

## CERS Working Paper

### Racism in Russia

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#### Introduction

Historically Russia has long been associated with racial and ethnic divisions, with the mobilisation of racial categories through anthropology, embracing European developments and constructs following from social science (Geddie, 1885). Russian eugenics and the domination of primordial approaches (Tishkov, 1997) provide a theoretical foundation for racial and ethnic division within Russia. Racial divisions have constructed race based hierarchies focusing on racialization, genealogy, primordialism alongside other attributes from social science collectively providing the core structure for constructing racial and ethnic hierarchies on the grounds of innate biological characteristics, reproducing diverse racisms in Russia. Marxist Leninists argue such division is based on a natural biological division whereby certain groups are doomed to extinction as they have 'wrong' ethnic origins and claims to group identities (Law, 2012).

The development of ethnic hostility has given rise to racism in Russia. With Russian racism being unique and substantially different to other countries that host racist attitudes, Russia arguably became a more racial country following communism, the fall of the Soviet Union and the economic, social and political crisis that followed are contributing factors for the spread of racist attitudes and values throughout Russia. Racism was arguably suppressed under communism, with the fall signifying racial inequality. The fall of the Soviet Union, was the fall of national identity with ideologies, values and structural systems vanished racist attitudes in Russia expanded, this explosion of racism and the emergence of right wing and political extremists manifested throughout the newly formed liberal democratic states. The fall of the union signifies the 'fall of the friendships of the people' (Souleimanov, 2006) replaced with an 'us against them mentality'. The breakdown of communism and the eradication of communist values has created a 'cultural reservoir' (Law, 2012) whereby racism has become highly dynamic and deeply entwined and imbedded in Russian society and culture (Goldberg, 2006). Many perceive the break-down of the Soviet Union as the need to re-establish Russian nationalism catalysing racist attitudes and inverting racism as a core Russian ideology (Flores, 2003).

Despite racism in Russia being a wide spread and highly dynamic notion the knowledge of Russian racism is limited, with a lack of knowledge and theoretical insight despite a developing western interest into Russian culture noticeably the Caucasus and central Asia. Financing for Russian studies have plummeted rapidly with most literature dominated by western European and northern American contexts with ever more attention moving away from countries like Russia (Tlostanova, 2010) with a specific focus on South Africa and Brazil (Law, 2012). This distinctive lack of academic text and literature regarding racism in Russia exemplifies the true gap in racial knowledge and racial understanding (SOVA, 2009). Russian authorities argue that Russia is a nation exceptional from racism with racism simply understood as a western capital issue with all racist issues merely an American problem with acts of racial violence simply perceived to be crime. Ensuring racism remains successfully hidden from the public and more importantly wider academic debate (Goldberg, 2005).

This essay attempts to understand and develop theories and notions of racism within Russia. I intend to expand the global mapping of racism within Russia as part of a wider on-going project, my research pushes and questions current knowledge and the understanding of racism in Russia, if not the lack of knowledge, exploring the concept racist underground, and the notion that Russia is without racism, as conceptualised throughout the federation, offering that the country has 'long held a tradition of inter-ethnic tolerance and peace, that continue today'. However data from the amnesty international (2006) argues 'Racism in Russia is out of control' with many supporting the claims that 'Racism runs deep in Russia' (Boutilier, 2004).

**Russian Politics: reinforcing or removing racial attitudes?**

Post-Communist Russian Government is officially 'anti-racist' with Moscow claiming to be 'the one society that has discovered the cure for racial prejudice' (Roman, 2002), yet discriminatory and racist practices are prevalent in Russia permeating all aspects of society and politics are no exception. The intertwining and sculpting of Russian racism is arguably the result of state sponsored evolutionism (Hirsch, 2005), whereby the Marxist concept of historical development has been entangled within the creation of European anthropological theories; regarding culture, evolution and the creation of race. The hierarchy of ethnic and racial differences in anthropology provides historical racial building blocks, central for laying social foundations that allow politics to create and develop modern constructs of ethnicity and ethnic identity enforced through the Russian political system (Bonnett, 2002).

Russian politics are increasingly becoming a cause for concern, with regards to political motives, and racist attributes held by some politicians allowing xenophobic attitudes and racial intolerance to secrete into discourse by the people who hold positions of power (Verhovsky, 2002). Racially motivated politics contribute to the creation and development of a distinctive hierarchy of nationalities (Watson, 1956) that position ethnic minorities inferior to Russian nationals. Political discourse represents official parlance which hosts an overarching racist ideology, engraving racist values and attitudes of Russian superiority and imperialism nurturing and cultivating nationalist ideas throughout society, with every sign of racially discriminatory politics increasing for the years to come (SOVA, 2013).

Racist values are ever more evident throughout Russia with parties such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's liberal democratic parties and the Dmitry Rogozin fraction (made up of small violent Neo Nazi groups and political nationalists that promote a dominantly anti-ethno-nationalist agenda) emitting racism from the core of their policies, focusing on and introducing migration policies that control and restrict birth rates (ECRI, 2003) whilst manifesting religious intolerance, xenophobic policies, (usually towards the Muslims) (United Nations, 2007) and maintaining racial hostilities towards many minority groups (Ovshieva, 2013), with many political parties gain support at the expense of minorities. The media accelerates and stimulates social and political sentiments within society many of which advocate racist and unjust values. Popular discourse represents official parlance with an overarching ideology of engraving racist ideas and values of Russian superiority and imperialism, nurturing and cultivating nationalist ideas throughout Russia with every sign of increasing popularity for racist discourse for the years to come (SOVA 2013). Many politicians deny that racist practices are outlined through political discourse, with many political leaders refusing to take active measures to minimise the spread of racial violence and nationalist attitudes nor pass policies regarding racist acts and attitudes or xenophobia (Verkhovsky, 2002).

The escalation of informal racism and extreme right violence has not prompted a rise in political concern or the need to punish racists' harder (Arnold, 2009) with Weitz (2002) arguing that since 1937-1994 racial politics have crept into national practices with groups from the borderlands being generalised as unstable and inassimilable. This generalisation can be seen throughout the majority of literature regarding Russian politics although a handful of literature does counteracts allegations that Russian politics is racist. Such as the government taking a stand against all manifestations of nationalism and racism in 2003 with President Vladimir Putin condemning all 'negative, racially motivated acts' (The Moscow Times, 2001) this movement can be regarded a key figure in combatting racist injustice and inequality, as following the statement lead to a surge in the sentencing and conviction for citizens who commit racially motivated crimes in Moscow, with an increase of nearly fifty percent from 2007 to 2008 (SOVA, 2009). Emerging literature suggests some efforts have been made through Inter Ethnic Relations to protect and safeguard the rights of ethnic minorities, such as banning the use of racially and ethnically offensive images in advertising (Law, 2011) although a step in the right direction Russian politics remain subjugated by racist and xenophobic attitudes.

Xenophobic racial slurs and attitudes are part of everyday life in Russia, from the swastikas and 'kill the Caucasians' on the walls of Moscow to the Slavic looking citizens only preference on rental and employee applications, notions of racism are ubiquitous and have universally been accepted and internalised by politicians and citizens alike (Ovshieva, 2013). Racism is a central and key notion for many political adverts and campaigns. During the Moscow city council elections one political advert presented several 'individuals of Caucasian nationality' (SOVA, 2005) eating in a town park and

throwing food on the floor, the video later questions to what extent to the Caucasus clean up after themselves, questioning their 'Russian morals' concluding the campaign with the words 'Let's keep Moscow clean of Dirt' an ambiguous quote given the context being degrading towards the Caucasus in the video however when banned for its explicit racist and xenophobic context the leader simply shrugged the video as wanting to keep the streets free of litter (clean) and nothing else. Throughout Russia there is an over whelming association with racist policies directly affecting ethnic minorities, with the Caucasus appearing to be the most victimised group dominating literature (SOVA. 2005, Hirsch. 2005 and **Ovshieva**, 2013). There is extreme racial discrimination interlaced throughout politics and submerged in racial propaganda, with numerous politicians holding active positions distributing racist discourse. The Mayor of Moscow claimed 'All Chechens are bandits, thieves and murders' supported by Yuri Luzhkov Russians head of intelligence service who claimed 'this is Chechen terrorism' both comments made in regards to an explosion in Moscow without a court verdict charging Chechen members of guilt (Souleimanov, 2006). One example of many in which racial undertones and prejudices are produced through politics.

The Russian political system can also be considered racist given the responses to injustices. Reactions and responses to injustices based on the grounds of ethnicity are evident throughout history. The recent shooting of a Russian citizen of Chechen origin in Florida by the FBI generated an pandemonium with online Russian commentators who rejoicing in their newly founded love for the 'Pindos' (Americans) for doing Russians job of 'exterminating Chechens' (**Ovshieva**,2013) this racial mongering didn't stimulate a reaction from Russian government officials who distanced themselves from the blatant racist regards towards the Chechens, in sharp disparity to the neglect and death of a neglected Russian orphan, which stimulated a muscular campaign from the government following the event. (Ovshieva, 2013)

There is adequate evidence suggesting racist morals and discourses are shaped and entrenched throughout Russian politics, with limiting political boundaries and regards to racism in politics. Another notable platform that harness racist values is the police and law enforcement officials with racial discrimination and racial targeting of ethnic minority groups remaining a persistent problem in Russia. The committee for the elimination of racial discrimination (2008) report that problematic ethnic targeting remains at large with many Caucasus, Roma, Muslim and Africans continually being harassed and marginalised by the police and other enforcement officers, such as over precedented stop and search, extreme uses of violence when retaining suspects, especially the Roma (ECRI. 2013) 'The police and state force could not achieve government ideals without the rhetorical support' from the perceivably racist political system (Gramsci.1971) given the deficiency of policies in place to safeguard and protect citizens against racial prejudice.

## **Media**

The media like the political system is intertwined with the rhetoric of racist discourse. Against the backdrop of the society, it is interesting to question what is the role of the Russian media? A role that has clearly deviated and expanded over the decades, as the media as a multi-national institution it is supposed to take a balanced non-judgemental approach and ethnic tolerance and respect for all races, however the extent of which this is carried out by the media is blurred. The media can be viewed responsible for building the enemy images through the creation of demeaning and racialised vocabulary in which racist values and discourse manifest (Boutlier, 2014).

Ethnic divisions within the media are visible through the reporting of black ethnic minority citizens. Appearing more frequently in the news as criminals and appearing far less frequently when they are victims of crime unlike white victims, who are reported throughout the Russian media much more vigorously and in depth with far more apathy and coverage being given, with the current news story of a white victim on average being three times longer than that of a black ethnic minority (**Ovshieva**, 2013).

The media is a significant part of society influencing and affecting all aspects of social life, the media is significant in underpinning racism as a phenomenon, this being said there is a distinct lack of theoretical research into the effects racial media has on society. It is essential to understand how the media influences and modifies Russian society and the way Russian's identify with their nationality as the mass media is an integral part of society. The media can be perceived as actively disseminating racist news messages, political opinions and racist values throughout the Russian federation

(Politkovskaya, 2004). With reports suggesting the media plays an active role in the influence of public opinion and radical changes within society (Boutlier, 2014 and Souleimanov, 2006). Statistics suggest that as much as twenty one percent of the Russian population are influenced to an extent by the media (COE, 2003) significantly contributing to the rapid escalation of racial hostility (Law, 2013). Racial hostility can be found within the Russian media through the association and the suggestion of racial differences between certain groups often portraying minority ethnic groups in an inauspicious manner using the media as a mechanism to manifest the war on terror. Journalists often over report and exaggerate events with racist messages openly disseminated by mainstream media fundamentally leading to the amplified growth of racial hostility and negative association of certain marginalised groups (Politkovskaya, 2004). With Over one hundred Russian newspapers regularly use hate speech and assert racist attitudes towards ethnic minority groups with numerous publishing companies having links with extreme right wing groups and movements (Lokshina, 2006) The Literaturnaja Gazeta headlining 'Russians are slaves, and it's happening here not in Wild Chechen'(Kalinin, 2004) such openly racist publications are common place within the Russian media.

The nature of racism in the Russian media is ever changing, with new notions and attitudes being emanated through the use of newspapers and other publications. Fifty one percent of news articles involve hate speech and twenty one percent seemingly displaying ethnic hostility towards migrant groups. With a marginal twenty eight percent of newspapers arguably racially neutral (Lokshina et al 2002). Racial categorising at this level is disturbing and the lack of sanctions for Russian journalists and editors more so. Despite a small percentage of media outlets attempting to draw attention to the expanding problem of racism and hostility that Russian minorities encounter on a daily basis (ECRI, 2005). One of the nation's most influential nation-wide newspapers 'Komsomolskaya Pravda' devoted half a page on the Luxhniki event reporting the conflict between Azeri and Russian retailers, however only thirty percent of the material published was related to the incident itself, the rest was speculations about the Azeri Diaspora in Russia the economic weight they carry and the respective threats they hold towards Russians (Ossipov, 1998). The mass media alongside official's play a role in constructing the images of consolidated corporate or mafia type 'ethnic communities (Diasporas)' which include the scapegoating of criminal groups as an integral part of their reporting. Criminalised groups are created and their collective strengthened through the media portraying and racialising groups, highlighting the 'undercurrents of great Russian chauvinism' in place within Russia (Law, 2010).

Social networks also emanate race hate, with Russians exploding with racist anger following the crowning of a half Tatar woman this year during the Miss Russia contest. After receiving thousands of racist and xenophobic insults the beauty pageant was forced to shut down Miss Russia's social media accounts, with citizens attacking the woman for not being 'Russian enough' (Ilayna 2013). Racially motivated attacks are ever more frequently displayed in the media leading to the escalation of racial hostility (Law, 2013) with an overwhelming fifty three percent of Russians supporting the slogan 'Russia for Russians' blatant racist attitudes are held strongly with forty two percent of Russians supporting the decision to deport certain ethnic minority groups from their region (Law, 2010). Racist attitudes are extenuated through the public expression of race hate from the media (Ossipov, 1998).

### **Minority Ethnic Group victimisation**

There is an emerging trend throughout literature that certain social and racial groups are positioned unfavourably within Russian society. This next chapter focus on two minority groups that are racially victimised the Caucasus and the Muslims. This is not to suggest they are the only nor the most racialised as within Russia there exists a vast population that are racially discriminated against (ECRI, 2003). The development of racism in Russia follows George Culvier's racial science, the understanding of three races developing in isolation of one another resulting in hierarchical differentiations between groups; regarding culture, mental ability and physical ability. Racial categorisations develop from complex linages of language, physical appearance, customs and decent (Slezkine, 2001), evidently structuring Russian modernity. The organisation of people into 'peoples' based on territory and identity alongside classifications such as sex, consumption and interaction where the forfeitures of building Russian society (Slezkine, 2001) situating racism as a historical category. Russia is 'Reich' with racial differences (Hirsch, 2005) that have allowed Russian orient to control, objectify and classify the nation, constructing racial minorities as morally inferior and backwards (Crews, 2006). Historical foundations of racial categorisation, values and attitudes

assimilated through modernity structuring and reinforcing notions of racism among minority groups (Brown, 2004).

Racist attitudes and values towards the Caucasus have developed overtime founded upon historical conflicts, the Caucasus are racially positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy, with the inversion of Caucasian in contemporary Russia to mean black exemplifying the ever changing nature of racist attitudes in Russia (Law, 2013). The racial development of the Caucasus set foundations for developing racism leading to increase marginalisation, with the Caucasus scapegoated to explain the exponential growth in crime that followed the Soviet Union emphasising negative attitudes and extenuating the development of racist and discriminative attitudes towards the Caucasus, with many citizens refused the rights to apply for jobs or rent houses due to xenophobic attitudes suggesting the Caucasus are violent and unruly citizens 'profoundly different to the central' (Stalin, 1913:15). Racist attitudes against the Caucasus are reinforced and strengthened by xenophobic messages in the media and political systems directly degrading minority ethnic groups, Mikhail Suntov, head of Moscow's regional directorate for organised crime reported 'certain hard core characteristics of behaviour including criminal, exist for certain ethnic groups' (Human Rights Watch, 1998) propelling racist associations of the Caucasus with criminal activities.

Racism in Russia although disregarded by Russian official remains a deeply rooted issue, signalling concern throughout the world, with the United Nations sending their 'special rapporteur on racism' Doudou Diene to investigate accelerating racism, (UN, 2007) racially motivated attacks, anti-Semitism and antimuslimism, a trend that is expanding throughout Russia permeating the political system allowing racial discrimination to fester and expand throughout Russia. Racialised politics in Russia have strengthened the war on terror; together with the shift towards racial neoliberalism racial conflicts and exclusion amongst ethnic minorities have intensified (Goldberg, 2008). 'They say we are lazy, that we steal that we are parasites on the backs of Moscow... for forty five years I slaved for this country and now because I am Caucasus I am treated like a human being of the lowest sort' (Human Rights Watch, 1998)

Religion in Russia is equally as significant as skin colour for constructing racial attitudes towards ethnic minority groups. With the Russian federation taking a distinctly anti-islamic dimension (Verkhovsky, 2002) with Islam perceived as a violent intolerant religion, the influence of western discourse throughout modernity positioned Islam as a non-white religion which lacks humanity, ingrained distrust and personal fear of Islamic and Muslim unity is widespread (Blank, 1994: 220). The logic of modernity signified the Eurocentric justification of Islam to be of sub human status (Gatagova, 2006 and Tlostanova, 2010). The traditional Marxist stance on Islam is valued within the Russian federation, in that Islam plays a reactionary role, being a weapon in the hands of the exploiting class, an instrument for spiritual oppression of the workers (Sovetskya 1958). Racialisation of Islam has developed overtime with the 19<sup>th</sup> century term 'tartar' introduced to define a Muslim of any ethnicity or nationality, refined today to Muslim signifying 'black' (Tlostanova, 2010). The trajectory of Islamophobia throughout the Russian federation was shaped through Christianity fearing Islam as a constant threat, a violent and intolerant religion reproduced through the collective Russian unconsciousness, this monopolisation of Islam as something to be feared or devalued is held among British and French citizens alike (Brower and Lazzarini, 2001) with the state actively portraying minority groups as inferior (Law, 2013).

The Islamophobic culture in Russia is responsible for the systematic widespread violation of human rights within the federation, rights to property; healthcare, land, work, education and in some cases the right to live (Tlostanova, 2010 and COE, 2003) are common place. Russia proclaims the need to Christianise and civilise diverse ethnic groups living in the borders (Breyfogle et al, 2007) signifying widespread racism at play in Russia. The Mayor of Moscow Sergey Sobyenin is arguably catering to nationalist with his recent policies regarding Islam, reporting to the newspaper Komosomolskaya Pravda 'No new building permits will be issued, I think that's enough mosques for Moscow' (Pitt, 2013). Despite almost twenty percent of Russias population being Muslim, the majority concentrated in the North Caucasus. Currently there are only four over-crowded mosques in sharp contrast to the hundreds of empty orthodox churches. The official Muslim clerical body suggest that there should be at least eight Mosques, although many fear that more mosques will only attract more Muslims to Moscow (Pitt, 2013). Tensions are strained in Russia with many Muscovites becoming increasingly irritated by people who have different language, cultures and values Sobyenin warned, his warning

becoming reality when thousands of Muscovites rioted in the Moscow suburb Biryulyovo over the stabbing of a Russian man by a Muslim (Pitt, 2013) local citizens and nationalists vandalised the homes of Muslim citizens, with cases like this happening frequently, thus it is undeniable that racist attitudes and values towards Muslims and many other minority groups are marginalised and discriminated against with many Russian citizens frequently displaying their intolerance.

### **Racism in Russian football**

Football culture is an integral part of Russian society, with dynamic racist attitudes permeating the football culture. The level of racism within Russian football clubs is increasingly concerning officials on a wide scale across the football community, concerns regarding Russia's lack of regulations of racial intolerance and racist language of both players and fans in football stadiums are steadily rising as Russia is hosting the World cup in 2018. UEFA have issued a public warning expressing that Russian clubs need to eliminate racist chants during matches together with the introduction of partial and full stadium closures and fines of fifty thousand euros for teams that express racist attitudes (Ghosh, 2013) such sanctions are believed to catalyse positive change within the behaviour and attitudes of football fans as Russia is hosting the pinnacle of all football events despite the problem of racism dominating Russian football culture (Ghosh, 2013). Racially toxic atmospheres in Russian stadiums have sparked rumours of a potential boycott of black players from the World Cup, Yaya Touré warning that unless Russian sport officials eradicate racist behaviour and attitudes in football stadiums black players will not participate in the world cup, if they are not confident that conditions have improved they won't come (The Guardian, 2013).

From constant monkey noises, neo-Nazi associations to banners with bananas on them (Ogden, 2014) the Russian football culture represents a racial epidemic of xenophobic attitudes and racist language, evident both on and off pitch in Russia. Andre Bikey, former Russian football player claims that he experienced and witnessed blatant racism during his time in Russia he was physically attacked in the streets on more than one occasion, claiming that life in Russia can be hard as a black person (Sunday Mirror, 2010). Racist language in football games is not infrequent but it is ignored, during his time playing for Lokomotive Moscow Football Club Touré told referees that he was experiencing racist slurs stating that fans generated monkey noises and shouted racial abuse in general, however the referees overruled racist allegations (Ogden, 2014). Fans celebrated the transfer of the Nigerian player to West Bromwich Albion Football Club with a banner sporting a banana saying 'Thanks West Brom' (Saakov and Sinnett, 2014). Racial implications of bananas symbolising black players as monkeys is a growing trend amongst many football clubs, Dani Alves ate a banana thrown at him during last week's match against Villarreal, kick starting a world-wide viral social media campaign calling fans to unite under anti-racist campaigns (Hodgetts, 2014).

Racist attitudes are deeply embedded in Zenit's racial attitudes and tolerance. Zenit is arguably one of the most racist clubs in Russia, however Zenit fans do not associate themselves as racists arguing they simply wish to preserve their football traditions. Nevertheless there is an extreme anti-black racial value system in place with fans 'Only wanting players from Russian brotherly nations' the absence of black players at Zenit football club is an important tradition that maintains the club's national identity, symbolic in representing St Petersburg (Marshall, 2013). The Landskrona arguably Zenit's largest organised fan group caused international tumult by asking Zenit manager André Villas-Boas to refrain from signing black and homosexual players. Followed by the publication of a statement claiming they don't want any non-white players representing Zenit football club. The unfavourable racist values that a proportion of Zenit fans hold is an issue that needs to be tackled, Christophe Samba (former player for Anzhi Makhachkala) stated he wasn't surprised with the statement as 'everyone knows Zenit supporters are no good and racist' (Muller, 2013).

Many football fans are nationalists holding radical right wing ideas with increasing racial protests and supporters openly being vocally racist and extremely proud of their 'patriotic' views, regarding themselves as guardians for Zenit's unique identity as a Whites only club (Matusevich, 2013). Many of the fans protest through public sentiments, the Chechen flag was burnt during a game against Chechen team Terek Grozny with fans filming the disrespectful act and posting it online. FIFA and UEFA officials branded the behaviour of Zenit fans 'disgraceful' (Ogden, 2014). Zenit has become a symbol of Russia's newly acquired wealth, contributing as one of Europe's highest spending clubs, however there lies a more disturbing reality surrounding Zenit's fan culture, which openly reflects xenophobic

attitudes across Russia, blatant racist attributes are regarded as Zenit patriotism seeking to ensure 'Russia is for the Russians' (Matusevich, 2013) a popular rallying cry for Russian nationalists. Zenit has done little to tackle the deeply rooted problem denying any issues exist (Muller, 2013) football unions play down racist acts such as chanting, language, violence, Nazi slogans and gestures disturbances that regularly disrupt most matches (Panoivski, 2013).

Rafal Pankowski (2010) chief monitor for observing racism in Russia's football society said the problem is widespread and rarely acknowledged. There is limited acknowledgement of racism both inside and outside football grounds by football and government authorities in Russia. Alexander Brod, director of the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights claims there is a dominant pattern of denial of racism within football, claiming racial street graffiti and major bookshops openly display racist language, hate crime is soaring and black people are often beaten up by skin head gangs (Ogden, 2014). Violent football epidemics are widespread throughout Russia with radical right wing protests frequently arising within football cultures. A two thousand strong protest at central Moscow Maneehz square followed the murder of Russian fan Egor Sviridov who died during a brawl with natives of the North Caucasus, his death mobilizing thousands of fans to enact racist violence, with many protesters performing Hitler salutes (Matusevich, 2013). Fifa believe that harsher punishments should be in place in some circumstances removing racist football clubs out of competitions where racism is a real problem (Panoivski, 2013).

## **Conclusion**

Active state racism and the development of Russian superiority following the fall of the Soviet Union laid the foundations for contemporary racialization in Russia. With the fall of communism came the fall of ideology and national identity, followed by a shift towards an 'us against the others mentality'. The exponential growth of racist attitudes and values in Russia can be understood as an attempt to reconstruct Russia, with racist ideologies perceived as creating and reinforcing power to Russia as a country that is proud of its distinctively Russian practices discouraging multiculturalism and collective unity of different racial groups catalysing racist attitudes and inverting racism as a core Russian ideology (Flores, 2003).

Russia proclaimed to be a country that denounced western style racism believing it to merely be the product of the Western capitalist system, arguing that Russia has long been a country of multiculturalism and inter-ethnic tolerance. However it is clear that racial inequalities and racist values are insidiously and structurally embedded in society with Russians pursuing their own unique style of racism (Weitz, 2002) with Russian racism understood as a variety of despotism (Winant, 2006).

It is paramount that Russian styled racism is acknowledged; with a distinctive lack of knowledge and understanding of the racist notions in place in Russia it is clear that more theoretical investigation is needed to establish the true nature of racism in Russia. With racist attitudes and derogatory values of ethnic minorities formulated and ingrained through the media, politics and other law enforcement officials, permeating all aspects of society interlacing Russian nationalism with racist values. The racialization and victimisation of minority ethnic groups can be understood through racial hierarchies, with Russian nationals situated at the top and ethnic minorities at the bottom. Russian values are evidently racist with the overarching desire to keep Russia 'Russian' the influx of multiculturalism is Russia is not something to be empowered, rather something to be fearful of with many Russian citizens forming radical right wing and nationalist values and attitudes, racist attitudes have become highly dynamic and deeply embedded in Russian society and culture (Goldberg, 2006)

The attempt to eradicate race and racial signifiers such as the racial hierarchies suggest a possibility for a world unstructured by race and race thinking. Through the dismantling of race and racial categorisations (Gilroy, 2000) that retain the polarities of sameness and difference, racial hierarchies that currently structure Russian society would no longer influence social hierarchies based on racial features and skin colour, there would cease to be 'Russians' and 'Alien' others. It is evident that we still live in an society with unfolding racial history whereby racial dynamics are linked to the struggle for democracy and equality (Winant, 2006), as clearly seen through Russia with the fall of the soviet union racial categorisations and signifiers of difference where important to help restructure Russia's economic political and social structures. However as long as racial inequalities and values exist, and are reproduced through society, post racism and deracialisation projects will forever remain an elusive

possibility and an unattainable utopia for imagining the demise of race and racism in Russia. 'Racial rule is essential to rule itself, these contradictions are destined to deepen not diminish' (Winant, 2006). This being the future of Russia appears to be racially dominated, with ethnic differences and values degraded. Due to the extent of racist values and ideologies grounded within all aspects of Russian society Russia can be perceived as a country that will remain structured by racist constructions for the unforeseeable future (Flores, 2003).

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