

**Identifying the Heideggerian Footprint in Post-Communist Russia's
Radical Political Thought: the Case of Aleksandr Dugin**

By

Aleksandr Shishov

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Political Science

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in Political Science

Supervisor:

Professor Janos Kis

Co-supervisor:

Professor David Weberman

Budapest, Hungary

2018

Abstract

At present, despite significant interest in Russian politics and its benchmark status for claims regarding the rise of illiberal tendencies, very little is done to investigate the developments within Russia's eclectic philosophical landscape. This paper examines the political theory of one the most controversial and curious Russian intellectuals - Aleksandr Dugin. In his key work "The Fourth Political Theory" Dugin dismisses liberalism, communism and fascism and proposes an approach to political philosophy that, according to his argumentation, fosters an authentic relationship with Being by conceptualising Heidegger's category of Dasein as the subject of politics. This paper suggests that Dugin's theory constitutes a genuine and unique example of Right-Heideggerianism and expands on the ideas of conservative revolutionaries through incorporating the major theoretical developments of the 20th century. It is demonstrated that identifying the key premise of Dugin's approach to political philosophy as the insistence on the ontological primacy of community in relation to the construction of the human self, envisioned in Heideggerian terms, allows for Dugin's political application of Heidegger's fundamental ontology to be both sufficiently distinct from present currents in political thought, and flexible to be appropriated as a new conceptual foundation by a wide array of radical conservative and right-wing movements.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Janos Kis and Professor David Weberman, who both have guided me through the process of writing not only by providing valuable commentary and suggestions on the contents and direction of my research, but have also encouraged me to broaden my horizons in exploring additional dimensions of the question at hand, significantly enhancing my understanding of the topic and its situation in the general context. I would also like to thank my dear friends, specifically, Elizaveta Potapova, Jaroslavs Jasins and Viktorija Kozlova, with whom I have extensively discussed my research, which helped me to sharpen and clarify the arguments presented in the paper. Finally, I would like to thank Central European University for allowing to have this experience, and, of course, my family for their care and support through the entire duration of my degree.

INTRODUCTION.....	1
<i>Structure of the Paper</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Limitations</i>	<i>4</i>
CHAPTER 1: ALEKSANDR DUGIN - “THE ANTI-MODERN PROPHET OF CHAOS”	6
<i>1.1 From the Moscow “Underground” to Moscow State University</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>1.2 Aleksandr Dugin: Perspectives and Misconceptions in Current Literature</i>	<i>12</i>
CHAPTER 2: THE FOURTH POLITICAL THEORY: DUGIN’S CRITICISM OF MODERNITY AND A POLITICAL RE-IMAGINATION OF HEIDEGGER	16
<i>2.1 Monotonic Processes and “Monopolising the Vision of the Future” by Modern Rationality</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>2.2 Alienation and Authentic Existence: Dasein as the Subject of Politics</i>	<i>21</i>
CHAPTER 3: THE ONTOLOGICAL PRIMACY OF COMMUNITY AS A CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT	27
<i>3.1 The Ontological Primacy of Community and Communitarian Critiques of Liberalism</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>3.2 Post-Metaphysical Liberalism, Freedom and Dugin’s Traditionalism</i>	<i>33</i>
CHAPTER 4: REACTIONARY CONSERVATISM, DUGIN AND THE FAR RIGHT: SAME SIDES OF DIFFERENT COINS	36
<i>4.1 Fascism and National Socialism</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>4.2 Reaction, Conservatism and the “Conservative Revolution”</i>	<i>41</i>
CONCLUSION: WHAT IS THE FOURTH POLITICAL THEORY?	49
SOURCES.....	53

Introduction

At present, despite significant interest in Russian politics and its benchmark status for claims regarding the rise of illiberal tendencies, very little is done to conceptualise Russia's eclectic political landscape by looking at the theories and ideas, which have fuelled such turbulence (Backman, 2016). To start bringing this gap the current research will investigate an approach to political theory formulated by one of the most controversial and curious critics of liberalism, Russian theorist and ideologue Aleksandr Dugin. In his key work "The Fourth Political Theory" Dugin dismisses liberalism, communism and fascism within an attempt to formulate a radically new approach to political philosophy grounded in an imaginative application Martin Heidegger's thought. Through his distinctive political reading of Heidegger, Dugin proposes a sketch of political philosophy that, according to his argumentation, would foster an authentic relationship with Being by conceptualising Heidegger's category of Dasein as the subject of politics (Dugin, 2012, pp. 25-50). The proposed research aims to provide an exposition of Dugin's theory, unravel its relationship to Heidegger and consider how a specific formulation of its foundation can be regarded as presenting a challenge to present currents in political philosophy, along with the provision of a detailed theoretical foundation for various contemporary illiberal and anti-democratic currents.

The initial inspiration for this project came from the work of Alexander Duff, who is one of the few researchers to directly investigate the conceptual foundation of contemporary illiberal and anti-democratic movements by drawing from the rich tradition of counter-Enlightenment critiques of liberalism (Duff, 2015).

Dugin can be regarded as a prominent political figure within the right-wing movement both in Russia and abroad. Dugin's radical rejection of the liberal idea turned him to become one of the founders of the National Bolsheviks party that appealed to the frustrations of the age that

stemmed from both the early disenchantment with the Western model of development chosen by early post-Soviet Russia and the fatigue produced by the communist past. This has significantly contributed to the later evolution of Dugin's ideas and the creation of the neo-Eurasionism movement (Tolstoy & McCaffray, 2015). Moreover, for a significant amount of time Dugin was well-established in the Russian academia and able to capture and, possibly, contribute to the formation of certain tendencies that later became characteristic of Russia's both domestic and foreign policy – some even credit him with the articulation of elements of the ideological framework, the existence of which Russia's public officials are still wary of admitting (Laruelle, 2015a).

Dugin's project is curious due to the way it tries to formulate a new direction in criticising both Modernity and post-Modernity along with establishing the groundwork for an alternative theory of political organisation by reimagining the work of prominent writers, traditionally labelled “conservative revolutionaries”, within an attempt to transcend the established antagonisms within political thought. However, at the same time Dugin cannot be classified as a conservative within any of the present political currents, due to his rejection of the notion of a conservative turn as preservation, reconstruction or re-institution of traditional elements (Millerman, 2014).

Despite this, Dugin has been largely ignored by Western scholars (Millerman, 2015). Among the majority of those, who addresses Dugin, there appeared to be until very recently a certain consensus in labelling his works as “neo-fascist”, by shifting the focus from the underlying assumptions of his philosophy to hypothesising about its possible practical implications. Notable strains of this critique focus on denouncing Dugin as “reproduce[ing] the worst excesses of the geopolitical and imperialist gaze” (Ingram, 2001; p. 1029) or attempting to

dismiss such views on psychological grounds by diagnosing his views as a pure expression of resentment and misguided revanchism (Allen, 2017).

I consider this tactic faulty, since it not only constitutes a misinterpretation, but also significantly obscures the possibility to recognise that Dugin's approach to political theory as providing a sketch of a sophisticated conceptual apparatus for various contemporary right critiques of established political philosophies. In such a sense Dugin's theory can be seen as carrying a legacy of a grander version of an all-encompassing scrutiny of Modernity. Still, only a few researchers have attempted to engage with the substance of Dugin thought, which has characteristically required acknowledging and disentangling the Heideggerian component in his writings (Backman, 2016). Current research will build up on the groundwork set out by scholars such as Backman, Duff, and others in attempting to demonstrate that despite its initial appearance, Dugin's project is currently one of the few, if not the single most pronounced theory (despite its actual merits) that taps into a new way of critiquing established political philosophies by providing a political Right interpretation of Heidegger.

The paper proposes that in this regard the key element of Dugin's theory, is an appeal to a specific notion of community, envisioned in Heideggerian terms, as a key existential constitutive of selfhood (Newel, 1984; Gilbert-Walsh, 1999; Boedeker, 2001; Haugeland, 2005). The paper examines Dugin theory primarily in terms that it constitutes an illustration to an underappreciated (questionably, whether this is in fact a good thing) application of Martin Heidegger's thought, arguing that the drawn demarcation lines between the established political theories can be considered sound, and that it can be regarded as constituting one of the key reasons for its popularity within the new generation of far right tendencies. While the researcher does not assert that Dugin's theory is a necessary extension of Heidegger's

philosophy into the political dimension, it is argued that Dugin's view can be considered consistent with the premises found in Heidegger's fundamental ontology.

Structure of the Paper

The current research will be structurally divided into five main segments: providing the context for the emergence of Dugin's views and a review of current literature on the attempts to situate Dugin within the political spectrum; a brief outline of the "fourth political theory" as envisaged by Dugin along with an explication of the relationship between Dugin's theory and Martin Heidegger. Later on, the paper will address the way in which the key premise regarding the relationship between the notion of community, as formulated by Dugin, and the possibilities of structuring the self can be considered as a challenge to the established political theories, specifically – liberalism, and whether responses to similar critiques already present can be considered as sufficiently covering the full scope of the challenge's application. Following this line of thought, an attempt to draw a demarcation line between Dugin's approach and other "conservative" and right-wing currents, specifically the Nazi and Fascist doctrines, which can, arguably, be regarded as adopting a similar strain of criticising liberalism, will be presented. The paper will conclude with examining the possibility of considering Dugin's political theory as a successor and re-imagination of the ideas of the "conservative revolution," along with speculations regarding prospects of Dugin's views in establishing the theoretical foundations of the new radical right.

Limitations

Stated in the following way, a number of limitations as well as notes on the intentions of the researcher must be taken into consideration. First of all, despite being required to work with the Heidegger, the researcher does not aim to arrive at a personally distinctive and original

interpretation, or to provide a complete survey of views on either the political component or possible implications of Heidegger's philosophy - such a project would be far too extensive, immensely difficult and outside the visible scope of current research. Secondly, the proposed research bears in mind the general question about the possibility of any political reading of Heidegger, but does not wish to engage in this debate directly, due to implicitly assuming for such a possibility to be present, based on suggestions from A significant body of literature already existing on the topic (Lacoue Labarthe, 1990; Bourdieu, 1991; Marchart, 2007; Millerman, 2014). What is important for the research is whether Dugin's theory can be considered as relying on a viable version of such a political reading. Moreover, the researcher acknowledges that the proposed description of the approach in investigating the topic implies a certain level of selection bias in terms of texts and fragments put under examination along with their anachronistic reading. However, it must be taken in mind that the intention put forward is not to provide a survey of the history of the development of Heidegger's thought or to deduce from it a conceptual framework that will be only then compared to the one demonstrated by Dugin's theory, but rather to bridge and relate two thinkers, focusing primarily on "highlighted points" of one in other. Finally, the provisioned research does not indent to provide an argument in favour of Dugin's approach to political theory, or assess its desirability compared to the ones already present, but to contest the established consensus regarding the treatment of his works and possibly demonstrate the requirement to consider the approach suggested by Dugin, not even restricted to his own view, but rather the general course that it establishes, as a challenger situated among the presently existing directions in political thought.

Chapter 1: Aleksandr Dugin - “The Anti-Modern Prophet of Chaos”

The following chapter will provide a brief exposition of the general political landscape of late-twentieth century Russia, which has seen the emergence of Dugin as political figure and theorist, specifically focusing on the tendencies and theories within the far-right. The chapter will be concerned with addressing two main issues: surveying the context in which Dugin first became prominent together with the development of his views and political allegiances; and providing a brief overview of positions in the current literature on Dugin’s political and theoretical activity.

While the paper is envisioned to maintain a predominantly theoretical focus, this expanded exposition is required for a number of reasons. First of all, it allows not only to paint a picture of the political and theoretical landscape that provided the context for the development and realisation for the views of Aleksandr Dugin, but also direct towards possible insight for his success, by situating Dugin’s views in relation to former and contemporary challengers. Secondly, it is required to make possible inferences regarding Dugin’s rising popularity and his connection with far-right circles outside of the immediate context of the Post-Soviet states, in regions such as Eastern and Western Europe, Turkey, and stretching as far as neo-fascist and recent alternative right movements in the United States (Laruelle, 2015b). Finally, it will allow exposing the core theoretical assumptions of his views that have consolidated over the development of his theory and have arguably ensured his success in attracting a wide array of allies and sympathisers within the radical-right movements. Specifically, among those seeking to acquire a detailed theoretical bedrock that would allow answering the current challenges, involving not only the visual rebranding of their ideologies, but also re-imagining the connections between core values held, their political realisation, and critical justification, while

at the same time ensuring a safe distance from traditional adversaries within the anti-liberal left (Laruelle, 2015b).

1.1 From the Moscow “Underground” to Moscow State University

While it was not until the early 1990’s that Dugin became an established figure within the space of Russian political and cultural counter-currents, the starting point for the traceable development of his views became a decade earlier with the membership in the Iuzhinskii circle – a secretive “salon” in Moscow for those belonging to the intellectual underground. The circle was formed around the writer Juri Mamleyev in the 1960’s and was first organised around readings of his works to a small group of admirers, later evolving into an exclusive society of people united by the discontent with the Soviet regime, who sought existential refuge in art and mysticism (Shenfield, 2001). The scope of interests of the Iuzhinskii club gradually transitioned from theosophy and Russian religious philosophy to the studies of various Western metaphysical and esoteric doctrines: from Gnosticism to the works of 20th century authors such as René Guénon; novels by Ernst Junger, and works of fascist philosopher Julius Evola (Laruelle, 2015a). When Dugin obtained membership in the circle he quickly demonstrated his zeal in studying and translating the literature that was circulating among its members, with one of the first works being a translation of Evola’s “Pagan Imperialism” (Schkhovtsov, 2008). It can be argued that this period has left a significant trace in the development of the general direction of Dugin’s views, channelling his discontent with the political every-day of the late Soviet Union into a fascination with various complex mystical doctrines that deal with alternative realities, elaborately constructed abstractions and have provided visions of what could have been considered beyond the scope of possible (Laruelle, 2015a).

However, membership in the Iuzhinskii circle has also had an impact on Dugin in regards to him developing a strong interest in traditionalism and nationalism, which lead him to briefly

joining the ultra-nationalistic organisation Pamyat (Verkhovsky, 2000). However, Dugin quickly became disappointed with the organisation's absence of a strictly defined and sufficiently elaborated ideological basis, as well as the lack of willingness amongst its members to devote resources to its establishment (Arnold & Umland, 2018).

Nevertheless, by that time Dugin has already begun actively establishing connections with various Western radical right intellectuals, such as Alain de Benoist, Claudio Mutti and Jean-François Thiriart. While the initial aspirations of Dugin have been predominantly mediated by his intellectual curiosity, he soon started to consolidate this network of connections and at some point, as described by his later colleague from the National Bolsheviks Party, Eduard Limonov: "usurped the contacts between the patriotic opposition and the Western right wing" (Shekhovstov, 2018, p. 47).

With the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has entered a period of deep economic and social crisis, and while president Yeltsin still enjoyed major popular support, early signs of disenchantment with the idea of the possibility of rapid modernisation and Westernisation begun to spur. The devastation caused by hasty and ill-managed reformism and the struggle for power between the elites has ensured catastrophic consequences for the vast majority of Russia's population, while allowing for the establishment of the extremely wealthy and powerful oligarch class (Kapustin & Malinova, 2016). These processes and the accompanying formation of long-lasting structural problems have tainted the image of liberal democracy for many Russian citizens, which came as extremely useful for the creation of illiberal and anti-democratic, anti-Western discourses in the future. Moreover, this has presented an opportunity for a great variety of opposing political movements to actively propagate their ideas filling in the ideological vacuum left by the dissolution of state-enforced

communism alongside the relatively fragile grip of liberal ideas on Russia's society (Toschenko, 2015).

At that time Dugin was found actively contributing to the formation of Right-wing and nationalist-minded outlets, having personally played a significant role in establishing the periodical "Den" and publishing house "Arktogeya", which published his own books and translations of Western theories of the New Right, works by 20th century conservative revolutionaries, religious mystics and occultist (Shenfield, 2001). Simultaneously, he apparently became close to Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of the KPRF, a successor to the Soviet Union's communist party. Dugin arguably had an impact on KPRF's signature ideological feature of nationalist-communism (Laruelle, 2006). In 1993 Dugin met writer and poet Eduard Limonov, with whom they established the National Bolshevik Party, for which Dugin has supplied the ideological foundation comprising of a mix of radical left-wing anti-liberalism and Russian nationalism. In 1995 Dugin even ran for the Duma election in a district of Saint Petersburg, however was only able to get 0.85% of the vote. After five years of partnership, Dugin left the NBP due to disagreements with Limonov and the inability to successfully adapt his complex and esoteric political vision with the practical requirement of the party's activity (Laruelle, 2015b).

With the former begins the Eurasionism chapter of Dugin's life, which at the same time became the basic reference point for the majority of researchers in evaluating his political and theoretical contributions (Millerman, 2014). Having left the NBP, Dugin has concentrated on the establishment of his own political movement that would constitute a reformulation of Eurasionism, originally a version of the Western far-right, incorporating both nationalist and imperialistic elements, proposed by the Russian émigré community in the 1920 and 30s'. The classical version of this doctrine rests on the assumptions about the necessity to find a particular

path of political and historical development for Russia, rejecting both communism and liberalism, due to its specific positioning between Western and Eastern civilisations and an imperial mission as a bastion against Western expansion (Shekhovtsov & Umland, 2008). Dugin has heavily reformulated this vision in order for it to incorporate, firstly, his modernised vision of geopolitics that assumes an inherent civilizational antagonism between Atlantist (UK, US) and Heartland (Continental) nations, secondly, his general syncretic corpus of views derived from earlier affiliations (Dugin, 1997). He wrote extensively on his version of neo-Eurasianism in an attempt to elaborate the metaphysical topography of the Heartland-Atlantic conflict that was necessitated by their definitive civilizational features. Moreover, at that time Dugin has frequently connected it with the call for the establishment of a new supra-national political entity that would correspond with civilisation boundaries identified within his version of geopolitics and the vision of Eurasia's historical mission (Shekhovstov, 2008).

It is specifically this period of Dugin's activity, roughly stretching from 1998 to 2008 that has received most attention from researchers on the topic and has become the benchmark for evaluating his theoretical and political activity. While it is highly doubtful that purely the radicalism of Dugin's thought at the period has attracted the attention of Western researchers, but rather the peculiar alignment of circumstances in Russia's political life in general and Dugin's career in particular. The middle of the 2000's saw a significant resurgence of nationalist and xenophobic sentiments in Russia perpetuated by a new cohort of radicals different from their counterparts from the 1990's (Laruelle, 2006). One of the possible reasons for this that has been identified by scholars recently, has been a gradual change of Russia's political climate: unlike the years of Yeltsin, during the period starting from the end of Putin's first term nationalist groups have been able to shed their image of fringe-marginals (Kapustin & Malinova, 2016). While still lacking in terms of access to the ability to exercise power formally through state institutions, they have firmly established themselves in the public space

and the political discourse, partially owing to the tacit consent of the Russia's political elite, which at the time has already been drifting towards experimenting with ideological alternatives to the liberalism of the previous decade (Kuzio, 2016).

For Dugin in particular this period can be characterised by his transition from the radical opposition to a supporter of regime, which also corresponded to his success career-wise: in 2006 he started lecturing at the Moscow State University, where he later became the head of the Department of Sociology of International Relations. Furthermore, he continued to serve as an advisor to Evgeny Seleznev, a speaker of the Russian Duma (parliament), and has also became more active in involving the community of previously underground musicians and artist both with whom Dugin maintained connections from his early days and attracting new ones, allowing him to gaining additional publicity (Kolstø & Blakkisrud, 2016).¹

What is most important, however, is that while Dugin's presence became more vivid in Russia and, consequently, noticeable to Western researchers from regional studies and international relations, due to its correspondence with general changes in Russian politics, it also established the basis for the later consensus of treating him in the relevant literature (Millerman, 2015). An examination of Dugin's individual works within narrow disciplines carried out by researches from the same fields, paired with their emphasis on trying to formulate a strict continuity with his previous activity, has earned him designations that of a militant imperialist (Tolstoy & McCaffray, 2015), neo-Nazi revanchist (Ingram, 2001), and even most recently the poetic title of an "Anti-Modern prophet of Chaos" (Allen, 2017, p. 23). At the same time this not only obscured a large portion of his more philosophical works, but the possibility to recognise the changing character of his activity. As of the late 2000's with the publication of the first Russian

¹ Dugin no longer holds the position of advisor in the Duma, nor teaches at MSU, from where he has been fired in 2014 after a possible conflict with the administration, due to his radical public statement regarding the conflict in Ukraine. Currently, he is primarily engaged with his works on the series "Noomahiya" and lecture tours outside of Russia (Arnold & Umland, 2018).

edition of the “Fourth Political Theory” in 2008, Dugin’s primary focus has shifted towards more fundamental philosophical inquiry, particularly that motivated by a heightened interest towards the legacy of Martin Heidegger and possible ways to incorporate his insights within own theoretical framework (Backman, 2016). Moreover, it is specifically this turn that necessitated a reformulation of Dugin’s doctrine of neo-Eurasionism, which now explicitly emphasized political multipolarity (Dugin, 2014a), multiplicity of tradition (Dugin, 2014b) and more clearly demarcated his views from those of present versions of radical conservative and far-right theories (Millerman, 2015). As stated previously, the current paper will attempt to overcome the deficiencies of present research by attempting to more deeply explore Dugin’s views declared in the most recent edition of the “Fourth Political Theory”, specifically in relation to his appeal to the philosophical project of Martin Heidegger (Duff, 2015).

1.2 Aleksandr Dugin: Perspectives and Misconceptions in Current Literature

The second task of this chapter, as formulated previously, is to provide a basic description of contemporary approaches to conceptualising the work of Dugin within the fields of political science, international relations, Russian studies and, to an extent, political philosophy (Umland, 2008) and evaluate the possible reasons for the formation such views. The majority of literature on Dugin currently can be described as characteristically dismissive not only of his views, but the actual idea of engaging with them substantively and directly² (Millerman, 2015). Despite this general consensus, however, there exists a differentiation between the ways of how Dugin and his views are described, which mostly deals with attributing him to a specific political camp. In accordance with both the independent survey of available literature on Dugin and an examination of secondary sources, the current paper has identifies three main labels that have been applied to Dugin in attempting to locate him within the established political categories

² The former being understandable, due to the their marginalised character to the political mainstream.

and serve as the basis for the approach to analysing his activity: Dugin as a neo-fascist or neo-Nazi (Ingram, 2001; Laruelle, 2006; Umland, 2008), Dugin as a radical reactionary and religious fundamentalist (Toschenko, 2015; Allen, 2017), and, finally, Dugin as an imperialist-nationalist (Tolstoy & McCaffray, 2015).

One possible, yet trivial, way of explaining this variety in opinion of how to approach Dugin can be attributed to difference between what particularly in his works or activity has been put into the focus of the researcher, which is significantly reliant on the field from which the initial address is made (Kolstø & Blakkisrud, 2016)³. As mentioned above, Dugin, despite the questionable quality and coherence of his body of work, can be considered a prolific writer with broad interests touching upon multiple fields of social sciences and humanities (Verkhovsky, 2000).

As it has been noted, few researchers outside Russia are able to directly observe the consequences of Dugin's activity and follow the development of his view through publications and public appearances in real time. Earlier this could have been partially justified by his marginalised position and the time-lag in terms of the appearance of translated versions of his work (Laruelle, 2006). Furthermore, these limitations also shaped the way, in which his research has been addressed. Up until recently, the majority of literature on Dugin has been situated within the fields of regional studies, international relations and to an extent, various sub-fields within the study of contemporary conservatism (Laruelle, 2015a). This approach has significantly narrowed down the scope of both his actual involvement in politics and works produced that have been considered relevant (Millerman, 2014). As described in the previous

³ At the same time it may even be possible to argue that the separation into these divisions, in regards to Dugin, is unnecessary, and seek to formulate some generalised description of his works based on the degree of proximity between the ideological content of these labels. However, this would, firstly, very likely produce just another way of looking at Dugin without fully dismissing the other approaches, and, more importantly, be susceptible to the same flaws as them, if based purely on the same material.

section of this chapter, Dugin's career has in fact seen allegiances with ultra-nationalist and borderline fascist currents, along with the production of a significant number of publications on topics corresponding with the political agenda of these groups and literature advocating for a civilisationist and antagonistic vision of geopolitics (Kolstø & Blakkisrud, 2016). However, even a preliminary look at the timeline would demonstrate that these periods, while still constituting part of Dugin's general legacy, have long since passed. At the same time a more thorough examination of Dugin's actual work would show a significant degree of change that has occurred to his thought, areas of interests and influences. Nevertheless, for over a significant amount of time the majority of Western researchers have been reluctant to notice this and have continued to perpetuate the stereotypes formed on the basis of Dugin's earlier activity (Millerman, 2014).

However, currently the statement regarding the difficulty of access to Dugin would not pass as a sufficient reason for this oversight by Western researchers (Millerman, 2014). The last decade has seen both a significant increase in the volume of work produced by Dugin, and the number of these works being translated and published abroad in major languages, such as French, German, English, Italian etc⁴. Moreover, after his forced retirement from the Moscow State University, Dugin has significantly increased his public activity abroad and began to actively utilise his connections, along with establishing new ones with illiberal movements and intellectuals in West (Laruelle, 2014). This has not only increased the level of acquaintance with him for such movements, but has contributed to the popularisation of his ideas at a larger scale, with the increased outreach indirectly signalling the possible adoption, application and

⁴ His key work of political theory, which is at the centre of the current inquiry has been first published in 2009, yet up until 2012 it has not been even received even minor attentions in terms of engagement with its substance even in regards to minor mentions in English-language academic literature (Millerman, 2015).

incorporation of Dugin's philosophical ideas into the political agenda of the Right (Laruelle, 2015a)

Fortunately, the last few years have seen a new trend in the literature that attempts to dismiss the previous misconceptions regarding Dugin's writing. Researchers such as Backman, Millerman and Duff have attempted to engage with Dugin's work without falling into the trap of taking his intentionally provocative claims at face-value or the established categorical clichés for granted (Backman, 2016; Millerman, 2017a; Duff, 2015). They have been one of the few to recognise the peculiar nature of Dugin's corpus of work in regards to the vital character of its philosophical component, particularly the way Dugin's theory can be seen seeking its justification within Martin Heidegger's fundamental ontology (Millerman, 2017a). Current research will build on the insight of these authors in contesting the existing labels applied to Dugin and will attempt to clearly demarcate his views from others currents within the far right in the chapter: "Reactionary Conservatism, Dugin and the Far Right: Same Sides of Different Coins" However, at first it would be necessary to paint a comprehensive picture of the views expressed in Dugin's central work on political philosophy, "The Fourth Political Theory", specifically focusing on its metaphysical foundations.

Chapter 2: The Fourth Political Theory: Dugin's Criticism of Modernity and a Political Re-imagination of Heidegger

This chapter will include a summary of the contemporary views of Aleksandr Dugin in regards to his approach to political philosophy manifested in his central work on the subject “The Fourth Political Theory⁵” (Dugin, 2012). The chapter will provide an outline of Dugin's political-philosophical ideas in relation to other political theories, as stated by the author himself, and will briefly elaborate the foundations of the metaphysical (ontological) basis of Dugin's works.

In reconstructing Dugin's argument in the Fourth Political Theory it would first be necessary to consider the claims that raise concerns regarding the current state of the world, culturally and politically, along with the theories that have either necessitated (liberalism), or, with various degrees of success, have attempted to critically address these issues. In this respect Dugin remains rather uncontroversial, and to an extent non-original even possibly outdated (Backman, 2016), as his key statement in this regard involves acknowledging firstly, the transition to Post-Modernity and the triumph of liberal democracy as the standard form of organizing societies into states (Dugin, 2012, pp. 5-7). While the second claim is rather contentious, and concerns a significantly debated topic in contemporary political science (Gans-Morse, 2004), it does not significantly impact the further development of Dugin's ideas. The first reason for this would be that, in making such a statement Dugin primarily refers to the recognition of the general trend as a cultural phenomenon (rather the factual state of affairs) that came into being after the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Furthermore, the following perspective still allows Dugin to

⁵ It must be noted that Dugin does not provide an elaborated picture of the political practice implied by his theory (Dugin, 2012). Arguably, this is done intentionally, as it allows for the greater variety of possible interpretations and theoretical flexibility, which can be considered as one of the key factors influencing the popularity of his vision among various currents within contemporary illiberal movements.

acknowledge the possible disruptions in this pattern occurring currently (Dugin, 2015a). Most importantly, this is employed by Dugin to highlight the conceptual victory of liberal democracy as the political mainstream and the ubiquity of the perception regarding the apparent lack of non-marginalized credible alternatives to liberal capitalism (Fisher, 2009).

As Dugin proceeds further in his argument, he identifies a number of features of the contemporary state of society and culture under liberal capitalism that he considers as being characteristic of the period, which have established themselves firmly starting in the second half of the 20th century: market-universalism, increasing penetration of economic reasoning into previously untapped areas of human life and the following acting as the structuring force for subjectivity, atomization of society, gradual displacement of governance with management, de-politisation etc (Brown, 2014)⁶. Continuing, Dugin suggests that the underlying premises for the formation of such conditions are immanent to the development of Modernity as a whole, and that neither of the present political and theoretical alternatives to liberalism and capitalism, which are also products of Modernity would be successful in overcoming them. He justifies this claim by suggesting that these alternatives are equitable, as they would produce structurally similar challenges in the counterfactual case of their success (Dugin, 2012, pp. 12-20). Dugin believes this to be true, due to the reliance of such alternatives on the features of Modernity, which have allowed for their creation: the assertion of the universality of reason, which creates a specific framework for conceptualising historical development based on an eschatological vision of social progress, and the failure to overcome alienation of humans subjects from their authentic existence. At the same time, Dugin declares

⁶ Once again, such observations are not particular to Dugin and have been an active part of theoretical debates for the last half of century, predominantly from left-leaning authors such as Foucault, Marcuse, Althusser, Guy Debord, Ranciere, Baudrillard and countless others (Žižek, 2010). What distinguishes Dugin in this regard from nevertheless a very diverse cohort of thinkers, is that unlike the vast majority of them, Dugin cannot be described as adhering to any version of left-wing political philosophy that could have been implicitly assumed as providing remedies for these conditions, as it can be said for the authors mentioned (Milleran, 2017b).

that his project attempts to transcend the present topography of political divisions by offering a critical stance from a vantage point that is primarily metaphysical rather than political. Dugin declares that his approach is in essence “non-Modern” – that is does not incorporate the features of Modernity that produce the current political divisions (Dugin, 2012, p. 64).

It must be noted that in regards to the identified components of Modernity Dugin remains rather vague, and frequently diverts to speculations based on broad interpretations of anthropological and philosophical concepts. What is of primarily importance, however is the way Dugin structures his critique: by questioning the political manifestations of Modernity, which he considers as being the ideologies of liberalism, communism and fascism, Dugin simultaneously addresses what he considers to be their common theoretical underpinnings derived from the essence of Modernity (Dugin, 2015a). While this approach in itself remains rather questionable, considering Dugin’s theory in the following way allows to draw a picture of the structural relationship between the identified basic features of Modernity, and the political theories at the target of his criticism.

2.1 Monotonic Processes and “Monopolising the Vision of the Future” by Modern Rationality

Dugin proceeds in his critical description by addressing the way in which currently established political theories manifest the principal features of modernity. In the “Fourth Political Theory” Dugin does not provide an independent and sufficiently detailed account of Modernity’s imposition of a universal and totalising form of reasoning, as he mostly addresses it indirectly through a reference to the present critiques of (post)Enlightenment rationality by 20th century authors (Backman, 2016). However, he builds up on these critiques by arguing that it is specifically the expansive character of the reason of Modernity that creates the theoretical foundations, which allow conceptualizing the political within explanatory frameworks of the

three present political theories that are restrictive and paternalistic in their considerations of prescriptions regarding the image of society and its development - constituting “a monopolization of the vision of the future” (Dugin, 2012, p.10).

To elaborate on this point Dugin introduces the notion of “monotonic processes”, a term borrowed from Gregory Bateson (Bateson, 1979), which he explains as a way of describing any process, particularly that of social and political development, that assumes constant growth and accumulation as an internal defining feature of the process itself. In his conceptualization of the term, Dugin remains very sceptical of any belief in both the intrinsic value and the conceptual soundness of an idea of progression (Dugin, 2012) and moreover the validity of applying this model, as he considers that it results in the naturalisation of political prescriptions. Yet, according to Dugin, all the present political theories can be seen as asserting their vision of historical development and the underlining eschatology through a reliance on accepting various forms of monotonic processes as governing forces (Dugin, 2012). In demonstrating this assumption, Dugin proceeds to examine each of the political theories individually.

First of all, Dugin, considers a generalized vision of left-wing political theories, which he presents are most susceptible to this form of criticism, due to the way in which their foundations can be traced to the theoretical corpus of, firstly, Hegelian philosophy, and later Marx’s historical materialism (Dugin, 2012). It can be said that this claim does seem to be constructing a straw-man, as the great variety of left-wing political theories and the sophistication of their development cannot be without question placed under this conceptual umbrella (Hemming, 2013). Anticipating such a reply, Dugin elaborates that for this feature to be identified, one does not necessarily have to uphold any version of strictly deterministic Hegelian or Marxian conception of history, but generally just assume a notion of social and historical time as a construct that causality arranges the vision of the past and future, implying their ability to be

described by characteristic phenomena, thought the exclusiveness of authentic forms of socio-economic formations encountered and the irreversibility of the sequence of their emergence (Dugin, 2012, pp. 65-68).

Secondly, Dugin moves on to test his assumption against liberal theories. While, admittedly, few versions of liberal political thought pertain any eschatological vision of the future (Loureiro, 2010), Dugin's description mostly concerns certain historical and cultural phenomena that have been observable within the development of liberal democracies and capitalist societies (Dugin, 2012). Among these processes Dugin finds, the expansion of capitalist markets, firstly, thought Western colonialism, and later the processes of globalization and standardisation of world economies and political systems in accordance to the model of liberal democracies, finally the attempts of universalising the system of international relations and introduction of prescriptions to political conduct with the aid of transnational organisations (Harvey, 2005). Again, since the universality and determinism in normatively describing political development is rarely found outside of early transitionalist theories or liberal political thought influenced by the Hegelian conception of history (Loureiro, 2010), it would important to stress that rather than claiming that these features are explicitly present in liberal political theory, Dugin considers them as being consequential to the adoption of the premises of liberalism as guiding principles for political organization (Dugin, 2012, p. 11).

Finally, Dugin briefly touches upon Right-Wing political theories in regards to the way that this idea is manifested. While he acknowledges the existence of disputes regarding the extent to which the doctrines of Fascism and National Socialism can be classified as "Modernist" (Griffin, 2007), Dugin draws attention to the way how the idea of progress is expressed. In his considerations Dugin emphasizes that, despite the reactionary nature embedded in National Socialism and fascism in regards to the way they consider liberal democracies and communist

regimes as manifestations of decay (Dugin, 2012), and call for the return and re-establishment of authentic forms of life, the progressivist idea of historical linearity is nevertheless clearly manifested in them. In National Socialism, for example, it is present through the assertion of a hierarchy of development for races, and the underlying assumption regarding the introduction of particular naturalised political order. According to Dugin, this necessitates the eschatological vision that requires the establishment of a political entity that would conform to these natural forms as the ultimate realization of history: in the case of Nazi Germany – the thousand-year Reich (Dugin, 2012, pp. 51-64).

2.2 Alienation and Authentic Existence: Dasein as the Subject of Politics

The main line of Dugin's criticism of the present political theories that are considered manifestations of Modernity concerns his assumption regarding the way in which each of them can be regarded as alienating the human subject from its authentic existence. Dugin bases his argument on an appeal to a specific vision of philosophical anthropology, which he considers as being essentially political (Dugin, 2012). Dugin asserts the ontological primacy of politics to the self, declaring that the "man is a function of politics" (Dugin, 2012, p. 95)⁷. Dugin insists that the self is constructed in reference to the political: the disposition of violence, structures, hierarchies, power arrangements, state institutions and mechanisms of interpellation etc (Althusser, 1970; Schacht, 1990; Marchart, 2007).

At the same time, Dugin notes that, while the political retains its primacy to "man", it is necessarily constrained by the present possibilities to conceive its subject in reference to particular anthropological horizon. Here Dugin asserts a relationship of balanced hierarchy:

⁷ It would be true to say that this is also not particularly novel to Western thought, as similar claims can be found in both ancient authors such as Aristotle (Miller, 2017) and more recent ones. Some contemporary examples include notable philosophers such as Deleuze (Gastaldi, 2009), or, more recently, Mouffe (Mouffe, 2005).

while any philosophical anthropology is necessarily political, any political theory must also be anthropological (Dugin, 2015a). Regardless of the content of the political theory and its manifestations in political practice, it has to refer to a certain conception of the historical and political subject (Dugin, 2012). While “man”, according to Dugin, remains a function of politics, he must be present as a reference point for it. The way in which this reference point is addressed rests on the set of possible ways in which such can be done in accordance to the horizon of meanings that structure these possibilities. Modernity and the political theories which Dugin identifies as being immanent to it, are flawed in his view, specifically due to the way this reference is made, resulting in the imposition of a political restriction on the possibility to cultivate an authentic existence, which in Dugin’s view constitutes the essence of alienation (Dugin, 2012, pp. 95-101)⁸.

Having put forward this criteria, Dugin proceeds to examine the three theories, in regards to what is considered an essential definitive for the notion of the political in each of them - the subject of the politics, in Dugin’s formulation. To clarify: Dugin considers that in each of these cases the subject of politics is that, which historical and relational positioning towards other entities dictates the way of assembling the political. Dugin considers that the preference for a way of organizing society politically is reliant on the features of the subjects, which are considered to be the acting units of the order to be instituted; and as the latter is assumed to be necessarily correspondent with the features that define the subject, the preferred order is naturalised (Dugin, 2012, pp. 30-45).

⁸ It can be argued that, if considered with a sufficient degree of abstraction, a very similar conception of alienation is at the heart of various left-wing theories and can be traced to the initial propositions of Marx. As for Marx the alienation of the subject is necessarily tied with capitalist exploitation, manifested by the estrangement of labour through the extraction of surplus value from its products by the class of exploitators. Labour remains an integral part of realizing human subjectivity, because its products come into being through the conscious goal-directed activity on the objective world - constituting the species-being of humans (Marx & Engels, 1988). However, as it will be explained later on, the content of the Dugin’s application of the term is very different.

Through broad generalization Dugin portrays the subjects of the three political theories being: class – for left-wing theories, the individual – for liberalism, and the nation or race for fascism and National Socialism (Dugin, 2012). For various strains of Marxism, class is the subject of politics and the ultimate reference point, as it is the acting subject of history, which manifests itself the struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed, therefore politics remains meaningful as long as it is conceptualized in accordance with this struggle⁹. For liberalism the subject being the individual, implies that the realization of the corresponding political project must necessarily unfold through the accommodation of the ascribed inherent features of subject, such as naturalized rights and freedoms, securing which justifies the construction of any political entity and governs the possible interactions between actors (Dugin, 2012, p. 31). For fascism and National Socialism the subjects, are either a particular conception of the nation or race, the preferred political order is then that, which is best in line with the realisation of the natural mission of these entities; the particular subject is defined along with its goals in accordance to which this mission is considered to be realisable (Dugin, 2012, p.35).

What Dugin considers to be the main problem with all of these approaches is the artificial character of how these subjects are constructed (Dugin, 2012). Dugin asserts that the way in which the subject of politics should be constructed must be correspondent to broadest and most fundamental imagination of what can be regarded as the organizing principle of the assembly of the self (Gilbert-Walsh, 1999). Dugin considers that a non-alienating political philosophy that would be able to facilitate the authentic human existence, requires a category of a completely different kind to be put forward as the subject of politics. It is specifically in this line of thought that Dugin addresses the philosophical legacy of Martin Heidegger. Following

⁹ This may seem as an oversimplification of orthodox Marxism. However, Dugin insists that this can be considered in a broader sense, as one does not necessarily have to adopt strict historical materialism with the inevitability of transitions from one socio-economic formation to another, but rather to maintain the primacy of relationships which define the classes and the way these relationships are channeled through political and cultural manifestations (Dugin, 2012).

Heidegger, Dugin believes that the root of alienation is the fact that the most fundamental question – that of Being – is obscured (Heidegger, 1996 pp. 21-24; Robertson, 2013). Dugin asserts that a political theory must incorporate this insight, and in order to overcome the danger of being alienating, it must be structured in accordance with a conception of philosophical anthropology that would allow for the exercise of authenticity (Dugin, 2010). For this reason Dugin takes a curious turn and decides to name the subject of his political theory Heidegger's category of Dasein (Duff, 2015).

It should be noted that Dasein, as one of the central terms in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, remains a highly complex concept with immensely broad possibilities for interpretation (Macann, 1992). Nevertheless, a very general way of approaching it will be chosen by this paper in order to allow illuminating its usage by Dugin. Briefly stated, Dasein can be conceived as a particular mode of being peculiar to human beings (without the terms being equivalent) that necessitates the way of assembling human selfhood (Boedeker, 2001). Dasein unfolds as an openness to the question of Being and presupposes the horizon of possibilities to encounter entities as beings (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 36-40). While in Heidegger's ontological writing, where the concept of Dasein is primarily encountered, there has been identified little direct reference to politics (Bourdieu, 1991), Dugin's approach strikes as peculiar specifically due to the insistence on the political application of the term. Yet, following the insight of a number of Heidegger-scholars, the current paper asserts that such usage can still be permissible, if a relationship between Dasein and the concept of community, as used by Heidegger, can be established (Wolin, 1990; Margolis, 1992; Haugeland, 2005; Boedeker, 2001).

Dasein can be seen relating to community as a shared response to the address of Being that ensures its thematisation through the characteristic "with-ness": being-with-Others, as a modus of Dasein's being, prior to it being itself. In "Being and Time" Heidegger claims that the

recognition of Dasein by itself in its capacity to unfold as the possibility to encounter entities as particular beings by structuring the horizon of meanings, is necessitated by the moduses of its existence that allow such recognitions. Being-with-Others is one of the ways Dasein unfolds, which concerns the initial experience of the Other: the recognition of the Other's reference to Dasein, implying their capacity to encounter entities in their being. In this sense, any particular expression of the Dasein's capacity to perceive beings can be considered as supervened by an address to the question of Being (Heidegger, 1996).¹⁰

Dugin does not elaborate on this point very much, as it remains more or less implicit in his writing. Yet it can be considered that the way his argument proceeds requires it to rely on a conception of "human beings" that is situated in a landscape of meaning defined by their approach to the question of Being, in turn necessitated by the historicity of such address within a community. This plays a key role in grounding the possibilities of the wide scope and variety in which the fourth political theory can be used in order to justify traditionalist and conservative political claims (Duff, 2015).

Having provided a brief sketch of Dugin's ideas regarding the Fourth Political Theory along the lines of its basic structure and the appeal to Heidegger's theoretical framework through reference notion of Dasein and its relationship to community, the following chapters will explore more deeply the way in which Dugin's views relate to other political theories. It would be important to note that, when proceeding with this project the author acknowledges that a certain degree of overstepping outside the initial boundaries of what can be considered a charitable interpretation of Dugin's argument is present. However, it is not the intention to provide a defence of Dugin's claims that cannot be derived from them initially, but rather to

¹⁰ The cumbersome character of Heideggerian terminology is acknowledged by the author. Therefore, in order to ensure at least a certain degree of clarity, these statements will be reformulated in relation to less abstract examples that are dealt the paper in the following chapters.

flesh out the implicit premises that are otherwise obscured in his thought, yet remain pivotal (Millerman, 2017a). This is primarily done in accordance with the thesis about the flexibility of Dugin's theory that allows for its diverse adoption, influence and popularity within contemporary Right-Wing movements (Backman, 2016).

Chapter 3: The Ontological Primacy of Community as a Challenge to Liberal Thought

Having provided the context of the development of Dugin's ideas, the outline his approach to political theory, including the basic character of its relationship to the thought of Martin Heidegger, which acts as an essential premise for the critique of established directions in political thought, the following chapter will explore how Dugin's insistence on the ontological primacy of community in structuring the political can be regarded as presenting a possible challenge for contemporary liberal political thought.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to comment on one highly important issue: while it can be suggested that, according to the line of argument in the paper, it would also be necessary to explore the relationship between Dugin's theory and left-wing currents, it will not be done for a number of reasons. First of all, despite the fact that Dugin dismisses both liberalism, socialism-communism and fascism-Nazism along the lines of the same basic premises, the political order and theoretical underlying of liberal democracy and capitalism are the prime targets for his criticism. Furthermore, it is also important to note that Dugin considers liberalism as the only "living" theory, as he asserts its currently dominant position in terms of its assumed acceptance as the mainstream and providing the guidelines for organising societies politically (Dugin, 2012). Additionally, despite the fact that Dugin does build up on various critiques of both right and left-wing theorists, the implications of his line of thought remains sufficiently distinct from those proposed by the left. Yet it is important to draw a clear demarcation line between Dugin and other right-wing theorists not only to correct a shortcoming of the existing literature, but to also show that his critique does not belong to either of the categories to which he has been traditionally attributed to (Millerman, 2017b). Although, exploring how the challenge of the ontological primacy of community, as formulated in this reconstruction of Dugin's thought, can be addressed by various strains of (post)Marxism would, of course, be

beneficial to the research project, it is not possible to make a sufficiently detailed inquiry within the scope of this paper. And while it would not be wise to completely discard the possibility of a shift in status-quo or forever dismiss left-wing theories as non-credible alternatives¹¹, considerations of them are left for further research.

Before proceeding further it must be noted that, despite his anti-liberalism Dugin generally neglects to consider the requirement of a sufficiently detailed engagement with liberal political theory outside of simply accepting the present criticism of capitalism, neoliberalism and existing liberal democratic regimes, which he considered as necessary consequences of adopting the prescriptions of a generalised version of liberal thought. However, despite the absence of an explicit formulation of such criticism, it can be extracted from the Dugin's work on the fourth political theory. Moreover, as it will be shown, an allegedly similar version of this criticism has already been directed towards liberalism by communitarian thinkers (Polt, 1997). Following this line of thought, the remaining part of the chapter will be divided into two sections.

3.1 The Ontological Primacy of Community and Communitarian Critiques of Liberalism

When positioning Dugin's theory as a criticism of liberal political thought, in regards to the identified premise as the ontological primacy of community, it is important to acknowledge the history of this form of criticising liberalism. As mentioned previously, while Dugin does not directly provide a substantive criticism of contemporary liberal theory, since most of his actual writing on this topic concern classical formulations of liberalism and cannot be considered applicable in their full extent to contemporary developments, it is nevertheless possible to extract a relevant critical aspect from the general body of his views (Millerman, 2015). In the

¹¹ Especially, in regards to the identified critique in Dugin, as there is a sufficient number of left-leaning thinkers influenced by Heidegger, whose views might accommodate for that challenge (Lacoue Labarthe, 1990).

most general sense, Dugin's suggestion regarding the neglect of community by liberal thought as being a constitutive of the self can be seen similar to the relatively recent concerns expressed by communitarians (Dagger, 2009). Therefore, the current section of the chapter will very briefly present these communitarian critiques of liberalism along with the replies that have been offered.

While communitarian critiques of liberalism can be classified as targeting different aspects of liberalism along with employing various strategies in formulating liberalism's overemphasis on "individualism", two closely connected direction can be considered as most relevant to the criticism extracted from Dugin's views: the restricted conception of the self, used by liberals to justify their political claims, and the general neglect for the role of community in shaping individual preferences, values, goals, which otherwise should be considered as primarily informing our notions of justice, freedom etc (Taylor, 1985; Dagger, 2009).

The first direction of replying to these criticism, specifically, in regards to Rawls-inspired versions of liberalism (which have been one of the primary targets of communitarian critiques), it has been argued that they are misguides, since such version of liberal theory do not concern themselves with a particular metaphysical formulation of the concept of self (Bell, 2016). On the contrary, Rawlsian liberalism is "political" on the grounds that no such conception is advanced. Individuals in the originals position are a necessary construction that allows for inferring the standards of political organisation based on assumed strategies of conduct – such strategies being compatible with detailed external definitions of what can be considered as constituting the self (Rawls, 1993). Moreover, a number of liberal theorists have argued that the ability of individuals to these recognise these strategies and consider them preferable in reference of the possession of rationality and capacity to formulate the conception of the good

is necessitated specifically by the features of our communal existence (Dworkin, 1985; Kymlicka, 1995).

Secondly, it has been argued that the assumption of communitarians regarding liberalism's neglect of community is not only misplaced, as it both misinterprets what is implied by the individual in liberalism and ignores the possibility of various versions of liberalism to sufficiently accommodate community as a constitutive of the self, but is also based on an exaggeration of a trivial point – the embeddedness thesis (Caney, 1992). Arguments of this sort proceed by suggesting that, essentially, the communitarian criticism can be formulated as the requirement to consider individuals as embedded in communities, which contribute to the formation of the structure of the individuals' worldview through transmitting systems of value and meaning. This is considered as being a basic descriptive claim about the nature of social reality, which, as it has been demonstrated by the previous replies, is not denied by a significant portion of liberal theory. Yet for this claim to be considered as problematic for liberalism it must be strengthened by assigning it a status of a metaphysical necessity – such a reformulation not being considered plausible. (Den Uyl & Rasmussen, 2006).

These replies may be considered viable to various degrees in regards to the specifics of the liberal-communitarian debate, however it can be argued that they are not applicable to the full extent of what can be extracted from Dugin's theory, in regards to its Heideggerian foundations. The main reason is that the notions of community, self and the political are conceptualised in a significantly broader way with a stronger emphasis on their specifically ontological character (Marchart, 2007).

The strong formulation of community as constitutive for identification is usually dismissed in liberal political theory (Caney, 1992), due to its assumed failure to account for multiple sources of identification, implications of exclusiveness and the questionable degree of ability to

problematize value systems and standards of conduct constructed and imposed by communities (Dagger, 2009). However, the suggested application of the Heideggerian notion of community, provides an even stronger formulation of the embeddedness thesis, while arguably being able to disregard these criticisms.

As suggested in the previous chapter, community is considered not just a composite entity against the background of which identification occurs (Sandel, 1998). Community is that of Being-with-Others - a modus of Dasein that presupposes primacy of intersubjective experience. It is one of the ways thought which Dasein unfolds: for it to obtain an own reference requires recognition through the reference of the Other (Heidegger, 1996; Backman, 2016). For Dasein structuring the horizon of meaning and recognising the being of entities requires for the recognition of the existence of this way in Dasein's own being (Heidegger, 1996). Furthermore, this recognition of own being in reference of the Other is also acknowledged as being shared by the Other as inherent to its own capacity for encountering entities (Gilbert-Walsh, 1999). While for Heidegger Being-with-Other (Mitsein) is not exhaustive of own way of being for Dasein (Janicaud, 1992) it is required for its encounter of oneself in virtue of which it can unfold as necessitating the possibility of recognising beings (Heidegger, 1996; pp. 95-102; 149-169; Macann, 1992).

Dugin extrapolates Heidegger's argument by transplanting this inference into the domain of the political (Duff, 2015). Dugin's insistence on the ontological primacy of community and the conceptualisation of the relationship between philosophical anthropology and the political, implies not only that specific features of our existence as humans should inform political principles through considerations regarding the behaviour and treatment of individuals as political actors, but that that it is exactly these features of our existence that are defined in reference to the political. At the same time the political is non reducible to any formulation of

just principles of conduct that organise polities, but is considered a defining the boundaries of what can be considered as constituting meaningful existence (Margolis, 1992). Therefore, a peculiar reformulation of the primacy of the political can be extracted from Dugin's reading of Heidegger.

Moreover, even the minimal liberal concept of the individual as an entity that retains the possibility to bear properties that can be considered as governing preferences, construction of values etc, ultimately informing the justified standards of conduct, still implies a basic metaphysical¹² claim (yet liberal replies are right in the sense that it does not make a more specific metaphysical claims about the content of the "self"). For Heidegger this would not be acceptable, as such a claim assumes the individual as an acting subject separate from the world upon which he acts (Heidegger, 1996) – even if the constitution of the subject is influenced by the character of this relationship. In its most basic formulation, Heidegger's own philosophical project (at least at the stage of "Being and Time"), constitutes an attempt to overcome the metaphysics of the subject-object division. He argues for the indivisibility of "consciousness" and the world that is encountered by it without abandoning the privileged position of the later, allowing for entities to be recognised as being presented to it (Wolin, 1990). This is achieved by suggesting Dasein a general horizon of possibilities to recognise Being through the being of entities: Dasein, at the same time, exists in the moduses that necessitate the possibility for it to unfold in such capacity (Macann, 1992) - one of which is specifically Being-with-Others that can, arguably, be used to establish the ontological primacy of a very specific notion of community (Boedeker, 2001).

¹² While it has been acknowledged that not all variations of liberalism declare themselves as not being reliant of a particular metaphysical framework (Rawls, 1993), engaging with the debate concerning this issue is not only outside the scope of this paper, but also un-necessary. The reason for this is that the following case rests on a terminological difference: the phrase "ontological foundations" would have been used, if we were to follow the usage of the term "metaphysical" suggested by this debate. However, since the initial critique is presented in Heideggerian vocabulary, it has been chosen not to do so in order to avoid additional confusion.

3.2 Post-Metaphysical Liberalism, Freedom and Dugin's Traditionalism

The second part of the chapter argues that despite the apparent difficulty of juxtaposing liberalism and the identified Heideggerian premise regarding the ontological primacy of community, due to the difference in the level of the operation of the critique and its object, it does not necessarily apply to all possible version of liberalism.

It may be still be possible to propose a version of liberalism that would be able to adopt a similar framework for the relationship between a Heidegger-inspired version of philosophical anthropology and the political, if the focus is shifted away from the acting subject that exercises freedom and the assertion the primacy of freedom (as the possibility of a willed upon choice) occurs. The later can be conceptualised as the potentially of action within the horizon of meaning, which arrives thought the encounter with the “question of Being” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 5) and reveals the multiplicity of entities in accordance to the way the question is addressed (Polt, 1997). Imagining such versions of liberalism would involve retaining the relationship between Dasein and community as shared response to the question of Being, given that some particular version of the sketched out conception of the connection between freedom and action are accepted (Villa, 1996). Therefore, if these notions are retained and prioritised, the “with-ness” of the Dasein can find its political realisation in the “moral space” (Polt, 1997; Taylor, 1989a). Consequently, this would presumably allow to derive the principles that are already consider essential for liberal political theory (Taylor, 1989b).

However, while the general outline of how a re-imagined version of liberalism,¹³ can accommodate the presented challenge can be provided, making it possible for specific versions of liberalism to avoid the accusations of being alienating (using Dugin's terms), it would still

¹³ Polt argues that Hanna Arendt's “post-metaphysical” liberalism can be possibly seen as constituting a version of such (Polt, 1997).

stay in sharp opposition with the fourth political theory (Millerman, 2017a). The central point here would be the differences in the approach towards the justification of legitimacy for a political entity or form of organisation. The reason for is that Dugin's vision can allow for any form of political organisation to exist, as long as it can be considered embodying the interests of an entity that both structures the totality of available existential experience and at the same time is immanent its subject. In "The Forth Political Theory" Dugin names this entity "ethnos" (Dugin, 2012). Dugin's definition of ethnos, of course, has little to do with those used in anthropology, sociology or any other field. Rather he describes it in an extremely broad way, as a

cultural phenomenon; as a community of language, religious belief, daily life, and of sharing resources and efforts; an organic entity written into an "accommodating landscape" (Lev Gumilev); as a refined system of constructing models for marital unions; as an always-unique means of establishing a relationship with the outside world; as the matrix of the "lifeworld" (Edmund Husserl); and as the source of all the "language-games" (Ludwig Wittgenstein).

Dugin, 2012, p. 41

In this sense it may be suggested that Dugin's "ethnos" can be used to refer to virtually any "traditional" form of community, as long as it can be seen as fulfilling these criteria. "Tradition" here also does not necessarily mean an actually existing and observable corpus of long-established practices or beliefs, but more likely is used to denote a manifestation of a primordial truth of being – a conception borrowed from the interpretation of perennial philosophy by such authors as René Guénon¹⁴ (Millerman, 2015).

Therefore, Dugin's theory would not question the legitimacy of the existence of a way of organising society that would otherwise be regarded abhorrent, as long as it can be demonstrated to satisfy the premise identified above. Given the general ambiguity, esoteric language of Dugin's writings, the difficulty to present them holistically while retaining a degree

¹⁴ The later constitutes a curious demonstration of certain long-standing influences on Dugin's thought.

of coherency and the great variety of topics they cover (Arnold & Umland, 2018) this may prove not that difficult. At the same time a version of a “post-metaphysical,” “non-subjectivist” liberalism would likely denounce such a political formation, based on the necessity to ensure the protection of even the broadest “ontologised” conception of freedom (Taylor, 1989b).

It can be argued that it is particularly this feature of Dugin’s thought that allows it to be so flexible in adopting to the demands of a great variety of political currents (specifically in regards to various conservatives and the Right-Wing), seeking elaborate theoretical foundations and at the same time permit to retain their political commitments.

Chapter 4: Reactionary Conservatism, Dugin and the Far Right: Same Sides of Different Coins

The following chapter will explore the relationship between the key points of Dugin's fourth political theory, as identified in the paper, and its possible manifestations within established right-wing ideologies. As discussed previously in the second chapter, the existing literature on Dugin, even the most recent one, is reluctant at designating his views either neo-fascist, neo-Nazi or reactionary conservative. The paper considers this classification is misguided, since it relies primarily on Dugin's previous political allegiances, along with the affiliations of the authors he draws upon, without engaging with the contents of his thought substantively (Millerman, 2017b). In order to correct this mistake and demonstrate the distinctive character of Dugin's ideas the following chapter will articulate the differences between Dugin's theory and the present right-wing currents in terms of the principles used for justifying political claims (Gentile, 2017), their relationship to Modernity and, specifically, the possible interpretation of the ontological primacy of community (Backman, 2016). Additional insight will be sought by surveying Dugin's own position in regards to affiliation with the ideological frameworks of national-socialism, fascism and certain versions of conservatism. The chapter will conclude with the consideration of Dugin's relationship to "conservative revolutionaries" (Arnold & Umland, 2018).

4.1 Fascism and National Socialism

Despite Dugin's earlier views, which have been seen as supportive and even apologetic of fascism as unjustly discredited by German National Socialism, already in the "Fourth Political Theory" he has distanced himself from it. (Laruelle, 2015b). The main reason of Dugin's rejection of fascism in general (and also National Socialism, if one is to consider it a particular instance of fascism) is its assumed relationship to Modernity as one of its political

manifestations (Dugin, 2012). While this relationship still remains a matter of scholarly debate (Griffin, 2007), it remains outside the scope of the current paper, as a proper examination would require a detailed account not only of fascism and National Socialism individually, but an elaborate definition of the characteristic features of Modernity, while not necessarily referencing Dugin at all¹⁵. For these reasons, the debate itself is put aside, as the paper sides with researchers who explicitly emphasize the presence of this relationship.

The most broadly defined theoretical features of fascism, identified by researchers, have included its simultaneous rejection of liberal capitalism and socialism, based on an assumption regarding the then-contemporary state of decay of the West, accompanied by the recognition of a unique moment of history that necessitates a grand transformation of all aspects of human existence: society, politics, culture etc. to ensure a civilisational re-birth (Sedgwick, 2004). Fascism implies a rejection of the development of Western society guided by the principles of reason that have created the liberal capitalist and then-present socialist political order, and advocates for the adoption of different forms of political organization, which would be based on new ways of conceptualising the nation, the state and the community (Griffin, 2007). Fascists recognised that in order to achieve this transformation, one must transcend the antagonisms of the present through an act of creative destruction, which itself lays the foundations for the “New Beginning” (Griffin, 2007, p. 365). Consequently, this theoretical framework, has found its manifestation in political praxis as rejection of previous forms of political organization such as the nation state, scepticism of democratic consensus, totalizing militarism, cult of action, mystification of heroism, glorification of death etc. (Eco, 1995).

Contemporary research has emphasizes that despite the overt rejection of the political

¹⁵ It is acknowledged, that it can be possible to deny the following relationship between fascism and modernism and therefore, under certain condition, demonstrate that Dugin’s theory can be viewed as belonging it.

manifestations of Modernity and fascination with pre-Modern form of societal organization, fascism in its essence remains an “alternative modernism rather a rejection of it” (Griffin, 2007, p.2). Briefly stated, this claim is justified by highlighting the transformative emphasis characteristic of fascism. While fascism does seem to reject (post)Enlightenment rationality, it does not reject the function played it in establishing the political projects of liberalism and socialism. The transformative impulse of Fascism can be regarded as based on the same a priori inference regarding the nature of the political, which results in the creation of normative prescriptions regarding political organisation (Sedgwick, 2004). This is specifically what Dugin has highlighted as rejecting in Modernity (Dugin, 2012, pp. 120-135).

At the same time, it would not be sufficient to simply point out this feature of Dugin’s argument, as his theory can be seen as essentially attempting to undertake the same task: it both shares its transformative pathos and utilizes similar terms. Therefore, demarcating Dugin’s theory from fascism requires specifically looking at how the terms of nation and state in fascism can be related to the foundations of the fourth political theory without them making a restricting inference regarding the the content of the political.

One can argue that Dugin’s establishment of community as an existential constitutive of selfhood, the prioritization the interests of the “ethnos” as legitimising the existence of a political entity, can be seen as nearly identical to that of Fascism’s reference to “nation” as being the ultimate form of community

Man is man only by virtue of the spiritual process to which he contributes as a member of the family, the social group, the nation, and in function of history to which all nations bring their contribution [...] Outside history man is a nonentity.

Mussolini, 1932, p.3

[Nation] as an idea, the mightiest because the most ethical, the most coherent, the truest, expressing itself in a people as the conscience and will of the few, if not, indeed, of one, and ending to express itself in the conscience and the will of the mass, of the whole group ethnically molded by natural and historical conditions into a nation, advancing, as one conscience and one will, along the self; same line of development and spiritual formation. Not a race, nor a geographically defined region, but a people, historically perpetuating itself; a multitude unified by an idea and imbued with the will to live, the will to power, self-consciousness, personality.

Mussolini, 1932, p.5

What is different however, is that for Dugin “ethnos” is not just a spiritually united historical community sharing the same will, but rather a particular expression of a horizon structuring the totality of experience (Dugin, 2012). Dugin choses “ethnos” to designate a particular expression of the relationship between Dasein - as encompassing the possibilities of encountering the world (Heidegger, 1996); and community - as fixating the horizon of these possibilities (Boedecker, 2001).

Moreover, fascism assumes a rigid relationship between the state and nation: “It is not the nation which generates the State [...] Rather is it the State which creates the nation, conferring volition and therefore real life on a people made aware of their moral unity” (Mussolini, 1933, p. 6). Dugin, however, would deny the exclusivity of this relationship as it is not the state or any particular political entity, which structure the “ethnos,” but rather the “ethnos” which necessitates the presence of a particular form of political organisation that would allow for its fullest realization (Dugin, 2012). The fourth political theory leaves room for various non-statist forms of political organization that would nevertheless would be considered adequate in their avoidance of alienating humans from authentic existence: anarchic, quasi-state, religious, deterritorialized nomadic communities etc (Backman, 2016).

Therefore, the political for Dugin does not remain restricted by any concretely defined construct that can be considered as a meaningful reference point, while for fascism, on the other hand, it remains confined by the relationship and content of nation and state, despite their seemingly broad definitions (Dugin, 2012). It would be important to note, however, that while

one can still attempt to formulate similar principles to those of fascism and remain in line with the fourth political theory without arriving to a direct contradiction, it would be necessary for them to avoid the same degree of both restriction and generalisation.

Consequently, it can be possible to apply the same distinction between the notion of community within national socialism and in Dugin's theory, as it can be done in regards to fascism (either by assuming national socialism being a particular expression of fascism sharing the same basic conceptual attitude towards the notion, or through an application of the same structure of reasoning). Yet, it would be useful to consider certain features of National Socialism in light of Dugin's theory independently, specifically due to him frequently being classified as a Neo-Nazi (Laruelle, 2015b). Not only does Dugin strongly reject this affiliation himself, but, more importantly, it can be demonstrated that he cannot be seen as a Nazi-sympathizer based on the absence of a number of critical features characteristic of National Socialism in his theory¹⁶.

First of all, despite his strong preference for nationalism, Dugin can be found as openly rejecting racism, specifically that constructed on biological grounds (Dugin, 2012). Even in his earlier works on Eurasionism, where Dugin emphasized the role of spatiality and the metaphysical nature of a nation's historico-geographical positioning as constitutive civilizational feature, Dugin's notion of ethnos as a unified political body cannot be necessarily traced to the "blood and soil" of National-Socialism (Arnold & Umland, 2018). Dugin denies primordial nationalism and its emphasis on biological heritage. Moreover, Dugin openly acknowledges the diverse ethnic and cultural influences, for example, on the Russian ethnos and state-tradition, celebrating its Slavic, Byzantine, Iranian, Finno-Ugric, Mongol and even

¹⁶ It remains questionable, however, whether it would be possible to reformulate National Socialism by accepting the premises of Dugin's theory. As the possibility to implement at least elements of the Nazi political order is present.

Western origins (Laruelle, 2015a).

Secondly, it is also important to note that Dugin has also been found denouncing the possibility of comparing ethnic groups in terms of their capacities for development as inherent in their biological nature, or even of them retaining predispositions towards a particular location in a social hierarchy within a political community (Dugin, 2015a). An examination of the ‘Fourth Political Theory’ reveals that constructing these hierarchies along with the pursuit of their institution as a an establishment of a “natural” political order would be seen by Dugin as a characteristically Modern feature, due to its reliance on theoretical reason, which seeks to construct universalized prescriptions and explanations for particular social and political realities (Dugin, 2012). Moreover, despite Dugin’s advocacy for the creation of supra-state entities based on their assumed civilizational borders, they are not constructed based on biologically naturalized hierarchies of political communities. Dugin’s version of political anthropology centred on the category of Dasein, accepts and embraces the multiplicity of traditions, without ranging them or requiring domination of “inferior” ones (Dugin, 2012)¹⁷

4.2 Reaction, Conservatism and the “Conservative Revolution”

The current section of this chapter addresses the relationship between Dugin and various forms of reactionary conservatism, which has been recognised as the most pervasive designation of for his work in the literature. While this has been the case due to both the content of his statements and the extent of support for various ideas traditionally present among various strands of both liberal and non-liberal conservatism (Kolstø & Blakkisrud, 2016), such

¹⁷ However, despite rejecting natural biological hierarchies, Dugin’s theory does leave space for justifying hierarchical relations based not on the domination of the inferior by superior, but denial of recognition to certain communities. At the same time, in Dugin’s theoretical framework, this would not be considered a hierarchy, due to the absence of the object of domination, unless a community that is otherwise recognized as particular can be shown as corresponding to an “ethnos” (Dugin’s usage of the term). An example of this would be Dugin’s denial of the legitimacy of the claims by Ukraine to its territories (Umland, 2016).

designation would not be exhaustive to characterise his views or provide the sufficiently broad theoretical arsenal to counter them.¹⁸ Finally, the chapter will attempt to draw a demarcation line between Dugin and the “conservative revolutionaries,” whose influence can be seen as shaping the general framework of Dugin’s theory (not surprisingly, since Heidegger himself has frequently been recognised as belonging to this camp). However, it will be argued that by tracing not only the way of interpreting their reference to community, but also how it can be seen as constitutive to the content of political theory, Dugin’s approach can be demonstrated as being sufficiently different, while still remaining a distinctive political application of Heidegger’s philosophy.

For the most part, the reasons why Dugin’s views have been frequently classified as radically conservative or reactionary, are based on examples of his statements featuring his strong advocacy for religion, bordering that of fundamentalism¹⁹, anti-secularism to the extreme of completely abolishing the separation between church and state (Dugin, 2015b), ethno-nationalism (Millerman, 2017a), traditional gender roles (Dugin, 2010a), disapproval for abortion, LGBT+ rights (Dugin, 2016) etc. Moreover, Dugin not only vocally endorsed these positions, but has also celebrated the preservation of existing barriers that support their disintegration and calls for the introduction and re-establishment of institutions, practices and beliefs that would facilitate a return to their various historical and pre-Modern forms (Arnold & Umland, 2018).

¹⁸ It would still be possible to argue against certain implications of his views explicitly concerning political practice from many existing political or moral stances, yet it would not constitute a sufficient reason to dismiss them all- together, due to the situation of the main content of his theory on a more abstract level.

¹⁹ Dugin himself subscribes to Edinoverie, a movement within the Russian Old Believers, which advocates for transcending the divisions between contemporary New and Old Orthodox Church by emphasising the importance of belongingness to a single normative canon, while maintaining particular differences in carrying out religious ceremonies (Paert, 2003). Moreover, in one of his interviews Dugin stated, in reply to the question regarding his identification, that : “First, I am orthodox, second, I am Russian, and only then – human” (Dugin, Pozner: Aleksandr Dugin, 2014c).

What is frequently missed by researches who label Dugin simply as a reactionary conservative, is that his support for these positions is not unconditional and, moreover, anti-universalist (Dugin, 2012). Dugin, himself openly declares that his vision of “conservatism” does not simply imply a set of political beliefs that advocate for the preservation or re-establishment of a certain current or past order, based on its assumed superiority, but calls for a re-imagination of that order on new foundations.²⁰

Dugin briefly addresses reaction and conservatism in the “Fourth Political Theory,” examining a notion of “naïve” conservatism, speaking of a less academic and more common-practice usage of term, as it is frequently found in political discourse (Dugin, 2012, pp. 120-130). Dugin notes that in regards to this usage, conservative or reactionary politics, values, practices and ways of structuring institutions are justified based on the premise regarding the superiority of the existing order, or that existing previously to a new one that comes about through change (Dugin, 2012). Dugin denies naïve conservatism and reaction as he asserts the absence of a simple necessary relationship between value of some form of organising society politically and the time of origin of this form. Moreover, such conservatism can be frequently found to rest on moral claims, which themselves counter-position the past, as exhibiting a realisation of some moral quality or virtue to a greater degree, compared to the present or the future characterised by the absence or lesser presence of such virtue.²¹ Dugin also reject this premise, and furthermore highlights that in order to make, some degree of accepting moral universalism is required²². Unlike such conservatives, Dugin can be considered a value-pluralist, as despite his

²⁰ Moreover, Dugin is seen to not only accept, but to build up on particular issues that can be considered the domain of “progressivists” (reference is made to the common usage of the term rather a precise scholarly definition) (Backman, 2016).

²¹ Conservatism of this type can also be considered as generally pessimistic regarding the development of society and politics, by suggesting a certain “virtuous age” located in the past, which is used as a reference point for moral evaluation, while the history following the passing of this age is regarded as gradual (and sometimes also more abrupt) decay (Hamilton, 2016).

²² While this is not necessarily true, this statement can be considered as being descriptive of the actually existing conservative arguments in politics, rather than normative or philosophical justification.

rejection of certain practices on moral grounds, he does not believe in the universality of the application of such claims, and can consider them justified in certain political contexts (Milerman, 2017).

One can argue that this form of grounding conservative or reactionary politics is not actually philosophical. The preference for retaining certain features of the political order is justified not just by a value claim, but on the consideration that these features arise through gradual and organic development and retained as being best able to answer to social and political challenges (Hamilton, 2016). Viewed in this way, the conservative justification would have something in common with the general structure of the evolutionary argument: existing forms of social and political organisations can be regarded in the similar way as species of animals – they survive, because they are best fit to do so. One can suggest that such features are preferable, because they have been successfully tested by time, while changes have not, making them inherently less appealing. Furthermore, this version of conservatism can allow for both the possibility of gradual change, because it does not subscribe to a static vision of society, and is non-universalistic, since various ways of organising society are preferable not purely because of their moral character, but are embedded in the social, political, economic etc. histories of those societies. This makes it possible to advocate for the preservation of different sets of political practices for different societies, while still labelling them “conservative” (Hamilton, 2016).²³

While this view in justifying conservatism does seem to be more in line with Dugin’s thought, to assume them as relying on the same justification would be false. As described in the chapter discussing Dugin’s theory in general, it would not be possible to hold an organicist vision of society, while adhering to the fourth political theory. The main reason for this would be that an

²³ Which is also the conservative argument against a priori politics, which aims to restructure the social order in the way that would correspond to what can be considered best fitting the realisation of some rationally-deduced principles (Hamilton, 2016).

organicist justification for conservatism relies on the naturalisation of the political, which Dugin regards a necessary feature of Modernity, corresponding to the desire to rationalise the world through an application of an abstract and universalised model of it and the processes occurring²⁴ (Dugin, 2012).

Finally, in regards to conservatism and Dugin it would be important to consider the differences between the attitudes towards reason as present in the fourth political theory and conservative critics of liberalism and socialism. It is important to note that both classical and more contemporary works of conservative critique are based on scepticism towards universalised reason (Burke, 1987 [1790]) – a widely accepted characteristic feature of Modernity (Kekes, 1997). Conservatives from Burke to Scruton have emphasised that the transformative projects of socialism and liberalism can be considered the products of adopting (post)Enlightenment-style reasoning, which attempts to deduce moral and political truths a priori (Hamilton, 2016). Conservatives thus can be seen as rejecting rapid social change and exhibiting a preference for existing or disappearing features of social and political order not simply because they are considered “more natural,” but because this preference is mediated by the considerations regarding the inherently non-rationalistic character of politics and prioritisation of practice over theory (Scruton, 1980)²⁵. Moreover, as emphasised by Scruton, this non rational character is mediated by the way the relationship between society and particular human beings necessitates the structuring of the political. For Scruton, this relationship is regarded as being outside the realm of individual choice, meaning that the derivation of political prescriptions purely from

²⁴ It can also be suggested that Dugin could possibly deny the necessary connection between the durability of some form of polity as being grounded and its ability to best answer the challenges presented. Moreover, there currently exists an active debate regarding the relationship between this approach to conceptualising conservatism and Modernity, with perspectives ranging from positioning them in an interdependent relationship, to conservatism being another possible implication of adopting the principles of Modernity (Hamilton, 2016).

²⁵ This of course is not to say that conservatism is irrational, but rather “non-rational,” as it does not fully deny theoretical reason or propose the primacy of the irrational (as with Freud or Nietzsche), but merely attempts to limit the scope of its application (Hamilton, 2016).

the detached standpoint of theoretical reason would be inadequate (Hamilton, 2016).

However, the application of a conservative label to Dugin's theory in this regards, would also remain limited. Looking at Scruton's point, it can be considered very much in line with the general premise of Dugin's argument against existing political theories as failing to recognise a proper relationship between the community and the particular self. However, what differentiates Dugin from Scruton, is that for Dugin this relationship is not that with a particular human being (or just a way of describing the structure of the relationship between any given person within a certain community), but rather, as identified earlier, his concept of "ethnos," which itself mediates the totality of existential experience for the subjects (Dugin, 2012, pp.40-43). It would then be important to point an important feature that can different Dugin from the present versions of conservatism. While the premise regarding the rejection of liberalism and socialism is based on similar scepticism towards the colonising character of Modern rationality, unlike even the earlier conservatives such as Burke (Burke, 1987 [1790]), Dugin, following Heidegger, locates the reason for this not in Modernity itself, but at the very foundations of Western style philosophising: the establishment of the subject-object division (Backman, 2016).

In relation to this point Dugin can actually be seen as more closer to a number of 20th century thinkers, who have been labelled "conservative revolutionaries:" Evola, Spengler, Schmitt, Junger and, frequently, Heidegger himself. They recognised that the flaws of Modern societies are not simply due to the features of Modernity, but that Modernity itself is a product of an initial flaw, a civilizational "birth defect" of the West that ultimately ensures its destruction (Griffin, 2007). Therefore, simple delay of change, careful preservation of social order, or a return to some pre-Modern forms would not be sufficient. What was considered to be required by them is complete reconfiguration of society based on principles that cannot be found within

the existing political canon, but can only be forged in the annihilation of the existing order, which was regarded as not simply decaying, but manifesting a stage of oblivion. This apocalyptic vision was presumably, what has made them, along with numerous prominent intellectual and artistic figures of the age to become supporters of radical doctrines such as various versions of fascism and National Socialism (Sedgwick, 2004). For “conservative revolutionaries” the dialectic of the “decline of the West” (Spengler, 1992; p. 3.) required for the arrival of the anti-thesis of the Modern as its necessary mirror image briefly found in Fascism and National Socialism, which would engage in the “final battle of the Modern world” ensuring a rebirth of civilisation²⁶. And while Dugin has expressed great admiration for conservative revolutionaries, he can be seen as diverging from them in one important respect (Dugin, 2015a).

It was specifically the Modernity of National Socialism and Fascism, which made the conservative revolutionaries disenchanted with this vision and retreat into passive nihilism, when they realised that both these ideologies in virtue of their creation cannot ensure the development of true antagonisms with the Modernity of liberalism and socialism (Sedgwick, 2004). Dugin, on the other hand, considers that this dialectic is internal, rather than external: the antagonisms were present within liberalism and socialism, yet their manifestation required the presence of a living alternative, which would allow for them to be articulated against the horizon of possibilities²⁷ (Dugin, 2010). This was exactly what occurred throughout the 20th century and necessitated the collapse of, first, right wing ideologies, and, afterwards,

²⁶ In regards to Heidegger, this mostly concerns his earlier position, as later he has almost completely distanced himself from engaging in any form of philosophical commentary on politics, while still refusing to openly acknowledge his allegiance with National Socialism as a mistake. However Heidegger’s late work “Contributions to Philosophy of the Event,” can be seen as providing some insights of his attitudes towards different political theories in terms of their metaphysical foundations (Heidegger, 1992), which can be regarded as later picked up by Dugin (Millerman, 2014).

²⁷ Fascism came as a false alternative, because it was also Modern in its core.

socialism,²⁸ allowing liberalism to transcend into its post-ideological phase (Dugin, 2012). Therefore, for Dugin, the creation of the fourth political theory is required not only to rearticulate these antagonisms, as this is both no longer possible and sufficient, but to provide an anti-thesis to the whole history of Modernity with liberalism as immanent to it. Yet unlike the aspirations regarding fascism and National Socialism the “final battle” is that not of arms, as it cannot provide the complete realisation of the dialectic, but one that can ensure complete subversion of the existing order though embracing the acceleration of the processes that ensure its own destruction – the arrival of fourth political theory signifying the possibility of such (Noys, 2014).

²⁸ Dugin does not see either of those as necessary, though, but being reliant on contingent factors (Dugin, 2012)

Conclusion: What is the Fourth Political Theory?

The following paper has attempted to present a case that a substantive study of the current “conservative turn” in politics, specifically concerning Russia, would significantly benefit from a serious examination of one of the most curious contemporary anti-liberal intellectuals – Aleksandr Dugin. It has also been argued that doing so requires challenging a major segment of existing literature, that not only has up till recently almost completely neglected Dugin, but has also failed to acknowledge the distinctive character of his views by misplacing him within the existing categories of the anti-liberal right wing. It has been suggested that this not only constitutes a scholarly mistake, but obscures the possibility to recognise Dugin’s current and prospective influence on the development of contemporary right-wing thought and political movements, which seek new and detailed theoretical foundations. The paper attempted to demonstrate that correcting this mistake calls for not only a thorough consideration of Dugin’s own writings, but the recognition of the novelty of their application Martin Heidegger’s philosophy (Millerman, 2017a).

It has been argued that, despite the foundations of Dugin’s political theory being comprised of a not particularly original assemblage of criticisms of Modernity, the key point, that is at the same time central to Dugin’s application of Heidegger is the way he conceptualises the alienating character of the existing theories of political organisation and formulates the criteria that would grant a political theory the capacity to overcome this obstacle by allowing for an authentic existence of human beings (Dugin, 2012). This has been presented as the requirement to acknowledge the ontological primacy of community, which, according to Dugin, has been neglected by existing political theories. The basis of this claim has been traced back to the complex character of the relationship between the self and community in Heidegger, where community retains ontological primacy as it is necessary for the self to unfold as both

inseparable from the world and being able to encounter particular entities through different modes of Dasein (Heidegger, 1996). It has been shown that Dugin's theory retains this premise (Dugin, 2015a), but provides a specific reading of it by prioritising the political character of community (Wolin, 1990).

In order to justify the assumption regarding the novelty of Dugin's approach, the possibility of applying this requirement to the existing political theories criticised by Dugin has been analysed. It has been concluded that despite the presence of a certain scope to accommodate for the ontological primacy of community in post-metaphysical versions of liberalism (Villa, 1996), Dugin's theory in its political reading of Heidegger – the way in which he conceptualises the realisation of the relationship between community and the self – is broader than could be allowed by liberals due to their commitments. At the same time it has been demonstrated that despite the seemingly close character of the appeal to the primacy of community in justifications used by classical fascism, National Socialism and reactionary conservatism to Dugin's theory, his approach remains distinct from them, since it allows to both incorporate a more extensive critique of Modernity and accommodate a larger set of justifiable ways of political organisation. The latter has been also exemplified by a demonstration of how, despite the apparent similarity of between Dugin's political claims and those of the radical right, they substantively differ in terms of their justification – supplying an additional argument against the tendencies in current literature to consider Dugin primarily in light of his political commitments (Backman, 2016).

Finally, it has been shown that the most plausible way of conceptualising Dugin's political theory would be to consider it as an authentic example of Right-Heideggerianism and continuing the traditions of conservative revolutionaries in regards to the shared character of their basic premises (Millerman, 2017a). However, it has also been shown that Dugin's theory

does not simply constitute a generalised summary of their insights, but provides at least a glimpse of a possible direction in developing that position further. This assumption is made based on Dugin's suggestion of different criteria of what should be considered a "New Beginning" for "Western Civilisation" – the institution of which conservative revolutionaries have mistakenly believed to see in the doctrines of fascism and National Socialism – by incorporating the theoretical developments of the following decades and the experience of the latest history in regards to the collapse of socialist regimes, emergence of neoliberalism, developments in technology and transition to the post-political and post-ideological (Dugin, 2015a).

Therefore, it can be suggested that this specific political reading of Heidegger's philosophy, paired with a syncretic incorporation of both left and right critiques of contemporary society and Modernity has allowed Dugin's political theory to remain sufficiently flexible in order to be appropriated as a theoretical foundation, or at least remain of high interest to a significant number of radical conservative and right-wing movements across the world (Laruelle, 2015b). The explanation of this flexibility lies in its radical pluralism, exceeding that considered reasonable by liberal or socialist adaptations of Heidegger's thought, along with the emphasis on the rigidity of the relationship between a very broad conception of community and the horizons of meaning accessible to humans – supposedly necessitating the unjustified character of questioning them from an external critical vantage point. Together these features allow for the fourth political theory to easily accommodate various forms of anti-liberal, anti-communist, authoritarian, anti-secularist, nationalist, traditionalist, revanchist, right-populist etc. tendencies within a broadest array of possible forms of political organisation, given that specific contextual links are provided (Millerman, 2017a).

In conclusion it should be noted that the criticism of the current state of research on Dugin offered by the this paper and its call to explore the philosophical foundations of his thought as a way of contributing to a more holistic and less instrumentalised understanding of contemporary anti-liberal intellectualism, is, fortunately, not a completely exclusive case within the relevant literature (Millerman, 2017a). The last few years have demonstrated not only a rise of interest to Dugin within the larger context of right-wing thought, but also a gradual shift in recognising the importance of embracing a more philosophical approach towards studying his philosophy, as demonstrated by Backman, Millerman and Duff, whose insights have proven invaluable to this work. However, the paper does not suggest a privileged position for the exclusively theoretical engagement with the thought of Dugin and other contemporary radical right-wing thinkers, nor does it advocate for the ability of such an approach to provide exhaustive explanations of current trends. It is fully acknowledged by the author that a development of a proper holistic understanding of the contemporary resurgence of the right, even in the particular case of Dugin, requires diverse and mutually-informing approaches and methods.

Nevertheless, in regards to targets for further research, which can be suggested within the scope of the current investigation, it should be important to highlight, firstly, the necessity to consider the relationship between the possibility of various left-wing currents to accommodate for the Heideggerian challenge of the ontological primacy of community as formulated by Dugin. This direction may be fruitful in terms of providing possible ways of tackling not only Dugin theories, but those inspired by him. Secondly, it would be important to explore other facets of Dugin's philosophy in regards to his reference to Heidegger that could be used to formulate criticisms of established political theories. Finally, it may be suggested to conduct a broader investigation on the possibilities of political readings of Heidegger by the contemporary Right in general.

Sources

Allen, J. (2017). *Aleksandr Dugin's "New Beginning" – An Anti-Modern Prophecy of Chaos*. Retrieved from <http://www.belletrist.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Duginism.pdf>

Althusser, L. (1970). *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* [Translation: Brewster, B.]. La Pensée.

Arnold, R., & Umland, A. (2018). *The Radical Right in Post-Soviet Russia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Backman, J. (2016). Postmetaphysics and the Global Order: Radical Conservative Critiques of Globalization in Right Heideggerianism. Global Order in Conservative Political Thought since WWII. Ljubljana: CEEISA-ISA 2016 Joint Conference.

Bateson, G. (1979). *Unity, Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*. New York: E.P. Dutton.

Bell, D. "Communitarianism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2016 Edition), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/communitarianism>.

Boedeker, E. (2001). Individuality and Community in Early Heidegger: Situating das Man; the Man-self, and Self-ownership in Dasein's Ontological Structure. *Inquiry*, 63-99.

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Caney, S. (1992). Liberalism and Communitarianism: A Misconceived Debate. *Political Studies*, 273-289.

Dagger, R. (2009). Individualism and the Claims of Community. In T. Christiano, & J. Christman, *Contemporary Debates in Political Philosophy* (pp. 303-342). New Jersey: Blackwell.

Den Uyl, D., & Rasmussen, D. (2006). The Myth of Atomism. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 841-868.

Duff, A. (2015). *Heidegger and Politics: The Ontology of Radical Discontent*. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press .

Dugin, A. (1997). *The Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia [In Russian]*. Moscow: Arktogeta.

Dugin, A. (2010a). *Martin Heidegger: A Philosophy of another Beginning [In Russian]*. Moscow: Mir.

Dugin, A. (2010b, May 17). Questions Regarding the Rights of Sexual Minorities. (*Chestnij Ponedelnik, Interviewer*)

Dugin, A. (2012). *The Fourth Political Theory*. Moscow: The Eurasian Movement.

- Dugin, A. (2014a). Alexander Dugin on Eurasionism, the Geopolitics of Land and Sea, and a Russian Theory of Multipolarity. (M. Millerman, Interviewer)
- Dugin, A. (2014b). *Eurasian Mission: An Introduction to Neo-Eurasianism*. Budapest: Arktos.
- Dugin, A. (2014c, April 21). *Pozner: Aleksandr Dugin*. (V. Pozner, Interviewer)
- Dugin, A. (2015a). Alexander Dugin on Martin Heidegger. (M. Millerman, Interviewer)
- Dugin, A. (2015b, August 15). The Church Must Not Be Separated from the State [In Russian]. *Izborsk Club*.
- Dugin, A. (2016, June 20). Secret UN Funds: For Abortion and Sodomy [In Russian]. *Kateheon*.
- Dworkin, R. (1985). *A Matter of Principle*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Eco, U. 1995. "Ur-Fascism." *The New York Review of Books*, June 22.
- Fisher, M. (2009). *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative?* London: Zero Books.
- Gastaldi, J. (2009). Politics before Being: Deleuze, Ontology, and Politics. *Cités*, 59 - 73.
- Gentile, E. (2017). Fascism as Political Religion. In M. Neiberg, *Fascism*. London: Routledge.
- Gans-Morse, J. (2004). Searching for Transitologists: Contemporary Theories of Post-Communist Transitions and the Myth of a Dominant Paradigm. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 320-349.
- Gilbert-Walsh, J. (1999). *Heidegger and the Question of Community*. Toronto.
- Griffin, R. (2007). *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Haugeland, J. (2005). Reading Brandom Reading Heidegger. *European Journal of Philosophy*, 421-238.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1992). *Contributions to Philosophy of the Event*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and Time [A Translation of Sein und Zeit]*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hemming, P. (2013). *Heidegger and Marx*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.
- Ingram, A. (2001). Alexander Dugin: geopolitics and neo-fascism in post-Soviet Russia. *Political Geography*, 1029-1051.

- Janicaud, D. (1992). The Shadow of His Thinking. In C. Macann, Martin Heidegger: *Critical Assessments* (pp. 104-135). London: Routledge.
- Kapustin, B., & Malinova, O. (2016). *Russia in Search of Ideologies*. Moscow: ROSPEEN.
- Kolstø, P., & Blakkisrud, H. (2016). *The New Russian Nationalism: Imperialism, ethnicity and Authoritarianism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Kuzio, T. (2016). Nationalism and Authoritarianism in Russia: Introduction to the Special Issue. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 1-11.
- Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural Citizenship: A liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Lacoue Labarthe, P. (1990). *Heidegger, Art and Politics*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.
- Laruelle, M. (2006). *Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Far-Right*. Washington: Kennan Institute.
- Laruelle, M. (2014). The Ideological Shift on the Russian Radical Right. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 19-31.
- Laruelle, M. (2015a). Dangerous Liaisons: Eurasianism, the European Far Right, and Putin's Russia. In M. Laruelle, *Eurasianism and the European Far Right: Reshaping the Europe-Russia Relationship* (pp. 1-32). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Laruelle, M. (2015b). The Iuzhinskii Circle: Far-Right Metaphysics in the Soviet Underground and its Legacy Today. *Russian Review*, 563-580.
- Loureiro, R. (2010). *Politics and Eschatology: Christian, Muslim and Liberal Traditions and their Visions of Humankind's Future*.
- Macann, C. (1992). Who is Dasein? Towards an Ethics of Authenticity. In C. Macann, *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments* (pp. 214-247). London: Routledge.
- Marchart, O. (2007). *Post-Foundational Political Thought*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Margolis, J. (1992). Philosophy and Politics: by Way of Martin Heidegger. In C. Macann, *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments* (pp. 78-104). London: Routledge.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1988). *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto*. New York: Prometheus Books.
- Miller, F. (2017). Aristotle's Political Theory. Retrieved from *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/aristotle-politics/>
- Millerman, M. (2014). Heidegger, Left and Right: Differential Political Ontology and Fundamental Political Ontology Compared (Marchart vs. Dugin). *Journal of Eurasian Affairs*.

- Millerman, M. (2015). *Alexander Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism and the Eurasian Union Project: A Critique of Recent Scholarship and an Attempt at a New Beginning and Reorientation*.
- Millerman, M. (2017a). *Dasein and the Fourth Political Theory: Towards an Adequate Critique of Alexander Dugin's Political Theory*.
- Millerman, M. (2017b). *The Ethnosociological and Existential Dimensions of Alexander Dugin's Populism*.
- Mouffe, C. 2005. *On the Political*. New York: Routledge.
- Mussolini, B. 1933. *The Doctrine of Fascism [Translated by Munro I.S.]*. London: Alexander Maclehose
- Newel, W. (1984). Heidegger on Freedom and Community: Some Political Applications of His Early Thought. *American Political Science Review*, 775-784.
- Noys, B. 2014. *Malign Velocities: Accelerationism and Capitalism*. London: Zero Books.
- Paert, I. (2003). *Old Believers: Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Polt, R. (1997). Metaphysical Liberalism in Heidegger's *Beitrage zur Philosophie*. *Political Theory*, 655-679.
- Rawls, J. (1993). *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sandel, M. (1998). *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schacht, R. (1990). Philosophical Anthropology: What, Why and How. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 155-176.
- Sedgwick, M. (2004). *Against the Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shekhovtsov, A. (2008). The Paligenic Thrust of Russian Neo-Eurasianism: Ideas and Rebirth in Aleksandr Dugin's Worldview. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 491-506.
- Shekhovtsov, A., & Umland, A. (2008). Is Aleksandr Dugin a Traditionalist? "Neo-Eurasianism" and Perennial Philosophy. *Russian Review*, 662-678.
- Shenfield, M. (2001). *Russian Fascism: Traditions, Tendencies, Movements*. New York: M.E.Sharpe.
- Steigman-Gall, R. (2004). Nazism and the revival of political religion theory. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religion*, 376-396.
- Spengler, O. 1927. *The Decline of the West*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Taylor, C. (1985). Atomism. *Philosophical Papers*, 187-210.

Taylor, C. (1989a). Cross-Purposes: The Liberal Communitarian Debate. In N. Rosenblum, *Liberalism and the moral life* (pp. 159-182). London: Harvard University Press.

Taylor, C. (1989b). *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Tolstoy, A., & McCaffray, E. (2015). *Mind games: Alexander Dugin and Russia's war of ideas*. *World Affairs*.

Toschenko, Z. (2015). *Phantoms of Russian Society [In Russian]*. Moscow: Nauka.

Umland, A. (2008). Theorizing Post-Soviet Russia's Extreme Right: Comparative Political, Historical and Sociological Approaches. *Russian Politics and Law*.

Umland, A. (2016). Alexander Dugin and Moscow's new right radical intellectual circles at the start of Putin's third presidential term 2012-2013: the anti-orange committee, the Izborsk club and the Florian Geyer club in their political context. *Europolity*, 7-31.

Verkhovsky, A. (2000). Ultra-nationalists in Russia at the onset of Putin's rule. *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 707-722.

Villa, D. (1996). *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Wolin, R. (1990). *The Politics of Being*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Žižek, S. (2010). *Living in the End Times*. London: Verso.