Russian Nationalism in the 21ˢᵗ Century

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Introduction

Russian nationalism is a political movement that found its root back in the 18th century and regained its vitality after the demise of the USSR. Nationalism has become a heated topic in contemporary Russian politics, as the Russian Federation has to address various nationalist issues inherited from its Soviet past, when nationalist notions such as nation-state were mainly suppressed.

However, in contrast with several clearly articulated nationalist slogans ("Russia for the Russians," for instance), "What is it to be Russian" remains ambivalent. It is observed that there is a group of **ultra-nationalists** who insist on an ethnical founding of Russian nationalism (EN), whereas **civic nationalists** claim that being Russian is a matter of citizenship (CN). **Vladimir Putin**'s support of the latter has complicated the issue, for the intermittent ethnical conflicts, including the wars with Chechnya and Georgia, have rendered civic nationalism quite a fragile ideology in Russia.

This study, as part of a project that looks holistically into contemporary Russian politics, aims to assess the relative strength of different nationalist ideas. Clusters within the observations are expected to emerge. We are also interested in identifying factors that may predict a participant's political standing, especially in respect of nationalist issues.

Sample

The national sample (N=1000) is provided by Romir, a professional Russian study institution in Moscow. It is a survey conducted on 1000 Russian citizens over the phone. The sample represents the adult population of the Russian Federation. The sample design is a five-stage sampling plan, where sampling units are:

1) administrative districts and separate cities equivalent to administrative districts <u>at the primary stage</u>
2) towns and rural soviets <u>at the second stage</u>
3) voting districts in towns and separate settlements in rural soviets <u>at the third stage</u>
4) households (apartments) <u>at the fourth stage</u>
5) randomly selected respondents <u>at the fifth stage</u>

Sampling units at the first three stages are drawn with a probability proportional to the unit size (PPS).

Methods and Models

Identified as a sufficient indicator of Ethnical Nationalism, Question 38_1 - "Do you agree with the slogan 'Russia for the Russians'?" is our dependent variable. Responses "fully agree" and "incline to agree" are coded as 1 (N=592) for EN, while "incline to disagree" and "completely disagree" are coded as 0 for CN (N=329). As for the independent variables, we have included important questions regarding the leading role of ethnical Russians, political preferences, diversity, and etc. as covariates that may be significantly associated the responses in Q 38_1.

On the other hand, a tentative multidimensional scaling (MDS) has been conducted on a subset of 20 variables to identify potential clusters among the interviewees.
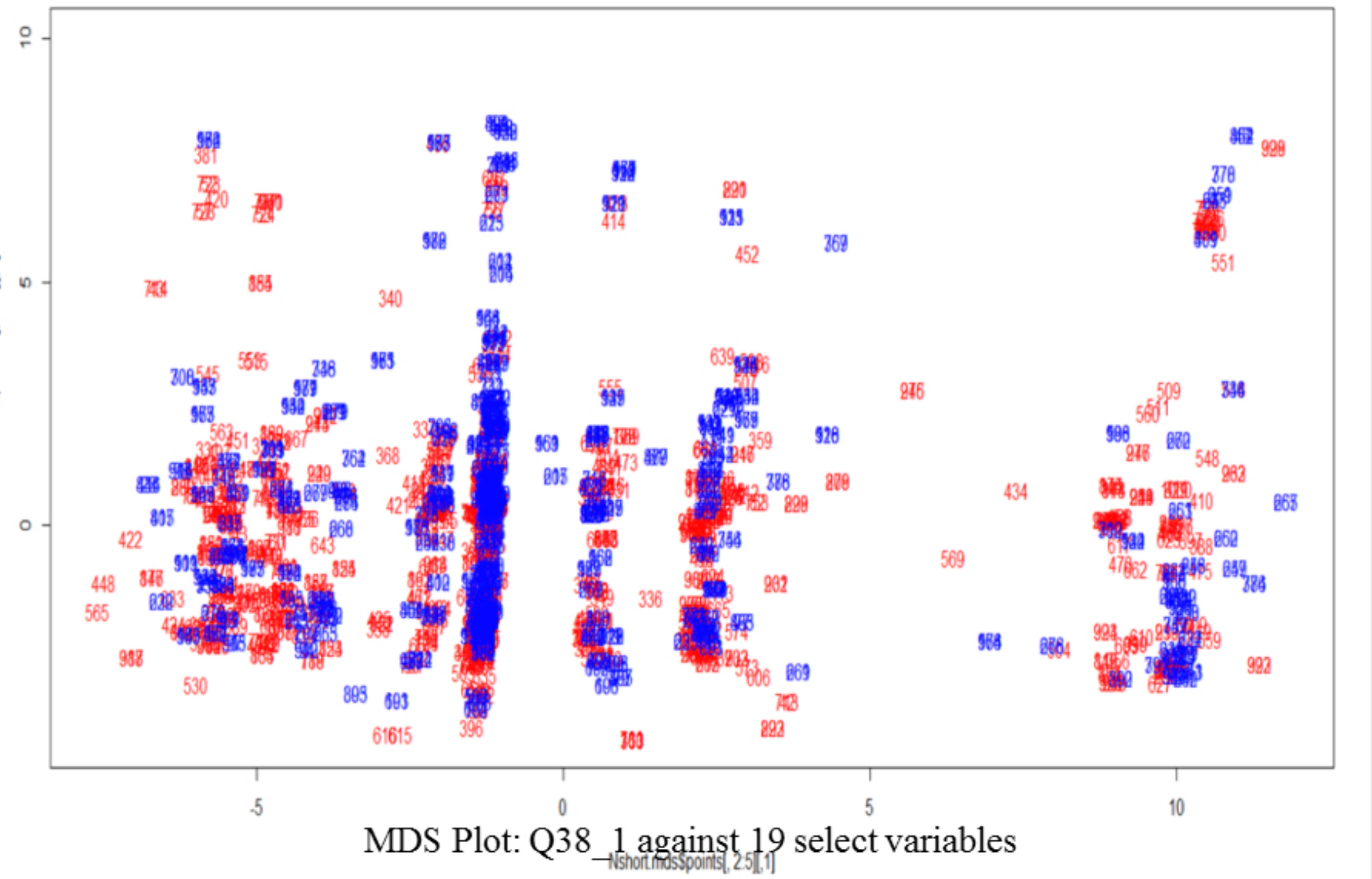
Results and Graphs

Logistic Regression:

The results of the logistic regression suggest that a participant's responses to Question 22_4 (Is it necessary to **deport** all migrants and their children to where they came from? P =9.71e-07), 31_3 (There should be **preferences** for Russians when appointing people to leading positions? P=1.55e-09), 31_5 (**History** shows that people of any nationality can be true patriots of Russia? P=0.003461), 31_6 (The Russian (Russkii) people must play a **leading** role in the Russian (Rossiiskii) state. P=1.12e-05), Q32.1 (Does the **diversity** in nationality of the Russian people strengthen or weaken our country? P=0.000182) are significant indicators of being an ethnical nationalist.

Odds ratios for each significant variable:

Variable	Q22_4	Q31_3	Q31_5	Q31_6	Q32.1
Odds Ratio	0.7419	0.6272	1.2563	0.6744	1.4113

Multidimensional Scaling:

The MDS demonstrated a five-dimensional model (k=5, stress value = 3.15) that aims to identify clusters among the observations. While several 2-dimensional plots suggest that certain clusters do exist, they do not seem to be grouped by our dependent variable – Q38_1.
(Red = Nationalist (1), Blue = Not nationalist (0), and the following plot shows dimensions [2:5])

MDS Plot: Q38_1 against 19 select variables

Discussions

It is quite evident from the logistic regression that it is possible to predict one's nationalist standing given certain important indicators. Generally, those who stay relatively hostile to immigrants and minorities are more likely to be identified as ethnical nationalists than those who are more cosmopolitan and believe in diversity. Biological variables, such as gender, age, education level are insignificant in our logistic regression.

However, bad news is that the MDS suggests that, although those indicators are significant in predicting nationalist standing, members of both EN and CN are not largely consistent with each other when responding to the survey. A confirmatory factor analysis may help here because enforcing the data to show several theory-based characteristics is probably better than simply exploring the data.

References

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