

**“All for one, one for all”: Strategies of nativist dissent under
Putin**

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Paper presented at the ASN Convention

Columbia University, 5-8 May 2021

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Abstract

In the critical period for opposition movements from 2004 to 2012, when there was still some open space for political dissidence in Russia, some nativist social movements critical of the government managed to survive longer than others. This article presents the strategies through which nativist opposition organizations manage to create mobilization and survival advantages in hybrid regimes. It argues that Russian nativists entered into a noncompetitive informal coalition by deliberately adopting flexible organizational structures and by coordinating their mobilization and framing strategies in order to both support each other and to keep their distinctive profiles. As a result, they gained mobilization and survival advantages vis-à-vis their competitors. Russian nativists became, thus, the first studied nativist movement organizations to undertake such a division of labour worldwide.

1. Paradoxes of the nativist opposition in Russia

The international community has understood by now how the Kremlin deals with its contesters; EU and US imposed recently sanctions on Russia over Alexei Navalny's poisoning (Herszenhorn and Bertrand 2021). This is, however, only the tip of the iceberg. Russia's political system has been shifting towards authoritarianism since Vladimir Putin's rise in power. In fact, the years from 2004 to 2012 were critical for Russia's civil society; state repression against civil liberties and political opposition was increasing, but had not yet reached its peak, still leaving some political space open for dissidence. In 2005, the Kremlin unfolded the "preventive counter-revolution" (Horvath 2013) with the creation of "state orchestrated" top-down organizations (Gabowitsch 2018, 297) or "ersatz" movements (Robertson 2011a, 194, 2009b, 542) that would stand up against the critical of the government grassroots organizations. At the same time, the authorities were positively discriminating pro-regime civil society organizations, while repeatedly detaining and harassing independent opposition activists preventively in their effort to block unwanted protest (Robertson 2009b, 537, 540).

Vladimir Putin's administration championed, thus, the "repertoires of repressive techniques" (Robertson 2009a, 531). However, some Russian nativist social movement organizations¹ not only managed to survive in such a hostile environment; they also played a prominent role during the 2011-2013 protest wave that shook the country in its demand for free and fair elections. In this period, nativists established themselves as one of the major opposition forces together with the liberals² and have played a crucial role

¹ The term nativist social movement refers to the multifaceted group of political organisations in Russia, the ideologies and organisational features of which vary considerably. It encompasses loose groups, social movement organizations, and parties, some of which support democratic representation, such as the National-Democrats, while others directly oppose it, such as far-right groups. Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) are "informal or formal organizations that explicitly pursue political and social change" that play a key role in sustaining movements and producing outcomes (Staggenborg 1996, 144). 'Far right' political organizations place nationalism at the core of their ideology, while some of them display anti-immigration, authoritarian and anti-establishment populist features (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015; Mudde 2010). The core ideological feature of all these organizations is nativism, a form of prejudice that sees foreigners as a threat to both the socio-economic status and cultural way of life of the native population.

² In the 2000s, the main organizations that made up the democratic opposition were the Coordinating Council of the Opposition, RPR-Parnas and Aleksei Navalny's Progress Party, later

in the opposition's ability to challenge Vladimir Putin. This makes them, thus, a potential force of change of their broader political environment, since "patterns of contention affect how regimes develop too" (Robertson 2011a, 4).

Additionally, the Russian government has echoed the voice of nativists on various occasions. In the first half of the 2010s, the Russian political elite has reacted to the DPNI's major mobilization events by changing its discourse and adopting more restrictive rules on immigration (Tipaldou and Uba 2014). In the 2011-2012 protests, when nativists joined liberals to articulate the major anti-government narrative, the Kremlin responded with a series of laws to promote "traditional values", a fight against alcoholism, respect for the elderly and hierarchy (Laruelle 2019, 135). After Crimea, Russia's political elite and state television showed support for both ethnic nationalism and territorial irredentism and especially for the nativist-produced myth around the concept of "Novorossiia" that legitimized the insurgency (Horvath, (Laruelle 2016, 56; Horvath 2015, 819). Finally, the Russian government has intended to mobilize the support of nationalists regarding its war in Eastern Ukraine through renowned nationalist and vice-premier for Defense and Space Industry at the time Dmitrii Rogozin (Horvath 2015, 832).

We encounter, thus, the following puzzle regarding the Russian extra-parliamentarian nativist movements: The Russian government has been "tapping into" and "draining" societal nationalism to construct its own patriotic ideology (Kolstø and Blakkisrud 2018, 8). At the same time, the government has created its own patriotic *ersatz* movements, such as *Nashi* (Ours) and Moving Together (*Idushchie Vmeste*) (Greene 2014; Horvath 2011, 7), and has co-opted influential nationalist opposition politicians from the 1990s and early 2000s, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and Dmitri Rogozin; the former has been serving as puppet opposition leader, while the latter has held key positions in the country's defence and cosmonautics industry. Why is it then that some nativist social movements critical of the government manage to survive longer than others? This begs the broader question: Through which strategies do nativist opposition organizations manage to create mobilization and survival advantages in hybrid regimes?

From a sociological point of view, survival is one of the possible outcomes of challengers and has to do with their viability (Cormier 2004). Whether or not the movement sees its goals fulfilled is another issue related to success; successful organizations can disband and redefine their goals (Zald and Ash 1966). This article considers survival as a success criterion and adopts the view that a group has "survival advantages" when the actions that it takes facilitate the acquisition of resources when compared to other similar groups. The acquisition of resources in turn improves a group's legitimacy "and thereby its bargaining position and continued activity" (Minkoff 1993, 888). Similarly, the term "mobilization advantages" is used here to refer to new opportunities for public action, through which groups spread their message and exercise pressure to the government.

Despite the abundance of recent scholarly work on the topic of Russian nationalism (Laruelle 2015a, b; Horvath 2015, 2011, 2013; Kolstø and Blakkisrud 2018, 2016) and the far right (Arnold and Markowitz 2018; Arnold 2016; Mareš, Laryš, and Holzer 2018; Horvath 2014, 2021; Varga 2019; Tipaldou 2018), little has been written on the reasons

transformed into Russia of the Future (Gel'Man 2005, 236-241, 2015, 179-183; McFaul 1998; Colton 1998).

why nationalism from below has remained resilient. The study of social movements and civil society in Russia is dominated by elite-centred approaches (McFaul and Treyger 2004; Greene 2014; Robertson 2011b). Scholars of Russian nationalism have written about how the Kremlin deploys the tactic of “managed nationalism” in order both to tame and to harness extremist and xenophobic forces and to gain hegemony over the various ways in which the concept of nationalism is applied (Laine 2015; Horvath 2014). Kolstø and Blakkisrud (2018, 8) argue that when the state does not need to use nationalism to legitimize its choices, it allows “autonomous nationalists” to operate, because they function as a “safety valve for social frustration”. In times of “official nationalist ferment”, however, the state crushes autonomous nationalists to avoid competition.

Additionally, the study of Russian nationalism is predominantly conducted through the prism of “Russian exceptionalism” that deprives it of the possibility to analyse comparatively nationalism in Russia with Western and Central Europe and the US (Laruelle 2019, 6). The scarce studies that research Russian nationalism from a social movement perspective include those by Mikhail Sokolov (2008), Mihai Varga (2008), Hilary Pilkington (2010), Hilary Pilkington *et al.* (2010), Dennis Zuev (2010, 2011; 2013), Pål Kolstø (2016), and Tipaldou and Uba (2014, 2019). However, none of these works researches the strategy of nationalist and far-right organizations, and in particular coalition-building, despite the centrality of strategy for movement outcomes (McCammon 2012; Nikolayenko 2013).

This article puts four Russian nativist organizations in comparative perspective through the lenses of social movement theory. The research is based on a small-N comparative design of four influential nativist organizations of the 2000s within their real-life context; the Russian Social Movement (the ROD), the Movement Against Illegal Immigration (the DPNI) that in 2011 was banned and reorganized as an umbrella organization called *Russkie* (Russians), the National Socialist Initiative (the NSI), and the Russian All-National Movement (the RONS), the oldest of the organizations under study. The organizations were chosen on the basis of their popularity, disparity in ideological orientation (each organization represents a different branch of contemporary Russian nationalism) and on the information the author obtained from extensive fieldwork in Russia. I applied content, textual and visual analysis drawing on original data generated by semi-structured interviews by nativist leaders and experts on Russian nationalism; on indigenously generated documents by nativist organizations, such as manifestos, flyers, banners, and photos from public events; on nativist leaders’ blogs and interviews in the media; on articles in nativist outlets; and on data from the Moscow-based watchdog on nationalism, racism and radicalism SOVA Center.

The article’s argument is that some nativist organizations made a compromise around the second half of the 2000s as a response to the increasing state repression: they decided to enter an informal coalition that would help them increase their prospects for survival. In practical terms, this meant that these organizations deliberately adopted flexible organizational structures and started to coordinate their mobilization and framing strategies in order to both support each other and to keep their distinctive profiles. The Russian nativists managed to do this by each promoting their own particular issue and frame specialization, a tactic that enabled each organization to appeal to a different audience within the broader nationalist *milieu*. Through this division of labour, Russian nativist movement organizations have managed to turn the collaboration model that drives their interorganizational relationship from competitive (when organizations

compete for the same base of support) into noncompetitive (when organizations appeal to different audiences) (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 157-159). As a result, they gained mobilization and survival advantages vis-à-vis their competitors. Russian nativists became, thus, the first studied nativist movement organizations to undertake such a division of labour worldwide.

By researching the strategies of the nationalist movement in Russia, this article makes a triple contribution: first, to social movement literature, by unravelling the origins of social movement actions, especially with groups that are difficult to access; second, to the scholarship of illiberal regimes, by showing how the regime type shapes the strategies of opposition movements; and third, to studies on far-right organizations, by broadening the scope of existing research with the case study of Russia.

The article proceeds as follows. In section 2, it presents existing research conducted in the field of Russian nationalism and identifies the gap in existing research related to the study of movement strategies of nativist organizations. It then provides the theoretical framework developed in the field of sociology for the study of coalitional dynamics as movement strategies, relates it to case of Russian nativist organizations and provides the theoretical model that underpins the study. Section 3 presents empirical data that show the strategies that nativist organizations followed in Russia in order to turn competitive cooperation into noncompetitive cooperation once in a coalition with like-minded organizations and to enjoy, thus, survival and mobilization advantages. The paper concludes by pointing to the particularity of Russian nativists vis-à-vis their Western counterparts, and singling out two promising areas of further research on nativism in hybrid regimes.

2. Coalitional dynamics of Russian nativists

Theories on coalitional dynamics developed by social movement scholars can shed light to this paradox. Coalitions can be defined as “organizations of social movements organizations (SMOs) and/or networks that animate social movements and collective action more generally” and are located somewhere between the more stable social movement organizations and the looser, more permeable social movement (Brooker and Meyer 2019, 253).³ Coalitions occur when “distinct activist groups mutually agree to cooperate and work together toward a common goal” (McCammon and Moon 2015). Coalitions can take any form from a simple partnership between two movement groups to a complex network of a variety of organizations. The links between or among organizations are usually informal, but there also exist more formal coalition arrangements, such as the creation of umbrella organizations with their own staff and resources. A coalition’s goals can range from a single project to a more long-lasting alliance, in which members collaborate on multiple activities (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010, xiv-xv).

Coalitions have proved to be particularly effective in achieving the aims of protestors. By coordinating actions and promoting joint campaigns, organizations increase the resources

³ Social movement organizations are more coherent and purposeful as structures and are characterized, thus, by relative stability, while social movements are more volatile and, thus, temporal (Brooker and Meyer 2019, 253).

available to them and can enjoy many advantages. In particular, coalitions help disseminate their interpretation of social change over multiple constituencies, facilitate the diffusion of protest and increase, thus, the visibility of the movement. Coalitions also help organizations mobilize a wider range of people, expand their tactics, promote innovation and facilitate the diffusion of protest. Actions can be easier escalated by distributing the effects of one group's activities to all of them. As a result, the chances of success of the protest are increased and so is the relevance of the coalitions' central themes in the political agenda, while entry into a greater number of institutional niches is facilitated. Coalitions can also maximize the adaptability of the movements, reduce the negative effect of failures and help organizations deal easier with emergencies and threats coming from their environment (Brooker and Meyer 2019, 257; Laumann and Knoke 1987; Knoke 1990; Gerlach 1971).

However, cooperation among social movement organizations can have two faces; it can be competitive when organizations compete for the same constituency or noncompetitive when they do not. In the case of "competitive cooperation" organizations develop joint initiatives, "based on compatible definitions of the issues and some degree of identity but at the same time they find themselves facing stiff mutual competition for the same support base, and for similar sectors of public opinion whose interests they wish to represent" (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 159). Alternatively, when organizations have sufficient common interests to activate joint mobilization, but appeal to different audiences, organizations enter "noncompetitive cooperation". During this situation, organizations undergo intense exchanges with each other, but maintain different constituencies (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 158).

Forming or entering a coalition in order to gain specific advantages can be seen as outcome of "strategic adaptation" (McCammon 2012, 18) or "tactical activism" (Shaw 2013). Strategic adaptation is a four step mechanism. First, the movement organization perceives signals, opportunities, or threats from its environment. Once perceived, the organization engages in self-evaluation to determine whether tactics need to be adapted. The third step is that the movement organization decides to change its tactics and to adapt to the changed environment. The final step is the implementation of changed tactics. This process shapes the outcomes of social movements. Every step is a strategic choice that is taken under constraints internal and external to the movement, and that stresses the interplay between structure and agency in the understanding of its outcomes (McCammon 2012, 19).

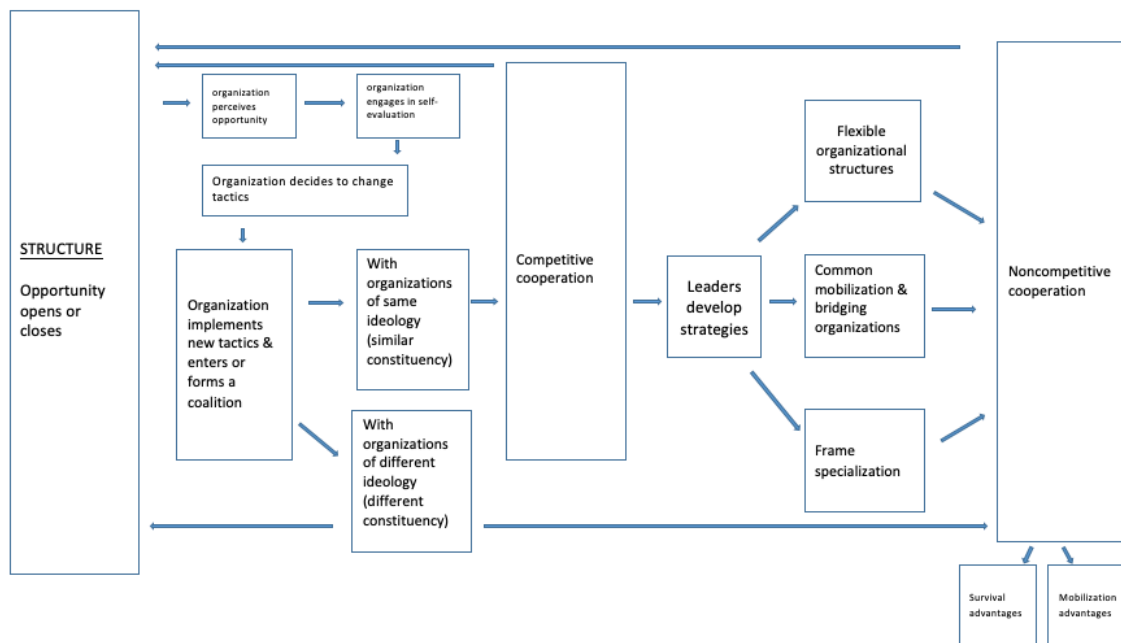
Threats are key to coalition formation. McCammon and Van Dyke (2010, 305) find in their meta-analysis of the literature that threats – together with ideology – play a pivotal role in coalition formation (see also Bevacqua 2001). Research has shown that resource-poor pro-choice groups collaborate when changes in policy severely threaten the movement's goals (Staggenborg 1986). Scholars have also researched how the interplay of threats with ideology (Maney 2000; Grossman 2001), political opportunities (Stearns Brewster and Almeida 2004; Bandy and Smith 2005; Reese 2005; Meyer and Corrigan-Brown 2005; Obach 2010), social ties (Sonenshein 1989), and availability of resources (Hathaway and Meyer 1993) facilitates coalition building.

Coalitions and, more general, alliances provide resources and political opportunities for protest groups and increase their chances of success (Laumann and Knoke 1987, 387; Knoke 1990, 208). Studies on coalitions tend to focus on left-oriented social groups

(Reese, Petit, and Meyer 2010; McCammon and Campbell 2002; Reger 2002; Van Dyke 2003) and on ethnic groups (Okamoto 2010; Eisinger 1976; Meier and Steward 1991; Regalado 1995; Sonenshein 1993; Raphael 1989) and has not paid attention “to movements of the right, including contemporary populist mobilizations” (Brooker and Meyer 2019, 263). Research on far-right organizations concentrates on how political threats have inspired mobilization among reactive social movements, such as the militia or white power movements (McVeigh 1999, 2009; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). Furthermore, existing studies tend to consider threats as unusual circumstances that may mitigate their ideological differences and prompt them to collaborate (Staggenborg 1986).

In Russia, the threat in the political environment can be considered constant. Additionally, there is intra-movement competition and both conditions of cooperation and competition coexist. Figure 1 shows the coalitional dynamics of nativist groups. It presents the steps that nativist organizations in Russia followed for obtaining survival advantages by turning competitive cooperation into noncompetitive cooperation.

Figure 1: Coalitional dynamics of Russian nativist opposition organizations.



The opening or closing of a political or discursive opportunity triggers a chain reaction: the organization needs to perceive the opportunity first and, if this happens, then the organization engages in self-evaluation and takes the decision to change its tactics and to engage in a coalition. If the organization decides to implement the new tactics, it will enter into an existing coalition or form a new coalition either with organizations of different ideology or with like-minded organizations. In the former case, if organizations have different ideology, they are less likely to compete over the same constituencies. In the latter, if the organization enters into a coalition with organizations of the same ideology, it will probably enter a competitive cooperation. However, the regime of competitive cooperation can be overturned if leaders develop some or all of the following three survival strategies: frame specialization, common mobilization and the creation of bridging organizations. These strategies can lead into a noncompetitive cooperation, where they no longer compete for the same constituency because every organization specializes in a different area.

Noncompetitive cooperation offers nativist movements survival and mobilization advantages. When these movements join forces and share their resources they partially overcome their minimal resources. It, thus, becomes easier for them to mobilize; to spread their message to a wider audience through their combined social networks; and to survive as organizations, because if the government bans one organization, the others continue with the public actions until the organization reshuffles, and if one leader gets arrested, leaders from other organizations will take over. Noncompetitive cooperation, opens, thus, new opportunities, both political and discursive, for nativist organizations.

3. “All for one, one for all”: Survival strategies of nativist dissent in Russia

After having presented the theoretical model that underpins this study, this section focuses on the strategies through which Russian nativists managed to overturn the competitive cooperation situation and to increase, thus, their survival and mobilization potential in Russia’s increasingly repressive political environment of the late 2000s and early 2010s. Strategies of Russian nativists can be divided in three blocks; their organizational structure, their mobilization efforts and their framing strategies. A detailed analysis of each follows.

3.1 Flexible internal organizational structure

Leaders of Russian nativist organizations under study adapted to the contracting political opportunities of Vladimir Putin’s regime by re-organizing their internal structure using, what they themselves call, the ‘network principle’. By this term, they refer to more decentralized and less hierarchical structures combined with allowed overlapping membership among them. This makes the coalition more flexible and increments their chances to survive in a hostile environment.

The main reason that obliged nativists to adopt this strategy is the regime’s constant pressure. Forming a network allows nationalist organizations to remain independent and to develop individual structures, while at the same time collaborating with the organizations of the network. As Ivan⁴ puts it:

“Why are there lots of small movements? For a simple reason: once a movement becomes large, it gets destroyed or prohibited. So, we have to act as a network structure. At some point this was decided: no more attempts to create a super-movement, but rather to create lots of small ones. If you ban one, you can create another. The network principle [*setevoi printsip*]”.

Ivan also explains that once his organization (ROD) grew bigger, it quickly transformed into an association with individual units that operate almost independently, without being controlled by the central branch in Moscow. This would enable ROD to survive if the central branch got banned, or to have someone else taking control if something happens to the leader.

Similarly, pro-monarchist organizations in St. Petersburg united under the umbrella of the only movement unbanned:

⁴ All respondents from the interviews I have conducted in Russia in 2011 have been pseudonymized (see Appendix 2 for a full list).

“All active nationalist organizations were banned. DPNI was banned, RONS was banned. Now, the only legal organization in St. Petersburg is the Russian Imperial Movement (Russkoe Imperskoe Dvizhenie, RID), which has a network structure and is elusive. When asked, we always say that this is just a kind of community of like-minded people, who do not even know each other, who are united by an idea. Basically, it is difficult to ban us”. (Kirill)

The nationalist organizations have also adopted the principle of multiple leadership. Having many leaders enables an organization to continue with its activities even if one of them gets arrested, because someone else is able to take over. The organization can also rely on the support of its closest allies. DPNI introduced the strategy of a leaderless movement and created a number of autonomous cells; however, not all of them could function. After that, DPNI leadership became more apparent. According to Vadim, a truly leaderless movement is impossible to sustain. But neither can nativists afford to have one single leader, “because he would immediately be sent to prison” (Ivan). This flexible network form has proved to be very efficient for nativist movements. Although some of them were banned, they were able to start functioning again under different names or different coalitions.

This flexibility was facilitated and in many cases, relied upon, the Internet. The Internet enabled nativists to develop their own channels, the most prominent being the newspaper *Den'* that later became *Zavtra* and the internet site *Agenstvo Politicheskikh Novosti* (APN). According to Lev, the Internet is the only place where the “illegal opposition” can express themselves, since they are offered no air time on TV and radio, and are banned from protesting on the streets. The Internet also enabled nativists to recruit new members. For instance, one of ROD's leaders and former DPNI member, Bogdan, confirmed that had it not been for the Internet, he wouldn't have heard about the massive participation numbers of Moscow's Russian March that made him join DPNI.

3.2 Common mobilization and bridging organizations

Nativist organizations under study engaged in common mobilization efforts. These can be divided in planned events organized annually and in random agitation strategies that took place when the circumstances were favourable. Starting from the planned events, the trademark of Russian nativists is the annual Russian March. The Russian March was initiated by Alexander Dugin's Eurasian Youth Union in 2005 in order to bring together all nationalist organisations and mobilized about 5,000 people, a big number for Russian standards. It also attracted the attention of Russian and Western media, which described it as an “anti-orange” protest (Pribylovskii ca, 2013; Laruelle 2009, 80). In 2006, it passed under DPNI's control and was renamed into Russian March in an attempt to overcome ideological divisions, to distance it from extremist connotations, and to reach out to a broader public. The majority of nativist prominent organisations, but also nationalist-leaning liberal figures, such as Alexey Navalny, and Duma members, such as Dmitry Rogozin, got involved (Laruelle 2009, 80-81; Kozhevnikova 2007). The event had a turbulent course echoing prohibitions from the government (it was not granted permission in 2006), rivalries among Russian nativists (in 2007 there were three parallel marches), and also internal splits of leading organizations (in 2008 each of DPNI's two branches after a split organized their own march). However, at the same time it was growing in participation and was proliferating in the regions. Its heyday was probably in 2011, when it reached about 6,000 participants in Moscow and 500 in St Petersburg and spread in at least thirty-five cities in Russia's regions. In Moscow, Alexei Navalny delivered a speech before the closing performance by *Kolovrat*, a ‘cult band’ popular in ultra-right circles

(Yudina, Alperovich, and Verkhovsky 2012; Kozhevnikova 2010).

Parallel to the Russian March, nativists have come up with their own annual commemorations, such as The Russian March of Labour or National Labour Day on 1 May, the Russian March of Grief or Day of Heroes on 1 March, and the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Ethnic Crime on 1 October. Events such as memorial days, rallies, pickets and gatherings, usually take place in Moscow, but are becoming increasingly popular in the periphery as well (Tipaldou and Uba 2014, 1085). Nationalist annual commemorations differ from individual events organized by each organization separately that target only each organization's constituency, in so far that the organizers do not matter. What matters, instead, is that intra-organizational collaboration between the nationalist groups under study is taking place with the aim of mobilizing the broader nationalist-leaning public.

As for the coordinated agitation strategies, Russian nativists developed one of the most successful mobilization techniques in the summer of 2006, when a fight between ethnic Russians, and Chechens and Azerbaijanis in the small town of Kondopoga ended with the killing of two and the serious injury of six. DPNI leader, Alexander Belov, arrived on the spot one day later and led a local residents' meeting. At the same time, DPNI website was used as a "coordination centre" to prepare the meeting and the follow-up actions. For example, DPNI organized a series of community gatherings in other Russian cities in support of Kondopoga (Kozhevnikova 2007). By working simultaneously on the ground and online, DPNI discovered the winning formula. On 2 September, about 2,000 people gathered in the city centre to demand the expulsion of Chechen and other Caucasian people from Kondopoga. The protest soon escalated and violence broke out over the following days. Pogroms resulted in at least twenty arson attacks against the property of Caucasians and in the injury of at least eight Caucasian-looking people, according to unofficial data. Police arrested over 100 protesters, but there was a delay in taking control of violent perpetrators. This has presumably led hundreds of residents with Caucasus origins to flee the city (Kozhevnikova 2007; RFE/RL 2006).

The Kondopoga-inspired innovative strategy introduced by DPNI (Kozhevnikova 2008) works as follows: DPNI deploys inter-ethnic terms to frame violent brawls between Russians and non-Russians or Russians from the Caucasus that usually involve injury or death. Through its social media, it calls for support for ethnic Russians and organizes street campaigns. Local members of nationalist organizations, or from neighbouring cities, or even Moscow, go to the spot and disseminate provocative xenophobic propaganda (leaflets, stickers, graffiti). DPNI also tries to organize a residents' meeting, framed as a People's Assembly, which does not require special permission. Or, in the case of incidents involving fatality, DPNI takes advantage of the funeral to address the crowd. During the Assembly, nativists present a pre-written resolution with the people's purported demands against non-Russians. Sometimes, violence against non-Russians follows People's Assemblies. At the same time, DPNI acts through its website as the only newsmaker, constructing to a large extent its own version of facts. The absence of mainstream media coverage works to DPNI's advantage. Other organizations soon joined DPNI in the promotion of future Kondopoga-inspired protests, such as Igor Artemev's RONS (Kozhevnikova 2008; Tipaldou and Uba 2014).

In 2010, nativists managed to apply the Kondopoga strategy in Moscow after the killing of *Spartak* fan Egor Sviridov by a group of Caucasian youngsters. Five days after the

killing, on 11 December, football fans organized a memorial rally at the murder scene that resulted in attacks on foreign-looking people. Aleksandr Belov was there. He addressed the crowd and incited it by calling for violence against the Caucasian “animals”. About 3,000 people arrived at Manezhnaya Square, some of whom came directly from the memorial rally. The crowd chanted racist slogans, such as “Russia for Russians”, “Kill!Kill!”, “Moscow for Moscowites”, and slogans against the police, raised hands in Nazi salutes, and attacked passers-by of “non-Slavic appearance” and police officers who tried to protect them. After negotiations with the police, the mob left the square, entered the metro, and started attacking “non-Slavs”, leaving behind forty injured and one dead (Felgenhauer 2010; Verkhovsky and Kozhevnikova 2011; see also Hutchings and Tolz 2012, 873).

Table 1 presents the scope of nativists’ mobilizations in Moscow and the regions and the protests that were organized according to the Kondopoga strategy from 2005 to 2012. It takes into consideration the only two annual events for which systematic reporting over the years could be found: the Russian March and the May Day March.

Table 1: Nativist mobilization in Russia (2005-2012)

Year	Russian March (4 November)		Russian March of Labour (1 May)		Kondopoga- inspired protests
	Number of participants in Moscow	Number of cities involved	Number of participants in Moscow	Number of cities involved	
2005	3,000	2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
2006	1,000	14	N.A.	N.A.	3
2007	2,500-3,000	22	500-700	4	3
2008	500	19	200-400	3	3
2009	2,500-3,000	12	300-400	7	2
2010	5,500	30	400-500	10	6
2011	6,000	35	600	16	3
2012	5,500	45	500 (renamed into Citizens’ March)	18	3

Sources: *Tipaldou and Uba 2014, 1086; ‘Racism and Xenophobia’ archive on SOVA Center’s website, available at: <https://www.sova-center.ru/en/xenophobia/reports-analyses/>, accessed 21 March 2020, own elaboration.*

Parallel to jointly organized protest, nativists also engaged in the creation of a bigger and more formal coalition through the development of bridging organizations in the 2000s. Despite the numerous efforts, none succeeded. These efforts are indicative of internal divisions within organizations and the relations among nativist groups.

It is notable that DPNI participated in the majority of these efforts. In 2007, the Great Russia Party was formed with DPNI with other groups that elected MP Andrei Savelyev as its chairman (Kozhevnikova 2008). In 2008, DPNI, ROD, and others founded the Russian National Movement, while in 2010 another effort to unite a broad coalition of nativists and the democratic opposition took place with the creation of the Russian Civil Union (*Russkii Grazhdanskii Soyuz*, RGS) (Verkhovsky and Kozhevnikova 2011). In

2011, driven by the euphoria of Manezhnaya Square's events, nativists created two broad bridging organizations. The first one, *Russkie*, was led by DPNI and brought together the most significant radical-right organizations, including NSI and Slavic Union (SS) and the Russian Platform. The second one, Russian Platform, was initially formed by Konstantin Krylov's ROD and Anton Susov's RGS and was later joined by Daniel Konstantinov's Moscow Defense League (*Liga Oborony Moskvyy*, LOM), Stanislav Vorobyev's RID, and Dmitrii Bobrov's NSI among other smaller organizations (Tipaldou 2018; Yudina, Alperovich, and Verkhovsky 2012). On 20 April 2012, *Russkie* leaders attempted the institutionalization of their organization with the formation of the Party of Nationalists (*Partiya Natsionalistov*). Dmitrii Demushkin became the party's chairman (Yudina and Alperovich 2012; Tipaldou 2018). Russian Platform is a more moderate organization than *Russkie*, but does not openly disavow violence. In the spring of 2011, they announced the creation of the National-Democratic Party (*Natsional-Demokraticeskaya Partiya*, NDP). Neither of the two newly formed parties managed to become registered to run for elections (Yudina, Alperovich, and Verkhovsky 2012).

3.3 Framing strategies of noncompetitive cooperation

Nativist organizations under study aim to preserve the interests of Russians in the broader sense. The main issues they commonly address are related to non-Slavic and non-Christian immigration, predominantly from Central Asian and Caucasian countries; the protection of native Russians against what nativists perceive as indirect discrimination from the state (e.g. economic discrimination, discrimination before the law); opposition to Putin and demand of free and fair elections (this is a frame that nativists share with liberals and united these two strange bedfellows during the 2011-2012 antifraud protests); and the abolition of Art. 282 of the Criminal Code⁵ that allows nativists to link their claims to liberty of expression in Russia. In parallel, the organizations that make up the nativist network under study have created a peculiar division of labor in the discursive field, in order to avoid competition among themselves. By this, I mean that each nationalist organization in the network specializes on one main issue and actively promotes it, making sure that it does not overlap with the main frames of another organization of the network. In Ivan's words: "all Russian nationalist organizations have their own focus. There was a time when every organization tried to deal with all the issues, but that was long ago and did not lead to success. Now there is specialization".

3.3.1 Russian Social Movement (ROD): Human rights' defenders

⁵ Art. 282, also known as the article on "extremism", was adopted in 2002 and amended in 2006 and has been increasingly used for suppressing a wide variety of opposition speech, including by nationalist activists (Orttung 2012: 462).

ROD presents itself as a human rights organization (*Pravozashchitnyi Tsentr 'ROD'*) and its main frame is “We protect Russians!”.⁶ ROD’s main activity is to assist Russian people (*Russkim lyudyam*) who need legal help and to promote public awareness by disseminating this information. Additionally, ROD proposes the construction of a nation-state for Russian people and frames its main issue in the following terms: “We do not intend to oppress other nations, but neither do we want to live in captivity”, emphasizing that Russian people are held hostages in their own country by foreigners.⁷ ROD’s



Picture 1 <https://krylov.livejournal.com/2322117.html>

signature campaign is the *Khvatit Kormit' Kavkaz* (Stop Feeding the Caucasus) campaign launched in 2011 through the creation of *Rusplatforma.org* (Picture 1). It describes the situation in Russia as “an undeclared ethnic war” between the North Caucasian diaspora and ethnic criminal clans on one hand, and Russians and other nations of Russia, on the

other. The campaign is indirectly related to ROD’s central frame - the rights of ethnic Russians – by stressing the economic hardship that the financing of the Caucasus region poses to Russian taxpayers. ROD asks for the establishment of a visa regime restricting travel from the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, for ending the “resettlement projects in Northern Caucasus”, for “equality” between all regions and for the destruction of “ethnic criminal groups”.⁸

3.3.2 Movement Against Illegal Immigration (DPNI): Guardians against non-Slavic immigrants

DPNI has linked its name to illegal immigration, but actually stands opposed to every type of non-Slavic immigration. Although DPNI's official claim was to deport illegal immigrants, it actually stands opposed to every type of non-Slavic immigration to Russia (Pribylovskii 2013). As such, DPNI appeals to “We, the Russian people”, who demand the restriction of unreasonable mass immigration and only collectively can protect “general Russian interests”. DPNI also asks for the introduction of a visa regime restricting travel from the states of Central Asia, Transcaucasia, and all CIS countries.⁹ However, DPNI overcomes this



Picture 2 <https://dpni.org>

⁶ Homepage, 2015-2020, *Pravozashchitnyi Tsentr 'ROD'*, available at: <https://www.rod-pravo.org/>, accessed 12 March 2020.

⁷ *Politicheskaya Platforma Russkogo Obshchestvennogo Dvizheniya*, ca. 2013, *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/nasha-poziciya/politicheskaja-platforma/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

⁸ *Nasha Positsiya – Nasha Trebovaniya*, ca. 2013, *Russkoe Obshchestvennoe Dvizhenie*, available at: <http://rod-ru.org/nasha-poziciya/nashi-trebovaniya/>, accessed 16 March 2013.

⁹ “1 Oktyabrya – Den’ pamyati zhertv etnicheskoy prestupnosti”, *DPNI*, available at:

overlap with ROD by focusing on direct action against foreigners and by adopting a profile that speaks to more extreme publics. For instance, DPNI's logo is a red X in a red circle against a black background and around it the logo "For Law and Order" in white letters (Picture 2). The logo is clearly inspired by the Celtic Cross or Odin's Cross, which is one of the most popular symbols for white supremacists (North West Counter Terrorism Unit). Additionally, when DPNI was newly formed, it helped the policy to identify illegal immigrants' workplaces and places of residence (DPNI 2010, 2007).

3.3.3 Nationalist (People's) Socialist Initiative (NSI): Russian National Socialism



Picture 3
<http://nsinitiative.blogspot.com/2012/02/blog-post.html>

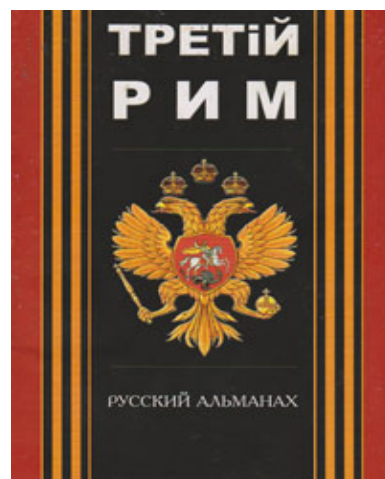
What differentiates NSI from the other organizations in the network under study is its nationalist socialist orientation, both in its ideological and its aesthetic values. NSI is the only organization which offers an ideological platform for contemporary National Socialism in Russia (Tipaldou 2018, 191-192). The organization claims that "Russian National Socialism" refers to the creation of a national-socialist system that would benefit Russians. NSI stretches the definition of National Socialism, applying 'National' to the "national state" that it envisions, i.e. a Russian-dominated state, and 'Socialism' to the economic system that this state should follow. A closer look to NSI's visual communication, however, reveals the organization's

affinity to German National Socialism of the interwar period, its adherence to white supremacy and its anti-Jewish stance. NSI's emblem (Picture 3) resembles the Nazi Party's black swastika on a white circle against a red background; instead of the swastika, it has a logo of its three letters together in black and instead of the plain red background, it has a red crown of laurel leaves.

Alongside a "Russian National Socialism", NSI has initiated the creation of a solidarity fund for imprisoned nativists. All nationalist organizations have a central frame in common: the abolishment of Art. 282 of the Russian Criminal Code, on the basis of which many organizations have been banned and their activists imprisoned. NSI, however, takes the credit for providing them with financial help through a campaign called "Russian help", that aims to crowdfund and to allocate financial resources to fellow activists who sit in jail through the 'Nationalist Prisoners Support Fund'.

3.3.4 Russian All-National Union (RONS): A blend of ethnic nationalism and Orthodox monarchism

RONS is the oldest and best known nationalist organization in Russia, distinguished from the rest for its “avowedly Orthodox” ideology (Yudina, Alperovich, and Verkhovsky 2012). As such, RONS specializes in pro-monarchic and conservative frames, such as religion, family values, anti-homosexuality. It collaborates with the “secular wing” of Russian nativists —meaning the other organizations of the network that are not religious-driven—by combining the values of “modern ethnic nationalism with Orthodox Christianity and monarchism” (Kirill). One of its central frames is the ‘Third Rome’, which refers to Russia as the successor of the Roman Empire and the final Orthodox empire able to prevent the coming of the Antichrist (Kirill). In fact, Third Rome is also the name of RONS’ journal [*Tretiy Rim: Russkiy Al'manakh*]. The journal’s cover has the double-headed eagle associated with the Byzantine Empire on the front cover against a black background with the ribbon of Saint George on each side (Picture 4). Other key frames of RONS are defending the ‘traditional’ family and criticizing abortions and homosexuality. RONS’ leader, Igor Artyomov, led and coordinated the homophobic “sodomite pogrom” in Moscow on the day of the first Gay Pride Parade in 2006 and played an active role in coordinating a series of homophobic attacks in response to it (Center 2007).



Picture 4 <http://ronsslav.com/igor-artyomov-russkiy-obshhenatsionalnyy-soyuz-v-2007-godu/>

4. “All for one, one for all”: Coalitional dynamics and the Russian nativist opposition

The four movements under study managed to a certain extent to live by the most popular slogan of Russian nativists: “All for one, one for all”. This is rather surprising, given the fact that nativist organizations in the West, where they were mostly studied, are frequently undergoing conflicts and internal splits. In fact, most far-right parties remain very small movements with strict internal hierarchies and a high level of member discipline (Mudde 2007). Contrary to nativist organizations in Western democracies, however, some of the most significant nativist organizations in Russia engaged in coalitions and in the exchange of resources and communications and underwent intense exchanges with each other. They did so, despite their ideological differences, in order to gain survival and mobilization advantages.

For the achievement of a coalition, nativist organizations deliberately developed three strategies that helped them collaborate without having to compete for the same constituencies; they adopted flexible organizational structures, they engaged in common mobilization and developed bridging organizations, and they each organization specialized in a specific frame that would speak to a certain part of the nativist public. In particular, ROD focused on protecting the rights of Russians, DPNI on immigration, NSI on the preservation of the white race, while RONS’ major frames were conservative values, such as the preservation of ‘traditional families’ and the ban on abortions and homosexuality.

When nativists turned their collaboration model from competitive into noncompetitive, they became able to organize broader mobilization events and attract more people, to spread their message to a wider public through the joint communication channels and to extend, thus, their limited resources. As a result, these organizations could survive longer in Russia's hostile political environment of the 2000s. By doing so, Russian nationalists have introduced an innovation in the way that nationalist movements organize; up to now, studies have shown that different far-right movements within a country use the same themes, as in the case of Germany, where the themes of the radical populist right, New Right, and extreme right movements differ in style and not in content (Ahmed and Pisoiu 2019).

I have to add here a particularity regarding nativist movements in Russia; they differ from other oppositional movements in Russia and from Western nativist movements, in so far that the Russian government adopts their frames when it considers necessary to channel societal nationalism and, in some occasions, coopts them. Despite this, we still notice that hybrid regimes can open new cooperation perspectives for nativist movements, not *despite* but *because* they close opportunity structures, confirming thus sociological theories on coalitions in Western societies.

By researching the coalitional dynamics of nativist organizations in Russia, this article has introduced a sociological angle in the study of Russian nativism that opens up new research avenues on both grassroots nativism and domestic politics from a comparative perspective. It shows how far nativist movements can go in hybrid regimes if they adopt strategies followed by non-nativist movements in democracies, such as new left groups in Italy of the 1970s (Della Porta 1995; Tarrow 1989) and women's organizations in favour of abortion rights in the USA (Staggenborg 1991). Additionally, it brings together scholarship on social movements and organized racism, strengthening, thus, scholarship on the far right. Specifically, the concept of movement alliance could effectively direct scholars to examine how networks can strengthen the far right. It could also help us understand whether alliances are the product of strategic decision making, such as in the case of more mainstream and progressive social movements, or if alliances emerge from floating memberships or overlapping criminal networks (see also Blee 2017).

Appendix 1. Respondents: Activists, October – December 2011

No.	Party/City	Pseudonym	Former affiliations	Interviews dates
1	ROD, Moscow	Ivan		3 interviews on 3/11/2011, 14/12/2011 & 16/12/2011
2	ROD, St. Petersburg	Bogdan	DPNI	interview on 31/10/2011
3	RONS leader, Russian Imperial Movement (RID) member, St. Petersburg	Kirill		2 interviews on 26/11/2014 & 29/11/2014
4	The Other Russia, Moscow	Lev		interview on 6/10/2011
5	The Other Russia, St. Petersburg	Vadim		interview on 1/11/2011

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