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THE OTHERS WITHIN: DRAWING BOUNDARIES INSIDE THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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This study turns around the conventional idea of boundaries as outer limits by focusing on the internal boundaries that define who is considered a full member and a legitimate owner of the state. The theme of internal boundaries of Russia is approached in this study through two political projects: an initiative of a codex of behavior for the residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and the Strategy of National Politics. The purpose of the study is to construct and compare boundary narratives emerging from these discussions in order to sketch the directions towards which the use of internal boundaries for the purposes of nation building in Russia may be developing, and what it may mean to the relations between 'us' and 'the Others within'.

My research problem can be formulated as follows: *What kind of competing narratives about the internal boundaries within the Russian Federation can be found in the boundary discourse emerging around the two chosen political projects?* The resulting narratives are further analyzed to find answers to the following sub-questions: *Are there elements of exclusionary nation building visible in the narratives? Do the results support the claim that Russian nation building is purposefully ambiguous?*

The study approaches boundaries and nations through a social constructivist lens. Boundaries are hence studied here as socially constructed lines of distinction dividing people into 'us' and 'the Others'. My theoretical framework combines border studies and studies of nation building, making use of theories of exclusionary nation building and the concept of 'the Other'. Articles from eight Russian media publications, the Strategy of National Politics, three speeches and one article by Vladimir Putin are used as material. Narrative analysis is applied to construct alternative boundary narratives based on the material.

Three distinct boundary narratives were constructed: russocentric, multinational and civic narratives. The first unifies the culturally defined core nation against an internal 'Other'; the second takes for granted the existence of boundaries between ethnic sub-nations within the supra-nation of Russia; and the third calls for a civic nation of equal citizens. My results support the claim that Russian nation building is purposefully ambiguous, as especially the high level discourse mixes all of the three boundary narratives. Each of the narratives responds to different problems within the state, suggesting that ambiguity is used as a strategy to guarantee relevant internal stability in a divided society. Only the russocentric narrative could be interpreted to advocate exclusionary nation building, while the other two gave reason to believe in the possibility of more inclusionary future directions for nation building in Russia.

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Codex Initiative and the Strategy of National Politics

A key function of boundaries is creating distinction: boundaries are always drawn around or between something, categorizing and creating compartments in which some are included and some are not (Newman 2003, 123; Lamont & Molnar 2002). Such boundaries of inclusion and exclusion exist not only at the edges of a state, but also inside it – defining who belongs to the “group viewed as the legitimate owner of the state” (Marx 2002, 107) and can be considered a “full member of the nation” (Wimmer 2006, 337). What makes such internal boundaries important from the point of view of International Relations is their potential to change the location and meaning of physical state borders and affect the relations not only between the different groups within the state, but also between neighboring states. In Russia, it is difficult not to notice such internal boundaries that seem to exclude certain groups of people living within the Russian borders. Most often, these ‘Others within’ seem to be ethnic Caucasians or migrants from Central Asia, as problems linked to these groups and the boundaries excluding them are present in everyday practices, discussions and in the media.

In 2010, those internal boundaries were made visible by initiatives in Moscow and St. Petersburg to create a codex of behavior for residents of the cities. The Codex was supposed to contain the “unwritten rules” of behavior and dress in the two cities, and the stated goal was to “help newcomers from near and far abroad, and also from Russian regions to adapt as quickly as possible to the cultural and everyday particularities of the life in Moscow”¹. The initial idea came from Moscow, where Mikhail Solomentsev, president of the Committee of Interregional Connections and National Policy of Moscow, acted as the main lobbyist for the “Codex of Muscovite”. Later, a local LDPR party leader Elena Babich suggested creating a similar Codex in St. Petersburg. In her own words, she was forced into this by an event from her own experience: “not long ago she met on the Nevsky prospekt a family of immigrants from the Caucasus, the woman was dressed in a dressing gown and slippers, while the man’s clothing was

¹ «-- помочь приезжим гражданам из ближнего и дальнего зарубежья, а также из российских регионов в кратчайшие сроки адаптироваться к культурным и бытовым особенностям жизни в Москве» (*Rossiiskaya Gazeta* 16.6.2010)

‘sweatpants that were stretched on the knees’². After the local politicians brought up the idea of a Codex in the summer of 2010, it was discussed and criticized in the media. By December 2010 the idea had succumbed into some general rules of behavior and quietly buried.

It is worth noting, that cases of local politicians suggesting controversial laws or rules that result to nothing more than momentary publicity are not rare in Russian politics. Nevertheless, the discussion sparked by the suggestions underlines the existence of a perceived boundary between ‘us’ and ‘the Others’ within Russia. In fact, the suggested Codex and the discussion themselves are boundary-producing processes: they define and enforce the boundary by pointing out why ‘the Others’ should be excluded and what makes them different from us. This makes the media coverage of the Codex fruitful material for uncovering underlying boundary narratives and understanding the alternative roles assigned in them to ‘the Others within’.

The media discussion around the Codex Initiative gives an idea of the boundary narratives on a popular level – concentrating on the narratives of the media and the local politicians. Another important source of boundary narratives is the high level political nation building discourse. The initiatives of the Russian President Vladimir Putin³ to create a strategy on dealing with the diversity of Russia and the resulting strategy document serve as interesting material for studying what kind of ideas of the boundary are being projected on the nation from above. The Strategy on National Policy⁴ was published in December 2012 and prepared by the Council of Interethnic Relations, led by Putin. The Strategy was created, according to Putin, for the purposes of strengthening the unity of the multinational country, harmonizing ethnic relations and integrating internal and foreign migrants to the society.⁵ Key ideas of the Strategy were already outlined in one of the articles that were published in Putin’s name as part of his election campaign in

² «-- недавно она встретила на Невском проспекте семью выходцев из Кавказа, причем женщина была одета в банный халат и домашние тапочки, а в гардеробе мужчины были «треники с вытянутыми коленками» (*Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 24.6.)

³ The discussions about the codex happened during Medvedev’s presidency in 2010. Putin became president in 2012 and took an active role in the creation of the Strategy of National Politics both before and after the election.

⁴ ‘National’ here refers to the different sub-nations within Russia.

⁵ Putin at the meeting of the Council of Interethnic Relations, 24.8.2012.

January 2012. The Council is still active at the moment of writing this thesis – now discussing the implementation of the Strategy. It is meant to act as an arena for discussion on the national politics and an instrument for feedback from the local level where the implementation of the Strategy takes place.⁶

These two political projects – the Codex Initiative and the Strategy on National Policy – both essentially deal with the internal boundaries within the Russian Federation. They both contribute to the drawing of internal boundaries and attempt to offer solutions on how to deal with them. Combining the two makes it possible to compare the high and low levels of boundary discourse and to study the contradictions of Russian nation building, which occasionally seems to switch tactics from assimilation to celebration of diversity, or from unification to construction of internal boundaries. In this study, these contradictions are approached by constructing and comparing the competing boundary narratives – alternative stories about and around the internal boundaries of Russia – embedded in my material.

1.2 Ambiguous boundaries of the Russian nation

For Russia, the collapse of the Soviet Union did not solve the question of the boundaries of the nation. As Zevelev (2009) points out, this was rather the moment when the question was born. The very same question of the boundaries of the Russian nation became topical again during the writing of this thesis, as the crisis in Ukraine became a new scene for the redrawing of the symbolic boundaries of the Russian nation – as well as the physical borders of the Russian Federation.

The complications regarding the question of boundaries in Russia stem from history. While many other post-Soviet states began their nation building processes on pronouncedly ethnic foundations, the new Russia in the 1990s had no clear ethnic, linguistic, cultural or historical boundaries to refer to (Tolz 1998a, 993). On the one hand, the collapse of the Soviet Union left a considerable number of ethnic Russians outside of the borders of the Russian Federation. On the other, the Russian Federation was born a multiethnic state: according to the census in 2010, the

⁶ Putin at the meeting of the Council of Interethnic Relations, 9.6.2012.

people on the territory of Russia belong to 193 ethnic groups and speak 277 languages (Strategy of National Politics, 3). From this starting point, Russia had to find new foundations for its political existence, while at the same time dealing with usual problems of nation building (Panov 2010, 85). This led to, as Morozov (2009, 200) says, a “nearly universal obsession with identity”. The ‘unifying national idea’ called for by Yeltsin in 1996 (Simonsen 2000, 379) is still not clear, and the process of its formulation is now lead by current president Vladimir Putin. Following this confusion, post-Soviet nation building discourse in Russia has mixed different kinds of civic and ethnic conceptions of the nation⁷, meaning that there exist several alternative ideas of how the boundaries of the Russian nation – the legitimate owners of the state – should be drawn.

Panov (2010) has studied the image of the Russian nation through Annual Addresses of the presidents. According to him, the Kremlin imagines the nation in neither narrow ethnic nor purely civic senses. As culture is the key criterion of membership, citizenship becomes insufficient and even unnecessary for gaining the status of a full member of the nation. Shevel (2011) and Tolz (1998a, 1998b), on the other hand, have studied Russian nation building debates and recognized five distinct discourses containing alternative ways of drawing the boundaries of the nation: three ethnic discourses based on ethnicity, language or culture, and two civic definitions based on current or previous territory. Some of these discourses can be recognized in the current case of Ukraine and Krim, where the redrawing of borders and boundaries has been mostly argued by referring to linguistic boundaries and historical borders. The key point made by Shevel and Tolz and illustrated by the developments of the crisis in Ukraine is that in the case of Russia the boundaries of the imaginary nation rarely match with physical state borders – the nation both spills outside of the borders and contracts within them.

This is not only a Russian phenomenon, as it is quite rare that the symbolic boundaries of the nation would perfectly equal the physical borders of the state. Sometimes, however, this may become a larger issue; a good example is the case of Hungary, where the creation of a Hungarian nation much wider than the population of Hungary has become an important political project (see

⁷ A civic/ethnic division of nations is often referred to in this study. An ethnic nation would be a community bound together by common ethno-cultural characteristics, such as ethnicity, language, culture and religion. Civic nation, on the contrary, is a community whose membership is defined simply by territory or citizenship and the loyalty to the state’s political institutions (see f.ex. Shevel 2011, 180; Tolz 1998a, 993).

f.ex. Nyysönen 2011). In the Russian case, the dilemma lies in the way dealing with the Russian diaspora in the Near Abroad⁸ and the diversity within Russia itself require pulling the boundaries into opposite directions. Kántor calls such two-directional strategy of homogenizing internal population and simultaneously supporting co-nationals abroad ‘nation policy’ and believes that all states engage in it to some extent (Kántor 2004; Nyysönen 2011, 60). Similarly, Shevel (2011) argues that the nation’s boundaries are kept vague by the Russian state *on purpose*, to enable flexibility in addressing both of these issues. Could it be that the same vagueness is found in the narratives of the internal boundaries of Russia? And can such vagueness be a sustainable solution?

It is suggested by Kolossov (2005, 615–616) that to avoid disintegration Russia should be able to create a single political nation that would encompass the whole population – meaning that this nation cannot be defined by ethnicity or region. Constructing a coherent and dominant narrative of the nation’s boundaries is crucial for the state because, as Kolossov (2005, 616) puts it, “if there is no stable political identity, there will be no stable boundaries, territory, state or political unit”. In this sense, it is interesting to research to what extent the boundary narratives match with this idea, or whether they are likely to strengthen the already existing separatist tendencies. Will future Russia be divided by even stronger symbolic boundaries than today, or are those boundaries already beginning to fade?

Shevel’s idea of ambiguity as a conscious strategy and Kolossov’s argument of the importance of a coherent and inclusive boundary narrative provide interesting starting points for this study. Based on Shevel’s findings it would seem that the Russian state is doing the very opposite of what Kolossov recommends – at least in its policies towards the Russians beyond the borders of the Russian Federation. Previous research on Russian nation building discourses has tended to concentrate on the ways of drawing the nation’s boundaries beyond the state borders – in other words, on the question of compatriots⁹. However, boundary discourses also define and give

⁸ ‘Near Abroad’ is a term used for new independent states that appeared after the collapse of Soviet Union.

⁹ Compatriot is a term used for Russians living outside of Russia as a result of the fall of the Soviet Union. Although compatriots maintain to have a special status in regards to right to Russian citizenship et cetera, there is so far no clear definition on who counts as a compatriot in practice nor clearly stated goals or coherent practices in regard to

meaning to the more intangible boundaries cutting through regions and cities inside the state. While Shevel (2011) concentrates on the “spilling outside” part of the Russian nation building, I will complete the image she provides by examining how the boundaries are drawn *within* the borders of the Russian Federation. I believe that this side of the dilemma is more important for the future of Russia than is the definition of compatriots, because badly drawn internal boundaries can cause much more damage by sparking and fueling internal conflict. However, it is important to understand that these two sides are connected, as each boundary discourse inevitably draws lines both outside and within the physical borders – linking the question of internal boundaries to the wider picture of International Relations.

1.3 Setting the research problem

The research at hand contributes to the study of boundaries by revealing the boundary narratives underlying the Russian discourse about internal boundaries. The purpose of the study is to construct and compare boundary narratives emerging from the discussion around the Codex Initiative and the Strategy of National Politics in order to sketch the directions towards which the use of internal boundaries for the purposes of nation building in Russia may be developing, and what it may mean to the relations between ‘us’ and ‘the Others within’. For example Newman and Paasi urge border scholars to pay attention to such competing boundary narratives and the differences between the symbolic boundaries and the physical state borders (Newman & Paasi 1998, 195–201). The question of boundaries of the nation is important from the point of view of International Relations, because boundary discourse always draws lines both inside and outside of the state and therefore the way the boundaries are set in the minds of people has the potential to affect relations between neighboring states and even physical state borders.

Boundaries are a useful point of view from which to approach nation building, because nation building is essentially a process of defining boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘the Others’. Traditionally, the outer limits of nations have been in the center of attention, because nation building has most often been understood as an inclusionary process of uniting a community against an external ‘Other’ (Wimmer 2006, 335). However, there is another side to nation

compatriots. The theme has attracted much academic attention and is researched widely by such scholars such as Ingram (2001), Shevel (2011) and Tolz (1998).

building, too. Unlike most previous research, my focus is on the symbolic boundaries of inclusion and exclusion *within* the borders of the Russian Federation. The ‘us’ in this thesis is the group viewed as the “legitimate owner of the state” (Marx 2002, 107) consisting of those who are considered “full members of the nation” (Wimmer 2006, 338). This is the group who is granted equal rights before the law, who is invited to participate in politics and whose culture and language are valued – in contrast to those ‘Others within’ who are treated as aliens, whose political voice is disregarded and whose culture and language are marginalized (Wimmer 2006, 335–336). Such distinction becomes meaningful in connection to Panov’s (2010, 93–94) description of Russian nation building as ‘hierarchical’ in the sense that social mobility of the citizens between such core nation and the rest of the population is limited. This kind of hierarchy inevitably leads to the creation of ‘Others within’ who are deemed, as Marx (2002, 104–107) says, to remain permanently excluded from the imagined nation, but inside the state territory. Rather than taking a conventional perspective to nation building as a supposedly inclusive phenomenon, this study pays attention to the use of internal boundaries as instruments for the kind of exclusionary nation building described above.

Stories are a central way of how people comprehend the reality surrounding them and hence a powerful instrument in molding public opinion. This makes it interesting to approach the question of internal boundaries through the alternative stories around and about the boundary – stories, which argue for different kind of understandings of the nature of the boundary and solutions on how to deal with it. Therefore, I chose narrative analysis as a method, while my theoretical framework rests on the social constructivist strain of border studies combined with theories of nation building and the concept of the ‘Other’. As the study takes a social constructivist view on nations and boundaries, the ‘core nation’ and the ‘Others within’ addressed in this research are analyzed not as something objective or concrete, but as social constructions emerging from the discourse, making narrative analysis a suitable method for approaching them. The narratives are constructed by the researcher based on statements collected from the material, meaning that the narratives do not exist in the material in a form of a clear story, but as scattered statements which are collected, categorized and combined in order to construct the underlying boundary narratives.

As other scholars have already pointed out the vagueness of the official boundary discourse in Russia, I expect to find no single coherent narrative, but rather several alternative ones. I call these narratives *competing*, because each of them argues for a distinct way of drawing the boundary, a distinct way of explaining the problems related to it and – perhaps most importantly – a distinct way of solving these problems. Even if different narratives may exist simultaneously and even be voiced by a single narrator, the narratives still compete with each other for attention and followers within the boundary discourse. Sooner or later, one of the narratives becomes more dominant than others and begins to have a stronger effect on general discourse and political decision-making.

My research problem can be formulated as follows:

What kind of competing narratives about the internal boundaries within the Russian Federation can be found in the boundary discourse emerging around the two chosen political projects?

The resulting narratives are further analyzed to find answers to the following sub-questions:

Are there elements of exclusionary nation building visible in the narratives?

Do the results support the claim that Russian nation building is purposefully ambiguous?

I approach the research problem by concentrating on two political projects: the Strategy of National Politics and the codex of behavior for residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg. These cases are interesting from the point of view of boundaries and nation building because the discussion around them essentially defines the boundaries between 'us' and 'the Others within'. The Strategy of National Politics does this while looking for answers to the question of how to manage diversity in a multiethnic state; the Codex Initiative by explaining to whom and why such rules of behavior are needed. At the same time, these political projects are abstract enough to leave room for discussion about the roles of the 'the Others within'. My material covering the discourse around the Strategy of National Politics consists of the final strategy paper itself, Putin's article "Russia: the national question" and transcripts of his speeches at the first three meetings of the Council of Interethnic Relations that was set to create the Strategy. These sources were chosen for their timeliness and capability to affect the wider boundary discourse:

the Strategy of National Politics is being implemented at the time of writing this thesis and Putin's role in Russian politics makes his statements more influential than those of other politicians. The discourse around the Codex Initiative is covered by articles published during 2010 in eight Russian online media publications¹⁰. Popular mainstream publications were chosen in order to cover the mainstream media discussion that affects a wide audience.

Another reason for choosing the cases of the Codex Initiative and the Strategy of National Politics is that they make it possible to cover and compare both high and low level discourse of boundaries. Critical geopolitics makes this kind of distinction between the different layers of discourse. The high level of discourse is the one created by politicians and experts, who use it to justify the actions of the state. Low level, on the other hand, refers to the discourse in the media, popular culture and education. It consists of representations of the relationships between different elements of the political space, national security and threats to it, territory of the group and its boundaries, historical missions et cetera (Kolossov 2005, 625). It is possible to question the sense of making such strict division between the high and low levels of discourse, as these discourses cannot be completely separated in practice. However, choosing material from both levels of discourse helps to make the material more varied and allows some comparison between the discourses of high level politics and the media. Comparison of the narratives emerging from the different levels is interesting for the reason that these layers of discourse never completely fit together, but to legitimate its attempts of nation building the government needs them to match as well as possible (Kolossov 2005, 624–625). Especially the low level discourse, as it is directed directly to the population, is a powerful tool for nation building and creating ethnic and political identities (Kolossov 2005, 625). However, at the same time the low level discourse is open for everyone to participate in, meaning that it is not the state alone who decides about the constructing, shifting and erasing of boundaries (Rumford 1998, 67).

For clearly addressing the topic of the study, it is necessary to make some terminological distinctions. First, it is essential to understand the difference between '*Rossiiskii*' and '*Russkii*' – the two words that both translate to 'Russian' in English, but have quite distinct meanings.

¹⁰ The online versions of the newspapers *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Izvestia*, and *Delovoi Peterburg* were used along with the website of the information agency RIA Novosti and the online news portals *Gazeta.ru*, *Lenta.ru*, and *Fontanka.ru*. These sources are presented in more detail in the methodology section.

Simply put, '*Russkii*' refers to Russians as an ethnic group, while '*Rossiiskii*' or '*Rossiiane*' refers to all citizens of the Russian Federation. However, neither of the terms can be considered to refer to a clear group defined by uncontested boundaries. The meaning of such groups as *Russkie* or *Rossiiskie* is socially constructed, just as is the meaning of any other national group. This study concentrates on the meanings of *Rossiiskii* nation, because the point of interest here is what kind of nation is being produced within the framework of the Russian Federation, but it is possible that ethnic ideas of a *Russkii* nation arise from the narratives. Second, the words 'border' and 'boundary' are sometimes used interchangeably, but for the sake of conceptual clarity they bear distinct meanings in this study. 'Border' is used here to refer to the physical state borders, while 'boundary' refers to the symbolic, socially constructed boundaries. This study focuses on the latter, conceptualizing boundaries as socially constructed lines of distinction dividing people into 'us' and 'the Others'. 'Boundary narrative', on the other hand, refers to the story unfolding around the boundary: the alternative explanations of why the boundary is drawn where it is drawn and what should be done about it.

In the following chapters I will first discuss the concept of 'boundary' using ideas from previous research belonging to the social constructivist line of border studies. These ideas of boundaries are then combined with theories of nation building, especially its exclusionary forms, and the concept of 'the Other'. This synthesis of border studies and studies of nation building is my theoretical framework for approaching the internal boundaries of Russia. Previous research on Russian nation building discourses will be addressed, as it serves as a background against which the results of the thesis will be reflected. In the methodology section, I will explain in more detail how narrative analysis can be used to analyze political narratives and how the analysis is conducted in this study. In the results, I will present the three competing boundary narratives found in this study: the russocentric, multinational and civic narratives. They will be further analyzed and compared in order to find answers to the research questions set in this chapter. In conclusions, I will summarize my findings and discuss the directions towards which the use of internal boundaries seems to be developing in the Russian nation building.

2 What is a boundary?

2.1 Diverse approaches to borders and boundaries

Border studies is a multidisciplinary field of study concentrating on different aspects of borders and boundaries. Geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and IR scholars all study borders and boundaries, each from their own angle. From the perspective of this study, the most interesting contributors to the study of boundaries have been Newman, Paasi and Kolossov.

Interest towards different kind of boundaries and their meanings increased among political scientists during the 1990s, encouraged by the facts that nationalism was on the rise and many borders were being redrawn in Eastern Europe and post-Soviet space (Paasi 2011, 62; Newman & Paasi 1998, 186–187; Newman 2003, 128). Still, border studies has a longer history, developing from mere typologies of physical borders to more constructivist ideas of what and where boundaries are and how they appear (Newman 2003). One way to categorize different approaches is to divide them to historical- geographical, typological, functional and political approaches (Kolossov 2005, 608–609). Traditional border studies tended to produce functional classifications or empirical analyses of concrete borders, while more recent research often takes a more theoretical view, studying boundaries within the context of such concepts as state, nation, territoriality or identity (Paasi 2005, 665; Newman & Paasi 1998, 189–190).

Political approaches, which emerged in the 1970s, focused originally on the role of state borders in international conflicts. By now, their scope has expanded to cover a variety of themes, such as functions of boundaries, spatial scales, questions of identity, management of borders, world systems, borders as social representations, and relationships between natural and political borders. The themes focused on by border scholars are often interrelated and combined, making the choice between them basically just a question of focus (Kolossov 2005, 609–613; Newman 2003). Political scientists have traditionally mostly been interested in state boundaries and hence their approaches have been closely linked to territoriality (Paasi 1998, 187; Newman 2003, 124). More contemporary themes, such as boundary hierarchies, questions of inclusion and exclusion, boundary management and the borderless world (Newman 2003, 128–133) widen the perspective from territorial to more abstract conceptualizations of boundaries. Even while new themes have

emerged, the traditional ones still remain central because descriptive information regarding classifications and functions of boundaries is important to governments (Newman 2003, 125). Paasi and Newman (1998, 191) identify four major themes within current boundary studies: disappearance of boundaries, the role of boundaries in the construction of sociospatial identities, spatial scales of boundary construction, and boundary narratives and discourse. According to them, these themes are “separate but linked” in the sense that they share a common underlying theme: the connection between territoriality, lines and identities.

Perhaps due to their traditional focus on descriptive research of concrete territorial boundaries, border studies have suffered from “a lack of theoretical reflection” (Kolossoff 2005, 612). There is so far no solid conceptual or theoretical framework for comprehensive study of boundaries (Newman 2003, 124). Newman believes that what we lack is a coherent theory to understand the *process* of bounding or bordering, rather than just the outcome of that process. According to him, the theory should offer a framework for understanding both spatial and other kinds of boundaries as a phenomenon taking place within different social and spatial dimensions, as well as link together the territorial and non-territorial ways through which the process takes place (Newman 2003, 134). Newman is not alone in calling for a more general theory of boundaries, but Paasi finds the idea problematic. According to him, the very contextual nature of boundaries makes it possible to theorize about them only as a part of a much broader theory (Paasi 2005, 668). Our theorizations of boundaries should not be fixed, but rather provide tools to be used and re-conceptualized in different empirical settings (Paasi 2009b).

I join the discussion on the role of boundaries in political discourse by using boundary narratives to address questions of inclusion and exclusion. My study belongs to the social constructivist strain of political approaches to border studies, taking the perspective that boundaries can be studied as social representations. As was discussed earlier, it is difficult to clearly separate different themes within border studies because they are all linked in many ways. Therefore it is natural that my study, although focusing on the idea of inclusion and exclusion, also touches questions of identity and of the relationship between natural and political borders. Following what Paasi (2009b; 2005) says about border studies providing tools to be applied together with a broader theory to analyze empirical situations, I use previous research on borders and boundaries

as a toolbox for analyzing boundaries in the particular case of Russia and combine this approach with theories of nation building and ‘the Other’.

2.2 Social constructivist definition of boundaries

Although the conceptual flexibility and the multiplicity of approaches has made border studies an interestingly diverse field of study, it has at the same time made it unclear what and where the ‘border’ or ‘boundary’ actually is in border studies (Johnson & Jones 2011, 61). This study takes a social constructivist view to borders and boundaries, meaning that they are conceptualized as social representations.

Constructivism in International Relations is not one coherent theory but rather a “family of theories” which share interest in the socially constructed nature of world politics (Knutsen 1979, 279). Constructivism makes a distinction between ‘brute facts’ that are objectively true and ‘social facts’ which rely on social conventions. Realist approaches often ignore this distinction and therefore easily interpret phenomena as natural and objective even when they are actually socially *produced* (Brown & Ainley 2005, 49). Constructivism, on the contrary, acknowledges that the “rules of the game” were made by someone, and that international relations are affected also by non-rational factors, such as identity. According to Wendt (1999, 1) constructivism is based on the idea that structures of human associations are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and identities and interests of actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature. Hence, it is through ideas that states or nations relate to one another and define themselves. Taking a social constructivist view on boundaries, therefore, means to not take boundaries for granted, but to analyze them as lines that were once drawn by someone and can be redrawn.

Border studies began taking influence from social constructivism in the 1980s and has since been widely affected by the ideas of discourse and social construction of space. The major shift was that scholars began to study boundaries as social representations instead of just physical lines. This allowed new kinds of questions to be asked, such as how boundaries mirror social relations, what their role is in political discourse and in the formation of identity (Kolossoff 2005, 610). Johnson et al (2011, 61) have defined boundaries as physical, social, cultural or symbolical lines

separating or bounding together people or spaces. Taking a more pronouncedly social constructivist stand, Newman and Paasi (1998, 187–188) define boundaries as social, political and discursive constructs manifesting themselves through social, political and cultural practices. By taking this view, as I do in this study, it becomes possible to study boundaries not just as fixed lines but as a more dynamic phenomenon consisting of social, cultural and political processes (Johnson et al 2011, 61).

The social constructivist strain of border studies recognizes a multitude of different kinds of boundaries that can be chosen as an object of study. One way to clarify what is meant by a boundary in a certain context is to make a distinction between spatial and symbolic boundaries. For example, state borders can be studied as a strictly spatial phenomenon: territorial lines between states. On the other hand, the emphasis can be placed on the symbolic nature of boundaries. Viewing boundaries as symbolic means that they are no longer limited to the edges of states, or any spatial units for that matter, but can be found in social practices and discourses anywhere on the territory of the state in question (Paasi 2005, 669). This idea of boundaries as symbolic allows applying border studies to different kinds of social and cultural boundaries, and opens up new possibilities for research. During the past two decades, border studies has come to embrace the idea that “borders are everywhere” (Johnson & Jones 2011, 61). Accordingly, the themes and terminology (such as frontiers, borderlands or border-crossings) that have traditionally been associated with territorial borders are now often used metaphorically to analyze symbolic boundaries (Newman & Paasi 1998, 188; Newman 2003, 124).

Another way to conceptualize boundaries is to define them as “lines of separation or contact” between territories or groups of people. Looking through a social constructivist lens, it is then easy to argue a leap from that definition to one that defines boundaries as “instruments through which social distinctions are constructed” (Newman & Paasi 1998, 188; 191). This idea of distinction is central for the conceptualization of boundaries applied in this study. Recently, the focus of border studies has been moving away from hard international borders and towards understanding boundaries as this kind of lines that “separate, enclose and exclude” (Newman 2003, 124). These definitions underline the fact that boundaries can be studied as tools for categorization.

According to Wendt (1999, 370) it is necessary to understand the ontological basis that the study relies on, because all observation is dependent on the ideas and theories that lay on the background, especially when dealing with such unobservable objects as in IR. The study at hand views boundaries through a social constructivist lens. Boundaries are conceptualized here as socially constructed lines of distinction. Especially Paasi's research represents this kind of social constructivist view on boundaries. Importantly, the focus of this study is not on physical or territorial borders, but on social and symbolic boundaries between groups of people – the boundaries dividing people into 'us' and 'the Others' within the borders of the Russian Federation. Following the social constructivist line of border studies, boundaries, in this study, are understood as social representations formed through debate and conscious nation building efforts. This kind of definition makes it possible to use narratives as material for analysis. After all, "it is people who give meaning to boundaries" (Grundy-Warr & Schofield 2005, 653).

So how do these symbolic boundaries become visible for us to study them? According to Paasi (1998, 188), they "manifest themselves in numerous social, political and cultural practices". These boundary-producing practices can be any acts that contribute to defining or confirming the location or meaning of the boundary. This makes it possible to study how these boundaries manifest themselves in the discussion around the Strategy of National Politics and the Codex Initiative. These two political projects can be analyzed from the perspective of how they contribute to defining the way the boundary is drawn between 'us' and 'the Others'.

The idea of boundary as a process manifesting itself in such practices brings us to the concepts of bordering and the performativity of boundaries. Boundaries, as described by Berg and Oras (2000, 602), are not fixed and objective, but constantly created, modified and maintained by a variety of actors. These actors are continuously choosing versions of history and definitions of 'us' and 'them' suitable for their needs and preferences in each context. 'Bordering' refers to this "constructing, shifting and erasing" of boundaries by the state, citizens, companies, NGOs and other actors (Rumford 2011, 67). At the same time, the boundary is constantly being 'performed' by those actors as they enact the boundary in their daily lives. To simplify, it is possible to say that bordering is the act of constructing and reconstructing boundaries, while performativity refers to the act of playing along (or against) the existing boundaries.

Salter (2011, 66) categorizes these boundary performances into formal, practical and popular. Referring mainly to territorial boundaries, he defines formal performances as formal descriptions and defense of the boundary; practical performances as the practical filtering of who may or may not cross the boundary; and popular performances as the public and political debate about the meaning of the boundary. Paasi, on the other hand, distinguishes between “discursive or emotional landscapes of social power” and “technical landscapes of control and surveillance” as parallel ways in which boundaries are being performed in the society. By the previous he refers to the practices and discourses related to national identities and ideologies, to which the boundaries often are tightly linked. Both discursive and technical landscapes work together to strengthen (most often state) space as a bounded unit (Paasi 2011, 63).

Using Paasi’s terminology, this study focuses on the discursive landscapes of the internal boundaries of Russia. The bordering process in the form of popular performances of negotiating the meaning of the boundary are studied in order to understand the role of boundaries as tools for nation building in the case of Russia. I will also keep in mind Rumford’s suggestion of trying to “see like a border” in order to not get caught into a limitedly state-centered perspective – a very usual problem in political studies of boundaries. This kind of perspective makes it easier to recognize boundaries “woven into the fabric of society”; to realize that boundaries are not always working in the service of the state; to take into account the perspectives of various actors shaping the boundary; and to realize that “some boundaries are designed to not be seen” (Rumford 2011, 68).

2.3 Boundaries as instruments of inclusion and exclusion

Different definitions of boundaries open our eyes to different kinds of boundaries, but also to different dimensions and functions of boundaries. As was concluded in the previous chapter, this study conceptualizes boundaries as socially constructed, symbolical lines of distinction between people, formed through debate and conscious nation building efforts. This definition allows paying attention to how boundaries categorize people and the way they can be consciously produced to serve as instruments of exclusion as well as inclusion.

Creating distinctions is a key function of all kinds of borders and boundaries. Boundaries are always drawn around or between something; they categorize people, space and time, creating compartments in which some are included and some are not (Newman 2003, 123; Lamont & Molnar 2002). Jones (2010, 263–266) uses the metaphor of a container to describe how boundaries create categories, which seem to have a homogenous inside and sharply differentiated outside. She believes border studies should pay more attention to the role boundaries play in this categorization process. In essence, the boundary is where identities of ‘us’ and “the Other” are created – boundaries both create identities and are created through them, making identity and boundaries seem like different sides of the same coin (Newman & Paasi 1998, 191; 194). However, boundaries do not only act as separating fences. They may also function as bridges, regulating interaction between the separated groups (Newman & Paasi 1998, 194).

If we believe that boundaries are socially constructed, it becomes clear that they are not neutral or objective. According to Newman and Paasi (1998, 194), they are in fact “symbols and manifestations of power relations and social institutions”. Remembering the categorizing function of boundaries, it can then be claimed that boundaries can be created and used as instruments of inclusion and exclusion. These instruments are used by different actors to argument for their definitions of reality. Competing boundary discourses and narratives supported by different actors provide alternative ways of drawing boundaries – in other words, alternative definitions of ‘us’ and ‘the Other’ (see f.ex. Lamont & Molnar 2002, 168; Paasi 2003, 129; Newman & Paasi 1998, 194). Boundaries can be used to institutionalize existing differences, but also to create a perception of difference where there was none to begin with (Newman 2011, 33).

What makes the boundary-producing narratives and practices powerful is that they create the categories we all use to understand the world and interpret it (Jones 2010, 263–266). In this way, the discourses have an impact on policy making, and the definitions emerging from them become reflected in practical policies (Tolz 1998a, 993). Especially in situations of conflict, boundaries pose limitations on those who are excluded, because crossing a boundary – even a symbolic one – always requires acceptance by those already included (Newman 2003, 131; Grundy-Warr & Schofield 2005, 656). It may be easy for migrants to cross the physical borders to arrive to Moscow or St. Petersburg, but crossing the symbolic boundary between ‘us’ and ‘Others’ is

much more difficult. This is why understanding boundaries and the processes by which they are produced and maintained is so crucial for answering questions of belonging and exclusion.

3 Boundaries as tools for nation building

3.1 Nation building as boundary construction

‘Nation’ is most often thought to refer to a human collective, bound together by abstract feelings of sameness and perceived common heritage. It is a complicated concept to define objectively, leading many scholars to apply subjective definitions, according to which a nation comes to an existence when a sufficient number of members of the community so decides or begins to behave so (Panov 2010, 86; Pakkasvirta 2005, 73). What matters is not whether the nation actually is eternal and unchanging, but the fact that people believe so, because that belief has an effect on their thinking and behavior (Pakkasvirta & Saukkonen 2005, 25). From this perspective, nation building is a discursive process, the results of which the state can affect by participating in the discourse (Panov 2010, 86).

Nation building is approached in this study from the perspective of boundaries and through a constructivist lens, viewing it essentially as the kind of discursive process described above. The concept of boundary is naturally connected to the idea of nation building: as the nation must be defined in some way, nation building efforts inevitably produce boundaries at the edges of the constructed nation. What makes this process of drawing boundaries of the nation interesting is that if we take a social constructivist view to boundaries we understand that the concepts of state and nation are not bound together. As Newman (2011, 33) and Conversi (1995, 81) point out, lines of distinction can be drawn anywhere, regardless of any pre-existing differences or “natural boundaries”.

It is necessary to explain why I choose to talk about ‘nation building’ in this study instead of ‘state building’, because these terms are often used interchangeably even if they have quite different meanings. In contrast to the human collective which ‘nation’ refers to, ‘state’ is a territorial-political unit most often comprised of several nations. State building is therefore directed towards strengthening the state as a political unit, while nation building aims for binding together a more abstract community of people (Connor 1978, 300). Connor (1978) emphasizes this distinction and accuses scholars of terminological confusion when they, for example, talk about an “American nation” which, according to him, is a result of state building rather than

nation building, because of its multiethnic nature and lack of common cultural heritage. Although I recognize the problem pointed out by Connor, for the purposes of this thesis I choose to use the terms ‘nation’ and ‘nation building’ when talking about the multiethnic Russia. This is because I consider ‘nation’ as something imagined and instrumental, requiring only a *perception* of ‘sameness’ as Connor himself puts it. Hence, a nation can be created – and its basis need not be ethnic. Also, the term ‘state building’ would be too unspecific for my purpose, because state building is not only about construction of a collective of people, which is the focus of this study, but can also take many other forms (Marx 2002, 104).

According to Ó Tuathail and Dalby (1998, 3), the creation of a national community requires the state to construct one national identity out of many, to establish a boundary with an outside and to create an internal nation-space. The first task – creating a single national identity – becomes the more difficult, the more diverse the chosen group is and how strong competing identities they already hold. The second – establishing the boundary – requires defining the outside, since national identities are dependent on a socially constructed boundary with ‘the Other’. It is this function of categorizing and creating distinctions that makes borders and boundaries important for nation building. Paying attention to this inherent tendency of nationalism and nation building to create boundaries between groups of people allows them to be analyzed as processes of social categorization (Conversi 1995, 79) and border creation or maintenance (Conversi 1995, 73).

However, such processes are often difficult to recognize, because most often they are presented not as intentions to create new boundaries, but as attempts to maintain a natural boundary that was already there (Conversi 1995, 79). Importantly, as is pointed out by both Conversi (1995, 81) and Newman (2011, 33), the process of categorization does not necessarily require any “real” differences between the groups to be distinguished. For example Conversi (1995, 81) believes the perceived differences are rather a result of conscious efforts to create such categorizations. She points out that the boundaries may sometimes be emphasized more than the actual content of the imagined nation, especially if the group is very fragmented. Barth (1969), an anthropologist and one of the first who examined the role of boundaries in identity construction, makes a similar distinction between boundaries and contents in relation to ethnic groups, claiming that boundaries may be maintained independently from the culture they are supposed to enclose.

According to Kolossov (2005, 618), the purpose of boundaries is to separate the space controlled by members of a certain group and to limit the rights to that space for those who do not belong. In his words, “any boundary looks outwards to reunite a social group and inwards to separate it and its territory from neighbors”. If one recalls the Russian situation, this description sounds very familiar. Russia is trying to simultaneously look outwards to unite the compatriots to the nation and inwards to separate the core nation from the internal ‘Others’. Kántor (2004, 105) claims that all states engage in these two types of ‘nation policy’: one operates within the state to homogenize the internal population, while the other is directed at ‘our’ people beyond the state borders. What this means is that states engage in policies to support their co-nationals abroad, and simultaneously within their borders they act to ensure the interests of a certain ethnic or national group, although they might be unwilling to admit such practice. Currently, the way Russia supports the compatriots on Krim and in Eastern Ukraine is a sign of the previous. The task of this study is to look for signs of that other side of nation building pointed out by Kántor and Kolossov: the way boundaries are drawn within the state borders. Similarly to Kántor and Kolossov, Paasi (2003, 118) talks about state territory as a container that looks both inwards and outwards: “as a power container it tends to preserve existing boundaries; as a wealth container it strives towards larger territories; and as a cultural container it tends towards smaller territories, especially when the ‘nation’ consists of diverging cultural groups”.

It is unusual for a state to consciously strive towards something that may result in shrinking one’s own territorial borders (Newman 2003, 130), but perhaps in the case of Russia Newman’s word “consciously” is the key. Barely anyone engaged in Russian nation building is willing to shrink the current state borders. Yet, they mix ethnic criteria into the boundary discourse, thereby actually shrinking the boundaries of the nation so they no longer reach the state borders – while crossing them in other places. Mixing different ideas of who belongs to the nation and who does not may allow the state to respond to different situations in a flexible manner, but in the long run it may turn out to be a dangerous strategy because it leaves the boundary narrative offered from above very unclear. Creating and reinforcing its own boundary narratives is important for the state, because the one whose narratives dominate the discourse determines where and how the boundaries are perceived. Through discourse, borders and boundaries are linked to national identities, and can be used as tools to mobilize or fix territoriality and national identities. The

kind of definitions of the nation that do not match with the state borders may in the end result in redrawing of the latter. For a state, failing to engage in nation building by enforcing its own boundary narratives is risky, because a lack of a stable political identity easily leads to instability of borders, territory and the state itself (Kolossoff 2005, 616). It is easy to see, how this could be a risk for the Russian Federation. Being ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse, it already faces separatist discourses within its fairly new and contested borders.

3.2 Where do nations come from?

A collective national identity is necessary for binding a nation together, but the question of how such collective identities appear – whether they are born or created – has been one of the most divisive in the post-Cold War study of International Relations (Knutsen 1979, 278). Theories of nationalism are often divided into two main categories: instrumentalism and primordialism. Primordialism views nations as something natural and spontaneous, while instrumentalism believes they can be fabricated (see f.ex. Conversi 1995, 73).

Instrumentalists believe that a nation appears from the sheer belief of the people that they form one, as this belief leads them to think and act accordingly (Pakkasvirta & Saukkonen 2005, 25; 73). Importantly, this makes it possible to use such imagined nations as instruments of power (Smith 1995, 29). Lately, most scholars have leaned more towards instrumentalist and constructivist ideas of nations' origins, perhaps as a side-effect of a general move towards a constructivist worldview among contemporary IR scholars. Hence, nations and states are now often analyzed as constructed identities, based on the distinction between 'us' and 'the Others' (Knutsen 2005, 278). Such constructed collective identities are not exclusive or unchanging, but rather people maintain simultaneously several contextual collective identities whose meanings are continuously redefined (Smith 1995, 29–30). This kind of approach allows research of topics like how the meaning of 'state' is constructed, different levels of identities or the relationships between different collectives within a state (Knutsen 2005, 278).

Such view on nations and their boundaries as social constructions has most famously been taken by Anderson and Gellner, who are often referred to as modernists. Modernists emphasize the importance of modernization as the enabling factor for the birth of modern nations and

nationalism. According to them, it is the development of print media and education system that allowed the spreading of nationalist ideas and the formation of wider collective identities (Pakkasvirta & Saukkonen 2005, 30). Anderson (2006 [1986]) understands nations as *imagined communities*, referring to how the members of a nation share a feeling of an imagined bond, despite most of them never having any tangible connection to each other. Hence, nation must be created in the minds of the people belonging to it. Similarly, Gellner (2006 [1983]) talks about *invented nations*, emphasizing the idea that the imagined nations do not come about naturally, but are purposefully constructed. It is nationalism that creates nations, rather than the other way around. Mitchell (2000, 269) has further developed these ideas by asking what kind of common imagination is forged and how it is defined, reproduced and contested. The way Gellner and Mitchell approach the imagined nations puts more emphasis on the practice of power in producing those imagined bonds.

Modernist and instrumentalist ideas have, however, been criticized for undermining historical continuity and overestimating the extent of fabrication in the formation of nations. Some of these critics have been called ethnosymbolists. They lean towards primordialism and believe that nations cannot be entirely fabricated, but are always based on existing historical memories, myths and symbols (Pakkasvirta 2005, 36). Perhaps the most famous ethnosymbolist is Anthony D. Smith, who believes that such collective cultural identities on which nations are based “have deeper roots within human society, and history” and that the persistence and collective force of nationalism should not be overlooked (Smith 1995, 31–34). Smith (1995, 39–40) criticizes instrumentalist approaches for concentrating too much on nationalism as elite manipulation and failing to explain why people choose to have such strong emotions for their nation instead of the other collective identities which instrumentalism claims them to possess.

This study views nations, just like boundaries, as socially constructed phenomena. Hence, an instrumentalist view is adopted, because it allows viewing the Russian nation as something that is created as a result of debate and conscious nation building efforts. The instrumentalist view of nations is well illustrated by Massimo D’Azeglio’s famous words regarding the newly united Italian kingdom: “Italy is made. We still have to make Italians” (Wimmer 2006, 337). The same is true, in a way, for post-Soviet Russia, although in the Russian case the borders were not so much purposefully “made”, but rather the constructors of the nation have to do with what was

left for them to work with. In any case, in the beginning of the 1990s the Russian state was defined by new territorial borders, but the process of defining the nation had only begun. The problematique of nation building, from a constructivist point of view, lies in the fact that the state (or any other actor) cannot unilaterally decide the boundaries of the nation; the boundaries are formed through debate involving several competing discourses, and can always be questioned. Sometimes even the state itself may not be able to logically stick to a single discourse, as we see in the Russian case.

3.3 The civic/ethnic dichotomy

In addition to the primordialist/instrumentalist divide, nation building is often analyzed through another dichotomy: the distinction between civic and ethnic nation building strategies. An ethnic nation would be a community bound together by common ethno-cultural characteristics, such as ethnicity, language, culture and religion. Civic nation, on the contrary, is a community whose membership is defined simply by territory or citizenship and the loyalty to the state's political institutions (see f.ex. Shevel 2011, 180; Tolz 1998a, 993). What makes civic and ethnic approaches different is also the idea of how one becomes a member of the nation – in the ethnic way of thinking, it is difficult or impossible to voluntarily join or leave the nation, because its membership requires inherent characteristics. Simply put, one is born into an ethnic nation, while membership of a civic nation can be acquired. Ethnic ideas of nation can easily be linked with primordialism, while civic ideas are more often connected to instrumentalist thinking.

Brubaker (1995) has developed the civic/ethnic dichotomy further in the context of post-Soviet nation building. He brings up a new category of 'nationalizing states' in order to argue that post-Soviet nation building is different and more ethnically based than the Western model. According to Brubaker's categorization, states can be divided into fully civic states, bi- or multinational states with two or more ethnocultural cores, and nationalizing states in which minorities believe that the state leads an oppressive project of homogenization and destruction of ethnic and regional identities. This perception may not necessarily require any actual oppressive policies as it can arise from mere rhetoric of the dominant group (Kuzio 2001, 137–138). According to Brubaker, post-Soviet states would fall into the category of nationalizing states that create the nation by force.

The civic/ethnic approach has been popular because it provides a clear and simple tool for categorization. However, dividing states and nations into civic and ethnic categories has been criticized as too simple. Many scholars make the point that there are nearly no states that would be truly able to call themselves nation-states in the sense that the borders of the state would match with the boundaries of the nation (see f.ex. Kuzio 2001; Connor 1978; Smith 1995). Kuzio (2001) questions the purpose of having a separate term for ‘nationalizing states’ by pointing out that there is no clear distinction between ethnic and civic nation building. Both are mere ideal types that rarely – some scholars even claim never – exist in pure form. Plain territoriality seems not to be sufficient for the formation of a nation without myths that connect the community and the territory together (Pakkasvirta 2005, 65).

In practice, all states apply both civic and ethnic elements in their nation building discourses and policies (Tolz 1998a, 993; Shevel 2011, 180; Panov 2010, 93; Smith 2000, 18–19). All states make choices about whether to include more than one ethnic group to the ‘core nation’; which language to make official; which historiography and national values to promote; and whether to select a state religion. Furthermore, just like ethnic states, civic states require ‘Others’ to define the boundaries of ‘us’ (Kuzio 2001, 147). Smith (1995, 61) argues that modern Western states are based on such ethnic core, whose common myths, symbols, traditions and language the allegedly civic nation is built on. According to Smith (2000, 18–19), even in a civic state the cultural criterion defines who can be a citizen and further integration is required for social and cultural acceptance. He argues that it is a misunderstanding that nationalism can be depoliticized in a civic nation and limited to cultural level only, because cultural and political nationalism cannot be separated (Smith 1995, 11–13). Hence, modern states remain a symbiosis of civic and ethnic elements that support each other – but can lead into a conflict if one of them becomes too dominant (Smith 1995, 100).

If we consider that no state applies purely civic nation building strategies, and that the majority of modern states are in fact multiethnic (Tishkov 2009, 38), the Russian case can hardly be considered unique. If all states are mixing civic and ethnic strategies in their nation building efforts, why should it be crucial and suspicious only in the Russian or post-Soviet context, as Brubaker seems to suggest? However, the civic/ethnic approach does not have to be used in such black and white manner. The dichotomy can be useful as an analytical tool for example in

recognizing characteristics of different national communities (Egry 2012, 190). When used to make sense of the different strategies and discourses present in the nation building project of a single state, the civic/ethnic approach provides some useful concepts and tools for analyzing nation building and the way the boundaries around the nation are imagined. Rather than trying to place the Russian case into any pre-defined category, I will use the civic/ethnic lens to analyze and differentiate between the competing boundary narratives that provide alternative definitions of the boundaries of the Russian nation.

Brubaker was mentioned earlier not only as an example of a misguided attempt to categorize post-Soviet nation building as “nationalizing”, but also because he is one of the few scholars who have paid attention to the effects of nation building on those internal groups that may be purposefully or accidentally excluded from the emerging nation. Lack of such point of view in primordial and instrumentalist theories has been pointed out by Marx (2002, 105–106). This neglected theme of internal exclusion is central to the study at hand, as its focus is on the people left in the margins of the nation. Researching such marginality to “reverse the meaning of boundaries” is mentioned by Parker and Vaughan-Williams et al. (2009, 585–586) as a future direction for border studies. They suggest asking where and how the margin is located, and how these distinctions appear, are produced and maintained. This study attempts to answer some of these questions in the context of Russia.

4 Use of ‘the Other’ in exclusionary nation building

4.1 The function of ‘the Other’

This study is interested not only in the ways of drawing the internal boundaries of Russia, but it aims to shed light on the situation of those excluded by these boundaries. ‘The Others’ that this study concentrates on are the migrants – internal and foreign – for whom the Codex of Muscovite and its St. Petersburg variant were, often quite explicitly, created. These ‘Others’ are left outside of the definition of “full members of the nation” (Wimmer 2006, 337) or “legitimate owners of the state” (Marx 2002, 107). To analyze the image and role of ‘the Other’ in the competing boundary narratives it is necessary to take a look into the theoretical discussion on the meanings and functions of ‘the Other’ as a concept.

The concept of ‘the Other’ is commonly used not only in IR but also in other fields of science, such as psychology. The concept has been made famous by Edward Said (1978) in his book *Orientalism* and most notably theorized upon by anthropologist Stuart Hall. The two important functions of ‘the Other’ are related to identity formation and projection of negative features of ‘us’ onto some other group. National identity – or any other identity – requires defining what is outside of the boundaries of self. As Harle (2000, 10) puts it, “one cannot comprehend oneself fully if one has no appreciation of who and what one is not”. Therefore a key function of ‘the Other’ is providing something against which an identity for ‘us’ can be created. This ‘Other’ can be an external one, such as the people of a neighboring state, or it can be an internal ‘Other’ defined by ethnicity, gender or any other chosen factor (Bhabha 1990). On the other hand, ‘the Other’ has also a social function of separating wrongdoers from those who follow the law – thereby allowing ‘us’ to feel righteous compared to the unrighteous ‘Others’ (Harle 2000, 10–11). The ‘Other’ often represents disorder, while ‘we’ represent morality and justice. Hence, ‘the Other’ functions as an object to which ‘our’ own evil is attributed, and violence against ‘the Others’ is justified by their bad behavior (Harle 2000, 12–14).

As Harle (2000, 11) points out, the relationship between ‘us’ and ‘the Others’ is not necessarily hostile. Some ‘Others’ are talked about in neutral terms or even positively, while some are excluded and perceived as below ‘us’. While ‘the Other’ simply defines ‘our’ identity, the more

hostile version of ‘the Other’ – Harle calls this ‘the Enemy’ – explains what the conflict between ‘us’ and ‘the Other’ is about. According to Harle (2000, 12), an Enemy emerges if there is a fundamental difference perceived between ‘us’ and ‘the Other’ and when the relationship is depicted as a struggle between good and evil. He follows the instrumentalist tradition by stating that Enemies are a product of intentional social construction by anyone who is participating in the process of their exclusion (Harle 2000, 20–21). Further, Harle (2000, 12) makes a distinction between a worthy Enemy that can be considered as an equal partner, and an evil Enemy who is perceived as fundamentally different to the extent that it must be destroyed.

Importantly from the point of view of this study, otherness is not only about the outlines of ‘us’ but also about the grey zones where ‘us’ and ‘the Others’ overlap (Vares 2012, 59). Gábor Egry (2012) talks about internal Others in the case of Hungary, referring to how Hungarians from neighboring states return to Hungary only to be treated as ‘Others’. ‘The Others’ of the study at hand also exist on such grey zone: excluded despite in many cases having citizenship and living territorially among ‘us’.

4.2 Exclusionary forms of nation building

The division between inclusionary and exclusionary forms of nation building categorizes nations based on how open they are for integration. Usually, nationalism is considered an internally inclusive phenomenon, the purpose of which is to unify the community against an external ‘Other’. However, internal others can be used in a similar way to unify the core nation. This is called exclusive nation building.

According to Wimmer (2006, 335), the focus of mainstream IR scholars has been on the inclusionary side of nation building, while the exclusionary side has been nearly forgotten. The exclusionary character of nation building has only been brought up by scholars who are critical towards nationalism as an ideology. However, there is a line of study that researches the exclusion and inclusion along the nation’s boundaries, trying to “understand how the imagining of a national community is intertwined with the creation of ethnic or immigrant minorities and how these boundaries are reinforced and reproduced” (Wimmer 2006, 336). For example Wimmer (2006) and Marx (2002) discuss this kind of exclusionary nation building.

In his framework of nationalism, Marx (2002) combines the instrumental and primordial approaches in order to address exclusion as a structural part of nation building by acknowledging that nation building is constrained by cultural and historical factors (Marx 2002, 119). He points out that nationalism often unifies only a certain part of the population, and that the creation of internal ‘Others’ may be an intentional side-product of nation building. Rather than include the whole population to the nation, states may intentionally exclude certain groups of people for the purpose of unifying the core nation. Such exclusion can be used by the state as a strategy for cohesion. Therefore ‘nation’ is conceptualized by Marx (2002, 107) as the “group viewed as the legitimate owner of the state”. This is the definition of ‘nation’ used in this study, because it allows distinguishing between different groups of citizens within the borders of the state – those that ‘belong’ and those that do not.

Often, the excluded minorities are meant to remain permanently outside of the imagined nation, but inside the state territory (Marx 2002, 104–107). In such cases the exclusion usually is not total. Exclusionary nation building can take different forms: rhetorical, social, economic or other informal ways of exclusion can be made use of. It can become visible in the setting of legal boundaries for citizenship or the way a group is partially excluded from certain rights. It can also take forms that are more difficult to recognize, such as acceptance of informal discrimination or encouraged or forced homogenization (Marx 2002, 109). Especially the less visible forms of exclusion are what should kept an eye for in the case of those ‘Others’ pushed to the sidelines by the internal boundaries in Russia. Exclusionary strategies of nation building are further detailed by Wimmer (2006). According to him, states use different tactics to deal with ethnic divisions: The divisions can be pushed aside to propagate a new idea of a national community; the state may encourage mixture of ethnic groups and cultures to create a “melting pot”; or forced assimilation can be used to homogenize the population. The fourth, more drastic alternative is ethnic cleansing to completely remove the unwanted groups (Wimmer 2006, 338).

Wimmer believes that implementation of exclusionary nation building follows a certain pattern. The first step of the pattern consists of creating or rearranging ethnic categories in order to describe and administer them. Often, many smaller groups are merged together into a larger group (Wimmer 2006, 339). A distinction is established between the dominant core – those that are considered to represent the legitimate foundation of the state – and those who are excluded

from that core. Wimmer interprets this process through an instrumentalist lens; he believes that both groups are deliberately chosen. The most important criterion for the excluded groups is that they should be weak enough to be excluded without risking general stability within the state. Existing prejudices among the core nation can be utilized, or the 'Others' can be blamed for having ties to some external enemy. In short, the excluded should be "present, visible and powerless to resist" (Marx 2002, 115).

Second phase is the enforcement of distinction between the core nation and the excluded through segregation, legalization and discrimination. Segregation aims at reducing interaction between members of different groups, thereby reinforcing the boundaries and making them seem natural and self-evident. In practice, this can take the form of residential segregation or marriage rules. Legalization refers first of all to citizenship laws, while discrimination points to, often illegal, institutional discrimination by state administration (Wimmer 2006, 340). In the third phase, the members of the core nation share a common interest in maintaining the created boundary. One strategy for this is creating a "moving cultural target": changing the membership criteria whenever the excluded assimilate enough to make the previous boundary unclear (Wimmer 2006, 341).

Obviously, exclusive nation building is not risk-free. Constructing such internal boundaries can easily create new problems by encouraging conflict and provoking protest among those excluded (Marx 2002, 121–122). So why would any state engage in nation building that enforces internal boundaries? Wimmer's explanation relies on the idea that the modern state derives its legitimacy from "the people" whose will it represents. Ethnicity, therefore, became a factor of legitimization of power, encouraging the elites to homogenize their nation and declare their own ethnicity, language and culture as the national core. According to Wimmer, this is how a boundary appeared to separate foreigners from nationals and the national core from the minority. The boundary became important and guarded, because only full members of the nation have the right to be treated as equal members of the society (Wimmer 2006, 337).

Marx (2002, 111–113) adds another perspective. According to him, states rationally avoid disruption of their rule. Ensuring unity is, according to him, always the goal of the political elites, only the strategies they employ may vary. However, pressures and challenges from the society,

such as diversity of the population and internal conflicts, may make inclusive civic nationalism difficult or impossible to achieve. In such cases, the state may resort to selective exclusion in order to unify the core and turn away attention from divisions within the core itself. As Marx (2002,113) puts it, the elites “make deals en-route to nation-building, selecting who to include, reward, and encourage loyalty from” and in doing so they manipulate established prejudices and confrontations with other groups, thereby effectively encouraging their exclusion. Nation building, then, is no longer only about unifying the population, but also about selecting whom to include.

5 Previous research on Russian nation building discourses

Russian nation building discourses have been researched earlier by other scholars, but mostly from the perspective of how the outer limits of the nation spill beyond the state borders. My research brings a new perspective to this line of study by concentrating on the internal boundaries dividing the Russian Federation into the ‘legitimate owners of the state’ and ‘the Others within’. Some of the ideas and definitions of the Russian nation, revealed by other scholars, are recognized in my study as well, while others turn out to not be as important in the context of internal boundaries. Nevertheless, this previous research provides an important background for my research and helps to understand the Russian boundary discourse from a wider perspective. Here, I concentrate mainly on the findings of Shevel (2011) and Tolz (1998a), who have recognized five different nation building discourses, each propagating a distinct idea of how the Russian nation should be defined.

Essentialist and constructivist approaches to “Russianness” are recognized by Clowes (2011, 166). The first is based on ethnic membership criteria – ethnicity, language or culture – while the second applies civic criteria, hence defining the nation by citizenship. A similar divide between ethnic and civic ideas of the nation is found by Shevel (2011) and Tolz (1998a), who have studied Russian nation building discourses in more detail. They both categorize their findings into five definitions of the nation. Considering these discourses through the civic/ethnic distinction, it is clear that in the Russian case both civic and ethnic types of nation building can take many forms. Two of the nation building discourses define the nation by territory: either the territory of the Russian Federation or the former Soviet Union. The other three are ethnic definitions: the nation as ethnic Russians, Eastern-Slavs, or Russian speakers. All of these definitions have different implications for the territorial integrity of the Russian state as well as for its relations with the neighboring states (Shevel 2011, 180), depending on how far beyond the state borders the nation is stretched and what kind of internal boundaries are created within the Russian Federation.

From the perspective of internal boundaries, the most inclusive of the five are the civic discourses. The first of them, the one that defines the Russian nation by citizenship and territory of the Russian Federation, is most strongly advocated in Russia by the former Minister of

Nationalities Valerii Tishkov, for whom the solution to the Russian nation building dilemma is to create “unity in diversity” (Tishkov 2009, 30). The other civic discourse found by Shevel and Tolz finds its reference point in historical territories. For the advocates of this second discourse – unionists, as Tolz (1998a) calls them – the nation consists of all the people living on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Their thinking is based on the thought that due to their common history these people form a unique civilization and can only exist in a union (Tolz 1998a, 996–997). From the point of view of internal boundaries, this discourse is even more inclusive than the one based on the citizenship of the Russian Federation, because it allows all migrants from the previous Soviet states to be included in the nation.

According to Tishkov (2009, 40-49), it is the civic ideas of the nation that have historically been dominant among the Russian elites. However, the people of Russia still understand ‘nation’ first of all as an ethnic community. According to Tolz (1998a, 1003), ethnic definitions of the nation have gained more strength since non-Russians within the state borders, especially Muslims, began to replace the West as the new ‘Others’.

It is important to understand that ‘ethnic’ refers not only to ethnicity, but to several factors related to cultural communities. In Russian nation building discourses three factors rise above others: ethnicity, cultural heritage and language. The first of the three ethnic discourses is based on pure ethnicity. This view has been most famously advocated by ethnologist Lev Gumilev, and rose from the perceived threat to the survival of Russians as an ethnic collective (Tolz 1998a, 1002). Obviously, this kind of definition of ‘us’ would exclude a significant part of the multiethnic population of the Russian Federation. Proponents of the second ethnic discourse take a wider perspective, seeing Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians as one nation of eastern Slavs. Here, the definition of a nation is based on common ethno-cultural heritage (Tolz 1998a, 999), excluding all those citizens who do not share the Slavic orthodox culture. The third and the widest of the ethnic definitions regards the Russian language as the bounding factor. Compared to the other two ethnic definitions, the linguistic one is more inclusive as it allows uniting the whole population of Russia through promoting Russian as a common language. According to polls, cultural and linguistic definitions have been more popular among Russians than the one based on pure ethnicity in the 1990s as well as the 2000s (Shevel 2011, 186; Tolz 1998a, 1015; Panov 2010, 91).

As I have claimed earlier, there seems to be two sides to the problematique of nation building in Russia: the compatriots abroad and the ‘Others’ within the Russian Federation. These factors complicate the implementation of all of the alternative definitions of the Russian nation, because it is difficult to properly address both questions within one nation building discourse. On the one hand, the definition should allow civic nation building within the Russian Federation, in order to avoid conflict and separatism. On the other, it should provide arguments for Russia’s interference in the Near Abroad to protect the rights of the compatriots (Shevel 2011, 185). This is not an exclusively Russian problem, as for example Kántor (2004) points out by claiming that all states direct nation building efforts within their borders as well as to the compatriots abroad. Keeping in mind this double goal of nation building helps to recognize the problems related to all of the nation building discourses listed above.

The problem with civic definitions is that both ethnic Russians and minorities view the idea of a civic nation with skepticism – both interpret it as a dangerous attempt to deprive them of their rights as an ethnic community (Shevel 2011, 181). The ethno-federal structure left from the Soviet Union makes the task of creating a civic nation all the more difficult, as taking away the already established ethnic autonomy in the name of civic nation building is bound to spark conflict (Shevel 2011, 184). Perhaps this is why Russian political elite, rather than speaking of Russia as a nation of fellow citizens, chooses to use terms like ‘multinational nation’ or ‘peoples of Russia’. On the other hand, the idea of a civic nation contained by the current borders leaves no room for compatriots abroad.

From the point of view of internal boundaries, ethnic definitions are problematic because they inevitably exclude a part of the population and may lead to separatism and internal conflict between ethnic groups. Despite the ethnofederal administrative structure, it is difficult to draw clear ethnic boundaries within a state where different ethnic groups have intermingled and mixed for hundreds of years. Even proponents of ethnic definitions usually do not call for the creation of a Russian republic, the borders of which would be very complicated to define, but instead require a special status for ethnic Russians (whether it be culture, language or ethnicity that is the defining factor) as the “state-forming” nation of Russia (Shevel 2011, 186–188).

On the other hand, all of the definitions – except for the civic nation on the territory of the Russian Federation – are problematic because they stretch the boundaries of the nation outside of the current state borders. Hence, they can be used to question current borders and cause tensions with the neighbouring states. The ethnic definitions are based on the primordial thinking that one does not choose his or her nation but is born into it. Their advocates do not care, whether the people beyond the borders of the Russian Federation actually want to belong to the Russian nation. They believe the underlying Russian nationalism of these people should be revived by state measures (Tolz 1998a, 1000–1001). Similarly, the unionist view of a common national identity of all former citizens of Soviet Union bases its argument on history and does not take into account the strength or direction of the actual nationalist feelings in the former Soviet republics today.

As was discussed above, all of the nation building discourses found by Shevel and Tolz are problematic in their own way. None of them are able to provide solutions for dealing with both of the two sides of the Russian nation building problematique – the internal diversity and the compatriots abroad. However, Shevel (2011) believes the state has found another way to solve the dilemma: ambiguity. In Shevel's interpretation, the state is purposefully keeping the definition of the nation unclear. Such tactic allows the state more flexibility, and makes it possible to attempt to construct a civic nation within the state, while simultaneously using ethnic arguments to legitimize responsibility for the compatriots abroad. The ambiguity not only allows the state to simultaneously pursue contradicting policies, but also to re-direct these policies to suit each situation, without committing to any of the nation building discourses. Shevel uses the example of the compatriots law, whose unclarity allows officials to define compatriots as anyone from ethnic Russians to all former Soviet citizens (Shevel 2011, 193). The state benefits from this flexibility when controlling migration and justifying for Russia's involvement in different regions outside of its borders, because different situations often require different kinds of argumentation and different definitions of 'us' (Shevel 2011, 197). Shevel believes this may currently be "the only politically feasible, and also the most pragmatic, solution that serves a functional purpose" (Shevel 2011, 199).

However, this may not be a very sustainable strategy. As was discussed above, many of the nation building discourses recognized by Shevel and Tolz exclude parts of the population of

Russia, creating internal boundaries between those considered as full members of the nation and legitimate owners of the state, and those ‘Others within’ who are expected to stay within the state borders without being accepted as one of ‘us’. Leaving symbolic boundaries of the nation fuzzy entails a risk of instability and conflict within the multiethnic state and may even risk the prevalence of the current state borders, because “political boundaries are increasingly being drawn on maps after having first been created in social representations” (Kolossoff 2005, 615). The study at hand takes Shevel’s (2011) idea of the purposeful ambiguity of the boundaries as a starting point, but approaches the question from a different perspective. This study analyzes the Russian boundary discourse from the perspective of internal boundaries, in order to see whether a similar ambiguity can be recognized in the narratives concerning the boundaries dividing people within the state borders into ‘legitimate owners of the state’ and ‘the Others within’.

6 Uncovering boundary narratives

6.1 Analysis of political narratives

This study is interested in boundary narratives – stories about the symbolic boundaries within the Russian Federation. I chose to approach the problematique of internal boundaries through narratives, because I believe that the construction and maintenance of those boundaries happens largely through narrativity. Narrative methodology is based on the thought that people tend to use stories for organizing and making sense of their reality. People structure events into a form of a story, which then acts as an instrument for both understanding and communicating phenomena. Narrative researchers, therefore, are interested in stories as instruments for structuring reality (Clandinin 2007, 4; Patterson & Monroe 1998, 315).

Narrative methodology refers to a range of approaches to analyze different sorts of texts that can be viewed as stories (Spector-Mersel 2010, 213). Most often, it is used to analyze personal narratives, such as life stories, but it can also be a useful methodology in the field of political science. In a political context, narratives are used both by individuals and collective units, like nations or other groups, to interpret and understand the political realities around them. Since narratives affect our perceptions of reality, it is obvious that they also affect political behavior, and this is what makes them powerful tools for political actors. They present processes and developments in the form of stories, and those stories are designed to support the aims of the storyteller (Patterson & Monroe 1998). A narrative can be defined as political either because of the political nature of its content (non-formal political narrative), or because it emerges from a formal political forum or is produced by politicians or public officials (formal political narrative) (Shenhav 2006, 247). In this case, the content of the analyzed narratives – the internal boundaries of the Russian Federation – can and should be considered political, because defining who belongs and does not belong into a nation is clearly a political question. On the other hand, the narratives here are partly, but not completely, formal, as they are only partly produced by politicians. The material of the high level discourse is more clearly formal, as it consists of texts created by the president and the Council of Interethnic Relations. However, while the low level discourse is ignited by local politicians, they are not the only ones taking part in the formation of

the narratives emerging from it. The other participating actors are the journalists, along with anyone else whose opinion is voiced in the articles.

While Czarniawska (2004) states that anything can be treated as a narrative, in practice a narrative is most often understood as a spoken or written text describing an event or a chronologically connected series of events. It is often expected that narrative should have a recognizable structure, consisting of events following each other, linked together by reasons and consequences. The narrow definition of a narrative requires a clear plot with a beginning, middle and end (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009). Such strict criteria may be suitable when using narrative analysis to analyze texts that are already in the form of a story to begin with – such as life stories – but become problematic in the context of political narratives, which are rarely presented as complete stories. According to Shenhav (2006), a strict structure of beginning, middle and end should not be considered a necessary criterion for defining political narrative. In the case of political narratives, such criteria as causality, plot and coherence may not be relevant, because political speakers may prefer not to present any ending, and rather move from one issue to another without completing any of the stories they make use of (Shenhav 2005). On the other hand, political narratives are always incoherent to some extent, despite politicians' efforts to present them as logical (Shenhav 2006). In the material used for this study, the narrator does not read the story out loud from beginning to end – rather, his statements and arguments are based on an underlying narrative, which becomes visible through scattered statements that reveal the story-like elements of the underlying narrative. Recognizing these elements makes it possible for the researcher to construct those underlying narratives and rewrite them in the form of a story. For the purposes of constructing the narratives, I will use Czarniawska's (2004) minimal definition of a plot. According to her, the plot can be very minimal, consisting of a stable situation, which is disturbed and then restabilized. This kind of definition allows flexible analysis of the material by concentrating on points that often are relevant in political narratives.

There are different ways to conduct narrative analysis, and it is important to choose a type that fits the material and the research problem. Czarniawska (2004) presents three types of narrative analysis: structuralist, post-structuralist and dramatist. Structuralist analysis concentrates on defining story structures by typifying roles of the characters or typical plots. In this study, I am not interested in such typifications. In contrast, post-structuralists believe that there is no one

deep structure common to all narratives, but that the structure is constructed into the text by the storyteller and the listener. Especially in the context of politics, narratives are always created by someone and have a purpose, which makes a post-structural way of reading suitable for the analysis of political narratives. In addition to post-structuralism I will make use of dramatist forms of analysis. Dramatists analyze the narrative by finding in it such dramaturgic factors as a scene, events and actors. In this study, I will pay attention to these kind of story-like elements, because they help to construct, interpret and compare the narratives. By analyzing the use of certain dramaturgic factors in the stories, it is possible to study the roles and identities given to the narrator and other actors in the story, as well as how causal relationships are built and perceived by the narrator (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009).

Another important aspect that I will focus on in my analysis is the evaluative parts in the material: the parts where the narrator evaluates the story, events, characters and his own feelings. The evaluative parts show how the actors see themselves in relation to others (Patterson & Monroe 1998), revealing thereby their understanding of the location and nature of the symbolic boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘the Others’, as well as their feelings towards that boundary and ‘the Others within’. Analyzing the evaluative element is possible because the voice of the narrator is always present in a narrative, making all narratives essentially normative (Patterson & Monroe 1998, 315–321). Hence, a distinct perspective can be found even in those narratives that seem to combine different points of view (Shenhav 2006, 248). This is what makes analysis of political narratives helpful in studying the different voices in politics (Shenhav 2006, 76). In this case, those different voices that I look for in the material are the competing boundary narratives that present alternative understandings of the internal boundaries of Russia.

It is important to remember that narratives cannot be studied as if they represented the reality as such – in narrative analysis they are treated merely as text, without trying to define to what extent they are truthful or not. As narratives are always created by the narrator and interpreted by the researcher, they should be treated as subjective representations of reality. Stories are always told by someone, to someone. They always have a function in the context in which they are told. The narrator makes choices of what to tell and what to leave untold, and the same events can be plotted in many different ways, in order to create the kind of story the narrator wants to tell (Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009). This is why multiple competing narratives describing the

internal boundaries of Russia can exist simultaneously. Because of the nature of narratives as subjective representations of reality, my purpose is not to evaluate whether the narratives are truthful or not. From a constructivist point of view the truth value of the narratives is irrelevant, because what matters is whether people believe in the narratives and how the narratives affect concrete policies via the thinking and behaviour of the people affected by them.

Boundary narratives are one of the four themes that Newman and Paasi (1998, 191) recognize within contemporary border studies. According to them, understanding boundaries as narrative brings up new perspectives and broadens the field of border studies, because sometimes boundaries are hidden in such literary landscapes, difficult to get a hold of with the help of other methodologies. Narratives have been described useful especially for understanding the role of boundaries in social construction of sociospatial identities (Newman & Paasi 1998, 191) and also for analyzing agency and identity, because there is a role given to each actor in a narrative (Patterson & Monroe 1998, 316). The fact that narratives are used by people to make sense of their reality make them an important tool for affecting the thinking and behavior of people. Therefore, the construction of narratives is always a political act linked to power, and this is what makes it important to understand whose narratives dominate, what is excluded or included, and how the representations of ‘us’ and ‘the Others’ are produced (Newman & Paasi 1998, 191).

6.2 Conducting the research

6.2.1 Collection of material

My material is divided into two parts in order to shed light to both high and low levels of Russian boundary discourse. The low level discourse is represented by articles discussing the initiative of a codex of behavior for the residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg, collected from eight Russian online media publications. The high level will be represented by Putin’s article¹¹

¹¹ Россия: национальный вопрос. Published in *Nezavizimaya Gazeta*, 23.1.2012. [Available at: <http://putin2012.ru> and http://www.ng.ru/politics/2012-01-23/1_national.html. Downloaded 29.4.2012.]

and his three speeches at the Council of Interethnic Relations¹², along with the final Strategy of National Politics¹³, created by that very council.

For the analysis of the discourse around the Codex Initiative, articles were collected from the websites of chosen media publications using the names of the Codex – ‘kodeks moskvicha’ and ‘kodeks peterburzhtsa’ – as search terms.¹⁴ Only articles published in 2010 were included, because the idea of the Codex was suggested, discussed and buried during that year. A total of 29 articles were found and all of them were analyzed. The intention was to gather material from mainstream online media sources in order to be able to analyze the mainstream media discourse affecting a wide audience. Therefore, websites of major newspapers *Nezavisimaja Gazeta*, *Izvestia* and *Rossiiskaya Gazeta* were used, along with the website of the information agency RIA Novosti and the popular online news portals *Gazeta.ru* and *Lenta.ru*. *Delovoi Peterburg* and *Fontanka.ru* are popular locally in St. Petersburg and were included in order to gather more material on the Codex Initiative in St. Petersburg. I limited the material to online sources because those were the easiest to access and search for keywords. Therefore, sources that do not offer freely available archive of online content, like *Vedomosti*, were not included in the study. The sources used in the study are listed and described in Table 1. The numbers of articles analyzed from each publication are given in the same table. During the analysis it became clear that most of the publications heavily cite the state owned *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, especially regarding interviews of local politicians. Therefore a significant part of citations on the pages of this study are from *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*.

Source	Description	Number of analyzed articles
RIA Novosti	A state owned information agency. Runs over 80 bureaus internationally and delivers news mostly	8

¹² Verbatim reports of Putin’s speeches at the meetings of the Council of Interethnic Relations in St. Petersburg 9.6.2012, Saransk 24.8.2012 and Moscow 19.2.2013. [Available at: <http://state.kremlin.ru/council/28/news>. Downloaded 12.1.2013.]

¹³ *Strategia gosudarstvennoi natsionalnoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii na period do 2025 goda* (Strategy of State National Politics of the Russian Federation in the period until 2025). [Available at: <http://www.minnac.ru/minnac/info/14183.html>. Downloaded 15.11.2012.]

¹⁴ The exact search terms used in cyrillic: «кодекс москвича» and «кодекс петербуржца».

	related to Russia and the CIS. Founded in 1941.	
Fontanka.ru	Online news portal in St. Petersburg. Delivers news on society and politics. Founded in 1993.	5
Rossiiskaya Gazeta	State owned daily newspaper. In addition to news articles it publishes official decrees, statements and documents of state institutions. Founded in 1990.	4
Gazeta.ru	Online news portal that covers politics and business. Founded in 1999.	3
Lenta.ru	One of the leading Russian online news portals. Delivers foreign and domestic news. Founded in 1999.	2
Izvestia	Daily newspaper that concentrates on domestic and foreign events, analysis and commentary, business and economics, cultural events and sports. Founded in 1917.	2
Nezavisimaya Gazeta	Daily newspaper that concentrates on politics, society, culture and art. Founded in 1990.	2
Delovoi Peterburg	Free daily newspaper distributed in St. Petersburg. Founded in 1993.	1

Table 1. The used online media sources, their descriptions and the number of analyzed articles. Source of descriptions: official websites of the publications and Russian Wikipedia (ru.wikipedia.org).¹⁵

The second part of the material represents the high level discourse of politicians. It consists of the Strategy of National Politics, Putin's article titled "Russia: the national question", and transcripts of Putin's speeches at the first three meetings of the Council of Interethnic Relations. These provide relevant material because the purpose of the Strategy and the other texts is to formulate a plan of managing the diversity of the multiethnic Russian state, and that inevitably involves drawing and describing those internal boundaries that are the focus of this thesis. The article, published as part of Vladimir Putin's election campaign in January 2012, outlines Putin's key ideas about the management of diversity in Russia. These ideas were further discussed by the Council, gathered and led by president Putin, in three meetings on 9.6.2012, 24.8.2012 and 19.2.2013. The final strategy document was published in December 2012, and the Council's task currently is to implement the Strategy. The transcripts of Council meetings and the Strategy of

¹⁵ I consulted about the sources for descriptions of Russian media publications with Jukka Pietiläinen, a researcher of Aleksanteri Institute whose research specializes in Russian media. He suggested the websites of the publications and Russian Wikipedia as the best sources available for this purpose. Wikipedia was used as an additional source only when there was not enough information available on the official website of the publication itself.

National Politics were publically available online on the Council's official Internet site and Putin's article was available on the official Internet site of the president.

I chose to include only the mentioned texts and leave out the discussion during the meetings, because the process and the result of the making of the Strategy of National Politics were so clearly influenced by Putin. The discussion in the meetings consisted mostly of speeches in support of the ideas already presented by Putin and of various suggestions of how to enforce them in practice. I believe they would have offered little additional information. The final strategy document together with Putin's article and speeches outlining the Strategy provides a more concise and easily analyzable material for this research.

6.2.2 Analysis

The research material was interpreted using narrative analysis in order to construct competing boundary narratives. This means that the texts were scanned for story-like elements, such as how the plot is woven and what kind of roles are assigned to the actors. Specific attention was paid to descriptions of the nation and the boundary, roles given to 'the Others within', the framing of the problem and the suggested solutions. Due to the nature of my material – newspaper articles, political speeches and a political strategy document – it is natural that the narratives are not presented in the material as complete stories. Rather, they appear in the form of scattered statements which reveal the story-like elements mentioned above. This is typical for political narratives, which rarely are presented in the form of a clear story with a beginning, middle and end. I collected and categorized relevant statements and constructed alternative boundary narratives based on those story-like elements found embedded in the material. In the end, I rewrote the narratives as complete stories by compressing together the elements of each narrative.

As a framework for the analysis I used a model adapted from Ó Tuathail's "grammar of geopolitics". Ó Tuathail based his framework on the idea of a "grammar of motives" sketched by Kenneth Burke. Burke used the dramaturgical concepts of act, scene, agent, agency and purpose in order to explain "what is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it" (Burke 1969, xv). Ó Tuathail (2002) developed the "grammar of geopolitics" for studying practical geopolitical reasoning as a dramaturgical phenomenon. He believes this kind

of approach is useful for analyzing alternative definitions of geopolitical problems and solutions, as it takes better into account the incoherencies and tensions between them. The framework is based on the idea that political actors respond to events by constructing storylines, which help to make sense of the political challenge at hand. The resulting narrative becomes a way to interpret the situation and is sharpened and deepened through public argumentation and debate. The model has been used by Ó Tuathail (2002) to study why the Bosnian war was framed as a ‘humanitarian nightmare’ and later by Ó Tuathail and Kolossov (2007) to study geopolitical imaginations about the North Caucasus.

Although Ó Tuathail developed his framework for studying practical geopolitics and geopolitical narratives of media events, it can also be useful for studying how any political challenges are framed. The idea is very similar to common methods of narrative analysis. In this study, the model is modified and combined with Czarniawska’s (2004) idea about the parts of the plot necessary for narrative analysis, in order to make the model suitable for analyzing Russian boundary narratives. A boundary as such cannot be treated as an event – it is rather a process than something that happens in a flash – but it can be treated as a political challenge, requiring explanations, assigning of blame, and declaration of threats and solutions. The modified framework presented in Table 2 guides to pay attention to the key questions in the material, thereby helping to uncover the underlying narratives.

THE INITIAL SITUATION	What?	Definitions of the nation, the boundary and ‘the Others within’
	Descriptions of the situation	Construction of scenarios and analogies to make them meaningful
DISTURBANCE	Why?	Definition of the problem
	Attribution of causality	Construction of causal relations and explanations
	Who?	Roles and descriptions of the actors in the narrative
	Actors and their roles	Assigning blame

THREATS AND SOLUTIONS	So what?	Possible threats if the current situation continues
	Declaration of interests	Suggested solutions

Table 2. Framework for analyzing boundary narratives (Adapted from Ó Tuathail, 2002 and Ó Tuathail & Kolossov, 2007)

Since political narratives rarely have a clear plot consisting of beginning, middle and end, the methodological framework used for this research makes use of Czarniawska's (2004) idea of dividing the plot into an initial situation of stability, disturbance and restabilization. The first part – the initial situation – describes the situation considered as normal in the narrative, defines what is meant by the nation and draws the boundary around it. The second part – disturbance – defines the problem and explains its causes. Here, roles are assigned to the actors of the narrative, and those to blame for the disturbance are pointed out. In my framework, the last part of the plot is called “threats and solutions” because in addition to offering a solution for restabilizing the situation, the narratives also describe the threat – in other words, what happens unless the problem is solved by suggested means.

Several steps were required to construct the final narratives from the material. I started the analysis by first reading through the texts and highlighting all statements that could be relevant for constructing the narratives. I collected the highlighted statements into the framework, categorizing them under suitable topics. All statements were treated equally, regardless of whether the text supported a particular statement or simply criticized a statement made by somebody else. The aim was to find all possible narratives that were given a voice in the material. A separate table was used for each of the sources at the first phase. In the second step of analysis, different tables were compared in order to identify common themes that appeared in several sources. Statements related to these emerging themes were color coded and collected into separate tables. My original intention was to construct separate high and low level narratives in order to compare them to each other. This is why all the steps of the analysis explained above were done separately for high and low level sources, to keep the resulting high level and low level narratives separate. However, the narratives emerging from high and low level discourses

all turned out to be very similar – which is also an interesting result for the study. Therefore I decided to combine the similar high and low level narratives.

Finally, the result was three different narratives of the internal boundaries of Russia. These narratives are presented in the results of the thesis, rewritten in the form of concise stories. As the narratives are constructed by the researcher, it is necessary to provide enough evidence to show how those elements that the narratives are built on are visible in the analyzed material. This is done by providing citations from the material in order to show how the elements I refer to appear in different parts of the material. Such comparative element provides more solid evidence for my interpretations and allows the reader to evaluate the strength of my argumentation.

To find answers to all of the research questions set in the introduction, the narratives were further compared and analyzed with the help of the analytical tools provided by my theoretical framework combined from border studies and theories of nation building. The dichotomies of ethnic and civic nation building and instrumentalist and primordialist ideas of the origins of a nation were used to categorize the narratives and to understand more deeply what kind of conceptualizations of ‘nation’ they rely on. Further, the narratives were analyzed for elements of exclusionary and inclusionary forms of nation building. Wimmer’s (2006) pattern of exclusionary nation building was used to analyze whether the steps of this pattern were visible in those narratives that turned out to be exclusionary and how the narratives aimed to complete those steps. Finally, Shevel’s claim that Russian nation building is purposefully ambiguous was reconsidered based on the findings of my study.

6.3 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are mostly related to the chosen methodology, material and focus. Concerning methodology, there are two factors whose effect should be considered: the storyteller and the interpreter. Narratives should never be interpreted as direct representations of reality, because they are always constructed by the storyteller and reconstructed by the interpreter. In this case, the storytellers are the authors of the texts I used as material – mostly the journalists, the Council of Interethnic Relations and Vladimir Putin (or his speech writers). It is they who decide which points of view to bring up regarding the boundaries. On the other hand, it is

impossible to completely avoid the effect of the researcher, because it is the researcher who reconstructs and interprets the narratives emerging from the material. In this case, the narratives are not found in the material as complete stories, but constructed by the researcher by combining the story-like elements found in the material. Therefore, what are being analyzed in this study are the narratives constructed by the researcher based on the images of the internal boundaries that the storytellers wish to share.

The second limitation has to do with the chosen material – the selected sources and the two political projects that the material was collected around. It is always possible to gather a wider material, to use a more comprehensive amount of sources and find more cases to focus on. However, it is always necessary to limit the material somehow due to the constraints regarding the length and scope of the study. The Codex Initiative and the Strategy of National Politics provide relevant cases for studying the problem of internal boundaries within Russia because both of them aim at defining the location and nature of such boundaries and use these definitions as a basis for official rules or strategies. Analyzing not only final documents but the discussion around these projects allows a more comprehensive analysis of the boundary discourse involving internal boundaries. Two other criteria were kept in mind when choosing the cases. First, they should shed light to both high and low level boundary discourse and allow comparison between those levels. Second, I looked for cases where the roles of ‘the Others within’ would be open for discussion. Had I chosen a case like the Manezhnaja Square fights¹⁶ or the “shooting weddings”¹⁷, the roles of ‘the Others’ would have been more or less pre-determined by the nature of the event. The Codex Initiative and the Strategy, as more abstract processes, allow searching for different interpretations of the role of ‘the Others’ in the material.

¹⁶ This refers to the riots on the Manezhnaya square in Moscow in 2010. The demonstrations and resulting violence were ignited by the death of a Russian football fan who was beaten up by a group of North Caucasians. The demonstrators believed that the police did not investigate the case properly.

¹⁷ “Shooting weddings” refer to several events reported in Russian media where people from the Caucasian republics have celebrated weddings in Moscow or in other predominantly ethnically Russian cities by shooting in the air.

Eight Russian online media publications¹⁸, the Strategy of National Politics, a speech and article by president Putin were used as material. Choosing the media publications to be analyzed, my purpose was to cover the mainstream media discussion affecting a wide audience. Therefore I chose to use popular newspapers and news portals as sources. While searching for suitable material to cover the high level boundary discourse, I found several documents related to the theme of internal boundaries. The Strategy of National Politics and Putin's article and speeches preparing it were chosen because they are recent and the Strategy is in use at the time of writing this study. Considering Putin's major role in Russian politics, I believe the narratives he presents are likely to influence the boundary discourse on both high and low levels more than those presented by any other politician.

The third limitation has to do with the focus of the study. As was discussed in the theory section, border studies can be applied to view boundaries from very different perspectives, making it possible to pay attention to different kinds of boundaries. However, it is impossible to cover all possible aspects of boundaries within one research, making it important choose certain aspects to concentrate on. In this case, I chose to focus on the internal symbolic boundaries within the Russian Federation, and to approach this problem through the cases of the Codex Initiative and the Strategy of National Politics. This choice of focus leads to certain limitations, which must be acknowledged. First of all, it means that a whole lot of other kinds of boundaries are left out of focus: no attention is paid for example to territorial boundaries or to those extending themselves beyond the state borders. On the other hand, the chosen material leads the research to emphasize problems relevant to the major cities of Russia and to concentrate mainly on national characteristics, ignoring other kinds of symbolic boundaries within Russia. These other boundaries could be for example related to sexual orientation or social status, creating a completely different kind of "Other" than is revealed in this study. There are many interesting directions towards which the question of internal boundaries could have been developed, but those will be themes for separate studies.

¹⁸ The online versions of the newspapers Rossiiskaya Gazeta, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Izvestia, and Delovoi Peterburg were used along with the website of the information agency RIA Novosti and the online news portals Gazeta.ru, Lenta.ru, and Fontanka.ru.

7 The competing boundary narratives

This chapter presents the three competing boundary narratives found in this study: the russocentric, multinational and civic narratives.

Each narrative is first presented by “telling” the narrative in the form of a story. In the material, the narratives do not exist in such clear form, but in order to make the narratives more approachable to the reader, they were re-written in the form of a concise story by combining the elements emerging in scattered statements throughout the material. Despite being re-written into a storylike form, the entire content of the narratives is based on statements from the material. In the following analysis I will use citations from the material to draw a link between the narratives and the material and to argue for the validity of my interpretations. The analysis follows the framework presented in the methodology section – moving from the initial situation to the disturbance and finally to threats and solutions.

7.1 The russocentric narrative

First of the three narratives emerging from the material is the narrative of *Russkie*, ethnic Russians, as the core nation of the multiethnic country. The russocentric narrative goes like this:

Once upon a time, there was a land of many ethnic groups. Luckily, there were the Russkie, whose mission was to unite this diverse land through their culture and language – without this unifying cultural code, there would be no country or nation at all. People lived their lives happily in the major cities, whose unique way of life was, naturally, based on the Russkii culture. But then, the wonderful life in those cities began attracting others from far-away places. Those newcomers refused to live like people had always lived in the cities, and scared the locals with their strange outfits, dances and traditions. They also brought with them crime. The law enforcement and the politicians did nothing to stop the deterioration of the once so cultured and safe cities. The cities were no longer the same, and a clash between these incompatible cultures was inevitable. Some of the Russkie began fighting against the newcomers on their own, only to worsen the conflict. The unifying cultural code was at risk of being broken – leading not only to the loss of the cities to the strange cultures of the newcomers, but to the disintegration and

destruction of the whole nation and the state. The only way to stop this would be for the state to lead tighter migration politics – there should be less newcomers and those who come should be assimilated into the Russkii culture.

The key point in the russocentric narrative is that it points out *Russkie* as the “core” of the nation. A distinction is made between the multiethnic nation as a whole and the *Russkii* sub-nation, whose culture and language are lifted above others. The same idea of *Russkie* as a state-forming nation of Russia is recognized by Shevel (2011, 186). The elevated status of the *Russkii* core nation is illustrated by the following citations:

«The Russian state was created as a union of peoples, the core of which has historically been the Russkii people»¹⁹ (Strategy of National Politics, 3)

«Thus, we have every reason to talk about a crucial, binding role of the Russian language, Russkii people, their great culture»²⁰ (Putin 24.8.2012)

Further, it is the *Russkie* that are given the mission to unify the multiethnic nation by providing a unifying cultural code:

«Contemporary Russian state is united by a common cultural (civilizational) code, based on the protection and development of Russkii culture and language, the historical-cultural heritage of all peoples of Russia»²¹ (Strategy of National Politics, 3)

«The great mission of Russkie is to unite and bind the civilization»²² (Putin 23.1.2012)

The initial and preferable situation in this narrative is the kind where everyone accepts the status of the *Russkie* as a core nation and follows the common cultural code based on the *Russkii* culture. The primordialist groundings of the narrative become visible in how the core of the

¹⁹ «Российское государство создавалось как единение народов, системообразующим ядром которого исторически выступал русский народ»

²⁰ «При этом мы с полным основанием можем говорить о ключевой, скрепляющей роли русского языка, русского народа, его великой культуры»

²¹ «Современное Российское государство объединяет основанный на сохранении и развитии русской культуры и языка, историко-культурного наследия всех народов России единый культурный (цивилизационный) код»

²² «Великая миссия русских – объединять, скреплять цивилизацию»

nation is self-evidently *Russkii* and how the mission of *Russkie* to “bind the civilization” is taken as given. This is how the narrative creates an image of maintaining a natural boundary that “was always there” (Conversi 1995, 79).

The function of boundaries in the russocentric narrative is similar to Kolossov’s (2005, 618) idea that boundaries function to limit the rights of ‘the Others’ to the space controlled by ‘us’. In the narrative, this means limiting both the rights of migrants to arrive to *Russkie* cities and their freedom to follow their own cultures and traditions in those places. This is illustrated by the way Moscow and St. Petersburg are described as historically *Russkie* cities with a *Russkii* way of life:

«Moscow is a city, whose way of life is based on Russkii culture and traditions, which prevailed for centuries, and everyone, who comes here to live, should accept this» (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)²³

«-- he, who comes to regions with other cultural, historical traditions, should respect local customs. -- Any other – inappropriate, aggressive, defiant, disrespectful – behavior should be met with corresponding lawful, but tough reply, and first and foremost by the authorities, who today often simply don't do anything»²⁴ (Putin 23.1.2012)

Hence, an internal boundary is constructed between the *Russkii* cultural core and other sub-nations of Russia, leaving no doubt about the hierarchical order. If we understand ‘nation’ as the “group viewed as the legitimate owner of the state” (Marx 2002, 107), it is clear that *Russkie* are considered the legitimate owners of Russia in the russocentric narrative. Referring to the quotes above, it is visible that *Russkii* cultural dominance is taken for granted and that failing to assimilate puts one in a position of an unwanted ‘Other’. Importantly, the boundary acts as a fence – as a line of separation to protect ‘us’ from the bad influence of the cultures of ‘the Others’. The narrative sets migrants against those “legitimate owners” of the city that are often referred to as “citizens”, “permanent residents” or “people of the city”. These “citizens” are assumed to follow the *Russkii* way of life and to be worried about the disturbance brought by the “arriving cultures”:

²³ *«Москва – город, жизненный уклад которого базируется на русских культуре и традициях, сложившихся веками, и все, кто приезжает сюда жить, должны с этим считаться»*

²⁴ *«-- тот, кто приезжает в регионы с другими культурными, историческими традициями, должен с уважением относиться к местным обычаям. -- Всякое другое – неадекватное, агрессивное, вызывающее, неуважительное – поведение должно встречать соответствующий законный, но жесткий ответ, и в первую очередь со стороны органов власти, которые сегодня часто просто бездействуют»*

«Today citizens are seriously worried, or let's say it straight – irritated, by the many downsides related to mass migration – both foreign and internal»²⁵ (Putin 23.1.2012)

«Feelings of anxiety are instilled in the people of the city most often by the sheer visual range. There really are a lot of guest workers in Moscow, much more, than the city needs. This is where the concern of permanent residents arises from, sometimes amounting to a phobia of strangers – with unfamiliar way of life, unknown traditions»²⁶ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)

«-- «it is necessary to accommodate the rights of the minority with the rights of the majority», especially when the Moscow community has a very negative attitude towards «arriving cultures»»²⁷ (Gazeta.ru 9.7.2010)

Hence, it is implicitly assumed that all these “citizens” are culturally *Russkie*. Despite citizenship and permanent residency – or even having been born in Moscow or St. Petersburg – representatives of other cultures are not considered “legitimate owners” of the city. This interpretation is supported by Panov (2010, 93–94), who argues that citizenship is not considered among Russians a sufficient condition for membership in the nation. Panov (2010, 93–94) further claims that culture is the key membership criterion in the case of the Russian nation. It seems that the russocentric narrative supports this interpretation. As the above citations show, the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘the Others’ is defined in the russocentric narrative by ethnic criteria – cultural factors are clearly the most pronounced, while there are fewer mentions of linguistic, regional, religious and racial factors. It is first of all culture that forms the “natural” boundary to be protected. In this way, the russocentric narrative comes close to the ethnic nation building discourses found by Shevel (2011) and Tolz (1998a). Although Putin demands from newcomers adaptation to local traditions of “*Russkie* and all other peoples in Russia”²⁸, in practice the expected assimilation is one-way. It is, after all, the *Russkii* cultural code which is pointed out as

²⁵ *«Сегодня граждан серьезно волнуют, а скажем прямо – раздражают, многие издержки, связанные с массовой миграцией – как внешней, так и внутрироссийской»*

²⁶ *«Чувство тревоги у горожанам вселяет чаще всего сам визуальный ряд. Гастарбайтеров в Москве в самом деле очень много, гораздо больше, чем нужно городу. Отсюда беспокойство постоянного проживающего населения, доходящее порой до фобий перед чужими – с незнакомым укладом, неизвестными традициями»*

²⁷ *«-- «необходимо согласовывать права меньшинства с правами большинства», тем более что московское сообщество крайне негативно относится к 'приезжим культурам'»*

²⁸ *«-- тот, кто приезжает в регионы с другими культурными, историческими традициями, должен с уважением относиться к местным обычаям. К обычаям русского и всех других народов России» (Putin 23.1.2012)*

the glue holding together the country, and most migration in Russia is towards the major cities defined as *Russkie* by the narrative.

In the russocentric narrative, the disturbance is caused by the arrival of “too many” migrants who fail to follow the cultural code of the core nation. Due to the perceived cultural incompatibility, culture clash leading to interethnic tensions, xenophobia and nationalist reactions is deemed inevitable in the narrative. The problem of too many culturally non-*Russkie* migrants is repeatedly referred to by the local politicians behind the Codex Initiative:

«During recent years thousands of citizens of Russia and other countries come to our city for work of permanent residency, following their own cultural and religious habits, which are in strong contradiction with our norms of life»²⁹ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 23.6.2010)

«Reaction to such model of behavior is growth in xenophobia among local native population – People are shocked by the aggressive pressure on their traditions, accustomed way of life and they are seriously wary of the threat of losing their national and state identity»³⁰ (Putin 23.1.2012)

The quote above gives an idea of how ‘the Others’ are imagined in the narrative. Cultures of migrants are seen as inherently incompatible with the “*Russkii* way of life”. Similarly to Jones’ (2010, 263) illustration of boundaries as a container, the narrative creates an image of a homogenous inside and differentiates the outside to the extent of incompatibility. Conversi (1995, 81) and Barth (1969) note that sometimes the boundaries are emphasized more than the actual content of the imagined nation. Similarly, the russocentric narrative tells little about the content of the *Russkii* culture, but more about the negative features of ‘the Others’. *Russkie* are imagined to share a common culture and way of life, thereby forming a ‘homogenous inside’ to use the term of Jones (2010, 263–266). Again, it is not important whether such homogeneity among the ‘core nation’ actually exists, but whether people can be made to believe in it (Pakkasvirta & Saukkonen 2005, 25). Migrants – the ‘Others’ of the russocentric narrative – present the outside,

²⁹ *«В последние годы в наш город на работу или постоянное место жительства приезжают тысячи граждан России и зарубежья, следующие своим культурным и религиозным обычаям, входящим в жёсткое противоречие с нашими нормами жизни»*

³⁰ *«Ответная реакция на такую модель поведения – рост ксенофобии среди местного коренного населения, -- Люди шокированы агрессивным давлением на свои традиции, привычный жизненный уклад и всерьез опасаются угрозы утратить национально-государственную идентичность»*

differentiated by emphasizing their strange cultural and religious traditions, unusual clothing and engagement in criminal activities:

«It is reflected in the elements of clothing, behavior in public places and traditions of celebrating one's national religious celebrations»³¹ (Delovoi Peterburg 23.6.2010)

«Muscovites came to dislike the arrogant guys from Northern Caucasus – with their demonstrative car races and shootings on the streets»³² (Izvestia 13.12.2010)

«So far there exist unwritten rules, which residents of our city are obliged to follow. For example, not slaughter sheep in the yard, not grill shashlik on the balcony, not walk around the city in national clothing, speak in Russian...»³³ (RIA Novosti 16.6.2010)

«A clear example of this is the celebration of sacrifice Eid, when in the center of the city celebrating people slaughtered sheep. Such acts, caused by lack of knowledge of the unwritten norms of behavior in St. Petersburg, cause interethnic tensions»³⁴ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 23.6.2010)

It is notable, that the descriptions of ‘the Others’ very often refer to Muslim traditions, Caucasus, Southern regions of Russia or guest workers from the neighboring countries in the South, giving clear clues about who is being talked about. Another thing to pay attention to in the above citations is the way they illustrate how ‘the Other’ represents disorder, while ‘we’ represent good behavior and morality. Here the narrative seems to use the boundary for separating “wrongdoers” from the righteous ‘us’ (Harle 2000, 10–14). This idea of well-behaving *Russkie* is, however, questioned by those criticizing the russocentric narrative, suggesting that the narrative is simply projecting the “bad” in ourselves to ‘the Others’ (Harle 2000, 12–14). The much cited citation below is from Elena Babich, who lobbied for the Codex in St. Petersburg. Her comment about

³¹ *«Это проявляется в элементах одежды, поведении в общественных местах и традициях отмечать свои национальные религиозные праздники»*

³² *«Москвич невзлюбил нагловатых парней с Северного Кавказа – с их демонстративными автогонками и стрельбой на улицах»*

³³ *«Пока существуют неписанные правила, которых обязаны придерживаться жители нашего города. Например, не резать барана во дворе, не жарить шашлык на балконе, не ходить по городу в национальной одежде, разговаривать по-русски...»*

³⁴ *«Ярким примером может служить праздник жертвоприношения Курбан-байрам, когда в центре города празднующие резали баранов. Такие действия, обусловленные незнанием неписанных норм поведения петербуржцев, приводят к межкультурному напряжению»*

the terrible clothing of migrants is referred to in the following citation, which sarcastically remarks that native *Russkii* may not be much better dressers themselves:

«Also, a number of issues are brought up by the member of city parliament regarding the newcomers' traditions of clothing. As an example, Elena Babich gave an event from her own experience – recently she met on the Nevsky prospect a family of natives of the Caucasus, and the woman was dressed in a dressing gown and slippers, while the man's clothing was 'sweatpants that were stretched on the knees'»³⁵ (Izvestia 24.6.2010)

«And this 'dress code' is absolutely not necessarily associated with people from the CIS countries or the Southern regions of the Russian Federation. In any courtyard in St. Petersburg one can meet a person in old sweatpants, relaxing on a bench with a cigarette»³⁶ (Delovoi Peterburg 23.6.2010)

Assigning blame is one of the features of a political narrative. In the russocentric narrative, the cultural clash is blamed on two actors: the migrants and state institutions. Migrants are to blame because instead of assimilating they bring with them their own culture, incompatible with the *Russkii* way of life. They are expected to socially and culturally assimilate into the dominant *Russkii* culture:

«I too think that the Azeri diaspora should not grill sheep in plain view in Moscow. Better do it inside some kind of a building. And Cossacks, for example, who love to wear a uniform and shout 'lyubo', should better do that in formal occasions, where they are invited specifically as Cossacks»³⁷ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

«If a newcomer reads through the Codex and understands, that some of his actions may be received negatively by the residents, then it will be easier for him to adapt to the life in Moscow»³⁸ (RIA Novosti 16.6.2010)

³⁵ «Также ряд вопросов у депутата вызывают традиции, которых придерживаются приезжие в одежде. В качестве примера Елена Бабич привела случай из собственного опыта – недавно она встретила на Невском проспекте семью выходцев из Кавказа, причем женщина была одета в банный халат и домашние тапочки, а в гардеробе мужчины были «треники с вытянутыми коленками»

³⁶ «И совершенно необязательно этот 'дресс-код' ассоциируется с выходцами из стран СНГ или южных регионов РФ. В любом петербургском дворе можно встретить человека в старых спортивках, рефлексирующего с сигаретой на скамейке»

³⁷ «Я тоже считаю, что азербайджанская диаспора не должна жарить в Москве баранов у всех на виду. Лучшие это делать внутри какого-то строения. А казаки, например, которые любят носить форму и кричать 'любо', пусть лучше это делают на званых вечерах, куда они приглашены именно как казаки»

³⁸ «Если приезжий прочитает кодекс и поймет, что какие-то его действия могут вызвать негатив у жителей, то ему легче будет приспособиться к жизни в Москве»

Still, migrants are not the only culprits in the russocentric narrative. As the boundary is viewed as a protecting fence, those failing to guard the fence are also responsible. State institutions, therefore, are blamed for leading too soft migration policies, resulting in too large quotas of migrants and too little control:

«The failure of state organs to fulfill the legislation on the control of labor migration lies on those very organs. This is what should be talked about»³⁹ (Gazeta.ru 9.7.2010)

«-- the authorities are looking for a solution to the problem of migration, which already long ago got out of control. If the current formally existing mechanism of 'filtration' of migrants functioned, there would be no problems»⁴⁰ (RIA Novosti 5.7.2010)

Another reason to blame the state institutions is their lack of coordinated efforts to prevent ethnic conflicts, extremism and nationalism resulting from the culture clash. Lack of regulation of migrational processes and lack of measures to prevent extremism and ethnic conflicts are named in the Strategy of National Politics as one of the negative factors affecting the development of interethnic relations.⁴¹ In the low level discourse, more concrete examples are given of the lack of control by the state institutions and law enforcement:

«-- the starting day of the Eid festival, on the Apraksin dvor marketplace «representatives of the Muslim community» conducted a ritual sacrifice by slaughtering some sheep. According to Nilov, the police patrol that arrived called by the citizens did not take any measures, referring to the absence of appropriate legal basis»⁴² (RIA Novosti 23.6.2010)

³⁹ «Неисполнение органами госвласти законодательства в части контроля за трудовой миграцией лежит на самых этих органах. Вот о чем надо говорить»

⁴⁰ «-- власти ищут решение миграционной проблемы, которая давно уже просто вышла из-под контроля. Если бы формально существующий сейчас механизм 'фильтрации' мигрантов действовал, проблемы просто не было»

⁴¹ Strategy of National Politics, 5.

⁴² «-- в день начала праздника Курбан-байрам, на рынке Апраксин двор «представители мусульманской общины» провели ритуальное жертвоприношение, зарезав несколько баранов. Как сообщил Нилов, прибывший по вызову граждан наряд милиции не принял никаких мер, сославшись на отсутствие соответствующей правовой базы»

«Nowadays, any foreigner can buy a patent for a thousand rubles, and it doesn't matter whether he works or engages in robberies, nobody has the right to touch him»⁴³ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)

Measures to control ethnic conflict are needed because it is believed that “somebody, unfortunately, likes to inflame these interethnic tensions”⁴⁴:

«-- for someone it is directly beneficial to transform the outrage of citizens towards concrete facts of injustice into a form of interethnic conflict»⁴⁵ (Putin 9.6.2012)

The third part of the framework contains the threats and solutions presented in the narrative. The threat in the russocentric narrative is threefold. First, there is the threat of losing “our city” to ‘the Others’. This is reflected in the need to fence ‘our’ cities against the influence of strange cultures, which was discussed above, as well as in the fear of the formation of “cultural enclaves”:

«We should not allow the appearance of closed, isolated ethnic enclaves, which often do not follow laws, but [instead] various kinds of 'understandings'»⁴⁶ (Putin 23.1.2012)

«It is another thing completely, if cultural enclaves are formed and they begin to demand themselves specific rights. For example, publishing newspapers. And later they may announce a piece of land, on which they live, as land of that enclave. It is a dangerous path, in that way it is possible to split the country»⁴⁷ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

⁴³ *«Купит теперь любой иностранец патент за тысячу рублей, и неважно – работает ли он или занимается грабежами, никто его не имеет право тронуть»*

⁴⁴ *«-- а кое-кому, к сожалению, нравится разжигать эту межэтническую напряженность» (Putin 9.6.2012)*

⁴⁵ *« -- а кому-то прямо выгодно перевести возмущение граждан конкретным фактом несправедливости в форму межэтнического конфликта»*

⁴⁶ *«Нельзя допустить, чтобы у нас возникли замкнутые, обособленные национальные анклав, в которых часто действуют не законы, а разного рода 'понятия'»*

⁴⁷ *«Совершенно другое дело, если образуется культурный анклав и начнет требовать себе особых прав. Например, издания газеты. Ну а потом он может объявить кусочек земли, на которой живет, землей этого анклава. Это опасный путь, так можно раздробить страну»*

Prevention of the formation of such closed, ethnically defined enclaves of migrants is mentioned as a task in the Strategy of National Politics.⁴⁸

Another threat mentioned in the narratives is that the culture clash spawns extremism and organized crime:

« Today increasingly, under the guise of development of democracy and freedom, different national groups are raising their heads. -- In fact, they all push, provoke separatist, divisive tendencies in our country. It is important to break these dangerous tendencies and influences»⁴⁹ (Putin 24.8.2012)

Finally, all this may lead to disintegration and destruction of the state itself, as the ‘integrating cultural code’ is broken. It is believed in the narrative that there are some unnamed forces that aim to break the cultural code. This concern is voiced by Putin:

«The core, binding the fabric of this unique civilization is the Russkii people, Russkii culture. It is that core that all sorts of provocateurs and our adversaries with all their strength will try to tear away from Russia -- To ultimately force people to destroy their homeland with their own hands»⁵⁰ (Putin 23.1.2012)

«-- [we] should understand, that conflicts here are capable of not only undermining our statehood, but also of destroying its very foundations»⁵¹ (Putin 24.8.2012)

Two solutions are suggested to avoid this destruction: limiting the access of ‘the Others’ to ‘our’ space and preventing ethnic conflict. The emphasis of the solutions is on tighter control and, in Paasi’s (2011, 63) words, “technical landscapes of control and surveillance”. First, the quantity of migrants in the cities must be reduced and their cultural assimilation must be assured. The narrative calls for tighter and more selective migration politics.

⁴⁸ «--противодействие формированию замкнутых анклавов мигрантов по этническому признаку» (Strategy of National Politics, 16)

⁴⁹ «Сегодня всё чаще под видом развития демократии и свободы поднимают голову разные националистические группы. -- По сути, все они подталкивают, провоцируют сепаратистские, разведительные тенденции в нашей стране. Важно переломить эти опасные тенденции и влияния»

⁵⁰ «Стержень, скрепляющая ткань этой уникальной цивилизации – русский народ, русская культура. Вот как раз этот стержень разного рода провокаторы и наши противники всеми силами будут пытаться вырвать из России -- Чтобы в конечном счете – заставить людей своими руками уничтожить собственную Родину»

⁵¹ «-- [мы] должны понимать, что конфликты здесь способны не только подточить нашу государственность, но и разрушить сами ее основы»

«There really are much more guest workers in Moscow than the city needs. It is the result of incorrect state policy on migration»⁵² (RIA Novosti 16.6.2010)

«-- [we] should have a clearly differentiated policy in relation to legal migration – both permanent and temporary. Which, in turn, suggests obvious priorities in migration politics in favour of qualification, competency, competitiveness, cultural and behavioral compatibility. Such 'positive selection' and competition for quality of migration exist in this world. It is needless to say that such migrants integrate much better and easier to the receiving society»⁵³ (Putin 23.1.2012)

Fully in line with the demands of local politicians, Putin adds that “we should go for tightening rules for registration and sanctions for violating them”⁵⁴, while the Strategy of National Politics lists “successful social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrants”⁵⁵ as one of its goals. According to the Strategy, this adaptation and integration is to be attained by “improving the system of measures to ensure a respectful attitude of migrants towards the culture of the receiving society”⁵⁶. Again, it is ‘the Others’ who should assimilate to the culture of the core. The purpose of the boundary as a fence that protects ‘our’ culture against the cultures of ‘the Others’ by limiting the rights of those others to ‘our’ space is similar to that mentioned by Kolossov (2005, 618).

Second, ethnic conflicts should be anticipated and prevented by suppressing nationalist and extremist ideas and banning the use of any ethnic factors in politics. The Strategy of National Politics talks about “early prevention of interethnic conflicts, demonstrations of aggressive nationalism and related criminal actions, mass riots, demonstrations of extremism and

⁵² *«Гастарбайтеров в Москве и в самом деле очень много, гораздо больше, чем нужно городу. Это следствие неправильной государственной миграционной политики»*

⁵³ *«-- должна быть предельно четко дифференцирована политика в отношении легальной миграции – как постоянной, так и временной. Что, в свою очередь, предполагает очевидные приоритеты и режимы благоприятствования в миграционной политике в пользу квалификации, компетентности, конкурентоспособности, культурной и поведенческой совместимости. Такая 'положительная селекция' и конкуренция за качество миграции существуют во всем мире. Излишне говорить и о том, что такие мигранты интегрируются в принимающее общество намного лучше и легче»*

⁵⁴ *«Считаю, что следует пойти на ужесточение правил регистрации и санкции за их нарушение» (Putin 23.1.2012)*

⁵⁵ *«Успешная социальная и культурная адаптация и интеграция мигрантов» (Strategy of National Politics, 6)*

⁵⁶ *«--совершенствование системы мер, обеспечивающих уважительное отношение мигрантов к культуре и традициям принимающего общества» (Strategy of National Politics, 17)*

terrorism”⁵⁷, “inadmissibility of creating political parties based on racial, national or religious attachments”⁵⁸ and “prevention of unfair use of the ethnic factor in the election process and party programs”⁵⁹. The task of preventing any kind of extremism and nationalism is also brought up by Putin:

«The reality of today is growth in interethnic and interconfessional tensions. Nationalism, religious intolerance become an ideological base for the most radical groups and movements. [They] destroy, erode the state and divide society»⁶⁰ (Putin 23.1.2010)

«-- [we] must correct the mechanisms for resolving and preventing potentially conflictual situations, resolve disputed issues, in which there is some kind of a national factor»⁶¹ (Putin 9.6.2012)

«But one cannot be allowed – the possibility of creating regional parties, including in national republics. That is a straight road to separatism»⁶² (Putin 23.1.2012)

The narrative is built around the idea of a *Russkii* core nation defined by ethnic factors – cultural criteria being the most important. The way the narrative presents as natural such cultural divisions supports the conclusion that the russocentric narrative is based on primordial thinking and is part of the ethnic nation building discourse that emphasizes culture as membership criteria (Shevel 2011). The worry about the survival of *Russkie* as an ethnic collective (Tolz 1998a, 1002) can be recognized in the threats described in the russocentric narrative, which fears for the disintegration and destruction of the nation. As Shevel (2011, 186–188) notes, advocates of

⁵⁷ «--раннего предупреждения межнациональных конфликтов, проявлении агрессивного национализма и связанных с ними криминальных проявлении, массовых беспорядков, проявлений экстремизма и терроризма» (*Strategy of National Politics*, 11)

⁵⁸ «недопустимость создания политических партий по признаку расовой, национальной или религиозной принадлежности» (*Strategy of National Politics*, 7)

⁵⁹ «-- профилактике недобросовестного использования этнического фактора в избирательном процессе и в партийных программах» (*Strategy of National Politics*, 12)

⁶⁰ «Реальность сегодняшнего дня – рост межэтнической и межконфессиональной напряженности. Национализм, религиозная нетерпимость становятся идеологической базой для самых радикальных группировок и течений. Разрушают, подтачивают государства и разделяют общества»

⁶¹ «-- нужно отладить механизмы урегулирования и профилактики потенциально конфликтных ситуаций, разрешения спорных проблем, в которых присутствует какой-то национальный момент»

⁶² «Но нельзя допустить одного – возможностей для создания региональных партий, в том числе в национальных республиках. Это – прямой путь к сепаратизму»

ethnic definitions of the nation rarely hope for a separate state for *Russkie*, but rather want them to be officially recognized as a state-forming nation – in other words, a core nation. This wish is clearly visible in the russocentric narrative, even at the level of terminology: such terms as ‘cultural core’, ‘common cultural code’ and ‘state-forming nation’ are employed in the material referring to the status of the *Russkie*. Moreover, the solutions offered by the narrative emphasize the role of control and assimilation.

All these factors support the conclusion that this is a narrative advocating for exclusive nation building: unifying the core nation against an internal other. The narrative does leave open an option for cultural assimilation, but based on the material used for this research it is unclear, whether this is genuinely an option that would lead ‘the Others’ to be considered as full members of the nation or whether cultural assimilation would still leave them in the role of ‘the Others within’. The exclusionary nature of the russocentric narrative is further analyzed in a separate chapter.

7.2 The multinational narrative

The second narrative introduces a unique multiethnic Russia, where diversity is a strength, rather than a threat:

Once upon a time, there was a unique multiethnic civilization, whose diverse peoples had centuries old traditions of solidarity and unity. They were one team, united in diversity, and their multinational cities welcomed all citizens. But then, the politicians and officials, having no understanding of the true multinational nature of the country, began running xenophobic policies. Their migration laws and other initiatives harmed interethnic relations within the country and provoked conflict. Such politics would eventually lead to a split of the nation and destruction of the state. The nation could be saved by harmonizing ethnic relations by soft means: cooperation, protection of diversity and patriotic education. These would allow the country to reap the positive potentials of its natural diversity.

The multinational narrative is about unity in diversity. The nation is defined as multinational, emphasizing the nature of Russia as a collection of ethnic sub-nations. In that way, the narrative

confirms the existence of internal ethnic boundaries. Similarly to the common understanding among Russian people (Tishkov 2009, 40–41), the multinational narrative sees nations first of all as ethnic communities, and the fact that such ethnic boundaries are taken for granted makes the narrative primordial in nature. However, in contrast to the russocentric narrative, boundaries are understood not as separating fences, but as bridges that facilitate interaction and cooperation between the sub-nations (Newman & Paasi 1998, 194). This is visible for example in how the Strategy of National Politics sets goals of developing cultures of the different ethnic groups and creating cultural contacts between them⁶³, as well as in the following citations:

«Most peoples of Russia were formed in the course of centuries on the territory of the modern Russian state and contributed to the development of Rossiiskii statehood and culture»⁶⁴ (Strategy of National Politics, 3)

«If we remember history – for example, the Great Patriotic War [the Second World War], the country won it first of all because all peoples and nationalities acted together in the struggle against the enemy like one effective team»⁶⁵ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)

«We are a multinational society, but we are one people»⁶⁶ (Putin 23.1.2012)

This is where the multinational narrative leans towards a civic understanding of a nation, by advocating a supra-nation that brings all these sub-nations together. Ideas of “one team”, “unity in diversity”, “historical traditions of solidarity and mutual help between peoples of Russia”⁶⁷ are emphasized also in the Strategy of National Politics. In the multinational narrative, the initial situation and the eventual goal is one of interethnic solidarity and cooperation between the peoples of the Russian Federation:

⁶³ Strategy of National Politics, 13-14.

⁶⁴ *«Большинство народов России на протяжении веков формировались на территории современного Российского государства и внесли свой вклад в развитие российской государственности и культуры»*

⁶⁵ *«Если вспомнить историю – к примеру, той же Великой Отечественной войны, то страна выиграла ее прежде всего потому, что все народы и народности действовали в борьбе с врагом как одна эффективная команда»*

⁶⁶ *«Мы многонациональное общество, но мы единый народ»*

⁶⁷ *«-- исторических традиций солидарности и взаимопомощи народов России» (Strategy of National Politics, 7)*

«-- national agreement, interethnic prosperity, interethnic peace, harmony – these are defining issues for our society, for the integrity of the Rossiiskii state»⁶⁸ (Putin 9.6.2012)

«And together we must ensure that one of the key concepts in the life of our society will be tolerance, respect towards cultures and ways of life of other people, other nations, other ethnicities»⁶⁹ (Putin 24.8.2012)

Consequently, Moscow and St. Petersburg are presented in this narrative as inherently multinational cities that should welcome all citizens of the multinational country. Considering the different tactics of dealing with ethnic divisions (Wimmer 2006, 338), the cities seem to function as ‘melting pots’ – perhaps not for the purpose of merging the sub-nations, but to allow their interaction with each other:

«Moscow is not a city for Muscovites. It belongs to a multinational Russia, all of its citizens and nationalities with their cultures and traditions»⁷⁰ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

«And the capitals of Russia – St. Petersburg as well as Moscow – are called capitals because they are the common home with open doors to absolutely all nations of multinational Russia»⁷¹ (Nezavisimaya Gazeta 11.8.2010)

«Russia is a secular country and historically always was a multinational state, just like Moscow is a multinational city»⁷² (Gazeta.ru 16.6.2010)

Unlike in the first narrative, here diversity is seen as a potential and even a possibility for Russia to create a positive international image of itself by showing an example in tolerance and minority rights:

⁶⁸ «-- национальное согласие, межнациональное благополучие, межэтнический мир, гармония – это определяющие вопросы для нашего общества, для целостности Российского государства»

⁶⁹ «И мы вместе должны добиться того, чтобы одним из ключевых понятий в жизни нашего общества стала толерантность, уважительное отношение к культуре и к образу жизни других людей, других народов, других этносов»

⁷⁰ «Москва – это не город для москвичей. Она принадлежит многонациональной России, всем ее гражданам и национальностям с их культурами и традициями»

⁷¹ «А столицы России – и Санкт-Петербург, и первопрестольная Москва – потому и называются столицами, что являются общим домом с открытыми дверями для абсолютно всех народов многонациональной России»

⁷² «Россия – светская страна и исторически всегда была многонациональным государством, как и Москва – многонациональным городом»

«Moscow, as a major European city, as the capital of the country, claiming a special political role in the world, including a role as a mediator between the Muslim and Christian worlds, on the contrary, should show an example of multiculturalism and ethnic tolerance»⁷³ (Gazeta.ru 16.6.2010)

«We were always proud of, and are still rightly proud of the diversity of our culture. And in this lies the power of our multinational people»⁷⁴ (Putin 9.6.2012)

«And today the preservation [of ethnocultural and religious diversity] is not only a guarantee of strength of Rossiiskii statehood, but also our greatest competitive advantage. No [other] country has such richness of ethnicities and languages»⁷⁵ (Putin 24.8.2012)

«The diversity of the national (ethnic) composition and religious attachments of the population of Russia, the historical experience of intercultural and interreligious cooperation, preservation and development of the traditions of the peoples living on her [Russian] territory are common achievements of the Russian nation, serve as a factor to strengthen Russian statehood, define the status and positive direction of further development of interethnic relations in the Russian Federation»⁷⁶ (Strategy of National Politics, 3)

Similarly to the russocentric narrative, misguided state policies are seen as the source of the disturbance and the state structures as the main culprit. Only the reasons for this are different. In this narrative, the state structures are accused for not understanding the multinational nature of Russia. Therefore they run such xenophobic policies that harm interethnic relations and cause conflict in the inherently multinational Russia:

⁷³ *«Москва, как большой европейский город, как столица страны, претендующей на особую политическую роль в мире, в том числе на роль посредника между мусульманским и христианским миром, наоборот, должна показывать пример мультикультурализма и межнациональной терпимости»*

⁷⁴ *«Мы всегда гордились и по праву гордимся до сих пор разнообразием нашей культуры. И в этом – сила нашего многонационального народа»*

⁷⁵ *«И сегодня его сохранение – это не только залог прочности российской государственности, но и наше великое конкурентное преимущество. Такого богатства этносов и языков нет ни в одной стране»*

⁷⁶ *«Многообразие национального (этнического) состава и религиозной принадлежности населения России, исторический опыт межкультурного и межрелигиозного взаимодействия, сохранение и развитие традиции проживающих на ее территории народов являются общим достоянием российской нации, служат фактором укрепления российской государственности, определяют состояние и позитивный вектор дальнейшего развития межнациональных отношений в Российской Федерации»*

«-- our post-communist officials, whatever good intentions they are guided by, do not understand the nature of a multinational state»⁷⁷ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

«Codex of Muscovite – it is provocation of anti-Rossiiskie and anti-Moscow feelings»⁷⁸ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

«-- some of the national groups may get offended...since people already know how to behave themselves in the society... additional normative documents are not needed for that»⁷⁹ (Gazeta.ru 16.6.2010)

Migrants, on the contrary, are presented in the multinational narrative as victims of stereotyping and xenophobia. They are not like the Enemy, defined by Harle (2000, 11–12), but more like the kind of neutral ‘Other’, which helps to define ‘our’ identity but is not considered a threat. Migrants are expected to follow the law, but not “become Russians”:

«The Chinese, Tadjiks, Uzbeks or Chechens in Moscow can hardly someday become ‘Russkie’. But the representatives of all these nationalities can be brought closer to each other by following universal (not national or religious) values in their connections with each other. Alas, for the Russian migration politics to be based on these values, they should first be adopted by the state itself»⁸⁰ (Gazeta.ru 16.6.2010)

«If the law is being broken, authorities should be tough to restore law and order. But what law is broken, for example, by an African, when he wears his traditional clothes»⁸¹ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

The threat presented in the multinational narrative is similar to the russocentric narrative, but the reasons behind it are very different. It is the harming of interethnic relations that is feared to split the nation and destroy the state:

⁷⁷ «-- У нашего посткоммунистического чиновничества, какими бы благими пожеланиями оно ни руководствовалось, нет понимания природы многонационального государства»

⁷⁸ «Кодекс москвича – это провоцирование антироссийских и антимосковских настроений»

⁷⁹ «--кто-то из национальных групп может обидеться...ведь люди и так знают, как вести себя в обществе...для этого не нужны дополнительные нормативные документы»

⁸⁰ «Китайцы, таджики, узбеки или чеченцы в Москве вряд ли когда-нибудь смогут стать ‘русскими’. Но представителей всех этих национальностей может сближать следование общечеловеческими (а не национальными или религиозными) ценностями в общении друг с другом. Увы, чтобы российская миграционная политика основывалась на этих ценностях, их для начала должно принимать само государство»

⁸¹ «Если закон нарушается, то власти должна предельно жестко восстанавливать правопорядок. Но какой закон нарушает, к примеру, африканец, когда ходит в своей традиционной одежде»

«Yet, the value of interethnic agreement is not an eternal present from our forefathers. Such traditions must be continuously supported»⁸² (Putin 24.8.2012)

«[We] must learn to respect every nation, else everything crumbles. Remains the principality of Moscow, yet without Ryazan, because in there 30 percent of the population are Kasymov Tatars»⁸³ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

«We often substitute Russian national consciousness with ethnic Russkii nationalism. Not understanding, that it is a destructive power, and it was never welcomed in Russia. On this basis it is impossible to preserve Russia»⁸⁴ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

«I am deeply convinced that attempts to preach the idea of building a Russkii 'national', multi-ethnic state contradict all of our thousand years of history. Moreover, it is the shortest path to the destruction of the Russkii people and Russkii statehood»⁸⁵ (Putin 23.1.2012)

«But according to the logic of Moscow authorities, Russkie in the Caucasus must be forced to live by Muslim traditions. That kind of reasoning is a sure way to further mental division of the country on national and ethnic grounds»⁸⁶ (Gazeta.ru 16.6.2010)

In contrast to the russocentric narrative, in which tighter control was suggested as a solution, the multinational one emphasizes the importance of harmonizing ethnic relations to create a state of mutual respect and agreement. For example, the role of school in forming such “culture of relations between people of different nationalities, in strengthening the atmosphere of mutual respect”⁸⁷ is mentioned by Putin. This is another point that shows how the multinational narrative understands boundaries as bridges and treats the different sub-nations of Russia as

⁸² «Однако ценности межнационального согласия – это не подарок наших предков на все времена. Такие традиции необходимо постоянно поддерживать»

⁸³ «Нужно учиться уважать каждый народ, иначе все рассыплется. Останется Московское княжество, даже без Рязани, потому что там 30 процентов населения – касымовские татары»

⁸⁴ «Мы часто подменяем русское национальное сознание этническим русским национализмом. Не понимая, что это разрушительная сила, и она в России никогда не приветствовалась. На этой основе невозможно сохранить Россию»

⁸⁵ «Глубоко убежден, попытки проповедовать идеи построения русского «национального», многоэтнического государства противоречат всей нашей тысячелетней истории. Более того, это кратчайший путь к уничтожению русского народа и русской государственности»

⁸⁶ «А по логике московских чиновников, русских на Кавказе надо заставлять жить по мусульманским обычаям. Такого рода рассуждения – верный путь к дальнейшему ментальному расколу страны по национальному и религиозному признаку»

⁸⁷ «-- роль школы в формировании культуры взаимоотношений между людьми разных национальностей, укреплении атмосферы взаимоуважения между ними» (Putin 19.2.2013)

equals, unlike the russocentric narrative where the hierarchy between ‘us’ and ‘Others’ is very clear. Mutual respect should be achieved by soft means: cooperation and dialogue, protection of diversity and creation of cultural consensus through patriotic education:

«-- in its interethnic politics the government of Moscow emphasizes not what separates representatives of different nationalities, but on what unites them – creation of a community of Muscovites should make all residents of the capital members of one team, who share the same challenges»⁸⁸ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)

«Better to focus on real things, prevention of racism, xenophobia by active work of the law enforcement bodies, upbringing, education of citizens, courses, social advertising, television programs»⁸⁹ (Gazeta.ru 16.6.2010)

«Civil peace and interethnic consensus – those are not a frozen picture established once and forever. On the contrary, it is constant dynamics, dialogue. -- It is necessary not only to observe mutual responsibilities, but also to find values common to everyone. You can't force [people] to be together»⁹⁰ (Putin 23.1.2012)

«-- our fundamental task is to strengthen the harmony and agreement in the multinational Russian society, so that people regardless of their ethnic, religious identity saw themselves as citizens of a single country»⁹¹ (Putin 19.2.2013)

The emphasis on bringing the different nations together in a peaceful way is evident also in the Strategy of National Politics, which calls for ”educational and cultural-instructive measures to form a *Rossiiskii* civic identity, education of interethnic communication culture, study of history

⁸⁸ «-- в своей межнациональной политике правительство Москвы делает акцент не на том, что разделяет представителей разных национальностей, а на том, что их объединяет – создание общности москвичей должно сделать всех жителей столицы членами одной команды, перед которыми стоят одни и те же задачи»

⁸⁹ «Лучше сосредоточиться на реальных вещах, профилактике расизма, ксенофобии путем активной работы правоохранительных органов, воспитания, образования граждан, учебных курсов, социальной рекламы, телевизионных программ»

⁹⁰ «Гражданский мир и межнациональное согласие – это не один раз созданная и на века застывшая картинка. Напротив, это постоянная динамика, диалог. -- Необходимо не только соблюдение взаимных обязательств, но и нахождение общих для всех ценностей. Нельзя насильно заставить быть вместе»

⁹¹ «-- наша базовая задача заключается в том, чтобы укрепить гармонию и согласие в многонациональном российском обществе, чтобы люди независимо от своей этнической, религиозной принадлежности осознавали себя гражданами единой страны»

and traditions of peoples of Russia, their experience of solidarity”⁹² and lists as its first goals “strengthening the nationwide civic consciousness and spiritual community of the multinational nation of the Russian Federation”⁹³, “maintenance and development of the ethnocultural diversity of peoples of Russia”⁹⁴ and “harmonization of national and interethnic relations”⁹⁵.

The case of the multinational narrative is curious in how it combines the ethnic and civic, as well as primordial and instrumentalist, ideas of nation and nation building. The primordial nature of the narrative is visible where it presents as natural the existence of multiple ethnic nations within Russia. The ethnic basis of the nations is taken for granted. On the other hand, the narrative cherishes the idea of a civic supra-nation, which it believes can be created by harmonizing interethnic relations by state measures. Instrumentalism is visible in the way the supra-nation is described as a “team” that requires efforts to be built and the way its existence is seen as being threatened by state policies – both hinting that the nation is something that can be created by different actors. The narrative tackles the problem of defining the Russian nation by introducing two levels of the nation: the level of the ethnic sub-nations and the supra-level of the common civic nation. Based on the treatment of sub-nations as equals and the goal of unifying them all to form a common supra-nation, the multinational narrative can be concluded to be inherently inclusive.

7.3 The civic narrative

The third narrative takes a whole new perspective by declaring that the conflicts along the internal boundaries of Russia are not ethnic, but social in nature:

⁹² «-- образовательных и культурно-просветительных мер по формированию российской гражданской идентичности, воспитанию культуры межнационального общения, изучению истории и традиций народов России, их опыта солидарности --» (*Strategy of National Politics*, 5)

⁹³ «упрочение общероссийского гражданского самосознания и духовной общности многонационального народа Российской Федерации» (*Strategy of National Politics*, 5)

⁹⁴ «сохранение и развитие этнокультурного многообразия народов России» (*Strategy of National Politics*, 5)

⁹⁵ «гармонизация национальных и межнациональных отношений» (*Strategy of National Politics*, 5)

Once upon a time, there was a country, where all the citizens should have had equal opportunities – but did not. Poorly functioning state structures were unable to overcome regional and other kinds of inequality. Poor living conditions pushed people from their homes to bigger cities, where they were needed for the economic development of the country. But the corrupt and discriminating officials along with abusive employers made integration difficult for the migrants, who already had to struggle with overly complicated migration rules. The structural inequality and mistrust in state institutions caused tensions within the society, and those tensions lead to ethnic conflicts – although the underlying problem was structural, not ethnic. The conflicts would get worse, unless the structural problems were solved: regional development should be balanced, equal possibilities should be guaranteed to all citizens and better conditions for integration should be organized for all migrants.

This is a narrative of a civic nation, where all citizens should have equal opportunities. Unlike the multinational narrative, the civic narrative does not speak about equality between nations within a nation, but between ‘citizens’. Hence, it can be interpreted that membership of the nation is defined in civic terms by citizenship. This, according to Tishkov (2009, 49), has often been the dominant idea of the nation among the elite, which perhaps explains why the civic narrative is most visible in the material representing the high level political discourse. Instead of drawing boundaries between ethnic groups, the civic narrative recognizes the existence of internal boundaries based on social and regional inequality in the current reality. The initial situation and the disturbance are, therefore, the same: a state of problematic structural and regional inequalities. Such goals as “equality of citizens, realization of their constitutional rights”⁹⁶ are stated in the Strategy of National Politics. Unlike the other two narratives, the civic narrative does not aim to restore the initial situation, but to change it.

The perceived problem is the inequalities that create internal boundaries between regions and between ‘locals’ and ‘newcomers’, ‘us’ and ‘the Others’. Importantly, this inequality combined with poorly functioning state structures creates tensions that get manifested through ethnic conflicts, although the original reason has nothing to do with ethnic boundaries. Ethnic tensions are, according to this narrative, triggered by structural problems in the society and strengthened

⁹⁶ «равноправия граждан, реализации их конституционных прав» (Strategy of National Politics, 10)

by mistrust in state institutions. The Strategy of National Politics lists “high level of social and material inequality, regional economic differences”⁹⁷, “legal nihilism and high level of criminality, corruption of individual representatives of public authorities”⁹⁸ and “discrimination towards citizens of different nationalities in the practice of law enforcement”⁹⁹ as negative factors affecting the development of interethnic relations. Putin makes a similar connection between ethnic conflict and the underlying structural problems:

«Furthermore, we see that often in the basis of conflicts that seem to be ethnic lies something else – distrust of citizens towards state structures and governance»¹⁰⁰ (Putin 24.8.2012)

«Structural problems of the society very often find their expression in the form of interethnic tensions. It should always be remembered, that there is a direct dependency between unresolved socio-economic problems, defects of law enforcement, inefficiency of the government, corruption and ethnic conflicts»¹⁰¹ (Putin 23.1.2012)

«Moreover, incapacity or corruption of the court and police always will lead not only to dissatisfaction and radicalization of the society receiving migrants, but also to the use of own rules for solving disagreements and to a shadowy criminal economy among the migrants»¹⁰² (Putin 23.1.2012)

As is visible in the above citations, the civic narrative, too, blames state structures for the disturbance. However, the civic narrative concentrates on structural flaws of the system:

⁹⁷ «высокий уровень социального и имущественного неравенства, региональной экономической дифференциации» (Strategy of National Politics, 4)

⁹⁸ «правовой нигилизм и высокий уровень преступности, коррумпированность отдельных представителей власти» (Strategy of National Politics, 4)

⁹⁹ «сохранение проявлений дискриминации по отношению к гражданам различной национальной принадлежности в правоприменительной практике» (Strategy of National Politics, 4)

¹⁰⁰ «Кроме того, мы видим, что зачастую в основе возникающих конфликтов на этнической, казалось бы, почве лежит совсем другое – недоверие граждан к органам власти и управления»

¹⁰¹ «Системные проблемы общества очень часто находят выход именно в форме межнациональной напряженности. Нужно всегда помнить, что существует прямая зависимость между нерешенными социально-экономическими проблемами, пороками правоохранительной системы, неэффективностью власти, коррупцией и конфликтами на национальной почве»

¹⁰² «Более того, недееспособность или коррумпированность суда и полиции всегда будут вести не только к недовольству и радикализации принимающего мигрантов общества, но и к укоренению 'разборок по понятиям' и теневой криминализованной экономики в самой среде мигрантов»

inefficiency, corruption, and discrimination, which make the state structures unable to fulfill their tasks and take care of all citizens in a balanced manner.

Similarly to the multinational narrative, migrants are not perceived as an enemy or a threat, but rather a neutral and in some ways even positive ‘Other’ (Harle 2000, 11–12). As the citation below shows, migrants are understood to function as needed workforce for economic development:

«But are the economies of Moscow and St. Petersburg able to function without the cheap labor of migrants – that is a big question -- migrants usually make money for transfers [home] by doing the hardest, the lowest paid and at the same time the most needed work in our country»¹⁰³ (RIA Novosti 5.7.2010)

«That is why for the realization of the positive potential of the migrational processes – and such potential there, of course, is – the whole system of managing them must be modernized»¹⁰⁴ (Putin 24.6.2012)

While the russocentric narrative blames the migrants for coming to ‘our’ cities and the multinational narrative sees Moscow and St. Petersburg as naturally multinational cities, the civic narrative tries to understand the reasons behind migrants flocking to these cities. In addition to acknowledging the above mentioned need of cheap labor as a pulling factor, the narrative emphasizes the problems that drive migrants away from their places of origin and the difficulties they face in their new places of residence:

«We understand that it is not from a good life that people leave for distant lands to earn, often in uncivilized conditions, themselves and their families an opportunity for human existence»¹⁰⁵ (Putin 23.1.2012)

¹⁰³ «Но сможет ли функционировать экономика Москвы и Питера без дешевого труда мигрантов – большой вопрос -- мигранты обычно добывают деньги для переводов самым тяжелым, самым низкооплачиваемым и одновременно востребованным в нашей стране трудом»

¹⁰⁴ «Поэтому для реализации положительного потенциала, заложенного в миграционных процессах – а там такой потенциал, конечно, есть, – вся система управления ими должна быть модернизирована»

¹⁰⁵ «Мы понимаем, что не от хорошей жизни люди уезжают за тридевять земель и зачастую далеко не в цивилизованных условиях зарабатывают себе и своей семье возможность человеческого существования»

«Even the most ignorant 'native' Muscovite has heard something about the poverty reigning in Central Asia, that is why the invasion by Uzbeks and Tadjiks, working as janitors, even if it annoys 'patriots', it does not cause surprise»¹⁰⁶ (Izvestia 13.12.2010)

«-- and the arrogance of employers, who more often 'threw away' their workers, than paid them. A direct consequence of this became the growth of crimes committed by migrants – experts characterize this process as 'uprising of the slaves'»¹⁰⁷ (Izvestia 13.12.2010)

The civic narrative assumes that it is the lack of help, knowledge and opportunity that hinders migrants from integrating. Provided with information, better living conditions and possibilities for learning the language the migrants would do their best to integrate. One sign of this is the way the Codex is presented as a measure to 'help' the newcomers integrate:

«In the near future we want to develop a set of rules, which will help newcomers, who stay in Moscow for permanent residence, to get accustomed more quickly»¹⁰⁸ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)

«This Codex -- according to the high flying thought of the officials, should help newcomers settle in the capital»¹⁰⁹ (Gazeta.ru 16.6.2010)

On the other hand, the same can be interpreted from the complaints of the lack of suitable conditions for integration and the suggested solutions to improve the situation. One example of the numerous measures suggested for creating favourable conditions for integration are suggested is the creation of integration centres for migrants:

«-- multifunctional cultural-educational integration centers, where migrants receive legal and household services, learn Russian language, get to know Russian culture, history and the basics of the legislation of the Russian Federation»¹¹⁰ (Strategy of National Politics, 17)

¹⁰⁶ *«Даже самый неосведомленный «коренной» москвич что-то слышал о бедности, царящей в Средней Азии, поэтому нашествие узбеков и таджиков, устраивающихся дворниками, если и раздражает 'патриотов', то удивления не вызывает»*

¹⁰⁷ *«-- и беспардонность работодателей, которые чаще "кидали" своих работников, чем платили им. Прямым следствием этого стал рост числа преступлений, совершенных мигрантами, - эксперты характеризуют этот процесс 'восстанием рабов'»*

¹⁰⁸ *«А в ближайшее время мы хотим разработать свод правил, которые помогут быстрее освоиться приезжим, которые остаются в Москве на постоянное место жительства»*

¹⁰⁹ *«Этот кодекс -- согласно высокому полету чиновничьей мысли, должен помочь освоиться приезжим гражданам в столице»*

The civic narrative paints no clear image of an ultimate threat, such as the destruction of the nation and the state depicted by the two other narratives. However, there is an implicit threat of the internal boundaries growing stronger, which is expected to lead to more ethnic conflict, if nothing is done to the structural problems underlying them. Since the problems are perceived as structural, the solutions offered aim for structural changes in the society. In short, the civic narrative wants to solve the problem by guaranteeing equal possibilities for all citizens and taking advantage of the positive potentials of migration. There are three types of measures required:

First, state structures must be developed to enable equal constitutional rights and to end discrimination. The Strategy of National Politics lists as its tasks such structural changes as abolition of discrimination in state and municipal structures and cooperation of these with institutions of civil society.¹¹¹ The creation of equal possibilities are also emphasized:

«Equality of rights and freedoms of a person and a citizen regardless of race, nationality, language, origin, material and professional status, place of residence, attitude towards religion, convictions, relations to public associations, and other conditions»¹¹² (Strategy of National Politics, 6)

«I stress: not faith, not nationality should divide peoples of Russia, citizens of Russia, but on the contrary, we with you should create such conditions that would create equal possibilities for all citizens»¹¹³ (Putin 24.8.2012)

Second, regions must be developed in a balanced manner, so that work and services would be available to citizens wherever in Russia they live:

¹¹⁰ «-- многофункциональных культурно-образовательных интеграционных центров, в которых мигранты получают юридические и бытовые услуги, обучаются русскому языку, знакомятся с российской культурой, историей и основами законодательства Российской Федерации»

¹¹¹ Strategy of National Politics, 10; 18.

¹¹² «Равенство прав и свобод человека и гражданина независимо от расы, национальности, языка, происхождения, имущественного и должностного положения, места жительства, отношения к религии, убеждения, принадлежности к общественным объединениям, а также других обстоятельств»

¹¹³ «Подчеркну: ни вера, ни национальность не должны разделить народы России, граждан России, а наоборот, мы с вами должны сформировать такие условия, которые создавали бы равные возможности для всех граждан»

«But on the other hand – so that people in their native places, in their own small homelands, could feel good and comfortable. People just need to be given an opportunity to work and live a normal life at their homes, in their native lands, an opportunity, which they are now largely deprived of»¹¹⁴ (Putin 23.1.2012)

«Objective reasons for the mass migration -- enormous inequality in the development and conditions of existence. It is clear, that the logical way to minimize, if not to eliminate, migration flows, would be to end such inequality»¹¹⁵ (Putin 23.1.2012)

The Strategy of National Politics lists several measures for creating favourable conditions for socio-economic development of regions and subjects of Russia, such as creation of jobs, adapting the traditional economic activity of the minorities to modern economic conditions, access to social and medical services in their actual place of residency and encouragement of migration to places suffering from labour shortage.¹¹⁶

Third, the rights of migrants must be protected and conditions must be created for them to integrate:

«It is very important to create appropriate conditions for the integration of migrants, protect their rights and freedom, provide social security»¹¹⁷ (Putin 24.8.2012)

«According to the president [Medvedev], 'such conditions must be created for the migrants that people would be ready to come and that rules were understandable and simple enough, so they would be easier to follow than to break'. Thus, the president signaled that he does not intend to move towards restrictive measures, mentioning that current rules are being broken because they are impossible to follow»¹¹⁸ (RIA 5.7.2010)

¹¹⁴ «А с другой стороны – чтобы люди в своих родных местах, на своей малой родине могли чувствовать себя нормально и комфортно. Надо просто дать возможность людям работать и нормально жить у себя дома, на родной земле, возможность, которой они сейчас во многом лишены»

¹¹⁵ «Объективные причины массовой миграции -- колоссальное неравенство в развитии и условиях существования. Понятно, что логичным способом если не ликвидации, то хотя бы минимизации миграционных потоков, было бы сокращение такого неравенства»

¹¹⁶ Strategy of National Politics, 12-13.

¹¹⁷ «Очень важно создать надлежащие условия для интеграции мигрантов, защитить их права и свободы, обеспечить социальную защищенность»

¹¹⁸ «По мнению президента, 'нужно создать такие условия для мигрантов, чтобы люди были готовы приезжать и чтобы правила были понятны и достаточно просты, чтобы их было проще соблюдать, чем нарушать'. При этом президент дал понять, что не намерен двигаться по пути запретительных мер, отметив, что и нынешние правила нарушают потому, что они невыполнимы»

Several suggestions for the creation of favourable conditions for social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrants are mentioned in the Strategy of National Politics, such as organization of courses on Russian language, history and legislation in the migrants' countries of origin and creation of multifunctional integrational centers where migrants could get the help and information they need for integrating.¹¹⁹

Of the discourses found by Shevel (2011) and Tolz (1998a), the civic narrative comes close to the one which defines the Russian nation by citizenship and territory of the Russian Federation. The narrative does not care about ethnic boundaries and emphasizes the rights of individual citizens, demonstrating a clear civic understanding of the nation. This makes the perspective different compared to the other two narratives: while the other two defend the rights of ethnic groups, the civic narrative defends the rights of individuals. This change of perspective allows the narrative to see 'the Others' as individuals, too, to think about the reasons for them migrating to the cities and why they might fail to integrate. The fact that the civic narrative aims to remove any internal boundaries in order to create a nation of equal citizens makes it inclusive in nature.

7.4 Distinctions and common factors

Three competing boundary narratives – russocentric, multinational and civic – were constructed based on the material and analyzed in the above chapters. The analysis reveals profound differences between the narratives in terms of how the problem of internal boundaries and the role of 'the Others within' are perceived. Key concepts of the research – the nation, the boundary and the 'Others' – are understood differently in each of the narratives. The different definitions of these concepts are collected to Table 3.

The nation is understood in the multinational and russocentric narratives first of all as an ethnic community. Especially the russocentric narrative emphasizes cultural factors as the key criteria of membership, fitting Panov's (2010, 93–94) view that citizenship only is not enough to gain membership in the Russian nation.

¹¹⁹ Strategy of National Politics, 8.

Narrative	The nation	The boundary	The Others
RUSSOCENTRIC	Multinational, but with a <i>Russkii</i> core nation that provides the unifying cultural code.	Between the core nation and the other sub-nations.	Criminal, unwilling to adapt, expected to assimilate or keep away.
MULTINATIONAL	One multinational team where diversity is a potential.	Between the sub-nations.	Not expected to assimilate, victims of xenophobia.
CIVIC	A civic nation of equal citizens.	Boundaries based on structural and regional inequality.	Needed for economic development, willing to integrate but lack information and help for integrating.

Table 3. Comparison of the meanings of the concepts of nation, boundary and 'the Others' in the three competing boundary narratives.

Moreover, both refer to history and myths when talking about the nation of Russia: the first to the mission of the *Russkii* core nation to hold together the multinational country, and the latter to the history of solidarity between the sub-nations. The following citations, taken from a single article, illustrate the difference between the narratives:

«Russkie are the state-forming people - based on the fact of the existence of Russia. The great mission of Russkie is to unite, bind the civilization»¹²⁰ (Putin 23.1.2012)

«Russia emerged and developed for centuries as a multinational state. A state, in which continuously went on a process of mutual habituation, mutual intermingling, mixing of peoples on

¹²⁰ «Русский народ является государствообразующим – по факту существования России. Великая миссия русских – объединять, скреплять цивилизацию»

the levels of family, friends and work. -- Acquirement of the vast territories during the whole history of Russia was a joint venture of many peoples»¹²¹ (Putin 23.1.2012)

This kind of ethnic understanding of the nation as somehow natural and eternal, along with the tendency to refer to historical myths, suggests that these narratives are essentially primordial in nature (see Smith 1995, 31–34; Pakkasvirta 2005, 36). However, the multinational narrative leans towards more civic and instrumental ideas by adding another layer to its understanding of the Russian nation: the common supra-nation, into which all of the ethnic sub-nations should be unified by harmonizing their mutual relations with the help of state policies. The civic narrative differs from the other two by ignoring ethnic boundaries and understanding the nation exclusively as a civic community whose membership is defined by citizenship.

The boundary in both russocentric and multinational narratives is based on ethnic markers and the idea of nations within a nation. The distinction between the narratives, however, lies in how the boundary is perceived. The russocentric narrative emphasizes the status of the *Russkii* cultural core, drawing the boundary between this core and the ‘Others’ whose cultures are incompatible with ‘ours’. This is best illustrated by a citation from the mother of the St. Petersburg Codex, Elena Babich, which is referred to multiple times in my material:

«During recent years thousands of citizens of Russia and other countries come to our city for work of permanent residency, following their own cultural and religious habits, which are in strong contradiction with our norms of life»¹²² (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 23.6.2010)

Meanwhile, the multinational narrative emphasizes the nature of Russia as a collection of ethnic sub-nations, which together form the nation of Russia. In this way the narrative draws boundaries between the ethnic nations, but also creates another layer of a civic supra-nation of Russia:

¹²¹ «Россия возникла и веками развивалась как многонациональное государство. Государство, в котором постоянно шел процесс взаимного привыкания, взаимного проникновения, смешивания народов на семейном, на дружеском, на служебном уровне. -- Освоение огромных территорий, наполнявшее всю историю России, было совместным делом многих народов»

¹²² «В последние годы в наш город на работу или постоянное место жительства приезжают тысячи граждан России и зарубежья, следующие своим культурным и религиозным обычаям, входящим в жёсткое противоречие с нашими нормами жизни»

*«The Strategy -- is intended to develop the potential of the multinational nation of the Russian Federation (Rossiiskii nation) and all of the peoples comprising it (ethnic communities)»¹²³
(Strategy of National Politics, 2)*

As Newman and Paasi (1998, 188) have noted, boundaries can be viewed as separating fences or bridges that allow interaction. This is the distinction between russocentric and multinational narratives – the previous emphasizes the distinctions between the groups and the protective function of the boundary, while the latter emphasizes solidarity and interaction across the boundaries. The civic narrative changes perspective by ruling ethnic boundaries irrelevant and concentrating instead on internal boundaries based on structural and regional inequality. These boundaries of inequality are seen as the true source of ethnic conflict. Another thing that makes the civic narrative stand out is that while the russocentric narrative aims to strengthen internal boundaries and the multinational narrative takes their existence for granted, the civic narrative sees the boundaries themselves as problematic and wants to remove them.

What about the ‘Others within’ for whom the Codex was designed? What kind of a role is assigned to them in the competing narratives? The common factor is that in all of the narratives they are described as ‘newcomers’¹²⁴ – those, who come to Moscow and St. Petersburg from somewhere else. Putin, for example, refers to them as “those who arrive, move somewhere”¹²⁵. However, occasionally more precise groups are named: ‘Caucasians’, ‘people from Southern republics’, ‘migrants from the Near Abroad’ or ‘people who come from other regions of Russia’. Considering this along with the fact that ‘the Others’ are occasionally described as having ‘dark faces’¹²⁶ and celebrating Eid¹²⁷, it can be assumed that the word ‘newcomers’ in the narratives mostly refers to internal migrants from the Caucasian republics and foreign migrants from post-

¹²³ *«Стратегия -- призвана развивать потенциал многонационального народа Российской Федерации (российской нации) и всех составляющих его народов (этнических общностей)»*

¹²⁴ Translated from the Russian word 'приезжие'.

¹²⁵ *«--те, которые приезжают, куда-то переезжают» (Putin 9.6.2012)*

¹²⁶ *«-- you go out on the street – around dark faces and non-Russian speech.» In original language: «-- на улицу выходишь – сплошь смуглые лица и нерусская речь» (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)*

¹²⁷ In Russian: Курбан-байрам (Kurban-bayram). A Muslim celebration of sacrifice, which gathers thousands of people around Mosques in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Soviet states in Central Asia. This is hardly surprising, considering the number and visibility of migrants from these regions in the two cities, as well as the fact that these groups are the most talked about in Russian discussions about migration in general.

Yet, it is the attitude towards these ‘newcomers’ of the cities that is strikingly different between the russocentric narrative on the one hand and the multinational and civic narratives on the other. Harle (2000, 11–12) makes a distinction between neutral ‘Others’ whose function is merely to provide something for ‘us’ to define our identity against, and the kind of evil ‘Others’ that Harle calls the Enemy. In the multinational and civic narratives, the ‘newcomers’ are considered as neutral ‘Others’ – internal migrants are included in their ideas of the nation and hence there is no reason why the two major cities should not welcome them. The russocentric narrative, however, defines ‘newcomers’ as a threat and clearly excludes them from the group of the ‘legitimate owners’ of the cities. The following citations illustrate this contradiction:

«Moscow -- belongs to a multinational Russia, all of its citizens and nationalities with their cultures and traditions. That is why attempts to divide Moscow by some special barriers, linguistic or others, to prohibit national clothing and ceremonies is comparable to a crime»¹²⁸ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

«In many countries there emerge closed national-religious communities, which refuse not only to assimilate, but even to adapt»¹²⁹ (Putin 23.1.2012)

Since the narratives are based on such different ideas of the key concepts, they offer quite distinct ways of framing the problem of the boundary and weaving the story of that boundary into a plot. Questions like how the boundary appeared, why it is problematic and what should be done about it are offered competing explanations. In Table 4 I have collected the ‘building blocks’ of the plots of the competing narratives: the initial situation, the disturbance, the threats and the solutions.

¹²⁸ *«Москва -- принадлежит многонациональной России, всем ее гражданам и национальностям с их культурами и традициями. Поэтому попытки отделить Москву какими-то специальными барьерами, языковыми или другими, запретить национальную одежду и обряды - это равносильно преступлению»*

¹²⁹ *«Во многих странах складываются замкнутые национально-религиозные общины, которые не только ассимилироваться, но даже и адаптироваться отказываются»*

Narrative	Initial situation	Disturbance	Threats	Solutions
RUSSO-CENTRIC	Acceptance of <i>Russkii</i> culture as the common cultural code.	Too many unassimilated migrants.	Losing our cities, crime and chaos, breakage of the cultural code, destruction of the nation and the state.	Less migrants and more assimilation by tighter control of migration. Preventing ethnic conflict.
MULTI-NATIONAL	Multinational nation as one team.	Xenophobic policies harm interethnic relations.	Splitting the nation and destruction of the state.	Harmonizing ethnic relations by soft means.
CIVIC	Civic nation troubled by regional and structural inequalities.	Structural problems cause conflict that takes ethnic forms.	Stronger and more conflictual internal boundaries. Failure of the civic state.	Equal rights and possibilities for all citizens. Helping migrants to integrate.

Table 4. Plots of the competing boundary narratives.

In the russocentric narrative, the initial situation, where all residents of Russia accepted the *Russkii* cultural code is disturbed by the arrival of too many migrants who refuse to assimilate. The multinational narrative takes a completely reverse perspective by claiming that it is the xenophobic policies that disturb the original solidarity and unity of the multinational “team”. In the civic narrative, the initial situation itself is seen as already troubled by structural and regional inequalities. Taking a closer look at the causalities and the assignment of blame in these narratives it becomes clear that they share a common culprit: the state structures. State structures and the migration politics lead by these are blamed in each of the narratives, but for quite different reasons. In the russocentric narrative they are blamed for being too soft, while the multinational narrative accuses them for being xenophobic and the civic narrative criticizes the

impracticality of the migration rules along with the general ineffectivity and other problems within the state structures.

The ultimate threat in both the russocentric and the multinational narratives is the disintegration and destruction of the nation and the state. Yet again the reasons that lead to this are presented differently. In the russocentric narrative it is the weakening of the common 'cultural code', while the multinational narrative blames the harming of interethnic relations. Naturally, the solutions offered by these narratives reflect the way the problem is framed in them. As the perceived problem in the russocentric narrative is the quantity of unassimilated migrants, tighter control is offered as a solution. Multinational narrative suggests harmonization of ethnic relations to solve the problems caused by xenophobic policies. The civic narrative differs from these two by not offering any clear image of an ultimate threat. As structural inequalities are the problem, the narrative aims for creating equality through removal of such internal boundaries of inequality.

The features of the narratives discussed above give us clues about which of the narratives can be considered inclusionary and which exclusionary. The multinational and civic narratives are clearly inclusive: they are open for migration and attempt to unite all the peoples or citizens of Russia into one common supra-nation. In contrast, the russocentric narrative unites only a certain ethnically defined part of the population and views 'arriving cultures' as a threat. Inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the narratives can be evaluated also by comparing their attitudes towards diversity, using the four strategies of dealing with ethnic divisions mentioned by Wimmer (2006, 338): pushing aside, encouraging mixture, homogenization and ethnic cleansing. The civic narrative pushes ethnic divisions aside in order to propagate for a civic idea of a national community. Although the multinational narrative encourages interaction between the sub-nations and hence the function of major cities as kind of melting pots, it would perhaps be wrong to conclude that the goal of that interaction is a mixture of ethnic groups. Rather, the multinational narrative prefers to maintain the Russian nation as a collection of cooperating sub-nations. The strategy employed by the russocentric narrative to deal with the ethnic divisions is homogenization, as the narrative expects migrants to culturally assimilate to the *Russkii* way of life. Since the russocentric narrative pays so much attention to reducing the quantity of migrants in 'our' space, it can even be interpreted to advocate for, to some extent, ethnic cleansing. The

russocentric narrative is the only one of the three that falls into the category of exclusionary nation building, and its exclusionary features are analyzed in more detail in the following chapter.

8 Exclusion and ambiguity in the competing boundary narratives

8.1 Elements of exclusion

One of the tasks of this study was to analyze the exclusionary side of the boundary discourse. As was discussed in previous chapters, the difference between exclusionary and inclusionary nation building is that while the purpose of inclusionary nation building is to unify the whole population against an external ‘Other’, exclusionary nation building uses an internal ‘Other’ to unify only a certain part of the population (Marx 2002). In order to analyze the narratives from this point of view, one must see whether the narratives draw the boundary in a way that inevitably excludes a part of the population, and what kind of elements of exclusionary nation building there are to be found in those narratives. What reveals the exclusionary and inclusionary elements in the narratives are first of all the ways of drawing the boundary, the kind of roles given to ‘the Others’, the way the problem is framed and the kind of solutions suggested.

Only one of the three boundary narratives found in this research can be considered to advocate exclusionary forms of nation building. This is the russocentric narrative, which in the material is mostly advocated by local politicians, but also woven into the high level political discourse. In the following, I will argue what makes the russocentric narrative exclusive, how the elements of exclusion appear in the narrative and whether the use of exclusionary elements can be considered a conscious strategy of the Russian state.

The first sign of exclusionary nation building is that the russocentric narrative unifies only a part of the population of Russia – the culturally defined *Russkii* core nation. Already the fact that culture is considered the key membership criteria hints towards exclusionary nation building in a country whose population is quite multicultural. Moreover, the idea of a ‘core nation’ is explicitly visible in the russocentric narrative in the usage of terms like ‘state-forming’, ‘core’ and ‘cultural code’¹³⁰ when referring to *Russkie* and their culture. Considering Marx’ (2002, 107) definition of a nation – a group viewed as the legitimate owner of the state – the difference between the russocentric narrative and the other two narratives is clear. While the two others

¹³⁰ In original language: 'государствообразующий', 'ядро', 'культурный код'.

consider all *Rossiiskie* people as full members and legitimate owners of the state, in the russocentric narrative only *Russkie*, the ‘locals’ of Moscow and St. Petersburg, are the legitimate owners of those cities and the state as a whole. A confrontation is presented in the narrative between the ‘locals’ following the *Russkii* way of life and ‘the Others’ who fail to assimilate to this common ‘cultural code’ – suggesting that to belong one must assimilate to the culture of the core nation. Only *Russkie* are granted the right to define the unwritten cultural rules that everyone is to follow. Hence, the narrative fits Wimmer’s (2006, 337) description of exclusive nation building, where only full members of the nation – in this case, members of the *Russkii* core nation – are considered equal members of the society.

Second, the narrative emphasizes the function of boundaries as fences to limit the rights of ‘the Others’ to access ‘our’ space and live there according to their cultures. Newman (1998, 188–194) notes that boundaries can be both lines of separation or contact, meaning that they can function as bridges as well as fences. While the multinational narrative clearly views the boundaries as bridges encouraging interaction and cooperation across them and the civic narrative nearly ignores any ethnic boundaries, the russocentric narrative draws the boundary as a protecting fence separating the core nation from ‘the Others’. This is illustrated by the way ‘the Others’ are presented as a disturbance and a threat to the *Russkii* way of life and more control is demanded in order to limit their access to the the *Russkii* space. Only in the russocentric narrative are the internal boundaries of Russia used, as described by Jones (2010, 263), for creating an image of a homogenous core nation and the incompatible, suspicious cultures of the outside. This is done by emphasizing the immoral and disturbing role of ‘the Others’ in contrast to the ordinary “people of the city”:

«All these documents are intended to clarify to the guys from the Caucasus that they should not slaughter sheep in front of Apraksin dvor, dance lezginka [Caucasian folk dance] on the Manezhnaya Square, and fire in the air while driving on the Garden Ring, because, oddly enough, such behavior is not acceptable everywhere»¹³¹ (Lenta.ru 23.11.2010)

¹³¹ «Все эти документы призваны разъяснить ребятам с Кавказа, что не стоит резать баранов перед Апраксиным двором, танцевать лезгинку на Манежной площади и палить в воздух, катаясь по Садовому кольцу, потому что, как ни странно, не везде такое поведение считается приемлемым»

Third point in determining whether the narrative is an exclusionary one is to analyze how open is it for inclusion of new members. The nation of Russia has been described by Panov (2010, 93–94) as open for anyone who shares the *Russkii* culture, making citizenship an insufficient and even unnecessary criteria. The russocentric narrative seems to support this interpretation. Culture is the most emphasized membership criteria in the russocentric narrative, and the narrative encourages other ethnic groups to culturally assimilate in order to belong. Especially the high level discourse seems to emphasize the possibility of assuming a Russian cultural identity regardless of ethnicity:

«This kind of a civilizational identity is based on the dominance of Russkii culture, whose holders are not only ethnic Russians but also people who hold such identity regardless of nationality»¹³² (Putin 23.1.2012)

«-- such type of state-civilization, where there are no national minorities, but the principle of recognizing 'us' and 'Others' is based on common culture and common values»¹³³ (Putin 23.1.2012)

«We are sure, that this important requirement helps all residents of the capital with no exceptions to become Muscovites. That is members of a community, which is more than nationality, as different cultures are intertwined in it, which has its own Moscow way of life, own rules of behavior. Take a look at any newcomer, how he changes literally in around five years of life in the capital!»¹³⁴ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)

Still, whether assimilation is a route to full membership as an equal member of the society (Wimmer 2006, 337) and a legitimate owner of the state (Marx 2002, 107) can be questioned. Looking at the solutions offered by the russocentric narrative, the emphasis seems to be less on assimilating ‘the Others’ and more on limiting their access to the cities. Assimilation and even ethnic cleansing in the sense that the quantity of non-*Russkie* migrants should be reduced are the preferred tactics for dealing with diversity (Wimmer 2006, 338). Furthermore, especially in the

¹³² «Такая цивилизационная идентичность основана на сохранении русской культурной доминанты, носителем которой выступают не только этнические русские, но и все носители такой идентичности независимо от национальности»

¹³³ «-- такой тип государства-цивилизации, где нет “нацменов”, а принцип распознавания “свой-чужой” определяется общей культурой и общими ценностями»

¹³⁴ «Мы уверены, что это важное требование поможет всем жителям столицы без исключения стать москвичами. То есть членами общности, которая больше, чем национальность, поскольку в ней переплелись разные культуры, у которой есть свой московский стиль жизни, свои правила поведения. Посмотрите на любого приезжего, как он меняется буквально лет через пять жизни в столице!»

low level discourse it is not only the culture that separates ‘the Others’ from the core nation. Other kinds of ethnic markers are used occasionally, such as “dark faces” and “non-Russian speech”:

«-- you go out on the street – around dark faces and non-Russian speech»¹³⁵ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)

Similarly to Panov (2010), Shevel (2011) and Tolz (1998) mention in their research that culture and language seem to be the key ethnic criteria of membership in the Russian case. My results are in line with theirs. Almost all of the definitions of ‘the Other’ and markers of the boundary were based on culture, and *Russkii* cultural code was emphasized as the common uniting factor for the nation in the russocentric narrative. Especially the discussion around the Codex revolves around cultural factors – behavior, clothing and cultural traditions. Language was also mentioned several times, but compared to cultural factors, its importance was rarely emphasized as clearly as in this citation:

«The fundamental basis of the country’s unity is, undoubtedly, the Russian language, our official language, language of interethnic communication. It is the language that forms the common civil, cultural and educational space»¹³⁶ (Putin 19.2.2013)

Panov (2010, 93–94) describes the Russian situation as one in which the hierarchy between different groups within the nation is given and which does not allow social mobility for individual members. This means that there exists a core nation and ‘the Others’ who are lower in the hierarchy and can never become full members of the nation. Hence, ‘the Others’ – be it migrants or anyone representing a non-*Russkii* culture – remain permanently excluded despite living inside the state territory (Marx 2002, 104–107). Considering the exclusionary features of the russocentric narrative discussed above, the narrative seems to support Panov’s interpretations.

According to Wimmer (2006) the process of exclusion follows a pattern of recategorization of ethnic groups, establishing a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘the Others’ and maintenance of the

¹³⁵ «-- на улице выходишь – сплошь смуглые лица и нерусская речь»

¹³⁶ «Фундаментальной основой единства страны, безусловно, является русский язык, наш государственный язык, язык межнационального общения. Именно он формирует общее гражданское, культурное, образовательное пространство»

boundary. The russocentric narrative divides the sub-nations of Russia into two categories: the *Russkii* core nation and ‘the Others’. There is no distinction made between different groups of people ‘the Others’ may consist of – they are all lumped together in a group of ‘newcomers’ representing strange cultures. No attention is paid in the narrative to the fact that not all non-Russian migrants in Moscow and St. Petersburg share a similar culture, incompatible with the *Russkii* one; not all of them wear traditional outfits or engage in traditions that would disturb a member of the core nation; and not all of them come from the Russian Caucasus or Central Asia. Still, the image of ‘the Other’ is built based on these assumptions. ‘The Other’, as Harle (2000, 12–14) mentions, represents disorder in the russocentric narrative: they are described as shooting on the streets, wearing unusual clothes and slaughtering sheep on the street. Importantly, that perceived disorder brought by ‘the Others’ is used to argument for the need of a stronger boundary to separate them from ‘us’.

«There is no doubt that a big inflow of migrants is still awaiting Moscow. And this, while already up to half of the crimes in the city are committed by migrants. We must urgently correct the migration politics»¹³⁷ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 16.6.2010)

«'We don't need the thousand roubles, paid by guestworkers for the permission to work uncontrollably in Moscow!' – exclaims mayor Luzhkov, who from the beginning had a negative attitude towards the idea of giving migrants paid permissions for work»¹³⁸ (RIA Novosti 5.7.2010)

According to Marx (2002, 115), the group chosen to be excluded should be “present, visible and powerless to resist”. The group of internal migrants from the Caucasus and foreign migrants from Central Asia are unquestionably present and visible in the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Internal migrants are naturally in a better position to resist the exclusion than the foreign migrants, who often do not even have a permission to stay in the country legally. If the exclusion of the chosen group should not risk general stability within the state, as Marx (2002, 115) adds, we can assume that this is the case with the foreign migrants, but the exclusion of internal migrants may sooner or later pose that very risk.

¹³⁷ *«А уж в том, что Москву ждет еще больший наплыв приезжих, можно не сомневаться. И это при том, что уже сейчас до половины преступлений в городе совершается приезжими. Надо срочно корректировать федеральное миграционное законодательство»*

¹³⁸ *«Не нужна нам тысяча рублей, которые платят гастарбайтеры за патент, позволяющий им бесконтрольно работать в Москве!» - восклицает мэр Лужков, с самого начала негативно относившийся к идее выдачи мигрантам платных патентов на работу»*

The second step of Wimmer's process of exclusion is the establishment of a distinction between the core and 'the Others' (Wimmer 336). The russocentric narrative does this by emphasizing cultural incompatibility – according to the narrative, conflict is inevitable because of cultural differences that can only be overcome by assimilation of 'the Others'. The distinction is further strengthened by presenting 'the Others' as criminal, uncultured and ignorant towards local traditions. This is done by using the before mentioned examples of immoral acts of 'the Others': slaughtering sheep on the street, dressing improperly and firing guns to celebrate. The distinction is further established by referring to fundamental cultural differences:

«We live in Moscow within the frames of European Christian civilization, but a culture, for example of peoples of North Caucasus, remained clan-tribal, they live in their homelands in a patriarchal society»¹³⁹ (Rossiiskaya Gazeta 22.6.2010)

Marx (2002, 133) notes, that existing prejudices and presentation of the group's ties to some other enemies can be utilized to create a distinction. As can be seen in the examples above, the russocentric narrative makes use of existing prejudices of the Muslims of Russian Caucasus and Near Abroad by referring to such actions that are already associated with these groups and cause emotional reactions in the general public – such as the repetitive mentions of the slaughtering of sheep on city streets. The linkage to "other enemies" is formed by associating migrants with criminal groups:

«From a legal point of view, criminal groups based on ethnicity or clans, are in no way better than usual gangs. But in our conditions, ethnic crime is not only a criminal problem, but a problem of national safety. And it must be treated accordingly»¹⁴⁰ (Putin 23.1.2012)

In contrast to 'the Others', the *Russkii* core represents morality and order (Harle 2000, 12–14); they are implicitly assumed to not engage in such immoral acts that are associated with 'the Others' – after all, it is they who are given the mission of holding the multinational country together by providing the unifying cultural code.

¹³⁹ *«Мы живем в Москве все же в рамках европейской христианской цивилизации, а культура, к примеру народов Северного Кавказа, осталась кланово-племенной, они живут у себя на родине в патриархальном обществе»*

¹⁴⁰ *«С правовой точки зрения преступные группировки, построенные по национальному, клановому принципу, ничем не лучше обычных банд. Но в наших условиях этническая преступность является проблемой не только криминальной, но и проблемой государственной безопасности. И к ней надо соответствующим образом относиться»*

The third step – controlling the boundary – can be found in the solutions offered in the narrative. As Paasi (1998, 602) points out, boundaries should be looked for in social, political and cultural practices – in fact in anything, that defines or confirms the location or meaning of the boundary. The sources used in this study do not offer material for analyzing existing practices, but they do allow analysis of those practices *suggested* in the narratives. Marx (2002, 19) lists such ways of controlling the boundary as partial exclusion of legal rights, homogenization, expulsion and other ways of discrimination that are not legally encoded. The russocentric narrative resorts to all of these. In order to strengthen the control of the boundary, the russocentric narrative demands limiting the access to the two cities for those excluded. Since the narrative aims to do this by changes to the migration policies and their implementation, the means for controlling the boundary are partly legislative. Referring to Kolossov's (2005, 618) idea of boundaries limiting the rights of 'the Others' to 'our' space, it is clear that Moscow and St. Petersburg are defined as an exclusively *Russkii* space also in a more informal sense. It is the *Russkie* who define the content of the "unwritten rules", because it is they who are considered the legitimate owners of the state (Marx 2002, 107) and full members of the nation (Wimmer 2006, 337). Migrants, or anyone representing a non-*Russkii* culture, are not given such status and hence are expected assimilate to the unwritten rules based exclusively on *Russkii* culture.

But to what extent are these categorizations into the *Russkii* core nation and culturally incompatible 'Others' a result of conscious efforts? The categorization between 'us' and 'the Others' is of course based on some existing difference: the distinction between a local and a migrant, between *Russkii* culture and the cultures of those from Caucasus or Central Asia. The russocentric narrative claims, to use Newman's (2011, 33) words, that it is merely defending natural boundaries and reacting to an existing distinction, rather than creating any new boundaries. However, the boundaries between locals and migrants, or *Russkii* and non-*Russkii* culture are quite vague in a country where different ethnic groups have moved around and mixed for centuries. The russocentric narrative makes use of the existing distinctions and prejudices to draw the boundary much clearer and stronger than it was originally.

As was discussed before, exclusionary nation building does not seem to make much sense for a fragmented state like Russia. So why would local politicians and the high level political discourse lean towards such a dangerous narrative? Berg and Oras (2000) point out that

boundaries are constantly modified by a range of actors – not only the political leaders – to make them suitable for their contextual needs. Because of this dynamic the state is forced to modify its discourse in order to respond to challenges arising from the divisions and conflicts within the society (Marx 2002, 111–113). Therefore, it is important to remember that boundaries are not exclusively working in the interest of the state (Rumford 2011, 68). The russocentric narrative, although being woven into the high level political discourse, is coming most pronouncedly from the local politicians. The motivation of local politicians to advocate such an exclusionary narrative may be simply personal branding and media attention, or turning away the attention of voters from more crucial local problems, as is suggested by this disillusioned citation:

«But all this [requires] money, effort and strain. [It is] much easier and demonstrative to prohibit something and fire someone»¹⁴¹ (RIA Novosti 5.7.2010)

Explaining more thoroughly the use of exclusionary elements in the high level political discourse, I believe, requires a deeper look into the ambiguity of the boundary discourse.

8.2 Ambiguity in the Russian boundary discourse

Ambiguity was discussed earlier in this study by referring to Shevel (2011), who claims that the Russian state is purposefully keeping the boundaries of the nation unclear in order to allow itself more flexibility in its policies regarding the compatriots. My results add a new dimension to those of Shevel by suggesting that the ambiguity that Shevel noted is also present in the discourse concerning internal boundaries of Russia.

During the analysis of my material, it became clear that narrators from both low and high level mix together civic and ethnic elements and elements from different narratives. However, it is possible to recognize which narratives are emphasized by different narrators. The russocentric narrative is most visible in the discourse of the local politicians and the multinational narrative in the discourse of the journalists critical towards the russocentric narrative. The civic narrative is most pronouncedly present in the high level political discourse, confirming what Tishkov (2009) says about the civic narrative coming from above. Despite differences in emphasis, different

¹⁴¹ «Но все это – деньги, усилия и напряжение. Намного проще и нагляднее что-нибудь запретить и кого-нибудь уволить»

narratives are mixed by all of the actors, supporting Shevel's findings that the Russian nation building discourse in fact is ambiguous. This is underlined by the fact that especially the high level political discourse seems eager to use elements from all three narratives. This tendency of the Russian state to mix civic and ethnic elements is also noted by both Panov (2010) and Tishkov (2009). The same contradictory approach is noticeable in the simultaneous acknowledgement of a supra-nation of the Russian Federation and sub-nations within it. This is most visible in the multinational narrative, and it is important to notice that the same contradiction is very much present in the high level political discourse. Only the civic narrative ignores the idea of nations within a nation, concentrating only on the civic supra-nation comprising all citizens of the Russian Federation.

Based on the tendency of the high level political discourse to mix all three narratives and leave contradictions in the definition of what is meant by a nation, it can be concluded that my research supports Shevel's argument that the state is purposefully keeping the definition of the nation and its boundaries fuzzy. Yet, the question left to be answered is why; why would the state choose to engage in such confusing policy, which, in the worst case, might risk the integrity of the state?

What may help answer the question above is the fact that very similar narratives emerged from the high and low levels of the boundary discourse. According to Kolossov (2005, 624–625), the discourses at these different levels never completely fit together, but the state should attempt to make them match as well as possible to legitimate its own nation building project. Since similar narratives were found on both levels, it can be assumed that the Russian government has, at least to some degree, succeeded in this. Taking another perspective, it is possible to ask to what extent the Russian media is influenced by the high level discourse and actually taking the narratives from above. It is probable that the influence goes both ways, as different actors – both from the high and low levels – participate in the creation of the narratives and, through these narratives, take part in the drawing of the internal boundaries. However, it is crucial to notice that the state seems to have succeeded in matching the high and low levels not by lobbying for one dominant narrative, but by creating a high level discourse that mixes elements from all of the three competing narratives. An example illustrating how the narratives are mixed by the narrators is given by Putin, who weaves together civic and russocentric narratives in a single sentence:

“Our legislation should be understandable and comfortable for respectable citizens, including newcomers to Russia, and tough towards those who ignore our laws, cultural, behavioral norms”¹⁴² (Putin 9.6.2012)

Although the citation combines statements representing two completely different narratives in terms of understanding what the nation and its key problems are, Putin manages to present them in such way that they do not seem to contradict each other.¹⁴³ In the case of Putin’s article it can be assumed that its role as part of an election campaign may be the reason for it appearing like a collection of all possible points of view – from which each voter can find something to relate to. But the same mixing of discourses continues in his speeches to the Council of Interethnic Relations and the final strategy document.

This choice of approach might be explained by the fact that the high and low level discourses were very different to begin with. For example Tishkov (2009, 40–49) claims that in Russia nation is widely understood as an ethnic community, despite the fact that among the Russian elites civic nationalism has long been the dominating idea. According to him, this is the main obstacle to the development of a civic nation and the reason why the elite prefers to talk about “peoples of Russia” instead of fellow citizens. The ethnofederal structure of Russia and Soviet Union has institutionalized the idea of ethnic groups as nations within the nation, and the fear of losing that status can be one reason why the civic narrative does not seem to appeal to the people of Russia. Tishkov’s interpretation is supported by my study, because the civic narrative is most clearly visible in the high level discourse – especially the final strategy document, in which structural problems are often emphasized as the reason for conflict and the solutions are aimed at solving these issues.

The need to legitimize the nation building project by acknowledging the ethnic ideas of the nation held by citizens at least partly explains the confusing mix of ethnic sub-nations and civic supra-nation in the narratives. As Shevel (2011, 181) mentions, a civic narrative preferred by the

¹⁴² *«Наше законодательство должно быть понятно и комфортно добропорядочным гражданам, в том числе приезжающим в Россию, и жестким по отношению к тем, кто игнорирует наши законы, культурные, поведенческие нормы»*

¹⁴³ Taking a closer look at this particular citation one cannot fail to notice the russocentric undertones: that a “respectable citizen” behaves according to ‘our’ cultural norms.

elites may be difficult to sell to the public for whom ethnic definitions of the nation are more familiar, making this one possible reason for the ambiguity of the boundary discourse. Leaning towards ethnic understandings of a nation, in the form of multiethnic and russocentric narratives, then appears as a way to gain legitimacy for the nation building project of the state. Yet, this does not seem an adequate reason for the state to risk playing with the exclusionary elements of the russocentric narrative, considering their obvious dividing nature. Marx (2002, 111) provides further explanation by noting that political leaders are sometimes encouraged to engage in exclusionary nation building by pressures from a divided society. Often, the purpose is to turn away attention from other kind of divisions within the state. Seen from this perspective, the russocentric narrative appears as an instrument for directing public attention and maintaining stability and loyalty towards the state within the core nation.

Based on my results, it can be claimed that the use of ambiguity in the high level boundary discourse in the context of internal boundaries of Russia has a more important purpose underlying those mentioned above: maintaining stability within the state borders. Taking a closer look at the narratives, one notices that each of them addresses a different problem faced by the Russian state. The russocentric narrative takes up the problems related to migration; the multinational narrative the problem of ethnic tensions and maintaining internal stability; and the civic narrative those structural problems that complicate the lives of all citizens. All of these are existing problems that the state must tackle, but none of the narratives is alone able to resolve all of them. Lobbying for one narrative only might risk internal stability and the legitimacy of the nation building project, because the citizens are divided in their interests and hence prefer and are accustomed to different narratives. In the eyes of the ethnic sub-nations of Russia, discarding the multinational narrative would present a threat to those privileges that they possess as a 'nation within a nation'; forgetting the russocentric narrative would cause dismay among those Russians who feel threatened by the downsides of the increasing migration; and leaving out the civic narrative would make it seem like the state refuses to recognize the obvious structural issues plaguing the state as a whole.

Ensuring unity and stability of the state is, according to Marx (2002, 111–113), always the ultimate priority of the state, even if pressures from the society may sometimes lead the state to resort to exclusionary measures. This ultimate goal of stability explains why the high level

discourse mixes elements of different narratives in order to offer something for everyone. Each of the narratives strives for stability in a certain section of the society. Another sign of this underlying pursuit of stability is that, despite their differences, all of the narratives accommodate, in their own way, an element of a shared supra-nation: the russocentric narrative by creating a hierarchy of a core nation and ‘the Others’, and the multinational narrative by joining the sub-nations into one multinational team. For the civic narrative, the supra-nation is all that there is. Although the special status of *Russkie* is emphasized in the high level discourse, the elite attempts not to lean too much into such exclusionary rhetoric, but to balance it by mixing the narratives – by talking about the historical multinationality of Russia and emphasizing the underlying structural issues as a source of ethnic conflict. Ambiguity, in fact, may not be only a means for the state to reserve itself flexibility in order to run contradicting policies, as has been suggested by Shevel (2011). Perhaps a more important underlying purpose for the ambiguous boundary discourse is to guarantee a relevant internal stability, while at the same time reacting to the crucial problems and divisions within the society.

9 Conclusions

Nation building has traditionally been understood as a process of unifying a community against an external ‘Other’, thereby creating a boundary as an outer limit of the nation. In this study, boundaries of the Russian nation were studied from the more unconventional perspective of exclusionary nation building – as internal boundaries dividing the nation into ‘full members’ or ‘legitimate owners’ of the state and ‘the Others within’. Three competing narratives about the internal boundaries of Russia were constructed by the researcher based on the material gathered around two political projects: the Codex Initiative and the Strategy of National Politics. The Codex Initiative was an attempt to create rules of behaviour for residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg, while the purpose of the Strategy of National Politics is to manage the diversity within the Russian Federation. Both were essentially processes of defining the location and nature of internal boundaries, which made them useful cases for this research. My material consisted of 29 articles discussing the Codex Initiative, collected from eight Russian online media publications; a pre-election article and three speeches held by Vladimir Putin in the meetings of the Council preparing the Strategy; and the Strategy of National Politics itself. The resulting narratives were further analyzed using the tools provided by my theoretical framework, which combined constructivist theories of border studies and nation building, making use of theories of exclusionary nation building and the concept of ‘the Other’.

The purpose of the study was to construct and compare competing boundary narratives in order to sketch the directions towards which the use of internal boundaries for the purposes of nation building in Russia may be developing and what it may mean to the relations between ‘us’ and ‘the Others within’. My main research problem was to find out, *what kind of competing narratives about the internal boundaries within the Russian Federation can be found in the boundary discourse emerging around the two chosen political projects?* The narratives were further analyzed to answer two more research questions: *Are there elements of exclusionary nation building visible in the narratives? Do the results support the claim that Russian nation building is purposefully ambiguous?* In the following, I will draw conclusions from my results in order to formulate answers to the research questions set above.

As a result of my research, three competing boundary narratives were constructed based on the material. I named these the russocentric, multinational and civic narrative. The narratives differ in their presentations of the nation, the ways of drawing the boundary and the roles given to ‘the Others’. They also differ in their understandings of what the problem involving the internal boundaries is and what should be done to solve it. The russocentric narrative draws the boundary between the *Russkii* core nation and ‘the Others’, declaring culturally defined *Russkii* people as the ‘legitimate owners of the state’ (Marx 2002, 107). The multinational narrative emphasizes the nature of Russia as a collection of ethnic sub-nations, thereby confirming the existence of such ‘natural’ boundaries within the Russian Federation. These two narratives rely on primordial and ethnic ways of understanding the nation, but differ in the ways the boundary is perceived. For the russocentric narrative the boundary is a fence protecting ‘our’ culture, leading the narrative to suggest tighter control of migration in order to strengthen the boundary. Meanwhile, the multinational narrative sees the boundary as a bridge enabling interaction between the sides, and suggests harmonization of ethnic relations as a solution. The civic narrative, instead, turns its attention to the internal boundaries based on structural and regional inequality, and claims that those are the true source of ethnic conflict. The goal of the civic narrative is to remove those internal boundaries of inequality.

The russocentric narrative thus turned out to be the only one of the three advocating an exclusionary model of nation building. This narrative unifies only the *Russkii* core nation against an internal ‘Other’, and considers only those belonging to the *Russkii* cultural group as “full members of the nation” (Wimmer 2006, 338) and “legitimate owners of the state” (Marx 2002, 107). This leads to a hierarchy similar to that described by Panov (2010), who found that the Russian nation consists of a ‘core nation’ and those who are never accepted as full members. Such ‘Others within’ are, as Marx (2002, 104–107) says, deemed to remain permanently excluded from the imagined nation but inside the state territory. The russocentric narrative is in line with Panov’s finding that in the case of the Russian nation, culture is a more important criterion of membership than citizenship. In contrast, the civic and multinational narratives are inclusive in nature and thus question the validity of Panov’s interpretation. They aim to find solutions for unifying all of the people of Russia: the multinational narrative into a “team” of cooperating sub-nations and the civic narrative into one civic nation of equal citizens. In these

narratives, culture is not a key criteria of belonging, hence showing that there are also opposing tendencies in the Russian boundary discussion, which place more emphasis on citizenship as membership criteria.

My results add a new dimension to Shevel's (2011) conclusion that the discourse around the question of the boundaries of the Russian nation is an ambiguous one. My findings show that the discourse about the internal boundaries of Russia is plagued by a similar ambiguity as the one detected by Shevel (2011) regarding the question of compatriots abroad. It turns out that the boundaries of the Russian nation are not ambiguous only beyond state borders, but also within them. The ambiguous nature of the discourse is revealed by the way elements of all three boundary narratives are mixed by both high and low level narrators. The underlying goal of the use of ambiguity seems to be, perhaps surprisingly, internal stability. From the point of view of the state, each of the narratives aims for stability in a certain section of the society: the multinational narrative plays down ethnic tensions; the russocentric narrative unifies the *Russkii* population and turns their attention away from other divisions in the society; and the civic narrative proves that the state is doing something to those structural problems the citizens have to struggle with in their everyday lives. Ambiguity, therefore, becomes a way to guarantee internal stability in a divided society. Perhaps a complicated problem, such as the one about the internal boundaries of Russia, inevitably requires an ambiguous discourse, because a single narrative is unable to take into account the different sides of the problematique.

While pointing out the ambiguity in the boundary discourse of Russian policymakers, it is important to keep in mind that all states apply both civic and ethnic elements in their nation building (see f.ex. Panov 2010, 93; Smith 2000, 18–19). Therefore one should not overanalyze this tendency in the Russian case. However, it is possible to ask whether such extensive mixing of narratives and usage of exclusionary elements is a sustainable solution for creating stability. It does, as Shevel (2011) points out, allow the state flexibility, but at the same time it may feed confusion and provide the space needed for another actor to enforce a dominant narrative – and that other actor may care less about inclusionary and civic forms of nation building than does the government.

The most dangerous alternative from the point of view of internal stability would be the russocentric narrative becoming dominant, because such exclusionary ideas are likely to strengthen the internal boundaries and spark conflict. Such development would be in strong opposition to Kolossov's (2005, 615–616) suggestion that in the Russian case, to avoid disintegration, a single political nation and identity common to the whole population should be created, independent of ethnicity and region. It is also crucial to note what Kuzio (2001, 137–138) says: that sheer rhetoric is enough to create a perception of state-led oppressive homogenization. This means that even if no actual oppressive policies took place, strengthening of the russocentric narrative may be enough to cause negative consequences. As narratives are used by people to comprehend their reality, they are likely to, as Tolz (1998a, 993) warns, eventually become reflected in actual policies and even the location of physical state borders.

Yet, the results of the research give reason to believe that the use of internal boundaries in Russian nation building can also develop into a more inclusionary direction. This can be the direction of enforcing the solidarity and team spirit between the sub-nations of Russia as envisioned in the multinational narrative, or striving for the removal of internal boundaries caused by inequality, as the civic narrative suggests. It is important to note that these inclusionary narratives are not exclusively coming from the media – they are also embedded in the high level discourse. Since the civic narrative is most clearly visible at the high level, my results somewhat support what Tishkov (2009, 49) claims about civic ideas of the Russian nation coming from the elite – although my results show that in addition to the civic narrative the elite simultaneously makes use of exclusionary and multinational elements in its discourse. If the ultimate goal of every state is to ensure stability (Marx 2002, 111–113), the state should have all the reason to genuinely support such inclusionary modes to avoid the dangers involved in exclusionary nation building.

The research at hand contributes to the study of boundaries by revealing the boundary narratives underlying the Russian discourse about internal boundaries. In this way, it sheds more light to the less researched perspective of internal boundaries. The fact that three distinct but intertwined boundary narratives were found in this research is a sign of the continuous and contradictive process of redrawing boundaries, and shows that the internal boundaries of a nation may not be any clearer than the outer ones. My results suggest that the ambiguity of internal boundaries may

in some cases even be used to maintain stability, at least in the short term. My findings are important for the study of International Relations because they draw attention to the importance of understanding the contradictions and different sides of the boundary discourse in the context of nation building, making way for a more multi-faceted approach in the study of nation building and boundaries. The way internal boundaries are constructed is inevitably linked also to the way the boundaries of the nation are perceived beyond the state borders, thus potentially affecting the relations with neighboring states and even the physical state borders.

As my results describe the particular case of Russia, they cannot be directly generalized to those of other countries. However, a comparative study analyzing boundary narratives in the context of other states might reveal a similar tendency to ambiguity. Especially studies that aim to explain the use of ambiguity in boundary discourse on a more general level would be a welcome continuation to my research. One possible task for future studies could be to look deeper into the exclusionary and inclusionary sides of nation building in Russia and elsewhere by approaching them from the two levels of analysis suggested by Marx (2002, 108): where and how the process of exclusion takes place and – perhaps more interestingly – what the factors and motivations behind it are. This kind of research could help us better understand *why* the boundary discourse is kept so ambiguous and how such policy affects people's lives in reality. Another direction for future studies could be to widen the scope to include the obvious spatial dimensions of the problematique of inclusion and exclusion within the Russian Federation. Although my study concentrated on symbolic boundaries, it became clear that those boundaries also have a spatial dimension. In the narratives, the spatial dimension becomes visible in the way the civic narrative refers to regional inequalities, and the russocentric narrative makes a spatial division within the state to regions that belong to 'us' and those that belong to 'the Others'. For example Newman (2003, 128–134) believes that symbolic and spatial approaches should be combined to research boundaries more comprehensively, but so far, there is no proper theoretical framework linking them together.

The Ukraine crisis has brought the question of the boundaries of the Russian nation back into the public discussion in Russia. Due to the crisis, the process of redefining the symbolic boundaries of the Russian nation and the effects of such redefinitions on physical state borders can, at the time of writing this thesis, be observed in the redrawing of both symbolic and physical

boundaries on Krim and in the minds of the Russian people. As we see from these current events, boundaries are never static – they are constantly pushed to different directions by various actors participating in the boundary discourse and in the performances of the boundary. In the case of Russia, the question of boundaries may be more topical now than it has been for a long time. The purpose of my study was to sketch the directions towards which the use of internal boundaries may be developing in Russia, and what it may mean to the relations between ‘us’ and ‘the Others within’. My results point into two directions: an inclusive society that aims for equality regardless of ethnic boundaries, or a divided society that feeds ethnic conflict between the *Russkii* core and the internal ‘Others’. The effects of these discourses are not merely theoretical, but concretely affect the lives of those involved – both the ‘Others within’ and those considering themselves as full members of the nation. Therefore, I hope for the previous scenario.

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