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## **“The Fourth Wave of Emigration” vs “Global Russians”: Self-Naming as an Actual Problem of Forming Identity**

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### **Abstract**

The political and economic situation of the first half of the 1990s was accompanied by a massive relocation of Russian citizens abroad for permanent or temporary residence with an ability to have multiple citizenship, working, studying and doing business outside the Russia. This new conditions have radically changed the idea of exile, which was formed in the Russian language imagine of the world in the preceding two centuries, through periodic discussion of this topic in journalism and fiction. The changed perceptions of the concept of emigration and emigrants has induced to a discussion of how to name this new generation. The four waves of Russian emigration differ from each other on political, economic and social grounds, but the strongest difference lies in the attitude to departure and the emigrant defining themselves in the new conditions. In this article we want to observe just one aspect of actual social situation - the self-nomination problem of Russians who do not live in Russia permanently or moved to other countries for a permanent stay. We briefly describe the self-characteristics of representatives of all waves of emigration, but pay special attention to the last, so called ‘fourth wave’, self-determination of which is conceptually and semantically different from all previous ones. In the paper will be discussed the course and results of the discussion about self-nomination based on the materials of the magazine online platform *Snob* in the 2000s. This narrow lexicological material allows us to make some general conclusions about group and personal identity of the new “mobile” formation of Russians in aspects of social and cultural studies.

**Keywords:** Russian emigration, Global Russians, blogs, *Snob*, globalization

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In modern Russian linguo-culture, the question of who could be called “an emigrant” and who could be called a *cosmopolitan*, has no clear answer, primarily due to the fact that the Soviet period of Russian history has brought a distinct negative semantics in the meaning of both words. The problem of naming those who (for one reason or another) left their home country is certainly not exclusively Russian. It is considered by researchers around the world (Fortier 1998; Teagarden 2010; Sayad 2018; Gulina 2016 etc.), but if earlier emigration was often equated to escape, then the modern social, political, cultural situation assumes revision of the attitude to the people leaving to other countries for work, education or new life experience. The structure of modern society allows you to try new things more freely, to choose the places of education, work, types of lifestyle at your own discretion. Modern man absorbs different behavioral and cultural patterns easier than before, turns into a kind of a *World citizen*.

The Soviet culture was highly isolated and closed, the structure of the USSR assumed strict state control over the mobility of the population even within the country. Departure from the USSR for permanent residence even in the 1980s was an extraordinary event for those who left, and for those who remained. Dictionaries, fixing the spoken language, captured expressions such as *nevozvrashchenets* (non-returner), *otkaznik*, *refjuznik* (word is formed from Engl. ‘to refuse’), etc., associated with the stages and forms of departure from the USSR and to intensify semantics of “refusing” and “never returning back”.

The collapse of the USSR greatly simplified the procedure of leaving and departing from Russia and increased the number of people living outside Russia for a number of reasons. Their situation is different from previous immigrants, so we can even talk about the emergence of a special social group, which inevitably caused the question of its nomina-

tion and, last but not least, self-nomination. It urgently confronts those who earlier unequivocally referred to immigrants as self-nomination directly linked to the identity and finding your “own” place in the new culture and social environment: it may affect both the issue of saving or adapting your own name (Sussman 2010) and the nomination of the entire group.

The more closed was the previous culture, the more rigid was its attitude to the “gone”, the more acute the question of how to call this new trend and the people who form it. In other words, is it appropriate to refer to these persons in the same way (with all the negative connotations associated with it), or are new definitions necessary?

In this article we want to observe just one aspect of actual social situation –the self-nomination problem of Russians who do not live in Russia permanently or even moved to other countries for a permanent stay. This narrow lexicological material allows us to make some general conclusions about group and personal identity of the new “mobile” human formation in aspects of social and cultural studies. In the paper we will discuss the course and results of the discussion based on the materials of the magazine online platform “*Snob*”.

To obtain these results, firstly, we will give a very brief outline of the Russian emigrants’ history to identify the main patterns in the naming of the people who left the country. Afterwards, we will consider the specifics of modern emigration from Russia, mainly focused on the public discussion about the problem of self-naming of the group of Russians who do not live in Russia permanently.

## **1 History of Russian emigration and different nominations of emigrants**

The changed perceptions of the concept of emigration and emigrants has induced a discussion of how to name this new generation of people who leaving their Motherland (or preparing to do so) live in other countries.

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Geographic mobility, and related to it cosmopolitan mood, were gaining popularity in Russia since the 18th century. Russian elites considered that Russia was a part of Europe, so the secondary education included compulsory study of European languages (primarily French and German, and from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century - English) and the history of European culture. Pride of Russians' *Universal responsiveness* (according to Fedor Dostoevsky) –the admirable ability to understand other cultures and to make these other cultures the source of their own culture as an important part of the Russian identity. From the mid-19th century two lines of social thought were formed in the Russian society –*Westerners* (they believed that Russia should be integrated into European society) and *Slavophiles* (they suppose that the country should go its own special way) (Kantor, 2001; Leontiev, 1996; Masarik, 2000; Strakhov, 1897).

National laws of the Russian Empire allowed thousands of foreigners to live and work in Russia, and the people of Russia have also had the opportunity to leave the country to live, study and work abroad freely. At the same time, not many people could use this opportunity because of economical reasons: mostly, they were educated aristocrats and merchants, only since the last third of the 19th century it also became possible for commoners. These people called themselves *travelers, students, boarders*, underlining their coherence with the homeland. Those who left Russia for political reasons defined themselves with romantic connotations of the word –*exiles* (izgnanniki).

The situation changed dramatically in the early 20th century. Results of the 1905-1907 revolution, the First World War, the revolutions of 1917 and the Russian Civil War gave rise to talk about a new social phenomenon –the Russian mass emigration, primarily for political reasons. The word *emigrant* got fixed in the Russian language. Modern historiography decided to recognize four chronological “waves” of emigration from Russia during the 20th century. They are different from each other in their assumptions, structure and reputation in Russian culture (Glezer, Polyana 2005; Раев, 1994; Струве, 1996).

The first “wave” was the so-called “*White*” emigration. During and after the Civil War in 1918–1921 about one million people, who disagreed with the Bolsheviks, left Russia. Among them were the supporters of the monarchy, the aristocracy, cadres of the tsarist army, a considerable part of the intelligentsia (among them were many artists, writers, ballet dancers, musicians, etc.). Russian emigrants of this generation, who settled in the 1920s in Europe and China (and later some of them moved to the United States, some came back – not in Russia, but in the Soviet Union), formed the phenomenon of *Russia Abroad* – many institutions and Russian communities abroad (Паев 1994). They traditionally called themselves *exiles* and *refugees* (it was the social status of the majority of them), *Russian foreigners*, *Russian Parisians* (*Berliners*, *Prague residents*, *Harbiners*, etc.). Thus, they marked their connection with each other, their forced departure, and their linguistic and cultural affinity with Russia (not the USSR).

The second “wave” of emigration related to the Second World War. War prisoners, collaborators, people who were outside the Soviet Union during or after the military operations and redistribution of territory, feared of repressions which might happen to them in case they came-back home. Their hiding from possible persecution by the Soviet power took them to North and South America, Australia, and other remote regions. In the USSR they were considered to be traitors and war criminals. They wanted to assimilate and “dissolve” in the society of the new country of their residence. Later, reflecting on the fact of their immigrant status, they would usually call themselves *dipi* (official DP – de-territorialized person), emphasizing not the political but bureaucratic reason of their stay in the other country.

The third “wave” was the emigration during the Cold War period. It has been associated with political dissent, aesthetic disagreement with the cultural policy of the USSR, as well as the desire to improve the economic conditions of their lives. This departure usually takes place with the knowledge of the features of the Soviet state: the potential immigrants know that in the case of departure they will be deprived of citizenship and the right of return to their homeland. Abroad they grad-

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ually assimilated, although a part of them has forever remained a part of the Russian-speaking diaspora (the “phenomenon of Brighton Beach”). They have usually defined themselves in terms of *dissent* (disagreement with the Soviet authorities), i.e. *ideological emigration*. But in the Soviet Union they always were called in an ironic way as *the sausage emigration*, this term described those who leave the country *for a better life* (opposed to *white emigration* who do it because of *the idea*).

Emigrants of the first, second and third “waves” were united by the fact that the pre-revolutionary Russian or Soviet stage of their life was conceptualized by them as separate and complete. In public discourse they described emigration as a necessity, in their self-determination they emphasized the boundary between the two phases of their life, and the bureaucratic component of the process of “deprivation” of the motherland. The rich literary heritage left by the emigrants of all three “waves” allows one to see in it the dominance of the pathos of lament, the prevalence of genre elements of elegy and lamentation, the definition of emigration as a death or exile, *someone else’s hired house* (Bunin, 2006, p. 128-133), an emigrant “*gobbled down the bread of exile, not leaving a crumb*” (Brodsky, 2000, p. 211), etc.

The fourth “wave” of emigration came in the period of 1990–2000’s. Reasons for leaving are more diverse than for its predecessors: the search for work, study places, a more favorable climate, the desire to see the world, the ideological disagreement with the policies of post-Soviet Russia, criminal prosecution, etc. A distinctive feature of this “wave” was that those who leave are able to (and make use of this ability) go back to Russia, to live in two or more countries. The majority of them has “dual citizenship”, allowing them both to expand the geographical boundaries and the boundaries of their own identity.

Globalization became one of the most important social trends on the border of the 20-21th centuries. Modern people have more mobility and freedom of movement, and choice of the country they work and live in, as well as more freedom to determine their place in the geographical and social space. As a consequence, a problem of identity, the definition of

a person's "points" of his own "attachment" to the territory, history, language –increasingly– culture, becomes actual. Russia is not an exception; its case is quite typical for the modern world.

The formation of a community of Russians living abroad or having a multiple citizenship has intensified with the beginning of the Internet. The lack of a lexical definition for them in the modern Russian language was directly linked by these people with the uncertainty of their status as well as, apparently, with the need to decide on their own identity.

Awareness of the social scale of the phenomenon has led people who have become a part of it to attempt a self-naming. Earlier definitions related to emigration in media (the *new immigrants*, *fourth wave*, etc.) have been opposed to definitions related to the current state of society (*mobile Russians*, *Global Russians*). Thus, panelists wanted to change the image of the victims of political repression and economic cataclysms, escaping abroad from the actual or possible persecution to the new image of themselves as global citizens who have made a free choice of place of work and residence.

The main discussion launched on the Internet platform named "*Snob*", which positions itself as "a unique discussion, information and public space for the people who live in different countries, speak different languages, but think in Russian". A target audience of "*Snob*" magazine was "well educated, successful and competent" Russians who have "achieved a lot in professional and social fields" (Waulker, 2008). During the period of launching the magazine Western media tried to describe a target audience and also to understand what does *Global Russian* mean and which social class the new magazine tried to present worldwide.

## **2 Official explanation of the term *Global Russians***

Because this term was used at first time on the pages of "*Snob*" magazine to describe their primary audience we need to briefly explain

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whom the magazine was targeted for.

“*Snob*” was established by Russian businessman and billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov at 2008 as an offline magazine and an online media-platform and social network for Russians around the world who were interested in Russian political, cultural, business etc. news and wanted to keep in touch with other ex-fellow citizens. The magazine recruited many high-quality writers and over time created its own community on its on-line platform.

As we are told by A. Baskin:

““*Snob*” is a Russian-language publication that doesn’t want to be seen as “ethnic”. The goal is to engage *Global Russians* –a group of people who, after the fall of the Soviet Union, “have accomplished what they set out to do, created their identities, and are now looking outward,” according to the Editor-in-Chief Masha Gessen.”

(Baskin, 2010).

S. Waulker from UK’s “*Independent*” after an interview with Olga Erykalina, a spokeswoman for the magazine, reaches the conclusion that the magazine was published for

“...well-to-do professionals. Readers are expected to be between 35 and 50 and earn £2,500 to £5,000 a month” –the top end of Russia’s middle class who can also ironically call themselves “snobs” because of their sophistication which was totally opposite to stereotypical Russian “nouveaux nouveaux riches” of the beginning of 1990s.”

(Waulker, 2008).

Another analyst, C. Billings from “*Campaign*”, pays attention to the members of the “Snob club” –a half-closed community of the magazine’s authors and readers which involved a lot of wealthy and suc-



successful Russians: writers, journalists, businessmen, fashion designers, artists, TV personalities, actors etc. who were “united not by political views or by any other views but by their ‘globalness’, creativeness and openness to the whole world” (Billing, 2009). By now the last statement insensibly was transformed into “not divided by geography, social status, age or beliefs. Whatever they do, and wherever they live, they are united by a common interest in the world that surrounds them and a desire to act in order to make this world a better place” (*Snob*).

So we can conclude that the target audience of “*Snob*” is the new class of Russian origin *Global Professionals*: successful, open-minded, sophisticated, sharing liberal political view. It’s an official postulate of the editors and PR services of the magazine. At the same time, there are some questions: are *Global Russians* an exclusive group? Does it consist of just a privileged class or all Russian emigrants could be called so?

### **3 Global Russians: a glance from the inside**

The formation of a community of Russians living abroad or having a multiple citizenship has intensified with the starting of the Internet, which facilitated and significantly speeded up the process of communication between people. It allowed emigrants to obtain relevant information from Russia, read Russian media and become active participants of social processes that were taking place in their homeland.

Basically, the problems with definition of the new emigrant wave is the problem of misunderstanding who they are in the global society and which traditional emigrant narrative, we have talked about in section 1, they use. Was their decision to change the country a moving out or an exile?

More often the problems discussed by *modern Russians abroad* are closed to that ones, which were discussed by the previous generations of emigrants: self-identity, the problem of integration into a foreign “environment”, the involvement or non-involvement in Russia’s contem-

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porary social, cultural or political situation, the attitude to the heritage of Russian culture, the difference between the cultural and political background, etc. New Russian-speaking emigrant authors while in their texts they are speaking about their life experience outside of Russia are usually referring, on the one hand, to the themes of previous generations of Russian emigration (the horrors of life in the country they had left), and on the other hand, to the topic of missing their culture and their language. They support an image of border which is sustainable for the immigrant discourse; and the process of crossing this border connects with the victims: the deprivation of the cultural environment, the need to find a new identity, difficulties in integration of “foreign” space. Often they hold a speech genre of lament, which, according to Nancy Ries, is a characteristic of Russian late- and post-Soviet culture. Homesickness for these *émigrés* is more anguish of cultural codes and desire to be completely understood. The important theme (dreams connecting with the coming back home) which linked all the generations of emigrants has almost disappeared from the texts, as it lost its relevance.

Change of social status, lack of compulsory “dissidence” pathos as reasons for departure, the relative transparency of the borders causes the people who have chosen residence in a place other from Russia, to avoid to define themselves as *outcasts*, *victims of political regime*, or even as actual *émigrés*. The term *expats* has (incorrectly) gained currency in the journalist discourse. The new wave of emigrants created a new term for self-description and it is not *émigrés*, but *Global Russian* (from now on we will abbreviate it as GR).

GR is a special group of modern Russians, which are non-Russians by the place of permanent residence, but regard themselves as owners of Russian culture. In addition, this group may include those who have no passports, except a Russian one, but consider themselves to be a heterogeneous group of *new Russian cosmopolitans*.

The publishers of the internet platform “*Snob*” became popularizers of GR ideas. This involved the cooperation of socially active and well-known *expat writers* living in Russia to create an international magazine, the printed version of which you can buy only in major cities

around the world where Russian communities exist. Anyone at any points of the globe, who reads Russian and places a paid subscription to the online version of the publication, may become a member of any of the communities formed around the journal –“snob-community” (or GR-community). The online version of the magazine consists of personal columns (blogs) and open discussions around topics offered by any community member.

GR attitude is characterized by both recognition of its involvement in world culture through relocate and the understanding that identity is not determined by the place of residence and membership of a particular culture, provides that culture medium is open to development and adoption of new standards. The relevance of this idea one can explain by the tradition of imaging of relations with the Homeland and themselves as the exiles, victims, etc. created by previous generations of immigrants.

Elena Spirina writes about her attitude towards Russia:

“It is time to understand a simple truth: Homeland is not a place, not the land, though, that cunning, we would like to keep a handful of it in a jar, it is not a point on the map, not the name and even people. This is foundation, your personal inner culture and version of an aspiration. It’s the starting point if you want to call it so. And that is why it is so important to be with it in peace, not in conflict. Cause, in fact, you both create a one-piece and the love makes your stronger.”

(Spirina, 2012).

The pursuit of a positive identity characterizes a GR in common. According to Alexei Fedorov’s blog in the online magazine “*Snob*”:

“We are really Global: we live in different countries (including Russia), move a lot, appreciate and love the cultures of other countries and peoples, thus being part of the global civilization, and not just national. But, of course, we are still Russians via “cultural codes” and temperament.”

(Snob, 2011).

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He was echoed by Alexander Svirin:

“Global Russians, in my point of view, are the ones who carry the values of Russian culture and at the same time are open to dialogue with the worldwide culture. For me, this category largely lies precisely in the field of culture, not politics. Every nation is unique, has its own traditions and customs, but the similarities anyway can distinguish each, regardless of the continent.”

(Tribune of the public chamber of Russia).

GR try to keep the tradition of Russian cosmopolitanism, and Russian culture, to produce tradition emigrant texts more or less consistently. As a result of this ideological alloy the idea of a new identity, which is related to the dual, even within the international Russian-speaking community, was born.

Involvement in the global context of the world, interest in “foreign” culture, the desire to adopt a different demeanor, especially the assimilation of its majority of those who consider themselves to this group, are perceived as a positive feature mostly. Activist of the GR-identity debates Elena De Winne writes:

“In Moscow on a book market everyone told I was a foreigner. They said that all the Muscovites grabbed everything by their hands and only foreigners are watching from a far”.

(Snob, 2011).

However, the conspicuous contrast between the new style and traditional Russian manner of behavior perceives as a bad taste. Blogger *goiko*, even states that

“Russians who are speaking in their native language with a deliberate accent ... that say “Ouch “and” wow “and” this country “make me ... feel contempt.”

(Livejournal).

Active discussion about those, who can and those who can not be considered as GR, explicitly or implicitly leads supporters of defining this social group to a kind of hierarchy of society by the degree of willingness and/or unwillingness to live in a “global” world, associated with the ownership of foreign languages, the development of adaptive skills, the ability to navigate a new social space. The idea of a stereotypical bad “Russian-ness”, the image of Russia as a country of barbarian orders, heading to isolationism of despotic political structure is typical for the traditions of Russian emigrant literature, but in blogs of the new wave emigrants a verbal radicalism stylistically highlights a litany of this type.

Blogger Peter M. Key writes about it directly, emphasizing the unpopularity of his own position:

“Taking a deep breath (now probably I will face prosecution in the absence of tolerance and snobbery ... :-)) I suppose that this kind of “improved” version of who you can just designate as a Russian ... a kind of Russian v.2.0.”

(Snob, 2011).

In fact, he like the other participants in the debates about the GR tries not only to identify certain features of the GR, but also to rate them.

Already mentioned above Elena De Winne raises a question that is quite important for GRs: is this term a self-definition of individual people or a social construct that is associated with the desire to define a new social phenomenon. Taking the definition of itself as the GR she insists on the “*confirmation and generalization of social reality behind the term*”, associates it with an important global trend –the union of national groups on the basis not of a single country of residence but of the culture and mentality:

“Why does this label me? I like it much more than the label ‘Dutch’,<sup>1</sup> which is incorrect, because I can not feel it; and I do

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<sup>1</sup> De Winne lives in the Netherlands.

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not, in fact, fit to be just Russian –I am living in Europe the whole of my adult life and I can see that it doesn't matter I kept the relationship, love and respect for my Russian half, I have a number of important issues which are mentally different.”

(Snob, 2011).

In fact, using the new self-nomination, she tries to symbolically overcome the hybridity of her own identity.

The appearance of the GR community and their attempts to revise an “emigrants” and “lefts” can be considered an indicator of the social changes that happened. Using the terms of Russian historiography, we can say that the historical cycle is repeated, the dispute between the *Westerners* and *Slavophiles* currently moved to the synthesis stage: GRs are not *emigrants*, but rather *Westerners* with Slavophil slope, who are quite actively involved in the social life of Russia. They, unlike many emigrant predecessors, position themselves as *open-world people successfully overcoming difficulties with a foreign culture and their own self-realization*. GR consistently produce the image of the *new Russian cosmopolitan* living at the crossroads of Russian domestic traditions and lifestyle of the country of residence; a Russian culture and, at the same time, a selectively received generalized “Western”, “East”, “US”, “Scandinavian”, etc. culture in their texts.

Who are the GR? Who can be a member of this group? What are the characteristics that a person must possess to be able to call him/herself a GR? Do all Russian members living abroad belong to this group or not?.. Discussion about these problems is still incomplete both in the information space of the journal “*Snob*”, and also in the Russian segment of the Internet in general.

### 4 Conclusion

The traditional interest in people/social groups leaving Russia, and the desire to bring into the public space the explanation of reasons for

such behavior, inevitably led to their nomination (immigrants, exiles, etc.). The ideological uni-directionality of the USSR brought a negative connotation to any official definition for those who left their Homeland (traitors, apostates, non-returnees, etc.). Since emigration away from the Soviet country was, to a certain extent, periodic in the twentieth century, it became possible to speak about four “waves” of emigration, each of which was associated with its own lexical nomination vocabulary (“white” emigration, traitors-“dipi”, “sausage” emigration, etc.).

The collapse of the Soviet Union radically changed the situation, as there was a return to the relative freedom of movement around the world that characterized pre-revolutionary Russia. The globalization processes have given this situation a much greater quantitative and qualitative diversity. Deep introduction into the linguistic culture of the negative connotations and the restrictly defined values of such nominations as emigrant, demanded from the direct participants of the “new mobility” an act of self-determination. Its traces are recorded, in particular, on the platform “*Snob*”. The analysis of the opinions of the representatives of this group, who initially classified themselves as Global Russians, shows that representatives of this group can be characterized by a dual identity: they position themselves as carriers of Russian culture, while possessing an international mentality. For this new formation, identity is not related to what passport they have –they are professionals who can work or study in any country of the world, they are open to get a foreign experience, but all of them are united by their shared knowledge of the common paradigm of Russian culture.

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