

**University of Alberta**

**Competitive Discourse in an Imitational Democracy:  
The Multifaceted Image of the Opponents  
in the Online Materials of Russian Political Parties and Leaders**

by

Artëm Andreevich Medvedev

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Slavic Linguistics

Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies

©Artëm Andreevich Medvedev

Spring 2012

Edmonton, Alberta

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Libraries to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only. Where the thesis is converted to, or otherwise made available in digital form, the University of Alberta will advise potential users of the thesis of these terms.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis and, except as herein before provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatsoever without the author's prior written permission.

## **ABSTRACT**

In contemporary Russia, the Internet serves as the most diverse and open platform of sharing and contrasting ideas. While the most life-like imitational democracy elements do manifest themselves to a limited extent in the mainstream print and electronic media, only online do all political forces and leaders have the opportunity of reaching a wide audience and disseminating seemingly uncensored information. This thesis analyzes the discourse of Russia's political parties and figures through the prism of representation strategies. Particular focus is made on the ways Russian politicians represent themselves indirectly, through their opponents. Through the adaptation of Teun van Dijk's racist discourse studies and Buell and Sigelman's study of negative electoral campaigns to a wider phenomenon, it is possible to disclose such strategies as de-positivization/de-normalization, de-patriotization, de-personification, de-veracity, de-politization, de-contemporarization, de-intellectualization, de-ability, de-lawfulness, de-independence, de-morality/de-civility, and de-superiority. Data includes the materials from the websites of such diverse political forces as the self-proclaimed communists, nationalists, liberal-democrats, socialists and democrats, as well as the websites of individual political leaders. The thesis aims at disclosing an important aspect of political and inter-group discourse by means of online media within the context of post-Soviet social transformation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This thesis was only made possible by the extraordinary patience and invaluable advice of my academic supervisor, Prof. Alla Nedashkivska, and the love and support of my family. I thank them with all my heart.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW .....	1
1.1. Russian post-Soviet transition .....	2
1.2. Vladimir Putin and the current situation in Russia .....	4
1.3. Russian political parties and leaders .....	7
1.4. Elections and parliamentarism in Russia .....	9
1.5. Russian political Internet and the role of media.....	11
1.6. Competitive political discourse .....	12
1.7. Intended contribution of the thesis .....	15
1.8. Thesis structure .....	16
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY .....	17
2.1 Research Questions .....	17
2.2 Theoretical framework and general aim of the study .....	17
2.3 Corpus .....	22
2.4 Coding and analytical process .....	26
CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS .....	29
3.1 DE-PERSONIFICATION.....	30
3.1.1 Opponents as animals and inanimate objects.....	30
3.1.2 De-personification summary.....	35
3.2 DE-ABILITY .....	35
3.2.1 Opponents as weak and losing .....	36
3.2.2 Opponents as tired and asleep.....	39
3.2.3 Opponents as mentally ill.....	40
3.2.4 Opponents as dead .....	47
3.2.5 De-ability summary .....	48
3.3 DE-MORALITY/DE-CIVILITY .....	48
3.3.1 Opponents as envious and cowardly .....	49

3.3.2 Opponents as impudent and rude .....	52
3.3.3 Opponents as intolerant to dissent .....	54
3.3.4 Opponents as uncaring and selfish.....	57
3.3.5 Opponents as cynical, hypocritical, and immoral .....	60
3.3.7 Summary of de-morality/de-civility .....	67
3.4 DE-VERACITY .....	68
3.4.1 Opponents as liars .....	68
3.4.2 Opponents as spreading rumours, myths and propaganda.....	70
3.4.3 Opponents as populists engaging in rhetoric only .....	75
3.4.4 De-veracity summary .....	79
3.5 DE-LAWFULNESS .....	80
3.5.1 Opponents as violating the law .....	80
3.5.2 Opponents as corrupt .....	82
3.5.3 Opponents as violent and dangerous criminals.....	86
3.5.4 Opponents as violators of the political process.....	89
3.5.5 De-lawfulness summary .....	92
3.6 DE-INTELLECTUALIZATION .....	92
3.6.1 Opponents as stupid and not intelligent .....	93
3.6.2 Opponents as lacking education and skill .....	95
3.6.3 Opponents as against common sense and out of touch with reality.....	97
3.6.4 Opponents as mistaken and not learning from mistakes.....	100
3.6.5 De-intellectualization summary .....	102
3.7 DE-CONTEMPORARIZATION .....	103
3.7.1 Opponents as prehistoric, medieval and archaic .....	103
3.7.2 Opponents as relics of the Soviet era .....	106
3.7.3 De-contemporarization summary.....	109
3.8 DE-POLITIZATION .....	109

3.8.1 Opponents as non-political or imitating politics .....	110
3.8.2 Opponents as unstable in their views .....	114
3.8.3 Opponents identified through prefixes and words like ‘so-called’ .....	117
3.8.4 Opponents as comical elements .....	119
3.8.5 Opponents as PR-oriented.....	122
3.8.6 Opponents as engaged in business instead of politics.....	124
3.8.7 De-politization summary.....	125
3.9 DE-INDEPENDENCE .....	125
3.9.1 Opponents as puppets and minions.....	126
3.9.2 Opponents as parts of the establishment .....	130
3.9.3 Opponents as all the same .....	139
3.9.4 De-independence summary .....	141
3.10 DE-SUPERIORITY .....	142
3.10.1 Opponents as shrinking in popularity .....	142
3.10.2 Opponents as facing a crisis.....	144
3.10.3 De-superiority summary .....	145
3.11 DE-PATRIOTIZATION .....	146
3.11.1 Opponents as hateful and treacherous towards the country .....	146
3.11.2 Opponents as hateful towards the people and Russophobic .....	148
3.11.3 Opponents as oriented abroad.....	152
3.11.4 De-patriotization summary .....	153
3.12 DE-POSITIVIZATION/DE-NORMALIZATION .....	154
3.12.1 General de-positivization/de-normalization.....	155
3.12.2 Opponents as monopolizing politics .....	156
3.12.3 Opponents as the political fringe .....	157
3.12.4 Opponents as extremists, radicals and fundamentalists .....	159
3.12.5 Opponents as anti-democratic.....	163

3.12.6 Opponents as fascists and Stalinists.....	166
3.12.7 Opponents as not an alternative but those that need to be defeated..	170
3.12.8 De-positivization/de-normalization summary.....	172
3.13 ANALYSIS SUMMARY .....	173
CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION.....	176
4.1 The roles played by the Opponent .....	177
4.1.1 The Opponent as a distorting mirror .....	178
4.1.2 The Opponent as a permanent scapegoat.....	179
4.1.3 The Opponent as a scarecrow .....	180
4.1.4 The Opponent as a distracting element .....	180
4.1.5 The Opponent as ‘the old politics’ .....	181
4.1.6 Overview of Opponent’s roles .....	182
4.2 The constructed political system.....	182
4.2.1 Manipulations and fraud .....	183
4.2.2 Corruption and violence.....	183
4.2.3 Immorality and decay.....	184
4.2.4 Conspiracy and imitation .....	184
4.2.5 Overview of the depicted system .....	184
4.3 Summary .....	185
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS .....	187
5.1 Summary of the findings.....	187
5.2 Wider implications.....	192
5.3 Limitations and venues for further research .....	193
Works Cited .....	197
APPENDIX A: Details on corpus selection.....	203
APPENDIX B: Details on sources in the corpus .....	206
APPENDIX C: Example of coding and analysis .....	209

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Total number of pages from each of the data sources.....	25
Table 2: Overview of the system of strategies.....	28



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Given the announcement in September 2011 that Vladimir Putin will be returning to his Kremlin office in the 2012 presidential election, the issue of post-Soviet or post-communist transition in Russia becomes more difficult to investigate through previously constructed frameworks of democratization. As two of the foundations necessary for the growth and development of democracy are a robust party system and the existence of healthy, open, and diverse political discourse, including the inter-party discourse in an attempt at influencing public opinion, the current project looks at the ways the major political forces of today's Russia express themselves. In particular, it explores the discourse of contemporary Russian political parties and leaders with focus on the strategies employed for the representation of the Opponents<sup>1</sup> in electronic texts. The thesis analyzes the materials<sup>2</sup> that Russia's political forces provide to the public on the Internet (the data corpus covering a 6-month period from September 2009 to February 2010), taking into account the growing influence of this medium in the general political context of Putin's Russia. In its approach to data, the project relies on a number of frameworks in regards to the representation of Others while putting this discussion within the scope of post-communist transition studies. The theoretical and methodological basis of the thesis is formed by the research of Teun van Dijk into racist discourse and the negative campaigning analysis by Buell and

---

<sup>1</sup> As the issue under study is competitive discourse, the terms 'Opponent' and 'Other' are used interchangeably throughout the thesis. All of the 'Others' to which a political party or leader refers are considered, for the purposes of the project, to be the Opponents with whom the party or leader competes for the attention and support of the population.

<sup>2</sup> The materials include only the texts, which may include commentaries, interviews, point-form notes and articles. Audiovisual materials are excluded from the current project.

Sigelman. It is of special interest to the current study to investigate the features of competitive political discourse within the structures of reportedly managed democracy. While discussing the discursive and representational phenomena in relation to Russia's political parties and leaders, the thesis aims to contribute to a new understanding of the events and socio-political structures in post-Soviet Russia that would not rely as heavily on the transition-to-democracy model. The discussion begins with an overview of Russia's post-Soviet transition in order to place the analysis below into a socio-political context.

### **1.1. Russian post-Soviet transition**

The question of post-Soviet or post-communist transition has occupied wide attention since the so-called third wave of democratization. This wave is believed to have started during the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, included the collapse of one-party regimes throughout Central and Eastern Europe and led to the breakup of such countries as Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the USSR.

In regards to Russia, the question of transition from one socio-political and economic system to another itself is a point of debate. Ostrow, Satarow and Khakamada in *The Consolidation of Dictatorship in Russia*, for example, state that "Journalists and academics have hailed Russia's transition to democracy, and continue to cling to that framework. But Russia's leaders have consistently made decisions that have prevented rather than promoted democratic development, and the political system they have produced is not democracy, but dictatorship" (125).

In a similar light, Resnianskaia in *Labirinty Demokratizatsii* 'Labyrinths of

Democratization' discusses the commonly used 'transition formula', which includes three vaguely defined stages of 'opening', 'breakthrough' and 'consolidation' with much scepticism. She underlines that "the linear nature of such an analytical outline of transition/change blocked out the objectively existing differences [...] between the states making the thrust towards democracy" (247). Sakwa, on the contrary, states that "to all intents and purposes 'the transition' in Russia is largely over" (474). This idea is supported by Shleifer and Treisman, who conclude that "Russia has become a typical middle-income, capitalist democracy" (172). Importantly, the latter two scholars find themselves in relative minority in their evaluation of the post-Soviet transition as a success.

Most other researchers underline that this transition has either failed or stalled. This general line of thinking is manifest in White's assessment that "By the mid-1990s, the suggestion that all former authoritarian countries were simply at particular stages of the 'democracy continuum' and that [they], given time, would reach the end goal of 'fully developed' liberal democracy, began to be questioned. It had become apparent that some countries might, in fact, become 'hybrid regimes' containing elements of both democratic and authoritarian systems" (David White 184). Furman also suggests that the initial transition logic was deeply flawed by the idea that its goal was democratic. He underlines that in the Russian example "in the course of this system's evolution it was the elements of democracy that were eliminated" (9), implying that the grassroots pro-democracy enthusiasm was extinguished through deliberate efforts at democratization. As

Lee reports, 61 percent of respondents to a nation-wide survey in 2006 felt regret for the collapse of the Soviet Union (170).

Serious differences of opinion can also be seen among scholars in regards to the reasons for this failure. Colton and McFaul suggest that the movement towards democracy was unsuccessful because the “leadership of the process changed hands for the first time since it began, with a subsequent shift in course” (3). In their opinion, it is Vladimir Putin’s succession of Boris Yeltsin in 1999 that is to blame. Sakwa, in part contradicting himself, notes that “the apparent democratic consensus among the political elite in the early post-Soviet period soon dissolved and gave way to complex interaction between democratization and authoritarianism” (470), thus including Yeltsin and his team into the group of culprits. Sakwa’s opinion is shared by Ostrow, Satarow and Khakamada, who point out that the reasons for the transition’s failure “lay in decisions made when communism collapsed and in decisions made at each critical moment for the future of Russia’s political system after the collapse” (3). While no common ground is visible in regards to the beginning of the democratic deficit in Russia, the evaluations of the current state of Russian democracy display a number of significant overlaps.

## **1.2. Vladimir Putin and the current situation in Russia**

Most researchers of the situation in Russia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century underline the central role of one political figure, Vladimir Putin, in changing the country and its socio-economic system. In one of the most direct accusations found, Ostrow, Satarow

and Khakamada, while describing Putin's Russia, underline that Russia today can be characterized as a dictatorship due to the system's dependence on a single individual (101). Regarding Putin's past, Shlapentokh notes that "former KGB members adjusted to the new reality of post-Soviet Russia much better and faster than intellectuals and the Party apparatchiks" (38). Due to this, Putin is described as having no real ideology, but as "one of the most cynical politicians in Russian history" (Shlapentokh 38). Smyth et al. stress that already "in Putin's first term [as President], Russia moved squarely into a category of countries in the 'grey zone' between democratic and authoritarian regimes" (119). The system constructed and fostered by Putin is called 'Putinism' by Gorenburg, who adds that Putinism is a political structure in which politics and private and commercial interests are deeply interrelated. Putinism is also "not merely conservative but is designed specifically to block the development of the rest of society and to prevent its modernization" (3). This last statement is especially important for evaluating the concept of 'modernization' fostered by Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's third president (2008 to time of writing, i.e. November 2011). The relation between these two figures is aptly outlined by Kulik: "Medvedev was brought to power by Putin as a member of his team and his 'chosen successor' under the condition he takes the office of the prime minister and, thus, continues to influence the state policy as 'national leader'" (138). Rose and Mishler stress Medvedev's complicity in the processes that were taking place before his term in office by reminding the readers that Medvedev used to be Putin's assistant in his various roles (808).

Importantly, in the above studies, it is usually only Putin's name that comes up in evaluations of the state of Russian democracy today.

There is no precise definition for the socio-political system of contemporary Russia. The Kremlin introduced the term 'sovereign democracy' in 2006 (Ruutu 108), but it was not well received even within the ruling United Russia party. Several terms that are more widely used are "highly managed democracy" (Gorenburg 4), "authoritarian rule" (Shlapentokh 33), "authoritarian dominant party regime" (Remington 959), "imitational democracy"<sup>3</sup> (Furman 97, Resnianskaia 252) and "semi, pseudo, partial, virtual, managed, manipulated, controlled, authoritarian, or guided [democracy]" (David White 185). The hybrid oxymoronic character of many of these tags leads Ostrow, Satarov and Khakamada to state that "if it is managed, it is not democracy" (101), while Smyth et al. underline that the name does not matter, because "whether we call Russia's political system managed- or sovereign democracy, or something else, the fact is that both formal and informal institutions have closed within-system opportunities to contest for power in the competitive arena" (134). As a result, as Andrieu reports, a large number of opinion polls conducted during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century indicated growing frustration and disillusionment of Russians with democracy (200). The weakness of the Russian party system is frequently said to be one of the main manifestations of the present political situation.

---

<sup>3</sup> Imitational democracy, a term that appears to describe the contemporary Russian political system most accurately, denotes the co-existence of democratic institutions, such as elections, parliament and political parties, with authoritarian practice that prevents these institutions from functioning appropriately.

### **1.3. Russian political parties and leaders**

The importance of a healthy system of political parties to the functioning of democracy is underlined by numerous authors, as “parties help to engage citizens in the political process on a continuing basis” (Stephen White 7). In the context of deep socio-political transition, “political parties and [...] stable partisanship are essential for successful democratic consolidation. Parties incorporate voters and elites into the new state structure and also transform elections into mechanisms of accountability and responsiveness” (Smyth 209). Russia, however, is said to have a party system that is virtual, dysfunctional, and irrelevant to the stabilization of democracy (cf. Lavery 377 and Riggs 142). While White suggests that the main reason for this situation lies in the “long experience of Communist rule” that “choked off the development of a civil society” (Stephen White 19), most scholars focus on Putin’s role in the crisis. Gel’man, for example, states directly that “party competition – the very heart of democratic politics – virtually disappeared in Putin’s Russia” (913). The artificially-created United Russia party, which has become the dominant force of Russian party politics, is said to be a hindering factor in the development of the country, as well as the central element of corruption, intimidation and power abuse (Konitzer and Wegren 509, Makarova 125 and Reuter 296). Simulation of political competition through the creation of other government-supported parties while preserving the status of United Russia is, in March’s opinion, part of the created “form of authoritarianism” (March, “Managing Opposition” 507). All of this is said to be aptly used by Putin for “assured passage of any legislation he proposes” (Remington 959), as United

Russia holds constitutional majority in both chambers of Russia's Federal Assembly. Knox et al. underline that while "the phenomenon of parties of power has been a consistent feature of post-Soviet Russian political development[;] such parties do not significantly assist the development of Russian civil society, because the state now occupies positions that civil society agents should hold" (4). The United Russia phenomenon is further complicated by the fact that while it is frequently considered the ruling party, it does not form even a third of the federal government (Rose and Mishler 815). March explains that "the crucial difference between the party of power and other hegemonic parties is that [...] in the former the source of authority lies entirely outside the party (in presidential structures)" ("Managing Opposition" 510).

Two other major parties, A Just Russia and the LDPR, are ascribed the status of client parties of the Kremlin (Lavery 377). This label is further supported by Peregudov, who calls A Just Russia "a second leg – [...] a political competitor that might force United Russia to generate the dynamism and energy that it lacks" (82). March notes the appearance of "pseudo-parties" that are "ideologically incoherent, weakly institutionalized, with little stable connection to a mass membership, let alone a wider electorate, and regularly among the least trusted of all social institutions" (March, "Russian Parties" 370). Russia's largest opposition party, the Communists, is described as a force whose "leadership was very willing to become integrated in the Russian political system" (Malfliet 60), while LDPR is said to fill the "convenient but largely symbolic role of an opposition party without real power" (Shirayev 166). As Slider acutely notes, "the Kremlin has no



interest in creating a truly independent political party with the structures and mechanisms needed to become more fully functional and capable of enforcing its internal discipline” (272). Taking all of these facts into account, it is hardly surprising that “the [Russian] public generally regards parties with scepticism or even hostility” (Stephen White 19). Two other factors influencing the low evaluation of the Russian political system in regards to democracy are election characteristics and the peculiarity of Russian parliamentarism, discussed below.

#### **1.4. Elections and parliamentarism in Russia**

The term that appears most often in discussions of the Russian electoral process is “administrative resource, which can be thought of as extralegal or informal means of securing electoral success” (Lavery 373). Smyth et al. call the elections in contemporary Russia “a fig leaf”, which is used to conceal the regime’s authoritarian character (134). Myagkov et al. underline that “there is a considerable body of evidence to convince any but the most die-hard Kremlin apologist that elections in Russia are anything but fraud-free” (25). The same group of scholars state that “fraud and the wholesale subversion of democratic process has only increased in Russia following Putin’s rise to power” (Myagkov 25). With the notable exception of an information booklet entitled *Demokratizatsiia Rossii* ‘Democratization of Russia’, produced by prominent Russian political scientist and senior adviser to the presidential administration Gleb Pavlovsky, most of the studies of the Russian electoral system agree that it is deeply flawed. Smyth goes as far as to say that the Russian example “illustrates how elections can generate conditions that lead to authoritarian revival” (210).

Furman notes that the government cannot do away with elections altogether, as “the authorities in an imitation democracy<sup>4</sup> system do not have other sources of legitimization except for elections, a popular vote” (96). A number of detailed studies of the quantitative data from the elections in Russia since 1993 demonstrate that the process is “distorted by asymmetries in financial, administrative and power resources” (Sakwa 140) and characterized by “falsification, coercion, and the arbitrary disqualification of candidates” (Fish 29). The severely reduced electoral competition is supplemented by a weak parliament, which is “no longer an arena for confrontation between the president and the opposition, but an instrument for legislative endorsement of nearly any initiative that was offered by the President” (Malfliet 57). A number of authors point to Putin’s amendments to the rules by which the State Duma is elected, such as the move towards 100% party list elections with a high threshold required for a party to enter parliament, as well as somewhat draconian measures to prevent the formation of regional parties, a setup “which favors big parties, the biggest of which is Putin’s own United Russia” (Ruutu 107). Shiraev provides information on the perception of these changes by the population, such as the fact that 69 percent of Russians in 2007 believed “that fraud and manipulation are possible during parliamentary elections” (185). The status of the traditional media and the Internet in today’s political Russia continues the discussion of the general context of the thesis.

---

<sup>4</sup> Based on the conducted review of literature, the terms ‘imitation democracy’ and ‘imitational democracy’ are used interchangeably.

### **1.5. Russian political Internet and the role of media**

In their criticism of Vladimir Putin, Ostrow, Satarow and Khakamada underline that he “has overseen a relentless and often violent crackdown of independent media and has eliminated all independent national television media, restoring control to the Kremlin” (3). Other scholars note that the ‘imitational’ character of the Russian media space follows the same pattern in the political system: “the democratic facade does not guarantee the functioning of the main political institutions with adherence to democratic principles. ‘Facade-ity’ is also visible in the operation of mass media, which, on the one hand, have constitutional guarantees of independence from the state, but are, on the other hand, controlled by it, especially in the socio-political print media sector” (Resnianskaia 252). A peculiar change in the Russian media in the past decade is the fact that the traditional media have “switched to the entertainment genre, putting all the critical issues outside the public sphere” (Voinova 267). This is supplemented by the Kremlin’s attempts at generating a similar ‘switch’ online, which have led to the creation of numerous Internet ‘information portals’ that contain minimal political information in the context of a wide range of entertainment materials (cf. Morozov 20).

Scholarly attitudes towards the role of the Internet in contemporary Russian society differ. Shiraev, for instance, stresses that 67 percent of Russians “never use the internet”, as opposed to only 16 percent that use it almost daily (199). He also notes that “Russia does not censor the web” (Shiraev 199), leaving it as a rare platform for social and political debate in the country. Voinova’s opinion is that

“the Internet has become an independent stage for political discourse and mobilization of the audience within political processes” which has paramount importance to the functioning of the remaining elements of Russian civil society (273). In terms of political mobilization, March, based on research done a decade ago, notes that “party adoption of ICTs in Russia is still at a rudimentary stage” (March, “Russian Parties” 388). No studies are found that would specifically explore the role of the Internet in Russian party politics at the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is one of the aims of the present research project. In light of the role of the Internet in the mobilization of public discontent following the 2011 election in Russia<sup>5</sup> and, more broadly, other mass protests of that year in such countries as Lybia, Egypt, and Tunisia among others, a new perspective into the importance of online communication within the context of imitational democracy regimes is made urgent.

### **1.6. Competitive political discourse**

The current study relies on prior research in what may be generally called competitive political discourse, i.e. the discourse of political participants that underlines their competition with others. As Soubeyran concludes, “there are two ways of winning a competition: by increasing one’s own chances of winning or by decreasing one’s opponents’ chances of winning” (337). It is the second approach

---

<sup>5</sup> In December 2011, as hundreds of YouTube clips were posted providing evidence of electoral fraud, ballot stuffing, voter intimidation, and other violations, social networking websites acted as the main space for the organization of mass rallies throughout Russia. Two most notable rallies calling for fair elections, which took place in Moscow on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, attracted up to 70,000 and 100,000 participants, which made them the largest protests since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

that is of particular interest here. Carraro, Gawronski and Castelli note the increase in the use of negative approaches to politics in the past two decades (453). Attempting to explain the prevalence of negative campaigning, Buttice and Stone come to the conclusion that “negativity can be more effective because negative information is often more memorable” and “because most individuals make their voting decisions on relatively little information, tactics that increase the likelihood that a candidate’s message is remembered may be effective” (3). Other reasons may lie in the fact that, according to Patrut, up to 70% of voters do not think about ideology when voting, and, as a result, the parties and candidates in elections do not consider information about their ideological stance to be important in a campaign (53). Interestingly, while Buttice and Stone state that “negative campaigning serves a useful purpose in a contemporary representative democracy” (10), Carraro et al. underline how “generalized negative perceptions may create a halo of negativism around the political field, strengthening the association between negativity and politics” (462). There is also disagreement in regards to the effect of negativity on the source of such messages. The effect can be unclear (Carraro et al. 454) or detrimental (Buttice and Stone 3). Importantly, the aforementioned research into competitive political discourse, done through the prism of political science, media studies and communication studies, is based on the developed democracies as opposed to countries undergoing post-communist transition.

In regards to Russian political discourse specifically, Issers, in her study of political insults, notes that “denigration of the opponent is a rather traditional

method of political struggle” (51). The scholar constructs a theoretical system of speech tactics directed at the opponent, ranging from direct and indirect insults to debunking the opponent’s rhetoric (Issers 53). A similar system is briefly mentioned by Sivenkova in a study within the field of discourse analysis that focuses specifically on attacks on the opponents’ truthfulness. Using Issers’ study as its foundation, Romanova builds another system for the study of print election materials of Russian parties in the 2003 federal election through the prism of linguistic analysis and communication studies. Interestingly, Romanova comes to the conclusion that “each tactic is efficient, as they are placed within the system according to the increased strength of their impact” (10). Analyzing the data, Romanova states that United Russia “rarely resorts to defamation strategies” (9), which is of interest to the current project.

Within the general wider field of political discourse analysis, the current project relies on a number of studies that deal with both data and subject matter close to or partly overlapping with the corpus of study and research questions here. Of particular interest to the thesis is the understanding among discourse analysts working with the data from developed democracies that the employment of negative tactics as opposed to positive Self-representation<sup>6</sup> is on the rise. The prior studies on Russian political discourse reflect negativity as one of the approaches to this type of communication but fail either to observe the growing

---

<sup>6</sup> It needs to be mentioned that while the Self is not the direct object of study here, the notion of Self inevitably remains in the analysis of competitive discourse. Any action against the Opponents may reflect on the Self and any attack on an Opponent’s features has as its inherent aim, in a democratic system, the attainment of electoral victory over the Opponents.

influence of this approach in Russian politics or to reconcile the role of competitive discourse with the reported lack of democracy in the country. It is the current project's aim to address this discrepancy.

### **1.7. Intended contribution of the thesis**

Relying on a broad scope of prior studies in such diverse fields as discourse analysis, political science, sociology, and media studies, this thesis seeks to integrate their findings in its analysis of the representational strategies employed by key players in the contemporary Russian political arena. It appears that while the most recent discussions of the state of Russian democracy agree in giving it a low grade in terms of development of civil society, public discourse and political parties, no explanation is provided for the presence and possible consequences of rich competitive political discourse on the Russian internet. Namely, the existing studies appear to simultaneously describe a political system in which debate and competition are non-existent or irrelevant and point to examples when such debate and competition are clearly visible and important to large groups of people. The underlined rudimentary character of the Russian political sphere online comes into conflict with the noted growing importance of the Russian Internet as a platform of free socio-political debate. The thesis aims at understanding this duality by including into its corpus the discourses of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition parties as well as the party of power. By specifically focusing on a period between election campaigns, this project eliminates the electoral campaign factor from the pertinent causes of competitive discourse in

the materials of parties and leaders. In its approach, the thesis is guided strictly by the collected data.

### **1.8. Thesis structure**

The current chapter discusses the general socio-political framework and the pertinent prior research that serve as the context of the present study. The following Chapter 2 presents the methodological and theoretical framework of the thesis, as well as details on the corpus and research questions. Chapter 3 constitutes the core of the thesis and offers an analysis of the corpus of data through the prism of the described methodological base. Chapter 4 elaborates on the results of the analysis and presents a discussion of the study's findings. Chapter 5 provides concluding remarks in regards to the wider implications of the findings, limitations and venues for further research of the subject matter. These chapters are supplemented with a number of appendices that give extra information on several aspects important to the project.



## **CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY**

The current chapter discusses the project's research questions, corpus and theoretical framework. It then provides details on the employed analytical system.

### **2.1 Research Questions**

The object of study is constituted by the texts published by the participants of the Russian political process on the Internet. Drawing on the experience of prior studies, the thesis aims at contributing to a more complete view of the inner workings of contemporary Russia within the wider context of post-communist transition. The following research questions are set for the thesis:

- 1) What system of discursive strategies of Other-representation is employed by Russia's major political parties and leaders?
- 2) What general roles are ascribed to the Opponents within this discourse?
- 3) What view of the current political situation in Russia do the parties and leaders construct through this discourse?

The research questions are approached through the prism of the theoretical framework, discussed further.

### **2.2 Theoretical framework and general aim of the study**

This project's theoretical framework relies on Teun van Dijk's research model on discrimination strategies and Buell and Sigelman's classification of negative electoral campaigning attacks. In *Prejudice in Discourse*, van Dijk looks at

various types of discriminatory discourse, focusing on the discourses surrounding ethnic minorities. In his approach, van Dijk talks first and foremost about the ways that majorities talk about minorities, i.e. the discourse of the powerful towards the powerless. The scholar aims at contributing to a larger, ‘full-fledged theory of prejudiced discourse’ (2), drawing in his work on prior studies in discourse analysis, psychology, conversational analysis, and theories of social cognition. Van Dijk’s data is constituted by interviews about ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands, although he stresses that similar prejudiced discourse can be seen in other texts, including the media and school textbooks. While analyzing the data, van Dijk constructs a schema of ethnic information processing, which serves as the origin of racial and ethnic stereotypes and prejudices. It is this schema that constitutes the central feature of van Dijk’s theory, as it seeks to bring together the manifestations of prejudice in a specific text and the semantic and episodic memory phenomena that lead to this prejudice.

Within the schema, van Dijk outlines the ‘action plans’ used in the discourse directed against ethnic Others, which he calls ‘the 7 D’s of Discrimination’. They include

“Dominance, Differentiation, Distance, Diffusion, Diversion, Depersonalization or Destruction, and Daily Discrimination. These general categories will organize, in principle, all actions against, about, or with minority members, viz. maintaining power and control, treating them differently, keeping them at a distance, diffusing beliefs and prejudices about them, attributing social or economic problems of the in-group to them, treating them as inferior, hurting or destroying them, and, finally,

enacting all these more general actions also in small everyday activities” (van Dijk 40).

The notion of the ‘action plan’ of Depersonalization, which denies the Opponents the status of a person and puts them at an inferior level through discourse, served as an impetus and cornerstone for the current study. However, other approaches to Others outlined by van Dijk also play a role in the discourse analyzed in the thesis.

While other frameworks within discourse analysis could be applied to the data at hand, it is precisely the different focus of van Dijk’s theory that motivated the current researcher to investigate its applicability within a different context and to a different type data. Van Dijk’s framework underlines the racist and discriminatory attitude in discourse that negates the presence of certain features in the opponents or attacks and labels the others as scapegoats for social ills. The current project seeks to support the understanding that a system similar to the 7 D’s of Discrimination is present outside of the field of discrimination and racism, but within the daily discourse of political parties and leaders of various ideological stripes that is not necessarily concerned with issues of race or ethnicity. The thesis thus investigates the wider and more constant presence of discourse that is as socially damaging as racist and chauvinistic discourse in the sphere of socio-political language as a whole, especially given the special character of the Internet as the most free and open communication medium in the country.

In *Attack Politics*, Buell and Sigelman conduct a survey of all presidential electoral campaigns in the United States since the year 1960 in an attempt to see if the level of negativity in these campaigns has changed over the years. Using a number of theories in political science as their foundation, the authors divide all of the electoral campaigns into a number of types, including dead heat races, comeback races, competitive races and runaway races. The authors analyze the historic origins of negative campaigning in America, as well as the importance that is attributed by candidates and campaign staff to attack ads. An attempt is made at quantifying the effectiveness of negative campaigns as well as the probability of such campaigns backfiring on their originators. Contrary to a number of other studies in the field of political studies that Buell and Sigelman refer to, their analysis, after minutely dissecting each electoral campaign in isolation and in comparison to all others, arrives at the conclusion that negativity in US presidential elections has neither decreased nor increased since 1960. Instead, Buell and Sigelman stress that negative attacks have become a constant feature of campaigns by major parties and third parties alike.

Buell and Sigelman discuss topics that constitute the core of negative campaigns or their parts, including “credibility, trustworthiness, [...] vote wasted on the opponent, campaign finances, questionable contributions or spending, trying to buy the election, [...] opponent’s state of mind, sanity, mental health, age, physical condition, appearance of opponent, [...] corruption, violation of public trust, abuse of power” (13). These topics are only a part of a longer list that includes numerous social and political issues. Therefore, attacking the Opponent per se and

not the Opponent's views or ideas, in Buell and Sigelman's opinion, is just one of the possible elements that can exist in a negative electoral campaign. Importantly, the scholars stress their focus on a specific type of campaigning, which is based on negativity, as well as a particular example of election, presidential elections in the United States. The current project broadens the scope of Buell and Sigelman's classification to include not only topics, but also deliberate strategies. The thesis also enlarges this classification's applicability to include inter-party and inter-leader discourse outside of electoral campaigns.

It is on these two pillars that the theoretical premise of the thesis is constructed. While van Dijk acknowledges that such approaches to the Others as denial of their humanity, blaming the Others for social ills, and calling for the Others' destruction are generally present in the discursive field of discrimination, the current project seeks to assert that the same strategies permeate the day-to-day communication of politics. In a similar light, Buell and Sigelman's understanding of the special political phenomenon of negative campaigns allows for its expansion onto regular discourse by parties and leaders, including periods of relative calm between elections and environments where elections are, by numerous accounts, non-competitive. This general aim of the thesis of viewing political negativity as a wider phenomenon has influenced the choice of data and the analytical framework, discussed further.

## 2.3 Corpus

The original intention in regards to data selection was to include texts from the 10 most visited (according to search engine ratings) websites of political figures in Russia and 10 most visited websites of political parties and movements. However, a number of technical issues prevented this intention from being fully realized.<sup>7</sup> As a result, the corpus includes the texts from the websites of 8 parties and movements and 7 leaders (see Appendix A for full information on the selection of the data sources and Appendix B for detailed information on the sources). The data was collected for the period from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 to February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, which was a 6-month period exactly between two federal election campaigns in Russia. In line with the present research questions, the everyday discourse of political parties and leaders, and not only electoral campaigning discourse is of interest here. The texts in the corpus are from the following parties and movements:

- *Partiia ‘Spravedlivaia Rossiia’* ‘‘A Just Russia’ party’ (henceforth AJR), a federal party led by Nikolai Levichev and Sergeĭ Mironov, which at the time of data collection held 8% of the seats in the Russian State Duma
- *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Rossiĭskoĭ Federatsii* ‘Communist Party of the Russian Federation’ (henceforth CPRF), Russia’s largest opposition party led by Gennady Ziuganov, which at the time of data collection held 13% of the seats in the State Duma

---

<sup>7</sup> The technical issues included repeated computer crashes and virus intrusions due to faulty website code, as well as instability of the websites that prevented data collection.

- *Demokratičeskii Soiuz* ‘Democratic Union’ (henceforth DU), one of the first anti-Soviet parties, formed in 1988 and led by Valeria Novodvorskaia, which has never been represented in Russia’s parliament
- *Liberal'no-demokratičeskaia partiia Rossii* ‘Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia’ (henceforth LDPR), led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, which at the time of data collection held 9% of the seats in the State Duma
- *Dvizhenie protiv nelegal'noi immigratsii* ‘Movement Against Illegal Immigration’ (MAII), formerly led by Vladimir Ermolaev, which has never held seats in the State Duma and was banned as an extremist organization in 2011
- *Partiia 'Edinaia Rossiia'* ‘United Russia’ party’ (UR), Russia’s self-proclaimed ‘party of power’, led by the ex-president and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, which at the time of data collection held the constitutional majority of 70% in the State Duma
- *Molodaia Gvardiia Edinoi Rossii* ‘Youth Guard of United Russia’ (YGUR), the youth wing of ‘United Russia’, which is represented in the State Duma by the ‘United Russia’ delegates below 30 years of age
- *Rossiiskaia ob"edinennaia demokratičeskaia partiia 'Iabloko'* ‘Russian united democratic party ‘Yabloko’’, one of the oldest surviving right-of-centre parties in Russia, which was not represented in the State Duma at the time of data collection

The corpus also includes the websites of the following political leaders:

- Mikhail Delyagin, formerly one the leaders of the now defunct ‘Motherland’ party and as of November 2011 the chairperson of the ‘Motherland: common sense’ party
- Garry Kasparov, world-famous chess player who as of November 2011 is one of the leaders of three opposition groups in Russia: the ‘United Civil Front’, ‘Solidarity’ and ‘The Other Russia’
- Mikhail Kasyanov, prime minister of Russia in 2000-2004 and as of November 2011 one of the leaders of the ‘Party of Popular Freedom’<sup>8</sup> and the ‘Russian Popular-Democratic Union’ movement
- Yuri Krupnov, chairman of the ‘Movement for Development of Russia’ organization
- Aleksandr Lebedev, Russian entrepreneur, owner of British periodicals ‘The Independent’ and ‘The Evening Standard’, former delegate of the State Duma and candidate for mayor of Moscow in 2003
- Boris Nemtsov, former deputy prime minister of Russia, one of the leaders of the ‘Solidarity’ movement and the ‘Party of Popular Freedom’
- Vladimir Ryzhkov, former delegate of the State Duma, one of the leaders of the ‘Party of Popular Freedom’

---

<sup>8</sup> Importantly, the ‘Party of Popular Freedom’ was only formed in the fall of 2010. At the time of data collection, the politicians in question were nonpartisan.



Due to the sheer volume of data collected within this timeframe, the data set for the analysis was reduced to no more than 20 webpages<sup>9</sup> with references to Opponents per each source. As a result, from each party's or leader's website were taken no more than 20 pages or within the mentioned timeframe. Thus if a particular website included only 10 or 15 pages with references to Opponents, this was the total number of pages included in the corpus. It is important to note that the current project does not include a quantitative component, in accordance with the set research questions and the general goal of the study. The total number of pages within the corpus from each of the sources is given in Table 1:

<b>Parties/ movements</b>	<b>CPRF</b>	<b>AJR</b>	<b>LDPR</b>	<b>Yabloko</b>	<b>YGUR</b>	<b>UR</b>	<b>MAII</b>	<b>DU</b>
<b>Number of pages in the corpus</b>	20	20	20	20	20	10	8	4
<b>Leaders</b>	<b>Delya- gin</b>	<b>Kaspa- rov</b>	<b>Ryzh- kov</b>	<b>Nemtsov</b>	<b>Kasya- nov</b>	<b>Krup- nov</b>	<b>Lebe- dev</b>	
<b>Number of pages in the corpus</b>	20	20	20	9	7	5	3	

Table 1: Total number of pages from each of the data sources

The total number of pages in the corpus is 209. The difference in the number of pages per source, seen in Table 1 above, is due to either the lack of materials with references to Opponents or technical issues with the websites in question that prevented further data collection.

---

<sup>9</sup> A webpage, also referred here as a page, is a single document on the World Wide Web, the information contained in one small part of a website. Every webpage has a unique Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

## 2.4 Coding and analytical process

The data was coded by means of MAXQDA 10 software, which is a leading product for qualitative analysis available to the researcher (Appendix C provides a detailed overview of the coding and analysis process employed for one of the documents in the dataset). Each page containing references to Opponents was copied into the database and attributed the tags of date and source, e.g. 'Kasyanov, 1 Sep 2009'. During data collection, the vast amounts of data were classified by means of a researcher-formed coding system, as described further. The category of the representation of 'Other' was initially divided into the following parts: 'General negative evaluation', 'Reference to non-political character', 'Evaluation of performance', 'Evaluation of character/abilities', 'Positive reference to the Other' and 'Unclear reference to the Other'. Each of the categories included specific codes that were devised based on the collected data. For example, the 'Reference to non-political character' category included such codes as 'Rhetoric only' and 'Business'.

Following the preliminary analysis of the data, it became evident that the initially devised coding system, albeit facilitating the initial classification of data, had to be significantly revised in order for the project to approach its research questions. As a result, a new set of strategies was delineated based entirely on the codes that manifested themselves in the data. Twelve strategies of Other-representation were singled out, with names based on the negation principle of van Dijk. In the present study, the strategies are: De-positivization/de-normalization (Negation of non-political positivity/normality), De-personification (Negation of people,

individuals), De-veracity (Negation of truthfulness), De-politization (Negation of political character), De-contemporarization (Negation of being modern, contemporary), De-intellectualization (Negation of intelligence, reason), De-ability (Negation of health, physical capacity), De-lawfulness (Negation of obedience, legality, compliance with the law), De-independence (Negation of independent or unique character), De-superiority (Negation of being in the lead, popular), De-morality/de-civility (Negation of compliance with moral norms), and De-patriotization (Negation of patriotism and faithfulness towards the people and country). A brief overview of the system of strategies through illustrations is given in Table 2 below:

<b>Representational strategy</b>	<b>Illustrations</b>
De-positivization /de-normalization	<i>Éto politicheskoe tuneiadvstvo</i> ‘This is political parasitism’; <i>Éti tri frazy predstavliaiutsia mne kvintéssentsiei rossiiskogo liberal'nogo fundamentalizma</i> ‘these three phrases appear to me to be the quintessence of Russian liberal fundamentalism’
De-personification	<i>‘Medvedi’ idut naprolom</i> ‘The ‘Bears’ are forcing their way through’
De-veracity	<i>Agressivnaia ritorika lidera LDPR sviazana s krizisom v ego partii</i> ‘The aggressive rhetoric of the LDPR leader is due to the crisis in his party’
De-politization	<i>Kliuchevye resheniia Sergeĭ Mironov i napravliaemaia im t.n. ‘Spravedlivaia Rossiia’ obkhodiat</i> ‘Sergey Mironov and the so-called ‘Just Russia’ that he guides avoid key decisions’
De-contemporarization	<i>Chego tol'ko stoit glavnyi lozung ‘manifestantov’, bez obiniakov vozvrashchaiushchii nas k ideiam ‘Moeĭ Bor’by’ s mirovoi finansovoi plutokratiei</i> ‘Just take into account the main slogan of the ‘manifestants’, <sup>10</sup> which returns us without

<sup>10</sup> The word translated here as ‘manifestants’ is *manifestanty* in the original. The word *manifestanty* can mean both ‘authors and supporters of the manifesto’ and ‘demonstration or rally participants’, and in this particular example it appears to be both, as the quote refers to a public rally by the supporters of a political manifesto.

	beating about the bush to the ideals of ‘My Struggle’ with the global financial plutocracy’
De-intellectualization	<i>Chubais gluboko neprav</i> ‘Chubais is deeply mistaken’; <i>Rossiiskie liberaly kakie-to ne te uchebniki chitali</i> ‘The Russian liberals have been reading some wrong kind of textbooks’
De-ability	<i>Zhirinovskii ustal</i> ‘Zhirinovsky is tired’; <i>Snachala liudi otvernulis’, potom vy umerli, a potom vy poumneli</i> ‘First the people turned away from you, then you died, and then you got smarter’
De-lawfulness	<i>Èto radikal'nye oppositsionery, falsifitsiruiushchie dannye</i> ‘These are radical oppositionists falsifying the data’; <i>metodicheskoe zapugivanie aktivistki Malinovskoi</i> ‘the methodical intimidation of Malinovskaia, an activist’
De-independence	<i>Pomalkivaiut i mariiskie kommunisty</i> ‘the communists of Mari El are keeping silent too’; <i>loial'nye kremliu partii</i> ‘parties loyal to the Kremlin’
De-superiority	<i>Oni znaiut, chto ne smogut vyigrat’</i> ‘they know that they won’t be able to win’
De-morality/de-civility	<i>Zhirinovskii pytaetsia nazhit'sia na liudskoï tragedii</i> ‘Zhirinovsky is trying to profiteer from human tragedy’
De-patriotization	<i>Protiv zasil'ia zapadnykh èmissarov</i> ‘against the prevalence of emissaries of the West’

Table 2: Overview of the system of strategies

While Table 2 provides a general illustration of the strategies, each example of Other-representation was reviewed in light of a certain strategy that constituted its core, and the various approaches visible in the employment of each strategy were singled out and discussed further. In a number of instances the same sentence or structure included the features of more than one strategy. This combination of several strategies aimed against the same Opponent at the same time is of interest to the set research questions. The following chapter provides the analysis of the data corpus through the prism of this completely data-driven system of strategies.

### CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS

The analysis is structured according to the following strategies: De-positivization/de-normalization (Negation of non-political positivity/normality), De-personification (Negation of people, individuals), De-veracity (Negation of truthfulness), De-politization (Negation of political character), De-contemporarization (Negation of being modern, contemporary), De-intellectualization (Negation of intelligence, reason), De-ability (Negation of health, physical capacity), De-lawfulness (Negation of obedience, legality, compliance with the law), De-independence (Negation of independent or unique character), De-superiority (Negation of being in the lead, popular), De-morality/de-civility (Negation of compliance with moral norms), and De-patriotization (Negation of patriotism and faithfulness towards the people and country). Each strategy is analyzed in details through the various approaches to them that were singled out during the analysis. The most vivid examples are provided to illustrate the line of analysis.<sup>11</sup> The examples are presented in transliterated original and translation. The transliteration follows the Library of Congress system, while the translation is first and foremost focused on conveying the meaning of the examples with the highest degree of precision as opposed to the preservation of specific morphological or syntactic features. The examples are supplemented with information notes providing the necessary general context of

---

<sup>11</sup> Examples are as inclusive of the relevant context as possible. However, space constraints prevent inclusion of entire web page texts that constitute the source of the examples.

the entries in order to familiarize the readers with the persons, places and events mentioned. The first strategy analyzed is de-personification.

### 3.1 DE-PERSONIFICATION

The representational strategy of de-personification is an attempt to demonstrate that the Opponent is not human. This strategy presents the Opponents as animals or inanimate objects. The employment of this strategy may negate the Opponent as a real political alternative, calling for the Opponent's isolation and destruction.

#### 3.1.1 Opponents as animals and inanimate objects

The corpus contains several examples where the Opponent is compared to an animal. Consider (1)-(3):<sup>12</sup>

- (1) Kogda ia smotriu na éti zhe ulybki v segodniashnikh listovkakh, ia vizhu prostupaiushchiĭ skvoz' nikh **volchiĭ oskal**.

‘When I look at the same smiles in today’s leaflets, I see a wolf’s bared teeth showing through them.’ (AJR, 21 Sep 2009)

- (2) Ego absolutno nezasluzhenno arestovali, **po-svinski**, podlo, v den', kogda gospodin Medvedev, obrashchaias' s poslaniem k Federal'nomu Sobraniuu, govoril o modernizatsii v Rossii i tak dalee.

---

<sup>12</sup> The discussed examples may include the employment of various strategies, discussed in relevant sections of the thesis.

They arrested him without any grounds at all, as swine would, in a vile way, on the day when Mr. Medvedev,<sup>13</sup> addressing the Federal Assembly, was talking about modernization in Russia and so on. (Nemtsov, 16 Nov 2009)

- (3) Eschë ne znaia resul'tatov vyborov, Sergeï Mitrokhin vecherom v den' vyborov zaiavil, chto 'Spravedlivaia Rossiia', chast' dvizheniia 'Solidarnost', dvizhenie 'Pravoe delo' **ob"edinilis' v 'trogatel'nom lae'**.

'Before finding out the election results, on the evening of Election Day Sergey Mitrokhin<sup>14</sup> stated, that 'The Just Russia', a part of the 'Solidarity'<sup>15</sup> movement, and 'The Right Cause'<sup>16</sup> movement had united in 'touching barking'.' (Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

In examples (1) and (2), references to *volchiï oskal* 'wolf's bared teeth' and *svinskiï* 'swine-like' behaviour are used towards the Opponents. These linguistic means imply the presence of such characteristics as aggression, untidiness and lack of intelligence in the Opponents. Importantly, both examples create a direct opposition between the Opponents' desired public image and the negative image underlined here. In (1), the politicians already in power want to be seen as friendly and open, while the representative of A Just Russia party underlines that

---

<sup>13</sup> Dmitry Medvedev is the President of the Russian Federation since 2008, originally supported in his bid by 4 parties: United Russia, The Just Russia, Civic Power and the Agrarian Party of Russia.

<sup>14</sup> Sergey Mitrokhin is the leader of the Russian United Democratic Party 'Yabloko' since 2008. He used to be a delegate of the State Duma and Moscow City Duma.

<sup>15</sup> Solidarity (Solidarnost') is a democratic coalition movement formed in 2008 and not registered with the Russian government. Leaders include Boris Nemtsov and Garry Kasparov, whose personal websites are a part of the corpus.

<sup>16</sup> The Right Cause (Pravoe Delo) is an officially registered right-of-centre political party formed in 2008 as a merger of the Civic Power party, the Democratic party of Russia and the Union of Rightist Forces.

a different attitude towards people is concealed within. In (2), Russian President Dmitry Medvedev continues to build his image of a liberal modernizer while the police arrest a prominent opposition activist. Example (3) goes further in that a leader of a major political party is quoted as comparing three of his party's Opponents to dogs and their discourse to *laĩ* 'barking'. Putting numerous opponents together, as in (3), is another strategy, de-independence, which is discussed in one of the sections below.

It is necessary to note that not all instances of comparison to animals can be considered manifestations of de-personification. For example, Russia's largest party, United Russia, has a large bear – previously brown and currently polar – on its emblem. The party sponsors a youth organization called *Medvezhata* 'Bear Cubs' and has the word *Berloga* 'Bear's den' as the name for its online forum.<sup>17</sup> However, examples (4) and (5) below demonstrate that a comparison to an animal that was originally chosen by the Self can be further used by one's opponents to highlight negative features:

(4) **Medvedi** idut naprolom.

The Bears are forcing their way through. (AJR, 1 Sep 2009)

(5) Komandir dolzhen byt' vperedí na likhom kone, a ne **na sonnom i ob''evshemsia medvede!**

---

<sup>17</sup> Importantly, the letters 'er' in *Berloga* 'Bear's den' are always written in a different colour or bolded, as additional reference to the official acronym for *Edinaia Rossiia* 'United Russia'.



A commander must be at the front on a valiant steed, not on a sleepy and overfed bear!<sup>18</sup> (Delyagin, 13 Nov 2009)

Example (4) is the title of an article by A Just Russia regarding United Russia's misuse of government authority to influence local elections, while (5) is taken from Delyagin's interview regarding Dmitry Medvedev's non-party status and plans for modernizing Russian society. The bear as mascot is chosen by United Russia for its deep links to Russian folklore. The bear is also internationally recognized as the symbol of Russia. In (4), the same mascot is viewed from a different angle that underlines stupidity and clumsiness through *idut naprolom* 'forcing their way through'. In (5), opposition politician Delyagin urges Medvedev not to follow Vladimir Putin<sup>19</sup> into United Russia. The use of *sonnyĩ* 'sleepy' signals that the party is inefficient, *ob"evshiĩsia* 'overfed' points to that party's being corrupt, while the contrast between the bear and the *likhoĩ kon'* 'valiant steed' underlines that the party is also regressive. Advice for Medvedev thus serves the purpose of a large-scale de-personification attack against United Russia.

The aforementioned examples employ de-personification through comparisons of Others to various animals. The same strategy can take on more serious forms that

---

<sup>18</sup> The first part of this sentence, *komandir dolzhen byt' vperedí na likhom kone* 'a commander must be at the front on a valiant steed', is a direct quote from the 1934 Soviet film 'Chapaev' about the Russian Civil War. The film is considered one of the best early Soviet films.

<sup>19</sup> Vladimir Putin was the President of Russia from December 1999 to May 2008 and is the Prime-Minister of Russia since 2008. Putin is the head of the United Russia party, but not a party member.

either deny the Opponent a specific living image, or view the Opponent as an inanimate object. Consider (6) and (7):

(6) I ved' ne skazhesh', chto **éto sushchestvo** soznatel'no khotelo sdelat' gadost'.

And you can't really say that this creature consciously wanted to do something vile. (Delyagin, 17 Oct 2009)

(7) Esli v **bochku s nechistotami** brosit' kilogramm brusniki, zapakh izmenitsia malo.

If one would throw a kilogram of cowberries into a barrel of sewage, the smell won't change much. (Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

In (6), Delyagin discusses an article by a controversial journalist Aleksandr Podrabinek in which the latter attacks the Soviet legacy and, in Delyagin's opinion, insults the memory of the victims of the Great Patriotic War<sup>20</sup>. In (6), the politician demonstratively refers to Podrabinek as *éto sushchestvo* 'this creature', which is a combination of a demonstrative pronoun and an animate noun. This use demonstrates that Delyagin considers his Opponent's human side distorted beyond recognition. A similar strategy is further amplified in (7). The context here is that Nemtsov violently denies any plans of the Solidarity movement to merge with the Right Cause party, accusing the leadership of that party of being in cahoots with the Kremlin and thus incapable of real work towards democratic reforms. Importantly, in (7), while calling his Opponents *bochka s nechistotami* 'a

---

<sup>20</sup> The Great Patriotic War is the official name for the Soviet Union's war with Nazi Germany and its satellite states from June 1941 to May 1945. It coincides with the Eastern Front in Europe part of the Second World War.

barrel of sewage', Nemtsov also calls his own group *brusnika* 'cowberries', thus applying similar strategy of de-personification to himself, supposedly with a different purpose.<sup>21</sup>

### **3.1.2 De-personification summary**

Examples (1) – (7) show that the employment of the de-personification strategy aims at removing the Opponent from the political process through removal from human society in general. The analysis discloses the use of de-personification to refer to the Opponents as various kinds of animals as well as abstract creatures and inanimate objects. All of these approaches are used in order to underline that the Opponents are not human in nature and thus cannot be participants of the political process. Many examples of de-personification above may be considered rude and out of place in civilized discourse. The political figures and forces thus rely on a large scope of other representational strategies. These strategies do not deny the Opponents a human physical appearance but attack other characteristics crucial to being successful in leading the country. One of such features is adequate health and ability to work, targeted through the de-ability strategy.

## **3.2 DE-ABILITY**

The de-ability strategy attempts to demonstrate that the Opponents are not able to engage in good work or represent the voters due to problems with mental and

---

<sup>21</sup> No specific positive collocations or connotations of *brusnika* 'cowberries' are, however, known to the current author.

physical health, as well as general lack of strength and energy. The approaches discussed further focus on the Opponents as weak and losing (3.2.1), tired and asleep (3.2.2), mentally ill (3.2.3), and, ultimately, dead (3.2.4).

### 3.2.1 Opponents as weak and losing

In the analyzed corpus, the examples of references to Opponents as weak and losing are numerous. Consider examples (8) and (9):

- (8) Zato poiavilos' 'Pravoe Delo', za kotoroe liberal'nyĭ ėlektorat golosovat' ne stanet, potomu chto ėto iavno prokremlĕvskiĭ proekt, i ostalos' **oslabevshee** 'Yabloko'.

However, there appeared 'The Right Cause', which the liberal electorate won't vote for, because that's a clearly pro-Kremlin project, and there is the weakened 'Yabloko' left. (Ryzhkov, 15 Sep 2009)

- (9) Ėtot potok zhalob – **priznak slabosti opponentov partii.**

This torrent of complaints is a sign of the weakness of the party's opponents. (YGUR, 30 Sep 2009)

Example (8) deals with a pre-election forecast made by Ryzhkov. Example (9) is the reaction of United Russia's youth wing to the opposition's numerous complaints to the election authorities regarding violations during the electoral process that had resulted in United Russia's victory in the local elections. In (8), the choice of *oslabevshee* 'weakened' when describing the Yabloko party refers to the fact that the party used to be a major player in the political arena in the 1990s but currently has minimal presence. The fact that Yabloko is grouped with The

Right Cause, which is described as a party for whom people of liberal views are not going to vote, further underlines Ryzhkov's pessimism about that party's electoral chances. Example (9), directly accuses the Opponents of 'weakness' (*slabost'*). This example is representative of a large group within the corpus through which United Russia and its youth wing react to the other parties' protests against an allegedly rigged regional election. Examples (10)-(12) illustrate further YGUR's utilization of de-ability strategies towards Opponents:

- (10) V sviazi s burnymi pr-protestami<sup>22</sup> oppozitsii **protiv sobstvennogo porazheniia** na vyborakh 11 oktiabria, poezdka Churova v parlament vriad li oboïdëtsia bez vozmushcheniï **luzerov** v ego adres.

Due to the tumultuous PR-protests of the opposition against their own defeat in the October 11<sup>th</sup> election, Churov's<sup>23</sup> trip to the parliament will hardly go by without the perpetual losers' indignation towards him. (YGUR, 20 October 2011)

- (11) Demonstratsiei **bessiliia** – imenno tak ia by nazval vykhodku opponentov protiv 'Edinoï Rossii' i 'Molodoï Gvardii'.

A display of feebleness – that's precicesly what I would call this escapade of the opponents against 'United Russia' and the 'Youth Guard'. (YGUR, 10 Nov 2009)

---

<sup>22</sup> Here and further, parts of examples written in the Latin script in the original are underlined in the transliteration.

<sup>23</sup> Vladimir Churov is the Chairperson of the Central Electoral Committee of the Russian Federation since 2007.

- (12) Proizoshedshee, bezuslovno, iavliaetsia podtverzhdeniem **politicheskoi impotentsii nashikh opponentov.**

What occurred, undoubtedly, is confirmation of political impotence<sup>24</sup> of our opponents. (YGUR, 10 Nov 2009)

In (10), the focus on the opponents' poor electoral results is such that the same sentence contains both the more formal 'defeat' (*porazhenie*) and the borrowing from English *luzery* 'perpetual losers', which became slang in Russian. The opposition, importantly, is shown as not only losing time and time again, but also incapable of dealing with negative emotions in an age-appropriate way. Examples (11) and (12) are taken from the United Russia youth wing's reaction to an attack on one of their regional offices in which an incendiary device was thrown through one of the windows. While elsewhere in the same text the Youth Guard author admits that he has no evidence to link the attack to anyone specifically, the event is clearly employed by the organization to point out the 'feebleness' (*bessilie*) of the Opponents and even insult them through an indecent allusion in 'political impotence' (*politicheskaiia impotentsiia*). The employment of de-ability to underline the Opponents' weakness goes hand-in-hand with another approach that focuses on the Opponents' being tired or even asleep.

---

<sup>24</sup> In Russian, as opposed to English, the word *impotentsiia* 'impotence', even when preceded by a non-sexual adjective, has clear sexual connotations. Importantly, the same is not true for *bessilie* 'feebleness, impotence, exhaustion', which does not have sexual connotations unless preceded by *polovoe* 'sexual'.

### 3.2.2 Opponents as tired and asleep

The underlining of sleepiness, already seen in (5) above in regards to a *sonnyiĭ medved'* 'sleepy bear', is seen in the corpus only in the materials of United Russia and its youth wing. Consider examples (13)-(15):

- (13) A esli oni **tol'ko posle vyborov prosnulis'**, poiavilis' i nachali piarom zanimat'sia, to, navernoe, na golosa izbiratelei ne osobenno rasschityvali.

And if they only woke up after the election, showed up and started their PR, then, probably, they didn't really count on the voters' support. (YGUR, 22 Oct 2009)

- (14) Chuvstvuetsia nekotoraiia **ustalost' samogo Zhirinovskogo i izbiratelia**.

One can feel certain tiredness of Zhirinovsky<sup>25</sup> himself and his voters. (UR, 7 Dec 2009)

- (15) Po slovam Orlova, Zhirinovskiiĭ vstupael v **period, kotoryĭ mozhno nazvat' 'osen'iu patriarkha'**, poetomu on chuvstvuet, chto s ego ukhodom na formal'no-predsedatel'skie roli, partiia rezko sdast svoi pozitsii.

According to Orlov, Zhirinovsky is entering a period that can be called 'the patriarch's autumn', thus he feels that as he moves on to formal chairperson roles the party will quickly lose its standing. (UR, 7 Dec 2009)

Example (13), similarly to (9) and (10) above, is taken from the United Russia youth wing's reaction to claims by the opposition regarding election irregularities

---

<sup>25</sup> Vladimir Zhirinovsky is the founder and leader of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) since 1989 and Deputy Speaker of the State Duma since 2000.

and violations that had given that party majority in all regional parliaments. Through reference to *tol'ko posle vyborov prosnulis', poiavilis' i nachali piarom zanimat'sia* 'only woke up after the election, showed up and started their PR', the Youth Guard writer not only points to the fact that the opposition would be inefficient in government, as it has no energy, but also links this to self-centered orientation to media attention. In (14) and (15), United Russia reacts to Zhirinovsky's criticism of its government's slow response to a large fire in the city of Perm through an attack on his personality, especially his age. In (14) and (15), this attack is carried out through *patriarch* 'patriarch' and *ustalost'* 'tiredness'. Importantly, Zhirinovsky's 'tiredness' (*ustalost'*) is also transferred onto his voters, which is difficult to interpret due to the possibly incomplete character of the statement. A possible interpretation is that Zhirinovsky's voters have 'Zhirinovsky fatigue' (*ustalost' ot Zhirinovskogo*). Notably, this employment of de-ability does not constitute a major part of the corpus. Greater variety of approaches is seen in the attempts to demonstrate that the Opponent is mentally ill.

### 3.2.3 Opponents as mentally ill

Attacks on the Opponent's mental health employed in the corpus are diverse, ranging from references to dementia and schizophrenia to accusations of being possessed. General references to mental instability can be seen in (16) and (17):

- (16) Krome togo, Prezident Medvedev lichno pozvonil odnomu iz (kak èto ni stranno zvuchit – **naibolee vmeniaemomu**) avtorov demarsha – Zhirinovskomu, i zaveril ego v gotovnosti k dialogu.



Besides, President Medvedev personally called one of the authors of the demarche (as strange as that may sound – the most sane one) – Zhirinovsky, and assured him of readiness for dialogue. (YGUR, 15 Oct 2009)

- (17) Izvinite, no polemizirovat' s takim Deliaginym negumanno. On [Deliagin], kazhetsia (ia izviniaius', Mikhail Gennad'evich), **sbrendil. Nuzhen psikhiatr.**

I'm sorry, but it's inhumane to polemicize with such a Delyagin. He [Delyagin] has, it seems (I beg your pardon, Mikhail Gennadievich), gone off his trolley. A psychiatrist is needed. (Delyagin, 22 Dec 2009)

In (16), Zhirinovsky is singled out as *naibolee vmeniaemyĩ* 'the most sane one' among all of the parliamentary opposition leaders, who are, in effect, called *nevmeniaemyĩ* 'insane' for an attempt at a filibuster during which all the factions except for United Russia left the State Duma building in protest. Even this label is given to Zhirinovsky with a 'strange' (*stranno*) marker, pointing out that it is unusual to think of the LDPR leader as a sane person. In (17), Delyagin quotes a radio program listener commenting on the politician's own mental instability with phrases *on sbrendil* 'he has gone off his trolley' and *nuzhen psikhiatr* 'a psychiatrist is needed'. Inclusion of these comments on the website clearly indicates that Delyagin does not take these statements seriously nor feels embarrassed by them. While (16) and (17) give general references to the Opponents' mental health problems, (18) and (19) below attempt to provide specific diagnoses:

- (18) Pomimo '**demshizy**', ne ochnuvsheisia s kontsa 80-kh, zhivotnaia nenavist' k nasheĩ istorii svoistvenna liberal'nym fundamentalistam: dlia nikh,

obozhestvliaiushchikh pribyl' i rynok, dazhe vospominanie o nasheĭ strane, otritsavsheĭ nazhivu kak edinstvennyĭ smysl zhizni, - nesterpimoe bogokhul'stvo.

Besides 'demschizo', that had been unconscious since the end of the 80s, bestial hatred of our history is intrinsic of liberal fundamentalists: for them, people that idolize profit and the market, even the memory of how our country denied profiteering as the only purpose in life is an unbearable blasphemy. (Delyagin, 20 Nov 2009)

- (19) Organizatsiia, kotoraiia pozvoliaet takuiu **shizofreniiu** v svoikh riadakh, obrechena na proval.

An organization that allows such schizophrenia in its ranks is destined to fail. (Delyagin, 22 Dec 2009)

In (18), Delyagin employs the word *demshiza* 'demschizo', an ironic and insulting term coined in the late 1980s or early 1990s through combining *demokratiia* 'democracy' and *shiza*, a slang version of *shizofreniia* 'schizophrenia' to describe the radical part of the democratic movement that does not aim at real social reforms as much as the opportunity to rally and create disturbance. The same diagnosis in its overt form is seen in (19), where an open-minded attitude within a party, referred to in a lengthy question falling outside of the quoted excerpt, is called the route to failure. The use of such terminology as *shizofreniia* 'schizophrenia' for insults is widely spread in contemporary Russian, not limited to political discourse, as seen in (18) and (19). Other references to the Opponents' mental abnormality can be seen in (20)-(23) below:

- (20) Proizoshedshee segodnia, krome kak **isterikoï**, nikak po-drugomu nazvat' nel'zia.

What happened today can be called nothing other than a fit of hysteria. (YGUR, 15 Oct 2009)

- (21) Stoit otmetit', chto povedenie parlamentskoï oppozitsii v poslednee vremia vsë bol'she napominaet stil' **otmorozhennykh** marginalov iz tak nazyvaemoï vnesistemnoï oppozitsii. Khorosho khotia by to, chto, vykhodia iz parlamentskogo zala zasedaniï, nikto iz uchastnikov demarsha eshchë ne **udarilsia golovoï ob kosiak**.

It needs to be noted that the behaviour of the parliamentary opposition lately resembles more and more the style of the lame-brained fringe group representatives from the so-called non-systemic opposition. It's good that at least yet none of the démarche participants hit their heads on the doorpost when coming out of the parliamentary conference hall. (YGUR, 15 Oct 2009)

- (22) Ia schitaiu, chto nasha oppozitsiia **stradaet kompleksom nepolnotsennosti**.

I think that our opposition suffers from an inferiority complex. (YGUR, 9 Oct 2009)

- (23) Vse srazu vspomniat pro strel'bu po beslanskoï shkole iz granatomëtov i tankov s sotniami pogibshikh detëi, vspomniat pro 130 pogibshikh v Nord-Oste, vspomniat pro **sadistskuiu ukhmylku** v programme Larri Kinga i otvet na vopros: 'Chto sluchilos' s Kurskom?' – 'Ona utonula.'

Everyone will at once remember the gunfire at the Beslan school<sup>26</sup> using grenade launchers and tanks, resulting in hundreds of children killed, will remember the 130 killed in Nord-Ost,<sup>27</sup> will remember the sadist smirk on the Larry King show when answering the question ‘What happened to the Kursk?’<sup>28</sup> – ‘It sank.’ (Nemtsov, 30 Dec 2009)

Examples (20) and (21) deal with the same subject matter, the opposition parliamentary factions refusing to participate in a State Duma session in protest over election results. The unusual level of activity on the part of the parliamentary opposition led United Russia and its youth wing to resort to de-ability. The use of *isterika* ‘fit of hysteria’ in (20) stresses that such behaviour is abnormal on the part of mature politicians. The comparison in (21) to *otmorozhennye marginaly* ‘lame-brained fringe group representatives’ that would ‘hit their heads on the doorpost’ (*udarit'sia golovoï ob kosiak*) when exiting a room points to the direction in which the parliamentary opposition will go if it continues such behaviour, i.e. it will no longer be in the mainstream Russian politics. In (22), the whole scope of opposition to United Russia is said to have ‘an inferiority complex’ (*kompleks nepolnotsennosti*). This particular remark is made by a Youth Guard official in response to the opposition’s decision to file a lawsuit against United Russia following an allegedly rigged election in several Russian regions.

---

<sup>26</sup> In September 2004, a group of terrorists held hostage over 1100 children and adults at a school in Beslan, North Ossetia, Russia. 334 hostages, out of them 186 children, died as a result of the terrorist act.

<sup>27</sup> In October 2002, a group of terrorists held hostage 916 people at a ‘Nord-Ost’ musical show in Moscow. 174 people died during the security forces operation to free the hostages.

<sup>28</sup> In August 2000, Russian nuclear submarine K-141 ‘Kursk’ sank in the Barents Sea. Investigation into the causes was inconclusive. All 118 crew members aboard died.

The lawsuit is thus shown to be a result of mental health problems and not legal reasons or evidence of electoral violations. Example (23) is more complex in that it refers to three major national tragedies that had occurred during Vladimir Putin's time in power, all of which led to doubts about Putin's leadership. This example culminates in the image of Putin's inexplicable – 'sadist' (*sadistskaia*) as believed by Boris Nemtsov – smile while answering a question from American journalist Larry King about the sinking of a submarine. Nemtsov thus undertakes to explain the smile and the answer 'it sank'<sup>29</sup> (*ona utonula*) through a mental health reference. Two more examples that should be mentioned here claim that the Opponents are possessed by devil. Consider (24) and (25):

- (24) Kakie-to **besnovatye politicheskie partii**, kotorye proigrali vybory, oni trebuiut: èto vsë Luzhkov, nuzhno sniat' Luzhkova.

Some possessed political parties that had lost the election, they demand: it's all Luzhkov's fault, that Luzhkov<sup>30</sup> should be removed. (Lebedev, 2 Nov 2009)

- (25) V èto zhe vremia okolo mesta sbora **besnovalas' nemnogochislennaia kuchka antifashistov**, pytaias' naïti otdel'nykh pravvykh, idyshchikh na sbor, pri ètom soznatel'no 'nezamechaemaia' militsiï.

At the same time a small handful of antifascists was raving like one possessed not far from the place of the meeting – they were trying to find individual

---

<sup>29</sup> While submarines, as vessels in general, have feminine grammatical gender in English, the translation 'it sank' in this example is taken from the original synchronized translation of the *Larry King live* show.

<sup>30</sup> Yuri Luzhkov was Mayor of Moscow from 1992 to 2010 and Co-Chair of the Supreme Council of United Russia in 2001-2010.

right-wingers going to the meeting, while being consciously ‘ignored’ by the police. (MAIL, 9 Nov 2009)

Example (24) directly states that the Opponents are ‘possessed’ (*besnovatye*). This adjective, built on the basis of the noun *bes* ‘demon’, is used here to describe the political parties demanding that the Moscow mayor be removed from office. The rest of the text from which (24) is taken does not give any indicators that there are other reasons to consider these parties ‘possessed’ (*besnovatye*) than their electoral losses and opposition to the Russian capital’s mayor. In (25), the word *besnovat'sia* ‘to rave’, formed from the root *bes* ‘demon’ and describing the actions of someone possessed, is employed to describe the actions of a group of antifascists attempting to prevent a march by far-right activists. Importantly, a similar verb, *besit'sia* ‘to be furious, to horse around’, albeit with the same root, does not have the same reference to mental health but is avoided by the author of the text. Attacking the Opponents’ mental normality and stability accounts for a wide array of examples in the corpus, which demonstrates the scope of this technique employed in Russian political discourse. One more type of de-ability is reference to the Opponent’s death.

### 3.2.4 Opponents as dead

The corpus contains several examples in which the Opponent's ability is put in question to the highest possible degree, i.e. when the Opponent is stated to be dead.<sup>31</sup> Examples (26) and (27) demonstrate the employment of this approach:

- (26) ‘Molodoi Gvardii’ est' chem zaniat'sia i **khoronit' mertvorozhdënnuiu organizatsiiu** nekogda – pust' budushchee kuchki svoikh funktsionerov-plagiatorov ostanetsia golovnoi bol'iu partii ‘Spravedlivaia Rossiia’.

‘The Youth Guard’ has things to do and has no time to bury the stillborn organization – let the future of a handful of their plagiarist functionaries remain the headache of ‘A Just Russia’ party. (YGUR, 5 Oct 2009)

- (27) Snachala liudi otvernulis', potom **vy umerli**, a potom vy poumneli. No pozdno.

First the people turned away from you, then you died, and then you grew wiser. But it was too late. (Delyagin, 22 Dec 2009)

While both (26) and (27) refer to political death, the very choice of *mertvorozhdënniaia* ‘stillborn’ over a possible *nerabotosposobnaia* ‘unable to work’, and *vy umerli* ‘you died’ rather than a possible *vy ischezli* ‘you disappeared’ demonstrates that the aim of both the United Russia youth wing (26) and Mikhail Delyagin (27) is de-ability. In (26), the Youth Guard expresses its feelings about the creation of a youth wing of another political party, ‘A Just

---

<sup>31</sup> As is the case in English, references to death and dying are employed to point to inactivity and lack of perspective in contemporary Russian discourse. What is of particular interest here is the use of such references within a political context, signifying political death, i.e. end as a viable political force in the eyes of the electorate.

Russia', by calling the organization *mertvorozhdënnaia* 'stillborn' and advising 'A Just Russia' to 'bury' (khoronit') it just a week after the new body's creation. Interestingly, (28) is taken from a radio interview transcript, thus the words *vy umerli* 'you died', while used in reference to the Yabloko party's collapse, were said on air and in person to Sergey Mitrokhin, Yabloko's leader. The fact that it is political and not physical death that is implied is further stressed by the fact that the dying is followed by *poumneli* 'grew wiser'.

### **3.2.5 De-ability summary**

The scope of employment of various de-ability techniques found in the corpus demonstrates the popularity of this strategy in the political discourse under analysis. The Opponents are shown to be both physically and mentally ill, as well as too tired to be able to focus on the state's and people's needs and problems. Referring to the Opponents as (politically) dead takes away the need for ideological confrontation or the analysis of the Opponents' actions and suggestions. An attack through de-ability aims at permanently excluding the Opponent from the political and electoral sphere. De-morality/de-civility is another strategy that is employed in the analyzed corpus, the discussion of which follows.

## **3.3 DE-MORALITY/DE-CIVILITY**

The de-morality/de-civility strategy includes a number of approaches that attack the Opponents' compliance with moral standards or the norms of civil interaction



with others. It can focus on the Opponents as envious and cowardly, impudent and rude, intolerant to dissent, uncaring and selfish, as well as cynical, hypocritical and heartless.

### 3.3.1 Opponents as envious and cowardly

One of the approaches within de-morality is to show that the Opponents feel envy towards others, but unable to make important decisions themselves. Consider (28)-(30):

- (28) Kobzon uveren, chto razgovory ob otstavke Luzhkova sprovotsirovali **politicheskie zavistniki**, kotorye nikogda ne smogut zamenit' deistvuiushchego mera.

Kobzon<sup>32</sup> is certain that the talk about Luzhkov's dismissal was provoked by political enviers that will never be able to replace the current mayor. (Lebedev, 2 Nov 2009)

- (29) Ètot sluchaï možno ob"iasnit' tol'ko odnim – **Il'iu Ushakova boiatsia ego opponenty**, kotorye, kstati, ugrozhali emu nedeliu ranee fizicheskoi raspravoï.

This incident can only be explained by one thing – Ilia Ushakov's opponents, who, by the way, threatened him with physical reprisal a week before, are afraid of him. (YGUR, 8 Oct 2009)

- (30) Nu v samom dele – kem nado byt', chtoby vser'ëz boiat'sia Ziuganova? Khriushei? Stepashkoï? Kto budet boiat'sia Ziuganova posle 1996 goda, kogda on, po vseï veroiatnosti, pobedil na vyborakh i **ispugalsia brat' vlast'**.

---

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Kobzon is a famous Soviet and Russian singer. He is a delegate of the State Duma (United Russia faction) and close personal friend of ex-mayor of Moscow Luzhkov.

Well, really – who does one need to be in order to seriously fear Ziuganov?<sup>33</sup>

Khriusha? Stepashka?<sup>34</sup> Who will fear Ziuganov after the year 1996, when he, in all likelihood, won the election and got scared of taking power.<sup>35</sup>

(Delyagin, 17 Oct 2009)

In (28), the feeling of envy that drives the political opponents, called here *zavistniki* ‘enviers’, is the central motive. Luzhkov, the former mayor of Moscow, provided cause for such envy through his political longevity and perceived stability of his situation, thus this envy is closely related to the inferiority complex discussed above in (22). The alleged incomparability of Luzhkov and his opponents is further stressed by Kobzon’s certainty that the opponents ‘will never be able to replace’ (*nikogda ne smogut zamenit’*) the mayor. In (29), the United Russia youth wing reacts to an attack by an unknown group onto one of their candidates in a local election through an assertion that ‘the opponents are afraid’ (*opponenty boiatsia*). Similarly to (11), where arson at a United Russia office is called a demonstration of the opponents’ weakness, the assault in (29) is said to be a manifestation of the opponents’ cowardice. Importantly, in the larger context of both (11) and (29) no information is given that specifies the opponent. In both examples, the weakness and the cowardice are referred to as general characteristics of United Russia adversaries. Example (30) relates to the topic of

---

<sup>33</sup> Gennady Ziuganov is the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation since 1993. He was the presidential candidate in 1996, 2000 and 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Khriusha and Stepashka are characters of a popular television show for children *Spokoīnoī nochi, malyshi!* (Good night, little ones!)

<sup>35</sup> The Russian presidential election of 1996 was a two-way race between Gennady Ziuganov and the first Russian president, Boris Yeltsin. While all pre-election polling put Yeltsin’s popularity at no more than 10%, according to official results, he received 35% in the first and 54% in the second round of the election.

fear in two ways: communist leader Ziuganov is said to be scary only for children, through reference to television show characters Khriusha and Stepashka, and Ziuganov himself is described as one that 'got scared of taking power' (*ispugalsia brat' vlast'*) in 1996. As a result, Ziuganov in (30) is shown to be both negligible as an opponent and apprehensive as a leader. Lack of confidence in one's power and fear towards the other participants of the political process can also be seen in (31)-(33):

- (31) Odnako, kak schitaet deputat ot KPRF Ivan Vetokhin, otkaz v naznachenii daty vyborov mèra goroda sviazan so **strakhom 'Edinoï Rossii' proigrat' vybory mèra** iz-za nizkogo reïtinga ètoï partii.

However, CPRF delegate Ivan Vetokhin thinks that the refusal to appoint a date for the mayoral election is linked to United Russia's fear of losing the mayoral election due to that party's low rating. (Kasparov, 3 Sept 2009)

- (32) 'Reformatory' **kak chërt ladana boiatsia otkrytogo, obstoiatel'nogo razgovora** o dostoinstvakh i nedostatkakh izvestnykh nam sotsial'no-èkonomicheskikh sistem.

The 'reformers'<sup>36</sup> fear an open, thorough discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of the socio-economical systems known to us like the devil fears holy water. (CPRF, 5 Sep 2009)

- (33) Nemtsov otmetil, chto **u Sergeia Mitrokhina ne khvataet ni muzhestva, ni prilichiia samomu uïti v otstavku**, i èto 'lishniï raz dokazyvaet, chto on ne dostoin byt' rukovoditelem demokraticeskoï partii.'

---

<sup>36</sup> In Russian political discourse, the group of 'reformers' is rather vague and includes all those responsible for the socioeconomic reforms of the 1990s.

Nemtsov noted that Sergey Mitrokhin lacks both courage and decency needed to resign, which ‘confirms yet again that he is not worthy of leading a democratic party.’ (Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

In both (31) and (32), the cowardice is attributed to an entire political party and the representatives of a particular political movement. While in (31) United Russia has ‘fear of losing the election’ (*strakh proigrat' vybory*), in (32) ‘reformers’ (*reformatory*) ‘fear an open, thorough discussion’ (*boiatsia otkrytogo, obstoiatel'nogo razgovora*). Importantly, the degree of fear in (32) is amplified through the use of an idiomatic expression *boiat'sia kak chërt ladana* ‘to fear like the devil fears holy water’, literally ‘to fear like the devil fears incense’. Example (33) highlights the complex nature of de-morality/de-civility, as Yabloko party leader Mitrokhin is shown to be a person that ‘lacks both courage and decency’ (*ne khvataet ni muzhestva, ni prilichiia*) and thus is ‘not worthy of leading a democratic party’ (*ne dostoin byt' rukovoditelem demokraticeskoï partii*). In (33), Mitrokhin’s moral characteristics are attacked simultaneously from several sides, including challenge to his fortitude. Focus on the Opponent’s attitude to others in their communication continues the discussion of de-morality/de-civility.

### 3.3.2 Opponents as impudent and rude

The texts of several political parties and leaders analyzed display the violation of norms of polite communication by the Opponents. Consider (34)-(36):

(34) No tsel' **khamskikh zaiavleniï** lidera LDPR sovsem v drugom.

But the goal of boorish statements by the LDPR leader is in something else.

(UR, 9 Dec 2009)

- (35) **Otkrovennoe nakhal'stvo** 'edinorossa' vozmutilo drugikh uchastnikov predvybornoï gonki, kotorye napravili sootvetsvuiushchee zaiavlenie v sud.

The outright impudence of the 'United Russia member' filled the other participants of the pre-election race with indignation, and they've submitted the respective petition to court. (AJR, 16 Sep 200)

- (36) I vot **ëto neprikrytoe khamstvo**, demonstratsiia vsevlastiia gorodskikh chinovnikov, konechno, deïstvuet na liudeï bezotkazno.

And this direct rudeness, this demonstration of the omnipotence of municipal officials certainly has an unfailing effect on people. (Delyagin, 30 Sep 2009)

In (34), United Russia accuses its Opponents of 'boorishness' (*khamstvo*). The comments in (35) and (36) are about United Russia functionaries behaving in the same manner. In (34), the accusation of 'boorishness, rudeness' (*khamstvo*), followed by the revelation of a hidden agenda in 'the goal is in something else' (*tseli sovsem v drugom*), sets the stage for a lengthy article about Zhirinovskiy's love for cheap air time and newspaper coverage. Thus the de-morality/de-civility attack serves as the introduction to a sustained de-politization attack, which is discussed further. Examples (35) and (36) share the underlining of 'impudence' (*nakhal'stvo*) and 'rudeness' (*khamstvo*) through adjectives *otkrovennyi* 'outright' and *neprikrytyi* 'direct'. They differ in the consequences of this type of behaviour, with a court appeal in (35) and lower voter engagement and turnout rates in (36). A separate part of the corpus in regards to this type of de-morality/de-civility is

constituted by the Communist party's response to the Moscow officials' removal of the advertising for that party's newspaper 'Pravda'<sup>37</sup>, as in (37) and (38) below:

(37) KPRF: My tak prosto ne ostavim **khamskii zapret** na reklamu 'Pravdy'.

CPRF: We aren't going to let the boorish ban on 'Pravda' advertising go by unnoticed. (Kasparov, 9 Sep 2009)

(38) Zampred TSK KPRF otmetil, chto proizoshedshee s gazetoï 'Pravda' – èto '**beschinstvo i grubeishie metody** protiv KPRF.'

Deputy Chairman of the CPRF Central Committee noted that what had happened to the 'Pravda' newspaper is 'an outrage and the rudest methods against CPRF.' (Kasparov, 9 Sep 2009)

The situation referred to in (37) and (38) occurred before the Moscow municipal election of 2009, when previously approved advertising for 'Pravda' was dismantled and replaced with social advertising. Importantly, United Russia billboards were not dismantled, which causes CPRF to note the 'boorish' (*khamskii*) and 'rudest' (*grubeishii*) character of the incident. Another line of attack within de-morality/de-civility related to references to rudeness and similar behaviour is the demonstration that the Opponents are intolerant to dissent within their own ranks.

### 3.3.3 Opponents as intolerant to dissent

Violation of communication norms towards one's colleagues in political work, such as suppression of other opinions or removal of people with dissenting views

---

<sup>37</sup> 'Pravda' ('Truth') newspaper was founded by the Bolshevik party in 1912 and served as the main publication of the Russian and Soviet communists until being banned in 1991. It was a Greek-owned tabloid from 1992 to 1996 and since 1997 has been the main publication of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

from the party, is a characteristic alleged in the Opponents by various political forces in the corpus. Consider (39)-(42):

- (39) Ziuganovskaia partiia, s 1996 goda prochno zakrepivshaiasia v kategorii sistemoobrazuiushchikh, umelo pol'zuetsia glavnym kommunisticheskim brendom, okazyvaiushchim magicheskoe vozdeistvie na konservativnogo izbiratelia, i **bezzhalostno iskoreniaet v svoikh riadakh vsiakoe inakomyslie.**

Ziuganov's party, which since 1996 has firmly secured itself in the category of system-forming parties, aptly uses the main communist brand that has a magic effect on the conservative-minded voters, and mercilessly eradicates any dissent in its ranks. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

- (40) **Liberal vam budet pet' pro pliuralizm mneniï do skonchaniia veka, no pri ètom on chëtko budet iskhodit' iz togo, chto est' dve tochki zreniia: odna ego, a drugaia nepravil'naia.**

A liberal will sing to you about plurality of opinions to the end of time, but at that he will clearly proceed from the assumption that there are two points of view: one is his own, and the other one is wrong. (Delyagin, 17 Oct 2009)

- (41) Na samom dele oni iavliaiutsia radikalami, potomu chto takzhe **neterpimy k drugomu mneniiu.**

In reality they are radicals, as they are also intolerant to another opinion. (Ryzhkov, 10 Feb 2010)

- (42) **Dopustit' sushchestvovanie otlichoi ot ikh pozitsii oni, vidimo, ne v silakh. Uslyshat' eë – tem bolee.**

They are evidently unable to allow the existence of a position different from their own. Not to mention hearing it. (YGUR, 13 Oct 2009)

Example (39) attacks a specific political party, unlike (40)-(42), which refer to a general trend in political thinking of Opponents. Taken from a larger text on the role of CPRF in stifling new ideas on the left flank of the spectrum, in (39) Kasparov accuses Ziuganov and his party of being ‘merciless’ (*bezzhalostnyi*) when dealing with ‘any kind of dissent’ (*vsiakoe inakomyslie*). In (40) and (41), the Opponents are shown to have two faces: a public one that ‘sings about pluralism of opinions to the end of time’ (*poët pro pliuralizm mneniï do skonchaniia veka*) and the in-party one that is ‘intolerant to another opinion’ (*neterpimyï k drugomu mneniiu*). In (42), inability to ‘allow the existence of a different position’ (*dopustit' sushchestovanie otlichnoï pozitsii*) is said to be a weakness, signalled through the phrase *ne v silakh* ‘unable’, which links this strategy to de-ability discussed above. The most vivid example of this type of demorality/de-civility that stresses intolerance to dissent can be seen in (43):

- (43) ‘Yabloko’ govorit: ‘My – demokraticheskaia partiia’. **Demokraticheskaia partiia provodit tol'ko chto svoï 15-yï s"ezd. I chem ona ot bol'shevikov otlichaetsia?** Vot pochitaïte sredstva massovoï informatsii poslednikh dneï. Tak **ona provodit vnutri sebia chistku.**
- ‘Yabloko’ says: ‘We are a democratic party.’ The democratic party just had its 15<sup>th</sup> congress. And how is it different from the Bolsheviks?<sup>38</sup> Just read the media from the past few days. That’s how it conducts an internal purge. (Delyagin, 22 Oct 2010)

---

<sup>38</sup> This is reference to the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks that took place in 1927. Under Joseph Stalin’s directions, the congress voted to expel a number of prominent members from the party, including veteran Bolsheviks Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek et al. In total, as per the Congress decisions, over 10 thousand people had their party memberships revoked. The congress is widely seen as the start of an active phase of Stalinist purges in the Soviet Union.



In (43), Delyagin notes that the 15<sup>th</sup> congress of the Yabloko party shared more than just its number with the 15<sup>th</sup> congress of the Bolshevik party that took place in 1927. That historic congress, and even the words *15-yŭ s"ezd* ‘15<sup>th</sup> congress’ have become linked in the minds of millions in Russia with Stalinism. The 15<sup>th</sup> congress of Yabloko voted to revoke party memberships for anyone that participated in other organizations, such as the Solidarity and the Other Russia movements. The historical analogy allows Delyagin to use the emotionally-charged term *chistka* ‘purge’ to discuss the situation in Yabloko. Importantly, this is the only instance of the noun *chistka* ‘purge’ in the analyzed corpus. Attention to the eradication of other opinions is complemented by a number of approaches that center on the Opponents’ lack of attention for anyone but themselves, discussed further.

### 3.3.4 Opponents as uncaring and selfish

The focus on the Opponents’ love for themselves as opposed to attention for the needs and problems of others is a vivid approach to this strategy used in texts analyzed. Consider (44)-(46):

- (44) V poslednem nomere ‘Bloknota’ na absolutno zakonnykh osnovaniiax byla opublikovana tablitsa ‘Kto i kak golosoval v Gosudarstvennoĭ Dume po vazhneĭshim sotsial'no-ekonomicheskim voprosam’, gde fakty govorili sami za sebia – **praviashchaia partiia god za godom ‘rezala’ vse sotsial'nye initsiativy.**

In the latest issue of ‘Bloknot’,<sup>39</sup> on absolutely legal grounds, a table ‘Who voted in the State Duma on the key socioeconomic issues and how’ was published, where facts spoke for themselves – the ruling party has been ‘killing off’ all social initiatives year after year. (AJR, 22 Sep 2009)

- (45) **Liberalam nikogda ne bylo svoïstvenno otstaivanie interesov prostykh liudeï.**

It has never been characteristic for liberals to defend the interests of the common folk. (Delyagin, 25 Dec 2009)

- (46) **Poslednie karikturnye predlozheniia Sergeia Mironova, ego t.n. ‘Spravedlivoï Rossii’, ravno kak i bezdeïstvie (libo nedostatochnye deïstviia) pravitel'stva V. Putina, nagliadno pokazyvaiut, chto obshchestvennoe zdorov'e ne iavliaetsia prioritetom provodimoï avtoritarnymi rossiïskimi vlastiami politiki.**

The last grotesque proposals of Sergey Mironov and his so-called ‘Just Russia’, just as the inaction (or inadequate actions) of the government of V. Putin, clearly demonstrate that public health is not a priority of the policies enacted by the authoritarian Russian authorities.<sup>40</sup> (Yabloko, 14 Oct 2009)

In (44), A Just Russia criticizes ‘the ruling party’ (*praviashchaia partiia*), i.e. United Russia for the fact that it ‘has been ‘killing off’ all social initiatives’ (*‘rezala’ vse sotsial'nye initsiativy*) in the federal parliament. In example (45), Delyagin criticizes the liberals for not caring about ‘the interests of the common folk’ (*interesy prostykh liudeï*). In example (46), the liberal Yabloko puts ‘A Just

<sup>39</sup> ‘Bloknot’ (‘Notebook’) is a group of privately-owned newspapers distributed free of charge to households in a number of large cities in the South of Russia, including Volgograd, Voronezh, Krasnodar, Novocherkassk, Rostov-on-Don, Stavropol et al.

<sup>40</sup> The Russian word *vlast'* ‘authorities’ presents a difficulty in translation in the company of *avtoritarnyi* ‘authoritarian’. However, it is necessary to note that in Russian the term for ‘authoritarian’ is a borrowing whereas the word for ‘authority, authorities’ is of Slavic origin, and thus the two do not create any confusion in a Russian language context.

Russia' together with the United Russia government led by Putin and stresses that 'public health is not a priority of the enacted policies' (*obshchestvennoe zdorov'ie ne iavliaetsia prioriteto provodimoï politiki*). The same accusation of not caring for the population thus comes from all directions simultaneously. The following examples (47)-(49) illustrate how the Opponents display selfishness to a point of narcissism:

- (47) Zakonodатели должны **принимать нужные людям законы, а не пытаться урвать из государственной казны средства на себя и свою семью, руководствуясь принципом 'после нас крот потоп'**.

Legislators must adopt laws that the people need rather than try to carve out funds from the state treasury for themselves and their families, led by the 'after us the deluge' principle. (AJR, 1 Sep 2009)

- (48) Я уже так привык, что **правящая партия всё выдаёт за свои успехи**, поэтому бурная реакция у меня не возникает.

I'm already so used to the ruling party passing everything for its own successes, thus I don't react to this in a serious way. (Yabloko, 23 Sep 2009)

- (49) Эксперт также отметил несамостоятельность либерально настроенных политических деятелей, решения за которых принимает крупный бизнес и, наконец, **самовлюбленность либералов**.

The expert also noted the dependence of liberal-minded politicians, whose decisions are made by the large business, and, finally, the liberals' narcissism.

(Delyagin, 25 Dec 2009)

In (47), the LDPR faction in the State Duma is being criticized for its proposal to increase medical and vacation coverage for delegates and their family members. In the opinion of A Just Russia, this proposal is not a 'law the people need'

(*nuzhnyi liudiam zakon*). Instead, it stems from the ‘after us the deluge’ (*posle nas khot' potop*) principle. Interestingly, while in (48) Yabloko accuses United Russia of being self-congratulatory, as it ‘passes everything for its own successes’ (*vsë vydaët za svoi uspekhi*), in (49) the liberals themselves are directly said to suffer from ‘narcissism, self-admiration’ (*samovliublënnost'*). As narcissism is both an extreme level of selfishness and a possible mental disorder, this type of de-morality/de-civility borders on de-ability. The discussion of de-morality/de-civility continues with the study of negative personality traits such as selfishness and lack of attention towards others alleged among the Opponents.

### 3.3.5 Opponents as cynical, hypocritical, and immoral

In the corpus, the strategy that shows the Opponents not following societal moral, religious, decency and other norms is widely attested. A group of examples in this category attributes the quality of ‘dirt, filth’ (*griaz'*) to the Opponents, as in (50)-(52):

- (50) Ia obratilsia k glave gosudarstva s pros'boi otpravit' v otstavku mëra Moskvy Luzhkova, poskol'ku schitaiu, chto èto **samoe griaznoe, kriminal'noe pravitel'stvo za vsiu istoriiu Rossii**.

I appealed to the head of state requesting that Moscow mayor Luzhkov be dismissed, as I consider this to be the most filthy and criminal government in the entire history of Russia. (Lebedev, 2 Nov 2009)

- (51) Ia eshchë raz prizyvaiu nekotorykh r'ianikh predstavitelei partii vlasti **ne ispol'zovat' v svoikh griaznykh igrakh sotrudnikov pravookhranitel'nykh organov**.

I once again call upon certain zealous representatives of the party of power<sup>41</sup>  
not to use the officers of law-enforcement agencies in their dirty games. (AJR,  
 22 Sep 2009)

- (52) Provokatory sami tozhe stesnialis', znaete, **zakryvali kapiushonami** **svoi merzkie litsa**, chtoby ikh ne snimali kamery, khotia kamery ikh, po-moemu, zafiksirovali.

The agent provocateurs themselves were also embarrassed, you know,  
covering their disgusting faces with hoods, so that the cameras wouldn't  
 capture them, although the cameras, I think, did record them. (Nemtsov, 16  
 Nov 2009)

In (50), the description refers to the Moscow municipal government and its activities. Example (51) refers to United Russia. The meaning of 'dirty, filthy' (*griaznyĭ*) in these two examples differs. In (50), this descriptor is further elaborated on by *kriminal'nyĭ* 'criminal', with reference to corruption. In (51), the situation refers to the 'use of the officers of law-enforcement agencies' (*ispol'zovanie sotrudnikov pravookhranitel'nykh organov*),<sup>42</sup> attempts to disrupt the pre-election campaigning of the opposition through force or threat of force. Importantly, in (51) the Opponents are said to be playing 'games' (*igry*) instead of being engaged in politics. Example (52) differs from the two earlier examples in that the faces of specific people, called *provokatory* 'agents provocateurs', are

---

<sup>41</sup> The title of *partiia vlasti* 'party of power', which is commonly used to refer to United Russia, is not completely clear. It can mean both 'the party that has power' and 'the party that advocates strong authorities'. Throughout the thesis, it is translated as 'party of power' to underline this dichotomy.

<sup>42</sup> This and other examples refer to what is collectively called in Russian *ispol'zovanie administrativnogo resursa* 'the employment of administrative resource', i.e. the semi-legal use of bureaucratic and other means by the party in power to stifle opposition and ensure its victory in future elections.

described as ‘disgusting’ (*merzkie*). Examples (50) and (52) thus have in common the fact that the concept of dirt or filth is further expanded by negatively-charged adjective *kriminal'nyi* ‘criminal’ and noun *provokatory* ‘agents provocateurs’. There is a visible connection between the use de-morality/de-civility to underline the repulsion towards the Opponents, and the strategy of de-personification that included reference to Opponents as *nechistoty* ‘sewage’, discussed in (7). While (50)-(52) make general reference to the violation of certain norms by the Opponents, (53)-(56) below make more specific accusations in light of de-morality/de-civility:

- (53) Soderzhanie dokumenta govorit samo za sebia – **stepen' tsinizma i litsemeriia** skontsentriravana v samoï chasto povtoraiushcheisia fraze: ‘Zapretit' na vremia predvybornoï kampanii.’

The contents of the document speak for themselves – the full degree of cynicism and hypocrisy is concentrated in the most frequently repeated phrase: ‘Prohibit for the time of the election campaign.’ (CPRF, 1 Sep 2009)

- (54) Otmeniaetsia Den' primireniia i soglasiia 7 noiabria: **dlia praviashcheï biurokratii neynosima, naskol'ko možhno poniat', uzhe ne tol'ko ideologiia sotsial'noï spravedlivosti, no dazhe i primirenje s neï.**

Day of Reconciliation and Concord<sup>43</sup> on November 7<sup>th</sup> cancelled: as far as one can see, the ruling bureaucracy now cannot endure not only the ideology of social justice itself, but even reconciliation with it. (Delyagin, 17 Dec 2009)

---

<sup>43</sup> *Den' soglasiia i primireniia* ‘Day of Reconciliation and Concord’, November 7<sup>th</sup>, has been the name for the anniversary of the October Revolution of 1917 since 1996. Formerly a two-day state holiday (since 1918), it is now a regular working day. The cancellation Delyagin mentions refers to the creation in 2005 of a new holiday, *Den' Narodnogo Edinstva* ‘Day of National Unity’, on November 4<sup>th</sup>, which serves to replace November 7<sup>th</sup>.

- (55) Lider LDPR pytaetsia **nazhit' politicheskii kapital na liudskoï tragedii, na chuzhom gore.**

LDPR leader is trying to earn political capital on human tragedy, on other people's distress. (UR, 9 Dec 2009)

- (56) Èto otsechenie provodilos' s **iskliuchitel'nyu urovnem tsinizma**, vplot' do togo, chto tak nazyvaemye èksperty iz izbiratel'nykh komissiï ob"iavliali fal'shivymi dazhe lichnye podpisi kandidatov v deputaty, dazhe te podpisi, kotorye stavilis' v prisutstvii ètikh èkspertov.

This elimination [of signatures on signature lists] was conducted with an exceptional level of cynicism, up to cases when so-called experts from the electoral committees proclaimed as false even the personal signatures of the candidates for parliament, even those signatures that were made in the presence of these experts. (Delyagin, 30 Sep 2009)

In (53), the communists discuss a leaked document that forbade government officials in Moscow to engage in such actions as raising prices, mass layoffs, and eviction 'for the time of the election campaign' (*na vremia predvybornoï kampanii*). In (54), Delyagin notes that the 'cancellation' (*otmena*) of the Day of Reconciliation and Accord underlines that the governing party attempts to do away with every remnant of the Soviet society, which, in the author's opinion, was based on 'ideology of social justice' (*ideologiya sotsial'noi spravedlivosti*). Example (55) discusses anti-government remarks by Zhirinovskiy following a large fire, which many considered inappropriate, while (56) talks about the process of 'elimination' (*otsechenie*) of signatures collected by independent candidates in the Moscow municipal election, which, in the end, eliminated every single such candidate from the poll. Both (53) and (56), in reference to the

Opponents, directly name such characteristics as ‘cynicism’ (*tsinizm*) and ‘hypocrisy’ (*litsemerie*). Example (55) talks about similar traits through the use of *politicheskii kapital na liudskoï tragedii, na chuzhom gore* ‘political capital on human tragedy, on other people’s distress’. Example (54) puts the Opponents against ‘social justice’ (*sotsial'naia spravedlivost*). A separate group of examples deals with unacceptable attitude towards all citizens or large groups, as in (57) and (58):

- (57) Pochemu dazhe v takoi tiazhelei dlia strany god otdel'nye lichnosti **pliuiut na sobstvennyi narod i zabotiatsia iskluchitel'no o sebe?** Ia schitaiu eto **verkhom tsinizma. Vdvoine tsinichno**, chto Anatolii Ivanov, pomimo prochego, iavlaietsia chlenom Komiteta Gosudarstvennoi Dumy po trudu i sotsial'noi politike – to est' Komiteta, kotoryi, po idee, dolzhen zabotit'sia o roste blagosostoianiia naseleniia.

Why do some individuals spit upon their own people and only take care of themselves even in a year that is so difficult for the country? I consider this to be the pinnacle of cynicism. It's doubly cynical that Anatoly Ivanov, among other things, is a member of the State Duma Committee on Labour and Social Policy – that is, the Committee, which, ideally, must concern itself with the growth of the population's wellbeing. (AJR, 1 Sep 2009)

- (58) Ia ne budu ostavat'sia v storone, kogda chinovniki ‘Edinoi Rossii’ **vykidyvaiut na ulitsu veteranov voïny,**<sup>44</sup> **bukval'no obrekaiut ikh na bomzhevanie,**<sup>45</sup> **lishaia kryshi nad golovoi.**

<sup>44</sup> *Veterany voïny* ‘war veterans’ essentially means the Great Patriotic War veterans, just as *voïna* ‘war’ without a specific name generally refers to that war.

<sup>45</sup> *Bomzh* ‘street bum’ was originally a police acronym for *bez opredelennogo mesta zhitel'stva* ‘without a fixed abode’ but has since moved into colloquial Russian. The more literary and less



I won't stand aloof while the 'United Russia' officials throw war veterans out into the street, literally dooming them to being street bums by depriving them of a roof over their heads. (MAII, 2 Dec 2009)

In (57), the LDPR, through one of its members, is accused of 'spitting upon their own people' (*plevat' na sobstvennyĭ narod*), an attitude which is called both 'the pinnacle of cynicism' (*verkh tsinizma*) and 'doubly cynical' (*vdvoĭne tsinichnyi*). In addition, Ivanov's alleged duplicity is further strengthened through reference to the State Duma Committee on Labour and Social policy and its mandate with a phrase *zabota o roste blagosostoianĭia naseleniia* 'concern with the growth of the population's wellbeing'. Example (58), coming from the far-right activists, stresses that United Russia treats one of the most respected social groups in the country, the war veterans, without any respect or concern for their future. Under United Russia's orders the veterans are allegedly put at the bottom of the social ladder, as signalled by the use of *bomzhevanie* 'being street bums'. Such treatment of fellow humans violates basic moral and religious norms, which relates the above examples to the following (59)-(62):

- (59) **Zaiavlenie Zhirinovskogo, kak minimum, amoral'no.**

Zhirinovsky's statement is, to say the least, immoral. (UR, 9 Dec 2009)

- (60) **Nazhivat' politicheskie ochki na tragedii, unessheĭ zhizni stol'kikh liudeĭ i obezdolivsheĭ namnogo bol'she – po men'sheĭ mere, beschelovechno.**

Earning political points on a tragedy that had taken the lives of so many people and deprived many more of means of livelihood is, at any rate, inhumane. (UR, 9 Dec 2009)

---

derogatory *bezdomnyi* 'homeless' was used in Soviet discourse to talk about the homeless in the capitalist world.

- (61) **Ne dozhdavshis' 40 dneĭ so dnia smerti Gaĭdara** (24 ianvaria), Luzhkov i Popov razrazilis' stat'eĭ.

Unable to wait until the fortieth day<sup>46</sup> after the day of Gaidar's<sup>47</sup> death (January 24<sup>th</sup>), Luzhkov and Popov<sup>48</sup> burst out with an article. (Nemtsov, 24 Jan 2010)

- (62) Ėto, na moĭ vzgliad, **kanibalistskaia, antichelovecheskaia ideologiya**.

This is, in my view, a cannibalistic, antihuman ideology. (Krupnov, 28 Jan 2010)

Examples (59) and (60), coming from two different United Russia articles published on the same day, refer to LDPR leader Zhirinovskiy's inappropriate comments about a large fire, which were already discussed above. Here, the comments are called *amoral'nyiĭ* 'immoral' (59), *beschelovechnyiĭ* 'inhumane' (60), and an attempt to 'earn political points on a tragedy' (*nazhit' politicheskie ochki na tragedii*) (60). In (61), Nemtsov refers to the Russian Orthodox value system that frowns upon negative comments about a recently deceased. Under that system, 'recently deceased' means up to 40 days since death. The violation of this norm by Luzhkov and Popov makes Nemtsov use the verb *razrazilis'* 'burst out' in reference to their article. Example (62) goes as far as calling the

---

<sup>46</sup> In Russian Orthodox tradition, the recently deceased are prayed for on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> day, including the day of death. On the 40<sup>th</sup> day the soul of the deceased is believed to be presented for the third and last time before God, who decides on the soul's place until the Last Judgment. Disrespect for the recently deceased is considered sinful.

<sup>47</sup> Egor Gaidar was a Russian politician and economist. He was one of the leaders of the move towards rapid economic liberalization and privatization and founder of several democratic movements and parties. Gaidar died in December 2009.

<sup>48</sup> Gavriil Popov is a Russian economist. He was one of the leaders of the democratic movement in the Soviet Union in the 1980s and first mayor of Moscow (1991-1992). Popov is a close personal friend of Yuri Luzhkov.

Opponents very ideology ‘cannibalistic’ (*kanibalistskaia*) and ‘anti-human’ (*antichelovecheskaia*). Importantly, although ‘anti-human’ (*antichelovecheskaia*) in (62) and ‘inhumane’ (*beschelovechnyi*) in (60) share the same root, the difference in negativity between them is stark, with the former referring to active destructive action against people, and the latter noting only a deeply inconsiderate attitude. This difference is further underlined by the presence of the adjective *kanibalistskaia* ‘cannibalistic’ next to the adjective *antichelovecheskaia* ‘anti-human’.

### 3.3.7 Summary of de-morality/de-civility

As moral principles are one of the factors unifying social groups, demonstration of someone’s violation of these principles, as well as norms for civil communication with other members of the group, may have long-ranging effect. Destruction or damage of the Opponent’s moral image can serve as a barrier for that Opponent’s future success in communicating with the members of the public. A natural reaction to rudeness and inability to comprehend another person’s point of view would be to cease such communication as well. The diversity of de-morality/de-civility attacks, as the analysis demonstrates, ranges from references to religious norms to accusations of basic impoliteness to the negation of humanity in the actions of the Opponents. The latter type relates the de-morality/de-civility strategy to de-personification, discussed above. The next strategy, de-veracity, was originally viewed as a part of de-morality/de-civility, but separated due to the significant volume of the data and diversity of observed approaches.

### 3.4 DE-VERACITY

The de-veracity strategy, which is closely related to de-morality/de-civility, focuses on demonstrating that the Opponents' discourse is either based on lies or has as its aims only rhetoric that is not substantiated by either facts or actions. De-veracity includes depiction of the Opponents as liars, as people spreading rumours and myths, as well as viewing the Opponents as populists.

#### 3.4.1 Opponents as liars

One approach to de-veracity attacks against the Opponents is a direct claim that the Opponent is lying or hiding the truth. This approach is shown in (63)-(65):

- (63) **Sliskom mnogo nenavisti, lzhi i beschestiia oni poseiali vokrug.**

They've cultivated too much hatred, lies and dishonour around. (AJR, 21 Sep 2009)

- (64) Leonid Gozman – **klevetnik i fal'sifikator.**

Leonid Gozman<sup>49</sup> is a slanderer and falsifier. (Yabloko, 29 Sep 2009)

- (65) **Fal'sh' i obman** ne pozvoliaut takim partiiam pretendovat' na uspeshnoe vystuplenie na vyborakh.

Falseness and deception do not allow such parties to aspire to a successful electoral campaign. (YGUR, 30 Sep 2009)

In (63), A Just Russia explains its decision not to consider electoral cooperation with United Russia through reference to this party such as *nenavist', lozh' i beschestie* 'hatred, lies and dishonour'. Example (64) shows how Yabloko

---

<sup>49</sup> Leonid Gozman is a Russian political figure, former co-chairperson of the 'Right Cause' party, former leader of the 'Union of Right Forces' party.

strongly rejects the claims of a leader of the Right Cause, another right-wing party, that with time the two parties will merge. Gozman's suggestion is shown to be without ground, as his personality is attacked through the use of labels *klevetnik i fal'sifikator* 'slanderer and falsifier'. Other political parties and their leaders are also attacked through de-veracity in (65). In the light of United Russia's overwhelming electoral success, its youth wing condemns that party's opponents for 'falseness and deception' (*fal'sh' i obman*). An interesting mix of de-veracity with other strategies can be seen in (66) and (67):

- (66) **Chudovishchnaia lozh' i mrakobesie** vseгда otlichali avtorov stat'i.

Monstrous lies and obscurantism have always distinguished the authors of the article. (Nemtsov, 24 Jan 2010)

- (67) Nel'zia pozvolit' kuchke predatelei nadrugat'sia nad samoĭ ideeĭ 'Russkogo Marsha' i oskvernit' ee svoei griaznoi i lzivoi profanatsiei.

We cannot allow a handful of traitors to defile the very idea of the 'Russian March'<sup>50</sup> and defile it with their filthy and false profanation. (MAII, 19 Oct 2009)

In (66), Nemtsov discusses the letter by Luzhkov and Popov mentioned above in regards to (61), this time from the point of view of truthfulness. The contents of the letter are evaluated through an evaluation of its authors. Luzhkov and Popov are said to be prone to 'monstrous lies and obscurantism' (*chudovishchnaia lozh' i*

---

<sup>50</sup> *Russkii Marsh* 'Russian March, March of the Russians' is a series of rallies and demonstrations of nationalist and far-right groups in Russia that takes place every year on November 4<sup>th</sup>, the Day of National Unity. *Russkii* 'Russian' is an adjective that refers to the Slavic ethnic group that constitutes about 80% of the population of the Russian Federation as of the 2002 census, as in *russkii iazyk* 'Russian language'. A different adjective with the same English equivalent, *rossiiskii* 'Russian', refers to the nationality and the state, as in *Rossiiskaia Federatsiia* 'Russian Federation'.

*mrakobesie*), lies that seek to mask lack of intellect and understanding. Through the use of *mrakobesie* ‘obscurantism’, (66) is connected to the strategy of de-intellectualization, discussed below. In (67), the use of de-veracity in *lzhivyĩ* ‘false’ is grouped with a number of other strategies, including de-morality/de-civility (*predateli* ‘traitors’, *nadrugat'sia i oskvernit'* ‘to defile and profane’ and *griaznyĩ* ‘filthy’). Discussing the strategy of de-veracity further, a group of examples, containing accusations of unsubstantiated claims, up to the levels of gossip and myths, is analyzed.

### 3.4.2 Opponents as spreading rumours, myths and propaganda

In the corpus, reference to the Opponents’ information not being based on facts takes various forms. The most common examples overtly state that the arguments of the Opponents are unfounded or poorly supported, as in (68) and (69):

- (68) Predstavitel' fraktsii ‘Edinaia Rossiia’ deputat Andreĩ Makarov vo vremia diskussii **byl menee argumentirovannym**.

The representative of the ‘United Russia’ faction, delegate Andrei Makarov was less well-reasoned during the discussion. (AJR, 23 Sep 2009)

- (69) Na ètikh debatakh partiia ubeditel'no dokazhet nesostoiatel'nost' zhalob svoikh opponentov na zloupotrebleniia so storony ‘Edinoĩ Rossiĩ’, iakoby imevshie mesto v khode izbiratel'noĩ kampanii.

At these debates the party will convincingly prove the groundlessness of the complaints of its opponents in regards to ‘United Russia’ abuses that allegedly took place during the electoral campaign. (YGUR, 8 Oct 2009)

In (68), a United Russia delegate is mildly criticized for being ‘less well-reasoned’ (*menee argumentirovannyĩ*) as opposed to the A Just Russia

representative. In (69), United Russia itself accuses its opponents of having ‘groundless complaints’ (*nesostoiatel'nye zhaloby*) after an election. The fact that the discourse of the Opponents is unsubstantiated is further underlined by the word *iakoby* ‘allegedly’. Example (70) may be viewed as aggressive in assessing the information spread by the Opponents:

- (70) Dlia ètogo ‘**na kolenke**’ **sozdaiutsia psevdonauchnye doklady, kuda sobiraiut ves' sor iz interneta i vydaiut èto za nekoe ‘otkrovenie’**.

For this, they create hastily written<sup>51</sup> pseudo-scientific reports, into which they gather all the sweepings from the Internet to then present it as some kind of ‘revelation’. (YGUR, 30 Sep 2009)

In (70), the information gathered by the Opponents is compared to ‘sweepings’ (*sor*), while the methods of the Opponents are said to be primitive through the use of *na kolenke* ‘hastily written, made by writing on one’s knee’. In (70), United Russia underlines that the Opponents would like to call their information ‘reports’ (*doklady*) and ‘revelation’ (*otkrovenie*), but the reports are, at most, ‘pseudo-scientific’ (*psevdonauchnye*) and the revelation can only be described with the adjective *nekoe* ‘some kind of’, demonstrating the potential readers’ mistrust. In (71) and (72), the information distributed by the Opponents is compared to rumours or word on the street:

- (71) **Politicheskie opponenty raspustili slukh**, chto Bykov, *iakoby*, ‘sam upal’.

The political opponents have spread a rumour that Bykov,<sup>52</sup> supposedly, ‘fell down by himself’. (AJR, 16 Sep 2009)

<sup>51</sup> The expression *na kolenke*, translated here loosely as ‘hastily written’, literally means ‘done or written when holding on one’s knee’. The expression refers to work done without due preparation and care, originating from the manner in which a negligent student completes the homework right before class.

- (72) **Raspuskanie slukhov**, vypusk ocherniaiushcheĭ poligrafii i lzhivyykh gazetĕnok – vot kratkiĭ spisok nepriiatnykh i neblagorodnykh primerov vzaimootnosheniĭ.

Spreading rumours, printing of libellous printed materials and lying little newspapers<sup>53</sup> – that's a short list of the unpleasant and dishonourable examples of our mutual relations [with other parties]. (YGUR, 20 Oct 2009)

Example (71) refers to an attack on Bykov, one of A Just Russia's local candidates, which AJR blamed on their opponents. While no substantiation of the complicity of the other parties' is provided, the allegation the Opponents 'spread a rumour' (*raspustili slukh*) that there was no attack to speak of and Bykov's injuries were due a misstep reflects poorly on the alleged perpetrators of the crime. In (72), United Russia stresses that its relations with other parties are limited to 'rumours' (*slukhi*), 'libellous printed materials' (*ocherniaiushchaia poligrafiia*) and 'lying little newspapers' (*lzhivye gazetĕnki*). United Russia thus underlines that the Opponents are unable to engage in civilized discourse and must resort to lies and libel in order to keep their electoral campaigns afloat. In addition to 'rumours' (*slukhi*), the Opponents are also said to spread and cultivate 'myths' (*mify*), as in (73) and (74):

- (73) Dostigaemaia na marshe vysokaia distsiplina i poriadok **razveivaiut liberal'nye mify** o prestupnykh naklonnostiakh Russkoĭ<sup>54</sup> natsii, o

---

<sup>52</sup> Yuri Bykov was a local candidate for the A Just Russia party in in the Kursk region.

<sup>53</sup> The diminutive suffix *-ĕnk* in *gazetĕnka* 'little newspaper', formed from *gazeta* 'newspaper', may refer to both the size of the newspaper's circulation and the perceived low and insignificant role of this publication in the formation of public opinion.

<sup>54</sup> Standard Russian orthography does not require capitalization of the names of nationalities and ethnic groups, but in the texts of the Movement against Illegal Immigration (MAII) the word



nevozmozhnosti samoorganizatsii Russkogo naroda, o negotovnosti Russkikh otstaivat' svoi natsional'nye interesy v èpokhu smutnogo vremeni 'reform' i 'demokratizatsii'.

The high level of discipline and order attained at the march dispel the liberal myths about criminal inclinations of the Russian nation, about the impossibility of self-organization of the Russian people, about the unpreparedness of Russians to defend their national interests in the 'reforms' and 'democratisation' epoch of troubles.<sup>55</sup> (MAII, 18 Oct 2009)

- (74) A to, chto narod razocharovann vo vseh partiakh, krome 'ER', - **eshchë odin mif, pridumannyy biurokратиi.**

That the people are disappointed in all the parties but 'U[nited] R[ussia]' is one more myth created by the bureaucracy. (Ryzhkov, 21 Oct 2009)

In (73), the far-right group discusses the 'liberal myths' (*liberal'nye mify*) about Russians that they consider their actions to be successful in dispelling. MAII stresses that the myths about negative traits of Russians are many and point to the culprit, the liberals. Example (74), coming from a liberal politician, puts the blame for the creation of 'one more myth' (*eshchë odin mif*) on the bureaucracy that supports United Russia. De-veracity of the Opponents' information is underlined by three elements in (75):

- (75) Massovoe soznanie bezopotno prinimaet **rastirazhirovannyi ofitsioznoi propagandoi mif** o 'liberal'nykh reformatorakh', vvergnuvshikh stranu v

---

*russkii* 'Russian' in all forms is always capitalized, apparently to emphasize the ideological basis of the movement.

<sup>55</sup> The phrase *smutnoe vremia* 'time of troubles', is used in reference to the period in Russian history from 1598 to 1613 (from the death of Ivan the Terrible to the start of the Romanov dynasty) characterized by numerous natural disasters, Polish military intervention, and a deep political, economic and social crisis. More broadly, the phrase denotes a difficult period in general.

khaos 90-kh, a levye i natsional-patrioticheskie organizatsii **prodolzhaiut musolit' tezis** o zasil'e 'liberal'nykh fundamentalistov' i v putinskiu epokhu.

The mass consciousness submissively accepts the myth, disseminated by the officious propaganda, about 'liberal reformers' that plunged the country in the chaos of the 90s, while the left and national-patriotic organizations keep harping on the thesis about the dominance of 'liberal fundamentalists' into the Putin epoch. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

In (75), Kasparov simultaneously discusses two large directions of discourse directed against the liberals in today's Russia: the 'myth disseminated by the officious propaganda' (*rastirazhirovannyi ofitsioznoi propagandoi mif*) and the 'thesis about the dominance of 'liberal fundamentalists'' (*tezis o zasil'e 'liberal'nykh fiundamentalistov'*). The myth is concerned with putting the full blame of responsibility for the socio-economic problems faced by the Russian population since the collapse of the Soviet Union onto the liberals. As underlined in (75), the myth is being spread by 'propaganda' (*propaganda*), which underlines the complicity of the state in this misinformation and also brings up historical memories of Soviet-era communist party propaganda. The more neutral 'thesis' (*tezis*) is grouped with 'keep harping on' (*prodolzhaiut musolit'*), signalling tedium and endless repetition of the old story. The thesis itself is concerned with abounding conspiracy theories that claim the liberals' hope for Russia's further disintegration. The myth and the thesis are thus not refuted by Kasparov based on facts but through active de-veracity that casts serious doubt on them. Another

approach to de-veracity aims to show that the discourse of the Opponents is populism.

### 3.4.3 Opponents as populists engaging in rhetoric only

A number of examples within the corpus depict the Opponents as engaging only in rhetoric that is not and cannot be substantiated by positive actions. Consider (76)-(79):

- (76) **Mozhno li zavoevat' populiarnost' takimi metodami? Veshaiia lapshu na ushi**, s odnoi storony, i demonstriruiia politicheskuiu impotentsuiu – s drugoi? Bezuslovno net.

Can one gain popularity by such methods? By feeding people baloney<sup>56</sup> on the one hand and demonstrating political impotence on the other? Certainly not. (YGUR, 30 Sep 2009)

- (77) **Gde predvybornye obeshchaniia ‘Edinoi Rossii’ o protsvetanii i pod"eme strany, povyshenii blagosostoianiia naroda?**

Where are ‘United Russia’'s pre-election promises of the country's prosperity and recovery, increase in the well-being of the people? (CPRF, 5 Sep 2009)

- (78) **Abstraktnye prizvy ‘Za spravedlivost’ – éto prizvy ne o chëm.**

Abstract slogans ‘For justice’ are slogans about nothing. (Delyagin, 30 Sep 2009)

- (79) **Vazhno, chto teper' u ‘lidera liberalov vseia Rusi’ poiavilis' sobstvennye politzakliuchënnye.**

---

<sup>56</sup> The phrase *veshat' lapshu na ushi*, translated here loosely as ‘feeding people baloney’, literally means ‘to hang noodles on the ears’. Its other semi-equivalent in English is ‘to pull someone’s leg’.

It's important to note that now the 'leader of liberals of all of Russia'<sup>57</sup> has his own political prisoners. (Delyagin, 29 Oct 2009)

The four examples above demonstrate distinct approaches to showing that the Opponents engage in empty rhetoric that is not reflected in their actions. In (76), United Russia's youth wing employs a colloquial formula *veshat' lapshu na ushi* 'to feed people baloney' together with a de-ability formula, *politicheskaiia impotenstiiia* 'political impotence', to underline the reasons for the Opponents lacklustre performance in regional elections. In (77), the Russian communists analyze the disconnect between United Russia's 'pre-election promises' (*predvybornye obeshchaniia*) and their work in government. In (78), Delyagin directly attacks the main party slogan of A Just Russia, *Za spravedlivost'!* 'For justice!', with a claim that this is rhetoric 'about nothing' (*ne o chëm*). Example (80) presents an unusual case where Delyagin transforms Dmitry Medvedev's self-positioning as a liberal into *lider liberalov vseia Rusi* 'leader of liberals of the whole of Russia', playing on the official title of Russian tsars. Medvedev's adherence to liberal principles is shown to be rhetoric only through reference to 'political prisoners' (*politzakliuchënnnye*) arrested and sentenced without any reaction from the president. Similar empty rhetoric is underlined in (80)-(82):

- (80) **Poka lider LDPR nadryval glotku s tribuny v Gosdume**, mariïskie 'zhirinovtsy' delali vid, chto s mestnoï 'Edinoï Rossiei' u nikh raznoglasii net.

---

<sup>57</sup> *Lider liberalov vseia Rusi* 'leader of liberals of all of Russia' is play on the historic title *Tsar' i Velikiï Kniaz' vseia Rusi* 'Tsar and Grand Duke of all of Russia' that was employed by the leaders of the unified Russian state from Ivan the Terrible until Peter the Great. Use of similar structures in contemporary Russian usually indicates a jocular or sarcastic tone.

While the LDPR leader was yelling from the State Duma rostrum, the ‘Zhirinovskians’ of Mari El<sup>58</sup> pretended to have no difference in opinion with ‘United Russia’. (Ryzhkov, 21 Oct 2009)

- (81) Poniatno, chto **nekotorye liubiat povystupat'**,<sup>59</sup> pomakhat' to flagami, to kulakami.

It's clear that some people love to speak in public and wave flags or shake fists.<sup>60</sup> (YGUR, 22 Oct 2009)

- (82) Zato vecherom, v den' press-konferentsii, kak vseгда krasovalsia svoim **antikommunisticheskim ponosom** nebezyzvestnyĭ Karaulov.

But then in the evening of the day of the press conference, as always, there was the notorious Karaulov<sup>61</sup> showing off with his anti-communist logorrhoea. (CPRF, 1 Sep 2009)

In (80), the duplicity of the LDPR is demonstrated through the discrepancy between their leader Zhirinovsky's speeches against the United Russia government in the State Duma and the actions of his regional colleagues. In his speeches, Zhirinovsky is said to be ‘yelling, overexerting his throat’ (*nadravaet glotku*), while the actions of an LDPR faction in one of the regional parliaments is in line with the wishes of United Russia. Opposition parties are shown as people

---

<sup>58</sup> Mari El is an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation located south-east of Moscow on the Volga river.

<sup>59</sup> The word *povystupat'*, built from *vystupat'* ‘present, perform’, is translated here loosely as ‘speak in public’. Its meaning can be wider and can include the additional connotation of ‘having nothing of importance or interest to say, but enjoying the process of speaking at the expense of content’.

<sup>60</sup> In the interests of preserving the meaning, the translation here differs in form from the original. In Russian, the same action, *makhat'* ‘to wave, to shake’, can be used with both *flag* ‘flag’ and *kulak* ‘fist’.

<sup>61</sup> Andrei Karaulov is a prominent Russian journalist, author and host of the show ‘*Moment Istiny*’ ‘Moment of Truth’. He is known for controversial remarks and accusations that have led to a number of court cases against him for affront and libel, many of which he lost.

that ‘love to speak in public’ (*liubiat povystupat'*) in (81), as United Russia responds to accusations of electoral fraud. Importantly, the Opponents also ‘love to shake fists’ (*liubit' pomakhat' kulakami*), which is a direct reference to the proverb *posle draki kulakami ne mashut* ‘there’s no use shaking your fists after the fight is over, what is done cannot be undone’. In (81), the ‘fight’ (*draka*) is thus replaced by the election, and the Opponents are told to calm down and concede defeat, as the vote is finished. In (82), CPRF complains of unfair treatment by the media. A high-profile press-conference by their leadership was not mentioned on national television while an allegedly ‘anti-communist’ (*anti-kommunisticheskaia*) program by Karaulov was given airtime. In this example, the journalist’s discourse is called *ponos* ‘diarrhoea’, implying *slovesnyi ponos* ‘logorrhoea’. Rhetoric that is not meant to serve as the basis for actions is also said to be a sign of populism in a number of instances in the corpus. Consider (83)-(86):

- (83) Cherez televidenie on obrashchaetsia k **populistskim** levym i natsionalisticheskim marginal'no-oppozitsionnym sloiam.

Through television he is addressing the populist left and the nationalist fringe-opposition strata. (UR, 7 Dec 2009)

- (84) Na vyborakh 11 oktiabria v Moskve budet predstavlena gruppa podderzhki deistvuiushchikh vo vlast lits – t.n. ‘Edinaia-Spravedlivaia Rossiia’, kommunisty, **populisty (LDPR)** i demokraticheskaia opozitsiia (‘Iabloko’).

At the October 11<sup>th</sup> election in Moscow there will be a cheerleading squad of those in power – so-called ‘United-Just Russia’, the communists, the

populists (LDPR) and the democratic opposition ('Yabloko'). (Yabloko, 5 Sep 2009)

- (85) Poètomu, kto govorit, chto, pobediv korrupsiiu naverkhu, mozžno pobedit' eë vnizu, prosto **zanimaetsia populizmom!**

That's why those that say that having defeated corruption at the top it's possible to defeat it at the bottom are simply engaged in populism! (AJR, 23 Sep 2009)

- (86) Vybory uzhe pozadi, i **populistskie aktsii** lisheny smysla.

The election is already in the past, thus the populist actions are devoid of sense. (YGUR, 15 Oct 2009)

Example (83) shows how the LDPR leader Zhirinovskiy is using the media to talk to the 'populist left' (*populistskie levye*). In (84), Zhirinovskiy's own views are described as populist. In (85), A Just Russia criticizes United Russia for the suggestion made by one of its functionaries that corruption can only be fought from the top down. In (85), these ideas are called an example of 'populism' (*populizm*). Example (86) relates to the démarche of the parliamentary parties that is also discussed several times above. In (86), United Russia declares such actions 'populist' (*populistskie*) and out of place after an election, which serves as reference to the Opponents' usual communication strategies within election campaigns.

### 3.4.4 De-veracity summary

The attempts at demonstrating the Opponents' substandard relation to the truth and sensibility in their discourse are various. While direct accusations of lying are visible in the corpus, there are also ample references to the Opponents as

spreading rumours and myths about others. Such approaches to de-veracity are supplemented by references to populist nature of the Opponents' discourse and their insincerity when making promises during election campaigns. Importantly, de-veracity approaches its aim of refuting the Opponents' discourse without reference to facts or information contained in this discourse. The strategy of de-lawfulness continues the discussion.

### 3.5 DE-LAWFULNESS

The strategy of de-lawfulness aims at demonstrating that the Opponents are violating the law, including allegations of administrative offences, felonies and economic crimes. The approaches to de-lawfulness vary from references to violations in general, to corruption, violent crimes and crimes directed against political stability.

#### 3.5.1 Opponents as violating the law

In the corpus, the most common way to convey de-lawfulness direct references to violations of the law by the Opponents. This strategy is illustrated in (87)-(89):

- (87) V okružnykh gazetakh vykhodiat otchëty kandidatov ot 'Edinoï Rossii' – deïstvuiushchikh deputatov, kotorye iakoby otchityvaiutsia o svoeï rabote, prichëm iz izbiratel'nogo fonda vsë èto ne oplachivaetsia – **priamoe narushenie zakona.**

Local newspapers contain reports of 'United Russia' candidates – current delegates that are supposedly reporting on their work, and all of this is not



being paid for from election campaign funds, at that – a direct violation of the law. (Delyagin, 30 Sep 2009)

- (88) Deputat-edinoross **narushil postanovlenie mèra Penzy** o netorgovle alkogolem v Den' znaniï.

A United Russia delegate violated Penza mayor's decree banning alcohol sales on the Day of knowledge.<sup>62</sup> (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

- (89) Kogda zakanchivaiutsia argumenty, kogda v otkrytykh diskussiiakh nechego skazat', v khod idut imenno takie metody – **za gran'iu zakona**. / When they run out of arguments, when they have nothing to say in open discussions, these kinds of methods come into play – methods outside of the law. (YGUR, 10 Nov 2009)

Both (87) and (88) elaborate on the committed crimes. Example (89) only hints at a violation of the law through *za gran'iu zakona* ‘outside of the law’. In both (87) and (88) the alleged criminals are United Russia members. In (87), acting United Russia delegates seeking re-election into the local parliament are accused of ‘direct violation of the law’ (*priamoe narushenie zakona*) in regards to the use of state finances for election campaigns and illegal political advertising. In (88), a specific person is said to have violated a particular municipal government decree, *postanovlenie mèra Penzy* ‘Penza mayor's decree’, that made it illegal to sell alcohol on the first day of school. Example (89), when viewed within the larger context, refers to the potential use of violence by the Opponents. Direct names of crimes, as opposed to more general references to them, are seen elsewhere in the corpus.

---

<sup>62</sup> *Den' znaniï* ‘Day of knowledge’, September 1<sup>st</sup> has been a state holiday in the Soviet Union and Russia since 1984 celebrating the first day of the new school year.

### 3.5.2 Opponents as corrupt

A large segment of the data containing examples of de-lawfulness is made up of references to corruption, graft and misappropriation of funds. Consider (90)-(92):

- (90) Ia absoliutno soglasen s Tsoem, chto my s Luzhkovym raznovelikie figury: ia schitaiu, chto **Luzhkov – korruptsioner**, a ia – net!

I completely agree with Tsoy<sup>63</sup> that Luzhkov and I are incomparable figures: I think that Luzhkov is a corruptionist, while I am not one. (Nemtsov, 17 Sep 2009)

- (91) Po slovam uchastnikov aktsii, ‘Maibakh’ olitsetvorიაet **prodazhnost’ Zhirinovskogo** s odnoī storony i ego piar ‘na kostiakh’ s drugoī.

According to the participants of the action, the ‘Maybach’<sup>64</sup> symbolizes, on the one hand, Zhirinovsky’s corruptibility, and on the other hand, his PR ‘on the bones’. (UR, 1 Sep 2009)

- (92) Takzhe otlichitel’noī osobennost’iu liberal’nykh politikov iavliaetsia **sklonnost’ k korruptsii**.

Another distinctive feature of liberal politicians is their inclination to corruption. (Delyagin, 25 Dec 2009)

In (90), Nemtsov directly calls Luzhkov a ‘corruptionist’ (*korruptsioner*), which led the former Moscow mayor to file a lawsuit against his opponent, which Nemtsov lost. Examples (91) and (92) both suggest that the Opponents are prone to corruption and thus may engage in it, through ‘corruptibility’ (*prodazhnost’*)

---

<sup>63</sup> Sergei Tsoy was the head of the media department of the Moscow government from 1989 to 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Maybach is German luxury car manufacturer, subsidiary of Daimler-Benz. The starting price for the most basic model of a Maybach vehicle is around \$400,000.

and ‘inclination to corruption’ (*sklonnost' k korruptsii*), without making a specific accusation. Several other notable references that link the Opponents to corruption can be seen in (93)-(95):

- (93) Pavel Krasotin **nazval ‘IABLOKO’ edinstvennoi partiei raiona, ‘kotoraiia ne prodalas’**.

Pavel Krasotin called ‘YABLOKO’<sup>65</sup> the only party in the district ‘that hasn’t sold itself’. (Yabloko, 13 Sep 2009)

- (94) Soglasno oprosu Levada-tsentra, provedennomu v seredine oktiabria, bol'shinstvo moskvichei veriat v **nechistoplotnost' stolichnogo gradonachal'nika**.

According to a poll conducted by Levada-centre<sup>66</sup> in mid-October, the majority of Muscovites believe that the mayor of the capital city is unscrupulous. (Lebedev, 2 Nov 2009)

- (95) Vsë, chto my tut vidim, **imenno na ètu summu – a èto desiatki milliardov dollarov – my s vami ogrableny**, to est' èto den'gi, kotorye dolzhny byli idti na to, chtoby rasselit' ‘khrushchëby’, privesti v poriadok nashi seti, kommunikatsii.

Everything that we are seeing here, this exact amount – and we are talking about billions of dollars – that’s how much we were robbed of, that’s the money that was supposed to go towards giving new homes to those living

---

<sup>65</sup> Here and elsewhere, inexplicable capitalization of party names is preserved from the original.

<sup>66</sup> *Levada-tsentr* ‘Levada-centre’, also called *Analiticheskii tsentr Iurii Levady* ‘Analytical centre named after Yuri Levada’ is one of the largest sociological and marketing research organizations in Russia, formed in 2003 and working independently from the government, as opposed to its main competitor, *Vserossiiskii tsentr izucheniia obshchestvennogo mneniia (VTsIOM)* ‘All-Russian centre for the study of public opinion’.

in ‘Khrushchev slums’,<sup>67</sup> towards fixing up our grids, our service lines.

(Lebedev, 2 Nov 2009)

In (93), Yabloko is placed in contrast to all the other political parties. This is an example of de-independence strategy, discussed below, as it is alleged to be the only one that ‘hasn’t sold itself’ (*ne prodalas*). In (93), de-lawfulness is thus achieved not through a direct accusation against the Opponents but through negation of corruption on the part of the Self. Examples (94) and (95) deal with the connection between Luzhkov and the loss of state funds. Importantly, neither of them accuses Luzhkov directly. In (94), Lebedev refers to the opinion of ‘the majority of Muscovites’ (*bol'shinstvo moskvichei*) that believe that Luzhkov is ‘unscrupulous’ (*nechistoplotnyi*). In (95), the author writes *my s vami ogrableny* ‘we were robbed’, but does not say by whom, only referring to a number of important municipal projects that were not completed as planned. Luzhkov’s party United Russia and the government that it forms are targeted in many other examples in the corpus. Consider (96) and (97):

- (96) My schitaem kategoricheski nepriemlemym golosovanie za **‘Edinuiu Rossiui’ – partiiu korrumpirovannoï biurokratii** – i prizyvaem moskvichei 11 oktiabria ko vsem formam protesta: boïkot, vynos biulletenia s uchastka, porcha biulletenia, vpisyvanie svoikh kandidatov, trebovanie suda nad Luzhkovym i Baturinoï.

---

<sup>67</sup> The word *khrushchēba* in the original, loosely put here as ‘Khrushchev’s slums’, is impossible to adequately translate. The word is built from *trushchēba* ‘slum’ and *khrushchēvka* ‘Khrushchev-style building, five-story block of flats from the 1950s to the 1960s’. The tradition to call building types typical during the reign of a particular leader, as in *stalinka* ‘building with large apartments with high ceilings and imposing exterior typical from the 1930s to the 1950s’, in this particular case met a similar-sounding word for ‘slum’, which allows for this play of words.

We consider voting for ‘United Russia’, the party of corrupt bureaucracy, categorically unacceptable, and urge Muscovites to engage in all forms of protest on October 11<sup>th</sup>: boycott, taking the ballot away from the voting station, spoiling the ballot, writing in your own candidates, demanding that Luzhkov and Baturina<sup>68</sup> be tried in court. (Nemtsov, 14 Sep 2009)

- (97) Pri vsekh svoikh nedostatkakh sovetskoe gosudarstvo stremilos' k obshchestvennomu blagu, kotoroe, khotia i ponimalos' chasto porazitel'no izvrashchenno, bylo real'noï tsel'iu – i èto strashnoe obvinenie nyneshnei **kleptokratii, prevrativsheï gosudarstvo v prostoi instrument lichnogo obogashcheniia.**

For all of its imperfections, the Soviet state sought to attain social welfare, which was a real goal, although it was frequently understood in a strikingly perverted way – that is a terrible accusation against today's kleptocracy, which has turned the state into a simple tool of personal enrichment. (Delyagin, 20 Nov 2009)

The name chosen for United Russia in (96), *partiia korrumpirovannoï biurokratii* ‘party of corrupt bureaucracy’, is also seen elsewhere in the corpus as an agreed reference to the governing party on the part of various opposition groups.<sup>69</sup> This reference puts de-lawfulness together with de-politization, which will be discussed further. In (97), Delyagin uses an academic term, *kleptokratiia* ‘kleptocracy’, from Ancient Greek for ‘power of the thieves’, to talk about the Russian government, which is headed by United Russia’s leader Putin. The

---

<sup>68</sup> Elena Baturina is the wife of Yuri Luzhkov and president of Inteco Real Estate Company. Prior to Luzhkov’s dismissal in 2010, Forbes magazine called Baturina the world’s third richest woman.

<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, the label chosen for United Russia by the participants of mass rallies in December 2011, *partiia zhulikov i vorov* ‘the party of swindlers and thieves’, follows a similar pattern.

accusation of corruption and embezzlement of public funds is further underlined in (97) by adding *prevratili gosudarstvo v prostoĭ instrument lichnogo obogashcheniia* ‘have turned the state into a simple tool of personal enrichment’. All (90)-(97) demonstrate references to various economic crimes. De-lawfulness is also shown in presenting the Opponents as prone to violence, up to the level of banditry, which is analyzed below.

### 3.5.3 Opponents as violent and dangerous criminals

References to crimes against other people’s property, such as stealing and burglary, form a part of this approach to de-lawfulness. Consider (98) and (99):

(98) Klinskie vlasti **poshli na vorovstvo**, chtoby sorvat' miting ‘Iabloka’.

The authorities of Klin<sup>70</sup> stooped to theft in order to disrupt a ‘Yabloko’ rally. (Yabloko, 12 Sep 2009)

(99) Po nasheĭ informatsii, za kazhdyĭ **vytashchennyĭ** ěkzempliar ‘Bloknota’ platiat 1.5 rublia i na ěti raboty privlekaiut molodĕzh' iz ‘Molodoĭ gvardii’.

According to our information, they pay 1,5 roubles for every copy of ‘Bloknot’ that is stolen and get young people from the ‘Youth guard’ involved in this work. (AJR, 22 Sep 2009)

Both (98) and (99) refer to crimes allegedly committed or instigated by United Russia members. In (98), Yabloko accuses the local authorities of sending people to engage in ‘theft’ (*vorovstvo*), that is, stealing banners and flags prepared for an opposition rally prior to a municipal election. In (99), Youth Guard of United

---

<sup>70</sup> Klin is a city in the Moscow region, 65 km North-West from Moscow.

Russia members are said to be paid for breaking into voters' mailboxes and stealing an opposition newspaper (*vytashchit'* 'to steal, to extract'). The effect of de-lawfulness is further illustrated in (100). In this example, the author refers to Opponents as hooligans and arsonists:

- (100) My otkryty k dialogu, no ne podderzhivaem liubye formy davleniia na opponentov – nachinaia ot nazakonnogo otkaza v registratsii i zakanchivaia **podzhogami i drugimi khuliganskimi deistviiami**.

We are open to dialogue, but do not support any forms of pressure onto opponents, starting from illegal refusal to register [candidates] and ending with arson and other acts of hooliganism. (CPRF, 5 Sep 2009)

The non-political transgressions in (100) include 'arson' (*podzhog*) and 'other acts of hooliganism' (*drugie khuliganskie deistviia*), while 'illegal refusal to register candidates' (*nazakonnyi otkaz v registratsii*) is an example of another approach within de-lawfulness, which is discussed below. The notions of both 'arsonists' (*podzhigateli*) and hooligans (*khuligany*) create a deeply negative image of the Opponents. Importantly, earlier example (11) within the strategy of de-ability also deals with allegations of arson, which underlines the interplay of different strategies found within the corpus. References to other violent and dangerous crimes can be seen in (101)-(103):

- (101) **'Edinaia Rossiia' broсила na 'YABLOKO' avtomatchikov.**  
'United Russia' sent submachine gunners against 'YABLOKO'.  
 (Yabloko, 19 Sep 2009)
- (102) Vse oni uviazylaiut **beznakazannuiu banditskuiu vylazku** s toi antikommunisticheskoi isteriei, kotoruiu vlasti regiona razviazali letom

2007 goda protiv oblastnogo otdeleniia KPRF i lichno menia, kak ego rukovoditelia i deputata oppozitsionnoi fraktsii Rossiiskogo Parlamenta.

They all link this unpunished sortie by bandits with the anti-communist hysteria that the regional authorities started in the summer of 2007 against the provincial section of CPRF and me personally as the head of this section and a delegate of an opposition faction of the Russian Parliament. (CPRF, 5 Sep 2009)

- (103) Vchera noch'iu v Lipetskoï oblasti byl **zverski izbit** kandidat v deputaty Lipetskogo gorsoveta ot LDPR po okrugu #7 Anatoliï Emel'ianov. **Napadenie** sovershila gruppa molodykh liudeï. V regional'nom otdelenii LDPR ubezhdeny, chto èto byli prestaviteli shtaba kandidata v deputaty ot 'Edinoï Rossii', deïstvuiushchego deputata gorsoveta Svetlany Bessonovoï.

In Lipetsk<sup>71</sup> region last night: Anatoly Emelianov, LDPR candidate for member of the Lipetsk city council, district 7, was brutally assaulted. The attack was carried out by a group of young men. The regional section of LDPR is certain that they were representatives of the headquarters of the 'United Russia' candidate, current city council member Svetlana Bessonova. (LDPR, 1 Feb 2010)

Example (101), when taken out of context, produces the impression of the most serious crime. However, the phrase *brosila avtomatchikov* 'sent submachine gunners' actually refers to the attempts of United Russia functionaries to prevent Yabloko's canvassing efforts, during which the police were called. The *avtomatchiki* 'submachine gunners' thus refers to police officers carrying guns

---

<sup>71</sup> Lipetsk is a regional centre located to the South of Moscow.



and not to an attack involving the guns or even the threat of such an attack. Importantly, the phrase *broshila avtomatchikov* ‘sent submachine gunners’ is used in the article’s title, thus surface scanning of the website would produce a distorted picture of the events, which appears to be the intention of the Yabloko writers. In (102), a regional communist leader accuses the authorities of allowing an ‘unpunished sortie’ (*beznakazannaia vylazka*) by what she calls a group of ‘bandits’ (*bandity*), referring to an incident during which someone threw a bag with coloured liquid in her face. A ‘brutal’ (*zverskii*) assault is referred to in (103). Notably, as opposed to (102), in (103) LDPR directly accuses United Russia of being behind the attack. In (102) the name of the Opponent is not mentioned and its alleged complicity in the crime is only seen in the word *beznakazannaia* ‘unpunished’, as the regional authorities are headed by a prominent United Russia member. Allegations of violations of the established political process constitute another visible trend in the studied texts.

### 3.5.4 Opponents as violators of the political process

Violations of the political process may include electoral fraud, preventing the work of other parties and their members, and other means. One of the notions of particular importance to this type of de-lawfulness is that of ‘agents provocateurs’. Consider (104) and (105):

- (104)      Kak deputat-kommunist obrashchaius' k oblastnym i gorodskim vlastiam  
s prizyvom strogo sobliudat' zakon, **ostanovit' politicheskikh  
provokatorov**, nadëzhno zashchitit' ot **vandalov** ob"ekty oblastnogo

kraevedcheskogo muzeia, k kotoromu odnositsia i Dom-muzei V.I. Lenina.

As a communist delegate, I address the regional and municipal authorities, calling upon them to strictly comply with the law, to stop the political agents provocateurs, to firmly protect the facilities of the regional local history museum, which includes V.I. Lenin's house-museum, from vandals. (CPRF, 4 Sep 2009)

- (105) Ne oboshlos' i bez **provokatsii** so storony t.n. 'antify' i dvizheniia 'Nashi'.

Provocations on the part of the so-called 'Anti-Fa'<sup>72</sup> and the 'Nashi'<sup>73</sup> movement could not be avoided. (MAII, 24 Nov 2009)

In (104), the reference *politicheskie provokatory* 'political agents provocateurs' is used together with *vandaly* 'vandals'. These Opponents are accused of trying to destroy the regional museum. Further context of the article from which (104) is taken underlines CPRF's focus on the Lenin museum and its determination to refer to those trying to close the museum through the negatively-charged reference *provokatory* 'agents provocateurs'. In (105), the far-right MAII employs de-lawfulness to shift the blame for a number of physical conflicts between themselves, the police and the anti-fascist groups. To this end, in (105) the anti-fascists are accused of engaging in 'provocations' (*provokatsii*). The following (106)-(108) point to United Russia's meddling with the electoral process:

---

<sup>72</sup> *Antifa* 'Anti-Fa' is a reference to the *Antifashistskoe soprotivlenie* 'Anti-Fascist resistance' movement.

<sup>73</sup> *Molodëzhnoe antifashistskoe dvizhenie 'Nashi'* 'Youth anti-fascist movement 'Nashi'' is an organization formed and sponsored by the Administration of the President of Russia since 2005. The literal translation of the name is 'Ours', meaning 'people from our area or sociopolitical group'.

- (106) A u Putina vot èta dubina partii korrumpirovannoï biurokratii pod nazvaniem ‘Edinaia Rossiia’ v rukakh est', kotoraiia **pobezhdaet na vsekh vyborakh, kak vy znaete, so schëtom 109 protsentov** i tak dalee. Putin has in his hands this bludgeon, the party of corrupt bureaucracy called ‘United Russia’, which wins all the elections, as you know, scoring 109 percent and so on. (Ryzhkov, 23 Sep 2009)
- (107) Ves' bogatyï opyt **makhinatsii s itogami golosovaniia** politicheskaiia partiia ‘Edinaia Rossiia’ primenila po vseï strane i v stolitse nasheï Rodiny – Moskve, gde LDPR bezogovorochno prokhodila v gorodskuiu Dumu. Political party ‘United Russia’ used their vast experience at electoral results fraud around the country and in the capital of our Motherland, Moscow, where LDPR certainly made it into the city Duma. (LDPR, 23 Oct 2009)
- (108) Èto politicheskoe prestuplenie, èto moshennichestvo... It’s a political crime, it’s cheating... (LDPR, 14 Oct 2009)

In (106), Ryzhkov expresses frustration with United Russia’s allegedly fabricated victories in local and federal elections. He brings the United Russia’s successes to the level of absurdity through the use of *pobezhdaet so schëtom 109 protsentov* ‘wins scoring 109 percent’. The methods that are employed by United Russia and its supporters to retain power are called *makhinatsii s itogami golosovaniia* ‘electoral results fraud’ in (107) by LDPR. The same party claims in (108) that violations of the democratic process are a ‘political crime’ (*politicheskoe prestuplenie*) and ‘cheating’ (*moshennichestvo*). Interestingly, no data is present in the corpus in which any other party except United Russia is accused of

violations of the political and electoral regulations. United Russia's image is attacked in terms of political de-lawfulness by all of its opponents, as it is shown to be manipulating the political process at will and against the best interests of the country.

### **3.5.5 De-lawfulness summary**

De-lawfulness attacks may create long-term damage to the Opponent's public image and make it difficult to regain the voters' trust and feeling of commonality with them. An old Russian saying states *to li on ukral, to li u nego ukrali* 'either he stole something or something was stolen from him', meaning that with time the details may be forgotten, but the sour aftertaste may remain forever. The approach to de-lawfulness that focuses on electoral fraud, which supplements references to economic and petty crimes, only deals with the actions in which the Opponents engage to retain power. The illegal actions of the Opponents are referred to as dangerous to society at large. De-intellectualization, the next strategy discussed, focuses on another aspect of the Opponents and their actions, lack of reason and common sense.

## **3.6 DE-INTELLECTUALIZATION**

The representational strategy of de-intellectualization is related to de-ability in that it also reflects lack of certain ability on the part of the Opponents. Specifically, de-intellectualization stresses that the Opponents do not have the intellectual capacity and knowledge necessary to be successful in government and

as representatives of the people. This strategy includes the following approaches: demonstration of the Opponents as not intelligent and stupid; presentation of the Opponents as lacking education and training; portraying the Opponents as acting against common sense and as being out of touch with reality; as well as showing Opponents as mistaken and not learning from their mistakes.

### 3.6.1 Opponents as stupid and not intelligent

One of the approaches to de-intellectualization is claiming that the Opponents are stupid and not intelligent. Overt manifestations of this approach are presented in (109) and (110):

(109) Mitrokhin – **klinicheskii mudak**.

Mitrokhin is a clinical moron. (Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

(110) Chto zhe kasaetsia zaiavlenii Mitrokhina, to oni ne tol'ko idiotskie, no i nelepye.

As for Mitrokhin's statements, they are not only idiotic, but also absurd.

(Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

In (109), Nemtsov displays de-intellectualization strategy in the use of an insulting reference *mudak* 'moron'. He also shows de-ability in the use of *klinicheskii* 'clinical' when referring to the Yabloko party leader. Example (110), taken from the same source, adds the tags *idiotskii* 'idiotic' and *nelepyi* 'absurd' to Nemtsov's evaluation of Mitrokhin's suggestion that the other parties are treating Moscow mayor Luzhkov unfairly. Other references to the Opponents' lack of intellect can be seen in (111) and (112):

- (111) **Pochti nikto i pochti nikogda ne mozhet priznat' Ziuganova intellektualom.**

Almost no one – and almost never at that – can acknowledge Ziuganov to be an intellectual. (Delyagin, 15 Dec 2009)

- (112) V politicheskikh krugakh glavu Soveta Federatsii i t.n. 'Spravedlivoi Rossii' Sergeia Mironova inogda za **bezdummye initsiativy** nazyvaiut **'vsadnikom bez golovy'**.

In political circles, the head of the Council of the Federation and the so-called 'Just Russia' Sergey Mironov is sometimes called, for his light-headed initiatives, 'a headless horseman'.<sup>74</sup> (Yabloko, 27 Sep 2009)

De-intellectualization is realized in a more oblique manner in (111), as CPRF leader Ziuganov is not presented as un-intellectual. However, the implication of the phrase *ne mozhet priznat' intellektualom* 'cannot be acknowledged to be an intellectual' is transparent and signals Ziuganov's allegedly generally recognized lack of intellect. In (112), the de-intellectualization strategy is employed both directly, through the phrase *bezdummye initsiativy* 'light-headed initiatives', and indirectly through reference to the opinion of 'political circles' (*politicheskie krugi*). The tag *vsadnik bez golovy* 'headless horseman' in (112) is morphologically related to the adjective *bezgolovyĭ* 'brainless, scatterbrained', which signals that this adjective is implied as a descriptor for Mironov. More specific references to the Opponents level of education and training are continue the discussion of de-intellectualization.

<sup>74</sup> The nickname *Vsadnik bez golovy* 'headless horseman', together with reference to the characters of Washington Irving and Mayne Reid, as well as multiple folk stories, may also be connected with the place of Mironov's personal and political origin, St. Petersburg, through the *Mednyi vsadnik* 'the Bronze horseman' monument, an icon of the city.

### 3.6.2 Opponents as lacking education and skill

A separate approach within de-intellectualization is formed by examples in which the Opponents' education is either too low or inappropriate for a particular task.

Consider (113) and (114):

- (113) Takoe oshchushchenie, chto rossiiskie liberaly **kakie-to ne te uchebniki chitali**.

One feels that the Russian liberals must have been reading some wrong kind of textbooks. (Delyagin, 17 Oct 2009)

- (114) Prezhde chem vesti svoiu partiiu v Moskovskuiu gorodskuiu dumu peterburzhitsu Mironovu luchshe **vospolnit' probely v obrazovanii i pobol'she uznat'** o Moskve.

Before leading his party in the Moscow city дума, Petersburger Mironov should fill in the gaps in his education and find out more about Moscow. (Yabloko, 4 Sep 2009)

In (113), Delyagin refers to the education of Russian liberals in general, and, importantly, gives his evaluation in a circumlocutory fashion, by assessing the readers through the books, hence 'some wrong kind of textbooks' (*kakie-to ne te uchebniki*) are said to form the basis of the liberals' knowledge. Example (114) attacks the 'gaps in education' (*probely v obrazovanii*) of Sergey Mironov, and, through him, the A Just Russia party. The wider context of both (113) and (114) point out that the inadequate education of the Opponents prevents them from being efficient and proactive in their work. Lack of training and skills is underlined in (115) and (116):

- (115) V ètom smysle kampaniia, eë plakaty, nosit **traditsionno-bezdarnyi kharakter**.

In this sense the campaign, the posters in it, is traditionally unskilled.  
(Delyagin, 30 Sep 2009)

- (116) Khodiat slukhi, chto èto vyzvalo isteriku v shtabe ‘Edinoi Rossii’, chei reiting v Volzhskom v poslednee vremia, po zameram sotsiologov, neuklonno padaet iz-za **neprodumannyykh topornykh deistvii mestnykh funktsionerov**.

It is rumoured that this caused a fit of hysteria in the ‘United Russia’ headquarters, as recently their rating in Volzhskiy,<sup>75</sup> according to the sociologists’ measurements, is steadily falling due to thoughtless and clumsy actions of local functionaries. (AJR, 22 Sep 2009)

In both (115) and (116), it is United Russia that is referred to. In (115), its pre-election campaign is not only called *bezdanaia* ‘unskilled’, but also said to be this way continuously (*traditsionno* ‘traditionally’). Example (116), which also contains elements of other strategies, such as de-ability and de-superiority, discusses the ‘thoughtless and clumsy actions’ (*neprodumannye topornye deistviia*) of the local functionaries of United Russia that caused their party to lose public support. The word *topornyĭ*, translated here as ‘clumsy’, is built from the noun *topor* ‘axe’ and thus refers to work that is done in a coarse and unskilled fashion, as if using an axe. Another approach to de-intellectualization stresses that the Opponents are detached from reality and common sense.

---

<sup>75</sup> Volzhskiy is a town in the South of Russia, 20 km North-East of Volgograd.



### 3.6.3 Opponents as against common sense and out of touch with reality

A number of examples in the corpus contain de-intellectualization through negating the Opponents' connection to common sense and reality in their actions and way of thinking. Consider (117) and (118):

- (117)      Initsiativa deputata Ivanova **vstupael v polnoe protivorechie** ne tol'ko s programmnyimi ustanovkami partii SPRAVEDLIVAIA ROSSIIA, posledovatel'no dobivaiushcheisia perevoda chinovnikov i gosudarstvennykh deiatelei iz kasty izbrannykh v kastu prostykh smertnykh, no i **so zdravym smyslom**.

Delegate Ivanov's initiative comes into complete disagreement not only with the programme aims of A JUST RUSSIA party, which consistently seeks to move bureaucrats and state officials from the caste of the selected few into the caste of mere mortals, but also with common sense.  
(AJR, 1 Sep 2009)

- (118)      Sut' pozitsii partii 'konservativnoi modernizatsii', naskol'ko možhno sudit', možhno izlozhit' izvestnoi frazoj o tom, chto '**vo-pervykh, ia tvoego gorshka ne videla, a vo-vtorykh, on byl razbityi**.'

The essence of the position of the 'conservative modernization' party, as far as one can judge, can be summed up in a famous phrase that 'first of all, I haven't seen your pot, and second, it was already broken when I saw it.' (Delyagin, 27 Nov 2009)

In (117), A Just Russia continues its criticism of LDPR delegate Ivanov's proposal for greater welfare for State Duma delegates and members of their families. In an interesting turn, A Just Russia puts its 'programme aims' (*programmnye ustanovki*) and 'common sense' (*zdravyi smysl*) on the same level,

and states that Ivanov's initiative 'comes into complete disagreement' (*vstupayet v polnoe protivorechie*) with both. Example (118) sees Delyagin discuss the ideology of United Russia, which he calls *partiia 'konservativnoï modernizatsii'* 'party of 'conservative modernization'', referring to Dmitry Medvedev's speech on the need for modernization in Russia. The saying that Delyagin employs, *ia tvoego gorshka ne videla, a on byl razbityĩ* 'I haven't seen your pot and it was already broken when I saw it', demonstrates the level to which the proposals of the Opponents are illogical. Losing touch with reality is seen in (119)-(121):

- (119) Govorit' o tom, chto oppozitsiia travit Luzhkova, mozhет tol'ko chelovek, kotoryĩ **poterial sviaz' s real'nost'iu** i ustroil sebe rabochee mesto pod bokom u mєra Moskvу.

Only a person that has lost touch with reality and organized a job for himself close to the Moscow mayor could say that the opposition is persecuting Luzhkov. (Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

- (120) A vo-vtorykh, uchebnik po Moskvovedeniiu, ved' **cheloveku iz Peterburga trudno izuchat' Moskvu iz okon personal'nogo avtomobilia.**

And secondly, a Moscow Studies textbook, because it's difficult for a person from St. Petersburg to learn about Moscow by looking out of the windows of a private car. (Yabloko, 7 Sep 2009)

- (121) Vot **krasnoiarskie 'edinorossy' predlagaiut prispособit' zdanie vokzala pod Dvorets brakosochetaniĩ.**

And now the United Russia functionaries of Krasnoyarsk<sup>76</sup> suggest that the railway station building be re-equipped for use as a Wedding palace.

(CPRF, 1 Sep 2009)

In each of the examples above, (119)-(121), reference to Opponents' losing touch with reality is used in combination with another accusation or reference. In (119), Yabloko leader Mitrokhin is said to 'have lost touch with reality and organized a job for himself close to the Moscow mayor' (*poterial sviaz' s real'nost'iu i ustroil sebe rabochee mesto pod bokom u mèra Moskvu*). Example (119) thus demonstrates an attack on both Mitrokhin's intellect and his independence, discussed further in de-independence strategy. In (120), Yabloko presents its attack on Sergey Mironov's education by offering him a textbook to read, sarcastically taking pity on the A Just Russia leader that finds it 'difficult to learn about Moscow by looking out of the windows of a private car' (*trudno izuchat' Moskvu iz okon personal'nogo avtomobilia*). Example (121), which appears to attack United Russia from the point of view of both de-ability and de-intellectualization, shares information on plans to 're-equip the railway station building for use as a Wedding palace' (*prisposobit' zdanie vokzala pod Dvorets brakosochetaniï*) instead of constructing a new, more suitable place to conduct weddings in the large city that also cannot do without the railway station. Misguided proposals and actions similar to the one in (121) form the subject of a separate approach within de-intellectualization, which is discussed further.

---

<sup>76</sup> Krasnoyarsk is the largest city and regional centre in Central and Eastern Siberia with a population of 1 million.

### 3.6.4 Opponents as mistaken and not learning from mistakes

Lack of intellect and common sense may lead to mistakes that influence the lives of many people when these mistakes are on the part of large organizations. Stressing that the Opponents are mistaken is an important approach within de-intellectualization. Consider (122)-(124):

- (122) Po mneniiu Orlova, perekhod k agressivnoï ritorike – èto **nepravil'noe reshenie dlia Zhirinovskogo**.

In the opinion of Orlov, the turn to aggressive rhetoric is an erroneous decision for Zhirinovsky. (UR, 7 Dec 2009)

- (123) **Kommunisty odumalis'**, no дума ne khochet platit' im za proguly.

The communists came to their senses, but the дума doesn't want to pay them for absenteeism. (YGUR, 21 Oct 2009)

- (124) Naverno, liudi, kotorye olitsetvoriali liberal'nuiu ideiu, ne sumeli ispol'zovat' natsional'nyi pod'em i **dopustili mnogo oshibok**.

Probably, the people that symbolized the liberal idea didn't manage to use the national upheaval and made many mistakes. (Yabloko, 11 Sep 2009)

In (122), Zhirinovsky's actions are directly called 'erroneous' (*nepravil'nyi*) by a United Russia functionary. In (123) the same party's youth wing claims that the communists 'came to their senses' (*odumalis'*), i.e. realized their mistake of criticizing United Russia and storming out of the State Duma. Example (124) is the most interesting of the three, as in it Yabloko, a liberal party, hesitatingly, through the use of modal *naverno* 'probably', admits that liberals 'made many mistakes' (*dopustili mnogo oshibok*). Example (124) is still considered to be a de-

intellectualization attack against an Opponent, as the liberals to which Yabloko refers are spoken of in the past tense, such as *olitsetvoriali* ‘symbolized’, *ne sumeli* ‘didn’t manage’ and *dopustili* ‘made’. The liberals of today, represented by Yabloko, are thus distanced from the old mistakes. While making mistakes may be considered normal, further development of this type of de-intellectualization stresses that the Opponents do not learn from their mistakes, as in (130)-(132):

- (125) **Svalivat' svoi proigrysh tol'ko na narusheniia nepravil'no, nado iskat' oshibki vnutri sebia.**

It's wrong to just lay the blame for one's defeat upon violations, one needs to look for mistakes in one's self. (YGUR, 15 Oct 2009)

- (126) **Oppozitsiia zhe, vmesto togo, chtoby rabotat' dal'she, ispravliat' dopushchennye oshibki,** ustraivaet strannye demarshi i vmesto raboty v parlamentakh vybiraet ulichnyi protest.

The opposition, however, instead of working further and correcting the mistakes that it made, organizes strange démarches, and instead of work in the parliaments chooses street protest. (YGUR, 22 Oct 2009)

- (127) **Mitrokhin nastupaet na odni i te zhe grabli,** poskol'ku porazhenie 'Iabloka' na vyborakh napriamuiu sviazano s tem, chto ono zashchishchalo Luzhkova.

Mitrokhin keeps stepping on the same rake,<sup>77</sup> as 'Yabloko's' defeat at the election is directly linked to the fact that it defended Luzhkov. (Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

---

<sup>77</sup> The expression *nastupat' na odni i te zhe grabli* 'to keep stepping on the same rake' is frequently used in Russian to refer to a situation when past mistakes and failures have taught a person nothing.

Examples (125) and (126), both coming from the youth wing of United Russia, blame the Opponents for disagreeing with the election results, storming out of the national and regional legislatures. In (125), the opposition's poor showing in the election is said to be the result of 'mistakes within' (*oshibki vnutri*) the Opponents, while in (126) the Opponents are called back to work to 'correct the mistakes that were made' (*ispravliat' dopushchennye oshibki*). In example (127), an idiomatic expression *nastupat' na odni i te zhe grabli* 'to keep stepping on the same rake' demonstrates that the Opponent, Yabloko in this case, does not learn from mistakes, just as an unintelligent person keeps getting hit in the face, but does not make the connection between stepping on the rake and the resulting injuries. In (127) it is thus possible to see a clear case of de-intellectualization that is achieved not through insults, as in (109) and (110) above, but through a vivid image of a national political leader that cannot analyze his party's failure.<sup>78</sup>

### 3.6.5 De-intellectualization summary

As seen from the examples above, the elements of de-intellectualization observed in the corpus are frequently made more indirect and surrounded with colourful imagery. Attempts at depicting the Opponents as having lost touch with reality of the lives of regular Russians may be create division of society into an elite and the rest of the country, a simple dichotomy that is then easier to control. The Opponents' inability to learn from mistakes, given the importance of making such inferences in the minds of the readers, is seen as an important tool employed by

---

<sup>78</sup> Such remarks can be said to be legitimate political points, but it is necessary to keep in mind that these examples are taken from a general context different from the developed democracies, that of imitational democracy that should make such comments unnecessary.

the political forces under study here. While many examples within the de-intellectualization strategy seek to show lack of intellect and understanding of problems as the reason the Opponents should not be supported, another strategy, de-contemporarization, seeks to move the Opponents on the temporal plane.

### 3.7 DE-CONTEMPORARIZATION

The strategy of de-contemporarization involves distorting the Opponent's belonging to the current timeframe. While the data falling into this strategy is not as vast, it is possible to see some general trends in the corpus. The approaches within de-contemporarization include references to the Opponents as prehistoric, medieval and archaic, and viewing them as relics of the Soviet era.

#### 3.7.1 Opponents as prehistoric, medieval and archaic

Several examples in the corpus refer to the Opponents as belonging to another historic period. This is seen in (128)-(130):

- (128) K svedeniiu vsekh **dinozavrov, kotorye pochemu-to vsë vremia vylezaiut v sovremennost' iz Iurskogo perioda**, sovetскої vlasti v RF ne sushchestvuet s 5 oktiabria 1993 g. soglasno Ukazu Prezidenta El'tsina.

For the information of all dinosaurs that, for some reason, keep crawling out into modern times from the Jurassic period: Soviet power has not

existed in the R[ussian]F[ederation] since October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1993, in accordance with President Yeltsin's decree.<sup>79</sup> (DU, 28 Sep 2009)

- (129) A vot liberal – èto chëtкое delenie mira na svoikh i vragov, prichëm vragi ne podlezhât nikakomu perevospitaniyu i pereubezhdeniyu – tol'ko unichtozheniyu, **kak v Vetkhom Zavete**.

But a liberal has a clear division of the world into the friends and the foes, and the foes, at that, cannot be re-educated or over-persuaded in any way, they can only be annihilated, as in the Old Testament. (Delyagin, 17 Oct 2009)

- (130) Net **srednevekovym metodam 'ER'**!

No to the medieval methods of 'U[nited]R[ussia]'! (LDPR, 23 Oct 2009)

Three different distant epochs are represented in (128)-(130): the prehistoric period (128), the pre-Christian period (129) and the Middle Ages (130). In (128), the Democratic Union, formerly a major anti-Soviet party and currently a small anti-communist group, refers to the supporters of Soviet power, the CPRF, as *dinozavry* 'dinosaurs' and suggests that the appropriate timeframe for them is not today, but 'the Jurassic period' (*Iurskiĭ period*). In (129), Delyagin does not specifically assign the liberals to the period before Christ. Instead, he attributes

---

<sup>79</sup> This is a reference to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation #1617, signed not on the 5<sup>th</sup>, but on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 1993. The decree reformed the system of government through the abolition of Soviets 'councils' at various levels and the creation of municipal and regional parliaments, as well as the State Duma at the national level. Importantly, the Decree was signed by Boris Yeltsin as a result of a coup d'état. Starting with Decree #1400, which was signed on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1993, and dissolved the Supreme Soviet of Russia, the legality of all presidential decrees is questionable due to the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Russia and the Supreme Soviet of Russia made on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1993, which impeached President Yeltsin.



the liberals' attitude towards people with different ideas to that distant period in human history. A similar approach is taken by the LDPR in (130). While United Russia itself is not called 'medieval' (*srednevekovyĭ*), its methods of work are. The specific methods discussed in (130) are the use of physical force and the destruction of opposition print materials.<sup>80</sup> Another, less specific, example can be seen in (131):

- (131) Teper' uzhe vmeste s **propakhnuvshimi istoricheskim naftalinom** M. Poltoraninym i A. Podberëzkinym povedali staroe, chto im ne nravitsia Dvizhenie v podderzhku armii, vozglavlïaemoe V. Iliukhinym.

This time already together with M. Poltaranin<sup>81</sup> and A. Podberezkin,<sup>82</sup> who have become permeated with historic naphthalene,<sup>83</sup> they've imparted the old information that they don't like the Movement in support of the army<sup>84</sup> headed by V. Iliukhin.<sup>85</sup> (CPRF, 1 Sep 2009)

---

<sup>80</sup> Although the word *srednevekovyĭ* 'medieval' is used in Russian to mean 'retrograde, backward', in this particular case, the alleged methods of United Russia coincide with those employed by governments and religious authorities in the Middle Age in an attempt to fight dissent and heresy.

<sup>81</sup> Mikhail Poltoranin is a Soviet and Russian journalist and state official, speech writer for Boris Yeltsin in 1987-1990, Minister of the press and information in 1990-1992, Head of the state committee on declassification of the archives of the Communist party of the Soviet Union in 1992.

<sup>82</sup> Aleksey Podberezkin is a Russian political figure. He was delegate of the State Duma in 1995-1999 (CPRF faction), was the former leader of the Socialist United Party of Russia, Party of Social Justice and the People's Patriotic Union of Russia. Podberezkin was candidate for President of Russia in 2000.

<sup>83</sup> Naphthalene is an organic compound which is the main ingredient of mothballs.

<sup>84</sup> *Dvizhenie v podderzhku armii, oboronnoi promyshlennosti i voennoi nauki* 'Movement in support of the army, military industry and military science' is a national movement in Russia formed in 1997 that is closely allied with CPRF.

<sup>85</sup> Viktor Iliukhin was a prominent Russian politician. He was a delegate of the State Duma (CPRF faction) from 1993 to 2011, when he died under what CPRF calls 'strange circumstances'. In 1991, while working at the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office of the USSR, Iliukhin started a

In (131), the Russian communists attack their Opponents through reference to ‘naphthalene’ (*naftalin*) and thus belonging to a museum drawer rather than active political life. Importantly, physical age does not appear to be the deciding factor in attacking Poltoranin and Podberezkin through de-contemporarization, as the first is only five years CPRF leader Ziuganov’s senior, while second is nine years his junior. The retrograde character of the represented individuals and their actions is further underlined through the use of *povedali staroe* ‘imparted the old information’. A large group of examples, presented below, equates the notions ‘old’ and ‘Soviet’.

### 3.7.2 Opponents as relics of the Soviet era

References to the Opponents’ Soviet past and comparisons of the Opponents to elements of that period in history are visible in the data in the texts of various parties and leaders, excluding CPRF.<sup>86</sup> Consider (132)-(134):

- (132) V nachale nyneshnego goda Gorbachëv rezko obrushilsia na putinskuiu partiiu ‘Edinaia Rossiia’, nazvav ee ‘partiei biurokratov’ i **‘ukhudshennym variantom KPSS’**.

Early this year Gorbachev strongly attacked Putin’s ‘United Russia’ party, calling it ‘a party of bureaucrats’ and ‘an aggravated variant of the C[ommunist]P[arty of the]S[oviet]U[nion]’. (Lebedev, 6 Sep 2009)

---

criminal investigation into the actions of Mikhail Gorbachev as USSR President. Iliukhin headed the Movement in support of the army.

<sup>86</sup> Importantly, while other political forces and leaders condemn Opponents’ ties with Soviet communism, CPRF, according to its party constitution, ‘continues the work of the Communist party of the Soviet Union and the Communist party of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, serving as their ideological successor.’ (CPRF Constitution, Introduction)

(133) Vse oni – **byvshaia KPSS**.

They are all former members of the CPSU. (LDPR, 18 Sep 2009)

(134) Vo-pervykh, zakhvativshaia v 1991 godu v Rossii vlast' postkommunisticheskaia nomenklatura **v rodstve so vcherashnimi kommunistami**.

First of all, the post-communist bureaucracy that captured power in 1991 is related to yesterday's communists. (Yabloko, 2 Sep 2009)

In (132)-(134), relation to or similarity to the Soviet communists is referred to as a clearly negative feature. In (132), Gorbachev, quoted by Lebedev, states that United Russia is 'an aggravated variant of the CPSU' (*ukhudshennyi variant KPSS*), thus noting that the CPSU itself was already quite bad and not an example to be followed. Former membership in the CPSU is shown to be a disqualifying factor in (133). Notably, LDPR leader Zhirinovsky frequently notes that he never was a member of the CPSU, as opposed to other prominent politicians, including Yavlinsky, Putin, Lebedev, Medvedev, Kasparov and others. Not only membership in the CPSU, but even close communication with former communists is referred to as a negative characteristic in (134), which criticizes the current authorities due to their 'relation to yesterday's communists' (*rodstvo so vcherashnimi kommunistami*). Two more references to the Soviet past can be seen in (135) and (136):

- (135) Vzgliady bol'shinstva predstavitelei kommunistsheskikh i sotsialistsheskikh dvizhenii **obrashcheny v proshloe. V luchsem sluchae – k Marksu, v khudshem – k Stalinu.**

The views of the majority of the representatives of communist and socialist movements are turned into the past. At best – towards Marx, at worst – towards Stalin. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

- (136) S odnoi storony, my **blizki k novomu brezhnevizmu**, a s drugoi storony, ia vizhu beskonechno izmenivshiisia za eti gody mir, chto ne mozhet ne radovat'.

On the one hand, we are approaching a new Brezhnevism,<sup>87</sup> but on the other hand, I see a world that has changed in innumerable ways during these years, which cannot but make one glad. (Ryzhkov, 16 Sep 2009)

In (135), the Russian left are united as a group that has outdated ideology that stems ‘at best’ (*v luchsem sluchae*) from Karl Marx’s economic theories dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and ‘at worst’ (*v khudshem*) from Stalinism. Example (136) is unusual in that it carries both positive and negative evaluation of the situation. However, the words such as *novyi brezhnevizm* ‘a new Brezhnevism’, i.e. a new socio-economic stagnation under the rule of the same individual, are a transparent reference to Vladimir Putin’s firm grasp of state power that had, by that time, lasted for nine years and showed no signs of ending.

---

<sup>87</sup> This is a reference to the reign of Leonid Brezhnev from 1964 to 1982, a period in Russian history considered to be a time of stagnation.

### **3.7.3 De-contemporarization summary**

The analysis of examples of de-contemporarization in the corpus demonstrates that various political forces employ this strategy with reference to different time periods in the past. No examples are found in which the temporal disconnect between the Opponent and reality is underlined with reference to the future. On the contrary, the Opponents attacked through the de-contemporarization strategy are invariably ascribed characteristics of an era in the past. Given the unusual situation of post-Soviet transition in which the society finds itself, references to the Soviet period, especially in light of the Opponents' complicity in transgressions and crimes of the communist regime, constitute a visible part of the data corpus. While with the use of de-contemporarization is an attempt to move the Opponents from the current timeframe, another strategy, de-politization, seeks to remove the Opponents from the political sphere of life, thus negating their existence.

## **3.8 DE-POLITIZATION**

The employment of de-politization strategy, which aims at the Opponent as a political force or figure, can take various forms. De-politization strategy involves: direct negation of the political character of the Opponent and stressing that the Opponent is imitating politics; focus on the Opponents as unstable in their views; reference to the Opponents through prefixes and adjectives like 'so-called'; reference to the Opponents as comical elements; reference to the Opponents as

people only interested in media attention; and demonstration of the Opponents employment of politics as a business venture.

### 3.8.1 Opponents as non-political or imitating politics

Demonstrating that the Opponents are non-political or simply pretending to be engaged in politics is a frequent approach to de-politization found in the analyzed corpus. Consider (137) and (138):

- (137) Vo-vtorykh, malo togo, chto **ER ne zanimaetsia politikoï**, no ona eshchë i priviazyvaet k svoeï sud'be natsional'nogo lidera Vladimira Putina, vystupaia dlia nego v svoeï nedeesposobnosti ideal'nym mel'nichnym krugom.

Secondly, not only does U[nited]R[ussia] not engage in politics itself, but it also attaches the national leader, Vladimir Putin, to its fate, serving, in its incapacity, as an ideal grindstone for him. (Krupnov, 26 Feb 2010)

- (138) Shakhmatist Kasparov, pokhozhe, nakonets-to prislushalsia k molodogvardeïskim prizyvam i zaniatsia tem, v chëm deïstvitel'no razbiraetsia. **Kak izvestno, rech' idët ne o politike.**

Chess player Kasparov, it seems, has finally considered the calls of the Youth Guard and engaged in what he really knows well. As is generally known, that's not politics. (YGUR, 23 Sep 2009)

In (137), Krupnov directly states that United Russia 'does not engage in politics' (*ne zanimaetsia politikoï*) because of its 'incapacity' (*nedeesposobnost'*). The article from which (137) is taken is dedicated to the chance United Russia lost to become a truly national party. Example (138) demonstrates Youth Guard's sarcasm concerning Kasparov's first major chess game since he entered Russian

politics in the year 2000. Kasparov is said to be a non-politician, which is claimed to be ‘generally known’ (*izvestno*). In both (137) and (138), Opponents are shown as not being engaged in politics or not being serious about politics. This approach to de-politization is supplemented by references to imitation of politics by the Opponents. Consider (139)-(142):

- (139) **Deputaty, kotorye v itoge zaregistrirovany v okrugakh – èto ‘spoïlery’, liudi, kotorye imitiruiut konkurentsiiu, a real'no eë ne sostavaliut.**

The delegates that are, in the end, registered in the districts are ‘spoilers’, people who imitate competition without really being it. (Delyagin, 30 Sep 2009)

- (140) **Èto potëminkaia derevnia s paroï pokosivshikhsia khat dlia oppozitsii na zadnem plane.**

That’s an Potemkin village<sup>88</sup> with a couple of lopsided huts for the opposition at the back. (Ryzhkov, 23 Oct 2009)

- (141) **Oppozitsiia shla ne dlia togo, chtoby zaregistrirovat'sia i pobedit'.**

The opposition participated in the election without interest in either registration or victory. (YGUR, 10 Oct 2009)

- (142) **Podkhod Sergeia Mironova primer togo, kak možno imitirovat' bor'bu s kureniiem, no po suti nichego ne meniat'.**

Sergey Mironov’s approach is an example of how one can imitate the struggle against smoking, but change nothing in reality. (Yabloko, 27 Sep 2009)

---

<sup>88</sup> *Potëmkinskaia derevnia* ‘Potemkin village’ is an idiom based on a historic legend, now part of the English language defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as ‘an impressive façade or show designed to hide an undesirable fact or condition’.

The multiple approaches to this type of de-politization underline the importance of the notion of ‘imitation’ (*imitatsiia*) within the context of what some observers call ‘guided or managed democracy’ (*imitatsionnaia demokratiia*), as discussed earlier. An English borrowing, *spoĭlery* ‘spoilers’, is used in (139) to talk about candidates that ‘imitate competition’ (*imitiruiut konkurentsiu*) at elections, a practice that is widely spread at the municipal and regional levels. In (140), the Russian State Duma is called *potëmkinskaia derevnia* ‘Potemkin village’. The title to the same article also presents *potëmkinskaia дума* ‘Potemkin Duma’ to refer to the unenviable status of the parliamentary opposition that does not have control over the proceedings but, by its mere presence, legitimizes them. In (141), United Russia’s youth wing accuses the opposition of not wanting to participate in the election process or the work of legislative bodies. YGUR stresses that the opposition exists ‘for something else’ (*ne dlia togo*), i.e. for extended media coverage. A personal attack is seen in (142), in which a leader of A Just Russia is said to be ‘imitating the struggle’ (*imitirovat' bor'bu*) without interest in real change. The references in (141) and (142) signal that the party of power does not consider the parliamentary opposition a threat to its authority. The opposition’s willing participation in the existing political system, as opposed to struggle against it, is underlined in (143)-(145):

(143) Èta **partiia** – **imitatsiia**.

This party is an imitation. (Ryzhkov, 15 Sep 2009)

(144) Ran'she im, naskol'ko možhno poniat', ostavliali toliku mest v parlamentakh (federal'nom i regional'nom) v obmen na to, chto **oni**



**morochili golovu svoim èlektoratam, otvlekaia ego parlamentskimi mirazhami ot real'noï bor'by za svoi prava.**

Before now, they were, as far as can be understood, left a few seats in the parliaments (the federal and the regional) in exchange for them fooling their electorates, distracting it from real struggle for its rights by parliamentary mirages. (Delyagin, 16 Oct 2009)

- (145) A Kreml', so svoeï storony, vsegda gotov vyslushat' liderov oppozitsii, potomu chto Kremliu **zhëstko kontroliruemaia, dekorativnaia oppozitsiia** nuzhna tak zhe, kak oppozitsii nuzhen Kreml'.

And the Kremlin, on its part, is always ready to hear out the opposition leaders, because the Kremlin needs the strictly controlled, decorative opposition as much as the opposition needs the Kremlin. (Ryzhkov, 23 Oct 2009)

In (143), Ryzhkov sump us the Right Cause party as *partiia-imitatsiia* ‘imitation party’, which signals that further discussion of that party as a political force is unnecessary. Both (144) and (145) provide details on the imitational role that the parliamentary opposition parties play. In (144), these parties ‘fool’ (*morochat golovu*) and ‘distract’ (*otvlekaiut*) their voters through ‘mirages’ (*mirazhi*). In (145), the interconnection between the federal authorities, that is the ‘the Kremlin’ (*Kreml'*), and the ‘strictly controlled, decorative opposition’ (*zhëstko kontroliruemaia, dekorativnaia oppozitsiia*) is said to be mutually vital. Examples (143)-(145) stress the negative character of the Opponents and the detrimental effect their presence has on the development of the democratic society. The decorative role of the Opposition is further amplified through underlining the instability of its views, discussed further.

### 3.8.2 Opponents as unstable in their views

The instability or lack of permanent beliefs on the part of the Opponents is the target of another approach to de-politization, seen in (146) and (147):

- (146) **Kraĩnĩ levak v 1980-90-e, a nyne radikal'no ostepenivshĩsia, poiushchiĩ osannu KhDS/KhSS, edinoross Isaev zovět k 'konservatizmu', kotoryĩ, mol, 'ne iavliaetsia protivopolozhnost'iu modernizatsii', i o kotorom, po Isaevu, 'govoril Dmitriĩ Medvedev v svoeĩ stat'e'.**

A far-left activist in the 1980-90s, and now a radically sobered up United Russia member singing praises to CDU/CSU,<sup>89</sup> Isaev<sup>90</sup> calls for 'conservatism', which, he says, 'is not in opposition to modernization', and about which, according to Isaev, 'Dmitry Medvedev spoke in his article'. (Krupnov, 27 Sep 2009)

- (147) **Srazu stoit otmetit', chto granitsa mezhdue liberalami-sistemnymi i nesistemnoi liberal'noi oppozitsiei zachastuiu razmyta, tak kak mnogie segodniashnie neprimirimye kritiki rezhima s liberal'nogo flanga na kakom-to etape sami byli chast'iu praviashchei elity.**

It's necessary to at once note that the line between system liberals and the non-system liberal opposition is frequently fuzzy, as many of today's uncompromising critics of the regime on the liberal flank were, at some stage, members of the ruling elite themselves. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

---

<sup>89</sup> CDU/CSU is the Christian-Democratic Union and Christian-Social Union, conservative political party in Germany.

<sup>90</sup> Andrey Isaev is a delegate of the State Duma since 1999 (United Russia faction) and member of the Supreme Council of 'United Russia'.

In (146), Krupnov attacks a particular United Russia functionary for his shift from ‘far-left activist’ (*kraīniĭ levak*) to a person that ‘calls for ‘conservatism’’ (*zovēt k ‘konservatizmu’*). These references show that Isaev adapts his views to the dominant ideology of the time, being a communist in the Soviet era and a conservative in the Putin era. Example (147), coming from a liberal politician, discusses two groups of liberals in Russia, the ‘system liberals’ and the ‘non-system liberal opposition’. In (147), Kasparov stresses that ‘the line between [these two groups] is fuzzy’ (*granitsa mezhdu [nimi] razmyta*). Importantly, in (147) Kasparov refers to *segodniashnie neprimirime kritiki rezhima* ‘today’s uncompromising critics of the regime’, to whom Kasparov himself is usually attributed. In calling these critics ‘members of the ruling elite’ (*chast’ praviashcheĭ élit*), referring to United Russia, Kasparov appears to distance himself from both groups. Both (146) and (147) underline the negativity of rapidly changing one’s views. The Opponents are shown to espouse shifting points of view in (148) and (149):

(148) **313 ‘za’. ‘My za transportnyĭ nalog!’ – krichit ‘Edinaia Rossiia’.**

Potom eĭ zvoniāt iz Kremliā i govoriāt: mol, vy teper’ ‘protiv’. I **te zhe**

**313 govoriāt, chto tak my zhe s samogo nachala byli ‘protiv’.**

313 ‘in favour’. ‘We support the traffic tax!’ – shouts ‘United Russia’.

Then they are called from the Kremlin and told: you know, you are now

‘against’. And the same 313 say that they’ve been ‘against’ since the

beginning. (Ryzhkov, 25 Nov 2009)

(149) **Liuboĭ predstavitel’ rezhima mozhet byt’ s utra kommunistom, v obed liberalom, posle obeda natsionalistom, k uzhinu impertsem, i on**

**otzerkalivaet liubye ideologicheskie zaprosy, kotorye sushchestvuiut v obshchestve.**

Any representative of the regime can be a communist in the morning, a liberal at lunchtime, a nationalist after lunch, a monarchist<sup>91</sup> by dinnertime, and he reflects any ideological demands existing in the society. (Ryzhkov, 25 Nov 2009)

Both (148) and (149) refer to the membership of United Russia and their ideological instability. In (148), the United Russia parliamentary majority is alleged to be an unprincipled group of people that can vote ‘313 ‘in favour’’ (313 ‘za’) on one day and then state that they ‘have been ‘against’ since the beginning’ (*s samogo nachala byli ‘protiv’*). The rather grotesque description of the possible mutations of a United Russia member is found in (149), from ‘communist’ (*kommunist*) to ‘liberal’ (*liberal*) to ‘nationalist’ (*natsionalist*) to *imperets* ‘monarchist’. This representation of the Opponent underlines that the party of power does not have a steady platform, but ‘reflects any ideological demands’ (*otzerkalivaet liubye ideologicheskie zaprosy*) of the society. This relates example (149) to the populism in de-veracity strategy. As a result of these frequently changing views presented in (148) and (149), the Opponents appear to be not engaged seriously in the political process. Another approach that has the same goal of diminishing the role of the Opponents as a political force is the identification of Opponents through prefixes and words like ‘so-called’.

---

<sup>91</sup> The word used in the original is *imperets*, translated here as ‘monarchist’. *Imperets* does not exist in standard Russian, but it can be assumed that it is built from the root of *imperiia* ‘empire’ and thus the reference is to someone advocating return to the times of the Russian Empire, which would presuppose restoration of monarchy or features characteristic of it.

### 3.8.3 Opponents identified through prefixes and words like ‘so-called’

A set of prefixes is used to mark de-politization. These prefixes are pseudo- and quasi-. Consider (150) and (151):

- (150) My vozvrashchaemsia v dikie, anarkhicheskie 90-e gody ètim obsuzhdeniem, kogda otkaz ot otvetstvennosti u chinovnikov gosudarstvennykh oblachalsia v ètu **psevdoneoliberalistskuiu ideologiiu.**

We are returning to the wild, anarchic 90s through this discussion, when the officials gave up responsibility by hiding behind this pseudoneoliberalist ideology. (Krupnov, 28 Jan 2010)

- (151) V ètom plane **ER iavljaetsia takim zhe kvazi-vedomstvom**, uchastvuiushchim v bor'be za gosresursy, kak i drugie partii, goskorporatsii, obshchestva i prochie kluby, no **ne iavljaetsia politicheskoi siloi.**

In this respect U[nited]R[ussia] is the same kind of quasi-establishment that participates in the fight for state resources, just like the other parties, state corporations, societies and other clubs, but it is not a political force. (Krupnov, 26 Feb 2010)

In (150) and (151), Krupnov creates new words through the addition of prefixes, which makes it difficult to understand his intended meaning fully. In (150), he criticizes an ideology, which he calls *psevdoneoliberalistskaia* ‘pseudoneoliberalist’. Krupnov links this ideology to the ‘wild, anarchic 90s’ (*dikie, anarkhicheskie 90-e gody*). In (151), United Russia is likened to a ‘quasi-establishment’ (*kvazi-vedomstvo*) and put at the same level as ‘other parties, state

corporations, societies and other clubs' (*drugie partii, goskorporatsii, obshchestva i prochie kluby*). Moreover, United Russia is denied the status of a political force and said to have 'fight for state resources' (*bor'ba za gosresursy*) as its main objective of work. Prefixes used in (150) and (151) are shown to contribute to the de-politization strategy. In addition, the adjectival phrase *tak nazyvaemyĩ* 'so-called' is another, more prolific approach to this strategy represented by (152) below:

- (152) I vot teper' radikalov podderzhala i **tak nazyvaemaia sistemnaia oppozitsiia** i dazhe kosvenno predstaviteli samoĩ vlasti.

And now the radicals are supported by the so-called system opposition, as well as even the representatives of the authorities themselves.

(Lebedev, 2 Nov 2009)

Example (151) discusses the newfound unity of 'radicals' (*radikaly*), 'so-called system opposition' (*tak nazyvaemaia sistemnaia oppozitsiia*) and 'authorities themselves' (*sama vlast'*) in wanting the dismissal of Moscow mayor Luzhkov. Importantly, both 'radicals' (*radikaly*) and 'system opposition' (*sistemnaia oppozitsiia*) are seen multiple times in the corpus preceded by the adjectival phrase *tak nazyvaemyĩ* 'so-called', which may indicate not only attempts at de-politization through this element but also the authors' disagreement with the oversimplification of this division.

### 3.8.4 Opponents as comical elements

De-politization strategy is also seen in the attempts to demonstrate the comical and non-serious nature of the Opponents in the corpus. A familiar target within this approach is Zhirinovsky, as in (153) and (154):

(153) My govorim o tom, chto ran'she Zhirinovskii byl **smeshon, delal piar na kiche**, a teper' – na krovi. / We are saying that Zhirinovsky used to be **comical, conducting PR<sup>92</sup> through kitsch**, and now he makes it through blood.<sup>93</sup> (UR, 1 Sep 2009)

(154) 'On uйдёт s pozorom, s infarktom, s insul'tom', - zaiavil **ékstsentrichnyi politik** vo vremia vystupleniia pered studentami Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta.

'He will leave in shame, with a heart attack, with a stroke' – said the eccentric politician during his presentation in front of the students of the Petersburg state university. (YGUR, 22 Oct 2009)

In both (153) and (154), LDPR leader's *ékstsentrichnost'* 'eccentricity' and *kitch* 'kitsch' are shown to be on the border between something that is 'comical, funny' (*smeshnoi*) and something that is inhumane and inconsiderate. In (153), United Russia criticizes Zhirinovsky's remarks on the approaching anniversary of the Beslan school tragedy, while in (154) he is quoted as promising Churov, the head of the Central Elections Committee, 'shame' (*pozor*), 'heart attack' (*infarkt*) and

---

<sup>92</sup> In Russian, the borrowed term *piar* 'PR' has acquired a more clear-cut negative connotation, especially through the collocation *chërnyĭ piar* 'dark or negative public relations'.

<sup>93</sup> The Russian expression *na krovi* 'on top of blood, on the basis of people's suffering and death' does not have a direct equivalent in English. In (153), it is employed in a dichotomy of *na kiche* 'through kitsch' versus *na krovi* 'on top of blood'. While this element is a strong example of the de-morality/de-civility strategy, (153) is first of all reviewed here in regards to the de-politization reference present.

‘stroke’ (*insul't*). This type of de-politization is thus closely related to de-morality/de-civility. Consider other examples, (155)-(157), that underline the comical in the Opponents:

- (155) Takie otkroveniiia predstavitelia partii vlasti **vyzvali ulybku u prisutstvuiushchikh v zale zritelei**.

Such revelations of the representative of the party of power caused the audience present in the hall to smile. (AJR, 23 Sep 2009)

- (156) Takimi sposobami, kak demarshi na zasedaniiax Gosdumy, ulichnye aktsii, oni pytaiutsia privlech' k sebe vnimanie, rasshatat' mnenie obshchestvennosti. **Éto smeshno**.

Through such means as *démarches* at State Duma sessions and street actions they are trying to attract attention to themselves and destabilize public opinion. It's comical. (YGUR, 22 Oct 2009)

- (157) Esli my otkazhemsia ot nego, to priznaem pobedu za **sborishchem politicheskikh klounov**, kotorye, vtoptav v griaz' pamiat' svoikh predkov, vekami prolivavshikh krov' za RUSSKUIU zemliu, nashli v sebe dostatochno naglosti i besstydstva, chtoby sdelat' ofitsial'nym lozungom svoego **spektaklia** – ‘russkie – éto ne natsional'nost'!’, ‘russkii – éto prilagatel'noe!’.

If we give up having [the march], then we will admit to the victory of the mob of political clowns, who, having trample down into mud the memory of their ancestors, who have shed blood for centuries for the RUSSIAN land, have found in themselves enough insolence and shamelessness to make ‘Russians are not a nationality!’, ‘Russian is an adjective!’ the official slogan of their performance. (MAII, 19 Oct 2009)



Example (155) discusses unpremeditated remarks by a United Russia functionary during a television program. The person's statements that the government had no idea about the approaching crisis or ways to combat it are said to have 'caused the audience present in the hall to smile' (*vyzvali ulybku u prisutstvuiushchikh v zale zritelei*). Interestingly, in (155), A Just Russia does not call United Russia comical directly, but reflects on visible public opinion about the Opponents. In (156), the steps which the parliamentary opposition parties had taken to protest the allegedly manipulated local election results, already discussed above, are called 'comical' (*smeshno*), without any further justification. The word *smeshno* 'comical' is, in fact, the last word in the source article from which (156) is taken, which appears to be an attempt and cutting off further debate on the issue. Example (157), coming from the far-right nationalist group, attacks the organizers of an alternative 'Russian March' focusing on national unity, perhaps at the expense of Russian national consciousness, as opposed to anti-immigrant sentiment. The Opponents are called 'a mob of political clowns' (*sborishche politicheskikh klounov*), while their event is referred to as a 'performance' (*spektakl*). Examples (153)-(157) above demonstrate that the various political forces under analysis in this project attempt to draw the public's attention to the comical character of their Opponents and use the de-politization strategy to direct further communication about a particular topic. The discussion of the Opponents as PR-oriented, that is, the Opponents' orientation towards media attention, continues the analysis.

### 3.8.5 Opponents as PR-oriented

Search for media attention and publicity, frequently referred to through a borrowed term *piar* ‘PR’, constitutes a visible approach within de-politization strategy. Consider (158) and (159), in which Zhirinovsky is the target:

- (158) Lider LDPR ispol'zuet radikal'nye otsenki **v tseliakh piara**.

LDPR leader uses radical appraisals for the purposes of PR. (UR, 9 Dec 2009)

- (159) Zhirinovskii seichas budet **ispol'zovat' liuboï povod, chtoby popiarit'sia, chtoby napomnit' izbirateliu o sebe**.

Zhirinovsky will now use any cause for PR, for reminding the voters of himself. (UR, 9 Dec 2009)

Both (158) and (159), representative of a large group of examples in the corpus, focus on Zhirinovsky's activities ‘for the purposes of PR’ (*v tseliakh piara*) (158), ‘for PR’ (*chtoby popiarit'sia*) (159), and ‘to remind the voters of himself’ (*chtoby napomnit' izbirateliu o sebe*) (159). The Opponent's possible concern for the situation about which he speaks, as well as the validity of his arguments are thus obfuscated by active de-politization. A similar approach is seen towards a different target in (160):

- (160) Segodnia ikh deïstviia, vyskazyvaniia v internet-soobshchestvakh i razlichnye provokatsii na grani fola. Oni prosto oskorbitel'nye i vovse ne napravleny na to, chtoby predlozhit' moskvicham kakie-to konkretne resheniia ikh problem. Tol'ko na to, chtoby vyzvat' kakuiu-to kritiku, zlost'. **Vnesistemnaia oppozitsiia takim obrazom prosto pytaetsia privlech' k sebe vnimanie**.

Their today's actions, statements in online communities and various provocations are at rock bottom. They are just insulting and are not at all directed towards offering the Muscovites some specific solutions to their problems. They are only directed towards causing some kind of criticism and anger. The non-systemic opposition simply tries to attract attention to itself in this manner. (YGUR, 9 Oct 2009)

In (160), it is not one person but all of the 'non-systemic opposition' (*vnesistemnaia oppozitsiia*) that is accused of trying to 'causing some kind of criticism and anger' (*vyzvat' kakuiu-to kritiku, zlost'*) while making efforts to 'attract attention to itself' (*privlech' k sebe vnimanie*). The PR-orientation of the Opponents is shown to be opposed to 'specific solutions to problems' (*konkretnye resheniia problem*), thus serving only the needs of the Opponents and not the population at large. Examples (158)-(160) aim at diminishing the discourse of the Opponents by claiming that the purpose of this discourse is not spreading information per se, but mostly keeping the Opponents in the public eye. Similarly to focus on the comicality of the Opponents discussed above, stressing the Opponents' constant search for media attention makes it possible to skirt detailed analysis and debate regarding the content of the Opponents' communication. Another de-politization technique that pursues a similar aim focuses on the Opponents' business activities and connections.

### 3.8.6 Opponents as engaged in business instead of politics

One more approach to de-politization lies in demonstrating that the Opponents are not politicians so much as entrepreneurs.<sup>94</sup> Consider (161)-(163):

(161) **LDPR – biznes, a ne politika!**

LDPR is business and not politics! (UR, 1 Sep 2009)

(162) Esli govorit' o 'Edinoï Rossii', to sovershenno iasno, chto èto **partiia krupnogo kapitala**, partiia chinovnikov.

If one speaks about 'United Russia', it is completely clear that it is the party of big business, the party of bureaucrats. (CPRF, 1 Sep 2009)

(163) Èto obshchaia osobennost', potomu chto èti liudi, kotorye nazyvaiut sebia liberalami i demokratami, oni **vstaiut na sluzhbu krupnomu biznesu**.

It's a general trait, because the people that call themselves liberals and democrats are in the service of big business. (Delyagin, 25 Dec 2009)

Interestingly, while in (161) United Russia accuses LDPR of being 'business and not politics' (*biznes, a ne politika*), in (162) it is United Russia itself that is called 'the party of big business' (*partiia krupnogo kapitala*). Both CPRF and United Russia are thus attempting to reach the same part of the electorate that does not sympathize with business. Reference to Opponents' connections to 'business' (*biznes*) is made further in (163), as Delyagin notes that 'the people that call themselves liberals and democrats are in the service of big business' (*liudi, kotorye nazyvaiut sebia liberalami i demokratami, vstaiut na sluzhbu krupnomu*

<sup>94</sup> This particular approach may be more difficult to place within the political discourse of developed capitalist societies, as the element of negativity connected with the very word *biznes* 'business' is specific to post-Soviet discourse. However, it needs to be kept in mind that this type of de-politization also stresses that the Opponents are trying to or going to try to use political office for personal and corporate financial gain.

*biznesu*). A large part of the political spectrum in Russia thus appears marked together as bearing connections to or even dependence on ‘business’ (*biznes*), which acts as a de-politization factor against the multiple parties and leaders.

### **3.8.7 De-politization summary**

The strategy of de-politization aims at the very heart of the political Opponents – the fact that they are political. As the analysis demonstrates, de-politization is achieved through moving the Opponents into the sphere of comical instability and imitation, together with focus on the Opponents’ desire for media attention and personal profit through their engagement in the political process. The fact that all of the sources studied in this thesis resorted to various types of de-politization against their Opponents serves as further proof that this strategy is considered important. Another strategy, de-independence, seeks to place the Opponent into a role of a puppet, thus underlining the freedom and originality of the Self.

## **3.9 DE-INDEPENDENCE**

The de-independence strategy seeks to represent the Opponents as lacking freedom in their actions and discourse. Approaches within de-independence include: attempts at describing Opponents as puppets and minions; demonstration of the Opponents’ ties to the establishment; and presentation of Opponents’ uniformity to stress that they are all the same.

### 3.9.1 Opponents as puppets and minions

Demonstrating that the Opponents are puppets and minions is a visible approach within de-independence. It includes a wide variety of labels for the parties that are dependent on the authorities and the actions of such parties. Consider (164) and (165):

- (164) Kommentiruia zaiavlenie Sergeia Mitrokhina, on podcherknul, chto **lider ‘Yabloka’ otrabatyvaet politicheskii zakaz.**

Commenting on Sergey Mitrokhin’s statement, he underlined that the ‘Yabloko’ leader is carrying out a political order.<sup>95</sup> (Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

- (165) V zakliuchenii mitinga ego uchastniki edinoglasno priniali rezoliutsiiu, v kotoroi obratilis' k rukovodstvu federal'nykh politicheskikh partiĭ s prizyvom rassledovat' **fakty politicheskoi prostitutsii ikh mestnykh otdelenii** v Klinskom raione.

At the end of the rally, its participants unanimously passed a resolution in which they appealed to the leadership of federal parties for them to investigate the facts of political prostitution by their local branches in the Klin district. (Yabloko, 13 Sep 2009)

In (164), Yabloko leader Mitrokhin is said to be ‘carrying out a political order’ (*otrabatyvaet politicheskii zakaz*), and thus compared to a paid assassin and described as completely dependent in what he says and does on the ‘customer, person placing the order’ (*zakazchik*). Similar criminal allusions are made in

---

<sup>95</sup> The word *zakaz* ‘order’ and its derivatives are frequently used in contemporary Russian with a number of negative connotations, including *zakaz na ubiĭstvo* ‘assassination agreement’, *zakaznaia stat'ia* ‘paid-for article with libel and false information’ et al.

(165), where the local branches of CPRF, A Just Russia and LDPR are said to be engaged in ‘political prostitution’ (*politicheskaiia prostitutsiia*), their client being the local administration and branch of United Russia. Examples (164) and (165) thus present de-independence strategy in combination with de-lawfulness, using the rhetoric of court proceedings or a criminal investigation. Similar attacks against specific parties can be seen in (166) and (167):

(166) Dlia togo, chtoby reshitel'no provodit' politiku, napravlennuiu na sozдание zdorovogo obshchestva, grazhdane nasheĭ strany mogut v 2011 godu izbrat' novyiĭ sostav Gosudarstvennoĭ Dumy Rossii, v kotoroi budut predstavleny ne **t.n. ‘Edinaia-Spravedlivaia Rossiia’** **vokrug kotoroi, slovno vokrug Marsa, vrashchaiutsia dva satellita – Fobos (KPRF) i Deimos (LDPR)**, a opozitsiia, kotoraiia predstavliaet liberal'no-demokraticeskoe napravlenie v rossiĭskoĭ politike.

In order to resolutely enact policies directed towards the creation of a healthy society, in 2011 the citizens of our country can elect a new composition of the State Duma of Russia, in which there will be represented not the so-called ‘United-Just Russia’, around which, as if around Mars, rotate two satellites – Fobos (CPRF) and Deimos (LDPR).<sup>96</sup> but the opposition that represents the liberal-democratic trend<sup>97</sup> in Russian politics. (Yabloko, 27 Sep 2009)

---

<sup>96</sup> Although the names of the satellites of Mars are, indeed, Fobos and Deimos, the reference may be directed further, to the Ancient Greek meanings of these names, ‘fear’ and ‘dread’, implying timidity of CPRF and LDPR. If that is the case, the reference to Mars, the god of war, is unclear.

<sup>97</sup> Notably, in the opinion of Yabloko expressed in this example, the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) is not a part of the liberal-democratic movement. It is necessary to note that while CPRF is usually referred to by both its abbreviation and as the Communist party or *rossiĭskie kommunisty* ‘the Russian Communists’, LDPR is rarely called *liberal-demokraty* ‘liberal democrats’.

- (167) Vo-pervykh, **LDPR sovershenno loial'na**, vo-vtorykh, nuzhna kak postoiannaia illiustatsiia, chto 'Edinaia Rossiia' – daleko ne khudshaia partiia.

First of all, LDPR is completely loyal, and secondly, it is needed as a constant illustration that 'United Russia' is far from the worst as a party.

(Delyagin, 30 Sep 2009)

Example (166) draws a peculiar picture of the composition of the Russian State Duma in 2009 as 'the so-called 'United-Just Russia', around which, as if around Mars, rotate two satellites – Fobos (CPRF) and Deimos (LDPR)' (*t.n. 'Edinaia-Spravedlivaia Rossiia' vokrug kotoroi, slovno vokrug Marsa vrashchaiutsia dva satellita – Fobos (KPRF) i Deimos (LDPR)*). This metaphor is used to underline that A Just Russia is, allegedly, a wing of United Russia, while CPRF and LDPR are United Russia's subsidiaries that cannot act independently, just as Fobos and Deimos are firmly connected to Mars. In (167), with the use of *sovershenno loial'na* 'completely loyal', Delyagin implies Zhirinovskiy's loyalty to the federal authorities, and thus United Russia, and not the voters. Importantly, the dependence of LDPR's fate on the decisions made elsewhere is further underlined through the adjective *nuzhna* 'it is needed'. Several other examples in the corpus do not mention the names of parties, but attack them several at a time through dependence. Consider (168) and (169):

- (168) Ego predlozheniia o piati protsentakh dlia prokhozheniia partiī na regional'nom urovne, ob otmene sbora podpisei dlia partiī na vyborakh, dostupe k SMI ne meniaut suti putinskoī politicheskoi sistemy, ibo **partiinoe politicheskoe prostranstvo absoliutno zachishcheno, partiī**



**servil'ny** i dominiruiushchaia rol' putinskoï biurokratii ne podvergaetsia nikakomu somneniiu v poslanii Medvedeva.

His suggestions about five percent needed for a party to get into a regional parliament, about the abolition of signature collecting for parties during elections, about access to the mass media do not change the essence of Putin's political system, because the political space in terms of parties is absolutely cleaned up,<sup>98</sup> the parties are servile, and the dominating role of Putin's bureaucracy is not doubted in any way in Medvedev's address. (Nemtsov, 12 Nov 2009)

(169) No to, chto proizoshlo na vyborakh, pokazyvaet, chto strane nuzhny takie **ne karmannye partii**.

But what happened at the election demonstrates that the country needs such non-puppet parties. (Ryzhkov, 22 Oct 2009)

In (168) the political parties are called 'servile' (*servil'nye*) and in (169) they are referred to as 'puppet' (*karmannye*). In (168) Nemtsov paints a pessimistic picture in which Dmitry Medvedev's suggestions 'do not change the essence of Putin's political system' (*ne meniaiut suti putinskoï politicheskoi sistemy*). In (168), the idea is that there are no opposition parties worth talking, as they are said to be 'cleaned up' (*zachishcheny*). Ryzhkov's comment in (169) points to the division of parties into 'puppet' and 'non-puppet', and, moreover, stresses that 'the country needs non-puppet parties' (*strane nuzhny ne karmannye partii*). This division signals that de-independence can be used to draw simple dichotomies

---

<sup>98</sup> The term used in the original and translated here as 'cleaned up' is *zachishcheny*. This is a verb coming from the military term *zachistka territorii* 'clean-up operation, mop-up operation', which entails elimination of all pockets of resistance in a certain area.

between all of the Opponents and the Self. The Opponents' lack of independence is seen further in an approach underlining the Opponents' belonging to the establishment.

### 3.9.2 Opponents as parts of the establishment

This subsection focuses on the analysis of an approach within the de-independence strategy which demonstrates that the Opponents are part of the establishment. Within this approach, the Opponents are said to be unable to go too far in their criticism of the authorities. Consider (170)-(178):

- (170) Dazhe oppozitsionnye partii – **‘loial'naia oppozitsiia’, uspeshno kooptirovannaia i neĭtralizovannaia Kremlĕm, – ne vozrazhaiut protiv podtasovok, poka im pozvoliaut ostavat'sia v igre.**

Even the opposition parties – the ‘loyal’ opposition that has been successfully co-opted and neutralized by the Kremlin – do not object to the manipulations [of the results] as long as they are allowed to stay in the game. (Ryzhkov, 23 Oct 2009)

- (171) Teper', veroiatno, praviashchaia biurokratiia reshila, chto bol'she ne ispytyvaet nadobnost' dazhe v takikh **figovykh listochkakh**, - i nachala potikhon'ku vybrasyvat' ikh na pomoĭku.

Now, it seems, the ruling bureaucracy has decided that it no longer has need for even such fig leaves and has started to quietly throw them out into the dump. (Delyagin, 16 Oct 2009)

- (172) Oni **ne mogut vpriamuiu idti provit vlasti, kritikuia eĭ lish' polunamĕkami, s ogovorkami...**

They cannot directly confront the authorities, so they criticize it with only half-hints with reservations... (Ryzhkov, 15 Sep 2009)

Examples (170)-(172) do not mention specific parties, but all talk about the so-called 'system opposition'. In (170), the opposition is labelled as *loial'naia* 'loyal', *kooptirovannaia* 'co-opted' and *neītralizovannaia* 'neutralized'. In their actions, these Opponents are said to be complacent, 'as long as they are allowed to remain in the game' (*poka im pozvoliaut ostavat'sia v igre*), illustrated in (170). In (170), the verb *pozvoliat'* 'to allow' builds an image of servitude of the Opponents. In (171), the Opponents are called *figovye listochki* 'fig leaves'. A fig leaf is usually something meant to mask an unpleasant or disagreeable feature. Therefore, (171) implies that the Opponents are serving the 'ruling bureaucracy' (*praviashchaia biurokratiia*) by masking the lack of democracy in the country. Example (172) underlines that the Opponents may be engaged in anti-government rhetoric, but within limits, as the expression *polunamėkami s ogovorkami* 'through half-hints with reservations' suggests. This imitational character of the opposition links the use of de-independence to de-politization, discussed earlier. A number of examples within this strategy attack specific politicians and parties, as in (173)-(176):

- (173) V to zhe vremia **ne stoit preuvelichivat'** boītsovskie kachestva KPRF. Esli tandem ne tresnet, a **na Ziuganova prikriknut s samogo verkha**, KPRF, kak ēto vseгда byvalo ran'she, **otoīdēt nazad – na zaranee podgotovlennye pozitsii.**

At the same time, one shouldn't overestimate the fighter qualities of CPRF. If the tandem<sup>99</sup> doesn't crack and they raise their voice at Ziuganov from the very top, then CPRF, as it has always been before, will retreat – towards positions prepared in advance. (Ryzhkov, 5 Nov 2009)

- (174) Vprochem, zlye iazyki utverzhdauiut, chto **zadiristost' tekhn zhe moskovskikh 'iablochnikov' ne vykhodila za soglasovannye s gorodskimi vlastiami granitsy.**

However, evil tongues state that the fighting attitudes of those Moscow 'Yabloko' activists didn't do beyond the limits that were agreed upon with the municipal authorities. (Ryzhkov, 21 Oct 2009)

- (175) Odnako v svoei prakticheskoi deiatel'nosti **Ryzhkov vseгда ostavalsia loial'nym chlenom 'partii umerennogo progressa v ramkakh zakona o poslednikh vyborakh'.**

In his practical activities, however, Ryzhkov has always remained a loyal member of the 'party of moderate progress within the limits of the last election law'. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

- (176) Iasno, chto takaia kartina ne nuzhna ni odnoi iz partiĩ **'oppozitsii ego velichestva', vkluchaia KPRF.**

It's clear that such a state of things is not needed by any of the parties of 'His Majesty's opposition', including CPRF. (Delyagin, 16 Oct 2009)

Examples (173)-(175) share a common feature in that they discuss the Opponents behaviour towards the authorities. In (173), doubt is displayed towards 'fighter qualities of CPRF' (*boitsovskie kachestva KPRF*) and Ryzhkov suggests that not

---

<sup>99</sup> *Tandem* 'tandem' is a term used to refer to the diarchy of Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev.

only do directions to the communist leader Ziuganov come ‘from the very top’ (*s samogo verkha*), but also that CPRF is aware of limits to its activities and therefore has ‘positions prepared in advance’ (*zaranee podgotovlennye pozitsii*), to which it can return. In a similar light, in (174), ‘fighting attitudes’ (*zadiristost*) of Yabloko are said to exist within certain agreed-upon ‘borderlines, limits’ (*granitsy*). Interestingly, while (173) and (174) are Ryzhkov’s de-independence remarks about his Opponents, example (175) deals with Ryzhkov himself. Ryzhkov’s anti-establishment rhetoric is shown to be detached from his ‘moderate’ (*umerennyi*) and ‘loyal’ (*loyal'nyi*) practical side. Example (176) singles out CPRF while attacking all of the system opposition parties together under the name *oppozitsiia ego velichestva* ‘His Majesty’s opposition’.<sup>100</sup> Through these examples, it can be seen how de-independence is used in various ways in order to underline the links of the Opponents to the authorities and the so-called establishment. A related approach within this type of de-independence attacks the Opponents as compromisers prepared to do what the Kremlin tells them, as in (177)-(179):

- (177) Ne golosuĭte za **soglashateleĭ iz ‘Iabloka’** – ěto ne al'ternativa, nas vseгда prinuzhdali k kompromissam i Lubianka, i Kreml'.

---

<sup>100</sup> *Oppozitsiia ego velichestva* ‘His Majesty’s opposition’ may be unclear for Canadian readers, given the term ‘Loyal Opposition’ present throughout the British Commonwealth. It needs to be noted that the Russian Federation is a presidential republic, thus the satirical reference here is to either Dmitry Medvedev or Vladimir Putin.

Don't vote for the compromisers from 'Yabloko' – they are not an alternative, we've always been forced to compromise by both the Lubianka<sup>101</sup> and the Kremlin. (DU, 22 Sep 2009)

- (178) Esli dazhe **samaia terpimaia, samaia sgovorchivaia oppozitsiia** ob"ediniaetsia i ukhodit, to èto znak bedy.

If even the most tolerant, the most complaisant opposition unites and walks out, that's a sign of trouble. (Ryzhkov, 23 Oct 2009)

- (179) Egor Gaïdar ne shël na sdelki s sovest'iu i ne posledoval za svoimi **nevernymi soratnikami, prodavshimi Kremliu 'Soiuz Pravykh Sil' vmeste so svobodoï, sobstvennost'iu i zakonnost'iu i uchredivshikh marionetochnoe 'Pravoe delo'.**

Egor Gaidar didn't bargain with his conscience and didn't follow his unfaithful companions that sold the 'Union of Right Forces' to the Kremlin together with liberty, property and lawfulness and founded the puppet 'Right cause'. (DU, 16 Dec 2009)

Examples (177) and (178) employ de-independence through the use of various forms built around the same notion of compromise or agreement: *soglashateli* 'compromisers' (177) and *sgovorchivyï* 'complaisant' (178). The opposition in (178) is also described by the adjective *terpimyï* 'tolerant'. While usually this adjective is seen as a positive characteristic, the context in (178) shows that here 'tolerant' is used with negative connotation, implying 'tolerant to the worst excesses'. Example (179) with the use of verb *prodali* 'they sold' signals the fact that the Opponents treat their political activities as business, which relates to one

---

<sup>101</sup> Lubianka is a square downtown Moscow known for the former KGB and present FSB state security service building. The name of the square is frequently used to mean 'state security services', similar to the Kremlin being used to denote the Russian president.

of the aforementioned approaches to de-politization. The compromisers in (179) are said to have lost ‘liberty, property and lawfulness’ (*svobodu, sobstvennost' i zakonnost'*) together with their party in the end. While (179) calls the ‘Right Cause’ party a ‘marionette, puppet’ (*marionetka*), several other examples stress that the Opponents are so closely linked with the regime that they cannot pretend not to have power, as they have become a joint mechanism or body with the authorities. Consider (180)-(182):

- (180) **Oni byli loial'nymi i poslushnymi i polnost'iu vstroilis' v kremlëvskuiu sistemu k nemaloï dlia sebia vygode.**

They were loyal and obedient and integrated into the Kremlin-built system with much benefit for themselves. (Ryzhkov, 23 Oct 2009)

- (181) Poètomu, chestno govoria, **kogda Sergeï Mikhaïlovich Mironov chto-to takoe rasskazyvaet o tom, chto vlast' dolzhna poniat', priniat', uchest' zakony, kotorye predлагаet ‘Spravedlivaia Rossiia’ i t.d., ia vpadaïu v prostratsiiu, potomu chto ne mogu poniat, kto chego govorit.**

That’s why, to be honest, when Sergey Mikhailovich Mironov says something about how the authorities must understand, adopt, take into account the laws suggested by ‘A Just Russia’ etc., I fall into prostration because I cannot understand who’s saying what.<sup>102</sup> (Krupnov, 25 Dec 2009)

- (182) No zachastuiu dazhe samye radikal'nye liberaly, vseгда sokhraniavshie distantsiiu s vlast'iu, ne mogut predlozhit obshchestvu nikakogo

<sup>102</sup> The contraction to ‘who’s’ in the translation is a deliberate attempt to transfer the unusual character of *kto chego govorit* ‘who’s saying what’, which appears to be an clear reference by Krupnov to a low colloquial variant for *kto chto govorit* ‘who is saying what’.

tselostnogo videniia budushchego, tak kak na podsoznatel'nom urovne, cherez el'tsinskuiu epokhu, **oshchushchaiut ontologicheskuiu svyaz' s nyneshnim rezhimom.**

But often even the most radical liberals that have always kept their distance from the authorities cannot suggest an integral vision of the future to the society because at a subconscious level, through the Yeltsin epoch, they feel an ontological link to the current regime. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

Example (180) focuses on the fact that the Opponents not only 'integrated into the Kremlin-built system' (*vstroilis' v kreml'vskuiu sistemu*), but also received 'benefit' (*vygoda*) from it. Krupnov in (181) underlines the absurdity of claims by 'A Just Russia' to be in opposition to the government and needing special attention to its proposals. While Krupnov does not directly say so, the phrase *ia vpadaui s prostratsiiu, potomu chto ne mogu poniat', kto chego govorit* 'I fall into prostration because I cannot understand who's saying what' directs the readers of (181) to make a connection between 'A Just Russia' and the authorities from whom it is asking for attention. The reference in (181) is to the fact that at that time, Mironov was the chairperson of one of the chambers of Russia's two-chamber parliament and was viewed as the one of the most powerful people within the Russian system of authority. In (182), the link between the Opponents and the authorities is taken beyond the strictly political level into 'ontological, existential' (*ontologicheskaiia*). This connection is further said to be 'at a subconscious level' (*na podsoznatel'nom urovne*). Not only the actions but even the thought process of these Opponents is thus alleged to be controlled by the



authorities. Another type of control, financial and organizational, is seen in (183) and (184):

- (183) On podcherknul, chto dvizhenie nikogda ne ob"edinit'sia s **partiei**, **sozdannoï po initsiative Kremli**.

He underlined that the movement will never merge with a party created on the Kremlin's initiative. (Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

- (184) Russkiï marsh demonstriruet iavnoe preimushchestvo pered razlichnymi **sozdaiushchimisia svyshe 'partiiami' i 'dvizheniiami', poluchaiushchimi finansirovanie i inuiu podderzhku svyshe**, no ne nakhodiashchikh real'nogo odobreniia v narode.

The Russian march demonstrates a clear advantage over the various 'parties' and 'movements' created from the top down and getting financial and other kinds of support from those higher up, but not finding real approval among the people. (MAI, 18 Oct 2009)

In (183), the Right Cause is referred to as *partii*, *sozdannaia po initsiative Kremli* 'party created on the Kremlin's initiative'. Prior to Nemtsov's remark in (183), Right Cause leadership suggested that the broader democratic movement in the country should merge with the Right Cause in order to compete with the other parties. Example (183) underlines why such a merger was not possible in the eyes of Nemtsov. In (184), the Russian far-right activists denounce their Opponents as 'created from the top down' (*sozdaiushchiesia svyshe*). Such an approach is demonstrated to be in opposition to the popular uprising image of the 'Russian march' events taking place since 2004, as it 'doesn't find real approval among the people' (*ne nakhodit real'nogo odobreniia v narode*) as an artificial construct.

Both (183) and (184) demonstrate that political parties resort to de-independence techniques in order to distort popular perception of the Opponents and negate the Opponents' capability of doing anything serious by themselves. A similar unpopular and bureaucracy-friendly image due to its top-down origins is associated with United Russia, as in (185) and (186):

- (185) A teper' vopros k zhurnalistam i politologam, kotorye zakhlëbyvaias', napereboĩ shchebechat, kak nichtozhna oppositsiia, kak malo ona vydvigaet kandidatov v otlichie ot **'Edinstvennoĩ i 'Napravliaiushcheĩ': KAK IDTI NA VYBORY LIUDIAM, ZNAIA, CHTO IKH MOZHET POSTIGNUT' TA ZHE UCHAST'?!'**

And now a question for the journalists and political scientists that breathlessly, in eager rivalry chatter about how insignificant the opposition is, how few candidates it fields as opposed to the 'Only' and 'Guiding' one.<sup>103</sup> HOW CAN PEOPLE RUN IN AN ELECTION KNOWING THAT THE SAME FATE CAN BEFALL THEM?!<sup>104</sup>  
(MAIL, 5 Feb 2010)

- (186) Kto budet borot'sia s makhinatsiiami vlastei, korruptsiei, strannymi stat'iami v gorodskom biudzhete? **Trebovat' ètogo ot deputatov 'ER' bespolezno: oni iz odnoi pesochnitsy s chinovnikami.**

<sup>103</sup> *'Edinstvennaia' i 'Napravliaiushchaia'* 'the 'Only' and 'Guiding' one' is a reference to the ruling United Russia party made through a distorted quote from the 1977 Constitution of the Soviet Union that said in Article 6 of Chapter 1 that *rukovodiashcheĩ i napravliaiushcheĩ siloĩ sovetskogo obshchestva, iadrom ego politicheskoi sistemy, gosudarstvennykh i obshchestvennykh organizatsii iavljaetsia Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza* 'the Communist party of the Soviet Union constitutes the leading and guiding force of the Soviet society, the centre of its political system, state and social organizations'.

<sup>104</sup> In Internet discourse, continuous capitalization is considered an equivalent of shouting. This emotional outburst is further supported by the exclamation mark together with a question mark in the end of the sentence.

Who will confront the machinations of the authorities, the corruption, and strange articles in the municipal budget? Demanding this from the ‘U[nited]R[ussia]’ delegates is useless: they are from the same sandbox as the bureaucrats. (Ryzhkov, 21 Oct 2009)

Example (185) makes a reference to United Russia through a distorted quote from the Soviet constitution that elevated one political party in the country in ‘the Only and Guiding’ (*Edinstvennaia i Napravliaiushchaia*), which is a case of both de-independence, showing how deeply integrated with the establishment this party is, and de-contemporarization through the historical allusion. In (186), United Russia is said to be ‘from the same sandbox as the bureaucrats’ (*iz odnoi pesochnitsy s chinovnikami*), which underlines the level of integration of the party and the state officials, comparing them to children playing together. Importantly, as United Russia’s status as the party of power was not disputed at the time the data corpus was collected, it is not surprising that references to this type of de-independence focus only on United Russia. However, it is worthy of note that in spite of general recognition of the special status of United Russia in the socio-political system, that party’s Opponents appear to make significant efforts to strengthen and broaden the understanding of United Russia as a party of the state officials and bureaucrats. The analysis of an approach within de-independence strategy that presents the Opponents as uniform continues the discussion.

### 3.9.3 Opponents as all the same

Given the large number of parties and movements on the Russian political arena, one approach to de-independence that stands out in the corpus is that of

underlining similarities between the Opponents up to the level of stating that all of the Opponents are one and the same. One of the most direct techniques through which several parties can be shown to be the same is putting the names of these parties together, as is the case with *Edinaia-Spravedlivaia Rossiia* ‘United-Just Russia’ mentioned previously. Several other approaches can be seen in (187)-(189):

- (187) Nu, **budet u nas, dopustim, v trëkh drugikh partiiakh, ne v ‘Edinoï Rossii’, po 10 chelovek bol’she, chestnoe slovo, ia absoliutno ne ponimaiu, chto izmenitsia.**

Well, let’s assume we had 10 more people in three other parties, not in ‘United Russia’. Honestly, I can’t understand at all, what would have been different. (Krupnov, 25 Dec 2009)

- (188) Davaïte tak iskrenne, vot v **chëm raznitsa mezhdu ‘Edinoï Rossiei’ i ‘Spravedlivoï Rossiei’, ob"iasnite mne?**

Let’s be frank: can you explain to me the difference between ‘United Russia’ and ‘A Just Russia’? (Krupnov, 25 Dec 2009)

- (189) Nikto ne sdelaet modernizatsiiu, **ni korrupsionery, ni liberaly, ni demokraty.**

No one will carry out the modernization, neither the corruptionists, nor the liberals, nor the democrats. (Delyagin, 22 Dec 2009)

All of the above examples attempt to demonstrate that there is no difference between some or all of the Opponents. In (187), Krupnov states he ‘can’t understand at all what will change’ (*absoliutno ne ponimaiu, chto izmenitsia*) if the composition of the State Duma were different. In a similar approach, in (188) he asks his interviewer to explain the ‘difference between ‘United Russia’ and ‘A

Just Russia” (*raznitsa mezhdru ‘Edinoï Rossieï’ i ‘Spravedlivoï Rossieï’*), demonstrating confusion between these two parties. Example (189) is peculiar. In (189), the insertion of the noun *korruptsionery* ‘corruptionists’ into the structure *ni korruptsionery, ni liberaly, ni demokraty* ‘neither the corruptionists, nor the liberals, nor the democrats’ creates an unusual group that appears to equate its three components. Overall, examples (187)-(189), which are representative of a large segment of the corpus, demonstrate the attempt to ignore the differences between various Opponents in order to create a simple Self-Others dichotomy. As the examples show, putting the Opponents together is achieved by different means.

#### **3.9.4 De-independence summary**

As the analysis has shown, de-independence is a multi-pronged line of attack against the Opponents. It includes such approaches as demonstration of the Opponents’ humiliating status as a puppet of another force and putting all of the Opponents together into one group. Numerous approaches to de-independence attacks include overt accusations of dependent character of the Opponents as well as more overt references to control over the Opponents by the authorities. While focusing on the similarities between various Opponents, political forces create a simple manageable dichotomy of Us versus Them in the form of Self versus all other political forces in the country. De-superiority is the next strategy analyzed.

### 3.10 DE-SUPERIORITY

De-superiority is an attempt to convey that the Opponents' perceived power and popularity are only remnants of an indisputably successful, but also absolutely irretrievable past. The strategy of de-superiority focuses on the presentation of the Opponents as ones that had lost the former popularity or support and that are now facing a deep crisis. This strategy is related to de-contemporarization, discussed above, but goes beyond a temporal shift into underlining the changes the Opponents have undergone resulting in their current state. This strategy consists of such approaches as showing that the Opponents are shrinking in popularity and underlining a crisis within the Opponent.

#### 3.10.1 Opponents as shrinking in popularity

Within de-superiority, a direct attack consists in stressing that the Opponent is attracting less support than it used to. It contributes to an image of shrinking popularity of the Opponents. This is seen in (190)-(193):

- (190) **U 'Edinoi Rossii' seichas net toi podderzhki moskvichei, kotoraiia byla neskol'ko let nazad.**

'United Russia' now does not enjoy the same level of support from Muscovites as it used to a few years ago. (Kasparov, 4 Sep 2009)

- (191) **A situatsiia s pravoii ili, vernee, liberal'noi ideeii zakliuchaetsia v tom, chto ona poteriala ogromnoe doverie naroda, kotoroe imela v 90-kh godakh. Poteriala po raznym prichinam.**

And the situation with the right or, rather, the liberal idea is that it has lost the enormous trust of the people that it enjoyed in the 90s. Lost it for various reasons. (Yabloko, 11 Sep 2009)

- (192) Luchshe by kommunisty tak aktivnichali v period kampanii, rabotaia s izbirateliami, a ne seïchas, kogda vsem stalo poniatno, chto **svoikh predannykh izbiratelei oni rasteriali, molodëzh' k nim ne idët**, a ikh idei ne nakhodiat podderzhki na bol'shinstve territorii.

The communists should have been so active during the campaign by working with the voters, and not now, when it has become clear to everyone that they have lost their staunch voters, that young people are not coming to them, and that their ideas do not find support in most of the regions. (YGUR, 16 Oct 2009)

- (193) On otmetil, chto v **samom demokraticnom gorode 'Yabloko' poterialo svoikh izbiratelei – obrazovannykh intelligentnykh liudei.**

He noted that 'Yabloko' has lost its voters – educated, cultured people – in the most democratic city. (Nemtsov, 14 Oct 2009)

Examples (190)-(193) above admit that the Opponent used to be more popular than today. They all also make use of this image of former popularity as something that is irreversibly crumbling today. In (190), United Russia has lost 'the support of Muscovites' (*podderzhka moskvichei*), while examples (191)-(193) employ various forms of the verb *teriat'* 'to lose something'. In (191), the liberals have 'lost the people's trust' (*poteriali doverie naroda*), while in (192), the communists have 'lost their staunch voters' (*rasteriali svoikh predannykh*

*izbiratelei*) and in (193) Yabloko has ‘lost its voters – educated, cultured people’ (*poterialo svoikh izbiratelei – obrazovannykh intelligentnykh liudei*). The general reference is thus one of lost status and irreparable damage to the Opponents’ chances in the future elections. Another approach to de-superiority stresses that the current status of the Opponents is a crisis.

### 3.10.2 Opponents as facing a crisis

Reference to the crisis in which the Opponents find themselves is another approach to de-superiority, as a political party in crisis cannot serve as a drawing point for voters. Direct references to a crisis can be seen in (194) and (195):

- (194) Èto svidetel'stvo **krizisa LDPR**.

This is evidence of the crisis of the LDPR. (UR, 7 Dec 2009)

- (195) Zaiavleniia lidera LDPR sviazany s **sistemnym krizisom v riadakh oppozitsii**.

The LDPR leader’s statements are linked to a systemic crisis within the opposition. (UR, 9 Dec 2009)

In (194), Zhirinovsky’s unexpected anti-government rhetoric is seen by United Russia as ‘evidence of crisis’ (*svidetel'stvo krizisa*). This approach is similar to de-ability and de-intellectualization, where speeches and actions of the Opponents are shown to be signs of mental disability or lack of intellect. Example (195) widens the scope and severity of the crisis, as the same statements by Zhirinovsky are referred to as a sign of ‘a systemic crisis within the opposition’ (*sistemnyi*



*krizis v riadakh oppositsii*) and not just LDPR, linking this strategy to de-independence, as the whole opposition is viewed as a body with the same problems. More colourful references to the Opponents' crisis can be seen in (196) and (197):

(196)      **Politicheskikh bankrotov** vybory ne spasut!

The election will not save the political bankrupts. (LDPR, 23 Oct 2009)

(197)      Vozmozhno, èto **korabl' 'Edinoï Rossii' seïchas tonet?**

Maybe it is the 'United Russia' ship that is sinking now? (Ryzhkov, 10 Feb 2010)

Both (196) and (197) allege a crisis of United Russia. In (196), LDPR refers to that party as *politicheskie bankroty* 'political bankrupts' and paints a pessimistic picture of United Russia's electoral chances. In example (197), United Russia is compared to a ship that is 'sinking now' (*seïchas tonet*). These financial and nautical comparisons allow for the creation of vivid imagery of the seriousness of the crisis in which the Opponents find themselves drawn.

### 3.10.3 De-superiority summary

While at first glance the de-superiority strategy may seem counterintuitive and against the best interests of the politicians and political organizations, as it involves acknowledgement of the Opponents' former supremacy, this strategy, in fact, as seen in the corpus, acts more surreptitiously than many others. The diversity of approaches to de-superiority demonstrates that its use is not avoided

by players in the political arena. Importantly, within de-superiority attacks the positive features of the Opponents and their past successes during electoral campaigns are formulated in such a way as to attract attention to the discrepancy between the past and the present of the Opponents. The next strategy under analysis is that of de-patriotization.

### 3.11 DE-PATRIOTIZATION

The strategy of de-patriotization is an additional strategy only singled out during final data analysis, as it was initially seen as overlapping with several other strategies, such as de-morality/de-civility, de-veracity and de-positivization/de-normalization. However, there is substantial diversity of data indicating the existence of this strategy, which seeks to demonstrate: the Opponents' lack of commitment to the country and its people; hatred towards the people and Russophobia; and orientation abroad.

#### 3.11.1 Opponents as hateful and treacherous towards the country

Several examples in the corpus underline that the Opponents have already betrayed or are about to betray the people and the country up to the level of high treason. Consider (198) and (199):

- (198) Znaíte, ètot chelovek – podlets, a **èta partiia predala vas – svoikh zemliakov.**

Be aware that this person is a scoundrel and this party has betrayed you, its fellow countrymen.<sup>105</sup> (AJR, 21 Sep 2009)

- (199) A prizyv 'otverzhennoi' oppozitsii k boikotu vyborov – èto ili glupost', ili **izmena.**

And the call of the 'outcast' opposition to boycott the election is either stupidity or treason. (Delyagin, 30 Sep 2009)

Both (198) and (199) make serious accusations of treachery through 'betrayal' (*predatel'stvo*) and 'treason' (*izmena*). In (198), this notion is further developed by calling the members of the Opponents' party 'scoundrels' (*podletsy*). Example (199) presents an unflattering choice between 'treason' (*izmena*) and 'stupidity' (*glupost'*). Examples (200)-(202) are very direct in their accusations:

- (200) Partia **anti-'Edinaia Rossiia'.**

The anti-'United Russia' party. (Ryzhkov, 25 Nov 2009)

- (201) Rossiiskim liberalam v tselom, naskol'ko ia mogu sudit', svoistvenna **glubokaia nenavist' k strane, v kotoroi oni zhivut.**

Russian liberals in general, as far as I can judge, have an inherent deep hatred for the country in which they live. (Delyagin, 17 Oct 2009)

- (202) **Klhopnuvshikh dver'iu deputatov spiker B. Gryzlov obvinil v izmene Rodine:** 'Takogo roda demarshi... na ruku tem vneshnim silam, kotorye khotiat postavit' Rossiiu na koleni'.

[Duma] speaker B. Gryzlov<sup>106</sup> accused the delegates that slammed the door of high treason: 'Such démarches play into the hands of those external forces that want to put Russia on its knees.' (Ryzhkov, 21 Oct 2009)

<sup>105</sup> No adequate translation for *zemliaki* 'countrymen' is readily available. To understand its meaning fully, it is necessary to note that it is built on the root of *zemlia* 'earth, soil'. It can refer to one's neighbours and can also have a meaning close to 'comrade'.

In (200), the use of *anti-Edinaia Rossiia* ‘anti-United Russia’ separately from its context may be interpreted as a name for a party opposing United Russia. In fact, the context of (200) refers to Ryzhkov’s suggestion that further continuation of United Russia’s policies will lead to the disintegration of the country, thus the party’s very name, and its traditional slogan, *Sil’naia Rossiia – Edinaia Rossiia!* ‘A strong Russia is a United Russia!’, are seen as hypocritical. United Russia is thus being shown in opposition to the well-being of the country and its people. Example (201) stresses that the liberal politicians in Russia have ‘hatred for the country’ (*nenavist' k strane*), which is manifested in everything that they do. In (202) opposition factions of the State Duma are accused of ‘high treason, treason against the Motherland’ (*izmena [Rodine]*) by the third most powerful figure in the country. The actions of these factions are said to be helping those that ‘want to put Russia on its knees’ (*khotiat postavit' Rossiia na koleni*). The Opponents are shown to be truly against Russia and its people while pretending to act for their good. Accusations of such duplicity and lying relate this strategy to de-veracity, discussed above.

### 3.11.2 Opponents as hateful towards the people and Russophobic

Another approach to de-patriotization is underlining the Opponents’ hatred for the whole nation or the Russian ethnic majority. Consider (203) and (204):

- (203) Liberal'nye fundamentalisty vizzhat istoshno chut' ne na kazhdom uglu:  
**nel'zia podnimat' kul'turu bydla, ono tak bydlom i ostanetsia i pust'**

---

<sup>106</sup> Boris Gryzlov is the Speaker of the State Duma of Russia since 2003, Chairperson of the Supreme Council of ‘United Russia’, Head of the United Russia faction in the State Duma.

ostaëtsia, pust' smotrit 'Za steklom' ili chto tam im seïchas pokazyvaiut.

Liberal fundamentalists shriek in a heartrending way at almost every corner: the culture level of rednecks<sup>107</sup> should not be raised, they will remain rednecks anyway, so let them remain so, let them watch 'Behind the Glass'<sup>108</sup> or whatever it is that they are being shown now. (Delyagin, 17 Dec 2009)

- (204) I v ètom otnoshenii **liberaly, otnosiashchiesia k nashemu narodu kak k biomasse, otnosiatsia k nemu s točki zreniia realizatsii svoëi ob"ektivnoï zadachi – prevrashcheniia liudeï v zhivotnykh pri pomoshchi nasazhdeniia potrebitel'skoï motivatsii.**

And in this respect the liberals, who consider our people a biomass, treat it from the point of view of their objective goal – the transformation of people into animals with the help of cultivation of consumerist motivation. (Delyagin, 17 Oct 2009)

Both of the above examples come from Delyagin's article about the Russian liberals. He alleges that the Russian people are seen by the liberals as *bydlo* 'rednecks' (203) and *biomassa* 'biomass' (204) that should not and cannot be educated but need to be 'transformed into animals' (*prevrashchënniy v*

---

<sup>107</sup> The term *bydlo*, translated here loosely as 'rednecks', does not have a complete equivalent in English, but is a derogatory term referring to the people at large as uneducated, uncultured and thus deserving less respect than 'normal' humans.

<sup>108</sup> *Za steklom* 'Behind the Glass' was the first Russian reality show analogous to 'Big Brother' that aired from 2001 to 2002 and was followed by several other shows produced by the same group, such as *Posledniï geroï* 'Last hero', *Fabrika zvëzd* 'Star factory' and *Dom* 'House'. All were widely popular among viewers, but drew criticism from the Russian Orthodox church, Muslim leaders of Russia, and various social organizations for advocating lechery and treating humans as lab animals.

*zhivotnykh*), as per (204). In (204) it is thus possible to see a case of de-patriotization that includes reference to a case of de-personification. While the examples above refer to the Opponents' attitude towards the Russian people as a whole, (205)-(220) focus on the Opponents' relation to the Russian ethnic majority:

- (205) Zaderzhanie menia po 'podozreniiu v ubiistve gastarbaïterov', SRN v krazhe ikh zhe imushchestva, nesostoiavshiïsia Marsh, total'noe 'vintilovo', **potvorstvovanie rusofobskoi 'antife'** – zven'ia odnoi tsepi.

My arrest on 'suspicion of killing guest workers', the trial against the URP<sup>109</sup> for stealing their property, the disrupted March, mass arrests, conniving of the Russophobic 'Anti-Fa' – all of these are parts of the same sequence. (MAII, 9 Nov 2009)

- (206) 30 oktiabria s.g. B. Gryzlov v khode obshcheniia v sotsial'no-politicheskoi seti 'Berloga' Edinogo rossiiskogo portala ER.RU (iavliaetsia partiïnym resursom politicheskoi partii 'Edinaia Rossiia') **unizhitel'no vyskazalsia v adres russkikh**, a imenno zaiavil sleduiushchee: 'A svalivat' prisushchie russkomu mentalitetu korruptsiu i pravovoï nihilizm na partiiu 'Edinaia Rossiia' ne stoit.'

On October 30<sup>th</sup> of this year, while communicating on the social-political network 'Berloga' of the Unified Russian portal ER.RU (is the party resource of the 'United Russia' political party', B. Gryzlov made a degrading comment towards the Russians, and specifically stated the

---

<sup>109</sup> *Soiuz russkogo naroda* 'Union of the Russian people' is a monarchist organization that existed in 1905-1917 and was restored in 2005.

following: ‘One shouldn’t blame the corruption and legal nihilism that is characteristic of Russian mentality onto the ‘United Russia’ party.’ (MAII, 13 Nov 2009)

- (207) Razumeetsia, poiavlenie takoi knigi vyzvalo nastoiushchuiu isteriku v krugakh antisovetchikov i **rusofobov**.

Certainly, the appearance of such a book caused a real fit of hysteria among the anti-Soviets and Russophobes. (CPRF, 3 Sep 2009)

It needs to be noted that the majority of examples in this category come from the far-right MAII. In (205), the Anti-Fascist groups in Russia are called *rusofobsкое* ‘Russophobic’, while in (206), the State Duma Speaker and prominent United Russia leader is given the same characteristic put in a more legalese form of ‘made a degrading comment towards the Russians’ (*unizhitel'no vyskazalsia v adres russkikh*). The difference in style between (205) and (206) is explicable through the fact that (206) is taken from a larger document included in a court submission against Gryzlov. Example (207) groups ‘anti-Soviets’ (*antisovetchiki*) and ‘Russophobes’ (*rusofoby*) together while talking about a newly published book on Soviet ethnic policy that combined elements of Great Russia chauvinism with the principles of internationalism and self-determination of nations. This approach to de-patriotization, which focuses on Russophobic characteristics of the Opponents, is closely related to the next one, which concentrates on the real location of the Opponents’ allegiances.

### 3.11.3 Opponents as oriented abroad

The focus on the Opponents as agents of other countries has historically served as a major element in Russian political discourse, including, prominently, the year 1917, in which the Bolsheviks were accused of being on the payroll of the German Empire. A number of examples in the corpus makes use of the same approach to de-patriotization. Consider (208) and (209):

- (208) Ne so storony rossiiskikh liberalov, istovo veruiushchikh, chto **solntse voskhodit dazhe ne prosto ‘na Zapade’, a neposredstvenno v gorode Vashingtone.**

Not from the Russian liberals, who earnestly believe that the sun rises not just ‘in the West’, but right in the city of Washington. (Delyagin, 20 Oct 2009)

- (209) 12 oktiabria v gorode Kirov sostoialas' protestnaia aktsiia ‘Molodoï Gvardii’ **protiv zasil'ia zapadnykh èmissarov.** V neï prinialo uchastie okolo 30 molodogvardeitsev, kotorye skandirovali **‘Poshël von, vashingtonskii obkom!’, ‘Ianki, gou khoum!’, ‘Viatka – ne 51-ï shtat!’**, ‘Belykh, ne torguï Viatkoï!’.

On October 12<sup>th</sup> there was a ‘Youth Guard’ action against the dominance of Western emissaries in the city of Kirov.<sup>110</sup> About 30 Youth Guard members participated, chanting ‘Go away, Washington regional

---

<sup>110</sup> Kirov is a city of half a million people 700 km East of Moscow. It was called Khlynov and Vyatka at different periods before 1934, when it was renamed after Sergey Kirov, one of Stalin’s closest allies assassinated in 1934.



committee!’,<sup>111</sup> ‘Yankee, go home!’, ‘Vyatka is not the 51<sup>st</sup> state!’,  
‘Belykh,<sup>112</sup> don’t sell out Vyatka!’. (YGUR, 12 Oct 2009)

Both (208) and (209) refer to Washington and thus the United States as the point of orientation of certain Russian politicians. In (208), Delyagin also refers to the Russian liberals as people that believe that ‘the sun rises not just ‘in the West’ (*solntse voskhodit dazhe ne prosto ‘na Zapade’*), the illogicality of which may refer to the liberals’ blind faith in the American way as the best path for Russia. Example (209), taken from a report on a rally against ‘Western emissaries’ (*zapadnye émissary*), contains a number of strongly-worded instances of de-patriotization. The main target of these attacks is the local governor Belykh, who is said to be ‘selling out Vyatka’ (*torgovat’ Viatkoï*) as he is directed by the ‘Washington regional committee’ (*vashingtonskii obkom*). Examples (208) and (209) display that reference to foreign influence into domestic affairs of Russia and the links between the Opponents and outside powers is an important approach within de-patriotization.

### 3.11.4 De-patriotization summary

De-patriotization incorporates attacks on the Opponents’ allegiance to the Russian state and the Russian public. Such attacks are carried out in a number of ways,

---

<sup>111</sup> *Vashingtonskii obkom* ‘Washington regional committee’ – an unusual political discourse hybrid of the name of the US capital and the word *obkom*, abbreviation from *oblastnoi komitet* ‘regional committee’, referring to *oblastnoi komitet Kommunisticheskoi partii* ‘regional committee of the Communist party’. As regional party committees carried great political power during the Soviet period, the expression *vashingtonskii obkom* refers to the close connections of some people and parties in contemporary Russia to the United States.

<sup>112</sup> Nikita Belykh is a Russian politician, governor of the Kirov region since 2009. Belykh is the former leader of the Union of Right Forces party. He was voted one of the most important political bloggers in Russia.

which include overt accusations of the Opponents' hatred for Russians, up to the level of Russophobia. Attacks against the Opponents that imply their links to foreign governments and interests are present in the corpus and underline the fact that such an approach to de-patriotization is considered appropriate by the participants of the contemporary Russian political system. The analysis continues with a review of the broad representational strategy of de-positivization/de-normalization.

### **3.12 DE-POSITIVIZATION/DE-NORMALIZATION**

While every effort has been made to single out a detailed system of representational strategies, a number of observed approaches only lend themselves to observation as part of a broad de-positivization/de-normalization strategy. Within de-positivization/de-normalization, the focus is on demonstrating the Opponents' incomppliance with certain political or other norms, as well as on describing the Opponents as negative in general. Some approaches to this strategy include general de-positivization/de-normalization, demonstration that the Opponents are monopolizing politics, reference to the Opponents as the political fringe, extremists, radicals, fundamentalists, fascists, Stalinists, totalitarian, anti-democratic, and ultimately as those that need to be defeated.

### 3.12.1 General de-positivization/de-normalization

Basic de-positivization/de-normalization describes the Opponents as engaging in some action or having certain characteristics that do not represent them in a good light. Consider (210)-(212):

- (210) **Esli Gaïdar i Chubaïs liberaly, to ia ne liberal.**

If Gaidar and Chubais<sup>113</sup> are liberals, then I'm not one. (Delyagin, 22 Dec 2009)

- (211) 15 oktiabria **partiia rassmotrela vsiu povestku dnia do obeda**, priniav vse predlozhennye Kremlëm zakonoproekty **so srednei skorost'iu tri zakona v minutu.**

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, the party got through the whole agenda for the day before lunch, approving all of the bills proposed by the Kremlin at an average speed of three laws per minute. (Ryzhkov, 23 Oct 2009)

- (212) No nasha oppozitsiia, k sozhaleniiu, **pol'zuetsia iskliuchitel'no destruktivnymi instrumentami.**

But our opposition, unfortunately, uses only destructive methods. (YGUR, 22 Oct 2009)

In (210), while the negative attitude of the author is clear, it is difficult to place this representation of the Opponents into any of the other strategies. Importantly, Gaidar and Chubais are frequently viewed together as the ideologues of the 'shock therapy' approach to post-Soviet economic transition of the 1990s. In

---

<sup>113</sup> Analoly Chubais is a Russian economist and politician. Chubais is former Deputy Prime Minister of Russia (1992-1994 and 1997-1998), Minister of Finance (1997), Head of the Administration of the President of Russia (1996-1997). Currently he heads the Russian federal nanotechnology corporation. Chubais was one of the authors of the process of privatization of state property in the 1990s and formerly one of the leaders of the Union of Right Forces party.

(210), the word *liberaly* ‘liberals’ serves as additional information, with the main notion put into whatever Gaidar and Chubais are considered. This strategy places the author outside of the group to which the Opponents are ascribed. Example (210) is thus about negation of any similarity to the Opponents. In (211), the speed at which United Russia passes laws in the State Duma (*tri zakona v minutu* ‘three laws a minute’) is shown to be abnormal and demonstrative of that party’s dependent character. Example (212), which serves as United Russia’s response to the opposition’s accusations, stresses that while United Russia works in parliament, the opposition ‘uses destructive methods’ (*pol’zuetsia destruktivnymi instrumentami*), i.e. street protests and anti-government rhetoric. Monopolizing politics as an approach within de-positivization/de-normalization continues the discussion.

### 3.12.2 Opponents as monopolizing politics

Monopolizing politics as a negative trait, attributed mostly to United Russia, is found in several texts in the corpus. A large number of examples directly mention the concept of political monopoly, as exemplified in (213):

- (213)      Masshtab fal'sifikatsii na nedavnikh vyborakh pokazal, chto **Kreml' i ‘ER’ gotovy na vsë radi sokhraneniia svoei monopolii na vlast'.**

The extent of fraud at the recent election showed that the Kremlin and ‘U[nited]R[ussia]’ are prepared to do anything to preserve their monopoly on power. (Ryzhkov, 5 Nov 2009)

Example (213), similarly to many other examples in the corpus, uses the term *monopoliia* ‘monopoly’ to refer to the position of ‘United Russia’. Other

examples in the corpus employ the noun *monopoliia* ‘monopoly’, as well as various verbs and adjectives built using the same root. A rare reference to the political monopoly of another party can be seen in (214):

- (214) Ser'eznym prepiatstviem dlia formirovaniia masshtabnogo proekta budushchego na levom flange rossiiskoi politicheskoi zhizni, konechno, iavliaetsia sokhraniaiushcheesia **dominirovanie KPRF** v etoi ideologicheskoi srede.

A serious barrier to the formation of a large-scale project of the future on the left flank of Russian political life is, of course, constituted by the continuing dominance of the CPRF in this ideological sphere. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

Example (214) is one of a few in this strategy that do not refer to United Russia. In (214), the phrase *dominirovanie KPRF* ‘the dominance of the CPRF’ refers to the reasons ‘a project of the future’ (*proekt budushchego*). This example, together with being a manifestation of de-positivization/de-normalization, also includes elements of de-contemporarization.

### 3.12.3 Opponents as the political fringe

A number of examples within the corpus focus on the Opponents political ideology and actions in an attempt to demonstrate that they are abnormal or negative. Political abnormality first of all is manifested through the ‘fringe’ label, as seen in a number of examples above as well as in (215) and (216):

- (215) Tak derzhat', Garri Kimovich! Eshchë nemnogo, i vy u nas smenite propisku so svoego izvechnogo adresa v ‘**marginal-shou**’ na kuda bolee podkhodiashchuiu vam kak veteranu sporta ‘gruppirovku peremen’.

Keep it up, Garry Kimovich! A bit more, and you will change your place of residence from your long-time address at the 'marginal-show' to the address in the 'group for change' which fits you much more, as an old sports master. (YGUR, 23 Sep 2009)

- (216) Kogda vam ne veriat, **kogda na vashi mitingi vykhodit piat' neformalov** ili neskol'ko pensionerov, kogda vam prikhodit'sia im platit', a inache vse razbegutsia, kogda na vyborakh iz raza v raz vy **okazyvaetes' v autsaiderakh**, vy ponimaete, chto pora chto-to meniat'.<sup>114</sup>

When people don't trust you, when your rallies are attended by five hipsters<sup>115</sup> or a few pensioners, when you have to pay them or else they will scatter, when at election time and time again you end up as an outsider, you understand that it's time to change something. (YGUR, 10 Nov 2009)

In (215) and (216), the references to 'marginality' are overt. In (215), the youth wing of United Russia accuses Kasparov of being a part of 'marginal-show' (*marginal-shou*), which is a mixture of this type of de-positivization/de-normalization and de-politization evident in the use of *shou* 'show, performance'. Example (216), also originating from United Russia's youth group, attacks all of the opposition at the same time, referring to the CPRF supporters as 'a few

---

<sup>114</sup> Please note that this example contains a number of mistakes in the Russian original, copied from the source.

<sup>115</sup> *Neformaly*, translated here as 'hipsters', is a wider term in Russian dating to the Soviet Union of the 1980s. At that time, it referred to members of *neformal'nye ob"edineniia molodězhi* 'informal youth groups', as opposed to groups 'approved of' or supported by the authorities. In contemporary Russian, the term is used by the members of such groups themselves. *Neformaly* includes such various groups as punks, hippies, Tolkien and science fiction fans et al.

pensioners' (*neskol'ko pensionerov*) and to the supporters of the liberal opposition as 'five hipsters' (*piat' neformalov*). To add further to the notion of Opponents being on the political fringe, (216) stresses that during elections they are 'time and time again among the outsiders' (*iz raza v raz okazyvaiutsia v autsaïderakh*), i.e. those outside of the mainstream political process. Examples (215) and (216) are representative of a number of other examples in the corpus that demonstrate the use of this type of de-positivization/de-normalization to push Opponents into the fringe in public opinion. Calling the Opponents extremists, fundamentalists and radicals further elaborates the de-positivization/de-normalization strategy.

### 3.12.4 Opponents as extremists, radicals and fundamentalists

Extremism is an official term within the Russian criminal system (cf. Criminal Code article 282), and the laws against extremism are said by the opposition to be used against political dissent. Thus reference to the Opponents as extremists contributes to both de-positivization/de-normalization and de-lawfulness strategies. Possibly due to these additional connotations, there are only three instances in which the Opponents are called extremists in the data. All of these refer to the same incident involving a CPRF Duma delegate, discussed previously. Consider (217):

- (217) To, chto vlast' ne speshit rassledovat' **gnusnyï vypad êkstremistov** po otnosheniiu N. Ostaninoï vo vremia eë vstrechi s grazhdanami v Mezhdurechenske govorit o tom, chto vyïavlenie ispolniteľ, a v pervuiu ochered' zakazchikov **êkstremistskoï vylazki** ne v eë interesakh.

The fact that the authorities are in no hurry to investigate the vile attack of extremists upon N. Ostanina<sup>116</sup> during her meeting with citizens in Mezhdurechensk reveals that finding the perpetrators and, especially, those who ordered the extremist sortie is not in the interests of the authorities. (CPRF, 5 Sep 2009)

Example (217) includes two references to extremism, such as *gnusnyi vypad ekstremistov* ‘vile attack of extremists’ and *ekstremistskaia vylazka* ‘extremist sortie’. The evaluation of the attack on the part of CPRF makes clear that it views the incident as one of a strictly political nature. While references to extremism do not account for a significant part of the data within de-positivization/de-normalization, the evaluation of the Opponents as ‘radical’ (*radikal*) is seen in a diverse scope of examples. Consider (218)-(221):

- (218) Posmotrim, kakie resheniia po preodoleniiu tiazheleishogo krizisa rossiiskoi gosudarstvennosti predlagaiutsia po vsemu ideologicheskomu spektru **radikal'noi oppozitsii**.

Let’s have a look at what solutions to the most difficult crisis of Russian statehood are suggested across the whole ideological spectrum of the radical opposition. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

- (219) Po itogam vyborov **radikal'naia oppozitsiia** gotovitsia provesti mitingi protesta, obviniaia ‘Edinuiu Rossiiu’ v narusheniiakh izbiratel'nogo zakonodatel'stva.

---

<sup>116</sup> Nina Ostanina has been a CPRF State Duma delegate since 1999. She is the head of the CPRF branch in the Kemerovo region.



After the election, the radical opposition is planning to hold protest rallies to accuse 'United Russia' of violating election legislation. (YGUR, 8 Oct 2009)

- (220) K konfliktu vokrug Cherkizovskogo rynka vchera podkliuchilis' **radikal'nye natsionalisty**.

Yesterday the conflict around the Cherkizovo marketplace<sup>117</sup> was joined by radical nationalists. (CPRF, 1 Sep 2009)

- (221) V Sankt-Peterburge **gruppa levykh radikalov** popytalas' vospreiatstvovat' provedeniiu mitinga vo vremia vystupleniia Semëna Pikhteleva.

In Saint-Petersburg, a group of left radicals tried to disrupt a rally during Semion Pikhtelev's<sup>118</sup> speech. (MAII, 24 Nov 2009)

The examples above underline that the term *radikal'nyi* 'radical' can have both positive and negative connotations within the discourse of the analyzed parties and leaders, depending on the source. The most striking difference is between its use in (218) and (219). When referred to by Kasparov in (218), 'radical opposition' (*radikal'naia oppositsiia*) is a positive term that describes the so-called non-system opposition, i.e. the truly independent opposition groups in Russia. When used in (219) by the youth group of the party in power, 'radical opposition' (*radikal'naia oppositsiia*) refers to the semi-fringe groups that do not respect the electoral process and concentrate on protests before hearing the results.

---

<sup>117</sup> Cherkizovo marketplace was a large marketplace (over 200 hectares) that existed in Moscow from the 1990s until 2009. The marketplace served as a major place of work for hundreds of illegal and legal migrants and immigrants, including up to 60,000 Chinese. The marketplace was closed due to large-scale sales of counterfeit and smuggled goods.

<sup>118</sup> Semion Pikhtelev was a leader of MAII in Saint-Petersburg as of data collection period.

A different situation is seen between (220) and (221). In both of them, *radikal'nyi* means ‘extreme’, ‘far’, ‘radical nationalists’ (*radikal'nye natsionalisty*), i.e. the far right in (220), and ‘left radicals’ (*levye radikaly*), i.e. the far left in (221). The concept of radicalism thus presents additional difficulty in analysis. In the data set, another concept that relates to radicalism and extremism is fundamentalism, found only in Delyagin’s term of *liberal'nye fundamentalisty* ‘liberal fundamentalists’, as in (222) below:

- (222) Chtoby ponimat', chto iz sebia predstavliaiut **nashi liberal'nye fundamentalisty**, privedu tri frazy, posle kotorykh ia staraius' s nimi obshchat'sia kak mozhno men'she.

To understand the nature of our liberal fundamentalists, I’ll cite three phrases, after which I’ve been trying to communicate with them as little as possible. (Delyagin, 7 Sep 2009)

Example (222) is taken from a lengthy description of what Delyagin implies by ‘liberal fundamentalists’ (*liberal'nye fundamentalisty*). They are people of formerly democratic and liberal views that continue to claim that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ‘shock therapy’ approach to privatization were good for the country and, most importantly, its people. Delyagin uses a charged term on purpose, to demonstrate these fundamentalists’ hard-heartedness and fanaticism. An approach to de-positivization/de-normalization that focuses on the Opponents as anti-democratic is elaborated on further.

### 3.12.5 Opponents as anti-democratic

Contemporary Russia is officially considered a democratic state. Therefore, opposition to democracy is seen as a negative characteristic within this presumably democratic society. Consider (223)-(225):

(223) Egor Gaĭdara ne bylo v riadakh ètikh **mogil'shchikov demokratii**.

Egor Gaidar was not among these gravediggers of democracy. (DU, 4 Dec 2009)

(224) Slushaia zhiteleĭ sela Velikii Dvor, ia nevol'no vspomnil, kak **deputaty- 'demokraty'** protalkivali v Gosdume zakony, razreshaiushchie prodavat' kormilitsu.

Listening to the people of Velikii Dvor village, I involuntarily remembered how the delegates-'democrats' pushed through in the State Duma the laws that allowed to sell the provider.<sup>119</sup> (CPRF, 1 Sep 2009)

(225) Èto **glumlenie nad demokratiei**.

This is desecration of democracy. (LDPR, 14 Oct 2009)

The reference in (223) is to the leaders of several democratic parties that are alleged to have stopped being in opposition to the government in exchange for personal wealth and power. In the Democratic Union material, they are called *mogil'shchiki demokratii* 'the gravediggers of democracy'. The word 'democrats' (*demokraty*) is put in quotation marks and thus in doubt in (224). In (224), a communist delegate discusses the fact that measures allowing the private sale of land were adopted without due consultation with the members of the public and

---

<sup>119</sup> The term used in the original here is *kormilitsa* 'breadwinner, provider', literally 'the one that feeds', in reference to the earth and the fact that the sale of land was illegal in the Soviet Union.

thus in violation of the principles of democracy that was officially declared. In (225), the Russian electoral process, especially the way it is implemented to guarantee United Russia majority, is called ‘desecration of democracy’ (*glumlenie nad demokratiei*). Interestingly, in addition to these examples, this approach to de-positivization/de-normalization includes a number of newly coined terms. Consider (226) and (227):

(226) Poëtomu, nesmotria na stoïkoe otvrashchenie k politike, privitoe **demokradami** i inymi politicheskimi spekuliantami, neizbeznaia, vynuzhdennaia zashchita svoikh prav rossiianami neminuemo primet, kak prinimaet uzhe seïchas, kharakter politicheskoi bor'by.

That is why, despite the strong aversion to politics, cultivated by the democracy-thieves<sup>120</sup> and other political profiteers, the inevitable, forced defence of their rights by the Russians will take, as it already takes now, the nature of political struggle. (Delyagin, 3 Sep 2009)

(227) Chut' men'she chetverti rossiian schitaet, chto kazhdyï iz chlenov ‘**tandemokratii**’ vyrazhaet interesy ‘srednego klassa, to est' liudeï so sredneevropeïskim urovnem dostatka’.

Just under a quarter of Russians thinks that each of the members of the ‘tandemocracy’<sup>121</sup> represents the interests of ‘the middle class, i.e. people with an average European income level’. (Delyagin, 8 Nov 2009)

In (226), Delyagin refers to an unclear group as *demokrady* ‘democracy-thieves, people stealing democracy’. From the larger context it is possible to assume that

<sup>120</sup> *Demokrady* ‘democracy-thieves’ is built from *demokraty* ‘democrats’ and a form of the verb *krast* ‘to steal’.

<sup>121</sup> *Tandemokratiia* ‘tandemocracy’ is built from *tandem* ‘tandem’, referring to the existence of two national leaders, Dmitry Medvedev and Vladimir Putin, and *demokratiia* ‘democracy’.

this group includes those that were in power or close to the authorities during the 1990s. The anti-democratic image of this group is further underlined by the fact that they had ‘cultivated aversion to politics’ (*privit' otvrashchenie k politike*) in people. The ‘tandemocracy’ (*tandemokratiia*) referred to in (227) is clearly anti-democratic in that the term itself means ‘power of the tandem, power of two people’, as opposed to *demokratiia* ‘democracy, power of the people’. This approach to de-positivization/de-normalization is also seen in references to the Opponents as dictators, in (228):

(228) **Te, kto vsego chetyre goda nazad ulybalis' nam s listovok i govorili o vechnykh tsennostiakh, prevratilis' v diktatorov, iskrenne schitaiushchikh sebia khoziaevami nashego goroda, khoziaevami zhizni. Nashimi khoziaevami.**

Those that only four years ago smiled at us from leaflets and talked about eternal values, have become dictators that sincerely believe themselves to be the owners of our city, the masters of life. Our masters. (AJR, 21 Sep 2009)

Example (228), which also has elements of de-veracity, underlines the Opponents duplicity as they ‘talked about eternal values’ (*govorili o vechnykh tsennostiakh*) before becoming ‘dictators’ (*diktatory*) and ‘our masters’ (*nashimi khoziaevami*). The anti-democratic nature of the Opponents is thus confirmed through reference to their alleged self-perception as ‘masters’ (as opposed to servants) of the people. References to the Opponents as anti-democratic are further developed into attacks against them as fascists and Stalinists, discussed further.

### 3.12.6 Opponents as fascists and Stalinists

While fascism<sup>122</sup> is officially outlawed on the territory of the Russian Federation, Stalinism constitutes a serious problem for analysis, which is of a non-linguistic nature: the image of Joseph Stalin is despised and honoured by large segments of the contemporary Russian society. Importantly, the references discussed here are only to Stalinism as a negative characteristic and no positive references were found in the corpus. Consider (229) below:

- (229)      *Interesno, Oleg Smolin podderzhivaet **stalinizm** Gennadiia Ziuganova i **bol'shinstva kommunistov**?*

I wonder, does Oleg Smolin<sup>123</sup> share the Stalinism of Gennady Ziuganov and the majority of communists? (Delyagin, 22 Dec 2009)

In (229), a well-respected academic and member of the State Duma is questioned within the context of the party of which he is a member, the CPRF. Of special interest to the audience is Smolin's attitude towards the alleged 'Stalinism' (*stalinizm*) of the CPRF leader Ziuganov and 'the majority of communists' (*bol'shinstva kommunistov*). The rhetorical nature of (229), as well as the broader context from which this example is taken, suggest that support for Stalinism is a negative characteristic in the opinion of the speaker. Importantly, the CPRF

---

<sup>122</sup> In reference to this category it is necessary to mention that the terms *fashist* 'fascist' and *natsist* 'Nazi' are mixed in use in the Russian language. The German Nazi regime is most frequently referred to as *germanskii fashizm* 'German fascism'. The perception of Nazi and fascist ideologies and symbols is in many ways merged within the Russian political discourse.

<sup>123</sup> Oleg Smolin is a CPRF State Duma delegate since 1995. Previously he was a member of the Supreme Soviet of Russia and the Council of the Federation of Russia. Smolin is the President of the *Znanie* 'Knowledge' society for the advancement of education, Vice-President of the Russian Paralympics Committee, Vice-President of the All-Russian Society for the Blind, Honorary member of the All-Russian Society of the persons with disabilities.

sympathy for Stalin is framed as doubtless in (229).<sup>124</sup> References to fascism are more prolific in the data. Importantly, the smallest group within these references contain the actual word *fashizm* ‘fascism’ or its derivatives, as in (230):

(230)      Èduarda Limonova lichno ia schitaiu **fashistom**.

I personally consider Eduard Limonov<sup>125</sup> a fascist. (Ryzhkov, 10 Feb 2010)

In (230), a prominent opposition figure is directly called a ‘fascist’ (*fashist*). The accusation is followed by a lengthy description, omitted here, of why the word ‘fascist’ (*fashist*) in the given context cannot be considered an act of public insult. Importantly, the source does not provide any additional information to support the classification of Limonov as a fascist. Several other examples refer to the Opponents as Hitlerites and Nazis, as in (231) and (232):

(231)      Pri ètom ideologicheskaiia platform samoï KPRF, v poslednee vremia sil'no ozabochennoi ‘russkim voprosom’, vsë bol'she nachinaet priobretat' **otchëtliuiiu natsional-sotsialisticheskuiiu okrasku**.

At that, the ideological platform of CPRF itself, which lately has been very troubled by the ‘Russian question’,<sup>126</sup> is acquiring a clearer and clearer national-socialist tinge. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

---

<sup>124</sup> The name of Stalin is mentioned only once in the CPRF party programme, in relation to industrialization, collectivization and cultural revolution of the 1930s. However, this single quote appears to indicate at least retrospective support for Stalin, if not Stalinism: *Trudiashchiesia SSSR osoznali iskliuchitel'nuui vazhnost' idei I.V. Stalina o neobkhodimosti za 10 let preodolet' tot istoricheskii put', na kotoryi vedushchim kapitalisticheskim stranam potrebovalos' ne menee stoletia*. ‘The working people of the USSR understood the exceptional importance of I.V. Stalin's idea about the necessity of overcoming in 10 years the historic path, which the leading capitalist countries needed at least a century to complete.’

<sup>125</sup> Eduard Limonov is a Russian writer and political figure. He is the former leader of the banned National-Bolshevik Party (NBP) and present co-chair of ‘The Other Russia’ movement and party. Limonov was one of the initiators of opposition Marches of Dissenters.

- (232) **Esli sravnit' togdashnie zaiavleniia ofitsial'noi gitlerovskoi propagandy s toi politikoi, kotoruiu osushchestvliaiut liberaly, sushchnostnykh razlichii okazyvaetsia ne tak uzh i mnogo.**

If one compares the statements of the official Hitlerite propaganda of the past with the policies implemented by the liberals, then it appears that there aren't that many essential differences between them. (Delyagin, 17 Oct 2009)

While in (231) the ideology of the Russian communists is said to be getting a 'national-socialist tinge' (*natsional-sotsialisticheskaia okraska*) due to their treatment of the question of what role ethnic Russians should play in contemporary Russian nation-building, in (232), 'official Hitlerite propaganda' (*ofitsialnaia gitlerovskaia propaganda*) is practically equated with 'the policies implemented by the liberals' (*politika, kotoruiu osushchestvliaiut liberaly*). The severity of the accusation in (232) is especially visible when the historical context of Nazi policy towards the citizens of the Soviet Union is taken into account.<sup>127</sup> Three more references to fascism and fascism-like ideology and practice can be seen in (233)-(235):

- (233) **Egor Gaïdar spas stranu ot goloda i razrukhi v 1992 g., ot voennogo krasno-korichnevogo perevorota v 1993 g., on spasal eë ot pozora chechenskoï voïny v 1994-m i 1995-m.**

---

<sup>126</sup> The term 'Russian question' refers to the issue of the position of the Russian ethnic majority within the multiethnic society.

<sup>127</sup> In brief, the population of the Soviet Union was seen as sub-human and was to be exterminated to create 'living space' for the German nation. This approach is very different from Nazi policies towards, for example, the occupied French.



Egor Gaidar saved the country from famine and ruin in 1992, from the military red-and-brown coup in 1993,<sup>128</sup> he saved it from the shame of the war in Chechnya in 1994 and 1995.<sup>129</sup> (DU, 16 Dec 2009)

- (234) Ia by skazal o politicheskoi konkurentsii, no v usloviakh, kogda dve treti liudei zhivut na grani cherty bednosti, my poluchim na vykhode **barkashovykh**.

I could say something about political competition, but in the situation when two thirds of the population are living on the verge of poverty we will get Barkashovs<sup>130</sup> in the end. (Krupnov, 28 Jan 2010)

- (235) Neskryvaemoe prezrenie k sobstvennomu narodu delaet liberalov-s politicheskii nesostoiatel'nymi, i poetomu **pinochetovshchina byla i ostaetsia ikh idealom gosudarstvennogo upravleniia**.

The blatant contempt for their own people makes the system liberals politically unsound, and that is why Pinochet-style<sup>131</sup> rule has been and remains their ideal of state management. (Kasparov, 1 Sep 2009)

Example (233) employs 'military red-and-brown coup' (*voennyi krasno-korichnevyy perevorot*) to refer to the constitutional crisis of 1993, which saw a

<sup>128</sup> The reference here is to the constitutional crisis of 1993, discussed previously. *Krasno-korichnevyy* 'red-and-brown' is a political cliché unique to post-Soviet Russia. The 'red-and-brown' is an alleged union between the communists and the far-right groups, with the colors symbolizing each of the sides (the color brown was a symbol of the Hitler Nazi party, similar to the black color as the symbol of Italian fascists).

<sup>129</sup> Reference to the so-called First war in Chechnya that lasted from 1994 to 1996. Egor Gaidar was an opponent of starting the military operation against Chechen separatists in 1992.

<sup>130</sup> Aleksandr Barkashov is the founder and leader of the 'Russian National Unity' movement. This militarized organization is widely considered to be a Russian ultranationalist group. Barkashov participated at the head of the movement in the defence of the building of the Supreme Soviet of Russia in October 1993.

<sup>131</sup> This is a reference to the rule of Augusto Pinochet in Chile from 1973 to 1990. In the Soviet Union, his government was referred to as *fashistskaia khunta* 'fascist junta'.

number of groups, including communists and Russian nationalists, confront Boris Yeltsin's steps against the powers of parliament. This term is a very serious accusation that not only draws the Opponents as fascists, through 'brown' (*korichnevyyi*), but also underlines that the Opponents are prepared to form any coalitions and unions in order to capture power. Examples (234) and (235) carry reference to anti-democratic and quazi-fascist actions through the names of Barkashov, a prominent Russian nationalist leader (234), and Pinochet, the notorious Chilean dictator (235). The word formation in *pinochetovshchina* 'Pinochet-style rule' underlines the negativity of this type of rule.<sup>132</sup> While this and several other approaches to de-positivization/de-normalization demonstrate the negative character of the Opponents' political ideology, another approach focuses on the fact that the Opponents cannot be viewed as an ideological and electoral alternative to the Self, but can only be defeated outright.

### 3.12.7 Opponents as not an alternative but those that need to be defeated

This approach to de-positivization/de-normalization is, in part, related to depolitization, as readers are encouraged to disregard the Opponents as a serious alternative. Consider (236) and (237):

- (236) Dumaiu, **na nikh ne stoit obrashchat' vnimanie**, gde-to nuzhno prostit',  
ved' oni nichego drugogo prosto ne umeiut delat'.

---

<sup>132</sup> New nouns formed in contemporary Russian from the last names of people and the suffix and ending *shchina*, as well as some existing nouns, carry negative connotation, as in *manilovshchina* 'lazy and complacent lifestyle as that of the character created by Gogol', *voenshchina* 'militarists', *polpotovshchina* 'rule of or similar to that of Cambodian leader Pol Pot' et al.

I think that one shouldn't pay attention to them, forgive them for some things, because they just don't know how to do anything else. (YGUR, 9 Oct 2009)

- (237) **Ni v koem sluchae ne golosuïte za kommunistov:** èto budet povodom otniat' u naroda eshchë chto-nibud' iz edy i grazhdanskikh svobod, raz ego ustraivaet kommunisticheskoe proshloe.

In no case should one vote for the communists: this would be cause to take away from the people some more food and civil liberties, as the communist past suits this people. (DU, 22 Sep 2009)

Example (236) advises the voters 'not to pay attention' (*ne obrashchat' vnimanie*) to the Opponents, while (237) directly states 'don't vote for the communists' (*ne golosuïte za kommunistov*). In both cases, the Opponents are depicted as lacking in some characteristics that would make them a viable alternative to the Self for the voters' attention and support. Going further than electoral advice, (238)-(240) urge the readers to confront and defeat the Opponents:

- (238) **Soprotivlenie kommunistam mozhet i dolzhno sluzhit' nravstvennym orientirom i primerom dlia rossiïskikh grazhdan.**

Resistance against the communists can and must serve as a moral guideline and example for the citizens of Russia. (Yabloko, 2 Sep 2009)

- (239) **Oni srazhalis' protiv kommunistov v lesakh Litvy i Zapadnoï Ukrainy, v gorakh Chechni i peskakh Sredneï Azii. Imenno oni – podlinnye geroi nasheï strany.**

They fought against the communists in the forests of Lithuania and Western Ukraine, in the mountains of Chechnya and the sands of Central Asia. They are the true heroes of our country. (Delyagin, 1 Oct 2009)

(240) S ètimi liud'mi ia ne to chto ne khochu imet' nichego obshchego, no i rassmatrivaïu ikh kak vragov.

I don't only want to have nothing in common with these people, but view them as enemies. (Ryzhkov, 10 Feb 2010)

Examples (238) and (239), through historical references, urge the readers to oppose the communists. In (238), Yabloko talks about the White (Anti-Soviet) forces in the Russian Civil War of 1917-1922 as 'moral guideline and example for the citizens of Russia' (*nравstvennyĭ orientir i primer dlia Rossiĭkikh grazhdan*). Taking into account the fact that CPRF, until recently, stated in its constitution that it was the successor party of the Bolsheviks, (238) implicitly calls for action against CPRF. Example (239), taken from Delyagin's website, is, in fact, a quote from another individual, journalist Podrabinek, whose controversial article is discussed above in reference to example (6). Thus it is Podrabinek who calls those that opposed the Soviet authorities during the Second World War 'true heroes' (*podlinnye geroi*) of Russia in (239). In (240), Ryzhkov resorts to calling some of his Opponents 'enemies' (*vragi*), stating that there are some parts of the Russian opposition with which he and his supporters could never cooperate. While there is no reference to violence or destruction in (240), political animosity is greatly underlined.

### 3.12.8 De-positivization/de-normalization summary

At its core, de-positivization/de-normalization is a basic attempt at demonstrating that the Opponent is, simply put, bad, whereas the Self is good. Various approaches that are discussed above may or may not be viewed by the reader as a

sign of inadequacy or negativity. However, successful removal of the Opponents from the mainstream into the radical fringe may open the way for then removing them from the political plane altogether, while finding the Opponents guilty of extremism or fascism may lead to efficient employment of de-lawfulness against these Opponents. Demonstration of an Opponent's monopolist status may assist in underlining that Opponent's dependence on the establishment. Attaching the 'anti-democratic' label to the Opponent may serve as a first step in finding this Opponent, which attempts to engage in its politics in a formally democratic country, immoral and hypocritical. Thus most of the approaches within this broad strategy may first and foremost serve as initiators of larger-scale and deeper attacks against the Opponents, the only serious exception being the approach that highlights the need for the Opponents to be defeated.

### **3.13 ANALYSIS SUMMARY**

This chapter provides the analysis of the data corpus through twelve representational strategies: de-personification, de-ability, de-morality/de-civility, de-veracity, de-lawfulness, de-intellectualization, de-contemporarization, de-politization, de-independence, de-superiority, de-patriotization, and de-positivization/de-normalization. The analysis reveals numerous approaches to these strategies, each of which focuses on the representation of the Opponents in a

particular, although always negative, light.<sup>133</sup> The strategies are shown to be employed by various forces and leaders within the corpus in an intricate system of interplay and support of the created images of the Opponent.

The analysis chapter summarized here constitutes a detailed answer to the first research question of the thesis. The analyzed strategies form a complex system of attacks against the Opponents that focus on such various features as age, adherence to the nation, relationship with the authorities, compliance with social norms, to name only a few. It is possible to further delineate sub-strategies within the described strategies, as the parties and leaders in question have demonstrated interest and imagination in defeating their Opponents through discursive means. This defeat is brought about through the negation of particular characteristics, which relates the disclosed system to some features of racist and discriminatory discourse outlined by van Dijk.

Quantification of this data in terms of strategy employment frequency or the peculiarity in their use by particular parties and leaders falls outside of the scope of interests of the current study. Limitations of Internet-based data statistical analysis that make such quantification unreliable and subjective serves as one of the reasons. The second reason is that it is the fact of existence of the rich system of representational strategies that provides a detailed answer to the first research question and allows approaching the other two research questions of the thesis through the prism of critical discourse analysis. This qualitative approach to data

---

<sup>133</sup> Examples of positive representation of Opponents, a category included in the original plan of the current project, are virtually non-existent in the corpus, as compared to the numerous instances of negative representation.

permits greater applicability of the current research through the discussion within the current Russian socio-political climate, the general framework of post-Soviet transition, and party and electoral politics that follows.

## CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a discussion of the results of the analysis in the light of the declared research questions: 1) What system of discursive strategies of Other-representation is employed by Russia's major political parties and leaders? 2) What general roles are ascribed to the Opponents within this discourse? 3) What view of the current political situation in Russia do the parties and leaders construct through this discourse?

The analysis chapter has discussed the features of each of the twelve representational strategies formed based on the data at hand. The various approaches to the outlined strategies pointed to their prominence in the discourse of major players in the contemporary Russian political arena. As a large number of examples demonstrated, the strategies are frequently employed in combination. This complex system of strategy interplay relates directly to the first question of the current project. The aims of this project were not to attempt to quantify the frequency or extent of this combinability, as statistical analysis of Internet-based data samples such as the one forming the corpus here cannot be said to be fully reliable nor generalizable beyond the data set.<sup>134</sup> However, the discussion that follows takes into account not only the individual strategies but the observed cases of their interplay in building connections between the linguistic data and the political reality of Russia. While the analysis chapter, seeking to answer the first research question, looked at specific strategies in detail, the following discussion

---

<sup>134</sup> The interplay and overlap of examples of various strategies should also be taken into account as a reason that would make statistical analysis of the data at hand problematic and subjective.



of data in relation to the second research question goes beyond the particularities of individual strategies and towards a deeper understanding of how these strategies function to create roles that are then imposed on the Opponents. In discussing the thesis' findings, the review that follows relies on the examples from the previous chapter as well as the wider context of the entire corpus, which allows building bridges between the disclosed discursive features and the political situation in Russia.

#### **4.1 The roles ascribed to the Opponent**

While the representational strategies discussed in the analysis chapter serve as the groundwork for Other-representation in the texts of political parties and leaders in the corpus, the larger picture that links the discursive analysis to everyday activities of these political forces is formed as a result of the interplay of the strategies in the creation of more general roles for the Opponents. The analysis included among the approaches to various strategies a number of labels attached to the Opponents, such as 'liar', 'animal', 'cynic', and 'puppet'. These labels can be said to be micro-roles ascribed to the Opponents within the analyzed strategies. On the basis of the analysis it is possible to discuss a system of more general roles that the Opponents are made to play through the discourse of Russia's political parties and leaders. This underlines their importance and even indispensability to the construction of the image of the Self. Importantly, while the micro-roles within the representational strategies are made apparent to the general public, the roles discussed here are latent and only implied through the analysis of the micro-roles.

#### **4.1.1 The Opponent as a distorting mirror**

The thesis is concerned with political discourse and the discourse of the participants of a competitive system. Albeit the focus is placed on the Other, the notion of Self cannot be fully removed from the object of inquiry. A basic role that the Opponents are made to play is one of a distorting mirror of the Self. Within this role, the similarities between the Self and the Others may be underlined as an introduction to the major differences between them that make the Others inferior to the Self and thus the less logical choice in an election. The realization of this role starts with a focus on common features and it is thus most easily attributed to Opponents that share ideological, organizational, historical, voter-base, or other features with the Self. For example, A Just Russia may demonstrate its similarities to CPRF as another left-wing party that also advocates for the poor, seniors, and the intelligentsia, but then underline that the Russian Communists, as opposed to A Just Russia, are outdated in their agendas, have no young faces within their organization, and praise Stalin. In a similar fashion, CPRF may employ the same initial focus on similarities to then underline A Just Russia's status as a party of the Kremlin, its artificial character as opposed to the Communists' grassroots origins, and the lack of logic behind that party's proposals. The Opponent as a distorting mirror allows the Self to advocate its key features and underline the fact that Others want to be like the Self. This contrastive role does not require elaborate or detailed information and for this reason cannot be effectively declined by the Opponents.

#### **4.1.2 The Opponent as a permanent scapegoat**

In the studied texts, the Opponents are often blamed for all social ills and mistakes, thus playing the role of a lightning rod or scapegoat. The scapegoat role can be attributed to one of the Opponents or all of them as a group. This role, as opposed to that of a mirror, discussed above, relies first and foremost on the differences between the Self and the Opponents, as otherwise the blame that is placed on the Opponents can be easily shifted back onto the Self.

Three major scapegoats within the parties and leaders under analysis are seen to be the communists, United Russia, and the more general field of ‘the liberals’. In the case of the communists, who inevitably include the CPRF, the blame is generally connected to their dominance in the country for a period of over 70 years. Within the corpus, many social problems, such as economic backwardness, lack of democratic political culture, and even the nature of the current government and party of power are laid at the feet of the CPRF. United Russia’s performance of the scapegoat role is linked, in part, to its similarities to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as a system-formative political force that dominates all levels of power. The fact that the federal government is headed by the United Russia chairman, Vladimir Putin, makes it possible to blame that party for the mistakes made by the authorities. The general group of ‘the liberals’, which may, depending on the source, include or exclude Yabloko, Ryzhkov, Kasparov, Lebedev, and the Democratic Union, is observed as the cause of the socioeconomic collapse of the 1990s, including a high level of crime and corruption.

The role of the scapegoat makes use of the basic human instinct to search for an enemy or the cause of all problems. Importantly, the use of strategies leading to the imposition of this role onto the Opponents is observed in the texts of all parties and leaders under analysis here.

#### **4.1.3 The Opponent as a scarecrow**

The unenviable role of a scarecrow is attributed to the Opponents that are the most different from the Self. This Opponent or group of Opponents is given substantial attention through an approach that underlines the full extent of the gap between this Opponent and the Self, the ultimate goal being the demonstration of how ‘bad’ the Opponent is when compared to the Self. In this respect, the Opponent is prominently shown as the ‘terrible alternative’ that is inevitable should one not choose the Self in an electoral setting.

Several examples of scarecrow Opponents within the corpus are LDPR, MAII, and CPRF. While LDPR and the Russian nationalists are shown to be symbol of the potential danger of further rise in xenophobia, intolerance, violence, and populism, CPRF is used as the element from the totalitarian past to which the country cannot be allowed to return. The imposition of the role of a scarecrow may serve to eliminate serious Opponents from the electoral process in the eyes of the voting public.

#### **4.1.4 The Opponent as a distracting element**

While the previously discussed roles acknowledge that the Opponent in question is a noteworthy political force, placement of the Opponent within the image of a

distracting element works to negate the political character and replace it with comedy, theatricality or money. The most usual (forced) performer of this role is LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who is attacked repeatedly and by various Opponents as being funny, silly, business-oriented, eccentric, and generally non-political. Another group of parties, movements and leaders that is given this role within the corpus is what is loosely called ‘the non-systemic opposition’. This group is represented, most often in the texts of the party of power and its youth wing, as an assemblage of clowns that like to shout in public instead of being involved in the actual political process.

#### **4.1.5 The Opponent as ‘the old politics’**

A number of strategies work together to create a binary opposition between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ politics’. Parties and leaders ascribed this role are depicted as either out of touch with the times or engaged in inappropriate activities, which makes them directly opposed to the simultaneously constructed image of the different kind of politics that is in tune with the times. Several parties analyzed in this project are seen to unite all of their Opponents under this role, which makes direct contraposition more straightforward. The Others are shown together to be the corrupt and retrograde ‘establishment’ that is attempting to stem the progressive popular tide headed by the Self. No specific target for this role can be identified, as such varied parties as CPRF, United Russia, LDPR, A Just Russia, Yabloko and Democratic Union are at some point ascribed it.

#### **4.1.6 Overview of Opponent's roles**

While the roles discussed above are not meant to be exhaustive, they include the general trends observed within the data. The construction and imposition of these various roles may involve the implementation of the same strategies, and the use of roles can overlap, up to the level of contradiction between them when ascribed to the same Opponent. However, it is important to note that the range of roles, some of which focus on similarities and the negative political nature of the Opponents while others underline the points of difference or deny the Opponents their status as participants of the political process, has the potential to cover all of the Opponents. As a result, each of the Opponents may be disqualified from the general political or specific electoral competition in the eyes of the readers of the website texts.

#### **4.2 The constructed political system**

This analysis provides insight into the image of the contemporary Russian political system that is constructed by the participants of this system. The party that contributes the least to this construction is the party of power, United Russia.<sup>135</sup> The image that it constructs does not involve Opponents, but ignores them. This image can be summarized as one of 'Stability' that is only disturbed by opposition groups that do not have political abilities beyond street protests. As the

---

<sup>135</sup> While the current project does not seek to quantify data, United Russia's differing approach to talking about the political climate in Russia is made clear through a number of aforementioned examples. The wider context from which these examples are taken further confirms that United Russia is not as keen as its opponents to discuss the peculiarities of the contemporary Russian political system.

current project's focus is on the role of the Opponents in the work of the political parties and leaders, of particular interest here is the view of the political system manifested in the texts of parties and leaders other than United Russia and its functionaries.<sup>136</sup>

#### **4.2.1 Manipulations and fraud**

Focus on the existence of electoral fraud and the use of 'administrative resources' by the authorities to stifle opposition is prominent in the manifested worldview of most of the analyzed sources. The political process is shown to be fraught with government interference that prevents dissenting views from reaching wide audiences and makes elections undemocratic. While on rare occasions the other opposition groups are mentioned as 'fellow sufferers', the approach observed the most seeks to create a direct dichotomy between the authorities and the Self.

#### **4.2.2 Corruption and violence**

In addition to manipulations of the political process, the situation in Russia is shown to be linked to a great extent to the problem of corruption and other economic and even violent crimes. Direct and indirect accusations of graft at various levels of power are observed in the texts of various sources. Importantly, no instances are found in which the issue of corruption is brought up together with the names of Dmitry Medvedev or Vladimir Putin. Allegations of corruption are

---

<sup>136</sup> As it is the party system and its discourse that is of particular interest to the current project, the 'above party politics' approach of United Russia falls mainly outside of the scope of study here.

supplemented by numerous references to violent attacks on opposition activists or threats of such attacks on the part of Others.

#### **4.2.3 Immorality and decay**

The political system is further described through the prism of morality, and the resulting image is equally bleak. The society is shown to be negatively affected by the total collapse of basic norms of decency. Lying, cynicism and lack of patriotism are among the key features of the discussed environment. These features are said to be not only tolerated, but exemplified by the top officials of the country.

#### **4.2.4 Conspiracy and imitation**

The corrupt, violent, immoral and undemocratic system is further shown to be propped up not only by the efforts of the government, but also through the government's conspiracy with Others 'imitating' the democratic process. Importantly, the Opponents are consistently shown to be fully aware of their window dressing function, as demonstrated through a number of examples above. This description of the society is closely linked to the aforementioned elements of corruption and moral decay, as the political system is depicted as a vicious circle of lies about corruption due to collusion.

#### **4.2.5 Overview of the depicted system**

The view of the contemporary Russian socio-political system constructed through the texts of parties and leaders in the corpus of this project is consistent with the



general understanding formed by Russian and foreign-based political science. Elements of managed democracy are made even more visible through cited first-person accounts of encounters with election violations, government-sanctioned violence, and the overall feeling of hopelessness among opposition activists.<sup>137</sup> From the data corpus, it is, of course, impossible to clarify the issue of how much in the contemporary Russian political system is genuine, and how much is an imitation. The party of power and the so-called system opposition may be said to be participating in a democracy-imitation game together, but the question becomes more difficult if one compares the discourses of these two groups to the use of representational strategies in the materials of the out-system opposition that has no grounds to participate in the said game. The discourse can thus be seen as a combination of imitational features with genuine political competition and debate.

### **4.3 Summary**

Importantly, in spite of the allegations of a non-competitive nature of the Russian political system, all of the political forces and parties engage in negative Other-representation, thus aiming to remove their Opponents from political competition or decrease the Opponents' level of public support and potential electoral success. The representation of the Opponents is achieved through an interplay of strategies that results in the imposition of specific roles onto various Opponents. The ultimate aim of the strategies and roles is seen as the Opponents' defeat either within the electoral process or outside of elections as a credible political force.

---

<sup>137</sup> While such eye-witness comments in the data are seen interwoven into the texts of political parties and leaders, it is necessary to mention their paramount importance to the socio-political upheaval in Russia after the parliamentary election of 2011.

The analyzed discourse of political parties and leaders participates in the construction of a complex view of the current political climate in Russia, which is generally described as negative. Nonetheless, the presence of competitive discourse within this climate indicates its alterability and points to a number of conclusions, elaborated on further.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS**

This project analyzed the discourse of Russia's prominent political parties and leaders as manifested in the texts they publish on the Internet. In doing so, it relied on the framework of studies into the nature of contemporary Russian political system, negative electoral campaigns, and the representation of Others, as discussed in earlier chapters of the thesis. This chapter provides a summary of the results of the project, places the results within other studies in the field of critical discourse analysis and political communication, discusses wider implications of these studies and points out the limitations of the analysis as well as avenues for further research into its subject matter.

### **5.1 Summary of the findings**

The corpus was comprised of the texts of 8 Russian parties and movements (A Just Russia, the Communist party, the Democratic Union, the Liberal-Democratic party, the Movement against Illegal Immigration, United Russia, the Yabloko party, and the Youth Guard of United Russia) and 7 political leaders (Delyagin, Kasparov, Kasyanov, Krupnov, Lebedev, Nemtsov, Ryzhkov). The corpus included the websites of political forces diverse in both their ideology and history and the scope of employment of the Internet in their activities. The timeframe from which the data was collected was between two federal election campaigns, which allowed observing the discourse of these participants of the political process in a non-election environment.

The thesis aimed to answer the following research questions: 1) What system of discursive strategies of Other-representation is employed by Russia's major political parties and leaders? 2) What general roles are ascribed to the Opponents within this discourse? 3) What view of the current political situation in Russia do the parties and leaders construct through this discourse? While the analysis chapter in itself provided a detailed answer to the first research question, the second and third research questions were elaborated on in the discussion chapter.

The analytical framework of the project was fully data-driven and included twelve strategies for the representation of Opponents. The strategies were devised after an initial analysis that focused on the specific characteristics attributed to the Opponents allowed for systematization of these references. The resulting strategies were: De-positivization/de-normalization (Negation of non-political positivity/normality), De-personification (Negation of people, individuals), De-veracity (Negation of truthfulness), De-politization (Negation of political character), De-contemporarization (Negation of being modern, contemporary), De-intellectualization (Negation of intelligence, reason), De-ability (Negation of health, physical capacity), De-lawfulness (Negation of obedience, legality, compliance with the law), De-independence (Negation of independent or unique character), De-superiority (Negation of being in the lead, popular), De-morality/de-civility (Negation of compliance with moral norms), and De-patriotization (Negation of patriotism and faithfulness towards the people and country).

The analysis pointed to the highly competitive nature of the discourse of various Russian political parties and leaders, including the parties forming the parliamentary opposition, the so-called non-system opposition and United Russia, the party of power. A data-driven system of representational strategies that was constructed during the analysis indicated that the Opponents are made to play a number of roles, each of which highlights their particular negative features or acts as a repellent against support for the Opponents. While no quantitative aspect was included, it is necessary to point out that the full capacity of the system of strategies and roles was observed to be widely used by parties and leaders of radically different views and positions within the socio-political system. The fact that no radical discrepancy was found in the strategies employed by in- and out-system political players indicates that the nature of the contemporary socio-political system in Russia is far more complex than is usually noted, as is discussed further.

The analysis has underlined that the representation of the Others as understood by van Dijk in the study of racism and discrimination and by Buell and Sigelman in regards to negative electoral campaigns is fully applicable in the wider sphere of political discourse, i.e. not constrained either to discriminatory discourse nor elections. The same or similar strategies that were used in discrimination and negative campaigning were shown to constitute the backbone of the day-to-day representation of Opponents in the materials of political parties and leaders. The findings in the thesis thus suggest that a new understanding of negativity in political discourse, one that incorporates the consistent and continuous negative

representation of the Others, as opposed to displays of spontaneous animosity, is necessary.<sup>138</sup>

Having taken van Dijk's framework regarding racist and discriminatory discourse as one of its theoretical foundations, the thesis has demonstrated through examples that within the context of contemporary Russian politics, treatment of others that resorts to techniques that are as socially damaging and inappropriate is widely spread. This gives cause for both alarm and further investigation into the apparent phenomenon in which a deeply negative derogatory attitude towards one's political opponents on a regular basis is not generally viewed as near-criminal and unacceptable, while racist comments or those targeting particular ethnic groups are.

The view of contemporary Russian society and its politics that was represented in the data both supported and refuted claims made in recent literature concerned with the state of Russian democracy and civil society. Specifically, similarly to the conducted literature review, the optimistic point of view of Pavlovsky, Shleifer and Treisman regarding the completed transition of Russia to democracy was not supported by the descriptions of electoral processes and the everyday life of political activists in the corpus. The fact that electoral fraud and government pressure appeared in the materials of all parties under study with the notable exception of the party of power indicates that these phenomena constitute the everyday reality of these parties. The discussion of the unfair character of

---

<sup>138</sup> Such an understanding would practically bring together the notions of negative campaigning and permanent campaigning.

elections and limited access to mainstream media on the part of such major political players as CPRF and LDPR comes into conflict with the noted imitational nature of democracy in Russia, as the imitation does not appear to be preserved by anyone except the party of power. Further implications of the thesis' findings in this regard are discussed in a separate section below.

The thesis sought to reconcile the contradiction between most of the current studies of Russian politics from the point of view of political science and those analyzing contemporary Russian political discourse. It was noted earlier that while the general viewpoint among political scientists is that Russia does not have a developed civil society or a viable party system, a number of prior studies of political discourse in Russia demonstrate the presence of competitive discursive strategies among the individuals and organizations involved. Basing its analysis on the online presence of politicians and political parties, the thesis took as its data the medium that is widely considered to be the only free communication sphere in the country. The findings of the current project suggest that while the participants of the current political system in Russia are aware of its flaws, including electoral fraud and imitative parliamentarism, they nonetheless engage in rich competitive discourse. As was mentioned above, while it could be suggested that the in-system opposition imitates this type of discourse as well, the participation of the out-system opposition and the party of power in this competition does not appear to fit the description of a political system in which competition is impossible or irrelevant. The mentioned disconnect between political theory and discursive practice in this regard is thus confirmed

empirically. The thesis thus makes a contribution to both the study of the socio-political situation in Russia and its participants and contemporary Russian critical discourse analysis.

## **5.2 Wider implications**

The thesis' findings may have deeper implications that go beyond the analysis of discourse per se and into the realm of critical thinking about the future developments in Russia. In 2009, 92 percent of Russians responding to a poll said that they thought they had no significant way to influence the future of their country (Kulik 139). The energy with which Russia's politicians, including the party of power, United Russia, engage in highly competitive discourse points to the fact that their answer to this question may be different. Importantly, a number of scholars, including Peregudov, Smyth et al., and Shlapentokh, indicate that the Russian political situation is not hopeless should the opposition endure the pressure from the authorities and remain independent to some degree. The results discussed here underline that minute political planning and analysis, together with a perceptibly genuine desire to influence the opinions of voters even between elections, are a major feature of the Russian political system today, in spite of its imitational character. While the in-system opposition could be said to be playing a role drafted by the Kremlin, the participation of the non-system opposition in the same type of discourse demonstrates that competitive discourse is important to their work. Political groups and leaders not controlled by the authorities can thus be viewed as 'opposition in waiting' or 'politics in waiting', ready to engage citizens and each other in the traditional public sphere once possible.



Such implications would further increase the importance of the alternative online public sphere for further development of Russian society and political system. Taken further, they point to the need for a new, post-transitional angle in the analysis of societies like Russia, as the peculiarities of such formerly communist and presently undemocratic regimes cannot be fully explained through the notion of post-communist or post-Soviet transition. As the December 2011 events in Russia have shown, the aforementioned ‘politics in waiting’ appears to have developed to a significant degree through the use of online social media technologies, up to a point where it could overflow into the offline world of protest rallies, social organizations, elections monitoring and grassroots enthusiasm. While at the time of completion of this thesis in January 2012 the full extent of possibilities of this new process is unclear, its rapid expansion is a contributing factor to a number of further open avenues for research.

### **5.3 Limitations and avenues for further research**

The current project focused on the ways contemporary Russian politicians and political parties and movements relate to each other through the texts they publish on the Internet. The scope of the study was limited to a specific period, while the corpus was delineated using the popularity ratings of political websites. While the thesis has discussed at length the set research questions and the wider implications of its findings within the socio-political context of Russia, it does not answer all of the questions that may arise in relation to the data and the general issue of competitive political discourse. It is therefore necessary to point out some limitations of the study.

First, technical difficulties with a number of websites, as well as the possibility of undetected changes and removal of pages by parties and leaders, may have had an impact on the resulting data corpus and, subsequently, the results. Second, while the timeframe from which the data was taken is wide, the distribution of data time-wise varies from one source to another. However, given the current study's qualitative nature, this is a general limitation that did not prevent comprehensive analysis in the light of the set research questions. Third, as no quantitative analysis was conducted, some trends in the data may have been left unnoticed, although the variety and scope of the representational strategies in the corpus discussed indicate that their analysis by qualitative means provides substantial material for discussion. Fourth, a number of overlaps between strategies and roles outlined in the course of analysis may be seen as detrimental to the study's objective character and replicability. This is a limitation mitigated by the study's aim of contributing to the field of critical discourse analysis and disclosing deeper socio-political implications of discursive data as opposed to a number of other fields in which replicability is a more serious concern.

One of the possible avenues for further research into the subject matter of the thesis would include a longitudinal study taking into account the full scope of the data from the sources as opposed to a limited set, as was the case here. Such a study, only possible through automated data collection and analysis means due to the sheer volume of data present in even a single day of online texts, would allow an analysis of trends and changes in contemporary Russian discourse and its dependence on current events and the actions of the opponents. Another possible

direction in which the study could be developed is multimodality, which would take into account the video and photographic materials posted by the parties and leaders, as well as their offline activities, such as leafleting, speeches at rallies and television and print advertising materials. This approach makes it possible to establish the communication strategies employed by the parties and leaders and tracking the interplay of online and offline texts and audiovisual materials. One more direction would be an attempt to conduct the analysis on a wider scale that would enable cross-cultural comparison for both post-communist transitional states and the developed representative democracies. Such a study would allow for greater generalization of the results that goes beyond a single socio-political system and towards the analysis of a specific type of contemporary society. Yet another approach would take into account comments made by the audience (i.e. website readers) and the wider scope of intertextuality between texts on the same party's or leader's website as well as the texts about this political player on the websites of its opponents. The inter-discursive nature of political communication and the adherence of politicians to the principles of democratic dialogue could thus be observed. Given recent developments in Russia, the open-mindedness of mainstream politicians to such dialogue appears to be crucial to their own survival as legitimate representatives of the public.

Just as this thesis research was drawing to a close, Russia's post-Soviet transition took a new turn, with thousands of people filling squares and streets throughout the country to protest unfair elections. The status quo started to be challenged by the wider public, while the political players that served as the objects of study

here had to adjust to the new reality of growing public discontent with the established system originating online. These developments open a wide array of new issues for study within the context of early 21<sup>st</sup> century Russia. As with many projects, the current one opens at least as many important questions as it sought to answer. However, when dealing with the Russian context, this is hardly surprising, as the country is, as aptly described by Winston Churchill, a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma.<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> A quote from Winston Churchill's radio broadcast in October 1939: "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest." (The Phrases Finder)

## Works Cited

- Andrieu, Kora. "An Unfinished Business: Transitional Justice and Democratization in Post-Soviet Russia." *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*. 5 (2011): 198–220. Web.
- Buell, Emmet H. Jr. and Lee Sigelman. *Attack Politics : Negativity in Presidential Campaigns since 1960*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009. Print.
- Buttice, Matthew K. And Walter J. Stone. "The Puzzle of Negative Campaigning: Competition, Response, and Opponent Quality." *Midwestern Political Science Association*, 2008 Annual Meeting. 1-17. Web.
- Carraro, L, B. Gawronski and L. Castelli. "Losing on all fronts: the effects of negative versus positive person-based campaigns on implicit and explicit evaluations of political candidates." *British Journal of Social Psychology*. 49.3 (September 2010): 453-470. Web.
- Colton, Timothy and Michael McFaul. *Popular Choice and Managed Democracy : the Russian Elections of 1999 and 2000*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2003. Print.
- Fish, Steven. *Democracy Derailed in Russia : the Failure of Open Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.
- Furman, Dmitry Efimovich. *Politicheskaya Sistema Rossii v Riadu Drugikh Postsovetskikh Sistem*. [The Political System of Russia among Other Post-Soviet Systems]. Moskva: Institut Evropy RAN, 2009. Print.
- Gel'man, Vladimir. "Party Politics in Russia: From Competition to Hierarchy." *Europe-Asia Studies*. 60.6. (August 2008): 913-930. Web.
- Gorenburg, Dmitry. "The Nature of the Russian Political System." *Russian Politics and Law*. 49.2 (March-April 2011): 3-6. Web.

- Issers, O.S. "Pasha-‘Mercedes’, ili Rechevaia Strategiia Diskreditatsii." [‘Mercedes-Pasha’, or the Speech Strategy of Discreditation]. *Vestnik Omskogo universiteta*. 2 (1997): 51-54. Web.
- Knox, Zoe, Lentini, Pete, and Brad Williams. "Parties of Power and Russian Politics : a Victory of the State over Civil Society?" *Problems of Post-Communism*. 53.1 (January-February 2006): 3-14. Web.
- Konitzer, Andrew and Stephen K. Wegren. "Federalism and Political Recentralization in the Russian Federation : United Russia as the Party of Power." *Publius : the Journal of Federalism*. 36.4 (2006): 503-522. Web.
- Konstitutsiia Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik. [Constitution of the USSR]. November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. <<http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Etext/cnst1977.htm>>
- Kulik, Anatoly. "Can a Genuine Opposition Party Appear in Russia in Line with Medvedev’s Proclaimed Modernization?" *Revue d’Etudes Comparatives Est-Ouest*. 42.1 (March 2011): 115-148. Web.
- Laverty, Nicklaus. "Limited Choices : Russian Opposition Parties and the 2007 Duma Election." *Demokratizatsiya*. 16.4 (October 2008). 363-381 Web.
- Lee, Moonyoung. "Nostalgia as a Feature of “Glocalization”: Use of the Past in Post-Soviet Russia." *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 27.2 (2011): 158–177. Web.
- Makarova, Viktorija. "‘Perpetual Questions’ in Contemporary Russian Slogans." *Respectus Philologicus*. 13.18 (2008): 124-132. Web.
- Malfliet, K. "The Communist Party of the Russian Federation : not Communist per se." *Revue d’Etudes Comparatives Est-Ouest*. 42.1 (March 2011): 37-63. Web.
- March, Luke. "Managing Opposition in a Hybrid Regime: Just Russia and Parastatal Opposition." *Slavic Review*. 68.3 (Fall 2009): 504-527. Web.

March, Luke. "Russian Parties and the Political Internet." *Europe-Asia Studies*. 56.3 (May 2004): 369-400. Web.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>>

Morozov, Evgeny. "Technology's Role in Revolution: Internet Freedom and Political Oppression." *The Futurist*. July-August (2011): 18-21. Web.

Myagkov, Mikhail, Ordeshook, Peter, and Dimitri Shakin. *The Forensics of Election Fraud : Russia and Ukraine*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Print.

Ostrow, Joel, Satarov, Georgiy, and Irina Khakamada. *The Consolidation of Dictatorship in Russia : an Inside View of the Demise of Democracy*. London: Praeger Security International, 2007. Print.

Parties and Elections in Europe. < [www.parties-and-elections.de](http://www.parties-and-elections.de) >.

Pătruț, Monica. "The Confrontation of Candidates and Political Doctrines in the 2009 Presidential Campaign." *Journal of Media Research*. 1 (September 2011): 44-53. Web.

Pavlovskiĭ, Gleb, ed. *Demokratizatsiia Rossii : Khronika Politicheskoiĭ Preemstvennosti*. [Democratization of Russia: a Chronicle of Political Continuity]. Moskva: Izd-vo 'Evropa', 2010. Print.

Peregudov , S.P. "The Russian Political System After the Elections of 2007–2008: Stabilizing and Destabilizing Factors." *Russian Politics and Law*. 47.6 (November–December 2009): 47–87. Web.

Phrases Finder. <http://www.phrases.org.uk/>

Programma Kommunisticheskoiĭ partii Rossiĭskoĭ Federatsii. [Programme of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation]. November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011. <<http://kprf.ru/party/program/>>

- Remington, Thomas. "Patronage and the Party of Power: President–Parliament Relations Under Vladimir Putin." *Europe-Asia Studies*. 60.6. (August 2008): 959 – 987. Web.
- Resnianskaia, L.L. "Labirinty Demokratizatsii." *SMI v Meniaiushcheĭsia Rossii*. [Labyrinths of Democratization. Mass Media in Changing Russia]. Ed. E.L. Vartanova. Moskva: Aspekt Press, 2010. Print.
- Reuter, Ora John. "The Politics of Dominant Party Formation: United Russia and Russia's Governors." *Europe-Asia Studies*. 62. 2 (March 2010): 293–327. Web.
- Riggs, Jonathan W. and Peter J. Schraeder. "Russia's Political Party System as a (Continued) Impediment to Democratization: The 2003 Duma and 2004 Presidential Elections in Perspective." *Demokratizatsiya*. 13.1 (Winter 2005): 141-151. Web.
- Romanova, Tat'iana V. "Sovremennyĭ politicheskiĭ diskurs: Spetsifika i metodika analiza." [Contemporary Political Discourse: Specificity and Methodology of Analysis]. *Respectus Philologicus*. 11.16 (2007): 56-66. Web.
- Rose, Richard and William Mishler. "A Supply-Demand Model of Party-System Institutionalization : the Russian Case." *Party Politics*. 16 (2010): 801-821. Web.
- Ruutu, Katja. "Future, Past and Present in Russian Constitutional Politics: Russian Constitutions in a Conceptual-Historical Perspective." *Review of Central and East European Law*. 35 (2010): 77-110. Web.
- Sakwa, Richard. *Russian Politics and Society*. 3rd edition. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Shirayev, Eric. *Russian Government and Politics*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010. Print.



- Shlapentokh, Vladimir. "Expediency Always Wins over Ideology : Putin's Attitudes Toward the Russian Communist Party." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. 44 (2011): 33-40. Web.
- Shleifer, Andrei, and Daniel Treisman. "A Normal Country: Russia After Communism." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 19.1 (Winter 2005): 151-174. Web.
- Sivenkova, Mariia. "'Opiat' duratskiĭ vopros!'", ili kak Politiki Kritikuiut Zadavaemye Im Voprosy." ['A Stupid Question Again!'], or how Politicians Criticize the Questions They are Asked]. *Respectus Philologicus*. 18.23 (2010): 111-125. Web.
- Slider, Darrel. "How United is United Russia? Regional Sources of Intra-party Conflict." *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. 26.2 (June 2010): 257-275. Web.
- Smyth, Regina, Anna Lowry, and Brandon Wilkening. "Engineering Victory: Institutional Reform, Informal Institutions, and the Formation of a Hegemonic Party Regime in the Russian Federation." *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 23.2 (2007): 118-137. Web.
- Smyth, Regina. "Building State Capacity from the Inside Out: Parties of Power and the Success of the President's Reform Agenda in Russia." *Politics and Society*. 30.4 (December 2002): 555-578. Web.
- Soubeyran, Raphaël. "Contest with Attack and Defense: Does Negative Campaigning Increase or Decrease Voter Turnout?" *Social Choice & Welfare*. 32. 3 (March 2009): 337-353. Web.
- Ugolovnyĭ Kodeks Rossiĭskoĭ Federatsii. [Criminal Code of the Russian Federation]. October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. <<http://www.consultant.ru/popular/ukrf/>>
- Ustav Kommunisticheskoi partii Rossiĭskoĭ Federatsii. [Constitution of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation]. November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011. <<http://kprf.ru/party/charter/>>

Van Dijk, Teun. *Prejudice in Discourse*. Amsterdam: John Bengamins Publishing Company, 1984. Print.

Voinova, E.A. "SMI v Kontekste Mediatizatsii Politiki." *SMI v Meniaiushcheisia Rossii*. [Mass Media in the Context of Politics Mediatization. Mass Media in Changing Russia]. Ed. E.L. Vartanova. Moskva: Aspekt Press, 2010. Print.

White, David. *The Russian Democratic Party Yabloko : Opposition in a Managed Democracy*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006. Print.

White, Stephen. "Russians and their Party System." *Demokratizatsiya*. 14.1 (January 2006): 7-22. Web.

Wikipedia in Russian. <<http://ru.wikipedia.org>>

## APPENDIX A: Details on corpus selection

Four major Russian search engines, Yandex.ru, Rambler.ru, Mail.ru and Aport.ru, were used to put together the list of sources to be included in the corpus. The ratings of site popularity (top-100 lists of most visited websites in the ‘Politics’ category) were analyzed in August 2009. The first 10 parties/movements and first 10 leaders in each of the lists were selected. A score was assigned to the position on the list, on a 1 to 10 scale, with 10 points given for the first position on the list and 1 point given for the last position on the list, and an aggregate average score was given for each of the websites. The following ten parties and movements had the highest scores:

<b>Parties/Movements</b>	<b>Score</b>
Communist Party of the Russian Federation	9.5
Youth Guard of ‘United Russia’	7.5
Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia	6.25
United democratic party ‘Yabloko’	5.5
‘United Russia’ party	5.0
‘A Just Russia’ party	3.25
‘Following the course of truth and unity’ party; Movement against Illegal Immigration	2.25
‘Democratic Union’; ‘New People’ movement	1.75

During data collection and analysis, two organizations, ‘Following the course of truth and unity’ party and the ‘New People’ movement, were excluded from the

corpus for the following reasons: the former did not have any materials published within several months of the data collection period; the latter, although very active, did not have any political issues discussed and appeared to have been categorized as a political organization in error. As a result, the corpus included only 8 parties and movements. The following twelve political leaders had the highest scores (three shared the tenth position on the list):

<b>Leader(s)</b>	<b>Score</b>
Anatoly Chubais	6.75
Grigory Yavlinsky	5.75
Garry Kasparov	5.0
Dmitry Deliagin	4.5
Boris Nemtsov; Yuri Krupnov	3.75
Aleksandr Lebedev	2.75
Vladimir Ryzhkov; Sergei Glaziev	2.5
Viacheslav Igrunov; Mikhail Kasyanov; Dmitry Medvedev	2.0

Four of these sources were removed during data collection and analysis for various reasons. The leader of the list, the website of Anatoly Chubais, was removed for the presence of codes harmful to the researcher's computer that were repeatedly attempting to get access to the computer while the data was being collected. The website of Sergei Glaziev was not operational at the time data collection started and several attempts to reach it further in the data collection

period were unsuccessful. The website of Viacheslav Igrunov was excluded for lack of any political materials, as the website appears to be used by Igrunov for sharing his poetry. Finally, the website of Dmitry Medvedev was excluded for being inactive, as it only included the home page advising the visitors to check back later.<sup>140</sup> As a result, the corpus included the websites of 8 political leaders.

---

<sup>140</sup> The website in question should not be confused with Dmitry Medvedev's blog and other online presence, including the official Kremlin website. None of these were present in the website ratings top 10 lists at the time of data collection.

## APPENDIX B: Details on sources in the corpus<sup>141</sup>

Name of the party or movement	Website	Founded	Leaders	Political orientation	Number of seats in the Fifth State Duma	Membership in international organizations
'A Just Russia' party	<a href="http://www.spravedlivo.ru">www.spravedlivo.ru</a>	2006	Sergey Mironov, Nikolai Levichev	Left-of-centre, social democracy, socialism	38	Socialist International (consultative status)
Communist party of the Russian Federation	<a href="http://www.kprf.ru">www.kprf.ru</a> <a href="http://www.cprf.ru">www.cprf.ru</a>	1993	Gennady Ziuganov	Communism, Marxism-Leninism	57	Union of Communist Parties – Communist Party of the Soviet Union
'Democratic Union'	<a href="http://www.ds.ru">www.ds.ru</a>	1988	Valeriia Novodvorskaia	Liberalism, neo-conservatism, anti-communism	None	None
Liberal-democratic party of Russia	<a href="http://www.ldpr.ru">www.ldpr.ru</a>	1992	Vladimir Zhirinovsky	Nationalism, liberal conservatism, anti-globalism, anti-communism	40	None
Movement against Illegal Immigration	<a href="http://www.dpni.ru">www.dpni.ru</a>	2002 (banned in 2011)	Vladimir Ermolaev	Nationalism	None	None
'United Russia' party	<a href="http://www.edinros.ru">www.edinros.ru</a>	2001	Vladimir Putin	Social conservatism, centrism, statism	315	None

<sup>141</sup> With information from Parties and Elections in Europe ([www.parties-and-elections.de/russia.html](http://www.parties-and-elections.de/russia.html)), Wikipedia and the websites of parties, movements and leaders in question.

Youth Guard of 'United Russia'	<a href="http://www.mger2020.ru">www.mger2020.ru</a>	2005	Timur Prokopenko	Social conservatism, centrism, statism	None	None
--------------------------------	--	------	------------------	--	------	------

Name of politician	Website	Date of birth	Political history	Current status
Mikhail Delyagin	<a href="http://www.delyagin.ru">www.delyagin.ru</a>	18/03/1968	Member of expert group at the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, President of Russia, Government of Russia; Aide to leader of 'Fatherland-All Russia' movement Primakov; Chair of ideological council of the 'Motherland' party	Member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, PhD in Economics, Director of the Institute for the Study of Globalization Problems, chairperson of the 'Motherland: common sense' party
Garry Kasparov (Weinstein)	<a href="http://www.kasparov.ru">www.kasparov.ru</a>	13/04/1963	Chess world champion; Chess champion of the USSR; One of the founders of the Democratic party of Russia; Founder of the 'Committee 2008: free choice' organization; One of the founders of 'The Other Russia' coalition; Chair of the 'All-Russian Civil Congress'	One of the founders and leaders of the 'Solidarity' movement. Leader of the United Civil Front.
Mikhail Kasyanov	<a href="http://www.kasyanov.ru">www.kasyanov.ru</a>	8/12/1957	Prime Minister of Russia; Finance Minister; Member of Government since 1990; Member of 'The Other Russia' coalition	Chairperson of the 'Russian Popular-Democratic Union' movement. Co-chair of the 'Party of Popular Freedom'.
Yuri Krupnov	<a href="http://www.kroupnov.ru">www.kroupnov.ru</a>	25/05/1961	Aide to member of the State Duma; Aide to Representative of the President; Aide to the Government of Russia	Chair of the Observing Council of the Institute for Demographics, Migration and Regional Development; Leader of the 'Movement for Development'
Aleksandr Lebedev	<a href="http://www.alebedev.ru">www.alebedev.ru</a>	16/12/1959	Soviet and Russian diplomat and intelligence officer; Founder of the Russian investing and financial company; General director of the National Reserve Bank; member of the political council of the 'Our Home is Russia' party; deputy chairperson of the 'Cedar'	Owner of 'The Evening Standard' and 'The Independent' newspapers in the United Kingdom; Delegate of the Slobodskoy District Duma of the Kirov Region; One of the richest people in Russia, according to 'Forbes' magazine

			party; Candidate for Mayor of Moscow in 2003; Delegate of the State Duma; Member of 'Motherland', 'A Just Russia' and 'United Russia' parties	
Boris Nemtsov	<a href="http://www.nemtsov.ru">www.nemtsov.ru</a>	9/10/1959	Minister of fuel and power of Russia; Governor of the Nizhniy Novgorod region; Deputy Prime-Minister of Russia; Leader of the Union of Right Forces party; Candidate for Mayor of Sochi in 2009	One of the leaders of the Solidarity movement; Author of several public reports on Luzhkov and Putin; Co-Chairperson of the Party of Popular Freedom
Vladimir Ryzhkov	<a href="http://www.ryzhkov.ru">www.ryzhkov.ru</a>	3/09/1966	Delegate of the State Duma; One of the leaders of the 'Democratic Choice of Russia' party; One of the leaders of the 'Our Home is Russia' party; Leader of the Republican Party of Russia	Co-Chairperson of the Party of Popular Freedom; radio host and commentator; Author of a public report on Putin



### **APPENDIX C: Example of coding and analysis**

The following process was used for each text in the corpus:

- 1) The article was located on the source website
- 2) In MAXQDA, a file was created and named according to convention 'PartyName\_Date\_Number\_of\_item'. The full text of the source article was copied to the MAXQDA file.
- 3) The instances of each of the representational strategies, including approaches to them, were coded and marked in the text. The same fragment could be coded with several strategies if needed.
- 4) As a result, an Excel database was formed with listing of all segments coded with a particular representational strategy.

The following page contains a screenshot as an example of the coding of one of the texts in the corpus, the fourth text coming from the Democratic Union, dated Dec 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

C:\Users\Medvedevy\Documents\ArtemThesisData.mx4 - MAXQDA 10

Project Edit Documents Codes Memos Variables Analysis Mixed methods Visual tools Windows Language Toolbars ?

Document System

- Delyagin9\_Oct\_17\_09 19
- Delyagin8\_Oct\_16\_09 10
- Delyagin7\_Sep\_30\_09 39
- Delyagin6\_Sep\_19\_09 5
- Delyagin5\_Sep\_07\_09 3
- Delyagin4\_Sep\_03\_09 2
- Delyagin3\_Oct\_01\_09 3
- Delyagin2\_Sep\_01\_09 1
- Delyagin1\_Dec\_15\_09 16
- Democratic Union 18
  - DemocraticUnion4\_Dec\_16\_09 9
  - DemocraticUnion3\_Sep\_28\_09 1
  - DemocraticUnion2\_Sep\_28\_09 4
  - DemocraticUnion1\_Sep\_22\_09 4
- Fair Russia 86
  - FairRussia20\_Sep\_23\_09 3
  - FairRussia19\_Sep\_22\_09 7

Code System

- De-lawfulness 0
  - Bandits 1
  - Corrupt, greedy 46
  - Hooligans 2
  - Provocateurs 11
  - Unfair, cheating, dishonest 53
  - Vandals 1
  - Violating the law 34
  - Violent, cruel, hateful 15
- De-personification 0
  - Animals 6
  - Sewage 1
- De-politization 0
  - Business 6
  - Comical, not serious 11
  - Compromisers, opportunists 10

Document Browser: Democratic Union\DemocraticUnion4\_Dec\_16\_09

- Заявление ЦКС
- Пусть мародеры отойдут от гроба
- Россия потеряла сегодня человека, который по праву может считаться ее спасителем. Егор Гайдар спас страну от голода и разрухи в 1992 г., от военного красно-коричневого переворота в 1993 г., он спасал ее от позора чеченской войны в 1994-м и 1995-м. Когда Путин заторопился в советское прошлое и начал раскулачивание бизнеса и ликвидацию реформ, Егор Гайдар возвысил свой голос против вертикали власти и возврата к тоталитаризму. Его смерть ускорили темные чекистские силы, которые назвали самую счастливую в истории России эпоху реформ "лихими девяностыми".
  - ..Fascist
  - ..Anti-democratic
- Егор Гайдар не шел на сделки с совестью и не последовал за своими неверными соратниками, продавшими Кремлю "Союз Правых Сил" вместе со свободой, собственностью и законностью и учредивших марионеточное "Правое дело". Егора Гайдара не было в рядах этих могильщиков демократии. Сегодня сопresidentы Путин и Медведев, душителы гайдаровских реформ, пытаются повторить фарс с похоронами Пастернака по сценарию: "А над гробом встали мародеры и несут почетный караул". Демократические силы не должны допустить надругательства над прахом Егора Гайдара, которое те же лица устроили Борису Ельцину. Над его гробом не должен звучать советский гимн и должны стоять друзья и соратники, а не враги в лице представителей нынешней власти.
  - ..Outdated, archaic, reactionary
  - ..Anti-democratic
  - ..Violating the law
  - ..Part of the establishment
  - ..Anti-democratic
  - ..Compromisers, opportunists
  - ..Anti-democratic
- "Демократический Союз" глубоко скорбит, оплакивает своего учителя и товарища и приносит свои соболезнования его семье и коллегам.
- Председатель ЦКС ДС
- Валерия Новодворская

1 - 100 f. OR combination (standard ana 1 / 1