

The Nature of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment in Post-Socialist Russia

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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to investigate whether the *competition* and *cultural* theoretical models that have received solid empirical support in the context of Western-European societies can explain anti-foreigner sentiment in post-socialist Russia as a society searching for new national identity borders. Data obtained from the third round of the European Social Survey (2006) indicate a high level of anti-foreigner sentiment in contemporary Russia – more than 60% of Russians claimed that immigrants undermine the cultural life of the country, and almost 60% claimed that immigration is bad for the economy of the country. Our multivariate analysis showed that the two sets of individual level predictors of anti-foreigner sentiment – the socio-economic position of individuals (as suggested by the *competition* model) and conservative views and ideologies (as suggested by the *cultural* model) – are not meaningful in predicting of anti-foreigner sentiment in post-socialist Russia. The results are discussed from a comparative sociology perspective and in the context of Russian society.

Keywords: anti-immigrant sentiment, Russia, xenophobia

1. Theoretical explanations for anti-foreigner sentiment and social context

The substantive body of research on attitudes toward immigrants in Western countries (Western Europe, USA, Canada) has repeatedly shown the impact of two complementary sets of individual level attributes on anti-immigrant sentiment. The first set of attributes focuses on individuals' socio-economic status and relative position in the social system. According to the *competition* (or 'threat') theoretical model, socially and economically vulnerable individuals are more likely to express anti-immigrant sentiment because they face greater competition and a greater threat of potential competition with out-groups over scarce social and economic resources (Olzak 1992; Espenshade and Hempstead 1996; Esses et al. 2001; Raijman and Semyonov 2004). Therefore, majority group members who are unemployed are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward immigrants than those who are fully employed. Likewise, less educated people and those employed in low-status, low-paid occupations are more likely to express anti-immigrant sentiment than the highly educated and those employed in prestigious occupations (Bonacich 1972; Olzak 1992; Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders 2002; Semyonov, Raijman and Gorodzeisky 2006; Semyonov and Glikman 2009; Schlueter, Schmidt and Wagner 2008).

The second set of attributes relates to the role of conservative views and ideologies. According to this view, designated as the *cultural* model by Raijman and Semyonov (2004), anti-immigrant attitudes are prompted not only by a perceived threat to the socio-economic self-interest of majority members but also by the threat that immigrants may pose to cultural homogeneity and national identity of the host society (Castles and Miller 1993; Schnapper 1994; Fetzer 2000). Thus, persons who hold more conservative views and ideologies tend to express stronger anti-immigrant attitudes, because they are more concerned with the impact that foreigners may exert on the collective identity. Previous research has found that anti-immigrant attitudes are more prevalent among people with a right-wing political orientation. In addition, some studies show that such attitudes are also stronger among religious members of the majority population (e.g., Castles and Miller 1993; Schnapper 1994; Fetzer 2000; Raijman and Semyonov 2004; Strabac and Listhaug 2008; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2009; Gorodzeisky 2013).

In summary, both the *competition* model and the *cultural* model as explanatory theoretical frameworks for anti-immigrant sentiment have received solid empirical support in the context of Western-European societies, i.e., societies that are characterized by a relatively long migration history and stable political and welfare regimes. However, to date, these theoretical models have barely been tested in less stable national contexts, i.e., in societies that have undergone substantial changes in their political and economic regimes in last decades and only recently have started to face international labor migration. Thus, the present study aims to examine these theoretical models in the relatively ‘new’ and challenging context of societies under change. Specifically, the present research seeks to answer the question whether and to what extent the two theoretical explanations – *competition* and *cultural* models – apply in the context of post-socialist Russian society.

2. The context: Contemporary Russia

2.1. 'Russia for Ethnic Russians'?

Scholars of Russian society claim that in the first years of the 21st century – a decade after the breakdown of the Soviet Union – Russia was characterized by a deep crisis of national identity. The crisis occurred in the context of the dramatic changes in the Russian socio-economic, political and state-structural systems (Gudkov 2005; Pain 2007; Malinova 2010) and “was prompted not only by the need in reconsideration of the national self, given new geo-political and social borders, but also by burning ideological conflicts associated with this reconsideration” (Malinova 2010: 90). This critical period of identity formation created fruitful ground for the diffusion of anti-foreigner and anti-minority sentiments in Russian society (Pain 2007; Warhola and Lehning 2007). The idea 'Russia for Ethnic Russians'¹, which was supported in one way or another by more than half of the native Russian population in the first decade of the 21st century (Gudkov 2006; Pain 2007), exactly exemplifies the argument made by Wimmer (1997) saying that in times of crisis and general disorientation, "the appeal to the national community aims at securing the future by safeguarding the rights and privileges of the indigenous who the state is supposed to protect.

Whoever does not belong to the national majority, such as an immigrant or a member of a religious or ethnic minority, appears as an additional threat to the now precarious social union" (Wimmer 1997: 30).

The crisis of national identity in Russia took place side by side with the fast growth of international migration's flows into the country. Despite the fact that the entrance of Russia into the space of international population mobility started in the 1990s, by the beginning of the 21st century Russia already had the second largest population of immigrants in the world, after the United States (Heleniak 2002). Data from the 2002 census show that about 8.3% (about 12 million) of residents in Russia were born outside the country (Chudinovskikh et al. 2010), and by 2005, foreign-born residents represented 8.4% (12.07 million) of the total Russian population (UN 2009)².

2.2. Immigration trends in post-socialist Russia

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has experienced several periods of migration and different migration policy trends. The first period of massive immigration to Russia (1991-1996) was characterized by the repatriation of ethnic Russians from 14 Former Soviet Union (FSU) Republics. As a result of local wars, ethnic conflicts and new ethno-nationalist policies in some FSU republics, many Russians and Russian-speakers living in those republics suddenly became members of ethnic minorities and were forced to return to Russia (Molodikova 2007). A large wave of immigration started immediately after the breakup of the Soviet Union, with 105,000 immigrants to Russia in 1991 and a peak of 915,000 immigrants in 1994 (Heleniak 2002). This wave of immigration to post-soviet Russia is not of major relevance to the current study.

The second period of the immigration to Russia (1997-2000) was characterized by deceleration of the repatriation process alongside a growth of labor migration—both documented and undocumented. The migrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States came mainly from Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, but also from Central Asia and the Caucasus FSU Republics. Migrants also arrived from more distant countries, mainly from Turkey, but also from China, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Somalia and North Korea (Supyan 200; Molodikova 2007). As is evident from the census data, the ethnic diversity of the

population expanded rapidly between 1989 and 2002, for example whereas the share of ethnic Russians in the overall population of Russia decreased by 3%, the number of ethnic Azerbaijanis increased by 84%, Armenians by 112% and Chinese by 573% (Gorenburg 2003). By the end of this second period, the relatively laissez-faire migration policy and the success of the economy had resulted in Russia becoming a regional 'migration magnet', with the estimated maximum number of immigrants who had entered Russia by 2000 reaching 13 million (Heleniak 2002; Molodikova 2007).

In the subsequent immigration period, 2001-2005, the change of leadership – from Yeltsin to Putin – together with threats to national security (as a consequence of terrorist attacks) led to a radical turn in Russian immigration policy. During this period, a strict immigration policy was implemented to deal with illegal immigration. In an effort to tighten migration control, the Ministry of Interior assumed responsibility for the Federal Migration Service, visa requirements for citizens of several FSU states became stricter (e.g., establishing visa regime with Georgia), and immigration-related laws were amended (e.g., restrictions for applying for citizenship and permanent residency). The combination of all these actions demonstrated “the authorities’ willingness to pursue a tough anti-immigrant line” (Molodikova 2007: 61). Between 2001 and 2005, about 800,000 immigrants arrived in Russia, with about a third from three Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan (Chudinovskikh et al. 2010). Among the labor migrants who arrived in 2005 and 2006, the biggest share was from China (Vishnevskiy, 2011). It is estimated that in the mid-2000s, two-thirds of the labor migrants were employed in the twilight economy, with the average hourly wage of labor migrants being 40% lower than that of the natives (Lebedeva and Tatarko, forthcoming).

2.3. Xenophobia in Russia at the beginning of the 21st century

Restrictive immigration policies and a change in the ethnic and socio-demographic composition of the immigrant population, together with a notion of the 'strong state' and the feeling of national pride cultivated by the political leadership was reflected in a rise of intolerance towards the 'others' in Russia at the beginning of the 21st century (Gudkov 2005, 2006; Pain 2007; Shlapentokh 2007). The focus on

restoring Soviet nostalgia and a sense of pride in the Soviet Union's accomplishments as well as the rewriting of Soviet history in a positive light under the Putin regime (since 2005) (Mendelson and Gerber 2008; Lapidus, 2007) contributed also to the general intolerance toward the 'other'.

Political extremism and a nationalist ideology that emphasizes the dominance of Russian culture, Eastern Orthodox religion, and the Russian language have found strong support among titular groups (Pain 2007). Furthermore, there was a rise of nationalist movements contributing to the climate of hostility toward foreigners and social tensions (Lapidus, 2007). The number of radical nationalist youth groups operating under the slogan of 'Russia for Ethnic Russians' increased from 10,000 in 2001 to 33,000 in 2004 (Pain 2007). Violence towards immigrants became frequent and widespread; estimates showed that the rate of nationalist violence increased in the first decade of the 21st century by 20% each year (SOVA 2007). Some researchers suggested that the open activity of a substantive number of outlawed nationalist radical organizations in Russia revealed the passivity of law enforcement practice in the sphere of hate crimes on national grounds and the tolerance of Kremlin policy toward nationalist extremism. Together with the reluctance of law enforcement agencies to label crimes committed on ethnic and national grounds as such (in most cases, these actions were either ignored or treated as hooliganism), this tolerance may be viewed as the covert or indirect role of the state in supporting a xenophobic climate in Russia (Pain 2007; Shlapentokh 2007; Gudkov 2006).

The level of ethnic hatred in Russia, as pointed out by Gudkov (2006), is at least twice as high as that in the majority of other European countries. Moreover, according to Pain (2007), the level of xenophobia and ethnophobia in Russia is so high that the phenomenon has lost the characteristics of a social anomaly in the eyes of the majority group. In addition, Alexseev (2010) found that ethnic Russians, as the majority group, express higher level of hostility towards migrants as compared to non-ethnic Russians. In the research literature, this high level of anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia is understood in the context of the tremendous changes in the political, economic and state-structural system that citizens of Russia experienced after the collapse of Soviet Union. Such circumstances are usually accompanied by national identity and cultural self-determination crises. The desire to deal effectively with such crises

leads people to be "more and more interested in consolidating within primary, or ... primordial (such as ethnic and confessional) communities" (Pain 2007: 902). The process of re-marking the boundaries of the collective fuels opposition and tension between in-groups and out-groups, while a high level of solidarity within the in-group collective ('us') is accompanied by negative perceptions of the out-groups ('them').

In light of the theoretical framework and social context (which is quite unusual for most studies on anti-immigrant attitudes) presented above, it is reasonable to pose the following question: Do individual attributes capturing socio-economic self-interest (as suggested by the *competition* model) and conservative views and ideologies (as suggested by the *cultural* model) explain anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia as a society undergoing a search for new national identity borders or does such social context dilute socio-economic and ideological divergences among majority members with regard to anti-foreigner sentiment?

In the following empirical analysis, we seek to answer the above-mentioned question. We examine anti-foreigner sentiment as reflected in public views toward the impact exerted by foreigners on Russian society in two particular areas—economic and cultural. Considering the importance of the search for a new national and cultural identity in the period under study, we expect the negative perception of the impact of foreigners on the cultural sphere of Russian society to be more pronounced than the negative perception of the impact of foreigners on the Russian economy. Likewise, we expect perceptions of the impact of foreigners on the cultural sphere to be more similar across various social categories of the majority population than the perceived impact on the economy.

3. Data, variables and descriptive overview

3.1. Data

Data for the present study were obtained from the third round of the European Social Survey (ESS) conducted in 2006, in which Russia took part. The data were collected from a nationally representative sample of the Russian population (age 15 and above) and included – in addition to demographic, economic and social characteristics of individuals – items capturing attitudes toward immigrants. The analysis reported here was restricted to respondents aged at least 18 years who were born in Russia and who hold Russian citizenship, in other words, to the members of the majority group. The final sample size was 1987 respondents³.

3.2. Dependent variables

In this analysis, we examined anti-foreigner sentiment as reflected in two indicators: 1) the perceived impact of immigrants on Russian cultural life and 2) the perceived impact of immigrants on the Russian economy. We treated these two distinct measured indicators as separate dependent variables, since each captures a distinct concept. The definitions of the dependent variables, including the exact wording of the survey questions, and the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

The descriptive results demonstrated that negative perceptions related to foreigners' impact on both the cultural and the economic lives of the country were extremely widespread among Russian citizens. At the same time, Russians viewed the impact of foreigners in the cultural sphere ($X= 6.6$) in slightly more negative terms than that in the economic sphere ($X= 6.4$): 62.8% of Russians reported that immigrants undermined the cultural life of the country, while 58.6% claimed that immigration was bad for the economy of the country.

(Table 1)

To put these results into a comparative perspective, we estimated the level of negative perceptions related to the impact of foreigners in the economic and cultural spheres across 12 Western European

countries that took part in the ESS in 2006 (see Appendix Table A). The results demonstrated that the level of anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia was meaningfully higher than that in each one of these 12 countries. For example, the percentage of respondents who reported that immigrants undermined the cultural life of their respective countries ranged across the 12 Western European countries from 7.2% in Finland to 46.5% in the UK (in comparison to 62.8% in Russia). In 8 out of the 12 countries, the percentage of citizens who viewed the impact of foreigners on cultural life in negative terms did not reach 30%.

3.3. Independent variables

The independent variables selected for predicting the two indicators of anti-immigrant sentiment within the framework of the multivariate analysis included: 1) the set of variables that capture individuals' socio-economic status (namely, education, subjective income, and position in the labor force) and 2) the set of variables that capture individuals' conservative views and ideologies (namely, level of religiosity, religious denomination, and political orientation). In addition, age, gender and residential area (rural versus urban) were selected as control variables. Detailed definitions and descriptive statistics of all independent variables are presented in Appendix Table B.

While most of our independent variables (with the similar operationalized definitions) have been used extensively in the previous research on the topic, the inclusion of two of the variables, religious denomination and political orientation, requires further explanation.

Religious denomination: Although religious denomination is not a particularly popular indicator of conservative views in studies that focus on anti-foreigner sentiment, some researchers emphasize the importance of religion in forming such sentiments and suggest that in post-communist environments the revival of religion could prompt ethnic tensions and intolerance (Karpov and Lisovskaya 2007). Following this view and taking into account the relatively high percentage of the Russian population that by self-definition do not belong to any religious denomination, we included in our analysis, in addition to

degree of religiosity, religious denomination as a series of dummy variables representing Eastern Orthodoxy (titular religion in Russia), Islam and those who do not belong to any religious confession.

Political orientation: The traditional division of political orientation into 'right' and 'left', which is used in research in Western countries to capture conservative ideologies, cannot be applied in the Russian context. Unlike in Western societies, in post-socialist Russia, the idea of Russian nationalism was traditionally less widespread among Russian pragmatists and defenders of radical market reforms and liberal economy. However, such parties were associated in post-socialist Russia with the political right. Thus, people who define themselves as 'right' or even 'extreme right' may not hold ideologies related to national and cultural identity issues that characterize the so-called 'political right' in Western countries. Moreover, according to Pain (2007), from the beginning of the 21st century, the traditional division of 'left' and 'right' in Russia has lost its meaning. The data of the ESS conducted in 2006 strongly support this argument. In a preliminary analysis, we found that almost half of Russian respondents did not provide an answer to the question: “How would you place your views on the left-right political orientation scale?” Among those who did provide such an answer, more than half placed themselves in the middle category of the scale, and no obvious trends related to voting behavior could be found among the other half. In light of the circumstances discussed above, we decided not to use the political left-right orientation variable and, instead, to introduce into the multivariate analysis the variable ‘party voted for in the last election’ (including categories for those who did not vote or who did vote but did not indicate for which party).

4. Multivariate analysis

To examine whether and to what extent individual level attributes pertaining to socio-economic status and to conservative views and ideologies affected anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia, we estimated a series of linear regression equations. In equations 1a and 1b (Table 2) we predicted the perceived impact of foreigners on Russian culture and Russian economy, respectively, as a function of education, subjective income, a series of dummy variables representing the person's position in the labor market, and

demographic control variables (age, gender, rural versus urban residence). To equations 2a and 2b (Table 3), we added the degree of religiosity, a series of dummy variables representing religious denomination, and a series of dummy variables representing the party for which the respondent had voted in the last election. Thus, while equations 1a and 1b examined the *competition* model, equations 2a and 2b also examined the *cultural* model.

(Table 2)

The results presented in Table 2 (model 1a) revealed that neither subjective income nor a person's position in the labor market exerted a significant effect on perceptions regarding the impact of foreigners on the culture of Russia. The only indicator of socio-economic status that did affect respondents' perceptions of foreigners' impact on culture was education. More educated Russians tended to perceive the impact of foreigners on cultural life in less negative terms, as implied by a negative and statistically significant coefficient of years of education ($b = -0.070$). However, the size of the effect was extremely small. Interpreting this result in terms of standard deviation, one can say that a change in years of education by one standard deviation tended to be associated with an average change in the perceived impact of only 0.2 points on an 11-point scale. In addition, the *competition* model barely explained any variance of the dependent variable 'perceived impact that foreigners exert on the culture life of Russia', as demonstrated by the R squared score ($R^2 = 0.024$). To establish a benchmark for evaluating the explanatory power of the *competition* model in Russia, we estimated similar *competition* models separately for each of 12 Western European countries that took part in ESS in 2006. The percentages of the explained variance in perceptions of the impact of foreigners on cultural life in Western European countries are meaningfully higher (the results presented in Appendix Table C).

The results presented in model 1b predicting the perception of the impact of foreigners on the Russian economy resembled those presented in model 1a in terms of the effects of individual attributes and in terms of the explained variance. The only difference was the statistically significant students' coefficient. Students tended to perceive the impact of foreigners on the economy in slightly less negative terms than did blue-collar workers, as expected by *competition* theoretical model.

In summary, the *competition* model poorly explains anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia (as reflected in negative perceptions of foreigners' impact on the country's cultural life and economy).

The results presented in Table 3 (models 2a and 2b) did not demonstrate any meaningful change in the effect of education. Apparently, conservative views did not mediate the effect of education on attitudes toward foreigners (as reflected in negative perceptions of foreigners' impact on the country's cultural life and economy). This finding may imply that in Russia more educated people did not necessarily hold more liberal views (as is usually suggested in the research on the topic in Western societies). In other words, education in Russia could not be seen as a proxy of liberal ideologies, but only as a proxy of socio-economic position.

(Table 3)

The results presented in model 2a also revealed that negative perceptions of the impact of foreigners on the cultural life in Russia were more pronounced among respondents who belonged to the Eastern Orthodox confession (titular religion in Russia) in comparison to those who do not see themselves as belonging to any religious denomination ($b=0.368$). However, there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions of foreigners' impact on the economy between adherents of Eastern Orthodoxy and those who do not belong to any religious denomination (model 2b). At the same time, Muslim residents of Russia tend to perceive the impact of foreigners on both cultural and economic spheres in less negative terms ($b = -0.976$ in model 2a and $b = -1.131$ in model 2b). The fact that substantive numbers of foreigners in Russia are Muslims can probably explain this finding in part.

In contrast to theoretical expectations, the degree of religiosity exerted a negative effect on anti-foreigner sentiments. Apparently, when controlling for religious denomination, the higher the level of religiosity among Russians, the lower the level of negative perceptions regarding the impact of foreigners on both cultural and economic spheres ($b = -0.081$ and $b = -0.093$ for models 2a and 2b, respectively). It should be noted, however, that the size of the effect was quite small. The average differences in the perceptions of the impact of foreigners on cultural and economic spheres between a respondent who

defined himself as 'not at all religious' and a respondent who defined himself as 'very religious' (maximum score on 0-10 scale of level of religiosity) were only 0.8 and 0.9 points, respectively, on an 11-point scale.

With regard to the effect of political orientation (reflected in party voted for in the last elections), the results obtained in model 2a did not reveal any statistically significant differences across voters of different parties in the perceptions of the impact of foreigners on Russian culture. Apparently, the level of anti-foreigner sentiment related to the cultural sphere among the voters for United Russia (the ruling centrist party) was not different from the level of such sentiment among voters of rather nationalistic parties (namely, Liberal Democratic Party of Russia or Rodina/Motherland) or from the level of such sentiment among voters for parties in which the idea of nationalism was traditionally less spread (namely, The Union of Right Forces and The Russian Democratic Party Yabloko). At the same time, it is interesting to note that negative perceptions regarding the impact of foreigners on Russian culture were more pronounced among Russians who did not vote at all or voted 'against all' in comparison with those voted for United Russia (as implied by significant coefficients $b = 0.498$ and $b = 0.721$). Likewise, negative perceptions regarding the impact of foreigners on the economy were also more pronounced among Russians who did not vote or voted 'against all' (model 2b). While no differences were found between voters of different parties with regard to perceptions of the impact of foreigners in the cultural sphere, voters for the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia or Rodina/Motherland tended to perceive the impact of foreigners on the economy in more negative terms than voters for United Russia ($b = 0.572$ in model 2b)⁴.

In general, it seems that perceptions of the impact of foreigners on the economy diverged slightly more across different social categories in Russian society than perceptions of the impact of foreigners on the cultural life. However, in the interpretation of all these results, the extremely low explanatory power of both the *competition* and *cultural* models in predicting of anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia should be taken into account⁵. At the same time, individual level attributes capturing conservative views succeed in explaining the slightly greater variance in anti-foreigner sentiments in Russia (as reflected in perceived foreigners' impact on both culture and economy) vis-à-vis individual level attributes capturing socio-

economic status (analysis testing contribution of each set of indicators to the explained variance are not presented).

Looking for *alternative explanations* of the divergence in anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia that the *competition* and *cultural* models do not really explain, we added to these two models a 'region of residence' variable as a series of dummy variables representing ten regions of Russia (the analysis is not presented). Residence in the Central region was defined as an omitted category in the models. Inclusion of the region of residence did not change the results in terms of the effect of other individual attributes; the explained variance increased only by 1.5%. The only significant difference in anti-foreigner sentiment was found between Russians who resided in the Central region and those who resided in the Volga region. Apparently, the level of anti-foreigner sentiment (as reflected in the perceived impact of foreigners on both culture and economy) among Volga residents was higher than that among Central region residents.

5. Further analysis: Brief look into 2012

Recent political science research stresses a turn in the Kremlin's rhetoric, toward nationalist resentment since the end of first decade of the 21st century (Breslauer, 2009; Smith, 2012; Rithcer and Hatch, 2013). This nationalist rhetoric, along with 2008 economic crisis, may have had a meaningful impact on anti-immigrant sentiment in Russia. In order to test whether the results reported above hold in light of these events, we replicated our descriptive analysis and estimation of *competition* model⁶ using the most recent European Social Survey data, collated at the end of 2012. Figure 1 displays mean values for the level of negative perceptions related to the impact of immigrants on the cultural and the economic life of Russia in 2006 and 2012.

(Figure 1)

The data show that, similarly to in 2006, in 2012 Russians viewed the impact of immigrants in the cultural sphere in slightly more negative terms than that in the economic sphere. The data also reveal that the level of anti-immigrant sentiment in 2012 did not increase at all in comparison to 2006. In our view, a

possible reason for lack of change in the volume of negative attitudes toward immigrants is a 'ceiling effect'. Anti-immigrant sentiment in Russia in 2006 was already so widespread that the change in the political elites' rhetoric since the end of first decade of the 21st century could not lead to a further stable rise in the volume of such sentiment. It is reasonable to suggest that the most fruitful ground for the diffusion of anti-immigrant and anti-minority attitudes was created in Russian society during the critical period of identity formation in the first years of the 21st century.

Re-estimating regression equations (presented earlier in Table 2) using 2012 ESS data allow us to test the robustness of our results as related to the *competition* model. The results (not presented) reveal that in 2012, the *competition* model barely explained any variance of the dependent variable 'perceived impact that foreigners exert on the culture life of Russia' ($R^2 = 0.026$). The variance of the dependent variable 'perceived impact that foreigners exert on the economy of Russia' is slightly bigger in 2012 in comparison to 2006, but still very small ($R^2 = 0.054$). In sum, similar to 2006, in 2012 the *competition* model poorly explains anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

In the past 20 years, Russia has undergone substantial changes in the social, political and economic spheres. According to the research literature, this context has constituted a fruitful ground for the wide crises of national identity that led Russian society to search anew for its national self and its boundaries. At the same time, Russia has become a popular destination for different groups of immigrants. Previous research revealed an extremely high level of anti-foreigner and anti-ethnic sentiments in Russia at the beginning of the 21st century and connected this high level of xenophobia to the processes of re-building a collective identity and national solidarity.

In this paper, we questioned whether the socio-economic position of individuals (as suggested by the *competition* model) and/or conservative views and ideologies (as suggested by the *cultural* model) could explain the anti-immigrant sentiment in post-socialist Russia. While these two sets of individual-level predictors of anti-foreigner sentiment has been widely investigated and proven in the context of

Western societies, the relevance of these models in the context of societies 'under change' have hardly been tested as yet.

Descriptive findings revealed that anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia was widespread: almost two thirds of respondents perceived the impact of immigrants on the cultural and economic life of Russia as negative (to one extent or another). As was expected, in light of the importance of the search for a new national identity in the period under study, negative perceptions of the impact of foreigners on the cultural sphere of Russian society was slightly more pronounced than negative perceptions of the impact of foreigners on the Russian economy.

Multivariate analysis clearly demonstrated that the *competition* model hardly explains the variation in the anti-foreigner attitudes of Russian citizens. The *cultural* model (*vis-à-vis competition* model) explains only a slightly greater variance in anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia. The results showed that anti-foreigner sentiment almost did not vary across supporters of different political parties. In other words, the effect of political orientation was not evident in Russia. At the same time, it is interesting to note that Russians who did not vote at all tended to express a higher level of anti-foreigner sentiment than those who voted for the ruling centrist party. We believe that the association between such political behavior as abstention from voting and a high level of negative attitudes toward foreigners deserves further investigation.

Contrary to theoretical expectations, Russians who viewed themselves as more religious expressed a lower level of anti-foreigner sentiment. However, anti-foreigner sentiment related to the cultural sphere was more pronounced among people who defined themselves as Eastern Orthodox than among those who did not identify with any religious confession. According to Warhola and Lehning (2007), Eastern Orthodox identity in post-socialist Russia is a sign of cultural rather than religious identity and self-identification as 'Eastern Orthodox' does not necessarily hold a theological meaning. Probably in the context of religious resurgence and the collective identification crisis, deliberate self-identification with a titular religious denomination (e.g., Eastern Orthodox), regardless of the level of religiosity, reflects more conservative views related to national identity and culture. This could be one of

the reasons as to why those defining themselves as Eastern Orthodox were more likely to believe that foreigners undermine the cultural life of Russia. In contrast, Muslim Russians were less likely to express anti-foreigner sentiment, in general. The fact that substantive numbers of foreigners in Russia are Muslims can probably partly explain this finding. In general, the results draw our attention to the importance of religious denomination in studies of the social mechanisms underlying anti-foreigner sentiments in post-socialist Russia in particular and in post-socialist countries in general.

We believe that our findings will contribute to the body of comparative cross-national research of anti-foreigner sentiment. As mentioned above, in this study, we used research models and measures that are well-established in Western countries, but we found that some of the measures (e.g., left-right political orientation) are not applicable in the Russian context; some individual attributes have the opposite effect to those in Western countries, some do not play any role, while others are important (e.g., religious denomination). Indeed, in studies of non-Western societies one should be careful when applying models and measures that have been developed and tested in the Western context, since they are not always sufficiently context sensitive.

In summary, the two sets of individual level predictors of anti-foreigner sentiment – socio-economic status (as suggested by *competition* theoretical model) and conservative views and ideologies (as suggested by *cultural* theoretical model) – that have been repeatedly proved in research in Western countries are not effective in predicting of anti-foreigner sentiment in Post-Socialist Russia. It seems that the social mechanisms underlying anti-foreigner sentiment in Western countries, which are characterized by stable regimes and relatively long immigration histories, do not play a significant role in the explanation of anti-foreigner sentiment in Post-Socialist Russia.

One of the possible reasons why *competition* and *cultural* theoretical models barely explain anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia derives from the phenomenological approach. In the explanation of the social mechanisms underlying the emergence of anti-immigrant sentiment, the phenomenological approach focuses on the role of the general attributes of a society rather than on the role of economic

vulnerability and conservative views of majority group members. According to this approach, the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment tends to occur in the context of a wide crisis of national identity, i.e., in the context in which the re-building of a collective identity and national solidarity are viewed as extremely important and even crucial (Imhof 1993; Wimmer 1997; Pedahzur and Yishai 1999). The search for a collective identity revives historical myths and beliefs that help to reassure the national self and its boundaries. This context inherently fuels negative attitudes toward the 'others' and creates a social climate in which advocates of foreigners are seen as traitors to national solidarity. Following the phenomenological approach, it is reasonable to suggest that the social context of Russian society, characterized by a deep crisis of national identity and by the extreme importance of national solidarity (Pain 2007; Warhola and Lehning 2007; Malinova 2010), dilutes socio-economic and ideological divergences among majority members with regard to anti-foreigner sentiment. Future research on the countries that experienced major social, economic and structural changes accompanied by a crisis of national identity may explore this issue further.

It is also important to note that, in addition to socio-economic and ideological characteristics, other individual-level explanations of anti-foreigner sentiment can be suggested. Although these explanations are beyond the scope of the present study, a brief discussion of them is in place here. Specifically, a part of *competition* and *cultural* theoretical models, contact theory (Allport 1954) provides us with an important explanation of variation in anti-foreigner sentiment at the individual level. According to this theory, the frequency of intergroup contacts is associated with the level of hostility between different ethnic, racial and social groups. Establishing personal contacts between natives and foreigners, especially if these contacts are positive and have friendship potential, is likely to decrease negative attitudes, prejudice, perceptions of threat and desire for social distance (Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Semyonov and Glikman 2009). Previous research also considered human values (Davidov et al. 2008), ethnic residential segregation (Semyonov and Glikman 2009) and the

perceived criminal threat associated with the presence of immigrants (Ceobanu 2011; Ivleva 2009; Semyonov, Gorodzeisky and Glikman, 2012) as additional sources of anti-foreigner sentiment.

We believe that there are three main promising lines for the future research on anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia in particular and in societies under change in general. In our view, the first line should concentrate on the impact of individual-level sources that have not yet been tested in such social context. The second line should examine anti-foreigner sentiment and their sources in other countries that have experienced major social and economic changes accompanied by a national identity crisis and a search for new national identity borders. The third line may concentrate on the impact of recent events, such as the Ukraine-Russia crisis, on xenophobia in Russia. Although our results show that the level of anti-foreigner sentiment in Russia was quite stable in the last decade (until 2012), it is reasonable to suggest that dramatic events such as the Crimea crisis – and the Kremlin's amplified nationalist and resentment rhetoric in light of this event – might not only fuel Russians' negative attitudes toward West, but also increase already high negative sentiments towards immigrants in Russia, especially toward immigrants from Near Abroad.

Notes

1. Russia is multi-ethnic society. According to the Russian Census, about 80% of the total population are ethnic Russians, while the others 20% comprises more than 150 ethnic groups. There are two distinct words in Russian language: for Russians, one of them, *Russkie*, refers to Russians as an ethnic group and the other, *Rossiane*, refers to Russians as citizens of Russia. The slogan "Russia for Russians" (*Rossia dlia Russkikh*) explicitly refers to Russians as ethnic group.
2. This number also includes ethnic Russians who arrived to Russia from the Former Soviet Republics.
3. The cases were also selected in such a way that there are valid values for at least one of the two dependent variables.
4. To test the robustness of the results referred to the *cultural* model, we estimated additional regressions predicting anti-foreigner sentiment as a function of variables pertaining to conservative views and ideologies (namely, level of religiosity, religious denomination and party voted for in the last election) and control demographic variables (namely, age, gender, rural versus urban residence). There were no meaningful changes in the effects of all variables capturing conservative views and ideologies (in comparison to models 2a and 2b).
5. To establish a benchmark for evaluating the explanatory power of the *general* model (in other words, *competition* and *cultural* models together) in Russia, we estimated models 2a and 2b separately for three Western European countries: Germany, UK and Sweden (using party voted for in the last elections as measure of political orientation and controlling for religious denomination). These three countries were chosen since each represents a relatively different welfare regime, immigrants' incorporation policy and composition of migrant population. The results show that the percentages of the explained variance in perceptions of foreigners' impact on cultural and economic life in the three Western European countries were meaningfully higher than that in Russia. In the models predicting perception of foreigners' impact on the economy in Germany, UK and Sweden R^2 range from 0.111 to 0.144; while in the models predicting perception of foreigners' impact on the culture ranges R^2 ranged from 0.127 to 0.177.
6. We replicate competitive model and not general one since changes in party list and canceling option to vote 'against all' in election between 2006 and 2012 does not allow full replication of this model.

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Table 1: Dependent Variables' Definitions and Descriptive Statistics, Mean (Std. Deviation) or Per cent

Variable's Name	Variable's Definition	Mean (Std. Deviation)	Per cent of Responses from 6 to10
Perceived Impact of Immigrants on Culture	Would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? (0-10, 0 Cultural life enriched, 10 Cultural life undermined)	6.6 (2.6)	62.8
Perceived Impact of Immigrants on Economy	Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries? (0-10, 0 good for the economy, 10 bad for the economy)	6.4 (2.6)	58.6

Table 2: Coefficients of Linear Regression Equations Predicting Perceived Impact of Immigrants on Russian Culture and Economy¹

	Perceived Impact on Culture (1a)		Perceived Impact on Economy (1b)	
	B (SE)	Beta	B (SE)	Beta
Years of education	-0.070* (0.023)	-0.086	-0.045* (0.024)	-0.055
Feeling difficult on present income	0.081 (0.135)	0.015	0.239* (0.136)	0.045
Labor Force Position ² :				
Professionals, Technicians and Managers	-0.272 (0.201)	-0.045	-0.342 (0.200)	-0.057
Clerks, Services and Sales Workers	0.245 (0.240)	0.029	0.226 (0.238)	0.027
Students	-0.459 (0.301)	-0.043	-0.747* (0.298)	-0.072
Unemployed	-0.188 (0.339)	-0.014	0.256 (0.339)	0.020
Not in the Labor Force	-0.331 (0.197)	-0.061	-0.132 (0.195)	-0.024
Constant	7.245* (0.408)		6.540* (0.411)	
R ²	0.024		0.035	

* p<0.05

1. Age, gender and residence area are included in the models (as control variables), the coefficients are not presented.

2. Blue Collar Workers is omitted category

Table 3: Coefficients of Linear Regression Equations Predicting Perceived Impact of Immigrants on Russian Culture and Economy¹

	Perceived Impact on Culture (2a)		Perceived Impact on Economy (2b)	
	B (SE)	Beta	B (SE)	Beta
Years of Education	-0.072* (0.023)	-0.088	-0.049* (0.024)	-0.059
Feeling Difficult on Present Income	0.086 (0.134)	0.016	0.216 (0.134)	0.041
Labor Force Position ² :				
Professionals, Technicians and Managers	-0.270 (0.199)	-0.045	-0.314 (0.198)	-0.052
Clerks, Services and Sales Workers	0.212 (0.237)	0.025	0.199 (0.235)	0.024
Students	-0.584 (0.301)	-0.055	-0.811* (0.296)	-0.078
Unemployed	-0.346 (0.338)	-0.026	0.067 (0.337)	0.005
Not in the Labor Force	-0.330 (0.196)	-0.060	-0.112 (0.193)	-0.021
Religious Denomination ³ :				
Eastern Orthodoxy	0.368* (0.156)	0.071	0.205 (0.155)	0.040
Islam	-0.976* (0.286)	-0.091	-1.131* (0.286)	-0.106
Religiosity Degree	-0.081* (0.029)	-0.085	-0.093* (0.029)	-0.098
Political Orientation ⁴ :				
Voted Union of the Right Forces or Yabloko	0.275 (0.418)	0.016	-0.122 (0.416)	-0.007
Voted CPRF	0.258 (0.228)	0.030	0.308 (0.228)	0.036
Voted LDPR or Rodina	0.381 (0.273)	0.035	0.597* (0.274)	0.055
Voted Against All	0.721* (0.314)	0.057	0.972** (0.316)	0.076
Voted but Did Not Report a Party	0.080 (0.218)	0.010	0.307 (0.216)	0.037
Did Not Vote on the Last Election	0.498* (0.159)	0.091	0.403* (0.159)	0.074
Constant	7.173* (0.454)		6.647* (0.454)	
R2	0.052		0.068	

* p<0.05

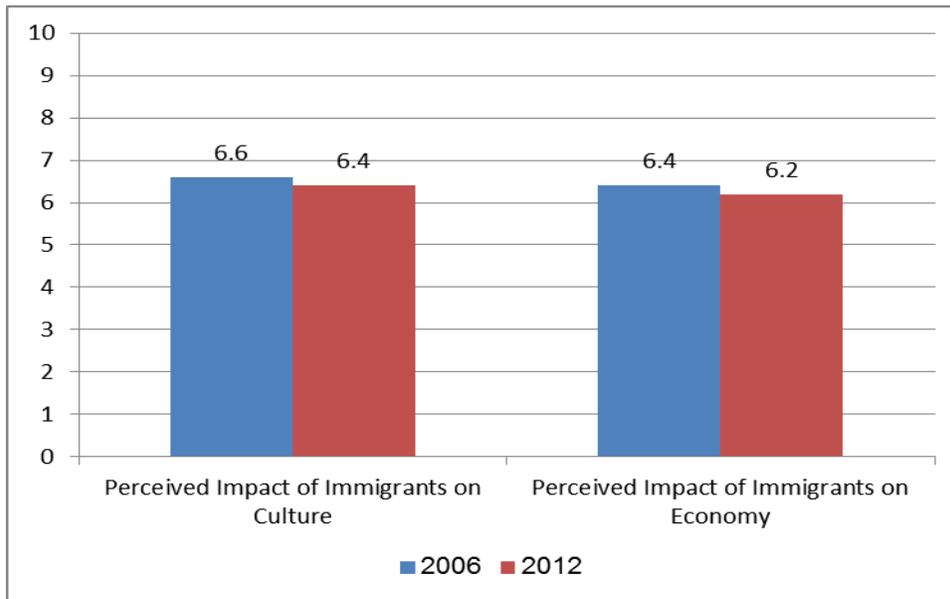
1. Age, gender and residence area are included in the models (as control variables), the coefficients are not presented.

2. Blue Collar Workers is omitted category;

3. No Denomination is omitted category;

4. United Russia is omitted category.

Figure 1: Mean Values for Perceived Impact of Immigrants on Russian Culture and Economy, by Year (highest number refers to most negative views)



Appendix A: Perceived Impact that Immigrants Exert on Culture and Economy of the Host Country (0 – positive; 10-negative), Mean (Std. Deviation) or Per cent

	Perceived Impact on Culture			Perceived Impact on Economy		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Per cent of Responses from 6 to10	Mean	Std. Deviation	Per cent of Responses from 6 to10
<i>Russian Federation</i>	6.625	(2.564)	62.8	6.364	(2.562)	58.6
Austria	5.294	(2.528)	41.6	4.843	(2.427)	32.4
Belgium	4.309	(2.240)	25.2	5.425	(2.203)	41.8
Switzerland	3.997	(2.319)	22.3	4.130	(2.13)	20.0
Germany	4.433	(2.396)	27.3	5.266	(2.361)	39.4
Denmark	3.918	(2.401)	22.1	4.628	(2.276)	29.0
France	4.903	(2.754)	37.0	5.388	(2.388)	39.9
United Kingdom	5.407	(2.538)	46.5	5.663	(2.477)	47.8
Netherlands	3.984	(1.948)	19.3	4.934	(1.909)	32.8
Norway	4.143	(2.222)	24.4	4.493	(2.107)	26.5
Sweden	3.097	(2.203)	11.9	4.655	(2.244)	29.7
Ireland	4.170	(2.476)	27.2	4.030	(2.459)	23.7
Finland	2.909	(1.862)	7.2	4.608	(2.160)	28.0

Appendix B: Independent Variables' Definitions and Descriptive Statistics, Mean (Std. Deviation) or Per cent

Variable's Name	Variable's Definition	Mean (Std. Deviation) or Per cent
Age	In Years	45.2 (17.6)
Gender	Men	41.5
	Women	58.5
Residential Area	Living in a rural area	27.2
	Living in an urban area	72.8
Years of Education	In Years	12.3 (3.1)
Subjective Income	Feeling difficulties on present income	63.8
	Feeling comfortable on present income	36.2
Labor Force Position	Professionals, technicians and managers	22.8
	Clerks, services and sales workers	10.6
	Blue collar workers	22.1
	Students	7.2
	Unemployed	4.0
	Not in the labor force	33.3
Religious Denomination	Eastern Orthodoxy	42.1
	Islam	6.3
	No denomination	51.1
Religiosity Degree	Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are? (0-10, 0 Not at all religious, 10 Very religious)	4.2 (2.7)
Political Orientation	United Russia	33.2
(Party Voted on the Last	Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)	9.4
Elections in December	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) or Rodina/Motherland	5.8
2003)	Union of Right Forces and The Russian Democratic Party Yabloko	2.3
	Voted against all	4.4
	Voted but did not report for which party	10.8
	Did not vote on the last election	34.0

Note: The cases were selected in a way that there are valid values for at least one of the variables: Perceived Impact on Culture or Perceived Impact on Economy.

Appendix C: Explained Variance (R Square) by *Competition* Model (**1a and 1b**) Predicting Perceived Impact of Immigrants on Culture and Economy

	Perceived Impact on Culture	Perceived Impact on Economy
<i>Russian Federation</i>	0.024	0.035
Austria	0.074	0.073
Belgium	0.138	0.119
Switzerland	0.129	0.101
Germany	0.106	0.092
Denmark	0.121	0.115
France	0.159	0.167
United Kingdom	0.112	0.103
Netherland	0.092	0.101
Norway	0.113	0.107
Sweden	0.143	0.119
Ireland	0.090	0.111
Finland	0.121	0.101