), which some call the sacred vertical (sakral'nyi vertikal).

. . . Russia is a country with a dual identity (dual'naia identichnost') in its culture, civilization, and geopolitics. In the sense of culture and civilization it is undeniably European. It is the Eastern Orthodox variant, standing in contrast, even in opposition, to Catholic Western Europe, but this is still all within the European context.

Geopolitically, we are Eurasia. This gets confused all the time. The intelligentsia likes to say that we are completely European, and whatever they can't fit into that picture is deemed unnecessary. This is a dangerous delusion (zabluzhdenie) of the intelligentsia consciousness. The contradiction between cultural and geopolitical identities matches to a large extent the difference between the intelligentsia and the regime. . . . They want to be civilized, like Europe. I wouldn't say we have a geopolitical mission, but we find ourselves on a geopolitical landscape. Russia has a mission to hold onto that expanse and protect it from chaos. But to expand this geopolitical idea to the cultural realm is wrong. Not only did the intelligentsia try to substitute their own idea of culture for conceptions of power, but the geopolitical imperatives, the holding on to power and land, often expanded to the idea of culture, suppressing it. That's why the Western-oriented intelligentsia so often

was cut down (vyrezalas') during the cruel totalitarian years, both in the tsarist and Soviet eras. The search for harmony between the European cultural and Eurasian geopolitical identities is one of the most complex tasks that faces a Russia in search of unity. An analysis, a diagnosis, is the first step⁹. . . .

Kara-Murza reflects thoughts of intelligentsia in Russia. The question of the status of development in Russia, its position in modern world till this time was very difficult to handle. Why? Truly, Russia is a big territorial state, which is situated between Europe and Asia, besides, a big part of territory is in the North of Russia, with its ethnos and peoples. However, not looking at its big territories, big part of people is in the European part. In all historical times, politics of state was defined in Moscow or Saint Petersburg. Besides, there was a big influence of European states. All this defined the development of Russia as a civilization, oriented on Europe. That's why, I consider that Russia, for most part is close to Europe, and will agree with a thesis that Russia is Europe, is Eurasia. Modern development of Europe also shows that it is oriented more on Europe than on Asia.

Chubais: In determining whether Russia is Europe or Asia, a lot depends on the methodology used. If we say that the basis (osnova) of Russian (rossiiskii) identity is ethnically Russian (russkii), then we will get one type of answer. If we see religion as the foundation, then we will arrive at a different solution. As we look at geopolitical space, we'll get a third variant. So the methodology, and what we choose as our fundamental element, are all-important. . . . This identity question is something that will be decided by society and not by the political elite, which will make a mistake if it doesn't listen to what society wants.

On the question of determining Russia's place in the world—as European, Asian, or Eurasian, or some other variant—the Europe/Asia dilemma is too narrowly stated and doesn't work (ne sratyvaet)—the result is always a state of vague

⁹ <http://www.loc.gov/about/welcome/speeches/russianperspectives/perspectives.pdf>

disagreement. The question is broader than that and needs to be looked at less theoretically and more practically. Russia can and must feel at home (svoi) in Europe, and can come to an understanding of its position in Asia—that is what our forefathers did as they moved on from here to Alaska¹⁰.

Chugrov: We have to find a balance. In the Russian mentality there is a sense of inner conflict and contradiction. I fully agree with those who call Russia a torn country (razorvannaia strana). If we choose to talk about identity as a subjective and dynamic category, then we have to ask people how they feel and how they want to feel in the future, what kind of life they want for Russia. More than 90% say they want it to be like it is in the West. Russians don't want to live in a place like Iran or Pakistan, or—despite our better relations with these countries—like people in China or India.

. . . Russia is Europe in its self-consciousness, but with its own original profile. But this can give rise to serious conflict. The West, seeing itself as a model for Russia, relates to it like a sister, not as if it is a foreign element . . . but like a person acts towards a relative. And we know that you make more demands of a relative than of a stranger to whom you can smile politely—that is the basis of the criticism that the West makes of Russia. A culturally closer Russia irritates the West more than a distant China or India, and Russia ought to understand this. For decades, the West feared a nuclear attack, and this left its psychological traces. When this danger passed and the situation changed completely, first there were benevolent feelings and then disillusionment, more or less as we felt towards them. . . . The West's fear of Russia is a legacy of the Communist past.

How should Russia act? I don't think that Russia should choose an orientation either towards the West or towards the East. We should act in an ad hoc way in each situation, according to our national interests and the internal problems we are trying to solve. We should have close, friendly relations with the United States, but not try to

¹⁰ <http://www.loc.gov/about/welcome/speeches/russianperspectives/perspectives.pdf>

please (ponravit'sia) or charm the West. If Russia acts according to this principle, I think that in a couple of decades it will once again be a great power (velikaia derzhava), and it won't have been achieved artificially, but in a natural way¹¹.

However, I agree with a view of Chugrov, who sees Russia as an independent state, not oriented on interests of only West, or only East, but a state, oriented on political interests on the West, and on the East. From my view, Russia cannot be a boat which has lost its orientation, standing on one place, and trying to find its way out. In my opinion, Russia, for most part, should take a course on the West, on contacts with the USA, and Europe.

To conclude this chapter, I should notice the difference in perception of Russian identity by different scholars. Western scholars write that identity of Russia is based on the years of history and historical change. This view is quite common. Truly, a state is nothing without history. All the historical events make up the basis for state formation, and significantly define state in the world politics. For Russian scholars, identity formation is mostly a process, based on history of Russia, as well as on the internal factors, such as nation-state formation. National identity is viewed by them as a significantly most important factor is state formation, and state is seen as a permanent value which develops in time. Politicians nowadays reflect the views of Russia on Russian identity. There is an idea in Russian intelligentsia, that Russia is a part of Europe, and on the other hand, that it is an independent entity which has its own way in history of Russia, and therefore its own national identity. However, these views are a part of ideological process in the identity formation, and these values are a historically made up principles which reflect people's minds and their common ideas. Main ideological thinking about fate of Russia started to exist from long ago. They reflected ideas about common Russian soil, Motherland, Russian soul, Russian state behavior, etc. To make an observation of these main ideologies, I will move you to the next chapter, about ideologies of Russia, and later, to a theory of civilizations, after which I will give you my own view on the problem.

¹¹ <http://www.loc.gov/about/welcome/speeches/russianperspectives/perspectives.pdf>

II.3. Main ideologies in history of Russia

Since the times of Peter the Great in minds of Russian Intelligentsia were two ideas: Russia as a Great European Might, and European Civilization. For the first ones, the most important was Russia as a great European Might. These were the representatives of governmental reaction. For the others, the most important were the ideas of progressive European civilization. They said: at any price let us implement the ideals of European civilization in Russia, and make Russia a progressive European state. These were the representatives of radical- progressive society. The tragedy was in the fact that not the first, neither the second direction judging the Russian conditions of living, couldn't be completely implemented. Every of the two sides noticed internal disagreement of the other, but couldn't see that it also had the same negative sides. Reactioners understood that to let to go half-wild Russian democracy, progressionism at their side will shaken the existence in Russia of European democracy. Progressists, from their side said that to save Russia in the concert of Great European states, Russia has to make it until the level of European states in foreign politics. These ideas were born after Peter the Great reforms. Russian people were far away from understanding of these ideas. (Savitskiy, 1925: 99) In later times, there appeared an absolute change in before existing ideas. The new ideology of Eurasianism was in big difference with before existing theories, provoking itself many contradictions with political considerations of old directions. (Savitskiy,1925:100) Eurasianism regreted an authority of European culture. Making Russian national culture a main cultural might, Eurasianism goes after the whole Petrovian, Saint- Patersburg, Imperator period of Russian history.(Savitskiy, 1925:101) A negative view on Imperator Russia and underlined existence of peoples culture was important.(Savitskiy, 1925: 102) Eurasianism comes to national Russian culture without a will to change it with any of Romano-German forms of life. It underlines a real independent national development. (Savitskiy, 1925: 103) Besides, Eurasianism stands on the ground of Orthodoxy, making it the only Christian religion and especially underlines the only true

Orthodoxy as Russian artistic stimuli¹².(Savitskiy, 1925:104)

However, Europeanization was not a natural process of forming Russian state, the reforms of Peter the Great were said to change it to the unnatural change towards Europeanization of Russian culture¹³.(Novikova, 1995: 11)

Before Revolution, Russia was a country in which the official ruler of all state territory was Russian people. During the revolution the things have changed. Russia started to fall down into separate parts, if not the Russian people who have saved the situation. That Russia, of which Russian people were the owners, came to a history. Revolution has proposed USSR an ideal entity which united groups of separated republics into socialistic, trying to implement the only social build. It was a great unifying factor. Proletariat of all people of the USSR, headed by the communist party of Russia became the only owner of Russian territory. (Novikova, 1995:194) The dictatorship of one class and multinational country underlined the identity of Russia those days.

II.4. The Theory of Civilizations

The theory of civilizations was formed in the process of studying the problem. The founders of it were Danilevsky, Veber, Shpengler, Sorokin, Toinbi. Later, in the second half of the 20th century, this problem was studied by many western thinkers. Civilization is a sociocultural entity, which is formed on the basis of universal values, including world religions, systems of morality, arts. This theory has grown into a theory of civilizations. (Shapovalov 2001:13)

¹² Savitskiy P.N. Eurasianism (1925) in Mir Rossii-Evrazija, by Novikova L.I. an Sizemskaja I.N., Moscow

¹³ Novikova L.I., Sizemskaja I.N.(1995) in Mir Rossii- Evrazija, Moscow

Observing Russia as one of the local civilizations, which has peculiar traits was formed on the contradictions of local civilization and the most common definition of “Russian civilization”. One of the contradictions was that the majority of people’s with different civilization orientation made Russia a segmented society. However, this was later developed, and civilization received its value in the majority of peoples who make up the ethnical composition of Russia. Another argumentation which the theory gained, and which didn’t receive a concrete development, was that the history of Russia had breakages, for example, it was a Kievan Rus, Moscow Rus, Russia of Peter the Great, Soviet Russia, etc. It was a significantly different basis for development of Russian civilization. (Shapovalov 2002:18)

One can talk about modern Russian civilization starting from the Peter’s reforms, in the 18th century, which has put a basis of that civilization in Russia, in which we continue to live nowadays. In Russia’s project, many theorists approve the fact that Russia follows Westernized way, however in the works of theorists from abroad, Russia is given its own way of development, and it is said to have its defined Russian place in the world system. Russia has its positive important factor in the world system. (Shapovalov 2002:21) Russia is a super ethnic entity, and is has a cultural Russian soil. It significantly defines the style of life and thoughts, which are typical for civilization. It is very important from the view of civilization. (Shapovalov 2002:23)

Thesis about the mentality of Russian culture became important nowadays. Some modern authors use it to explain the phenomenon of Russian totalitarianism of the 20th century. In their logic, Russian totalitarianism has its roots almost in Kievan Russia. Research of Russia as a difficult civilization, we can begin from the social psychology, trying to make a research in Russian soul, and then to bring them in the peculiarities of economical, social and cultural basis. (Shapovalov 2002:27) The most important resource of civilization- its people, and the most important quality of people is a life power, based on the understanding of historical destiny. Mostly, it concentrates on the character of people, and on its distinctive traits. (Shapovalov 2002:46)

II.5. My considerations

For every state, in a certain period of time there may be applied a term of civilization. Foundation of civilization is being made in historically defined period of time, and it reflects ideology of this particular state. Ideology of state is formed by social consciousness of people. Russian civilization has defined history and time chronology. Development of Russian civilization has been developed constantly, in conjunction with European civilizations, who had big influence on development of Russian civilization. However, what should be taken into consideration, that Russian civilization has been developed in a gap from European civilizations. I consider, that the main reason of this gap in development was a big territory of state, which was not ruled properly, differences in the development of Eastern as well as Western parts of Russia, separated nature of Russian territory, differences in people's number in Eastern and Western parts of Russia, in result of which there has been a difference in creating and rule of decreets in different parts of Russia. Western part of Russia was always more progressive. Here, revolutions were made, reforms were accomplished, the level of social development has been followed. Eastern part was not so developed, however from there came the existing theory of mentality and Russian soul. Russia as state, with certain level of civilization has to gone through historically defined periods of time, and society had to go through defined historical development for civilization to emerge. Russia from times, has gone very difficult, from one part of formation to another, because of its poor level of development, and not ability of society to go through these formations. Russia didn't have democratic society with its values. For one formation to another, there should be a certain influence from the side. But the society, which was all about avtoritarism, was not able to define itself and reorganize itself. For democratization in Russia, there should be certain time and free people with different consciousness.

Considering all this, I should say that I have asked myself a question: does the identity of Russia exist, is there a specific Russian, original Russian identity. Proving the fact, one might say that it exists. What kind of identity is it? What a current state creates out of this identity. What is Russia in the international system? Or is the power of Russia in its people? In Orthodoxy? Is Russian state under construction? To which direction does Russia develops? To the East or to the West?

For myself, I define next things:

First, a history of Russian state is full of victories, tragedies, and relief. Since the Christianity of Russia till 20th century, with its revolutionary ideas, monarchy, Civil War, Stalin period, Second World War, development of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev Perestroika, with his new ideas of democratization of the society, Period of Eltsin and Putin. Every period of history defined the ideology of the state, its identity, and formed its generation of people, as well as formed internal and external politics of state. The internal politics of state was formed by the governing elite existing in the society. External politics of state was always formed by the perceptance of state as a huge power, and its multinationalities. Especially, it was recognizable in the years of the Soviet Union, in the period of disintegration of the Soviet Union. State has lost its power, received characteristics of a weak state. This, therefore, defined behaviors of people in the society, and considerations from foreign states. Little by little, Russia becomes economically more strong state, which defines economically and politically in the world. In a short period of time, Russia has undergone a historical change in its political development, from monarchy to a democratic state, through anarchy and avtoritarism. This historical period influenced on the international reputation and self-definition of state in a modern world.

Second, culturally, Russia is very rich. Its enough to mention world famous writers: Tolstoi, Dostoevsky, Bulgakov, Solzhenitsin, etc. The role of intelligentsia in Russia was very contradictory in Russia. It formed an ideology of Russia. Many films in the years of Soviet Union were the examples of formation of the state, and this formed

ideology and self-identity of Russia.

Third, Orthodoxy is a defined religion in Russia before the revolution, and then in the 1920s it was separated from the state. New impulse it received nowadays. The accent is made nowadays on manyconfessionality. The Church nowadays is not able to influence the decisions which are taken inside of the state. The Church influences the development of the state, on its formation of mentality and ideology in the state. In Russia, people are unified by common idea. This common idea is formed in the minds of people, through the Church, through Media, through culture.

Fourth, Russian state has a peculiar geographical position. It has its considerations to the East and to the West. Therefore, Russia follows balanced strategy with Europe and Asia. Russia has to follow the well-balanced strategy with the West, and with the East, and find balance between different countries with different levels of state structure (China, Northern Korea, Japan, Arab countries, Europe, with democratic structures of power).

I see that the issue of Russian identity is quite a complicated subject. It involves many things, such as the issue of ethnicities, peoples, cultures, religion, mentalities, as well as it is a broad political question. Being a student of IR, I realized that it is very important to look at the issue from the perspective of constructing identities, as well as their development in time, their change, and common historical and political discourses. I concluded for my self that there is a specific Russian identity which has been developed in time, in Russia. I have given you a brief description of it in my work. I also understood that there is an issue of Russian identity which is evolving now, after the years of communism, which I haven't mentioned in my research paper. I consider them unnecessary to understand the main discourse in history. I think that these years didn't enrich Russian state with values, on the other hand, they made a big hole in the whole Russian history and made the face of Russia not very pleasant for foreign observers, but very weird and scary. I decided not to involve them to my research, and therefore, to escape from many ideological focuses of that time.

III. Values of Russian Identity

Next, from the point of constructivists, identity formation is a process which brings people together under one state, Russia. It is a process, it is a fundamental value, it's value shaped in history, it is a change, as well as the value to provide predictability and order in state. I would say that it is the main value how people see and construct ideology of a nation. It is a main value, with which people live and maintain their ideological interests on behalf of the construction of nation. Identity making is a value, through which people see their state, and accepted in the world. It is a value, by which it is judged and given a certain ideological impact on these of that nations, etc.

Next question that I want to answer, is why Russia is historically Russian? The answer that I have found is given by Mark Bassin, who states that "Russia's geographical existence within a larger zone of Eurasian civilization meant that Russian culture had been shaped to a not insignificant extent by influences coming from Asia. Referring to a wide historical array of manifestations of Russian culture, including folk music, art, politics, religion, and even language, he repeatedly emphasized the pre-eminent importance of connections to the east as compared to those to the west. "The Russians, the Ugro-Finns, and the Volga Turks," he wrote, "comprise a cultural zone that has connections with both the Slavs and the 'Turanian East,' and it is difficult to say which of these is more important." Trubetskoi argued moreover that Russia was Eurasian and not European (Slavic) not only by virtue of its cultural patterns, but in terms of anthropological-racial considerations as well. "Turkic blood mingles in Russian veins with that of the Ugro-Finns and the Slavs," he observed: "[I]t is usually forgotten that our 'brothers' (if not in language or faith, then in blood, character, and culture) are not only the Slavs but the Turanians..."¹ This dramatic insistence on the Asian sources of the Russian ethos--on what Trubetskoi evocatively called Russia's "non-European, half-Asiatic face"-- was intended to leave no room whatsoever for any doubt as to the fundamental chasm that set Russia apart

in every sense from Europe. As such, it forms without question the most well-appreciated element of Eurasianism overall”¹⁴.

These are a historically formed issues that are significant for research in the identity of Russia. Every nation is a matter of historical mission, development, and internal life. It is a historically formed basis of every nation to find its own path of development, and it’s a matter of controversies and disputes to find a common way of ideological development and values, which are important for a given society. Russia has a long history of ideological controversies and disputes, however, they have received its own path of development nowadays.

The new Russian identity, which received a discourse analyses in Russian media, and in politics, is the one which significantly describes Russia as a huge national and supranational power. It bring many issues to the discussion, for example the issue of self-identity of Russia, “Russia is with its own original profile”, or that it has several ideological orientations, “Russia is Europe”, or “Russia is Eurasia”, or “Russia is neither West nor East”, etc. Therefore one might say that the processes in Russia which it undergoes, lead to a specific ideological contradiction, which signifies nor Eastern nor either Western specifics of Russia. Preferably, most Russian theoreticians and politics say that there is a common unique Russian way of development, which is the way that politicians involve in their thinking and practice, however, in international space Russia sometimes is seen as the country with no way of development, and the country which borrows certain things from the West trying to improve internal conditions. But there is , of course, a dispute, in which scholars try to distinguish certain values for Russian state, and therefore, they try to see over all possible solutions to the evolving identity of Russia. Some say, that it is a historically evolved issue, some say that it is a matter of politics and social life, however, in my paper I tried to show you all these different views on the question.

¹⁴ Mark Bassin “Classical Eurasianism and the Geopolitics of Russian Identity”
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~crn/crn_papers/Bassin.pdf

In my view, I see all the perspectives as a given fact, or an ideological compounds, which go in contradiction with each other, however, they balance any contradictions, which evolve due to the mentioned disputes. Any of the views I consider valuable and important, however, the most important, which I have presented and argued about, present its own statement, which can be recognized as existing in Russian society. Any of the before mentioned issues can be characterized as making up the societal type of thinking, approve by the politicians, and, on the other hand, being formed throughout the history of Russia, its ideological conflict, which received its result in different views on Russian way, be they Slavofiles, or Westernisers, or, the dispute nowadays, to which direction Russia will go, to the East, or to the West, the dispute Where does Russia belong: to Europe, to Asia, or is it a Eurasia. From my view, Russia has its own path, however, it borrows many of Western traits, which it applies later on to its own life and economical and political development inside of Russia. However, the main priorities are given to the West, where it finds support and interests. Here, I want you to know the viewpoint of Zvonovsky, who says, that “a key component in the process of identity formation is the division of the world into “us” and “them” factions and the development of some perception of how Russians differ from others. From this point of view, the West as a whole, and America as the leader of the Western world, is the mirror in which Russians see themselves—both in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. To a lesser extent this view also contributes to assessments of the West, as well as the actions of Western states. Russians still consider American society to be, if not an example for simple implantation, at least a guide to orient them in many spheres of social life.”

He states, that Russian citizens themselves identify Russia in a provincial sense, and then somehow try to fit it into a global context. Moreover, the United States, as the social “center,” is accepted as the standard against which one measures and weighs the periphery. Second, despite the fact that, for the majority of Russians, American society seems to be a model for a more just set of social arrangements, the United States remains a threat to Russian society. This constitutes a radical difference from Russian public attitudes toward the United States during the Soviet period. At that time the United States seemed to be the key menace and the average Soviet citizen

viewed American society as being less just than their own. The two societies opposed one another with equal confidence in the superiority and just nature of their own social arrangements. Now Russians stand opposed (in their mind) to societies that they feel are both more and less just than our own. In this case, isolationism emerges as a reaction against an unattainable ideal—an expression of frustration. What lies at the roots of such attitudes? Obviously, there is no single irrefutable answer to this question. During the first phase of reforms in Russia, the United States and the West as a whole were perceived not only as model, but also as a factor spurring the home government to implement more liberal policies toward its citizens. Russians assumed that the activities of the national government were the main obstacles to improving life for the population to transform the government, via election or putsch (followed by the latter's suppression), and life would naturally change for the better. At the same time, the population's own activities and attitudes—with regard to work, money, the law, and even God—could remain the same.

At last, Zvonovsky says, that Russian residents consider the West a spatially remote authority within a series of other authorities; in other words, they understand it as a supranational extension of power. Thus, the more critically people estimate those relations, which currently exist between the central government and regions, the more critically they also estimate present relations between Russia and the West. In other words, they divide global space not into Russia and the outside world, but into the world of various authorities and the world of the individual's everyday being (Zvonovsky 2005).

However, in our case, we can see Russia as being oriented to the West, and I can prolong my arguments of why is it so. However, it has been a major driving force for Russia throughout the years that it has been following West, and it will continue to follow. In the Washington post, June 9, 2001 Michael A. McFaul has said that “between a continuation of engagement and a return to containment is a third path: realistic engagement. Bush needs to communicate to Putin that he believes in the possibility of Russia's integration into Europe and the Western community of states. But he also needs to clearly articulate the real terms of integration, terms that will

require Russia to undergo serious political and economic changes. To help Russia integrate into the West, the American strategy must still be engagement, but with more realistic expectations about when, and with real standards for how this integration might occur”. “Russian society is currently divided as to whether Russia can or should aspire to become part of Europe again. Russian foreign policy elites also articulate two paths -- West and East -- for Russia's strategic orientation.”¹⁵.

Here, all connected to external politics of Russia during the last decade or so. The priorities are given to the West, where Russia finds support and influence. Russian identity is so peculiar, so that it may be said that Russia rather goes in two dimensions, East and West. Russian national identity is not only a matter of Russian soul, but it may become a mass-based driving force for action and for change.

In my view, to see Russian identity as an issue nowadays is to realize, how it was formed in history, and on the basis of this knowledge, to establish a necessary framework to better understand the whole political discourse about the issue. I see it as a big multinational power. It gathers in itself the ethnicities and brings them together in one state, Russia. People are a constant value, a subject of history, an internal value, which during the centuries formed its culture, logic and made up future perspectives. Russian people in history have gone through many developments and changes. From Slavic Tribes to Kiev Rus, to a centralized system with Moscow in the centre of state. The most interesting is that there is a unique complex of national identification, and its in the history of Russian people. Religion, which is important nowadays, and was also a matter of Russian life in history, is a significant trait, which signifies Russian religious heritage. Orthodoxy, which I am going to talk about, is one of the most important characteristics, and a mater of life in Russian state.

¹⁵ Michael A. McFaul, West or East for Russia? *The Washington Post*, June 9, 2001
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=718>

Another important issue is a search for common national idea. Flourishing the nation, preservation and development of the national way of life and national interests are the core principles of Russian nation. These principles are reflected by every step of Russian people. They are vividly multiple and interesting to know and to follow, for example, Russian holidays and traditions. They are very important for Russian people and they in combination to a free nation, make up the cultural life of state. Throughout the history of Russia, there was a constant search of ideas. Some were taken from Western thinkers, some were created in Russia, to make up the spirit of Russian people more significant, and to draw a historical line in conjunction to which, a basis of Russian history and thinking were created. They were the Slavofiles and Westernisers, nowadays, they are politicians, who make up the most important steps to significantly make the Russian way of life more solid, strong, and oriented to the West. They are the Western values, which the state takes into account, and makes further steps to improve Russian way of life. On the other hand, these are Russian people, who choose the path to follow, and they are the ones who create the history of Russia from the inside, and they are politicians, who make up the identity of Russia, in time, taking into consideration, the basic values of international states and following their rules and order.

Mark Bassin says, “As for the Russian nation, it always was a center of ethnic and cultural attraction of not only the Slavs, but also the adjoining peoples. In fact, Russians are defined more by their geographic location than by blood. They have never constituted a nation in the Western understanding of this term. Unlike the nations of Western Europe, the Russians have never been obsessed with the idea of creating a national state, and never equated the nation and the state. Russia’s national idea always has been separate from the idea of Russian nationalism”¹⁶.

Another view, “Today Russian society is undergoing a period of dramatic change. Russian history was not smooth either. Since middle ages it has been developing in different way from the European West. Steady evolution of civil society in Europe

¹⁶ http://www.dartmouth.edu/~crn/crn_papers/Bassin.pdf

after Enlightenment gave a stable framework for development of identity there. The whole history of Russia is connected with changes between different ends. Now the picture remains basically the same: There are many different nonlinear processes which are taking place simultaneously in Russian society in the meantime”¹⁷.

Before-mentioned disputes are significant for the development of ideological thinking inside of Russia. But what are the other values which create Russian identity, in Russia. I consider Orthodoxy, a religious compound of Russian nation, to prevail in life of people in Russia. Orthodoxy is a significant value, which Russia has. It has been established hundreds of years before, and now, it is a value, which is now a compound in the country’s identity.

Why Orthodoxy, my next question? The idea of Russia as an “Orthodox nation” has a long history; it ties in with both official definitions and popular perceptions; it is also at the core of the historical and philosophical debates that have aimed to delimit geopolitical place of Russia and to understand the essence of “Russianness”. Russia is by no means unique in this respect. The religious dimension has always played an important role in the self-determination of peoples and nations. The conflicts of ancient and medieval states were conflicts of gods. Religious traditions frequently determined, in one way or another, how cultures and States were divided and united. In Europe, contemporary nation-states developed on the basis of communities that defined themselves partly in terms of their religious affiliation: Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox. Later, in the twentieth century, Islam, Buddhism and Catholicism have played a key role in the formation and legitimation of the new nations of Asia and Latin America. (Agadjanian 2000)

¹⁷ <http://www.aare.edu.au/97pap/morad019.htm>

Russian Orthodox identity was a consolidating factor that united Russians of all social strata. At the same time the similar role was played by the imperial identity. The Russians historically have been a nation, that kept forming an empire. Russians in a very high degree identified themselves with the empire. This fact explains to a large degree the inherent particular features of Russian national consciousness. The Russian national consciousness in this respect for a long time has been tempted by a suspicion of being a God chosen people, that it had a special purpose in the world. This role imposed from outside with a passage of time became quite organic self perception¹⁸.

The idea of an “Orthodox nation” reappeared in Russia during the 1990s; the prerevolutionary past was then brought into play, even though the contemporary situation in Russia differs fundamentally from the situation in the nineteenth century. The Orthodox “nature” of society and of the State was then a reality; Orthodoxy formed part of the popular consciousness, of daily behavior and of State practice; contemporary “Orthodox identity”, on the other hand, is rather a mythological idiom that appeared in response to a need for a new identity. Prerevolutionary society had gradually evolved towards a secularized and pluralist “formula of identity”; contemporary society already seems to be secularized and pluralist (as a legacy of the post-Communist period) and is seeking ways of gradually including the elements of Orthodoxy within its “formula of identity”. “Orthodoxy” in pre-revolutionary Russia was a religious reality permeating the whole of society, while “Orthodoxy” in present-day Russia is only a reality within the religious “field” and is essentially a kind of a cultural symbol, used as an important ideological construct.

Russian national consciousness was strongly cemented by Orthodoxy. Therefore it was much easier for it to acclaim, as its own member, a representative of another ethnos, and not of another religion. In the framework of the imperial identity both Poles, Germans, and Jews were undoubtedly considered “our own”. In this way one nation combined an imperial identity and Russian Orthodox identity. The first one dictated to recognize all peoples of the Empire as “our own”. The second refused to

¹⁸ http://www.acls.org/crn/network/ebook_gatagova_paper1.doc

accept the peoples, different in a religious way, as “our own”. They were considered alien. This dichotomy produced a very painful dual self perception. It considered proper and alien halves as part of one organism. This unity was extremely contradictory. We think, that this very dichotomy, constantly present in the Russian national consciousness, has and continues to determine the chronic crises of its self identification. Ethnic hatred is just one of the factors and, to this respect, a negative one in a very complex and long process of crystallization of ethnic identity of Russians¹⁹.

There is a close connection in modern Russian mind between Orthodoxy and national identity. Orthodoxy is a symbol of Russian origins and spiritual worth, something that can be opposed to others. It is not a concept of a “believer”, and it does not contradict to any normal logic. The number of Orthodox in Russia is much greater than the number of believers, around 40 percent. It makes it clear that such “ideological” Orthodoxy has only very indirect relation to religious faith. Ethnos, peoples and religion have been bringing Russia together. The new cultural traditions formed its inter-culture from inside, and a constant dialogue between these cultures has made Russia’s cohesion close and culturally stable. From the outside, there were influences throughout the history of Russia, which made it possible still, to find its big position in the world and among states. Russian Church has played a significant role throughout the history of Russia unifying Russian people and bringing them culturally and spiritually together.

Therefore, any ideological dispute, which has been a result of complicated historical events, is a matter of Russian self-identification. However, a religious value, is a significant trait of Russian consciousness, as well as Russian identity.

¹⁹ http://www.acls.org/crn/network/ebook_gatagova_paper1.doc

Conclusion

Construction of state is very important process which involves formations on the state level. It is important from the view of constructivism, which sees identity as the main discourse in the theories of IR. Identity of state shows how state is recognized by other states, on the international level, and it constructs an idea of state on the national level. To make these together, I may see it as it serves as a fundamental value of the state. What kind of Russian state identity is, and what values are making this identity were discussed in my paper.

State is undergoing a process of construction constantly, under certain conditions. It changes its identities and values. However, identity of state can be defined as a constant value which evolves in time as a result of some processes inside of the state, and the identity formation can be recognized as a value, which recognizes state in its external affairs. But in my work, I saw it also as a process, in which state is able to change its identity in time, and because of internal influences, it changes its identity. Also, I aimed to show that identity has its core in ethnos of the state, which is in people who compose this state. I tried to recognize it as a value in identity formation. All the other defined issues, such as Orthodoxy, or ideologies, etc. can be seen as theoretically approved values, which create an identity of Russian state. From my view, Russian state as a constant value brings in itself these mentioned in my work values, and as process, it can be seen as a state formation process, in which Russian state is seen in the system of states, and it is being ruled by international laws. Therefore, state identity is being shaped by international structures, and Russian state identity receives its already different value in international order. Then, I wanted to mention the importance of theory of constructivism which can be applied to external part of Russian state. Here, Russian values are seen as given, and a new Russian identity of state is its policies and behavior in the international system. The view on the identity of Russia is different from the one which is developed inside of the state. National politics is seen as a rule inside of the country, but external policies of state are being recognized as a result of state rule in time, and the identity which is being

developed, is recognized as Russian state identity. In my work, I tried to highlight two of the existing identities, however, I didn't separate them but showed them altogether making an accent on the significance of both. Therefore, I see these values as additional to each other, and their common aim, to open up the state identity of the state, as an entity, and as state as such, as an important value in identity formation.

Next, I tried to see more deeply on the constituting values in each of the visions. State identity from the perspective of nationals, who give their own vision on the problem, and also, I tried to make it clear that internationally, Russian state can be foreseen as a state which undergoes certain change in time, and with respect to policies of the state, Russia generates its state identity and is accepted in the world system. I gathered material which I considered important to open up the question more deeply. I touched all the issues that I consider important for reflecting my ideas about Russian state identity, and I applied to my research question all the necessary theoretical material to highlight the problem.

International vision on the problem is quite different from the one being developed inside of Russia. National policies which create internal state identity are quite different from the ones being developed in other countries. Therefore, I see Russia as a unique state with certain important values and own national identity.

Russia during the last ten years was experiencing a crisis of identity. It was connected to previous crises inside of the country, democratic and social problems and so on. It was hard to return to traditional path of nation-state development, which was signified by the inability to find common identity of Russian state, and it characterized state as lost in international political and economic systems. It was a significant development in Russia which had a fundamental character. Finally, Russia has found its place in international world system and developed a new Russian identity.

Russia has integrated into the world economy. After a long negotiations, Russia has been included onto the G-8 as a full member. Now, Russia expects a full assistance and support from the West and the United States.

Probably, geopolitical question was in general selected as the most important, and Russia has gained more than it has expected, for example, Russia has selected the US as a major power. In respect, the US has introduced the concept of its global leadership, equal to monopolar world. On the other hand, there were some misperceptions, especially connected to NATO, and its expansion. It is still a confrontation and a matter of mutual suspicions and misperceptions between the US and Russia.

In result, Russia has decided about its position in the world to rely on its own potential and capabilities in restructuring its economy. Integration into the world economy was left as a matter of future considerations, such values as democracy, market economy and civil society were decided to be strengthened, and in foreign policy Russia has had to be identified and stucked to its national interests. For the coming years, Russia will keep this identity matters.

However, during the time of crisis of economics and politics in Russia, the crisis of identity appeared. The notion of national idea has appeared as a state's historical idea, and a search of historical mission as well as national historical tasks has appeared more significantly.

Russia stands on the two ends of foreign policy. It balances between East and West, preferably choosing the West as a path to follow and to negotiate with. It grants the West a significant task of strengthening Russia in the spheres such as economy, politics, including International Politics. It gives an example to Russia how to build up the country. It provides significant ties in politics, as well as economical ties, which strengthen and unify Russia.

Russia is an ethnical community, which brings in itself specificities. It is a historically build-up nation, which has its significant traits, and which prolongs its existence. It is a strong nation, which has survived through the years of history and change, and it's a nation, which strongly holds its position in the World and in Eurasia.

Russia is constructing its nation. Russia is building up the nation on micro and macro levels. Russia has its behavior in the World Politics and provides a strong ties within the economy and politics in the World and the International system. Russia brings in itself a special nation in the World, and characterizes by a continuity in its political life and behavior.

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