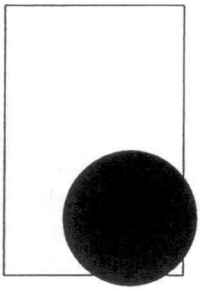
Anthropological Theory



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Inequality and exclusion

A Russian case study of emotion in politics

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Abstract

This article concerns the generation of a particular kind of inequality through social practices of inclusion and exclusion. It argues that we need to examine political as well as economic motivations to explain inequality, and it shows, using the case of Russian history, how political anxieties about the integrity of social groups and their governability has served to create inequality by disadvantaging those excluded. The theoretical approach taken is a dynamic and social one, taking up Dunn's observations on the continued salience of Hobbes in today's world and Kharkhordin's Foucauldian analysis of 20th-century Russian collectivism. Inequality, in this light, is seen as something that can be produced by political emotions and discursive practices, rather than as a fixed situation to be explained in terms of income disparities, unequal rights, or structures of exploitation. The intention is not to displace these other accounts but to supplement them by drawing attention to the ways in which a political impulse for the preservation of society constantly reviews the criteria of conformist unity and thus continually resets the boundaries for defining insiders against the outside. Variegated categories of the dispossessed are thereby created historically, and they form multiple sediments at the 'bottom' or the 'peripheries' of the wider polity. Among ordinary people, fear of being excluded, and ambivalent sentiments to those who have been expelled, give rise to volatile judgements about the legitimacy of inequality – especially when (as in the contemporary turmoil in Russia) certain of the previously dispossessed suddenly take their chance to grasp wealth.

Key Words

collectivism • inequality • political emotions • practices of exclusion and inclusion • Russia

Woman A: *(loudly and agitatedly)* Among us now are people building huge villas. They sit in official posts and their salary is only $50 a month, but already they have these huge houses! But you know, here, the custom is not to mind that kind of person. These are people who make their official position work for them . . .

Woman B: *(in a soft voice)* They are stealing from the state . . .

Woman A: *(firmly)* Yes. That is, he does it from his position, he steals, and he is accepted normally by everyone. You see, he's a boss (*on nachalnik*). But if it is just someone who is not a boss, who doesn't even have ordinary work, who suddenly starts to live a bit better than someone like you . . . then, oh! there will be a heap of criticisms (*kucha razgovorov*)! He didn't take it from anyone, he himself twisted out a profit, he's just got enough money to open a little workshop or something, but still people come down on him . . . .

(From a kitchen conversation, Grodno, Belorussia, summer 1999)[1]

The question addressed in this article concerns the generation of a particular kind of inequality through practices of exclusion from a socio-political whole. Such unities are both actual and discursively created, and it will be suggested that hierarchies and manners of domination within them, being represented in terms of loyalty, are conceived and experienced differently from inequalities perceived outside. Russia is the case I examine, though there could be numerous other analogies in the contemporary world (Northern Ireland, South Africa, or 'communalism' in India come to mind). The theoretical approach taken here is a dynamic and social one, that is, to see inequality as something constantly being produced by social (and political) anxieties and discursive practices, rather than as a set of conditions to be explained in terms of income disparities, unequal rights, or structures of exploitation (see Sen, 1992, for an account of these various approaches). The intention is not to displace these other accounts but to supplement them by drawing attention to the creation of a particular kind of inequality in a subjective field of practice.

Asking why people mind more about one kind of inequality than another, I shall be dealing not so much with the importance of various individual entitlements or capabilities per se, as with attitudes to the different political-economic systems that generate those variations. Why were Soviet inequalities of power and material benefits regarded with relative equanimity and frequently even accepted as just by most people at the time? Why are certain present-day income differences greeted with fatalistic cynicism, as among the Belorussian women quoted, while others arouse acute anger and distress, to the extent that many people feel them as a personal insult? This article takes as its subject the generations of ordinary provincial Russian citizens that have experienced both Soviet and post-Soviet life. I shall argue that in both periods, particularly the former, a political-social anxiety about unity (and its correlates schism and disloyalty) has created a fundamental emotional nexus. This concern is pervasive and operates at many levels, from the state to local institutions. The practices of producing unity have constantly at the same time generated practices of exclusion. This results in the generation of the dispossessed – a radical form of inequality. Still today in Russia, having contacts with influential officials, a job, residence permit, access to social benefits, and even citizenship status are tightly tied together, such that deprivation of one of them tends to lead to loss of the others. Among ordinary people, I suggest, it is emotions, fear of being excluded and ambivalent sentiments toward those who have been expelled, that generate the variable pulses of judgements about different kinds of inequality.

By 'unity' I refer to something that has a double reality, being on the one hand an

objectively occurring political-social group and on the other the cultural representation of that group. There is a tension between these two, such that the latter frequently comes to have an imperative character (the group in question, it is felt, should be more unified, more of a whole) and this sets in train practices of inclusion/exclusion that act upon people in the real world. These practices are 'irrational' in the sense that they do not derive from the actual degree of integrity of the group, but from a more generalized anxiety about what political life should be like. Hence, the particular flavour of the unity aspired to always has a cultural-historical character; but, as discussed later, there are grounds for arguing that the political impulse to produce unity is an irreducible and universal concern that becomes especially salient in times of upheaval and disarray.

So my argument in a nutshell is that there is a kind of inequality, which we may call exclusionary, that has been neglected in the literature. Such inequality is produced by political anxieties about the integrity of social groups. It is implemented by practices of inclusion and exclusion that create inequality by disadvantaging those excluded. The process is dynamic and unstable, since, as I argue, the principles by which exclusion takes place are historically variable. Russia is a good example since it makes this variability evident. Even in cases where religious difference (Northern Ireland), 'communalism' (India) or race (South Africa) appear as long-lasting 'reasons' for exclusion, my suggestion is that emotionally gripping issues of socio-political integrity are present too.

A word about 'exclusion'. Clearly inequality only makes sense as a relational term, that is, as a comparison between people or groups within some conceptual whole. It should, therefore, be clarified that what I am calling 'practices of exclusion' refers to processes such as exile, banishment, or limits on residence or employment, that radically disadvantage people but do not expel them entirely from society.[2] I have used the word exclusion because such practices have so frequently taken a geographical form in Russia. But with regard to inequality one could conceptualize them as 'vertical' in the sense that they insert further layers of deprivation in the country as a whole. The excluded and dispossessed are both visible and invisible. They are the disconsolate bands (of migrants, of refugees, of gypsies? – often the citizens are not sure) camped on wasteland in cities. They are the 'repressed' Chechens, who long before the current wars, were often forced to take the lowest-paid temporary jobs as shepherds throughout neighbouring regions. But they are also the people whom no one sees, who stay at home in their high-rise apartments because they have been sacked and cannot afford the fare for the metro to visit friends. This article does not attempt to explain all inequality in Russia, but something of the cultural history of the particular form of it created by practices of exclusion, and the shock and dismay aroused when the expected fall-out of exclusion is overturned in the new economic circumstances. This is to draw attention to one feature of inequality in general: that it may be created not only by deliberate practices of exploitation but also to some extent irrationally, as a result of a primarily emotional-political impulse.

The paradigmatic example in Russian history (and the most potent influence on the older generation today) is the nexus of faith and repulsion generated around certain discursive categories under Leninism-Stalinism. 'Cohesion' (*splochennost*) and 'decomposition' (*razlozheniye*) were not just political antonyms, but were tied to one another such that the one existed at the expense of the other. The cohesion of the 'political organism' of the state was built on organizational foundations, such as the all-Union managerial

structure of the Party or the functional relations created between widely dispersed industries. The internal hierarchy of plan, order and technical knowledge sucked upwards large numbers into the industrial working class, while simultaneously depressing yet further the status of those left in agriculture. But it is impossible to understand this situation without attending to its anxieties and emotional aura, the fear that the Party would lose touch with the workers or more generally that inside the vast, shifting conglomerate weakness and disloyalty would fester. Interesting research by Daniel Beer has shown how, during the 1920s–1940s, exhortations for the 'purification and making healthy of the state and managerial apparatus' used a pervasive language of *putrefaction* (e.g. of selfish egoism), *infection* (e.g. by bourgeois attitudes), or *disease* (e.g. of defeatism), which were to be countered by 'immunization' or cauterization of 'ulcers on the body of our Party'.[3] It was this profound paranoia about the corruptibility of the body politic, the correlate of the desire for its purity, that generated practices of explusion at every level, culminating in the concept of the 'enemies of the people'. Fitzpatrick (1999: 26) describes how Stalin's secrecy and obliqueness reinforced the fear by never clarifying policy or explaining the precise grounds for fault. Those to be excluded at first heard nothing directly; they found themselves left out of meetings, not greeted in public, no longer addressed as 'comrade'. Then, in countless waves,[4] the blows would fall, with arrest, trial and some arbitrary accusation, and (if not death) relegation to the camps, forced labour colonies and exile, which peopled the whole USSR with underlayers of the disenfranchised (*lishentsy*) and dispossessed.

Exile created a particular kind of disenfranchisement, for its aim was not so much individual punishment but the transformation of society by excising 'diseased parts' imagined collectively.[5] The exile was deliberately cut off from his or her social, cultural and moral placement, for precisely those relational qualities were considered dangerously infective. Furthermore, deportees were hardly ever expelled from the USSR but were sent to *somewhere*, a place we may conceive as part of a web of anti-spaces within the polity, for a community to which exiles were sent was stigmatized by their very presence. What seems often to have happened is a turning of backs on the banished, thus creating social wastelands within the borders of the 'whole'. In the places from which deportees vanished, we may find today that an administrator knows precisely how many 'enemies of the people' were arrested, but in the community in general there is an almost complete blotting-out of events in which the members were complicit, or from which they benefited by acquiring the land of the deportees.[6] Galetkina (1996: 70) explains one such case by the desire of the contemporary community to smooth over the discord such memories would revive ('Everything is fine with us, we lived and still live in a friendly way', people said). This article will discuss the history of such 'insider' perspectives, and I have attempted elsewhere (1997) to describe the utterly different construction of exile narratives.

What relevance does the Stalinist practice of exclusion have for the present day? The powerful, yet incomplete, introduction of capitalism to Russia has caused a seismic shifting of opportunities for acquiring wealth. While the masses of those 'in work' exist on little or no wages, a few in already advantageous positions have been able to benefit enormously from privatization, and meanwhile entrepreneurial openings have also appeared for some of those outside the established institutions. This new configuration arouses a particular pattern of affront among ordinary citizens in their daily lives, for political-social 'unities' in the public sphere continue to exist and to include/exclude people.

These are both old Soviet units (provinces, republics, state-owned combines, collective farms) and new or reinvigorated political entities (cities and nationalisms). Everyday anger is directed less at income disparities as such than towards those (relatively few) people who violate the presumption that outsiders should be disadvantaged. Such a mood encourages further episodes of exclusion, as was seen, for example, with the eviction of 'black' traders from Moscow in 1994 and again in 1999,[7] the repeated pogroms against Caucasian and Chinese business people in Siberian towns during the 1990s, or the introduction of stricter residence rules in cities, enabling the authorities to evict anyone without official employment (typically rural migrants).[8]

Of course there are many proximate and practical reasons for each of these examples, but I shall argue here that they are interwoven with a fundamental concern akin to that of Stalinist and earlier times, the political-social notion of 'us/them' that can adhere to various collectivities. This atavistic impulse is different from – though it is often mapped onto – retention of scarce resources, envy of wealth, or ethnic dislikes, or mistrust of commerce as such. Expulsion as a phenomenon cannot be explained only from particular configurations of the economy, such as the sudden introduction of capitalism. Its germinal source, the perceived necessity of maintaining the political order and moral integrity of society, is a long-standing (though not uncontested) preoccupation of Russian politics and not merely an epiphenomenon of recent economic turmoil or the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Such preoccupations have always been contested in Russia, and particularly so today with the general opening up and democratization of society. Nevertheless, Vladimir Putin's first serious speech on becoming acting President in January 2000 suggests that the old anxieties have not gone away:

> . . . growth dynamics is not only an economic problem. It is also a political and, in a certain sense – I am not afraid to use this word – ideological problem. To be more precise, it is an ideological, spiritual and moral problem. It seems to me that the latter is of particular importance from the standpoint of ensuring the unity of Russian society.
>
> Fruitful and creative work which our country needs so badly today is impossible in a split and internally disintegrated society, a society where the main social sections and political forces have different basic values and fundamental ideological orientations.[9]

Putin goes on to discuss 'the Russian idea' in terms of four 'footholds for the unity of Russian society': patriotism, belief in the greatness of Russia, statism and social solidarity. He states that there should be no forced civil accord in a democratic Russia. Yet it is evident that emotions among the public about the nature of the polity are, for Putin, a reality – a force to be used.

SOME THEORETICAL ISSUES

It is almost certain that current disparities in wealth are much greater than those during Soviet times. However, it would be an extraordinarily complex theoretical task, and one I shall not attempt here, to compare changes in the totality of real inequalities, both economic and political, in the Soviet and post-Soviet situations. Even to address the

question on the level of individual experience requires analysis of structural inequalities generated by historically not entirely separate systems involving many disparate variables; how, for example, would one set about comparing the situation of a Soviet forced labourer, sent to work on a desolate railway and subject to constant surveillance, with that of the same person today, 'free', but without work or income and stranded in that settlement of desperate people? It is possible, however, to make some headway with the issue of how such inequalities are conceived, expressed, and actuated in practice – that is, to address the ethnographic observation that inequality is *represented*, usually in paranoid guise,[10] and that such representations have effect in action.

Putting the question this way implies a move away from considering 'inequality' as a universally applicable and discoverable measure, to its contextualization as both value-laden judgements and as practices generating real advantages and deprivations in a particular political economy. The advantage of this approach for anthropologists is that it allows us to include something that we have some access too, yet is often left unexamined, the perspective of subjective experience. It enables us to consider the *place* of inequality (*neravenstvo*) amongst other dominating and long-lasting concerns in Russian political culture. This in turn allows us to attempt to explain what would otherwise be puzzling, why people in certain contexts seem not to mind much about inequalities that are evident from an external perspective.

Thus it would be problematic in the case of Russia to assume that any kind of inequality is interpretable through theories of post-colonial discourse, is transparent and inevitably objectionable to those subject to it, so that all sorts of activities, religious movements, or even lack of activity can readily be interpreted as 'resistance'. The anthropology of gender has insisted on the need to understand how unequal relations may be conceptualized by linking together metaphors unfamiliar to 'western thought' (Strathern, 1987).[11] Discursive formations tied to regimes of power 'naturalize' the differences cultures come up with (Yanigasako and Delaney, 1995). The recognition that there are cultural configurations does not mean, however, that we are reduced to dissolving inequality in relativism. In any society there must be a concept roughly understandable as human inequality and the task must be to uncover the conceptual repertoires and practices that made possible the appearance of this problem in its given form.

Tilly's *Durable Inequality* (1998) concerns the institutionalization of lasting practices of inequality, which work, he argues, by means of binary categorization of social relations of difference. Maintaining such categorical distinctions allows people in power to control access to resources through exploitation and opportunity hoarding. Tilly's argument emphasizes the importance of these distinctions for solving organizational problems, such that many parties, including the disadvantaged, acquire stakes in these solutions (1998: 7–8).

This article will suggest that although organizational problems, exploitation and opportunity hoarding occur in all societies – and certainly a Tilly-type of analysis would be very pertinent for contemporary Russia – they do not account for other, equally or more urgent motivations, such as fear of death and war, the urge for freedom, the sense of ineluctable dependency, fear of sin and criticism, the apprehension at absence of meaning in society, or the 'absolute happiness' of exercizing power (Shcherbinin and Shcherbinina, 1996: 246). Such emotions can generate decisions, and I suggest that, notwithstanding Tilly's strictures on mentalist arguments (1998: 17–18),[12] they can

explain the inequality of exclusion, for in my case what is required is not an explanation of the total range of structural inequalities but just that of the act of disenfranchisement.

Many contemporary Russian analysts argue for the predominance of power consciousness over economic rationales in everyday social relations in Russia (Il'yin, 1997; Kortunov, 1997; Lury'ye, 1994; A.S. Panarin, 1994). Not only has a remarkable degree of economic disorganization and deprivation been tolerable over long periods, but the self-interest that takes an economic form in Tilly's argument may – and not just in Russia – often be superceded by other even more raw and visceral motivations. In Tilly's argument, categorical distinctions (ethnic, religious, class or gender based) are put to the service of defining access to resources in stable social formations. I am suggesting that there is one even more fundamental distinction: being in or being out.

In Russia this rationale has operated in countless different circumstances and the stated reasons for exclusion appear not so much as lasting categorical distinctions as various self-justifications for the kind of unity evisaged for themselves by those inside. Even in situations which *seem* at first sight to be explainable simply in resource management terms, this can be the case. An example is the 1932 introduction by the Politburo of an internal passport registration system for major cities, which happened after thousands of peasants had abandoned the land and flooded the towns, threatening the urban food supply. The passports entitled the holders to receive rations, while others were forced to leave the cities. The Party did not, however, represent the decision to introduce passports in practical resource-distribution terms, but politically. It declared that the aim was to cleanse Moscow, Leningrad and other large cities of 'superfluous [people] not involved in production or the work of institutions, as well as of kulak, criminal and other anti-social elements'. Thus a category of the deserving core (the urban and industrial workers) served to define the 'superfluous' excluded (the newly-arrived peasants). But we can go further, because the whole situation was not simply one of 'objective' lack of food but was created by the previous collectivization policies, which had largely destroyed the productive capacities of agriculture. To prevent the resulting famines from spreading to the cities (which were the main loci of power of the regime), the passport system was introduced to defend the metropolitan spaces from the negative effects of a crisis the regime itself had created. The failure of agriculture to produce enough food to feed the entire population was attributed to 'sabotage' by the 'politically unreliable'. In effect, the peasants in the early 1930s were left to starve, and those ejected from the cities were made to join them. But this was not a *lasting* 'anti-peasant' categorizaton in Tilly's terms, for if in 1932–3 it was overwhelmingly rural migrants who were expelled under the passport policy, by 1935–6 they were no longer targeted and there were other categories of 'unwanted elements', such as 'thieves', 'bandits', 'alcoholics' and the 'homeless' (Kessler, 2000). As Arch Getty has shown (1999: 54), the discourse of cleansing and purging in the Central Committee was not, as has been assumed, a rhetorical repertoire for external use only, to be applied to secure certain practical goals that were discussed differently in private; on the contrary, this discourse was a practice of affirmation and validation that was as important collectively and privately for the upper echelon as it was for the population it ruled.

So this article suggests that there may exist different, more volatile processes of creating inequality, that parallel or cross-cut those proposed by Tilly. A subjective thought reveals the distinction, for we must suppose, quite simply, that being exiled or

dispossessed *feels different* from being exploited in an ongoing unequal social relation. But in order to explain this further it is useful first to attend to an important implication of both Tilly's work and that of the anthropology of gender, that we must understand not just the particular categories people use when thinking about social difference but those in relation to the concepts used to explain social life more generally.

Inequality (*neravenstvo*) in this regard is of course extremely complex and multi-layered. For a start, one must recognize that in political discourse it is not simply the negative of equality (*ravenstvo*). 'Equality' for contemporary Russians comes laden not only with a particular 'archaeology as a concept' (Il'yin, 1997: 24) but with a political function as one of the most widely proclaimed goals of the French and Russian revolutions. 'Inequality' on the other hand, having never been a goal, is one of a number of residual categories used to describe an absence or a social defect. The historicity of terms like 'equality' and 'inequality' reminds us that these ideas have had variable salience in Russian political life in different periods ('equality', for example, being strongly proclaimed just after the 1917 revolution but downplayed in the Stalinist era). This means that we should be careful about ascribing a characteristic like 'love of equality' to a culture in general. Béteille (1983: 34–5) made the same point when criticizing Dumont for characterizing Indian society as 'hierarchical' and the West as 'egalitarian', wryly observing that he himself grew up at a time when India was freeing itself from British colonial inequalities and constructing the constitutional project of a casteless and classless society.

In Russia, if the goal of general economic 'equality' has had its (fairly brief) moments, we should be aware that for contemporary Russians its Marxist and revolutionary history raises the issue of its foreignness. In the post-Soviet climate of nationalist angst, the media are packed with discussions of what are to be considered truly indigenous Russian political concepts. Not only is Marxism decried by many as an alien European intrusion, but there are influential voices that reject *any* 'supposedly universalist values' (such as rationality, or inequality considered in relation to human rights) on the grounds that they are no more than the expression of western cultural hegemony. Only specifically native political concepts, it is proclaimed, can form the basis of the Eurasian civilization that is Russia's birthright and could confront the civilization of the West (A.S. Panarin, 1994). In the current list of such concepts, which are endlessly chewed over in media discussions and hence widely disseminated, we should note that 'equality' and 'inequality' figure hardly at all.[13] The political concepts now considered to be the keys to understanding Russia are those related to *rule*, such as power, freedom, will, autocracy, the social good, statehood, authority, imperialism, dependency, and submissiveness (Il'yin, 1997). The agenda of discovering Russia's true political civilization tends to produce analyses that look for 'age-old' cultural ideas along the lines of Dumont's analysis of India (for example, Shcherbinin and Shcherbinina, 1996, who, much influenced by Victor Turner, emphasize the mythic and ritual basis of the Russian polity). We should read such works with an eye to freeing ourselves from their search for the contents of an unchanging cultural structure. Nevertheless, with appropriate historical contextualization, they are an important source, because they lay bare certain very long-standing preoccupations and explain the specifically Russian understanding and evaluation given to concepts that look universal because they are easily translatable, and yet have specific Russian connotations.

A common perception is that the Soviet hierarchy of power has collapsed, to be

succeeded by sharp differentiation into economic classes. It is because nothing so simple has happened that I advance my argument: the dilemmas of power have not gone away as a result of the introduction of capitalism. This is where the historicities and contextualizations I have been advocating reach a bedrock of necessity, indeed what we may suppose is a *universal* political necessity. Russian political culture has a very direct take on what John Dunn (1999: 2) calls the 'fundamental challenge of politics', when he argues for the continued relevance in the present world of Hobbes's bleak analysis.

> His [Hobbes's] decisive contribution was his insistence that there is no clear and stable basis for order inherent in the fundamental characteristics of human beings, but an electrifyingly clear, and always appallingly urgent, need for a high degree of order and dependability which follows from at least some of those characteristics. . . . The fundamental problem of politics as Hobbes saw it centred not on human morality, or even on human vanity or quarrelsomeness, all of which were simply natural facts, to be recognised, acknowledged and endured as they are. Rather, it centred on human practical judgement and its intensely centrifugal character.
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> (Dunn, 1999: 14–15)

Russian political culture is obsessed by the danger of centrifugality of judgement (and it seems that Hobbes is a popular philosopher there).[14] Taken in the long run, but particularly in the present period of turmoil, Russian thinkers have echoed the Hobbesian view, according to which the autocratic state is not only necessary for practical control but also appears as an eternally flawed (because that is the condition of human judgement) instrument of elimination of the constantly competitive pretensions of any of its subjects. The state is not attributed by the people with any epistemic authority of its own, even though it might claim such authority. Yet the state remains an ideal, because it alone has the function of providing the necessary rule. Thus we can find (e.g. at present) considerable indifference to the 'external' attractiveness of leaders and their policies, such that 'even an unpopular leader can remain, being the factor supplying the wholeness of the ideal world' (Shcherbinin and Shcherbinina, 1996: 249). The deeply felt need for government, and the hope that at some time its leaders might embody moral authority, may have been reinforced over the centuries by Russia's vastness, lack of natural boundaries, its shifting populations, diversity of peoples, and the historical experience, often repeated, of its peripheries splitting away. But Russia should not be thought of as *sui generis*. John Dunn (1999) is surely right that the intractable problem of government identified by Hobbes is a universal one and as urgent in contemporary politics as it ever was, even if one half of the world has adopted a democratic solution predicated on the optimistic hope of a convergence of popular judgements, while Russia (on the whole) has taken the more Hobbesian view that such convergence is unlikely without autocratic state machinery and rhetoric to ensure compliance.

So the argument I am making for the salience in Russia of anxiety over political unity is cultural and contextual, in the sense that its practices, language and the particular urgency has varied at different historical points; but there are also more stark and fundamental reasons why political integrity should be a *constant* concern, even if a strong state would appear to have solved the problem for a time. Russian observers have written that the state can be successful only in periods of 'spiritual' hegemony and commitment from

citizens (for example, strong Orthodoxy, Soviet socialism) and otherwise is destined to fail (Kortunov, 1997; Lury'ye, 1994; S.A. Panarin, 1996). Yet they have not dwelled on the fact that a society so conceived – as needing both rule and ideological conformity – results in the generation of 'inequality' of a characteristic kind, that which expels *chuzhaki* (outsiders, oddballs) into its lowest layers. Drawing this to the attention of anthropologists is to make a general point; that explanations of inequality based on rational economic self-advantage do not fully account for such a phenomenon.

THE IDEA OF 'JUST INEQUALITY' AND ITS HISTORY

Let us see how certain Russian political thinkers have addressed the question of the relation between the state and inequality. An almost exact contemporary of Hobbes in Russia was Iurii Krizhanich, who between 1663 and 1666 wrote a book known as *Politika*.[15] Both writers insist on the necessity, in order to prevent civil war, of autocratic rule, but there are crucial differences in their understanding of what this might consist of. Krizhanich, of course, is just one political philosopher (though a highly important one) and the 17th century may seem far from the immediate question raised at the beginning of this article, but a brief exposition of his ideas can help explain certain important recurrences in Russian political culture, in particular the conception of socio-political unity, of which the Soviet state later became a prime example.

Krizhanich lacks Hobbes's concept of the natural equality of humans (Hobbes, 1996 [1651]: 86) and their rights on this basis. Thus he does not, like Hobbes, advance the argument that men must voluntarily relinquish their *rights*, notably their private right of judgement, in order to institute the commonwealth and erect a sovereign. Krizhanich shares with Hobbes, however, the idea of the fallibility of human judgement and he argues that this cannot be ameliorated by personal experience but only by education, industry and craftsmanship. His political analysis proceeds from the existence of social classes (rather than individuals), which have different status because they are educated or occupied in one or another way. He argues (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 175–80) that the fundamental distinction between these social groups is that some are 'protective' (leaders, soldiers, and so on) while others are 'protected' (for example clergy, women, teachers, the poor), and there is a third category of 'unproductive' outsiders, which includes heretics and magicians, foreign merchants, usurers, squanderers, idlers, drunkards, thieves and murderers. Here we already see the kernel of the idea of the social whole with its penumbra of the rightfully excluded.

This whole is both ethnic (Russian or Slav[16]) and political (it is a tsardom). Writing in a supposedly pre-nationalist era, Krizhanich is surprisingly anxious about Russianness and foreignness. He has a whole chapter on 'Characteristics and Shortcomings of the Russian People' and another on 'Xenomania' (*chuzhebesie*), the 'deadly plague infecting our entire nation' of mad love of foreign things (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 128). Krizhanich must be one of the first comparativists in Russian political science, and he is quite clear that political unity in Russia is terribly threatened by contention and infiltration. But at least, he argues, it is better than the ignoble horrors of Poland (at the time Poland notably welcomed outsiders, had had a series of foreign rulers, and was beset with anarchy and 'licentious freedom'; Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 139).

For Krizhanich, the Tsar is the paramount 'protector', who rules (emphatically unlike Hobbes's vision) by virtue of his appointment by God (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985:

172). In fact Krizhanich advances some quite practical rules for election of the Tsar, and in his discussion he mentions that the people thereby grant authority to the Tsar (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 189). But the overriding idea is that of the religious legitimation of the sovereign, such that the people should be respectful and obedient to the Tsar next to their duty to God, this being sealed by an oath of allegiance 'to create unity among all the people' (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 224). The Tsar is the representative of God and at the same time the representative of the people, and herein lies the crucial need for *spiritual* unity and the dangers of heresy and foreignness. If Russia's tragedy is the tendency of rulers to resort to tyranny (which the populace can do no other than ascribe to punishment by God for their own sins, correct their way of life, and plead to the Tsar for mercy), Russian tsardom nevertheless has several 'pillars'. These are: the Orthodox faith and prevention of heresy; humble submission (*samovladstvo*, literally 'command of the self'); the inviolability of the tsardom from foreign domination; the closure of frontiers ('this wonderful law which prohibits our subjects from travelling in foreign countries and does not allow foreigners to come and inspect our land'); and finally, the full occupation of all classes and the prohibition of unemployment (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 225–6). In Krizhanich, as in Hobbes, the foundation of the just state is the acceptance of law. But the crucial difference is that for Hobbes submission to the law is a contractual agreement with fellow citizens ultimately for the benefit (self-preservation) of each one of them (Tuck in Hobbes, 1996: xxxiii), while in Krizhanich the reason for submission to law is the preservation of the state and society as a whle (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 4). This difference has implications for equality, since in Hobbes all citizens except the sovereign should be equal before the law (1996 [1651]: 237), whereas in Krizhanich the law should be such that it preserves the honour of every social class, each class being rightfully treated differently in law (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 225). Such privileges, however, should be granted only if they benefit the whole of society, and, in particular, do not undermine autocracy (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 213).

Since the 17th century, the danger of foreign incursion and 'heresies' introduced from without, so emphasized by Krizhanich, has become somewhat less prominent in accounts of what the state exists for. Internal dissent, on the other hand, has been a perennial concern; it was strengthened by the close tie of state and church from the 17th century onwards, and many would see Stalinism as its culmination. Dissent, and its solution, banishment, recur frequently as constant companions. For Krizhanich, the fact that exile was the main method of punishment used in Russia was positive and unproblematic. He saw it as a 'useful custom', since it enabled the sovereign to punish any disobedient person and allowed the exile the means to live without causing discontent and popular uprising (Letiche and Dmytryshin, 1985: 162). By contrast, Hobbes thought banishment was pointless because it was not enough of a punishment and was simply a 'change of air'; exile did not conduce men to what is positive, the forming of their wills to the observation of the law. 'A banished man', wrote Hobbes, 'is a lawful enemy to the commonwealth, being no more a member of the same' (1996 [1651]: 218). In the Soviet Union, curiously, both of these attitudes seem to have been present. On the one hand, whole peoples suspected of treason were unceremoniously uprooted and dumped in remote spots where they were given minimal 'means to live', as Krizhanich put it, and could even be useful to the state. On the other hand, a Hobbesian fear of creating lawful

enemies would result in the elaborate renunciations of 'heresy' required of those judged most dangerous. Kharkhordin (1999) has documented the practices of self-fashioning, self-command, and self-transformation required of those inside the hierarchy of estates, especially those entering and maintaining a position inside the Communist Party from the 1930s onwards. When suspicion fell on someone, the more 'included' they had been, the more it came to be required of them to confess publicly and demonstrate self-criticism (Kharkhordin, 1999: 155).

It is not difficult to see, therefore, why the Shcherbinins argue (1996: 51) that 'just inequality' (*spravedlivoye neravenstvo*) in Russia takes the form of a formalized hierarchy maintained by symbolic and ritual mediations. In their view, the deep and pervasive anxiety over political unity (*yedinstvo*), which I have related to Hobbesian concerns and Krizhanich linked to the need to maintain harmony between social classes, is but one expression of a universalistic politics of dependency whose roots lie in religion. The search for god[17] found symbolic form in the 'archaic charisma' accorded to the leader (Shcherbinin and Shcherbinina, 1996: 220). The primacy of the word over practical reality in Russian politics resulted, the Shcherbinins argue, during the Soviet regime in the construction of a formal artifical inequality stratified by symbolic markers. This 'righteous society' overlay a parallel tendency, a popular yearning for anarchic equality. This could be seen in the communitas of destitution (*nishchenstvo*) and the sacredness attributed to the extremely poor. In early Soviet times, they observe, so many were poor that this quality of sacredness shifted to include 'equality' (that is equality of all in poverty). The early Soviet elite cleverly co-opted these values, themselves symbolically demonstrating the notion of 'Suffering for the People' and acting out a parody of the simple life, while the structural pre-eminence of the working class became a fantasy on the same theme (Shcherbinin and Shcherbinina, 1996: 66). Thus, 'equality' was symbolically transformed and fed into the communitarian morality, making it subject to the prerogative of the governing powers. In Turneresque language, the liminal was reproduced in Soviet Russia as a false mould, as a customary reaction that preserved structural relations, while real existential communitas remained a dangerous threat to the conservative political values of the Russian people (Shcherbinin and Shcherbinina, 1996: 68). As for what the Shcherbinins mean by 'real existential communitas' is essentially volatile freedom beyond the hierarchy, their conclusion returns us to the issue of anxiety over outsiders and exclusion.

For most of Russian history the boundary between 'us' and the excluded has been a most sensitive membrane, but in no way can it be seen as invariant, set, or impermeable. One reason for this is that so many people in their lives have experienced both situations and therefore a seeping empathy for the excluded is always possible. Another is the marked historical swings and ambiguities in relations with even the most archetypal outsiders, such as Jews or Gypsies. With regard to the latter, Alaina Lemon's nuanced account (2000) shows how from Pushkin onwards Roma have been repelled, desired, embraced, expelled and excoriated again in Russian culture, for they are attributed with *volya* (the spiritual capacity for free will). Yet *volya* is also the characteristic of the 'Russian soul' – a civilizational, not necessarily an ethnic, concept – and this quality of 'soul' is felt to be constantly suppressed by routine structures and therefore desired endlessly by ordinary people.

However, a more proximate explanation for the ambiguous emotions wrought by

exclusion today lies in the psychological bases of belonging inside the hierarchy constructed during the Soviet period. Kharkhordin (1999) shows that there was a *history* of inculcation of practices of inclusion centring on the transformation of consciousness (a history, we might say, both of succeeding Soviet generations and within the lifetime of each individual). I shall suggest later that ordinary people of the current older generation, having experienced Soviet inclusion as something inevitable, having simulated support for it in a spirit of indifference (Yurchak, 1997), and watched amazed as it fell apart around them during *perestroika*, now find themselves at some emotional level yearning to recover the lost social unity. The emotion does not become less in a situation where its fulfilment is unattainable. Its source is the feeling that one's conscience is somehow tied up with loyalty to a collective.

Kharkhordin (1999) demonstrates how early Communist Party practices established expulsion as absolutely the last resort, carried out only after other penalties, such as warning, admonition, re-education, demotion, shaming, 'stepping down' and 'removal from the ranks'. Exclusion led to the civil and political death of the expelled ('it robs the living human being of the dearest thing he has, the political life'[18]) and afterwards the Party would have nothing to do with such people. This act of expulsion was not conceptualized as civil punishment but more like excommunication, though of course it was almost inevitably followed by prosecution in state courts, loss of one's job, and so forth (1999: 46–7). In this we can see the sacral, moral quality attributed to Party activity, analogous to that of Orthodox church courts in earlier times. Kharkhordin argues that Bolshevism in the 1920s and 1930s was amongst other things a movement akin to the Reformation. The revolutionary use of *soznatel'nost'* (usually translated 'consciousness') was, he suggests, closer to 'conscience', and personal conscience of righteousness at that (Kharkhordin, 1999: 56–7). How is this related to my theme? In the next section I argue that it is because conscience became the battleground of inclusion and exclusion in Soviet Russia that each individual experienced the existential dilemma of loyalty, and this linked political discourse to personally felt emotions.

INSIDE THE COLLECTIVE

By the 1930s the word *kollektiv* was being used to express the character of the whole USSR and whole Party. The *kollektiv* is a stable group of colleagues, united by labour and a common goal. The Soviet version of this idea, Kharkhordin argues (1999: 75), went beyond that of any old co-operative, because it established the meaning that by joining together the members gain a kind of immortality;[19] they are a political corps fighting for a future victorious socialist culture. Each member was to feel responsible for the whole, and purges were the means to create such a unified revolutionary body. It was only with some difficulty that this vision of the *kollektiv* was established in relation to actual working collectivities in Russia, but gradually it became pervasive and by the 1950s a cliché. Collectives were everywhere, and with this situation their overt political connotations retreated. As Kharkhordin writes about the 1970s and 1980s:

> A Russian entered a collective as a small child, passed from one to another in the course of life, but was never (normally) outside a collective. The network of collectives constituted the entire terrain of social life, so ubiquitous that people stopped

> noticing them as a phenomenon. . . . Most people would assume that everyone everywhere lived and worked in collectives, even in the country most famous for its individualism, the United States.
>
> (Kharkhordin, 1999: 87–8)

The fact that the collective became the 'taken-for-granted generic form of Soviet life' (Kharkhordin, 1999: 87) meant that internal inequality was similarly accepted, for *kollektivy* engendered certain characteristic ranking practices (while simultaneously proclaiming a certain equality, at least that of all being members of the same group). Let us look briefly at this paradox. The communes of the 1920s had distributed income equally to all members (often to their extreme dismay; Humphrey, 1999b: Ch 2), but the *kollektiv* of the 1930s came to envisage an organic economic purpose beyond its own members and thus introduced a rationale for the grading of skills. One impetus for this clearly came from above, the drive to specialize work groups and make them super-productive under Stalin, but another came from inside the work-place. Kuromiya's work (1988) on industrialization in the early 1930s is particularly illuminating on how egalitarianism can create inequality. The government could not entirely condemn wage-levelling, for by their own words it had the heroic revolutionary connotation of 'fighting against the spontaneity of the market' (after the relative freedom of the New Economic Policy in the mid-1920s, it was assumed that market conditions in a situation of shortage of labour would lead to sharp differentials). On the other hand, in any given context, equal pay was popular among the mass of less skilled workers but opposed, or rather restricted to themselves, by the skilled (Kuromiya, 1988: 251). The latter began to request separate canteens, better food, or more pay, and inside the work-place they began to set up their own small egalitarian communes. Equal pay was agreed within the new section, but the overall effect was to establish ranking within the wider collective. Kuromiya observes that these communes sometimes became 'caste-like' and expelled any weak members. Alternatively, if wages were levelled again by the management, the skilled workers left those factories to go to places where they could re-establish higher status vis-a-vis the unskilled (1988: 251–2). Such dynamic processes of the creation of inequality by means of a nested 'egalitarianism' soon salted down into general acceptance of ranking within the *kollektiv*. This acceptance was reinforced throughout the Soviet period by education policies emphasizing modernization and technical knowledge, such that the individual who recognized her own progress by virtue of her training simultaneously acknowledged the rightfulness of benefit distinctions on this basis in social groups.

In a similar mirroring of individual and socio-political processes, socialist re-shaping of the world was to be accompanied by conscious self-control and self-improvement. *Soznatel'nost'* (consciousness, conscience) was depicted, e.g. by Lenin,[20] in a dialectical relation with 'spontaneity', which stood for a failure to mediate one's impulses and responses to the world. The contrast between consciousness and spontaneity was not just a Bolshevik idea but is found in Chernyshevsky in the 1860s, as Kharkhordin points out (1999: 58), and it seems not foreign to even earlier writers such as Krizhanich with his notion of *samovladstvo* (self-control). The underlying idea seems to presuppose the innate diversity and disorderliness of human feelings, paralleled by the wildness of the natural world, both of which the *kollektiv* would counter. In the high Soviet period (1950s–late 1970s), anything 'elemental' (*stikhiinoye*) was increasingly disapproved of – this meant

any action taken on one's own account, for fun, or without permission. The fact that being in a *kollektiv* implied self-control in the form of *self-denial* reinforced the tie between belonging to the group and personal conscience. To exclude someone from the collective was paradoxically both to punish them and to give them a certain freedom (no longer to be loyal).

If this set of ideas proposes parallel structures in the individual, the *kollektiv* and society as a whole, the paradox just alluded to impels opposed political emotions: we dislike those who are suspected of undermining our heavy irksome unity, and yet we admire them for exposing its repressive character. Russian writers have addressed this issue on different levels and in various ways. Khlopin (1997) writes of 'double-standards': you want freedom from the state and yet you rely on the state to protect you from others; you tolerate disorder in your own life, but expect strict order from the collective and the state. Kharkhordin (1999: 270–78) writes of the 'dissimulative split' of the self, the way in which practices of dissimulation in the face of mutual surveillance in the *kollektiv* came to establish the 'private' sphere. Yurchak (1997), describing the period of late socialism, proposes that 'cynical reason' undermined the legitimacy of the state ideology. Acquiescence and pretence in support of officialdom were ways of acting that provided a space for an alternative culture of normal life in which endless irreverent jokes were endemic. Yurchak observes that such was the feeling of the inescapability, unavoidability and immutability of Soviet organization that people who openly challenged it, who voluntarily exposed themselves to expulsion, the dissidents, were simply written off by most people as pariahs or seen as people 'with a screw loose' (1997: 169–70). Yet all during this period, practices of banishment continued, and it is to this subject and its present consequences that I now turn.

EXPULSION AND INEQUALITY

From collectivization onwards, from the time when all of society came to consist of *kollektiv*s of one kind or another, anyone expelled from one group was automatically then included in another. Labour camps, colonies and construction corps, all were formed in the likeness of the *kollektiv*. Exile to remote regions (*ssylka*) consisted of being inserted into the designated local society at the very lowest, most deprived level (see, for example, Amalrik's description, 1970, of his exile to a collective farm in Siberia). As I discovered in farms in Buryatia in the 1960s and 1970s (Humphrey, 1999b), any village would contain a number of such people, detailed to perform the most unpleasant and badly-paid tasks. One could not find any particular 'categorical distinctions' (Tilly, 1998) at work. There were Tatars deported for supposed collaboration during the war, but it would be a mistake to suppose that ethnic distinctions were paramount in Soviet processes of exclusion. The reasons for banishment were utterly various and changed over time, from having been classed as a *kulak* to being the child of a former exploiter (thus suspected of harbouring bitterness), from maintaining ties with deported people to religious dissent, from prostitution to 'making trouble' (Fitzpatrick, 1999: 122–27). The decree in 1948 'On the eviction to distant regions of people maliciously evading labour in agriculture and leading an anti-social parasitical way of life' resulted in the shifting of people from one collective farm to another more disadvantaged one.[21] There was never any lack of work for deportees to do. In this shifting, bone-weary populace, some were serving out their time, some washed up for decades with their families. Exiles

were part of the rural social landscape. On the whole they were regarded with contempt, being both outsiders and people of lower status, and they were generally known as 'parasites' (Amalrik, 1970: 171) – a remarkable echo of Krizhanich's 'unproductive outsider'.

What has happened in the 1990s is that the notion of the *kollektiv* as denoting both the state as a whole and all the collectives inside it has evaporated. At the same time, the site of the production of the excluded has shifted from central organs to the collectives themselves. Despite the fact that most of them are in economic ruin, people in many rural areas still cling to collectives as the vital infrastructural support for their smallholdings (Humphrey, 1999b). Members have access to free or subsidized petrol, hayfields, fodder, electricity, machinery, firewood, and transport. The excluded have to pay for such things, and most of them cannot afford to do so. The question of who is to be a member arouses enormous social tension, for at issue is the very nature of the community. One diagnosis would be that we are witnessing a shift from the Soviet politically-defined hierarchy of nested social wholes to disaggregated networks, in which 'opportunity hoarding' along the lines proposed by Tilly is ousting any other rationale for attachment.

Yet recent field research in Russia indicates that the legitimacy of exclusion has become an open question. Patterns of inclusion and disenfranchisement differ widely between regions and even from village to village. In rural Buryatia (Humphrey, 1997 and 1999b), collectives remain almost everywhere, and in each village around 30–40 per cent of the people have been excluded from membership though not physically evicted. Heated, noisy meetings are held to decide the fate of the farm (its legal status, its charter, whether it should disband, and so on). Frequently resolutions taken one year are reversed later. Usually it is only the director who can bring himself or herself to exclude people, for the director is the only one to be able to speak on behalf of the farm as a whole, a discourse now usually phrased in terms of economic survival. The excluded (*isklyuchennyye*) are the ill, the lazy, the weak and disorganized, the lone mothers with many children, and the alcoholics. But there is also a handful of people who left voluntarily during the campaign to establish private farming in the early 1990s (these are invariably people with good official connections who were allotted profitable bits of the farm as their own). The people still inside the collective call all these various non-members *otorvavshchiyesya* (those who have torn themselves off); but bitter dislike is reserved for the private farmers.[22] In Telengit regions of the Russian Altai, the pattern just outlined may be found, but there are also villages that have not excluded anyone, and other villages where even if some people are formally excluded, local solidarity ensures that they nevertheless receive the benefits.[23] In another case, in the sub-arctic Nenets region, hunters disbarred from the collective because it redefined its activities formed their own rather successful *obshchina* (community) in parallel.[24] My last example comes from a remote Evenki area of the Yakut-Sakha Republic. Here, despite the fact that the state farm still exists and everyone is a member of it, the community has in effect collapsed. Year by year more people take to drink, including women and children. Only a handful of able-bodied non-alcoholics is left. 'Exclusion' here occurs on a different principle: almost everyone has alienated themselves and given up. Only the few sober friends of the director are left to run the state farm. In fact, the whole village feels itself excluded from the wider organization of Russia, because the state support that had made it viable, notably regular, subsidized helicopter flights, has been removed.[25]

Similar processes are taking place in the cities (in factories, technical services, institutes). Bankrupt enterprises are kept going for fear of mass unemployment and social unrest, yet workers are being quietly dropped too. How can we make sense of all this? In broad terms, we can see that the economic crisis has forced a new criterion for inclusion, economic usefulness, into practice. This in effect links new practices of exclusion (of the non-useful) to structures of exploitation and resource-hoarding. The problem, however, is that ordinary Russians of the older generation do not think in such terms; for them, the underlying criterion of inclusion has always been loyalty. This is why the current situation is so agonizing. For if some people can coldly regard all those excluded, for whatever reason, as having 'cut themselves off', implying self-isolation, even disloyal selfishness, there are others who see no good reason why their own aunt should have been thrust into destitution. They suspect animosities and vendettas must lie behind. The alienness of the purely economic rationale can be seen both in the moralism of what the directors say ('we'll let them in again if they prove themselves by discipline') and in the pleas of the dispossessed.[26] When each village makes a different arrangement about who is to belong and who is to be cut off, it is not surprising that the decision is seen as precisely that, a (political) *decision*, not an inexorable or legitimate process.

I would therefore argue that the atavistic politics of exclusion described in this article have not entirely disappeared. Two sites in particular stand out. One is the post-Soviet city, newly established as a political entity, with its elected mayoralty often opposed to the governorship of the region. The other, of course, is nationalism. As Simon Goldhill points out with regard to European history, nationalism as a structuring ideological principle of personal identity and political purpose transformed the earlier universal Odyssey-like character of exile (Goldhill, forthcoming). Analogously in Russia, contemporary nationalisms create a situation in which exclusion is no longer from the society-polity as such (the *kollektiv*), but from a particular imagined ethnic collectivity. So the complexity of what is happening today is the intersection of these various unities (economic, national, administrative, and so on), which are based on different principles of inclusion/exclusion.

In a short article I can do no more than give one example. Sergei Panarin (1996) describes the case of Tadjik refugees who were stranded in the railway station of the Siberian city of Ulan-Ude, capital of Buryatia, after rejection in several other towns. Here the boundaries of city and nation overlapped and the refugees fell outside both. For months the Tadjiks waited even for an audience with the authorities who might grant residence permits (normally refused to anyone who does not have work). Meanwhile the city folk insisted on misrecognizing the refugees, seeing them, despite all the evidence to the contrary and their own protestations of their identity, not as Tadjik comrades deserving of charity but as 'Gypsies', who of course deserved no sympathy at all, for 'wandering was their way of life'.[27] In Ulan-Ude, the Tadjiks were rejected both by Germans, who had been deported to this region under Stalin, and by the indigenous Buryats, whose clout in their own city was swamped by waves of Russian incomers in Soviet times. S.A. Panarin's explanation gets to the heart of the matter and points to the difference between nationalist and more universal workings of inclusion/exclusion.

> Why did all these people gripped with their own national feeling refuse to let go of the 'Gypsy' version? . . . Because, it was non-Tadjiks [i.e. our own Soviet state, C.H.]

> who gave the order to deport the Germans and whose policies made the Buryats a minority in their own republic! And now these innocent people have appeared on your land and you want so much not to recognize their ethnicity, because with their appearance the historical memory of injustice to your own people can no longer serve to justify your forgetting general, human [injustice] in favour of your own.
>
> (S.A. Panarin, 1996: 163)

It is easier, Panarin is saying, for the citizens to have recourse to proximate ethnic stereotypes, for this enables them not to think about the visceral process of exclusion as such, and in particular their own (two-sided) experience of it.

CONCLUSION

It may seem that I have digressed far from the conversation in Grodno at the start of this article. But I hope to have laid the ground for understanding a conceptualization of society in which that conversation makes sense. In Russia over the long term the basic building blocks of the polity have not been individuals but territorially rooted and internally hierarchical groups, and individuals have social meaning in terms of those groups. It is not only in Grodno that people might grumble about an official who lined his pocket but would not in the end mind very much: for that is after all evidence that he is the boss and is able to rule. The people who are excluded, or exclude themselves – and especially when they become rich – arouse the more passionate and ambiguous emotions.

The patchy advent of capitalism has not yet eroded this situation for ordinary people who experienced socialism, because for them real privatization still means (a) self-exclusion by the proprietors from the social condition of everyone else, and (b) a surrender of protection.[28] People cling to the collective not only for the immediate economic provisions mentioned earlier, but also because it remains the only site for organizing the local economy as a whole, because it is 'somewhere to go to', because membership still implies rights, even if these are hazy and disputed. In short, belonging constitutes the 'society', which is the corpus that is felt should exist if total disintegration is not to ensue. Being outside, people are on their own. There is no cultural apparatus for deciding what their rights might be. The cry so often heard that Russia is in a state of chaos (*bardak*) derives importantly from the apprehension in the older generation that soon we will all be on our own.

In more general terms, this article has suggested that inequality should not be seen only in terms of economic structures (classes, exploitation), distributive justice, or individual capabilities and opportunities. Some kinds of inequality are created by a political impulse for the preservation of society. This impulse constantly reviews the criteria for conformist unity and thus continually resets the boundaries for defining itself against the outside. In doing so, it creates the dispossessed. In this process in Russia loyalty may have consciously set itself against volatility, but we see that nevertheless, elemental emotions reappear from inside. In the 1990s Russia opened some doors to the workings of unregulated capitalism, and this has certainly foregrounded 'opportunity hoarding'. But rather than obliterate earlier loyalties and surging ethnicities, resource-hunger has become isomorphic with them. And they have made use of it. Thus, although the desperate rural poor are at the bottom of the heap for 'economic' reasons, in the end it

makes no sense to separate these from the inexorable political workings of the emotions, which erect barriers and create outsiders in many diverse sites in society.

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Notes

1 I am grateful to Helen Kopnina, who recorded this conversation in Grodo, Belorussia in summer 1999.
2 It will be clear from the article as a whole that I am using 'exclusion' differently from the literature on 'social exclusion'.
3 I am grateful to Daniel Beer for sharing with me these insights, presently being written up as a PhD dissertation at the University of Cambridge.
4 Fitzpatrick writes (1999: 137), 'We do not know how many lives were scarred by social stigmatisation in the 1920s and 1930s, but the numbers must have been great. Four million disenfranchised, plus their families, and two million kulak deportees at the beginning of the 1930s; close to 300,000 "socially harmful elements" in Gulag, almost a million "special settlers," and perhaps several hundred thousand more administrative exiles at the end of the decade – these overlapping and incomplete figures provide us with no usable totals but at least suggest the magnitude of the phenomenon'.
5 In Russia one central aim of banishment was to eliminate earlier class and status rankings. Little concern was given to whether these people would ever return (and usually they did not). In China, by contrast, the same aim was effected by re-education, or the reform of 'alien mentalities' by labour, with the goal that reformed people would return to exactly their previous social placement. This difference can be likened to a surgical, as opposed to a 'healing harmonization', view of the treatment of disease in the body politic (Humphrey, 1999c).
6 For example, a district head in Irkutsk Oblast said, 'In 1937 in our district 89 enemies of the people were arrested, 30 of them from our village of Vershina. Not a single one of them returned'. In the same place, there was almost complete 'forgetting' of how the villagers acquired the land of the Buryats of neighbouring Nashata when the latter were expelled in 1931 and subsequently most of them 'repressed' (Galetkina, 1996: 69–71).
7 'Black' is an epithet widely used for a variety of non-Russian peoples from the southern parts of the former USSR, including central Asians, Tatars, Caucasians, and Gypsies (Humphrey, 1997: 87).
8 For details of these events, see Humphrey (1999a).
9 Vladimir Putin, 'Russia at the Turn of the Millenium', website of the Russian Government, January 2000.
10 For discussion of the prevalence of 'the paranoid style' in social thought at the end of the 20th century, see Marcus, 1999, especially the paper by Bruce Grant, 'The return of the repressed'.
11 In *Dealing With Inequality* (Strathern, 1987) it is argued that 'equality' as a practical and theoretical concern is rooted in western ideas, and therefore that there is a

need to take account of quite different indigenous ways of understanding and experiencing power relations between men and women in non-western societies.

12 Tilly writes (1998: 17): 'Mentalism – which relies in the last instance on shared interests, motivations or attitudes as the bases of inegalitarian institutions – also causes serious trouble. . . . If collectively a whole population sustains a set of preferences simultaneously ordered by gender, race, ethnicity and citizenship, whose mental processes contain these preferences, how do they order the preferences, and what translates preferences into a wide range of structural inequalities?'

13 If one peels away the historically 'socialist layers', equality (*ravenstvo*) is a word that exists along with *ravnina* (plain), *ravno* (alike), *ravnovesiye* (equilibrium) or *ravnodushiye* (indifference). In other words, the indigenous notion of 'equality' suggests an uninspiring 'levelness', with social connotations linking it to nothing grander than the co-operative teams (*artel'*) of peasants and workers, which have had variable importance in different periods of Russian history.

14 Hobbes is buried at Malmsbury, and the churchyard attendant not long ago complained at the constant stream of 'atheist Russians' who came to lay flowers on his grave (Richard Tuck, personal communication).

15 Iurii Krizhanich, originally named Juraj Krizanic, was a Croatian by origin, but he spent most of his life in Russia. He went to Moscow in 1659 with the mission of reconciling Catholicism and Orthodoxy and uniting the Slavic peoples under the hegemony of the Tsar. Not long after he arrived, he was suspected of heresy and banished to Tobolsk in Siberia. Here in the 1660s he wrote *Discourses on Government* (*Besedy o Pravlenii*, known as *Politika*), which contains many observations on the Russia of the time. A scholar, diplomat, philosopher, priest and adventurer, Krizhanich knew many European languages. Letiche and Dmytryshyn suggest that Kryzhanich had probably read Hobbes in Latin, though he could not cite him because of Hobbes's atheism (1985: Introductory analysis and p. lxxix).

16 The *Politka* is a mixture of analysis of the actual 17th century situation in the Russian Tsardom, including its Tatar and Siberian conquests, and exhortations to a notional reader, Boris, about how the hoped-for wider Slavic Tsardom should be constituted.

17 The mystical apearance of god in the self was never popular in Russia; rather, seeking to find god, the Russian went on a search and at different periods in history sought him in different forms: the 'true' God, the fount of human progress, the personification of the mediator (Shcherbinin and Shcherbinina, 1996: 219–20).

18 Valerian Kuibyshev in his report at the 14th Party Congress in 1925, quoted in Kharkhordin (1999: 45).

19 This idea appears also in the Shcherbinins' analysis of Russian society in the long term (1996: 222). In the traditional way of thinking, they write, strong, healthy power is necessary to society, not so much because it is a guarantee of harmony on earth but as a symbol of its deathlessness. Here lies the optimism of the people. The body-politic must be imperishable, otherwise there arises the terrible fear of 'lack of meaning'.

20 In *What Is To Be Done?* (1987 [1902]).

21 The practical purpose of this decree was to increase labour discipline in agriculture, but on the ground it was interpreted in a communitarian and political spirit. For example, in the Ordzhonikidze collective farm in Saratov Oblast, a slacking worker

called Zakharov was due to be expelled when it was discovered that he was a respected invalid of the 2nd class of the Great Patriotic War, and so the meeting of farmers decided to evict someone called Vituzhnikova instead. After the meeting, Vituzhnikova was found to have a well-respected husband and son serving in the army, so the district party committee 'had to lift that expulsion order too' (Popov, 1992: 248). Occasionally, the banished people found their new collectives in remote parts of Siberia more to their liking than the old ones and wrote letters inviting their relatives to join them. Such letters were decried by the party authorities as 'provocations' (Popov, 1992: 251).

22 Galina Manzanova, personal communication, summer 1999.

23 Agnieszka Halemba, personal communication, based on fieldwork in 1998–1999. Despite efforts of the farm director to enforce deprivation of subsidized fuel, transport and other items, decisions were taken at general meetings of the villagers to continue support for neighbours who were non-members.

24 Vera Skvirskaya, personal communication, based on research, summer 1999.

25 Piers Vitebsky, personal communication, based on fieldwork, summer 1999.

26 A Buryat culture worker, for example, who was cut off from the farm services because she was employed not by it but by the state, wrote, 'My family has lived here for five generations. My two sons did not return from the Great Fatherland War. I, with the medical assistants, the librarians, the *agitbrigad* of the school, always went out on the winter details, the spring planting, the hay-cutting. We worked at night when the herders were resting. We took part in unpaid *subbotniki* and *voskresniki* (communal work on holidays). But now they will not give me a hay-plot to support my two cows. Why? We live on this land, but no longer are we "one family",' (Barguzinskaya Pravda, 4 September 1996, p 2).

27 Earlier in Bishkek too, a paranoid suspicion of hidden wealth had done for the Tadjiks. People said, 'How can they be refugees? All of them have gold teeth, like Gypsies', S.A. Panarin (1996: 156).

28 Mellor (1999) makes this point with regard to privatization of housing, where home owners immediately lose a number of rights held by tenants. On a more theoretical level, Woodruff (1999) discusses economic disintegration in Russia in terms of Polanyi's idea of the 'double movement', the confrontation of the principle of economic liberalism with that of 'social protection aiming at the conservation of man and nature as well as productive organization'. The absence of labour mobility, the prevalence of one-factory towns, and the intertwining of public and private infrastructures make virtually imperative the defence of productive organizations by administrations (Woodruff, 1999: 112).

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