

Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations

Examining the Entanglement of How the EU and Russia Narrate the World

by Mario Baumann

Dissertation submitted to the School of Politics and International Relations
in the Division of Human and Social Sciences

in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the award of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations

16. II. 2023

University of Kent
Brussels School of International Studies

1st Supervisor: Dr Tom Casier
2nd Supervisor: Professor Adrian Pabst
Word count: 95.252

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the result of my almost decade-long formation at university. This has been achievable thanks to the endless trust of my parents, who have always blindly and unconditionally encouraged me and never doubted my very own choices. I am grateful for that. Diese Arbeit ist das Resultat meiner fast zehnjährigen akademischen Ausbildung. Diese wurde mir ermöglicht durch das endlose Vertrauen, welches meine Eltern mir und meinen Entscheidungen immer bedingungslos entgegenbrachten. Dafür bin ich dankbar.

I want to sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr Tom Casier, who, by all standards, has been the best supervisor thinkable. Most importantly, I want to thank you, Tom, for your guidance and trust, but also for your interest, your support, uncountable inspiring discussions and, sometimes coinciding, quite a number of delicious Belgian beers.

I owe gratitude also to all other academic and professional staff as well as my fellow PhD students at the Brussels School of International Studies, who all together form a stimulating and supportive community that I always cherished, an environment which is just so important for the creative process.

Further, I want to thank the people, friends and colleagues, with whom I had and have the privilege to work on the more practical side of EU-Russia relations in the form of policy projects, mentorships and conferences. It is them who remind me every day of my fascination for the subject and why it is so important to keep engaging with it, despite – or rather because of – its daunting realities.

This dissertation has been made possible thanks to a generous scholarship by Friedrich-Ebert foundation, and I want to express my gratitude to the Team Promotionsförderung for their daily efforts in supporting my peers and me in pursuing our projects.

Finally, I want to thank my friends in Brussels and beyond, who have made this process an enjoyable one. Without them it would have not been possible to offset the monotony, the stress and the frustration such an endeavour sometimes generates – especially during a pandemic that makes such a solitary project much more solitary.

Abstract

In a time when ‘the Western idea’ is increasingly challenged, when the creation of meaning is contested globally, this dissertation seeks to illuminate how Russian and EU foreign policy discourses interact. It is building upon the insight that Russian and European debates do not exist in isolation from but are entangled with each other.

Going beyond one-dimensional studies of Russian and European identity formation, this project seeks to capture the EU-Russia relationship as an intersubjective one. Such a context, it is argued, requires an approach that does not reduce the Other to an object of discursive othering but appreciates it as an acting subject in its own right, articulating an alternative political project. It seeks to understand how this social context of discursive struggle positions Russia and the EU towards each other, how this positioning may pose constraints on the foreign policy discourses they articulated, and thus, how it conditions both subjects’ (discursive) agency.

To this end, this dissertation proposes a non-deterministic intersubjective analytical approach. Its theoretical framework marries poststructuralist thought with insights from critical approaches to Hegelian recognition dialectics. Adding the latter’s social ontology to the former’s constitutive logic, it fleshes out how the intersubjective dimension conditions Russia’s and the EU’s articulation of contingent discourses. The empirical discourse analysis takes a comparative perspective, focusing on articulations by key figures and institutions of foreign policy-making both in Russia and the EU. Based on more than 550 primary sources, it traces the structure of Russian and EU antagonistic foreign policy discourses on seven contested events (floating signifiers) between 2004 and 2021 and illuminates how they engage with each other in a competition for hegemony.

This study draws a detailed empirical picture of discursive dynamics between Russia and the EU. Tracing the evolution of how both subjects relate to each other discursively, it illustrates how the discursive struggle between Russia and the EU intensifies. At the same time, it is argued that neither the EU’s nor Russia’s foreign policy discourses have changed substantially. Their structure, as well as their patterns of interaction have exhibited striking continuity. This interaction is an asymmetrical one with Russia’s articulation remaining much more conditioned by the EU’s discourse than vice versa. Harnessing insights from recognition dynamics, this dissertation argues that the EU is more independent in sovereignly articulating an interpretation

of the world, whereas Russia continues to face constraints in the formulation of an autonomous political project, ultimately limiting its agency in the articulation of discourse.

Conceptually and methodologically, this dissertation contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analytical framework to capture discursive interaction in an intersubjective setting free of preconceived structural assumptions. Empirically, it offers a detailed account of the mechanics of how Russian and EU discourses compete for hegemony, substantially contributing to an understanding of the discursive dynamics in the two decades preceding Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	<i>xi</i>
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review	8
Introduction	8
a) EU-Russia Relations: A Heterogeneous Field.....	9
b) Navigating Through Complex Terrain.....	10
1. Power-Based Explanations for Making Sense of EU-Russia Relations	12
a) Offensive or Defensive Russia.....	13
b) Rising or Declining Russia	14
c) Competition for Influence.....	14
d) The Persistence of Realist Thinking	15
2. Domestic Political Explanations for Making Sense of EU-Russia Relations	16
a) Authoritarian Russia vs Democratic Union	17
b) Domestic Players	18
c) Diversionary Theory of Conflict.....	19
d) Cooperation Through Interdependence.....	19
e) Interim Conclusions	20
3. Ideas and Interpretation in EU-Russia Relations	20
a) Interpretation and Identity	22
i) Russia in European Identity Discourses.....	23
ii) Europe in Russian Identity Discourses	25
b) Taking a Step Back: Ideational Interaction.....	32
i) What is Interaction?	33
ii) Explaining Ideational Interaction	35
iii) Exploring Agency in Interaction.....	40
iv) Developing the Intersubjective Dimension.....	44
4. Conclusion	48
Chapter 3: A Conceptual Framework for Discursive Interaction	50
Introduction	50
1. The Poststructuralist Edifice	52
a) General Introduction to Poststructuralist Thought.....	53
b) Discursive Change	55
c) The (Perceived) Problem: Can We Really Do Without Constraining Structures?	57
d) Developing the Intersubjective Dimension.....	59
2. The Recognition Analogy	59
a) Recognition Theory: A Brief Overview	61
b) Recognition in Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit	64
c) Critical Approaches: The Role of Negativity	66
d) Implications for the Self and Its Relation to Others	68
3. Bringing Recognition and Poststructuralism Together	71

a)	A Framework of Discursive Interaction	74
b)	Agency and Constraints to It.....	75
c)	Intra- and Intersubjectivity.....	76
4.	Conclusion	77
Chapter 4: A Research Design for Accessing Discursive Interaction		79
Introduction		79
1.	Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis: Methodological Considerations	80
a)	General Aim and Research Logic of Discourse Analysis.....	80
b)	Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis: Taking Stock	82
c)	Problem-Driven Approach.....	83
d)	The Question of Validity	84
2.	Capturing Discursive Interaction: Antagonism, Boundaries, and Floating Signifiers	85
a)	Discursive Struggle Between Russia and the EU	86
b)	Methodological Crux: Floating Signifiers in Laclauian Discourse Theory	86
c)	How to Analyse Floating Signifiers Between Competing Discourses?.....	89
i)	Predicate Analysis and Binaries.....	89
ii)	Proceeding Practically.....	91
iii)	Correspondence to the Theoretical Framework and Key Concepts.....	93
3.	Operationalisation: Analysing Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations	96
a)	Foreign Policy Discourse and Self-Other Relations	96
b)	Two Selves and Two Others: Russia and the EU	98
i)	Two Selves.....	98
ii)	Two Others.....	99
c)	Selection of Events and Temporal Dimension.....	101
i)	Selection Criteria.....	102
ii)	Change and Time	103
iii)	Suggested Selection of Events	104
d)	Capturing Foreign Policy Discourse: Discursive Arenas	105
i)	Official Discourse in Russia.....	106
ii)	Official Discourse in the EU	107
e)	Selecting Texts for Analysis	109
f)	From Sources to Insights: Some Practical Steps In-Between.....	111
4.	Conclusion	112
Chapter 5: Seven Contested Events in EU-Russia Relations		114
1.	The Orange Revolution (2004/05)	115
a)	Context.....	115
b)	Analysis.....	116
i)	Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:	116
ii)	Discursive Interaction	122
(1)	Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse	122
(2)	References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other	124
(3)	Summary	128
2.	Kosovo's Declaration of Independence (2007/08).....	129
a)	Context.....	129
b)	Analysis.....	130
i)	Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:	131
ii)	Discursive Interaction	138
(1)	Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse	138
(2)	References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other	140
(3)	Summary	144
3.	Caucasus: Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's Declaration of Independence (2008).....	146
a)	Context.....	146
b)	Analysis.....	148

i)	Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:	148
ii)	Discursive Interaction	157
(1)	Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse	157
(2)	References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other	158
(3)	Discussion: The Role of the 2008 Kosovo Discourse	163
(4)	Summary	165
4.	Maidan: The Revolution of Dignity (2013/14)	166
a)	Context.....	166
b)	Analysis.....	167
i)	Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:	168
ii)	Discursive Interaction	176
(1)	Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse	176
(2)	References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other	179
(3)	Summary	183
5.	The Annexation of Crimea (2014).....	185
a)	Context.....	185
b)	Analysis.....	186
i)	Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:	187
ii)	Discursive Interaction	194
(1)	Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse	194
(2)	References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other	197
(3)	Summary	202
6.	Protests in Belarus (2020)	203
a)	Context.....	203
b)	Analysis.....	204
i)	Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:	204
ii)	Discursive Interaction	212
(1)	Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse	212
(2)	References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other	214
(3)	Summary	218
7.	The Poisoning of Alexei Navalny (2020/21).....	220
a)	Context.....	220
b)	Analysis.....	221
i)	Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:	222
ii)	Discursive Interaction	229
(1)	Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse	229
(2)	References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other	232
(3)	Summary	237
	Chapter 6: Making Sense of Discursive Interaction – Analytical Discussion	238
	Introduction	238
1.	Drawing Discursive Boundaries	238
a)	Significance of the Representation of the Other	239
b)	Discursive Practices of Othering	239
i)	Ethical Dimension of Othering	242
(1)	Stability & Democracy	242
(2)	Necessity & Responsibility	245
ii)	Spatial Dimension of Othering.....	247
(1)	Europeanness.....	247
(2)	Russian Narrative of Exclusion	248
(3)	Russian Narrative of a Divided EU	252
(4)	Russian Narrative of Fraternity	257
c)	First Interim Summary: Drawing Discursive Boundaries	262
2.	Intersubjective Interaction with the Other's Discourse.....	263
a)	Extensive Russian Engagement	263
b)	Making Sense of Asymmetrical Interaction Through Recognition	264

c) Second Interim Summary: Intersubjective Interaction	268
3. Revisiting Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations.....	269
a) Agency in Interaction.....	270
b) An Intersubjective Relationship.....	271
c) Room for Dynamics?	275
4. Conclusion	279
<i>Chapter 7: Epilogue to the Analytical Discussion: Russia Narrating Its War in Ukraine</i>	<i>281</i>
1. Continuity of Russia’s War Discourse.....	282
2. The Evolution of Narratives	286
3. Conclusions.....	290
<i>Chapter 8: Conclusion</i>	<i>294</i>
1. Tracing Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations	294
2. Contributing to the Study of EU-Russia Relations and Beyond	297
3. Avenues for Further Research	300
4. Towards Increasing Competition.....	302
<i>Bibliography.....</i>	<i>304</i>
<i>Annex: Catalogue of Primary Sources</i>	<i>1</i>

List of Figures

Figure 1: Coding-scheme for primary texts, example	111
Figure 2: Discursive structure around nodal points, Orange Revolution, EU	119
Figure 3: Discursive structure around nodal points, Orange Revolution, Russia	122
Figure 4: Discursive structure around nodal points, Kosovo, EU	134
Figure 5: Discursive structure around nodal points, Kosovo, Russia	138
Figure 6: Discursive structure around nodal points, Caucasus, EU	151
Figure 7: Discursive structure around nodal points, Caucasus, Russia	156
Figure 8: Discursive structure around nodal points, Maidan, EU	172
Figure 9: Discursive structure around nodal points, Maidan, Russia	176
Figure 10: Discursive structure around nodal points, annexation of Crimea, EU	190
Figure 11: Discursive structure around nodal points, annexation of Crimea, Russia	194
Figure 12: Discursive structure around nodal points, Belarus, EU	208
Figure 13: Discursive structure around nodal points, Belarus, Russia	212
Figure 14: Discursive structure around nodal points, poisoning of Navalny, EU	224
Figure 15: Discursive structure around nodal points, poisoning of Navalny, Russia	229

List of Tables

Table 1: Selection of events for analysis	104
Table 2: Number of texts selected for analysis	110

List of Acronyms

- **ABM Treaty** – Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty
- **AA** – Association Agreement
- **CWC** – Chemical Weapons Convention
- **CFSP** – Common Foreign and Security Policy
- **CIS** – Commonwealth of Independent States
- **Council** – Council of the European Union
- **CSCE** – Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
- **DG** – Directorate General
- **DG RELEX** – Directorate-General for External Relations
- **EaP** – Eastern Partnership
- **EU** – European Union
- **EULEX** – European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
- **ECHR** – European Court of Human Rights
- **EEAS** – European External Action Service
- **ENP** – European Neighbourhood Policy
- **ESDP** – European Security and Defence Policy
- **JPKF** – Joint Peacekeeping Force
- **HR/VP** – High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of European Commission
- **ICJ** – International Court of Justice
- **IIFMCG** – Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia
- **IR** – International Relations
- **KFOR** – Kosovo Force
- **LGBT** – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
- **NATO** – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- **NGO** – Non-governmental organisation
- **FBK** – Anti-Corruption Foundation
- **ODIHR** – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- **OAF** – Operation Allied Force
- **OSCE** – Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

- **OPCW** – Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
- **Res1244** – Security Council Resolution 1244
- **FSB** – Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation
- **UN** – United Nations
- **UNSC** – United Nations Security Council
- **UNGA** – United Nations General Assembly
- **UNMIK** – United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
- **US** – United States of America
- **USSR** – Soviet Union

Chapter 1

Introduction

On 24 February 2022, Russian missiles were hitting targets all across Ukraine. What many observers in the West, in Ukraine, and in Russia had thought improbable (EUREN, 2022) became reality. The Kremlin's crude statements of a 'special military operation' in support of 'denazification' to justify Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine lent new traction to former German Chancellor Angela Merkel's 2014 remark that Russian President Vladimir Putin lives in "another world" (New York Times, 2014). Against the background of a full-scale war in the heart of Europe with estimated numbers of casualties on both sides at the time of writing exceeding two hundred thousand (BBC, 2022) and the far-reaching destruction of a sovereign country, Western politicians expressed their despair and disbelief over the narratives through which the Kremlin imbues the events with meaning (Irish Times, 2022; Reuters, 2022; Interfax-Ukraine, 2022).

Irrespective of the absurdity of Russia's most recent war propaganda, the divergence of Russian and Western discourses is not a new phenomenon. In 1989, when the end of the ideological standoff between Western liberalism and Soviet communism was perceivable, Fukuyama (1989) heralded the "triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*" (p.3, emphasis in original). Fukuyama's prediction, however, did not materialise. Neither did the assimilation of all post-Soviet states, which has been subject to the extensive liberal transition literature of the 1980s and 1990s (Diamond et al., 2014:86) with its inherent "democratic teleology" (Carothers, 2002:7). Today, "the world is far from ideological uniformity" (Morozov, 2010:187). Indeed, it sees itself confronted with evermore competing narratives, articulating alternative interpretations about good domestic and international order.

The Russian case is paradigmatic for this "civilizational confrontation with liberal democracy" (Shevtsova, 2015:173, cf. Haukkala, 2010a). More than 30 years ago, towards the end of the Cold War, Mikhail Gorbachev introduced his rhetoric of the "common European home" (Neumann, 1999:163). He would herald a pro-Western liberal stance, invoking a shared political identity of liberal values between Russia and Europe (Prozorov, 2007:321). However, as Morozov (2010) contends, any attempts to fully integrate Russia into Western modernity have proven unsuccessful (p.191). Casier's (2016) observation of "widely diverging

perceptions and narratives of the current crisis on either side” (p.377) has only increased in pertinence. Europe is thus confronted with “a discursive boundary between Russia and the West” (Morozov, 2010:191). Both perspectives offer an alternative and thus competing interpretation of the world. They provide different understandings of what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ – as a part of the “complex of crosscutting, if not competing, international orders and globalisms” (Acharya, 2017:277). This competing element is about what are considered the ‘true’ interpretations and the ‘right’ implications one has to draw from Kosovo, Syria – or Ukraine – for ‘good’ foreign policy making.

Diverging interpretations, however, do not exist in isolation from each other. Based on a genealogical study spanning several centuries, Neumann (1996) asserts that “the Russian debate about Europe is entangled with the European debate about Russia” (p.206). In the face of vastly diverging, competing narratives, it is more pertinent today than ever to investigate the nature of this entanglement, the dependencies and influences that exist between Russia and the European Union (EU) in their articulation of foreign policy discourse. The central research question of this dissertation is thus: **How do diverging foreign policy discourses articulated by Russia and the EU interact?** This question guides the ensuing examination of Russian and EU official foreign policy discourses throughout 18 years, from 2004 to 2021, how they generate diverging interpretations, how they compete for hegemony and, consequently, how they engage with each other respectively in this competition.

Based on a thorough comparative analysis of Russian and EU foreign policy discourses, it is argued that despite a radically changing context and an intensification of the EU’s and Russia’s struggle to reassert their respective interpretation since 2004, neither the EU’s nor Russian foreign policy discourses have changed substantially. Their structure, as well as their patterns of interaction have exhibited striking continuity. Discursive interaction between Russia and the EU is characterised by Russia’s foreign policy discourse remaining much more conditioned by the EU’s articulations than vice versa. The Russian discourse’s vulnerability to what the EU says, it is argued, arises out of recognition dynamics, which, much more so than the EU, compel Russia to interact with the Other’s diverging discourse. As a result, the EU is more independent in sovereignly articulating an interpretation of the world, whereas Russia continues to face constraints in the formulation of an autonomous political project, ultimately limiting its agency in the articulation of discourse. Its extensive engagement with EU articulations reveals the contingency of Russia’s discourse more so than it is the case with the EU’s discourse. Therefore, the Russian discourse in principle remains more conducive to change. While the escalating confrontation between Russia and the EU in the context of Russia’s invasion of

Ukraine suggests even stronger reassertions, however, it is unlikely to induce a more fundamental discursive transformation. Russia's current foreign policy discourse, to the contrary, will rather perpetuate Russia's discursive dependency.

To study how foreign policy discourses in EU-Russia relations come into being and how they are entangled is relevant, because they constitute the signifying contexts in which foreign policies are conceived, justified, and carried out. They define what is perceived as 'normal' or 'natural', what is sayable – even imaginable. EU-Russia relations therefore ought to be understood as deeply interrelated with the discourses on the respective Other in Russia and the EU. The existing scholarship remains wanting of a systematic understanding of how those discourses come into being through interaction. The extensive focus on structural perspectives has created a multifaceted understanding of why Russia and the EU relate to each other the way they do. It misses, however, an understanding of how both relate to – and engage with – the respective Other's *discourse* and how this interaction in itself facilitates or limits their “discursive and political room of maneuver of foreign policy issues” (Hansen, 2006:68). Why does Russia employ ostensibly Western arguments for justifying its annexation of Crimea (Berg & Mölder, 2018) if in the Russian discourse on the event 'the West' is simultaneously depicted as the main enemy responsible for the violation of the Ukrainian territorial integrity? How do the EU's accusations against the Kremlin in the case of Alexei Navalny's poisoning condition Moscow's articulation of its own version of the incident? Studies that *have* addressed these dynamics struggle to fully analytically grasp them, overlooking that *intersubjective* structures might be appreciated differently from the diverging perspectives of the subjects they relate.

Against the background of Russia's war in Ukraine and the growing rift between Russia and the EU throughout the many years preceding it, it is of utmost importance to address this gap. The first aim of this dissertation is thus to further an empirical understanding of how Russia's and the EU's perspectives on each other condition their articulation of foreign policy discourse respectively. Secondly, and more generally, this dissertation aims at establishing an analytical framework for capturing such discursive dynamics in an intersubjective setting. “[International] relations”, as Weber (1995) writes, “was and is an area for the contestation of meanings” (p.13). With the mounting challenges to liberal hegemony by non-Western actors (Haukkala, 2010a:161), the world is facing ever more competition among alternative interpretations of what is 'true' or 'right'. Such a context of growing contestation calls for a conceptualisation that is able to capture those discursive struggles between subjects of

international relations while doing justice to the openness that comes with those fundamental changes.

To achieve this, this dissertation relies on a poststructuralist theoretical framework. Attributing ontological significance to subjective interpretation, the poststructuralist epistemology focusses on how meaning comes into being through discourse and how it changes (Hansen, 2006:20). Its radical anti-determinism makes poststructuralism therefore especially apt to capture dynamic discursive interaction. With their comprehensive poststructuralist edifice, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) provide the theoretical foundation for this study. This foundation is developed through insights from critical approaches to recognition theory. This theoretical development adds to the constitutive logic of poststructuralism a social ontology, that enables it to capture the intersubjective dimension of Russia's and the EU's 'discursive encounter' (Hansen, 2006:68). Markell's (2003) critical approach to recognition allows for an appreciation of how the coming-to-be of both Russia and the EU as subjects through interaction is inextricably linked with freedoms and constraints to their (discursive) agency. Marrying poststructuralism with insights from recognition theory allows for a radically anti-deterministic conceptualisation of interaction that responds to the need, voiced in the literature, for extending discourse theoretical enquiries beyond "'self-centred' analyses of identity" (Morozov & Rumelili, 2012:29). Expanding the view from 'Uses of the Other' (Neumann, 1999) for one-directional studies of identity formation, this framework seeks to take a step back in order to capture the *mutual* constitution of Russia and the EU through intersubjective interaction. In this approach, the Other is analytically not reduced to a mere object of Othering but appreciated instead as a subject in its own right, the subjective perspective of which cannot be disregarded. Methodologically, in line with the discursive epistemology, this dissertation builds on insights from poststructuralist discourse analysis. In order to capture discursive interaction, the analysis traces how Russia and the EU engage in a discursive struggle in their attempt to hegemonise the meaning of contested events, so-called floating signifiers. Covering a time period from 2004 to 2021, starting with the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and ending with the poisoning of Kremlin-critic Alexei Navalny and its aftermath, the empirical analysis examines competing foreign policy discourses as articulated by key figures in EU and Russian foreign policy-making on the basis of more than 550 primary texts (see Annex). The research design rests on a two-step approach. The first step consists in mapping the EU's and Russia's respective discursive structures by identifying privileged representations, so-called nodal points, and the underlying binaries that define the relationships of linking and differentiation between them. The aim of this examination, however, is not just to compare two different systems of

signification, but rather to understand what they imply for each other in an intersubjective context. Hence the second step traces discursive interaction in the form of discursive struggle, capturing attempts to draw discursive boundaries between Self and Other, inside and outside, and defining modes of interaction – confirmations, negations and subversions – to track how Russia and the EU engage with the respective Other's discourse.

Through its analytical framework and the thorough empirical investigation, this dissertation contributes to the field of EU-Russia relations, firstly, by furthering a conceptual and empirical understanding of the EU's and Russia's mutual constitution within the social context they find themselves in. It does so by fleshing out how this context conditions the freedoms and constraints to both Russia's and the EU's agency in their interaction with each other. Its value for the field lies in its radical anti-determinism, that allows for an appreciation of the openness of dynamic interaction in a social environment. It rids itself of preconceived structures that are at the bottom of many existing accounts on discursive dynamics between Russia and the West. These accounts, relying on English School, postcolonial or sociological frameworks, retain a, if only residual, level of determinism. Empirically substantiated, this approach complements the existing scholarship by offering profound insights on the unravelling of discursive dynamics between the two subjects.

Secondly, the analytical framework facilitates an appreciation of the relationship between Russia and the EU as intersubjective. A key conceptual contribution is the poststructuralist reconceptualisation of Hegelian recognition dynamics. Reaffirming that intersubjective structures do not exist independently from the subjects they relate to, the framework developed here approaches the EU-Russia relationship by focussing on the EU's and Russia's views of each other. It thereby furthers an understanding of the asymmetry between Russia and the EU, which in the literature has been approached through notions of normative power (Manners, 2002), normative hegemony (Diez, 2013; Haukkala, 2008b), recognition (Ringmar 1996; 2002; 2010) or European modernity (Zarakol, 2011; Morozov, 2015). What remains unsatisfactory in the existing scholarship is the tendency to approach this relationship from an external vantage point, describing intersubjective dynamics objectively. The social ontology at the bottom of the theoretical approach developed here addresses this gap, facilitating an analytical appreciation of the EU-Russia relationship from the perspective of both subjects.

This study constitutes the first empirical investigation of discursive dynamics between Russia and the EU of that scope, covering the extensive time period of 18 years and a diversity of issue-areas. It furthermore offers the first systematic examination of discursive *interaction*,

going beyond a mere comparison of discourses to also capture – and indeed focus on – individual discourses’ engagement with competing alternatives.

After having outlined what this dissertation does, it seems pertinent to briefly point out what it does not. As a consequence of the ontological assumptions at the basis of the poststructuralist theoretical framework, this study does not provide *causal* explanations for why EU-Russia relations evolved in a certain way. While focussing on interpretation, the theoretical and methodological premises of this study do furthermore not allow for any conclusions on cognitive processes or individuals’ intentions.

Epistemologically, this study captures how interpretations come into being as shared meanings through discourse. This analytical focus consequently does not distinguish between a subjective ‘discursive’ field and an objective ‘reality’ (cf. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:108). For understanding the genesis of interpretations, it is insignificant whether articulations are ‘true’ or ‘wrong’, whether they constitute disinformation or propaganda. While the manipulative use of information in EU-Russia relations for obvious reasons has sparked considerable research interest on its own (cf. Pomerantsev & Weiss, 2014; Thomas, 2014; Hellman & Wagnsson, 2017) it evades the research focus of this project. What matters for the study of interpretation is not what is true, but what is *considered* true.

Studying the constitutive power of discourse inevitably alerts the researcher about the (re)production of meaning through research. As such, this study runs the danger of simplistically reducing EU-Russia relations and thereby reifying the East-West divide, the genealogy of which, as Wolff (2000) has shown, traces back to European discourses of enlightenment. Rather, the intention here is to acknowledge the reality of this divide, which has become central for the mapping of Europe both in the EU and in Russia, to understand its consequences for EU-Russia relations and, by revealing its contingent nature, to ultimately challenge the essentialisation of difference (cf. Morozov, 2010:186).

The reality of the East-West divide is also reflected in my own positionality, my personal perspective on the research topic (Lynch, 2008). Having grown up in a rural area of south-west Germany, I was confronted with this divide for the first time, when I embarked on my undergraduate studies in Dresden. Here, I sensed, the differentiation between East and West played a much bigger role for how people talked about themselves and about the country. A student of the Russian language, I spent quite some time studying, interning and working in Russia and other countries, which from the German – or rather Western – perspective were deemed ‘the East’ (cf. Wolff, 2000). Here, I had the chance to deconstruct this representation for myself through my own experiences. At the same time, I oftentimes found myself

confronted with perspectives – in itself relying on certain representation of ‘the West’ – that in many ways challenged my own view of the world. Numerous such stimulating encounters have sparked a fascination for the tension of diverging perspectives, a tension that is deeply political. As such, this study also constitutes an attempt to make sense of my own experiences. My view, of course, remains that of a West-German spectator born in the 1990s, years after the end of the Cold War, a period that has shaped this divide so profoundly and sustainably (Neumann, 1999:102). It was a time when Western confidence proclaimed this divide’s transcendence through assimilation (Fukuyama, 1989), a confidence that later should be disappointed (Carothers, 2002).

This dissertation unfolds through eight chapters. Following this introduction, a review of the scholarly literature on EU-Russia relations identifies the need for a conceptualisation of discursive interaction between Russia and the EU that does justice to the openness of this social relationship and takes into account the perspectives of both actors. The subsequent theory chapter addresses this gap by marrying the social ontology at the bottom of critical approaches to recognition to the constitutive logic of Laclau’s and Mouffe’s (1985) poststructuralism. The resulting theoretical framework is then operationalised in chapter four in order to facilitate an empirically founded argument in response to the central research question. The two-step analytical approach zooms in on discursive competition between Russia and the EU over contested events. Translated into a transparent research design, it allows for a systematic empirical investigation of how Russia’s and the EU’s diverging foreign policy discourses bring into being alternative interpretations, how they evolve, and – importantly – how they interact. The empirical analyses on seven of such contested events are summarised in chapter five, illustrating, firstly, Russia’s and the EU’s competing discursive structures and, secondly, how both subjects engage with the respective Other and its discourse. Chapter six provides a theory-informed discussion of these empirical observations. The analysis carves out how Russia and the EU relate to the respective Other and how the articulation of their diverging foreign policy discourses is conditioned by the intersubjective context. Given the profound changes in EU-Russia relations during the time of writing, an epilogue to chapter six will address the Russian discourse since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine against the background of this analysis. The conclusion, finally, will summarise the findings of this study, discuss its virtues and limits, and open up trajectories for further research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The endeavour of this dissertation to capture discursive interaction between Russia and the EU must depart from a thorough inventory of existing research on the subject of EU-Russia relations. Following a double purpose, such an inventory will, first, allow the reader to situate the present research project within the overall body of literature and, secondly, help to flesh out the blind spots in the scholarship that this study aims to shed light on.

What follows is thus a critical review of the scholarly literature on EU-Russia relations since the nascency of the very same after the end of the Cold War. Keeping this subject in focus, the following review will not involve a sighting of purely theoretical literature as long as it has no relevance to the relationship between these two actors. A comprehensive situation of the theoretical approach developed and applied in this dissertation will form the fundament of the following theoretical chapter. Yet, this critical review aims at setting the ground for such a theoretical endeavour by showing the need for coherently and profoundly conceptualising discursive interaction in EU-Russia relations. With this in mind, this review will thus also leave aside the large number of think tank and policy-oriented publications on the matter. It will further not focus on accounts that analyse Russia's relations with individual EU member states. EU-Russia relations as a subject is not always easy to separate from the broader notion of Russia-West relations. While this dissertation situates itself in the former body of literature, accounts invoking the latter that further the present reflection will not be excluded.

The following two introductory subsections offer, first, a brief overview of the development, the overall structure, and general features of the academic literature covering EU-Russia relations. Secondly, the structure of this review is presented, explained, and justified.

a) EU-Russia Relations: A Heterogeneous Field

The contemporary body of literature on EU-Russia relations is characterised by a wide array of theoretical and conceptual approaches. Its development has to a large extent followed, on the one hand, the paradigmatic evolutions and the zeitgeist of the discipline of International Relations as a whole, and, on the other hand, the empirical developments defining its object of analysis. Towards the end of the Cold War, the subject was joyfully welcomed by liberal thought, the transitional paradigm of which burgeoned in the 1980s and 1990s (Diamond et al., 2014:86). The “end of the transition paradigm”, which accompanied – and explained – the disaggregation of the Soviet bloc with its inherent democratic teleology, has been declared abruptly by Carothers in 2002 with the conclusion that the empirical developments did not match the liberal predictions. In accordance with the worsening of Russia’s relations with the EU in the course of the first decade of the millennium, a considerable share of more recent English-speaking literature has focused on Russia’s more proactive and assertive foreign policy (Götz & MacFarlane, 2019:714; Zaslavskaya & Averre, 2019).

In 2006, Prozorov deplors the “lack of theoretical reflection” (Prozorov, 2006:11) characterising the studies of EU-Russia relations. Ten years later, this inadequacy of theorisation has been reiterated by Forsberg and Haukkala (2016). They observe that the scholarly literature dealing with EU-Russia relations, while having grown, remains largely “descriptive and/or prescriptive, and policy-oriented in nature” (p.220). Their words are echoed again by Zaslavskaya and Averre (2019:155; cf. Casier, 2018c:107) in their extensive review of Western and Russian research on the security relationship between Russia and the EU.

One reason for the theoretical blur is certainly the fact that the literature on EU-Russia relations is not confined to the boundaries of International Relations as a discipline. It is also informed to a large extent by the fields of comparative politics, foreign policy analysis, area studies (cf. Chebakova, 2015:23) and other sub-fields. Yet, as has been pointed out recently (Forsberg, 2019; Götz & MacFarlane, 2019; Götz, 2017), it *is* possible to discern different approaches adopted to make sense of the relations between Russia and the EU.

The complexity of the field grows larger when acknowledging that the issue of EU-Russia relations is approached also in academic debates outside the English-speaking scholarship. Of particular relevance here are, of course, Russian reflections on the issue. Overall, the Russian-speaking International Relations literature tends to be rather isolated from the Western debate and vice versa (Fischer, 2021:8). A lack of dialogue between the research communities has been lamented, leading to a poor account of mutual stimulation and theoretical concordance

(Dekalchuk & Khokhlova, 2019; Romanova, 2019). As a general tendency, the Russian academic debate on the matter reflects the broader evolution of EU-Russia relations from unconditional admiration of the EU to a more pragmatic approach. In addition to that, it increasingly adopts a comparative focus on Eurasian integration (Romanova, 2015:104-105). Russian scholarship on EU-Russia relations furthermore tends to focus on empirics at the expense of theoretical reflections (Romanova, 2015:105; Romanova 2019:139-140; Dekalchuk & Khokhlova, 2019). The theoretically informed literature, on the other hand, exhibits a strong bias towards foundationalist, mostly (neo-)realist thinking (Romanova, 2019:139), whereas constructivist approaches are met with reservations. This, according to Pavlova and Romanova (2014), is the result of an association of certain theoretical perspectives with particular political views – the realist tradition evoking a conservative orientation while constructivist advances being discounted as characteristic of the pro-Western liberal camp. Moreover, where constructivist perspectives are employed, the theoretical ruminations remain rather cursory (Romanova, 2019:141). Therefore, while aiming at taking into account publications from both academic debates, the theoretical argument here will be built predominantly on the English-speaking literature. This debate, to some extent, unites scholars with different, including Russian backgrounds (notably, for example, Sergei Prozorov, Viatcheslav Morozov, and Andrey Makarychev). Yet, the dominance of Western perspectives in the field of International Relations (Acharya & Buzan, 2007; 2017) is widely accepted today. By focussing on the English-speaking debate, this review thus cannot evade the danger of replicating this literature's biases, including a one-sided focus on 'understanding' Russia within the EU-Russia relationship. Since this dissertation is about intersubjective interaction, however, it is the impression of the author that the literature resonating most with this focus (see section three, p.20) has a more balanced view – while, of course, largely retaining the perspective of the Western scholar.

b) Navigating Through Complex Terrain

This chapter seeks to depict in an intelligible way the key debates and the dividing lines that structure this diverse field of research. It further aims at carving out the conceptual limits of existing accounts in order to prepare the ground for some innovative development.

To structure this uneven and heterogeneous field has been attempted by others. While Forsberg (2019) straightforwardly defines an array of theoretical approaches under which existing accounts can be subsumed, Zaslavskaya and Averre (2019) cautiously avoid any explicit theoretical labels and cluster the body of literature along issue areas, explanatory variables, and levels of analysis. Indeed, a delineation of theoretical perspectives is not always self-evident. While many studies are not explicitly referring to theoretical assumptions, others lament that the one-dimensionality that comes with applying rigorously a certain theoretical framework is unable to capture the complexity of EU-Russia relations, arguing instead for more synthetic approaches (Götz & MacFarlane, 2019; Götz, 2017; Forsberg & Pursiainen, 2017:222; Charap & Welt, 2015; Cadier, 2015; cf. Freire, 2012; 2019).

However, doing justice to the conviction that a transparent discussion of underlying assumptions is conducive to an intelligible and productive scholarly debate while also acknowledging that many accounts in the field evade theoretical labels, the structuring of the present chapter is inspired by Götz and MacFarlane (2019). Recognising the diverse body of literature, they focus on factors determining foreign policy behaviour and group the accounts into dominant explanations, which suggest to be implicitly or explicitly informed by the assumptions of prominent theoretical approaches in the scholarly field of International Relations. This review, accordingly, seeks to sketch the main lines of reasoning along the premises of different theoretical schools of thought before leading into a more detailed discussion of the literature that forms the immediate conceptual environment of this dissertation. Following Götz and MacFarlane (2019), this review will divide the literature into accounts that draw predominantly on materialist notions of power, domestic factors and ideas to make sense of EU-Russia relations. The author is aware of the risk of oversimplifying the structure of the field when imposing theoretical lenses that roughly follow, of course, the realist, liberal and constructivist schools of International Relations – or a division between what often is called ‘traditional’ approaches and the developments or critique thereof (Smith, 2013:9). For the purpose of this project, however, this structuring is useful, since it moves from an individualist, materialist ontology,¹ at the basis of most accounts invoking power and domestic factors, towards one that puts to the fore the social context, where non-material elements such as shared ideas, interpretation and discourse are at the centre of inquiry for understanding subjects’ behaviour (Fierke, 2013).

¹ According to Fierke (2013), most traditional approaches in the discipline of International Relations share an ‘individualist’ ontology, insofar as they focus on the individual as the primary unit of analysis (p.190).

This structuring might evoke the impression of invoking a materialist-idealist divide, in the sense of moving from a privileging of material to ideational factors as primary determinants of the social (Wendt, 1999:23-24). This is not the intention, as this divide, as will be shown later, is of no use, if the study of discourse is not to be reduced to the realm of the subjective as opposed to some objective reality (cf. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:108). If anything, the structuring of this review moves away from clear-cut distinction between those two fields in the so-called 'traditional' approaches (Wendt, 1999:2-3), towards a blurring of this line to prepare the ground for ultimately doing away with this dichotomy in the formulation of the theoretical framework in the following chapter.

The ensuing inventory will thus set off with reviewing the literature on EU-Russia relations that roughly follows a realist logic, relying predominantly on materialist notions power as the main factor for explaining the subject. Secondly, it will map existing accounts that invoke domestic factors, such as the political system, key political actors or domestic implications of economic interdependencies to explain EU-Russia relations. Finally, and most extensively, the role of ideas and interpretation in EU-Russia relations will be discussed at large in section three, which aims at situating this research project and at fleshing out the blind spots in the existing literature that it seeks to address.

This review does not claim to present a 'complete' overview of what has been written on the subject of EU-Russia relations. It seeks, instead, to offer an understanding of how this subject has been approached from different perspectives and how they diverge. This review is critical in a sense that it seeks to assess the virtues and limitations of these perspectives. Within this dissertation, the purpose of this chapter is thus to identify theoretical gaps and to situate the research carried out in the present study within the existing body of literature.

1. Power-Based Explanations for Making Sense of EU-Russia Relations

Realist thought arguably has the oldest pedigree among the various branches of International Relations theoretical approaches (Schimmelfennig, 2010:66). Classical realists and neorealists (or structural realists) as their theoretical successors assume anarchy and its derivative of existential insecurity as the basic condition of international relations against which rational

states operate. For structural realists, the distribution of power within the anarchic system is the principal explanatory variable for state behaviour (Schimmelfennig, 2010:66-88).

Scholarly literature that follows this reasoning seeks to explain relations between Russia and the EU by referring to rational behaviour – utility-maximising action determined by cost-benefit calculations (Kurki & Wight, 2013:23-24) – in the context of structural pressures and opportunities, most notably shaped by a materialist notion of power (Götz, 2017:240). Accounts which are explicitly or implicitly informed by realist assumptions evolve around notions of economic and military capabilities as indicators of an actor's power, (perceived) threat and security, or geopolitics including spheres of influence. Analyses of EU-Russia relations based on these fundamental assumptions are not unanimous in their conclusions, however. Three typical debates can be delineated.

a) Offensive or Defensive Russia

First, along the line dividing the offensive and defensive variants of structural realism, there exist different views as to whether Russia should be understood as an aggressive actor pursuing territorial expansion and regional dominance, or whether Russia's primary motive in its behaviour towards the EU is (perceived) insecurity (cf. Forsberg, 2019:766; Götz, 2017:240). Taking the former approach, Karagiannis (2013) argues for example that the 2008 Russo-Georgian war is the result of Moscow's striving to re-establish regional hegemony in the Caucasus. After the Russian annexation of Crimea, a prominent defensive realist explanation for Russia's behaviour has been provided by Mearsheimer (2014), who argues that the crisis in Ukraine is a natural consequence of the provocative enlargement of NATO and the EU into "Russia's backyard [...] threatening its core strategic interests" (pp.77-78; cf. Walt, 2014; Bock et al., 2015; Smith & Timmins, 2001).

In some of his lines of reasoning, Sakwa (2015b) follows this stance when arguing that the EU and NATO cemented a dividing line through Europe. The enlargement of the latter "created a security dilemma for Russia that undermined the security of all", ultimately provoking various conflicts (p.4). These interpretations of the dynamics between Russia and the EU (or the West more broadly, since from a realist perspective the two can hardly and need not be separated) have a prominent pioneer. In 1997, Brzezinski predicted that an enlargement of the EU and NATO, and in particular a potential future integration of Ukraine into Western structures,

would lead to a high potential for conflict with Russia (Brzezinski, 1997:121). In order to explain patterns of cooperation, this defensive argument is often merged with the notion of balancing against a potential threat – such as US-hegemony, terrorism or a rising China (cf. Forsberg, 2019:767) – following the lines of argumentation presented by the balance of power (Waltz, 1979; cf. Korolev, 2018; Oskanian, 2019) or balance of threat theories (Walt, 1994; cf. Bock et al., 2015).

b) Rising or Declining Russia

Secondly, scholars have tried to explain the dynamics between Russia and the EU by framing Russia either as a rising or a declining power (Götz & MacFarlane, 2019:715). In the first version, Russia is understood to be increasingly assertive as a consequence of an increase in its relative material capabilities (cf. Forsberg, 2019:766). Stent (2008) maintains, for example, that deteriorating relations between Russia and the West in the 2000s are a result of a stronger Russian revisionist stance against the terms that were largely negotiated in the 1990s when Russia was still comparatively weak. The same argument has been made by Mankoff (2007), adding that Russia's increase in relative power – which is understood to be closely tied to the economic success in the first years of the millennium – has allowed it to play a more confident role in its neighbourhood (pp.126-127; cf. Perović, 2009). The opposite argument goes, accordingly, along the narrative that Russia is a power in long-term decline seeking to exert influence while it still can (cf. Götz & MacFarlane, 2019:715).

c) Competition for Influence

A third and related theme is the competition for influence between Russia and the EU in the sphere between them as a potential reason for conflict (Forsberg, 2019:766). This argument, revolving around a zero-sum logic, is closely linked to the discussion about geopolitics (for example Walker, 2016; Smith & Timmins, 2001; Götz, 2015; Krickovic, 2014; Oskanian, 2019; Pardo Sierra, 2011; Treisman, 2016) and especially prominent among the Russian scholarship (Zaslavskaya & Averre, 2019:152; see for example Arutyunyan & Sergunin, 2015; Gromyko, 2015). Charap and Troitskiy (2013), inspired by a realist understanding of the

security dilemma, speak of an “integration dilemma” with regard to Russia’s and the EU’s integration projects. Neoclassical realist perspectives, which bring together systemic and domestic factors for the explanation of foreign policy (Rose, 1998), have been provided by Becker et al. (2016), Götz (2019), and, more implicitly, Marten (2015).²

d) The Persistence of Realist Thinking

The relevance of the realist paradigm for understanding the dynamics between Russia and the EU is underscored by several scholars who argue that it is this theoretical perspective in particular that is dominating the world view of Russian decision-makers (Mankoff, 2007; 2009). The Russian foreign policy outlook, according to Romanova (2019), is heavily influenced by realist reasoning, including the “prevalence of systemic factors and the need to protect national interests in this context” (p.140). This portrayal of Russia as a power- and interest-driven “*Realpolitik* actor” has contributed, according to Casier (2018c), to a one-sided focus in the study of interaction in EU-Russia relations (p.105, emphasis in original). This echoes DeBardeleben (2012), who argues that Russia is frequently depicted as fulfilling the realist image of a unified political actor with a zero-sum mindset and geopolitical interests in its neighbourhood. She concedes, however, that this way of thinking is impactful not only in the Russian elite but also the wider public (pp.421-422). Among the Russian academic community, perspectives that implicitly or explicitly follow a realist and neorealist logic are highly popular – also for the analysis of EU-Russia relations. Foci of Russian realist-inspired analyses have been the EU’s behaviour towards its eastern neighbourhood, including enlargement and the Eastern Partnership (EaP), as well as sanctions against Russia (Romanova, 2019:140). The popularity of realist perspectives to analyse EU-Russia relations was there from the early stages but increased over time (Romanova, 2015:102). This trend is becoming ever more dominant with the recently growing role played by civilisational debates in official and public discourses (see below, p.25).

In the English-speaking literature, realist and especially geopolitical underpinnings were re-emerging by the beginning of the 2010s. Casier (2011), sketching the development of literature on EU-Russian energy relations, maintains that geopolitical considerations were stemming

² For a neoclassical interpretation of accounts on Russian foreign policy in a special issue of *Problems of Post-Communism* (Vol.62, Is.2), see the introductory chapter by Charap and Welt (2015).

“from a larger context of understanding, from a logic of appropriateness resistant to change” (p.504). According to him, Russia, on the one hand, could not yet escape its Soviet legacy in the scholarship, especially in a post-Soviet space that was still regarded as a space of competing interests. On the other hand, Russia’s economic growth in the early 2000s permitted it to approach relations with the EU from a more assertive position (ibid.; cf. Casier, 2016b:772-775). It is self-evident that power-based explanations of EU-Russia relations surged again after Russia got involved in conflicts in its neighbourhood, especially so after the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine in 2013 and the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Zaslavskaya & Averre, 2019:152).

2. Domestic Political Explanations for Making Sense of EU-Russia Relations

The radical new global context during and after the end of the Cold War constituted a fertile ground for liberal thought in scholarly work on East-West relations in the 1990s (Tsygankov, 2010:11-12). Liberalism as a theory of International Relations in the narrow sense bases its reasoning on the conviction that international politics are a function of domestic actors, structures and processes (Schimmelfennig, 2010:138). In Cadier’s and Light’s (2015) words, concluding their instructive edited volume: “foreign politics as the continuation of domestic politics by other means” (p.204). A focal point of liberal approaches at the time was the teleological universalisation of liberal democracy, praised by Fukuyama as “the final form of human government” (1989:4). This view was highly popular also in Western policy circles (Tsygankov, 2010:13). The liberal transition paradigm predicted the diffusion of that model and hence an inevitable democratisation of the new republics emerging from the former Soviet Union (Forsberg & Pursiainen, 2017:224-228). A discrepancy between empirical developments and liberal predictions has been pointed out already in the early 2000s (Carothers, 2002). Nevertheless, Prozorov finds in 2006 that liberal approaches, which are characterised by a positive stance towards “Russia’s ‘integration with Europe’”, were still dominant in the European literature (Prozorov, 2006:11). Romanova (2019) highlights that, while to some extent liberal and institutionalist approaches were applied to make sense of the EU, this tradition has not sparked widespread research interest among the Russian academic

scholarship on EU-Russia relations. Increasing tensions since 2014 led to a further marginalisation of these theory perspectives in the Russian academic landscape (Romanova, 2019:140-141). This trend should not be confused, however, with the existence of liberal views in the Russian think tank and policy-sphere.

Analogous to the deterioration of relations between Russia and the West since the mid-2000s, three broad narratives, all closely connected, have emerged in the more recent English-speaking literature that seeks to explain the developments based on domestic factors (cf. Forsberg, 2019; Götz & MacFarlane, 2019).

a) Authoritarian Russia vs Democratic Union

Firstly, and most fundamentally, the deterioration of Russia's relationship to the EU is explained by pointing to authoritarian tendencies in the Russian government. As Forsberg (2019) elaborates, accounts following this logic invoke either the inherent inclination of authoritarian regimes to conduct antagonistic foreign policies as such or a normative clash with the more democratic EU (p.6; cf. Lynch, 2016; Maass, 2017).

A variant of this narrative which gained considerable ground in Western policy and expert circles (Götz, 2017:234) explains an increasingly confrontational atmosphere between Russia and the EU by pointing to the Kremlin's fear of democratic 'contagion'.³ A prominent explanation is the invocation of Moscow's reaction to so-called 'colour revolutions', pro-democracy upheavals (Clunan, 2018:51) in a number of post-Soviet countries that led to changes of government. Ambrosio (2007), for example, maps Russian reactions to democratic transition in its neighbourhood, concluding that Moscow's fear of a potential democratic spill-over makes it pursue an isolationist path with the aim to protect its political system. His conclusions, namely that respective strategies include a restrictive stance towards domestic opposition and civil society as well as antidemocratic and more assertive moves in the region, are shared by Silitski (2010; see also Ambrosio, 2009; Wilson, 2014). Lanking and Niemczyk (2017) go one step further, arguing that regime consolidation is not the only aim. The Kremlin, they claim, opposes potential democratic spill-over by fashioning an alternative to the liberal Western model in its post-Soviet neighbourhood, contemplating a potential diffusion of

³ This term has been used by Manners (2002:244-245).

authoritarian values.⁴ Wilson (2010) underscores how with regard to these developments domestic and foreign policy goals are deeply connected in Russia's relations with the West.

b) Domestic Players

A second narrative seeks to explain foreign policy by pointing to interests and preferences of domestic actors and groups of actors. In the case of Russia, Western scholars have focused on different groups. In his 2001 article, Stowe points to the new Russian business elite. According to him, the elite's "economic interests and cultural identity" (p.49) constitute important factors in explaining Russian policy-making. After Vladimir Putin became President, significant attention has also been paid to the increasing influence of the so-called 'Siloviki', a group of people with a background in armed forces and intelligence coming to occupy key-positions in Russian bureaucracy (cf. Bremmer & Charap, 2007; Kryshtanovskaya, 2008).

While not distinctly informed by liberal assumptions, it is apt at this point, given their focus on the domestic context, to mention works that centre on decision-makers personalities.⁵ Naturally, Putin with his lead-role in Russian foreign policy-making is a common object for scrutiny here (for example Hill & Gaddy, 2015; Galeotti & Bowen, 2014). This branch of literature, which extends to a big number of "semi-academic" accounts (Forsberg & Pursiainen, 2017:223), mostly shares the assumption that it is Putin's *personal* geopolitical understanding that drives Russian (assertive) foreign policy (Götz, 2017:231).⁶ Forsberg and Pursiainen (2017) accentuate the difficulties that such endeavours face given the lack of transparency surrounding Russian decision-making processes (p.221). Barkanov (2014) moreover highlights that it is not helpful to focus solely on Putin due to the considerable domestic constraints he has to navigate. According to Barkanov (2014), it is thus of higher importance to understand the dynamic of different audiences within Russian politics and the constituency.

⁴ The argument of Russia purposefully countering potential democratic spill-over has been contested, for example by Babayan (2015).

⁵ Such accounts are often explicitly or implicitly associated with approaches inspired by psychology and foreign policy analysis (cf. Forsberg, 2019:771; Forsberg & Pursiainen, 2017:220-221).

⁶ For a comprehensive review of (psychological) accounts focusing on decision-making in the Kremlin and the personality of Vladimir Putin, see Forsberg and Pursiainen (2017).

c) Diversionary Theory of Conflict

This leads to the third and last broad narrative prevalent in analyses focussing on domestic dynamics. This narrative is based on the ‘diversionary theory of conflict’, according to which incumbent leaders who face domestic pressure seek to divert attention by provoking an external conflict and thereby rallying their people around the flag (Richards et al., 1993). McFaul (2014), criticising Mearsheimer’s analysis of the Ukraine crisis (2014), contends that it was Putin’s fear of domestic unrest that led him to intervene in Ukraine, providing reasons to tighten the opposition’s room of manoeuvre and gather support for his policies. Filippov (2009) applies this reasoning to the Russo-Georgian war in 2008, arguing that the Russian government reaped domestic benefits from tensions with the West that this conflict produced (see also Shevtsova, 2010; Mendras, 2017; Forsberg, 2019:768; Götz, 2017:233).

Whether it is about preventing the spread of democratic practices and norms or the diversion of attention to external conflicts, the basic assumption of these narratives is that an authoritarian regime’s striving for protecting the system constitutes the underlying factor that determines foreign policy behaviour (Götz, 2017:234; Cadier & Light, 2015).

d) Cooperation Through Interdependence

A variant of liberal thinking in International Relations commonly dubbed neoliberalism or neoliberal institutionalism focusses on inter-state cooperation resulting from increased interdependencies and collective interests as a stabilising factor in the international system (Sterling-Folker, 2013; cf. Oneal et al., 1996). This reasoning was popular in the 1990s and early 2000s. It expected that economic interdependencies would lead to common interests and consequently closer cooperation between Russia and the EU (Casier, 2020:7). A detailed analysis of how the notion of ‘reciprocity’ plays out in EU-Russia relations has been provided by Romanova (2010). Energy was considered a major field where interdependence leads to cooperation between the two actors (Forsberg, 2019:768). In his neoliberal analysis, Proedrou (2007), for example, argues that, despite the presence of conflictive elements, EU-Russia energy cooperation has in principle led to a cooperative relationship. Krickovic (2015), in contrast, argues that interdependencies in some cases may in fact have negative effects on the security concerns of states. According to him, interdependencies between Russia and the EU

in the field of energy have led to dynamics akin to a typical security dilemma, exacerbating tensions prior to the Ukraine crisis. Casier (2020) also notes that “[strongly] interwoven economic interests at low politics level were unable to produce stable political relations between Russia and the EU” (p.7). Yet, Forsberg contends still in 2019, existing interdependencies might have prevented tensions from escalating further (p.768).

e) Interim Conclusions

While traditional accounts invoking explanations based on materialist notions of power and domestic factors have opened up a big variety of perspectives on EU-Russia relations, they tend to omit or downplay the role played by ideational elements, such as ideas, interpretations or discourses. Since the present dissertation focusses on the entanglement of discourses and interpretations between Russia and the EU, the rest – and lion’s share – of this review will discuss existing approaches that appreciate the centrality of ideational elements for an understanding of EU-Russia relations.

3. Ideas and Interpretation in EU-Russia Relations

Besides power and domestic factors, the foci of what are often deemed ‘traditional’ approaches, diverse contributions have also investigated the role of ideas, interpretations or discourses to make sense of the dynamics between Russia and the EU. Rejecting the foundationalist ontology at the heart of realist or liberal thought allows for an appreciation of the world as socially or discursively constructed (cf. Marsh & Stoker, 2010:184-211). This body of literature, comprising primarily perspectives inspired by constructivist and poststructuralist thought, relies on discourses, interpretations, or ideas for understanding dynamics between the two actors or, indeed, subjects. These accounts vary – like the whole field of EU-Russia Studies – in stringency of theorisation and are heterogeneous in their assumptions and their affinity to distinct theoretical approaches.

An illustrative example of this shift in perspective is offered by contributions to critical geopolitics (cf. Omelicheva, 2016; Toal, 2017; Tuathail, 2008; Zeleneva, 2021; O’Loughlin et

al., 2016). In differentiation from the above-introduced perspectives that rely on materialist notions of power, critical geopolitics focus on the “mental, cognitive, and discursive constructions of geopolitical spaces” (Omelicheva, 2016:711). Not denying that the geopolitical context matters, they argue that this context ought to be understood by means of the ideas and beliefs, identity and interpretations that define it. Critical geopolitics thus adopt a constructivist perspective while emphasising spatial assumptions and ‘truths’ underlying foreign policy-guiding conceptions (Omelicheva, 2016:719; cf. Tuathail, 1999).

Within the Russian body of literature, constructivist approaches have rarely featured (Romanova, 2019:141). Where they are applied, constructivist frameworks tend not to reflect profound theoretical and conceptual richness (p.141). Explicit poststructuralist approaches in Russian language remain few and far between and tend to be targeted at a Western readership (Romanova, 2015:106). Yet, as will be shown, there has been a – from this theoretical perspective most insightful – debate among Russian scholars about issues of Russian identity and Europeaness.

EU-Russia relations appear as an especially apt subject for constructivist research – or anti-foundationalists investigations more generally – because, as Morozov (2018b:30) points out, this relationship exceeds mere sectoral questions and isolated policy areas. It is, rather, an issue that can only be understood in a holistic way, since it is as much about Europe and its identity as such, about questions of being and becoming, values and borders. Contrasting constructivist thought to realist and liberal approaches, which naturally fail to widen their perspective beyond the designated explanatory variables they rely on, Tsygankov (2010) highlights as virtue of constructivism for the study of EU-Russia relations its offer of a comprehensive explanatory framework (p.14). It furthermore allows closer attention to cultural and historical peculiarities, thus steering clear of imposing an essentially Western (realist or liberal) rationale on a relationship where the ambiguity of and the (non-)identification with the West is a fundamental element of this relationship’s functioning in a multicultural world (Tsygankov, 2010:14). This is of particular relevance in this dissertation, since the framework developed here seeks to being able to capture ideational heterogeneity and change.

For this endeavour, constructivism, broadly understood,⁷ seems to be an apt point of departure. Not only do constructivists criticise the static materialism of traditional approaches. They furthermore acknowledge the fundamentally social nature of international relations and allow

⁷ Constructivism is to be understood broadly here, following Fierke (2013) in including both ‘conventional’ and ‘critical’ variants, and is thus defined rather through its anti-foundationalist ontology than through epistemological positions.

for the possibility of change (Fierke, 2013:188; Hopf, 1998:180) through discursive interaction (DeBardeleben, 2012:425). Constructivists thus replace the rationalist function that underpins realist and liberal thinking with an acknowledgement of contextual particularities. Consequently, the individualist ontology of traditional approaches in International Relations theory is rejected, facilitating instead a social ontology that allows for a “context of normative meaning”, that is shared (or competing) understandings such as norms and values (Fierke, 2013:190). Instead of assuming pre-given interests, constructivists claim that it is imperative to understand an actor’s identity, since it defines their preferences (Wendt, 1992:398). Given its new calibration of national identity after 1991, Clunan notes in her seminal book (2009), Russia has been an especially informative case for constructivist interrogation (pp.1-2).

a) Interpretation and Identity

From a constructivist perspective, interpretation is central for an understanding of EU-Russia relations because of its close link to interests and identity. “[Before] we can say anything about Russia’s interests, we must analyse the processes through which the country’s identity is formed” (Ringmar, 2002:131). Interests are always the outcome of a process of interpretation (Weldes, 1996:276). Interpretation, however, takes place within a shared context of meaning – discourse – through which actors make sense of the world and through which they legitimate their actions (p.277). Rejecting the positivist assumption of an objective representation of the world, any interpretation is necessarily dependent upon a ‘subject position’ in it (Torfing, 1999:89). For poststructuralists, the constitution of meaning and identity is essentially relational, constructed through processes of linking and differentiation (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001:127-134). This link between relational identity and interpretation is verbalised by Makarychev (2005), who states that “[the] way one assesses his/her neighbours and interlocutors is indicative of his/her own worldviews and political standpoints” (p.1). To examine interpretation by studying relationally structured identity discourses is thus relevant, because it constitutes the condition of possibility but at the same time also the limit of foreign policy (cf. Campbell, 1992). Constructivist studies of identity have consequently centred on investigations of identity discourses and self-other relations constructed therein.

Studies of Russian and EU identity, and notably how they relate to each other discursively, have featured prominently in the field of EU-Russia relations (Morozov, 2018a:30; 2018b:24).

These accounts problematise Russia's ambiguous Europeanness and great power aspirations, Europe's external Others, the relationship of concepts like Europe, the EU and the West, or ideational boundaries. In order to pave the way for this dissertation's quest to investigate discursive interaction in EU-Russia relations, a first task must thus be to map existing studies on the discursive economy at work between the two subjects. This subsection a) will thus in the following present existing research on the genealogy of identity discourses in both Russia and the EU with a particular focus on how the two subjects relate to each other. After having presented the empirical point of departure for this dissertation, it remains to outline the conceptual one. The subsequent subsection b) will therefore delineate and critically discuss how the interaction of ideas, interpretations and discourses has been approached in the literature on EU-Russia relations from various theoretical perspectives. On this basis it will be fleshed out how the literature can benefit from a new conceptual framework that focusses on how the intersubjective relationship between Russia and the EU in itself conditions the dynamics between the two subjects.

i) Russia in European Identity Discourses

There is great agreement in the literature that historically and until today Russia constituted a projection screen that served European identity construction with various depictions as a constitutive 'Other' (Morozov, 2015; 2018b; Morozov & Rumelili, 2012; Neumann, 1997; 1999; Wolff, 2000; Timofeev, 2008; Semenenko et al., 2006; Heller, 2010). In his extensive study, Wolff (2000) shows how in the intellectual discourses of the enlightenment, the mental map of Europe came to be divided into East and West. This conceptual reorientation, he argues, the "invention of Eastern Europe" (p.7; cf. Melegh, 2018; Zarycki, 2014) as an idea somewhere between Europe and Asia and between civilisation and barbarism, served to define the Western European Self. Heller (2010), a seminal contributor to the discussion of 'the West' as a concept, argues that – besides the Russian self-delineation from a Western Other – the European image of Russia and the East was an important factor for the formation of a 'Western' identity in the 19th century (p.36).

In his profound genealogical study of European discourses on 'the East' over time, Neumann (1999, cf. 1997) traces the representations of Russia from the early 16th century until the 1990s. In the course of early contacts, he argues, there emerged in Western Europe a dominant idea of Russia as barbarous, as deficient with regard to faith, civility and governance (1999:67-74).

The coming to power of Peter the Great in the early 18th century profoundly changed this image. Now, Russia was perceived, if as a learner, then still a serious player in the European state system. It is at this time, after the Great Northern War (1700-1721), that with the ascend of Russia the coordinates of Europe became increasingly perceived in terms of an East-West divide (pp.74-86). Playing a significant role in the Napoleonic Wars and forming part of the Holy Alliance with Prussia and Austria, Russia was recognised as a great power in the European concert in the course of the 19th century (Neumann, 1997:164). Yet, in this century of rapid socio-economy changes, the East-West divide got entrenched and Russia, along with the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans, increasingly served as an antagonistic Other to a Western Self (Neumann, 1999:98; Heller, 2010:36).

After the revolutions of 1917, Western discourses initially portrayed Soviet Russia ambiguously as a European power gone astray (Neumann, 1999:99-102). This changed with the Second World War. This fundamental break for Europe would induce the Cold War and, with it, entrench a representation of Russia as a military and political threat (p.102), indeed *the* threatening Other (Campbell, 1992). The dominant representation invoked the image of an Asiatic, barbarian power threatening to intrude into Europe. Structuring binaries in this discourse were, notably, West/East, sedentary/nomadic, civilised/barbarian, free/unfree, democratic/totalitarian or authoritarian, and defensive/offensive (Neumann, 1997:159-161; cf. Semenenko et al., 2006:111). A dissident representation, articulated mostly by communists and socialists, depicted the Soviet Union as liberator from Nazism and as a viable alternative model for Europe (Neumann, 1997; cf. Semenenko et al., 2006:111). This alternative representation, however, lost traction to the authorised one during the course of the Cold War arguably due to Soviet interventions in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, which were perceived as an attack on Europe more generally (Neumann, 1997:159-162).

One constant throughout history, Neumann (1999) points out, is that Russia has always been represented as “*just* having been tamed, civil, civilized; just having begun to participate in European politics; *just* having become part of Europe” (p.110; emphasis in original). This observation echoes Prozorov’s (2008) assertion that “Russia is present in Europe without being represented in it” (p.181), that Russia is at the same time a part of Europe while it remains excluded. This ambiguous position of Russia in Europe has been described by others as liminal (Rumelili, 2012) or, from a postcolonial perspective, as hybrid (Morozov, 2015:22-29).

Russia is not the only external Other that has played this role in European identity formation. Thomas Diez (2004) argues that Eastern Europe as a territorial and temporal ‘Other’, as a mirror image of Europe’s own past, became increasingly relevant for European identity

construction, since European identity became increasingly difficult to define after the end of the Cold War.⁸ Morozov and Rumelili (2012), moreover, have identified similarities between the role the Russian and the Turkish Other play for European identity (cf. Sakwa, 2010), and Hansen (2006) has looked at the othering of Yugoslavia.

In more recent Western European discourses since 1991, Russia is depicted as an (unwilling) learner of European political and economic practice, thus striving to becoming less different from Europe (Neumann, 1997:158). While invoking a European future in describing Russia, the country was still represented as the periphery, reasserting Europe as the centre. With references to “a lack of a democratic past, the need for a strong hand, for a different approach to politics, etc.” (ibid.), a picture was drawn of Russia as lagging behind. Semenenko et al. (2006) point out that Russia’s historical function as a (derogatory) Other to Europe remains important until today. In Western European discourses, references to that purpose point among others to Russia’s unpredictability or flawed institutions. In 2012, Morozov and Rumelili observe that since the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, “Europeanness [within the contemporary EU discourse] is often defined with a negative reference to Russia” (Morozov & Rumelili, 2012:39). Casier (2018c) finds that Europeanness has disappeared as an attribute to the EU’s representation of Russia altogether (p.111). The EU, Miskimmon and O’Loughlin (2017) write, has increasingly built its identity discourse on the exclusion of Russia from a common European project (p.116). In his recent contribution, Cadier (2019) moreover observes a long-ongoing and increasing ‘geopoliticising’ discourse that is framing EU-Russia relations within the Union.

ii) *Europe in Russian Identity Discourses*

When looking at the other side, Russian identity discourses likewise exhibit an existential relationship to the representation of Europe (Neumann, 1996; 1997; 2002; 2016; 2017; Hopf, 2002; Leichtova, 2014; Morozov, 2010; 2015; 2018a; 2018b; Tsygankov, 2008; Timofeev, 2008; Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012). It is widely acknowledged that Europe and the West are by far the most important constitutive Others for Russian identity construction (Neumann, 1996; Hopf, 2002; Leichtova, 2014; Neumann, 2017; Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012; Makarychev, 2014;

⁸ Diez’s (2004) projection of the EU’s past on Eastern Europe resonates with Morozov’s (2019) contention that the literature invoking as object of temporal othering *merely* the EU’s own past (cf. Wæver, 1996) misses the point, since, “[in order] to be ‘otherable’, a particular part of the past must be politically relevant” (Morozov, 2019:349).

Greenfeld, 1992:254; Omelicheva, 2016) with the Russian discourse simultaneously accommodating close identification with and stark differentiation from it (Morozov, 2018b:32). The ambiguous relationship to Europe in Russian identity discourses makes Makarychev (2005) speak of an ‘empty signifier’. This conceptualisation echoes a similar line of thought presented earlier by Casier (1998:60-61), who infers from this ambiguity an inherent indeterminacy of such debates. Given the historical centrality of the notion of Europe for Russian identity formation, Neumann (1996) goes as far as to say that diverging perceptions of it have precluded a “common Russian identity” (p.10).

With his book *Russia and the Idea of Europe* (1996), Neumann provided an unprecedentedly detailed investigation of Russian identity discourses and the representation of Europe therein since the end of the 18th century until the early 1990s. Neumann’s genealogy and his subsequent works (notably 2002; 2016; 2017) became core references for studies of Russian identity formation. He writes that a first notable engagement with the West can be traced back to debates on the Polish invasion of Russia at the beginning of the 17th century. Here already, a divide can be observed between those representing the invaders as radically inferior analogous to the Tartar Yoke and others emphasising the Poles’ socio-political advantages from which Russia ought to learn (Neumann, 1996:9-10). As a fundamental reference in Russian identity debates, however, Europe appears not before the 18th century during the reign of Peter the Great (Neumann, 1996:10-11; Tsygankov, 2008:766).⁹ Peter the Great had a passion for the West. He introduced various Westernising socio-political reforms and strived to present Russia as a *European* country (Neumann, 1996:10-12).

This position changed in the early 19th century in response to the fundamental shifts that appeared in Europe with the French Revolution in 1789 and the ensuing Napoleonic wars. Those events presented Russia with military and political challenges alike (Neumann, 1996:12). The state promoted a “Europe of Christian Monarchs” (p.26, cf. Heller, 2010:36), with Russia being part of a Holy Alliance defending the ‘true’ Europe of the ancien regime against a ‘false’ one of liberalism and secularism. This official position was met by two more strands. Firstly, a constitutionalist position, embodied by the Decembrists, that called for adapting to the political and economic developments in Europe, and, secondly, an anti-enlightenment Romantic nationalist position that, influenced by German Romanticism, emphasised Russian cultural distinctness in contrast to a morally inferior Europe (Neumann,

⁹ The following account is partly a development of a genealogical discussion published in an earlier article by the author (Baumann, 2020).

1996:17-26; Heller, 2010:36-37; Tsygankov, 2008:766). Those two positions led to a defining polarisation of the Russian debate on Europe between Westernisers, praising Europe's political and economic superiority as an example to be emulated by Russia, and Slavophiles, who emphasised Russia's unique culture and regarded Europe as decadent and rotten (Neumann, 1996:28-39; Tsygankov, 2008:766; Heller, 2010:36-37).

Actively developing in the late 19th century and originating in the Westernising camp, the Marxist position split into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks over the question of how to relate to European social democracy. The former advocated for reform over revolution in a political process with other classes, emulating the successes of social democracy in Western Europe. The Bolsheviks, in contrast, refused to delineate a Russian Self from the European Other along national borders. They drew a line between a 'false' and a 'true' Europe along class lines, where the former was constituted by the bourgeoisie and state apparatuses and the latter embodied the proletariat as a whole (Neumann, 1996:61-94). This position became the state's position after the revolutions in 1917 with Bolshevik Russia coming to represent 'true' Europe. Western Europe incrementally turned into a monolithic evil Other. After the Second World War, the notion of 'the West' increasingly came to embody post-war Europe under the hegemony of the United States (US) (Neumann, 1996:95-130). Besides the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as the main enemy, Morozov (2004) notes, the "European communities, the precursors of today's European Union, are one of the most characteristic incarnations of 'false' Europe" in Soviet texts of the 1950s (p.6).

The significant expansion of public political space during Mikhail Gorbachev's Glasnost revived the previously closeted debate about Europe and the West. The dominant representation became Gorbachev's 'common European home',¹⁰ which recognised the historical ties between Russia and Europe, rejected dividing lines, and marginalised notions of Russian moral superiority (Neumann, 1996:160-162; Timofeev, 2008:106). Neumann (1999) states that the "new representations of Russian identity involved a political struggle over how to differentiate Russia from Europe" (p.164).

Boris Yeltsin's government initially adopted the liberal position, understood in terms of a reintegration with Europe as a 'return to civilisation'. This position regarded Europe as equal, to some extent superior, partner from which Russia ought to learn (Neumann, 1996:180; 2016:1385; Hopf, 2016:229). It found a proponent with then Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev,

¹⁰ While the notion has been coined notably by Mikhail Gorbachev, Leonid Brezhnev has used it before (see Neumann, 1996:161).

who famously articulated the ambition for Russia to be regarded as ‘a normal great power’ (Neumann, 1996:182). The nationalist opposition was joined by some former communists and neo-Eurasianists, who remotely drew on the Eurasianist tradition developed by exiled intellectuals in the interwar period and who presented Russia’s Eurasian identity as clearly distinct from Europe. This opposition advocated for a strong Russian state and declared Europe together with cosmopolitanism and globalisation the hostile, inferior West (Neumann, 1999:168-169; 2016:1384; Tsygankov, 2008:768). The liberal Westerniser discourse’s initial optimism about Russia’s integration into Europe soon gave place to a more pragmatic ‘Eurasianist’¹¹ orientation. Yeltsin stated that “while ‘Russia’s independent foreign policy started with the West’, it was now time to ‘build relations with any country, be it from the West or East, Europe, or Asia’” (as quoted in Neumann, 2016:1385). Yevgeny Primakov, Kozyrev’s successor, subsequently coined the term multipolarity – at the expense of the hitherto Western orientation (Neumann, 2016:1386). This shift was the result, on the one hand, of pressure from the nationalist opposition – especially in the face of the powerful idea in Russian discourses of itself as a great power. Another reason was a feeling *within* the liberal camp that Russia was not accepted as an equal partner by the West (Neumann, 1999:169; 2016:1385; Timofeev, 2008:110). Internal as well as external developments in the 1990s formed the context for this disenchantment. Internally, Russia faced a tough transition to a market economy via ‘shock therapy’ that came with surging poverty and criminality and peaked in the financial crisis in 1998. Externally, Russia was confronted with the enlargement of NATO, the Alliance’s bombing of Yugoslavia during Operation Allied Force, and Western criticism of Russia’s campaign in Chechnya (cf. Prozorov, 2007:314; Hopf, 2016:229-230).

Tsygankov (2008) maintains that “while bringing about a fundamental change in Russia’s discourse, [the Soviet disintegration] preserved the core civilizational debates” (p.767). Morozov (2015), however, highlights that the recourse to the historical dichotomy between Westernisers and Slavophiles often paints a picture too simplistic (p.43; cf. Casier, 1998:59). He points to a number of more refined studies (including Tsygankov, 2010; Clunan, 2009; and Kuchins & Zevelev, 2012) of which Hopf’s 2002 study constitutes a fundamental contribution. Hopf offers a detailed “empirical reconstruction of the identity topography”, identifying dominant discourses in 1955 and 1999 based on a great number and broad variety of sources.

¹¹ As Neumann (1996) underlines, this seeming convergence with Romantic nationalist Eurasianism was only superficial, as the state’s liberal Eurasianist position did not question the moral equality of Europe and Russia (p.184). For a taxonomy of different interpretations of Eurasianism in contemporary Russian discourses see Rangsimaporn (2006).

Thereby, this in-depth study stands out for its broad scope, allowing it to make solid claims on the diversity of discourses prevalent in society and thus the discursive framework, Soviet and Russian foreign politics had to navigate.

Instructive mappings of competing representations of Europe since Putin's early presidency have been provided by Prozorov (2005; 2007), Morozov (2010) and Neumann (2016). Putin started his first presidency from the disenchanted liberal position (Neumann, 2016:1389). In his 2007 article, Prozorov outlines how in the early 2000s exclusionary practices by the EU made liberals, while sticking to the idea of an underling identity with a European community on the basis of liberal values, envision an institutionally more autonomous path (Prozorov, 2007, cf. Baranovsky, 2000). In this environment, Prozorov (2005) argues, Putin's position struck a 'liberal-conservative' synthesis. While the underlying assumptions were in continuity of the liberal tradition, the rhetoric was now more conservative, emphasising consolidation and normalisation (pp.124-130; cf. Casier, 2018b). It stressed the achievements of the transition during the challenging 1990s, which ought to be preserved (Prozorov, 2005). The context of this discursive dissociation from the West, which also came with a reaffirmation of state sovereignty (p.128), was formed by the US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the Iraq war, further enlargement of NATO and so-called colour revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan (Hopf, 2016:233). Putin's liberal-conservatism was opposed by what Prozorov calls 'left-conservatism', which regarded Russia's post-Soviet liberal development as illegitimate (Prozorov, 2005:133-137). In terms of their relationship to Europe, left-conservatives did not question Russia's cultural identity as European, but challenged the equation of Europe with the EU and its normative agenda (Prozorov, 2007:315-318).

Similar to Prozorov's assessment, Neumann (2016) argues that Putin navigated – to some extent superseded by means of closing with the (post-)Soviet past¹² (Prozorov, 2005:129-130) – the polarised divide between liberals and nationalists prevalent in the 1990s during his first two terms (Neumann, 2016:1391-1392, cf. Prozorov, 2005:124-130).

Neumann (2016; 2017) considers that Putin's incremental approximation to the nationalist discourse during the 2000s reached a new level in his third term after Dmitry Medvedev's interlude as President between 2008 and 2012. Neumann calls this new official discourse, which posits Russia's "superiority" vis-à-vis Europe (2016), a "full-fledged xenophobic

¹² Putin's political project in the early 2000s defined itself "no longer [against] the Soviet history but rather the revolutionary turmoil of the 1990s" (Prozorov, 2005:130).

nationalist”¹³ position (2017:78). The characterisation of Putin’s post-2012 rhetoric as “increasingly nationalist” is shared by Tsygankov (2015:295).

Morozov (2015) rejects the dichotomous view of contemporary Russian debates “as structured by the opposition between the pro-Western liberals and the anti-Western nationalists” as too simplistic (p.43). He terms the dominant discourse after Putin’s return for his third presidential term ‘paleoconservatism’¹⁴ (pp.103-134; 2018b:33-35), a “radical traditionalist ideology” (2015:104) that tends “to politicise culture an instrument of ‘civilisational struggle’” (p.114). Central both to Morozov’s characterisation of paleoconservatism and Neumann’s notion of xenophobic nationalism, however, is a self-representation, according to which “Russia itself is a morally superior ‘true Europe’, a conservative Great Power that guards Europe’s true Christian heritage *against* the ‘false’ Europe of decadence and depravity to its West” (Neumann, 2016:1383, my emphasis; cf. Morozov, 2018b:33).¹⁵

Consequently, Putin’s third term is also frequently associated with the proliferation of the idea of Russia’s civilisational distinctness (Feklyunina, 2016:783; Morozov, 2015:115) and a conservative turn towards ‘traditional values’, a term defined first and foremost negatively in differentiation from an immoral, secular and homosexual West (Uzlaner, 2017; Morozov, 2018b; Morozov, 2017a; Wilkinson, 2014; Zevelev, 2016; Tsygankov, 2016:151). Pointing to the notion of ‘state-civilisation’ employed by Putin since 2012, Tsygankov (2016) highlights the connection of strong statehood and the representation of Russia as a unique civilisation in the official discourse (p.51).

Tracing the discursive history of Russia’s annexation of Crimea, Hopf (2016) provides a further account of predominant discourses of Russian national identity from 1992 to 2014. His assessment of the official position’s oscillation between liberal and conservative discourses (p.233) resonates with Morozov’s and Neumann’s description of Putin’s first two terms. As one of the permissive discursive conditions for Russia’s annexation of Crimea, however, he identifies a rejection of a European identity, freeing the country from Western judgements.

¹³ Neumann (2017) differentiates xenophobic nationalism from the ‘spiritual nationalism’ of the 1990s with regard to how they relate to (Western) Europe: “Where xenophobic nationalism sees Europe as an Other and as a threat, spiritual nationalism saw Europe as a different yet approachable and overlapping Christian culture, a Christian culture with which Russia could have various relations” (p.79).

¹⁴ Morozov differentiates paleoconservatives from their ‘predecessors’, the conservatives described by Prozorov (2005). While these “believed that modernisation and prosperity could be achieved without imitating the West, the paleoconservative ideology is framed as an explicit rejection of modernity as detrimental to tradition and organic spirituality” (Morozov, 2018b:33).

¹⁵ The representations of Europe identified by Neumann and Morozov are reminiscent of the nationalist opposition, described by Prozorov (2007), which invoked a “false ‘Europe of pederasts and punk’” (p.322). The representation of Europe as ‘rotten’ reappeared in the Russian discursive landscape, according to Neumann (2016:1392), in the second half of the 2000s.

Hopf's (2016) idea of emancipation thus goes beyond Morozov's notion of paleoconservatism and Neumann's xenophobic nationalism, both of which do not dispute an underlying European identity.

Clunan (2018) points out that "[since] the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian elites have struggled to find an alternative to liberal triumphalism – some kind of international architecture that places them within the West, yet allows them the distinctiveness of their long history as a global rule-maker" (p.45). As mentioned earlier, this dynamic discursive environment led to the emergence and development of new and old civilisational debates (Akopov, 2020:290).

The notion of the 'Russian World' or 'Russkij Mir' has been widely discussed in this context (Suslov, 2018; Laruelle, 2015; Feklyunina, 2016; Pieper, 2020; Zevelev, 2014; Omelicheva, 2016; O'Loughlin, 2016). Born in the 1990s in the works of two intellectuals Petr Shchedrovitsky and Gleb Pavlovsky (Laruelle, 2015; Suslov, 2018), it has since been interpreted differently. While Pieper (2020) speaks of "a common civilizational space of a unified 'Russian World'" (p.771) tied together primarily through a common language, Laruelle (2015) sees it as "a fuzzy mental atlas on which different regions of the world and their different links to Russia can be articulated in a fluid way" (p.1). Omelicheva (2016) argues that the 'Russian World' is not linked, exclusively, to ethnicity, language, culture, or territory." Its meaning, according to her, is also defined by emotional connotations and political goals (p.715).

Suslov (2018) attempts to structure the evolution of the concept along three stages "from a non- or even anti-territorial to a territorialized conception" (p.346). Initially understood as an 'archipelago' comprising islands of Russian-speakers that promise to be beneficial to Russia's development in a global context, the concept increasingly turned into a soft power instrument in Russia's competition with the West. This second stage coincides with what other authors have identified as a turning point in Russia's positioning towards its 'near abroad' (Laruelle, 2015:9-10; Feklyunina, 2016:781), leading to increasing "efforts to reintegrate the post-Soviet space" through means of soft power (Feklyunina, 2016:781-782; Suslov, 2018:338-339; cf. Pieper, 2020) after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004/05. A final irredentist and isolationist articulation identified by Suslov (2018) is the 'Russian World' as a distinct civilisation "situated on a distinctive territory, ruled by a single political subject, and struggling with other civilizations for resources and influences" (p.344). This stage is associated with the conservative turn outlined above and the promotion of traditional values by Russia (cf. Feklyunina, 2016:784). The 'Russian World' became to be defined primarily through culture and language (Pieper, 2020:763; cf. Feklyunina, 2016:783), "a monolithic body of the Russian

people, Russian state, Russian lands, Russian culture and Russian values” (Suslov, 2018:344). With the ‘Russian World’ being increasingly defined in ethnic terms, Torbakov (2019) observes a challenge of rather multi-ethnic conceptions of (pragmatic) Eurasianist integration by more culturally homogeneous concepts.

For Akopov (2020), the notion of the ‘Russian World’, the “narrative of Russia ‘betrayed by its brothers’ ‘naturally’ belonging to Russia’s cultural and political world [...], or even Russia’s ‘sphere of influence’ and Russia’s mission as the protector of Southern Slavs” (p.296), carries a feeling of loneliness that characterises Russian discourses since the collapse of the Soviet Union. A notion of loneliness is reflected, for example, in Vadim Tsymbursky’s concept of ‘Island-Russia’ (1993; cf. Akopov, 2020:298). He advocates for an isolationist identity as a Russian civilisational core distinct from Europe, emerging from the Soviet Union’s collapse and surrounded by a Eurasian periphery (Torbakov, 2019:49-50). Tsymbursky would later refer to the “territories connected to the Russian core through geographical, geostrategy and cultural bonds” as ‘shelf of Island Russia’ (Tsymbursky, 2008; cf. Torbakov, 2021), an idea that Boris Mezhuyev interprets in his ‘civilisational realism’ to legitimise the inclusion of bordering territories (Mezhuyev, 2017; Mezhuyev, 2019). Akopov (2020) identifies a notion of loneliness also in former “main pro-Kremlin ideologist” (Morozov, 2008:154) Vladislav Surkov’s concept of ‘sovereign democracy’ (Akopov, 2020:299; see Surkov, 2006) and his later article titled *The Loneliness of the Half-Breed*, where he predicts for Russia “a hundred years (or possibly two hundred or three hundred) of geopolitical loneliness” (Surkov, 2018).

b) Taking a Step Back: Ideational Interaction¹⁶

The preceding review of studies on European and Russian identity discourses resonates with Morozov’s (2015) assessment that “we have a reasonably good understanding of Russian identity politics in its historical evolution and structural conditionality” (p.41). The numerous genealogical studies “all agree on certain fundamental structural points, and therefore one might conclude that we have a solid ground for further research, including comparative

¹⁶ The term ideational interaction is chosen to facilitate the review of a wide and heterogeneous range of theoretical lenses that have been applied to (partially) capture the phenomenon under investigation in this study. It does not mean to imply a limited focus on ‘idealist’ understandings of the world (cf. Wendt, 1999:23-24), comprising, to the contrary, also perspectives – among which this study ought to be situated theoretically – that reject an idealist-materialist divide in the first place (cf. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:108; Laclau, 1999:105-112; Torfing, 2005:7-9; Wæver, 2002:22).

endeavours” (p.43). Besides, there has also been an acknowledgement that European and Russian identity discourses do not coexist in isolation from each other. To quote Neumann (1996) again: “the Russian debate about Europe is entangled with the European debate about Russia” (p.206). The same has shortly after been claimed by Casier (1998): “the European debate about Russia's place and the Russian debate about Europe are not unrelated. They will mutually influence each other” (p.61).

The aim this dissertation subscribes to is to further an understanding of *how* Russian and EU foreign policy discourses are entangled, how they interact. While the above-outlined accounts on European and Russian identity discourses allow for an appreciation of how different narratives constituting the Self compete and evolve, the external dimension – how these narratives are conditioned by the greater international context in the presence of other subjects – has so far not been approached systematically. To investigate ideational – or discursive – interaction means to create an understanding of what the coexistence of these diverging interpretations and ideas implies for each subject respectively. This dissertation seeks thus to take a step back, aiming to understand what role both Russian *and* European discourses play for and how they condition each other.

This last subsection in this review seeks to prepare the ground for this endeavour by taking stock of how ideational interaction between Russia and the EU has previously been approached conceptually.¹⁷ It will start by outlining the phenomenon of ideational interaction in EU-Russia relations before giving a brief overview of how it has been made sense of through various conceptual frameworks. This inventory will end by pointing out two blind spots in the existing literature that this dissertation seeks to illuminate and further develop: the freedom and constraints to the EU's and Russia's (discursive) agency within their relationship and this relationship's intersubjective ontology.

i) What is Interaction?

In order to make sense of EU-Russia relations, it has become popular to identify ideational differences between Russia and the EU (Casier, 2013:1377-1378). Casier (2013) points to the argument of a ‘values gap’ in the literature, reviewing how EU-Russia relations have been described through reference to “incompatible world views, value systems or normative

¹⁷ This depiction does not claim to be exhaustive. For a notable example see Fierke and Wiener (1999), who employ Wittgensteinian ‘language games’ to show that the meaning of discourses can change along with changing contexts.

agendas” (p.1377). While Prozorov (2006), for example, points to different (not static) ‘logics’, Romaniuk (2009) explains EU-Russia relations through a post-modern vs modern divide (cf. Klinke, 2012). Casier (2013) criticises as inconsistent the argument brought forward by Emerson et al. (2009) or Timmins (2002) that the EU should be regarded as norm-driven while Russia’s policy is based on interests and further argues against a simplistic dichotomous view of the EU’s and Russia’s normative agenda (cf. Averre, 2009b). To point out ideational differences between Russia and the EU risks a particularistic view with limited analytical value for understanding EU-Russia *dynamics*, since it misses the complexity of how ideational differences are intertwined with the relationship between the two subjects.

Instead of focussing on differences, various authors have underlined the role of ideational *interaction* along the lines of Neumann’s (1996) and Casier’s (1998) above-mentioned insight that discourses and resulting interpretations in Russia and the West do not exist in isolation from each other but should be understood as closely interrelated. Tsygankov (2003), for example, states that “ideas put forward in the international arena can make important contributions to how local cultures perceive each other” (p.68). He examines how at the end of the Cold War Fukuyama’s *End of History* and Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* “participated in domestic political discourse in Russia, were perceived by this discourse, and contributed to its change” (p.54). He illustrates how post-independence reactions to Fukuyama’s liberal paradigm shaped the discursive context of Russia’s turn away from an unquestioned pro-Western stance with Andrei Kozyrev’s replacement by Yevgeny Primakov as Foreign Minister. More broadly, he concludes, Russia’s adoption of a more isolationist discourse was a reaction to those ethnocentric Western debates.

Another example is provided by Dias (2013). Looking at the perceptions that Russia and the EU have of each other with regard to their policies in the shared neighbourhood, she investigates “the interplay between two sets of discursive practices that aim to become hegemonic” (p.259).

Makarychev (2018), finally, also assumes that discourses and interpretations cannot be understood without taking into account the external dimension when he argues that Russia’s vision of the shared neighbourhood must be understood as a counter-hegemonic response to the EU’s advances to project its norms in the region.

Whereas these accounts are instructive in their illustration of how discourses and interpretations are conditioned by the discourses and interpretation of others, they do not offer a comprehensive conceptual framework to study this interaction. While Tsygankov’s (2003) paper constitutes a detailed empirical observation of particular discursive dynamics, it does not

lend itself to infer a more general theoretical understanding of how discourses of one actor interact with debates somewhere else and how this interaction might be conditioned by the relationship between the two. Dias's (2013) study, tracing competing rationales, relies explicitly on critical constructivist reasoning, which attributes major significance to discourses for the way a subject makes sense of the world. Yet, approaching discursive competition as a conscious and deliberate one-directional practice of both actors (cf. pp.266-267), her framework does not reflect on the question of how these discourses change or interact within an intersubjective setting.

This question thus calls for a more systematic conceptualisation of ideational, or rather discursive, dynamics between Russia and the EU. The following paragraphs seek to take stock, reviewing how existing accounts have conceptually made sense of the role that Russia and the EU in the context of their intersubjective relationship play for each other in shaping ideas, interpretations and discourses.

ii) Explaining Ideational Interaction

Following the anti-foundationalist claim shared also by constructivists that the social world is fundamentally contingent (Burr, 2006:3), the question of how discursive dynamics unravel must necessarily address the question of how or by what ideational interaction is conditioned. Constructivists have been criticised for not adequately addressing this question, that is for not sufficiently theorising *how* ideas and identities change (Götz, 2017:237-238). Lake (2013), for instance, laments the lack of “a good explanation of how and why some identities win out over others” and calls for a deeper understanding of that matter (p.571). In the field of EU-Russia relations, this issue has been approached from different angles. In order to explain why ideational interaction between Russia and the EU unravels in a given way, authors have invoked various conceptual frameworks, building, for example, on the world-system theory, postcolonial and sociological approaches, the English School, the notion of recognition or normative power. This literature will be reviewed in the following to prepare the conceptual ground for this dissertation.

Bull's (1977) formulation of the English School, for example, constitutes a conceptual starting point for Haukkala (2010b), allowing him to integrate different theoretical approaches. In Haukkala's eyes, the English School can account for the overall systemic picture in which EU-Russia relations are situated. His main conclusion is that there are “clear differences in the way

in which the EU and Russia frame their institutionalized relationship” (p.169). These diverging ‘world views’, according to Haukkala, determine both actors’ respective rationales. In terms of normative dynamics since the 1990s, he points to the EU’s attempt to ‘normative hegemony’ towards Russia, seeking to impose a one-directional and asymmetrical convergence of Russia towards its own norms and values. For Makarychev (2014), the English School offers an inert structuralist frame to the otherwise dynamic interaction between Russia and the EU. He introduces the English School’s notion of the International Society as an overarching structural level in which dynamic intersubjective practices are grounded and, consequently, by which they are conditioned.

In *After Defeat* (2011), Zarakol analyses relations between the Western core and Eastern outsiders by means of the symbolic interactionist concept of stigma. Relying on the writings of the sociologists Erving Goffman and Norbert Elias, she argues that countries like Turkey, Japan, and Russia adopted the norms of Western modernity and simultaneously accepted the stigmatised outsider-position they were assigned in within that system.¹⁸ Zarakol thus assumes a shared understanding of inferiority between stigmatiser and stigmatised, and this sense of inferiority to the established European centre is rooted in a hegemonic notion of modernity that generates social hierarchies along Western standards of civilisation (pp.38-56).

Morozov (2015) considers Zarakol’s study as a “particularly significant [contribution] to the study of semi-peripheral states’ position in the international system” (p.49). In his own seminal book, *Russia’s Postcolonial Identity* (2015), he aims to make sense of Russia’s role in the world and its relation to Europe through a postcolonial lens. Morozov (2015) conceptualises Russia as a ‘subaltern empire’. This term suggests to analytically apprehend Russia both as a coloniser and, importantly, also as being subject to a Western hegemonic order that creates dependencies. Underlining that “the Russian case is still just an empirical case” (p.2), Morozov is looking for a more systemic understanding and “modest generalizations” (p.2) that allow for broader conclusions and comparative investigations (p.39; cf. p.44). Consequently, he advocates for a more structural approach that comprehends “the specificity of each case as resulting from a unique constellation of structural factors” (p.39). The Western hegemonic order is thus interpreted within a world-system framework, in which Russia is a peripheral country relative to the Western core (p.15; cf. Hopf, 2017; Kagarlitsky, 2008). An important aspect of

¹⁸ This approach relies on an anthropomorphisation of states which, in Zarakol’s (2011) case, results from the assumption that stigma has the same effect on states as it does on individuals (p.4). This touches upon a deeper debate that concerns conceptualisations of the (state-)subject based on individualist sociological and psychological approaches and which has been carried out elsewhere (cf. Epstein, 2011; Wendt, 2004; Mitzen, 2006; Ringmar, 2010:4-6).

Morozov's (2015) argument is his contention that Russia's subalternity¹⁹ in the existing social world order has to be understood through two dimensions.²⁰ Russia, first, has a material dependency on the global capitalist core (pp.67-102). Economically, the country took and takes a semi-peripheral position within the world-system. Russia is not outside that system, however. Having internalised the neo-liberal capitalist paradigm, it does not offer an 'alternative modernity'. This dependency cannot be understood in isolation from the second dimension of Russia's subalternity, its normative dependency (pp.103-134). It is Morozov's contention that "Russia's discursive space has been fully Europeanised during several centuries of catch-up modernisation" (p.11). As a consequence, the Russian discourse is entirely locked within the same referential system like the Western hegemonic discourse. Russian articulations, even when challenging Western hegemony, therefore cannot formulate a viable alternative, since they remain defined by – or in opposition to – Western concepts: "counter-hegemonic contestations have no other language to use than the language of hegemony and therefore tend to reproduce the very inequality they oppose" (p.108).

In order to make sense of normative dependencies between Russia and the West, the scholarship has furthermore attributed great importance to recognition and Russia's great power status (Clunan, 2009; Hopf, 2002; Freire, 2011; Neumann, 2008; Makarychev, 2005; DeBardeleben, 2018; Heller, 2014; Omelicheva, 2016:717). It has been widely argued that the "quest for recognition as a great power" (Neumann, 2008:129) has important implications for Russia's relation to the West (Forsberg, 2014:323; Freire, 2012; Tsygankov, 2014; Nitoiu, 2016; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010; Ringmar, 2002; Neumann, 2008; 2015).

Casier (2018a:15-18) gives an account of how the underlying motivation of being recognised as a great power has led to changing foreign policy strategies. Not only did Russia under the perception of inadequate respect from the West increasingly invoke anti-Western rhetoric. It also shifted its efforts from being recognised as a "normal great power"²¹ (Tsygankov, 2005) to adopting an increasingly neo-revisionist stance – a notion put forward by Sakwa (2011; 2015a), according to which Russia, without radically changing the existing international

¹⁹ The term 'subaltern', which Morozov (2015) borrows from postcolonial studies, refers to "disenfranchised individuals and groups, those whose agency is limited and who are deprived by the hegemonic social order of the possibility to make their voices heard" (p.1).

²⁰ This distinction, Morozov (2015) claims, is a merely analytical one (p.1). Showing how material conditions and national identity are interrelated, he appreciates discourse as deeply material (p.83) and thereby moves beyond the material-ideational divide akin to the late poststructuralist understanding of discourse (p.79; cf. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:108; Torfing, 2005:7).

²¹ As pointed out above, this notion was coined by former Russian Foreign Minister (1990-1996) Andrei Kozyrev (1992), who asserted that Russia "will not cease to be a great power. But it will be a normal great power" (p.10).

system, demands a “worthy and equal place in that system” (Sakwa, 2011:963). The third trend Casier (2018a) identifies as motivated by Russia’s quest for recognition is a move away from understanding great power status as attainable through economic performance to increasingly tying it to military engagement. This contention echoes Freire (2012), who asserts that Russia’s increasingly assertive course is grounded in popular support for Russia’s great power status as well as the recognition it receives from other international actors. Apart from the aim of internal consolidation, she identifies in her 2019 contribution moreover geopolitical considerations and identity discourses as driving factors for Russia’s increasingly assertive status-seeking foreign policy (Freire, 2019:797).

The link between recognition and interpretation is highlighted by Tsygankov (2014) when he claims that “Russia’s identity or sense of honor is not limited to protection of state international status/prestige in the eyes of other states, but also includes a distinctive idea of national self, or a system of nationally held meaningful beliefs” (p.347; cf. 2010:17-21). Splidsboel-Hansen (2002) finds that recognition has played a major role in Russia’s process of redefining its identity since the end of the Cold War. Aiming at joining the ‘in group’ of liberal democratic market economies, Russian elites actively sought the recognition as such from the EU (cf. Neumann, 2008:146). Feklyunina (2008) similarly asserts that the sensitivity of Russian elites to Western perceptions of Russia is impacting Russia’s self-representation. According to her, the prevailing negative attitudes towards Russia in the West are a source for growing resentment, fuelling a conflictual foreign policy (cf. White & Feklyunina, 2014:23).

A comprehensive theoretical account on Russia’s quest for Western recognition has been provided by Ringmar (2002; cf. 1996; 2010). Ringmar builds his argument on “an alternative, non-rationalist, interpretation of the fundamental logic of world politics” (2002:116). This logic presumes that the main driver for a subject’s actions is the quest for establishing an identity, which in turn requires recognition from significant Others (1996:1-18). Such a conception of identity is a deeply social one (p.13), since it acknowledges that identity can only be fully constituted in – and is contingent upon – interaction with others. In his *Recognition Game* (2002), he sketches an illustrative history of interaction between the Soviet Union and the West, arguing that Soviet actions can be made intelligible when viewed from the perspective of recognition dynamics. The projected identities that Soviet foreign policy sought to find recognition for, however, changed over time. According to Ringmar, identities evolved from a ‘legitimate state’, ‘great power’ and ‘super power’ to being seen as part of Gorbachev’s ‘common European home’ at the end of the Cold War. Ringmar (2002) draws on Hegel’s Master-Slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. In his analysis of dynamics between

Russia and the West, Ringmar explains the *asymmetrical* desire for the Other's (speak the West's) recognition by arguing with Hegel that we seek recognition only from those whom we consider equal (2002:120; cf. 1996:81; 2010:11; Bertram, 2017:110). This particular criterion determining the (asymmetrical) pattern of interaction in EU-Russia relations has also been put forward by other authors (Makarychev, 2010:194; Neumann, 1999:223). Since "[throughout] most of the century, Soviet Russia was the unrecognized party and the West [...] the recognized party" (Ringmar, 2002:122) – that is Russia taking the role of the Slave while the West that of the Master – Ringmar infers that the West continues to exert a major influence on Russia's processes of identity constitution after the Cold War by granting or withholding recognition (p.131). Albeit relying on a different theoretical tradition, namely Social Identity Theory, this conclusion is shared by Larson and Shevchenko (2010; cf. also Splidsboel-Hansen, 2002:416). This short outline has presented how authors have made sense of ideational interaction in EU-Russia relations. Whether relying on an English School framework, sociological, postcolonial or recognition models, these accounts equally presuppose certain social structures along which discursive interaction unravels. These social structures can be defined along the lines of Barnett and Duvall (2005) as "the co-constitutive, internal relations of structural positions" (p.52). That is, social structures define the relations between actors, relations that are (co-)constitutive of their subject positions and thus the varying dispositions towards each other. Consequently, the "social beings that are mutually constituted are directly or internally related; that is, the social relational capacities, subjectivities, and interests of actors are directly shaped by the social positions that they occupy" (p.53). By means of invoking such social structures to make sense of ideational interaction, above-mentioned frameworks constitute valuable analytical instruments, that help to illuminate various aspects of the complex relationship between Russia and the West. They thereby offer insightful explanations for the configuration of Russia's positioning towards the EU and vice versa. Yet, these explanations exhibit two related epistemological blind spots that this dissertation seeks to shed light on.

A first blind spot concerns the subject's agency that it enjoys within a given structural position. Whether the English School, postcolonial or sociological frameworks are invoked to explain interaction, these accounts necessarily remain, at least to some extent, deterministic and therefore limited in capturing the full range of *dynamic* interaction. Rather than explaining a given configuration, the dramatic trajectory of EU-Russia relations in recent years suggests to shift the focus on the *openness* of Russia's and the EU's positioning towards each other and how it may be constrained. How (in)dependent are the EU and Russia in articulating their own political project in the face of a challenging alternative? What is their discursive leeway? A

second and related blind spot concerns the analytical appreciation of the *intersubjective* dimension of the structure that the relationship between two subjects, Russia and the EU, constitutes. How can this intersubjective structuring context be captured epistemologically? To develop an intersubjective perspective that accounts for various points of views is deemed crucial in a time when the ‘Western idea’ – and with it the Western perspective – is increasingly challenged (Acharya, 2017). These two blind spots will be outlined in the following in order to prepare the ground for a new analytical framework.

iii) Exploring Agency in Interaction

Social structures, as follows from the definition given by Barnett and Duvall (2005) above, necessarily come with given ‘social positions’, positionings of the subjects towards each other that define their relationship. “A large part of the literature [on EU-Russia relations]”, finds Casier (2018c), “focuses on fairly stable structures of subordination” (p.106). Among the frameworks presented above, the positionings defining the EU-Russia relationship have been cast, for example, as a stigmatised Russia wanting to join the circle of the established members of the Westphalian system (Zarakol, 2011), a subaltern semi-peripheral Russia that remains materially and normatively dependent on a Western core (Morozov, 2015), or Russia as the unrecognised party seeking Western approval within Hegelian dialectics (Ringmar, 2002). All these accounts invoke some kind of social structures come structural positions that explain how the interaction between Russia and the West unravels. By defining those structural positions and the constraints they come with, these frameworks offer a compelling response to the above-mentioned critique of anti-foundationalist contingency, providing an explanation as to *why* ideational interaction between Russia and the EU happens in a certain way (Götz, 2017:237-238; Morozov, 2018a). Explicitly prioritising structure over agency, Makarychev (2014:38), for example, refers to the structural level of the International Society and how it imposes constraints on (but also facilitates) intersubjective dynamics. The application of those theories can yield profound insights on the nature of EU-Russia relations and helps to interpret respective empirical observations. By relying on preconceived structures to explain empirical observations, however, those frameworks are less suitable to capture dynamics and change. Structures can, of course, be conceptualised as slippery and capable of evolution (Morozov, 2018a:22). Yet, any preconception of social structures, while often having a high explanatory value for making sense of a certain configuration between subjects, comes, at least to some

extent, at the expense of an appreciation of this configuration as well as the structures that define it as contingent. Assuming some kind of social structures necessarily introduces more or less rigid social positions, that is identities, with preconceived constraints to actions for the actors involved. As a consequence, those frameworks cannot entirely rid themselves of some, if only residual, level of determinism.

Zarakol (2011) is aware of the danger of perceiving the stigmatised as merely at the receiving end of a one-directional relationship, rid of all agency. Her approach is thus more nuanced, aiming to “underline the additional pressures faced by Eastern actors on the one hand and bring their agency in responding to stigmatization to the forefront on the other hand” (p.23). Relying on Goffman (1986), she does that, notably, by discussing various stigma-coping strategies, which have later been developed by Adler-Nissen (2014; cf. Rogstad, 2022). Morozov (2015), too, takes into account Russia’s agency, understanding European modernity as overarching social structure to be the outcome of the intersubjective interaction of both core and periphery (pp.49-51). Yet, his focus is rather on Russia’s place within this social structure than on its role in its constitution. In conceptualising Russia as subaltern, Morozov (2015) seeks to explain the Russian case from a broader, more global perspective. In comparison to many constructivist accounts, this ontology thus allows him to shift focus from agency to structure, to pay closer attention to Russia’s situation within the broader international system, as well as to generalise and to compare it structurally with other cases (p.38-39). His reliance on world-system theory notions of core and periphery as defining of the European international society is conducive for approaching his underlying research question, which is “the question of the *origins* of Russia’s rather special, undecidable position within the Eurocentric global order and in particular Russia’s problematic European identity” (pp.39-40, my emphasis; cf. p.42). The discussion of modernity offers a well-founded explanation for how Russia came to occupy its current position of dependency in relation to Europe. Yet, while Morozov (2015) acknowledges that *mutual* ideational influence is defining the identities of all subjects involved (cf. p.113 & 116), the interaction²² dynamics are obscured by the focus on the structure of the wider international system.

While in his 2015 book Morozov seeks to explain Russia’s positioning towards Europe, he takes a different perspective in his article with Rumelili (2012) on the role of Russia and Turkey for the constitution of European identity. The theoretical framework is a postcolonial one, too,

²² Morozov (2015) discusses the possibility of Russia’s emancipation (cf. pp.157-165), see discussion in chapter six (p.213).

explaining the asymmetrical relationship through European normative hegemony. In this article, however, the authors focus on Russia's and Turkey's agency and limits thereto in the coming about of identities through interaction, conceptually drawing on the notion of liminality. Investigating the constitution of identities in an intersubjective context, the Other's articulations are considered to be significant for the Self's own discourse: "the discursive debates and practices in Russia and Turkey have enabled certain articulations of European identity and constrained others" (Morozov & Rumelili, 2012:34). The Other and its discourses are thus seen as a potential constraining element to the Self posed by the intersubjective context. Makarychev (2014), similarly, claims that the relationship between both parties is inherently intersubjective, and intersubjectivity, in his terms, "presupposes that each type of influence has its reverse side" (p.27). While identity is constituted through relating a Self to significant Others, the Other takes no passive role in this process of constitution. Not only is the Self reliant on the existence of a constitutive outside, it is also "sensitive to the opinions and approaches of external others" (p.28). "[The] other", Morozov and Rumelili (2012) claim, "far from being a mere presence that reproduces the identity discourses of Self, often plays a subversive role by negotiating and contesting identities" (pp.28-29). Thereby, Morozov and Rumelili claim to go beyond Zarakol (2011), who focusses "solely on the ways in which the Others assimilate into the hegemonic discursive space of the Self" (Morozov & Rumelili, 2012:32). An example of this complicity of Russian debates in the formation of a Western identity is the fact that the formulation of social policies in the West can only be understood when taking into account Soviet ones, which presented a (threatening) alternative that needed to be addressed (pp.37-38). Morozov and Rumelili (2012) contrast their approach explicitly to earlier constructivist accounts which in processes of identity construction ascribe to the respective significant Others a merely passive role. They call, instead, for "[expanding] our horizon by looking at identity construction as a process that is profoundly conditioned by the mutual constitution of the inside and the outside, where both the Self and its Others enjoy agency" (p.32). While similar to Morozov (2015), Morozov and Rumelili (2012) make sense of contemporary empirical dynamics through a notion of European normative hegemony, the latter account allows for a greater variation of engagement with this hegemonic discourse by focusing on the role of Others in its constitution. Relying on Bhabha (1994), the authors focus on Russia's and Turkey's "structurally conditioned agency [...] which emerges as an effect of the discursive interaction between various subject positions" (Morozov & Rumelili, 2012:33). This perspective allows for an engagement of European discourse with Russian representations of Europe and the other way around.

The issue of ideational interaction in EU-Russia relations – and particularly Russia’s engagement with Western discourses and norms – has in recent years also been approached from the other side, departing not from overarching frameworks come structural constraints to explain discursive dynamics but prioritising Russia’s agency instead (Kurowska & Reshetnikov, 2021; Burai, 2016; Bettiza & Lewis, 2020; Chernobrov, 2022; Dunn & Bobick, 2014; Aydın-Düzgit & Noutcheva, 2022). Burai (2016), for example, through the notion of ‘norm parody’ observes that “Russian normative discourse explicitly and systematically references the Western one”, in particular in relation to contested norms (p.68). A taxonomy of norm contestation is offered by Bettiza and Lewis (2020), who identify different modes of engagement, among them the reproduction as well as mimicry of liberal discourses (see also Aydın-Düzgit & Noutcheva, 2022). Going beyond Sakwa’s ‘neo-revisionism’ (2011; 2015a), Krickovic (2017) interprets Russia’s challenging of the global order as an attempt to reverse its decline within that order. Whereas Dunn and Bobick (2014) speak of ‘satire’, Chernobrov (2022) argues that in the face of competing narratives, Russia employs ‘strategic humour’ to “promote instrumental interpretations of contested international events” (p.278). For Kurowska and Reshentnikov (2021), Russia’s ambiguous – both conformist and deviant – engagement with international society is best captured as ‘trickstery’. All these accounts conceptualise Russia’s engagement with dominant discourses as deliberate form of agency, a “political strategy” (Dunn & Bobick, 2014:405), a “tool” (Chernobrov, 2022:278), or “ideational-counterbalancing moves” (Bettiza & Lewis, 2020:572).

To argue, like Zarakol (2011) or Morozov and Rumelili (2012) that Russia’s agency is constrained by certain social structures does not contradict those accounts. It simply shifts focus on different aspects of the relationship between Russia and the EU, namely the dependencies and constraints that this context provides. While this dissertation sympathises notably with Morozov’s and Rumelili’s (2012) approach due to its ability to account for the social context in which the interaction takes place, it aims at the same time for a greater flexibility of this context in order to being able to capture change.

As such, this dissertation follows Doty (1997), who writes that agency ought to be understood not “as an inherent quality of individual human beings qua human beings, but rather a positioning of subjects that occurs through [discursive] *practices*” (p.384, my emphasis). Agency, thus approached, is a dynamic process. Instead of providing an explanation for given positionings of the two subjects by means of deriving constraints to interaction from preconceived social structures, this dissertation seeks to illuminate the EU’s and Russia’s discursive positioning towards each other by studying the *malleable* discursive structures that

– more or less – condition both actors’ discourses and the degree of freedom they enjoy in their articulation. One aim of this dissertation is thus to explore how the social encounter Russia and the EU find themselves in *in itself* conditions both subjects’ (discursive) agency, that is what they can and cannot articulate. Such an approach to discursive interaction allows for capturing not only the relative openness and thus potential change of conditioning discursive structures, it also leaves room for the evolution of the discursive subject positions – that is identities – involved.

iv) Developing the Intersubjective Dimension

Besides the constraints posed by the surrounding social structures on the autonomy of subjects, a second, related, blind spot in the literature is the analytical appreciation of the relationship between Russia and the EU as intersubjective. Turning a blind eye to the intersubjective ontology of this relationship, it is argued, fails to understand how Russia and the EU as two subjects are positioned towards each other, and, hence, cannot grasp appropriately the dynamics between them. This limitation is most visible in accounts that have conceptualised the relationship between Russia and the EU as objectively perceivable from an external Archimedean point.

Ringmar (1996, 2002, 2010), for example, while highlighting that each individual subject’s identity is formed only in interaction with the Other, does not account for the fact that each subject gauges this interaction independently – and thus possibly differently – from the perspective of their respective subject position. Importantly, in the formulation of his ‘narrative theory of action’, he rids the subject of all essentialisation. He claims that the subject ‘is’ – carves out a place in time and space – by narrating itself as someone into the world: “[it] is through the stories that we tell that we make sense of ourselves and our world, and it is on the basis of these stories that we act” (1996:66). Yet, he also seems to assume that these narratives somehow exist objectively between subjects: we require external recognition of our stories, since “we are never in a position to see how well or how badly a particular description [of ourselves] fits” (p.81). Often, he argues in a later contribution (2010), these stories are “faulty”; in telling them, we are “mistaken about ourselves” (p.6). This, he argues, is to be measured against the ‘validity’ of the stories we tell about ourselves (p.80). Whether or not a certain narrated identity is ‘valid’, according to Ringmar, depends on the judgement – the recognition – of Others. What Ringmar misses here is the intersubjectivity of this act. The Other’s

judgement of whether or not a particular description of ourselves fits depends on how the Other sees us. These “[other people]”, Ringmar (2010) contends, “are wont to describe us far more *realistically*” (p.6, my emphasis). The Other, it is argued in this dissertation however, has no ‘better’ outside view of us, no “privileged perspective” (p.6). How the Other sees us rather depends on how the Other sees *itself* in relation to us. The stories that we tell about ourselves inevitably condition how we make sense of the stories of the Other and vice versa. The Other is thus in no position to *objectively* judge whether the stories we tell about ourselves match what we are. By focussing on the Self as the receiver of (mis)recognition and by not approaching the Other as a subject in its own right, Ringmar (1996) misses to develop this intersubjective dimension. This is illustrated in his 2002 account where he discusses the entanglement of the West and Russia, casting them as Master and Slave respectively, and presuming an impartial vantage point from which these roles can be objectively assessed.

Despite his assertion that ideas on what it means to be a great power diverge in Russia and the West, Neumann (2008) is equally ambivalent in his argument. According to him, Russia has continuously been unsuccessful in acquiring recognition from European great powers due to its diverging understanding of strength.²³ While he points to subjective perceptions of what it means to be a great power, he still assumes an objective context, where the western European powers as “great powers that are firmly established as such” (p.129) can grant recognition while Russia finds itself on the receiving end of the relationship. Both Ringmar’s and Neumann’s recognition arguments miss out on depth by assuming an overarching vantage point from which different actors’ position towards each other – and dependencies on one another – can be objectively evaluated.

Manners (2002; cf. 2008) takes a similar perspective when formulating his influential notion of ‘normative power Europe’, which has sparked a vivid debate also in the field of EU-Russia relations (cf. Averre, 2009b; Casier, 2013; Haukkala, 2008b; Whitman, 2011; Romanova, 2016). Manners seeks to expand the analysis of the EU’s power²⁴ beyond military and civilian (Twichett, 1976; Maull, 1990) dimensions by capturing the EU’s “ideational impact” (Manners, 2002:238), its “ability to shape conceptions of ‘normal’ in international relations” (p.239). By focussing on the “diffusion of ideas from the EU to other political actors” (p.244), however, Manners grasps the ideational economy between the EU and its Others as a one-

²³ Neumann’s diagnosis of Russia’s continuous misfortune in attaining recognition is opposed to Freire’s study (2011), which identifies Russia as an “overachiever”, whereby “[perceptions] of Russia as being a major power clearly do not match its capabilities” (p.74).

²⁴ Useful overviews on the different facets of power in EU-Russia relations are offered by Forsberg (2013) and Casier (2018c).

directional mechanism, not taking into account the subjective perspective of the recipients – for example the reception of this concept in Russia, where it has been challenged notably through two narratives, one denying the EU the legitimacy of acting as a normative power and a second one pushing an alternative interpretation of human rights (Romanova, 2016).

Descriptions of (mutual) influence ‘from above’ cannot fully capture ideational interaction. Referring to Kratochwil and Ruggie (1986), Doty (1997) writes that “the rules and norms that make up structures are inherently intersubjective” (p.371). Epistemologically, intersubjective structures can thus *not* be observed from an external Archimedean point. If they are intersubjective, they cannot be understood or represented as something objective, “as they truly are” (p.370). Since they are the outcome of interaction, intersubjective ideational structures do not exist independently from the subjects they relate to each other. As such, intersubjective structures must be approached and understood from the respective subjects, and it must be acknowledged that – given that no objective assessment is possible – they, from the perspectives of their respective subject positions, might apprehend differently those rules and norms that make up the structuring relationship to Others. “[There] is no reason to suppose that ‘us’ and ‘others’ will always agree on how they are ranked in relation to each other” (Zarakol, 2011:21-22).

This disagreement stemming from diverging perceptions of the relationship is accounted for by Casier, who, relying on insights from social psychology, captures how interacting perceptions led to Russia and the EU having increasingly hostile images of each other (2016a) and how diverging interpretations facilitated the escalation of conflict (Casier, 2022). When looking at power dynamics, accordingly, Forsberg (2013) argues that it is essentially the *perception* of power that needs to be studied: “Insofar as the EU is able [to] gain acceptance by Russia as an authority, role model or teacher, it would have normative power” (p.28; cf. Kavalski, 2013).²⁵ Casier (2018c), who scrutinises different aspects of power in EU-Russia relations along Barnett’s and Duvall’s taxonomy (2005), argues, for example, that besides the institutional dimension, it was foremost the *constitutive* dimension of power, namely the “capacity to produce and recognise identities, such as Europeanness”, that played a role in EU-Russia relations prior to the events in Ukraine in 2013/14 (Casier, 2018c:113). This constitutive dimension of power must thus be understood not as a one-directional influence, but rather as

²⁵ Forsberg (2013) points out that in the international arena it is difficult to analytically isolate the power of one actor from that of others. Influence by the EU can therefore often not be clearly separated from that of other Western actors (p.30) – especially, as it is argued here, with regard to the normative dimension.

an intersubjective dynamic that can be studied by looking at the role that those identities and representations produced by the EU played for Russia's own perception.

In his critical engagement with Manners (2002), Diez (2013) develops this intersubjective dimension by arguing that normative power should be understood not as an objective category but as a "practice of discursive representation" (p.626). He points to the fact that the influential "narrative of 'normative power Europe' [itself] constructs the EU's identity as well as the identity of the EU's others" (p.626; cf. Haukkala, 2011:45). Against the background of Haukkala's (2008b; 2011; cf. 2015) development of the concept, Diez (2013) suggests to substitute Manners's 'normative power Europe' with a concept of (Gramscian) 'hegemony'. Grasping Europe's normative power in terms of hegemony, he argues, first transcends the often-invoked norms/interests divide²⁶ and, importantly, facilitates a shift from assuming power on the basis of pre-given norms to focus on the struggle about those norms instead. Diez's reconceptualisation of the EU's normative influence underlines Manners's (2002) focus on the power to shape identities and "conceptions of the normal" (Diez, 2013:195). At the same time, it highlights the *intersubjective* processes of political struggle instead of assuming a one-directional effect (p.203; cf. Kavalski, 2013). This reconceptualisation is supported by Morozov (2015), who attributes to it analytical value for understanding why Russia continues to be normatively dependent on the West (pp.108-109).

A similar shift is required when invoking recognition dynamics. While Ringmar contends that only those who are perceived as equal (2002:120; cf. 1996:81; 2010:11) have the power to recognise others, his model still assumes that the interaction between Russia and the West can be described objectively along the dynamics of a recognised Master and a non-recognised Slave. Following the discussion above, one ought to follow Forsberg (2014), who argues that an inquiry into recognition dynamics requires a focus on *perceived* recognition instead. It is not about how much recognition is granted, but rather how both actors perceive the Other and the recognition they respectively grant or receive. A systematic reconceptualisation of recognition dynamics as intersubjective process promises profound insights into ideational interaction between Russia and the EU.

Rather than assuming dynamics between the two subjects that can be described objectively from an external vantage point, an analysis of this relationship must centre on Russia's and the EU's views of each other. A second aim of this dissertation is thus to capture the relationship

²⁶ Casier (2013) has criticised this divide (see above, p.25).

between Russia and the West as an intersubjective one, focussing on both subjects' interpretations and perceptions thereof from their respective subject positions.

4. Conclusion

This extensive review of the scholarly literature on EU-Russia relations has sought to depict the different perspectives from which this subject has been approached, to illustrate the different assumptions and the dividing lines that have guided the existing research. After a discussion of materialist notions of power and domestic political factors for the understanding of EU-Russia relations, the third, more extensive, section of this review has focused on how ideas and interpretation have been put to the fore in order to make sense of this relationship. Following the presentation of existing research on the genealogy of identity discourses in both Russia and the EU, it sketched the phenomenon of ideational *interaction* in EU-Russia relations. It made the point that discourses and resulting interpretations articulated by Russia and the EU, while being constitutive of both subjects' respective subject positions, do not exist in isolation but condition one another. It then outlined how existing accounts have conceptualised this ideational entanglement between Russia and the EU by invoking various frameworks in order to explain Russia's and the EU's positioning vis à vis one another. The preconception of social structures, it was argued, limits the analytical appreciation of radically contingent dynamics between the two subjects. The conceptual appreciation of this relationship's intersubjective nature was pointed out as a second issue that so far has not been approached systematically in the literature, meriting the development of a comprehensive analytical framework.

The turmoil in EU-Russia relations and the radically different world views that both subjects articulate call for the development of a comprehensive analytical framework that pays respect to the openness of the discursive dynamics between Russia and the EU while at the same time being able to detect and examine the constraints to this openness. Highlighting the dependencies and freedoms of both subjects within this relationship will contribute to an understanding of how EU-Russia relations evolved the way they did and how to gauge the present (discursive) dynamics.

Without preconceiving social structures, this dissertation seeks to illuminate how interaction between Russia and the EU conditions its own dynamics and, consequently, the identities of both subjects. Complementary to existing accounts, it aims thereby, first, at producing insights on Russia's and the EU's agency, freedoms and constraints thereto within their intersubjective relationship. To look at constraints as being conditioned by the relationship itself promises to better understand (the possibility of) change and dynamic interaction between Russia and the EU. Secondly, this dissertation aims at capturing this relationship's intersubjective ontology in order to further an understanding of how Russia's and the EU's diverging interpretations that constitute this relationship relate to each other, evolve and interact.

The following chapter takes up this mission. It does so, by marrying a poststructuralist theoretical foundation to insights from recognition theory. By employing a poststructuralist, radically contingent notion of discourse, it does justice to the openness of dynamics between Russia and the EU. It accounts, secondly, for the intersubjective nature of the relationship between Russia and the EU by relying on Hegelian dialectics, which, approached from a critical angle, apprehends the becoming of the subject as an ongoing process in interaction with other subjects.

Chapter 3

A Conceptual Framework for Discursive Interaction

Introduction

The previous chapter has reviewed how the existing literature has approached the discursive entanglement between Russia and the EU. It was argued that discourses and resulting interpretations articulated by those two subjects, while being constitutive of their respective subject positions, do not exist in isolation but condition one another. As a limitation to analytically capture radically contingent dynamics between Russia and the EU, it identified in the literature the reliance on more or less preconceived social structures. As a consequence, it spelled out the need for a radically anti-deterministic framework that does justice to the openness of the discursive dynamics between the two subjects while at the same time being able to detect and examine the constraints to this openness. The previous chapter secondly underlined the need to analytically appreciate the intersubjective nature of this relationship in order to understand how Russia and the EU are positioned towards each other as two subjects, how their diverging interpretations that define this relationship relate to each other, evolve and interact.

Against this background, this chapter seeks to conceptualise discursive interaction in an intersubjective setting. To that end, it departs from the guiding question: *To what extent is a Self's discourse vulnerable to an Other's discourse, and how can this interaction be conceptualised?*

The chapter is anchored in poststructuralist discourse theory as developed by the so-called Essex school.²⁷ The following conceptual journey takes as its point of departure Chouliaraki's and Fairclough's (2007) critique of the poststructuralist assertion of radical contingency. Their claim is that poststructuralists overemphasise the contingent nature of discursive structure – and thus of the social as such – and that one ought to pay more attention to structuring elements. While acknowledging the need to flesh out how the contingency of discourses might be constrained in an intersubjective setting, it is argued here that for this task there is no need to

²⁷ For a situation of the Essex school in the bigger poststructuralist body of literature, see Torfing (2005).

fundamentally attack the poststructuralist edifice. In order to further an understanding of intersubjective discursive dynamics, this chapter builds on an analogy between poststructuralism and critical approaches to recognition theory.

While the radical contingency of poststructuralism addresses the need to embrace the openness of the social as identified in the previous chapter, the insights from recognition theory offer guidance for conceptualising how discourses are conditioned in the presence of Others. The notion of recognition complements the constitutive logic of poststructuralism (Epstein et al., 2018:788) by introducing a social ontology, “one whose sociality runs all the way down” (Epstein, 2018:808), one that does justice to the intersubjective setting, appreciating the Other as a subject in its own right. If approached from the same radical (anti-essentialist) perspective that also characterises poststructuralist thinking, recognition theory offers great insights into the conditions of discursive interaction. Tracing the dynamics of recognition makes explicit how the relations between Self and Other – and their respective discourses – are tied up in mutual (in-)dependence. By fleshing out the freedoms and constraints to the autonomy of the Self in the presence of significant Others, the notion of recognition helps to conceptualise how a subject’s agency is conditioned by the intersubjective relationship itself. Incorporating Markell’s (2003) crucial insight from recognition theory that the quest for sovereignty is tied up with asymmetrical relations, the Self’s dependency on the Other and its (in)ability to formulate an autonomous political project in the presence of the Other is understood to be conditional upon whether the Self can successfully isolate its own discursive identity from the antagonistic discourses articulated by others. As will be shown, the craving for recognition can either be isolated by successfully subduing the Other in the Self’s own identity discourses, or it leaves the Self vulnerable to what the Other says.

It is important to point out how recognition theory is approached in this chapter. The aim is not to discuss the ‘right’ interpretation of this tradition, which is rooted in the thought of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. The point here is to trace and to emphasise relevant theoretical trains of thought to create added-value for an *intersubjective* poststructuralist framework. Therefore, the chapter will trace the argument brought forward by critical approaches to recognition theory in differentiation from conventional ones. The main source that will guide the elaborations here is Markell’s 2003 book *Bound by Recognition*.²⁸ The chapter will build on this critical treatment of recognition, arguing that the notion of radical negativity inherent therein makes this

²⁸ For instructive commentaries on Markell’s (2003) work, see Vázquez-Arroyo (2006), Cocks (2006), Sheth (2006), and Markell (2006) himself.

reasoning compatible with the poststructuralist framework based on the Essex school, particularly on the work of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau (1985; Laclau, 1990; 2005; 2007).

The chapter proceeds in three sections. First, it offers a brief overview of the poststructuralist edifice that forms the overall theoretical frame for analysis. Building on a critique of this framework, the second section will propose a critical reading of recognition theory as a source of inspiration to make poststructuralist conceptualisations of intersubjective dynamics more explicit. The third section, finally, aims at bringing the different trains of thought from critical approaches to recognition theory and poststructuralist reasoning together, proposing a coherent framework apt for capturing discursive interaction.

1. The Poststructuralist Edifice

In order to prepare the ground, this section introduces some key notions of the poststructuralist tradition the author relies on. The following account builds in large on Laclau and Mouffe's theoretical edifice, which, as presented in their principal work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), constitutes a widely recognised coherent and comprehensive poststructuralist theory of discourse (Torfing, 2005:9). Their writings and the subsequent developments of Slavoj Žižek, David Howarth and others have been termed the Essex school of discourse analysis (Howarth, 2018:378; Bacchi, 2015:2).

The section unfolds through four subsections. After a general introduction to poststructuralist thought in subsection a), the subsequent subsection b) outlines how this theoretical tradition conceptualises discursive change. Subsection c) discusses the need for conceptualising 'constraints' that condition discursive change. In an intersubjective setting, the final subsection d) argues, this requires one to zoom out from a narrow focus on the Self in order to reconceptualise the role of the Other as subject.

a) General Introduction to Poststructuralist Thought

Poststructuralists give central importance to ‘interpretation’²⁹ and ‘meaning’ in their analysis of the world. This is reflective of their ontological and epistemological assumptions, which are epitomised in Campbell’s (1992) words: “The world exists independently of language, but we can never know that [...], because the existence of the world is literally inconceivable outside of language and our traditions of interpretation” (p.6). For poststructuralists, this claim can be read as to embody three fundamental points of departure.

First, positing that the social world cannot be understood in isolation from our subjective interpretation of it, poststructuralists herald ontological anti-foundationalism. Instead of attributing ontological significance to the world independent of our knowledge of it, poststructuralists assert as object of their enquiry subjective interpretations. “[While] the world exists out there, truth does not” (Torfing, 2005:13; cf. Rorty, 1989). ‘True claims’ cannot be found ‘out there’. Far from transcendental conditions, they are always dependent on our abstract thinking and our understanding of what counts as truth. Truth is deeply contextual (cf. Foucault, 1979:46). Interpretations and meaning are thus ontologically significant as they are understood to be key for gaining an understanding of the social world.

Campbell’s claim, secondly, points to the epistemological consequences of this ontological choice. If it is futile to think of the (social) world as existing independently of our subjective interpretation, there is no point in pursuing a positivist approach. Positivists assert the possibility of immediate access to the world through scientific methods, further of producing true statements about its quality, and of describing it objectively through an inquiry into causal relations between variables. In opposition to that, the poststructuralist epistemology sheds light on how the meaning and identities that form the basis for our subjective interpretation come into being (Hansen, 2006:20).

This points to the third fundamental claim of poststructuralists as verbalised by Campbell, the central role of language and discourse in the construction of meaning. “It is only through language that ‘things’ [...] are given meaning and endowed with a particular identity” (Hansen, 2006:16). The poststructuralist epistemology is thus a discursive one that focusses on how meaning and identity come into being *through discursive articulation* (Hansen, 2006:20). Rejecting a positivist referential conception of language where words are understood to be

²⁹ Discourse theory can be situated in the hermeneutical tradition of social sciences. As such it is preoccupied with understanding subjects’ self-understandings and interpretations (Howarth, 2005:319).

mere labels for pre-existing objects, poststructuralists adopt a differential approach (Wæver, 2002:24; cf. Laclau, 1990:109). In this view, meaning is constructed through the use of language as a relational system that establishes links between signs (Hansen, 2006:16-20). This understanding goes back to Derrida's development of Saussurian structuralism. Saussure postulated that the linguistic sign, the basic unit of the linguistic structure, consists of two components, the signifier (the sound of a word) and the signified (the concept this word represents). He argued that the relation between the two is arbitrary (Saussure, 1959:120). The meaning attached to words, according to Saussurian structuralists, is not inherent to them. Instead, it is the result of differential but stable relationships to other linguistic signs (Wæver, 2002:23; Weber, 1987). Saussure proclaims: "in language there are only differences" (Saussure, 1959:120). Derrida moved beyond this thought, arguing that the relational structure of language is not fixed but inherently unstable. Because the differences between linguistic signs are not pinned down, meaning is always ambiguous and "endlessly differing and deferring" (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010:64). Laclau and Mouffe make clear that this differential or relational conception is not limited to language but applies to any signifying system (Laclau, 1990:109). While one can distinguish between the linguistic and the non-linguistic, there is thus no non- or extra-discursive realm. In that sense "post-"structuralists are not "anti-"structuralists (Wæver, 2002:23). Discourses strive to fix meaning around a given structure. Through positively linking signs to other signs and negatively differentiating them from others, discourses produce and reproduce a given linguistic structure (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:105). The construction of meaning along those two dimensions is denoted by Laclau and Mouffe as 'equivalence' and 'difference' (pp.127-130). Hansen (2006) speaks of processes of linking and differentiation that produce a discursive structure of chains of signifiers (pp.17-18).³⁰ However, while discourses strive to stabilise meaning around a given structure, meaning can never ultimately be pinned down (Hansen, 2006:18). Laclau and Mouffe (1985) contend: "neither absolute fixity nor absolute non-fixity is possible" (p.111).

Positing that the structure of meaning is inherently unstable and merely (re-)constructed by virtue of discursive articulations, poststructuralists take a radical anti-essentialist stance: "there is no pre-given, self-determining essence that is capable of determining and ultimately fixing all other identities within a stable and totalizing structure" (Torfing, 2005:13). Thereby, they depart from traditional International Relations theory and also the essentialist residues of poststructuralism's theoretical pedigree, Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches (Howarth, 2018;

³⁰ The analysis will employ Hansen's terminology of 'linking and differentiation'.

cf. Coole, 2000:72-84). As a consequence, not only is there a lack of any kind of fixed centre around which all meaning is established. Identities and interests are therefore essentially non-essential, that is to say that they are infused with meaning only through discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:5; cf. Ringmar, 2002). Whereas earlier writers, including Foucault, were less stringent regarding a distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive realm (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:107; Torfing, 2005:7), Laclau and Mouffe (1985) make it clear that poststructuralism transcends this divide between an ideational and a material sphere when they say: “we will affirm the *material* character of every discursive structure. To argue the opposite is to accept the very classical dichotomy between an objective field constituted outside of any discursive intervention, and a discourse consisting of the pure expression of thought” (p.108). With this fundamental assertion, Laclau’s and Mouffe’s conception of discourse steers clear of an “unreflected idealism” (Wæver, 2002:22). The rejection of a divide between the discursive and the extra-discursive does not reduce ‘the real’ to the conceptual, or ideational. It overcomes, instead, the dichotomy between ideational and material in the first place. Crucial for this transcendence is an understanding of discourse not as a self-contained system, but as contingent, always slippery and overflowing (Laclau, 1990:105-112). This leads to the question of how discourses change.

b) Discursive Change

Given this lack of essence in the (social) world, a central issue that poststructuralists need to address is why a certain discourse/meaning/identity is in place over another one. This leads to the question of *how* discourses change.

Derrida’s work showed the lack of any pre-given determinacy of the linguistic structure. This is what Torfing (1999) calls the “undecidability” of meaning (pp.95-96). Any structuring is possible. Thus, any structuring necessarily happens at the expense of alternatives and “involves [discursive] practices that silence or marginalise those alternatives” (Doty, 1997:378). One set of meaning is institutionalised through exclusionary practices that necessarily repress various other possibilities (Laclau, 1990:34). It is in this sense that Foucault (1981) proclaims: “[we] must conceive discourse as a violence which we do to things, or in any case as a practice which we impose on them” (p.67).

Discourses are therefore the product of contingent – possible but not necessary – articulations (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:25). This contingency is *radical*. This means that it is rid of any determinism. It is thus an expression of poststructuralism’s anti-essentialism, of “the impossibility of fixing with any precision – that is, in terms of a necessary ground – either the relations [between identities] *or the identities*” (Laclau, 1990:20, emphasis in original). The impossibility to ever produce any discourse – and thus any (discursive) identity – irrevocably is a consequence of the ‘overdetermination’ of meaning – the “overflowing of the signifier by the signified” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:11, cf. p.111; Doty, 1997:384). Any discursive structure is always only a partial fixation of meaning (Torfin, 1999:92). Importantly, however, this does not mean that discursive structures cannot be *relatively* stable. Some discourses are established to such an extent that their contingent character is masked. These discourses appear natural and ‘objective’ (Laclau, 1990:34). ‘Objectivity’ in the poststructuralist sense is thus a relatively stabilised structure of meaning, which is taken for granted.

If discourses are contingent – i.e. in principle changeable – and more or less stable, how *do* they change? Articulations either reproduce or challenge a given discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:29). Articulations are discursive processes of linking and differentiation. They are “any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:105). Discourses, as unstable structures, can therefore be rearticulated, meaning can change. The reaffirmation or challenging of a given discourse can be conceptualised as ‘discursive struggle’ – indeed a political struggle – among competing discourses. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:6-7; Torfin, 2005:15-16; 1999:92-93; cf. Edkins, 1999:135; Ringmar, 1996:85). This discursive struggle is a struggle for hegemony. This means that “[any] discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:112). A hegemonic discourse dominates the field of discursivity. It is commonly accepted, taken for granted, and not profoundly challenged (cf. Marttila, 2015a:52). Competing discourses struggling for hegemony are deemed ‘antagonistic’ by virtue of being incommensurable and thus revealing of each other’s contingency. This incommensurability, Laclau describes in his seminal essay (2007), means that “the actualization of what is beyond the limit of exclusion would involve the impossibility of what is this side of the limit [sic!]” (p.37). The mere existence of such alternative incommensurable discourses leads to the “impossibility of closure” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:122), that is the institution of one discourse as all-embracing and absolute. This is indeed a key element of the Essex school’s understanding of discourse: “No discourse is a closed entity: it is, rather, constantly being transformed through

contact with other discourses” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:6). Antagonism is “the limit of [a given] order” as it prevents this order from constituting itself as a closed totality (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:126; cf. Laclau, 1990:17-18). As such it is also the condition for change. By virtue of presenting an alternative, antagonism, however, is not only the negation of a given discourse, a threat revealing of this discourse’s contingency and thereby preventing it from becoming total. It simultaneously is also its ‘constitutive outside’, its condition of possibility, since “it is not possible to threaten the existence of something without simultaneously affirming it” (Laclau, 1990:27).

To conclude, a certain discourse/meaning/identity being in place over another one is thus the result of discursive struggle, “a trench war in which different political projects strive [for hegemony]” (Laclau, 1990:28).

c) The (Perceived) Problem: Can We Really Do Without Constraining Structures?

As outlined above, in poststructuralist thinking discursive structures are understood to be inherently contingent (i.e. possible, but not necessary). No discursive structure is ever ultimately fixed and *any* restructuring is thus possible. Poststructuralism has therefore faced critique concerning the extent to which meaning is considered to be malleable.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2007) accuse Laclau and Mouffe of taking a one-sided focus on the contingency, on the “unconditional openness of the social” (p.124). They argue that one needs to differentiate; that this openness of the discursive structure varies for different groups of social agents, depending on their position in social structures. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2007) proclaim “[we] therefore need a distinction between structures and contingency” with the former constraining the latter (p.126). It is argued here that this analysis misses the point.

In her discussion of the ‘agent-structure problematique’, the question of whether agents shape social structure as independent actors or whether they are determined by it, Doty (1997) convincingly illustrates how the poststructuralist project overcomes the agent-structure divide through the notion of ‘discursive practices’. Dominant discourses provide an interpretation of the world that determines what is doable, sayable or imaginable. However, since no structure of meaning can be ultimately fixed, there is always a dimension of indeterminacy to discursive practice. Because discourses are inherently unstable and never complete, there is a possibility of variation, the possibility for change. This indeterminacy of discourse constitutes the locus

for agency (Doty, 1997:385): “Agency is not understood as an inherent quality of individual human beings qua human beings, but rather as a positioning of subjects that occurs through practices, practices which are inherently discursive and ultimately undecidable” (p.384; cf. Weldes, 1996:286).

The constraints an actor experiences thus depend on their positioning within a given discourse (subject position), the result of discursive practices. According to their (undetermined and changeable) positioning in discourse, subjects experience different degrees of agency (Doty, 1997:384; cf. Laclau, 1990:60-61).

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2007) concede that their proposed (social) structures are discursively constructed and changeable (p.120 & 125). Their call for a distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive (p.126), however, reveals their ultimate resort to the kind of structural determinism poststructuralists seek to overcome in the first place (cf. Jessop, 1996:123). While their critique can therefore not serve as a credible ‘corrective’ of the poststructuralist theoretical body, their intervention *does* point to an important issue, the development of which promises to add significantly to the applicability of poststructuralist theory for analyses of the social world.

Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) take up Chouliaraki’s and Fairclough’s critique, agreeing that “it is important to include considerations of permanence and constraint in any analysis of the social” (p.55). They argue, however, that poststructuralist theory already provides the tools for such considerations: “if in principle everything can be different, it does not mean that everything is in flux or that change is necessarily easy” (ibid.). Derrida (1988), confronted with the accusation of ‘complete freeplay’ in his work, countered that, akin to the impossibility of complete fixity, “there can be no ‘completeness’ where freeplay is concerned” (p.115). Torfing (1999) expands, arguing that the undecidability of meaning – far from positing that every restructuring is always equally possible – refers to the “structuring of the structure”, to “determined openness”, and “oscillation between [...] possibilities” (pp.95-96). If everything were always in flux, no meaning would be possible in the first place (Coole, 2000:78). It is thus an important question, in Doty’s (1997) wording, “how effects of stability and intransigency are produced” (p.379). The (perceived) problem of the ‘unconditional openness of the social’ might thus not be a problem after all, given that the existing theorisation offers the tools to further conceptualise (discursive) constraints.

d) Developing the Intersubjective Dimension

How then can constraints to discursive change be conceptualised? In the context of international relations, it has been argued that an analysis of a given discourse alone, that is looking only at its internal dynamics, struggles, and implications thereof, is not satisfactory. The previous chapter has illustrated the entanglement of Russian and Western discourses, emphasising that they cannot be fully understood in isolation from each other. This intersubjective dimension concerns exactly the theoretically intricate question of a structuring of social relations that has been brought up by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2007).

It is argued here that the concept of recognition can provide important insights for a conceptualisation of the dynamics of discursive interaction between subjects in a poststructuralist framework. Recognition theory is suitable for this endeavour, because it relies on a fundamentally social ontology. At the bottom of this approach is the relation between Self and Other and, importantly, a conception of how the dynamics of relationality affect the constitution of the Self and, hence, its identity (Epstein, 2018:818).

What recognition theory thus can offer to poststructuralist thought are explicit insights into the dynamics of relations between Self and Other, dependencies and vulnerabilities (Epstein, 2018:808). It makes explicit that ‘the Other’ cannot be seen *only* as an object for relational identity construction. In the subject’s existential engagement with the outside world, the world “does not passively reflect the subject as one object reflects the light that emanates from another; reflection always presupposes and articulates ontological relatedness” (Butler, 1999:8). For understanding the dynamics of the relations between Self and Other, then, one needs to bring in the discursive practices of all subjects involved. It is consequently not enough to perceive of discursive ‘othering’ as a one-directional act: The Other’s quality as a subject, implicated in a joint negotiation of meaning and identities, needs to be taken into account. Recognition theory is apt to capture this social positioning of subjects towards each other.

2. The Recognition Analogy

One rare example where a ‘Self’ is contextualised as part of a wider international system populated by animate Others is Williams’s and Neumann’s analysis (2000) of discursive

interaction between NATO and Russia during the 1990s (Morozov, 2015:45). Their underlying question is how Russia, in its official foreign policy rhetoric, came to finally acquiesce to NATO's eastern enlargement despite a Russian consensus against it across all political camps domestically. Building on the work of Ringmar (1996), they claim that the process of narrative identity construction not only depends on internal dynamics (i.e. the struggle with competing discourses in the domestic realm), but also on the *recognition* of a narrated identity by others (p.363). Williams and Neumann (2000) tie the capacity to recognise (to grant or to deny) as well as to claim a certain identity to the notion of 'social power' (p.364) – a clearly structuring element in their theorising. According to their analysis, NATO's reinvention as a 'democratic security community' and the discourses that came along with it left Russia with a choice of either taking the role of a supporter of Western civilisation or, alternatively, of being recognised as a counter-civilisational force (p.361). Tellingly, even the democratic circles in Russia who opposed enlargement because they feared antidemocratic backlashes as a reaction to it felt compelled to adjust their rhetoric to these roles that NATO's identity discourses left them with (Williams & Neumann, 2000).³¹

The previous chapter has already outlined Ringmar's own, similar analysis in his 2002 article *The Recognition Game*, where he scrutinises how Western discourses influenced Russian (Soviet) identity construction throughout the 20th century. The desire to be recognised in a particular way, he argues, is an important factor for state behaviour and often trumps material explanations. From this desire for recognition arise constraints to the articulation of narratives that constitute a certain identity: "there are strict limits [...] to the kinds of identities we can construct" (1996:79). These limits are conditional upon the audiences who may or may not recognise these discourses; because ultimately "meaning cannot be created in isolation from all others" (ibid.). It is only through the external dimension of recognition, as he formulates later (2010), that (discursive) identities "will come to have continuity over time and space" (p.8).

The conceptualisation of these constraints arising from external recognition, however, remains wanting both in Williams's and Neumann's (2000) as well as in Ringmar's work (1996; 2002; 2010). Especially the latter's starting point that these constraints can be described from an external vantage point as well as his claim that Others confer recognition based on objective judgement is unsatisfactory. Appreciating the intersubjective nature, however, is crucially

³¹ See also Antonenko (1999:127-129) and Tomé (2000:12-31) for an account of Russian politicians' perception of and final acquiescence to NATO enlargement.

important for understanding the dynamics of discursive interaction between two *subjects*. While Williams and Neumann as well as Ringmar point to important international discursive dynamics, it remains to be fleshed out *how* recognition helps to conceptualise the very constraints Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2007) among others miss in discourse theory.

It is argued here that, in order to better understand the discursive dynamics brought to light in these and other studies presented in the previous chapter, it is instructive to look at recent developments in recognition theory. The following subsection will briefly unfold the landscape of this body of literature in order to establish some points of reference for the ensuing discussion.

a) Recognition Theory: A Brief Overview

The notion of ‘recognition’ (Anerkennung) is inextricably linked to the thought of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. His notion is the result of a reinterpretation of Johann Gottlieb Fichte’s, who understood recognition as a principle guiding the relation between rational individuals (Bertram, 2017:11). The atomistic assumption of isolated subjects guided by reason was defining of the then prevailing tradition of modern natural law. To overcome this assumption, Hegel developed the concept of ‘recognition’ as a dynamic inherent to the intersubjective nature of human interaction (Honneth; 1996:11-18; cf. Bertram, 2017:13). One cannot say, however, that Hegel has always remained unambiguous about his understanding of recognition. Moreover, the concept develops on slightly different trajectories throughout his various works (Honneth, 1996:60-63; Markell, 2003:92-94; Williams, 1997:1-2).

The *interdisciplinary* evolution of recognition theory and its entry into International Relations literature can be traced to the early 1990s (Markell, 2003:2; Epstein, 2018:807; Greenhill, 2008:344; Schick, 2020). The end of the Cold War saw a rising importance of questions of ethnicity, nationality and religious fundamentalism among others, propelling problems of identity and difference to global politics (Markell, 2003:2). At the same time, political movements evolving around matters of identity such as culture, gender, or sexuality increasingly raised justice demands that went beyond a mere politics of material redistribution. It was in this context, that Hegelian reasoning gained ground (ibid.; Epstein, 2018:807). A prominent example of recognition’s entry into International Relations is offered by Fukuyama. Basing his famous proclamation of the *End of History* (1992) very much on Hegel’s reasoning,

he claims that liberal democracy represents the final stage in human history where all struggles for recognition and all contradictions will be resolved.

For the further development of recognition theory, the two landmark-works of that time, however, are Taylor's *Multiculturalism and the Politics of 'Recognition'* (1992) and Honneth's *Struggle for Recognition* (1996) (Epstein, 2018:807; Schick, 2020:146; Smith, 2012:1). Epstein (2018) sees in Taylor and Honneth critics of the individualist ontologies that were fuelled by rationalist liberalism at the time (p.808). Markell (2003) deems Taylor's essay a "forceful critique of liberal self-congratulation" (p.91). However, irrespective of whether one perceives Hegel as a battleground between liberals and their critiques (Epstein, 2018) or not, both groups share more of the underlying assumptions than it seems at first.

Taylor (1992) claims that recognition is becoming increasingly important with the surge of a modern understanding of individual identity. This modern notion of identity, he argues with Johann Gottfried Herder, came to be based on the 'ideal of authenticity', the understanding of identity as not being determined anymore by one's social position but instead as representing an 'original' potentiality in each individual. This identity, however, can only be expressed or discovered in interaction with others. Recognition by others thus becomes a "vital human need" (p.26) and the denial of recognition can be deemed "a form of oppression" (p.36). Recognition thereby becomes married to justice, a just social order being one "in which diverse individuals and groups are bound together by mutual recognition into a whole that does not suppress difference" (Markell, 2003:91). Honneth (1996), likewise, emphasises the close connection between individual identity and recognition. He claims that, in an intersubjective context, misrecognition may violate the integrity of human beings and ultimately lead to a collapse of their identity (pp.131-132).

On the basis of this reasoning, the 'politics of recognition' came to be increasingly discussed in competition with or as a form of a 'politics of redistribution'. In these discussions, where conflict and oppression – and for that matter injustice in general – are linked to a lack of or asymmetrical recognition, the latter is cast as a 'good' analogous to the maldistribution of wealth (Markell, 2003:18).

Observing a bifurcation over the question of whether justice is a matter of redistribution or recognition, Fraser (2001) for example establishes that the two cannot be separated but must be understood as part of one comprehensive framework. In a similar vein, Tully (2000) rejects the claim of a 'transition from distribution to recognition' in politics, upholding that the two are inextricably linked and simply represent different sides of political struggle. Cooke (2009),

building on Taylor, takes a different perspective on the politics of recognition. She proposes that it is not authenticity but substantive values that are at the heart of recognition demands.

The purpose of this brief review is to show that the commonality of *all* these accounts is their treatment of recognition as a political good, the *successful* realisation of which yields a more just order (Ringmar, 2010; Brincat, 2017), an ethical state (Williams, 1997; Fukuyama, 1992), or a world state (Wendt, 2003).

Whether one takes side with Fukuyama's appraisal of liberal democracy as the ultimate satisfaction of recognition and the ensuing end of ideological fights or with Taylor's problematisation of recognition demands in contemporary politics – the underlying interpretation of Hegel's thought is similar. As Markell (2003) notes,

For Taylor as for Fukuyama, Hegel's philosophy grounds a principle of mutual and equal recognition and challenges us to find social and political forms that will realise that principle, finally satisfying – for everyone – the basic human need to be seen and respected by one's fellows. (p.91)

This *conventional* view³² of recognition as a means to attain justice and overcome societal inequality applies also to Honneth and much of the interpretations in the 1990s (Markell, 2003:92). This teleological understanding has been criticised for its "romanticised ontology" (McNay, 2012:231) and its resemblance as "folk paradigm" according to which injustice stems from a lack of recognition and the solution is thus simply more recognition (Schick, 2020:151).

The critical approach takes a fundamentally different view on Hegelian recognition. The difference is ultimately an ontological one that can be understood by distinguishing two different understandings of *negativity*. While the conventional view claims negativity to be merely internal to a greater positive totality, a critical approach relies on a radical notion of negativity that implies the ultimate openness of the social. While the conventional view understands identity as pre-given and thus successfully recognisable, the critical view focusses on the *constitution* of identity through processes of recognition instead. While the conventional view clings to a teleological interpretation of the unfolding of the (social) world, the critical approach bans such an eschatological understanding to the realm of the metaphysical that needs to be overcome. Taking the risk of oversimplification, this distinction is not meant to

³² What Markell (2003) calls "standard approach to recognition".

uncritically lump together theorists from most different traditions into the respective camps but to flesh out two radically different interpretations of recognition that amount to different understandings of social dynamics.

The remainder of this section will be dedicated to carving out this critical approach to recognition in differentiation from the conventional one. To that end, it is instructive to trace the basic dynamics of recognition through Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic, which will be presented in the following subsection b). The focus in distinguishing a critical from the conventional approach will be on the role of negativity within both frameworks, discussed in subsections c), and on the resulting diverging understandings of identity, discussed in subsection d). This clarification of different standpoints is necessary in order to establish theoretical compatibility and to make intelligible the added value of critical approaches to recognition theorising for the poststructuralist edifice.

b) Recognition in Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit

This subsection will briefly introduce the Master-Slave dialectic from Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (2013, first published in 1807). This dialectic is closely linked to Hegel's notion of the 'struggle for recognition' (Markell, 2003:90-91) and the role of the 'negative' in the constitution of the Self (Epstein, 2018:807). The depiction of the Master-Slave relationship will help to distinguish the two fundamentally different approaches to the notion of recognition and its role for the constitution of identity.

In the *Phenomenology*, the Master-Slave dialectic is an episode in the chapter on the development of self-consciousness.³³ For Hegel, self-consciousness is inextricably linked to sovereignty and the chapter essentially addresses this link (Bertram, 2017:91). Key for a certainty of the Self is *negativity* – the differentiation of the Self from everything that is 'other'. This differentiation functions as an external confirmation of one's distinctness through the reflection in this relationship (cf. Epstein, 2018:818; Butler, 1999:8). The driver, or principle, for this self-relation to the other is desire: "it is always desire-for-reflection, the pursuit of identity in what appears to be different" (Butler, 1999:7; cf. Epstein et al., 2018:797). In its desire-for-reflection, the chapter continues, the Self first engages with the material world. By consuming the material world, the Self experiences a "reflection into itself" (Hegel, 2013:106).

³³ The following depiction of the Master-Slave dialectic largely follows Bertram (2017).

By consuming it, however, a material object is destroyed. This relation of negativity to the object can thus not serve as a continuous reflection of the Self (Bertram, 2017:99-100). Hegel therefore postulates: “[self-consciousness] achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness” (Hegel, 2013:110). This relationship of reflection takes the form of a pursuit of recognition between two subjects (Bertram, 2017:103). It is only by being recognised as such that the Self becomes fully conscious of itself. The constitution of the individual Self thus depends on the recognition, the reflection of oneself as a subject, by another self-consciousness (Greenhill, 2008:348-349).

At the encounter of two Selves, both approach the respective other like they approached the material world: they want to attain confirmation of their sovereignty through consumption/destruction: “insofar as it is the body of the Other that is seen to lay claim to freedom, it is that body that must be destroyed. Only through the death of the Other will the initial self-consciousness retrieve its claim to autonomy” (Butler, 1999:49). This leads to a “life-and-death struggle” (Hegel, 2013:114) for recognition (Bertram, 2017:106; cf. Markell, 2003:104). Bertram (2017) highlights that in such a struggle, a symmetrical outcome is not thinkable. Its only outcome can be one of victors and losers (p.107): one Self subdues the Other. The first emerges as Master, the latter as Slave. While the Slave now recognises the Master, this asymmetrical result does not represent the ideal of an empowering state of mutual recognition of two independent self-consciousnesses (Bertram, 2017:109).

Taking up this unsatisfactory outcome, conventional interpretations of the dynamics in Hegel’s Master-Slave relationship point to the possibility of a synthesis, whereby the relationship of subordination is resolved in equal recognition, transcending inequality and asymmetry, and releasing Master and Slave as two sovereign self-consciousnesses (Markell, 2003:106; Greenhill, 2008; cf. Fukuyama, 1992:192-208; Ringmar, 2002:120-121). This (conventional) reading of Hegel suggests that the trajectory of the social is characterised by a teleological process of repeated negations, a sequence of conflictual re-integrations of differences through various not yet satisfactory stages that, at the end, will lead to a unity of the universal and the particular (Honneth, 1996:14-15). In this teleological view, negativity is the fundamental condition for the development of society.

c) Critical Approaches: The Role of Negativity

The notion of negativity underlying the conventional interpretation of Hegel is one that Laclau (1990) calls ‘internal’ negativity. According to this understanding, “the negative is a moment in the internal unfolding of the concept which is destined to be reabsorbed in an *Aufhebung*³⁴ [sublation], or higher unity” (p.26, emphasis in original). The negative in that sense is thus part of a greater positivity. The transformations within this greater positivity do not need a constitutive outside, they are understood to be part of an isolated system. The unity – or ‘the Absolute’ – that stands at the end of a series of unfolding transformations is all-encompassing of the negativity that fuels the intersubjective dynamics. The negativity of these dialectical dynamics is thus a *necessary* one, since the self-unfolding of these dynamics constitutes a determined movement towards a greater whole (Laclau, 1990:26). Negativity thus understood is therefore “not a true outside since it is merely present to be recovered by the inside” (ibid.). This dialectical movement of superseding *Aufhebungen* (sublations) of negative relations “presupposes and articulates a metaphysical monism, the implicit unity of all beings” (Butler, 1999:6-7). The conventional interpretation of Hegelian dialectics thus adheres to the promise

that at the end [...] there lies this prospect of homecoming, of finally arriving at a state in which contradiction, division, suffering, and other manifestations of negativity have been not necessarily eliminated, but at least *redeemed* as moments of an intelligible, internally articulated, encompassing whole (Markell, 2003:93, emphasis in original).

This teleological understanding of Hegelian dialectics – the resolution of conflicts through mutual recognition ultimately leading to a more harmonious and just society – is what is at the bottom of many of the conventional accounts on recognition that have burgeoned since the early 1990s (Markell, 2003:93).

This “teleological thrust” (Schick, 2020:152) has been criticised, usually accompanied by a proposition to refocus from the moral and political potential of recognition to the “ongoing, difficult process of coming-to-know” (Schick, 2020:155; cf. Markell, 2003; Epstein 2018; Epstein et al., 2018). In the terms of Hegel’s Master-Slave dialectic, human desire for autonomy and independence – and thus the desire to be recognised as such – leads to an unfolding of societal dynamics: starting from the Self’s confrontation with the material world

³⁴ “[The] moving beyond the contradictions that [through negation are] set into play” (Epstein, 2018:816).

and leading up to a ‘life-and-death’ struggle. The fundamental division between what can be termed the conventional and the critical approach to recognition is on whether one presupposes – even if implicitly – a potential end point to these dynamics where asymmetry and conflict can be overcome to reach the “only one satisfactory solution, [...] a regime of reciprocal recognition among equals” (Taylor, 1992:50). The *critical interpretation* posits that the human desire for recognition is ultimately impossible to fulfil. There can thus be no end point to that struggle and asymmetry and conflict might be inherent to the social dynamics that are propelled by the Self’s desire for autonomy and independence (Markell, 2003). The difference between the two approaches boils down to two different notions of negativity – internal vs radical.

This more critical reading of Hegel’s dialectical dynamics has surfaced already in philosophical discussions in pre-Second World War France, most notably fuelled by Kojève and Hyppolite (Butler, 1999:6). Kojève’s reading of the *Phenomenology* (1947) and Hyppolite’s translation and commentary (1969) on Hegel introduced a profound reinterpretation to French thinking (Marmasse, 2013; Cohen, 2013; Epstein, 2018:816). They questioned “whether external differences among subjects, or between subjects and their worlds are always capable of being recast as internal features of an internally integrated world” (Butler, 1999:6). Challenging the Hegelian harmony and its underlying metaphysical monism, Kojève’s and Hyppolite’s reasoning leads to the “dissolution of Hegel’s doctrine of internal relations, the emergence of ontological rupture, the insurpassability [sic!] of the negative” (Butler, 1999:7). The struggle for recognition consequently becomes indefinite. For Kojève, a solution is not principally ruled out, but it is deferred to an undetermined point in the future (Marmasse, 2013:242). The pursuit of the Absolute is thus stretched out to take the form of an “indefinite movement of time, of history, of the various permutations of Becoming in which negativity is neither resolved nor negated, but sustained in a progressive and open adventure of Spirit” (Butler, 1999:14). In their critique of the ‘metaphysics of presence’ Derrida and Heidegger have deemed this move not radical enough, accusing Kojève’s and Hyppolite’s reinterpretation as being still tied to a “philosophical death wish for a final and static metaphysical identity” (Butler, 1999:14; cf. Laclau, 1990:108).

At the end of this conceptual journey, however, having abandoned all teleological residues and eschatological hopes, there must lie an understanding of negativity as *radical*.³⁵ For Laclau (1990), radical negativity is the existence of a constitutive outside which is irreducible to any

³⁵ The term ‘radical negativity’ is borrowed from Laclau (1990). An extensive discussion of poststructuralists’ notion of radical negativity and how it relates to Hegel’s and Marx’s thinking is presented by Coole (2000:72-84).

pre-given, self-unfolding order. Since “the inherent negativity of a ‘constitutive outside’ means that the social never manages to fully constitute itself”, the outside must also be a radical one (p.18). The radical outside is irreconcilable with a greater positivity. In contrast to Hegel’s negativity as a “principle of systemic integration”, this radical negativity presents itself as a “subversion of system” (Coole, 2000:48). There is thus no teleological unfolding within a closed system leading to the Absolute, since the excess of negativity can never be dissolved in a zero-sum unity. The Absolute can never fully constitute itself and the ultimate solution, ‘the regime of reciprocal recognition among equals’ cannot be attained. The Self’s quest for full autonomy and independence will thus never be fulfilled. As such, introducing the notion of radical negativity to Hegelian dialectics is the ultimate critique of Hegelian idealism, understood as the reduction of ‘the real’ to the concept, to a self-contained system, a greater whole that can be resolved through various rounds of sublating internal negative relationships (Laclau, 1990:109-112).

Yet, radical negativity is not only subversive. By means of disrupting a given system (of signification), it is also the condition of possibility for any political project, its constitution, (tenuous) continuity and change. Coole (2000) speaks of “that force or movement which both renders meaning and institution possible yet menaced, and which inscribes their possibilities of endurance or transformation” (p.74). It is an element of disruption that precludes any form of ultimate determination. If negativity is accepted to be radical and constitutive, the “uniqueness and rationality of history must be abandoned” (Laclau, 1990:18; cf. pp.26-27). We thus arrive at a radical anti-determinism, rid of any teleological residues.

d) Implications for the Self and Its Relation to Others

How does this radical anti-determinism play out in the role of recognition for Self and Other? The discussion of negativity is inextricably linked to diverging concepts of identity. As Butler (1999) writes, the subject only gets to know about itself through the experience of encountering what is different from itself. The negative is thus fundamental for the Self “to gain reflection of itself in its environment, recognition of itself by Others” and thus to attain certainty of itself (p.13). According to the conventional approach, internal negativity implies that through perfect recognition, full certainty of oneself can be attained. This unambiguity is expressed in the notion of *successful* recognition – a state where the subject is reflected *as it is*. The notion of

successful recognition thus presupposes a pre-given identity. Vice versa, failing recognition is deemed “the failure to extend to people the respect or esteem they deserve in virtue of *who they really are*” (Markell, 2003:18, my emphasis). It is thus a matter of injustice that should be met with ‘more’ recognition. Epstein (2018) summarises that, following this conventional approach, “[identity] suffers a similar fate in recognition theory as in IR [International Relations] constructivism: it is reduced to a given, a fixed variable” (p.812). This understanding of identity, “emptied of its dynamism and of its constructedness” (ibid.), ultimately rids the concept of the constraints of the intersubjective setting. It thus abandons the social ontology which has been so profitable in Hegel’s reasoning in the first place (cf. Markell, 2003:12; Epstein, 2018:812).

If in the conventional interpretation the Absolute, the end point of equal and mutual recognition, represents the resolution of all conflict and asymmetry, it is a state where all Selves realise their full potentialities because they are recognised as what they really are. Accordingly, it is assumed, if we are recognised as, that is if we know who we really are, we can act ‘authentically’ and are thus constituted as sovereign agents (cf. Markell, 2003:12-13).³⁶

If any conflict and asymmetry is understood to be a form of internal negativity that can be resolved in a greater positivity, abandoning the Absolute by asserting a radical notion of negativity necessarily implies a different concept of identity. This is precisely Markell’s (2003) move, who criticises this essentialised notion of identity. In his detailed discussion of ‘human finitude’ he reaches the conclusion that the ideal of full sovereignty or independence is impossible to attain. Markell (2003) points out how in an intersubjective setting the openness and contingency of the social introduces insecurity and unpredictability to human life and human practices. In society, full autonomy is necessarily restricted: “the fact of human freedom, which is the condition of the possibility of effective agency, also limits our practical capacities because it is not exclusively ours but is mirrored in others” (p.79). What he calls human finitude is in fact the implication, not merely of the existence among others, but most importantly of this existence’s open-ended temporal dimension. A Self can never be the full master of their practices and, most importantly, the *meaning* of these practices given that they unfold and are interpreted over time in a plurality of others beyond the Self’s control. Because

³⁶ Markell (2003) highlights the inconsistency of this view: while the conventional approach relies on an antecedently given identity, it also concedes to recognition the power to shape identity (p.18). This inconsistency is reminiscent of Wendt’s conventional constructivism, which introduces ideational factors as pre-given while also considering structural effects on these factors (Epstein, 2011:331).

of this uncertainty, “action itself exceeds or outruns the terms of identity in which [it is tried to be grounded]” (Markell, 2003:68).

It is suggested that Markell’s notion of finitude, which humans inevitably face in social life, is akin to Laclau’s notion of radical negativity. In Butler’s (1999) words, according to the conventional approach, “the Hegelian subject only knows itself to the extent that it (re)discovers its metaphysical place; identity and place are coextensive, for Hegelian autonomy depends upon the doctrine of internal relations” (p.8). Markell’s (2003) proposition of the impossibility of autonomy thus inevitably abandons the doctrine of internal relations by introducing a dimension of unpredictability to social life. This unpredictability, like radical negativity, precludes any ultimate closure through *Aufhebung* (sublation) within some kind of positive totality. On an abstract plain, the crucial role of temporality here becomes clear when reminding oneself that the conventional Hegelian doctrine of internal relations relies on some end-point, if only represented by an indefinite future. Once this endpoint is abandoned, a not confinable temporal dimension inevitably introduces an element of unpredictability. Markell’s claim is thus that ultimate security over one’s identity, hence autonomy or full independence, are impossible to attain, since, in a social world, agents have only limited control over their acts and the meaning that they acquire. In such a world of plurality and openness of meaning, there can be no perfect reflection of the Self in others through recognition. In her question, Butler (1999) hints at the consequences of this reasoning: “has Hegel then created the notion of a subject as a perpetual striving?” (p.13). Identity cannot be viewed anymore as an antecedent fact. It is, instead, the result of ongoing intersubjective dynamics.

If the full constitution of identity (for Laclau) or ultimate self-certainty and autonomy (for Markell) are impossible, what are implications thereof for dynamics between Self and Other in an intersubjective setting? In the light of the unattainability of full sovereignty through mutual and equal recognition, Markell’s interpretation of the Master-Slave dialectic shifts focus from the empowering potential of recognition to the effects of social subordination inherent to the quest for recognition itself.

It is the Selves’ desire to attain certainty of themselves that makes them strive for recognition by the respective Other. However, since the unpredictability of social life prevents ultimate self-certainty, the struggle for recognition cannot result in a mutually satisfying solution of equal recognition where both subjects are fully constituted as independent sovereign Selves. In order to better understand the dynamics of this struggle, Markell (2003) suggests to focus in

Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic on the constitutive role of the emerging Slave.³⁷ In the course of the struggle for recognition, the emerging Slave turns into an object of negation for the emerging Master. For this negation to be of another quality than the mere – unsatisfying – destruction/consumption of the material world, it has to be instantiated not through the soon-to-be Master-Self through annihilation, but through the acting of the *other* self-consciousness – by surrender, by recognising the emerging Master's independence (Markell, 2003:107). The two roles come into being only through this act (cf. Epstein et al., 2018:789).

The asymmetry of this relationship is hardly satisfying to the Master, who is recognised as such merely by a *dependent* self-conscious Other. The Slave's recognition is thus worthless (Bertram, 2017:109). Nonetheless, since the Slave is not perceived as an equal competitor anymore, the Master is now isolated from the Other's antagonistic claim to freedom and autonomy that led to the struggle for recognition in the first place. Subduing the Slave thus isolates the Master from the Other's challenges to his autonomy that have painfully reminded him of his own finitude. Despite not having reached the desirable state of being recognised as sovereign by an equal, the Master thus experiences at least some relative sense of sovereignty, an illusion of freedom. Assuming negativity as radical and the pursuit of full recognition as futile, this is the best – or worst – we can get. Markell (2003) concludes that “the pursuit of recognition itself may be implicated in the formation and maintenance of unjust relations of social power” (p.112). Put differently, in the words of Greenhill (2008), “enslavement of one actor tends to be the necessary consequence of another actor's quest for independence” (p.353).

3. Bringing Recognition and Poststructuralism Together

Thus conceived, the element that makes apparent the theoretical compatibility of a critical approach to recognition and poststructuralism is the underlying notion of radical negativity.³⁸ Like it is implicit in Markell's (2003) and other critical approaches to recognition (Epstein, 2018; Schick, 2020; cf. Butler, 1999), Laclau (1990) explicitly contrasts the notion of radical negativity to the internal negativity characteristic of the conventional Hegelian interpretation

³⁷ For a detailed account of the Master-Slave dialectic with a special focus on the role of the negative, see Epstein (2018:817-820).

³⁸ See Butler's (1999) discussion of Foucault's and Derrida's engagement with Hegelian dialectics (pp.177-186).

(p.8). It is important to highlight in this context that radical negativity is *not* a mere inversion of positivity which would result, again, in a zero-sum *Aufhebung* into an “empty totality” (p.26). Radical negativity, instead, is the “element of impurity which deforms and hinders [the full constitution of any objectivity]” (pp.26-27).

In poststructuralist thought, as it has been presented above, the experience of radical negativity, the experience of the impossibility of establishing any objective structure, has been termed antagonism. It is the expression of a constitutive outside as “the limit that makes full constitution as a totality, as a fixed identity, impossible” (Edkins, 1999:133; cf. Laclau, 2005:140-149). The antagonistic outside corresponds to a *radical* negativity insofar as it has no “common measure with the ‘inside’” (Laclau, 1990:18). It cannot be accommodated, it exceeds, it interrupts, it breaks down an articulated system of signification (Laclau, 2007:37). Closure is not possible, leading Laclau and Mouffe (1985) to speak of the impossibility of society. Society, like any identity or discursive structure, they argue, can never fully constitute itself, can never fully become totalised (pp.111-114). For this reason, however, antagonism constitutes at the same time the condition for the subject to exist. Were a society to be constituted completely, there would be no subject, only subject positions (cf. Butler, 1999:10). Akin to the poststructuralist claim of the ultimate non-fixity of any discursive structure, Markell’s (2003) reinterpretation of Hegel’s Master-Slave analogy emphasises that the desire for sovereignty, and thus a stable relationship of full recognition, is unattainable, that it is largely an ideal (cf. Epstein, 2018:821-822; Epstein et al., 2018:788). Sovereignty, Markell (2003) argues, is unattainable, because it ultimately cannot integrate the finitude of human existence, the contingency of the social with its insecurities and ambiguities.

The tenuousness of any identity in the light of the contingency of the social raises the question of relative stability. Radical negativity, the constitutive outside which time and again challenges a constituted structure, must be negated in order to stabilise any relationship. Laclau (1990) highlights that any discursive structure is essentially a form of spatialisation, which consists in “eliminating [...] temporality” (p.41). Any structuring involves thus, in fact, a masking of the ultimate contingency of discourse.

This logic resonates with the critical approach to recognition theory. According to Markell (2003), the “roles give substance to the social identities of ‘master’ and ‘slave’ and lend relative stability to the intersubjective world” (p.112). This structuring of the social, this “social subordination can be understood as a means of avoiding or disavowing the open-ended temporality of human action by converting that existential problem of time into the technical problem of the organization of social space” (p.22). Even though the fantasy of an ultimately

stable identity remains unattainable, the relationship of subordination frees the Self of its dependence on the Other's recognition and thus isolates the Self from the experience of antagonism: "to finesse the problem of the [self-consciousness's] own contradictory relation to the other" (Markell, 2003:111). Subduing the Other, the Self experiences relative sovereignty, an illusion of it, by isolating itself from the confrontation with its own contingency in the face of antagonism. While the Self remains short of full sovereignty, this illusion, this masking of threatening antagonism and thus of the Self's own contingency renders the asymmetric relationship to the Other relatively stable (cf. Zarakol, 2018:851).

Markell's claim that the quest of one Self for sovereignty comes with the subordination of others finds its mirror image in the poststructuralist conceptualisation of the relation between antagonistic discourses, namely in the notion of discursive struggle. For discourse theory, the prevalence of a given discursive structure comes at the expense of another one. To stabilise a given interpretation it needs reaffirmation and the marginalisation of alternatives (cf. Doty, 1997:378). This leads to the construction of boundaries, banning any antagonism revealing of a discourse's contingency to the outside. Like the Master's quest for sovereignty, a Self isolates itself from the vulnerability to an Other by securing its identity through (discursive) subjugation and thereby isolating itself from the Other's antagonistic discourses. Like the Slave's recognition for the Master, the Other's interpretation becomes irrelevant for the Self if the Other is deprived of an equal standing. Laclau (1990) appositely asserts that "the constitution of a social identity is an act of power" (p.31). If, despite the impossibility of ultimate fixity, "an objectivity manages to partially affirm itself, it is only by repressing that which threatens it" (pp.31-32). Like the asymmetrical relationship between Master and Slave isolates the former from acknowledging the ultimate finitude of its existence and thereby maintains at least the illusion of some kind of sovereignty, the construction of some level of objectivity by means of suppressing antagonistic alternatives masks the ultimate contingent nature of any discursive structure and thereby stabilises it. However, like the Master's tenuous sovereignty, any partially fixed discourse conveying a sense of stable identities remains always a "myth" (cf. Laclau, 1990:35).

a) A Framework of Discursive Interaction

The framework developed in this chapter offers a theoretical response to the guiding question: *To what extent is a Self's discourse vulnerable to an Other's discourse?*

Discourses do not exist in isolation from each other. Relations between Self and Other – and their respective discourses – are tied up in mutual (in-)dependence. The Other's interpretation needs to be taken into account as a potentially constraining element for the discourses of the Self. Striving for self-certainty, the Self seeks confirmation of its own identity in its reflection in the Other. Out of this need to engage with the 'outside', with what is not Self, to get to know itself arises a vulnerability, a vulnerability to what the Other says, to the recognition by the Other of itself. As the articulation through discourse represents an attempt to fix a certain discursive structure (Hansen, 2006:18), for Markell (2003), "the pursuit of recognition expresses an aspiration to sovereignty" (p.10). The impossibility of both of these endeavours to ultimately succeed – which in the last instance boils down to the impossibility of the Self – has important implications for the relationship between Self and Other. If relative sovereignty is only attainable through the subordination of Others, the Self needs to isolate itself from antagonistic discourses. If the Other and its discourse are not discursively 'enslaved' by the Self, if, figuratively speaking the Self remains stuck in the life-and-death struggle with the Other, the Other's interpretation continues to have an impact, painfully revealing to the Self the ongoing antagonisms between discourses, and constrains the Self's own articulations. If, however, the Self manages to discursively subdue the Other to the extent that its interpretation can be dismissed, it remains relatively isolated, self-secure, and autonomous.

Whether framed in poststructuralist terms or in the language of recognition theory – the impossibility of closure epitomises the play between the constraints and the sovereignty a subject oscillates between, and thus its varying degrees of agency. The advantage of introducing recognition theory is the applicability of this logic to the social and the intersubjective, to relations between Self and Other.

The following two subsections feed the preceding ruminations back to the two blind spots identified in the previous chapter. The following subsection b) will first reflect on how the conceptual framework developed here approaches agency and constraints thereto without preconceiving structural positions. The subsequent subsection c) then outlines how the framework achieves to analytically appreciate the intersubjective nature of the relationship between Russia and the EU.

b) Agency and Constraints to It

Accordingly, agency is not an inherent quality but is constructed with the agent through interaction with Others. It is “not a presocial given, but always precarious and in construction” (Epstein et al., 2018:795). As such, marrying recognition theory to poststructuralist thought adds to the latter’s constitutive logic a conceptualisation of the subject’s freedoms and constraints *without* defining the roles of the subjects prior to their interaction (cf. Epstein et al., 2018:789). The constraints to (discursive) interaction arise from the interaction itself rather than from given identities.

The framework thus avoids the introduction of limiting preconceived patterns of interaction. While the initial motivation for developing this framework was the conceptualisation of discursive constraints in intersubjective settings, it nonetheless evades any deterministic notion of structure. By remaining within poststructuralist premises, the framework offers a conceptualisation of constraints to the contingency of the social that does not deny this contingency, but, instead, formulates it as the underlying condition for constraints to arise. It is thus capable of capturing dynamic interaction instead of replicating more or less static identity construction.

While postcolonial approaches, for example, yield crucial insight into the (discursive) relationship between Russia and the West (cf. Morozov, 2015; Morozov & Rumelili, 2012), the framework put forward here rids itself of the pre-established categories of ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ which – with no doubt justifiably – entrench an almost essentialised identity. It complements these and other accounts based on world-system theoretical premises or the English School – both of which presuppose a stable centre of the current international system – by shifting focus on the openness of the social.

The indeterminacy of the categories in recognition theory is epitomised by the fact that the roles of Master and Slave are not determined prior to the struggle (Kojève, 1947; cf. Epstein, 2018:820). Still, the power-dynamics theorised in the mentioned alternative approaches find space within recognition theory. Ringmar (2010) suggests that Hegel’s Phenomenology was itself inspired by uprisings in former French colonies, leading to inferences akin to postcolonial reasoning, namely that the newly independent, given their dependence on recognition, “always [faced] limits to their freedom” (p.13). Without preconceived roles, this framework not only is more flexible in capturing discursive dynamics, it also encourages for critical reasoning, because it highlights the “permanent instability [of] relations of domination” (Epstein, 2018:820).

c) Intra- and Intersubjectivity

Crucially, the intention here is not to reconceptualise discursive interaction between Russia and the West as a Hegelian Master-Slave relationship like Ringmar (2002) did. Instead, the recognition analogy helps to understand the discursive struggle between both subjects *from their individual (discursive) points of view*. As such it helps to analytically appreciate the intersubjective character of the relationship between Self and Other.

Markell's reinterpretation of Hegel epitomises that the quest for a sovereign, independent Self presupposes a relationship of subordination, of negation (Markell, 2003:95) – very much in line with discourse theory. This is, in the first instance, an intra-subjective perspective: a focus on the identity-constructing discourses of one subject, Russia *or* the West (cf. Bertram, 2017:109). It is thus only in a second instance that this intra-subjective dialectic has implications for the intersubjective setting between Russia and the West. The dynamics of recognition, the more or less successful discursive subjugation of the Other from the intra-subjective perspective of one subject is mirrored at the intersubjective level in this subject's lesser or greater vulnerability to the discourse of the Other. This focus is justified, given that Hegel's Master-Slave scheme in the *Phenomenology* has originally been cast to frame a subject's inner world, the coming into being of its consciousness (Epstein, 2018:814; Epstein et al., 2018:799). This underlines that in the dialectical differentiation of a Self from an Other, the Other is an integral part of the Self (= intra). It "is located only *as* the other of the self rather than possessing genuine alterity" (Coole, 2000:47, emphasis in original). Accordingly, the intra- and intersubjective distinction remains a merely analytical one, as both dimensions cannot be separated in a social relationship.

An additional virtue of remaining within the premises of poststructuralism is that it allows for an abstraction of the individual. The question to what extent the notion of identity can be transferred from an individual level to collective entities (cf. for example Ringmar, 2010:4-6; Greenhill, 2008:346-347) thus becomes superfluous. The discursive perspective unproblematically allows to speak of a state's 'Self' without resting on tenuous assumptions on whether we can apply our (psychological, rationalist etc.) understandings of the individual to the state (cf. Epstein, 2011). The fact that a subject is constituted through narratives and a discourse of 'Self' is sufficient to speak of (discursive) identity. It constitutes itself – in discursive terms – through its relations to Others as a subject position in the structure of meaning. As Epstein (2011) emphasises: the question is "who speaks?". For an analysis of intersubjective settings in international politics, this social ontology of the subject and of

identity thus does not require a strict distinction between the domestic and the international level (cf. Epstein, 2018:808; Morozov, 2019:345-346).

4. Conclusion

This chapter has evolved through three sections. On the basis of a brief introduction to poststructuralist thought, the need was identified to conceptualise constraints to the contingency of discursive structures in order to gain a better understanding of discursive interaction. The second section proposed a critical reading of recognition theory as an apt analogy to ponder on the intersubjectivity of Self and Other. The third and final section married these insights from recognition theory to the poststructuralist edifice.

The resulting framework offers a profound theorisation of discursive interaction. It builds on the central insight from critical recognition literature, vocalised by Markell (2003), that the quest for an independent Self is tied up with asymmetrical relations to others. Going back to the guiding question formulated at the beginning of this conceptual journey, the vulnerability to the Other – and thus constraints posed by the Other’s articulations – can be understood as a function of how successfully the Self can isolate antagonistic interpretations by way of subordinating the Other in its own intra-subjective identity discourses. Only if the Other takes the role of a discursive Slave, the Self is relatively isolated from the former’s antagonistic discourses within the intersubjective context.

If the consequence of poststructuralist reasoning is the very acceptance of the insecurity of human existence, recognition theory offers an account on how this insecurity is tied up in our (discursive) relations to others. When looking at a particular discourse, any snapshot thereof is essentially one-dimensional (spatial). Without debarking from the poststructuralist framework, the analogy from recognition theory helps to flesh out the effect of temporality as a further dimension which is inextricably tied up with every discursive practice as an attempt to mask it. It is the effect of a subject’s finitude within a temporally open social context, the impossibility of being in control of the meaning of one’s own acts in a context of multiple changing interpretations, that forces the Self to discursively subdue the Other in order to create the illusion of sovereignty. The success of this endeavour determines to what extent the Self can isolate itself from the experience of antagonism, to what extent the Self is vulnerable to

alternative interpretations articulated by the Other. The following chapter will translate this theoretical conceptualisation into a comprehensive research design, capable of tracing discursive interaction between Russia and the EU empirically.

Chapter 4

A Research Design for Accessing Discursive Interaction

Introduction

The preceding chapter has outlined a theoretical approach to the overarching research question of this dissertation: How do diverging interpretations of the world by Russia and the EU interact? The present chapter now aims to outline a corresponding methodological approach and to formulate a research design that allows for a rigorous empirical investigation of the interaction of foreign policy discourses articulated by Russia and the EU.

Discourse theory and discourse analysis form a “theoretical and methodological whole” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:4). Originating in the field of linguistics and semiotics, discourse analysis, akin to the big variety of approaches in discourse theory (Torfing, 2005:5-9; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), has evolved into a number of different traditions. Notable examples are Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is inextricably tied to the work of Fairclough (1992; 1995), or Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (for example Mills, 1997). It is important to point out, however, that discourse analysis is not a stand-alone method in the sense of “a free-standing and neutral set of rules and techniques that can be applied mechanically to all empirical objects” (Howarth, 2005:317). The methodological design of any discourse analysis has to be built on the ontological and epistemological assumptions, the “hard core”, of the respective theoretical framework (Marttila, 2015a:5; cf. Glynos & Howarth, 2007:6). Consequently, discourse analysis, in the broadest sense, is not a single method but an umbrella term, “a series of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used to explore many different social domains in many different types of studies” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:12). The link between discourse analysis and discourse theory, according to Howarth (2005), is that “the former consists of a range of techniques to analyse 'talk and text in context', while the latter provides the underlying assumptions for their appropriate employment” (p.336). The methodological approach and the resulting research design outlined in this chapter are therefore a response to as well as an expression of the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter. The following methodological considerations are therefore to be accommodated within the

philosophical edifice constructed primarily by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) in the so-called Essex school of poststructuralist discourse theory.

The present chapter will unfold through three sections. The first section will offer a comprehensive introduction to poststructuralist discourse analysis and thereby provide the context for developing a comprehensive methodological framework. Section two will focus on discursive interaction, proposing a detailed approach for capturing this empirical phenomenon. Section three, finally, operationalises these considerations and sketches a comprehensive research design.

1. Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis: Methodological Considerations

The following section will prepare the methodological ground for the ensuing research design. It will give a comprehensive introduction to poststructuralist discourse analysis by, first, presenting its research logic and aims before, secondly, offering a brief review of how the academic discussion on the method evolved. Thirdly, it argues for understanding discourse analysis as a problem-driven approach and, lastly, raises the question of validity.

a) General Aim and Research Logic of Discourse Analysis

The fundamental aim of discourse analysts is to understand “the implications of [discourse³⁹] for the way we think and act in the contemporary world” (George, 1994:191). Loosely following Milliken (1999b) in her pioneering stocktaking of the various contributions to discourse theory at the time, three principal foci of discourse analysis can be pointed out. They all answer to different aspects of the poststructuralist conceptualisation of discourse.

First, addressing discourse as *relational systems of signification*, poststructuralists focus on how meaning and interpretation come into being through articulation (cf. Hansen, 2006:20).

³⁹ In the original text, the author speaks of the “connection [of] textual and social processes” (George, 1994:191). It is argued here that this is synonymous with the notion discourse in the Laclauian sense as presented in the previous chapter.

Discourse analysis is therefore not about uncovering ‘authentic’ intentions or motivations subjects might have (Wæver, 2005:35). Instead, it sheds light on the particular discursive structures that facilitate certain practices – or policies –, make them thinkable and doable within a given discursive context.

Secondly, discourses as *inherently unstable* structures are always prone to transformation in the interplay of reaffirming and challenging articulations. An analysis of discourse must therefore pay ample attention to discursive change and scrutinise the implication thereof for the way subjects make sense of the world. Discursive change, as has been outlined in the previous chapter, is always linked to the challenge of an existing structure by competing discourses. Glynos and Howarth (2007) consequently identify as discourse analytical aims to focus “attention on the reproduction and transformation of hegemonic orders and practices” (p.5; cf. Howarth, 2005:341).

Finally, the *radical contingent* nature of discursive structures means that any given order lacks necessity and is thus only one of many possibilities. Its instantiation through articulation therefore necessarily excludes other alternatives. A third aim of discourse analysis must therefore be to “[consider] the manifest political consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another” (Campbell, 1992:4).

Discourse analysis therefore seeks to capture how meaning is discursively produced, how it changes, and what the implications of one particular instantiation over others are. Situated within the hermeneutical rather than a naturalistic positivist tradition of enquiry, discourse analysts are “concerned with understanding and interpreting socially produced meanings, rather than explanations of observed behaviour based on universal laws of cause and effect” (Howarth, 1998:281).⁴⁰ Discourse analytical enquiries therefore typically do not follow a causal ‘why’ logic but raise ‘how possible’-questions instead: “how meanings are produced and attached to various subjects/objects, thus constituting particular interpretive dispositions which create certain possibilities and preclude others” (Doty, 1993:298). This logic does not aim at establishing causal relations between independent variables, but to understand how a given system of signification is constituted (Wendt, 1998:104-105). Therefore, “context matters” above all and qualitative data constitutes the basis for analysis (Dreyer Hansen & Sørensen, 2005:98).

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the relationship between ‘understanding’ and ‘explanation’, see Winch (2008).

b) Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis: Taking Stock

Discourse theory in the social sciences had, from the very beginning, an ambivalent position towards methodology. In 1999, Milliken (1999b) finds that there had been “strikingly little examination of appropriate methods and criteria for discourse study” (p.226). The reluctance to engage with questions of method and general rules for guiding empirical research was rooted in the tradition’s intrinsic criticism of the mainstream ‘scientific’ approaches to study the social world (Marttila, 2015a:2).

On the one hand, this stance has provoked a critical self-awareness of the consequences of methodological choices and research more generally: the idea that the objects of study are brought into being by the methods used to study them (Marttila, 2019:19) and by the researcher, who is an integral part of the research process rather than a ‘neutral observer’ (Dreyer Hansen & Sørensen, 2005:98; Marttila, 2015a:105). On the other hand, it has led in some cases to the rejection of methodological criteria as silencing of dissident approaches (Milliken, 1999b:227). Yet, as Milliken (1999b) notes further, “to refuse to engage in mainstream modes of doing social science research should not mean the near exclusion from debate of issues of research and method” (p.226). A lack of methodological reflection, according to her, deprives the researcher of a basis for rigorous empirical research, imposes unnecessary limitations on discourse analytical enquiries, and stands in contrast to a highly developed body of theoretical literature, which puts into question the ‘non-paradigmatic’ status of discourse research in the first place (p.228). Despite the elaborated and coherent theoretical basis provided by Laclau and Mouffe, the methodological canon for poststructuralist discourse analysis remains vague (Marttila, 2015a:2; Howarth, 2005:316; Torfing, 2005:2). The original works remain rather abstract. They eschew questions of method and how the theoretical framework ought to drive empirical analyses (Marttila, 2015a:97; Laclau, 2004:321). According to Torfing (2005), their radical critique of the traditional epistemologies’ claim to produce ‘true knowledge’ has led discourse theorists to “[throw out] the methodological baby with the epistemological bath water” (p.27).

Addressing this methodological gap, a number of scholars in the tradition of the Essex school have attempted to develop more systematic templates for empirical enquiries. Among them is Howarth (2005), who brings forward a “method of articulatory practice”, seeking to bridge the divide between theoretical construct and objects of analysis by discussing hands-on questions of empirical research. Together with Glynos (Glynos & Howarth, 2007; 2008; 2019), they offer

a ‘logics approach’ for the analysis of discourse. Remaining rooted in Laclau and Mouffe’s theoretical framework, Glynos and Howarth differentiate between various dimensions of social reality and offer so-called ‘logics’ to make the practices that are constitutive of these dimensions intelligible. Marttila (2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2019), who criticises Glynos’s and Howarth’s ‘logics approach’ for a lack of operationalisation and analytical differentiation (2015a:119-124), offers his own research programme in turn. Other notable contributions to the empirical applicability of poststructuralist research theory are Hansen’s (2006) comprehensive introduction to discourse analytical research designs and Wæver’s (2002; 2005) ‘structural poststructuralist approach’ to capture discursive change through shedding analytical light on different layers of sedimentation.

What all these accounts have in common is a close entanglement with Laclau and Mouffe’s theoretical edifice. They thus constitute various reformulations that highlight different aspects of this edifice and elaborate their applicability for better understanding empirical contexts.

c) Problem-Driven Approach

Against the discussion of poststructuralist discourse analysis’s methodological shortcomings, it is instructive to point to Howarth’s (2005) claim that “discourse theory is best seen as a version of ‘problem-driven’ rather than ‘method-‘ or ‘theory-driven’ research” (p.318). Whereas method-driven research is determined by the qualities of existing methods, he points out, theory-driven enquiries serve primarily to make the case for a given theory. Problem-driven enquiries, in contrast, are motivated by the existence of a problem and the urge to illuminate the conditions of possibility that gave rise to it (ibid.). In that sense, discourse theory “then employs its analytical tool kit, often refashioned by the integration of new problem-relevant theories, to shed light on the problem” (Torfing, 2005:22).

Accordingly, the research design developed here will answer to the particular research question of this dissertation. None of the research models put forward in previous attempts to address the methodological deficits of poststructuralist discourse theory (Marttila, 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2019; Howarth, 2005; Glynos & Howarth, 2007; 2008; 2019; Hansen, 2006; Wæver, 2002; 2005) will be applied in the form of a ready-made template. Instead, the valuable methodological contributions by said authors will be drawn on extensively yet selectively in the following sections to develop a tailor-made methodological framework to capture the

central object of enquiry of this dissertation: discursive interaction. The development of this framework is driven by the intention – and indeed the need – to “reflect, openly and critically, upon the many methodological choices [that] the analysis of specific discursive formations” demands (Torfing, 2005:25).

d) The Question of Validity

Before zooming in on the question of how discursive interaction ought to be captured methodologically, this introductory section will close with some reflections on the validity of discourse analytical enquiries.

Poststructuralism’s aforementioned critique of traditional epistemologies is based on the assumption that there is no conceivable extra-discursive reality against which ‘true’ or ‘objective’ knowledge can be tested. Any truth claim is always the expression of a theoretically informed perspective on a reality that is discursively constructed (Torfing, 2005:27). Consequently, there can also be no external validation for a given research program and its “capacity to generate bodies of knowledge consistent with the objective reality” (Marttila, 2015a:7). The radicalisation of the post-positivist epistemological critique inevitably suggests a position of ‘epistemological relativism’, according to which scientific practices cannot be considered epistemologically superior against any other beliefs (Marttila, 2015a:7; Lakatos, 1999:25). Against this relativism and the lack of ‘objective’ external yardsticks, it has been argued that the epistemological value of a research program can be determined according to its internal validity: accepting that there is no direct access to the world, the quality and the epistemological value of a research program can still be evaluated according to its “coherence and fit” (Putnam, 1981:54-55). A statement is consequently not evaluated against its correspondence with an external reality but its internal consistency and transparency. The validity of a particular discourse analytical research design needs thus to be assessed against “the extent to which analytical practices, methods and empirical findings are consistent with the ontological and theoretical premises of [poststructuralism]” (Marttila, 2015a:98-99).

The question of validity also concerns the role of the researcher in the research process. It is only through the rejection of the positivist scientific claim to objective analysis that the role of the analyst and of the analyst’s positionality in the production of knowledge can be fully acknowledged. A reflection of this role for the study of discourse is therefore pertinent.

Hansen (2006) writes that “discourse analysis requires linguistic as well as general knowledges of the Selves under study” (p.67). At the same time, as Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) point out, analysts need to some extent distance themselves from the cultural context under study for being able to take a critical view and to detect the “taken-for-granted, common-sense understandings expressed in the material” (p.21). Without the necessary analytical distance, these understandings might get lost – by means of being considered common sense. The analyst therefore ought to be familiar enough with the context under study in order to make sense of the articulated discourses while at the same time maintaining a critical distance that allows for a differentiated analysis.

While the author of this study is familiar with both Selves under study and reads both English and Russian, his personal background, as pointed out in the introduction, inevitably embeds him firmly in the cultural and discursive context of the European Union. While this positionality shapes the author’s perspective on the issue under analysis, the acknowledgement of this positionality’s significance simply underlines the need for methodological reflection as voiced by other authors (Milliken, 1999b:227; Torfing, 2005:27). This need will be addressed in the following framework by thoroughly systemising and disclosing all analytical steps in order to maximise the transparency of the investigation.

2. Capturing Discursive Interaction: Antagonism, Boundaries, and Floating Signifiers

Following the general methodological considerations outlined in the previous section, this second section will set the focus on the empirical phenomenon raised by the overarching research question: discursive interaction. This section functions as a bridge between the theoretical fundament as developed in the preceding theory chapter and the subsequent operationalisation of the concrete research design in section three.

To that end, this section will, first, contextualise discursive interaction between Russia and the EU as discursive struggle before, secondly, discussing the notion of ‘floating signifier’ as a key concept for capturing this interaction. Finally, a two-step strategy is proposed to analyse floating signifiers in order to facilitate a meaningful empirical enquiry.

a) Discursive Struggle Between Russia and the EU

The aim of this dissertation is to capture and to better understand the interaction of foreign policy discourses between Russia and the EU. These discourses, in many ways, diverge and constitute alternative, incompatible viewpoints. They articulate, for example, alternative narratives of Kosovo, Belarus or on Crimea, as well as different visions for a good domestic, European, and international order. The Russian discourse and the EU's discourse are – in poststructuralist terms – antagonistic to each other, since both constitute alternative, competing interpretations that are incommensurable, challenge each other and thereby reveal each other's contingency.

Let's recall from the previous chapter that any articulation of discourse constitutes an aspiration to (partially and temporarily) stabilise the structure of meaning by establishing relationships of linking and differentiation (Hansen, 2006:17-18; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:127-130). By hegemonising a discursive space, a given discourse attains relative objectivity, concealing its contingent, that is unnecessary, character (Marttila, 2015a:50). The presence of an antagonistic discourse that articulates an alternative political project challenges this relative stability by *revealing* its contingency. Antagonism thus constitutes an existential experience of finitude, of the impossibility to establish such an objective structure, a totality. Any relative objectivity must therefore be grounded in the exclusion and marginalisation of such alternative, antagonistic articulations (Laclau, 1990:34; cf. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:125). Antagonism is thus the expression of the 'constitutive outside' that a discourse needs to engage with in order to conceal its own contingency; with which it needs to compete in its continuous striving for hegemony. In the previous chapter, the competition of discourses to hegemonise a discursive space has been termed discursive struggle. It is the discursive struggle between Russia's and the EU's antagonistic foreign policy discourses that the methodological framework aims to capture.

b) Methodological Crux: Floating Signifiers in Laclauian Discourse Theory

How can a discourse analytical framework capture discursive struggle? Possible questions such a framework should address are: How are discourses antagonistic? How does a given discourse

relate to antagonistic discourses? How does a given discourse marginalise antagonistic discourses?

A methodology able to provide empirical insight to those questions can help to understand the discursive dynamics between Russia and the EU. To what extent is Russia's discourse vulnerable to the EU's discourse and vice versa? In other words, to what extent features the Other's antagonistic discourse as a constraining element to the articulation of the Self's discourse? It is argued here that 'floating signifiers' constitute an ideal focus for the analysis of discursive interaction in EU-Russia relations.

Floating signifiers are signifiers, or 'elements' in Laclau and Mouffe's terminology, that are not anchored in a relatively stable discursive structure, that is within relatively stable chains of signifiers (Marttila, 2015a:47). As a consequence, the meaning of those signifiers is relatively unstable and subject to contestation by competing discourses.⁴¹ They constitute the particular sites where discursive struggle can be observed, since they are "simultaneously articulated within two (or more) opposing discourses, [...] positioned within different signifying systems of conflicting political [projects]" (Farkas & Schou, 2018:302).

'Hegemonising moves' are attempts by discourses to integrate floating signifiers into a discursive structure and to stabilise their meaning while at the same time repressing alternative articulations (Howarth, 2000:110). As such, they are used "as part of a battle to impose the 'right' viewpoint onto the world" (Farkas & Schou, 2018:302). With different discourses employing hegemonising moves in order to marginalise the respective alternative in a competition for hegemony, floating signifiers constitute the ideal sites to study discursive interaction.

Within a discourse, floating signifiers often play the prominent structuring role of so-called 'nodal points' (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:28-29). Nodal points⁴² are "privileged discursive points" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:112); signs "around which the other signs are ordered" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:26). They play the role of "privileged discursive points of partial fixation" in the discursive structure (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:112). Nodal points are thus reference points (Rear & Jones, 2013:379) through which other 'moments' are defined by relationships of linking or differentiation. Thereby, they provide a(n unstable) structure to the overall discourse. To hegemonise a signifier "[amounts] to fixing its meaning around a nodal point" (Laclau, 1990:28). *Within* a given discourse, signifiers accordingly identify with or in

⁴¹ The concept of floating signifiers has a similar analytical function like 'essentially contested concepts' (cf. Rear & Jones, 2013:377).

⁴² Laclau and Mouffe (1985) refer to Lacan's notion of 'points de caption' (p.112; cf. Rear & Jones, 2013:379).

opposition to a nodal point as important signposts (cf. Marttila, 2015a:49-51). Discursive struggle, then, happens in a “social field criss-crossed by antagonisms” where “contingent elements [are present] that can be articulated by opposed political projects striving to hegemonize them” (Howarth, 2000:110). One example is how the notion of ‘Maidan’ is articulated radically differently within the antagonistic discourses on Ukraine by Russia and the EU.

The more stable (‘objective’) a given discursive structure, the less room there is for competing discourses to challenge this structure by capturing floating signifiers. Yet, while objective discourses to some extent conceal their contingency, every element within a discursive structure is always relatively ‘floating’, since no discourse is ever produced irrevocably and therefore absolutely stable (Torfing, 1999:92; Marttila, 2015a:51).

Laclau (2005) asserts that this “‘floating’ dimension becomes most visible in periods of organic crisis when the symbolic system needs to be radically recast” (p.132; cf. Laclau, 1990:28). This crisis is the result of ‘dislocation’, when a discourse is “confronted by new events that it cannot explain, represent, or in other ways domesticate” (Torfing, 2005:16). These are “events that cannot be symbolised by an existent symbolic order, and thus function to disrupt that order” (Howarth, 2000:111; cf. Glynos & Howarth, 2007:14). This is the experience of antagonism (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:131). As a consequence, the objective appearance of this established order is subverted and its contingency revealed (Marttila, 2015a:53). “This will open a terrain for hegemonic struggles” with competing discourses trying to fix floating signifiers into a new order (Torfing, 2005:16). Consequently, in this situation of instability, “the hegemonic dimension of politics increases” (Doty, 1996:8). Referring to Diez (2001), Morozov and Rumelili (2012) point out that the confrontation with antagonistic discourses also provokes dislocation. At the example of the EU and Turkey they demonstrate that the “[tension] that inevitably exists between different discursive spaces produces dislocation on both sides of discursive boundaries” (p.33).⁴³ It can thus be argued that wherever the EU and Russia articulate antagonistic and competing discourses, the contingency of either discourse is revealed and the event⁴⁴ that is subject to these competing discourses can be regarded as a floating signifier.

⁴³ What Morozov (2010:191) and Morozov & Rumelili (2012:33) refer to as ‘discursive boundary’ has been termed by Laclau (2005; 2007) discursive ‘frontier’.

⁴⁴ Following Laclau’s and Mouffe’s (1985) formulation of the discursive as all-embracing (pp.107-109) and thus exceeding the realm of the linguistic (Angouri & Glynos, 2009:9), a (floating) signifier is not necessarily a word, but could be anything – for example an event – “so long as it enters into relations with other such elements” (ibid.).

c) **How to Analyse Floating Signifiers Between Competing Discourses?**

Floating signifiers are an ideal point of departure for the empirical enquiry of this study, because it is here where interpretations clash and, by virtue of negating each other, where competing discourses are coerced into mutual engagement. An analysis of how Russia and the West engage with the respective Other's discourse in the competition of integrating floating signifiers in respectively antagonistic discursive structures suggests two analytical steps.

A first step must be to *map the two antagonistic discourses* by Russia and the West respectively. How do both subjects articulate a particular event? What are the relationships of linking and differentiation articulated? What does the resulting discursive structure look like? This mapping is a prerequisite for understanding how those diverging and antagonistic discourses interact.

After having established an inventory of the diverging discourses, the second step seeks to capture discursive interaction. It therefore constitutes the methodological core of this dissertation. It does so by *scrutinising the hegemonising moves* both subjects employ in an intersubjective context, facing the Other's alternative discourse. Antagonistic discourses construct boundaries, banishing the alternative to the outside and creating distance between Self and Other often by "[invoking] stereotyped pictures of friends and enemies" (Torfing, 2005:16). The hegemonisation of "meaning and identity [...] involves the exclusion of a threatening Otherness that stabilizes the discursive system" (p.15). The 'Other' and its representation as radically different is thus an integral part of the construction of discursive boundaries through hegemonising moves. It is implicated in "the exclusion of a series of identities and meanings that are articulated as part of a chain of equivalence, which emphasise the 'sameness' of the excluded elements" (ibid.). In order to prevail, a discourse needs to successfully ban the alternative to the outside. At the centre of this second step is thus a focus on how a Self draws discursive boundaries between Self and Other, and how it deals with the Other's antagonistic discourse.

i) ***Predicate Analysis and Binaries***

This two-step approach demands a detailed understanding of the respective discursive structures. To this end, an extensive predicate analysis will be conducted as proposed by Milliken (1999b). The focus is on "the verbs, adverbs and adjectives that attach to nouns" that

“construct the thing(s) named as a particular sort of thing” (p.232). The task is thus to capture *how* something is discursively represented. Predicate analysis builds on the idea of language as structured along dimensions of identity and difference: through “implicit or explicit parallels or contrasts [a] set of predicate constructs defines a space of objects differentiated from, while being related to, one another” (ibid.). Predicates thus define relationships. A systematic predicate analysis of a discourse entails “drawing up lists of predications attaching to the subjects the text constructs and clarifying how these subjects are distinguished from and related to one another” (p.233). From comparing how subjects are constructed through predication, the researcher ought to abstract oppositions, or “relational distinctions that arguably order” a particular discourse (ibid.). As such, it seeks to flesh out the major reference points and basic binary oppositions that provide structure to a given discourse and that define the relationships of linking and differentiation it is made up of. Doty (1996) presents an applied example of this method. She underlines that “[thinking] in terms of representational practices calls our attention to an economy of abstract binary oppositions that we routinely draw upon and that frame our thinking” (p.2).

As outlined in the previous chapter (see p.53), the poststructuralist understanding of language goes back to Saussurean structuralism. Meaning, according to structuralists, is not inherent to a sign but the result of its differential positioning in relation to other signs in language and thus a function of the discursive structure. As a consequence of this crucial role of difference, structuralists – and later poststructuralists like Derrida – highlighted the importance of binary oppositions for the differential structure of language and hence for the creation of meaning. Such binaries are opposed ideas such as male/female or good/evil – each part of which “we understand by its opposition to the other” (Tyson, 2015:202). The two terms forming binaries, Derrida showed, are not equal but ordered hierarchically with one being privileged over the other (Tyson, 2015:240). Discourses work through such binaries to frame our thinking and they do so also by seemingly naturally linking binaries to one another. To employ Doty’s (1996) example: “the nature/culture and Oriental/European opposition merge into new oppositions between the civilized Europe and the instinctual Oriental” (p.10). The result of these processes of linking and differentiation (Hansen, 2006:16-20) along structuring binaries is discourse: a(n unstable) discursive structure, a grid that imbues signs with meanings by contrasting them and linking them to others (cf. Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:25-30).

ii) *Proceeding Practically*

For the first analytical step – the mapping of both discourses – the selected texts will be studied carefully to discern the fundamental structure of the discourse. It is suggested to focus on nodal points that are the major reference points, through which the particular floating signifier is given meaning – and thus integrated into the particular discursive structure. It is the partial fixation of the discursive structure around nodal points that facilitates predication in the first place (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:112). Hegemonising a signifier means to define its meaning in relation to nodal points (Laclau, 1990:28). Knowledge of the latter is thus a prerequisite to trace hegemonising moves.

To identify nodal points, the analyst ought to pay attention to signs with a privileged status (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002:30). A predicate analysis of significant nodal points (such as key actors, events, or issues) will illuminate the discursive structure of the respective discourse along the dimensions of linking and differentiation. Therefore, lists of predicates attributed to nodal points (paraphrases and direct quotes) will be prepared.⁴⁵ Based on those predication tables, the basic discursive structure including the underlying binaries that imbue the nodal points with meaning will be identified and presented in the form of summaries and illustrative figures of the discourses articulated by Russia and the EU. They will be supported by extensive referencing to exemplary primary sources, where a particular representation surfaces.⁴⁶ This process involves a methodologically guided yet creative abstraction (Wæver, 2005:39) from the individual sources, where the theoretical categories – nodal points, relationships and structuring binaries – are drawn from the empirical data (for a detailed description of this process see below, p.111).

In the second step – tracing discursive interaction – the analysis scrutinises the hegemonising moves employed by Russia and the EU. Given the centrality of the Other for hegemonising the meaning of floating signifiers in an intersubjective context, the focus will be set, firstly, on the drawing of discursive boundaries between Self and Other. Secondly, hegemonising moves will be illuminated by tracing references to the respective Other's discourse:

The *drawing of discursive boundaries* will be systematically studied by, firstly, paying attention to the role the representation of the Other plays in the overall discursive structure, that

⁴⁵ For an example of a predication table, see Annex, p.4.

⁴⁶ The respective representations surface in all referenced sources – the order is of no significance. Where direct quotes are given in said summaries, an exact quote shows only in the source indicated by the first references *not* preceded by 'cf.'. References following 'cf.' do not refer to direct quotes but to sources that still reproduce the broader representation articulated by it.

is its significance for imbuing a floating signifier with a particular meaning. It will then proceed to analyse the predicates that are attributed to the Other. In that way, the analysis illuminates the relations of linking and differentiation that make up the articulated discursive structure and how discursive boundaries are drawn between the Self and the Other, transporting the Other to the outside. The analysis of the relationship between Self-Other draws on three analytical lenses following Hansen's approach to study discursive identity constructions (2006:41-48). Articulations that construct discursive boundaries between Self and Other can be located along spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions. Whereas spatial constructions ban 'the Other' to the physical or metaphorical outside (pp.42-43), temporal constructions invoke notions of progress, development or stasis. Others can be, for example, represented as backward or progressive, able or unable to change (pp.43-44). Ethical constructions, finally, invoke references to "ethics, morality, and responsibility" (p.45). Tracing the construction of discursive boundaries along those three dimensions will offer a differentiated account of how the Other and its alternative antagonistic discourse are banned to the outside, how they are 'othered', in an attempt to hegemonise the interpretation of a given floating signifier. Finally, the evolution of these representational practices over time will be taken into account.

Besides focussing on discursive boundaries between Self and Other, the texts will be screened for any articulations that refer to the Other's *discourse*, that is to the discursive structure that is articulated by the Other. How, if so, does the Self engage with the Other's discursive structure? What nodal points are attempted to hegemonise and how? Here, three basic modes of discursive interaction with several sub-categories are defined as analytical instruments:

1. **Confirmation:** The Self repeats the discursive structure (i.e. binaries/attributions) articulated by the Other.
 - a. Accommodating Confirmation: The repetition serves to accommodate antagonism.
 - b. Instrumentalising Confirmation: The repetition serves to support the Self's own discourse.
2. **Negation:** The Self denies the discursive structure articulated by the Other
3. **Subversion:**⁴⁷ The Self refers to the discursive structure articulated by the Other, represents it as wrong and actually different (restructuring of binaries/attributions)

⁴⁷ The term as it is utilised in this framework is not linked to the notions of subversion and inversion as employed in postcolonial literature.

- a. Ascribing Subversion: The Other's discursive structure is challenged by ascribing to (e.g. intention) or denying (e.g. authority) the Other a certain attribute.
- b. Justifying Subversion: The Other's discursive structure is challenged and rearticulated by providing a justification (with no reference to the Other)

Identifying those different modes of discursive interaction will help to understand what nodal points are addressed and how the Self attempts to rearticulate their meaning in relation to the floating signifier.⁴⁸ Besides identifying said modes of discursive interaction, attention will be paid to the evolution of these strategies across different events over time.

In summary, the two-step analytical approach can be sketched as follows:

Step 1: **Mapping** both antagonistic discourses:

Identification of nodal points and fundamental binaries

Step 2: Tracing **discursive interaction**:

1. Guiding question: How are discursive boundaries drawn between Self and Other?
 - a. Significance of the representation of the Other for the overall discourse
 - b. Discursive practices of othering (spatial, temporal, ethical)
 - c. Evolution over time
2. Guiding question: How do the Selves engage with the respective Other's discourse?
 - a. Modes of discursive interaction
 - b. Evolution over time

iii) Correspondence to the Theoretical Framework and Key Concepts

To conclude this section, which set as its aim to mediate between the theoretical fundament and the subsequent operationalisation of the research design, a few lines will be dedicated to highlight how the methodological approach outlined so far resonates with the theoretical framework.

⁴⁸ Given the structural nature of discourse where signs are defined through links and differences between each other, the rearticulation of one nodal point inevitably has consequences for the whole discursive structure and touches upon other nodal points as well.

The preceding chapter aimed to establish a conceptual framework for capturing discursive interaction in an intersubjective setting. Anchored in poststructuralist discourse theory, it sought to provide a theoretical understanding of the question of how a Self's discourse may be vulnerable to an Other's discourse – in other words, how the contingency of a Self's discourse might be constrained by what the Other says. Drawing on insights from critical approaches to recognition theory helped to flesh out how the relations between Self and Other – and their respective discourses – are tied up in mutual (in)dependence.

It has been established that at the basis of intersubjective dynamics is a subject's striving for self-certainty and autonomy, which it seeks in the reflection in, that is recognition of itself by the Other. Since this striving can ultimately never be fulfilled in the open-endedness of the social, the subject remains vulnerable to the Other's antagonistic interpretations, which painfully remind it of its own finitude. Deprived of the possibility to ever reach full sovereignty through perfect recognition of itself by the Other, this vulnerability – the constraints that consequently arise out of the Other's antagonistic discourse for the Self's own articulations – can only be alleviated by isolating the Self from the Other, by drawing discursive boundaries and discursively subduing the Other like Hegel's emerging Master subdues the emerging Slave. It is only now, in this asymmetrical relationship to the Other, that the Self can dismiss the former's antagonistic discourse, that it is relatively isolated and thus relatively independent in its own articulations. If, however, the subject is not as successful in discursively suppressing the Other's antagonistic discourse, it remains stuck in the life-and-death struggle and thus compelled to engage with the Other's threatening alternative. Not able to successfully subdue the Other discursively, the Self remains relatively vulnerable, which means that its own articulations remain relatively constrained by what the Other says.

Those constraints arise thus from the intersubjective context and condition the (discursive) agency of the Self in the presence of Others.

What does it mean that Russian and EU foreign policy discourses are antagonistic? They are antagonistic in the sense that what has been captured by Markell (2003) in the notions of human 'finitude' in the social context, this excess, the slipperiness of meaning is preventing both Russia and the EU from becoming the full Masters of their identity and from receiving the recognition thereof by the respective Other. Just like Markell (2003), Laclau and Mouffe (1985) describe the antagonistic relationship as one where "the presence of the ' Other' prevents me from being totally myself." (p.125). The Other and its antagonistic articulations are at odds with the Self's articulated order, they reveal its contingency, they cause a disruption. "Insofar as there is antagonism, I cannot be a full presence for myself" (ibid.). And just like the Hegelian

subject suffers from this experience of finitude, not allowing it to become fully sovereign, the threat posed by an alternative, antagonistic discourse constitutes an identity crisis (p.126). Laclau (1990) proclaims, “The antagonizing force *denies* my identity in the strictest sense of the term” (p.18, emphasis in original). Following the critical appreciation of Hegel’s dialectics, the ‘antagonizing force’ is *radical* in that it cannot be reduced to a greater totality (cf. Laclau, 2005:140-149). It is in this sense, that Russia’s and the EU’s incommensurable discourses – which articulate alternative, incommensurable identities of their respective Self and Other – are understood to be antagonistic and thus capable of posing constraints to one another.

For understanding how Russian and EU foreign policy discourses interact, how vulnerable they are to each other’s alternative articulations, it is thus necessary to understand the extent to which Russian and EU articulations pose constraints to the respective Other’s discourse.

After the necessary mapping of both the EU’s and Russia’s foreign policy discourses in step one, their vulnerability to the Other will be assessed in the second analytical step: what is the significance of the Other for the formulation of the Self’s discourse? How is the Other and its discourse banned to the (spatial, temporal and ethical) outside, and how successful is this drawing of discursive boundaries to isolate the Self from antagonistic articulations? The last question will be reflected in how extensively the Self engages with the Other’s *discourse*, captured in terms of the modes of interaction defined above. Relying on recognition dynamics, these confirmations, negations and subversions are to be understood as the Self’s attempt to deal with the disruptive experience of antagonism. Being confronted with an alternative that is threatening the Self’s truth claims, it needs to engage with this alternative, drawing boundaries and discrediting it. This engagement with an alternative interpretation, however, simultaneously constitutes an acknowledgement thereof – even if it is merely to negate and repress it – revealing the contingency of the Self’s articulations. The stronger this engagement, the more the Self remains constrained by the Other’s discourse. If, however, the Self does *not* engage considerably with the Other’s discourse, if it is able to largely disregard it, one can conclude that the former successfully isolates itself from this threatening alternative, that it is relatively independent in sovereignly articulating its own discursive structure within the intersubjective context.

3. Operationalisation: Analysing Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations

Building on the methodological and theoretical considerations in the previous section, the discourse analytical framework employed in this dissertation will focus on floating signifiers, signifiers that are subject to diverging discourses as articulated by Russia and the EU. In order to make sense of these discursive struggles and the concomitant hegemonising moves, a case has been made for paying analytical attention to the articulated relationship to the Other as well as the engagement with the Other's discourse.

The following section aims at translating this abstract fundament into a transparent and applicable research design. For this purpose, it will clarify several relevant parameters, loosely following Hansen's (2006) discussion of discourse analytical research designs (pp.65-82). Among those parameters to be defined are, notably, the number of Selves under analysis, the temporal dimension, the nature and number of events taken into account, as well as the scope of the discourse – that is where a certain discourse can be found.

After a brief introduction of the poststructuralist reading of foreign policy discourse as the primary articulation of Self and Other, the following subsections will address those parameters. Subsection b) will define Russia and the EU both as Selves and as significant Others to each other. After having defined selection criteria and a suitable timeframe, subsection c) will suggest seven events that lend themselves for the empirical inquiry. The subsequent subsection d) will reflect on the institutional settings for the articulation of foreign policy discourse in Russia and the EU, before a strategy to compile relevant texts for analysis is proposed in subsection e). A final subsection f) describes in detail the practical steps needed in order to fruitfully apply the analytical approach defined above to those primary sources.

a) Foreign Policy Discourse and Self-Other Relations

For poststructuralist readings of international politics, foreign policy is intimately linked to identity (Hansen, 2014:176; Fierke, 2015:82). "Identity requires difference in order to be", writes Connolly (2002), "and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty" (p.64). Foreign policy discourses articulate notions of identity and difference, of Self and Other. Ashley (1987) and Walker (1993; cf. 1990), among the first major

poststructuralist contributions to International Relations literature, have pointed out the dichotomisation of international politics into a domestic and a foreign realm (Hansen, 1997:339-340). For the identity of a subject in international relations, foreign policy is the key articulation for the constitution of Self and Other. This point has been made by Campbell in his landmark study *Writing Security* (1992). In his study of the United States, Campbell's focus is on the representation of the Other in foreign policy discourses. He argues that depicting the Other as a threat serves to secure the Self's own identity: "The mere existence of an alternative mode of being, the presence of which exemplifies that different identities are possible and thus denaturalises the claim of a particular identity to be the true identity, is sometimes enough to produce the understanding of a threat" (p.3). The foreign Other thus corresponds to what Laclau and Mouffe (1985) have termed the 'constitutive outside'. The Other constitutes an alternative 'mode of being', that, by virtue of presenting an alternative, challenges the identity of the Self as the sole, natural order. Campbell builds on Connolly's account of identity and difference (2002). Connolly points out that a Self's differentiation from the Other tends to be a hierarchical one (pp.64-65). Identity, as an inherently unstable thing, requires constant reaffirmation. Securing one's identity thus requires to "[define] the other that exposes sore spots in one's identity as evil or irrational" (p.8). For Campbell (1992), that is the role that notions of threat and danger play in foreign policy discourse. These notions of security are no objective conditions but "the consequence of a calculation of a threat which objectifies events, disciplines relations, and sequesters an ideal of the identity of the people said to be at risk" (p.3). By virtue of defining the border of inside and outside, the Other simultaneously constitutes the limit and the condition of possibility of the Self (cf. Laclau, 1990:39). As a consequence, this performative process of othering cannot be definitive: "Should the state project of security be successful," – that is should the state successfully eradicate the threatening outside – "the state would cease to exist" (Campbell, 1992:12). The absence of a constitutive threat in the form of an Other would mean the absence of the condition of possibility for the Self. The relationship to the Other that the Self articulates in its foreign policy discourses has been debated also beyond Campbell's notion of the threatening 'radical Other'. In various empirical studies, Self-Other relations have been described, for example, as leader/partner (Milliken, 1999a:94), guardian/children (Doty, 1996), or a temporal differentiation from a past Self (Wæver, 1996; Diez, 2004). It has further been argued (Hansen, 2006:36) that the analysis of foreign policy discourses should not limit itself to a mere Self-Other duality. Relations to an Other should be apprehended in a more differentiated way by, for example, highlighting differing representations of the Other's leadership and society (Weber, 1995). Across the diversity of

discursive relationships, the intimate relationship between foreign policy and identity as co-constitutive is widely acknowledged (Hansen, 2006; Fierke, 2015:82; Hansen, 2014:176-177).

b) Two Selves and Two Others: Russia and the EU

This dissertation investigates foreign policy discourses as articulated by two subjects, Russia and the EU. It has been suggested that comparative empirical research of discourses has so far remained largely neglected (Howarth, 2005:332; Hansen, 2006:68). Pointing to various individual case-oriented studies on Russia, Morozov (2015) also states that it is time for more comparative perspectives (pp.41-43).

Yet, this study aims to go beyond a mere comparison of Russian and EU foreign policy discourses. By focussing on how foreign policy discourses engage with each other in discursive struggle, the aim is not just to compare two different systems of signification, but rather to understand what they imply for each other in an intersubjective context. This approach corresponds to what Hansen (2006) calls ‘discursive encounter’. The point is not only to compare, but to “[contrast] the discourse of the Self with the Other’s ‘counter-construction’ of Self and Other” (p.68). Following the analytical steps as formulated above (see p.91) and looking at how the EU and Russia relate to each other in their diverging foreign policy discourses, the dynamic of this discursive encounter can be fleshed out. Therefore, however, it is pertinent to take a look at who, first, these two Selves and, second, their significant Others are.

i) Two Selves

In this study, Russia and the EU are understood as two articulating subjects or Selves. An important question in this regard is whether the EU can or should be considered a monolithic actor.

The EU vocally aspires to be regarded as a foreign policy actor on its own (EU, 2016). Yet, against the background of historically different experiences with the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, individual member states across Europe have developed diverging attitudes towards Russia (Meister, 2014:7). At least until Maidan and the subsequent conflict in Ukraine starting in 2013/14, this was often reflected in disagreement

among member states regarding Russia (Casier, 2018c:108; Forsberg & Haukkala, 2016:228; Mälksoo, 2013).⁴⁹

Nevertheless, for the study of discourses the relevant question is ‘*who speaks?*’ (cf. Epstein, 2011; see in the previous chapter, p.76). With regard to the analysis of contemporary EU-Russia relations, Casier (2018c) points, first, to the common policy the EU has formulated in its relations with Russia and, second, to the shared interpretations that fuelled these policies (p.108). This does not mean that the EU’s discourse towards Russia would not be the result of a negotiation process that can involve different positions (Mälksoo, 2013). The EU, however, *de facto* speaks and negotiates with Russia and is also perceived as such by the latter (cf. Prozorov, 2007). It is further widely acknowledged that Russia historically played and still plays a key role as significant Other in the construction of a common European identity (Morozov, 2010; Neumann, 1999; 1997; Timofeev, 2008; Heller, 2010; Semenenko et al., 2006; Wolff, 2000). In accordance with the ontology developed in the previous chapter, it is therefore argued that the EU can be understood as a Self, a speaking subject.

Importantly, this is not to neglect that relations of individual member states to Russia do diverge with regard to genealogy, intensity and emotions. Keeping in mind Haukkala’s (2008a:114) critique of Prozorov’s (2006) account, this study will not artificially superimpose a monolithic EU discourse. National particularities, where relevant, will be taken into account. The adopted focus on the EU leads to an inevitable caveat regarding conclusions derived from observed interaction patterns. Where Russia interacts with discursive structures articulated by the EU, it is not possible to determine whether similar structures have been articulated by other actors, such as the US or NATO, that also play an important role for Russian identity discourses (see the following subsection). While in most of the below-defined events the EU plays an outstanding role that allows for drawing conclusions on discursive interaction in *EU*-Russia relations, the context of a greater Western discourse will be discussed in greater detail in the analytical discussion of the empirical findings (see p.271).

ii) Two Others

The images that those two Selves, Russia and the EU, draw of their respective significant Others are important to understand how they relate to the Other as a constitutive outside, how

⁴⁹ Youngs (2009) illustrates, however, that already during the Orange Revolution in 2004/05, different positions within the EU ultimately united behind a common agenda.

they draw discursive boundaries. As the review of the scholarly literature in chapter two has revealed (see p.23), Russia's role as significant Other for European identity construction is widely acknowledged. The same is true the other way around. While they constitute to each other not the *only* Others in their respective identity discourses, they are, as has been demonstrated, arguably central ones.

Europe has been Russia's main reference point for making sense of its own identity (Neumann, 1996; 1999; 2017; Morozov & Rumelili, 2012; Tsygankov, 2008; Morozov, 2010; Timofeev, 2008; Leichtova, 2014; Makarychev, 2014:23). Yet, focussing on the representation of the EU in contemporary Russian discourse inevitably runs into the difficulty of distinguishing between the closely related notions of 'EU', 'Europe' and, further, the 'West'. All three constitute important sources of differentiation and identification in Russian identity construction. Their meaning, however, is far from congruent and has continuously changed over time.

As it has been traced in detail in the literature review (see p.25), the notion of *Europe* is at the centre of Russian identity construction. A fundamental constant in this constitutive relationship is Russia's simultaneous belonging to and exclusion from Europe (Morozov, 2015:41-42; Morozov, 2018b:32). The ambiguity of the term is further complicated by the earlier mentioned differentiation in Russian discourses between a 'true' and a 'false' Europe (Neumann, 1996). Besides the continuously appearing desire to be 'distinct', Morozov (2004) argues, the simultaneous "fear [of isolation] has been compensated by construing a 'true Europe', representing a kind of projection of Russian values and priorities onto the entire continent, while the Europe that is 'hostile' to Russia is described as being not quite European" (p.5).

Another concept central to Russia's self-identification is *the West*. As pointed out by Heller (2010), this notion has its origins as a unified concept largely in non-Western debates. She argues for appreciating the Russian intellectual debates of the 19th century as constitutive not only of a Russian identity in differentiation from 'the West', but also of the notion of 'the West' itself (pp.33-34). This argument has been reiterated by Morozov (2010:186), who points out that in contemporary Russian debates 'the West' does not carry the same ambivalent connotations as 'Europe'. Whereas Russia may be portrayed as an integral part of Europe, 'the West' has always clearly taken the role of a hostile Other (Morozov, 2004). After Stalin's death, 'the West' was largely associated in Soviet debates with western Europe under the hegemony of the United States (Neumann, 1996:128-130). This understanding of 'the West' in Russian debates is closely related to the notion of a 'false' cosmopolitan and bourgeois Europe that appeared after the Bolshevik Revolution (pp.128-130). As a symbol of American

influence on the continent, NATO thus became a major representative of such a ‘false’ Europe (Morozov, 2004:6).

How do representations of ‘*the EU*’ sit in there? Contrary to the EU’s own inclination to equate itself with Europe (Laffan, 2010; White & Feklyunina, 2014:6), both terms are far from congruent in Russian discourses. Representations of the EU vary across political camps, ranging from the EU sharing a common liberal identity with Russia to the EU being the incarnation of this “false ‘Europe of pederasts and punk’” (Prozorov, 2007:322). Since the big enlargement waves to the east and the advent of integration projects designed for its eastern vicinity, the EU has increasingly been apprehended as a hostile challenger to Russia (Casier, 2016a; Haukkala, 2010a:168). As an organisation “seeking to dictate policies, norms and values to Russia”, it has rhetorically also been lumped together with NATO (Haukkala, 2010a:168). In contemporary discourses, the notion of the EU is therefore also closely related to the notion of ‘the West’.

This brief discussion shows that in Russian discourses the notions of ‘the EU’, ‘the West’, and ‘Europe’ cannot be neatly distinguished. While ‘Europe’ constitutes a highly ambivalent term that can carry many different meanings in different historical and political contexts, ‘the West’ overlaps only partially with it. At the same time, while the notion of ‘the EU’ in Russian discourses is not congruent with that of ‘the West’ it is portrayed as part of the axis between Brussels and Washington, and both notions oftentimes serve a similar function in Russian discourses. This underlines that the discourse analysis carried out in this dissertation defies any mechanical approach and instead requires a deep appreciation of the respective context – in particular when scrutinising the place of the EU within Russian discourse. The analysis will therefore differentiate the representation of EU/West in the Russian discourse where applicable.

c) Selection of Events and Temporal Dimension

What foreign policy discourses are suitable for analysis? The preceding discussion on floating signifiers has shown how discursive interaction can be captured through an analysis of events where the antagonisms between Russian and EU foreign policy discourses become apparent. It is here that the discursive struggle between alternative discourses and their moves to hegemonise floating signifiers is most visible. Such events, understood as ‘policy issue’ around

which a discourse evolves (Hansen, 2006:71), must therefore be subject to diverging interpretations as articulated in the foreign policy discourses by Russia and the EU.

i) Selection Criteria

Based on the theoretical underpinnings of this analysis, four distinct criteria for the selection of events can be formulated. In order to lend themselves for the analysis of discursive struggle between Russia and the EU, the events must be (i) subject to competing interpretations, (ii) relevant to EU-Russia relations, (iii) central within foreign policy discourse, and (iv) balanced with regard to the EU's and Russia's role in them.

Events must be *subject to competing interpretations*, that is, they must constitute floating signifiers in Laclau's and Mouffe's terms. Competing interpretations are the result of antagonistic discourses engaged in discursive struggle and aiming to hegemonise the meaning of a given event.⁵⁰

Secondly, events must be *relevant to EU-Russia relations* to make sure that the respective Other plays a role in the Self's discourse on the event. This is important, since representations of the Other are central for a discourse's engagement with antagonistic discourses.

Thirdly, events must be *central*, that is to say they should constitute nodal points within the foreign policy discourses articulated by Russia and the EU. It is argued that the analysis ought to focus on such privileged signs because "[nodal] points and the key *moments* they structure offer an empirical way in which discourses can be identified, mapped, interpreted and invoked" (Rear & Jones, 2013:379, emphasis in original). They are thus neatly embedded within a broader discourse and can be regarded as representative. To adopt Doty's (1996) words, the events selected here "serve as windows onto more global systems of representation" (p.3). Focusing on such central events will therefore justify broader inferences.

Finally, the selection should be *balanced*, ensuring that different dynamics between the two Selves are included in the analysis. It ought to avoid, for example, that the engagement with antagonistic discourses of one actor is exclusively reactive. A balanced selection will thus make it possible to capture a wide range of hegemonising moves by both subjects.

⁵⁰ It needs to be noted that Russian and EU foreign policy discourses have not always been antagonistic across all sectors. Discourses in 'low politics' areas such as trade and energy cooperation have for long periods of time been less conflictual (Casier, 2020). These rather pragmatic discourses, which at the time of writing have disappeared entirely, do moreover not represent the *political* discursive competition that constitutes this study's object of enquiry. They will therefore not be taken into account.

ii) *Change and Time*

Having defined criteria for the selection of events, it is left to set an appropriate timeframe for the analysis. Following from the anti-essentialist conceptualisation of discursive interaction in the preceding theory chapter, there is no reason to believe that the discursive interaction between Russia and the EU is static and not changing over time. To the contrary, reviewing the existing scholarship, it has been argued that precisely such an analytical framework capable of capturing *dynamic* interaction, free from any preconceived structural patterns, is needed.

To ask the question of discursive *interaction* is to investigate the (potentially constraining) role the Other's discourse plays for the discourse of the Self. It addresses a criticism of constructivist literature mentioned earlier, namely that, while allowing for the change of meaning and identity, it fails to account for *how* it changes (cf. Lake, 2013:571).

To capture change is to capture a process. To study interaction thus by and of itself disqualifies a mere snapshot of Russian and EU discourses. Empirically, the aim of this study is to scrutinise the unfolding of an intersubjective relationship that is a function of and at the same time keeps conditioning the identities of Russia and the EU. Following the recognition analogy, the previous chapter has established that identities, in the presence of Others, are in a continuous process of becoming, and that the representation of the Other therein plays a role by drawing boundaries to isolate threatening antagonism. The temporal dimension therefore ought to stretch over a timeframe broad enough to capture the evolution of those identities and the representations they articulate of their significant Others.

Previous studies of interactive patterns in EU-Russia relations help to define apt demarcation points. Casier (2016a) offers such a demarcation of different stages in EU-Russia relations that are linked to changing images of the respective Other. He identifies three periods, one of 'asymmetric cooperation' (1992-2003), followed by 'pragmatic but increased competition' (2004-2013), which finally turned into 'conflict' (since 2013). This signposting is congruent with other studies with a specific focus on discourse. Hopf (2016) identifies the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 as the last high-point of Russian liberal discourse and the discursive alignment with the West (pp.230-233). Morozov (2010) similarly points out that Putin started from a liberal position before adopting an increasingly confrontational attitude towards the West. While Putin's third term since 2012 has been suggested as a discursive turning point for Russia's relation to the West (Morozov, 2015:114; 2018b; Neumann, 2016; 2017), the obvious caesura in EU-Russia relations is the annexation of Crimea in 2014. In order to study discursive interaction by tracing competing discourses it is apt to capture this gradual

deterioration of EU-Russia relations from relative alignment in the early 2000s to open conflict at present.

This approach corresponds to Hansen’s (2006) focus on the “evolution of discourse and identity” (p.70). The focus here is less on a comparison of individual discourses, but on understanding in detail the discursive structures that underpin the identities articulated in foreign policy discourses and – within the framework of the discursive encounter – how they relate to the Other and its discourse over time (ibid.).

iii) Suggested Selection of Events

Based on the criteria formulated above and the considerations regarding the temporal dimension, the following events have been selected for analysis:

Theme/ Discourse	Events
1. Human Rights	- 2020/21: The poisoning of Alexei Navalny
2. Sovereignty	- 2008: Kosovo’s declaration of independence - 2008: Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s declaration of independence (Caucasus) - 2014: The annexation of Crimea
3. Common Neighbourhood	- 2004/05: The Orange Revolution - 2013/14: The Revolution of Dignity (Maidan) - 2020: Protests in Belarus

Table 1: Selection of events for analysis

These events fulfil the criteria of being (i) subject to competing interpretations, (ii) relevant to EU-Russia relations, (iii) central within foreign policy discourse, and (iv) balanced with regard to different roles in the interaction. Being situated at different stages of EU-Russia relations they furthermore cover the defined timeframe. The first event in 2004/05, the Orange Revolution, represents a time of increasingly competing interpretations. It is at this point, “after the pro-democracy ‘colored’ revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan in the early 2000s”, that the “conflicting worldviews between Russia and Western powers became much more serious” (Clunan, 2018:51). The latest events, the protests in Belarus in 2020 as well as

the poisoning of Alexei Navalny and its aftermath in 2020/21, have furthermore not been subject to extensive scholarly attention yet and therefore add to the topicality and relevance of this study. The same applies to the epilogue (see p.282), which does not form an integral part of this study. Given the fundamental changes in EU-Russia relations during the time of writing, the epilogue discusses Moscow's official rhetoric since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 against the insights from the present study, albeit in a more open manner than the principal analysis.

For analytical purposes, the events have been grouped within prevalent themes in EU-Russia relations:

1. Human Rights
2. Sovereignty
3. Common Neighbourhood

It is argued that these themes are paradigmatic for the competing (antagonistic) discourses of Russia and the EU. This arrangement is a merely analytical one and does not envision a comparison between themes.

d) Capturing Foreign Policy Discourse: Discursive Arenas

Where can foreign policy discourse be found? There are “different locations for political debate, different types of actors, and different forms of genre” (Hansen, 2006:66). It seems obvious to prioritise the official discourse as articulated by key figures in foreign policy-making. This focus “centers on political leaders with official authority to sanction the foreign policies pursued as well as those with central roles in executing these policies” (p.53). These actors as “authorized speakers” (Milliken, 1999b:242) are central in the shaping of foreign policy discourse (Weldes, 1996:281; Wæver, 2005:40). Possible sources include speeches, interviews or statements (Hansen, 2006:53, cf. Howarth, 2005:335-336). Importantly, as Haukkala (2008a) points out, the selection of actors taken into account for discourse analysis must be clear and transparent (p.114). Therefore, this subsection will identify the key institutions and actors in Russian and EU foreign policy-making.

i) *Official Discourse in Russia*

According to the Russian constitution of 1993, the President takes the central and largely unconstrained role in designing the country's foreign and security policy (Graef, 2017:2; Gvosdev & Marsh, 2014:27; cf. Romanova, 2018:85). He can draw on the extensive resources of the presidential administration and, further, assistants, advisors, intelligence services, as well as the Security Council as consultive and coordinating body (Graef, 2017:3; Gvosdev & Marsh, 2014:35-36).

The Russian Foreign Ministry, with its Minister unlike most other cabinet members appointed by the President, is not involved in strategic foreign policy decisions. Its role is the execution of the policies decided upon by the President (Graef, 2017:13; Fischer, 2022:338). While being a visible figure in Russian foreign policy, Foreign Ministers, especially since the Putin years (Igor Ivanov, 1998-2004, and Sergei Lavrov since 2004), have tended to not actively engage in Russian politics beyond their role (Gvosdev & Marsh, 2014:33; Graef, 2017:3). Yet, Russian diplomacy is traditionally actively involved in the articulation of foreign policy discourse (Graef, 2017:3; cf. Sergunin, 2016:169-173).

The remaining government, as well as the two parliamentary chambers, the State Duma and the Federation Council, play no significant role in the formulation of foreign and security policies (Graef, 2017:3; Gvosdev & Marsh, 2014:30-32). It has been argued, however, that during Putin's tenure as Prime Minister under President Medvedev (2008-2012), the otherwise hierarchical relation between the two positions was temporarily blurred (Gvosdev & Marsh, 2014:28-29). Beyond the official institutions, informal networks play a significant role in the formulation of policy in general and foreign policy in particular (Graef, 2017:4-5). Looking at different actors involved in Russia's foreign policy-making, Romanova (2018) finds that, overall, Russian foreign policy discourse is relatively coherent with alternative views remaining largely marginalised (pp.85-87).

For the purpose of this study, the analysis will focus on the two key institutions in Russian foreign policy-making: the President and the Foreign Ministry. Primary sources by the former constitute speeches, including annual addresses to the Federal Assembly or the Valdai Discussion Club, articles, interviews, press conferences, statements by the President's Spokesperson as well as press releases by the presidential administration. Regarding the Foreign Ministry, primary sources include statements, articles, speeches and interviews by the Foreign Minister and their Spokesperson, as well as official press releases by the Ministry.

ii) *Official Discourse in the EU*

The EU's foreign policy competencies have developed constantly over the years. As a result of this organic process, the EU's "external action [...] is quite complex, difficult to conceptualise, competence- and instrument- rather than policy-driven, and highly fragmented" (Missiroli, 2016:6). The EU's foreign policy framework is characterised by the dualism between intergovernmental and community-based initiatives (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2014:61-63). What follows is a quick overview⁵¹ of the most important institutions and their role in the EU's foreign policy-making process, taking into account institutional changes and developments within the timeframe under consideration, notably the Treaty of Lisbon 2009.

Foreign policy-making within the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), agreed upon under Maastricht (1993), is dominated by the *Council of the European Union* (Council), where decisions require unanimity among member states. The CFSP's global strategic lines are set by the *European Council* (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2014:61). The President of the European Council, created with Lisbon, represents the Union in CFSP-related issues at high-level contexts (p.64). The Council and its President, though not actively engaged in foreign policy-making, have an important symbolic status by representing a *united* European approach and therefore enjoy high visibility (pp.63-66).

The *Council*, notably in its configuration as Foreign Affairs Council chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of European Commission (HR/VP), constitutes the "main foreign policy decision-making body of the EU" (p.66). While being the primary body for the formulation of the CFSP, its role is institutionally more embedded in other issues of external action where the Commission features more prominently (p.67).

The HR/VP is 'the face and the voice' (Missiroli, 2016:18) of the CFSP. Introduced with the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999), the scope of this position was significantly broadened with the Lisbon Treaty (Missiroli, 2016:20-26). This includes the establishment of the *European External Action Service* (EEAS) supporting the HR/VP as a "*sui generis* stand-alone structure, separate from both the Commission and the Council" (p.32, emphasis in original). Yet, the 'double-hatted' HR/VP's function is also to bridge these two institutions and to ensure consistency (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2014:77-79). Before the Lisbon Treaty, the High Representative's role was closely linked to the competencies of respective Directorates General

⁵¹ For an extensive overview of the EU's foreign policy system, see Keukeleire and Delreux (2014:61-93).

(DGs) in the Commission, including the DG RELEX (relations extérieures) (McCormick, 2020:433).

The *European Commission's* role in the CFSP, which remains an intergovernmental matter, is limited. Its responsibilities in the external sphere are primarily linked to external action in the fields of trade, humanitarian action and development, and externalities of internal policies (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2014:77:72). However, areas, in which it plays a prominent role are the Union's (eastern) enlargement, the representations of the EEAS, international organisations of which the EU is a member or observer, but also its own policy initiatives such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and, as a part thereof with particular relevance for this dissertation, the Eastern Partnership (EaP). With Lisbon, the Commission's role as agenda-setter has been weakened by a strengthening of the European Council with regard to the CFSP. This also concerns the Commission President in the face of the creation of the President of the European Council and the HR/VP (Missiroli, 2016:13-18).

As it has been pointed out above (see p.98), despite the complexity and diversity of foreign policy-making in the EU's institutional fabric, the EU's foreign policy discourse, in particular towards Russia, can be regarded as largely coherent (Casier, 2018c), lending itself for analysis. Regarding the analysis of the EU's foreign policy discourse, this study will concentrate on articulations including speeches, articles, interviews, press conferences, and statements by the leading figures of the main institutions in EU foreign policy-making. These include the Commission President, the HR/VP, the Council President, as well as relevant Commissioners. Further, press releases and statements by Spokespersons and the institutions proper will be taken into account.

For both Russia and the EU, all primary sources will be assessed in their original language, unless there is a translation into English provided by the respective institution, in which case the official English translation⁵² will be used for practical reasons. In case of unclarities in the English version, the original Russian text will be consulted. Direct quotes from primary sources in languages other than English will be translated by the author. Primary sources that are only available in video or audio format will be transcribed. Any transliteration of Cyrillic text, including in the bibliography, follows the transliteration table GOST 7.79 (Russian: "ГОСТ 7.79") System B standard. Names, places and proper nouns will be latinised according to the spelling in the respective national language.

⁵² It is acknowledged that the official English translation might deviate from the original Russian text.

e) Selecting Texts for Analysis

The question is left of how to select the texts that will form the basis for the analysis. Holm (1997) recommends to read “piles of different sorts of literature” (p.129). But what texts? And how many? It is the purpose of discourse analysis to rigorously trace the construction of meaning and identity by looking at the articulation of a discursive structure, how it links signs and juxtaposes them to others (Hansen, 2006:41). A given discourse, however, can surface and therefore be accessed in a variety of texts. Texts can consequently be understood as indicators of a discourse exceeding them. Wæver (2005) argues in that regard that “if discursive structures operate in a political space, they will show up in any text” (p.40).

Yet, to discern these structures, discourse analysis needs to engage with a broad selection of texts. On the question of how much text is needed, Milliken (1999b) responds that an “analysis can be said to be complete (validated) when upon adding new texts [...], the researcher finds consistently that the theoretical categories she has generated work for those texts” (p.234).

The selection for this study will follow a twofold approach as brought forward by Howarth (2005). It will consist of a *core set* of texts, based on objective selection criteria, and a *supplementary set* of a broader range of sources.

For every given event, the *core set* will aspire to comprise as many detectable and publicly accessible articulations of the official foreign policy discourse (as defined above) as possible. The events identified above vary in nature, and the time period for which the core set of texts on the respective issues should reasonably be collected varies accordingly. While the foreign policy discourse on the protests in Belarus, for example, were characterised by a relatively low density in articulations from both sides over a longer period of time, the EU’s and Russia’s articulations on the annexation of Crimea were highly concentrated for a few weeks. The appropriate time period will thus be set individually for each event in the subsequent chapter. Its definition will follow Milliken’s (1999b:234) criterium for validity as quoted above, namely ensuring that the selection of texts can be considered complete if the inclusion of more texts does not add significant additional insight.

Given that only texts within this defined period will be taken into account for analysis, no exhaustive claim can be made on the *entire* discourse that Russia and the EU have articulated on any topic over the course of time. This does not constitute a limitation, however, since this analysis is primarily interested in the dynamics of discursive interaction rather than in an exhaustive depiction of the individual discourse’s substance.

The *supplementary set* comprises “a looser selection of [texts resulting from the] researcher's intuitive judgements about their significance and meaning” (Howarth, 2005:337). This includes sources that offer themselves for analysis due to their salience, authority, references from the core set, or other reasons.

Anticipating the criticism of ‘anything goes’ (Samokhvalov, 2018:793; cf. Brown, 1994:225), the rationale behind this twofold strategy is “not to give in to an unobtainable scientism, while simultaneously guarding against the usual positivist allegations that discourse theory relies upon anecdotal evidence and arbitrary choices of source” (Howarth, 2005:337). It further seeks to do justice to the ‘intertextuality’ of discourse: any text is always embedded in a broader space and carries references to other texts, only the entirety of which can illuminate the conveyed meaning (Kristeva, 1980).

Following this approach, the overall selection for this study amounts to 563 texts articulated by Russia (293) and the EU (270) in narrating the events identified above. All primary sources have been made accessible as digital copies in an online repository⁵³ and are listed by event in the Annex. Table 2 provides an overview of the number of sources analysed for each event:

Event	Number of texts in total (EU/Russia)
The Orange Revolution (2004/05)	54 (21/33)
Kosovo’s declaration of independence (2007/08)	38 (15/23)
Caucasus: Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s declaration of independence (2008)	67 (20/47)
Maidan: The Revolution of Dignity (2013/14)	152 (99/53)
The annexation of Crimea (2014)	89 (47/42)
Protests in Belarus (2020)	93 (41/52)
The poisoning of Alexei Navalny (2020/21)	70 (27/43)
Total:	563 (270/293)

Table 2: Number of texts selected for analysis

⁵³ For access link, see Annex, p.1.

f) From Sources to Insights: Some Practical Steps In-Between

A few further practical steps need to be laid out in the method of uncovering the discursive structure of a text, paving the way for mapping the diverging structures and tracing their interaction.

All texts added to the selection are given a distinctive code along the scheme [YY-MM-DD-Figure/Institution⁵⁴-Label] (see Figure 1).

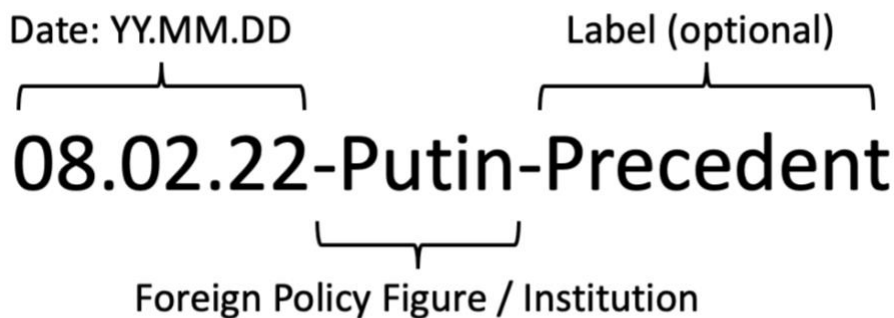


Figure 1: Coding-scheme for primary texts, example

Using NVivo, a computer software for qualitative data analysis, all texts are then read repeatedly and systematically to identify fundamental nodal points (including the respective Other) that structure both subjects' discourses. Predication tables are then drawn up with columns for each nodal point (for an example, see Annex, p.4). Going through all texts again, *all* representations of the defined nodal points are noted in the predication table. Each column of the predication table thus lists all representations of a given nodal point in the form of direct quotes from the original sources or paraphrases that capture the semantics of a representation and the relationships of linking and differentiation it establishes to other nodal points. Importantly, only representations of a respective nodal point that are directly related to the articulation of the event under analysis are taken into account. From Russian President Vladimir Putin's annual press-conference⁵⁵ in 2013, for example, representations of the EU/West (and other nodal points identified as just described) were noted only if the articulation

⁵⁴ Abbreviation possible. A full glossary of all figures and institutions (as well as abbreviations used for coding) that were recorded as articulating of Russia's and the EU's foreign policy discourse on the events under analysis within the respective time period can be found in the Annex, p.2.

⁵⁵ 13.12.19-Putin-Annual PC.

of this representation was directly linked to the articulation of Maidan/the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine.

Besides documenting the predication of nodal points in both Russia's and the EU's discourses on a given event, any articulations that refer to the discursive structure articulated by the respective other actor are identified and collected separately.

Based on this raw material, the empirical analyses in the following chapter follow the analytical steps outlined above. They, first, summarise the discursive structure – the nodal points, the relationships of linking and differentiation as well as the structuring binaries – of both the EU's and Russia's foreign policy discourses before, secondly, tracing the various modes of interaction with the respective Other's discourse.

4. Conclusion

This chapter set out to translate the previously developed theoretical conceptualisation of discursive interaction in an intersubjective setting into a corresponding methodological framework that allows for a rigorous empirical investigation of the interaction of foreign policy discourses articulated by Russia and the EU.

A general introduction to poststructuralist discourse analysis set the focus on the production and change of meaning through discourse. In order to capture discursive interaction, it was then proposed to zoom in on floating signifiers, elements that in the discursive struggle between Russian and EU discourses are subject to radically different interpretations by the two subjects. Therefore, it was argued, attention should be paid to hegemonising moves, attempts by Russia and the EU to integrate a floating signifier in their respective discursive structure by imbuing it with a certain meaning and repressing alternative articulations.

On this basis, a two-step analytical approach was developed to trace discursive interaction. Its logic is to, first, map the two antagonistic discourses on a given event based on a thorough predicate analysis before, secondly, shifting focus to discursive interaction by scrutinising the hegemonising moves employed by both subjects.

For the second step, it was proposed to focus on the drawing of discursive boundaries and, consequently, to pay ample attention to the significance and representation of the respective Other. Central for the aim of capturing discursive interaction dynamics, the analysis would then

detect engagements with the respective Other's discourse. Therefore, possible – and identifiable – modes of interaction (confirmation, negation, and subversion) were defined.

In the ensuing operationalisation of this methodology, seven events were selected for the empirical analysis that Russia and the EU articulated differently. All events fulfil the selection criteria of being subject to competing interpretations, relevant to EU-Russia relations, central within foreign policy discourse, and balanced with regard to the EU's and Russia's role in them. Covering a time span stretching from 2004 to 2021 will further allow to trace the evolution of discursive interaction over time by facilitating a comparison of interaction dynamics from one event to the other. The operationalisation furthermore outlined the principal figures and institutions involved in the articulation of Russian and EU official foreign policy discourses and determined the sets of primary sources to be taken into account for analysis. Following these guidelines, the number of detected primary sources to be considered for the empirical analyses amounts to 563. The chapter closed by describing and illustrating the practical steps to be carried out to extract substantiated empirical insights from the original sets of texts. The results of these extensive empirical analyses will be summarised in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Seven Contested Events in EU-Russia Relations

This chapter presents the empirical observations of all seven discourse analyses carried out in accordance with the methodological framework. The two-step analytical approach (see p.91) is mirrored in the structuring of the following sections, each of which accounts for one event and traces the competition of Russian and EU discourses to imbue this respective floating signifier with meaning.

After a short introduction to the *context* of an event, each analysis first presents *mappings of the antagonistic discourses* articulated by Russia and the EU on this event. Based on a comprehensive predicate analysis, these mappings consist of empirically substantiated summaries that are structured around the prevalent nodal points in each discourse. By tracing how those nodal points are connected through relationships of linking and differentiation, the analysis reveals the discursive structure and the fundamental binaries as illustrated by the figures at the end of each summary. The analysis is supported by extensive referencing to original quotes and exemplary texts, where a particular representation surfaces. The footnotes⁵⁶ refer to primary texts that can be accessed via the Annex.

The second analytical step – tracing discursive interaction – follows, investigating first *the role of the representation of the Other for the Self's discourse*. Attention is paid to the significance of the Other for the articulation of the overall discourse, that is its significance for imbuing the event – or floating signifier – with a particular meaning. In addition, practices of discursive othering along the spatial, temporal and ethical dimensions will be summarised. Finally, the analysis will trace the EU's and Russia's engagement with the respective Other's *discourse*. Therefore, it will depict *references to the discursive structure articulated by the Other*. By identifying different modes of interaction – confirmations, negations and subversions – it will be shown how and to what extent both Russia and the EU engage with the respective Other's interpretation of the event. The depiction of this engagement is structured along the nodal points as articulated in the discourse of the respective Other.

⁵⁶ Where a direct quote is supported by multiple references, the first reference points to the primary source where the direct quote can be found. Additional references indicate primary sources where the same representation surfaces.

1. The Orange Revolution (2004/05)

a) Context

The events surrounding the Ukrainian presidential elections in 2004 came to be known as the Orange Revolution. It was the first time since the revolutionary years of 1917-1920 that the Ukrainian society raised against the ruling elites and achieved change (Kappeler, 2019:288).

The second round of the elections on 21 November saw the run-off between the two frontrunners of the first round, Viktor Yanukovich and Viktor Yushchenko. Yanukovich was Prime Minister since 2002 under the outgoing President Kuchma and stood for continuity (Kappeler, 2019:283). His campaign was endorsed and supported by Russia (Kappeler, 2019:283; Youngs, 2009:363-364). His challenger from the opposition, Yushchenko, was Prime Minister from 1999 to 2001. Yushchenko's campaign – represented by the colour Orange – advocated closer relations with the EU and the US and was backed by support from the latter (Kappeler, 2019:283-284).

The official outcome of the second round saw Yanukovich winning with 49,5% against Yushchenko, who received 46,6% (CEC Ukraine, 2004). The next day, Yanukovich was congratulated by Russian President Vladimir Putin (Putin, 2004).

The official results ran contrary to the exit polls, which predicted a clear victory for Yushchenko (Kappeler, 2019:285; Pifer, 2007:29). International observers, moreover, reported gross irregularities and manipulations (IEOM, 2004a; IEOM, 2004b), on the basis of which the EU refused to recognise the results (Bot, 2004). The events triggered mass protests with more than 200.000 people rallying at Kyiv's Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) on 22 November. The coming days would see protests across the country and up to one million people gathering in Kyiv (Kappeler, 2019:286; Åslund & McFaul, 2006). They supported the Yushchenko campaign and demanded the annulment of the election results. While government buildings were blocked, the protests remained peaceful. In the country's east, Yanukovich's stronghold, discussions of separation appeared as did counter protests in support of Yanukovich – far outnumbered, however, by Yushchenko's supporters (Kappeler, 2019:287; Pifer, 2007:32).

On 26 November, the Presidents of Poland, Alexander Kwaśniewski, and Lithuania, Valdas Adamkus, the EU's High Representative Javier Solana, secretary general of the OSCE Ján

Kubiš, and the speaker of the Russian parliament Boris Gryzlov came to Kyiv to mediate (Pifer, 2007:31-34). On 3 December, the Ukrainian High Court declared the election results invalid and ordered a re-run on 27 December. The political agreement that was reached with the mediators' support further included a revision of the election law as well as constitutional amendments (Pifer, 2007:34). The repetition of the run-off happened with no major irregularities (IEOM, 2004c). Yushchenko won with 52% (CEC Ukraine, 2004) and was sworn in as President on 23 January 2005.

b) Analysis

To capture the EU's and Russia's discursive interaction over the Orange Revolution as a floating signifier, the discourse analysis captured 33 documents of the Russian and 21 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse on the events from 21 November 2004, the day of the second round of the elections, to 31 January 2005, shortly after Yushchenko's swearing-in as President.

i) *Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:*

Nodal Points in the EU's Discourse

2nd round of elections: In the EU's discourse, the 2nd round of the elections is considered fraudulent.⁵⁷ According to the authoritative⁵⁸ OSCE,⁵⁹ it is falling short of international standards⁶⁰ and is thus not democratic.⁶¹ “[The] significant breaches of fundamental democratic principles in the recent presidential elections” are concerning.⁶² The results do not reflect the will of the people.⁶³ Thus, the EU does not accept them and underlines the importance of

⁵⁷ 04.11.23-Bot, 04.11.23-Council, 04.11.25-Balkenende.

⁵⁸ 04.11.23-Council, 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 04.12.17-EC.

⁵⁹ 04.11.24-Solana, 04.11.25-Balkenende.

⁶⁰ 04.11.23-Bot, 04.11.23-Council, 04.11.25-Balkenende.

⁶¹ 04.11.28-Barroso, 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁶² 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁶³ 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

democratic elections for its relations to Ukraine.⁶⁴ The EU therefore supports a “free and fair”⁶⁵ re-run, which, following the OSCE’s assessment,⁶⁶ is considered democratic⁶⁷ and legal⁶⁸ under Ukrainian law, and which reflects Ukraine’s choice for “a peaceful democratic path”.⁶⁹

Authorities/Yanukovich: After the elections, the authorities are represented as antidemocratic⁷⁰ and hence anti-European.⁷¹ They do not respect the people’s democratic choice.⁷² Yanukovich has less and less support⁷³ and his supporters, which are “bussed into Kiev”,⁷⁴ are deemed inauthentic. They are, however, congratulated on having agreed to a re-run of the elections.⁷⁵

Opposition/Yushchenko: Yushchenko’s non-recognition of the election results is backed by international observers.⁷⁶ The massive protests in support of Yushchenko⁷⁷ show “that millions of Ukrainians are actively living out their fundamental democratic freedoms”⁷⁸ and they are reminiscent of the peaceful protests of 1989.⁷⁹ Protesters are called upon, however, to not block governmental buildings.⁸⁰ Yushchenko’s election is welcomed as a start of strong relations with the EU based on common European values.⁸¹

The people: In the EU’s discourse, the Ukrainian people are the victims of fraudulent elections, the results of which do not reflect their will.⁸² They are depicted as actively demanding democracy for their country.⁸³ “The peaceful commitment of Ukrainian citizens to democracy

⁶⁴ 04.11.23-Bot, 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 04.12.14-Council, 05.01.21-Ferrero-Waldner, 05.01.25-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁶⁵ 04.12.14-Council.

⁶⁶ 05.01.21-Ferrero-Waldner, cf. 05.01.31-Council.

⁶⁷ 04.11.24-Solana, 04.12.04-Ferrero-Waldner, 05.01.21-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁶⁸ 04.12.17-EC, cf. 04.11.24-Solana.

⁶⁹ 04.12.14-Council, cf. 04.12.17-EC.

⁷⁰ 04.11.23-Council, 04.11.24-Barroso.

⁷¹ 04.11.24-Barroso.

⁷² 04.11.24-Barroso, 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁷³ 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁷⁴ 04.11.24-Solana.

⁷⁵ 04.12.14-Council, 04.12.17-EC.

⁷⁶ 04.11.24-Solana.

⁷⁷ 04.11.23-Bot.

⁷⁸ 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁷⁹ 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner, cf. 04.11.24-Solana, 05.01.24-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁸⁰ 04.12.01-Solana.

⁸¹ 05.01.31-Council, 05.01.21-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁸² 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 04.11.24-Barroso, 04.11.29-Barroso-Statement.

⁸³ 04.11.24-Solana.

and European values was impressive”.⁸⁴ This commitment to “common values shared by both European States and citizens”⁸⁵ gives proof of Ukraine’s “European aspirations”,⁸⁶ linking it discursively closely to the EU.⁸⁷ Another dimension, however, is the division of the country⁸⁸ and, consequently, the importance of its territorial integrity.⁸⁹

Self (EU): Europe and the EU are inextricably linked to democracy. Consequently, the EU’s main concern in Ukraine is the realisation of democratic principles.⁹⁰ EU-Ukraine relations are a function of shared values of democracy. They are thus heavily dependent on the democratic nature of the elections.⁹¹ Therefore, the events are deemed “crucial for both Ukraine's own development as well as the future of the EU-Ukraine relationship.”⁹² Ukraine is deemed a strategically important neighbour and partner⁹³ as well as a “good friend of the European Union”.⁹⁴ According to official articulations, the events showed both the impact and the importance of the EU’s engagement in the region,⁹⁵ which played an important role in settling the crisis.⁹⁶

Russia: The few representations of Russia in the EU’s discourse contrast the Russian approach to openly support Yanukovych to the EU, who in turn was interested only in the democratic nature of the elections.⁹⁷ Despite those differences, common interests and goals, such as stability, democracy and a legitimate leadership are stated.⁹⁸ Russia is further named as one of the international facilitators for an agreement.⁹⁹

⁸⁴ 05.01.24-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁸⁵ 05.01.31-Council.

⁸⁶ 05.01.31-Council.

⁸⁷ 05.01.21-Solana, 04.11.24-Barroso, cf. 05.01.21-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁸⁸ 04.11.24-Solana.

⁸⁹ 04.11.29-Barroso-Statement, 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 04.12.14-Council.

⁹⁰ 04.11.25-Balkenende, 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 04.11.24-Solana.

⁹¹ 04.11.24-Barroso, 04.11.24-Solana, 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 04.12.09-Ferrero-Waldner, 04.12.14-Council, 05.01.31-Council.

⁹² 04.11.24-Solana.

⁹³ 04.11.24-Solana, 04.12.14-Council, 04.12.17-EC, 05.01.21-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁹⁴ 05.01.21-Solana.

⁹⁵ 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁹⁶ 05.01.24-Ferrero-Waldner, 05.01.25-Ferrero-Waldner, 05.01.28-Ferrero-Waldner.

⁹⁷ 04.11.24-Solana, 04.11.29-Barroso-FAZ.

⁹⁸ 04.11.25-Balkenende.

⁹⁹ 04.12.17-EC.

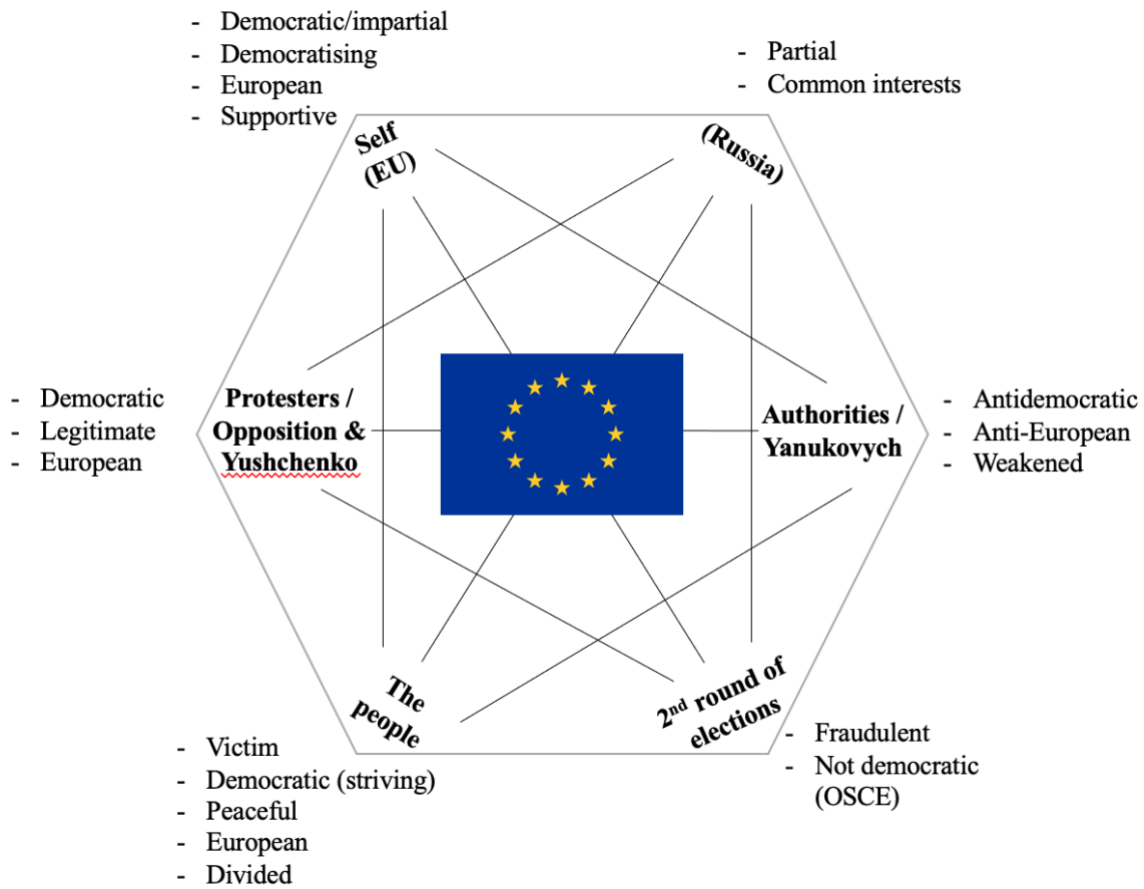


Figure 2: Discursive structure around nodal points, Orange Revolution, EU

Nodal Points in Russia's Discourse

2nd round of elections: When congratulating Yanukovych on his victory, Putin speaks of an “open and honest”¹⁰⁰ election campaign. Following the assessment of numerous observers, the elections are considered “democratic, free, transparent”¹⁰¹ and reflecting of the “free expression of [the people’s] will”.¹⁰² Despite irregularities, they are legitimate.¹⁰³ Any complaints must be voiced within Ukraine’s legal framework.¹⁰⁴ A re-run, which is considered incompatible with

¹⁰⁰ 04.11.22-Putin.

¹⁰¹ 04.11.23-MID-Press Release.

¹⁰² 04.11.23-MID-Press Release.

¹⁰³ 04.11.23-MID-Press Release.

¹⁰⁴ 04.11.26-Lavrov, 04.11.29-Yakovenko, 04.12.01-Lavrov-Vientiane.

the constitution,¹⁰⁵ is later, after an agreement had been reached, portrayed as a political compromise.¹⁰⁶

Authorities/Yanukovych: Yanukovych is considered the legitimate victor of the elections, standing for “stability, the strengthening of statehood, and the further development of the democratic and economic transition.”¹⁰⁷ The government and the authorities, who are in charge of the events,¹⁰⁸ are merely executing laws in line with the principle of democracy.¹⁰⁹

Opposition/Yushchenko: In the Russian discourse, the opposition and its protesting supporters are represented as radical and destabilising.¹¹⁰ They are mainly responsible for the political crisis.¹¹¹ Their demands and actions are antidemocratic and illegal.¹¹² The opposition is closely linked with the West: “[Brussels] is openly urging the opposition on to illegal actions of force [sic!].”¹¹³ Russia has no problem with Yushchenko with whom it has good relations,¹¹⁴ as long as he is not surrounded by people formulating “anti-Russian and anti-Semitic paroles”.¹¹⁵ After the re-run, Yushchenko is congratulated¹¹⁶ and portrayed as the choice of the Ukrainian people.¹¹⁷

The people: According to the Russian discourse, the people have the “right to independently decide their own internal affairs”.¹¹⁸ Their free choice, reflected in the election, must be respected.¹¹⁹ In calling for a revision of the elections, “Brussels is oblivious to the bedrock democratic principle of respect for the expression of the people's will”.¹²⁰

¹⁰⁵ 04.12.03-MID, 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁶ 05.01.02-Lavrov, 04.12.23-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁷ 04.11.25-Putin-Congratulations, cf. 04.11.22-Putin.

¹⁰⁸ 04.12.09-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁹ 04.11.25-Putin-PC, 04.12.06-Putin.

¹¹⁰ 04.11.23-MID-Press Release, 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹¹¹ 04.12.16-Lavrov.

¹¹² 04.11.23-MID-Press Release, cf. 04.12.01-Lavrov-Vientiane, 04.12.09-Lavrov.

¹¹³ 04.11.23-MID-Bot Statement, cf. 04.12.01-Lavrov-Vientiane, 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹¹⁴ 04.12.21-Putin, 04.12.23-Putin.

¹¹⁵ 04.12.23-Putin.

¹¹⁶ 05.01.20-Putin.

¹¹⁷ 05.01.19-Lavrov.

¹¹⁸ 04.11.26-Lavrov, cf. 04.12.09-Lavrov, 04.12.03-MID.

¹¹⁹ 04.11.23-MID-Press Release, 04.11.22-Yakovenko, cf. 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹²⁰ 04.11.23-MID-Bot Statement.

Self (Russia): In its discourse on the events in Ukraine, Russia is represented as transparent¹²¹ and impartial, ready to work with whoever is chosen by the Ukrainian people.¹²² As such Russia is a strong supporter if not facilitator of Ukraine's independence and sovereignty.¹²³ Russia and Ukraine are very closely connected. They are "strategic partners",¹²⁴ tied by "history, geography, economy, culture and the fates of people."¹²⁵ The Russian and Ukrainian peoples are "bound by thousands and indeed millions of threads".¹²⁶ Therefore, Russia has an interest in Ukraine¹²⁷ and will always support the country.¹²⁸

EU/West: In the Russian interpretation, the West is heavily interfering in the events.¹²⁹ It is depicted as supporting the opposition,¹³⁰ calling for "antidemocratic, illegal actions, for actions of disobedience".¹³¹ The non-recognition of the official election results is removing the situation from legality.¹³² European countries do not respect the choice and rights of the Ukrainian people¹³³ and teach the country from above.¹³⁴ Western calls on Ukraine to decide between East and West are "provocative and instigatory [sic!]"¹³⁵ and reintroduce dividing lines in Europe.¹³⁶ Russian articulations, however, also convey commonalities with the EU and the West. Multiple references point to common views as expressed for example in a statement of the Russia-NATO Council, including on non-interference, Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty.¹³⁷ It is furthermore claimed that Russia ultimately considers closer cooperation with the EU desirable¹³⁸ and does not oppose EU enlargement.¹³⁹

¹²¹ 04.12.06-Putin.

¹²² 04.11.25-Putin-PC, 04.12.06-Putin, 05.01.02-Lavrov, 04.12.01-Lavrov-Vientiane.

¹²³ 04.12.02-Putin, 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹²⁴ 04.12.22-Yakovenko.

¹²⁵ 05.01.19-Lavrov, cf. 04.12.23-Putin.

¹²⁶ 05.01.21-Lavrov.

¹²⁷ 04.12.02-Putin, cf. 04.12.23-Putin, 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹²⁸ 04.12.02-Putin.

¹²⁹ 04.12.08-Lavrov.

¹³⁰ 04.12.01-Lavrov-Vientiane, 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹³¹ 04.11.23-MID-Press Release, cf. 04.12.09-Lavrov.

¹³² 04.11.26-Lavrov.

¹³³ 04.11.26-Lavrov, cf.04.12.06-Putin.

¹³⁴ 04.11.23-Putin, cf. 04.12.06-Putin.

¹³⁵ 04.12.09-Lavrov.

¹³⁶ 04.11.23-Putin, 04.11.26-Lavrov, 04.12.01-Lavrov-Vientiane.

¹³⁷ 04.12.09-Lavrov, 04.12.16-Lavrov, 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹³⁸ 04.12.10-Putin, 04.12.23-Putin.

¹³⁹ 04.12.10-Putin.

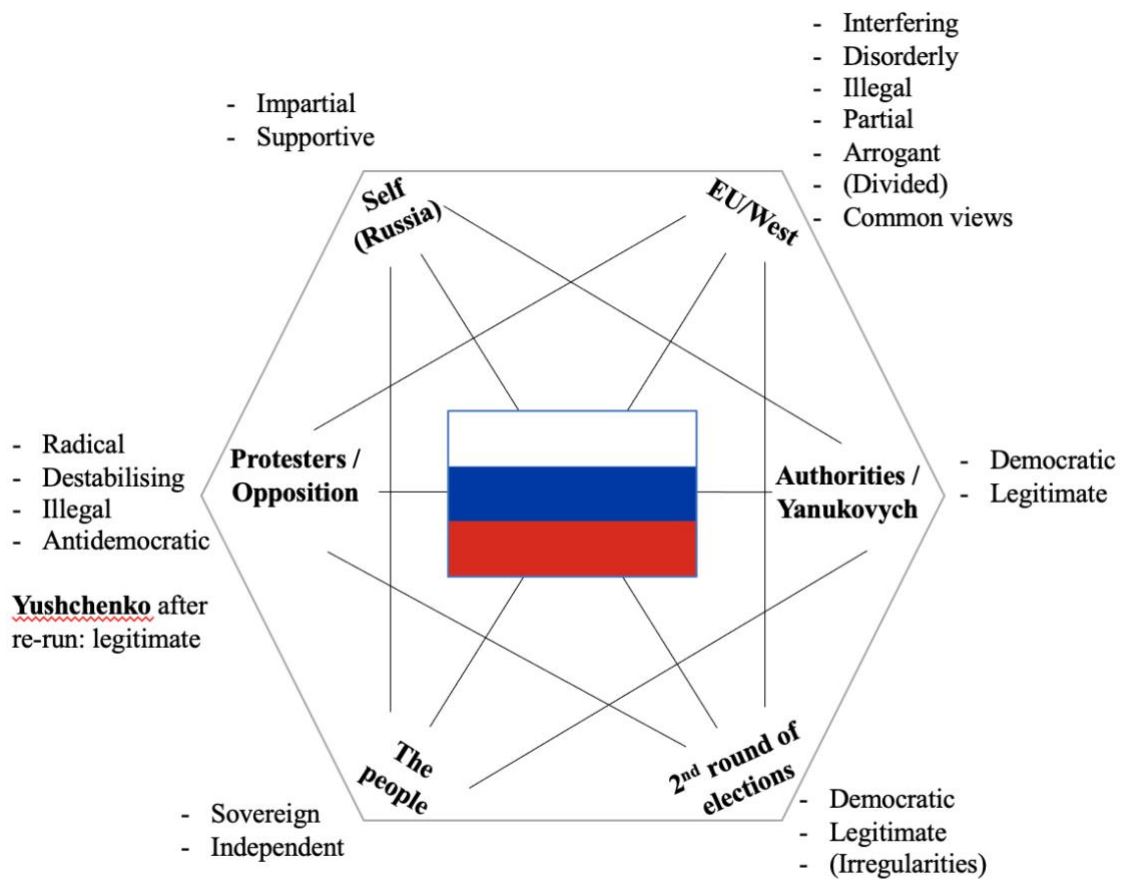


Figure 3: Discursive structure around nodal points, Orange Revolution, Russia

ii) *Discursive Interaction*

(1) *Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse*

In the EU's Discourse:

Othoring of Russia in the EU's discourse on the Orange Revolution is sparse. The few direct references to Russia are rather descriptive. An invocation of the *ethical dimension* can be

discerned by presenting Russia's support of Yanukovych as partial (in the sense of biased).¹⁴⁰ The invocation of common interests and goals, on the other hand, suggests that the EU to some extent also identifies with Russia.

In Russia's discourse:

In the Russian discourse, the representation of the EU and the West plays a major role as a nodal point for imbuing the events in Ukraine with meaning. Numerous references to the EU thereby serve to construct the Russian interpretation and thereby, through various forms of othering, to create distance to the EU and its discourse. Following Hansen's (2006) taxonomy, spatial, temporal, and ethical constructions can be discerned.

The representation of the EU as drawing new "dividing lines"¹⁴¹ in Europe constitutes a *spatial* construction. Presenting the Union as drawing a line between itself and Eastern Europe seemingly transports the Russian Self to the outside. Accusing the West of "attempts at [isolating]"¹⁴² Russia is a variation of this construction. Whereas the Russian discourse often refers to "some [European] states",¹⁴³ the explicit suggestion that the EU is in itself divided was raised only once.¹⁴⁴

The *temporal* dimension surfaces in Russia's discourse when Putin describes the Western practice of dividing lines as anachronistic.¹⁴⁵

Ethical constructions represent the EU as "destabilizing",¹⁴⁶ provoking disorder and illegality.¹⁴⁷ Asked about the EU's position, Putin articulates his conviction that "we have no moral right to push a major European government towards some kind of mass disorder".¹⁴⁸ Ethical othering is further inherent to representations of the EU's actions and statements as "inappropriate",¹⁴⁹ arrogant, or as treating Ukraine and Eastern Europe from above.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁰ 04.11.24-Solana, 04.11.29-Barroso-FAZ.

¹⁴¹ 04.12.01-Lavrov-Vientiane, 04.11.26-Lavrov, 04.11.23-Putin.

¹⁴² 05.01.02-Lavrov, cf. 04.12.23-Putin.

¹⁴³ Cf. 04.11.26-Lavrov.

¹⁴⁴ 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹⁴⁵ 04.11.23-Putin.

¹⁴⁶ 04.11.23-MID-Press Release, cf. 04.12.09-Lavrov, 04.12.06-Putin.

¹⁴⁷ 04.11.26-Lavrov, 04.11.23-MID-Bot Statement, 04.11.23-Putin, 04.11.25-Putin-PC, 04.11.23-MID-Press Release, cf. 04.12.08-Lavrov, 04.12.01-Lavrov-Vientiane.

¹⁴⁸ 04.11.25-Putin-PC.

¹⁴⁹ 04.11.23-Putin, 04.12.06-Putin, cf. 04.12.09-Lavrov.

¹⁵⁰ 04.11.23-Putin, 04.11.25-Putin-PC, 04.12.06-Putin.

Besides those various dimensions of othering, however, the Russian discourse's invocation of commonalities precludes the representation of the EU as a wholly antagonistic actor.

(2) *References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other*¹⁵¹

In the EU's Discourse:

The EU's foreign policy discourse barely refers to its Russian counterpart. Only four sources could be identified that negate or subvert discursive structures articulated by Russia.

EU: The EU's engagement with the Russian discourse serves primarily to hegemonise the meaning of its Self, reasserting its own linking of **[EU-democratic]**. It does so, for example, by means of a negating the Russian linking of **[EU-violence]**: "*The Russian government has criticised the EU for inciting violence - a charge without foundation.*"¹⁵² The EU's discourse furthermore subverts the Russian conjunction of **[EU-interfering & partial]** by invoking the justification that "*[the protection of democracy] is not about taking sides with a particular candidate, nor is it about 'interfering' in a concrete electoral process. It is about protecting accepted democratic principles*".¹⁵³ The Russian articulation of **[EU-interfering & partial]** is thus replaced with **[EU-democratic]**. This subversion is backed with an ethical assertion of the democratic nature of the EU's intentions, which in the EU's overall discourse is contrasted to the depiction of Russia as supportive of antidemocratic Yanukovych.

In Russia's Discourse:

The Russian discourse engages much more with its counterpart articulated by the EU. Modes of discursive interaction engage with various nodal points in the EU's discourse, confirming, negating or subverting its discursive structure.

¹⁵¹ Direct quotes supporting this part of the analysis are italicised to improve readability. This also applies to all analyses that follow.

¹⁵² 04.11.24-Solana.

¹⁵³ 04.12.01-Ferrero-Waldner, cf. 04.11.25-Balkenende.

2nd round of the elections (in the following ‘elections’): The Russian discourse challenges the EU’s articulation of this nodal point to reassert the Russian representation of [**elections-democratic & legitimate**]. It does so through an accommodating confirmation: “*Despite the irregularities that took place, the elections are democratic, free, transparent and, of course, legitimate.*”¹⁵⁴ This statement takes up the EU’s critique of the elections as fraudulent [**elections-fraudulent**] and, without contesting this structure, accommodates it into the Russian discourse of [**elections-democratic & legitimate**]. While this accommodation creates tension, the Russian interpretation is backed up with references to the positive assessment of election observers and the claim that the elections were held in conformity with Ukrainian law.¹⁵⁵ The EU’s representation of the elections as not meeting democratic standards [**elections-not democratic**] is challenged by questioning the legitimacy of the OSCE. Referring to a statement by the Council of the EU,¹⁵⁶ Putin calls the EU’s refusal to recognise the election results based on the OSCE’s assessment inappropriate. According to him, someone attempts to use “*the OSCE as an instrument of their policies to reach tactical goals, some of which are not justified*”.¹⁵⁷ This constitutes a subversion that is backed up by ascribing an instrumentalist intention, which calls into question the OSCE’s impartiality. The EU’s linking of [**elections-not democratic**], which it bases on the OSCE’s assessment, is thus undermined by denying the organisation any authority to objectively evaluate the elections.

EU: The EU is rearticulated by the Russian discourse as [**EU-interfering, illegal & partial**]. Constituting a major nodal point in the Russian discourse, this rearticulation is closely linked to the rearticulation of other nodal points, such as the elections, the opposition, and the authorities. In an ascribing subversion, Lavrov states that “*the attempts by certain states to remove the situation from the legal field of Ukraine do make us cautious, especially as certain European capitals have declared that they do not recognize the elections, and their next thesis is: Ukraine must be with the West.*”¹⁵⁸ Through this articulation, the EU’s non-recognition of the elections, which in the EU’s discourse has been given meaning through the representations of [**elections-not democratic; EU-democratic**], is rearticulated as illegal and instrumental, backing the Russian linking of [**EU-illegal & partial**] and challenging the EU’s linking of [**elections-not democratic**]. A similar move is performed by the Russian Ministry of Foreign

¹⁵⁴ 04.11.23-MID-Press Release.

¹⁵⁵ 04.11.23-MID-Press Release.

¹⁵⁶ 04.11.23-Council.

¹⁵⁷ 04.11.23-Putin.

¹⁵⁸ 04.11.26-Lavrov.

Affairs. To the ministry, Bot's statement on behalf of the EU,¹⁵⁹ *"which qualifies the results of the run-off vote in Ukraine as not complying with international standards and as not reflecting the will of the Ukrainian electorate in full [...] came as no surprise"*.¹⁶⁰ *"[From] the very beginning [...] the only position had been advocated: either Viktor Yushchenko wins, or the elections fall short of standards, are fraudulent and antidemocratic. Since he has lost, the EU's reaction was predictable. But what have democracy, objectivity and impartiality to do here?"*¹⁶¹ The EU's linking of **[EU-democratic]** is challenged here, too, explaining the Union's narrative on Ukraine by assuming a partial intention **[EU-partial]**. Consequently, the EU's representation of **[elections-fraudulent]** is also challenged. The Russian quote illustrates how the EU's invocations of democracy are framed as in fact antidemocratic. This subversion is also at the bottom of Putin's disapproval of a re-run of the second round of the elections, if this means that *"it will be necessary to repeat it a third and a fourth and a twenty-fifth time as long as one side doesn't get the desired result"*.¹⁶² The representation of the EU's invocations of democracy as undemocratic is even more explicit, when Putin claims that *"The statements of political leaders on the – also violent – seizure of power despite whatever election result are nothing other than not only pressure, but intimidation. We in Russia cannot support such a development of events, even if someone wants to call it democracy."*¹⁶³ Accordingly, this subversion also challenges the EU's representation of **[protesters-democratic]** and reinforces the Russian articulation of **[protesters-radical]**.

Russia: The EU's representation of **[Russia-partial]** is challenged in order to assert **[Russia-impartial]** through a justifying subversion. Lavrov quotes Putin, saying that *"Russia would respect any choice of the Ukrainian people"*¹⁶⁴ and that *"[speculations] that we openly supported one candidate"*¹⁶⁵ are groundless *"if one takes an objective look"*.¹⁶⁶ Outlining how those speculations are based on misinterpretations, he decouples the EU's articulation of **[Russia-partial]** and justifies the Russian articulation of **[Russia-impartial]**.

¹⁵⁹ 04.11.23-Bot.

¹⁶⁰ 04.11.23-MID-Bot Statement.

¹⁶¹ 04.11.23-MID-Bot Statement.

¹⁶² 04.12.02-Putin.

¹⁶³ 04.12.06-Putin; while not explicitly attributed, it is evident from the context, speaking about the suppression of the East by the West, that Putin talks about Western leaders.

¹⁶⁴ 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹⁶⁵ 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹⁶⁶ 05.01.02-Lavrov.

Authorities: The EU's representation of the authorities is challenged, too, in order to reassert the Russian representation of **[authorities-legitimate]**. Employing an instrumentalising confirmation, Putin confirms the EU's link of **[the people-democratic]**: *"In all countries [...] we must care about the development of democracy, strengthen the institution of civil society, the multiparty system."*¹⁶⁷ However, he argues, *"democratic laws"*¹⁶⁸ and a government *"capable of executing them"*¹⁶⁹ are just as much constitutive of democracy. Putin thereby extends the representation of the people as democratic to the authorities. He thus instrumentalises the EU's discursive structure to back up the Russian attribution of **[authorities-legitimate]** and weakening the EU's articulation of **[authorities-antidemocratic]**.

Protesters: Another instrumentalising confirmation is used in the Russian discourse to rearticulate the notion of protesters as **[protesters/opposition-illegal, destabilising & radical]**: *"[Certain western representatives] began at once to call for the observance of the Constitution and Ukrainian laws. But the same representatives of western countries had been silent, when all the previous days violations of these laws by the opposition had followed one after another."*¹⁷⁰ Here, Lavrov reiterates the Western criticism of secessionist tendencies in Ukraine's east and extends it to the protesters, thus rearticulating the Russian representation of **[protesters-illegal]**. This further constitutes an ascribing subversion, where the West's condemnation of separatism on legal grounds is reinterpreted as instrumentalist, thereby reasserting the link **[EU/West-partial]**. Referring to a press release by the EU's Council on Ukraine,¹⁷¹ Putin states that he fully sides with the Council's *"call upon all sides of the [election] to refrain from violence"*.¹⁷² This reiteration of the EU's discourse, however, is only partial, since the original passage in the EU text is primarily addressed to the authorities: *"[The Council] strongly called on the Ukrainian authorities to show restraint and on all sides to express themselves only in a non-violent manner"*.¹⁷³ This partial reiteration by Putin is thus a distortion of the EU's discourse, shifting the responsibility away from the authorities and thereby supporting the Russian interpretation of **[opposition-destabilising & radical]**. This representation is epitomised in a statement issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry the same

¹⁶⁷ 04.11.25-Putin-PC.

¹⁶⁸ 04.11.25-Putin-PC.

¹⁶⁹ 04.11.25-Putin-PC.

¹⁷⁰ 04.12.01-Lavrov-Vientiane.

¹⁷¹ 04.11.23-Council.

¹⁷² 04.11.23-Putin.

¹⁷³ 04.11.23-Council.

day: *“All the political forces, primarily the opposition forces, should exercise restraint, statesmanship and responsibility to their people”*.¹⁷⁴

(3) Summary

The preceding paragraphs have traced interaction between EU and Russian discourses in the articulation of their respective interpretations of the Orange Revolution in 2004/05. In summary, the Russian discourse engages much more with the EU’s discourse than vice versa. The latter primarily seeks to hegemonise the meaning of the EU Self by means of negating and subverting Russian depictions of the EU as violent, interfering and partial. Russia’s discourse, on the other hand, challenges extensively how the EU represents the event, engaging notably with how the EU depicts the 2nd round of the elections, the role of the EU, the Russian Self, the authorities as well as the protesters. While it accommodates the EU’s representation of the elections as fraudulent, the Russian discourse predominantly relies on subversions to reassert the Russian interpretation.

¹⁷⁴ 04.11.23-MID-Press Release.

2. Kosovo's Declaration of Independence (2007/08)

a) Context

In 1999, after tensions rose between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (since 2003 Serbia and Montenegro and since 2006 Serbia) and talks at the Rambouillet Conference did not produce any results, NATO intervened militarily against Belgrade on 24 March 1999 (Heller, 2014:337; Bono, 2010:250). The objective of the Operation Allied Force (OAF) was “to halt the violence and to stop further humanitarian catastrophe” as a result of atrocities by Serbian forces in Kosovo (Solana, 1999). The military intervention was not mandated by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and faced fierce opposition particularly by Russia (Averre, 2009a; Antonenko, 1999; Antonenko, 2007; Lynch, 1999; Heller, 2014). Rather than support of then Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević, Moscow’s opposition was based on a feeling of disregard and marginalisation from matters of European security (Averre, 2009a; Heller, 2014). Stances diverged, among others, on the dilemma “between respecting the principle of state territorial integrity and the right to self-determination” (Averre, 2009a:578). With the help of Russian mediation, however, Milošević agreed to withdraw from Kosovo and accepted to place the administration of the region under the auspices of the UNSC (Warbrick, 2008:677; Antonenko, 1999:139; Lynch, 1999:75-76). Adopted by the UNSC on 10 June 1999, Resolution 1244 (Res1244) outlined the civil and military international presence in Kosovo.

The military dimension was implemented by the Kosovo Force (KFOR), a UN mandated peacekeeping mission commanded by NATO. Russia joined the mission at the beginning but withdrew its peacekeeping contingent in 2003 (Lynch, 1999:76-78; Averre, 2009:583-584; Heller, 2014:340). The civil dimension, addressing the political development of Kosovo, was overseen by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Res1244 also prescribed the finding of a final settlement of Kosovo’s status. Talks under the lead of UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari formally started in 2005 but led to no agreement. Belgrade rejected Pristina’s demand of full independence for Kosovo (Tansey, 2009:159). In early 2007, Ahtisaari came up with a proposal recommending “independence, supervised by the international community” (Ahtisaari, 2007). The plan was opposed, however, by Serbia and Russia (Tansey, 2009:159). A new round of talks between Belgrade and Pristina, mediated

by an international troika consisting of representatives of the US, Russia and the EU was initiated in August 2007 (Tansey, 2009:159). On 10 December 2007, however, the troika reported that “the parties were unable to reach an agreement on the final status of Kosovo” (Troika, 2007).

On 17 February 2008, the Assembly of Kosovo declared Kosovo’s independence and, with it, committed to Ahtisaari’s recommendations. The majority of the EU member states as well as the US have recognised Kosovo since then. In an advisory opinion requested by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled in 2010¹⁷⁵ that Kosovo’s declaration of independence neither violates international law nor Res1244 in particular (ICJ, 2010). Russia and Serbia, on the other hand, have rejected Kosovo’s declaration of independence.

Already in 1999, the EU had launched the Stabilisation and Association Process, offering a membership perspective to all countries of the Western Balkans (Commission, 2022). In December 2007, the European Council announced the deployment of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) mission “to assist Kosovo in the path towards sustainable stability”.¹⁷⁶ The mission, named EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo), was set up in February 2008 and endorsed by Kosovo following its declaration of independence (Tansey, 2009:159).

b) Analysis

To capture the EU’s and Russia’s discursive interaction over this floating signifier, the discourse analysis captured 23 documents of the Russian and 15 documents of the EU’s foreign policy discourse on Kosovo from 10 December 2007, the day when the troika reported that status talks between Pristina and Belgrade had failed, to 28 February 2008, shortly after Kosovo’s declaration of independence.

¹⁷⁵ The conclusions were supported by ten to four votes.

¹⁷⁶ 07.12.14-EC.

i) *Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:*

Nodal Points in the EU's Discourse

Self (EU): The EU represents itself as supportive¹⁷⁷ of Kosovo and the Western Balkans. It assumes responsibility¹⁷⁸ and sees itself as a leading actor “in strengthening stability in the region”,¹⁷⁹ particularly in Kosovo.¹⁸⁰ “After the talks [on Kosovo's status] failed in the UN, the EU was bound to steer this process to conclusion.”¹⁸¹ The ESDP mission, the “largest ever civilian mission of the EU”,¹⁸² is considered a major factor for stabilisation.¹⁸³

On Kosovo's independence, the EU represents itself as united,¹⁸⁴ providing “a unifying lead”.¹⁸⁵

In its position, the EU depicts itself as adhering to international law (“the principles of the UN Charter and the CSCE Helsinki Final Act and to all UNSC resolutions”¹⁸⁶).

Russia: Russia features very scarcely in the EU's discourse. Generally, relations to Russia are represented as constructive and “very productive”.¹⁸⁷ In early December, cooperation with Russia regarding Kosovo is described as “very profound” with the potential of finding common ground.¹⁸⁸ After Kosovo's declaration of independence, it is acknowledged that the EU and Russia “have a disagreement about the situation in the Western Balkans”.¹⁸⁹

Kosovo/Pristina: Kosovo is represented as the EU's diligent disciple. While problems regarding rule of law, corruption and organised crime persist,¹⁹⁰ the EU's cooperation with and support of Kosovo, in particular Kosovo's European perspective, will bolster “economic and

¹⁷⁷ 07.12.10-Council, 07.12.14-EC, 08.01.22-Rehn.

¹⁷⁸ 07.12.10-Council, 08.02.18-Solana.

¹⁷⁹ 07.12.14-EC, 08.02.18-Council, cf. 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana, 08.02.26-Solana, 08.02.20-Rehn, 08.02.19-Rehn.

¹⁸⁰ 08.02.16-Council, 07.12.14-EC, 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana, 08.02.20-Rehn.

¹⁸¹ 08.02.19-Rehn, cf. 08.02.20-Rehn.

¹⁸² 08.02.19-Rehn.

¹⁸³ 07.12.14-EC.

¹⁸⁴ 07.12.10-Amado & Solana, 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana, 08.02.19-Rehn, 08.02.20-Rehn.

¹⁸⁵ 08.02.19-Rehn.

¹⁸⁶ 08.02.20-Rehn, cf. 08.02.19-Rehn.

¹⁸⁷ 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana, cf. 07.12.10-Amado & Solana.

¹⁸⁸ 07.12.10-Amado & Solana.

¹⁸⁹ 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana.

¹⁹⁰ 07.12.10-Council.

political development” as well as stability.¹⁹¹ “[Progress] towards the EU also means progress in developing standards and practices for a normal, modern European society”.¹⁹²

Serbia/Belgrade: While it is acknowledged that Kosovo’s declaration of independence is difficult for Serbia, Belgrade ought not to worry. The “time has come to turn the page on the past, and to look to the future”.¹⁹³ This future is represented as European.¹⁹⁴ According to Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn, Serbs have a choice “between a nationalist past and a European future”.¹⁹⁵

Declaration of independence: The EU depicts Kosovo’s status “as a special case, as a case sui generis”,¹⁹⁶ “which does not call into question [the principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, inter alia the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and all UN Security Council resolutions]”.¹⁹⁷ The EU’s initial reaction to Kosovo’s declaration of independence positively highlights that “the resolution commits Kosovo to the principles of democracy and equality of all its citizens, the protection of the Serb and other minorities [...]”.¹⁹⁸ The declaration is presented as a necessary consequence, the “result of a longer status-process”¹⁹⁹ that is exhausted.²⁰⁰ While member states decide individually,²⁰¹ widespread recognition of Kosovo’s independence is depicted as legitimate and expected (“I expect most of the others to follow suit, at their own pace“).²⁰² The representation also involves positive predicates like a “climate of dignity” and “joyful but responsible” celebrations.²⁰³

Western Balkans: In the EU’s discourse, the Western Balkans are represented as developing on a trajectory towards the EU; a path that, thanks to the EU’s support,²⁰⁴ will bring progress,²⁰⁵

¹⁹¹ 07.12.14-EC, cf. 08.02.19-Rehn, 07.12.18-Barroso, 08.02.20-Rehn.

¹⁹² 08.02.19-Rehn, cf. 08.02.16-Council.

¹⁹³ 08.02.20-Rehn, cf. 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana.

¹⁹⁴ 07.12.14-EC, 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana, 08.02.20-Rehn.

¹⁹⁵ 08.01.22-Rehn.

¹⁹⁶ 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana; the resolution of Kosovo’s status has already earlier been described as ‘sui generis’, see 07.12.14-EC.

¹⁹⁷ 08.02.18-Council, cf. 08.02.20-Rehn.

¹⁹⁸ 08.02.18-Council.

¹⁹⁹ 08.02.19-Rehn.

²⁰⁰ 07.12.14-EC.

²⁰¹ 08.02.18-Council, cf. 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana, 08.02.19-Rehn.

²⁰² 08.02.20-Rehn, cf. 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana.

²⁰³ 08.02.20-Rehn.

²⁰⁴ 08.02.16-Solana.

²⁰⁵ 08.01.22-Rehn.

stability,²⁰⁶ and democracy²⁰⁷ to the region. It is numerously reaffirmed that the region has a “European perspective”²⁰⁸ and that “the future of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union”.²⁰⁹ Articulations like “a region that belongs to us, that belongs to the European Union”,²¹⁰ “our own front-yard and future home territory”,²¹¹ or “[the] Western Balkans are not in Asia but in Europe”²¹² underline the region’s Europeanness and its destiny to become part of the EU. A settlement of Kosovo’s status is considered essential for the stability in the region.²¹³

Troika (UN status process): Generally, the UNSC, the troika, Res1244 and the UN Charter are depicted as authoritative and legitimate.²¹⁴ Yet, the troika process, which aimed at reaching a “mutually acceptable agreement”,²¹⁵ is deemed “exhausted”,²¹⁶ the talks have “failed”.²¹⁷

²⁰⁶ 07.12.14-EC, 07.12.10-Amado & Solana, 08.02.18-Council, 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana.

²⁰⁷ 07.12.10-Council.

²⁰⁸ 08.02.18-Council, 08.02.18-Solana, 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana, 08.02.19-Rehn.

²⁰⁹ 07.12.10-Council, cf. 07.12.14-EC, 08.01.22-Rehn, cf. 07.12.18-Barroso.

²¹⁰ 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana.

²¹¹ 08.02.28-Rehn.

²¹² 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana.

²¹³ 07.12.14-EC.

²¹⁴ 07.12.10-Amado & Solana, 07.12.14-EC, 08.02.18-Council, 08.02.19-Rehn, 08.02.18-Solana.

²¹⁵ 07.12.14-EC, cf. 08.02.19-Rehn.

²¹⁶ 07.12.14-EC.

²¹⁷ 08.02.20-Rehn, 08.02.19-Rehn.

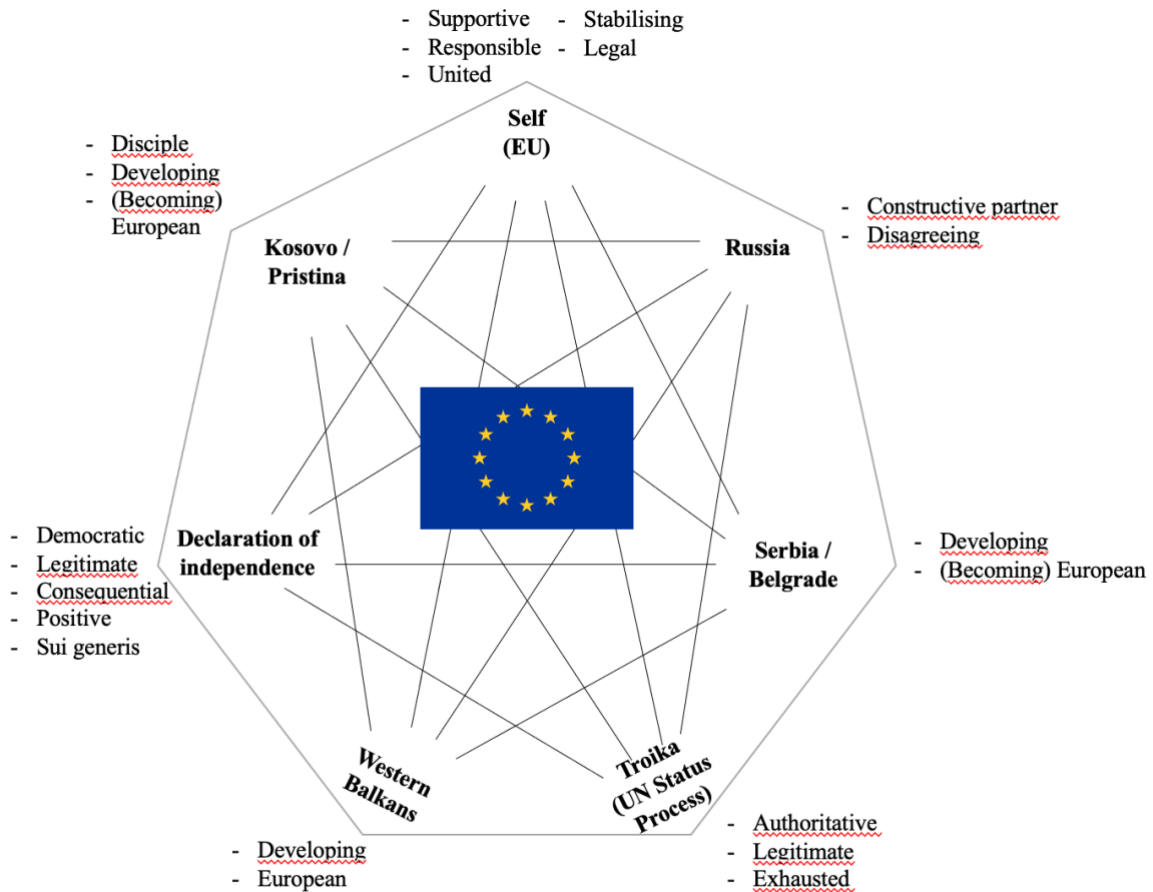


Figure 4: Discursive structure around nodal points, Kosovo, EU

Nodal Points in Russia's Discourse

Self (Russia): Russia represents itself as acting in accordance with international law,²¹⁸ being “categorically against a unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo”.²¹⁹ Russia is interested in stability²²⁰ and supports Serbia²²¹ and its territorial integrity.²²²

EU/West: The representation of the West is not homogeneous. In Russia's discourse, those actors supporting Kosovo's independence play a major role. While in December 2007 Lavrov

²¹⁸ 07.12.18-Lavrov, 07.12.21-Lavrov, 07.12.26-Lavrov-Knak, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva.

²¹⁹ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release, cf. 07.12.21-Lavrov, 07.12.26-Lavrov-Vremya.

²²⁰ 08.01.23-Lavrov, 08.02.13-Lavrov.

²²¹ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, 08.02.17-MID.

²²² 08.02.17-MID.

still denies that Russia's and the EU's positions on Kosovo diverge,²²³ he later states that they "differ radically".²²⁴ Among the EU member states, however, are still "sound voices"²²⁵ who are sceptical of Kosovo's independence, "who in the best tradition of European political culture strive for the expansion of democracy and justice."²²⁶ These sceptics in the EU, however, are "brainwashed" to recognise Kosovo's independence.²²⁷

The western mainstream position is represented as un-European,²²⁸ incomprehensible,²²⁹ "immoral"²³⁰ and "illegal".²³¹ The EU's ESDP mission also violates international law.²³² Treating Kosovo differently than other cases is one-sided²³³ and based on "double standards",²³⁴ for which Europeans should be ashamed.²³⁵ Striving to attain Kosovo's independence "at any price [even] at the price of violating international law",²³⁶ the West instrumentally misinterprets Res1244.²³⁷

Kosovo/Pristina: Russia highlights that besides Kosovar Albanians, Kosovo's population also comprises highly vulnerable Serbs.²³⁸ The "Kosovo separatists" alone are thus not representative.²³⁹ Pristina is depicted as being influenced from abroad, this influence leading to the failing of negotiations with Belgrade.²⁴⁰ Kosovo is further represented as "part of Serbia",²⁴¹ "torn out"²⁴² of Serbia, or a "historically Serbian province".²⁴³

²²³ 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC.

²²⁴ 08.02.13-Lavrov.

²²⁵ 08.01.23-Lavrov.

²²⁶ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release.

²²⁷ 08.01.29-MID.

²²⁸ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal.

²²⁹ 08.01.23-Lavrov, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, cf. 08.02.22-Putin.

²³⁰ 08.01.18-Putin, 08.02.14-Putin.

²³¹ 07.12.10-Lavrov-Papadopoulos, cf. 07.12.18-Lavrov, 07.12.26-Lavrov-Vremya, 08.01.18-Putin, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal, 08.02.14-Putin, 08.02.20-Lavrov.

²³² 08.01.29-MID.

²³³ 07.12.17-MID.

²³⁴ 08.02.14-Putin, cf. 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, 07.12.17-MID.

²³⁵ 08.02.14-Putin.

²³⁶ 07.12.26-Lavrov-Vremya.

²³⁷ 07.12.17-MID.

²³⁸ 07.12.14-Lavrov, 07.12.26-Lavrov-Knak, 07.12.21-Churkin, 07.12.17-MID, 08.01.23-Lavrov, 08.01.29-MID.

²³⁹ 07.12.17-MID.

²⁴⁰ 07.12.18-Lavrov, 07.12.21-Churkin, cf. 08.02.13-Lavrov.

²⁴¹ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva.

²⁴² 07.12.21-Lavrov.

²⁴³ 07.12.21-Churkin, cf. 07.12.17-MID.

Serbia/Belgrade: Serbia, supported in its stance by Russia,²⁴⁴ is represented as a stakeholder in the Kosovo issue without whom no settlement is legitimate.²⁴⁵ Its sovereignty and territorial integrity are violated by Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence.²⁴⁶

Declaration of independence: Russia depicts Kosovo's "unilateral"²⁴⁷ declaration of independence as illegitimate. It constitutes a "horrible precedent",²⁴⁸ threatening "a downward slide to an uncontrolled crisis",²⁴⁹ "chaos and destabilization".²⁵⁰ The Kosovo case is comparable to other cases and thus may have destabilising consequences beyond the region.²⁵¹ Not only does Kosovo's declaration of independence go against the UN Charter, the UNSC, Res1244 and the OSCE's principles,²⁵² it also violates Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.²⁵³ It is a "risky and serious damage to the whole system of international law".²⁵⁴ Kosovo's declaration of independence is further un-European, undermining the principles that are "at the core of [Europe's] existence".²⁵⁵ It is the potential "starting point of the collapse of the present European project".²⁵⁶ The recognition of Kosovo's independence would thus be illegal²⁵⁷ and "a mistake".²⁵⁸

Balkans: In the Russian discourse, the representation of "the region"²⁵⁹ or "the Balkans"²⁶⁰ plays no significant role on its own. It is merely depicted as prone to destabilisation due to Kosovo's declaration of independence.²⁶¹

²⁴⁴ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release, 08.02.17-MID.

²⁴⁵ 07.12.18-Lavrov, 08.01.17-MID, 07.12.21-Churkin, 07.12.21-Lavrov.

²⁴⁶ 07.12.21-Lavrov, 08.02.14-Putin, 07.12.21-Churkin, 08.02.17-MID.

²⁴⁷ 07.12.10-Lavrov-Kozakou-Marcoullis, 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal, 08.02.13-Lavrov.

²⁴⁸ 08.02.22-Putin, cf. 07.12.17-MID.

²⁴⁹ 07.12.17-MID.

²⁵⁰ 07.12.26-Lavrov-Knak, cf. 07.12.17-MID, 08.01.17-MID, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal, 08.02.17-MID, 08.02.22-Putin.

²⁵¹ 07.12.10-Lavrov-Papadopoulos, 08.01.23-Lavrov, 07.12.21-Churkin.

²⁵² 07.12.14-Lavrov, 07.12.18-Lavrov, 08.01.22-Lavrov, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal, 08.02.17-MID.

²⁵³ 08.02.14-Putin, 08.02.17-MID, cf. 07.12.21-Lavrov, 08.02.20-Lavrov.

²⁵⁴ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release, cf. 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, 07.12.10-Lavrov-Kozakou-Marcoullis, 07.12.17-MID, 08.02.22-Putin.

²⁵⁵ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva.

²⁵⁶ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal.

²⁵⁷ 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC, 07.12.21-Lavrov.

²⁵⁸ 08.02.13-Lavrov.

²⁵⁹ 07.12.26-Lavrov-Knak, 07.12.17-MID.

²⁶⁰ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release, 08.02.17-MID.

²⁶¹ 07.12.26-Lavrov-Knak, 07.12.17-MID, 08.01.17-MID, 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release, 08.02.17-MID.

Troika (UN status process): In the Russian discourse, Res1244²⁶² and the UN Charter²⁶³ constitute major legal reference points. A “[unilateral] interpretation” thereof would undermine international law and the authority of the UN.²⁶⁴ There can be no “Kosovo settlement outside the Security Council”.²⁶⁵

The troika talks have been productive and are not exhausted.²⁶⁶ They were “artificially interrupted thanks to outside interference”²⁶⁷ and should be continued.²⁶⁸ The UN and the UNSC are moreover depicted as undermined by Western countries.²⁶⁹

²⁶² 07.12.10-Lavrov-Kozakou-Marcoullis, 07.12.18-Lavrov, 07.12.21-Churkin, 07.12.21-Lavrov, 08.01.17-MID, 08.01.23-Lavrov, 08.01.29-MID, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, 08.02.14-Putin, 08.02.17-MID, 08.02.20-Lavrov.

²⁶³ 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC, 07.12.18-Lavrov, 07.12.21-Churkin, 07.12.21-Lavrov, 08.01.22-Lavrov, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal.

²⁶⁴ 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC.

²⁶⁵ 07.12.17-MID, cf. 07.12.21-Churkin, 07.12.26-Lavrov-Knak, 08.01.17-MID, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC.

²⁶⁶ 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC, 07.12.21-Churkin, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal, 07.12.17-MID, 07.12.18-Lavrov.

²⁶⁷ 08.02.20-Lavrov, cf. 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal, 07.12.17-MID.

²⁶⁸ 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC, 07.12.21-Churkin, 07.12.26-Lavrov-Knak, 08.01.17-MID, 08.01.18-Putin, 08.02.13-Lavrov.

²⁶⁹ 07.12.17-MID, 08.01.29-MID.



Figure 5: Discursive structure around nodal points, Kosovo, Russia

ii) *Discursive Interaction*

(1) *Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse*

In the EU's Discourse:

In the EU discourse, Russia is mentioned explicitly only during two press conferences. Whereas in the first one – on the EU-Russia partnership – Moscow is represented as

constructive partner,²⁷⁰ later there is a single boundary-drawing articulation pointing at a “disagreement about the situation”.²⁷¹ The representation of Russia therefore does not play a significant role in the EU’s discourse on Kosovo’s declaration of independence.

In Russia’s Discourse:

In the Russian discourse, however, all three dimensions of othering could be identified. While Kosovo’s declaration of independence is represented as going against European principles,²⁷² Putin invokes this *spatial* boundary-drawing also within the EU, referring to those who “[support] our position – the Russian position on [Kosovo’s independence]”.²⁷³ They are the ones who “show political courage, who demonstrate independence of judgement and who in the best tradition of European political culture strive for the expansion of democracy and justice in the international sphere.”²⁷⁴ Herewith, Putin draws a line between those supporting an ‘un-European’ independence of Kosovo and ‘true Europeans’, who are on Russia’s side. Those supporting Kosovo’s independence, on the other hand, are “undermining the legal foundations of the modern Europe and the UN Charter”.²⁷⁵

Secondly, constructions can be identified that *temporally* represent the EU/West and their position on Kosovo’s independence as backward-looking. Referring to this position, Lavrov contends: “To decide the fate of peoples proceeding solely from ‘solidarity’ or other considerations of political expediency would, in fact, mean a return to the Dark Age.”²⁷⁶ Similarly, arguing that this “horrible precedent”²⁷⁷ throws the world back to primitive times, Putin claims that it “destroys the entire system of international relations, which was formed not over decades, but even centuries.”²⁷⁸

Finally, there are numerous *ethical* constructions of othering, representing the EU’s/West’s position as unethical and thereby also discrediting their discourse. While the dominant ethical

²⁷⁰ 07.12.10-Amado & Solana.

²⁷¹ 07.12.10-Amado & Solana.

²⁷² 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva.

²⁷³ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release.

²⁷⁴ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release.

²⁷⁵ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal.

²⁷⁶ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal.

²⁷⁷ 08.02.22-Putin.

²⁷⁸ 08.02.22-Putin.

reference is the representation of the EU/West as violating international law,²⁷⁹ other examples of ethical attributes are “double standards”,²⁸⁰ “blackmailing”,²⁸¹ irresponsibility,²⁸² immorality²⁸³ or irrationality.²⁸⁴

(2) *References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other*

In the EU's Discourse:

In the EU sample, only two explicit references to the Russian discursive structure could be identified, both articulated at the same press conference and, engaging with the Russian representation of Kosovo's declaration of independence, reaffirming the EU's *sui generis*-argument.

Declaration of independence (in the following ‘declaration’): The EU engages with the Russian representation of the Kosovo case as comparable to other separatist movements (that is [**declaration-comparable**]). The EU reaffirms its own representation of the case as a special one. It does so by means of a justifying subversion when then Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of the Council of the EU Dimitrij Rupel claims that: *"I have pointed out very clearly that we see Kosovo as a special case, as a case sui generis. We have even argued that, there is a very carefully worded argumentation regarding this special case of Kosovo. So we should not speak about invitations to ‘separatists’. This has nothing to do with any other case.”*²⁸⁵ In this articulation, Rupel reaffirms the EU's [**declaration-sui generis**] while also denying the Russian representation of [**Kosovo-separatist**] – which would also imply comparability of the Kosovo case to other cases of separatism. The representation of Kosovo's status as *sui generis* is further reaffirmed by an ascribing subversion, implicitly portraying Russia – as the biggest critic – as ignorant: *“So when we talk about a sui generis situation, it is*

²⁷⁹ 07.12.10-Lavrov-Papadopoulos, cf. 07.12.18-Lavrov, 07.12.26-Lavrov-Vremya, 08.01.18-Putin, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal, 08.02.14-Putin, 08.02.20-Lavrov.

²⁸⁰ 08.02.14-Putin, cf. 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, 07.12.17-MID.

²⁸¹ 07.12.17-MID.

²⁸² 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva.

²⁸³ 08.01.18-Putin, 08.02.14-Putin.

²⁸⁴ 08.01.23-Lavrov, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, 08.02.22-Putin.

²⁸⁵ 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana.

*so evident that it is, that those who don't want to see it is because they don't want to look at it.*²⁸⁶

In Russia's Discourse:

Inversely, the Russian discourse engaged actively with the discursive structure articulated by the EU. Interactions – confirmations, negations, and subversions – could be identified, that challenge various nodal points.

Declaration of independence: Russia engaged arguably the most with the EU's representations of Kosovo's declaration of independence. In particular, it challenged depictions of it as legitimate and sui generis.

The EU's depiction of Kosovo's **[declaration-legitimate]** is negated. Lavrov states: *“attempts are being made to interpret the existing resolution 1244 as supposedly not prohibiting unilateral acquisition of independence by Kosovo. With full responsibility, I can say that's not the case”*.²⁸⁷ Such an “unilateral”²⁸⁸ interpretation (as opposed to an interpretation supported by all UNSC members) according to which *“[they] claim that [Res1244] does not close the way for Kosovo independence [...]”*²⁸⁹ is further declared a reduction,²⁹⁰ *“tightrope walking”*²⁹¹ and *“[turning] this resolution inside out”*.²⁹² In an ascribing subversion, Lavrov argues that the EU's representation of **[declaration-legitimate]** is opportunistic. He explains that *“American and European colleagues”* are motivated by *“political expediency”* and the *“domestic situation”* to *“opt for various ruses, trying to present the issue as if Resolution 1244 would not rule out independence. Like everything that is written in this Resolution on the sovereignty of Serbia and on the importance of a political solution, which would consist in the essential autonomy of Kosovo within Serbia, like all this was valid only for the transition period, which, according to them, is over”*.²⁹³ By ascribing opportunism, Lavrov questions the EU's discourse, reaffirming the Russian interpretation of **[declaration-illegal]**. In another

²⁸⁶ 08.02.18-Rupel, Rehn & Solana.

²⁸⁷ 07.12.18-Lavrov.

²⁸⁸ 07.12.17-MID, 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC.

²⁸⁹ 07.12.17-MID.

²⁹⁰ 07.12.10-Lavrov-PPC.

²⁹¹ 07.12.17-MID.

²⁹² 07.12.17-MID.

²⁹³ 07.12.21-Lavrov.

instance, this subversion is also supported by a legal justification: “*This [attempt to persuade everyone] does not stand up to any criticism at all. Lawyers fully understand what this is about.*”²⁹⁴ Finally, the Russian discourse is reaffirmed by referring to the EU’s interpretation as “*a feverish search for pseudo-legal arguments as a smokescreen for unilateral actions in Kosovo affairs*”.²⁹⁵ Ascribing an opportunistic intention, this articulation further supports the Russian representation of **[EU/West-instrumentalist]**.

The second major point of contention is the EU’s representation of **[declaration-sui generis]**. Ascribing subversions depict the sui generis-argument as instrumentalist. Russian Ambassador to the UN Vitaly Churkin, for example, states that “*[no] matter how much is said about the ‘uniqueness’ of Kosovo’s case, in fact it is only a self-reassurance of those who promote ideas of unilateral solutions*”.²⁹⁶ Similarly, Lavrov refers to the Western discourse, ascribing an instrumentalist intention: “*Kosovo is a unique case [sui generis], they say, and so it is possible in this case to simply trample upon international law and all the rest must agree to this.*”²⁹⁷ These subversions strengthen the Russian articulation of **[declaration-illegal & illegitimate]**.

In a justifying subversion, Putin engages more closely with the EU’s argument of **[declaration-sui generis]**, subverting it into its opposite **[declaration-comparable]**. He justifies this move by referring to Cyprus, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria: “*We are always told: Kosovo constitutes a special case. This is a lie, there is no special case there and all understand this well. Everything is the same: ethnic conflict, crimes on both sides, de-facto complete independence.*”²⁹⁸

Finally, the Russian discourse engages with the EU’s representation of **[declaration-consequential]**. In an ascribing subversion, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs portrays this representation as an EU/Western provocation and hopelessness: “*Instead of putting an end to the provocative statements we are becoming witnesses of connivance by a group of countries at this illegal move which may lead to serious adverse consequences for regional and international stability. In substantiation of that position they hopelessly suggest that the province’s independence is inevitable, supposedly having been brought about by all events of the previous period.*”²⁹⁹ Thereby, the ministry’s statement weakens the EU’s/Western narrative of Kosovo’s independence being the necessary consequence of a long process. It

²⁹⁴ 08.01.23-Lavrov.

²⁹⁵ 07.12.17-MID.

²⁹⁶ 07.12.21-Churkin, cf. 08.02.20-Lavrov.

²⁹⁷ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva.

²⁹⁸ 08.02.14-Putin.

²⁹⁹ 07.12.17-MID.

simultaneously reaffirms the Russian representation of **[declaration-illegal & destabilising]**. Ascribing irrationality and incomprehensibility to the EU's narrative further strengthens the Russian discourse: *"The fact that a whole array of states, particularly in Europe, speak of the absolute inevitability of a unilateral proclamation of independence for this part of Serbia and declare their readiness to support this initiative – I feel that many are not yet fully aware of its real implications [...]. I sincerely cannot understand the motives by which our American and European colleagues, especially the European colleagues, guide themselves when taking up that position."*³⁰⁰

Troika: In its engagement with the EU's representation of the troika, Russia strongly reaffirms that the negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina are not exhausted. The EU's claim that "the status quo in Kosovo is unsustainable"³⁰¹ (that is, **[troika-exhausted]**) is thus negated as untrue: *"We understand the colossal pressure that many states are under, but still, [...] we must try to tell the truth and not hide from a very complex topic behind a simple explanation about the status quo not being sustainable."*³⁰² Russia subverts the Western representation into its own representation of **[troika-not exhausted & productive]**, justifying this step by pointing to negotiation successes: *"That in the 120 days of dialogue a final compromise has eluded the parties is being used for absurd claims that the negotiation potential is exhausted. [...] The reality, however, is that the parties were successfully drawn into a close direct dialogue, most substantive since 1999. Belgrade and Pristina embarked on overcoming their alienation, and the talks themselves became a serious factor working for stability in the region."*³⁰³

To some extent there is also a confirmation of the EU's narrative. This accommodating confirmation follows the pattern of 'yes, but': *"Of course, the [troika] process is extremely difficult due to the persisting diametrically opposed positions of both sides, but we need to support it in every possible way and not get hung-up on one-sided pessimist scenarios"*.³⁰⁴ While difficulties are conceded, the EU's inference of **[troika-exhausted]** is still challenged.

EU: Russia also engages with the EU's representation of itself, denying the EU any special responsibility with regard to Kosovo (**[EU-responsible]**): The "Kosovo problem" is not yet the

³⁰⁰ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva.

³⁰¹ 07.12.14-EC.

³⁰² 08.01.23-Lavrov; original Russian wording: "[...] простым объяснением о том, что дальше терпеть статус-кво нельзя".

³⁰³ 07.12.17-MID, similar justifying subversion: 07.12.21-Churkin.

³⁰⁴ 07.12.26-Lavrov-Knak.

“European Union’s affair”: “So far, Kosovo is an international problem under the UN Security Council’s jurisdiction.”³⁰⁵ Russia further negates the EU’s self-representation as **[EU-legal]**, as acting in conformity with international law: “We are being told that resolution 1244 is the basis for sending the EU mission [...]. That’s not true.”³⁰⁶

Finally, by ascribing bad intentions and ignorance, Russia subverts the EU’s self-representation as supportive of Kosovo and leading the status-seeking process (**[EU-supportive & responsible]**), and turns it into **[EU/West-illegal]**: “If NATO and the EU declare that now, ignoring all existing legitimate legal mechanisms in the UN, they will decide on their own how to divide Serbia, how to tear out Kosovo from it [...], then they will put themselves simply outside of international law.”³⁰⁷

Kosovo: The Russian discourse, finally, engages with the EU’s representation of Kosovo. Churkin challenges the representation of **[Kosovo-developing]**, asking “where are the prerequisites for restoring a democratic society there?”³⁰⁸ Further, the overall representation of Kosovo is depicted as inconsistent: “They are saying that Serbs and Albanians cannot live together, and so Kosovo has to be separated from Serbia. But there are Serbs in Kosovo too. And, if the thesis is that Serbs and Albanians cannot live together, then how about those Serbs who are in Kosovo? To these questions there is no answer.”³⁰⁹

(3) Summary

The preceding paragraphs have traced interaction between EU and Russian discourses in the articulation of their respective interpretations of Kosovo’s declaration of independence in 2008. For the EU, the representation of Russia plays no significant role for making sense of the event. Yet, the Union, if only marginally, refers to Russia’s dissenting opinion, subverting it in order to undergird its sui-generis argumentation. For the Russian discourse, on the other hand, the EU plays a central role for explaining the course of events. Accordingly, the Russian discourse engages extensively with the EU’s argumentation, trying to reassert its own diverging assessment, among others, of the declaration of independence as illegal. It does so by engaging with the representation of the declaration itself, the EU, which it considers to act against

³⁰⁵ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrdal.

³⁰⁶ 08.02.20-Lavrov.

³⁰⁷ 07.12.21-Lavrov.

³⁰⁸ 07.12.21-Churkin.

³⁰⁹ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva.

international law, and the troika process, which – in contrast to the EU’s view – is depicted as productive and not exhausted.

3. Caucasus: Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's Declaration of Independence (2008)

a) Context

In the Soviet Union, South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's status within the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic was one of more or less autonomy (Tuathail, 2008:673). It remained contested, however, throughout Soviet times (Fischer, 2016:43; Zürcher, 2007:120-124).

From 1991 to 1994, the Georgian nationalist Gamsakhurdia government fought wars with the Abkhaz as well as South Ossetian secessionist movements (Fischer, 2016:45; cf. Zürcher, 2007:115-151).

In South Ossetia, the war ended with a ceasefire agreement and the establishment of a Georgian/Ossetian/Russian Joint Peace-Keeping Force (JPKF) under Russian command (Fischer, 2016:45). In Abkhazia, a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)-peacekeeping force, de facto consisting exclusively of Russian troops, was deployed (Fischer, 2016:46). Whereas South Ossetia remained relatively open, Abkhazia found itself isolated with a CIS-imposed embargo since 1994 (Fischer, 2016:47). Both regions emerged from the 1990s as de facto independent states, which were economically and politically increasingly dependent on Russia (Fischer, 2016:47; Cornell, 2008:309-310). Due to the distribution of passports by Russia, the majority of Abkhazians and South Ossetians had Russian citizenship by 2008 (Fischer, 2016:19-21; German, 2012:1658).

In early 2008, as the question of Kosovo's independence gained traction,³¹⁰ Russia intensified its relations with the two breakaway regions. In March, Russia announced it would no longer participate in the sanctions against Abkhazia (MID, 2008). On 16 April, two weeks after Georgia and Ukraine were promised a membership perspective during NATO's Bucharest summit (NATO, 2008), Putin stipulated "to open political, social, and economic relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia" (Cornell et al., 2008:8; cf. Cornell, 2008:310).

Tensions between South Ossetia and Georgia rose in late July and early August. Shelling of Georgian posts by South Ossetian forces were answered by fire from the Georgian side

³¹⁰ In the scholarly literature, Russia's engagement with Abkhazia and South Ossetia has commonly been linked to the events in Kosovo. See, for example, Antonenko (1999:132), Cornell (2008), Berg and Mölder (2014), Rotaru (2019), or Tuathail (2008).

(Cornell, 2008:311). On the evening of 7 August, Georgian forces started a “[large-scale] military operation” and attacked South Ossetia’s capital city Tskhinvali (IIFFMCG, 2009:19). The exact timeline of events – whether Russian troops prepared to move onto Georgian territory before or after Georgia’s move on Tskhinvali – remains disputed (Fawn & Nalbandov, 2012; Cornell, 2008:311-312). In 2009, a report, the so-called ‘Tagliavini Report’ (IIFFMCG, 2009), was issued by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG), which had been established in December 2008 by the Council of the European Union “to investigate the origins and the course of the conflict” (Council of the EU, 2008). While the mission did not find evidence of a large-scale incursion by Russia before Georgia’s military operation against Tskhinvali, it refers to indications of Russian military activity and the presence of non-official military personnel (IIFFMCG, 2009:20-21).

The Russo-Georgian war started on 8 August, when Russian forces entered Georgian territory through the Roki tunnel, which connects South Ossetia with the Russian republic of North Ossetia-Alania. Within the coming days, Russian troops gained control over South Ossetia and opened a second front from Abkhazia. They would also advance onto non-contested Georgian territory and bomb military as well as civilian targets across the country (Cornell, 2008:307).

On 12 August, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, representing the EU Presidency at the time, and his Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner travelled to Moscow and Tbilisi to conclude a six-point ceasefire agreement with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev³¹¹ and Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili. The withdrawal of Russian forces was announced by Medvedev on 17 August.³¹²

Referring to Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia had demanded recognition of their independence from the international community already in February (EUObserver, 2008; RFERL, 2008). The two regions renewed their request to Russia on 21 August (Interfax, 2008). The following week, on 26 August, Medvedev signed decrees to recognise Abkhazia and South Ossetia.³¹³ On 17 September, Russia further signed treaties ‘on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance’³¹⁴ with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in which it “granted generous budget assistance in the following years and invested in the socioeconomic development of the secessionist territories” (Fischer, 2016:48). Besides Russia, only Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru and Syria have recognised the independence of the two territories. The EU has strongly

³¹¹ Dmitry Medvedev was inaugurated as Russian President on 7 May 2008 when former Russian President Vladimir Putin took over the post of Prime Minister.

³¹² 08.08.17-Medvedev-Withdrawal.

³¹³ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Decree Abkhazia & 08.08.26-Medvedev-Decree South Ossetia.

³¹⁴ 08.09.17-Kremlin-Treaties.

condemned the recognition.³¹⁵ An EU delegation comprising Sarkozy, Kouchner, Commission President José Manuel Barroso and High Representative Javier Solana went to Moscow on 8 September. They negotiated an implementation agreement, according to which Russia committed to withdraw all its troops from Georgian territory, except for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the deployment of 200 EU observers (IIFMCG, 2009:11; France24, 2008; cf. Besancenot, 2008:26-27).

b) Analysis

The discourse analysis focusses on the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as a floating signifier which is represented differently in the EU's and Russia's antagonistic discourses. The analysis captured 47 documents of the Russian and 20 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse from 26 August, the day Russia recognised Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, to 30 September 2008.

i) *Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:*

Nodal Points in the EU's Discourse

Self (EU): The EU sees itself as a mediator,³¹⁶ thanks to whom the six-point ceasefire agreement could be reached.³¹⁷ The EU's role in the crisis is represented as efficient³¹⁸ and significant.³¹⁹ The EU's unity³²⁰ and active engagement, including its willingness "to commit itself",³²¹ are emphasised.

³¹⁵ 08.09.01-EC.

³¹⁶ 08.08.27-G8, 08.08.27-Rehn, 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.01-EC-PC.

³¹⁷ 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, cf. 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.09.29-Ferrero-Waldner.

³¹⁸ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 08.08.27-Rehn.

³¹⁹ 08.08.27-Sarkozy-Discours, 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 08.09.18-Rehn, 08.09.24-Barroso, 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.09.08-Sarkozy-PC, 08.09.10-Solana.

³²⁰ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, cf. 08.08.27-Miliband, 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.09.24-Hübner.

³²¹ 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, cf. 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.09.15-Council.

The EU supports Georgia³²² and is stabilising.³²³ In contrast to Russia, it is democratic,³²⁴ defends European values,³²⁵ and acts according to international law.³²⁶ Sarkozy introduces his delegation to Moscow as from “the European Union, a united, unified Europe, a Europe that wishes for peace”.³²⁷

Russia: “With the crisis in Georgia, relations between the EU and Russia have reached a crossroads.”³²⁸ Russia is depicted as disorderly, as disturbing the post-Cold War order in Europe and violating international law.³²⁹ Rehn contrasts that “[the] EU is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law, while today’s Russia combines features of authoritarian rule with hard-line capitalism.”³³⁰ Russia must be shown that it acted wrongly (“a red line was crossed”³³¹). Relations to Russia are therefore being reviewed.³³² Against the light of Russia’s role in the war, it is also represented as backward³³³ and un-European.³³⁴ While common interests and interdependence between Russia and the EU are emphasised,³³⁵ the Union’s dependencies are represented as a liability.³³⁶

Georgia/Tbilisi: The Georgian government is represented as “democratic and legitimate”.³³⁷ It is a victim of Russia’s military action and its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia³³⁸ that needs to be stabilised.³³⁹ It is stated that “partners like Georgia [...] can count on our support for their territorial integrity and sovereignty”.³⁴⁰ While referred to as “European”,³⁴¹ it

³²² 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.09.24-Hübner, 08.90.08-Barroso.

³²³ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

³²⁴ 08.08.27-Rehn.

³²⁵ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 08.09.01-EC-PC, cf. 08.09.08-Sarkozy-Beginn.

³²⁶ 08.08.27-Sarkozy-Discours.

³²⁷ 08.09.08-Sarkozy-Beginn.

³²⁸ 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions.

³²⁹ 08.08.27-Miliband.

³³⁰ 08.08.27-Rehn.

³³¹ 08.09.29-Ferrero-Waldner, cf. 08.08.27-Sarkozy-Discours, 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

³³² 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.01-EC-PC.

³³³ 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.08.27-Rehn, 08.08.27-Miliband.

³³⁴ 08.08.27-Rehn.

³³⁵ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 08.08.27-Rehn, 08.08.27-Miliband.

³³⁶ 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.01-EC-PC.

³³⁷ 08.08.27-G8, cf. 08.08.27-Miliband, 08.08.27-Rehn, 08.09.01-EC-PC.

³³⁸ 08.08.27-G8, 08.08.27-Miliband.

³³⁹ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

³⁴⁰ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

³⁴¹ 08.09.08-Council, cf. 08.09.29-Ferrero-Waldner.

is emphasised that Georgia is still on a developing path.³⁴² Whereas relations with Russia are reviewed, it has been stated repeatedly that relations with Georgia will be strengthened.³⁴³

Abkhazia & South Ossetia: While often mentioned, the two “regions”³⁴⁴ are not represented in any particular way. As inextricable parts of Georgia³⁴⁵ they lack any individual agency in the EU’s discourse.

Russian military intervention: The EU is “gravely concerned by the open conflict”³⁴⁶ and considers it significant.³⁴⁷ The “disproportionate reaction of Russia”³⁴⁸ is emphasised. “Military action of this kind is not a solution and is not acceptable”.³⁴⁹

Russian recognition: Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s independence, a “unilateral attempt to redraw the map”,³⁵⁰ is “strongly [condemned]”.³⁵¹ It is considered “unacceptable”³⁵² and “against the basic principles that underpin international relations”,³⁵³ including Georgia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty,³⁵⁴ as well as against European values.³⁵⁵ Russia’s recognition is contrasted to “a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict”.³⁵⁶

³⁴² 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

³⁴³ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.90.08-Barroso, 08.09.15-Council.

³⁴⁴ 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions.

³⁴⁵ 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.09.08-Sarkozy-PC.

³⁴⁶ 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.08-Council.

³⁴⁷ 08.09.01-EC-PC, cf. 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

³⁴⁸ 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.08-Council.

³⁴⁹ 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.08-Council, cf. 08.08.27-G8; in a much-noted speech, Miliband spoke of “invading a sovereign country”, see 08.08.27-Miliband.

³⁵⁰ 08.08.27-Miliband, 08.08.27-Sarkozy-Discours; “unilateral” is also articulated in 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.08.27-G8.

³⁵¹ 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.08-Sarkozy-PC, 08.09.10-Solana, cf. 08.08.27-G8, 08.08.27-Sarkozy-Discours, 08.09.01-EC-PC.

³⁵² 08.08.27-Sarkozy-Discours, cf. 08.08.28-Kouchner, 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions.

³⁵³ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, cf. 08.08.27-G8, 08.08.27-Miliband, 08.09.01-EC-PC.

³⁵⁴ 08.08.27-G8, 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.09.08-Council, 08.09.15-Council.

³⁵⁵ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner.

³⁵⁶ 08.09.15-Council, cf. 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions, 08.09.01-EC-PC, 08.09.08-Council.



Figure 6: Discursive structure around nodal points, Caucasus, EU

Nodal Points in Russia's Discourse

Self (Russia): Russia represents itself as the natural protector³⁵⁷ of Abkhazians and South Ossetians (it “is Russia’s mission to show concern for the security and safety of the peoples of the Caucasus”³⁵⁸). Russia sees itself as legitimately having “privileged interests”³⁵⁹ in the region. Its role is that of a self-sacrificing, responsible big brother: “Russia and its peacekeepers

³⁵⁷ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN.

³⁵⁸ 08.08.28-Churkin.

³⁵⁹ 08.08.31-Medvedev, 08.09.02-Medvedev-Euronews, 08.09.11-Lavrov-Gazeta.

have followed our deeply Christian tradition of dying for our friends.”³⁶⁰ Russia is protecting, however, only at the latter’s request.³⁶¹

Russia acts in a calm and restrained way³⁶² and restored peace in the region.³⁶³ It follows international law³⁶⁴ and has always supported Georgian territorial integrity: "Russia has done everything in its power to assist in settling those problems on the basis of the recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia."³⁶⁵

The events underline Russia’s regained strength: “Russia is back in the international arena”,³⁶⁶ the “myth of [the] unipolar world” is dispelled.³⁶⁷

EU/West: The Russian representation of the EU/West is not homogeneous, whereby – despite overlaps – the US and NATO can loosely be distinguished from the EU.

Russia represents the West as “[Saakashvili’s] western supporters”,³⁶⁸ “those who stand behind him”,³⁶⁹ the “external backers of the Saakashvili regime who [...] had consistently armed it”,³⁷⁰ primarily referring to NATO members³⁷¹ and the US.³⁷² While “a number of capitals in Europe and North America” have tried to keep Saakashvili at bay, they failed to control him.³⁷³ Consequently, they are complicit in Tbilisi’s deeds.³⁷⁴ The West is portrayed as having an immoral geopolitical rationale³⁷⁵ and applying double standards when supporting Saakashvili.³⁷⁶ Yet, Russia’s interdependence with the West is conceded.³⁷⁷

³⁶⁰ 08.09.01-Lavrov, cf. 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Churkin.

³⁶¹ 08.09.09-Lavrov-MFAs, 08.09.09-Lavrov-Plassnik.

³⁶² 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC, 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov.

³⁶³ 08.08.26-Medvedev-FT, 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Churkin, cf. 08.09.06-Medvedev, 08.09.10-Lavrov.

³⁶⁴ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN, 08.08.26-Medvedev-RT, 08.08.26-Medvedev-TF1, 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.09.09-Lavrov-Plassnik, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council.

³⁶⁵ 08.08.28-Churkin, cf. 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN, 08.08.26-Medvedev-RT, 08.08.26-Medvedev-TF1, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.09.09-Lavrov-Plassnik, 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.09.10-Lavrov.

³⁶⁶ 08.09.15-Lavrov, cf. 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.06-Medvedev.

³⁶⁷ 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council, cf. 08.09.28-Lavrov.

³⁶⁸ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks.

³⁶⁹ 08.09.01-Lavrov.

³⁷⁰ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks.

³⁷¹ cf. 08.09.02-Lavrov, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council.

³⁷² cf. 08.09.02-Medvedev-RAI, 08.09.08-Medvedev-PC, 08.09.12-Medvedev.

³⁷³ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, cf. 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Putin, 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.02-Medvedev-Euronews, 08.09.28-Lavrov.

³⁷⁴ 08.09.02-Lavrov.

³⁷⁵ 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov.

³⁷⁶ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction, 08.09.01-Lavrov, cf. 08.09.15-Lavrov.

³⁷⁷ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.28-Putin.

Explicit references to the EU – especially since early September – are less hostile. The EU is an important partner for Russia.³⁷⁸ The EU’s mediating role is accepted.³⁷⁹ On this issue, the EU is considered trustworthy, since “[they] do not want to play any geopolitical games here”.³⁸⁰

Georgia/Tbilisi: Russia clearly distinguishes the Georgian leadership from the Georgian people, who are seen as historically close to Russia.³⁸¹ In Russia’s discourse on the events, Tbilisi and its actions are represented as “aggressive”,³⁸² “barbaric”,³⁸³ destabilising³⁸⁴ and illegal.³⁸⁵

Georgia provoked the crisis and is the sole culprit.³⁸⁶ While Russia always supported Georgian territorial integrity, Tbilisi chose the path of war.³⁸⁷ With his aggression, Saakashvili “placed a cross on a united country of Georgians, Ossetians and Abkhaz”.³⁸⁸ Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s aspirations for independence are a result of Georgian suppression.³⁸⁹ Consequently, the Georgian leadership itself is the violator of Georgian territorial integrity: while “the Georgian leadership, from Mr. Gamsakhurdia on, [had been] consistently undermining the territorial integrity of Georgia”,³⁹⁰ “Saakashvili himself put an end to [it] by using crude and blatant military force [...]”.³⁹¹ In the same vein, Georgia is also to blame for the violence: “The responsibility for the loss of life rests squarely with the present Georgian leadership, which dared to take these criminal actions”.³⁹²

³⁷⁸ 08.09.08-Medvedev-PC, 08.09.10-Lavrov.

³⁷⁹ 08.09.08-Medvedev-Sarkozy, 08.09.08-Medvedev-PC, 08.09.09.-Lavrov-MFAs, 08.09.09-Lavrov-Sarkozy, 08.09.11-Lavrov-Yu, 08.09.23-Lavrov.

³⁸⁰ 08.09.09.-Lavrov-MFAs, cf. 08.09.09-Lavrov-Plassnik, 08.09.09-Lavrov-Sarkozy, 08.09.02-Lavrov.

³⁸¹ cf. 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC, 08.08.26-Medvedev-FT, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.08.28-Putin, 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Media.

³⁸² 08.09.08-Medvedev-Nicaragua, 08.09.11-Lavrov-Gazeta, 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Media, cf. 08.09.12-Medvedev, 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.09.06-Medvedev, 08.09.08-Medvedev-PC, 08.09.10-Lavrov, 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.09.16-Lavrov, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council, 08.09.28-Lavrov.

³⁸³ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.09.08-Medvedev-Nicaragua, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.09.02-Lavrov.

³⁸⁴ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.09.02-Medvedev-RAI, 08.09.06-Medvedev.

³⁸⁵ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.09.02-Lavrov.

³⁸⁶ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition.

³⁸⁷ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-RT, 08.09.12-Medvedev.

³⁸⁸ 08.08.26-Medvedev-TF1, cf. 08.08.31-Medvedev, 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN.

³⁸⁹ 08.08.26-Medvedev-FT.

³⁹⁰ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction.

³⁹¹ 08.08.28-Churkin, cf. 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.09.11-Lavrov-Gazeta, 08.09.02-Lavrov.

³⁹² 08.08.28-Putin.

More generally, the “regime Saakashvili”³⁹³ is depicted as undemocratic,³⁹⁴ not democratically elected,³⁹⁵ exhibiting “authoritarian tendencies”,³⁹⁶ illegitimate,³⁹⁷ and unreasonable:³⁹⁸ Saakashvili is an “absolutely unpredictable person, a person weighed down by a mass of pathologies, unfortunately, in an unbalanced mental state – you will excuse me, of course, but he is a drug user”.³⁹⁹

Abkhazia & South Ossetia: While South Ossetia already became a victim of Georgian aggression and the resulting “genocide”,⁴⁰⁰ “slaughter and mass expulsion”,⁴⁰¹ Abkhazia was about to follow.⁴⁰² Deprived of choosing their status themselves,⁴⁰³ both were victims already since a long time⁴⁰⁴ – at least since 1991 when then President Gamsakhurdia proclaimed the “Georgia for Georgians”⁴⁰⁵ slogan. “Ethnic cleansing was carried out for 17 years”.⁴⁰⁶ Abkhazia and South Ossetia are legitimate, sovereign actors,⁴⁰⁷ who “have the right to decide their destiny by themselves”,⁴⁰⁸ and who need to be included when stability in the region is discussed.

South Ossetians and Abkhazians are “fraternal peoples”,⁴⁰⁹ who are supported and protected by Russia.⁴¹⁰

³⁹³ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.08.30-Medvedev.

³⁹⁴ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction, 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.08.27-MID-Statement.

³⁹⁵ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks.

³⁹⁶ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks.

³⁹⁷ 08.09.02-Medvedev-RAI, cf. 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov.

³⁹⁸ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks.

³⁹⁹ 08.09.12-Medvedev.

⁴⁰⁰ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.09.15-Lavrov.

⁴⁰¹ 08.08.27-MID-Statement.

⁴⁰² 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.09.16-Lavrov, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council, 08.09.28-Lavrov.

⁴⁰³ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.08.27-MID-Statement.

⁴⁰⁴ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC, 08.08.26-Medvedev-FT, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction, 08.09.10-Lavrov, 08.09.11-Lavrov-Gazeta, 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.09.16-Lavrov, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council, 08.09.28-Lavrov, 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Churkin.

⁴⁰⁵ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.09.02-Lavrov, 08.09.09-Lavrov-Plassnik, 08.09.10-Lavrov, 08.09.28-Lavrov.

⁴⁰⁶ 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN.

⁴⁰⁷ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition.

⁴⁰⁸ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN.

⁴⁰⁹ 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council, cf. 08.09.30-Medvedev.

⁴¹⁰ 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.08.31-Medvedev, 08.09.16-Lavrov, 08.09.10-Lavrov, 08.09.17-Kremlin, 08.09.17-Medvedev.

Russian military intervention: Russia's actions in the Russo-Georgian war were provoked and justified by Georgia's "aggression",⁴¹¹ an ongoing "genocide",⁴¹² its "blitzkrieg"⁴¹³ against Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁴¹⁴ Georgia is thus responsible for the war.⁴¹⁵ Russia, on the other hand, was "forced"⁴¹⁶ to intervene: "Russia had no option but to crush the attack to save lives. This was not a war of our choice".⁴¹⁷ Given the attacks on Russian citizens and peacekeeping forces, Russia exercised its right to self-defence.⁴¹⁸

The operation had "no aims other than those dictated by the necessity of providing effective guarantees of the nonresumption [sic!] of Georgian aggression against South Ossetia and Abkhazia."⁴¹⁹ Consequently, Russian actions are represented as "peace enforcing operation".⁴²⁰ Russia's military intervention is represented as successful⁴²¹ and existential: "If we wouldn't have reacted as we did on the Georgian aggression on the 8th of August, then, most probably, we would have lost the North Caucasus".⁴²²

Russian recognition: Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia is represented as a necessary step: "Whichever standpoint you take, there was no alternative".⁴²³ Russia was forced⁴²⁴ to recognise: "The situation I think is utterly clear. Russia simply could not have taken – and had no right to take – a different decision".⁴²⁵ This decision is legitimate, since it was "the only one possible from the viewpoint of law and from the viewpoint of history and from the viewpoint of justice and morality".⁴²⁶ Russia's recognition was necessary to prevent genocide⁴²⁷ and as such is legal⁴²⁸ and existential: "We had no other choice but to ensure not

⁴¹¹ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.08.30-Medvedev.

⁴¹² 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.09.15-Lavrov.

⁴¹³ 08.09.01-Lavrov, cf. 08.09.11-Lavrov-Gazeta, 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council.

⁴¹⁴ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC.

⁴¹⁵ cf. 08.09.06-Medvedev, 08.09.08-Medvedev-PC, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction.

⁴¹⁶ 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC.

⁴¹⁷ 08.08.26-Medvedev-FT.

⁴¹⁸ 08.09.11-Lavrov-Gazeta, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council.

⁴¹⁹ 08.09.01-Lavrov.

⁴²⁰ 08.09.12-Medvedev, cf. 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov.

⁴²¹ 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC.

⁴²² 08.09.10-Lavrov.

⁴²³ 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.31-Medvedev.

⁴²⁴ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC, 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction.

⁴²⁵ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks.

⁴²⁶ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, cf. 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council.

⁴²⁷ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera, 08.08.26-Medvedev-RT, 08.08.31-Medvedev.

⁴²⁸ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-FT, 08.08.26-Medvedev-RT, 08.08.26-Medvedev-TF1, 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.09.17-Medvedev, 08.09.08-Medvedev-PC, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council.

only South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's security, but the very survival of their people by recognizing their independence [...]”⁴²⁹



Figure 7: Discursive structure around nodal points, Caucasus, Russia

⁴²⁹ 08.09.10-Lavrov, cf. 08.09.11-Lavrov-Warsaw, 08.09.14-Lavrov, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council, 08.09.28-Lavrov, 08.09.08-Medvedev-Nicaragua, 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC, 08.08.30-Medvedev, 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, 08.09.02-Lavrov.

ii) *Discursive Interaction*

(1) *Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse*

In the EU's Discourse:

Analogous to Russia's central role in the developments, the representation of Russia is significant in the EU's discourse. With South Ossetia and Abkhazia not considered sovereign actors, Russia constitutes the primary subject to blame for the violation of Georgian territorial integrity. Discursive boundaries are drawn along all three dimensions. One *spatial* articulation by then Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn represents Russia as un-European. He notes that "[it] had been widely assumed that Russia had become a European state in the sense that it would emphasise political cooperation rather than military power when it came to conflict resolution. As things stand, this assumption now has to be abandoned".⁴³⁰

He also differentiates Russia in *temporal* terms when claiming that "[rather] than the sustainable balance of the Cold War, Russia seems to be longing for the multi-polar power politics of the 19th century."⁴³¹ Arguing that "temptations of power politics remain",⁴³² temporal constructions are also invoked elsewhere: "The return of spheres of influence is unacceptable. Yalta is over."⁴³³

Depictions of Russia as disorderly and illegal,⁴³⁴ threatening to other governments,⁴³⁵ and overstepping⁴³⁶ construct an *ethical* distance. Yet, those constructions are predominantly attributed to Russia's actions and, besides less differentiating articulations as outlined above, do not define the overall representation of Russia in the EU's discourse. It furthermore needs to be highlighted that the intensity of the EU's discourse differed across actors. While sharing a general interpretation of the event, Rehn's language, including boundary-drawing articulations, was more radical for example than the French presidency's, which also acted as mediator between Russia and Georgia.

⁴³⁰ 08.08.27-Rehn.

⁴³¹ 08.08.27-Rehn.

⁴³² 08.08.27-Miliband.

⁴³³ 08.09.01-EC-PC, cf. 08.09.24-Barroso.

⁴³⁴ 08.08.27-Miliband.

⁴³⁵ 08.08.27-Rehn.

⁴³⁶ 08.09.01-Ferrero-Waldner, 08.09.29-Ferrero-Waldner.

In Russia's Discourse:

Despite the only indirect involvement in the events, representations of the EU/West play a significant role in the Russian interpretation – notably to articulate and make sense of the representation of Georgia/Tbilisi.

As outlined above, Russian foreign policy discourses are often ambiguous where – in the sketching of ‘the West’, of the US, NATO and the EU – the discursive boundary is drawn exactly. It is worth reminding that in this sample, differentiation of the Russian Self from the EU is far less pronounced than from the other subjects, such as the West, NATO and the US. Besides one spatial invocation, constructions of Otherness could be identified mainly along the ethical dimension.

Spatially, referring to “[the] response of some western countries to the South Ossetia crisis – on the verge of self-exposure – in a pointedly geopolitical, ideological vein”, Lavrov expels antagonistic interpretations from ‘Europe’: “Those incapable of siding with the truth and justice simply cannot, no matter how hard they try, represent the whole of European civilization”.⁴³⁷

Ethically, linking “western supporters”⁴³⁸ to the evil representation of Saakashvili in itself draws a boundary between the ethical Russian Self and the unethical Other(s). Ethical constructions focus on those ‘supporters’ – who, as outlined above, are mainly identified as the US and NATO member states – and those actors within the EU that are most critical of Russia, such as Poland.⁴³⁹

(2) References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other

In the EU's Discourse:

In the EU sample, four references to the Russian discourse could be identified, predominantly confirming the Russian structure either to accommodate antagonism or to strengthen the EU's own discourse.

⁴³⁷ 08.09.01-Lavrov.

⁴³⁸ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks, cf. 08.09.01-Lavrov.

⁴³⁹ Cf. 08.09.11-Lavrov-Gazeta, 08.09.01-Lavrov.

Georgia: Firstly, Sarkozy negates the Russian articulation of [**Georgia/Tbilisi-illegitimate**] by declaring it unacceptable: “*the intention was very clearly expressed by the Russian leaders, namely to overthrow the regime of Mr. Saakashvili. And from the first contact, I made it clear that this was unacceptable*”.⁴⁴⁰ Secondly, Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom David Miliband engages with the Russian representation of [**Georgia/Tbilisi-guilty**]: “*We can argue about the history of South Ossetia. We can argue about who fired first in early August. There are serious allegations levelled against South Ossetians and Georgians: it is right that these are independently investigated. But what Russia has done goes far beyond the bounds of peacekeeping*”.⁴⁴¹ This articulation constitutes an accommodating confirmation following the pattern of ‘yes, but...’. While it is conceded that Tbilisi may not be innocent, Miliband challenges Russia’s self-depiction of [**Russia-stabilising**] and thus implicitly supports the EU’s [**Russia-disorderly**].

Russia: The EU also directly engages with Russia’s self-representation. A section in the EU’s Council Conclusions can be read as an accommodating confirmation addressing Russia’s claim to privileged interests in the region, which translates into [**Russia-responsible**]: “*It is also legitimate for the security interests of each to be taken into account, so long as the fundamental principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the independence of States are respected*.”⁴⁴² While confirming Russia’s claim, it denies it as a legitimisation of Russian actions. In conjunction with preceding paragraphs on Russia’s “*disproportionate reaction*” and its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia – the EU’s articulation of [**Russian military intervention-unacceptable**] and [**Russian recognition-illegal**] is strengthened.

Secondly, Russia’s self-depiction as [**Russia-strong**] is addressed: “*We made it clear to President Medvedev that if Russia wanted to be seen as the great power it rightly aspires to be, then it must defend its legitimate interests through political dialogue, multilateralism and diplomacy, not through archaic tools that should be left to the darkest days of the twentieth century*.”⁴⁴³ This call upon Russia, which also constitutes a form of temporal othering, confirms its claim to strength in an instrumentalising way, arguing that it is not commensurable with its current actions – thus reinforcing the EU’s [**Russia-backward**].

⁴⁴⁰ 08.09.01-EC-PC.

⁴⁴¹ 08.08.27-Miliband.

⁴⁴² 08.09.01-EC-Conclusions.

⁴⁴³ 08.09.24-Barroso.

In Russia's Discourse:

Russian sources frequently refer to the discursive structure articulated by the EU.⁴⁴⁴ The Russian discourse engages primarily with the EU's representation of Russia, Russia's recognition of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence, and Georgia/Tbilisi.

Russia: The biggest point of contention in the Russian discourse is the EU's representation of the Russian Self as **[Russia-illegal]**. Russia subverts the EU's accusation of Russia's reaction being unproportionate, justifying this subversion by invoking the truth: *"In response to the judgment about Russia solely in the form of slogans like 'Russia started war against Georgia!', 'Russia is an occupier' and so forth our country is presenting the truth which just can't be brushed away and our truth is carving its way into western media as well. This is noticeable from ever increasing publications that, among other things, acknowledge that Russia acted both responsibly and moderately in response to the attack on Tskhinval"*.⁴⁴⁵ In this way, Russia is portrayed by Medvedev as **[Russia-stabilising]** instead. Medvedev elsewhere outlines that *"[the West considers] that this [Russian deployments] is illegal. We have heard these assessments and repeatedly explained that our actions are based on international law and that we see no other way of providing security for South Ossetia and Abkhazia and ensuring the survival of the South Ossetian and Abkhaz peoples."*⁴⁴⁶ With this justification, the EU's representation of **[Russia-illegal]** is subverted into **[Russia-legal]**. The EU's accusation is also simply turned around by arguing that *"the perpetrator isn't the Russian side, but practically all who armed the Saakashvili regime and actually prepared it for the aggression: member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance"*.⁴⁴⁷ Thereby, Russia rearticulates its representation of **[EU/West-complicit]**.

The Russian discourse also engages with the EU's representation of Russia as the culprit for military escalation (**[Russia-disorderly]**). It is either negated (*"We have not attacked anyone. [...] We are being portrayed as the aggressor."*⁴⁴⁸) or subverted, justifying it with Georgian aggression and thus supporting the Russian **[Georgia-guilty]**: *"the bashfulness and some*

⁴⁴⁴ It needs to be taken into account that other Western actors, including such important reference points as the US or NATO, articulated an at least to some extent similar discursive structure during the time of analysis. Russia's references to discursive structures as identified in the EU's discourse can therefore not be regarded as exclusive reaction to EU articulations but must be understood in the context of a broader (heterogeneous) Western discourse. See the discussion formulated in chapter four (see p.74).

⁴⁴⁵ 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council.

⁴⁴⁶ 08.09.18-Lavrov-Media.

⁴⁴⁷ 08.09.02-Lavrov, also 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction.

⁴⁴⁸ 08.08.28-Putin.

*ambiguity [regarding who's guilty of starting] are absolutely inappropriate here and hypocritical with regard to those who came under attack in the middle of the night and sustained enormous losses”.*⁴⁴⁹

Russian recognition: Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s independence is a second nodal point in the EU’s discourse that Russia engages with – primarily the EU’s representation of it as **[Russian recognition-illegal]**. Most interactions subvert this representation into the Russian **[Russian recognition-legitimate]**. Putin, for example, claims that *“those who insist that those territories must continue to belong to Georgia are Stalinists: They defend the decision of Josef Vissarionovich Stalin.”*⁴⁵⁰ Medvedev, similarly argues that representations of Russia’s recognition as illegal are the result of *“phantom pain experienced by those who are still trying to look at the Russian Federation as the Soviet Union.”*⁴⁵¹ He thinks *“that in the future, the decision that was made [recognition] will be intelligible to more countries. And other states, to whom human rights and the democratic will of the people are not empty words, will follow our example.”*⁴⁵² Putin and Medvedev thus ascribe misjudgement and disrespect of human rights to those representing Russia’s recognition as illegal. They thereby do not only strengthen **[Russian recognition-legitimate]** but also the Russian representation of **[EU/West-double standards & immoral]**.

Georgia/Tbilisi: The Russian discourse further engages with the representation of the Georgian leadership. The biggest point of contention is the representation of **[Georgia/Tbilisi-democratic]**. In order to turn this representation into its opposite **[Georgia/Tbilisi-undemocratic]** as articulated in the Russian discourse, ascribing and justifying subversions are employed. An example for the former is Lavrov’s invocation of opportunism and double standards: *“When we are being continuously told about ‘Georgia’s democratic government,’ does this mean that it is permissible for a democratic government to act this way against a civilian population which it considers its own? We will never agree with this British-style ‘license to murder’ that some capitals issue to the ‘friendly regimes’ certified by them.”*⁴⁵³ The same subversion is elsewhere justified by pointing to allegedly undemocratic behaviour: *“I*

⁴⁴⁹ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Reaction.

⁴⁵⁰ 08.08.28-Putin.

⁴⁵¹ 08.09.08-Medvedev-PC.

⁴⁵² 08.09.08-Medvedev-PC, see also 08.09.14-Lavrov.

⁴⁵³ 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov; for another ascribing subversion see also 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council.

shall mention that broadcasting of Russian channels to Georgia continues to be blocked. This is already an integral part of the 'democratic' regime in Tbilisi. Therefore I would like that our European Union partners would be on the alert. I hope that they understand with whom they are dealing, for they simply can be deceived."⁴⁵⁴ Questioning the EU's articulation of the Georgian government as democratic often comes with reasserting the Russian representation of **[EU/West-double standards]**, for example when Lavrov asks: "*Who among those championing Georgia have uttered even a single word over the almost daily civilian deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan resulting from the actions of the NATO-led coalition forces?*"⁴⁵⁵

Closely related is Russia's engagement with the EU's representation of the Georgian leadership as **[Georgia/Tbilisi-legitimate]**, for example by ascribing unethical motives to such a portrayal: "*The cynicism and hypocrisy of those who are trying to excuse [Saakashvili] are simply fantastic*".⁴⁵⁶ Thereby, the Russian representation of **[Georgia/Tbilisi-guilty]** is strengthened.

Finally, the Russian discourse is subverting the EU's representation of **[Georgia/Tbilisi-European]**. Pointing to Tbilisi's actions, Lavrov asks: "*Is this European-like? And when Mr. Saakashvili is disgorging, mildly speaking, untruth, as he speaks in Tbilisi on various occasions, and when behind his back, apart from the flag of Georgia, there is also the flag of the European Union? Does he thus underline that the European Union fully shares his actions? We asked our French colleagues about this. They said this was the wrong approach, and that Georgia as a non-member of the European Union cannot so facilely handle EU symbols.*"⁴⁵⁷ Notably, here Lavrov employs the authority of EU representatives⁴⁵⁸ to justify this challenge of the EU's discourse.

General engagement: The Russian discourse refers to the EU's discourse also more generally, pointing out that this different, antagonistic interpretation is based on Western manipulation,⁴⁵⁹ politicisation⁴⁶⁰ or bias: "*We can conclude that the total bias of western media has exhausted their resource of impact on our public opinion and our politics. The West will have to take this into consideration. Especially as the dust is beginning to settle, and all are beginning to ask themselves the necessary questions, the answers to which require facts. And the facts are on*

⁴⁵⁴ 08.09.11-Lavrov-Yu.

⁴⁵⁵ 08.09.01-Lavrov.

⁴⁵⁶ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks.

⁴⁵⁷ 08.09.09-Lavrov-Plassnik.

⁴⁵⁸ France held the EU Presidency.

⁴⁵⁹ 08.08.28-Putin; here, Putin refers primarily to the US.

⁴⁶⁰ 08.09.01-Lavrov.

our side.”⁴⁶¹ Explicit references to the EU are more differentiated. While Medvedev for example laments that “*unfortunately, [in the EU] there is still no complete understanding of what motives the Russian Federation was guided by when it made a decision to repel the aggression of Georgia and when it made a decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent subjects of international law*”, he concedes that “*despite a certain division of those states that are members of the European Union, a reasonable, realistic point of view still prevailed on this issue*”.⁴⁶²

(3) Discussion: The Role of the 2008 Kosovo Discourse

References to Kosovo (and the respective discourses on its independence) played a fundamental role in the discursive interaction between Russia and the EU over the legitimacy of Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (see also: Schaller, 2018; Averre, 2009a; Berg & Mölder, 2014).

On 26 August 2008, announcing Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Medvedev states that Russia did not refrain from calling for a negotiated solution in the Caucasus “*even after the unilateral proclamation of Kosovo's independence*”.⁴⁶³ Implying that the recognition of Kosovo’s independence by other countries would have granted Russia the same right in the Caucasus suggests that the EU’s Kosovo discourse had the potential to grant legitimacy also in this case.

On the same day, Medvedev gave a total of six interviews to international media outlets (BBC,⁴⁶⁴ CNN,⁴⁶⁵ Al Jazeera,⁴⁶⁶ Financial Times,⁴⁶⁷ TF1⁴⁶⁸ and Russia Today⁴⁶⁹). Here, he referred to Kosovo, adding two more interrelated narratives.

The first narrative presents the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as a similar *act* to the recognition of Kosovo’s independence and thus as legitimate. Regarding Russia’s unilateral recognition, Medvedev claims that “*[the] same thing happened with respect to Kosovo: someone recognized it, someone did not.*”, “*[we] did it the same way that other countries did*

⁴⁶¹ 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council.

⁴⁶² 08.09.02-Medvedev-Euronews, cf. 08.09.02-Medvedev-RAI, 08.09.08-Medvedev- PC, see also 08.09.11-Lavrov-Gazeta, 08.09.11-Lavrov-Yu.

⁴⁶³ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Recognition, see also 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN, 08.09.10-Lavrov.

⁴⁶⁴ 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC.

⁴⁶⁵ 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN.

⁴⁶⁶ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Al Jazeera.

⁴⁶⁷ 08.08.26-Medvedev-FT.

⁴⁶⁸ 08.08.26-Medvedev-TF1.

⁴⁶⁹ 08.08.26-Medvedev-Russia Today.

in the case of Kosovo [...]”.⁴⁷⁰ Referring to the EU’s representation of Kosovo as a special case, he argues that “[our] colleagues repeatedly said: ‘Kosovo is a *casus sui generis*’, a case of a special nature. Excuse me, but Ossetia and Abkhazia are also a *casus sui generis*”.⁴⁷¹

Notably, against the background that earlier in 2008 Russia had actually opposed the EU’s discursive representation of Kosovo as a special case (see preceding event, p.129), Medvedev adds that, while South Ossetia and Abkhazia are formally similar to Kosovo, the latter did actually *not* meet the requirements for claiming independence: “*In our opinion, the situation that had developed in Kosovo did not contribute to and did not give sufficient grounds for recognizing it as a subject of international law. [...] Under these conditions, when, in our opinion, ethnic cleansing was carried out for 17 years, when there were cases of genocide: both in the early 1990s and quite recently, the situation is different.*”⁴⁷² As a result, Russia confirms the Western discursive structure regarding Kosovo to justify its deeds, while at the same time denying the factual presence of those very circumstances the West invokes.

Secondly, Russia employs the Kosovo reference arguing that after the Western recognition of Kosovo’s independence, South Ossetia’s and Abkhazia’s independence cannot be rejected. Medvedev laments that, “*ignoring Russia’s warnings, western countries rushed to recognise Kosovo’s illegal declaration of independence from Serbia. We argued consistently that it would be impossible, after that, to tell the Abkhazians and Ossetians (and dozens of other groups around the world) that what was good for the Kosovo Albanians was not good for them.*”⁴⁷³ Here, Medvedev does not insinuate that the act of recognising is similar, but that the actual *circumstances* are similar and therefore recognition must be granted also to South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Both contradictory narratives aimed at legitimising Russia’s recognition – (1) that the acts of recognition in Kosovo and the Caucasus are similar while the necessary conditions were met only in the latter case⁴⁷⁴ and (2) that Kosovo and the Caucasus present similar cases⁴⁷⁵ – would surface also in later articulations.

The EU addresses those narratives by arguing that Kosovo and the Caucasus are different and that therefore no legitimacy can be derived to justify Russia’s recognition. Sarkozy explains, for example: “*Well, they tell me ‘but what about the Kosovo precedent?’ Excuse me, but before*

⁴⁷⁰ 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC.

⁴⁷¹ 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN, see also 08.08.26-Medvedev-RT.

⁴⁷² 08.08.26-Medvedev-CNN, 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC.

⁴⁷³ 08.08.26-Medvedev-FT.

⁴⁷⁴ see 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.09.11-Lavrov-Gazeta.

⁴⁷⁵ see 08.08.28-Putin.

we recognized Kosovo's independence, there were years of discussions in the international institutions. There was the United Nation's mediation."⁴⁷⁶ Similarly, Solana "reiterated that Kosovo was a very different issue from South Ossetia and Abkhazia".⁴⁷⁷

(4) Summary

The preceding paragraphs have traced interaction between EU and Russian discourses in the articulation of their respective interpretations of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's declaration of independence following the Russo-Georgian war in 2008. In the EU's discourse the representation of Russia constitutes a central nodal point to make sense of the events. Moreover, it engages partly with Russia's interpretation. On the one hand, the Union clearly rejects, for example, Russian depictions of the Georgian government as illegitimate or the representation of Russia's recognition of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence as legal. On the other hand, it also accommodates some of Russia's articulated discursive structures – for example conceding the possibility of the Georgian government also bearing responsibility for the escalation or conceding Russia's interests in and responsibility for the stability of the region. Accommodating these claims along the logic of 'yes, but...' thereby fits the mediating role the EU ascribes to itself.

For Russia, the representation of the EU/West is equally central in its discourse on the events. Compared to other events, a rather explicit yet ambiguous distinction between the US and NATO on the one hand and the EU on the other leads to a depiction of the former as the evil drivers of the events. The latter is considered a mediating actor, with whom, despite being manipulated by Washington, not all hope is lost. Accordingly, the EU's antagonistic discourse is depicted as errant, while the EU itself (contrary, for example, to 'supporters of the Georgian government') is not ascribed bad intentions as such. Russia, though, engages extensively with the EU's discourse, notably to challenge the depiction of itself in the events and, consequently, to claim its recognition of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence to be legitimate. It also reasserts its depiction of the Georgian government as malicious – which in turn serves as a justification for Russia's recognition.

⁴⁷⁶ 08.09.01-EC-PC.

⁴⁷⁷ 08.09.10-Solana; Miliband further argues that Russia's military intervention in Georgia cannot be compared to NATO's intervention in Serbia in 1999, see 08.08.27-Miliband.

4. Maidan: The Revolution of Dignity (2013/14)

a) Context

Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich was supposed to sign the Association Agreement (AA) at the EU Summit in Vilnius on 28-29 November 2013 (Kappeler, 2019:334). The AA had been negotiated with the EU over multiple years in the framework of the Union's Eastern Partnership (EaP) policy. In the run-up to Ukraine's association, Russia introduced a number of trade measures including increased controls of Ukrainian goods, temporary suspension, and continued obstruction of imports from Ukraine (Kappeler, 2019:335-336). Russia, for its part, was advocating for Ukraine to join its Eurasian integration project, the Eurasian Customs Union (Kappeler, 2019:335-336). On 21 November, the Ukrainian government suspended the preparations for signing the AA, referring to trade relations with Russia (Ukrainian Government, 2013). This move sparked pro-European protests, reaching a first peak on 24 November with tens of thousands taking to the streets (Ukraine-Analysen, 2013a:22; Kappeler, 2019:338). The EU Summit went by without Yanukovich signing the AA, provoking new protests on Kyiv's Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square). Police forces raided the demonstrations on 30 November, leaving injured on both sides (Kappeler, 2019:338; Ukraine-Analysen, 2013b:21). 400.000-700.000 people gathered on Maidan the following day; violent clashes with the police erupted and central administrative buildings were occupied (Kappeler, 2019:339; Ukraine-Analysen, 2013b:21). The 8 December 'March of a Million' saw, according to different sources, at least 500.000 people in Kyiv (Kappeler, 2019:339; Gorchinskaya, 2013). Protests continued throughout Ukraine, notably in its western part (Kappeler, 2019:340).

The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton came to Kyiv for the first time on 10-11 December to hold talks with Yanukovich and the opposition.⁴⁷⁸ Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Yanukovich the following week, announcing the purchase of Ukrainian Eurobonds worth \$15bln and promising a significant temporary gas price reduction.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁸ 13.12.11-Ashton-Remarks.

⁴⁷⁹ 13.12.17-Putin-Commission1.

On 16 January 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament – boycotted by the opposition parties – passed a number of ‘anti-protest laws’ that significantly restricted demonstration rights (Kappeler, 2019:340; Sakwa, 2015b:83), causing an escalation of violence. Demonstrators occupied administrative buildings, threw stones and Molotov cocktails. Groups allegedly financed by the government attacked and intimidated Maidan activists (Kappeler, 2019:340-341; Ukraine-Analysen, 2014a:31; Ukraine-Analysen, 2014b:24; Sakwa, 2015b:83-84). Besides the many injured on both sides, late January also saw the first casualties (Kappeler, 2019:341; Sakwa, 2015b:83).

On 28 January, the anti-protest laws were withdrawn and the government headed by Mykola Azarov resigned (Kappeler, 2019:341; Ukraine-Analysen, 2014b:24). Another escalation of violence between protesters and police erupted on 18 February and culminated two days later in authorised sniper shootings against activists and demonstrators, leading to dozens of deaths (Kappeler, 2019:343; Ukraine-Analysen, 2014c:26-28). On 21 February, an agreement between Yanukovych and the oppositional leaders was brokered and witnessed by representatives from Germany, Poland, France and Russia⁴⁸⁰ (Kappeler, 2019:343; Sakwa, 2015b:88-89). The bloodshed had ended. Yet, the deal, which allowed for early elections in December 2014 but for the time being would have left Yanukovych in place, was rejected by representatives from Maidan (Kappeler, 2019:343). In the evening of the same day, Yanukovych left Kyiv and fled to Russia.

b) Analysis

To capture the EU’s and Russia’s discursive interaction over the Revolution of Dignity as a floating signifier, the discourse analysis captured 53 documents of the Russian and 99 documents of the EU’s foreign policy discourse on the events from 21 November 2013, the day the Ukrainian government suspended the AA, to 22 February 2014, after Yanukovych had left the country.

⁴⁸⁰ The Russian representative Vladimir Lukin did not sign the agreement (Newsru, 2014).

i) *Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:*

Nodal Points in the EU's Discourse

Self (EU): The EU is a role model for Ukraine.⁴⁸¹ For Ukrainians, “Europe is [...] the land of opportunity in terms of economic development, [...] the promise of hope and freedom”.⁴⁸² The Union is a strong supporter of Ukraine, its modernisation and reforms,⁴⁸³ and the Union remains committed to the Ukrainian people.⁴⁸⁴ The demonstrators fight for the values and freedoms “that are so important for all of us in Europe”,⁴⁸⁵ confirming “how important the European Union and its values are”.⁴⁸⁶ Ukraine and the EU belong together⁴⁸⁷ and those relations are mutually beneficial.⁴⁸⁸ Neither are these relations at the expense of Russia,⁴⁸⁹ but the EU is ready to impartially defend Ukraine’s “sovereignty, their right to choose their own destiny”.⁴⁹⁰ The association offer remains “on the table”⁴⁹¹ to resume “as soon as Ukraine is ready”.⁴⁹² In the crisis, where the EU has proved to act united,⁴⁹³ its main goals are stability and peace.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁸¹ 14.01.14-Barroso, 13.12.11-Ashton-Remarks, cf.13.12.20-Barroso-final PC.

⁴⁸² 13.12.09-Barroso, cf. 14.01.25-van Rompuy, 14.02.01-van Rompuy.

⁴⁸³ 13.11.25-Füle, 13.11.27-Füle, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 14.02.03-Barroso, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1, 13.12.12-Füle, 13.12.20-Barroso-final PC, 14.02.10-Council-Conclusions, 14.02.10-Council-Press Release, 14.02.13-Füle, 14.02.19-Barroso-Statement, 14.02.20-Council, 14.02.21-Barroso-Statement.

⁴⁸⁴ 13.12.09-Barroso, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 13.11.27-Füle.

⁴⁸⁵ 13.12.09-Barroso, cf. 13.12.11-Ashton-Remarks.

⁴⁸⁶ 14.01.14-Barroso.

⁴⁸⁷ 13.12.20-van Rompuy, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1, 13.11.21-Ashton, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax.

⁴⁸⁸ 13.11.26-Füle-Ekho Moskv, cf. 13.11.29-Ashton.

⁴⁸⁹ 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 14.01.28-Barroso.

⁴⁹⁰ 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech2, cf. 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.29-Ashton, 13.12.20-Barroso-final PC, 13.12.20-van Rompuy, 13.11.29-Barroso, 13.12.05-Schmid.

⁴⁹¹ 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.28-Füle-EaP Business, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 13.11.29-Barroso, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech2, 13.12.11-Sefcovic, 13.12.12-Füle, 13.12.20-van Rompuy, 14.02.19-Barroso-Statement, 14.02.20-Ashton-Following, 14.02.20-Council.

⁴⁹² 13.11.28-Füle-Speech, cf. 13.12.08-Barroso, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech2, 13.12.11-Sefcovic, 13.12.12-Füle, 13.12.16-Ashton-Remarks, 13.12.18-Ashton, 13.12.20-van Rompuy, 14.01.20-Council, 14.01.28-van Rompuy, 14.02.10-Council-Conclusions, 14.02.10-Council-Press Release.

⁴⁹³ 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1, 14.01.14-Barroso, 14.02.20-Barroso.

⁴⁹⁴ 14.01.28-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.02.20-Barroso, 14.01.30-Barroso-Tusk, 14.02.05-Füle, cf.14.02.20-Council.

Russia: The AA was suspended because of Russian “unjustified”⁴⁹⁵ economic pressure.⁴⁹⁶ Through those actions, Russia subjects Ukrainians to geopolitical zero-sum games⁴⁹⁷ and is trying to prevent Ukraine’s future in Europe.⁴⁹⁸ Russia’s measures constitute “external pressure”⁴⁹⁹ and they harm Ukrainian citizens and the economy.⁵⁰⁰ This pressure is “groundless”,⁵⁰¹ since the EU’s EaP and Ukraine’s association benefit Russia too.⁵⁰² Russia, which is also the EU’s strategic partner,⁵⁰³ has close historical and cultural ties to Ukraine.⁵⁰⁴ Both, Russia and the EU are interested in the stabilisation of the situation.⁵⁰⁵

European integration: The EU presents the EaP and the AA as a privileged offer⁵⁰⁶ with many benefits to Ukraine:⁵⁰⁷ “the most reliable road to a modern, open, independent Ukraine”.⁵⁰⁸ The ensuing reforms, a “project for democracy, for prosperity and for stability”,⁵⁰⁹ promise “modernization”⁵¹⁰ and a better future as a “modern, prosperous and rule-based [democracy]”.⁵¹¹ Ukraine’s association is compared to Poland’s success story since joining the EU.⁵¹² The suspension, in turn, is costly,⁵¹³ backward-looking⁵¹⁴ and based on short-term calculations.⁵¹⁵

Ukraine’s European integration is also a “win-win” for Russia.⁵¹⁶ There is no zero-sum choice

⁴⁹⁵ 13.11.21-Füle-Russia impact, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1, cf. 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech2.

⁴⁹⁶ 13.11.26-Füle-Ekho Moskvyy, 13.11.25-Füle, 13.11.21-Füle-Russia impact, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 13.12.20-van Rompuy.

⁴⁹⁷ 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1.

⁴⁹⁸ 13.12.20-van Rompuy, cf. 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1.

⁴⁹⁹ 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy.

⁵⁰⁰ 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 13.11.25-Füle, 13.11.26-Füle-Ekho Moskvyy.

⁵⁰¹ 13.11.25-Füle.

⁵⁰² 13.11.25-Füle, 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.26-Füle-Ekho Moskvyy, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 13.12.20-van Rompuy, cf. 13.12.16-Ashton-Remarks, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1, 14.01.28-van Rompuy.

⁵⁰³ 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, cf. 14.01.28-Barroso; Prior to the annexation of Crimea, the EU and Russia considered themselves as strategic partners (see European Commission, 2011).

⁵⁰⁴ 14.02.01-van Rompuy.

⁵⁰⁵ 14.01.28-Barroso, 14.02.18-Ashton-Reaction.

⁵⁰⁶ 13.11.21-Ashton, 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.25-Füle, 13.11.28-Füle-EaP Business, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech2, 14.02.03-Barroso.

⁵⁰⁷ 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.26-Füle-Ekho Moskvyy, 13.11.27-Füle, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 13.11.29-Barroso, 13.12.12-Füle, 13.12.18-Ashton.

⁵⁰⁸ 13.12.20-van Rompuy.

⁵⁰⁹ 13.12.20-Barroso-final PC.

⁵¹⁰ 13.11.21-Ashton, 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.25-Füle, 13.11.28-Füle-EaP Business, 13.11.28-Füle-Speech, 13.12.12-Füle.

⁵¹¹ 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, cf. 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax.

⁵¹² 13.11.27-Füle, 13.12.09-Barroso, 14.01.25-van Rompuy, 14.01.30-Barroso-Tusk.

⁵¹³ 13.11.25-Füle.

⁵¹⁴ 13.11.21-Ashton, 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.25-Füle.

⁵¹⁵ 13.12.20-van Rompuy.

⁵¹⁶ 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.12.05-Schmid, cf. 13.11.26-Füle-Ekho Moskvyy, 13.12.16-Ashton-Remarks, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax.

to make for “either Brussels or Moscow”,⁵¹⁷ since the AA is compatible with existing Russian trade relations.⁵¹⁸

Authorities/Yanukovych: In the EU’s discourse, Yanukovych and the authorities are the main culprits. The use of force against protesters is condemned⁵¹⁹ as “unjustified”⁵²⁰ and deplorable.⁵²¹ While all sides are called upon to show restraint,⁵²² the authorities carry the main responsibility to stop the violence,⁵²³ protect people’s rights,⁵²⁴ and engage in dialogue with the opposition and the civil society.⁵²⁵ Their “actions [and] nonactions”⁵²⁶ are endangering a peaceful solution⁵²⁷ and “destabilise the country”.⁵²⁸ This violation of fundamental rights and freedoms⁵²⁹ is un-European.⁵³⁰ This also holds for the anti-protest laws.⁵³¹ Whereas earlier, Yanukovych favoured closer ties with the EU,⁵³² the authorities are now compromising the will of the people.⁵³³

The people: The people of Ukraine would have been the main beneficiaries of the association⁵³⁴ and consequently they are the victims of its suspension.⁵³⁵ They “fully understand and embrace the historic nature of the European association”.⁵³⁶ The EU knows

⁵¹⁷ 13.12.20-van Rompuy.

⁵¹⁸ 13.12.20-van Rompuy, cf. 13.11.25-Füle, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 14.02.18-Ashton-Reaction, 14.01.28-van Rompuy.

⁵¹⁹ 13.12.10-Butkevicius, 13.12.11-Ashton-Maidan, cf. 13.12.11-Ashton-Statement.

⁵²⁰ 13.11.30-Ashton & Füle, cf. 13.12.11-Grybauskaitė, 14.02.19-Barroso-Statement.

⁵²¹ 14.01.25-van Rompuy.

⁵²² 13.12.02-Barroso, 14.01.20-Council, 14.01.22-Ashton, 14.01.22-Barroso, 14.01.28-van Rompuy, 14.02.10-Council-Conclusions, 14.02.19-Barroso-Statement.

⁵²³ 13.12.09-Ashton, 13.12.09-Barroso, 13.12.11-Ashton-Statement, 13.12.11-Sefcovic, 14.01.31-Füle, 14.02.20-Ashton-Arrival, 14.02.20-Barroso.

⁵²⁴ 13.12.25-EU Mission UKR, 14.02.05-Füle, cf. 14.02.19-Barroso-Call, 14.02.19-Barroso-Statement, 14.02.10-Council-Conclusions.

⁵²⁵ 13.12.08-Barroso, 13.12.10-Butkevicius, 13.12.11-Ashton-Remarks, 13.12.11-Sefcovic, 13.12.12-Füle, 14.01.22-Barroso, 14.01.28-Barroso, 14.01.28-van Rompuy, 14.02.13-Füle, 14.02.18-Ashton-Statement, 14.02.19-Barroso-Declaration, 14.02.20-Ashton-Following, 14.01.23-Barroso, 14.01.25-van Rompuy.

⁵²⁶ 14.02.12-Füle-Violence, 14.02.13-Füle.

⁵²⁷ 13.12.09-Ashton, 13.12.11-Ashton-Statement, 14.01.28-Barroso, 14.02.19-Barroso-Call, 14.02.19-Barroso-Declaration.

⁵²⁸ 14.01.25-van Rompuy.

⁵²⁹ 13.11.30-Füle, 13.12.16-Ashton-Remarks, 14.01.20-Council, 13.12.02-Barroso, 13.12.05-Schmid, 13.12.08-Barroso, cf. 13.12.11-Sefcovic.

⁵³⁰ 13.12.09-Barroso, 13.12.11-Sefcovic, cf. 14.01.16-Füle, 14.01.17-Füle-Tweet2.

⁵³¹ 14.01.16-Füle, 14.01.17-Füle-Tweet1, 14.01.17-Ashton, 14.01.20-Council, 14.01.20-Ashton-Remarks, 14.01.17-Füle-Tweet2.

⁵³² 13.11.26-Füle-Ekho Moskvyy, 14.02.21-Ashton-Remarks.

⁵³³ 13.12.11-Ashton-Remarks, 14.01.16-Füle.

⁵³⁴ 13.11.21-Ashton, 13.11.28-Füle-EaP Business, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 13.11.28-Füle-Speech, 13.11.29-Ashton.

⁵³⁵ 13.11.25-Füle, 13.11.28-Füle-EaP Business, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 13.11.26-Füle-Ekho Moskvyy.

⁵³⁶ 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.28-Füle-Speech, cf. 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, 13.11.29-Barroso.

“how much the Ukrainian people feel European, how much they care about Europe, how much they aspire to be recognised as members of the democratic community of nations of Europe”.⁵³⁷ Ukrainians are suffering from Russian economic pressure⁵³⁸ and the ignorance of the authorities.⁵³⁹ Their independence and sovereignty “should not become victims of geopolitical zero-sum games or secret agreements”.⁵⁴⁰ “The people of this great country deserve better”.⁵⁴¹

Opposition/protesters: The demonstrations are representative of the people,⁵⁴² constituting the free expression of its will.⁵⁴³ The demonstrators support Ukraine’s “rapprochement with the EU”⁵⁴⁴ and fight for freedom, prosperity and stability.⁵⁴⁵ “When we see in the cold streets of Kiev, men and women with the European flag, fighting for that European flag, it is because they are also fighting for Ukraine and for their future”.⁵⁴⁶ The protesters and the EU are together in solidarity.⁵⁴⁷ Protesters are portrayed as the victims of violence and pressure.⁵⁴⁸ Although they were earlier depicted as largely peaceful,⁵⁴⁹ all sides are called upon to show restraint after the escalations in January and February 2014.⁵⁵⁰ The opposition is asked to clearly differentiate itself from “radical elements”.⁵⁵¹

⁵³⁷ 13.11.29-Barroso, cf. 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech2, 13.12.11-Ashton-Maidan, 13.12.11-Sefcovic.

⁵³⁸ 13.11.25-Füle, cf. 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1.

⁵³⁹ 13.12.11-Ashton-Remarks, cf. 14.02.19-Barroso-Statement.

⁵⁴⁰ 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1.

⁵⁴¹ 13.12.11-Ashton-Remarks.

⁵⁴² 13.12.09-Barroso, 13.11.29-Barroso, 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.28-Füle-Speech, 13.12.11-Ashton-Maidan, 13.12.20-van Rompuy, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1.

⁵⁴³ 13.11.26-Füle-Ekko Moskv, 13.11.26-Füle-Euronews, 13.12.09-Barroso.

⁵⁴⁴ 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax, cf. 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy, 13.11.28-Füle-Speech, 13.11.30-Ashton & Füle, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1, 13.12.11-Füle, 13.12.16-Ashton-Remarks, 13.12.18-Ashton, 13.12.20-van Rompuy, 13.12.25-EU Mission UKR, 14.01.14-Barroso, 14.01.30-Barroso-Discours, 14.01.31-Rehn.

⁵⁴⁵ 13.12.20-Barroso-final PC, cf. 13.12.12-Füle.

⁵⁴⁶ 13.12.09-Barroso.

⁵⁴⁷ 13.12.11-Ashton-Maidan, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax.

⁵⁴⁸ 13.11.30-Ashton & Füle, 13.11.30-Füle, 13.12.10-Butkevicius, 13.12.11-Ashton-Maidan, 13.12.25-EU Mission UKR, 13.12.25-Füle, 14.01.25-van Rompuy, 14.01.31-Ashton, 14.02.05-Füle.

⁵⁴⁹ 13.12.05-Schmid, 13.12.11-Ashton-Remarks, 13.11.30-Ashton & Füle.

⁵⁵⁰ 14.01.22-Ashton, 14.01.22-Barroso, 14.01.28-van Rompuy, 14.02.10-Council-Conclusions, 14.02.19-Barroso-Statement, 14.01.25-van Rompuy, 14.01.27-Ashton.

⁵⁵¹ 14.02.05-Füle, cf. 14.01.27-Ashton, 14.01.27-EU Mission, 14.02.10-Council-Conclusions, 14.02.20-Council.

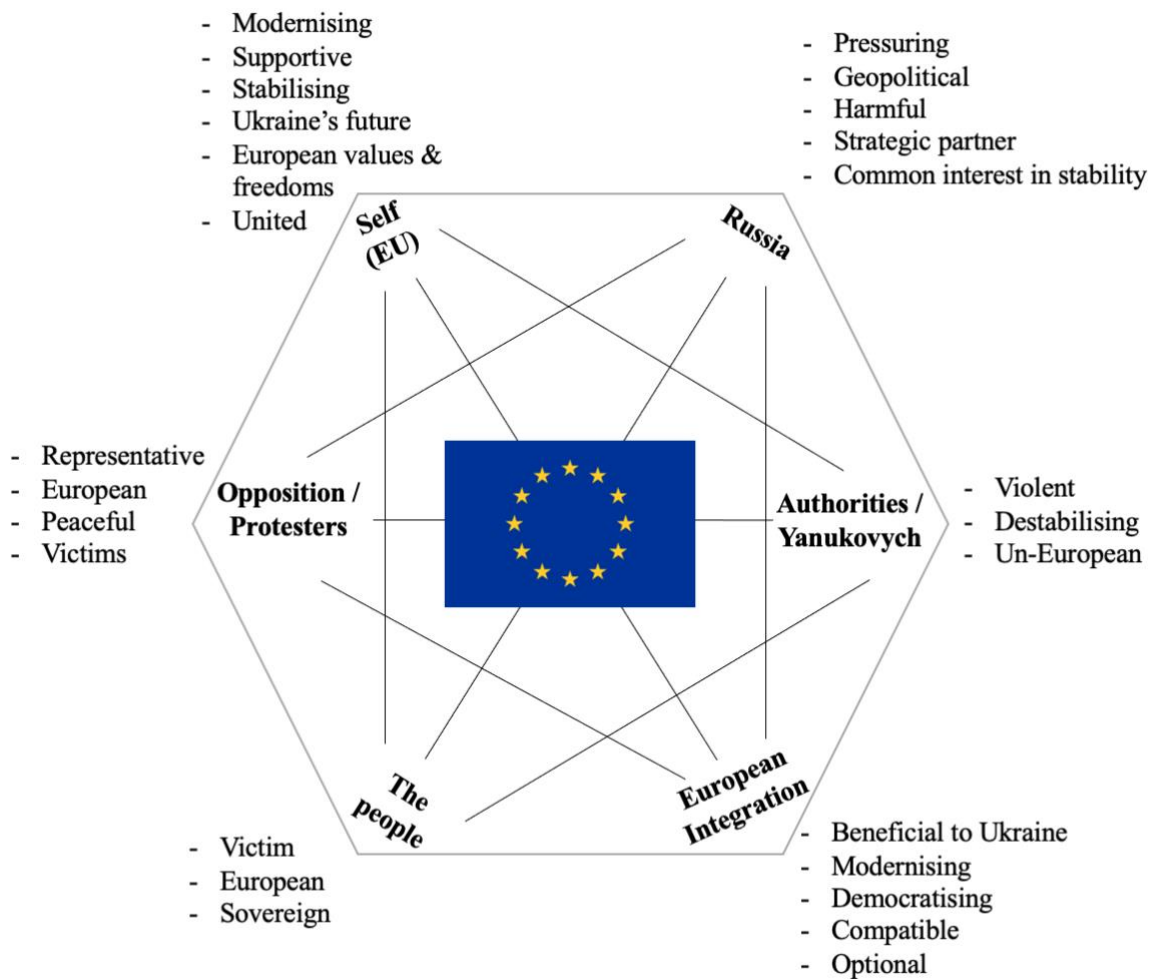


Figure 8: Discursive structure around nodal points, Maidan, EU

Nodal Points in Russia's Discourse

Self (Russia): Russia and fraternal Ukraine are closely “connected by historic, cultural, family traditions and ties”⁵⁵² as well as economic relations.⁵⁵³ The country is Russia’s “strategic partner and ally”.⁵⁵⁴ Russia is not imposing its interests or interfering into the events;⁵⁵⁵ Russia acts rationally, since its trade measures are merely defensive to protect the Russian economy

⁵⁵² 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government2.

⁵⁵³ 13.12.17-Putin-Commission1, 13.12.17-Putin-Commission2, 13.12.19-Putin, 14.01.28-Putin.

⁵⁵⁴ 13.12.17-Putin-Meeting, cf. 13.12.17-Putin-Commission1, 13.12.17-Putin-Commission2, 14.02.19-MID.

⁵⁵⁵ 13.12.17-Putin & Peskov, 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government1, 13.12.26-MID, 14.02.19-Peskov-Non-interference, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech, 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.14-Lavrov, 14.02.19-Peskov-Reaction.

in case of Ukraine's European integration.⁵⁵⁶ Russia is against dividing lines⁵⁵⁷ and will impartially respect Ukraine's free choice.⁵⁵⁸ Moscow's main goal in Ukraine is stabilisation and a lawful solution.⁵⁵⁹

EU/West: The EU/West plays a destabilising role. It instigates the opposition to protests⁵⁶⁰ and turns a blind eye to violent actions.⁵⁶¹ It interferes and puts pressure on Ukraine, disrespecting its sovereignty.⁵⁶² In contrast to an actual freedom of choice, "the choice has already been made for the Ukrainians".⁵⁶³ The EU applies double standards,⁵⁶⁴ imposes its policies,⁵⁶⁵ and hierarchically approaches the "apprentices" Ukraine and others as "teachers".⁵⁶⁶ Ukraine is used for geopolitical goals,⁵⁶⁷ "shedding all vestiges of what it once was".⁵⁶⁸ The EU refuses dialogue and acts in an exclusive, not inclusive way.⁵⁶⁹ The EU and its officials are sometimes represented as distinct from its member states.⁵⁷⁰

The notion of 'European integration' is inextricably linked with the representation of the EU/West and hence analytically not distinguished as a separate nodal point. The EU uses European integration instrumentally for its own gains, "[luring EaP-countries] into their free trade zone" and "[tearing them] from Russia".⁵⁷¹ Its policies reintroduce dividing lines in Europe.⁵⁷² The AA would actually be disadvantageous to Ukraine.⁵⁷³ The EU's reaction to the understandable suspension is thus hysterical.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁵⁶ 13.11.22-Putin, 13.11.26-Putin, 13.12.17-Lavrov, 14.01.28-Putin, 13.12.19-Putin, 13.12.20-Lavrov, 14.02.13-Lavrov.

⁵⁵⁷ 13.11.26-MID, 14.02.20-Lavrov, 13.12.05-Lavrov, 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁵⁵⁸ 13.11.26-Putin, 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government1.

⁵⁵⁹ 13.12.05-Lavrov, 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government1, 13.12.19-Lavrov, 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁵⁶⁰ 13.12.05-Lavrov, 13.12.14-Lavrov, 14.01.21-Lavrov, 14.02.13-Lavrov.

⁵⁶¹ 13.11.26-MID, 13.12.19-Peskov, 14.01.21-Lavrov, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech, 14.02.03-Lavrov-Interview, 14.02.18-MID, 14.02.19-Lavrov, 14.02.19-MID.

⁵⁶² 13.11.26-MID, 13.12.14-Lavrov, 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government1, 14.01.22-Peskov, 14.02.14-Lavrov, 14.02.19-Lavrov, 14.02.20-Lavrov.

⁵⁶³ 13.12.14-Lavrov, cf. 13.11.26-MID, 13.12.17-Lavrov, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Kozhara, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech, 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.14-Lavrov, 14.02.20-Lavrov.

⁵⁶⁴ 13.12.14-Lavrov, 14.01.21-Lavrov, cf. 14.01.28-Putin.

⁵⁶⁵ 13.12.05-Lavrov, 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁵⁶⁶ 13.12.05-Lavrov.

⁵⁶⁷ 13.12.24-Lavrov, 14.02.19-Lavrov, 14.02.20-Lavrov, 14.02.20-Lukashevich.

⁵⁶⁸ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

⁵⁶⁹ 13.12.05-Lavrov, 13.12.20-Lavrov, 13.12.24-Lavrov, 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁵⁷⁰ 13.12.20-Lavrov, cf. 13.12.24-Lavrov, 13.12.17-Lavrov.

⁵⁷¹ 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁵⁷² 13.11.26-MID, 14.01.21-Lavrov, cf. 14.02.20-Lavrov, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Kozhara.

⁵⁷³ 13.11.26-MID, 14.02.13-Lavrov, 13.12.05-Lavrov, 13.12.14-Lavrov, 13.12.17-Lavrov, 13.12.19-Putin, 13.12.20-Lavrov.

⁵⁷⁴ 13.12.05-Lavrov.

Eurasian integration: In the Russian discourse, Ukraine’s European integration is opposed to Eurasian integration. Whereas the former reinforces dividing lines,⁵⁷⁵ the latter envisions a “common economic and humanitarian space from Lisbon to Vladivostok”.⁵⁷⁶ Eurasian integration is not imposed and it is based on equal rights.⁵⁷⁷ In order to later liberalise trade with the EU, however, Eurasian integration first needs to ensure equal competitiveness, thus justifying protective measures.⁵⁷⁸ Ukraine has long been a proponent of Eurasian integration.⁵⁷⁹

Authorities/Yanukovych: Yanukovych and the authorities are legitimate.⁵⁸⁰ The suspension of the AA is understandable,⁵⁸¹ an “absolutely normal event”⁵⁸² that does not deserve an outcry.⁵⁸³ The law enforcement officials, “who defend the legal interests of the state to ensure law and order”,⁵⁸⁴ are victims of Western/oppositional provocations⁵⁸⁵ aiming at getting “a reaction from [them]”.⁵⁸⁶ The government and the authorities are the ones in charge of settling the crisis and normalising the situation.⁵⁸⁷ They “have shown their good will many times”⁵⁸⁸ and are Russia’s partners.⁵⁸⁹

The people: Ukrainians are “fraternal people” to Russia.⁵⁹⁰ They must make their own choice and deal with the situation on their own⁵⁹¹ – without others telling them what to do or deciding for them.⁵⁹² According to Lavrov, Ukrainians are a victim of Western “social engineering” and “export of revolutions”.⁵⁹³ They are subject to the West’s “personal geopolitical plans”.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁷⁵ 13.12.14-Lavrov, cf. 13.12.05-Lavrov.

⁵⁷⁶ 13.12.14-Lavrov, cf. 13.12.17-Lavrov, 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government1, 13.12.20-Lavrov, 13.12.21-Lavrov, 13.12.24-Lavrov, 14.02.14-Lavrov.

⁵⁷⁷ 13.12.12-Putin, 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government1.

⁵⁷⁸ 13.12.20-Lavrov, 13.12.24-Lavrov, 13.12.17-Lavrov, 14.02.14-Lavrov, 14.02.18-Lavrov.

⁵⁷⁹ 14.02.14-Lavrov, 13.12.12-Putin.

⁵⁸⁰ 13.12.14-Lavrov, 14.02.19-Peskov-Reaction.

⁵⁸¹ 13.11.26-MID.

⁵⁸² 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁵⁸³ 13.12.04-Lavrov, 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁵⁸⁴ 14.02.19-MID, cf. 13.12.19-Putin.

⁵⁸⁵ 13.11.26-MID, 14.01.21-Lavrov, 14.02.18-MID.

⁵⁸⁶ 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁵⁸⁷ 13.12.12-Putin, 14.01.22-Peskov, 14.02.19-Peskov-Reaction, 14.02.21-MID.

⁵⁸⁸ 14.02.20-Lavrov.

⁵⁸⁹ 14.01.22-Peskov.

⁵⁹⁰ 13.12.19-Putin.

⁵⁹¹ 13.12.21-Lavrov, 14.02.14-Lavrov.

⁵⁹² 14.01.28-Putin, 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.14-Lavrov.

⁵⁹³ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

⁵⁹⁴ 14.02.19-Lavrov.

Opposition/protesters: In the Russian discourse, the protests lack a legitimate reason.⁵⁹⁵ They are presented as a domestic issue with the AA’s suspension merely being an excuse.⁵⁹⁶ The “hysteria”⁵⁹⁷ is the result of “heated emotions”⁵⁹⁸ and insufficient knowledge,⁵⁹⁹ “outside the framework of normal human analysis.”⁶⁰⁰ Reminiscent of pogroms,⁶⁰¹ the movement “was staged and has been prepared for a long time”.⁶⁰² The protesters are supported and instigated by the EU/West.⁶⁰³ The opposition’s protests are “aggressive”⁶⁰⁴ and intermingled with anti-Semitic and racists appeals.⁶⁰⁵ They are undemocratic⁶⁰⁶ and un-European.⁶⁰⁷ “Bashing, attacks on the police, arson, Molotov cocktails, explosives – this is terrible, it violates all the European code of conduct!”⁶⁰⁸ The protesters are a nationalist minority that is not representative of the population.⁶⁰⁹ While portrayed distinctly, the opposition is closely linked to radicals and extremists.⁶¹⁰

⁵⁹⁵ 13.12.04-Lavrov, 14.01.21-Lavrov, 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁵⁹⁶ 13.12.02-Putin, 13.12.04-Lavrov, 13.12.19-Putin.

⁵⁹⁷ 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁵⁹⁸ 13.12.19-Peskov.

⁵⁹⁹ 13.12.19-Putin.

⁶⁰⁰ 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁶⁰¹ 13.12.02-Putin.

⁶⁰² 13.12.14-Lavrov, cf. 13.11.26-Putin.

⁶⁰³ 13.11.26-MID, 13.12.14-Lavrov, 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.19-Lavrov, 14.02.20-Lavrov.

⁶⁰⁴ 13.12.04-Lavrov.

⁶⁰⁵ 14.02.13-Lavrov, cf. 14.02.17-Lavrov, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech, 14.02.20-Lavrov.

⁶⁰⁶ 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech, 14.02.03-MID-Opposition, 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.19-MID.

⁶⁰⁷ 14.02.03-MID-Opposition, 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.19-MID.

⁶⁰⁸ 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁶⁰⁹ 13.12.19-Putin, 14.01.28-Putin, 14.02.13-Lavrov.

⁶¹⁰ 13.11.26-Putin, 14.02.18-MID, 14.02.20-Lavrov, 14.02.19-MID.

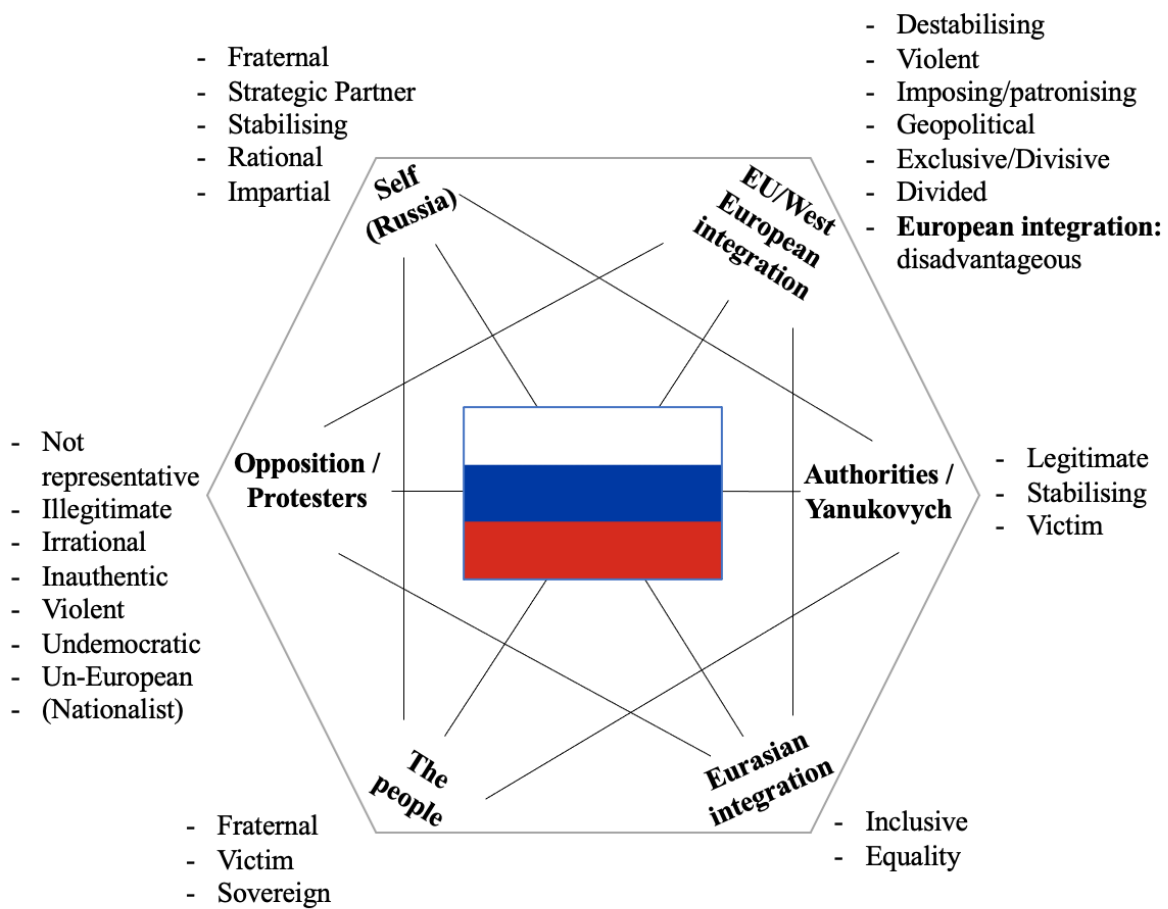


Figure 9: Discursive structure around nodal points, Maidan, Russia

ii) *Discursive Interaction*

(1) *Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse*

In the EU's Discourse:

In the EU's discourse, Russia plays a significant role only for explaining the AA's suspension. Here, a clear border is drawn between the Self and the Russian Other along *ethical* lines.

Russia's actions and "threats"⁶¹¹ are "[disapproved of]",⁶¹² "unjustified",⁶¹³ "unacceptable"⁶¹⁴ and constitute "inappropriate"⁶¹⁵ "outside pressure".⁶¹⁶ Russia's actions are bad because they "inflicted economic hardship on many Ukrainian citizens"⁶¹⁷ and subject the country to geopolitical games.⁶¹⁸

Otherwise, the representation of Russia is ambiguous, not allowing to speak of a clear discursive boundary. Besides referring to the 'strategic partnership',⁶¹⁹ Barroso for example refers to common interests in the events.⁶²⁰ In her reaction to an op-ed by Lavrov,⁶²¹ Ashton encourages rapprochement and cooperation.⁶²²

In Russia's Discourse:

The EU/West play a much more fundamental role in Russia's discourse on the events in Ukraine than the other way around. Whereas the EU refers to Russia mainly to explain the AA's suspension, Russia invokes the EU/West to make sense of the events following it. In its discourse, Russia employs multiple constructions of othering along all three dimensions.

Just like in Russia's discourse on the Orange Revolution, the representation of the EU/West as drawing "dividing lines" through Europe – implying an exclusion of the Russian Self – plays an important role also in its depiction of the events in Ukraine in 2013/14.⁶²³ The *spatial* border-drawing that this representation invokes is blamed on the EU – which resonates with the overall Russian discourse representing the Russian Self as inclusive. Lavrov claims, "[the policy of deepening the dividing lines] is not our mentality".⁶²⁴ Ultimately, however, the spatial exclusion that Moscow bemoans with the 'dividing-line narrative' is at the same time an exclusion of the EU/West by Russia. Whereas Russia represents itself as excluded by the

⁶¹¹ 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech2.

⁶¹² 13.11.25-Barroso & van Rompuy.

⁶¹³ 13.11.21-Füle-Russia impact, 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1, cf. 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech2.

⁶¹⁴ 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech2.

⁶¹⁵ 14.02.18-Ashton-Reaction.

⁶¹⁶ 13.12.20-van Rompuy.

⁶¹⁷ 13.11.25-Füle, cf. 13.11.26-Füle-Ekho Moskvyy, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax.

⁶¹⁸ 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1.

⁶¹⁹ 14.01.28-Barroso, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax; see (European Commission, 2011) on the EU-Russia Strategic Partnership.

⁶²⁰ 14.01.28-Barroso.

⁶²¹ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

⁶²² 14.02.18-Ashton-Reaction.

⁶²³ 13.11.26-MID, 14.01.21-Lavrov, 13.12.14-Lavrov, cf.14.02.20-Lavrov, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Kozhara, 13.12.05-Lavrov.

⁶²⁴ 14.01.21-Lavrov.

EU/West, it simultaneously bans the EU discursively from Europe by depicting the EU's action as un-European: "The attempts to make this country a site for geostrategic fight are devastating for Ukraine and for Europe, because they are contrary to modern European aspirations and the tasks set by prominent European leaders (I mean the President of France Charles de Gaulle), who then spoke about common European space from the Atlantic Ocean to the Urals."⁶²⁵ Here, Russia with its vision of such an economic space implicitly presents itself as the better Europe. *Temporal* othering surfaces in only one articulation, where the EU's approach is represented as "thinking from the last epoch which should be relegated to history or even better disappear".⁶²⁶

Ethical constructions are most prominent. In contrast to the Russian Self, they portray the EU/West as destabilising⁶²⁷ ("[somebody] must be interested in this chaos. We are not. We wish Ukraine to be stable"⁶²⁸), patronising (creating a hierarchy, for example, between Western "teachers" and us "apprentices"⁶²⁹ or imposing *their* will on others⁶³⁰), or irrational and incomprehensible⁶³¹ ("It is very sad for me that our western partners seem to have lost their sense of reality"⁶³²). Russia also invokes the familiar theme of "double standards",⁶³³ which in itself draws a discursive boundary, since it assumes different rules for *them* and *us*. The predication of Western actions as sly,⁶³⁴ secretive,⁶³⁵ greedy,⁶³⁶ "not polite",⁶³⁷ "indecent",⁶³⁸ "offhanded",⁶³⁹ "counterproductive"⁶⁴⁰ or "obtrusive"⁶⁴¹ are other examples.

⁶²⁵ 13.12.24-Lavrov.

⁶²⁶ 14.02.01-Lavrov-Kozhara.

⁶²⁷ 13.11.26-MID, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech, 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.18-MID, 14.02.19-Lavrov.

⁶²⁸ 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁶²⁹ 13.12.05-Lavrov.

⁶³⁰ 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.20-Lavrov, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech, 14.02.14-Lavrov.

⁶³¹ Cf. 13.12.14-Lavrov, 14.02.19-MID, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Kozhara, 14.01.22-Peskov, 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁶³² 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁶³³ 13.12.05-Lavrov, 14.02.20-Lavrov, 13.12.14-Lavrov, 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁶³⁴ 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁶³⁵ 13.12.17-Lavrov, 13.12.20-Lavrov.

⁶³⁶ 13.12.17-Lavrov.

⁶³⁷ 13.12.19-Lavrov, 14.02.14-Lavrov.

⁶³⁸ 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁶³⁹ 14.01.21-Lavrov.

⁶⁴⁰ 14.02.01-Lavrov-Kozhara.

⁶⁴¹ 14.02.19-Lavrov.

(2) References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other

In the EU's Discourse:

The EU's foreign policy discourse mainly refers to Russia's representation of European integration.

EU/European integration: The EU negates the Russian representation of the EU and its integration projects as being exclusive and divisive by imposing a choice on Ukraine: “*There is simply no choice to make between Russia or the European Union, nor is anybody asking Ukraine to renounce its traditional free trade agreement with Russia*”.⁶⁴² Ashton backs this negation with references to “*independent studies*”,⁶⁴³ providing a justification to the subversion of the Russian predication [**European integration–exclusive**] into the EU's [**European integration–compatible**]. The Russian accusation of exclusivity is further refuted when Barroso implies that only someone who is “*against democracy, against stability or against prosperity*”⁶⁴⁴ could call European integration exclusive.

This also touches upon the Russian articulation of [**EU/West–geopolitical**], which is negated⁶⁴⁵ and turned into [**EU-supportive**]: “*For the EU this is not about the creation of spheres of interests, but about respecting the choice of the Ukrainian people [...]*”.⁶⁴⁶

The EU also subverts the Russian articulation of [**EU–imposing**] into [**European integration–optional**]: “*[The AA] was never an imposition, but rather a proposition.*”⁶⁴⁷

Finally, it rearticulates the Russian claim of [**European integration–disadvantageous**] to [**European integration–beneficial**] by marking the narrative of high adjustment costs as “*neither proportionate nor credible*”,⁶⁴⁸ “*neither based on facts nor justified*”,⁶⁴⁹ “*unfounded*”⁶⁵⁰ and “*completely false*”.⁶⁵¹ Those subversions are justified, for example, by

⁶⁴² 13.11.28-Füle-EaP Business, cf. 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax.

⁶⁴³ 14.02.18-Ashton-Reaction.

⁶⁴⁴ 13.11.29-Barroso.

⁶⁴⁵ Cf. also 14.01.28-Barroso.

⁶⁴⁶ 14.02.18-Ashton-Reaction.

⁶⁴⁷ 13.11.29-Barroso, 13.12.20-Barroso-final PC.

⁶⁴⁸ 13.11.28-Füle-EaP Business, cf. 13.11.28-Füle-Tweet.

⁶⁴⁹ 13.12.12-Füle.

⁶⁵⁰ 13.11.25-Füle, cf. 13.12.10-Füle-EP Speech1, 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax.

⁶⁵¹ 14.01.30-Barroso-Tusk.

invoking past experiences.⁶⁵² Only in one instance they are based on an ascription of the Russian Other as panicking.⁶⁵³

In Russia's Discourse:

Lavrov's quote illustrates the general issue Russia takes with the EU's discourse: "*We are most deeply concerned about the events in Ukraine and, in particular, about the way this topic is commented on and affected by the capitals of western countries.*"⁶⁵⁴ Besides the general challenge of the EU's antagonistic discourse, however, the Russian discourse also engages with multiple specific nodal points articulated by the EU:

EU: A major point of engagement is the EU's call to respect Ukraine's freedom to develop relations with Brussels. The EU's articulation of supporting Ukraine's European aspirations is represented in the Russian discourse as contradictory to⁶⁵⁵ and disrespectful of Ukraine's sovereignty: "*Just note the difference in positions. The President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin said many times that everybody must respect sovereignty of the Ukrainian state [sic!], and all of us would respect the choice made by the Ukrainian people. However, western Europeans say: everybody must respect the choice of Ukraine in favour of Europe. I.e. the choice has already been made for the Ukrainians, all the others just need to respect it.*"⁶⁵⁶ The EU's call for respecting Ukraine's European choice is reframed as an imposition of choice "*under the pretext of freedom*",⁶⁵⁷ ascribing to the EU an instrumentalist motive and subverting **[EU-supportive]** into **[EU-patronising]**.⁶⁵⁸

The narrative of imposed choice is closely linked to Russia's representation of the EU as divisive. Lavrov is lamenting that while the EU frames the EaP as a modernising project, non-confrontational and respectful of those countries' traditional historical ties with Russia, the Union actually forces them to "*fulfil all the orders of Brussels, even if they do not comply with existing obligations*".⁶⁵⁹ "*Such an approach is contrary to the logic of the actions aimed at*

⁶⁵² 14.01.30-Barroso-Tusk, 13.11.28-Füle-EaP Business.

⁶⁵³ 13.11.28-Füle-Interfax.

⁶⁵⁴ 14.02.20-Lavrov.

⁶⁵⁵ 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government1, 13.12.17-Lavrov.

⁶⁵⁶ 13.12.14-Lavrov, cf. 13.12.05-Lavrov.

⁶⁵⁷ 14.02.14-Lavrov.

⁶⁵⁸ Cf. also 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.20-Lavrov, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech; (14.02.17-Lukashevich: same subversion, explicitly on US-discourse).

⁶⁵⁹ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

erasing dividing lines in Europe”.⁶⁶⁰ This is a “‘friend-or-foe’ lense [sic!] – with us or against us – [...] a ‘zero result’ game” where it is attempted to “make this country a site for geostrategic fight”.⁶⁶¹ By ascribing such intentions, the EU’s depiction of itself as **[EU–supportive & modernising]** is subverted into **[EU–divisive & geopolitical]**.

Russian articulations have further referred to the EU’s discourse as differing from individual member states. Talking about possible trilateral consultations between the EU, Ukraine and Russia, Lavrov notes: “Despite the words of some functionaries of the European Commission, it seemed to me today that member states of the EU understand the need of such honest talk rather than attempts to resolve issues behind somebody’s back.”⁶⁶² In an instrumentalising confirmation, the EU’s discourse is picked up to articulate the Russian representation of **[EU–divided]**.

EU Integration: The Russian discourse also subverts the EU’s representation of European integration. Putin comments on the AA’s suspension: “They say that the Ukrainian people are being taken away their dream, but if you look at the content of those agreements, many will not live to see those dreams because the conditions are so tough”.⁶⁶³ In a similar vein, Lavrov notes that “behind wails that Ukraine is making a historical mistake, I just see [the EU’s] awareness of the lost opportunity to get a large market without giving anything in exchange.”⁶⁶⁴ This subversion of **[European integration–beneficial]** into **[European integration–disadvantageous]** is justified, for example, with a reference to “[many] experts”,⁶⁶⁵ who predict for Ukraine “many years of economic disarray, de-industrialisation, the ruining of farms and, as a consequence, the growth of unemployment and a reduction in the level of life of the population”⁶⁶⁶ in case the AA were to be signed. In another justifying subversion, the EU’s representation of Ukraine’s European integration is challenged in favour of the Russian one: “the considerations that Ukraine should repeat the path taken by Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe, seem to be incorrect”,⁶⁶⁷ claims Lavrov, since the two cases are supposedly not comparable.

⁶⁶⁰ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

⁶⁶¹ 13.12.24-Lavrov.

⁶⁶² 13.12.17-Lavrov, cf. 13.12.20-Lavrov.

⁶⁶³ 13.12.02-Putin.

⁶⁶⁴ 13.12.05-Lavrov.

⁶⁶⁵ 13.11.26-MID, cf. 13.12.05-Lavrov.

⁶⁶⁶ 13.11.26-MID, cf. 13.12.14-Lavrov.

⁶⁶⁷ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

Russia: The Russian discourse engages with the EU's narrative of Russian economic pressure leading to the suspension of the AA, which is represented as intolerable: *"This and other statements made by European politicians and EU leaders of late, leave us puzzled and disappointed. We call it 'unfairly shifting the blame' in Russian. They are evidently caused by an aspiration to make Russia responsible for the problems in Ukrainian society due to the policy of explicit pressure used by the European Union against Ukraine and other countries"*.⁶⁶⁸ The allegation of **[Russia–pressuring]** is thus reversed. In a justifying subversion, the Russian discourse denies the allegation (*"After all, we are not pushing Ukraine anywhere"*;⁶⁶⁹ *"without blackmailing anybody"*⁶⁷⁰) and explains that it only acts reasonably, protecting its own economy.⁶⁷¹ *"Therefore, I [Putin] would want to ask our friends in Brussels, my good personal friends in the Commission, to refrain from this harsh language. Should we, in order to please them, need to strangle whole sectors of our economy?"*⁶⁷² In this way, **[Russia–pressuring]** is turned into **[Russia–rational]**.

Opposition/protesters: The Russian discourse attacks the EU's representation of the opposition/protesters. The EU's attempts to *"put the picture in the template framework – 'good' opposition against 'bad' government – are short-sighted"*,⁶⁷³ and Western countries *"prefer to avoid talking about what Maidan actually is"*.⁶⁷⁴

The EU's **[opposition/protesters–European]** is negated for example by invoking *"radical slogans having nothing to do with European culture"*.⁶⁷⁵ A subversion into **[opposition/protesters–un-European]** is justified by referring to actions that stand in *"direct contradiction to the statements that the opposition is committed to democracy and European values"*.⁶⁷⁶

Secondly, the EU's representation of the protests as predominantly peaceful is challenged: *"Look at western mass media showing pictures from Ukraine. Everything is lovely: peaceful opposition members request fairness and order, but 'brutal' authorities use force to suppress them. [...] To that end, I would like to remind my colleagues that there are Russian TV channels [...] which show those extremist [sic!], including anti-Semitic, forces in detail, which are*

⁶⁶⁸ 13.11.26-MID, cf. 13.12.17-Lavrov.

⁶⁶⁹ 13.12.19-Putin.

⁶⁷⁰ 13.12.17-Lavrov.

⁶⁷¹ 13.12.17-Lavrov.

⁶⁷² 13.11.26-Putin.

⁶⁷³ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

⁶⁷⁴ 14.02.20-Lavrov.

⁶⁷⁵ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

⁶⁷⁶ 14.02.03-MID-Opposition.

currently being faced by the Ukrainian authorities and the opposition. Unfortunately, this process is silenced.”⁶⁷⁷ Keeping silent about all the violence of protesters on Maidan, Western countries “appeal to the government (and only the government) to stop the violence against ‘evidently peaceful demonstrators’”.⁶⁷⁸ Ascribing ignorance to Western countries, who in the face of radicals are “burying their heads like an ostrich”,⁶⁷⁹ the EU’s depiction of **[opposition/protesters–peaceful]** is subverted into **[(opposition)/protesters–violent]**. Thirdly, Russia is also questioning the authenticity of the protests insinuated in the EU’s **[opposition/protests-representative]**. According to Putin, “everything that is going on at the moment indicates that this is not at all a revolution but a well-planned action”.⁶⁸⁰ The protests are therefore inauthentic **[opposition/protesters-inauthentic]**.

Authorities/Yanukovych: Three examples show, how Russia engages with the EU’s antagonistic representation of the authorities/Yanukovych: Through an instrumentalising confirmation, Putin transmits the EU’s predication of the authorities to the protesters: “When calling upon the Ukrainian authorities and president Yanukovych to act in a civilized manner, we must also pay attention to his political opponents.”⁶⁸¹ In this way, Russia’s **[protesters–violent]** is reinforced by reiterating the EU’s **[authorities–violent]**. By ascribing to the West a “condemnatory bias”⁶⁸² towards the Ukrainian government, Putin further subverts this link. A justifying subversion, finally, turns the EU’s **[authorities–violent]** into Russia’s **[authorities–stabilising]** by arguing that “[riots], violent actions serve a sufficient reason to restrict [the freedom of expression]” – just like in any European country – and that “[a] state should be strong to be democratic.”⁶⁸³

(3) Summary

The preceding paragraphs have traced interaction between EU and Russian discourses in the articulation of their respective interpretations of the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine in 2013/14. For Russia, the representation of the EU/West plays a much more central role for making sense of the event than vice versa. The EU discourse’s engagement with the Russian

⁶⁷⁷ 14.02.17-Lavrov.

⁶⁷⁸ 14.02.20-Lavrov.

⁶⁷⁹ 14.02.19-Lavrov, cf.14.02.20-Lavrov.

⁶⁸⁰ 13.12.02-Putin.

⁶⁸¹ 14.01.28-Putin.

⁶⁸² 14.02.19-Putin.

⁶⁸³ 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech.

version is mainly aimed at reasserting the depiction of European integration as optional, beneficial, and compatible with Russia's interests. It does not refer, however, to any other antagonistic representations articulated by Russia.

The Russian discourse, on the other hand, interacts extensively with multiple nodal points articulated by the EU. Not only does it challenge the EU's representation of the Union's own role and that of European integration, it also engages with the EU's depiction of the Russian Self and backs up its own interpretation of the events on Maidan by reasserting the opposition/protesters as un-European, violent and inauthentic as well as claiming a stabilising role for the authorities and Yanukovich.

5. The Annexation of Crimea (2014)

a) Context

Chronologically, the annexation of Crimea neatly follows the analysis of Maidan (see preceding event). After Yanukovich left Kyiv on 21 February 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament announced early presidential elections for 27 May and appointed Oleksandr Turchynov acting President. A new government under the leadership of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk was elected on 27 February.

During the last days of February, ‘little green men’ – unidentified armed soldiers – appeared in Crimea, occupying the parliament (Supreme Council), government buildings and key infrastructure sites (Ukraine-Analysen, 2014d:24-25). While being occupied, the parliament dismissed acting Crimean Prime Minister Anatolii Mohyliov, replaced him with the head of the Russian Unity party Sergey Aksyonov (Ukraine-Analysen, 2014d:25; Reuters, 2014), and set a referendum on Crimea’s status for 25 May (Interfax-Ukraine, 2014). Journalists were excluded and the exact circumstances of the procedures remain unclear. The referendum, which would later be rescheduled to 16 March (Ukraine-Analysen, 2014d:27), was denounced illegal by among others Ukraine’s central election commission and the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission (Ukrayinska Pravda, 2014; Venice Commission, 2014).

Aksyonov officially asked Russia to intervene militarily in Crimea in order to protect Russian-speaking citizens (Ukraine-Analysen, 2014d:25). On 1 March, Russian President Vladimir Putin received permission from the Russian Federation Council to use military force in Ukraine until “the socio-political situation in this country is normalised” (Federation Council, 2014). Based on a partition treaty from 1997 and an extension thereof in 2010, Russia had part of its Black Sea Fleet stationed outside the Crimean city of Sevastopol (Biersack & O’Lear, 2014:256-257).

In early March, Ukrainian military facilities were blocked by little green men and Ukrainian forces were called upon to hand over their weapons and to defect to the Russian side (Ukraine-Analysen, 2014d:26-27). While reports suggested that Russian soldiers were implicated in the events (Financial Times, 2014; The Guardian, 2014; RFERL, 2014), Putin denounced those troops as “local self-defense forces”.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸⁴ 14.03.04-Putin-PC; Putin would later admit the involvement of Russian soldiers.

On the extraordinary European Council summit on 6 March, EU leaders suspended talks with Russia over visa facilitation and a new bilateral agreement.⁶⁸⁵ Earlier, EU member states of the G8 forum had already announced their boycott of the G8 meeting planned in Sochi later that year.⁶⁸⁶

The Crimean status-referendum was held, as planned, on 16 March. According to the announced end result, 96,77% voted in favour of Crimea joining Russia (Washington Post, 2014). The following day, the Crimean Supreme Council declared the formal independence of the peninsula as the ‘Republic of Crimea’ (Ukraine-Analysen, 2014e:28), which was promptly recognised by Russia.⁶⁸⁷ On this day, the EU introduced a first set of sanctions, consisting of asset freezes and travel bans against 21 “persons responsible for actions which undermine or threaten the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine”.⁶⁸⁸ Twelve additional names would be added shortly after.⁶⁸⁹

The next day, on 18 March, Putin and representatives of the Crimean government signed the ‘Treaty on the Accession of the Republic of Crimea to the Russian Federation’.⁶⁹⁰ EU officials called the act an illegal annexation and announce not to recognise it.⁶⁹¹

On 21 March, EU representatives and Ukrainian Prime Minister Yatsenyuk signed the political provisions of the Association Agreement (AA) between the EU and Ukraine, the rejection of which by former President Yanukovych had sparked the protests on Maidan a few months before.

b) Analysis

The discourse analysis focusses on the annexation of Crimea as a floating signifier which is represented differently in the EU’s and Russia’s antagonistic discourses. The analysis captured 42 documents of the Russian and 47 documents of the EU’s foreign policy discourse from 1 to 31 March 2014.

⁶⁸⁵ 14.03.06-EC-Statement.

⁶⁸⁶ 14.03.03-Council.

⁶⁸⁷ 14.03.17-Putin-Recognition.

⁶⁸⁸ 14.03.17-Council-Sanctions.

⁶⁸⁹ 14.03.21-Council-Sanctions.

⁶⁹⁰ 14.03.18-Kremlin-Signing.

⁶⁹¹ 14.03.18-van Rompuy & Barroso-Statement.

While the annexation of Crimea and the representation thereof are tightly intertwined with the change of government in Ukraine a few months earlier, representations of Maidan have been omitted where not directly relevant for the depiction of the events in Crimea.

i) Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:

Nodal Points in the EU's Discourse

Self (EU): The EU represents itself as a committed supporter of Ukraine,⁶⁹² its people,⁶⁹³ and its government.⁶⁹⁴ The EU's efforts include signing the association agreement,⁶⁹⁵ macro-financial assistance,⁶⁹⁶ and trade measures.⁶⁹⁷

The Union is committed to international law⁶⁹⁸ and works towards stability⁶⁹⁹ in Ukraine and Europe. It considers for itself to bear a “special responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity in Europe”.⁷⁰⁰ The EU is united⁷⁰¹ in its solidarity⁷⁰² with Ukraine and its position towards Russia. In contrast to the “separation and segregation”⁷⁰³ practiced by Russia, the Union stands for “embracing and integrating the differences”.⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹² 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.06-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions.

⁶⁹³ 14.03.03-Ashton-Arrival, 14.03.12-Barroso-Statement.

⁶⁹⁴ 14.03.20-EC, cf. 14.03.21-Barroso & van Rompuy, 14.03.26-EEAS.

⁶⁹⁵ 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.06-Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.21-van Rompuy.

⁶⁹⁶ 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.06-Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following.

⁶⁹⁷ 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.06-Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine.

⁶⁹⁸ 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.06-Barroso.

⁶⁹⁹ 14.03.06-Barroso, cf. 14.03.20-Barroso, 14.03.06-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.19-Rehn, 14.03.05-Barroso-Remarks.

⁷⁰⁰ 14.03.06-EC, cf. 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.16-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso.

⁷⁰¹ 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.05-Barroso-PC, 14.03.06-Barroso.

⁷⁰² 14.03.06-Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.21-Barroso & van Rompuy.

⁷⁰³ 14.03.01-Barroso.

⁷⁰⁴ 14.03.01-Barroso.

Russia: With its illegitimate and “unprovoked violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity”,⁷⁰⁵ Russia is represented as exclusively responsible for the crisis.⁷⁰⁶ Russia’s unacceptable⁷⁰⁷ illegal⁷⁰⁸ actions, first the deployment of armed forces⁷⁰⁹ and then the annexation of Crimea, are dividing⁷¹⁰ and “[destabilising] the situation”.⁷¹¹ It needs to be sanctioned⁷¹² in order to “show to Russia that some of this behaviour is simply unacceptable”.⁷¹³ Russia’s behaviour is “unthinkable in the 21st century”⁷¹⁴ and thus deeply anachronistic.⁷¹⁵ While the EU is principally interested in a productive relationship, Russia is endangering it.⁷¹⁶

Ukraine: Ukraine is threatened by and a victim of Russia’s actions⁷¹⁷ – this representation is underlined by the constant affirmation of the need to respect Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁷¹⁸ Ukrainians are accorded agency, emphasising their “right to choose their own future”⁷¹⁹ and, at the same time, their “decisive choice in favour of our European

⁷⁰⁵ 14.03.06-EC, cf. 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Tweet, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.16-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Council-Sanctions, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.01-Barroso, 14.03.01-Füle, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.24-G7.

⁷⁰⁶ 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.06-EC, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.12-G7, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.17-Füle, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.21-Barroso & van Rompuy, 14.03.24-G7.

⁷⁰⁷ 14.03.06-Barroso, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Statement, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso.

⁷⁰⁸ 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, cf. 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.24-G7.

⁷⁰⁹ 14.03.01-Ashton, 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.03-Council.

⁷¹⁰ 14.03.01-Barroso, 14.03.20-EC.

⁷¹¹ 14.03.06-EC, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.20-EC, cf. 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.26-EEAS, 14.03.01-Ashton.

⁷¹² 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.06-EC, 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.12-G7, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.17-Council-Sanctions, 14.03.17-Füle, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.21-Ashton, 14.03.21-Council, 14.03.21-Barroso & van Rompuy, 14.03.24-G7.

⁷¹³ 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso.

⁷¹⁴ 14.03.01-Barroso.

⁷¹⁵ 14.03.05-Barroso-Remarks, 14.03.12-Barroso-Tweet WW1, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.12-Barroso-Statement, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso.

⁷¹⁶ 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.06-EC, 14.03.06-Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.21-Ashton, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions.

⁷¹⁷ 14.03.06-EC, 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.24-G7, 14.03.17-Füle, 14.03.12-G7.

⁷¹⁸ 14.03.01-Ashton, cf. 14.03.01-Füle, 14.03.05-Barroso-Remarks, 14.03.06-EC, 14.03.18-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.18-van Rompuy-Tweet Crimea, 14.03.24-G7, 14.03.01-Barroso.

⁷¹⁹ 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, cf. 14.03.06-Barroso, 14.03.06-van Rompuy & Barroso.

values”.⁷²⁰ Reiterating the need for reforms,⁷²¹ however, the country is depicted as un-finished and developing.

Ukrainian government: Yatsenyuk’s government is represented as legitimate and supported by the EU.⁷²² Its efforts to stabilise⁷²³ Ukraine and its “measured response”⁷²⁴ are commended. The new government’s ambitious work⁷²⁵ – also with regard to reforms – is contrasted to the “Yanukovich era of lies, bribes, manipulation, blackmail and poverty”.⁷²⁶

Crimea & Crimean authorities: While being the eponymous reference in this discourse, Crimea as such is not represented in a particular way other than a part of Ukraine. It is not granted any agency on its own. The Crimean Parliament is merely mentioned as the initiator of the illegal referendum.⁷²⁷

Annexation: According to the EU’s discourse, the referendum on Crimea’s status is “contrary to the Ukrainian Constitution and therefore illegal”.⁷²⁸ The “so-called referendum”⁷²⁹ is deeply flawed,⁷³⁰ not least due to the “intimidating presence of Russian troops”.⁷³¹ It is therefore “illegitimate and its outcome will not be recognised”.⁷³²

The annexation itself is depicted as illegal.⁷³³ Consequently, the “European Union does not and will not recognise the annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation.”⁷³⁴

⁷²⁰ 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, cf. 14.03.21-van Rompuy, 14.03.06-Barroso.

⁷²¹ 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.21-van Rompuy.

⁷²² 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.06-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.03-Council.

⁷²³ 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.26-EEAS, 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.03-Council.

⁷²⁴ 14.03.01-Ashton, 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.20-EC.

⁷²⁵ 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.21-Barroso & van Rompuy, 14.03.26-EEAS, 14.03.24-G7.

⁷²⁶ 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks.

⁷²⁷ 14.03.06-EC, cf. 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Council-Sanctions, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.06-Barroso.

⁷²⁸ 14.03.06-EC, cf. 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Council-Sanctions, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.06-Barroso, 14.03.12-G7, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.21-Ashton, 14.03.24-G7.

⁷²⁹ 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.21-Ashton.

⁷³⁰ 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.12-G7.

⁷³¹ 14.03.12-G7, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions.

⁷³² 14.03.16-van Rompuy & Barroso, cf. 14.03.16-van Rompuy-Tweet Referendum, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.12-Füle, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.18-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.19-Rehn, 14.03.12-G7.

⁷³³ 14.03.12-G7, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, cf. 14.03.19-Rehn, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.24-Füle, 14.03.24-G7, 14.03.26-EEAS.

⁷³⁴ 14.03.18-van Rompuy & Barroso, cf. 14.03.18-van Rompuy-Tweet Crimea, 14.03.19-Rehn, 14.03.20-Barroso, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.24-G7.

Reminiscent of the past century, the annexation is anachronistic⁷³⁵ and destabilising, since it “could have grave implications for the legal order that protects the unity and sovereignty of all states”.⁷³⁶

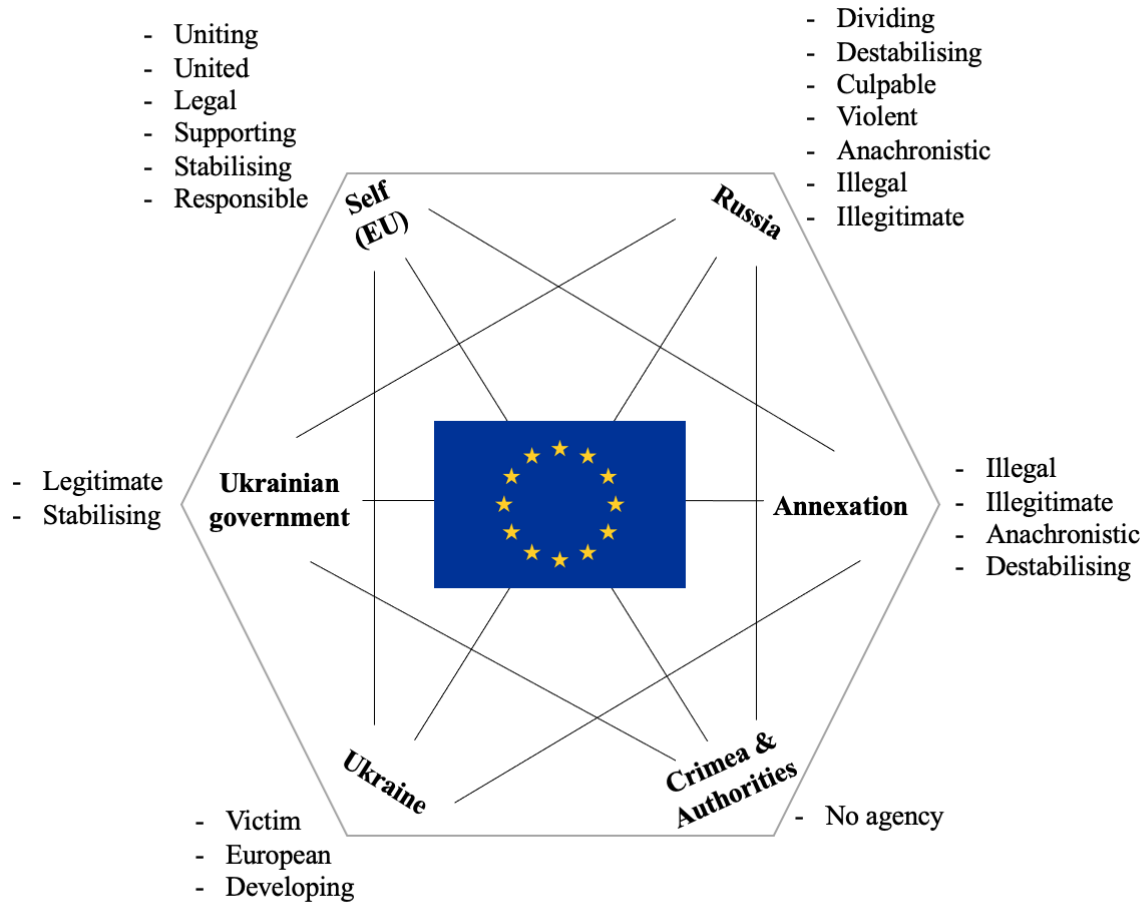


Figure 10: Discursive structure around nodal points, annexation of Crimea, EU

⁷³⁵ 14.03.26-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Tweet WW1, 14.03.12-Barroso-Statement.

⁷³⁶ 14.03.12-G7.

Nodal Points in Russia's Discourse

Self (Russia): Russian actions, including a possible deployment of Russian troops “‘on the territory of Ukraine’ — not ‘against Ukraine’”,⁷³⁷ are represented as legal⁷³⁸ and legitimate.⁷³⁹ “Russia cannot ignore the calls for help”.⁷⁴⁰ At the same time, it is open for dialogue and cooperation.⁷⁴¹ Russia depicts itself not only as the protector of Russians and Russian-speaking citizens in Ukraine,⁷⁴² but also of Ukrainians.⁷⁴³ Russia's motives are thus genuine, it is on a “humanitarian mission”.⁷⁴⁴ Within an inclusive Russia, all Crimean ethnic minorities can now enjoy their rights.⁷⁴⁵

EU/West: While explicit references to the EU are few and far between, the West is generally represented as opportunistic and selfish,⁷⁴⁶ not acting according to legal norms: “Our Western partners, led by the United States of America, prefer to be guided in their practical policy not by international law, but by the law of the stronger.”⁷⁴⁷ For “some Western politicians”, “Ukraine is merely a geopolitical playground”.⁷⁴⁸ Due to this opportunism, it ultimately is the West who is to blame for the breakup of Ukraine's territorial integrity: “[Russia has] always respected the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state, unlike, by the way, those who sacrificed the unity of Ukraine to their political ambitions.”⁷⁴⁹ Complicit with the new Ukrainian government,⁷⁵⁰ the West is thus divisive and confrontational, with its actions “directed both against Ukraine and Russia, and against integration in the Eurasian space.”⁷⁵¹

Ukraine: Ukraine is Russia's “fraternal country”,⁷⁵² its “closest neighbour”⁷⁵³ and “closest

⁷³⁷ 14.03.01-Churkin.

⁷³⁸ 14.03.02-Putin-UNSG, 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.07-Putin, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Introduction, 14.03.03-Churkin.

⁷³⁹ 14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.03-Lavrov, 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁷⁴⁰ 14.03.07-Putin.

⁷⁴¹ 14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, 14.03.19-Churkin.

⁷⁴² 14.03.02-Putin-Obama, 14.03.02-Putin-UNSG, 14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.05-Lavrov, 14.03.03-Lavrov, 14.03.03-MID.

⁷⁴³ 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.05-Lavrov, 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC, 14.03.03-Churkin.

⁷⁴⁴ 14.03.04-Putin.

⁷⁴⁵ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma.

⁷⁴⁶ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁷⁴⁷ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁷⁴⁸ 14.03.03-Churkin.

⁷⁴⁹ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁷⁵⁰ 14.03.01-Churkin, 14.03.08-Lavrov.

⁷⁵¹ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁷⁵² 14.03.01-Churkin, cf. 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma.

⁷⁵³ 14.03.04-Putin.

[relative]”.⁷⁵⁴ According to Putin, “relations with Ukraine, with the fraternal Ukrainian people have been and remain and will always be the most important for us.”⁷⁵⁵

Unfortunately, with the recent shifts of power, Ukraine has gone astray. Russia, however, is “interested in overcoming this crisis to let our fraternal people breathe freely, to let Ukraine recover from this intrigue”⁷⁵⁶ and to “[overcome] the current tragic pages in their history”.⁷⁵⁷

Ukrainian government: While Yanukovych remains the “democratically and legally elected President”,⁷⁵⁸ Yatsenyuk’s government is represented as illegitimate⁷⁵⁹ and undemocratic.⁷⁶⁰ “Instead of the promised establishment of a Government of national unity, a so-called Government of victors has been formed.”⁷⁶¹ Those “people, who have come to power [, are] mainly supported by extremists, Neo-Nazis, radicals, who do not consider the interests of a large portion of the Ukrainian people”.⁷⁶² As such, they are not representative of all Ukrainians⁷⁶³ and discriminate minorities:⁷⁶⁴ “the ‘champions’ intend to use the results of their ‘victory’ to violate fundamental human rights and liberties [of Russian-speakers and Russians]”,⁷⁶⁵ predominantly in the southeast and Crimea.⁷⁶⁶ Against this background, Kyiv wants to “destabilize the situation on the peninsula”.⁷⁶⁷

Crimea & Crimean authorities: Crimea is represented as essentially Russian:⁷⁶⁸ “In the heart, in the minds of people, Crimea has always been and remains an integral part of Russia”.⁷⁶⁹ Khrushchev giving the peninsula away to Ukraine in the 1950s was illegal and illegitimate.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁵⁴ 14.03.18-Putin-Miting.

⁷⁵⁵ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, cf. 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma.

⁷⁵⁶ 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC.

⁷⁵⁷ 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma, cf. 14.03.18-Putin-Miting.

⁷⁵⁸ 14.03.01-Churkin, cf. 14.03.04-Putin.

⁷⁵⁹ 14.03.01-Churkin, 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.08-Lavrov, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC.

⁷⁶⁰ 14.03.01-Churkin, 14.03.03-Churkin.

⁷⁶¹ 14.03.03-Churkin.

⁷⁶² 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC, cf. 14.03.02-Putin-Obama, 14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.03-MID, 14.03.08-Lavrov, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁷⁶³ 14.03.07-Putin, 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC, 14.03.21-Lavrov-Speech.

⁷⁶⁴ 14.03.01-Churkin, 14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma.

⁷⁶⁵ 14.03.03-Lavrov.

⁷⁶⁶ 14.03.02-Putin-Obama.

⁷⁶⁷ 14.03.01-Churkin, 14.03.01-MID, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma.

⁷⁶⁸ 14.03.18-Kremlin-Treaty, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, 14.03.14-Lavrov.

⁷⁶⁹ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, cf. 14.03.03-Churkin.

⁷⁷⁰ 14.03.15-Churkin, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, 14.03.19-Churkin.

Crimea is represented as a victim, threatened by “ultranationalists, who endanger the life and legal interests of Russians and the entire Russian-speaking population”.⁷⁷¹

In contrast, “popular self-defence brigades”,⁷⁷² which were created “to prevent a repetition of the events on Maidan”⁷⁷³ on the peninsula, as well as the “legally elected authorities of this Autonomous Republic”⁷⁷⁴ are represented as legitimate. Crimeans have a right to self-determination,⁷⁷⁵ and it became increasingly difficult for them to determine their own fate within Ukraine.⁷⁷⁶

‘Reunification’: Russia respects “the will of the Crimean people”⁷⁷⁷ and recognises the results of the referendum, which was carried out “in full compliance with democratic procedures and international legal norms”.⁷⁷⁸ It is legitimate against the backdrop of the “violent coup [...] in Kyiv”,⁷⁷⁹ and because the Crimean population could express its will freely.⁷⁸⁰

Crimea’s reunification with Russia, too, was “in full compliance with principles of international law”.⁷⁸¹ “[The return of Crimea and Sevastopol after a hard, long, exhaustive voyage] to their native harbor, to their native shores, to the port of permanent registry, to Russia”⁷⁸² is based on the genuine will⁷⁸³ of the Crimean people and constitutes a natural, emancipating development, where “[a] historic injustice has been righted”.⁷⁸⁴ Crimea’s reunification with Russia is the consequence of “the striving of the Russian world, of historical Russia to restore unity”.⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁷¹ 14.03.03-Lavrov, cf. 14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.03-MID, 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.07-Peskov, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁷⁷² 14.03.03-Churkin, cf. 14.03.01-Churkin, 14.03.01-MID, 14.03.04-Putin.

⁷⁷³ 14.03.14-Lavrov, cf. 14.03.04-Lavrov, 14.03.15-Churkin, 14.03.04-Putin.

⁷⁷⁴ 14.03.03-Lavrov, cf. 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.05-Lavrov, 14.03.09-Putin.

⁷⁷⁵ 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.15-Churkin, cf. 14.03.18-Kremlin-Treaty, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁷⁷⁶ 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma, 14.03.21-Lavrov-Speech.

⁷⁷⁷ 14.03.14-Lavrov, cf. 14.03.16-Putin, 14.03.15-Churkin, 14.03.30-Lavrov.

⁷⁷⁸ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, cf. 14.03.20-Lavrov-Introduction, 14.03.09-Putin, 14.03.14-Putin, 14.03.16-Putin, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma, 14.03.17-Putin-Obama, 14.03.11-MID, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Introduction, 14.03.30-Lavrov.

⁷⁷⁹ 14.03.13-Churkin, cf. 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma, 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC.

⁷⁸⁰ 14.03.17-Putin-Obama, 14.03.21-Lavrov-Speech, 14.03.18-Kremlin-Signing.

⁷⁸¹ 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma, cf. 14.03.25-Lavrov, 14.03.30-Lavrov.

⁷⁸² 14.03.18-Putin-Miting.

⁷⁸³ 14.03.18-Putin-Lukashenka, 14.03.18-Kremlin-Signing, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, 14.03.19-Churkin, 14.03.29-Lavrov.

⁷⁸⁴ 14.03.19-Churkin, cf. 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC.

⁷⁸⁵ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

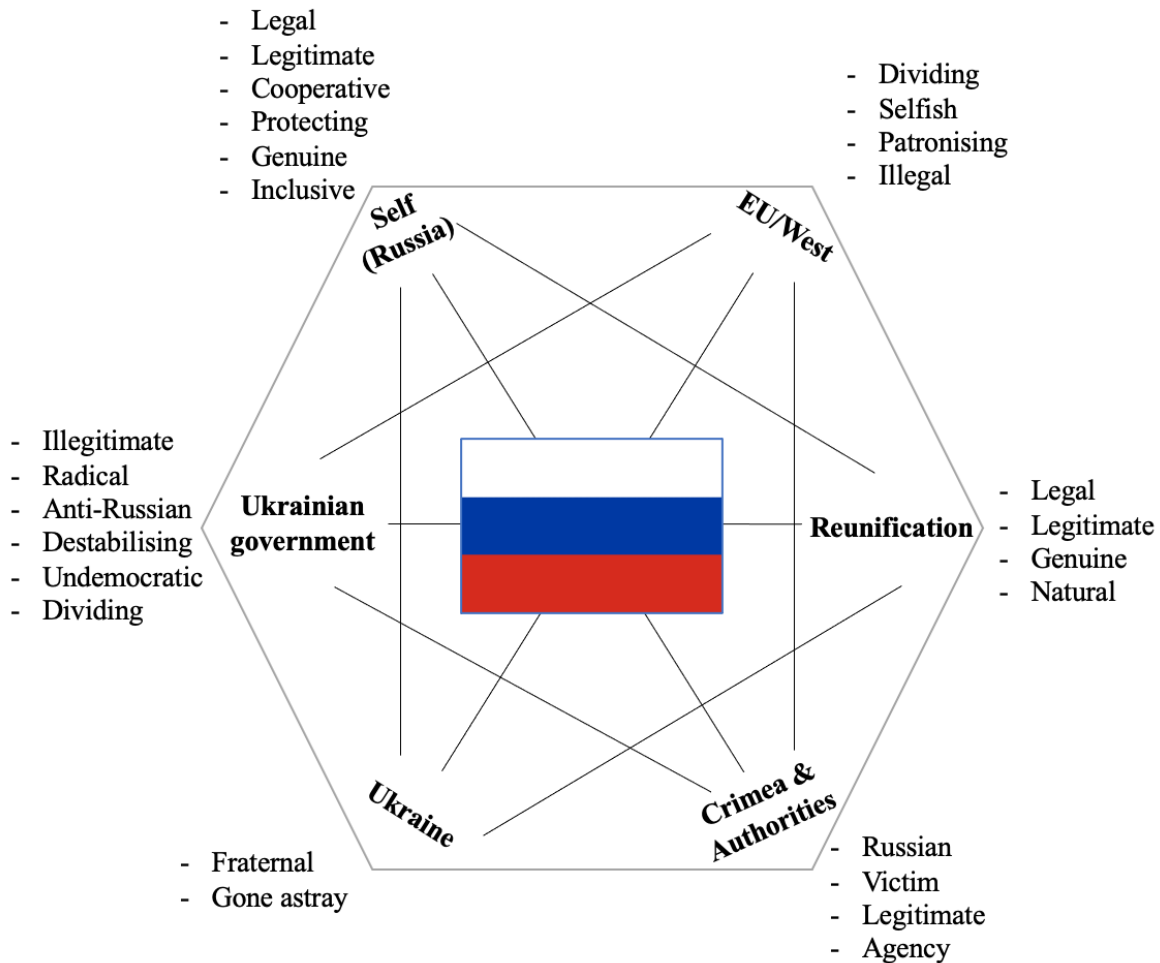


Figure 11: Discursive structure around nodal points, annexation of Crimea, Russia

ii) *Discursive Interaction*

(1) *Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse*

In the EU's Discourse:

In the EU's discourse on the annexation of Crimea, the representation of Russia plays a central role for imbuing this event with meaning. Russia is portrayed as the sole root and driver of the

situation.⁷⁸⁶ Consequently, Russia is othered extensively along all three analytical dimensions. Whereas some subtle spatial demarcations between the EU Self and the Russian Other could be identified, temporal Othering is arguably most pronounced in comparison to other events under analysis.⁷⁸⁷

Among the *spatial* constructions are the claim that Russia is “isolating itself”⁷⁸⁸ but also articulations of Russia as dividing, that is blaming Russia for creating boundaries: “The Russian actions are in clear breach of the Helsinki process, which in the past 40 years has contributed to overcoming divisions in Europe and building a peaceful and united continent.”⁷⁸⁹ Some articulations combine spatial and temporal boundary-drawing, by arguing that a given behaviour is not compatible with *today’s* (temporal) *Europe* (spatial): “The European Council firmly believes that there is no place for the use of force and coercion to change borders in Europe in the 21st century.”⁷⁹⁰

Other *temporal* constructions focus on the depiction of Russia’s actions as explicitly anachronistic, as “simply unacceptable in the 21st century”,⁷⁹¹ as “a disgrace in the 21st century”,⁷⁹² or as “outdated logic of the balance of powers”.⁷⁹³ Besides references to the First World War (“Simply not possible that 100 yrs after WWI, we see annexation of 1 part of a country by another”⁷⁹⁴), Russia’s behaviour is further linked to the Cold War: “The page of last century’s history should be turned and not re-written. I believe in a European continent where the rule of law prevails over the rule of force, where sovereignty is shared and not limited, where the logic of cooperation replaces the logic of confrontation. We don’t need new Cold Wars.”⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁸⁶ See for example 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.06-EC, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.12-G7, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.17-Füle, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.21-Barroso & van Rompuy, 14.03.24-G7.

⁷⁸⁷ All identified temporal constructions, however, have been articulated by a single figure, then President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso.

⁷⁸⁸ 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions.

⁷⁸⁹ 14.03.20-EC, see also 14.03.01-Barroso.

⁷⁹⁰ 14.03.20-EC, cf. 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Statement, 14.03.01-Barroso.

⁷⁹¹ 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso.

⁷⁹² 14.03.26-van Rompuy & Barroso.

⁷⁹³ 14.03.05-Barroso-Remarks.

⁷⁹⁴ 14.03.12-Barroso-Tweet WW1, cf. 14.03.12-Barroso-Statement.

⁷⁹⁵ 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine.

Ethical constructions in the EU’s discourse involve the representation of Russia’s behaviour as illegal,⁷⁹⁶ unacceptable,⁷⁹⁷ destabilising,⁷⁹⁸ or aggressive.⁷⁹⁹ Conveying that Russia needs to be punished or sanctioned⁸⁰⁰ further implies the EU’s normative superiority. In the broader context of Ukraine as situated between competing integration projects, a tweet posted by then Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle neatly illustrates the EU’s practice of discursive othering: “#Russia President's #Putin actions in&around #Crimea provide clear answer what is main difference between EU & Euroasian [sic!] Union (in making).”⁸⁰¹

Depictions of Russia as an important actor to whom the EU desires to have a productive relationship to some extent qualify the overall othering of Moscow in the EU’s discourse. Frequent claims that Russia’s mistakes are endangering such a relationship, however, uphold a clear normative hierarchy and sustain the divide between the EU Self and the Russian Other.

In Russia’s Discourse:

In Russia’s discourse, the representation of the EU/West plays a less prominent role for making sense of the event. Whereas explicit invocations of the EU are rare, general references to the West usually fulfil the function of explaining disorder in Ukraine – which in the Russian discourse is a fundamental justification for legitimising Crimea’s reunification with Russia.

No *spatial* constructions could be identified and only one *temporal* one whereby Putin accuses the West of a “Cold War rhetoric”, not taking Russia seriously.⁸⁰²

Ethical constructions are plenty, however. Some articulations clearly illustrate the drawing of discursive boundaries, such as Churkin’s claim that “[while] the Ukraine is merely a geopolitical playground for some Western politicians, for us it is a brotherly country to which

⁷⁹⁶ 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, cf. 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.17-Ashton-Following, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.24-G7.

⁷⁹⁷ 14.03.06-Barroso, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.12-Barroso-Statement, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso.

⁷⁹⁸ 14.03.06-EC, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.20-EC, cf. 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.26-EEAS, 14.03.01-Ashton.

⁷⁹⁹ 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.03-Ashton-Following.

⁸⁰⁰ 14.03.03-Ashton-Following, 14.03.03-Council, 14.03.06-EC, 14.03.06-van Rompuy-Remarks, 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine, 14.03.12-G7, 14.03.17-Council-Conclusions, 14.03.17-Council-Sanctions, 14.03.17-Füle, 14.03.17-Ashton-PC, 14.03.20-EC, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.21-Ashton, 14.03.21-Council, 14.03.21-Barroso & van Rompuy, 14.03.24-G7.

⁸⁰¹ 14.03.18-Füle-Tweet Putin.

⁸⁰² 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

we are bound by many centuries of common history.”⁸⁰³ Others formulate a clear ethical condemnation, for example the accusation that the EU’s visa policy towards Crimeans constitutes “the grossest violation of human rights”⁸⁰⁴ or the declaration that “our Western partners crossed the line, behaved rudely, irresponsibly and unprofessionally”.⁸⁰⁵ Ethical constructions further include representations of the EU/West as inconsistent,⁸⁰⁶ ruthless,⁸⁰⁷ untrustworthy,⁸⁰⁸ short-sighted⁸⁰⁹ and hysterical.⁸¹⁰

(2) *References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other*

In the EU’s Discourse:

In contrast to the significant role the representation of Russia plays in the EU’s discourse and to the numerous articulations creating discursive boundaries along various dimensions, the EU hardly refers to Russia’s *discourse*. Only one reference could be identified, by which Commission President Barroso subverts the Russian representation of **[reunification-legitimate/legal]** into the EU’s **[annexation-illegal]**, invoking a legal justification: “Any attempt to legitimise a referendum in Crimea is contrary to the Ukrainian constitution and international law and quite clearly illegal.”⁸¹¹

In Russia’s Discourse:

Russia, by contrast, – and despite the secondary role its representation of the EU/West plays for its discourse on Crimea – refers to the EU’s discourse extensively. It primarily engages with the EU’s representation of Russia and the annexation.

⁸⁰³ 14.03.03-Churkin.

⁸⁰⁴ 14.03.30-Lavrov.

⁸⁰⁵ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁸⁰⁶ 14.03.21-Lavrov-Speech.

⁸⁰⁷ 14.03.29-Lavrov, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁸⁰⁸ 14.03.25-Lavrov.

⁸⁰⁹ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁸¹⁰ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁸¹¹ 14.03.12-Barroso-Ukraine.

Russia: A major point of contestation is the EU’s representation of Russia as acting illegally [**Russia-illegal**]. In his famous speech on 18 February, Putin engages with it extensively: *“what do we hear today from our colleagues from Western Europe, from North America? We are told that we are violating international law. [...] what are we allegedly violating? Yes, the President of the Russian Federation received from the upper house of parliament the right to use the Armed Forces in Ukraine. But this right, strictly speaking, has not yet been used. The Russian Armed Forces did not enter Crimea, they were already there in accordance with the international treaty. Yes, we have strengthened our stationing, but at the same time - I want to emphasize this so that everyone knows and hears this - we have not even exceeded the maximum staff strength of our Armed Forces in Crimea [...]”*.⁸¹² By justifying the legality of Russia’s deployment, the EU’s [**Russia-illegal**] is subverted into [**Russia-legal**]. The same subversion can be identified with a different justification, namely the argument that the illegitimacy of the new Ukrainian government discharges Russia of contractual obligations regarding Ukraine’s territorial integrity: *“You have probably heard this many times: ‘[The change of government in Kyiv] is not an unconstitutional coup, this is not an armed seizure of power. This is a revolution!’ So? [...] And if it’s a revolution, what does that mean? Then it is difficult for me to disagree with some of our experts who believe that a new state is emerging on this territory. [...] And with this state and in relation to this state, we have not signed any binding documents.”*⁸¹³ Thereby, Putin not only rearticulates the Russian representation of itself as [**Russia-legal**], but also underlines the representation of [**Ukrainian government-illegitimate & undemocratic**].

In several cases, the engagement with the EU’s representation of [**Russia-illegal**] or [**Russia-illegitimate**] goes hand in hand with representing the EU/West as [**EU/West-dividing & selfish**]. Lavrov, for examples, argues that *“All those, who attempt to interpret this situation as aggression, and threaten all kinds of sanctions and boycotts, are the very same partners of ours, who consistently and insistently encouraged the political forces they favour, to enforce ultimatums and refusals of any dialogue, ignoring the concerns of south and east Ukraine and ultimately – the polarisation of the Ukrainian community. We appeal to them to demonstrate a responsible approach, to put aside any geopolitical considerations and place the interests of the Ukrainian people above all other interests.”*⁸¹⁴ Lavrov herewith supports the Russian articulation of [**EU/West-selfish**] by ascribing geopolitical and opportunistic motives to the

⁸¹² 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁸¹³ 14.03.04-Putin.

⁸¹⁴ 14.03.03-Lavrov, cf. 14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma.

EU/West. Invoking double standards serves the same discursive purpose: “*We are often accused of the illegitimacy of our actions, and when I ask questions: ‘Do you think that on your side everything is legitimate?’ they say ‘yes’. We have to recall the actions of the United States in Afghanistan, in Iraq [...]’*”⁸¹⁵

Secondly, the Russian discourse engages with the EU’s representation of [**Russia-culpable**] – for example through negation: “*It would probably be wiser to direct the enthusiasm of our western partners towards these goals [constitutional reform] rather than appeal to Russia and Ukraine to settle the crisis. This crisis was not created by us, we are not a party to it.*”⁸¹⁶ At other places, [**Russia-culpable**] is subverted by, again, ascribing geopolitical intentions. Lavrov refers to “*attempts to present Russia as a party to the conflict as some of our partners are attempting to do now. This crisis was not created by us, moreover, it was created despite our old and frequent cautions; it was created artificially and based on purely geopolitical motives.*”⁸¹⁷ While this ascribing subversion strengthens the Russian depiction of [**EU/West-selfish**], a similar move is performed by justifying Russia’s innocence in the face of Ukraine’s aberration [**Ukraine-gone astray**]: “*They [the West] present everything in such a way that these events are the subject matter of a conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This is a substitution of notions. The events are a reflection of the deepest crisis of the Ukrainian national identity.*”⁸¹⁸

Thirdly, Russia engages with the EU’s depiction of itself as [**Russia-violent**]. Putin, for example states that “*[we] are told about some kind of Russian intervention in Crimea, about aggression. It’s strange to hear that. I don’t remember a single case from history when an intervention took place without a single shot and without human casualties.*”⁸¹⁹ Putin’s justification underlines Russia’s representation as [**Russia-legitimate**]. Churkin articulates a similar move while at the same time invoking the Russian representation of [**Crimean authorities-legitimate**]: “*Some wish to make it seem that there are only Russian armed forces in Crimea, but there are also the Ukrainian armed forces who have sworn allegiance to the new authorities in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea*”⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁵ 14.03.04-Putin.

⁸¹⁶ 14.03.08-Lavrov, cf. 14.03.13-Churkin.

⁸¹⁷ 14.03.08-Lavrov.

⁸¹⁸ 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC.

⁸¹⁹ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁸²⁰ 14.03.03-Churkin.

Annexation: The EU's representation of Russia's annexation of Crimea is the second nodal point that Russia extensively refers to. Russia's interaction with this nodal point engages primarily with its depiction as illegal and illegitimate.

Lavrov points to this representation of **[annexation-illegal]** quite explicitly: "*Of course, as you know, we have been hearing accusations against Russia regards [sic!] the illegality of the connection of Crimea, even the use of the term 'annexation' lately.*"⁸²¹ He continues by outlining that this depiction does not correspond to what is actually happening in Crimea, that it can only be sustained by those refusing to see clearly: "*When my colleagues [...] attempt to use the term 'annexation', I offer them a simple answer: ask your press secretaries, your press services have video materials from Crimea covering the days preceding the referendum, the day of the referendum, as well as those containing pictures of the Crimeans' reaction, when they receive Russian passports. It is impossible to play, rehearse or stage this joy, this true happiness. When against this backdrop others throw terms like 'annexation' about, I think they are insulting these nationals, their irrevocable right to express their will, which they have used in full scope.*"⁸²² Lavrov justifies this subversion of **[annexation-illegal]** into **[reunification-legitimate]** by invoking the Crimeans' 'will'.

Referring to the EU's claim that the Crimean referendum was anti-constitutional, Putin argues that "*the Crimean authorities relied on the well-known Kosovo precedent, a precedent that our Western partners created themselves, as they say, with their own hands, in a situation absolutely similar to the Crimean one, they recognized the separation of Kosovo from Serbia as legitimate, proving to everyone that for a unilateral declaration of independence no permission from a country's central authorities is required.*"⁸²³ The Russian discourse does occasionally refer to Kosovo as a legitimising precedent.⁸²⁴ Lavrov, for example, argues that "*if Kosovo is a special case, then Crimea is no less special.*"⁸²⁵ References to Kosovo, however, while justifying Russia's representation of the annexation as legal and legitimate, are much less detailed than in the 2008 discourse on Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence.⁸²⁶ Putin further points to the "*Charter of the United Nations, which speaks about a nation's right to self-determination*". He laments that "*[in] Ukraine they benefitted from this right but Crimeans*

⁸²¹ 14.03.21-Lavrov-Speech.

⁸²² 14.03.21-Lavrov-Speech.

⁸²³ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁸²⁴ Cf. 14.03.11-MID, 14.03.13-Churkin, 14.03.17-Putin-Obama, 14.03.25-Lavrov.

⁸²⁵ 14.03.14-Lavrov.

⁸²⁶ For a discussion of the Russian legal argumentation with regard to the annexation and Crimea and Kosovo, see Marxsen (2014) and Tancredi (2014).

are denied it. Why?”⁸²⁷ Both quotes illustrate subversions of **[annexation-illegal]** into **[reunification-legal]**, either by employing legal justifications or by ascribing double standards. Another example of an ascribing subversion is given by Lavrov, who raises the accusation of opportunism: “*I have seen a lot in my time, but when serious countries throw all their diplomatic power into ‘arm twisting’ of the entire world, including their close partners, expecting that they will fall for the argument about inalterability and of territorial integrity, ignoring all the other principles of the UN Charter, – well, such ‘agility’ puzzled me.*”⁸²⁸

Besides the EU’s representation of the annexation as illegal, the Russian discourse engages also with its closely related depiction as **[annexation-illegitimate]**. Its subversion into **[reunification-legitimate]** is justified, for example, by means of legalistic arguments: “*We do not dispute the principle of the territorial integrity of States. It is indeed very important. It is also understandable that the enjoyment of the right to self-determination involving separation from an existing State is an extraordinary measure, applied when further coexistence within a single State becomes impossible. Moreover, as practice has demonstrated, in the majority of cases, the realization of peoples’ right to self-determination is achieved without the agreement of the central authorities of the State. With respect to Crimea, that case resulted from a legal vacuum generated by an unconstitutional armed coup d’état carried out in Kyiv by radical nationalists in February, as well as by their direct threats to impose their order throughout Ukraine.*”⁸²⁹ Another justification is given when the EU’s accusations of interference are countered with claims of genuineness: “*The Russian Black Sea Fleet is in no way interfering in the situation leading up to the referendum, which has been proclaimed and organized by the Crimeans themselves.*”⁸³⁰

Ukrainian government: Finally, the analysis revealed interaction of the Russian discourse with the EU’s representation of the Ukrainian government as **[Ukrainian government-legitimate]**. Firstly, this representation is challenged by depicting the Ukrainian government as **[Ukrainian government-undemocratic]**. Churkin cautions: “*Let us not be fooled into believing that any change of Government, especially if it is violent, leads to democracy. Some of our western colleagues seem to think that this is the case.*”⁸³¹ Besides this justifying subversion, a second articulation challenges the EU’s representation, ascribing to the West

⁸²⁷ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

⁸²⁸ 14.03.29-Lavrov.

⁸²⁹ 14.03.15-Churkin, cf. 14.03.13-Churkin, 14.03.14-Lavrov.

⁸³⁰ 14.03.13-Churkin.

⁸³¹ 14.03.03-Churkin.

opportunism and thus nurturing the Russian linking of [EU/West-selfish]: “I guess that our western partners know well what these forces are – they visit them regularly, share their worrying impressions about what they see there, in their own circle. However, for political considerations, they attempt to hide these facts from the public.”⁸³²

(3) Summary

The preceding paragraphs have traced interaction between EU and Russian discourses in the articulation of their respective interpretations of Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014. For the EU, the representation of Russia naturally plays the central role for making sense of the event. Nevertheless, the EU hardly engages with Russia’s interpretation of it.

For Russia, too, the depiction of the EU/West is fundamental for telling its story of the ‘reunification’, primarily to justify it. Russia, however, also engages extensively with the EU’s discourse on the event. It employs numerous subversions, engaging with the EU’s discursive structure to justify *why* it is acting legally and legitimately in annexing Crimea. Besides, invoking for example legalistic arguments, ‘reality’, or ‘rationality’, these subversions are backed up by ascribing to the EU/West opportunistic motives in its assessment of the situation.

⁸³² 14.03.08-Lavrov.

6. Protests in Belarus (2020)

a) Context

In 2020, the Republic of Belarus saw the biggest protests in its history, leading to a profound political crisis (Kazakevich, 2020:2). The unrest was triggered by the events prior to and surrounding the presidential elections on 9 August 2020, and it was directed predominantly against President Aliaksandar Lukashenka, who held the post since 1994. On 24 May, Lukashenka announced to run for the presidency again. Shortly after, two of his potential challengers, Syarhey Tsikhanouski and Viktor Babaryka, were arrested. Valery Tsepkala, who had also announced his candidacy, and others were denied registration. Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Tsikhanouski's wife, spontaneously decided to run and soon became the symbol of the united opposition (Dixon, 2020).

Demonstrations in solidarity with detained politicians and journalists started to gain pace already in June and July. The election took place on 9 August. It was not monitored by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), who claimed to not have received a timely invitation by Belarusian authorities (OSCE, 2020). The results were announced on 10 August by the Central Election Commission as 80.1% for Lukashenka and 10.1% for Tsikhanouskaya (CEC Belarus, 2020). Russian President Vladimir Putin promptly congratulated Lukashenka on the same day.⁸³³ Later that week, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) Josep Borrell declared that the EU would not accept the election results.⁸³⁴

On 14 August, Tsikhanouskaya, who had disputed the election results, announced the establishment of a Coordination Council consisting of “civil society activists, respected Belarusians and professionals” to facilitate a transfer of power (BBC, 2020). Two days later, more than 200.000 people demonstrated in Minsk alone. The protests were the biggest in the history of Belarus (Belarus-Analysen, 2020a:33). The ongoing demonstrations, in which women's actions have played a visible role, were accompanied by strikes throughout the country. Besides numerous arrests and a harsh approach by security forces, reports emerged on the abuse and torture of those detained (OHCHR, 2020). Lukashenka announced his

⁸³³ 20.08.10-Putin.

⁸³⁴ 20.08.14-Borrell.

willingness for dialogue. He reiterated earlier made promises for constitutional reform and now hinted at potential new elections in the course of this process (TASS, 2020). The inauguration of Lukashenka as President took place on 23 September in what has been described as a secretive ceremony (Politico, 2020). The EU reiterated that it viewed Lukashenka's presidency as illegitimate.⁸³⁵ Demonstrations with more than 100.000 participants continued throughout October (Belarus-Analysen, 2020b). Later, protests became increasingly decentralised (Belarus-Analysen, 2020c; Belarus-Analysen, 2021). The EU issued a first round of sanctions against officials involved in repressive and intimidating practices on 2 October. A second round, now also including Lukashenka, followed in November and a third in December.

b) Analysis

To capture the EU's and Russia's discursive interaction over the protests in Belarus as a floating signifier, the discourse analysis captured 52 documents of the Russian and 41 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse on the events from 1 July 2020, when protests were gaining traction in the pre-election phase, to 15 November 2020,⁸³⁶ after the EU issued its second round of sanctions.

i) *Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:*

Nodal Points in the EU's Discourse

Elections: The EU considers the elections “neither free nor fair”.⁸³⁷ They were “fraudulent”⁸³⁸ and did not meet international standards.⁸³⁹ Already prior to the election, the EU articulated that the “seemingly arbitrary exclusion of candidates [...] undermines the overall integrity and

⁸³⁵ 20.09.24-Borrell.

⁸³⁶ After carefully considering a longer period of time, this date has been set for reasons of feasibility. Primary texts after that date have been checked to make sure that later sources would confirm the observed discourse and without adding significant new insights (cf. Milliken, 1999b:234).

⁸³⁷ 20.08.11-Borrell, 20.08.14-Council, 20.08.19-EC, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement, 20.08.21-Borrell, 20.08.26-Borrell & Champagne, 20.09.16-vdL, 20.09.24-Borrell, 20.10.02-Council-Sanctions, 20.10.12-Council, 20.11.06-Council-Sanctions.

⁸³⁸ 20.09.15-Borrell, cf. 20.08.19-Michel & vdL.

⁸³⁹ 20.08.11-Borrell, 20.10.12-Council, 20.10.02-Council-Sanctions.

democratic nature of the elections”.⁸⁴⁰ It expressed concerns about human rights and democracy and lamented the apparent lack of an invitation to the OSCE to observe the elections.⁸⁴¹ Therefore, the EU “does not accept the results of the election”,⁸⁴² which it considers “falsified”.⁸⁴³

Lukashenka/the authorities: The EU does not recognise Lukashenka as legitimate President.⁸⁴⁴ His “‘inauguration’ directly contradicts the will of large parts of the Belarusian population [...] and serves to only further deepen the political crisis in Belarus”.⁸⁴⁵

Ignoring the “persistent call of the Belarusian people for the respect of their fundamental freedoms and human rights”,⁸⁴⁶ Lukashenka and the authorities are acting against the country’s own citizens.⁸⁴⁷ The detention of political activists is arbitrary and unlawful,⁸⁴⁸ restrictions of fundamental freedoms of expression and assembly are unacceptable.⁸⁴⁹ The authorities are exercising “brutal”,⁸⁵⁰ “shameful”,⁸⁵¹ “disproportionate and unacceptable state violence against peaceful protesters”⁸⁵² and the opposition.⁸⁵³ This “has no place in Europe”⁸⁵⁴ and is violating both “domestic laws and international obligations”.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁴⁰ 20.07.14-Borrell, cf. 20.07.23-EEAS.

⁸⁴¹ 20.07.23-EEAS.

⁸⁴² 20.08.14-Council, cf. 20.08.14-Borrell, 20.08.19-EC, 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, 20.08.21-Borrell, 20.09.24-Borrell, 20.09.25-Michel, 20.10.01-EC.

⁸⁴³ 20.08.14-Council, cf. 20.09.07-Borrell, 20.09.24-Borrell, 20.09.25-Michel.

⁸⁴⁴ 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.09.21-Borrell, 20.09.24-Borrell, 20.10.12-Borrell, 20.10.12-Council, 20.11.06-Council-Sanctions, 20.11.06-Council-Press Release.

⁸⁴⁵ 20.09.24-Borrell.

⁸⁴⁶ 20.10.12-Council.

⁸⁴⁷ 20.08.28-Missions, 20.09.24-Borrell, 20.09.07-Borrell, 20.09.11-Borrell, 20.11.06-Council-Sanctions, 20.11.13-EEAS.

⁸⁴⁸ 20.07.23-EEAS, 20.08.14-Council, 20.08.19-EC, 20.09.07-Borrell, 20.11.06-Council-Sanctions.

⁸⁴⁹ 20.08.07-Borrell, cf. 20.08.10-Borrell & Varhelyi, 20.08.11-Borrell.

⁸⁵⁰ 20.08.28.-Missions.

⁸⁵¹ 20.09.16.-vdL.

⁸⁵² 20.08.10-Borrell & Varhelyi, cf. 20.08.11-Borrell, 20.08.19-EC, 20.10.01-EC, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement, 20.08.19-Visegrad, 20.08.28-Missions, 20.10.02-Council-Sanctions, 20.11.06-Council-Press Release, 20.10.12-Council, 20.11.06-Council-Sanctions.

⁸⁵³ 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.10.02-Council-Sanctions, 20.11.06-Council-Press Release.

⁸⁵⁴ 20.08.10-vdL.

⁸⁵⁵ 20.09.07-Borrell, cf. 20.08.07-Borrell, 20.09.11-Borrell.

They must end the violence, de-escalate⁸⁵⁶ and engage in a genuine and inclusive national dialogue⁸⁵⁷ that also includes the Coordination Council.⁸⁵⁸ Those “responsible for violence, repression and the falsification of election results” will be sanctioned.⁸⁵⁹

The people: Belarusians are generally depicted as freedom-loving people, who “have suffered and continue to suffer at the hands of the Belarusian authorities”.⁸⁶⁰ They “have shown unprecedented political mobilisation in favour of free elections and democracy”.⁸⁶¹ The EU is “moved”⁸⁶² and “impressed by [their] courage”,⁸⁶³ “determination and perseverance”.⁸⁶⁴ It is stated repeatedly that “the people of Belarus deserve better”.⁸⁶⁵ They “want change. And they want it now”.⁸⁶⁶ Belarusians “have a right to determine their future”.⁸⁶⁷ The “European Union stands in solidarity with the people of Belarus”⁸⁶⁸ and supports their “call for new, free and fair elections under the OSCE’s supervision”.⁸⁶⁹

The opposition/protesters: Throughout, the protests have been depicted as “peaceful”⁸⁷⁰ and as representative of the people more broadly: “The demonstrations in Belarus are for the rights of the people of Belarus”.⁸⁷¹ They demand fundamental freedoms of speech and assembly, “the release of all unlawfully detained people, the prosecution of those responsible for police brutality, and holding of new presidential elections”.⁸⁷² Civil society, protesters and the people

⁸⁵⁶ 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, 20.08.26-Borrell & Champagne, 20.10.01-EC, 20.10.02-Council-Sanctions, 20.10.10-Borrell, 20.11.06-Council-Sanctions.

⁸⁵⁷ 20.08.11-Borrell, cf. 20.08.19-EC, 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, 20.08.26-Borrell & Champagne, 20.10.10-Borrell, 20.10.12-Council, 20.10.23-Borrell & Pompeo.

⁸⁵⁸ 20.10.12-Council, 20.10.23-Borrell & Pompeo, 20.09.11-Borrell.

⁸⁵⁹ 20.08.19-EC, cf. 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement, 20.09.07-Borrell, 20.09.11-Borrell, 20.09.15-Borrell.

⁸⁶⁰ 20.11.13-EEAS

⁸⁶¹ 20.08.07-Borrell, cf. 20.08.10-Borrell & Varhelyi, 20.08.11-Borrell, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement, 20.08.19-vdL-Tweet.

⁸⁶² 20.09.16-vdL, 20.09.24-Borrell.

⁸⁶³ 20.08.19-vdL-Statement, 20.09.24-Borrell.

⁸⁶⁴ 20.09.21-Borrell, cf. 20.09.24-Borrell.

⁸⁶⁵ 20.08.11-Borrell, cf. 20.09.11-Borrell.

⁸⁶⁶ 20.08.19-vdL-Statement, 20.08.19-vdL-Tweet, 20.08.17-Borrell.

⁸⁶⁷ 20.08.19-EC, cf. 20.08.21-Borrell, 20.09.16-vdL, 20.09.21-Borrell, 20.10.02-Michel, 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement.

⁸⁶⁸ 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, cf. 20.11.13-EEAS, 20.08.19-EC, 20.09.21-Borrell, 20.09.24-Borrell, 20.08.14-vdL, 20.08.28-Missions, 20.09.15-Borrell.

⁸⁶⁹ 20.09.21-Borrell, 20.09.24-Borrell.

⁸⁷⁰ 20.08.17-Borrell, 20.08.07-Borrell, 20.08.10-Borrell & Varhelyi, 20.08.14-Council, 20.08.10-vdL, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement, 20.08.19-Visegrad, 20.08.28-Missions, 20.09.16-vdL, 20.09.25-Michel, 20.10.02-Council-Sanctions, 20.10.12-Council, 20.11.06-Council-Sanctions.

⁸⁷¹ 20.08.19-vdL-Statement.

⁸⁷² 20.08.17-Borrell, cf. 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement.

are generally depicted to be united against the violent authorities from which they suffer.⁸⁷³ The opposition has to be included in a national dialogue⁸⁷⁴ and repression against the Coordination Council must stop.⁸⁷⁵

The OSCE: The OSCE is depicted as an authority who can legitimately judge the election process.⁸⁷⁶ The authorities' failure to invite the OSCE is deplored.⁸⁷⁷ The OSCE should have a role in the peaceful transition of power by means of its proposed mediation⁸⁷⁸ and supervision of new elections.⁸⁷⁹

Russia: The representation of Russia is virtually absent in the overall EU discourse. The EU only once points to "increasing support of Moscow" for Lukashenka.⁸⁸⁰ Repeated general calls that external interference into this genuinely Belarussian affair must be avoided⁸⁸¹ are implicitly⁸⁸² attributed (also) to Russia.

Self (EU): The EU articulates its policy towards Belarus to be guided primarily by concerns for human rights, democracy, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.⁸⁸³ As "friends of the Belarussian people",⁸⁸⁴ the EU sees itself as democratic force, standing in solidarity with Belarussians "in their desire for democratic change".⁸⁸⁵ It is supportive of this popular cause, ready to "accompany peaceful democratic transition of power".⁸⁸⁶ The leader of the opposition

⁸⁷³ 20.08.19-EC, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement, 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, 20.08.19-Visegrad, 20.08.28-Missions, 20.09.07-Borrell, 20.09.25-Michel.

⁸⁷⁴ 20.08.14-Council.

⁸⁷⁵ 20.09.11-Borrell.

⁸⁷⁶ 20.07.14-Borrell.

⁸⁷⁷ 20.07.23-EEAS.

⁸⁷⁸ 20.10.12-Borrell, 20.10.12-Council, 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.08.26-Borrell & Champagne, cf. 20.10.06-Michel, 20.10.10-Borrell, 20.10.13-Borrell, 20.08.21-Borrell, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement.

⁸⁷⁹ 20.09.21-Borrell, 20.10.12-Council, 20.09.24-Borrell.

⁸⁸⁰ 20.09.15-Borrell.

⁸⁸¹ 20.08.21-Borrell, 20.08.19-Visegrad, 20.09.21-Borrell, 20.09.25-Michel, 20.10.01-EC, 20.10.04-Borrell, 20.10.12-Council, 20.10.13-Borrell, 20.10.06-Michel.

⁸⁸² See for example 20.09.21-Borrell: "we call on all partners of Belarus not to interfere in Belarus' internal affairs".

⁸⁸³ 20.07.14-Borrell, 20.08.07-Borrell, 20.08.11-Borrell, 20.08.14-vdL, 20.08.21-Borrell, 20.08.26-Borrell & Champagne, 20.11.12-Delegation Minsk.

⁸⁸⁴ 20.08.26-Borrell & Champagne.

⁸⁸⁵ 20.08.14-Council, cf. 20.08.17-Borrell, 20.08.19-EC, 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, 20.08.19-vdL-Tweet, 20.09.25-Michel, 20.11.13-EEAS, 20.11.12-Delegation Minsk.

⁸⁸⁶ 20.08.19-Michel & vdL, 20.08.19-vdL-Statement, cf. 20.08.21-Borrell.

Tsikhanouskaya is received by the EU's Foreign Affairs Council.⁸⁸⁷ In the crisis, the EU has shown unity.⁸⁸⁸

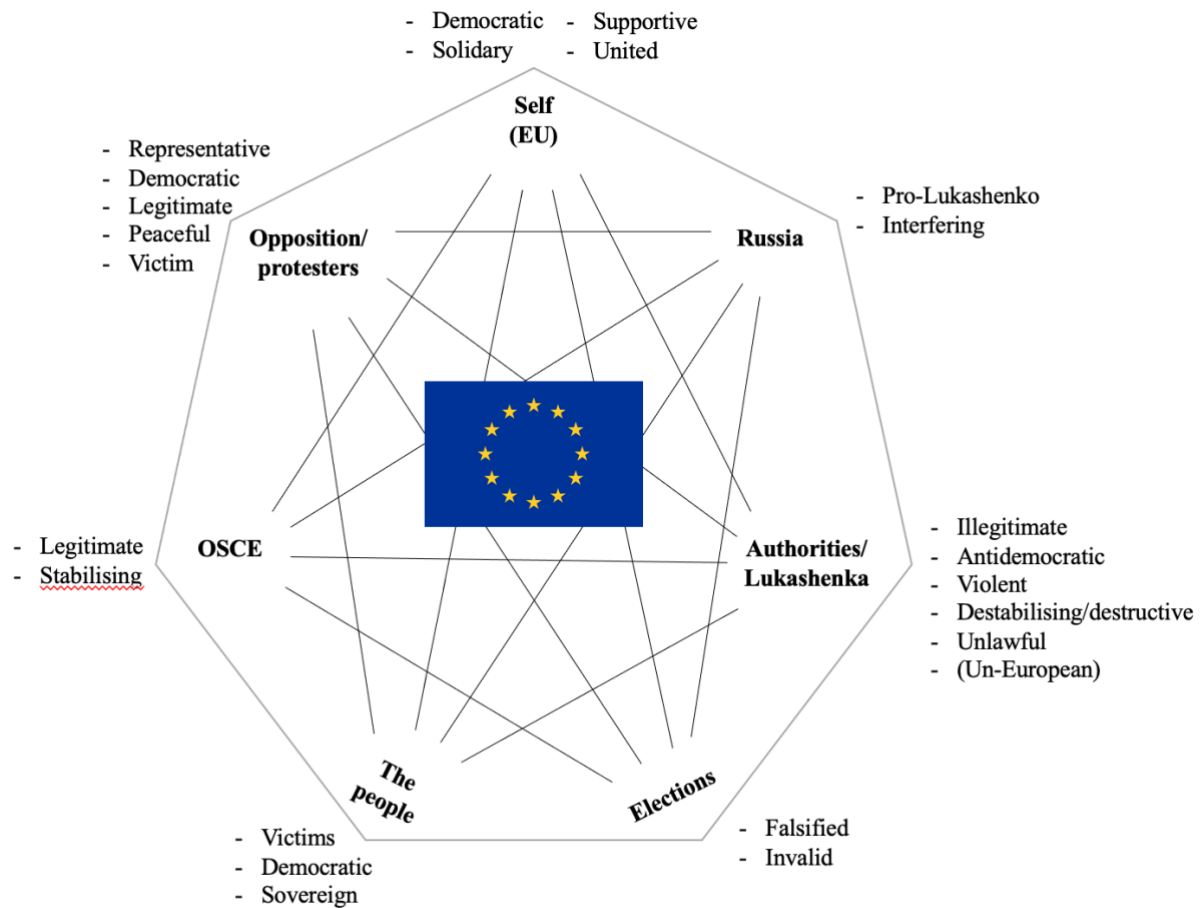


Figure 12: Discursive structure around nodal points, Belarus, EU

Nodal points in Russia's discourse

The elections: The Russian discourse presents the elections as valid and the results are recognised.⁸⁸⁹ Putin promptly congratulated Lukashenka after the official results were published.⁸⁹⁰ Acknowledging that “there are quite a few indicators [that the elections were not

⁸⁸⁷ 20.09.21-Borrell.

⁸⁸⁸ 20.10.04-Borrell, 20.10.10-Borrell, 20.10.12-Council.

⁸⁸⁹ 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.10.14-Lavrov.

⁸⁹⁰ 20.08.10-Putin, cf. 20.11.03-Lavrov; personal congratulation: 20.09.14-Putin.

perfect]”,⁸⁹¹ it has been argued that the international observers that *were* present confirmed the outcome.⁸⁹²

Lukashenka/authorities: Lukashenka is recognised as legitimate President.⁸⁹³ “He who makes no mistakes makes nothing. [...] A wise leader corrects mistakes”.⁸⁹⁴ Ready for dialogue and compromise, Lukashenka is playing a constructive role.⁸⁹⁵ His proposal for constitutional reform is promising and can help to stabilise the country.⁸⁹⁶ He and the authorities act in the interest of the people.⁸⁹⁷

Security forces are victims of provocations, violence, and attempts at bribery by the opposition.⁸⁹⁸ While initially they are depicted as “not hurting anyone and [...] not interfering with peaceful rallies”,⁸⁹⁹ Putin later concedes some “harsh” and “maybe even unjustified” action, which he ultimately considers, however, not to be different from what happens “on the streets of some big cities in developed democracies”.⁹⁰⁰

The people: Russia sides with “our true brothers”,⁹⁰¹ “our fraternal Belarusian people”.⁹⁰² Belarusians and their country are depicted as pro-Russian and closely linked to Russia, “ethnically”, “linguistically”, “culturally, spiritually, and otherwise”.⁹⁰³ Belarusians are represented as sovereign, able and required to “rely on their own wisdom to resolve this situation”.⁹⁰⁴ They are clearly differentiated from the opposition, who does not represent the people’s interests.⁹⁰⁵ Belarusians are further victims to their western neighbours, who “try to impose their will” on the population.⁹⁰⁶

⁸⁹¹ 20.08.19-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁸⁹² 20.08.19-Peskov-Interference, 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁸⁹³ 20.08.10-Putin, 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁸⁹⁴ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁸⁹⁵ 20.08.19-Lavrov, 20.10.02-Zakharova, 20.10.29-Putin, 20.11.03-Lavrov.

⁸⁹⁶ 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.08.25-Lavrov, 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.09.02-MID, 20.10.29-Putin, 20.11.03-Lavrov.

⁸⁹⁷ 20.08.27-Putin, 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁸⁹⁸ 20.08.19-Lavrov, 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.08.25-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁸⁹⁹ 20.08.23-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.27-Putin.

⁹⁰⁰ 20.10.22-Putin.

⁹⁰¹ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁹⁰² 20.11.03-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.13-Zakharova, 20.08.10-Putin, 20.08.19-Peskov-PC, 20.10.22-Peskov, 20.08.27-MID.

⁹⁰³ 20.08.27-Putin.

⁹⁰⁴ 20.08.19-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.08.25-Lavrov, 20.08.19-Peskov-PC, 20.09.01-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Putin, 20.10.22-Putin, 20.09.02-Lavrov.

⁹⁰⁵ 20.08.23-Lavrov, cf. 20.10.14-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹⁰⁶ 20.09.17-Lavrov, cf. 20.11.10-Putin.

The opposition/protesters: Addressing the protests, the Russian discourse differentiates the protests of “peaceful people who simply want [...] to be heard”⁹⁰⁷ from ‘the opposition’ led by the Coordination Council, who “would like the protests to be different – they need bloodshed so as to provoke a desired response from the Belarusian law enforcement services”.⁹⁰⁸ Only “[healthy] opposition forces” should be involved in a national dialogue.⁹⁰⁹

The Coordination Council lacks legitimacy.⁹¹⁰ It is not democratic⁹¹¹ and destabilising.⁹¹² Aiming for a “Ukrainian scenario”,⁹¹³ the opposition is provoking and seducing law enforcement forces to “betray their oath”, promising them “money and flats”.⁹¹⁴ They and their actions are criminal and violent.⁹¹⁵ the protesters, “among them many criminals”, are “taking to the streets armed with cobblestones, iron bars and Molotov cocktails”.⁹¹⁶

The opposition is “influenced”,⁹¹⁷ “backed”⁹¹⁸ and “[turned] against Russia”⁹¹⁹ by the West. Their actions are dictated from outside.⁹²⁰ Tsikhanouskaya is a puppet, uttering Western calls “that were written for her”⁹²¹ and “[put] in her mouth”.⁹²²

The EU/West: The West is the main culprit for the developments in Belarus, which are mostly a result of Western pressure⁹²³ and interference.⁹²⁴ It is the West who is “leading the opposition now”.⁹²⁵ “There are messages distributed [...] also from Warsaw and Vilnius, which contain instructions [...] on how to make incendiary mixtures and explosives – the Molotov cocktails and much more.”⁹²⁶ Hence, the West is depicted as responsible for violence⁹²⁷ and

⁹⁰⁷ 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹⁰⁸ 20.08.23-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹⁰⁹ 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹¹⁰ 20.08.25-Lavrov, 20.09.02-Lavrov.

⁹¹¹ 20.09.01-Lavrov.

⁹¹² 20.09.01-Lavrov, 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.10.14-Lavrov.

⁹¹³ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁹¹⁴ 20.09.02-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.19-Lavrov, 20.08.23-Lavrov 20.09.17-Lavrov.

⁹¹⁵ 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹¹⁶ 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹¹⁷ 20.09.11-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.19-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov, 20.08.25-Lavrov.

⁹¹⁸ 20.09.17-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹¹⁹ 20.09.17-Lavrov; examples of a representation opposition/protesters as anti-Russian: 20.08.23-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.09.02-Lavrov.

⁹²⁰ 20.11.12-Lavrov, 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.09.02-Lavrov.

⁹²¹ 20.10.14-Lavrov.

⁹²² 20.09.17-Lavrov.

⁹²³ 20.08.16-Putin, 20.08.13-Zakharova, 20.09.29-Putin, 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.10.02-Zakharova, 20.11.03-Lavrov, 20.11.10-Putin.

⁹²⁴ 20.08.19-Peskov-Interference, 20.08.19-Peskov-PC, 20.10.02-Putin, 20.08.24-Peskov-PC, 20.09.01-Zakharova, 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.09.03-Zakharova, 20.10.14-Lavrov, 20.11.03-Lavrov, 20.11.10-Putin.

⁹²⁵ 20.08.25-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.09.03-Zakharova, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹²⁶ 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹²⁷ 20.08.25-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

“destabilising”⁹²⁸ the situation. It tries to take advantage of the crisis and push its own interests,⁹²⁹ issuing illegal sanctions⁹³⁰ and instrumentalising the OSCE/ODIHR⁹³¹ (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights).⁹³² Just like in Ukraine, the EU’s/Western intentions in the Belarusian crisis are geopolitical.⁹³³ “[Our Western partners] are now trying to apply this method in Belarus, and they are offering their mediation”.⁹³⁴ The EU is represented as divided between the main culprits Poland and Lithuania, who “Brussels is unable to keep in line”⁹³⁵ and a “silent majority” of “responsible, serious states”.⁹³⁶

The OSCE: In the Russian discourse, the OSCE/ODIHR is closely linked to the West. According to the Russian discourse, OSCE observers were invited but ODIHR “struck an attitude”⁹³⁷ and “refused an observation mission”.⁹³⁸ Opposing a Russia-initiated reform,⁹³⁹ the institutional setting of the OSCE is instrumentalised by the West,⁹⁴⁰ as are the mediation proposals.⁹⁴¹

Self (Russia): Russia is a “reliable ally and friend”⁹⁴² to “fraternal”⁹⁴³ Belarus, with which it shares many cultural, spiritual and linguistic ties.⁹⁴⁴ With Belarus, Russia is in a union state⁹⁴⁵ and in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation.⁹⁴⁶ Not interfering,⁹⁴⁷ it is interested “in a

⁹²⁸ 20.08.13-Zakharova, 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.09.19-Zakharova, 20.10.02-Zakharova, 20.11.03-Lavrov, 20.11.10-Putin, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹²⁹ 20.08.19-Lavrov.

⁹³⁰ 20.09.01-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.01-Zakharova, 20.09.19-Zakharova, 20.10.02-Zakharova, 20.11.03-Lavrov.

⁹³¹ 20.08.19-Lavrov, 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.10.14-Lavrov.

⁹³² ODIHR is an OSCE institution concerned with election monitoring.

⁹³³ 20.08.19-Lavrov, 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹³⁴ 20.08.23-Lavrov; on imposition of mediation cf. 20.09.01-Lavrov, 20.09.02-Lavrov.

⁹³⁵ 20.09.19-Zakharova.

⁹³⁶ 20.10.09-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.01-Lavrov, 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.08.25-Lavrov, 20.08.25-MID, 20.09.03-Zakharova, 20.09.19-Zakharova, 20.10.02-Zakharova.

⁹³⁷ 20.08.19-Lavrov, cf. 20.10.14-Lavrov.

⁹³⁸ 20.08.19-Peskov-PC, 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov.

⁹³⁹ 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.09.01-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov.

⁹⁴⁰ 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.09.01-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov.

⁹⁴¹ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁹⁴² 20.08.13-Zakharova, cf. 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Peskov-Loan, 20.09.14-Putin, 20.10.14-Lavrov, 20.10.22-Peskov.

⁹⁴³ 20.08.19-Peskov-PC.

⁹⁴⁴ 20.08.27-Putin, cf. 20.09.14-Putin, 20.09.29-Putin.

⁹⁴⁵ 20.08.16-Putin, 20.09.02-Lavrov.

⁹⁴⁶ 20.08.16-Putin, 20.08.27-Putin, 20.09.02-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Putin, 20.08.28-Peskov.

⁹⁴⁷ 20.08.13-Zakharova, 20.08.27-Putin, 20.09.14-Peskov-Loan, 20.10.22-Putin, cf. 20.10.26-Peskov-Interference.

stable internal political situation”⁹⁴⁸ and supports Lukashenka’s initiative of a constitutional reform.⁹⁴⁹

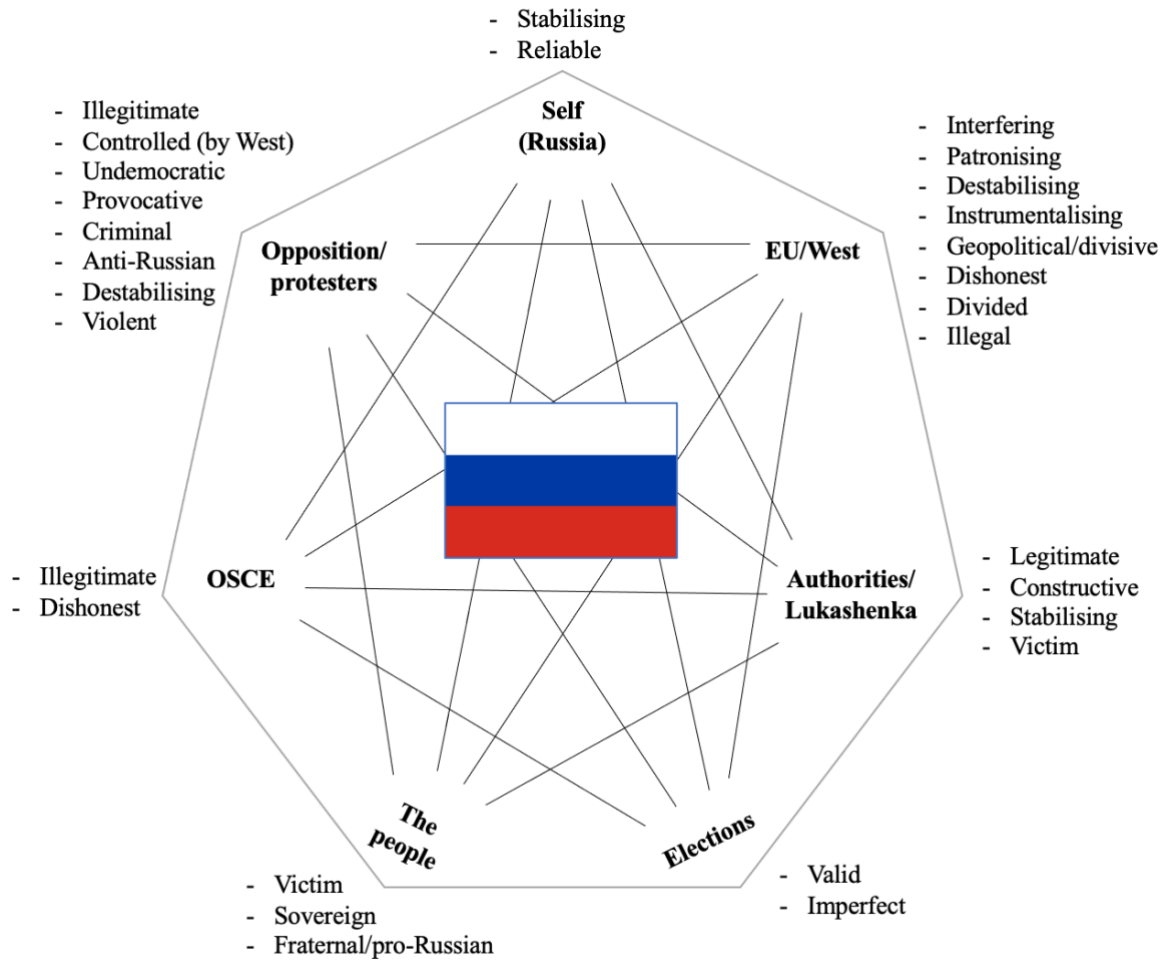


Figure 13: Discursive structure around nodal points, Belarus, Russia

ii) **Discursive Interaction**

(1) *Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self’s Discourse*

⁹⁴⁸ 20.08.13-Zakharova.

⁹⁴⁹ 20.11.12-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Peskov-Reform.

In the EU's Discourse:

Lacking explicit references, one cannot speak of a significant role the representation of Russia plays in the EU's discourse. References to the Russian Other and to external interference more generally do not seem to have an impact on the interpretation of the protests in Belarus as such. Consequently, discursive boundaries between the EU Self and Russia are not drawn explicitly. Merely indirectly there is a differentiation, since Russia is linked to Lukashenka and the authorities, who are discursively banned to the outside through multiple dimensions of othering.

In Russia's Discourse:

For the Russian interpretation of the events in Belarus, in turn, the representation of the EU/West is fundamental. Foreign influence and pressure are the primary reasons given for the escalation of events. According to the Russian discourse, the West has no interest in the normalisation of the situation. It keeps instigating the protesters, who provoke the security forces. Discursive boundaries are drawn primarily along the spatial and ethical dimensions of othering. Temporal constructions could not be identified.

A *spatial* discursive boundary between the Russian Self and the EU/Western Other is implicated in the 'either/or logic' ascribed to the EU/West: "the familiar destructive logic of 'you are either with Russia or with Europe'".⁹⁵⁰ Invoking these narratives of dividing lines,⁹⁵¹ depicting the West as "rabidly turning the Belarusian opposition against Russia",⁹⁵² constructs a boundary between 'us' and 'them'. The representation of the event as geopolitical⁹⁵³ ("No one is making a secret that it is all about geopolitics, about the struggle for the post-Soviet space."⁹⁵⁴) reinforces this construction where Belarus is represented as an object of 'their' great game.

Among the *ethical* constructions is the representation of the EU/West as destabilising.⁹⁵⁵ In contrast to Russia, Western interference is "destructive and malicious".⁹⁵⁶ It is "aimed at

⁹⁵⁰ 20.08.19-Lavrov.

⁹⁵¹ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁹⁵² 20.09.17-Lavrov.

⁹⁵³ 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹⁵⁴ 20.08.19-Lavrov.

⁹⁵⁵ 20.10.02-Zakharova.

⁹⁵⁶ 20.11.12-Lavrov.

splitting society and destabilising the country”,⁹⁵⁷ because “[when Western politicians] fail to dominate a country in a single effort, they create what is called ‘a space of chaos’ that they hope to turn into controlled chaos.”⁹⁵⁸ It is repeatedly claimed the West wants to turn Belarus into a “Ukrainian scenario”.⁹⁵⁹ The destabilisation-narrative is closely linked to representations of the EU/West’s actions as illegal⁹⁶⁰ and running counter accepted norms: according to the Spokeswoman of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria Zakharova, the EU’s policy “leads to the erosion of the international legal foundation of the international order, and in the case of Belarus, prevents the country from returning to normal”.⁹⁶¹ Other ethical constructions that transport the EU/West to the immoral outside are attributions of dishonesty (“the inability of our Western partners to honour agreements is a serious fact”⁹⁶²), a patronising⁹⁶³ attitude (“Even today they refuse to recognise the need to deal with others on an equal basis”⁹⁶⁴) and the accusation of manipulation (of the OSCE⁹⁶⁵ or the opposition⁹⁶⁶). Russia is also drawing a discursive boundary between itself and the EU/Western Other by challenging the latter’s ethical integrity more generally: “Today, when we try to appeal to the conscience of our colleagues and call on them to respect the principles of sovereign equality, noninterference [sic!] in domestic affairs and refraining from strengthening one’s security to the detriment of others [...], they adopt an evasive stance and refuse to set out these principles in legally binding documents.”⁹⁶⁷

(2) *References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other*

In the EU’s Discourse:

Echoing Russia’s weak role in the EU’s discourse, the latter also barely refers to the discursive structure articulated by Russia. Merely three articulations could be identified that *implicitly*

⁹⁵⁷ 20.08.13-Zakharova.

⁹⁵⁸ 20.09.01-Lavrov.

⁹⁵⁹ 20.08.23-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.19-Lavrov, 20.09.01-Lavrov.

⁹⁶⁰ 20.09.01-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.01-Zakharova, 20.09.19-Zakharova, 20.10.02-Zakharova, 20.11.03-Lavrov.

⁹⁶¹ 20.09.19-Zakharova.

⁹⁶² 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁹⁶³ 20.11.10-Putin.

⁹⁶⁴ 20.09.01-Lavrov.

⁹⁶⁵ 20.08.19-Lavrov, 20.08.23-Lavrov, 20.10.14-Lavrov.

⁹⁶⁶ 20.09.17-Lavrov.

⁹⁶⁷ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

engage with Russia's representation of the opposition/protesters and the EU/West – both of which are closely linked in the Russian discourse.

Opposition/protesters: Commission President Ursula von der Leyen states: “[The] demonstrations in Belarus are not against any neighbouring country or entity. The demonstrations in Belarus are for the rights of the people of Belarus.”⁹⁶⁸ She thereby negates the Russian representation of the protests as being steered from outside [**opposition/protests-controlled**]. So does President of the European Council Charles Michel, when he reaffirms that “[the] protests in Belarus are not about geopolitics. This is about the right of the people to freely elect their leadership”.⁹⁶⁹ Both subvert the Russian [**opposition/protests-controlled**] into [**opposition/protests-democratic**].

EU/West: The aforementioned articulations also implicitly address Russia's depiction of [**EU-geopolitical & divisive**], which Borrell subverts into [**EU-stabilising**]: “we do not have a hidden agenda. We do not seek to interfere in the internal affairs of the country. We just want to support people who are asking to have a political system that allows them to elect their rulers.”⁹⁷⁰

In Russia's Discourse:

The Russian discourse interacts much more with the EU's discourse than vice-versa. Besides a general critique, for example that the EU and NATO are making “quite unconstructive statements”⁹⁷¹ or the claim that the EU's position is illegal,⁹⁷² the Russian discourse engages also with distinct nodal points in the discursive structure articulated by the EU.

EU: Analogous to the important role, the representation of the EU/West plays in the Russian discourse, the latter also engages comprehensively with the antagonistic self-representation of the EU. A major point of attack is the EU's representation of itself as democratic. Ascribing to the West a zero-sum logic, Lavrov subverts [**EU-democratic**] into [**EU-geopolitical**]: “What

⁹⁶⁸ 20.08.19-vdL-Statement.

⁹⁶⁹ 20.08.19-Michel & vdL.

⁹⁷⁰ 20.09.21-Borrell.

⁹⁷¹ 20.09.02-Lavrov.

⁹⁷² 20.08.20-Peskov.

*we are now hearing from European capitals [...] has little to do with Lukashenko, human rights or democracy. It is about geopolitics and the rules that our Western partners want to inculcate [...].*⁹⁷³ Interestingly, the Russian discourse even addresses the EU's negation of this ascription (see above). Zakharova underlines that “[representatives] of the EU and its member countries repeatedly mention lack of geopolitics in their positions. However, the EU's decisions, its language of threats and other actions regarding Belarus point to the contrary.”⁹⁷⁴

The representation of the EU as geopolitical and destabilising is extended to the EU's representation of **[opposition-legitimate]**, which is deemed to be a merely instrumentalist move to pursue geopolitical goals, thus reinforcing **[EU-geopolitical]**.⁹⁷⁵

The EU's self-representation as **[EU-democratic]** is furthermore subverted into **[EU-instrumentalising]** (“The countries that are now loudly claiming that the ODIHR could not come to the elections because it was not invited were among those who rejected our proposals [to reform the OSCE] with particular fervency.”⁹⁷⁶) and **[EU-patronising]** (“Hiding behind an imaginary concern for the citizens of Belarus, the European Union is in fact trying to make decisions for them.”⁹⁷⁷).

A second major point of engagement is the EU's self-representation of itself as supportive of Belarusians (**[EU-supportive]**), which is turned into the Russian representation of **[EU/West-destabilising & dishonest]**. Lavrov justifies this subversion, for example, by invoking the Ukrainian scenario: “When the West says that the only effective solution is mediation involving Western countries, this makes all of us think back to what happened in Ukraine, where Western mediation translated into the complete inability of our partners to honour agreements.”⁹⁷⁸ Spokesman of the President Dmitry Peskov argues that “it is hard to imagine now how [the European countries] are going to help the Belarusian people”,⁹⁷⁹ after they refused to recognise Lukashenka as legitimate President and issued sanctions. This is because sanctions, according to Zakharova, “[run] contrary to the goal of restoring stability, establishing a dialogue, launching the constitutional process, and easing tensions that EU representatives mention so often.”⁹⁸⁰ Another example is given by Lavrov, who subverts **[EU-supportive]** into **[EU/West-destabilising & geopolitical]** by ascribing perfidious intentions to “our Western

⁹⁷³ 20.08.19-Lavrov.

⁹⁷⁴ 20.10.02-Zakharova, also 20.09.19-Zakharova.

⁹⁷⁵ 20.09.17-Lavrov; this example refers more specifically to Lithuania and Poland, both of which, however, are generally represented as a major driver of the EU's policies towards Belarus (see above).

⁹⁷⁶ 20.08.19-Lavrov.

⁹⁷⁷ 20.09.19-Zakharova.

⁹⁷⁸ 20.08.23-Lavrov, also 20.08.19-Lavrov.

⁹⁷⁹ 20.10.22-Peskov.

⁹⁸⁰ 20.09.19-Zakharova.

colleagues”: “[they] declare for all to hear that it is not an attempt to change the government in Minsk, it is not an attempt to drive a wedge between Belarus and the Russian Federation, yet all these good intentions are not confirmed by their actions.”⁹⁸¹

Authorities/Lukashenka: The Russian discourse, secondly, engages extensively with the EU’s representation of the authorities and Lukashenka. By referring to violence against protesters in Western countries, Putin denounces Western accusations against Lukashenka and the authorities as interest-driven and based on double standards: “Do some of those who are now blaming Belarus and the Belarusian leadership, President Lukashenko, do they condemn [violence in the West]? I didn’t see anything like that. Why such selectivity? This suggests that it is not about what is happening in Belarus, but that someone wants things to be different there. They want to influence these processes and achieve some decisions that [...] correspond to their political interests.”⁹⁸² This is no negation of the EU’s representation of **[authorities/Lukashenka-violent]**. A similar accommodating confirmation surfaces in another articulation by Putin: “[there] has been some harsh action indeed, I give you that, and maybe even unjustified”.⁹⁸³ By ascribing a selfish intention to those allegations, however, the Russian discourse backs a representation of **[EU/West-interfering & geopolitical]** and thereby ultimately weakens the credibility of the EU’s accusation of **[authorities/Lukashenka-violent]**.

Secondly, the EU’s representation of the authorities as illegitimate, which, according to Lavrov, materialises in “crude demands that Minsk cancel the results of the election and fully recognise the victory of the opposition”,⁹⁸⁴ is considered an “[attempt] to destabilise the situation in Belarus”.⁹⁸⁵ Through an ascribing subversion, the EU’s **[authorities/Lukashenka-illegitimate]** is thereby turned into **[EU-destabilising]**.

OSCE: The EU’s representation of **[authorities/Lukashenka-illegitimate & antidemocratic]** is further weakened by challenging the EU’s **[OSCE-legitimate]**, on the basis of which the Union’s assessment of the fraudulent elections is largely articulated. The claim that the OSCE/ODIHR had not received a timely invitation is “not true, to put it mildly”

⁹⁸¹ 20.11.12-Lavrov.

⁹⁸² 20.08.27-Putin, also 20.10.22-Putin.

⁹⁸³ 20.10.22-Putin.

⁹⁸⁴ 20.09.02-Lavrov.

⁹⁸⁵ 20.09.02-Lavrov.

because there is no requirement regarding any timeframe.⁹⁸⁶ According to Lavrov, the OSCE “could send one or two observers to every polling station. But they refused to do so.”⁹⁸⁷ Based on this justification, [OSCE-legitimate] is subverted into [OSCE-dishonest].

Elections: The Russian articulation of [OSCE-dishonest] necessarily also challenges the EU’s representation of [elections-fraudulent]. Given the refusal to observe the elections, the OSCE lacks the legitimacy to “report on the violations that they are inflating right now in every way”.⁹⁸⁸ In an accommodating confirmation, Lavrov concedes [elections-fraudulent]: “[the] figures could be different”.⁹⁸⁹ Against this antagonistic tension, however, the Russian interpretation is backed up and left without doubt: “but it is impossible to prove that President Lukashenko has not won the election without accepting his invitation to monitor the process.”⁹⁹⁰ Based on this justification among others, the EU’s [elections-fraudulent] is subverted into [elections-valid]. Consequently, Lavrov states, “[we] are convinced that our Western partners’ attempts to question [the election results], or to claim that the percentage was lower, [...] are an exercise in futility.”⁹⁹¹

(3) Summary

The preceding paragraphs have traced interaction between EU and Russian discourses in the articulation of their respective interpretations of the protests in Belarus in 2020. In the EU’s discourse, the representation of Russia has been found to be marginal. Accordingly, and despite far-reaching accusations articulated by Russia, the EU refers only sparsely to the Russian discourse, correcting – from the EU’s perspective – the representation of the Union itself as well as of the opposition and the protesters.

Russia, on the other hand, explains the events primarily by depicting the EU/West as the evil driver of the protests. Articulating an antagonistic interpretation, it refers extensively to the EU’s discourse, challenging its structure by subverting the representation of multiple nodal points. In accordance with the role Russia attributes to the EU/West, it works profoundly on their representation as, among others, geopolitical, instrumentalising or destabilising. The

⁹⁸⁶ 20.08.19-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.01-Lavrov.

⁹⁸⁷ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁹⁸⁸ 20.08.19-Lavrov.

⁹⁸⁹ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁹⁹⁰ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

⁹⁹¹ 20.10.14-Lavrov.

OSCE becomes merely the extended arm of the EU/West. Interestingly, in engaging with the EU's representation of the authorities and Lukashenka, Russia does not entirely refute the attribution of violence. While accommodating it, the Russian discourse plays the accusations down by means of relativising and depicting them as geopolitically motivated. The same ambiguity is visible in Russia's engagement with the elections, which, while concededly imperfect, are claimed to be valid.

7. The Poisoning of Alexei Navalny (2020/21)

a) Context

On 20 August 2020, Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny fell seriously ill during a flight back to Moscow from a talk with members of the local opposition in Siberia. After having received emergency medical care in Omsk, he was flown out for further treatment in the Berlin-located Charité hospital. Navalny, a Russian citizen, is an influential politician, who has repeatedly attacked the ruling elite in Moscow and had become the target of allegedly politically motivated assaults before (Moscow Times, 2017).

A German laboratory soon confirmed an intoxication with a nerve agent linked to the Novichok-group, which is listed⁹⁹² by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (Reuters, 2020; Bundesregierung, 2020). The OPCW later confirmed this result (OPCW, 2020). In a first statement on the case on 2 September, German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke of an attempted murder with the aim to silence one of the leading members of the Russian opposition.⁹⁹³ She urged the Russian leadership to provide answers to the severe questions arising from these circumstances. Russia repeatedly stated that an investigation of the matter was prevented due to the failure of German authorities to respond to requests for information by the Russian Prosecutor General.⁹⁹⁴ The German Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas denied those accusations.⁹⁹⁵

Merkel's call on Russia was echoed in mid-October by the EU. Pointing to the exclusive access to this group of toxic agents by Russian state authorities, the Council of the EU concluded that the poisoning could only have been carried out with consent by the Russian Presidential Executive Office.⁹⁹⁶ According to the Council's reasoning, the assault was motivated by Navalny's prominent role in the Russian political opposition. On this basis, the EU issued a first round of sanctions on 15 October, including travel bans and asset freezes against six Russian individuals and one state institute. Western governments see ample evidence for Russian participation in and responsibility for the attack, and have criticised Russia's inertia in

⁹⁹² The Novichok-group is listed; the exact substance was not listed due to its novelty.

⁹⁹³ 20.09.02-Merkel.

⁹⁹⁴ See, for example, 20.09.03-Peskov, 20.09.25-MID, 20.10.22-Putin.

⁹⁹⁵ 20.09.06-Maas.

⁹⁹⁶ 20.10.15-Council.

investigating the case.⁹⁹⁷ On 14 December, a number of Western media outlets published a detailed investigative report suggesting the implication of Russia's domestic security agency FSB in the attack (Bellingcat, 2020). Russian President Vladimir Putin denied any responsibility shortly after.⁹⁹⁸

When returning to Moscow after his recovery on 17 January 2021, Navalny was detained at the airport and, shortly after, placed under a 30-day arrest for failing to adhere to the conditions of his parole linked to a 2013 conviction, which the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) had previously found unfair (ECHR, 2017). Only two days later, Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) published a much-noticed investigative video on corruption surrounding Putin's alleged luxury residency at the Black Sea (FBK, 2020).

Thousands of protesters went to the streets all over the country – the largest anti-government demonstration since the 2011 Bolotnaya protests (Semenov, 2021) – and demanded Navalny's release on 23 January. The demonstrations were met with a police crackdown leading to more than 3000 protesters being detained (Reuters, 2021).

On 2 February, in the same week that the EU's High Representative Josep Borrell visited Moscow and condemned the arrest,⁹⁹⁹ Navalny's suspended sentence resulting from his 2013 conviction was turned into a 2,5-year imprisonment in a penal colony (Meduza, 2021a).

On 2 March, the Council of the EU sanctioned an additional four Russian individuals implicated in the arrest and repression of protests, using for the first time the framework of the EU's Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime.¹⁰⁰⁰

b) Analysis

To capture the EU's and Russia's discursive interaction over the poisoning of Alexei Navalny as a floating signifier, the discourse analysis captured 43 documents of the Russian and 27 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse from 20 August 2020, the day Navalny collapsed on his flight to Moscow, to 2 March 2021, when the EU issued the second round of sanctions against Russian individuals in response to Navalny's arrest and the repression of protests.

⁹⁹⁷ 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian.

⁹⁹⁸ 20.12.17-Putin.

⁹⁹⁹ 21.02.05-Borrell.

¹⁰⁰⁰ 21.03.02-Council.

i) **Mapping Antagonistic Discourses:**

Nodal Points in the EU's Discourse

Navalny: In the EU's discourse, Navalny is described as "prominent opposition leader",¹⁰⁰¹ who became the victim of a crime¹⁰⁰² committed by the Russian state. The EU stands on Navalny's side¹⁰⁰³ and wishes him a swift recovery.¹⁰⁰⁴

Poisoning: The EU considers the poisoning of Navalny an "assassination attempt"¹⁰⁰⁵ that constitutes a "serious breach of international law and international human rights standards".¹⁰⁰⁶ It was meant to silence the opposition leader¹⁰⁰⁷ and hence "seriously undermines the basic principles of democracy and political pluralism".¹⁰⁰⁸ To carry out this "unacceptable"¹⁰⁰⁹ "crime",¹⁰¹⁰ the use of a "military-grade chemical nerve agent of the 'Novichok' group"¹⁰¹¹ ("accessible only to State authorities in the Russian Federation"¹⁰¹²) has been confirmed through "irrefutable evidence".¹⁰¹³ The poisoning has consequently been attributed explicitly to the Russian leadership.¹⁰¹⁴

OPCW: The OPCW is represented as a neutral and authoritative international body,¹⁰¹⁵ the cooperation with which is crucial for an impartial investigation of the event.¹⁰¹⁶

¹⁰⁰¹ 20.10.15-Council, cf. 20.08.21-Borrell, 20.09.02-Borrell, 20.09.25-Michel, 20.10.12-Borrell, 20.09.02-Merkel, 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian.

¹⁰⁰² 20.09.02-Merkel.

¹⁰⁰³ 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian, 21.02.09-Borrell.

¹⁰⁰⁴ 20.08.21-Borrell, 20.08.24-Borrell, 20.09.02-Borrell, 20.09.02-Merkel.

¹⁰⁰⁵ 20.09.02-Borrell, 20.09.03-Borrell, 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.09.25-Michel, 20.10.01-EC, 20.10.12-Borrell, 20.10.15-Council, 21.02.03-Borrell, 21.02.09-Borrell.

¹⁰⁰⁶ 20.09.03-Borrell, cf. 20.10.02-Michel, 20.09.02-Borrell, 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian.

¹⁰⁰⁷ 20.09.02-Merkel, cf. 20.08.24-Borrell.

¹⁰⁰⁸ 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian.

¹⁰⁰⁹ 20.09.02-Borrell, 20.09.03-Borrell.

¹⁰¹⁰ 20.09.02-Merkel, 20.09.15-Borrell.

¹⁰¹¹ 20.09.02-Borrell cf. 20.09.02-Merkel, 20.10.15-Council, 20.09.03-Borrell, 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian.

¹⁰¹² 20.10.15-Council, 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian.

¹⁰¹³ 20.09.15-Borrell.

¹⁰¹⁴ 20.10.15-Council.

¹⁰¹⁵ 20.09.02-Merkel, 20.09.03-Borrell, 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian, 20.10.06-Michel-PC.

¹⁰¹⁶ 20.09.03-Borrell, 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.10.13-Borrell, 20.10.06-Michel-Report.

Detention: Navalny’s detention and sentencing by Russian authorities is condemned.¹⁰¹⁷ They are “politically motivated”¹⁰¹⁸ and hence not lawful.¹⁰¹⁹ The “crackdown of [Navalny’s] supporters [...] the mass detentions and police brutality”¹⁰²⁰ are deemed unacceptable. The “developments confirm a continuous negative pattern of shrinking space for the opposition, civil society and independent voices in the Russian Federation”¹⁰²¹ and are thus antidemocratic.

Russia(n authorities): Russia is held accountable¹⁰²² to explain the attempted assassination of Navalny. The crime has been closely associated with the Russian state (“A murder attempt has been made on Russian soil, against a Russian opposition figure, using a military nerve agent developed by Russia”¹⁰²³) even before an explicit attribution.¹⁰²⁴ Calls on Russia to investigate the event “thoroughly and in a transparent manner”¹⁰²⁵ as well as to cooperate with the OPCW¹⁰²⁶ have been disappointed.¹⁰²⁷ Given the circumstances, “it is reasonable to conclude that the poisoning of Alexei Navalny was only possible with the consent of the [Russian] Presidential Executive Office”.¹⁰²⁸ Consequently, figures and entities implied in the poisoning are subjected to sanctions.¹⁰²⁹ While selective cooperation with Russia remains important,¹⁰³⁰ the episode has shown that “Russia is drifting towards an authoritarian state and driving away from Europe”.¹⁰³¹

Self (EU): The EU strongly condemns the events.¹⁰³² In a first statement on the poisoning, German Chancellor Angela Merkel states that the “crime against Alexei Navalny goes against the basic values and fundamental rights that we [EU and NATO partners] stand for”.¹⁰³³ The

¹⁰¹⁷ 21.01.18-vdL, 21.01.22-Michel, 21.02.03-Borrell, 21.02.09-Borrell.

¹⁰¹⁸ 21.02.03-Borrell, cf. 21.02.09-Borrell.

¹⁰¹⁹ 21.02.03-Borrell.

¹⁰²⁰ 21.01.25-Borrell.

¹⁰²¹ 21.02.03-Borrell.

¹⁰²² 20.09.02-Merkel.

¹⁰²³ 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian, cf. 20.09.03-Borrell.

¹⁰²⁴ 20.10.15-Council.

¹⁰²⁵ 20.09.02-Borrell, cf. 20.08.24-Borrell, 20.10.13-Borrell, 21.01.22-Michel, 21.02.05-Borrell, 21.02.09-Borrell, 20.09.03-Borrell, 20.10.06-Michel-PC, 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian.

¹⁰²⁶ 20.10.01-EC, 20.10.06-Michel-Report, 20.10.13-Borrell, 20.10.15-Council.

¹⁰²⁷ 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian, 20.09.06-Maas.

¹⁰²⁸ 20.10.15-Council.

¹⁰²⁹ 20.09.15-Borrell.

¹⁰³⁰ 20.10.12-Borrell, 21.02.05-Borrell.

¹⁰³¹ 21.02.22-Borrell, cf. 21.02.03-Borrell, 21.02.09-Borrell.

¹⁰³² 20.09.02-Borrell, 20.09.03-Borrell, 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian, 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.10.01-EC, 20.10.06-Michel-PC, 20.10.06-Michel-Report, 20.10.02-Michel, 21.02.09-Borrell, 21.01.18-vdL, 21.02.03-Borrell.

¹⁰³³ 20.09.02-Merkel; besides Germany’s central role in the events, the country also held the Council Presidency from July to December 2020.

EU depicts itself as the liberal democratic¹⁰³⁴ defender of Navalny's rights¹⁰³⁵ and supports political and civil freedoms in Russia more generally.¹⁰³⁶ Sanctions are justified, among others, on the basis of human rights,¹⁰³⁷ for which the Union stands.¹⁰³⁸ The EU is united¹⁰³⁹ and part of a greater international audience¹⁰⁴⁰ to whom Russia is accountable.

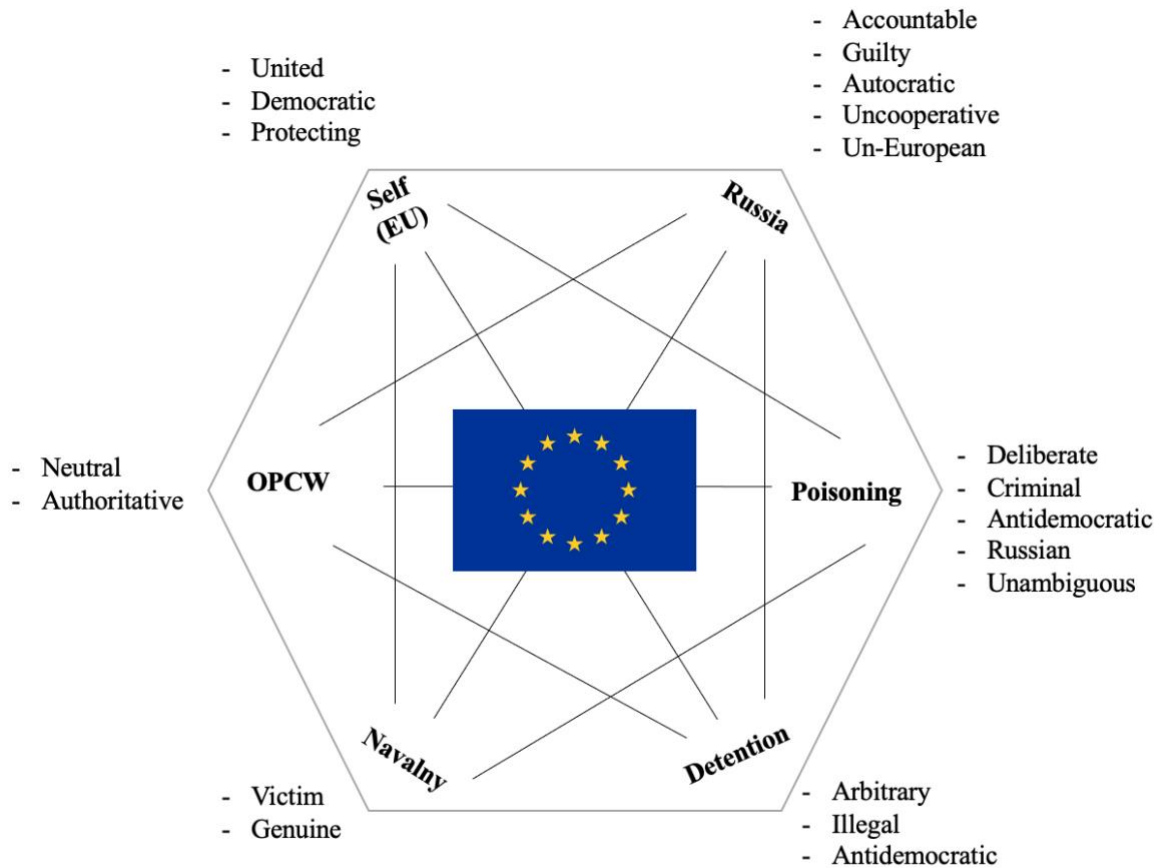


Figure 14: Discursive structure around nodal points, poisoning of Navalny, EU

¹⁰³⁴ 21.02.09-Borrell, 21.02.22-Borrell.

¹⁰³⁵ 21.02.09-Borrell.

¹⁰³⁶ 21.02.22-Borrell.

¹⁰³⁷ 20.09.15-Borrell.

¹⁰³⁸ 21.02.09-Borrell.

¹⁰³⁹ 21.01.22-Michel, 21.02.22-Borrell.

¹⁰⁴⁰ 20.09.03-Borrell, 20.09.02-Merkel.

(Alleged) poisoning: Russian representatives speak at length about the circumstances of the “alleged ‘poisoning’ of Mr. Alexey Navalny”.¹⁰⁴¹ Referring to a lack of “definitive facts”,¹⁰⁴² it is presented as ambiguous and questionable whether the poisoning actually took place: “The refusal to provide information [...] leads us to believe that this is a staged operation.”¹⁰⁴³ In a row with the Litvinenko or Skripal cases, the poisoning possibly constitutes “another staged mystical use of chemical weapons”.¹⁰⁴⁴ This suspicion is substantiated by an alternative “expert opinion”.¹⁰⁴⁵

Another dimension concerns the dissociation of the incident from Russia. It is highlighted that Novichok is used and produced also in the West and “this fact refutes any possible arguments that such technologies should only be associated with the USSR or Russia”.¹⁰⁴⁶

Navalny: Often referred to as the “Berlin patient”,¹⁰⁴⁷ Navalny is represented as unimportant figure who seeks to put himself “on the same level with the first person of the state and claim some kind of participation in the political struggle”.¹⁰⁴⁸ “Who cares about him?”¹⁰⁴⁹ Putin asks. He shows manifestations of “persecution mania [and] megalomania”¹⁰⁵⁰ and is led by “personal ambitions”, not the “interest of the people”.¹⁰⁵¹

He is used by the West.¹⁰⁵² Besides German “special services”,¹⁰⁵³ also “CIA specialists work with the patient”.¹⁰⁵⁴ Hence, “everything he says is what this organization puts into his mouth”.¹⁰⁵⁵ His and his team’s actions are further portrayed as unlawful.¹⁰⁵⁶

¹⁰⁴¹ 20.09.25-MID, cf.21.03.02-Lavrov, 20.09.11-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁴² 20.09.01-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Zakharova, 20.11.12-Lavrov, 20.12.22-Peskov, 21.01.18-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁴³ 21.02.02-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁴⁴ 20.09.25-MID, cf. 20.09.01-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁴⁵ 21.02.08-Lavrov, cf. 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁴⁶ 20.09.25-MID, cf. 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁴⁷ 20.09.03-Peskov, 20.10.01-Peskov, cf. 20.12.17-Putin.

¹⁰⁴⁸ 20.10.01-Peskov, cf. 20.12.17-Putin.

¹⁰⁴⁹ 20.12.17-Putin.

¹⁰⁵⁰ 20.12.22-Peskov, cf. 20.12.17-Putin.

¹⁰⁵¹ 20.12.17-Putin.

¹⁰⁵² 20.09.09-MID.

¹⁰⁵³ 21.02.08-Lavrov, cf. 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁵⁴ 20.10.01-Peskov, cf. 20.10.14-Lavrov, 20.12.17-Putin.

¹⁰⁵⁵ 20.10.01-Peskov.

¹⁰⁵⁶ 20.11.12-Lavrov, 21.02.12-Lavrov.

Detention: Navalny’s detention and the handling of the ensuing protests, which are deemed “illegal actions”,¹⁰⁵⁷ are depicted as appropriate and lawful¹⁰⁵⁸ and, generally, constituting an internal affair.¹⁰⁵⁹

The EU/West: The EU/West are represented as highly arrogant¹⁰⁶⁰ (“arrogance on behalf of a supposedly cultured Europe”¹⁰⁶¹), using this case instrumentally:¹⁰⁶² “had it not been for Navalny, these countries would have invented something else as a pretext for additional sanctions”.¹⁰⁶³ In order to establish the truth, not Russia but the West owes the world an explanation:¹⁰⁶⁴ “Western countries are concealing a crucial piece of evidence of an alleged crime”.¹⁰⁶⁵ Instead, they lecture Russia from above, issuing “schoolmasterly statements”¹⁰⁶⁶ and “[put] themselves above the law and above everyone else”.¹⁰⁶⁷

Besides this representation of the EU’s actions as intentional and instrumental, Russia depicts the Union also as detached from reality, as not seeing clearly: the “European Union [is unable] to adequately assess what is happening in the world”.¹⁰⁶⁸

Whatever the origin of its position, the EU is divided, and many member states secretly do not follow the “anti-Russian”¹⁰⁶⁹ and “Russophobic”¹⁰⁷⁰ stance: “some EU member states have told us in private that they are against sanctions and that they do not believe that Russia should be ‘punished’ with sanctions. They know this is futile, but they act out of ‘solidarity’, or the consensus principle.”¹⁰⁷¹

¹⁰⁵⁷ 21.02.15-Lavrov, cf. 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁵⁸ 21.01.19-Peskov, cf. 21.01.21-Zakharova, 21.02.03-Lavrov, 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC, 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁵⁹ 21.02.04-Peskov.

¹⁰⁶⁰ 20.09.04-Lavrov, 20.09.10-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.10.09-Lavrov, 21.01.18-Lavrov, 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁶¹ 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC.

¹⁰⁶² 21.02.08-Lavrov, 21.02.02-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁶³ 20.09.14-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.17-Lavrov, 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁶⁴ 20.08.25-MID, 21.01.18-Lavrov, 21.02.08-Lavrov, 21.03.02-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁶⁵ 21.02.08-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁶⁶ 21.02.02-Peskov-Putin.

¹⁰⁶⁷ 20.09.10-Lavrov, cf. 20.10.27-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁶⁸ 20.10.27-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.14-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁶⁹ 20.09.25-MID, cf. 20.10.27-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁷⁰ 20.10.09-Lavrov, cf. 20.10.14-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁷¹ 21.02.12-Lavrov, cf. 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC.

The EU's sanctions, finally, are "illegitimate"¹⁰⁷² and "unlawful".¹⁰⁷³ While some sectoral cooperation remains useful,¹⁰⁷⁴ the EU and the West are ultimately not trustworthy¹⁰⁷⁵ and act unreasonably.¹⁰⁷⁶

Germany: The representation of Germany is closely linked to the one of the EU/West, where "Germany has taken the leading role in the new escalation in relations with Russia".¹⁰⁷⁷ Despite its accusations against Russia, Germany is withholding crucial information on the case, thereby preventing Russia from starting an investigation.¹⁰⁷⁸ This "categorical refusal from the German government to cooperate in establishing the truth about the situation"¹⁰⁷⁹ is unreasonable,¹⁰⁸⁰ unconstructive,¹⁰⁸¹ arrogant¹⁰⁸² and constitutes a violation of intergovernmental agreements on legal assistance.¹⁰⁸³ From early on, Lavrov wonders why Germany is "so painstakingly concealing [information]",¹⁰⁸⁴ and Putin finds that "There is no explanation, there is just no explanation. This all looks strange."¹⁰⁸⁵ Spokeswoman for the Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova claims that "It's time to open the cards, because it's obvious to everyone: Berlin is bluffing, serving dirty political fuss".¹⁰⁸⁶

In one instance, Germany is represented as a victim of the West, being prevented to establish good relations with Russia: "they are trying to pit us against each other".¹⁰⁸⁷

¹⁰⁷² 20.10.27-Lavrov, cf. 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁷³ 21.03.02-Lavrov, cf. 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC.

¹⁰⁷⁴ 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁷⁵ 20.09.10-Lavrov, 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁷⁶ 20.09.14-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁷⁷ 20.11.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁷⁸ 20.09.03-Peskov, 20.09.04-Lavrov, 20.09.09-Lavrov, 20.09.09-MID, 20.09.11-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Zakharova, 20.09.15-Peskov, 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.09.25-MID, 20.10.01-Peskov, 20.10.14-Lavrov, 20.10.22-Putin, 20.10.27-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov, 20.12.17-Putin, 20.12.22-Peskov, 21.01.18-Lavrov, 21.02.02-Lavrov, 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC, 21.02.08-Lavrov, 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁷⁹ 20.09.25-MID.

¹⁰⁸⁰ 20.10.05-Lavrov, 20.09.15-Peskov.

¹⁰⁸¹ 20.09.09-MID, 20.10.14-Lavrov, 20.09.15-Peskov.

¹⁰⁸² 20.09.09-Lavrov, 20.10.27-Lavrov, 20.10.09-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov, 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC.

¹⁰⁸³ 20.09.09-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.11-Lavrov, 20.09.25-MID, 20.10.05-Lavrov, 20.10.14-Lavrov, 20.10.27-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov, 21.01.18-Lavrov, 21.02.08-Lavrov, 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁸⁴ 20.09.11-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.25-MID.

¹⁰⁸⁵ 20.10.22-Putin.

¹⁰⁸⁶ 20.09.08-Zakharova.

¹⁰⁸⁷ 21.02.12-Lavrov.

OPCW: The “OPCW, which has long been privatised by the West”,¹⁰⁸⁸ is represented as biased.¹⁰⁸⁹ Along with its Technical Secretariat, the once reputable organisation has been “turned by the Euro-Atlantic allies into a tool to promote their geopolitical agenda”.¹⁰⁹⁰

Self (Russia): Russia is represented as victim of arrogant and groundless accusations.¹⁰⁹¹ Russia did everything it could¹⁰⁹² and “has been acting in the most transparent manner in the situation around Mr. Alexey Navalny from the very beginning”.¹⁰⁹³ Navalny’s life was saved in Russia¹⁰⁹⁴ and, against previous claims,¹⁰⁹⁵ Putin was himself implicated in his relocation to Berlin.¹⁰⁹⁶ Russia “was and remains open to cooperation”.¹⁰⁹⁷ The “Russian leadership is in favour of the most thorough and most objective investigation of what happened”¹⁰⁹⁸ in order to “[establish] the truth”.¹⁰⁹⁹ Unfortunately, it is hindered by the West: “The fact that our partners are trying to keep this secret, muddying the waters, is a matter of serious concern for us. We want to get to the truth and will pursue this objective”.¹¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁸⁸ 21.01.18-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁸⁹ 21.02.08-Lavrov, 20.10.05-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁹⁰ 20.09.25-MID.

¹⁰⁹¹ 20.09.09-MID, 20.09.11-Lavrov, 20.10.05-Lavrov, 21.01.18-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁹² 20.09.11-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Zakharova.

¹⁰⁹³ 20.09.25-MID.

¹⁰⁹⁴ 20.10.01-Peskov, cf. 21.01.18-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁹⁵ 20.08.24-Peskov.

¹⁰⁹⁶ 20.10.22-Putin, 20.12.17-Putin, 21.01.19-Peskov.

¹⁰⁹⁷ 20.09.15-Peskov, cf. 20.10.09-Lavrov, 21.01.18-Lavrov.

¹⁰⁹⁸ 20.08.25-MID.

¹⁰⁹⁹ 20.10.05-Lavrov, 20.09.03-Peskov.

¹¹⁰⁰ 20.10.05-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.09-MID.

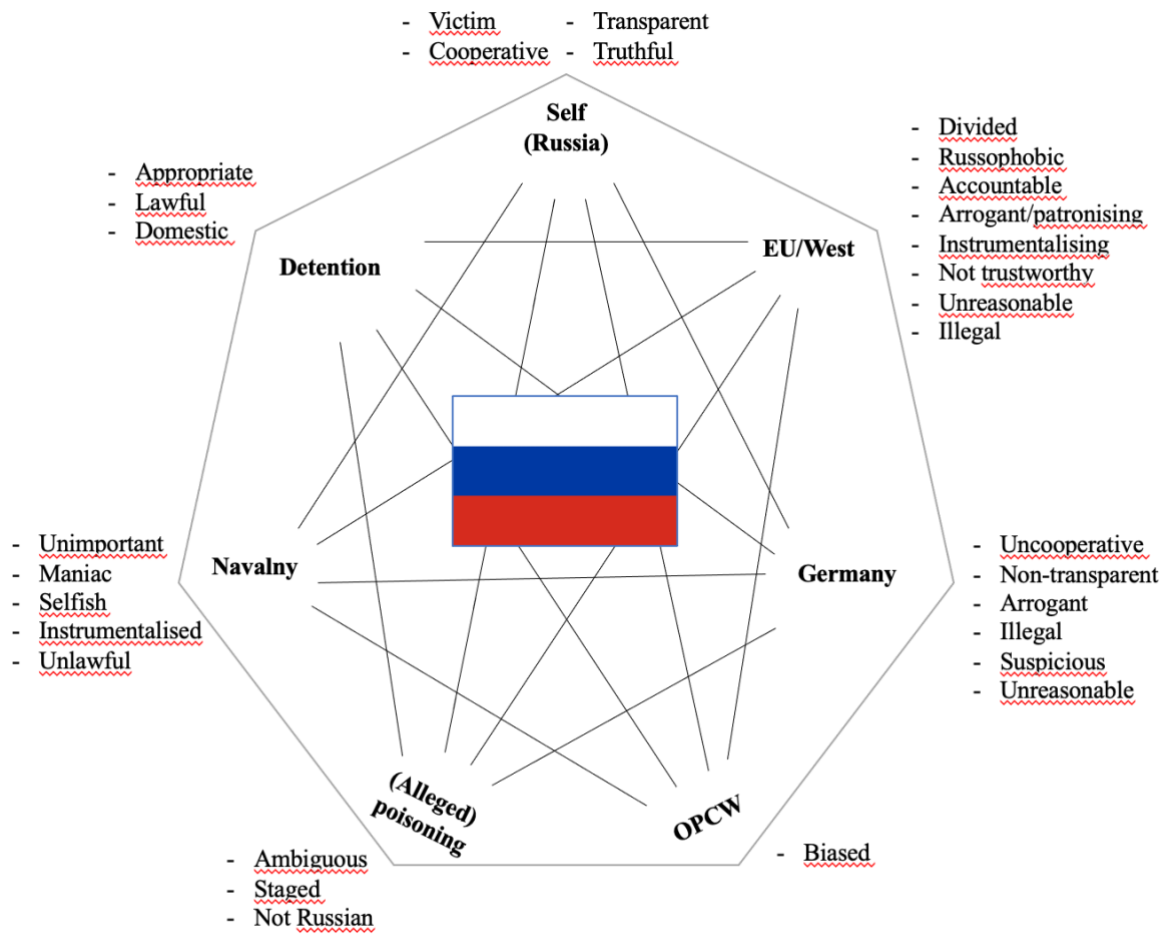


Figure 15: Discursive structure around nodal points, poisoning of Navalny, Russia

ii) **Discursive Interaction**

(1) **Role of the Representation of the Other for the Self's Discourse**

In the EU's Discourse:

In the EU's discourse, the representation of Russia is essential to make sense of the event. The Russian authorities have been depicted as solely responsible for the poisoning of Navalny. The

incident is repeatedly linked to other events where Russia has been equally deemed a negative driver by the EU, such as “Georgia and Ukraine, Syria and Salisbury”.¹¹⁰¹

Despite this fundamental role for the overall discourse, discursive boundary-drawing between the EU Self and the Russian Other remains marginal. No *temporal* constructions could be identified. Othering is arguably most pronounced in two texts articulated by Borrell after his return from Moscow in February 2021. Combining the *spatial* and *ethical* dimensions, Borrell paints the picture of an authoritarian Russia that distances itself from a liberal democratic Europe: “Russia is disconnecting from Europe”,¹¹⁰² the “Russian government is going down a worrisome authoritarian route”;¹¹⁰³ “they consider our liberal democratic system as an existential threat”.¹¹⁰⁴ More generally, he states that “Russia has not fulfilled the expectation of becoming a modern democracy”.¹¹⁰⁵ Other ethical invocations include the comprehensive condemnations of the Russian authorities’ “mass detentions and police brutality”,¹¹⁰⁶ as well as the poisoning itself, for which Russia is made responsible.¹¹⁰⁷ Distance along the ethical dimension is further created by explicit references to a human rights regime as foundation for sanctions.¹¹⁰⁸

In Russia’s Discourse:

For the Russian discourse, too, the representation of the Other is fundamental for imbuing the event with meaning. Besides the EU/West, the representation of Germany plays a central role for extensive discursive boundary-drawing. Russia is represented as the passive victim of a German led Western conspiracy.

Spatial constructions represent the EU as divided between an anti-Russian minority and a silent majority that supports the Russian perspective. Comparisons are made to the Skripal case, when “the British simply forced all the EU members to banish Russian diplomats”,¹¹⁰⁹ and “[those] who trusted the British may be sorry now, but they will never admit this out of a misguided

¹¹⁰¹ 20.09.16-vdL, cf. 20.09.03-Borrell, 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.09.16-vdL, 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian.

¹¹⁰² 21.02.09-Borrell, cf. 21.02.22-Borrell.

¹¹⁰³ 21.02.09-Borrell.

¹¹⁰⁴ 21.02.09-Borrell, cf. 21.02.22-Borrell.

¹¹⁰⁵ 21.02.09-Borrell.

¹¹⁰⁶ 21.01.25-Borrell.

¹¹⁰⁷ 20.09.02-Borrell, 20.09.03-Borrell, 20.10.07-Maas & LeDrian, 20.09.15-Borrell, 20.10.01-EC, 20.10.06-Michel-PC, 20.10.06-Michel-Report, 20.10.02-Michel, 21.02.09-Borrell, 21.01.18-vdL, 21.02.03-Borrell.

¹¹⁰⁸ 20.09.15-Borrell.

¹¹⁰⁹ 20.09.01-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.04-Lavrov, 20.10.09-Lavrov, 20.10.14-Lavrov.

sense of solidarity”.¹¹¹⁰ Now with Navalny, Lavrov is “sure that the majority of European politicians are aware of the absurdity of [the EU countries’ allied collective] stand”.¹¹¹¹ More generally, it is stated that the “EU should not be confused with Europe. We are not leaving Europe, we have many friends and like-minded people in Europe, and we will continue to expand mutually beneficial relations with them.”¹¹¹²

Temporal constructions refer to Europe’s conflict-ridden past. The Western position “regrettably, brings different times to mind. Arrogance and a feeling of one’s own infallibility have already been observed in Europe and led to very sad consequences.”¹¹¹³ A similar articulation links Germany’s contemporary stance to past wars: “We are concerned [...] because of the global role that Germany has played and, apparently, intends to play again in Europe.”¹¹¹⁴

Ethical constructions, finally, are articulated in abundance. Invocations of arrogance¹¹¹⁵ (“Everyone is equal, but they are more equal than others”¹¹¹⁶) and patronising behaviour (“Washington and a number of EU capitals have redoubled their efforts to contain Russia’s development”¹¹¹⁷) dominate. Other examples include articulations as disrespectful,¹¹¹⁸ uncivilised,¹¹¹⁹ uncultured,¹¹²⁰ hysterical¹¹²¹ or ludicrous.¹¹²² The ethical distance becomes visible, for instance, when Lavrov claims that “Western partners lack the ethics and standards of normal diplomatic work and that they have no respect for international law.”¹¹²³

¹¹¹⁰ 21.01.18-Lavrov.

¹¹¹¹ 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC, cf. 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹¹¹² 21.02.15-Lavrov.

¹¹¹³ 20.09.14-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.17-Lavrov.

¹¹¹⁴ 20.11.12-Lavrov.

¹¹¹⁵ 20.09.04-Lavrov, 20.09.10-Lavrov, 20.09.14-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.10.09-Lavrov, 21.01.18-Lavrov, 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹¹¹⁶ 20.09.10-Lavrov.

¹¹¹⁷ 20.10.27-Lavrov.

¹¹¹⁸ 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹¹¹⁹ 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹¹²⁰ 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC.

¹¹²¹ 21.02.03-Lavrov.

¹¹²² 20.09.11-Lavrov.

¹¹²³ 20.12.16-Lavrov.

(2) References to the Discursive Structure Articulated by the Other

In the EU's Discourse:

The EU barely refers to Russia's discourse on Navalny's poisoning. Only two references could be identified. The first one is a reaction by German Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas on the Russian accusation against Germany for allegedly withholding information. Maas negates the Russian [**Germany-non-transparent**] by calling it "*another smoke screen, of which we have already seen a few in the last few days.*"¹¹²⁴

Another articulation by Borrell could be interpreted as an accommodating confirmation of Russia's representation of Navalny's detention as an internal issue [**detention-domestic**], simultaneously, however, underlining the EU's representation thereof as [**detention-antidemocratic**]: "*While we fully respect Russia's sovereignty and its own responsibility regarding the fulfilment of its international commitments, the European Union considers that issues related to the rule of law, human rights, civil society, and political freedom are central to a common future, both for the European Union and Russia.*"¹¹²⁵

In Russia's Discourse:

Russia refers to the EU's discourse extensively. The entire representation of the event is highly defensive and thus reactive. The representation of whole nodal points can be interpreted as a reaction to the EU's discourse, for example depicting the poisoning as not Russian, Navalny as not important, or his detention as lawful. Those representations, among others, squarely constitute the opposite of what the EU articulates.

Russian articulations of this discourse involve an extensive retelling of the EU's narratives, using various strategies to ridicule or discredit them.¹¹²⁶ One example is Putin's reference to the EU's narrative in October: "*Well, they said that they had found traces of Novichok. Later they passed whatever they had on to the OPCW [...]. Then quite unexpectedly, they said, it is not Novichok – it is something else. So, is it Novichok or not? This has cast doubt on what was*

¹¹²⁴ 20.09.06-Maas.

¹¹²⁵ 21.02.05-Borrell.

¹¹²⁶ For a policy-oriented discussion of the event by the author, see Baumann (2021).

said before.”¹¹²⁷ Delegitimisations of the EU’s discourse more generally are abundant. The Russian Foreign Ministry states that “*the whole story is politically motivated*”,¹¹²⁸ the Russian delegation to the OPCW calls it “*megaphone diplomacy, [...] a mass disinformation campaign against Russia*”.¹¹²⁹ At other points, the Western discourse is denounced as “*politicised*”,¹¹³⁰ “[*stirred up*] frenzy”,¹¹³¹ or “*charade*”.¹¹³² Lavrov laments that the Western “*coverage of events that are taking place in Russia – not only in connection with Navalny, but in general whatever happens here – [...] is quite specific, I would say, one-sided*”.¹¹³³ At other instances he points to a “*host of inconsistencies*”¹¹³⁴ and the West’s “*unacceptable tone*”.¹¹³⁵ He further discredits the whole discourse by claiming that “*the point at issue is not Navalny. This is not just a coordinated Western campaign of deterring Russia, but a campaign of aggressive deterrence*.”¹¹³⁶ Besides general discreditations, interactions with individual nodal points could be identified:

Russia: The biggest point of contention is the EU’s representation of Russia as guilty [**Russia-guilty**]. This representation is at times negated as “*absolutely unfounded accusations*”.¹¹³⁷ The Foreign Ministry denounces it as “*a broad smear campaign baselessly accusing Russian authorities of allegedly poisoning the Russian citizen*.”¹¹³⁸ This representation is arguably most challenged, however, through various ascribing subversions. Many articulations invert the blame by ascribing double standards: “*It’s the same old story: we are publicly accused of something and our official requests for answers to specific questions from the Russian Prosecutor-General’s Office, under legal assistance treaties, remain unanswered*”.¹¹³⁹ These engagements strengthen the Russian representation of [**EU/West-accountable**]. Articulations use this ascription also to challenge the EU’s representation of [**Russia-accountable**]. Lavrov for example points out that “*When an official representative of the German government says [...] the German government can thus do nothing about it, but at the same time demands that*

¹¹²⁷ 20.10.22-Putin.

¹¹²⁸ 20.09.25-MID.

¹¹²⁹ 20.11.30-OPCW.

¹¹³⁰ 20.08.25-MID.

¹¹³¹ 20.09.09-MID.

¹¹³² 20.11.12-Lavrov.

¹¹³³ 21.02.03-Lavrov.

¹¹³⁴ 20.10.14-Lavrov.

¹¹³⁵ 20.09.09-Lavrov.

¹¹³⁶ 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹¹³⁷ 20.09.11-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.25-MID, 20.09.09-MID.

¹¹³⁸ 20.09.25-MID.

¹¹³⁹ 20.09.04-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.14-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.09.08-Zakharova.

*we conduct an investigation, this reminds us of the precedents that were created by our Western colleagues after the Salisbury poisoning”.*¹¹⁴⁰

Secondly, the EU’s accusations are subverted by ascribing an anti-Russian bias, thereby articulating a representation of **[EU/West-Russophobic]**. Confronted with Western allegations, Lavrov explains that “*the West has made it a rule to talk with Russia based on the presumption of its guilt*”.¹¹⁴¹ This presumption surfaces at another occasion, when he explains that “*Their logic is simple: they have made public the new ‘facts’ concerning Navalny’s poisoning found by German security services, yet Moscow has remained silent for two days. If it is silent, it must be guilty. The flaw in this approach is evident to any reasonable person.*”¹¹⁴²

Closely linked, the Russian discourse also invokes representations of **[EU/West-arrogant]** to delegitimise the accusations against Russia. Commenting on them, Lavrov states, for example, that “*this public conduct and such haughty, arrogant demands made in a tone that our Western partners allow themselves shows that there is little to present except artificially fueled pathetics [sic!]*.”¹¹⁴³ This ascription is also used to undermine the EU’s representation of **[Russia-accountable]**: “*I find it hard to believe that our Western colleagues are so high-handed and arrogant that they deem it possible to demand explanations from Russia without presenting us any evidence.*”¹¹⁴⁴

A final way of challenging the EU’s accusations is to ascribe and thus seemingly uncover hidden motivations. The Foreign Ministry claims to know that the “*massive misinformation campaign that has been unleashed clearly demonstrates that the primary objective pursued by its masterminds is to mobilise support for sanctions, rather than to care for Alexei Navalny’s health or establish the true reasons for his admission to hospital.*”¹¹⁴⁵ It later states that the “*politicization*” of this incident served the “*clear aim of accusing Russia of violating the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).*”¹¹⁴⁶ These articulations reinforce the Russian representation of the EU/West as **[EU/West-instrumentalising]**, unmorally making use of the event to pursue its own agenda.

¹¹⁴⁰ 20.09.10-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.11-Lavrov.

¹¹⁴¹ 20.10.27-Lavrov.

¹¹⁴² 20.12.16-Lavrov.

¹¹⁴³ 20.09.04-Lavrov.

¹¹⁴⁴ 21.01.18-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.09-Lavrov.

¹¹⁴⁵ 20.09.09-MID.

¹¹⁴⁶ 20.09.25-MID.

Russia also challenges the EU's representation of **[Russia-uncooperative]** by means of negation (“*They are accusing us of doing nothing to investigate this affair. This is not true.*”¹¹⁴⁷) and subversion. Ascribing subversions attribute familiar motives to the EU/Western Other, such as double standards (unlike the Russian doctors, “*for some reason, no one is urging [German doctors] or denouncing them for ‘attempting to withhold the truth.’*”¹¹⁴⁸) or hidden intentions (calls on Russia to cooperate are a “*pretext indicating [Germany’s] reluctance to establish the truth in the case of Alexey Navalny*”¹¹⁴⁹). Those articulations bolster a representation of **[EU/West-Russophobic]** as well as **[EU/West-instrumentalising]**.

The Russian discourse also resorts to legal arguments in order to justify this subversion: “*They urge us to start a criminal investigation. We have our own laws, and according to them, we cannot open a criminal case just by taking someone’s word for it.*”¹¹⁵⁰

Poisoning: The EU's representation of the poisoning as closely linked to Russian authorities is refuted through subversions, using familiar ascriptions. According to the Foreign Ministry, the “*quite predictable conclusion that Mr. Alexey Navalny was ‘exposed’ to a chemical agent from the ‘Novichok’ group*” was reached “*in the atmosphere of ongoing anti-Russian hysteria in the West*”.¹¹⁵¹ Through this ascription, the credibility of the representation is undermined, while the Russian representation of **[EU/West-Russophobic]** is rearticulated at the same time. Most of Russia's interactions with the EU's representation of **[poisoning-Russian]**, however, invoke justifications in order to subvert it. Peskov and the Foreign Ministry refute this representation by arguing that Russia would not benefit from poisoning Navalny (“*I don't think it could be beneficial for anyone*”¹¹⁵²). Another articulation disassociates the poisoning from Russian authorities by linking it to Germany instead. Lavrov's justification for this subversion are “*reasons to believe that everything that happened to Navalny with respect to the warfare agents that ended up in his body may have happened in Germany or onboard the plane which transported him to the Charite hospital.*”¹¹⁵³ A similar move links the poisoning to the US: “*We have been told since the Skripal case that only the Soviet Union, and hence Russia, has the Novichok production technology. They completely disregard [...] that over a hundred inventions related to the so-called Novichok formula have been registered in the United*

¹¹⁴⁷ 20.09.01-Lavrov.

¹¹⁴⁸ 20.09.01-Lavrov.

¹¹⁴⁹ 20.09.14-Zakharova, cf. 20.09.25-MID.

¹¹⁵⁰ 20.09.14-Lavrov, cf. 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹¹⁵¹ 20.09.25-MID, cf. 20.09.14-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov.

¹¹⁵² 20.09.03-Peskov, cf. 20.08.25-MID.

¹¹⁵³ 20.11.12-Lavrov.

States”.¹¹⁵⁴ All of these articulations undermine the EU’s depiction and back the Russian representation of the events as **[(alleged) poisoning-not Russian]**.

Another way to question the EU’s representation is by negating its unambiguity **[poisoning-unambiguous]**. Attacking the EU’s justification for sanctions, Zakharova, for example, claims that “*there are no facts on the table - they generally, in principle, are not*”.¹¹⁵⁵ Lavrov, similarly, argues that what happened, “*let me repeat it, is not yet clear.*”¹¹⁵⁶

Detention: Russia finally engages with the EU’s representation of Navalny’s detention and the repression of protests, challenging it generally by ascribing instrumentalist motives and invoking the Russian representation of **[EU/West-instrumentalising]**: “*We all see the response to the news of Alexey Navalny’s return to the Russian Federation. Carbon-copy comments on this event are coming in one after another. They are full of joy because they allow Western politicians to think that in this way they can divert public attention away from the deepest crisis of the liberal development model.*”¹¹⁵⁷ Another motive ascribed to the West are geopolitical interests¹¹⁵⁸ or an intention to hide the truth: “*the West is trying to push into the background for some reason [the issue of finding the truth of what happened with Navalny], drawing all attention to the protests and demonstrations in the Russian Federation.*”¹¹⁵⁹ The EU’s articulation of the detention as **[detention-antidemocratic]** is denounced as “*hysteria*”.¹¹⁶⁰ Its subversion into **[detention-appropriate]** is justified by comparing the Russian handling of protests to the West: “*it is absolutely hidden from the public that the laws that exist for holding demonstrations, rallies and all sorts of protests in the West are much more cruel than in the Russian Federation [and] the police deal with them much tougher than the actions of our law enforcement agencies regarding participants in illegal actions*”.¹¹⁶¹ The appropriateness of the detention is further underlined by subverting the EU’s representation of it as **[detention-arbitrary]**: “*The EU’s position is that we have made him a political prisoner, and this is unrelated to accusations against him. And that all of that constitutes a violation of human rights [...]. But Russia has laws that must be respected.*”¹¹⁶² Here, legal arguments serve as justification.

¹¹⁵⁴ 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹¹⁵⁵ 20.08.26-Zakharova.

¹¹⁵⁶ 20.09.01-Lavrov.

¹¹⁵⁷ 21.01.18-Lavrov.

¹¹⁵⁸ 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹¹⁵⁹ 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC.

¹¹⁶⁰ 21.02.03-Lavrov.

¹¹⁶¹ 21.02.03-Lavrov, cf. 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC, 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹¹⁶² 21.02.12-Lavrov.

(3) Summary

The preceding paragraphs have traced interaction between EU and Russian discourses in the articulation of their respective interpretations of the poisoning of Alexei Navalny in 2020/21. While for the EU the representation of Russia as the perpetrator behind the poisoning naturally plays a central role for making sense of it, the EU's discourse barely refers to Russia's alternative explanation of the event. In this alternative discourse, Russia attributes equal significance to the EU/West and Germany, shifting responsibility to them. The Russian discourse, in contrast, engages thoroughly with the EU's articulations. Besides general discreditations, Russia fervently engages with Western accusations, subverting the representation of itself predominantly by ascribing to the EU/West, among others, Russophobia, arrogance, and instrumental motives. Secondly, it works extensively on the representation of the poisoning itself, subverting the EU's claims against Russia by making the incident seem ambiguous and unattributable, and challenges, thirdly, the EU's representation of the detention and repression of protests.

Chapter 6

Making Sense of Discursive Interaction – Analytical Discussion

Introduction

The preceding chapter has traced in detail the EU's and Russia's antagonistic discourses on seven events acting as floating signifiers throughout a timespan of 18 years from 2004 to 2021. On this empirical basis, this chapter will contemplate the central research question of this study: how do Russian and EU foreign policy discourses interact? Responding to this question, this chapter aims at formulating an empirically grounded and theoretically reflected argument.

To that end, the chapter will unfold through three sections. Reflecting the guiding questions for tracing discursive interaction as developed in the methodological framework (see p.93), the first two sections present an analytical discussion of the empirical observations regarding, first, how in an intersubjective context both subjects draw discursive boundaries between Self and Other and, second, how both diverging discourses interact with each other. The third section will discuss these findings in function of the aims identified at the outset of this study. It will first shed light on the EU's and Russia's agencies as simultaneously facilitated and constrained in interaction before, secondly, dwelling on insights for the intersubjective nature of this relationship. The conclusion at the end of this chapter will ultimately bring together the findings of the previous sections to summarise the central argument of this dissertation.

1. Drawing Discursive Boundaries

In a first step, the preceding empirical analyses traced how Russian and EU foreign policy discourses, faced with a threatening alternative articulated by the Other, banished antagonism to the discursive outside by means of hegemonising moves. The drawing of discursive boundaries between Self and Other has been examined by focussing, first, on the overall

significance of the Other's representation for making sense of the respective events and, secondly, on the practices of othering along spatial, temporal, and ethical dimensions over time. The following subsections will trace discursive boundary-drawing in EU and Russian foreign policy discourses based on the observations in the preceding empirical analyses.

a) Significance of the Representation of the Other

The empirical analysis has shown that the EU/West constitutes a much more important reference point for the Russian discourse than vice versa. For the EU's telling of the Orange Revolution, Kosovo's independence and the protests in Belarus, the representation of Russia is even negligible. In the Russian discourses, on the other hand, the EU/West constitutes a major reference point across all events under study, playing a fundamental role for making sense of the events. The Russian discourse cannot explain the Orange Revolution, the protests in Belarus or the poisoning of Navalny without invoking the EU/Western Other as interfering and instigating force.

Observations regarding the representation of the EU/West in Russian discourses on the Caucasus and Crimea call for a more nuanced reading, however. In making sense of these events, the observations suggest that the Russian discourse differentiates more clearly between the EU on the one side and the West, NATO and the US on the other. Here it is the latter who are portrayed as the principal evil drivers and thus also playing a more significant role. While in Russia's discourse on Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's independence and the Russo-Georgian war the events could hardly be explained without reference to Saakashvili's Western supporters, the EU's representation as a mediator constitutes a rather supplementary role.

b) Discursive Practices of Othering

The Other not only constitutes a reference, a nodal point, in the Self's discourse. By means of its antagonistic interpretation of the event, it also poses a threat to the truth claims articulated by the Self in its own discourse and therefore, by extension, a threat to the Self and the role it assigns to itself. Therefore, the analysis focused also on how discursive boundaries are drawn

between Self and Other, banning the Other to the discursive outside. It did so by capturing the predicates and fundamental binaries that construct this divide.

The analysis has illustrated how both Russian and EU's discourses are drawing discursive boundaries between Self and Other through relationships of difference and, to a significantly lesser extent, equivalence. The extent to which they do so, however, varies. Differentiation is somewhat more pronounced in the Russian discourses. In contrast, analogous to the negligible significance of Russia's representations *in EU discourses* on the Orange Revolution, Kosovo and Belarus, for example, it was not possible to discern there a clear discursive boundary between the EU Self and the Russian Other at all.

The observations suggest that both Russia and the EU resort to negative, differentiating representations of the Other particularly when the course of events develops contrary to articulated interests. This is reflected, for example, in the EU's discourse on Maidan, where differentiation from the Russian Other can be observed only regarding Russia's alleged role in Yanukovich's refusal to sign the Association Agreement (AA). For the EU's interpretation of Maidan as such, the Russian Other is less pronouncedly banished to the spatial, temporal or ethical outside. For Russia, similarly, developments – for example the AA's suspension – are framed as the sovereign choice of Ukraine only as long as they play out in favour of what is inside the discursive boundary, that is what is linked to the Self. Any other development in the course of the Revolution of Dignity – such as Yanukovich losing ground against the protests on Maidan – is portrayed as at least partially caused by the Other. A similar ambiguity can be observed in Russia's discourse on the recognition of South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence as well as the Russian discourse on the annexation of Crimea. While both events are generally narrated as positive developments, Russian discourses actively engage in othering against the EU/West in order to conjure up threats that serve to legitimise Russia's actions. While in the Caucasus the EU/West is blamed for being complicit in Tbilisi's alleged aggression, differentiation from the EU/West in Ukraine serves to explain the political developments that Russia invokes in order to legitimise its annexation.

Besides relationships of difference, both actors also articulate different degrees of identification with the Other over time. Morozov and Rumelili (2012) point out that “[positive] and negative representations of the Other can coexist” (p.31; cf. Morozov, 2018b:31). Representations cast in positive terms do not mean, however, that Russia would cease to be a constitutive Other for European identity (Morozov & Rumelili, 2012:32). The EU stresses common interests and a constructive relationship across discourses on the Orange Revolution, Kosovo, the Caucasus and Maidan. Even prior to the annexation of Crimea, the Union expresses that in principle it

remains interested in productive cooperation, and also in its discourse on Navalny's poisoning the importance of selective cooperation remains highlighted. Russia, on the other hand, articulates an identification with the EU/West by means of invoking common views and partnership only in its discourses on the Orange Revolution, Kosovo and the Caucasus. Later discourses articulated by Russia completely lack general constructions of identification with the EU/West. This decrease of identification suggests that in Russian discourses the overall representation of the EU/West has increasingly been cast as a negative driver or threat. What prevails in these later discourses, however, is an identification with a 'Russian EU/West', that is (allegedly) sympathetic 'parts' of the EU that secretly side with Russia in opposition to the general evil EU/West – a spatial construction that will be discussed in greater detail below.

Looking closer at *how* Russia and the EU draw discursive boundaries to the respective Other, the analyses revealed an abundance of differentiating predicates along all three – spatial, temporal, and ethical – dimensions.¹¹⁶³ In order to outline the practice of discursive othering in EU and Russian foreign policy discourses, the remainder of this subsection will present the main narratives and structuring binaries they rely on. Reflecting the need to select the most prevalent notions in order to intelligibly illustrate the EU and Russia's discursive relationship to each other, the following ruminations are limited and cannot claim completeness. For that reason, the following depiction will not expand in detail on the temporal dimension of othering. This dimension *has* surfaced in both Russia's and the EU's discourses. Respective constructions would depict the respective Other and its actions as anachronistic or lagging behind. An example are the EU's representations of Russian policies as unfit for the 21st century¹¹⁶⁴ or as reminiscent of the First World War.¹¹⁶⁵ These representations echo Diez (2004), who argued that for the EU, Eastern Europe serves as a projection screen of its own past – the differentiation of which constitutes an important aspect of the EU's own identity construction (Wæver, 1996). Russia, however, similarly depicts EU policies as belonging to

¹¹⁶³ An non-exhaustive list of binaries based on the attributed predicates includes: altruistic-geopolitical, coherent-double standards, cooperative-uncooperative, genuine-instrumentalising, honest-dishonest, respectful-patronising/imposing, self-sacrificing-selfish, violent-peaceful, belonging/fraternal-not belonging, European-un-European, modern/modernising-backward/anachronistic, united-divided, democratic-undemocratic/authoritarian, humble-arrogant, legal-illegal, legitimate-illegitimate, moral-immoral, orderly-disorderly, strong-weak, complicit/culpable-innocent, constructive-destructive, impartial-partial, inclusive-exclusive, mediating-disrupting, protecting-harming, solidary-selfish, stabilising-destabilising, supportive-not supportive, uniting-dividing, comprehensible-incomprehensible, rational-irrational, reliable-unreliable, responsible-irresponsible.

¹¹⁶⁴ 08.08.27-Rehn, 14.03.20-van Rompuy & Barroso, 14.03.26-van Rompuy & Barroso.

¹¹⁶⁵ 14.03.12-Barroso-Tweet WW1, cf. 14.03.12-Barroso-Statement.

the past,¹¹⁶⁶ invoking, for example, the Cold War.¹¹⁶⁷ Overall, however, the temporal dimension has been found to be least prevalent and, accordingly, to play the least significant role in Russian and EU discursive practices of othering. For that reason, the following reflections will trace, first, ethical and, second, spatial dimensions of othering in EU and Russian foreign policy discourses.

i) Ethical Dimension of Othering

In the discourses under study, ethical constructions were often built on notions of democracy, stability, necessity and responsibility.

(1) Stability & Democracy

Hansen (2006) describes the ethical dimension of discursive differentiation as capturing “the moral force of particular representations” that roots the issue in the “‘higher grounds’ of the morally good” (p.45). With regard to how Russia and the EU represent the events under investigation, two ethical constructions stand out, organising the respective discursive structures along binaries of stability-instability¹¹⁶⁸ as well as democracy-autocracy.¹¹⁶⁹ Whereas the Russian discourse is structured more pronouncedly along the stability-instability divide, the EU’s discourse arguably more often invokes a differentiation along the democratic-undemocratic.

Stability plays a major structuring role in Russian discourses across all events under investigation. Whether it is the stabilising role of Yanukovych pitted against a destabilising opposition supported by the West during the Orange Revolution; the threat of massive chaos posed by Kosovo’s declaration of independence; Tbilisi’s destabilising role in the Caucasus provoking the 2008 Russo-Georgian war; the dividing role of the EU siding with disorderly Maidan-protesters; Kyiv’s destabilising policies leading to the breakup of Ukraine; Lukashenka’s efforts to stabilise and normalise the situation in the face of a destabilising

¹¹⁶⁶ 04.11.23-Putin, 08.02.12-Lavrov-Myrda, 08.02.22-Putin, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Kozhara, 20.09.14-Lavrov, 20.09.17-Lavrov, 20.11.12-Lavrov.

¹¹⁶⁷ 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

¹¹⁶⁸ Different configurations include for example: cooperative-uncooperative, orderly-disorderly, constructive-destructive, inclusive-exclusive, uniting-dividing, legal-illegal, lawful-unlawful, interfering-noninterfering.

¹¹⁶⁹ Other configurations include for example: democratic-antidemocratic/authoritarian, legitimate-illegitimate (if legitimacy is derived from democratic procedures or the representation of the people’s will).

opposition envisioning a ‘Ukrainian scenario’¹¹⁷⁰ for Belarus; or Germany’s unconstructive behaviour in the Navalny case – the stability-instability binary constitutes a divide that fundamentally structures Russian foreign policy discourses. It often surfaces in other configurations, such as orderly-disorderly or legal-illegal, most pronouncedly so where the international legal order is presented as being at risk – for example in Russian discourses on Kosovo (“serious damage to the whole system of international law”¹¹⁷¹) or Belarus (“the erosion of the international legal foundation of the international order”¹¹⁷²). In events where the EU/West is not represented as directly destabilising, namely in discourses on the Orange Revolution and Kosovo’s declaration of independence, it is discursively linked to destabilising forces.¹¹⁷³

For the EU, the stability-instability binary plays a significant role in its discourses on Kosovo, the Caucasus, Maidan and Crimea. There, however, it arguably remains less pronounced than in Russian discourses on the same events. The EU ascribes to itself a stabilising role in the Western Balkans and in the Caucasus, whereas Russia’s military actions against Tbilisi are considered destabilising. While Russia is only indirectly linked to Yanukovich’s unconstructive actions during the Maidan protests, Russia’s annexation of Crimea is represented as highly destabilising, capable of shaking “the legal order that protects the unity and sovereignty of all states”.¹¹⁷⁴

Democracy, on the other hand, plays a major role in all EU discourses under investigation. During the Orange Revolution, for example, the people demanding democracy along with the new Yushchenko government are contrasted to Yanukovich’s antidemocratic authorities. In discourses on Kosovo, and – more pronouncedly so – on Maidan, closer ties with the EU are presented as a democratising force. An explicit distinction between a democratic EU and an autocratic Russia then shapes the EU’s discourses on the 2008 Caucasus events as well as the poisoning of Alexei Navalny. In Belarus, this divide is prominent but, in absence of any significant representation of Russia, runs between an undemocratically elected President Lukashenka on the one side and the pro-democratic people and the opposition supported by the EU on the other.

¹¹⁷⁰ 20.08.23-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.19-Lavrov, 20.09.01-Lavrov.

¹¹⁷¹ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release, cf. 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva, 07.12.10-Lavrov-Kozakou-Marcoullis, 07.12.17-MID, 08.02.22-Putin.

¹¹⁷² 20.09.19-Zakharova.

¹¹⁷³ In the Russian discourse on the recognition of Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s independence, the heterogeneous representation of the EU/West entails a strong depiction as destabilising of those supporting Saakashvili’s government. The EU’s mediating role is articulated as rather stabilising.

¹¹⁷⁴ 14.03.12-G7.

When it comes to Russian articulations, the democratic-undemocratic binary features in discourses on the Orange Revolution, the Caucasus and, to a lesser extent, Maidan and Crimea. In 2004/05, Russia represents Yanukovych's election as democratic and the re-run along with the opposition as antidemocratic. Similarly in 2008, opposing the EU's discourse on the Caucasus, Russia represents the Saakashvili government as authoritarian. In both Russian discourses on Maidan and Crimea, Yanukovych is represented, again, as legitimate, democratically elected President. Whereas Russia stresses the undemocratic character of the Maidan demonstrations, it invokes the democratic legitimacy of the Crimean authorities and the referendum leading to the peninsula's annexation. Interestingly, the democratic-undemocratic binary plays no role in the Russian depiction of the 2020 protests in Belarus – where Russia even concedes the questionable character of Lukashenka's election.

Whereas for the EU invocations of democracy are often closely tied to civil liberties and human rights (see Orange Revolution, Maidan, Belarus and Navalny), Russian representations as democratic tend to focus on legitimacy derived from legality as well as procedures and institutions (see Orange Revolution, Caucasus, Maidan and Crimea).

The asymmetry in how the EU and Russia invoke notions of democracy and stability, and particularly the link of the former to notions of legality, resonates with Clunan's (2018) claim that "the question of whether it is democracy and human rights or rather sovereign statehood that is sacrosanct will continue to produce the deepest—and deadliest—conflict between Russia and the West" (p.50). At the same time, neither sovereignty nor democracy are universal notions with undisputed meanings. They are 'empty signifiers', subject to hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses (cf. Morozov, 2013:5-10). The different invocations of democracy by the EU and Russia – the former emphasising civil liberties and human rights and the latter referring to the legality of procedures – illustrate the negotiation of meaning. This "normative contestation" (Aydın-Düzgit & Noutcheva, 2022) has been described by Morozov (2008) as the Kremlin's attempt "to redefine democracy as a truly universal value to be emancipated from western hegemonic control" (p.152). Importantly, however, resorting to "Western language of democracy" illustrates that Russia remains caught up in the Western system of references (Morozov, 2015:23). This inevitably calls to mind the notion of 'sovereign democracy', which has widely been discussed (Morozov, 2008; Okara, 2007; Averre, 2007; Makarychev, 2008) and was cast as an explicit challenge to the EU's "monopoly of identity construction" (Casier, 2018c:111). Understanding Russia's discourse of democracy as an engagement with a universalism hegemonised by the West (Pavlova, 2013), the notion of

“‘Sovereign democracy’ gradually transformed into a ‘unique democratic experience’, which allows Russian political discourse to be included in the universal debate” (p.90). Not able to reject the universal value of democracy or even outrightly represent itself as undemocratic, Russia challenges the meaning of democracy in what Sakwa (2015a) described as a ‘neo-revisionist’ mission. Russia is not fundamentally challenging democracy as an ethical reference, as an authoritative signifier, but offers a reinterpretation instead. In line with the methodology applied here, Makarychev (2014) writes that “[the] result is an ongoing struggle for what academically might be dubbed empty signifiers – concepts of democracy, human rights, equality, justice, individual freedoms [...]” (p.17).

The discursive boundaries identified in the empirical analyses reflect that in this struggle the clash of different interpretations, i.e. different notions of democracy, results in “a reinforced antagonism towards the West and a crackdown on various identities that are perceived as pro-western and therefore subversive” (Morozov, 2008:153). A comprehensive discussion of the evolution of notions of stability and democracy in EU and Russian discourses is beyond the scope of this work. The demarcation of discursive boundaries by means of constructions of stability and democracy by both the EU and Russia is illustrative, however, of how both subjects create a distance between Self and Other in order to ban the latter to the ethical outside, thereby discrediting its threatening alternative interpretation. While the EU discourses predominantly construct a divide between the democratic and the undemocratic, the Russian discourses imply a different notion of democracy and primarily invoke the stability-instability binary.

(2) Necessity & Responsibility

Since in Hansen’s (2006) taxonomy of othering the ethical dimension is just as much about the “morally good” (p.45) as it is about the “construction of responsibility” (pp.44-45), the following paragraphs will briefly discuss notions of responsibility as they appear in the EU’s and Russia’s discourses. These notions are dealt with by focussing on narratives of necessity, that is the depiction of something as absolutely necessary and therefore unavoidable.

For the EU, the narrative of necessity could be observed only in its discourse on Kosovo’s declaration of independence. Not only does the EU consider itself as naturally responsible (“After the talks [on Kosovo's status] failed in the UN, the EU was bound to steer this process

to conclusion”¹¹⁷⁵). Kosovo’s independence is further represented as a necessary consequence of an “exhausted”¹¹⁷⁶ status process – a claim that is strongly contested by Russia in its engagement with the EU’s discourse.

Russia, on the other hand, employs the narrative of necessity extensively in its discourses on the Caucasus, on Maidan, the annexation of Crimea, and the poisoning of Navalny. In 2008, Russia represents its military intervention in Georgia as absolutely necessary: “The situation I think is utterly clear. Russia simply could not have taken – and had no right to take – a different decision”.¹¹⁷⁷ It was “forced”¹¹⁷⁸ to intervene, it “had no option”,¹¹⁷⁹ it was “the only [decision] possible from the viewpoint of law and from the viewpoint of history and from the viewpoint of justice and morality”.¹¹⁸⁰ Invoking the ‘responsibility to protect’,¹¹⁸¹ Russia justifies this necessity with the threat to the very survival of Abkhazians and South Ossetians. Consequently, it was not Russia, who violated Georgian territorial integrity, but the Georgian government itself (“Saakashvili himself put an end to [Georgian territorial integrity]”¹¹⁸²). Tbilisi is responsible for the war; Russia, who “has done everything in its power to assist in settling those problems on the basis of the recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia”,¹¹⁸³ merely *had* to react. Whereas necessity plays a minor role in Russia’s discourse on Maidan, where Russian trade measures are justified as a necessary act to protect the Russian economy, this narrative is fundamental for justifying the annexation of Crimea. The so-called reunification with Russia – as per the Russian discourse – is presented as a natural necessity, “[a] historic injustice” that “has been righted”,¹¹⁸⁴ the consequence of “the deepest crisis of the Ukrainian national identity.”¹¹⁸⁵ Just like in the Caucasus, it is not Russia who is to blame for the violation of Ukraine’s territorial integrity, but Kyiv and the West. Finally, there is a notion of necessity also in Russia’s discourse on the poisoning of Navalny. According to Moscow’s rhetoric, Russia did everything it could and would prefer to do much more, but since the West is withholding crucial information, its hands are tied. The responsibility is therefore with the West, who owns the world an explanation – not Russia.

¹¹⁷⁵ 08.02.19-Rehn, cf. 08.02.20-Rehn.

¹¹⁷⁶ 07.12.14-EC.

¹¹⁷⁷ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks.

¹¹⁷⁸ 08.08.26-Medvedev-BBC.

¹¹⁷⁹ 08.08.26-Medvedev-FT.

¹¹⁸⁰ 08.08.27-Lavrov-Remarks.

¹¹⁸¹ 08.09.01-Lavrov, 08.09.15-Lavrov, 08.09.28-Lavrov, cf. 08.09.06-Medvedev.

¹¹⁸² 08.08.28-Churkin.

¹¹⁸³ 08.08.28-Churkin.

¹¹⁸⁴ 14.03.19-Churkin, cf. 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC.

¹¹⁸⁵ 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC.

The structuring function of this narrative is not immediately obvious, since it does not explicitly draw a discursive boundary between Self and Other along the lines of the ethically good or bad, as do the binaries of democracy-autocracy or stability-instability. It does, however, convey a notion of responsibility, drawing an implicit line between the guilty and the innocent. As such, it is closely linked to a representation of agency. To argue that an issue could not be different or that a development is natural is to argue that it is not ‘in our hands’. By invoking necessity, by stressing to have been forced in a certain way, Russia denies itself the agency of a sovereign actor. Those lacking agency cannot be guilty. How is this tied to responsibility? If Russia claims not to be able to act differently in Georgia or Crimea, it also cannot be blamed. This constitutes a self-representation of Russia as having acted responsibly in a situation that left no other ethically viable option. Any accusations of irresponsibility are denied and any adverse developments – the violation of Georgia’s or Ukraine’s territorial integrity, the hampered investigation of Navalny’s poisoning – are blamed on Others. Claiming that something is necessary and unavoidable is also to argue that something is not up for debate, undermining any potential alternative that states otherwise. The claim of necessity thus depoliticises. By categorically muting any potential challenge, this narrative serves to stabilise a discourse and must consequently be regarded as covering up a discourse’s vulnerabilities.

ii) Spatial Dimension of Othering

Having sketched how EU and Russian foreign policy discourses construct distance between Self and Other along the ethical dimension, the following paragraphs will outline how both discourses create a spatial boundary between inside and outside.

A fundamental structuring binary along the spatial dimension in EU-discourses is mirrored in the articulation of a European-un-European divide. The Russian discourses, on the other hand, exhibit a more complex representation of Self and Other along spatial lines. They consistently employ narratives of exclusion, of ‘true’ and ‘false’ Europe, as well as invocations of fraternity towards Russia’s neighbours. These narratives will be discussed individually below.

(1) Europeanness

For the EU’s foreign policy discourses, the representation as European or un-European serves an important structuring purpose. Frequently, the predicate ‘European’ is closely linked to

‘European values’ and democracy. In the EU’s representation of the Orange Revolution, for example, Yanukovich and the authorities are depicted as antidemocratic and hence anti-European. The Ukrainian people striving for democracy, in contrast, have “European aspirations”¹¹⁸⁶ and share “European values”.¹¹⁸⁷ The same link can be observed in the discourses on Kosovo, where a European future is associated with democratisation, and, notably, on Maidan, where the people and protesters are depicted as ardent Europeans. The link between Europeanness and democracy, finally, is pronounced in the context of Navalny’s poisoning, when High Representative Josep Borrell states that “Russia is drifting towards an authoritarian state and driving away from Europe”.¹¹⁸⁸ Such representations as (implicitly) un-European mark the other side of the discursive divide. Pointing to Russia’s military intervention in the Russo-Georgian war, for example, Commissioner Rehn questions “that Russia had become a European state”.¹¹⁸⁹ Similarly, it is stated that during the 2020 protests in Belarus the authorities’ repressive actions have “no place in Europe”.¹¹⁹⁰

Russia, in contrast, invokes the European-un-European divide only in two events. First, to depict Kosovo’s declaration of independence as undermining the principles “at the core of [Europe’s] existence”.¹¹⁹¹ As a consequence, also those recognising Kosovo’s independence are considered un-European. Secondly, during Maidan, Russia objects to “statements that the opposition is committed to democracy and European values”.¹¹⁹² While Russia’s relation to the notion of Europe remains ambiguous, Russian discourses exhibit a comprehensive spatial structuring, suggesting a more nuanced analysis of relevant narratives.

(2) Russian Narrative of Exclusion

The spatial dimension in Russian foreign policy discourses is, first, characterised by a narrative of exclusion, illustrated, for example, by the repeatedly articulated figure of ‘dividing lines’. During the Orange Revolution, for example, Russia points to the danger of dividing lines as the consequence of the EU’s policies. The claim by “certain European capitals” that “Ukraine must be with the West” implies “that someone would very much like to draw in Europe a new

¹¹⁸⁶ 05.01.31-Council.

¹¹⁸⁷ 05.01.24-Ferrero-Waldner.

¹¹⁸⁸ 21.02.22-Borrell.

¹¹⁸⁹ 08.08.27-Rehn.

¹¹⁹⁰ 20.08.10-vdL.

¹¹⁹¹ 08.02.12-Lavrov-Geneva.

¹¹⁹² 14.02.03-MID-Opposition, 14.02.19-MID.

dividing line”.¹¹⁹³ This claim moreover suggests that “probably some element of a striving to isolate Russia is there. Of course, this may have ruinous consequences for a united Europe, which we favor, as do our partners in the EU and NATO”.¹¹⁹⁴ This narrative of exclusion is fundamental also for the representation of other events, notably Maidan, the protests in Belarus, and Navalny’s poisoning. In all those events, Russia represents the EU’s and Western policies as dividing, excluding and alienating Russia from Europe. As such, this narrative builds on underlying binaries like uniting-dividing, constructive-destructive, or inclusive-exclusive.

Prozorov (2007) traced how narratives of exclusion and self-exclusion were employed in post-Soviet Russia across the political spectrum (cf. Miskimmon & O’Loughlin, 2017:116). Analysing Russian reactions to EU visa policies, Prozorov (2007) identifies a double movement whereby a feeling of exclusion from the European community turns into an assertion of Russia’s self-exclusion both in the government’s official liberal-conservative discourse and by the oppositional left-conservative camp. Both positions, however, followed diverging rationales. Disenchanted by the EU’s seemingly asymmetric policies towards Russia, liberal-conservatives came to pursue an institutionally more autonomous agenda that envisioned a more equal standing towards the EU but did not abandon liberal principles. The oppositional left-conservative discourse, on the other hand, perceived the EU’s “hierarchical inclusion” as humiliating and as unjustified monopolisation of what it takes to be ‘European’. Not sharing the EU’s liberal identity, they advocated for Russia to turn its back on European integration altogether. The narratives of exclusion and self-exclusion, Prozorov suggests, form the context of an increasing reaffirmation of sovereignty during Putin’s first two presidential terms (Prozorov, 2007:325).

Both Neumann (2016; 2017) and Morozov (2015; 2018b) have traced the further radicalisation of the official discourse, which articulated Russian identity increasingly in civilisational terms (see p.25). Two empirical observations suggest that during the timeframe under study the official discourse has further moved towards a dissociation of the EU/West – towards what in Neumann’s (2016; 2017) wording can be interpreted as a nationalist position¹¹⁹⁵ that stresses Russia’s civilisational distinctness.

¹¹⁹³ 04.11.26-Lavrov, cf. 04.11.23-Putin.

¹¹⁹⁴ 05.01.02-Lavrov.

¹¹⁹⁵ The term ‘nationalist’ is used here according to Neumann’s (2016; 2017) observation of Putin shifting towards an increasingly ‘xenophobic nationalist’ position vis-à-vis (Western) Europe during his first two presidential terms. The ‘nationalist’ position in Neumann’s terminology is characterised by the representation of (Western) Europe as threatening and different from Russia (2017:79). The rejection of a shared underlying identity that this representation implies is a trait it shares with Prozorov’s left-conservatism (2005; 2007).

First, the invocations of the narrative of exclusion have turned from a rather cautioning tone during the Orange Revolution into increasingly open resentment in later events. The EU's Eastern Partnership, introduced in 2009, is represented, both during Maidan and the protests in Belarus, as separating Russia even from its closest neighbours in the post-Soviet space. In 2013, Lavrov claims that the "main goal in the entire Eastern Partnership project was to tear our neighbours from Russia".¹¹⁹⁶ The Union's logic of "with the EU or against it"¹¹⁹⁷ is "contrary to the logic of the actions aimed at erasing dividing lines in Europe".¹¹⁹⁸ Almost identically, Lavrov posits in 2020 that "[the] programmes offered to the post-Soviet European and South Caucasus countries under the EU's Eastern Partnership [...] are designed to tear these countries away from the Russian Federation".¹¹⁹⁹ He explains the events in Belarus as an "attempt to drive a wedge between Belarus and the Russian Federation"¹²⁰⁰ and refers to the already "familiar destructive logic of 'you are either with Russia or with Europe'".¹²⁰¹

The representation of a dividing and exclusive EU/West often goes hand in hand with a self-representation of Russia as uniting and inclusive. Lavrov, for example, asserts that Russia is "ready to discuss with the European Union the measures, which will allow us to stop the policy of deepening the dividing lines, [...] which [was] included in the Eastern Partnership, according to the principle 'either with us, or against us'. This is not our mentality."¹²⁰² The EU's allegedly exclusionary policies are contrasted to uniting Russian efforts, such as to "collectively build up a common economic and humanitarian space from Lisbon to Vladivostok",¹²⁰³ or to "build the European economic space on an equal basis".¹²⁰⁴

A second indication of a shift towards increasing dissociation from the EU/West are strong invocations of hierarchy when talking about Russia's exclusion. This is tied to the age-old idea of Russia being an apprentice to a superior West (Prozorov, 2007). Greenfeld (1992) argues that this trope is central to the Russian identity debate since the 18th century. Already in the early discourses of Russian nationhood, "Russians looked at themselves through glasses fashioned in the West [...]. The West was superior; they thought it looked down on them" (p.254). Positions on this idea differed, however. After the Napoleonic wars in the 19th century, for example, the constitutionalist discourse of the Decembrists embraced the idea of Russia

¹¹⁹⁶ 13.12.14-Lavrov.

¹¹⁹⁷ 13.12.14-Lavrov.

¹¹⁹⁸ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

¹¹⁹⁹ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

¹²⁰⁰ 20.11.12-Lavrov.

¹²⁰¹ 20.08.19-Lavrov.

¹²⁰² 14.01.21-Lavrov.

¹²⁰³ 13.12.14-Lavrov, cf. 13.12.17-Lavrov.

¹²⁰⁴ 13.11.26-MID.

learning from the West, while Romantic nationalists rejected it (Neumann, 1996:26-27). In the early 1990s, it became the official position of the Yeltsin government, which advocated for a 'return to civilisation' (Neumann, 2016:1385). In 1999, Putin, too, still spoke of Russia as 'lagging behind'. He would come to reject this hierarchical self-positioning, however, in the first half of the 2000s (pp.1390-1391).

In the period under study, the representation of the EU/West as a teacher – which is now rejected – is increasingly tied to representations of arrogance and paternalism. This is already visible during the Orange Revolution, when Putin contends that “Ukraine is a large European state with a developed legal system. She does not need to be taught”.¹²⁰⁵ The discreditation of the teacher-apprentice narrative becomes especially clear in Lavrov’s framing of the Western approach to Ukraine’s Maidan: “it turns out”, he claims, “that others are trying to direct the discussion in the direction that there are some ‘apprentices’, who have not acquired the status of ‘civilised structures’ like NATO and the European Union yet, and who must report to their ‘teachers’. While the ‘teachers’ have no such obligation.”¹²⁰⁶ The hierarchical dimension is further mirrored in Russia’s frequent accusation that the choice of “who you are with – Europe or Russia”¹²⁰⁷ has not only been imposed on Ukrainians, it “has already been made for [them]”¹²⁰⁸ and now “[they] must fulfil all the orders of Brussels”.¹²⁰⁹ The same narrative is invoked in articulations on Belarus,¹²¹⁰ where Lavrov holds that “Even after the colonial system collapsed the teacher-pupil or boss-assistant relations still largely influenced the mentality of Western politicians. Even today they refuse to recognise the need to deal with others on an equal basis [...]”.¹²¹¹ Those quotes illustrate that Russia has increasingly openly rejected the role of the pupil. In the most recent event under study, commenting on Navalny’s poisoning, Peskov declares that Russia does “not intend to respond to any schoolmasterly statements”.¹²¹² Returning to the discursive mappings provided by Prozorov (2007), Neumann (2016; 2017) and Morozov (2015; 2018b), the empirical observations thus suggest a further radicalisation of the dissociation from the EU/West. The self-representation of Russia as excluded in the face of an arrogant schoolmasterly West implies that Russia does not only aim at an equal standing with the EU by means of institutional autonomy but that it sees itself increasingly as a

¹²⁰⁵ 04.11.23-Putin.

¹²⁰⁶ 13.12.05-Lavrov.

¹²⁰⁷ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

¹²⁰⁸ 13.12.14-Lavrov, cf. 13.11.26-MID, 13.12.17-Lavrov, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Kozhara, 14.02.01-Lavrov-Speech, 14.02.13-Lavrov, 14.02.14-Lavrov, 14.02.20-Lavrov.

¹²⁰⁹ 14.02.13-Lavrov.

¹²¹⁰ 20.09.17-Lavrov, cf. 20.11.10-Putin.

¹²¹¹ 20.09.01-Lavrov.

¹²¹² 21.02.02-Peskov-Putin.

competitor who challenges the arrogant and illegitimate Western dominance. Contrasted against a dividing and exclusive West, Russia presents itself as uniting and inclusive and hence as the superior alternative.

While rejecting determinism and essentialism, Neumann (2016) formulates a cyclical pattern whereby “periods when Russian stories depict Europe as something to emulate give way to periods when stories about European decadence and rottenness take over” (p.1383). This links Russia’s self-exclusion to another fundamental narrative in Russian identity discourse, the distinction between ‘true’ and ‘false’ Europe. Prozorov (2007) argues that, from a Russian perspective,

one perceives concrete European exclusionary practices as unjustified humiliation, which in turn leads one into a cognitive dissonance, whereby the ‘We’ of Europe is necessarily fractured into the excluded us and the excluding them. This dissonance is in turn resolved by the fracture of the image of Europe itself into the true and false components, the line of the fracture becoming a precise marker of difference and a border of self-exclusion (p.318).

This border will be discussed in the following.

(3) Russian Narrative of a Divided EU

Spatial othering in Russian foreign policy discourses further works along articulations of the EU/West as divided. Those constructions generally differentiate ‘bad’ drivers within a heterogeneous EU, who serve as evil anti-Russian Others, and ‘good’ ones, who oppose them or are even secretly on Russia’s side but for some reason cannot openly express their real views. In the period under investigation, this narrative is most pronounced in the Russian discourses on Kosovo’s independence, Maidan and the protests in Belarus.

Despite the EU’s endorsement of Kosovo’s independence, Lavrov maintains that “there are sound voices in the European Union, if not voices, then minds, at least. Perhaps their voice does not sound very strong, but more and more they begin to think [...]” Unfortunately, he continues, these voices and minds remain suppressed: “We understand the colossal pressure that many states are under, but still, in this case, as in many others, we must try to tell the truth

[...].”¹²¹³ Those EU states who “[support] the Russian position”,¹²¹⁴ that is those, who oppose Kosovo’s independence, are acting “in the best tradition of European political culture”.¹²¹⁵ However, the Russian Foreign Ministry claims, “There is active brainwashing underway to convince so called doubters in the EU ranks of the necessity to ‘promptly’ recognize Kosovo”.¹²¹⁶

In Russian discourses on Maidan, the EU’s/Western approach is deemed “contrary to modern European aspirations and the tasks set by prominent European leaders (I mean the President of France Charles de Gaulle), who then spoke about common European space [sic!] from the Atlantic Ocean to the Urals”¹²¹⁷ – a ‘true’ European stance that is now embodied by Russia’s inclusive integration projects.¹²¹⁸ However, in spite of the EU’s teacher-mentality, “Many colleagues, including from the European Union, came and said that they support our logic.”¹²¹⁹ During this event, the differentiation between ‘good’ European states siding with Russia and ‘bad’ ones taking an exclusive stance is especially clear in Russia’s depiction of its proposal for trilateral consultations together with the EU and Ukraine. Lavrov notes that “the European Union refused from it, or to be more precise, European officials refused. However, [...] during my meeting with all the 28 foreign ministers of the European Union, some of them told that they approve the idea of trilateral consultations”.¹²²⁰

The narrative of a divided EU features, thirdly, in the Russian discourse on the protests in Belarus. Here, the dividing line is drawn between “Lithuania and Poland, who have openly demanded a change of government in Belarus”,¹²²¹ and the rest. The former “have taken an aggressive position”,¹²²² and “[they] are doing this by attempting to prevent Belarus from staying with Russia”.¹²²³ Lavrov, however, “[knows] that far from everyone in the West accept this approach.”¹²²⁴ Lithuania and Poland “are in the minority in the EU. The other trend is promoted by responsible, serious states. They believe that the EU must not repeat the mistakes made in Ukraine, including the last mistake in 2014.”¹²²⁵ Yet, “Brussels is unable to keep in

¹²¹³ 08.01.23-Lavrov.

¹²¹⁴ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release.

¹²¹⁵ 08.01.25-Putin-Press Release.

¹²¹⁶ 08.01.29-MID.

¹²¹⁷ 13.12.24-Lavrov.

¹²¹⁸ Cf. 13.12.14-Lavrov, 13.12.17-Lavrov.

¹²¹⁹ 13.12.05-Lavrov.

¹²²⁰ 13.12.20-Lavrov.

¹²²¹ 20.08.23-Lavrov, cf. 20.08.25-Lavrov.

¹²²² 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹²²³ 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹²²⁴ 20.08.23-Lavrov.

¹²²⁵ 20.10.09-Lavrov.

line [certain EU member states]”,¹²²⁶ who “would like to drag all EU member states into their hard-line anti-Lukashenko camp. We know that this has created serious discomfort in the countries of the so-called Old Europe, which are aware of the need for balanced actions”.¹²²⁷ In post-Cold War Russian discourses, the Baltic states came to embody ‘false’ Europe already in the late 1990s (Morozov, 2004). The continuity of this representation is confirmed by the empirical analysis, which has shown that in several Russian foreign policy discourses under study, the Baltic states and Poland continue to be at the fore-front of the evil Other. In the context of Navalny’s poisoning, for example, Lavrov praises Borrell just to state that “the EU is so far unable to get the better of its Russophobic minority, which is taking advantage of the principle of consensus and solidarity to block the more or less constructive approaches to the development of relations with Russia.”¹²²⁸ Responding to a request to specify this ‘Russophobic minority’ he replies “The Baltics and Poland”.¹²²⁹ In this context, the representation of Germany constitutes an interesting case. In the face of Germany’s vocal condemnations of the poisoning, it is stated that in addition to “the well-known fairly aggressive Russophobic minority [attempts are made by]¹²³⁰ serious, old European countries, including Germany, to lead this movement, so to speak.”¹²³¹ Whereas earlier the ‘good old’ European states have been invoked to define the representation of the Baltic states and Poland as ‘false’ Europe, it now seems hard for the Russian discourse to accommodate Germany’s accusations. This cognitive dissonance is met – and Germany’s aberrative behaviour explained if one will – by representations of Germany as manipulated by the West.¹²³² This spatial division between a ‘bad’ anti-Russian Europe, and a ‘good’ one confirming Russia’s discourse ought to be understood in the context of the above-mentioned trope of ‘true’ and ‘false’ Europe (Neumann, 1996).¹²³³ The ‘true–false’ Europe binary, Prozorov (2007) argues, has become “foundational for the very debate on Russia’s ‘European identity’” (p.318). It is the result of the desire to be different and original on the one hand and the anxiety of being

¹²²⁶ 20.09.19-Zakharova.

¹²²⁷ 20.09.01-Lavrov, cf. 20.09.03-Zakharova, 20.10.02-Zakharova.

¹²²⁸ 20.10.14-Lavrov.

¹²²⁹ 20.10.14-Lavrov.

¹²³⁰ The official English translation has been modified in comparison with the original Russian text to increase clarity. Original text in Russian: “Мы видим, как в дополнение к давно известному весьма агрессивному русофобскому меньшинству добавляются и попытки в серьезных, староевропейских странах, так сказать, возглавить это движение, в том числе в Германии.”

¹²³¹ 20.10.09-Lavrov.

¹²³² 21.02.12-Lavrov.

¹²³³ The ‘true–false’ Europe opposition has been fleshed out and coined by Neumann (1996). Greenfeld (1992), however, has already traced this sentiment back to dynamics in Russian national consciousness in the 18th century (pp.250-260).

left behind on the other (Morozov, 2004:5). Historical instantiations of this divide were, for example, the official 19th century representation of Russia as part of a ‘true’ Europe of Christian monarchs as opposed to a ‘false’ liberal one of constitutionalism (Neumann, 1996:24-26), or the Bolshevik self-identification in opposition to a ‘false’ Europe of capitalism. As mentioned in above, Neumann (2016) considers that the rejection of European asymmetrical exclusion evokes a feeling of superiority, promulgating a self-identification as ‘true’ Europe in opposition to a corrupted ‘false’ one that denies Russia recognition as an equal. The self-identification as ‘true’ Europe defined against a decadent ‘false’ Europe, he argues, has become characteristic of the official discourse since Putin’s third term (p.1383).

Greenfeld (1992) explains the coming about of this rationale in 18th century Russia. Having developed a feeling of inferiority, she argues,

unable to tear themselves away from the West, to eradicate, to efface its image from their consciousness, and having nothing to oppose to it, [the creators of Russian national consciousness] defined it as the anti-model and built an ideal image of Russia in direct opposition to it. Russia was still measured by the same standards as the West (for it defined Western values as universal), but it was much better than the West (p.255).

In the empirical material under investigation in this study, the representation of the Russian Self as better when measured by Western standards appears, for example, when Medvedev argues in 2008 that “other states, to whom human rights and the democratic will of the people are not empty words, will follow our example [of recognising the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia]”.¹²³⁴

Defining itself as ‘true’ Europe was possible, according to Aydın-Düzgit and Noutcheva (2022), because Russia, in contrast to Turkey for example, was never *culturally* othered in European discourses. Despite this narrative’s confrontational character, (Western) European discourses thus constituted the condition of possibility that permitted Russia to deny its Western neighbours European purity while claiming it for itself.

While the “need to contrast a ‘true’ and a ‘false’ Europe” seems to have been less apparent in Russian discourses of the early 2000s (Morozov, 2004:8), this divide has evidently gained new traction. Morozov and Neumann argue that after Putin’s third term, the official discourse has adopted it once again, underlining “the moral bankruptcy of Gayropa [in contrast to] Russia as

¹²³⁴ 08.09.08-Medvedevv-PC.

the true guardian of traditional European values and the Christian legacy” (Morozov, 2018b:33; cf. Neumann, 2016:1383).

The present analysis can add some nuances on this development. Tracing the narrative of ‘true’ and ‘false’ Europe as a spatial construction of othering across the events under study suggests that the line between inside and outside is drawn variably, incorporating *varying* elements of the Other in the Self that allegedly support the Self’s discourse.

Firstly, the status of the EU as a whole as representing either ‘true’ or ‘false’ Europe changes. In Russia’s discourse on Kosovo’s independence, the EU’s position as a whole is represented as un-European whereas individual member states are said to be secretly sharing Russia’s opinion. Only a few months later in Russia’s representation of the Caucasus events, the Union – now contrasted to and represented as manipulated by the US and NATO – is considered trusted as “really interested in there being peace and stability in the European region”, not “[wanting] to play any geopolitical games”.¹²³⁵

Secondly, the relation between the EU and individual member states is also represented in different ways. During the protests in Belarus, ‘Brussels’ is considered a victim of ‘false’ Europe embodied by the Baltic states, who allegedly strive to dictate their anti-Russia position to the other member states. A similar representation of the EU surfaces in Russia’s discourse on Navalny’s poisoning, where the Union is depicted as being forced into an anti-Russian position “formulated in Berlin”¹²³⁶ or “The Baltics and Poland”.¹²³⁷ During the Maidan protests, on the other hand, “European officials”,¹²³⁸ “bureaucrats”¹²³⁹ and “functionaries of the European Commission”¹²⁴⁰ are contrasted to “responsible European politicians”.¹²⁴¹ Here, the institutions are depicted as ‘false’ Europe, imposing a hostile stance on the member states. Many of the latter, on the other hand, allegedly support the Russian proposals for trilateral consultations,¹²⁴² because, unlike the institutions, “member states of the EU understand the need of such honest talk rather than attempts to resolve issues behind somebody's back.”¹²⁴³

These elements, which are represented as secretly siding with Russia, be it the EU as an institution or individual member states, are usually represented as suppressed by the ‘false’ Europe, be it the EU as an institution, individual member states, or transatlantic structures.

¹²³⁵ 08.09.09-Lavrov-MFAs.

¹²³⁶ 21.02.05-Lavrov-PC.

¹²³⁷ 20.10.14-Lavrov.

¹²³⁸ 13.12.24-Lavrov.

¹²³⁹ 13.12.20-Lavrov.

¹²⁴⁰ 13.12.17-Lavrov.

¹²⁴¹ 13.12.24-Lavrov.

¹²⁴² 13.12.17-Lavrov.

¹²⁴³ 13.12.17-Lavrov.

The variable drawing of spatially differentiating lines is noted also by Morozov (2018b) as “a temptation to ease the tension [of pure differentiation from the West] by deconstructing the identity of Europe and appropriating those of its elements which reinforce Russia’s self-esteem” (p.34). Neumann (2016) similarly claims that contemporary Russia’s ‘true’ Europe does not only include Russia itself, but also European Russia-friendly far-right parties (p.1392; cf. Laruelle, 2019). Referring to Campbell’s (1992) notion of ‘internal Others’, the author of this dissertation has suggested in a previous contribution to term external actors with whom the Self identifies, whose authority it uses to support a given discourse and who it therefore spatially includes, as ‘external Selves’ (Baumann, 2020). The fact that the Russian discourse does not coherently represent the EU as evil Other but expediently includes those elements allegedly sympathetic to its stance as ‘external Selves’ in order to justify its own discourse suggests that during the period of analysis, Russia has not arrived at an unconditional rejection of the EU as evil Other. The continued articulation of this narrative shows, moreover, that Russian discourses continuously draw authority from alleged acclaim by the EU/West. The fact that the definition of this (part of) ‘true’ Europe is delineated variably – it may be the EU, the member states, or only specific ones – underlines, first, the ambiguity of Russia’s relationship to (Western) ‘Europe’, but also that the authority conferred by those ‘external Selves’ is attributed to a more abstract notion of (Western) ‘Europe’, rather than to specific institutions.

(4) Russian Narrative of Fraternity

A third narrative constructing a spatial divide between inside and outside in Russia’s foreign policy discourses’ concerns the representation of Russia’s relations to its ‘near abroad’. Designating other post-Soviet countries, this notion was proliferated in Russian foreign policy debates after the end of the Soviet Union (Laruelle, 2015:9).

Gorenburg (2019) finds that Russia’s discursive relationship to its ‘near abroad’ is characterised by “fraternalist narratives concerning brotherly links, paternalistic relationships, and special historical and cultural commonalities with these countries.” These fraternalist narratives are central to the discourses under study concerning Russia’s ‘near abroad’, notably Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia. Surprisingly, however, fraternal ties are not invoked in Russia’s 2004/05 discourse on the Orange Revolution. There is, indeed, a strong linking of Russia and Ukraine in articulations like “[our] peoples are bound by thousands and indeed millions of

threads”,¹²⁴⁴ invoking history, culture and the economy. Moreover, representations of Ukraine as “an almost entirely Russian-speaking country”, where “[probably] every second family, maybe every third, [...] has some kind of friendly or even family ties with Russia”¹²⁴⁵ discursively link the two countries. Yet, the civilisational language invoking a seemingly ‘natural’ belonging, conjuring almost the identity of peoples and countries, is arguably less pronounced in 2004/05 than in later events. This observation confirms the accounts of a number of authors (Suslov, 2018; Laruelle, 2015:9-10; Feklyunina, 2016:781; cf. Tsygankov, 2015), who have identified the Orange Revolution as a trigger for Russia to more seriously engage with its ‘near abroad’ and adopt a more civilisational rhetoric.

Indeed, Russia’s discourse on Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s declaration of independence in 2008 extensively refers to those peoples as “fraternal”.¹²⁴⁶ Medvedev states that “The peoples of Russia and Abkhazia are historically bound by strong ties of spiritual kinship, friendship and mutual assistance”.¹²⁴⁷ The Russian discourse on this event also exhibits a strong civil dimension, since Russia’s actions are justified first and foremost by invoking threats posed to “Russian citizens”. The equation of Abkhazians and South Ossetians with Russian citizens needs to be seen in the context of Russia’s comprehensive issuing of passports since the early 2000s (Fischer, 2016:47). Starkly contrasted to the evil representation of Saakashvili and his government in Tbilisi, the Russian discourse similarly represents the Georgian people as closely tied to Russia: “during the many years that we were living together the Georgian culture – the Georgian people being a nation of ancient culture – became, without a doubt, a part of the multinational culture of Russia.”¹²⁴⁸ Further, “considering the fact that almost a million, even more than a million Georgians have moved here, we have special spiritual links with that country and its people.”¹²⁴⁹ Likewise in Ukraine, nine years after the Orange Revolution, Russian discourses on Maidan and Crimea exhibit a stronger emphasis on the commonalities between Russia and “fraternal”¹²⁵⁰ Ukraine. The equation goes so far that even “our Armed Forces are comrades in arms, friends, many of them know each other personally. And I am sure [...] that Ukrainian servicemen and Russian servicemen will not be on opposite sides of the

¹²⁴⁴ 05.01.19-Lavrov, 05.10.21-Lavrov.

¹²⁴⁵ 04.12.23-Putin.

¹²⁴⁶ 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.08.27-MID-Statement.

¹²⁴⁷ 08.09.30-Medvedev.

¹²⁴⁸ 08.08.28-Putin, cf. 08.08.27-MID-Statement, 08.08.28-Churkin, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Federation Council, 08.09.18-Lavrov-Media.

¹²⁴⁹ 08.08.28-Putin.

¹²⁵⁰ 13.12.19-Putin, 13.12.19-Lavrov, 14.01.22-Peskov, 14.02.19-MID, 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government2, 14.03.18-Putin-Speech, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma, 14.03.01-Churkin.

barricades”.¹²⁵¹ “We are connected by historic, cultural, family traditions and ties. Nobody will be able to break them easily”.¹²⁵² In 2021 then, “fraternal”¹²⁵³ Belarusians are represented as “very close, maybe the closest country to us: the closest ethnically, linguistically, culturally, spiritually, whatever. We have tens, maybe hundreds of thousands, if not millions of direct family ties [...]” Logically, “Russia has always been and remains a reliable ally and friend of Belarus and the fraternal Belarusian people. We are confident that any attempts to trigger discord between us are doomed to failure”.¹²⁵⁴

Gorenburg (2019) argues that countries of the ‘near abroad’, especially Ukraine and Belarus, are widely considered by Russian politicians as “‘naturally’ belonging to Russia’s cultural and political sphere of influence”. By underlining the linguistic, ethnic, historical, or even spiritual commonalities of Russians and the people in neighbouring countries, the Russian discourse conjures up a common identity, whereby Russia becomes their representative, paternalistically speaking *for* them. In light of the close linking of neighbouring peoples with Russia in Moscow’s foreign policy discourses, any political development or articulation that questions this identity is represented as an aberration. “Russia and Ukraine are two fraternal countries and, of course, what is happening in Kyiv is watched in Moscow with great attention and with concern, and sometimes also with pain”.¹²⁵⁵ The pro-EU Maidan protests, for example, are explained by Moscow as “a reflection of the deepest crisis of the Ukrainian national identity”,¹²⁵⁶ because the ‘true’ Ukrainian identity *must be* with Russia. Developments of the like are thus represented as not authentic or illegitimate, inevitably the result of an outside interference or imposed by a minority unrepresentative of these country’s ‘essences’ – which simply cannot be ‘anti-Russian’. Any “attempt to trigger discord”,¹²⁵⁷ “to break [ties]”¹²⁵⁸ or to “tear these countries away from the Russian Federation”¹²⁵⁹ must inevitably be external or inauthentic, because Russia and its ‘near abroad’ are an organic whole. Replying to a question why young people on Maidan arguably view Russia negatively, Putin responds:

I think the issue is awareness. There are, of course, probably also in Russia, people who are nationalistically minded, [...] but the vast majority of Russian citizens have a

¹²⁵¹ 14.03.04-Putin.

¹²⁵² 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government2.

¹²⁵³ 20.11.03-Lavrov, 20.08.13-Zakharova, 20.08.19-Peskov-PC, cf. 20.08.23-Lavrov.

¹²⁵⁴ 20.08.13-Zakharova.

¹²⁵⁵ 14.01.22-Peskov.

¹²⁵⁶ 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC.

¹²⁵⁷ 20.08.13-Zakharova.

¹²⁵⁸ 13.12.18-Lavrov-Government2.

¹²⁵⁹ 20.08.23-Lavrov, cf. 13.12.14-Lavrov.

positive attitude towards Ukraine. [...] It is the same, I think, in Ukraine. But you can always find people among the population of 45 million who, as a matter of principle, relate [to Russia] negatively. This is their right. But I think that the issue is largely related to the lack of awareness.¹²⁶⁰

Similarly, Yatsenyuk's "so-called Government of victors"¹²⁶¹ as well as 'anti-Russian' protesters in Belarus are represented as not representative and illegitimate. Referring to the 'Russian World', which he did occasionally since the early 2000s (Laruelle, 2015), Putin justified the Russian annexation of Crimea as "the striving of the Russian world, of historical Russia to restore unity".¹²⁶² He thereby underlines that Russia and Crimea naturally, that is *essentially*, belong together. This observation resonates with Suslov (2018), according to whom the 'Russian World' concept has been defined in Russia's official discourse in increasingly civilisational terms, conjuring up a single political entity, a "monolithic body" that does not allow for other acting subjects within (p.15). Contestants to this unity are therefore equated to saboteurs or traitors.

The 'Russian World' concept is indeed closely linked to the notion of 'compatriots' abroad, defined broadly as "ethnic Russians, Russian-speakers, 'passportized' compatriots" (Pieper, 2020:771), and is therefore intertwined with Russia's positioning towards its close neighbours. The equation of Russia with South Ossetians, Abkhazians, Ukrainians, Crimeans and Belarusians creates a sense of belonging-to-Russia that, further, naturally justifies a narrative of protection as surfacing in discourses on the Caucasus, Maidan, Crimea, and Belarus. The articulation of fraternal identity implies that Russia knows best what South Ossetians, Ukrainians or Belarusians need or want – thereby denying them agency. In the context of Russia's annexation of Crimea, Putin reassures that "when we see this, we then understand what worries the citizens of Ukraine - both Russians and Ukrainians, in general, the Russian-speaking population living in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine".¹²⁶³ Selflessly, Russia is taking on the responsibility to help Ukrainians "overcoming the current tragic pages in their history".¹²⁶⁴ Naturally belonging to Russia, Russia's intention to protect its neighbouring peoples as their big brother is presented as fully legitimate. Torbakov (2019) highlights that the 'Russian World' – closely related to the notion of the 'near abroad' –

¹²⁶⁰ 13.12.19-Putin.

¹²⁶¹ 14.03.03-Churkin.

¹²⁶² 14.03.18-Putin-Speech.

¹²⁶³ 14.03.04-Putin.

¹²⁶⁴ 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma.

constitutes “a geopolitical vision that ostensibly compels the Kremlin leadership to act as protector of all ‘Russians and Russian-speakers’ irrespective of where they live” (p.37). In the discourses under study, Russia is represented as the selfless protector, following “our deeply Christian tradition of dying for our friends”¹²⁶⁵ in the Caucasus and upholding the “ageless Christian truth, which tells us to help our neighbours, and this help will [be returned]”¹²⁶⁶ by a grateful Ukraine. The country “is a friendly and fraternal state for Russia, its strategic partner, and we will use all our influence to help this country live calmly and in peace”.¹²⁶⁷

The paternalistic narrative of fraternity and the categorial negation of any ‘apostacy’ by ‘fraternal’ countries in Russia’s ‘near abroad’ ought to be understood in the wider context of Russia’s imperial past (cf. Morozov, 2015) and the unwritten Soviet assumption of “ethnic Russians as ‘the first among equals’” (Morozov, 2017b:119). In his discussion of the notion of ‘loneliness’ in Russian post-Cold War identity discourses, Akopov (2020) argues that Russia’s relationships to its close neighbours can be regarded through a prism of brotherhood and betrayal. At the dissolution of the Soviet Union, “transition was guided by expectations that Russia would preserve close ‘brotherly links’ with its former neighbors” (p.295). Accepting the disintegration of the Soviet Union and recognising the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other post-Soviet states was perceived in Russia as a selfless, benevolent act deserving of recognition (p.296; cf. Surkov, 2018). Consequently, any attempt to question this unity, for example in 2014 by the new Yatsenyuk government in Ukraine or the protesters in Belarus 2020, is necessarily depicted as anti-Russian. Russian pledges of sovereign equality are therefore tied to the condition of allegiance. At tension with these pledges, Moscow’s narrative of fraternity suggests a continuity of an imperial, hierarchical self-positioning by the centre towards its neighbours when it now claims to speak for the subaltern (cf. Spivak, 1988).

In Russian foreign policy discourses, the spatial construction of fraternity ties Russia’s ‘near abroad’ to itself, facilitating a discursive boundary between the ‘Russian world’ and the EU/Western Other.

¹²⁶⁵ 08.09.01-Lavrov.

¹²⁶⁶ 13.12.19-Lavrov.

¹²⁶⁷ 14.02.19-MID.

c) First Interim Summary: Drawing Discursive Boundaries

This section investigated the drawing of discursive boundaries in both EU and Russian foreign policy discourses and the role the respective Other plays therein. The analysis suggests that the EU/West constitutes a more significant reference point for Russian discourses than vice versa. At the same time, Russia's identification with the EU/West has decreased during the period of analysis. Russia and the EU discursively create relational distance to the respective Other mostly to make sense of unfavourable developments, and they do it most pronouncedly along ethical and spatial lines.

A central ethical construction in both discourses is the notion of 'democracy'. The invocation of democracy and other universalist notions in order to draw a boundary along the binaries of inside-outside, democratic-undemocratic, ethical-unethical thereby constitutes in itself a discursive struggle whereby the authority of the signifier – democracy – is mutually accepted, while its precise meaning remains contested. Whereas the EU's notion of democracy is associated with civil liberties and human rights, the Russian discourse defines democracy rather through legality and institutions. The analysis of ethical constructions moreover revealed that, more so than the EU, Russian discourses place a stronger emphasis on stability and invoke a narrative of necessity in order to cover the contingency of its actions.

Spatial othering in the EU's discourses predominantly builds on drawing a clear line between the European – closely linked to democracy – and the un-European. Russia's spatial constructions, on the other hand, are more complex. It spatially delineates an inside from the outside through narratives of exclusion, of divided – or 'true' and 'false' – Europe, as well as invocations of fraternity towards its neighbours.

The preceding analysis draws a multi-layered picture of how Russia and the EU delineate Self from Other in their competing foreign policy discourses. In hermeneutic exchange with the relevant literature, it produced substantiated insights on trends of Russian foreign policy discourses.

Firstly, the development of Russia's narrative of exclusion, the increasingly openly articulated resentment thereof, as well as strong invocations – come rejection – of hierarchy suggest that the Russian official foreign policy discourse has continued its trend as identified in the literature and radicalised in its dissociation from the EU/West. Russia, however, continues to identify itself with a notion of Europe. The analysis of Russia's narrative of a divided EU has revealed, secondly, that the boundary between Self – 'true' Europe – and Other – 'false' Europe – remains important to confer legitimacy to Russian discourses through alleged Western

acclaim. That Russia draws this line variably shows that the EU has not been rejected unconditionally as evil Other during the time period under study. It also shows that an abstract notion of (Western) 'Europe' continues to be associated with authority. Thirdly, the examination of the Russian narrative of fraternity confirmed a tendency of increasingly civilisational rhetoric in events *after* the Orange Revolution. This rhetoric delineates an organic 'Russian World' characterised by the essential identity of all its 'fraternal' subjects under the guidance and protection of Russia.

In summary, while Russia's discourses remain centred on the EU/West, decreasing identification with it and increasingly open resentment against it, as well as reassertions of increasingly essentialist boundaries between Self and Other suggest an intensification of the discursive struggle – at least from the Russian perspective – during the period of analysis.

2. Intersubjective Interaction with the Other's Discourse

The previous section concerned the discursive structure of Russia's and the EU's foreign policy discourses. It has shed light on how in an intersubjective setting, that is in the presence of an alternative discourse, the EU and Russia ban the Other to the discursive outside – notably along the ethical and spatial dimensions. While the focus of the preceding analysis was thus on the individual discursive structures articulated by Russia and the EU respectively, the following section will now turn to the intersubjective dynamics of discursive *interaction*.

a) Extensive Russian Engagement

Following the methodology outlined in chapter four, the main focus of the discourse analysis was placed on how both actors engage with the Other's discursive structure by means of instrumentalising or accommodating confirmations, negations, as well as justifying or ascribing subversions. Aiming at challenging the Other's discursive structure, justifying subversions were observed invoking, for example, objectivity, reality, truth, reason, logic, external expertise, legal grounds, comparisons, security, legitimacy, identity or history. Ascribing subversions, in turn, delegitimised or discredited the Other by suggesting, for

example, instrumentalist, opportunistic, geopolitical, paternalist, or immoral motives as well as double standards, ignorance, cynicism, arrogance, panic or Russophobia.

With regard to the extent of how both actors interact with the discursive structure articulated by the Other, the analysis revealed a clear pattern whereby throughout the period under study Russia is continuously engaging much more actively with the EU's discourse than vice versa. The EU sparsely refers to the discursive structure articulated by Russia even in cases – like Crimea – where the Russian Other is at the centre of the Union's discourse and extensively differentiated spatially, temporally and ethically. As such, this pattern of interaction remained seemingly unaffected by the radical transformations that EU-Russia relations underwent throughout the period of analysis (cf. Casier, 2016a). In two cases – Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as Maidan – the EU's discourse engaged slightly more with Russian discourses compared to others. Yet, across all events, Russia's interaction with the EU's discursive structure by means of confirmations, negations and subversions was continuously much more extensive than vice versa.

b) Making Sense of Asymmetrical Interaction Through Recognition

Why does Russia interact significantly more with the discursive structure articulated by the EU than vice versa? The notion of recognition as developed in the theoretical framework in chapter three can help to make sense of the interaction pattern observed in the empirical analysis.

The recognition analogy has shown that 'the Other', central to poststructuralist analyses, must not be reduced to a static object for the construction of relational identity. In an intersubjective social context, the Other simultaneously acts as subject in a joint negotiation of meaning and identities. Relations between Self and Other are therefore not one-directional, but must be grasped as a complex of interdependencies.

The preceding analysis has fleshed out discursive struggle between Russia and the EU. Both actors offer antagonistic interpretations of the events under study. Both, Russia's and the EU's discourse constitute truth claims and, by virtue of being incommensurable, necessarily present alternatives in competition for dominance. The antagonistic nature of Russia's and the EU's competing discourses is striking, most so in instances where both discourses constitute mirror images of each other, for example when protesters on Maidan are represented by the EU as democratic and antidemocratic by Russia; when the recognition of Kosovo, Abkhazia or South

Ossetia is considered legitimate by one and illegitimate by the other; elections as falsified and valid. In the presence of antagonistic alternatives, both actors engage in hegemonising moves to stabilise the meaning of floating signifiers while at the same time repressing the alternative interpretations articulated by the Other. The previous section summarised how discursive boundaries are drawn notably along spatial and ethical dimensions. Structured along binaries, including notable examples like democratic-undemocratic, stable-unstable, or European-un-European, discourses banish the Other to the outside, the past or the unethical. Thereby, the underlying binaries are oftentimes to a large extent the same in both discourses. While remaining antagonistic, this shows the inextricable interweaving of both discourses, which respectively exhibit a largely inverted structure.

The EU's and Russia's discursive struggle is one for hegemony, "an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:112). However, as poststructuralists argue – and as the discussion of radical negativity in the theory chapter (see p.66) has shown – a centre around which all meaning is established is impossible. Any discourse, any identity can thus only be *relatively* stable. The tracing of discursive struggle in the framework of the preceding empirical analyses has illustrated that discourses are always in a state of tension with the antagonistic outside, which simultaneously poses a threat and, by means of reaffirming what it challenges, constitutes their condition of possibility.

This conceptualisation finds its mirror image in the recognition analogy, which implies that the negativity inherent to antagonism is fundamental for the Self to gain reflection of itself. In its quest for self-certainty, the Self is thus dependent on recognition by – or reflection in – the antagonistic Other. Yet, the recognition analogy posits that in the face of the contingency of the social, just like the impossibility of a fixed centre of all meaning, no identity can ever be ultimately pinned down. The antagonistic nature of Russia's and the EU's discourses prevents both subjects from having their subjective identity reflected in the respective Other – or rather in the Other's discourse – leading both to engage in a struggle for domination – Hegel's life-and-death struggle. In a contingent intersubjective context, relative stability of meaning and identities, that is certainty of oneself and thus autonomy, can only be attained if the threatening Other is successfully suppressed so that its diverging interpretation can be dismissed and the contingency of the social is masked. While the ideal of an ultimately stable identity remains unattainable, the relationship of subordination isolates the Self from the experience of antagonism which, in its desire for recognition, forces it to continuously engage with the Other.

(Relative) agency and independence are thus inextricably linked with inequality and asymmetry.

Taking this discussion back to how Russia and the EU engage with the respective Other's discourse, different degrees of agency can be observed. In articulating its discourse, the EU does enjoy a degree of autonomy and independence. It seemingly faces significantly less constraints by Russia's antagonistic interpretation than vice versa. The EU's articulation of meanings and identities is not significantly conditioned by Russia's alternative articulations. The Russian discourse, on the other hand, extensively engages with the EU's discourse. Russia's degree of discursive independence is thus lower. No change of this pattern has been observed throughout the period under study.

What does this mean for discursive interaction in EU-Russia relations? Applying Hegel's Master-Slave dialectics to the West's relationship with (Soviet) Russia, Ringmar (2002) argued in favour of understanding the former as the recognised party and the latter as the one craving recognition. He concludes that, in this constellation, "the West has much more influence over a future Russian identity than is commonly assumed" (p.131).¹²⁶⁸ While this conclusion is mirrored in the findings here, Ringmar's assumption that there can be a neutral, overarching vantage point from which one subject can be identified as 'the Master' and the other one as 'the Slave' is problematic. As argued in the theory chapter (see p.76), to look at a Self's discursive relationship to an Other is in the first instance an intra-subjective perspective. Instead of understanding this dialectic literally and assigning the roles of Master and Slave to the EU and Russia respectively, one ought to look at how successfully both subjects in their respective discourses isolate the respective Other's antagonistic interpretation. It is thinkable, after all, that both subjects from their intra-subjective perspective successfully suppress the antagonistic Other, thus assuming the role of the tenuous, relatively independent Master.

Against the above-formulated conclusion that relative independence requires the suppression of threatening alternatives, Russia is seemingly stuck in the life-and-death struggle with the Other in its pursuit for autonomy. It is faced with the EU's discourse equally claiming to objectively represent reality as it is, creating dissonance with its own claim to objectivity and thus revealing its contingency. In its – very own and (intra-)subjective – relationship with the

¹²⁶⁸ Building on the notion of the International Society, Makarychev (2014) reaches a similar conclusion. He finds that the intersubjective relationship between Russia and the EU is asymmetrical, since Russia's ability to shape debates within the EU is much more limited than vice versa. He summarises that "European and Russian identities are mutually dependent, but EU's [sic!] role in molding the Russian identity is stronger than Russia's role for the EU" (p.31). Here, however, the preconceived structures imposed by the English School framework are sought to be overcome conceptually.

EU/West, Russia cannot as efficiently as the EU suppress the contingency of its discourse, cannot as successfully isolate itself from the tenuousness of its identity and thus dismiss the constitutive outside – that is the antagonistic EU discourse. The presence of the EU’s antagonistic discourse poses an unsurmountable contradiction to Russia. “Every confrontation with an external reality is at once an alienation of the subject; difference threatens the subject with annihilation until the subject can discover that difference as an essential moment of itself” (Butler, 1999:45-46). The Russian discourse is thus constantly forced to accommodate what cannot be accommodated.

Among the different modes of interaction observed, this tension is most pronounced in cases where the discourses resort to accommodating confirmations along the line of ‘yes, but...’. Whereas those accommodating references acknowledge the contradiction, instrumental confirmations attempt to relocate a seeming contradiction within the Other’s discourse (‘In fact we are on the same page, the Other’s conclusion is simply wrong’). The Other’s antagonistic discourse may further simply be negated (for example when Russia in 2014 counters the EU discourse on Ukraine, claiming that “This crisis was not created by us, we are not a party to it.”¹²⁶⁹) or subverted. Subversions discredit the Other’s discourse by showing that the Other’s discourse is not what it pretends to be. To that end, the Other’s discourse is denounced as, for example, geopolitically, instrumentally or opportunistically motivated or declared the result of double standards, arrogance and Russophobia. The events under investigation show how Russia more so than the EU presents itself as the ‘truer’, the ‘more legal’, the ‘less selfish’, or the ‘more legitimate’ subject – bestowing upon itself a higher authority to interpret the event. Russia’s dependence leads to awkward situations, such as when during the annexation of Crimea, which Russia presents as legal reunification, the Russian discourse sees itself continuously forced to rebut EU accusations of illegality – subverting them either by ascribing malign intentions to the EU/Western Other or by providing legal, moral or other justifications. Further examples constitute Russia’s continuous fending off of the EU’s accusations of poisoning Alexei Navalny, presenting lengthy explanations of why they are allegedly intolerable or Russia’s acquiescence to NATO enlargement in the late 1990s despite far-reaching domestic opposition as outlined previously (see p.59).

All those modes of negating the contradictions with the EU’s discourse – that is negating the Other’s discourse’s claim to objectivity/truth/totality – can be understood as a form of seeking recognition. It is not the confident formulation of one’s own discourse in the face of a

¹²⁶⁹ 14.03.08-Lavrov, cf. 14.03.13-Churkin.

challenging alternative, but an attempt to accommodate contradictions with this alternative. The fact that the EU barely engages with the Russian discourse is possibly the deepest misrecognition possible. “If we want to deny a person recognition,” Ringmar (1996) writes, “all we have to do is to look the other way – no big gestures are needed and few traces are left at the sight of the crime” (p.82). Russia’s discourse is not even refuted – which would reflect upon Russia a sense of equality – it goes largely unnoticed in the EU’s official rhetoric.¹²⁷⁰ This is not a misrecognition of Russia as such – which features as important nodal point in the EU’s discursive structures under study – but of the subject position that Russia assigns to itself in its own discourses. While the same can to some extent also be argued regarding the EU’s discursive relationship to Russia, it has been found that this dependence is significantly lower. Importantly, as the theoretical framework has established, the quest for full autonomy and independence can never ultimately be fulfilled. The observed autonomy by the EU is thus also a tenuous and incomplete one. Speaking figuratively, the EU – in contrast to Russia – is not stuck in the life-and-death struggle with the Other but continues to successfully subdue it. As a consequence, it remains relatively isolated from challenging Russian articulations. Being vulnerable to the EU’s discourse, Russia is thus more constrained in its articulations by the intersubjective relationship than the EU. What the EU articulates, matters. It cannot be easily dismissed in Moscow and thus, to some degree, conditions the Russian discourse. Discursively, the EU experiences a higher degree of independence, ultimately bestowing on it a higher degree of agency.

c) Second Interim Summary: Intersubjective Interaction

This chapter has so far fleshed out how Russian and EU foreign policy discourses interact, competing for hegemony in what can be called discursive struggle. To this end they employ hegemonising moves, banning the alternative to the outside and thereby isolating the Self’s discourse from antagonism.

¹²⁷⁰ The argument here is built on a study of the EU’s official foreign policy discourse. Morozov (2015) has pointed out that Russia’s discourse, especially since its paleoconservative turn in 2011-12, has been met with partial recognition among its far-right equivalents in the United States and Europe (pp.127-128). The interaction dynamics identified here show, however, that while Russia attempts to represent these ‘external Selves’ as ‘true’ Europe, this partial – and marginal – recognition cannot serve as satisfactory external confirmation of Russia’s discourse.

Both the EU's and Russia's discourse primarily differentiate the Other through ethical and spatial constructions. The EU's discourse is characterised by invocations of democracy and a clear delineation of the European from the un-European, the Russian discourse tends to invoke notions of stability as well as necessity and creates spatial boundaries through narratives of hierarchical exclusion, 'true' and 'false' Europe, as well as patronising notions of fraternity. Russia's decreasing identification with the EU/West as well as increasingly civilisational rhetoric in delineating Self from Other suggest an intensification of the discursive struggle. Substantially, however, neither the EU's nor Russian foreign policy discourses have changed throughout the period of analysis. Their structure, as well as their patterns of interaction have exhibited a great extent of continuity.

The EU's and Russia's discursive struggle has been continuously found to be highly asymmetrical. The intersubjective dynamics are characterised by Russia's vulnerability to the EU's discourse. Russia's extensive engagement with the antagonistic discursive structure articulated by the EU in the form of confirmations, negations and subversions shows how the latter cannot be fully suppressed. In its pursuit for recognition, Russia remains forced to interact with that what challenges it, ultimately limiting its agency in the articulation of original discourse. As an effect, the EU is much more independent in sovereignly articulating an interpretation of the world, whereas Russia continues to face constraints to the formulation of an autonomous political project.

3. Revisiting Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations

How do these ruminations contribute to our understanding of EU-Russia relations? The preceding discussion illustrates how discursive interaction between Russia and the EU in itself conditions their respective identities. It thereby offers new conceptual and empirical insights, addressing the blind spots identified in the literature review (see p.40). Aiming to flesh these out, this last section will reflect on how this dissertation, first, furthers an understanding of Russia's and the EU's agencies, freedoms and constraints thereto as arising from their intersubjective relationship. Secondly, it will discuss how the focus of adopted in this study illuminates the intersubjective nature of this relationship and what the empirical findings reveal

about contemporary intersubjective dynamics. The section will conclude by going back to the issue of change, notably discussing Russia's potential emancipation.

a) Agency in Interaction

With insights from recognition theory, the poststructuralist framework has fleshed out how the dynamics of relationality affect the constitution of the Self and, hence, its identity. As such, it takes up Morozov's and Rumelili's (2012) contention that in an intersubjective context, the Self's Other and its discourses must be apprehended as a potentially constraining element to the Self (pp.28-29). By analytically approaching the Other as a subject in its own right, this study formulates a response to their call for "looking at identity construction as a process that is profoundly conditioned by the mutual constitution of the inside and the outside, where both the Self and its Others enjoy agency" (p.32).

With regard to agency, it has been established how a subject's relative autonomy can be understood as a function of the social and thus of the intersubjective relationship to the Other, making it more or less vulnerable to the Other's alternative interpretation of the world and thereby more or less constrained in articulating its own.

When Russia justifies its annexation of Crimea by referring to its responsibility to protect, invoking the 'Kosovo precedent' that it repudiates at the same time, this can be interpreted as deliberate strategy to ridicule Western hegemony (Kurowska & Reshetnikov, 2021), satire (Dunn & Bobick, 2014) or a parody of Western arguments (Burai, 2016). But why would the Russian discourse recourse to such strategies in the first place? These references, it is argued here, reflect a vulnerability that prevents Russia from formulating its own, independent political project, where such a potent act as the annexation of a part of another sovereign country would not require the authority conferred by those Western discourses.

In a social world, a subject's agency – the freedom to act – is necessarily reflected in Others, and since these Others need to be appreciated as acting subjects, too, agency is necessarily constrained (Markell, 2003:79). Recognition dynamics have illustrated this play between the constraints and the autonomy a subject oscillates between in a social context. As such, this study provided a comprehensive framework to analyse discursive identity construction, where the Other is not merely an object of othering, but where "both the Self and its Others enjoy

agency [in the mutual constitution of the inside and outside]” as called for by Morozov and Rumelili (2012:32).

The framework allows to identify the constraints to both subjects’ agency resulting from the intersubjective context while maintaining their non-deterministic character. Importantly, illuminating discursive interdependencies does not mean to *rid* Russia of agency and thus of responsibility for its actions. Agency understood as resulting from “a positioning of subjects that occurs through [discursive] practices” (Doty, 1997:384) emphasises that subjects always enjoy a – greater or lesser – degree of freedom to act from their respective subject position. While contingent discursive structures may pose softer or harder constraints to what can intelligibly be articulated, every articulation at the same time constitutes a political act (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) in the open-endedness of the social world, performatively redefining those structures. Poststructuralists argue that due to the overdetermination of meaning there is always room for change. Any articulation denying the openness of discursive practices – an illustrative example thereof is the narrative of necessity prevalent in Russian discourses – can thus only be the *attempt* to deny responsibility.

The aim to analytically account for change is reflected in the framework’s anti-essentialism and anti-determinism, conceptualising identities and structures to be mutually constitutive and malleable. Before, however, discussing in greater detail the potential for change in EU-Russia relations, the following subsection will continue by reflecting on the intersubjective relationship that conditions both Russia’s and the EU’s agency.

b) An Intersubjective Relationship

A second aim formulated at the outset of this study was to capture the relationship between Russia and the EU as an intersubjective one. Relying on the analogy of recognition dynamics, the theoretical conceptualisation has done so by approaching this relationship from both subjects’ individual (intra-subjective) interpretations and perceptions of each other. This constitutes a development of Ringmar’s insightful account (2002) in that it recasts his conceptualisation of the relationship as objectively perceivable by placing the analytical focus on Russia’s and EU’s respective subject positions instead, acknowledging that both might apprehend this relationship differently – which is reflected in the very asymmetrical dynamics observed.

On this basis, the empirical analysis offers a contribution to the discussion of Europe's normative hegemony, of the "hegemonic position occupied by Europe (or the West) in capitalist modernity", which is central to understand Russia's Eurocentrism (Morozov, 2018a:23). Diez (2013; cf. Haukkala, 2008b) has underlined that hegemony, understood as the power to shape "conceptions of the normal" (p.195), implies ideational struggle. It thus ought to be appreciated as a *process*. The poststructuralist notion of hegemony employed in this dissertation rests on the same Gramscian understanding (Laclau, 1990:29-30) that also informs Diez's (2013) account.

The analysis shows that, from a Russian perspective, the EU's discourse is not hegemonic in the sense that it would be "commonly accepted, taken for granted, and not profoundly challenged" (Marttila, 2015a:52). Yet, appreciating hegemony not as a state but as a process, the analysis of discursive struggle has confirmed the dominance of the EU's discourse in the "battle to impose the 'right' viewpoint onto the world" (Farkas & Schou, 2018:302). Echoing Laclau's (1990) contention that "it is not possible to threaten the existence of something without simultaneously affirming it" (p.27), Russia's engagement with the EU's discourse – confirming, negating or subverting its representations – validates the existence of it as an actual alternative to its own discourse. Russia can thus not fight the EU's interpretation without at the same time prolongating it. As a consequence, Russia's extensive engagement with the EU's discourse to a large extent defines its own. This leads to Russian discourses, as observed above, often appearing almost as mirror images of the EU ones. A more detailed example in this regard is Russia's discourse on the protests in Belarus, representing the opposition as undemocratic (as opposed to the EU's representation as democratic), the OSCE as illegitimate (as opposed to legitimate by the EU), and Lukashenko as playing a constructive, stabilising role (as opposed to being destructive and destabilising in the EU's discourse). Importantly, the fact that the Russian and the EU's discourse are largely mirror images in itself does not allow one to infer that the Russian discourse mirrors the EU's structure when the opposite could be true as well. This would mean to assume a one-directional influence that could logically be justified only by relying on external factors. The empirical analysis revealed, however, that the Russian discourse engages significantly more with the EU's discursive structure than vice versa. Russia's extensive referencing to the EU's discourse in terms of confirmations, negations, subversions leads to the Russian discourse to be largely responsive, remaining to a significant extent defined by what the EU articulates. Therefore, it is argued here that the Russian discourses' extensive engagement with the EU's discursive structure leads to the latter leaving a substantially greater footprint on the former than vice versa.

What does this footprint mean for the discussion of the ‘constitutive dimension of power’ in EU-Russia relations as outlined in the literature review at the outset of this dissertation (see p.44)? Barnett and Duvall (2005) understand this power-dimension as “a social process of constituting what actors are as social beings, that is, their social identities and capacities” (p.42). Casier (2018c) argues that Russia increasingly challenged the EU’s hegemonic position in this regard throughout the decade preceding Ukraine’s Maidan (p.108). The empirical analysis here has extensively illustrated this contestation by Russia of the EU’s “capacity to produce and recognise identities, such as Europeanness” (p.113) – or of its power to shape “conceptions of ‘normal’” more generally (Manners, 2002:239; Diez, 2013).

While the EU’s capacity to define identities is arguably limited – as Russia’s antagonistic discourses demonstrate – the analysis nevertheless shows that the EU retains a privileged position in the intersubjective context. Its discourses continue to set the referential system within which identities are defined. Admittedly, Russia has at least since the early 2000s increasingly contested identity-conferring representations articulated by the EU, including for example the EU’s representation of itself as embodying the notion of Europe. Yet, this at times fierce contestation has not only validated the EU’s representations as viable alternatives. Russia’s own representations moreover remain defined by those alternatives. Despite being antagonistic, the footprint of the EU’s discourse is visible in the Russian discursive structure often building largely on an inversion of the binaries that define the EU’s discourse. In this respect, the EU and the Russian discourses to a large extent constitute a ‘closed system’, since the inversion of a discourse does ultimately not allow it “to transcend the latter’s limits” (Laclau, 1990:26). Russia thus seems to fight a hopeless battle that can only increase in intensity but thereby preserves the very same patterns of dependencies it seeks to challenge in the first place. Consequently, “however enigmatic, dangerous, or unfriendly it might appear”, Zarakol (2011) argues, Russia continues to act as “an enforcer of systemic values” (p.239). It is in that way that the Russian discourse remains substantially conditioned by the EU one.

Why does Russia remain engulfed within the Western referential system? Appreciating the intersubjective nature of EU-Russia relations implies that the EU’s privileged position is not an inherent quality of the Union. It rather arises out of the relationship and therefore should be analytically approached from the *Russian* perspective, that is how Russia subjectively relates to the EU. As pointed out above, this approach resonates with Hegelian dialectics, according to which the subject’s intra-subjective notion of Self has consequences for the intersubjective interaction with others. If sovereignty is tied up with asymmetrical relations, then Russia’s dependency means that the Russian Self cannot as successfully subdue the Western Other in

the context of discursive struggle. The EU's privileged position is thus a function of Russia being unable to effectively isolate its own discourse from the challenging alternative. The desire for recognition, consequently, forces Russia to engage with the EU's challenging discourse, which, by means of articulating an alternative interpretation of the world, negates Russia's self-assigned subject position.

The question of Russia's dependency is thus intimately tied to the genealogy of Europe and the West in Russia's own identity discourse, and how they became the central Others in Russian identity construction. Greenfeld (1992) highlights that the engagement with the West was constitutive in the genesis of Russian national identity: "Russians could not separate themselves from the West and return to the times when its existence was a matter of indifference to them" (p.254). This is, because it "was the West, the encounter with the West, that ushered Russia into the new era in which it became aware of itself as a nation [...]. There simply would be no sense in being a nation if the West did not exist" (ibid.). "It was Europe", as Tsygankov (2008) notes, "that created the larger meaningful environment in which Russia's rulers defended their core values" (p.766). Both for Zarakol (2011) and for Morozov (2015) this environment was characterised by European modernity. Zarakol (2011) understands modernity as a western European phenomenon, a reality with which 'late-joiners' like Russia were confronted. Embracing the European standards of modernity, they also accepted the judgment that cast them as outsiders lagging behind. They thereby internalised the stigma conferred upon them (pp.38-45). Morozov (2015) highlights the intersubjective ontology of this context, arguing that "the European international society and its outside [...] stand in a mutually constitutive relationship" (p.49). For both, however, the context of European modernity endowed Russia with a given subject position that it could not easily escape. This position, in Chakrabarty's (2000) words, makes it impossible to meaningfully articulate – or even think – "without invoking certain categories and concepts, the genealogies of which go deep into the intellectual and even theological traditions of Europe" (p.4). This social order at the same time establishes standards of truth and legitimacy. Neumann (1996) points out that

it has always been the fate of Russians and others who have wanted to forge a non-European, antihegemonic debate that such debates cannot fail to maintain ties to Europe, if only inversely so, because of the very fact that they are patterned as attempts to negate the European debate and therefore remain defined by it (p.204, cf. Morozov, 2015:161).

Consequently, the discursive struggle observed in the empirical analyses continues to be fought within the confines of key references of European modernity like democracy, sovereignty or rationality, employed to legitimise the respective interpretation. These key references – as signifiers – are intelligible to both actors involved. Yet, what they exactly mean – the signified – can as well be subject to contestation, as the analysis of the notion of ‘democracy’ illustrates (see above, p.242).

The intersubjective relationship between Russia and the EU is a contested one where the EU’s discourse is extensively challenged and thus not hegemonic in the sense that it would be able to undisputedly define social identities. Yet, the analysis has shown that the EU remains in a privileged position where its articulations to a large extent define the rule of the game that condition intersubjective identity formation and thus substantially condition the Russian foreign policy discourse. The following subsection will illuminate the dynamics of this positioning and discuss the possibility of Russia’s emancipation thereof.

c) Room for Dynamics?

While the conceptual framework has prided itself with its ability to capture change, the empirical analysis has first and foremost revealed continuity in both the EU’s and Russian foreign policy discourses. The growing rift between Russia and the EU, moving from “pragmatic but increased competition” towards conflict after 2013 (Casier, 2016a), was accompanied by a growing intensity of discursive struggle, visible on the Russian side in the decreasing identification with the EU/West, increasingly open resentment and the reassertion of increasingly essentialist boundaries between Self and Other. Yet, as the analysis has shown, the discursive structure of both actors as well as the patterns of interaction between their discourses did *not* change fundamentally. If the prevalent discursive structures that constituted the discursive context in which EU-Russia relations evolved have not fundamentally changed, what *does* the empirical analysis reveal about (possible) dynamics?

Theoretically, everything is possible. As outlined in theoretical discussion in chapter three, the radical contingency of discourse results in a conceptualisation of discursive structures as non-deterministic and identities as non-essentialist (cf. Laclau, 1990:20). However, the fact that everything is possible does not mean that change is immanent. (Objective) discourses are stable to such an extent that their contingent character is masked. Given the overdetermination of

meaning (cf. Laclau & Mouffe, 1985:11), however, there remains always some degree of indeterminacy that allows for change. The discursively constructed intersubjective relationship that defines Russia's and the EU's subject positions – and conditions their agency accordingly – is thus changeable. Russia is ultimately not locked in its position of dependency. It is, in terms of the Hegelian analogy, not damned to remain stuck in the life-and-death struggle with the EU/West.

Many have discussed the permanence of Russia's position and the possibility of its emancipation. This question is central not least to Eurasianist and nationalist discourses in Russia. Tsymbursky's 'Island Russia' (1993) and Mezhujev's 'civilisational realism' (2017; 2019) advocate for Russia to become an "autarkic and self-sufficient civilisational island" (Akopov, 2020:298), an "'alien' civilizational space" (p.299). Surkov, though identifying 2014 as the end of "Russia's epic westward quest" (2018:2), doubts that Russia will turn into a true alternative, a "third civilisation" (p.5). Despite his prescription of "a hundred years (or possibly two hundred or three hundred) of geopolitical loneliness" (p.2), he predicts that Russia will always remain a product of its Western and Eastern centres of gravity, a "half-breed" as his title suggests. For Hopf (2016) on the other hand, Russia's turn away from Europe becoming manifest with Putin's third presidential term as well as the rising narrative of Russia as a superior 'true' Europe already constitute an "[escape] from Western standards of evaluation and [a rejection of] a European identity for a genuinely Russian one" (p.233). That Russia had freed itself of Western judgement, he suggests, was a permissive condition for the annexation of Crimea. Hopf's (2016) argument is not confirmed by this study's findings, where the Russian discourse on Crimea has been identified as highly dependent on Western categories. Permissive conditions for Russia's actions were largely defined in Russia's discourse following Western logics, not least by invoking the responsibility to protect. This observation is shared, for example, by Zarakol (2011) and Neumann (2016). Zarakol's (2011) claim that "for all its protestations of hostility and even at the peak of its post-defeat economic prowess, Russia has not been able to reject the norms of the international order this time around" (p.238) is echoed by Neumann (2016). According to him, Russia is trapped in a cyclical pattern of emulating and rejecting Europe, which could only be overcome if Russia developed a viable alternative order. Similar to Zarakol (2011), Morozov (2015) asserts that "being a troublemaker is hardly sufficient to qualify as a [sovereign¹²⁷¹] subject" (p.160). He argues that the discourses of Putinism – despite their reverse logic compared to Westernisers in terms of rejecting instead

¹²⁷¹ In the terms used here, see theory chapter (p.56).

of embracing the West – is stuck in the referential system defined by Western modernity (p.161). Aydın-Düzgit and Noutcheva (2022) confirm this assertion, arguing that “while being explicitly critical of Europe/EU on multiple fronts, [Russia adheres] to a Eurocentric discourse where [it justifies its] presence and actions in relation to Europe/EU as well as the European/Western language of norms and normativity” (p.1827). The discourses of modernity, in which Russia remains stuck, gain permanence, according to Morozov (2015), notably due to the Russian official discourse perpetuating them. He does discuss the theoretical possibility of freeing Russia from its Eurocentric world view. Yet, the Putinist paleoconservative discourse cements it, he argues, in order to ensure its own permanence as the basis of the regime’s power. This also includes repressing any burgeoning alternative domestically (pp.157-165).

This study’s empirical observations confirm Morozov’s (2015) analysis. They suggest that the more Russia tries to confront the EU/West, the more radical and intense are its discourses. Yet, they fail to break out of the referential system they seemingly fight and thereby at the same time perpetuate. Through the analytical lens informed by Hegelian recognition dynamics, Russia’s intensified engagement with the EU’s/Western alternative suggests that Russia remains stuck in the life-and-death struggle, incapable of freeing itself from it through discursive subjugation. This holds true also in situations of extreme confrontation, such as Russia’s annexation of Crimea, which had widely been considered a watershed moment in post-Cold War EU-Russia relations. While emancipation is a theoretical possibility, the official foreign policy discourse has not substantially changed throughout the period under investigation. Despite all this, it can be argued that contemporary Russian discourses remain conducive to potential change. Therefore, it is helpful to look at layers of discourse (Wæver 2002; 2005). Wæver points out that different layers of discourse may be more or less stable. Whereas more sedimented discursive structures may appear objective and are thus rather inert, discourses at the surface are often more dynamic.

Indeed, Russia’s “crisis of national identity” (Akopov, 2020:296) in the early 1990s and the ensuing competition of interpretations at first glance suggests a rather dynamic development of official Russian identity discourses throughout the last three decades. Yet, as Morozov (2015) points out, the *underlying* logic of those changing discourses is identical: “The only difference between the Westernisers and the paleoconservatives [is] that the former argue that modernisation is something every nation must strive for, while the latter embraces ‘tradition’, understood as a direct reversal of modernisation” (pp.161-162). The observed changes in Russian official debates must thus be conceived as surface changes. In the empirical analysis,

such surface changes within the Russian discourse are apparent, for example, in the decreasing identification with the EU/West and the increasingly confrontational rhetoric. At the same time, “a range of relatively sedimented discourses” (Morozov, 2015:162) keep Russian identity anchored in a Western referential system (cf. Baumann, 2020:302-303). Such competing discourses, articulating different interpretations at the surface (for example on European integration) and thereby facilitating different policies, thus share essential understandings or key references in more deeply sedimented discursive levels (Wæver, 2002:31). The inertia of those sedimented structures in the Russian discourses is confirmed by the observation of the identified themes of Russia’s exclusion, of Russia as ‘true’ Europe or the paternalistic narrative of fraternity, all of which have long genealogies (see chapter two, p.25).

As it was pointed out earlier, however, every element within discourse is always to some extent floating (Torfing, 1999:92). Wæver (2002) thus argues that also the most sedimented discursive structures are not immune to change and can corrode if surface structures become unstable (pp.31-32). The analysis, however, has illustrated the firm anchoring of Russia’s discourses in the Western referential system. Confirmed by the reflections in the ensuing epilogue, this observation makes fundamental change at the point of writing seem unlikely. This conclusion echoes Morozov’s (2015:164) claim that the Putinist official discourse is unlikely to fundamentally challenge the sedimentation of this very referential system. Yet, the observation of extensive engagement with antagonistic articulations and the increasing intensity of hegemonising moves suggest that the Russian official discourse at the surface remains relatively unstable and thus malleable. Russia’s extensive engagement with the EU’s discourse reveals the contingency of Russian discursive structures – much more so than it is the case with the EU. While change of deeper discursive levels might not be immanent, it can therefore be argued that the Russian discourse still remains *conducive* also to potentially more fundamental changes. As long as the regime seeks continuity, however, increasing challenges – both from within and outside – will likely lead to more fervent hegemonising moves, that is an even more intense discursive struggle including more hostile rhetoric and discursive othering.

4. Conclusion

How *do* EU and Russian foreign policy discourses interact? In response to the central research question of this study, the empirical analysis drew a detailed picture of interaction dynamics between Russian and EU foreign policy discourses. While it confirmed the scholarly literature on Russian and European identity construction, showing that both actors constitute important reference points for each other, it also revealed that the West is much more significant for how Russia makes sense of the world than vice versa. While the discursive relationship between Russia and the EU was not exclusively negative at the start of the period under analysis, it has been found that Russia's identification with the EU/West has decreased over time.

It was shown, further, that in an attempt to hegemonise the meaning of an event, both actors draw discursive boundaries primarily along ethical and spatial lines. While both Russia and the EU make an *ethical* distinction between the democratic and undemocratic, the precise meaning of democracy remains contested. Whereas the EU stresses civil liberties and human rights, Russia refers rather to legality and institutions. Russian discourses, moreover, place a stronger emphasis on stability and invoke necessity to justify a certain interpretation.

Spatially, the EU draws a boundary between the European and the un-European, a distinction that is closely linked to the democratic-undemocratic divide. The Russian discourse, on the other hand, exhibits a complex and ambiguous self-positioning towards Europe and the West. Firstly, Russia's self-representation as excluded and the increasingly open resentment against a patronising EU/West suggest a radicalisation of Russia's discursive dissociation from the latter. At the same time, Russia continues to represent itself as 'true' Europe, drawing the spatial boundary to a 'false' Europe variably. This narrative of a divided EU shows, first, that the Union is not unconditionally rejected as the evil Other. Secondly, it implies that an abstract notion of Europe and alleged Western acclaim continue to act as a reference conferring legitimacy and authority within Russian discourses. The radicalisation of Russia's dissociation from the EU/West, finally, is accompanied by an increasingly civilisational rhetoric. The narrative of fraternity illustrates an increasingly essentialist differentiation of an organic 'Russian World', consisting of 'fraternal' peoples under the guidance and protection of Russia, from the EU/Western Other.

Put together, Russia's decreasing identification with the EU/West, its increasing resentment as well as the growing use of civilisational, essentialist notions of difference suggest an intensification of the discursive struggle.

Importantly, however, the analysis has demonstrated that, despite a radically changing context and an intensification of the EU's and Russia's struggle to reassert their respective interpretation since 2004, neither the structure nor the patterns of interaction of Russian and EU foreign policy discourses have changed substantially. To the contrary, they have exhibited striking continuity.

This pattern is an asymmetrical one, whereby Russia's foreign policy discourse remains much more conditioned by the EU's articulations than vice versa. This vulnerability, these constraints to the Russian discourse arise out of recognition dynamics, which, much more so than the EU, compel Russia to interact with the Other's diverging discourse. The footprint of Western articulations on Russia's foreign policy discourse is thus much bigger than vice versa. As a result, the EU is more independent in sovereignly articulating an interpretation of the world, whereas Russia continues to face constraints to the formulation of an autonomous political project, ultimately limiting its agency in the articulation of discourse.

Its extensive engagement with the EU's articulations reveals the contingency of Russia's discourse more than it is the case with the EU's discourse. Therefore, the Russian discourse in principle remains more conducive to change. While the escalating confrontation between Russia and the EU in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine suggests even stronger reassertions, however, it is unlikely to induce a more fundamental discursive transformation. Russia's current foreign policy discourse, which remains rooted in a Western referential system, will rather perpetuate Russia's discursive dependency.

Chapter 7

Epilogue to the Analytical Discussion: Russia Narrating Its War in Ukraine

EU-Russia relations have changed fundamentally during the time this dissertation was written. Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and its ensuing and ongoing war with, at the time of writing, more than two hundred thousand casualties (BBC, 2022) have largely been regarded in the EU as a caesura, a paradigm shift (Meister, 2022), a 'Zeitenwende' (Scholz, 2022). As a consequence, cooperation between the EU and Russia has been suspended in virtually all areas, travel has been heavily restricted and unprecedented sanction packages have isolated Russia from the rest of Europe not only politically but also economically.

Has this fundamental break of EU-Russia relations been reflected in a fundamental change of Russia's discursive relationship to the West? Pondering this question against the background of the preceding analysis, the following paragraphs aim at offering an interpretation of the official Russian rhetoric since the outbreak of the war. To that end, four of President Vladimir Putin's speeches since February 2022 will be examined in the light of the structuring narratives identified in the previous chapter (see p.239). Attention will be paid, first, to the role these narratives play for explaining the war in the Russian discourse and, secondly, how those narratives have evolved in the new context. The conclusion, finally, summarises these reflections and ponders the continued role of recognition dynamics.

It is argued that Putin's discourse has not changed fundamentally since February. The central structuring narratives remain the same as in earlier foreign policy discourses analysed in this dissertation. Despite this continuity, however, the present discourse is much more radical in drawing discursive boundaries between Self and Other. Despite this radicalisation, however, the West and its discourse remain at the centre of Putin's speeches, suggesting that dynamics of (Western) recognition remain a significant conditioning element.

The four speeches under review here are Putin's address on 21 February,¹²⁷² directly preceding the war, where he announced the recognition of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic as independent, his address to State Duma leaders on 7 July,¹²⁷³

¹²⁷² 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁷³ 22.07.07-Putin-Duma.

Putin's speech on 30 September¹²⁷⁴ in which he announced the annexation of before-mentioned territories as well as Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions and, finally, his speech at the Valdai discussion club on 27 October.¹²⁷⁵

This epilogue does not follow a strict methodology. A comprehensive (and comparative) analysis along the parameters defined in the main part of this dissertation exceeds the scope and purpose of this addendum. It serves rather as an attempt to employ some of the insights produced by the preceding study for making sense of the most recent developments and thereby offering a discourse-theoretical perspective to the burgeoning scholarly discussion of the war (cf. Götz & Staun, 2022; Liik, 2022; Torbakov, 2022; Person & McFaul, 2022; Mearsheimer, 2022; Walt, 2022).

1. Continuity of Russia's War Discourse

The narratives previously identified as central to Russia's drawing of discursive boundaries (Russia's exclusion, a divided Europe & Russia as 'true' Europe, Russia's fraternal ties to its 'near abroad', notions of necessity, stability & democracy) constitute also the central themes in all four recent speeches. As such they neatly explain the underlying logic of Putin's rhetoric, which arguably shows striking continuity when placed in the context of Russia's foreign policy discourse since 2004. The following constitutes a summarising illustration of how those narratives are employed to construct the official discourse since Russia's invasion in February. Putin's recognition of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic as independent on 21 February 2022 has in Western capitals been widely regarded as an escalation of Russia's policy in the context of tensions that had arisen between Russia and the West over the course of the preceding months (von der Leyen & Michel, 2022; Biden, 2022). Putin's address sets the ground for the ensuing invasion on 24 February by constructing the discursive framework that allowed the Russian regime to explain and justify this step to its audience. Putin explicitly claims that "it is necessary to say at least a few words [...] in order to understand what is happening today, to explain the motives behind Russia's actions and what

¹²⁷⁴ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹²⁷⁵ 22.10.27-Putin-Valdai.

we aim to achieve.”¹²⁷⁶ For this reason, the address will be dissected in greater detail before outlining how the new context has been represented and made sense of in succeeding speeches. In his recognition speech, Putin sets out by extensively invoking Russia’s *fraternal* ties to Ukraine, proclaiming effectively the identity of Russia and Ukraine.

I would like to emphasise again that Ukraine is not just a neighbouring country for us. It is an *inalienable* part of our own history, culture and spiritual space. These are our comrades, those dearest to us – not only colleagues, friends and people who once served together, but also relatives, people bound by blood, by family ties¹²⁷⁷ (my emphasis).

He reinforces this representation of Ukraine as inextricable, organic part of Russia with an extensive historical argumentation, reminiscent of his 2021 article *On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians* (Putin, 2021). Ukraine’s existence as an entity of its own is deemed entirely unnatural: “Ukraine actually never had stable traditions of real statehood”.¹²⁷⁸ The aberration of Ukraine’s true Russian essence, according to Putin, originated in the early days of the Soviet Union due to a “generous”¹²⁷⁹ yet erroneous (“absolutely incomprehensible, even crazy”¹²⁸⁰) concession to nationalists aimed at keeping the Bolsheviks in power. Consequently, “Soviet Ukraine is the result of the Bolsheviks’ policy and can be rightfully called ‘Vladimir Lenin’s Ukraine.’”¹²⁸¹ Nevertheless, Putin argues, Ukraine turned into an inextricable part of the Soviet Union, which “was established in the place of the former Russian Empire”¹²⁸² and thus constituted a continuation of Russia. Ukraine’s independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 was yet another step away from Ukraine’s true identity. It was instigated by the “disease of nationalism”,¹²⁸³ the greed of local elites against the will of the population. Infused by neo-Nazism, the “Ukrainian authorities [built] their statehood on the negation of everything that united us, trying to distort the mentality and historical memory of millions of people, of entire generations living in Ukraine.”¹²⁸⁴ The country, finally, is denied existence as an independent actor altogether: “A stable statehood has never developed in Ukraine; its electoral and other political procedures just serve as a cover, a screen for the redistribution of power and property

¹²⁷⁶ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁷⁷ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁷⁸ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁷⁹ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁸⁰ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁸¹ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁸² 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁸³ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁸⁴ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

between various oligarchic clans.”¹²⁸⁵ Instead, it is steered by the West, who has turned it “not even into a political or economic protectorate but [reduced it] to a colony with a puppet regime”.¹²⁸⁶ The narrative of fraternity thus not only establishes the identity of Ukraine as essentially Russian. It also constructs the obedient pro-Russian Ukrainian people as the victims of selfish, ungrateful, and anti-Russian “oligarchic Ukrainian authorities”¹²⁸⁷ and “radicals”¹²⁸⁸, who, under foreign influence, led them astray from their true destiny.

Against this background, Putin proceeds by invoking the narrative of *necessity* to justify the ensuing Russian actions. He draws a dreadful picture of persecution, terror and poverty in Ukraine and bemoans the repression of political liberties and religious rights. The people in Donbas, Putin argues, “are fighting for their elementary right to live on their own land, to speak their own language, and to preserve their culture and traditions.”¹²⁸⁹ And Russia, too, is threatened by the Ukrainian leadership’s plans to develop weapons of mass destruction. “We cannot but react to this real danger”,¹²⁹⁰ he concludes. Ukraine’s inevitable accession to NATO will lead “the level of military threats to Russia [to] increase dramatically”.¹²⁹¹ “It is like a knife to the throat.”¹²⁹² With the West having turned down Russia’s multiple efforts to find a diplomatic, stabilising solution, “Russia has every right to respond in order to ensure its security”¹²⁹³ and furthermore to protect the maltreated people in the Donbas. Putin thus justifies his decision to recognise the two so-called People’s Republics as an inevitable step, taken only after “Russia has done everything to preserve Ukraine’s territorial integrity”.¹²⁹⁴

This first of Putin’s speeches under consideration constitutes an example of how the narratives identified in in the preceding chapter are employed to construct the Russian discourse since February 2022.

The narrative of fraternity is also at the centre of Putin’s annexation speech in late September. Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia joining Russia is the result, according to Putin, of

¹²⁸⁵ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁸⁶ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁸⁷ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁸⁸ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁸⁹ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁹⁰ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁹¹ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁹² 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁹³ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹²⁹⁴ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

the determination of millions of people who, by their culture, religion, traditions, and language, consider themselves part of Russia, whose ancestors lived in a single country for centuries. There is nothing stronger than their determination to return to their true historical homeland.¹²⁹⁵

The driver behind these annexations are thus the Ukrainians themselves. Putin represents Russia as their representative and selfless protector: “We will defend *our* land with all the forces and resources we have, and we will do everything we can to ensure the safety of *our* people. This is the great liberating mission of our nation” (my emphasis).¹²⁹⁶

Drawing on the theme of *Russia's exclusion*, Putin explains Western sanctions as a corollary of the West's imperial ambitions, “[dividing] the world into their vassals – the so-called civilised countries – and all the rest, who, according to the designs of today's Western racists, should be added to the list of barbarians and savages.”¹²⁹⁷ Those who are resisting “are sanctioned: all sorts of economic restrictions are carried out against them [...], coups are prepared or where possible carried out and so on. And in the end, if nothing at all can be done, the aim is the same: to destroy them, to wipe them off the political map.”¹²⁹⁸ Yet, following the logic of the narrative of *divided Europe*, Western policies towards Russia are depicted as imposed merely by an anti-Russian minority, while the majority of people secretly remains sympathetic to Russia. Conforming to Neumann's (1996:95-130) genealogy of ‘the West’ in Russian discourses since the Second World War, this evil minority is led by the US: “Washington demands more and more sanctions against Russia and the majority of European politicians obediently go along with it.”¹²⁹⁹ The people in the EU, on the other hand, are suffering, because “by pressuring the EU to completely give up Russian energy and other resources, the United States is practically pushing Europe toward deindustrialisation in a bid to get its hands on the entire European market.”¹³⁰⁰ The “dictatorship of the Western elites targets all societies, including the citizens of Western countries themselves.”¹³⁰¹ Having “many like-minded people [also] in Europe and the United States”¹³⁰², Russia is thus not as alone, as isolated as it may seem.

¹²⁹⁵ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹²⁹⁶ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹²⁹⁷ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹²⁹⁸ 22.10.27-Putin-Valdai.

¹²⁹⁹ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³⁰⁰ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³⁰¹ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³⁰² 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

This section traced how Putin constructs a discursive framework to make sense of the events since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It illustrates the continuity of the earlier-identified narratives, which remain central for drawing discursive boundaries between Self and Other. The logic and at times even the wording of these constructions is strikingly similar to the discourses analysed in chapter five. Moreover, the representation of key nodal points (such as the Ukrainian government, the Ukrainian people, and the EU/West) easily compare to earlier Russian representations as articulated in discourses on the Orange Revolution in 2004/05 and the Revolution of Dignity in 2013/14. In both discourses, the pro-Western opposition was already depicted as radical, destabilising and linked to nationalistic, anti-Russian as well as anti-Semitic forces. Both events were also represented as instigated by an instrumentalist and paternalistic West.

2. The Evolution of Narratives

Despite this continuity, the preceding summary of Putin's speeches suggests that Russian official foreign policy discourse has become much more radical. In order to trace the evolution of those fundamental narratives, the following section will discuss their contemporary articulation against earlier observations.

The narrative of *fraternal ties* is at the centre of Putin's contemporary discourse. Articulating Russia's and Ukraine's fraternal identity and representing the latter's independence as fateful aberration serves as the underlying justification for the invasion of Ukraine, the recognition, as well as the annexation of some of its territories. This narrative with its inherent paternalistic claim to represent, speak for and protect Russia's 'fraternal peoples' is not dissimilar from the representation of earlier events in the Caucasus (2008), Ukraine (Maidan 2013/14 and Crimea 2014) or Belarus (2020). In the current discourse, however, the civilisational rhetoric that was increasingly employed after the Orange Revolution is most pronounced. This civilisational language resonates with Suslov's (2018) observation that the 'Russian World' is articulated in increasingly civilisational terms since Putin's third term (p.15). This rhetoric is now even more pronounced and examples of it are countless historical references to Russia's civilising mission

or the designation of parts of Ukraine as “Novorossiia”.¹³⁰³ This historical narrative, Budraitskis (2022) argues, is fundamental for essentialising culture and belonging. Putin’s speeches moreover resonate strongly with Akopov’s (2020) observation that Russia’s fraternal relationships to its post-Soviet ‘near abroad’ are grounded in a feeling of betrayal. Throughout the four speeches under consideration, Russia is represented as selflessly accepting, even facilitating Ukraine’s independence: “Despite all these injustices, lies and outright pillage of Russia, it was our people who accepted the new geopolitical reality [...]. Not only did Russia recognise these countries, but helped its CIS partners, even though it faced a very dire situation itself.”¹³⁰⁴ Ukrainian authorities, on the other hand, are depicted as ungrateful and greedy, exploiting Russian good-will.

The narrative of *Russia’s exclusion* is a second major spatial construction in Putin’s speeches. Drawing a spatial boundary, he now echoes wordings earlier used to describe the Eastern Partnership: “What else, if not racism, is the Russophobia being spread around the world? [...] ‘You’re either with us or against us.’ It even sounds strange.”¹³⁰⁵ Whereas earlier discourses accused the EU and the West of drawing dividing lines, this division is now depicted as complete. The radicalisation of the dissociation from the EU/West that has been identified during the period of analysis has arguably reached a new level. Earlier depictions of the West as hierarchical and paternalistic have now evolved into a depiction of an exploitive colonial system of Western dominance, characterised by “totalitarianism, despotism and apartheid”.¹³⁰⁶ Formerly represented as (arrogant) “teacher”,¹³⁰⁷ the West is now cast in an imperialist rhetoric as “Masters”¹³⁰⁸ and “colonisers”.¹³⁰⁹ The West thus not merely excludes Russia anymore in Putin’s discourse. It aims for Russia’s complete submission: “They do not want us to be free; they want us to be a colony. They do not want equal cooperation; they want to loot. They do not want to see us a free society, but a mass of soulless slaves.”¹³¹⁰ This “racist”¹³¹¹ exclusion of Russia and others is explained as a Western attempt to keep up the “neo-colonial system”¹³¹², to “live off the world, to plunder it”.¹³¹³

¹³⁰³ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition, 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³⁰⁴ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹³⁰⁵ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³⁰⁶ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³⁰⁷ Cf. 13.12.05-Lavrov, 20.09.01-Lavrov.

¹³⁰⁸ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹³⁰⁹ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³¹⁰ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³¹¹ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³¹² 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³¹³ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

Russia, on the other hand, is represented as leading the “emancipatory, anti-colonial movement against unipolar hegemony”,¹³¹⁴ against “the Western model of globalisation, which is neocolonial in nature”.¹³¹⁵ As outlined in the previous chapter, the narrative of Russia’s exclusion is closely tied to the theme of *divided Europe*. In earlier discourses, the line between a ‘false’ Europe and a ‘true’ Europe siding with Russia had been drawn variably between EU institutions and member states, but also between the EU and the US. In the speeches under consideration here, this role of the evil Other rests squarely with the US, who are controlling their European vassals. Washington not only imposes anti-Russian policies upon the EU, it also forces it into “the complete renunciation of what it means to be human, the overthrow of faith and traditional values [...] – pure Satanism.”¹³¹⁶ Much more explicit than in previous discourses under examination, Putin draws the image of a morally bankrupt Gayropa (cf. Morozov, 2018b:33; cf. Neumann, 2016:1383). According to him, however, “the truth and reality is that the people in most of these countries do not want this life or this future”, this “totalitarian liberalism”.¹³¹⁷ This representation of the EU as manipulated by the US is reminiscent of earlier events under analysis, when, for example, the EU is “deceived”¹³¹⁸ about the ‘real’ situation in Georgia in 2008. In Putin’s recent speeches, he makes clear, however, that Russia, on the other hand, represents what Europe really wants and *is*. It stands for the better Europe, in fact, even the better West:

It is simply necessary to understand clearly that, as I have already said before, two Wests – at least two and maybe more but two at least – the West of traditional, primarily Christian values, freedom, patriotism, great culture and now Islamic values as well [...]. This West is close to us in something. We share with it common, even ancient roots. But there is also a different West – aggressive, cosmopolitan, and neocolonial. It is acting as a tool of neoliberal elites. Naturally, Russia will never reconcile itself to the dictates of this West.¹³¹⁹

The self-representation of Russia as finding itself on the right side of history is also sustained through the *stability-instability divide*, which continues to play a major structuring role.

¹³¹⁴ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³¹⁵ 22.10.27-Putin-Valdai.

¹³¹⁶ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³¹⁷ 22.07.07-Putin-Duma.

¹³¹⁸ 08.09.11-Lavrov-Yu.

¹³¹⁹ 22.10.27-Putin-Valdai.

Democracy remains a major point of reference, too. In earlier Russian discourses, however, invocations of democracy tended to create legitimacy derived from legality, procedures and institutions. In the speeches under consideration now, democracy is not central anymore for the representation of Ukrainian authorities as illegitimate. Their illegitimacy is now constructed along the narrative of fraternity, namely by accusing the authorities (and their foreign patrons) of leading the people astray. Democracy *remains*, however, at the centre of Putin's discourse as a familiar (Makarychev, 2014:17) legitimisation for his project of an anti-Western, multipolar international order:

So currently, an overwhelming majority of the international community is demanding democracy in international affairs and rejecting all forms of authoritarian dictate by individual countries or groups of countries. What is this if not the direct application of democratic principles to international relations?¹³²⁰

Democracy thus remains a central standard. Accordingly, Putin represents the West as deeply antidemocratic: "Instead of bringing democracy [, Western countries] suppressed and exploited, and instead of giving freedom they enslaved and oppressed. The unipolar world is inherently anti-democratic and unfree; it is false and hypocritical through and through."¹³²¹ What's more, the Western promise of democracy "has now degenerated into the opposite: totalitarianism."¹³²² Russia is thus *more* democratic than the West, making it the better West. Finally, the *narrative of necessity*, resonates strongly with Russia's discourse on the events in the Caucasus in 2008 and Crimea in 2014. Just like the annexation of Crimea, which had been depicted as the rightening of a "historic injustice",¹³²³ the annexation of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia is represented now as a "return to their true historical homeland".¹³²⁴ Similar to the discourses on the Caucasus and Crimea, the narrative of necessity now shifts the blame for the war and the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity on Kyiv and the West:

No, the war was unleashed by the collective West, which organised and supported the unconstitutional armed coup in Ukraine in 2014, and then encouraged and justified

¹³²⁰ 22.10.27-Putin-Valdai.

¹³²¹ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

¹³²² 22.07.07-Putin-Duma.

¹³²³ 14.03.19-Churkin, cf. 14.03.21-Lavrov-PC.

¹³²⁴ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

genocide against the people of Donbass. The collective West is the direct instigator and the culprit of what is happening today.¹³²⁵

Consequently, the West is responsible also for “the destabilisation of the global food and energy markets”.¹³²⁶ Russia’s actions, on the other hand, are represented as the only way out after all other attempts to preserve Ukraine’s territorial integrity had been exhausted. The narrative, just like in previous discourses, establishes clear designations of guilt and innocence. It depicts Russia as responding merely pre-emptively in the face of mounting threats to itself and its fraternal peoples, and thus as acting responsibly in a situation that left no other ethically viable option.

The preceding section illustrates not only the continuity but also the intensification of Putin’s underlying narratives. Fraternity is conjured in increasingly civilisational terms, Russia’s exclusion is cast as resistance against total imperial destruction. The rhetoric is consequently increasingly existential, justifying the necessity of Russia’s actions for its bare survival and the prevention of most horrible crimes. Representing Europe as divided and tacitly supporting Russia remains fundamental for Russia’s discourse, depicting the country as leading a just fight. The distinction of a ‘true’ from ‘false’ Europe thereby becomes maximally explicit. It is especially noteworthy, that this radicalisation is visible in *Putin’s* articulations, since his rhetoric had in earlier discourses been found to be less pronounced compared to other figures, such as Foreign Minister Lavrov.

3. Conclusions

The preceding two sections have illustrated the continuity and at the same time the radicalisation of structuring narratives in the discourse articulated by Putin since February 2022. Is this attempt to draw discursive boundaries between Self and Other also reflected in a continuation of recognition dynamics?

¹³²⁵ 22.07.07-Putin-Duma.

¹³²⁶ 22.10.27-Putin-Valdai.

Indeed, it seems that recognition dynamics have not changed fundamentally either. In Putin's speeches, the West remains the central reference through which identities, including the Russian one, are defined and by which present events are made sense of. Putin moreover keeps referring regularly to the Western discourse, thereby subverting its structure. An example for a justifying subversion is the familiar claim that "Maidan did not bring Ukraine any closer to democracy and progress. [The] nationalists [...] led Ukraine into an impasse, pushed the country into the abyss of civil war."¹³²⁷ An ascribing subversion, attributing evil intentions, is Putin's explanation for Western policies, according to which "[...] this is not about our political regime or anything like that. They just do not need a big and independent country like Russia around".¹³²⁸

A second indication that Russia remains relatively locked in recognition dynamics with the West is the central representation of itself as 'true' Europe or even 'true' West. In the face of the West's antagonistic interpretation that deprives Russia of the recognition for its self-assigned subject position, Putin creates the illusion of such recognition by referring to 'external Selves', those in Europe and the West who, according to Putin, secretly side with Russia. But why is it so important to Putin that "we have many like-minded people in Europe and the United States",¹³²⁹ if he sees Russia's liberating mission legitimised by spearheading an anti-colonial movement *against* the West? It is an indication of a strong sensitivity towards discrepancies with the Western discourse: the fact that the Western discourse is antagonistic matters and requires an explanation. The explanation that Putin gives is that this antagonistic discourse *cannot* be representative of the West, since Europe and the West are secretly on Russia's side – at least if they would see clearly and if they were not deceived by malicious elites.

Putin can therefore not discard the Western discourse. An illustrative episode in that regard is the debate about Amnesty International's report on Ukraine in August. The organisation has previously fiercely accused the Kremlin of a broad range of human rights violations, including LGBT-rights in Chechnya (Meduza, 2017) or Alexei Navalny's imprisonment (Meduza, 2021b). Along other Western NGOs, Amnesty's Russia-office was closed down by the authorities in April 2022 (Amnesty International, 2022a). In August, Amnesty, which had previously strongly condemned the Russian invasion (cf. Amnesty International, 2022b; 2022c), published a report (Amnesty International, 2022d) suggesting that civilians could be endangered by Ukrainian tactics, drawing Russian fire to residential areas. Previously

¹³²⁷ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹³²⁸ 22.02.21-Putin-Recognition.

¹³²⁹ 22.09.30-Putin-Annexation.

discredited, Amnesty now became a positive reference in the Russian debate, with Russian officials reportedly actively promoting it (Posner, 2022). Spokeswoman of the Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova, for example, took up the report to emphasise the Kremlin's accusations against Ukraine (Al Mayadeen, 2022). The episode shows that Western voices continue to have significant influence in the Russian debate.

A third indication thereof are the numerous references to democracy for justifying the Russian interpretation. Putin continues to represent Russia as the *more democratic* actor in the face of a totalitarian, imperial West, who makes false promises – Russia, indeed, is the better West. Russia thus continues to be tied to such universalist notions, which remain part of the sedimented discursive structure and thus anchor Russian discourses in a referential system fundamentally shaped by the West.

The assessment that Russia's war rhetoric has not fundamentally changed should not come as a surprise. The regime needed to create a discursive environment in which not only Russia's invasion would resonate as sensible and justified, but also domestic policies with a profound impact on the population at large, such as far-reaching censorship and the mobilisation of citizens for the war. Therefore, the regime had to draw on deeply entrenched discursive structures that were established already to an extent that they were commonly shared, appeared natural, and thus would prove relatively stable.

The mounting repression, that had accelerated and shaped the Kremlin's domestic policies for more than a year prior to the invasion, further indicates an attempt to strengthen the official narrative by silencing dissident thought from within. 2021 has seen the liquidation of Memorial International, whose historical work fundamentally contradicted the Kremlin's narrative (Budraitskis, 2022), the prohibition of Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) along with other organisations designated as 'extremist', and the massive silencing of the remaining free press – to name but a few examples.

The link between political repression and discursive continuity in Russia is discussed by Morozov (2015:157-165). Putinism, he claims, "operates within the Eurocentric world view in which the West is, writ large, the subject of global history" (p.162), and it perpetuates this logic, because it defines itself through it. An emancipation from this system of signification, Morozov argues, would pose an existential challenge, rendering the regime's legitimacy and the regime itself meaningless (p.162). Because the war against Ukraine reproduces and thereby preserves this system of signification, Yudin (2023) argues, Putin has no interest in ending it. Putin's repression of dissident thought can furthermore be understood as an attempt to silence the disruptive and therefore emancipatory potential of burgeoning alternatives within the

country.¹³³⁰ The political repression is justified within a familiar discourse, where internal Others are linked to evil forces from abroad; for example, when Putin accuses the West of “[supporting] terrorism and separatism in Russia, and internal destructive forces and a ‘fifth column’ in our country. All of them are still receiving unconditional support from the collective West.”¹³³¹

The war has thus been accompanied by an affirmation of foreign policy discourse rather than its change. Naturally, the attempt to reassert a discursive structure while at the same time suppressing potentially challenging alternatives from within and from without comes with a radicalisation of hegemonising moves, a reaffirmation of identities, including the drawing of discursive boundaries between Self and Other and the linking of internal Others to external ones. Given the close entanglement of Russia’s existing foreign policy discourse with Western articulations, the radicalisation of this discourse did not change the prevailing recognition dynamics that had significantly conditioned Russia’s discourse earlier.

¹³³⁰ For a poststructuralist take on how Kremlin discourses in conjunction with dominant opposition discourses have precluded a wider mobilisation during the 2011-13 protests, see Matveev (2014).

¹³³¹ 22.07.07-Putin-Duma.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This dissertation embarked on a quest to fathom the entanglement of the EU's and Russia's diverging interpretations that are articulated through their respective foreign policy discourses. Pointing to a growing ideational rift between Russia and the EU, the introduction formulated the necessity to understand the interaction of diverging interpretations. Russia's challenge of the Western perspective, it argued, is paradigmatic for an increasing competition of discourses, of interpretations and perspectives on the world. These competing discourses constitute alternative systems of signification, providing different rationales for how subjects relate to the world and thus facilitate and limit their action in it. In this context of growing ideational competition and the incremental drifting apart of Russia and the EU, the central research question guiding this study was: **How do diverging foreign policy discourses articulated by Russia and the EU interact?**

1. Tracing Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations

The ensuing review of the scholarship on EU-Russia relations situated this endeavour in the field and identified two blind spots in the existing body of literature it seeks to address. First, it proposed to approach discursive interaction from a radically anti-deterministic point of view, rid of any preconceived social structures. Such an approach, it was argued, is sensitive to dynamics and change and thereby does justice to the openness of the social world. The review pointed out, secondly, that any attempt to analytically understand discursive interaction between the EU and Russia from an external vantage point, such as the depiction of the EU and Russia as Master and Slave respectively (Ringmar, 2002) or the conceptualisation of the EU's normative power as a one-directional effect (Manners, 2002), fails to appreciate the intersubjective nature of this relationship.

Against this inventory, the theoretical chapter aspired to develop a conceptual framework that, first, allowed for insights in Russia's and the EU's agency, freedoms and constraints thereto, as conditioned within their own intersubjective relationship. It sought, secondly, to analytically

capture the intersubjective nature of this relationship, taking into account the subjective perspectives of both subjects in order to further an understanding of how Russia's and the EU's diverging interpretations relate to each other, how they evolve and interact. These aims have been pursued by marrying insights from recognition theory to poststructuralist thought, relying primarily on Laclau's and Mouffe's theoretical edifice (1985). The resulting framework conceptualised a subject's identity as continuing process of coming-to-be, a striving for Self, the Self's autonomy; a process, that, in a social world where meaning and identity are inherently unstable, can never be complete. For the subject to be *relatively* self-secure, that is sovereign, it was established that Others with their diverging perspective of the world need to be subdued, their discourses isolated. This struggle with the Other follows the logic of Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic. Instead, however, of applying it literally to the EU and Russia respectively, it is understood here as an intra-subjective process that defines the Self's relationship to the respective Other. Thereby, both subjects are approached from their respective subject positions, acknowledging that the intersubjective relationship needs to be understood from the perspectives of both subjects involved.

In order to facilitate an observation of how discursive interaction unravels between Russia and the EU empirically, the fourth chapter established a suitable research design. Relying on the methodological principles of poststructuralist discourse analysis, a first step consisted in mapping the EU's and Russia's respective discursive structures by identifying privileged representations, so-called nodal points, and the underlying binaries that define the relationships of linking and differentiation between them. The research design proposed, secondly, to trace discursive interaction in the form of discursive struggle around contested issues, so-called floating signifiers, that are subject to competing interpretations by Russia and the EU respectively. For this second step, a scheme was devised for recording how Russia and the EU strive to imbue such signifiers with meaning by means of hegemonising moves, attempts to reassert one's own discourse while marginalising others. Besides capturing how both the EU's and Russia's discourses draw discursive boundaries, banning the respective Other to the spatial, temporal or ethical outside, it focussed on how they engage with the Other's *discourse*. As possible modes of interaction, the methodology defined (accommodating and instrumentalising) confirmations, negations and (ascribing and justifying) subversions of the Other's discourse. Stretching from 2004 to 2021, the period of analysis allowed for an examination of seven contested events that cover important issue-areas of EU-Russia relations, such as the common neighbourhood, sovereignty and human rights: the Orange Revolution (2004/05), Kosovo's declaration of independence (2008), Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's

declaration of independence (2008), the Revolution of Dignity (2013/14), the annexation of Crimea (2014), the protests in Belarus (2020), and the poisoning of Alexei Navalny (2020/21). The analyses of those seven events on the basis of more than 550 primary texts were summarised in chapter five, providing an overview of both subjects' articulated discursive structures as well as a detailed examination of how they relate to the respective Other and its alternative, competing discourse.

The observations were extensively discussed in chapter six. Here, it was found that the EU/West plays a bigger role in Russia's foreign policy discourses than vice versa. References to the respective Other, it was moreover argued, were largely built on ethical and spatial differentiations. While a discursive boundary between the *ethical* inside and outside was drawn mainly by invoking democracy, stability and necessity, discursive practices of *spatial* othering revolved around the notion of Europe, with Russia articulating a complex of narratives, involving self-representations as excluded, 'true' Europe, and as leader of the 'Russian World'. Importantly, while the analysis indicates that the discursive struggle between Russia and the EU has intensified during the time of analysis, the discursive *structures* of both actors did not change substantially. Moreover, the pattern of interaction has shown striking continuity. This pattern is an asymmetrical one, whereby Russia's foreign policy discourse engages much more with the EU's articulations than vice versa. This observation points to constraints to Russia's discourse arising from the EU's antagonistic articulations. This vulnerability by Russia to the EU's discourse, it was argued, arises out of recognition dynamics. In its pursuit for recognition, Russia needs to engage with the antagonistic discourse of the Other, which, by virtue of offering an alternative interpretation, negates Russia's own articulated truth claims. Despite an intensification of this struggle with this threatening alternative, Russia's discourse remains to a large extent conditioned by what the EU says. The EU, on the other hand, is relatively successful in discursively banishing Russia, thereby isolating Russia's antagonistic discourse, and thus staying relatively independent of it. As a result, the EU is more independent in sovereignly articulating an interpretation of the world, whereas Russia continues to face constraints to the formulation of an autonomous political project.

Given that the empirical research was largely completed before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the author discussed Russia's most recent war rhetoric in a complementary chapter, the preceding epilogue. This epilogue illustrated the continuity but also the radicalisation of the underlying narratives that had been identified as structuring already in chapter six. It moreover revealed a continuing fixation on the West, suggesting that Russia's most recent official rhetoric, while fervently challenging it, keeps prolongating the Western discourse, which

thereby keeps largely defining Russia's own discursive structure. Recent developments moreover confirmed observations that Russia's increasingly fervent reassertion of its official discourse not only leads to an intensification of discursive struggle with the EU/West in the form of a more radical language, but that it is accompanied by increased repression, attempting to silence dissident thought also from within.

2. Contributing to the Study of EU-Russia Relations and Beyond

This dissertation offers an important contribution both to the study of EU-Russia relations and to the understanding of discursive interaction more generally.

It constitutes the first systematic empirical analysis of discursive interaction in EU-Russia relations of this scope. It covers the extensive time period of 18 years and a diversity of issue-areas – the common neighbourhood, sovereignty and human rights – that are key to EU-Russia relations. It combines a sophisticated theoretical framework with a rigorous empirical foundation based on a large number of primary sources. Thereby, it does not only achieve a non-deterministic intersubjective conceptualisation of how Russian and EU foreign policy discourses interact, it also draws a detailed empirical picture of these interaction dynamics.

The empirical analysis confirms the literature on EU and Russian identity discourses in showing that both subjects constitute central reference points for each other. The comparative approach revealed, however, that the West is much more significant for how Russia narrates the world than vice versa. While this reference was in the beginning not exclusively characterised by negative differentiations, Russia's identification with the EU/West has been found to be decreasing over time.

The tracing of Russia's and the EU's struggle to dominate the meaning of contested events has furthermore produced comprehensive insights on *how* both subjects draw discursive boundaries, discursively banning the respective Other to the outside. Here, it was shown, ethical and spatial constructions prevail. Regarding the former, the EU's discourse tends to invoke democracy, stressing civil liberties and human rights. Russia does not challenge the universalist notion of democracy as an ethical reference but defines it rather through legality

and institutions. Russian discourses, moreover, place stronger emphasis on stability and often justify their diverging interpretation with necessity.

The analysis illustrated how the EU closely links the democratic-undemocratic divide to the spatial distinction between the European and the un-European – whereby Russia often finds itself in the latter category. The analysis further drew a multi-layered picture of Russia's ambiguous self-positioning towards Europe and the West and how this relationship evolved over time. Russia's self-representation as marginalised, firstly, has been articulated along with increasingly open resentment against the EU's/West's alleged 'hierarchical exclusion' (cf. Prozorov, 2007). Resonating with the decreasing identification pointed out above, this development suggests a radicalisation of Russia's dissociation from the EU/West. At the same time, however, Russia continues to identify itself as Europe – as 'true' Europe – while the spatial boundary to 'false' Europe is drawn variably, not unconditionally rejecting the EU as such. The analysis thereby shows that, despite the observed dissociation, an abstract notion of 'Europe' as well as some alleged Western acclaim remain important to confer legitimacy and authority to the Russian discourse. The radicalisation of Russia's dissociation towards the EU/West is accompanied, finally, by a tendency of growing civilisational rhetoric. This rhetoric delineates an organic 'Russian World', characterised by the identity of all its 'fraternal' subjects under the guidance and protection of Russia in differentiation from the EU/Western Other.

Russia's decreasing identification with the EU/West, its increasing resentment as well as the growing use of civilisational, essentialist notions of difference suggest an intensification of the discursive struggle, which is understood as "a battle to impose the 'right' viewpoint onto the world" (Farkas & Schou, 2018:302) in the context "of crosscutting, if not competing, international orders and globalisms" (Acharya, 2017:277).

Despite this intensification, however, neither the EU's nor Russian foreign policy discourses have changed fundamentally throughout the period of analysis. Their structure, as well as their patterns of interaction have exhibited a great extent of continuity. Taking up the issue of the EU's and Russia's mutual constitution within the social context they find themselves in, the analysis of interaction dynamics between Russia and the EU builds on seminal works such as Zarakol (2011), Morozov and Rumelili (2012), and Morozov (2015). It contributes to this debate by fleshing out the freedoms and constraints that arise out of this intersubjective context for Russia and the EU and thereby condition their interaction while maintaining this social context's non-deterministic character.

The analysis showed and empirically illustrated how Russia's agency in the articulation of discourse continues to be limited, relative to the EU's. In the presence of a Western alternative discourse, Russia faces constraints to formulating an independent political project and remains largely trapped in the Western system of references. The identified asymmetrical pattern of interaction resonates with the explanations provided by influential structuralist-informed perspectives on the relationship between Russia and the EU, invoking world-system and postcolonial (Morozov, 2015; Morozov & Rumelili, 2012), sociological (Zarakol, 2011), or English School (Haukkala, 2010b; Makarychev, 2014) approaches.

The analytical discussion further contributed to the scholarly discussion on the normative dominance of the EU's discourse. It demonstrated that the EU as part of a greater Western complex continues to set the rules of the game with its discourse significantly conditioning Russian articulations. Instead of being an inherent quality of the Union, it was argued, however, the EU's privileged position in this relationship ought to be understood from the Russian perspective. It is a consequence of Russia's ambiguous relationship to Europe and the West, preventing it from successfully isolating itself from the Western framework of references.

From a conceptual point of view, this study has shown how the presence of the Other and its discourse matter for the constitution and the articulation of the Self. This non-deterministic intersubjective approach constitutes a fundamental innovation for the study of discursive interaction in EU-Russia relations and more globally.

First, by taking such an approach, both the Self's and the Other's agency have been rid of any residual determinism inherent to the preconception of social structures. In that way, the developed framework is capable of capturing the full range of dynamic interaction, reflecting the openness of the social in a period of potentially profound transformations. This innovation complements the established more structuralist-informed scholarship with a new perspective on the openness of the social context and interaction dynamics.

Secondly, whereas "the existing literature has reduced [the role of the Other] to a mere presence and not systematically explored the nature and extent of its agency" (Morozov & Rumelili, 2012:29), this study underlines the *social* nature of the EU-Russia relationship, analytically appreciating the Other not merely as an object of one-directional identity-construction but as a speaking subject in its own right. This innovation is the result of importing insights from critical approaches to recognition theory into the poststructuralist edifice, adding the former's social ontology to the latter's constitutive logic. This reunion facilitates an understanding of the non-deterministic (discursive) constitution of the subject in an intersubjective context.

More generally, this study constitutes an instructive example for the rigorous and coherent practical application of the poststructuralist theoretical edifice. One of its major qualities lies in its comprehensive methodological framework, which facilitates a rigorous empirical enquiry into discursive interaction. The elaborated modes of interaction – confirmations, negations, and subversions – enrich the poststructuralist methodology. They offer handy analytical lenses for capturing *how* an antagonistic discursive structure conditions subjects in their articulation and thereby add empirical substance to questions of normative hegemony and power, (discursive) agency and emancipation. Given the abstract nature of the poststructuralist theoretical canon (Laclau, 2004:321), such a transparent methodological bridge from theory to empirics is of great value for creating empirically substantiated insights into a highly abstract issue. Its systematic logic of abstraction from empirical material offers a convincing example of solid qualitative research, countering the often-voiced positivist criticism of ‘anything goes’ (Samokhvalov, 2018:793; cf. Brown, 1994:225) while at the same time steering clear of epistemological scientism (cf. Howarth, 2005:337).

3. Avenues for Further Research

The growing relevance of the issue of discursive interaction calls for expanding the investigations on the matter beyond the necessarily limited scope of this study. Three avenues for further research are proposed, the exploration of which promises valuable insights on discursive interaction in EU-Russia relations and beyond.

A first limitation, imposed by the finite space of this dissertation, constitutes its limited focus on the official discourse articulated by Russia and the EU. Looking only at both actors’ official positions was apt for gauging the role of the outside – the discourses of the Other – for the articulations of the Self. It does not allow for formulating claims, however, about the discursive economy *within* Russia and *within* the EU. It moreover misses that the official discourse is not only conditioned from outside, but at the same time is a function of domestic discourses, the outcome of a contestation at home.

Hansen (2006) writes that “foreign policy decision-makers are situated within a larger political and public sphere, [...] their representations as a consequence draw upon and are formed by the representations articulated by a larger number of individuals, institutions, and media

outlets” (p.6). Foreign policy is formulated, explained and legitimised within the domestic discursive context (cf. Wæver, 2005:35). This context constitutes both the possibilities and the limits of what can meaningfully be said.

In order to map these discursive structures in a given discursive space, Milliken (1999b) recommends thus to expand the empirical enquiry to capture different kinds of sources (p.233); in Hansen’s (2006) words a “[situation of the official discourse] inside a larger intertextual web that traces intertextual references to other texts” (p.53). Capturing this wider foreign policy discourse promises to be insightful as it helps to grasp the room of manoeuvre of official foreign policy rhetoric in the face of a broader public domestic discourse (cf. Hansen, 2006:54-55). Future research could add significant understanding of these domestic discursive dynamics by systematically investigating the wider foreign policy debates in Russia and the EU. An apt research design for such an endeavour could follow Hansen’s (2006) second intertextual research model (pp.54-55), which aims at “[broadening] the analytical scope beyond official discourse and its intertextual links to consider the major actors and arenas within a wider foreign policy debate” (p.54). More concretely, empirical investigations could trace discourses articulated by researchers, academics, intellectuals and think tanks (cf. Hansen, 2006:55; Wæver, 2005:40; Missiroli & Ioannides, 2012:7).

Secondly, while this study has considerably furthered the scholarly discussion on the EU’s normative hegemony, future research could work on a more differentiated picture of the EU as embedded in a broader West. As has been pointed out when developing the methodological framework (see p.99), it is often not possible to draw a sharp analytical distinction between the notions of the EU, Europe and the West in Russian foreign policy discourse. This is an indication that within a normative context that has been shaped by European modernity, the isolated focus on discourses articulated by the EU can capture only one aspect of Russia’s more complex relationship to the broader West. It is reasonable to assume that other Western subjects, notably the US and NATO, have articulated discourses not substantially different from the EU on some of the events under investigation in this study. Russia’s engagement with the EU’s discourse must therefore be understood as an engagement with a broader Western-dominated discourse. Russia’s preoccupation with this Western system of references arguably is the result of its complex relationship to Europe and the West, of which the EU is just one representative amongst others.

Importantly, the focus on EU-Russia relations justifies the conclusions drawn in this study regarding the EU’s privileged position in its relationship with Russia. Yet, from a more global perspective, the EU’s normative weight in its relations to its Others cannot be attributed to the

Union alone. Future studies therefore ought to expand the empirical investigation to cover also discourses by other Western subjects, particularly the US and NATO, in order to paint a more differentiated picture of how Russia relates to these actors individually, and how constraints to Russia's agency in the articulation of discourse arise from its relationship with 'the West' more broadly.

Thirdly, this study does not allow for broader generalisations but offers a flexible framework for expanding the research of discursive interaction to other cases. This dissertation departed from the aim to overcome preconceived structures. While its empirical focus has significantly contributed to the understanding of dynamics of social structures that make up the relationship between Russia and the EU, the analytical framework's radical anti-determinism thus prevents it from making more systemic inferences. The flexibility that comes with this anti-determinism – neither presupposing subjects' identities nor the social structures defining their relation – lends this framework for exploring discursive interaction dynamics beyond the EU and Russia. While in *this* empirical study the framework has revealed a discursive dependence by Russia on the EU due to the former's ambiguous intra-subjective relationship to the West, other dynamics are thinkable where, for example, both subjects remain relatively independent of the respective Other's antagonistic discourse. Future studies could thus apply the analytical framework developed here to compare the dynamics between various subjects in a structurally similar position relative to the EU, such as Turkey or Japan (Morozov & Rumelili, 2012; Zarakol, 2011). Other investigations could look at the discursive relationship to Others that have gained significance in the EU's and Russia's foreign policy discourses more recently, such as China.

4. Towards Increasing Competition

The insights of this dissertation on the dynamics of discursive interaction in EU-Russia relations, its conceptual framework and hands-on research design are of particular value in a context of growing normative competition (Acharya, 2017), offering an important analytical lens to further an understanding of how competing narratives interact globally. The proliferation of alternative interpretations worldwide amounts to what Laclau (1990) calls an "organic crisis", a situation where "basic hegemonic articulations weaken and an increasing

number of social elements assume the character of floating signifiers” (p.28). Doty (1996) writes that “the hegemonic dimension of politics increases as it becomes more difficult to fix meaning in a stable way” (p.8). The more the objectivity of previously hegemonic articulations is challenged, the more the discursive struggle reveals the contingency of the social world. Following the argumentation of this dissertation, this insecurity can be expected to be met with an even greater assertion of identities. The polarisation of public discourse with regard to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, both in the West and in Russia, seems to confirm this tendency. The emerging period of growing competition between rivalling political projects around the world thus promises to be characterised by increasing discursive struggle between alternative interpretations, an intensification of hegemonising moves, including the drawing of discursive boundaries, and hence the likely radicalisation of discourses towards the Other.

The Russian case has illustrated that presently much of this discursive struggle is taking place at the surface, while deeper discursive structures, a system of references that remains defined by Western modernity, exhibit relative stability. Wæver (2002) argues, however, that changes at the surface may well facilitate also the breaking up of deeper, more inert discursive structures.

This dissertation has shown that in a time when the teleological romanticism embodied by liberal thought is waning, Hegel’s dialectical conceptualisation of the social is well-suited to pick up the scattered shards and inform a new perspective that conceives the world not as unfolding towards salvation but as an arena of competing truths. All that is needed is to accept the social as a process of eternal striving, understanding that the negativity that fuels Hegel’s interaction is radical, an impurity that prevents ultimate closure. As such, a critical, that is, ultimately, *poststructuralist* approach to recognition offers great insights into the relations between international subjects and the asymmetries that they produce.

Bibliography

Please note that primary sources are listed in the Annex

- Acharya, A. (2017). After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 31(3), 271–285.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S089267941700020X>
- Acharya, A., & Buzan, B. (2007). Why is there no non-Western international relations theory? An introduction. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 7(3), 287–312.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcm012>
- Acharya, A., & Buzan, B. (2017). Why is there no Non-Western International Relations Theory? Ten years on. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 17(3), 341–370.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcx006>
- Adler-Nissen, R. (2014). Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society. *International Organization*, 68(1), 143–176. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818313000337>
- Ahtisaari, M. (2007). *Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Kosovo's future status, S/2007/168*. United Nations Security Council. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/272/23/PDF/N0727223.pdf?OpenElement>
- Akopov, S. (2020). Russia's 'fortresses of solitude': Social imaginaries of loneliness after the fall of the USSR. *Social Science Information*, 59(2), 288–309.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0539018420925967>
- Al Mayadeen. (2022, August 4). *Russia confirms Amnesty's report on Ukraine using 'human shields'*. Al Mayadeen English. <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/russia-confirms-amnestys-report-on-ukraine-using-human-shiel>
- Ambrosio, T. (2007). Insulating Russia from a Colour Revolution: How the Kremlin Resists Regional Democratic Trends. *Democratization*, 14(2), 232–252.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340701245736>
- Ambrosio, T. (2009). *Authoritarian backlash: Russian resistance to democratization in the former Soviet Union*. Ashgate Pub. Company.
- Amnesty International. (2022a, April 8). *Russia: Authorities close down Amnesty International's Moscow Office*. Amnesty International.

- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/04/russia-authorities-close-down-amnesty-internationals-moscow-office/>
- Amnesty International. (2022b). “*Anyone can die at any time*”: *Indiscriminate attacks by Russian forces in Kharkiv, Ukraine*. Amnesty International Ltd.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/5682/2022/en/>
- Amnesty International. (2022c). “*Children*”: *The attack on the Donetsk Regional Academic Drama Theatre in Mariupol, Ukraine*. Amnesty International Ltd.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/5713/2022/en/>
- Amnesty International. (2022d, August 4). *Ukraine: Ukrainian fighting tactics endanger civilians*. Amnesty International.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/08/ukraine-ukrainian-fighting-tactics-endanger-civilians/>
- Angouri, J., & Glynos, J. (2009). *Managing Cultural Difference and Struggle in the context of the Multinational Corporate Workplace: Solution or Symptom?* (No. 26; IDA Working Papers). IDA World.
- Antonenko, O. (1999). Russia, NATO and European security after Kosovo. *Survival*, 41(4), 124–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713660137>
- Antonenko, O. (2007). Russia and the Deadlock over Kosovo. *Survival*, 49(3), 91–106.
- Arutyunyan, A., & Sergunin, A. (2015). Mezhdū scilloj i xaribdoj: Programma «vostochnogo partnerstva» na perekrest’e geopoliticheskix interesov Evrosoyuza i Rossii [Между сциллой и харибдой: Программа «восточного партнерства» на перекрестье геополитических интересов Евросоюза и России]. *Vestnik SPbGU*, 6(2), 108–119.
- Ashley, R. K. (1987). The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 12(4), 403–434. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030437548701200401>
- Åslund, A., & McFaul, M. (2006). Introduction: Perspectives on the Orange Revolution. In A. Åslund & M. McFaul (Eds.), *Revolution in orange: The origins of Ukraine’s democratic breakthrough* (pp. 1–8). Carnegie endowment for international peace.
- Averre, D. (2007). ‘Sovereign Democracy’ and Russia’s Relations with the European Union. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 15(2), 173–190. <https://doi.org/10.3200/DEMO.15.2.173-190>
- Averre, D. (2009a). From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The Legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia’s Relations with the West. *International Affairs*, 85(3), 575–591.

- Averre, D. (2009b). Competing Rationalities: Russia, the EU and the ‘Shared Neighbourhood’. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61(10), 1689–1713.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130903278918>
- Aydın-Düzgıt, S., & Noutcheva, G. (2022). External Contestations of Europe: Russia and Turkey as Normative Challengers?. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 60(6), 1815–1831. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13380>
- Babayan, N. (2015). The return of the empire? Russia’s counteraction to transatlantic democracy promotion in its near abroad. *Democratization*, 22(3), 438–458.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2014.993973>
- Bacchi, C. (2015). The Turn to Problematization: Political Implications of Contrasting Interpretive and Poststructural Adaptations. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 05(01), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2015.51001>
- Baranovsky, V. (2000). Russia: A Part of Europe or Apart from Europe? *International Affairs*, 76(3), 443–458. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00145>
- Barkanov, B. (2014, March 13). *How Putin’s domestic audience explains Russia’s behavior*. Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/13/how-putins-domestic-audience-explains-russias-behavior/>
- Barnett, M., & Duvall, R. (2005). Power in International Politics. *International Organization*, 59(01). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818305050010>
- Baumann, M. (2020). ‘Propaganda Fights’ and ‘Disinformation Campaigns’: The discourse on information warfare in Russia-West relations. *Contemporary Politics*, 26(3), 288–307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2020.1728612>
- Baumann, M. (2021). Fighting for Discursive Hegemony: The Kremlin’s Foundation Is Shaking. *Russian Analytical Digest*, 266, 2–3.
- BBC. (2020, August 14). *Belarus election: Exiled leader calls weekend of ‘peaceful rallies’*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53780685>
- BBC. (2022, November 10). *Ukraine war: US estimates 200,000 military casualties on all sides*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-63580372>
- Becker, M. E., Cohen, M. S., Kushi, S., & McManus, I. P. (2016). Reviving the Russian empire: The Crimean intervention through a neoclassical realist lens. *European Security*, 25(1), 112–133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2015.1084290>
- Belarus-Analysen. (2020a). Chronik: 15. Juni—8. August 2020. In *Belarus-Analysen* (Vol. 51, pp. 15–22). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/belarus-analysen/51/>

- Belarus-Analysen. (2020b). Chronik des Protestes, 2.-29. November 2020. In *Belarus-Analysen* (Vol. 53, pp. 21–24). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/belarus-analysen/53/>
- Belarus-Analysen. (2020c). Chronik des Protestes, 08. August—01. November 2020. In *Belarus-Analysen* (Vol. 52, pp. 30–44). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/belarus-analysen/52/>
- Belarus-Analysen. (2021). Chronik: 30. November 2020—28. Februar 2021. In *Belarus-Analysen* (Vol. 54, pp. 20–24). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/belarus-analysen/54/>
- Bellingcat. (2020, December 14). *FSB Team of Chemical Weapon Experts Implicated in Alexey Navalny Novichok Poisoning*. Bellingcat. <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2020/12/14/fsb-team-of-chemical-weapon-experts-implicated-in-alexey-navalny-novichok-poisoning/>
- Berg, E., & Mölder, M. (2014). When ‘blurring’ becomes the norm and secession is justified as the exception: Revisiting EU and Russian discourses in the common neighbourhood. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 17(4), 469–488. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jird.2014.2>
- Berg, E., & Mölder, M. (2018). The politics of unpredictability: Acc/secession of Crimea and the blurring of international norms. *East European Politics*, 34(4), 400–417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2018.1497986>
- Bertram, G. W. (2017). *Hegels ‘Phänomenologie des Geistes’: Ein systematischer Kommentar*. Reclam.
- Besancenot, S. (2008). EU-Krisenmanagement zwischen Atlantizismus und Pragmatismus – Die Sicht aus Paris. In P. Bungarten & M. Buhbe (Eds.), *Krieg um Südossetien. Analysen und Perspektiven aus Hauptstädten der Welt* (pp. 25–28). Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung.
- Bettiza, G., & Lewis, D. (2020). Authoritarian Powers and Norm Contestation in the Liberal International Order: Theorizing the Power Politics of Ideas and Identity. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 5(4), 559–577. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogz075>
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- Biden, J. (2022, February 22). *Remarks by President Biden Announcing Response to Russian Actions in Ukraine*. The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/22/remarks-by-president-biden-announcing-response-to-russian-actions-in-ukraine/>

- Biersack, J., & O’Lear, S. (2014). The geopolitics of Russia’s annexation of Crimea: Narratives, identity, silences, and energy. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 55(3), 247–269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2014.985241>
- Bock, A. M., Henneberg, I., & Plank, F. (2015). “If you compress the spring, it will snap back hard”: The Ukrainian crisis and the balance of threat theory. *International Journal: Canada’s Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, 70(1), 101–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702014562593>
- Bono, G. (2010). The European Union and ‘Supervised Independence’ of Kosovo: A Strategic Solution to the Kosovo/Serbia Conflict? *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 15, 249–264.
- Bot, B. (2004, November 23). *Ukraine: EU Criticizes Elections*. Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1056013.html>
- Bremmer, I., & Charap, S. (2007). The Siloviki in Putin’s Russia: Who They Are and What They Want. *The Washington Quarterly*, 30(1), 83–92. <https://doi.org/10.1162/wash.2006-07.30.1.83>
- Brincat, S. (2017). Cosmopolitan recognition: Three vignettes. *International Theory*, 9(1), 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971916000221>
- Brown, C. (1994). ‘Turtles All the Way Down’: Anti-Foundationalism, Critical Theory and International Relations. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 23(2), 213–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298940230020901>
- Brzezinski, Z. (1997). *The grand chessboard: American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives* (1. ed). BasicBooks.
- Budraitskis, I. (2022, May 20). «Rossijskaya propaganda obnulyaet istoricheskij opyt preodoleniya nacizma» [«Российская пропаганда обнуляет исторический опыт преодоления нацизма»]. Doxa. <https://doxajournal.ru/putins-history>
- Bull, H. (1977). *The Anarchical Society*. Macmillan Education UK. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-24028-9>
- Bundesregierung. (2020, September 2). *Erklärung der Bundesregierung im Fall Nawalny*. Bundesregierung Der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/erklaerung-der-bundesregierung-im-fall-nawalny-1781790>
- Burai, E. (2016). Parody as Norm Contestation: Russian Normative Justifications in Georgia and Ukraine and Their Implications for Global Norms. *Global Society*, 30(1), 67–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2015.1092424>

- Burr, V. (2006). *An introduction to social constructionism*. Taylor & Francis e-library.
<http://www.myilibrary.com?id=47851>
- Butler, J. (1999). *Subjects of desire: Hegelian reflections in twentieth-century France*.
 Columbia University Press.
- Cadier, D. (2015). Policies towards the Post-Soviet Space: The Eurasian Economic Union as
 an Attempt to Develop Russia's Structural Power? In D. Cadier & M. Light (Eds.),
Russia's Foreign Policy (pp. 156–174). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137468888_10
- Cadier, D. (2019). The Geopoliticisation of the EU's Eastern Partnership. *Geopolitics*, 24(1),
 71–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1477754>
- Cadier, D., & Light, M. (2015). Conclusion: Foreign Policy as the Continuation of Domestic
 Politics by Other Means. In D. Cadier & M. Light (Eds.), *Russia's Foreign Policy*
 (pp. 204–216). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137468888_13
- Campbell, D. (1992). *Writing security: United States foreign policy and the politics of
 identity*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Carothers, T. (2002). The End of the Transition Paradigm. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(1), 5–
 21. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2002.0003>
- Casier, T. (1998). The boundaries of Europe: An Inquiry into Russia's identity. In T. Casier
 & K. Malfliet (Eds.), *Is Russia a European power? The position of Russia in a new
 Europe* (pp. 45–66). Leuven University Press.
- Casier, T. (2011). Russia's Energy Leverage over the EU: Myth or Reality? *Perspectives on
 European Politics and Society*, 12(4), 493–508.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15705854.2011.622963>
- Casier, T. (2013). The EU–Russia Strategic Partnership: Challenging the Normative
 Argument. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65(7), 1377–1395.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2013.824137>
- Casier, T. (2016a). From logic of competition to conflict: Understanding the dynamics of
 EU–Russia relations. *Contemporary Politics*, 22(3), 376–394.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2016.1201311>
- Casier, T. (2016b). Great Game or Great Confusion: The Geopolitical Understanding of EU-
 Russia Energy Relations. *Geopolitics*, 21(4), 763–778.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2016.1185607>

- Casier, T. (2018a). EU–Russia Relations in Crisis: The Dynamics of a Breakup. In T. Casier & J. DeBardleben (Eds.), *EU-Russia relations in crisis: Understanding diverging perceptions* (pp. 13–29). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Casier, T. (2018b). Gorbachev’s ‘Common European Home’ and its relevance for Russian foreign policy today. *Debater a Europa*, 18, 17–34. https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18_2
- Casier, T. (2018c). The different faces of power in European Union–Russia relations. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 53(1), 101–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836717729179>
- Casier, T. (2020). Not on speaking terms, but business as usual: The ambiguous coexistence of conflict and cooperation in EU–Russia relations. *East European Politics*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2020.1756784>
- Casier, T. (2022). Why Did Russia and the EU Clash Over Ukraine in 2014, But Not Over Armenia? *Europe-Asia Studies*, 74(9), 1676–1699. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2022.2133087>
- CEC Belarus. (2020, August 10). *Ob itogax vyborov prezidenta Respubliki Belarus’ v 2020 godu [Об итогах выборов президента Республики Беларусь в 2020 году]*. <https://rec.gov.by/files/2020/inf9.pdf>
- CEC Ukraine. (2004). *Results of voting in Ukraine*. Central Election Commission of Ukraine. <https://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vp2004/wp0011e.html>
- Chakrabarty, D. (2000). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton University Press.
- Charap, S., & Troitskiy, M. (2013). Russia, the West and the Integration Dilemma. *Survival*, 55(6), 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2013.862935>
- Charap, S., & Welt, C. (2015). Making Sense of Russian Foreign Policy: Guest Editors’ Introduction. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 62(2), 67–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2015.1012692>
- Chebakova, A. (2015). *Exposing the Limits of EU-Russia “Autonomous Cooperation”: The Potential of Bakhtin’s Dialogic Imagination*.
- Chernobrov, D. (2022). Strategic humour: Public diplomacy and comic framing of foreign policy issues. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 24(2), 277–296. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13691481211023958>
- Chouliaraki, L., & Fairclough, N. (2007). *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis* (Transferred to digital printing). Edinburgh Univ. Press.

- Clunan, A. L. (2009). *The social construction of Russia's resurgence: Aspirations, identity, and security interests*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Clunan, A. L. (2018). Russia and the Liberal World Order. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 32(1), 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679418000096>
- Cocks, J. (2006). Sovereignty, Identity, and Insecurity: A Commentary on Patchen Markells's *Bound by Recognition*. *Polity*, 38(1), 13–19. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.polity.2300048>
- Cohen, J. (2013). The Event of a Reading: Hegel 'with' Derrida. In L. Herzog (Ed.), *Hegel's thought in Europe: Currents, crosscurrents and undercurrents* (pp. 250–262). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Commission. (2022). *Stabilisation and Association Process*. European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/glossary/stabilisation-and-association-process_en
- Connolly, W. E. (2002). *Identity, difference: Democratic negotiations of political paradox* (Expanded ed). University of Minnesota Press.
- Cooke, M. (2009). Beyond Dignity and Difference: Revisiting the Politics of Recognition. *European Journal of Political Theory*, 8(1), 76–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885108096961>
- Coole, D. H. (2000). *Negativity and politics: Dionysus and dialectics from Kant to poststructuralism*. Routledge.
- Cornell, S. E. (2008). War in Georgia, Jitters All Around. *Current History*, 107(711), 307–314.
- Cornell, S. E., Popjanevski, J., & Nilsson, N. (2008). *Russia's war in Georgia: Causes and implications for Georgia and the world*. Silk Road Studies Program : Central Asia-Caucasus Institute.
- Council Decision 2008/901/CFSP, no. 2008/901/CFSP, Council of the European Union (2008). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008D0901>
- DeBardeleben, J. (2012). Applying constructivism to understanding EU–Russian relations. *International Politics*, 49(4), 418–433. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ip.2012.8>
- DeBardeleben, J. (2018). Alternative Paradigms for EU–Russia Neighbourhood Relations. In T. Casier & J. DeBardeleben (Eds.), *EU-Russia relations in crisis: Understanding diverging perceptions* (pp. 115–136). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

- Dekalchuk, A. A., & Khokhlova, A. (2019). Russian and Western scholarly perspectives on EU–Russia relations in Justice and Home Affairs: How ‘indigenous’ is the Russian scholarship? *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 27(2), 171–183.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2018.1552848>
- Derrida, J. (1988). *Limited Inc*. Northwestern University Press.
- Diamond, L., Fukuyama, F., Horowitz, D. L., & Plattner, M. F. (2014). Reconsidering the Transition Paradigm. *Journal of Democracy*, 25(1), 86–100.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2014.0018>
- Dias, V. A. (2013). The EU and Russia: Competing Discourses, Practices and Interests in the Shared Neighbourhood. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 14(2), 256–271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15705854.2013.785261>
- Diez, T. (2001). Europe as a Discursive Battleground: Discourse Analysis and European Integration Studies. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 36(1), 5–38.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00108360121962245>
- Diez, T. (2004). Europe’s others and the return of geopolitics. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17(2), 319–335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757042000245924>
- Diez, T. (2013). Normative power as hegemony. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 48(2), 194–210.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836713485387>
- Dixon, R. (2020, July 23). *Belarus’s Lukashenko jailed election rivals and mocked women as unfit to lead. Now one is leading the opposition*. Washington Post.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/belarus-lukashenko-opposition-election/2020/07/23/86f231f6-c5ca-11ea-a825-8722004e4150_story.html
- Doty, R. L. (1993). Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines. *International Studies Quarterly*, 37(3), 297–320. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600810>
- Doty, R. L. (1996). *Imperial encounters: The politics of representation in North-South relations*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Doty, R. L. (1997). Aporia: A critical exploration of the agent-structure problematique in international relations theory. *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(3), 365–392. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066197003003004>
- Dreyer Hansen, A., & Sørensen, E. (2005). Polity as Politics: Studying the Shaping and Effects of Discursive Polities. In D. Howarth & J. Torfing (Eds.), *Discourse Theory in European Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230523364>

- Dunn, E. C., & Bobick, M. S. (2014). The empire strikes back: War without war and occupation without occupation in the Russian sphere of influence: The empire strikes back. *American Ethnologist*, 41(3), 405–413. <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12086>
- Case of Navalnyye v. Russia (Application no. 101/15), (The European Court of Human Rights 17 October 2017).
<https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22languageisocode%22:%5B%22ENG%22%5D,%22documentcollectionid%22:%5B%22JUDGMENTS%22%5D,%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-177665%22%5D%7D>
- Edkins, J. (1999). *Poststructuralism & international relations: Bringing the political back in*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Emerson, M., Checchi, A., Fujiwara, N., Gajdosova, L., Gavrilis, G., & Gnedina, E. (2009). *Synergies vs. Spheres of influence in the pan-European space*. Centre for European Policy Studies.
- Epstein, C. (2011). Who speaks? Discourse, the subject and the study of identity in international politics. *European Journal of International Relations*, 17(2), 327–350. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066109350055>
- Epstein, C. (2018). The productive force of the negative and the desire for recognition: Lessons from Hegel and Lacan. *Review of International Studies*, 44(5), 805–828. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210518000347>
- Epstein, C., Lindemann, T., & Sending, O. J. (2018). Frustrated sovereigns: The agency that makes the world go around. *Review of International Studies*, 44(5), 787–804. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210518000402>
- EU. (2016). *A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy*. European Union. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/global-strategy-european-unions-foreign-and-security-policy_en
- EUObserver. (2008, March 11). *EU foreign ministers concerned Russia to recognise Abkhazia*. <https://euobserver.com/world/25813>
- EUREN. (2022, February 4). *Military build-up and diplomacy: Tensions in Russia-West relations*. EU-Russia Experts Network on Foreign Policy (EUREN). <https://eu-russia-expertnetwork.eu/en/military-build-up-and-diplomacy-tensions-in-russia-west-relations/>
- European Commission. (2011, February 22). *The EU-Russia Partnership – basic facts and figures*. European Commission: Press Corner. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_11_104

- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change* (Reprinted). Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Farkas, J., & Schou, J. (2018). Fake News as a Floating Signifier: Hegemony, Antagonism and the Politics of Falsehood. *Javnost - The Public*, 25(3), 298–314.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2018.1463047>
- Fawn, R., & Nalbandov, R. (2012). The difficulties of knowing the start of war in the information age: Russia, Georgia and the War over South Ossetia, August 2008. *European Security*, 21(1), 57–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2012.656601>
- FBK. (2020, January 19). *Dvorec dlya Putina [Дворец для Путина]*. Dvorec Dlja Putina. <https://palace.navalny.com>
- Federation Council. (2014, March 1). *Postanovlenie ob ispol'zovanii Vooruzhennykh Sil Rossijskoj Federacii na territorii Ukrainy [Постановление об использовании Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации на территории Украины]*. Federation Council of the Russian Federation. <http://council.gov.ru/activity/documents/39979/>
- Feklyunina, V. (2008). Battle for Perceptions: Projecting Russia in the West. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60(4), 605–629. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130801999888>
- Feklyunina, V. (2016). Soft power and identity: Russia, Ukraine and the ‘Russian world(s)’. *European Journal of International Relations*, 22(4), 773–796.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066115601200>
- Fierke, K. M. (2013). Constructivism. In T. Dunne, M. Kurki, & S. Smith (Eds.), *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity* (Third edition, pp. 187–204). Oxford University Press.
- Fierke, K. M. (2015). *Critical approaches to international security* (Second edition). Polity Press.
- Fierke, K. M., & Wiener, A. (1999). Constructing institutional interests: EU and NATO enlargement. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6(5), 721–742.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/135017699343342>
- Filippov, M. (2009). Diversionary Role of the Georgia–Russia Conflict: International Constraints and Domestic Appeal. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61(10), 1825–1847.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130903278975>
- Financial Times. (2014, March 4). *Former brothers in arms in tense Crimean stand-off*. Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/6d482ae2-a3be-11e3-aa85-00144feab7de>

- Fischer, S. (2016). The Conflicts over Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Light of the Crisis over Ukraine. In *Not Frozen! The Unresolved Conflicts over Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh in Light of the Crisis over Ukraine* (pp. 43–60). Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik.
- Fischer, S. (2022). Epistemic communities in EU-Russia relations. A dialogue of the deaf? In T. Romanova & M. David (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of EU-Russian relations: Structures, actors, issues* (pp. 335–344). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Forsberg, T. (2013). The power of the European Union: What explains the EU's (lack of) influence on Russia? *Politique européenne*, 39(1), 22.
<https://doi.org/10.3917/poeu.039.0022>
- Forsberg, T. (2014). Status conflicts between Russia and the West: Perceptions and emotional biases. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 47(3–4), 323–331.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.09.006>
- Forsberg, T. (2019). Explaining Russian foreign policy towards the EU through contrasts. *International Politics*, 56(6), 762–777. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-018-0166-9>
- Forsberg, T., & Haukkala, H. (2016). *The European Union and Russia*. Palgrave.
- Forsberg, T., & Pursiainen, C. (2017). The Psychological Dimension of Russian Foreign Policy: Putin and the Annexation of Crimea. *Global Society*, 31(2), 220–244.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2016.1274963>
- Foucault, M. (1979). Truth and power: An interview with Alessandro Fontano and Pasquale Pasquino. In M. Morris & P. Patton (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Power, truth, strategy* (pp. 29–48).
- Foucault, M. (1981). The Order of Discourse. In R. Young (Ed.), *Untying the text: A post-structuralist reader* (pp. 48–78). Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- France24. (2008, September 8). *Sarkozy and Medvedev agree on peace plan*.
<https://www.france24.com/en/20080908-sarkozy-medvedev-agree-peace-plan-georgian-conflict>
- Fraser, N. (2001). Recognition without Ethics? *Theory, Culture & Society*, 18(2–3), 21–42.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/02632760122051760>
- Freire, M. R. (2011). USSR/Russian Federation's Major Power Status Inconsistencies. In T. J. Volgy, R. Corbetta, K. A. Grant, & R. G. Baird (Eds.), *Major powers and the quest for status in international politics: Global and regional perspectives* (1st ed, pp. 55–76). Palgrave Macmillan.

- Freire, M. R. (2012). Russian foreign policy in the making: The linkage between internal dynamics and the external context. *International Politics*, 49(4), 466–481.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/ip.2012.11>
- Freire, M. R. (2019). The quest for status: How the interplay of power, ideas, and regime security shapes Russia's policy in the post-Soviet space. *International Politics*, 56(6), 795–809. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-018-0164-y>
- Fukuyama, F. (1989). The End of History? *The National Interest*, 16, 3–18.
- Fukuyama, F. (1992). *The end of history and the last man*. Free Press; Maxwell Macmillan Canada; Maxwell Macmillan International.
- Galeotti, M., & Bowen, A. (2014). Putin's Empire of the Mind. *Foreign Policy*, 206, 16–19.
- George, J. (1994). *Discourses of global politics: A critical (re)introduction to international relations*. Lynne Rienner [u.a.].
- German, T. (2012). Securing the South Caucasus: Military Aspects of Russian Policy towards the Region since 2008. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64(9), 1650–1666.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2012.718418>
- Glynos, J., & Howarth, D. (2007). *Logics of critical explanation in social and political theory*. Routledge.
- Glynos, J., & Howarth, D. (2008). Critical Explanation in Social Science: A Logics Approach. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift Für Soziologie*, 34(1), 5–35.
- Glynos, J., & Howarth, D. (2019). The Retroductive Cycle: The Research Process in Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis. In T. Marttila (Ed.), *Discourse, culture and organization* (pp. 105–126). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Goffman, E. (1986). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity* (1. Touchstone ed). Simon & Schuster.
- Gorchinskaya, K. (2013, December 9). *Awesome panoramic video, photos prove it really was a march of a million*. Kyiv Post.
<https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/euromaidan/awesome-panoramic-video-photos-prove-it-really-was-a-march-of-a-million-video-photo-333287.html>
- Gorenburg, D. (2019). *Russian Foreign Policy Narratives* (No. 042; Marshall Center Security Insight). George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies.
<https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/russian-foreign-policy-narratives-0>
- Götz, E. (2015). It's geopolitics, stupid: Explaining Russia's Ukraine policy. *Global Affairs*, 1(1), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2015.960184>

- Götz, E. (2017). Putin, the State, and War: The Causes of Russia's Near Abroad Assertion Revisited. *International Studies Review*, 19(2), 228–253.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viw009>
- Götz, E. (2019). Enemy at the Gates: A Neoclassical Realist Explanation of Russia's Baltic Policy. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 15(1), 99–117. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orx011>
- Götz, E., & MacFarlane, N. (2019). Russia's role in world politics: Power, ideas, and domestic influences. *International Politics*, 56(6), 713–725.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-018-0162-0>
- Götz, E., & Staun, J. (2022). Why Russia attacked Ukraine: Strategic culture and radicalized narratives. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 43(3), 482–497.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2022.2082633>
- Graef, A. (2017). Wer macht Außenpolitik in Russland? Akteure, Diskurse, Entscheidungen. *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik*, 10(1), 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12399-016-0601-1>
- Greenfeld, L. (1992). *Nationalism: Five roads to modernity*. Harvard University Press.
- Greenhill, B. (2008). Recognition and Collective Identity Formation in International Politics. *European Journal of International Relations*, 14(2), 343–368.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066108089246>
- Gromyko, A. (2015). Rossiya, SShA, Malaya Evropa (ES): Konkurenciya za liderstvo v mire policentricnosti [Россия, США, Малая Европа (ЕС): Конкуренция за лидерство в мире полицентричности]. *Contemporary Europe*, 4, 5–14.
<https://doi.org/10.15211/soveurope420150514>
- Gvosdev, N. K., & Marsh, C. (2014). *Russian foreign policy: Interests, vectors, and sectors*. SAGE/CQ Press.
- Hansen, L. (1997). R.B.J. Walker and International Relations: Deconstructing a discipline. In I. B. Neumann & O. Wæver (Eds.), *The future of international relations: Masters in the making?* (pp. 339–360). Routledge.
- Hansen, L. (2006). *Security as practice: Discourse analysis and the Bosnian war*. Routledge.
- Hansen, L. (2014). Poststructuralism. In J. Baylis & S. Smith (Eds.), *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations* (Sixth edition, pp. 169–183). Oxford University Press.
- Haukkala, H. (2008a). Book Review Forum: Debating Recent Theories of EU—Russia Interaction. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 43(1), 109–121.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836707086740>

- Haukkala, H. (2008b). The European Union as a Regional Normative Hegemon: The Case of European Neighbourhood Policy. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60(9), 1601–1622.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130802362342>
- Haukkala, H. (2010a). Explaining Russian Reactions to the European Neighbourhood Policy. In R. G. Whitman & S. Wolff (Eds.), *The European neighbourhood policy in perspective: Context, implementation and impact* (pp. 161–177). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Haukkala, H. (2010b). *The EU-Russia strategic partnership: The limits of post-sovereignty in international relations*. Routledge.
- Haukkala, H. (2011). The European Union as a Regional Normative Hegemon: The Case of European Neighbourhood Policy. In R. G. Whitman (Ed.), *Normative power Europe: Empirical and theoretical perspectives* (pp. 45–64). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Haukkala, H. (2015). From Cooperative to Contested Europe? The Conflict in Ukraine as a Culmination of a Long-Term Crisis in EU–Russia Relations. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 23(1), 25–40.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2014.1001822>
- Hegel, G. W. F. (2013). *Phenomenology of spirit* (A. V. Miller & J. N. Findlay, Eds.; Reprint.). Oxford Univ. Press.
- Heller, P. (2010). The Russian dawn. How Russia contributed to the emergence of ‘the West’ as a concept. In C. S. Browning & M. Lehti (Eds.), *The struggle for the West: A divided and contested legacy* (pp. 33–52). Routledge.
- Heller, R. (2014). Russia’s quest for respect in the international conflict management in Kosovo. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 47(3/4), 333–343.
- Hellman, M., & Wagnsson, C. (2017). How can European states respond to Russian information warfare? An analytical framework. *European Security*, 26(2), 153–170.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2017.1294162>
- Hill, F., & Gaddy, C. G. (2015). *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*.
- Holm, U. (1997). The French Garden Is No Longer What It Used To. In K. E. Jørgensen (Ed.), *Reflective approaches to european governance*. (pp. 128–145). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Honneth, A. (1996). *The struggle for recognition: The moral grammar of social conflicts* (1st MIT Press ed). MIT Press.
- Hopf, T. (1998). The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory. *International Security*, 23(1), 171–200. <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.23.1.171>

- Hopf, T. (2002). *Social construction of international politics: Identities & foreign policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*. Cornell University Press.
- Hopf, T. (2016). 'Crimea is ours': A discursive history. *International Relations*, 30(2), 227–255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117816645646>
- Hopf, T. (2017). Russia Becoming Russia: A Semi-periphery in Splendid Isolation. In G. Hellmann & B. Herborth (Eds.), *Uses of the West: Security and the politics of order*. Cambridge University Press.
- Howarth, D. (1998). Discourse Theory and Political Analysis. In E. Scarbrough & E. Tanenbaum (Eds.), *Research strategies in the social sciences: A guide to new approaches* (pp. 268–293). Oxford University Press.
- Howarth, D. (2000). *Discourse*. Open University Press.
- Howarth, D. (2005). Applying Discourse Theory: The Method of Articulation. In D. Howarth & J. Torfing (Eds.), *Discourse Theory in European Politics* (pp. 316–350). Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230523364>
- Howarth, D. (2018). Marx, discourse theory and political analysis: Negotiating an ambiguous legacy. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 15(4), 377–389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2018.1457550>
- Hyppolite, J. (1969). The Concept of Existence in the Hegelian Phenomenology. In J. O'Neill (Trans.), *Studies on Marx and Hegel*. Heinemann.
- Accordance with International Law of the unilateral Declaration of Independence in respect of Kosovo, (International Court of Justice 22 July 2010). <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/141/141-20100722-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>
- IEOM. (2004a). *Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, Presidential Election 31.10.2004*. International Election Observation Mission. <https://www.oscepa.org/en/documents/election-observation/election-observation-statements/ukraine/statements-25/1487-2004-presidential-first-round/file>
- IEOM. (2004b). *Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, Presidential Election (Second Round) 21.11.2004*. International Election Observation Mission. <https://www.oscepa.org/en/documents/election-observation/election-observation-statements/ukraine/statements-25/1489-2004-presidential-second-round/file>
- IEOM. (2004c). *Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, Presidential Election (Repeat Second Round) 26.12.2004*. International Election Observation Mission. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/8/1/39080.pdf>

- IIFFMCG. (2009). *Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia*. Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia. https://www.mpil.de/files/pdf4/IIFFMCG_Volume_I2.pdf
- Interfax. (2008, August 21). *Abxaziya i Yuzhnaya Osetiya prosyat ot Rossii priznaniya* [Абхазия и Южная Осетия просят от России признания]. <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/28426>
- Interfax-Ukraine. (2014, February 27). *Number of Crimean deputies present at referendum resolution vote unclear*. Interfax-Ukraine. <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/193292.html>
- Interfax-Ukraine. (2022, March 27). *Biden calls Putin's statements about denazification of Ukraine cynical and lies*. Interfax-Ukraine. <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/818408.html>
- Irish Times. (2022, May 8). *Berlin rejects Putin's talk of denazification of Ukraine as 'abuse of history'*. The Irish Times. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/berlin-rejects-putin-s-talk-of-denazification-of-ukraine-as-abuse-of-history-1.4872751>
- Jessop, B. (1996). Interpretive Sociology and the Dialectic of Structure and Agency. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 13(1), 119–128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327696013001006>
- Jørgensen, M., & Phillips, L. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. Sage Publications.
- Kagarlitsky, B. (2008). *Empire of the periphery: Russia and the world system*. Pluto Press.
- Kappeler, A. (2019). *Kleine Geschichte der Ukraine* (5., überarbeitete und aktualisierte Auflage). C.H. Beck.
- Karagiannis, E. (2013). The 2008 Russian–Georgian war via the lens of Offensive Realism. *European Security*, 22(1), 74–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2012.698265>
- Kavalski, E. (2013). The struggle for recognition of normative powers: Normative power Europe and normative power China in context. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 48(2), 247–267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836713485386>
- Kazakevich, A. (2020). Nationaler Dialog, Vermittlung und belarussische Eliten. *Belarus-Analysen*, 52, 2–5. <https://doi.org/10.31205/BA.052.01>
- Keukeleire, S., & Delreux, T. (2014). *The foreign policy of the European Union*. https://nls.ldls.org.uk/welcome.html?ark:/81055/vdc_100044302536.0x000001
- Klinke, I. (2012). Postmodern Geopolitics? The European Union Eyes Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64(5), 929–947. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2012.676237>

- Kojève, A. (1947). *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur la Phénoménologie de l'esprit professées de 1933 à 1939 à l'École des Hautes Études* (R. Queneau, Ed.). Gallimard.
- Korolev, A. (2018). Theories of Non-Balancing and Russia's Foreign Policy. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41(6), 887–912. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2017.1283614>
- Kozyrev, A. (1992). Russia: A Chance for Survival. *Foreign Affairs*, 71(2), 1–16.
- Kratochwil, F., & Ruggie, J. G. (1986). International Organization: A State of the Art on an Art of the State. *International Organization*, 40(4), 753–775.
- Krickovic, A. (2014). Imperial nostalgia or prudent geopolitics? Russia's efforts to reintegrate the post-Soviet space in geopolitical perspective. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 30(6), 503–528. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2014.900975>
- Krickovic, A. (2015). When Interdependence Produces Conflict: EU–Russia Energy Relations as a Security Dilemma. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 36(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2015.1012350>
- Krickovic, A. (2017). The Symbiotic China-Russia Partnership: Cautious Riser and Desperate Challenger. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 10(3), 299–329. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pox011>
- Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in language: A semiotic approach to literature and art*. Columbia Univ. Press.
- Kryshtanovskaya, O. (2008). The Russian Elite in Transition. *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 24(4), 585–603. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523270802510602>
- Kuchins, A. C., & Zevelev, I. (2012). Russia's Contested National Identity and Foreign Policy. In H. R. Nau & D. Ollapally (Eds.), *Worldviews of Aspiring Powers* (pp. 181–206). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199937479.003.0006>
- Kurki, M., & Wight, C. (2013). International Relations and Social Science. In T. Dunne, M. Kurki, & S. Smith (Eds.), *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity* (Third edition, pp. 14–35). Oxford University Press.
- Kurowska, X., & Reshetnikov, A. (2021). Trickstery: Pluralising stigma in international society. *European Journal of International Relations*, 27(1), 232–257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066120946467>
- Laclau, E. (1990). *New reflections on the revolution of our time: Ernesto Laclau*. Verso.
- Laclau, E. (2004). Glimpsing the future. In S. Crichtley & O. Marchart (Eds.), *Laclau: A critical reader* (pp. 279–328). Routledge.

- Laclau, E. (2005). *On populist reason*. Verso.
- Laclau, E. (2007). *Emancipation(s)*. Verso.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and socialist strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*. Verso.
- Laffan, B. (2010). The European Union and Its Institutions as ‘Identity Builders’. In R. K. Herrmann, T. Risse, & M. B. Brewer (Eds.), *Transnational identities: Becoming European in the EU* (pp. 75–96). Rowman & Littlefield.
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=632199>
- Lakatos, I. (1999). Lecture 1: The Demarcation Problem. In M. Motterlini (Ed.), *For and against method: Including Lakatos’s lectures on scientific method and the Lakatos-Feyerabend correspondence* (pp. 20–30). University of Chicago Press.
- Lake, D. A. (2013). Great Power Hierarchies and Strategies in Twenty-First Century World Politics. In W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse, & B. A. Simmons (Eds.), *Handbook of International Relations* (pp. 555–578). SAGE Publications Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446247587.n22>
- Lankina, T., & Niemczyk, K. (2017). Russia’s Foreign Policy and Soft Power. In D. Cadier & M. Light (Eds.), *Russia’s Foreign Policy: Ideas, Domestic Politics and External Relations* (pp. 97–116). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Larson, D. W., & Shevchenko, A. (2010). Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy. *International Security*, 34(4), 63–95.
<https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2010.34.4.63>
- Laruelle, M. (2015). *The “Russian World”. Russia’s Soft Power and Geopolitical Imagination*. Center on Global Interests.
- Laruelle, M. (2019). Mirror Games? Ideological Resonances between Russian and US Radical Conservatism. In M. Suslov & D. Uzlaner (Eds.), *Contemporary Russian Conservatism* (pp. 177–204). BRILL. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004408005_008
- Leichtova, M. (2014). *Misunderstanding Russia: Russian foreign policy and the West*. Farnham, Surrey, UK; Burlington, VT.
- Liik, K. (2022, February 25). *War of obsession: Why Putin is risking Russia’s future*. European Council on Foreign Relations. <https://ecfr.eu/article/war-of-obsession-why-putin-is-risking-russias-future/>

- Lynch, A. C. (2016). The influence of regime type on Russian foreign policy toward “the West,” 1992–2015. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 49(1), 101–111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2015.12.004>
- Lynch, C. (2008). Reflexivity in Research on Civil Society: Constructivist Perspectives. *International Studies Review*, 10(4), 708–721. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25482018#metadata_info_tab_contentshttps://www.jstor.org/stable/25482018#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Lynch, D. (1999). ‘Walking the tightrope’: The Kosovo conflict and Russia in European security, 1998–August 1999. *European Security*, 8(4), 57–83.
- Maass, A.-S. (2017). *EU-Russia relations, 1999-2015: From courtship to confrontation*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Makarychev, A. (2005). *Russia’s discursive construction of Europe and herself: Towards New Spatial Imagery*. Conference on “Post-Soviet In/Securities: Theory and Practice, Mershon Center of the Ohio State University.
- Makarychev, A. (2008). Russia’s Search for International Identity Through the Sovereign Democracy Concept. *The International Spectator*, 43(2), 49–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932720802057125>
- Makarychev, A. (2010). Conceptualising neighbourhood: Russia vs its ‘others’. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 13(2), 194–207. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jird.2009.30>
- Makarychev, A. (2014). *Russia and the EU in a multipolar world: Discourses, identities, norms*.
- Makarychev, A. (2018). Normative and Civilisational Regionalisms: The EU, Russia and their Common Neighbourhoods. *The International Spectator*, 53(3), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2018.1483630>
- Mälksoo, M. (2013). Decentering the West from Within: Estonian Discourses on Russian Democracy. In V. Morozov (Ed.), *Decentering the West: The idea of democracy and the struggle for hegemony* (pp. 157–173). Routledge.
- Mankoff, J. (2007). Russia and the West: Taking the Longer View. *The Washington Quarterly*, 30(2), 123–135. <https://doi.org/10.1162/wash.2007.30.2.123>
- Mankoff, J. (2009). *Russian foreign policy: The return of great power politics*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Manners, I. (2002). Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms? *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40(2), 235–258. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00353>

- Manners, I. (2008). The normative ethics of the European Union. *International Affairs*, 84(1), 45–60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00688.x>
- Markell, P. (2003). *Bound by recognition*. Princeton University Press.
- Markell, P. (2006). Ontology, Recognition, and Politics: A Reply. *Polity*, 38(1), 28–39. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.polity.2300050>
- Marmasse, G. (2013). The Hegelian Legacy in Kojève and Sartre. In L. Herzog (Ed.), *Hegel's thought in Europe: Currents, crosscurrents and undercurrents* (pp. 239–249). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marsh, D., & Stoker, G. (Eds.). (2010). *Theory and methods in political science* (3rd ed). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marten, K. (2015). Informal Political Networks and Putin's Foreign Policy: The Examples of Iran and Syria. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 62(2), 71–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2015.1010896>
- Marttila, T. (2015a). *Post-Foundational Discourse Analysis: From Political Difference to Empirical Research*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marttila, T. (2015b). *The culture of enterprise in neoliberalism: Specters of entrepreneurship*.
- Marttila, T. (2015c). Post-Foundational Discourse Analysis: A Suggestion for a Research Program. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol 16, No 3 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.17169/FQS-16.3.2282>
- Marttila, T. (2019). Post-foundational Discourse Analysis: Theoretical Premises and Methodological Options. In T. Marttila (Ed.), *Discourse, culture and organization* (pp. 17–42). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Marxsen, C. (2014). The Crimea Crisis. An International Law Perspective. *Heidelberg Journal of International Law*, 74, 367–391.
- Matveev, I. (2014). The “Two Russias” Culture War: Constructions of the “People” During the 2011-2013 Protests. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 113(1), 186–195. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-2390482>
- Mauil, H. W. (1990). Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers. *Foreign Affairs*, 69(5), 91. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20044603>
- McCormick, J. [VNV]. (2020). *European union politics*.
- McFaul, M. (2014). Faulty Powers. Who Started the Ukraine Crisis?/Michael McFaul, Stephen Sestanovich, John J. Mearsheimer. *Foreign Affairs*, 93(6).
- McNay, L. (2012). Suffering, Silence and Social Weightlessness: Honneth and Bourdieu on Embodiment and Power. In S. Gonzalez-Arnal, G. Jagger, & K. Lennon (Eds.),

- Embodied Selves* (pp. 230–248). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137283696>
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2014). Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault. *Foreign Affairs*, 93, 77–88.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2022, March 19). *John Mearsheimer on why the West is principally responsible for the Ukrainian crisis*. The Economist. <https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2022/03/11/john-mearsheimer-on-why-the-west-is-principally-responsible-for-the-ukrainian-crisis>
- Meduza. (2017, April 5). *Amnesty International demands investigation into reports of gay persecution in Chechnya*. Meduza. <https://meduza.io/en/news/2017/04/05/amnesty-international-demands-investigation-into-reports-of-gay-persecution-in-chechnya>
- Meduza. (2021a, February 2). *Sud otpravil Alekseya Naval’nogo v koloniyu [Суд отправил Алексея Навального в колонию]*. Meduza. <https://meduza.io/news/2021/02/02/sud-otpravil-alekseya-navalnogo-v-koloniyu>
- Meduza. (2021b, March 26). *Amnesty International condemns conditions of Alexey Navalny’s detention*. Meduza. <https://meduza.io/en/news/2021/03/26/amnesty-international-condemns-conditions-of-alexey-navalny-s-detention>
- Meister, S. (2014). *Reframing Germany’s Russia Policy—An Opportunity for the EU* (ECFR Policy Brief). European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR).
- Meister, S. (2022, November 29). *A Paradigm Shift: EU-Russia Relations After the War in Ukraine*. Carnegie Europe. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/11/29/paradigm-shift-eu-russia-relations-after-war-in-ukraine-pub-88476>
- Melegh, A. (2018). Positioning in global hierarchies: The case of Central Europe. In M. Moskalewicz & W. Przybylski (Eds.), *Understanding central Europe* (pp. 25–31). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Mendras, M. (2017). The Rising Cost of Russia’s Authoritarian Foreign Policy. In D. Cadier & M. Light (Eds.), *Russia’s foreign policy: Ideas, domestic politics and external relations* (pp. 80–96). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mezhuyev, B. (2017). “Island Russia” and Russia’s Identity Politics. *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2. <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/island-russia-and-russias-identity-politics/>
- Mezhuyev, B. (2019). “Civilizational Realism”. *Russia in Global Affairs*, 4. <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/civilizational-realism/>

- MID. (2008). *PRESS RELEASE: Russian Federation Withdraws from Regime of Restrictions Established in 1996 for Abkhazia*.
https://web.archive.org/web/20080901193119/http://www.ln.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/79C58F476CAEC4E8C32574040058934C?OpenDocument
- Milliken, J. (1999a). Intervention and Identity: Reconstructing the West in Korea. In J. Weldes, M. Laffey, H. Gusterson, & R. Duvall (Eds.), *Cultures of insecurity: States, communities, and the production of danger* (pp. 91–118). University of Minnesota Press.
- Milliken, J. (1999b). The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods. *European Journal of International Relations*, 5(2), 225–254.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066199005002003>
- Mills, S. (1997). *Discourse*. Routledge.
- Miskimmon, A., & O’Loughlin, B. (2017). Russia’s Narratives of Global Order: Great Power Legacies in a Polycentric World. *Politics and Governance*, 5(3), 111–120.
<https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v5i3.1017>
- Missiroli, A. (2016). *The EU and the world players and policies post-Lisbon: A handbook*. EUR-OP. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2815/123955>
- Missiroli, A., & Ioannides, I. (2012). *European Think Tanks and the EU* (No. 2; Berlaymont Paper). BEPA Bureau of European Policy Advisors.
- Mitzen, J. (2006). Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma. *European Journal of International Relations*, 12(3), 341–370.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066106067346>
- Morozov, V. (2004). In search of Europe: Russian political discourse and the outside world. *Neprikosnovennij Zapas*, 1–12. <https://www.eurozine.com/in-search-of-europe-russian-political-discourse-and-the-outside-world/>
- Morozov, V. (2008). Sovereignty and democracy in contemporary Russia: A modern subject faces the post-modern world. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 11(2), 152–180. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jird.2008.6>
- Morozov, V. (2010). Western hegemony, global democracy and the Russian challenge. In C. S. Browning & M. Lehti (Eds.), *The struggle for the West: A divided and contested legacy* (pp. 185–200). Routledge.
- Morozov, V. (2013). Introduction: Locating International Democracy. In V. Morozov (Ed.), *Decentring the West: The idea of democracy and the struggle for hegemony* (pp. 1–22). Ashgate Pub. Limited.

- Morozov, V. (2015). *Russia's Postcolonial Identity*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137409300>
- Morozov, V. (2017a). Organic Tradition or Imperial Glory? Contradictions and Continuity of Russian Identity Politics. *Russian Analytical Digest*, 198, 6–9.
- Morozov, V. (2017b). Russian Society and the Conflict in Ukraine: Masses, Elites and National Identity. In G. L. Uehling & A. Pikulicka-Wilczewska (Eds.), *Migration and the Ukraine crisis: A two-country perspective* (pp. 116–128). E-International Relations Publishing.
- Morozov, V. (2018a). Global (post)structural conditions. In A. P. Tsygankov (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of Russian foreign policy* (pp. 22–42). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Morozov, V. (2018b). Identity and Hegemony in EU–Russia Relations: Making Sense of the Asymmetrical Entanglement. In T. Casier & J. DeBardeleben (Eds.), *EU-Russia relations in crisis: Understanding diverging perceptions* (pp. 30–50). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Morozov, V. (2019). Community Beyond Hegemony? Liberal Cosmopolitanism, Generic Emancipation and the Political. *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. International Relations*, 12(3), 340–356. <https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu06.2019.306>
- Morozov, V., & Rumelili, B. (2012). The external constitution of European identity: Russia and Turkey as Europe-makers. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 47(1), 28–48.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836711433124>
- Moscow Times. (2017, May 2). *Navalny Sues Police, Loses Vision in One Eye, and Launches New Manhunt*. The Moscow Times.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20170502233013/https://themoscowtimes.com/news/following-attack-navalny-sues-police-loses-80-percent-of-his-vision-in-one-eye-and-launches-new-manhunt-57882>
- NATO. (2008). *Bucharest Summit Declaration*.
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm?mode=pressrelease
- Neumann, I. B. (1996). *Russia and the idea of Europe: A study in identity and international relations*. Routledge.
- Neumann, I. B. (1997). The Geopolitics of Delineating ‘Russia’ and ‘Europe’. The Creation of the ‘Other’ in European and Russian Tradition. In O. Tunander, P. K. Baev, & V. I. Einagel (Eds.), *Geopolitics in post-wall Europe: Security, territory and identity* (pp. 147–173). Sage.

- Neumann, I. B. (1999). *Uses of the other: 'The East' in European identity formation*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Neumann, I. B. (2002). From the USSR to Gorbachev to Putin: Perestroika as a Failed Excursion from 'the West' to 'Europe' in Russian Discourse. In M. af Malmberg & B. Stråth (Eds.), *The meaning of Europe: Variety and contention within and among nations* (pp. 191–214). Berg.
- Neumann, I. B. (2008). Russia as a great power, 1815–2007. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 11(2), 128–151. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jird.2008.7>
- Neumann, I. B. (2015). I Remember When Russia Was a Great Power. *Journal of Regional Security*, 10(1), 5–16. <https://doi.org/10.11643/issn.2217-995X151SPN56>
- Neumann, I. B. (2016). Russia's Europe, 1991-2016: Inferiority to superiority. *International Affairs*, 92(6), 1381–1399. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12752>
- Neumann, I. B. (2017). Russia's Return as True Europe, 1991-2017. *Conflict and Society*, 3(1), 78–91. <https://doi.org/10.3167/arcs.2017.030107>
- New York Times. (2014, March 12). *Ukraine Crisis Limits Merkel's Rapport With Putin*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/13/world/europe/on-ukraine-merkel-finds-limits-of-her-rapport-with-putin.html>
- Newsru. (2014, February 22). *Lukin ob"yasnil, pochemu Moskva ne podpisala antikrizisnoe soglashenie [Лукин объяснил, почему Москва не подписала антикризисное соглашение]*. Newsru.Com. https://www.newsru.com/russia/22feb2014/lukin_print.html
- Nitoiu, C. (2016). Russia and the EU's quest for status: The path to conflict in the post-Soviet space. *Global Affairs*, 2(2), 143–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2016.1163775>
- OHCHR. (2020, September 4). *Statement of Mrs. Anais Marin, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, at the Arria Formula meeting at UN Security Council (Unofficial translation)*. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26212>
- Okara, A. (2007). Sovereign Democracy: A New Russian Idea or a PR Project? *Russia in Global Affairs*, 5(3), 8–20.
- O'Loughlin, J., Toal, G., & Kolosov, V. (2016). Who identifies with the "Russian World"? Geopolitical attitudes in southeastern Ukraine, Crimea, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 57(6), 745–778. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2017.1295275>

- Omelicheva, M. Y. (2016). Critical geopolitics on Russian foreign policy: Uncovering the imagery of Moscow's international relations. *International Politics*, 53(6), 708–726. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-016-0009-5>
- Oneal, J. R., Oneal, F. H., Maoz, Z., & Russett, B. (1996). The Liberal Peace: Interdependence, Democracy, and International Conflict, 1950-85. *Journal of Peace Research*, 33(1), 11–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343396033001002>
- OPCW. (2020). *Note by the Technical Secretariat. Summary of the report on activities carried out in support of a request for technical assistance by Germany.* (S/1906/2020). OPCW Technical Secretariat. <https://www.opcw.org/sites/default/files/documents/2020/10/s-1906-2020%28e%29.pdf>
- OSCE. (2020, July 15). *ODIHR will not deploy election observation mission to Belarus due to lack of invitation.* Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/457309>
- Oskanian, K. K. (2019). Carr goes east: Reconsidering power and inequality in a post-liberal Eurasia. *European Politics and Society*, 20(2), 172–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2018.1545183>
- Pardo Sierra, O. B. (2011). No man's land? A comparative analysis of the EU and Russia's influence in the Southern Caucasus. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 44(3), 233–243. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2011.07.007>
- Pavlova, E. (2013). The Regional and the Universal: The New Democratic Discourses in the Russian Federation and Latin America. In V. Morozov (Ed.), *Decentring the West: The idea of democracy and the struggle for hegemony* (pp. 85–100). Ashgate Pub. Limited.
- Pavlova, E., & Romanova, T. (2014). *The normative power of Europe vs Russia as a great power* (No. 3). Russia in Global Affairs. <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/ideological-rivalry-or-trash-discourse/>
- Peoples, C., & Vaughan-Williams, N. (2010). *Critical security studies: An introduction.* Routledge.
- Perović, J. (2009). Introduction: Russian energy power, domestic and international dimensions. In J. Perović, R. W. Orttung, & A. Wenger (Eds.), *Russian energy power and foreign relations: Implications for conflict and cooperation* (pp. 1–20). Routledge.

- Person, R., & McFaul, M. (2022). What Putin Fears Most. *Journal of Democracy*, 33(2), 18–27. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2022.0015>
- Pieper, M. (2020). *Russkiy Mir*: The Geopolitics of Russian Compatriots Abroad. *Geopolitics*, 25(3), 756–779. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2018.1465047>
- Pifer, S. (2007). European Mediators and Ukraine’s Orange Revolution. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 54(6), 28–42. <https://doi.org/10.2753/PPC1075-8216540603>
- Politico. (2020, September 23). *Lukashenko sworn in as president of Belarus*. POLITICO. <https://www.politico.eu/article/alexander-lukashenko-inauguration-president-belarus/>
- Pomerantsev, P., & Weiss, M. (2014). *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*. The Institute of Modern Russia, The Interpreter. https://imrussia.org/media/pdf/Research/Michael_Weiss_and_Peter_Pomerantsev_The_Menace_of_Unreality.pdf
- Posner, L. (2022, August 9). *Flawed Amnesty report risks enabling more Russian war crimes in Ukraine*. Atlantic Council. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/flawed-amnesty-report-risks-enabling-more-russian-war-crimes-in-ukraine/>
- Proedrou, F. (2007). The EU–Russia Energy Approach under the Prism of Interdependence. *European Security*, 16(3–4), 329–355. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662830701751190>
- Prozorov, S. (2005). Russian conservatism in the Putin presidency: The dispersion of a hegemonic discourse. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 10(2), 121–143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569310500097224>
- Prozorov, S. (2006). *Understanding conflict between Russia and the EU: The limits of integration*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Prozorov, S. (2007). The narratives of exclusion and self-exclusion in the Russian conflict discourse on EU–Russian Relations. *Political Geography*, 26(3), 309–329. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2006.10.015>
- Prozorov, S. (2008). Belonging and inclusion in European–Russian relations: Alain Badiou and the truth of Europe. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 11(2), 181–207. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jird.2008.8>
- Putin, V. (2004). *Congratulations on Election Victory*. Kremlin. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/32209>
- Putin, V. (2021, July 12). *On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians*. Kremlin. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>

- Putnam, H. (1981). *Reason, truth, and history*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rangsimaporn, P. (2006). Interpretations of Eurasianism: Justifying Russia's role in East Asia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58(3), 371–389.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130600601750>
- Rear, D., & Jones, A. (2013). Discursive struggle and contested signifiers in the arenas of education policy and work skills in Japan. *Critical Policy Studies*, 7(4), 375–394.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2013.843469>
- Reuters. (2014, March 13). *RPT-INSIGHT-How the separatists delivered Crimea to Moscow*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-russia-aksyonov-idINL6N0M93AH20140313>
- Reuters. (2020, October 6). *Chemical weapons body confirms nerve agent Novichok in Navalny's blood*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-politics-navalny-chemicalweapo-idUSKBN26R2GQ>
- Reuters. (2021, January 23). *Police crack down on Russian protests against jailing of Kremlin foe Navalny*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/police-crack-down-russian-protests-against-jailing-kremlin-foe-navalny-2021-01-23/>
- Reuters. (2022, March 3). *France's Macron told Putin: 'You are lying to yourself'—French official*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-macron-idUSL5N2V62Z1>
- RFERL. (2008, March 5). *Georgia: South Ossetian Call For Recognition Cites 'Kosovo Precedent'*. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1079593.html>
- RFERL. (2014, March 4). *Russian Forces In Crimea: Who Are They And Where Did They Come From?* Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty. <https://www.rferl.org/a/russian-forces-in-crimea--who-are-they-and-where-did-they-come-from/25285238.html>
- Richards, D., Morgan, T. C., Wilson, R. K., Schwebach, V. L., & Young, G. D. (1993). Good Times, Bad Times, and the Diversionary Use of Force: A Tale of Some Not-So-Free Agents. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 37(3), 504–535.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002793037003005>
- Ringmar, E. (1996). *Identity, interest, and action: A cultural explanation of Sweden's intervention in the Thirty Years War*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ringmar, E. (2002). The Recognition Game: Soviet Russia Against the West. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 37(2), 115–136. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836702037002973>

- Ringmar, E. (2010). Introduction: The International Politics of Recognition. In T. Lindemann & E. Ringmar (Eds.), *The international politics of recognition* (pp. 3–23). Paradigm Publishers.
- Rogstad, A. (2022). Stigma Dynamics: Russia and the Crisis of Liberal Ordering. *Global Studies Quarterly*, 2(3), ksac027. <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksac027>
- Romaniuk, S. N. (2009). Rethinking EU-Russian Relations: ‘Modern’ Cooperation or ‘Post-Modern’ Strategic Partnership? *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, 3(2), 70–85.
- Romanova, T. (2010). The theory and practice of reciprocity in EU–Russia relations. In K. Engelbrekt & B. Nygren (Eds.), *Russia and Europe: Building bridges, digging trenches* (pp. 60–80). Routledge.
- Romanova, T. (2015). Issledovaniya otnoshenij Rossii i Evrosoyuza v nashej strane i za rubezhom (1992 gg.) [Исследования отношений России и Евросоюза в нашей стране и за рубежом (1992 гг.)]. *Contemporary Europe*, 65(5), 100–114. <https://doi.org/10.15211/soveurope52015100114>
- Romanova, T. (2016). Russian Challenge to the EU’s Normative Power: Change and Continuity. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 68(3), 371–390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2016.1155696>
- Romanova, T. (2018). Russia’s Neorevisionist Challenge to the Liberal International Order. *The International Spectator*, 53(1), 76–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2018.1406761>
- Romanova, T. (2019). Studying EU-Russian relations: An overview in search for an epistemic community. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 27(2), 135–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2018.1515729>
- Rorty, R. (1989). *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, G. (1998). Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy. *World Politics*, 51(1), 144–172. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100007814>
- Rotaru, V. (2019). ‘Mimicking’ the West? Russia’s legitimization discourse from Georgia war to the annexation of Crimea. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 52(4), 311–321. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2019.10.001>
- Rumelili, B. (2012). Liminal identities and processes of domestication and subversion in International Relations. *Review of International Studies*, 38(2), 495–508. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210511000830>

- Sakwa, R. (2010). *Russia and Turkey: Rethinking Europe to Contest Outsider Status* (No. 51; Russie.Nei.Visions). Ifri.
- Sakwa, R. (2011). Russia's Identity: Between the 'Domestic' and the 'International'. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 63(6), 957–975. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2011.585749>
- Sakwa, R. (2015a). Dualism at Home and Abroad: Russian Foreign Policy Neo-revisionism and Bicontinentalism. In D. Cadier & M. Light (Eds.), *Russia's foreign policy: Ideas, domestic politics and external relations* (pp. 65–79). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137468888_5
- Sakwa, R. (2015b). *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the borderlands*. I. B. Tauris.
- Samokhvalov, V. (2018). What Kind of 'Other'? Identity and Russian–European Security Interaction in Eurasia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 70(5), 791–813. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2018.1482259>
- Saussure, F. de. (1959). *Course in general linguistics* (C. Bally & A. Sechehaye, Eds.; W. Baskin, Trans.). Philosophical Library.
- Schaller, C. (2018). *Völkerrechtliche Argumentationslinien in der russischen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik*. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik.
- Schick, K. (2020). Recognition reframed: Reconfiguring recognition in global politics. In S. C. Roach (Ed.), *Handbook of critical international relations* (pp. 144–161). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2010). *Internationale Politik* (2., aktualisierte Aufl). Schöningh.
- Scholz, O. (2022, February 27). *Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz am 27. Februar 2022*. Die Bundesregierung. <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/regierungserklaerung-von-bundeskanzler-olaf-scholz-am-27-februar-2022-2008356>
- Semenenko, I. S., Lapkin, V. V., & Pantin, V. I. (2006). Obraz Rossii na Zapade: Dialektika Predstavlenij v Kontekste Mirovogo Razvitiya: K postanovke problemy [Образ России на Западе: Дialeктика Представлений в Контексте Мирowego Развития: К постановке проблемы]. *Polis*, 6, 110–124.
- Semenov, A. (2021, April 16). *Pro-Navalny protests are breaking records across Russia*. Riddle. <https://ridl.io/pro-navalny-protests-are-breaking-records-across-russia/>
- Sergunin, A. (2016). *Explaining Russian Foreign Policy Behavior. Theory and Practice*. Ibidem-Verlag.

- Sheth, F. A. (2006). Bound by Competing Agendas: A Comment on Patchen Markell's *Bound by Recognition*. *Polity*, 38(1), 20–27.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.polity.2300049>
- Shevtsova, L. (2010). *Lonely power: Why Russia has failed to become the West and the West is weary of Russia*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Shevtsova, L. (2015). Russia's Political System: Imperialism and Decay. *Journal of Democracy*, 26(1), 171–182. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2015.0015>
- Silitski, V. (2010). "Survival of the fittest:" Domestic and international dimensions of the authoritarian reaction in the former Soviet Union following the colored revolutions. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 43(4), 339–350.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2010.10.007>
- Smith, M. A., & Timmins, G. (2001). Russia, NATO and the EU in an era of enlargement: Vulnerability or opportunity? *Geopolitics*, 6(1), 69–90.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040108407707>
- Smith, N. H. (2012). Introduction: A Recognition-Theoretical Research Programme for the Social Sciences. In S. O'Neill & N. H. Smith (Eds.), *Recognition theory as social research investigating the dynamics of social conflict* (pp. 1–18). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Smith, S. (2013). Introduction: Diversity and Disciplinarity in International Relations Theory. In T. Dunne, M. Kurki, & S. Smith (Eds.), *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity* (Third edition, pp. 1–13). Oxford University Press.
- Solana, J. (1999, March 25). *Press Conference by Secretary General, Dr. Javier Solana and SACEUR, Gen. Wesley Clark*. NATO.
<https://www.nato.int/kosovo/press/p990325a.htm>
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the Subaltern Speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (pp. 271–313). Macmillan Education.
- Splidsboel-Hansen, F. (2002). Russia's Relations with the European Union: A Constructivist Cut. *International Politics*, 39(4), 399–421.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ip.8892002>
- Stent, A. E. (2008). Restoration and Revolution in Putin's Foreign Policy. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60(6), 1089–1106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130802161264>
- Sterling-Folker, J. (2013). Neoliberalism. In T. Dunne, M. Kurki, & S. Smith (Eds.), *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity* (Third edition, pp. 114–131). Oxford University Press.

- Stowe, R. (2001). Foreign Policy Preferences of the New Russian Business Elite. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 48(3), 49–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2001.11655934>
- Surkov, V. (2006). Nacionalizaciya budushhego [Национализация будущего]. *Jekspert*, 43(537). https://expert.ru/expert/2006/43/nacionalizaciya_buduschego/?cmt_page=7
- Surkov, V. (2018). The Loneliness of the Half-Breed. *Russia in Global Affairs*. <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/the-loneliness-of-the-half-breed/>
- Suslov, M. (2018). “Russian World” Concept: Post-Soviet Geopolitical Ideology and the Logic of “Spheres of Influence”. *Geopolitics*, 23(2), 330–353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2017.1407921>
- Tancredi, A. (2014). The Russian annexation of the Crimea: Questions relating to the use of force. *Questions of International Law*, 1, 5–34.
- Tansey, O. (2009). Kosovo: Independence and Tutelage. *Journal of Democracy*, 20(2), 153–166.
- TASS. (2020, August 17). *Belarus may hold new elections if new constitution is adopted, Lukashenko says*. TASS. <https://tass.com/world/1190615>
- Taylor, C. (1992). *Multiculturalism and ‘The politics of recognition’: An essay* (A. Gutmann, Ed.). Princeton University Press.
- The Guardian. (2014, March 6). *Russian troops removing ID markings ‘gross violation’*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/defence-and-security-blog/2014/mar/06/ukraine-gross-violation-russian-troops>
- Thomas, T. (2014). Russia’s Information Warfare Strategy: Can the Nation Cope in Future Conflicts? *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 27(1), 101–130. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2014.874845>
- Timmins, G. (2002). Strategic or pragmatic partnership? The European union’s policy towards Russia since the end of the Cold War. *European Security*, 11(4), 78–95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662830208407549>
- Timofeev, I. N. (2008). *Politicheskaya identichnost’ Rossii v postsovetskij period: Al’ternativy i tendencii [Политическая идентичность России в постсоветский период: Альтернативы и тенденции]*. Izd-vo ‘MGIMO-Universitet’.
- Toal, G. (2017). *Near abroad: Putin, the West and the contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*. Oxford University Press.
- Tomé, L. J. R. L. (2000). *Russia and NATO’s Enlargement*. NATO Research Fellowship Programme 1998-2000.

- Torbakov, I. (2019). 'Middle Continent' or 'Island Russia': Eurasianist Legacy and Vadim Tsymburskii's Revisionist Geopolitics. In N. Bernsand & B. Törnquist-Plewa (Eds.), *Cultural and Political Imaginaries in Putin's Russia* (pp. 37–62). BRILL.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004366671>
- Torbakov, I. (2021). *Towards 'Island Russia'*. Eurozine. <https://www.eurozine.com/towards-island-russia/>
- Torbakov, I. (2022, July 11). *No empire without end*. Eurozine.
<https://www.eurozine.com/no-empire-without-end/>
- Torring, J. (1999). *New theories of discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Torring, J. (2005). Discourse Theory: Achievements, Arguments, and Challenges. In D. Howarth & J. Torring (Eds.), *Discourse Theory in European Politics* (pp. 1–32). Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230523364>
- Treisman, D. (2016). Why Putin Took Crimea. *Foreign Affairs*, 95(3), 47–54.
- Troika. (2007). *Report of the European Union/United States/Russian Federation Troika on Kosovo, S/2007/723*. United Nations Security Council. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/634/56/PDF/N0763456.pdf?OpenElement>
- Tsygankov, A. P. (2003). The Irony of Western Ideas in a Multicultural World: Russians' Intellectual Engagement with the 'End of History' and 'Clash of Civilizations'. *International Studies Review*, 5(1), 53–76. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1521-9488.501003>
- Tsygankov, A. P. (2005). Vladimir Putin's Vision of Russia as a Normal Great Power. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 21(2), 132–158. <https://doi.org/10.2747/1060-586X.21.2.132>
- Tsygankov, A. P. (2008). Self and Other in International Relations Theory: Learning from Russian Civilizational Debates. *International Studies Review*, 10(4), 762–775.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2008.00831.x>
- Tsygankov, A. P. (2010). *Russia's foreign policy: Change and continuity in national identity* (2nd ed). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Tsygankov, A. P. (2014). The frustrating partnership: Honor, status, and emotions in Russia's discourses of the West. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 47(3–4), 345–354.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.09.004>
- Tsygankov, A. P. (2015). Vladimir Putin's last stand: The sources of Russia's Ukraine policy. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 31(4), 279–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2015.1005903>

- Tsygankov, A. P. (2016). Crafting the State-Civilization Vladimir Putin's Turn to Distinct Values. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 63(3), 146–158.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2015.1113884>
- Tsymbursky, V. (1993). *Ostrov Rossiya [Остров Россия]*. Intelros.
http://www.intelros.ru/subject/figures/1072-vadim_cymburskijj_ostrov_rossija.html
- Tsymbursky, V. (2008). *Shel'f Ostrova Rossiya. Geopolitika prostranstv i geopolitika granic [Шельф Острова Россия. Геополитика пространств и геополитика границ]*. Russkij Arhipelag. <https://archipelag.ru/authors/cimbursky/?library=2783>
- Tuathail, G. Ó. (1999). Understanding critical geopolitics: Geopolitics and risk society. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 22(2–3), 107–124.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01402399908437756>
- Tuathail, G. Ó. (2008). Russia's Kosovo: A Critical Geopolitics of the August 2008 War over South Ossetia. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 49(6), 670–705.
<https://doi.org/10.2747/1539-7216.49.6.670>
- Tully, J. (2000). Struggles over Recognition and Distribution. *Constellations*, 7(4), 469–482.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.00203>
- Twichett, K. (Ed.). (1976). *Europe and the world: The external relations of the common market*. St. Martin's Press.
- Tyson, L. (2015). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide* (Third edition). Routledge.
- Ukraine-Analysen. (2013a). Chronik: 11.-24. November 2013. In *Ukraine-Analysen* (Vol. 124, pp. 21–22). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/124/>
- Ukraine-Analysen. (2013b). Chronik: 25. November—11. Dezember 2013. In *Ukraine-Analysen* (Vol. 125, pp. 21–23). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/125/>
- Ukraine-Analysen. (2014a). Chronik: 11. Dezember 2013—26. Januar 2014. In *Ukraine-Analysen* (Vol. 126, pp. 28–33). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/126/>
- Ukraine-Analysen. (2014b). Chronik: 27. Januar—9. Februar 2014. In *Ukraine-Analysen* (Vol. 127, pp. 24–27). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/127/>
- Ukraine-Analysen. (2014c). Chronik: 10.-23. Februar 2014. In *Ukraine-Analysen* (Vol. 128, pp. 24–32). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/128/>
- Ukraine-Analysen. (2014d). Chronik: 24. Februar—9. März 2014. In *Ukraine-Analysen* (Vol. 129). <https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/129/UkraineAnalysen129.pdf>

- Ukraine-Analysen. (2014e). Chronik: 10.-23. März 2014. In *Ukraine-Analysen* (Vol. 130).
<https://www.laender-analysen.de/ukraine-analysen/130/UkraineAnalysen130.pdf>
- Ukrainian Government. (2013, November 21). *Suspension Order, 21.11.2013*. Government Portal.
https://web.archive.org/web/20131202225226/http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=246864953&cat_id=244276429
- Ukrayinska Pravda. (2014, February 27). *U CVK zabeznyayut", shho kryms'kyj referendum provesty ne tozhna [У ЦВК забезпечують, що кримський референдум провести не можна]*. Ukrayinska Pravda. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/02/27/7016542/>
- Uzlaner, D. (2017). Perverse conservatism: A Lacanian interpretation of Russia's turn to traditional values. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, 22(2), 173–192.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41282-016-0036-6>
- Vázquez-Arroyo, A. Y. (2006). Re-cognizing Recognition: A Commentary on Patchen Markell's *Bound by Recognition*. *Polity*, 38(1), 4–12.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.polity.2300047>
- Venice Commission. (2014). *Opinion on 'Whether the decision taken by the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in Ukraine to organise a referendum on becoming a constituent territory of the Russian Federation or restoring Crimea's 1992 Constitution is compatible with constitutional principles'* (Opinion no. 762 / 2014). European Commission for Democracy through Law.
[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2014\)002-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2014)002-e)
- von der Leyen, U., & Michel, C. (2022, February 22). *Statement by the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council on Russian aggression against Ukraine*. European Commission.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_1281
- Wæver, O. (1996). European Security Identities. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34(1), 103–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1996.tb00562.x>
- Wæver, O. (2002). Identity, communities and foreign policy: Discourse analysis as foreign policy theory. In L. Hansen & O. Wæver (Eds.), *European integration and national identity: The challenge of the Nordic states* (pp. 20–49). Routledge.
- Wæver, O. (2005). European Integration and Security: Analysing French and German Discourses on State, Nation, and Europe. In D. Howarth & J. Torfing (Eds.),

- Discourse Theory in European Politics* (pp. 33–67). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230523364>
- Walker, E. W. (2016). Between East and West: NATO enlargement and the geopolitics of the Ukraine crisis. In R. Sakwa & A. Pikulika-Vilchevska (Eds.), *Ukraine and Russia: People, politics, propaganda and perspectives* (pp. 134–148). E-International Relations.
- Walker, R. B. J. (1990). Security, Sovereignty, and the Challenge of World Politics. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 15(1), 3–27.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/030437549001500102>
- Walker, R. B. J. (1993). *Inside/outside: International relations as political theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Walt, S. M. (1994). *The origins of alliances* (3. print). Cornell Univ. Press.
- Walt, S. M. (2014, March 4). *No Contest*. Foreign Policy.
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/03/04/no-contest/>
- Walt, S. M. (2022, January 19). *Liberal Illusions Caused the Ukraine Crisis*. Foreign Policy.
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/19/ukraine-russia-nato-crisis-liberal-illusions/>
- Walter, C. (2014). Postscript: Self-Determination, Secession, and the Crimean Crisis 2014. In C. Walter, A. von Ungern-Sternberg, & K. Abushov (Eds.), *Self-determination and secession in international law* (First edition, pp. 293–311). Oxford University Press.
- Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.
- Warbrick, C. (2008). Kosovo: The Declaration of Independence. *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 57(3), 675–690.
- Washington Post. (2014, March 16). *Crimeans vote to break away from Ukraine, join Russia*. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2014/03/16/ccec2132-acd4-11e3-a06a-e3230a43d6cb_story.html
- Weber, C. (1995). *Simulating sovereignty: Intervention, the state, and symbolic exchange*. Cambridge University Press.
- Weber, S. (1987). *Institution and interpretation*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Weldes, J. (1996). Constructing National Interests. *European Journal of International Relations*, 2(3), 275–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066196002003001>
- Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what states make of it: The social construction of power politics. *International Organization*, 46(2), 391–425.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300027764>

- Wendt, A. (1998). On Constitution and Causation International Relations. *Review of International Studies*, 24(5), 101–118.
- Wendt, A. (1999). *Social theory of international politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wendt, A. (2003). Why a World State is Inevitable. *European Journal of International Relations*, 9(4), 491–542. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135406610394001>
- Wendt, A. (2004). The state as person in international theory. *Review of International Studies*, 30(2), 289–316. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210504006084>
- White, S., & Feklyunina, V. (2014). *Identities and foreign policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus: The other Europes*.
- Whitman, R. G. (Ed.). (2011). *Normative power Europe: Empirical and theoretical perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wilkinson, C. (2014). Putting “Traditional Values” Into Practice: The Rise and Contestation of Anti-Homopropaganda Laws in Russia. *Journal of Human Rights*, 13(3), 363–379. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2014.919218>
- Williams, M. C., & Neumann, I. B. (2000). From Alliance to Security Community: NATO, Russia, and the Power of Identity. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29(2), 357–387. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298000290020801>
- Williams, R. R. (1997). *Hegel's ethics of recognition*. University of California Press.
- Wilson, A. (2014). The Ukraine crisis brings the threat of democracy to Russia's doorstep. *European View*, 13(1), 67–72. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12290-014-0302-x>
- Wilson, J. L. (2010). The Legacy of the Color Revolutions for Russian Politics and Foreign Policy. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 57(2), 21–36. <https://doi.org/10.2753/PPC1075-8216570202>
- Winch, P. (2008). *The idea of a social science and its relation to philosophy*. Routledge.
- Wolff, L. (2000). *Inventing Eastern Europe: The map of civilization on the mind of the enlightenment*. Stanford Univ. Press.
- Youngs, R. (2009). ‘A door neither closed nor open’: EU policy towards Ukraine during and since the Orange Revolution. *International Politics*, 46(4), 358–375. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ip.2009.10>
- Yudin, G. (2023, February 24). «Imperskaya formula prinyata oficial'no: Rossiya nigde ne zakanchivaetsya» Za neskol'ko dneĵ do nachala vtorzheniya sociolog Grigorij Yudin v tochnosti opisal, kakoj budet ehta vojna. «Meduza» pogovorila s nim o tom, kak ona zavershitsya [«Имперская формула принята официально: Россия нигде не заканчивается» За несколько дней до начала вторжения социолог Григорий

- Юдин в точности описал, какой будет эта война. «Медуза» поговорила с ним о том, как она завершится]. *Meduza*.
<https://meduza.io/feature/2023/02/24/imperskaya-formula-prinyata-ofitsialno-rossiya-nigde-ne-zakanchivaetsya>
- Zarakol, A. (2011). *After defeat: How the East learned to live with the West*. Cambridge University Press.
- Zarakol, A. (2018). Sovereign equality as misrecognition. *Review of International Studies*, 44(5), 848–862. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210518000359>
- Zarycki, T. (2014). *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Zaslavskaya, N., & Averre, D. (2019). EU-Russia political and security cooperation: Major research trends. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 27(2), 147–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2018.1534726>
- Zeleneva, I. (2021). *Critical Geopolitics In Russian Foreign Policy: The Geography Of Federal Assembly Adresse*. 67–74. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2021.06.03.9>
- Zevelev, I. (2014). The Russian World Boundaries. *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2. <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/the-russian-world-boundaries/>
- Zevelev, I. (2016). *Russian National Identity and Foreign Policy* (CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program). Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- Zürcher, C. (2007). *The post-Soviet wars: Rebellion, ethnic conflict, and nationhood in the Caucasus*. New York University Press.

Annex: Catalogue of Primary Sources

The following tables list all primary sources used for carrying out the empirical analyses of Russian and EU foreign policy discourses. The catalogue of primary sources is preceded by (1) a glossary, functioning as a key for attributing the primary sources' reference codes to figures and institutions in EU and Russian foreign policy making, as well as (2) an exemplary (shortened) predication table, the depiction of which aims at illustrating the analytical process 'from sources to insights' as described in chapter four (p.111).

All primary sources have been saved as digital files and are stored in a cloud (Google Drive). To access the files, follow this link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1iwNCIOeX13mFkZQOEh7NFFZAJ5iX5M6o?usp=sharing>

Table of Contents (Annex)

Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	x
List of Acronyms	xi
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review.....	8
Introduction.....	8
a) EU-Russia Relations: A Heterogeneous Field	9
b) Navigating Through Complex Terrain.....	10
1. Power-Based Explanations for Making Sense of EU-Russia Relations	12
a) Offensive or Defensive Russia.....	13
b) Rising or Declining Russia	14
c) Competition for Influence	14

d)	The Persistence of Realist Thinking	15
2.	Domestic Political Explanations for Making Sense of EU-Russia Relations	16
a)	Authoritarian Russia vs Democratic Union	17
b)	Domestic Players	18
c)	Diversionary Theory of Conflict.....	19
d)	Cooperation Through Interdependence.....	19
e)	Interim Conclusions	20
3.	Ideas and Interpretation in EU-Russia Relations	20
a)	Interpretation and Identity	22
b)	Taking a Step Back: Ideational Interaction.....	32
4.	Conclusion	48
Chapter 3 A Conceptual Framework for Discursive Interaction.....		50
Introduction		50
1.	The Poststructuralist Edifice	52
a)	General Introduction to Poststructuralist Thought.....	53
b)	Discursive Change	55
c)	The (Perceived) Problem: Can We Really Do Without Constraining Structures?	57
d)	Developing the Intersubjective Dimension.....	59
2.	The Recognition Analogy.....	59
a)	Recognition Theory: A Brief Overview	61
b)	Recognition in Hegel’s Phenomenology of the Spirit	64
c)	Critical Approaches: The Role of Negativity	66
d)	Implications for the Self and Its Relation to Others	68
3.	Bringing Recognition and Poststructuralism Together	71
a)	A Framework of Discursive Interaction	74
b)	Agency and Constraints to It.....	75
c)	Intra- and Intersubjectivity	76
4.	Conclusion	77
Chapter 4 A Research Design for Accessing Discursive Interaction.....		79
Introduction		79

1. Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis: Methodological Considerations	80
a) General Aim and Research Logic of Discourse Analysis.....	80
b) Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis: Taking Stock	82
c) Problem-Driven Approach.....	83
d) The Question of Validity	84
2. Capturing Discursive Interaction: Antagonism, Boundaries, and Floating Signifiers	85
a) Discursive Struggle Between Russia and the EU	86
b) Methodological Crux: Floating Signifiers in Laclauian Discourse Theory.....	86
c) How to Analyse Floating Signifiers Between Competing Discourses?.....	89
3. Operationalisation: Analysing Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations	96
a) Foreign Policy Discourse and Self-Other Relations	96
b) Two Selves and Two Others: Russia and the EU	98
c) Selection of Events and Temporal Dimension.....	101
d) Capturing Foreign Policy Discourse: Discursive Arenas	105
e) Selecting Texts for Analysis	109
f) From Sources to Insights: Some Practical Steps In-Between.....	111
4. Conclusion	112
<i>Chapter 5 Seven Contested Events in EU-Russia Relations</i>	<i>114</i>
1. The Orange Revolution (2004/05).....	115
a) Context.....	115
b) Analysis.....	116
2. Kosovo’s Declaration of Independence (2007/08)	129
a) Context.....	129
b) Analysis.....	130
3. Caucasus: Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s Declaration of Independence (2008)	146
a) Context.....	146
b) Analysis.....	148
4. Maidan: The Revolution of Dignity (2013/14).....	166
a) Context.....	166
b) Analysis.....	167
5. The Annexation of Crimea (2014)	185
a) Context.....	185

b) Analysis.....	186
6. Protests in Belarus (2020).....	203
a) Context.....	203
b) Analysis.....	204
7. The Poisoning of Alexei Navalny (2020/21)	220
a) Context.....	220
b) Analysis.....	221
Chapter 6 Making Sense of Discursive Interaction – Analytical Discussion	238
Introduction	238
1. Drawing Discursive Boundaries	238
a) Significance of the Representation of the Other	239
b) Discursive Practices of Othering	239
c) First Interim Summary: Drawing Discursive Boundaries	262
2. Intersubjective Interaction with the Other’s Discourse.....	263
a) Extensive Russian Engagement	263
b) Making Sense of Asymmetrical Interaction Through Recognition	264
c) Second Interim Summary: Intersubjective Interaction	268
3. Revisiting Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations	269
a) Agency in Interaction.....	270
b) An Intersubjective Relationship.....	271
c) Room for Dynamics?	275
4. Conclusion	279
Chapter 7 Epilogue to the Analytical Discussion: Russia Narrating Its War in Ukraine.....	281
1. Continuity of Russia’s War Discourse	282
2. The Evolution of Narratives	286
3. Conclusions	290
Chapter 8 Conclusion	294
1. Tracing Discursive Interaction in EU-Russia Relations	294

2. Contributing to the Study of EU-Russia Relations and Beyond	297
3. Avenues for Further Research	300
4. Towards Increasing Competition	302
<i>Bibliography</i>	304
<i>Annex: Catalogue of Primary Sources</i>	1
<i>Glossary</i>	5
<i>Predication Table: (Shortened) Example</i>	8
<i>The Orange Revolution (2004/05)</i>	9
<i>Kosovo's Declaration of Independence (2007/08)</i>	17
<i>Caucasus: Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's Declaration of Independence (2008)</i>	23
<i>Maidan: The Revolution of Dignity (2013/14)</i>	32
<i>The Annexation of Crimea (2014)</i>	50
<i>Protests in Belarus (2020)</i>	61
<i>The Poisoning of Alexei Navalny (2020/21)</i>	74
<i>Epilogue to Chapter Six</i>	84

Glossary

The following glossary lists all figures and institutions (as well as abbreviations used for coding) that were recorded as articulating of Russia's and the EU's foreign policy discourse on the events under analysis within the respective time period. The description highlights the relevant position in the Russian or EU foreign policy complex a given person had at the time of the recorded articulation(s).¹³³²

- **Amado:** Luís Amado, Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2006 – 2011 (President in Office of the Council, Jul.-Dec. 2007)
- **Ashton:** Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – Vice-President of the European Commission, 2009 – 2014
- **Bailly:** Olivier Bailly, Deputy Spokesman of the Commission, 2010 – 2014
- **Balkenende:** Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, 2002 – 2010 (President in Office of the European Council, Jul.-Dec. 2004)
- **Barroso:** José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, 2004 – 2014
- **Borrell:** Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – Vice-President of the European Commission, 2019 – presently
- **Bot:** Bernard Bot, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2003 – 2007 (President in Office of the Council, Jul.-Dec. 2004)
- **Butkevicius:** Algirdas Butkevicius, Prime Minister of Lithuania, 2012 – 2016 (Lithuanian Presidency: Jul.-Dec. 2013)
- **Churkin:** Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations, 2006 – 2017
- **Council:** Council of the European Union
- **Delegation Minsk:** Delegation of the European Union to Belarus
- **EC:** European Council
- **EEAS:** European External Action Service
- **EU Mission UKR:** Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine
- **Ferrero-Waldner:** Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations, 2004 – 2009
- **Füle:** Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, 2010 – 2014
- **G7:** Group of Seven (political forum)
- **G8:** Group of Eight (political forum)
- **Grybauskaitė:** President of Lithuania, 2019 – 2019 (Lithuanian Presidency: Jul.-Dec. 2013)
- **Hübner:** Danuta Hübner, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, 2004 – 2009
- **Kouchner:** Bernard Kouchner, French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, 2007 – 2010 (President in Office of the Council, Jul.-Dec. 2008)
- **Kremlin:** Government of Russia

¹³³² As of 6 February 2023.

- **Lavrov:** Sergey Lavrov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2004 – presently
- **LeDrian:** Jean-Yves Le Drian, French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2017 – 2022
- **Lukashevich:** Alexander Lukashevich, Spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2011 – 2015
- **Maas,** Heiko Maas, German Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2018 – 2021 (President in Office of the Council, Jul.-Dec. 2020)
- **Medvedev:** Dmitry Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation, 2008 – 2012
- **Merkel:** Angela Merkel, German Chancellor, 2005 – 2021 (German Presidency: Jul.-Dec. 2020)
- **Michel:** Charles Michel, President of the European Council, 2019 – presently
- **MID:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
- **Miliband:** David Miliband, Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, 2007 - 2010
- **Missions:** Missions of the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the European Union
- **OPCW:** Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
- **Peskov:** Dmitry Peskov, Press Secretary of the President of the Russian Federation, 2012 - presently
- **Pompeo:** Mike Pompeo, United States Secretary of State, 2018 – 2021
- **Putin:** Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, 2000 – 2008 & 2012 – presently
- **Rehn:** Olli Rehn, European Commissioner for Enlargement, 2004 – 2010
- **Rupel:** Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2000 – 2008 (President in Office of the Council, Jan.-June 2008)
- **Sarkozy:** Nicolas Sarkozy, French President, 2007 – 2012 (President in Office of the European Council, Jul.-Dec. 2008)
- **Schmid:** Helga Schmid, Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service, 2010 – 2016
- **Šefčovič:** Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President for Interinstitutional Relations and Administration (European Commission), 2010 – 2014
- **Solana:** Javier Solana, High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, 1999 – 2009
- **Ushakov:** Yuri Ushakov, Assistant to the President of Russia for Foreign Policy, 2012 – presently
- **Van Rompuy:** Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Council, 2009 – 2014
- **vdL:** Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, 2019 – presently
- **Visegrad:** Visegrád Group (political forum)
- **Yakovenko:** Alexander Yakovenko, Spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2000 – 2005
- **Zakharova:** Maria Zakharova, Spokeswoman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2015 – presently

Predication Table: (Shortened) Example

(Shortened) example for illustrative purposes: Russian foreign policy discourse on the annexation of Crimea (1-31 March 2014)

Self (Russia)	EU/West	Ukraine	Ukrainian interim government / Kyiv	Crimea / Crimean authorities	Annexation/"Reunification" & Referendum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russian deployment of troops "on the territory of Ukraine' — not 'against Ukraine'" (14.03.01-Churkin) - Russians and Russian compatriots in Ukraine are threatened (14.03.02-Putin-Obama) - Protector of Russian-speaking population and Russians in Ukraine (14.03.02-Putin-Obama, 14.03.02-Putin-UNSG, 14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.05-Lavrov) - Protector of Ukrainian citizens (14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.05-Lavrov) -> "We are interested in overcoming this crisis to let our fraternal people breathe freely, to let Ukraine recover from this intrigue, which was caused by people, who have come to power mainly supported by extremists, Neo-Nazis, radicals, who do not consider the interests of a large portion of the Ukrainian people." (14.03.21-Lavrov-PC) -> Protector of Crimea (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) - Russia acts in accordance with international law (14.03.02-Putin-UNSG, 14.03.04-Putin, 14.03.07-Putin, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Introduction) -> importance of international law (14.03.03-Churkin) - Favouring dialogue (14.03.03-Churkin; cf. 14.03.18-Putin-Speech) -> "We constantly offer cooperation on all key issues, we want to strengthen the level of trust, we want our relations to be equal, open and honest. But we did not see a respective response." (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) - "Such [military/security] assistance [to Crimea] is entirely legitimate under Russian law, given the extraordinary situation in Ukraine and the threat posed to Russian citizens, our compatriots, and the Black Sea fleet" (14.03.03-Churkin) <p>[...]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must advise Ukrainian opposition not to let radicals "lord" over Ukraine (14.03.01-Churkin) -> have power over Kyiv (14.03.01-Churkin) - "While the Ukraine is merely a geopolitical playground for some Western politicians, for us it is a brotherly country to which we are bound by many centuries of common history." (14.03.03-Churkin) - Complicit with radical nationalists in Kyiv (14.03.08-Lavrov) - Talking about "international community" (implicitly West): "long periods of inactivity and long-lasting encouragement of the movement of Ukrainian leaders to head in the direction in which they were heading, led to the decision of the Supreme Council of Crimea to hold a referendum" (14.03.14-Lavrov) - West is not following international law (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) - West applies double standards (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) -> West applies "primitive and straightforward cynicism" (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) -> Opportunistic: "You can't just make everything so rudely fit your interests, call the same object white today, and black tomorrow." (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) - "Our Western partners, led by the United States of America, prefer to be guided in their practical policy not by international law, but by the law of the stronger." (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) - Patronising (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) <p>[...]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "fraternal country" (14.03.01-Churkin, cf. 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma) - Fraternal people (14.03.21-Lavrov-PC) - "brotherly neighbour" (14.03.03-Churkin) - "Ukraine is not only our closest neighbour, but really our neighbourly fraternal republic" (14.03.04-Putin) - Russia and Ukraine are "closest relatives" and future success depends on Ukraine and on Russia (14.03.18-Putin-Miting) - Ukraine will overcome all difficulties (14.03.18-Putin-Miting) - "relations with Ukraine, with the fraternal Ukrainian people have been and remain and will always be the most important for us" (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) - With Maidan, in Ukraine - especially southeast and Crimea - Russians and Russian-speaking citizens could not live in a friendly, democratic, civilized state anymore (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) -> otherwise Russia would have not touched Crimea - Ukrainians and Russians are essentially one people (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) - "one of our leading partners" (14.03.18-Putin-Speech) - "strong commitment to the development of friendly relations with our Ukrainian brothers" (14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "One opposition leader sought to assert himself, claimed victory and tried to impose his will on the people." (14.03.01-Churkin) - Illegitimate (14.03.01-Churkin) - "unknown armed people sent from Kiev" as predators on Crimea (14.03.01-Churkin) - Kyiv wants to "destabilize the situation on the peninsula" (14.03.01-Churkin, 14.03.01-MID) -> "very irresponsible to stir up tensions in the Crimea" (14.03.01-Churkin) -> "careless" (14.03.01-MID) - Uses "language of force" against "ethnic or political opponents" (14.03.01-Churkin) - "Ukrainian opposition" (14.03.01-Churkin) - Engaged in "treacherous provocation" (14.03.01-MID) - "Current authorities" encourage "provocative, criminal actions of ultranationalist elements" (14.03.02-Putin-Obama) -> link to right radicals (14.03.02-Putin-Obama) - Using force against Ukraine's East and Crimea (14.03.02-Putin-Obama) - "Instead of the promised establishment of a Government of national unity, a so-called Government of victors has been formed." (14.03.03-Churkin) - "can a forcible takeover be called democracy?" (14.03.03-Churkin) - "We have the feeling that, in essence, the Kyiv Government comprises nationalist radicals." (14.03.03-Churkin) - Influenced by Bandera radicals (14.03.03-Churkin) - Anti-Russian (14.03.03-Churkin, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma) <p>[...]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "People [...] from Kiev" came to "[replace] the regional governments" (14.03.01-Churkin) - "self-defence groups" are legitimate (14.03.01-Churkin, cf. 14.03.01-MID, 14.03.04-Putin) -> "In a situation of ongoing threats of violence by ultranationalists against the security, lives and legitimate interests of Russians and all Russian-speaking peoples, popular self-defence brigades have been established" (14.03.03-Churkin) -> "In conditions of threats of violent action on behalf of ultranationalists, who endanger the life and legal interests of Russians and the entire Russian-speaking population, self-defence units were created by the people, who had to prevent the attempts at forced occupation of administrative buildings in Crimea and the entry of weapons and ammunition into the peninsula." (14.03.03-Lavrov) -> legitimate representatives of "the people of Crimea" (14.03.04-Putin) -> they are not Russian soldiers (14.03.04-Putin) -> don't receive orders from Russia (14.03.05-Lavrov) -> "popular self-defence units were supposed to prevent a repetition of the events on Maidan" (14.03.14-Lavrov) <p>[...]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A unification with Russia is not planned (14.03.04-Putin) - Referendum: In accordance with international law and ensuring the legitimate interests of the Crimean population (14.03.09-Putin, cf. 14.03.14-Putin, 14.03.16-Putin, 14.03.20-Lavrov-Duma) -> the referendum was carried out "in full compliance with the norms of international law and the UN Charter, also partially taking into account the Kosovo precedent" (14.03.17-Putin-Obama) - Referendum and subsequent plea to united with Russia would be legal (14.03.11-MID) - Right to self-determination is justified by illegal coup in Kyiv (14.03.13-Churkin) - Referendum is legitimate (14.03.13-Churkin) - Referendum "has been proclaimed and organized by the Crimeans themselves" (14.03.13-Churkin) - Russia "will respect the will of the Crimean people during the forthcoming referendum of 16th March" (14.03.14-Lavrov) - "obliged to respect" the results of the referendum (14.03.14-Lavrov) -> "we will respect the choice of Crimean people" (14.03.14-Lavrov, cf. 14.03.16-Putin) - In the referendum, the "people of the Crimean republic will themselves determine their future" (14.03.15-Churkin) - Crimean population could freely express their will (14.03.17-Putin-Obama, 14.03.21-Lavrov-Speech) <p>[...]</p>

The Orange Revolution (2004/05)

33 documents of the Russian and 21 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse on the events from 21 November 2004 to 31 January 2005:

Code 1333	EU	Russia	Title	Link (last accessed 1 September 2021)
04.11.22 - Putin - Congratulations Yanukovych1			Владимир Путин позвонил Виктору Януковичу и поздравил его с победой на выборах президента Украины • Президент России	https://www.rbc.ru/society/22/11/2004/5703c4bd9a7947dde8e0c9db
04.11.22 - Yakovenko - UKR Elections			Alexander Yakovenko, the spokesman of Russia's ministry of Foreign Affairs, answers a media question in the course of the press conference at Ria Novosti on November 22 regarding the elections in Ukraine - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/455198
04.11.23 - Bot - Statement			Ukraine: EU Criticizes Elections	https://www.rferl.org/a/1056013.html
04.11.23 - Council			Press release: 2622nd Council Meeting, General Affairs and External Relations (14724/04)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/pres_04_325/PRES_04_325_EN.pdf
04.11.23 - MID - Bot Statement			Russian mfa information and press department commentary regarding a question from Interfax news agency concerning Netherlands foreign minister Bernard Bot's statement on the elections in Ukraine - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/455062
04.11.23 - MID - Press Release Elections			In relation to the conclusion of the second round of presidential elections in Ukraine - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/455070
04.11.23 - Putin - Santana Lopes			Заявления и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи с Премьер-министром Португалии	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22705

¹³³³ For an explanation of this format, see p.108.

	Педру Сантаной Лопешем • Президент России	
04.11.24 - Barroso - OBS	Barroso dira "fort et clair" aux Russes le désaccord de l'UE	https://www.nouvelobs.com/monde/20041124.OBS2298/barroso-dira-fort-et-clair-aux-russes-le-desaccord-de-l-ue.html
04.11.24 - Solana - AFET Transcr	Address by Dr Javier Solana, High Representative of the European Union for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, before the Committee for Foreign Relations of the European Parliament, on Ukraine	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-046846
04.11.25 - Balkenende + Barroso + Solana - EU-RUS Summit	Transcript: EU/Russia Summit: joint press conference by Vladimir Putin, Jan Peter Balkenende, Javier Solana and José Manuel Barroso	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-046822
04.11.25 - Putin - Congratulations Yanukovich2	Владимир Путин направил поздравительное послание Виктору Януковичу в связи с его избранием Президентом Украины • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/32224
04.11.25 - Putin - PC RUS-EU Summit	Вступительное слово и ответы на вопросы в ходе совместной прессконференции по итогам саммита Россия – ЕС • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22707
04.11.26 - Lavrov - Calmy-Rey	Transcript of remarks and replies to media questions by minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov at press conference following talks with minister of foreign affairs of Switzerland Micheline Calmy-Rey (Moscow, November 26, 2004) - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/454606
04.11.28 - Barroso - FAZ	Krise in der Ukraine: Barroso droht den Machthabern in Kiew mit Konsequenzen - Politik	https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/krise-in-der-ukraine-barroso-droht-den-machthabern-in-kiew-mit-

		konsequenzen-1192515.html?printPagedArticle=true#pageIndex_2
04.11.29 - Barroso - FAZ	Europäische Union: „Sind nicht an einem schwachen Rußland interessiert“ - Europäische Union	https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/europaeische-union/europaeische-union-sind-nicht-an-einem-schwachen-russland-interessiert-1192123.html?printPagedArticle=true#pageIndex_2
04.11.29 - Barroso - Statement	Transcript: Statement by José Manuel Barroso on the situation in Ukraine	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-046865
04.11.29 - Solana - FAZ quote	Staatskrise in der Ukraine: „Abspaltung wäre Wahnsinn“ - Ausland	https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/staatskrise-in-der-ukraine-abspaltung-waere-wahnsinn-1197970.html
04.11.29 - Yakovenko - ITAR-TASS	Alexander Yakovenko, the spokesman of Russia's ministry of foreign affairs, answers a question from Itar-Tass news agency regarding the elections in Ukraine - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/454542
04.11.30 - Yakovenko - Journalists in UKR	Alexander Yakovenko, the spokesman of Russia's ministry of foreign affairs, answers a question from TV Channel One and other media regarding the work conditions of Russian journalists in Ukraine - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/454358
04.12.01 - Solana - Handelsblatt	Solana rechnet in der Ukraine mit neuen staatlichen Strukturen	https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/solana-rechnet-in-der-ukraine-mit-neuen-staatlichen-strukturen/2445484.html
04.12.01 - Ferrero-Waldner - Speech EP	Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Situation in Ukraine, Plenary Session of the European Parliament	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_04_506

	(SPEECH/04/506)	
04.12.01 - Lavrov - UKR	From transcript of replies by minister of foreign affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov to Russian media questions, Bangkok, December 1, 2004 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/454262
04.12.01 - Lavrov - Vientiane	Transcript of replies to Russian media questions by minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, Vientiane, November 30, 2004 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/454254
04.12.02 - Putin - Meeting Kuchma	Встреча с Президентом Украины Леонидом Кучмой • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22715
04.12.03 - MID - Reaction EP	Russian mfa information and press department commentary regarding a media question concerning Ukraine resolution adopted on December 2 by European Parliament - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/453966
04.12.04 - Ferrero-Waldner - (Media) Statement Constitutional Court Decision	Court Orders New Ukrainian Election	https://www.dw.com/en/court-orders-new-ukrainian-election/a-1417617
04.12.06 - Putin - PC	Ответы на вопросы российских журналистов • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22732
04.12.08 - Lavrov - PC Pasi	Transcript of remarks and replies to media questions by minister of foreign affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov following talks with Solomon Pasi, minister of foreign affairs of Bulgaria and the OSCE chairman-in-office, Sofia, December 7, 2004 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/453494
04.12.09 - Ferrero-Waldner -	Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner Commissioner for External	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/doc

Actions Plans	Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Speaking note: Press Conference to launch first seven Action Plans under the European Neighbourhood Policy (SPEECH/04/529)	ument/print/en/speech_04_529/SPEECH_04_529_EN.pdf
04.12.09 - Lavrov - RUS-Nato Council PC	Transcript of remarks and replies to media questions by Russian minister of foreign affairs Sergey Lavrov following Russia-NATO council session, Brussels, December 9, 2004 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/453350
04.12.10 - Lavrov - PC Zuzul	Transcript of remarks and replies by minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov to media questions after meeting with minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Croatia Miomir Zuzul (Zagreb, December 10, 2004) - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/453390
04.12.10 - Putin - Zapatero	Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы по окончании переговоров с Председателем Правительства Испании Хосе Луисом Родригесом Сапатеро	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22742
04.12.14 - Council - Conclusions	Press release: 2631st Council Meeting, General Affairs and External Relations, External Relations (15461/04)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/pres_04_344/PRES_04_344_EN.pdf
04.12.16 - Lavrov - PC Cimoszewicz	Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference Following Talks with Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Moscow, December 16, 2004 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/453126
04.12.17 - EC - Conclusions	Presidency Conclusions (16238/04)	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/83201.pdf

04.12.17 - Lavrov - PC CHS	Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Russian Media Questions by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference Following Fourth Meeting of the CHS (Moscow, December 17, 2004) - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/453006
04.12.21 - Putin - RUS-GER	Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы по итогам российскогерманских межгосударственных консультаций • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22755
04.12.22 - Yakovenko - Visit Hryshchenko	Alexander Yakovenko, the Spokesman of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Answers Russian Media Questions Regarding the Upcoming Visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Konstantin Hryshchenko to Moscow - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/452782
04.12.23 - Lavrov - PC Hryshchenko	Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference Following Talks with Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Konstantin Hryshchenko, Moscow, December 23, 2004 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/452702?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
04.12.23 - Putin - PC	Пресс-конференция для российских и иностранных журналистов • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22757
05.01.02 - Lavrov - Handelsblatt	Transcript of the Interview Granted by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov to the German Newspaper Handelblatt (Moscow, December 28, 2004) - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/452054
05.01.07 - Putin - Litvinyum	Встреча с Председателем Верховной Рады Украины Владимиром Литвиным • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22772

05.01.19 - Lavrov - FP Results	Transcript of the Press Conference of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei V. Lavrov on the Foreign Policy Results of 2004 at the Press Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia (Moscow, January 19, 2005) - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/451196
05.01.20 - Putin - Congratulations Yushchenko	Владимир Путин поздравил Виктора Ющенко с избранием на пост Президента Украины • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/32612
05.01.21 - Ferrero-Waldner - Inauguration Yushchenko	Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner at inauguration of President Yushchenko (IP/05/81)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_05_81
05.01.21 - Solana - Kyiv	EU foreign policy boss Solana praises Ukraine	https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-01/22/content_411215.htm
05.01.21 - Lavrov - Barnier	Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference Following Talks with Michel Barnier, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nakhabino, January 20, 2005 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/450900
05.01.24 - Ferrero-Waldner - Bundesakademie	Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Kommissarin für Außenbeziehungen und die Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik, „Europa als globaler Akteur – Aktuelle Schwerpunkte Europäischer Außen- und Nachbarschaftspolitik“, Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik, Berlin, den 24. Januar 2005 (SPEECH/05/30)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_05_30
05.01.24 - Putin - PC Ukraine	Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-украинских	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22795

	переговоров • Президент России	
05.01.24 - Putin - Yushchenko	Владимир Путин выразил надежду, что курс на сближение и развитие отношений, выбранный украинским и российским народами, останется неизменным	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/32638
05.01.24 - Putin - Yushchenko2	Начало встречи с Президентом Украины Виктором Ющенко • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22794
05.01.25 - Ferrero-Waldner - AFET	Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Remarks to Foreign Affairs Committee European Parliament (SPEECH/05/41)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/speech_05_41/SPEECH_05_41_EN.pdf
05.01.28 - Ferrero-Waldner - Graz Speech	Dr. Benita Ferrero-Waldner Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Introductory Speech: “Governance, Education, and European Integration”, Conference of the Graz Process, Graz, 28 January 2005 (SPEECH/05/74)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/speech_05_74/SPEECH_05_74_EN.pdf
05.01.31 - Council - Conclusions	2637th meeting, General Affairs and External Relations, External Relations (5535/05)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/press_05_15

Kosovo's Declaration of Independence (2007/08)

23 documents of the Russian and 15 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse on Kosovo from 10 December 2007 to 28 February 2008:

Code	EU	Russia	Title	Link (last accessed 7 February 2022)
07.12.10 - Council - Press Release			Press release: 2840th Council meeting, General Affairs and External Relations, External Relations (16327/07)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/press_07_289
07.12.10 - Lavrov - Kozakou-Marcoullis			Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov At Joint Press Conference Following Talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1637224/?lang=en
07.12.10 - Lavrov - Papadopoulos			Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference After Meeting with President Tassos Papadopoulos of Cyprus, Nicosia, December 10, 2007	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1637688/?lang=en
07.12.10 - Lavrov - PPC			Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference After Permanent Partnership Council Meeting Russia - EU, Brussels, December 10, 2007	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1643607/?lang=en
07.12.10 - Amado & Solana - PPC			Transcript: General Affairs and External Relations Council: EU - Russia Partnership: joint press conference by Luís Amado, Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs and President in Office of the Council, Sergei Lavrov, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Javier Solana	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-056002
07.12.14 - EC - Conclusions			Presidency Conclusions (16616/07)	https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-

		16616-2007-INIT/en/pdf
07.12.14 - Lavrov - Egypt	Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference Following Talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Moscow, December 14, 2007	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1644729/?lang=en
07.12.17 - MID - Kosovo	Statement by Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Kosovo Settlement	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1644858/?lang=en
07.12.18 - Barroso - Debate	Debate on the European Council - 2007: the twin-track approach in action (SPEECH/07/831)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_07_831
07.12.18 - Lavrov - Riekstins	Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference with Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Maris Riekstins, Riga, December 18, 2007	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1645647/?lang=en
07.12.21 - Churkin - Kommersant	"Формула для Косово будет иметь прецедентный характер" – Газета Коммерсантъ № 236 (3812) от 21.12.2007	https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/838531?query=%D0%A7%D1%83%D1%80%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%BD
07.12.21 - Lavrov - Kosovo	Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова газете «Время новостей» 21 декабря 2007 года по косовскому урегулированию	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1741078/
07.12.26 - Lavrov - Кнак	Ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы бельгийского журнала «Кнак»	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1666190/
07.12.26 - Lavrov - Время	Интервью Министра иностранных дел России	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/167375

	С.В.Лаврова газете «Время новостей», опубликованное 26 декабря 2007 года	9/
08.01.17 - MID - UNSC	Заявление официального представителя МИД России М.Л.Камынина в связи с рассмотрением Советом Безопасности ООН ситуации в Косово	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1691757/
08.01.18 - Putin - Bulgaria	Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по окончании российско-болгарских переговоров • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24781
08.01.22 - Rehn - Plenary	What's the future for EU enlargement? AmCham EU Plenary meeting, Luncheon keynote speech (SPEECH/08/31)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_08_31
08.01.22 - Lavrov - Article	Статья Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова "Внешняя политика России: новый этап" ("Дипломатический ежегодник 2007")	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1698435/
08.01.23 - Lavrov - PC	Стенограмма выступления и ответов на вопросы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на прессконференции, посвященной внешнеполитическим итогам 2007 года, Пресс-центр МИД России, 23 января 2008 года	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1712120/?lang=ru
08.01.25 - Putin - Press Release	Заявления для прессы по итогам российско-сербских переговоров с участием Первого заместителя Председателя Правительства Дмитрия Медведева, Президента Сербии Бориса Тадича и Председателя Правительства Сербии Воислава Коштуницы	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24791
08.01.29 - MID - Kosovo	Statement by Mikhail Kamynin, Spokesman for Russia's	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/

	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on Kosovo Settlement	ent/1728825/?lang=en
08.02.04 - Council - EULEX	Council Joint Action 2008/124/CFSP of 4 February 2008 on the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, EULEX Kosovo	https://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/eul/repository/docs/WEJointActionEULEX_EN.pdf
08.02.12 - Lavrov - Geneva	Transcript of Press Conference by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (Geneva, February 12, 2008)	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1633045/?lang=en
08.02.12 - Lavrov - Myrdal	Transcript of Remarks by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at the Myrdal Lecture, Geneva, February 12, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1632166/?lang=en
08.02.13 - Lavrov - Troika	Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference After Meeting with the EU's Foreign Policy Troika (with the participation of Dimitrij Rupel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Javier Solana, European Union Council Secretary General and High Representative for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy, Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner), Brdo, February 13, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1644254/?lang=en
08.02.14 - Putin - PC	Ежегодная большая пресс-конференция • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24835
08.02.16 - Council - EULEX	Kosovo: Council establishes an EU Rule of Law Mission, appoints an EU Special Representative (6613/08)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/press_08_43
08.02.16 - Solana - Kermabon	Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the CFSP, welcomes the appointment of Yves de Kermabon as Head	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/98776.pdf

	of Mission of EULEX Kosovo (S060/08)	
08.02.17 - MID - Reaction Independence Kosovo	Statement by Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Kosovo	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1649512/?lang=en
08.02.18 - Council - Reaction Independence Kosovo	Press release: 2851st Council meeting, General Affairs and External Relations, External Relations (6496/08)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/press_08_41
08.02.18 - Solana - Letter	Kosovo: Letter dated 18 Feb 2008 from the UN SG to the President of the UN SC (European Union - Rule of law mission) – Serbia (S/2008/106)	https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/kosovo-letter-dated-18-feb-2008-un-sg-president-un-sc-european-union-rule-law-mission
08.02.18 - Rupel, Rehn & Solana - PC	Transcript: General Affairs and External Relations Council: joint press conference by Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenian Minister for Foreign Affairs and President in office of the Council, Olli Rehn and Javier Solana	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-056540
08.02.19 - Rehn - PC	Transcript: "Press conference by Olli Rehn, Member of the EC in charge of Enlargement, on the situation in Kosovo and on EU/Kosovo relations"	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-056565
08.02.20 - Rehn - EP	Mr Olli Rehn EU Commissioner for Enlargement European Institutions' reactions on Kosovo independence European Parliament Plenary session, 20 February 2008, Strasbourg (SPEECH/08/91)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_08_91
08.02.20 - Lavrov - Babajan	Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference with Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Babajan, Moscow, February 20, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1655395/?lang=en
08.02.22 - Putin - Precedent	Путин назвал суверенитет Косово "страшным	https://www.dw.com/ru/путин-назвал-суверенитет-

	прецедентом" Россия и россияне: взгляд из Европы DW	косово-страшным-прецедентом/a-3144545
08.02.26 - Solana - PC	Transcript: Joint press briefing by Javier Solana, Secretary General of the Council of the EU and High Representative for CFSP, and Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Secretary General of NATO	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-056637
08.02.28 - Rehn - CEPS	Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Europe's Role in the World – the next 25 years, CEPS annual conference "Europe's role in the world – the next 25 years", Brussels, 28 February 2008 (SPEECH/08/115)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_08_115

Caucasus: Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's Declaration of Independence (2008)

47 documents of the Russian and 20 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse from 26 August to 30 September 2008:

Code	EU	Russia	Title	Link (last accessed 2 February 2022)
08.08.26 - Medvedev - Al Jazeera			Интервью телекомпании «Аль-Джазира» • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1230
08.08.26 - Medvedev - BBC			Интервью телекомпании Би-Би-Си • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1228
08.08.26 - Medvedev - CNN			Интервью телекомпании Си-Эн-Эн • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1227
08.08.26 - Medvedev - Decree Abkhazia			Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 26.08.2008 г. № 1260 • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/27957
08.08.26 - Medvedev - Decree South Ossetia			Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 26.08.2008 г. № 1261 • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/27958
08.08.26 - Medvedev - FT			Why I had to recognise Georgia's breakaway regions	https://www.ft.com/content/9c7ad792-7395-11dd-8a66-0000779fd18c
08.08.26 - Medvedev - Recognition (en)			Statement by President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev • President of Russia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1222
08.08.26 - Medvedev - Russia Today			Интервью телекомпании «Раша тудей» • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1226
08.08.26 - Medvedev - TF1			Интервью телекомпании Тэ-Эф-1 • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1229
08.08.27 - G8 - Statement			Statement on Georgia of Foreign Ministers of Canada,	https://www.auswaertiges-

	France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom	amt.de/en/newsroom/news/080827-g7-erklaerung-georgien/234804
08.08.27 - Miliband - Kyiv	Ukraine, Russian and European Security	https://web.archive.org/web/20130201092447/http://davidmiliband.net/speech/ukraine-russian-and-european-security/
08.08.27 - Rehn - Helsinki	Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, The EU – from civilian power to premier league security policy player? Forum of Heads of Mission, Helsinki 27. Augustus 2008 (SPEECH/08/399)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_08_399
08.08.27 - Sarkozy - Discours	Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, sur les défis et priorités de la politique étrangère de la France, à Paris le 27 août 2008.	https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/171977-declaration-de-m-nicolas-sarkozy-president-de-la-republique-sur-les-d
08.08.27 - Lavrov - Reaction	Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov Commentary on the Speech of British Foreign Secretary David Miliband in Kyiv on August 27, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1600759/?lang=en
08.08.27 - Lavrov - Remarks	Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, Sochi, August 26, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1600652/?lang=en
08.08.27 - MID - Statement	Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1600343/?lang=en
08.08.28 - Kouchner - Sanctions	EU threatens sanctions against Russia European Union	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/28/eu.russia
08.08.28 - Churkin - 5969	Security Council, 5969th meeting	https://documents-dds-

		ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N08/492/97/PDF/N0849297.pdf?OpenElement
08.08.28 - Medvedev - Sarkozy	Телефонный разговор с Президентом Франции Николя Саркози • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1240
08.08.28 - Putin - CNN	Transcript: CNN interview with Vladimir Putin	https://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/europe/08/29/putin.transcript/
08.08.29 - Lavrov - Declaration	Обращение Министра иностранных дел России, председателя Правительственной комиссии по делам соотечественников за рубежом С.В.Лаврова к зарубежным соотечественникам, выразившим поддержку действиям России и проявившим солидарность с жителями Южной Осетии	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1718995/
08.08.30 - Medvedev - Brown	Дмитрий Медведев в телефонном разговоре разъяснил Премьер-министру Великобритании Гордону Брауну мотивы принятия решения о признании Российской Федерацией независимости Южной Осетии и Абхазии	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1270
08.08.31 - Medvedev - Interview	Интервью Дмитрия Медведева российским телеканалам • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1276
08.09.01 - Ferrero-Waldner - EP Speech	Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissaire Européenne pour les Relations Extérieures et la Politique Européenne de Voisinage, Speech by Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner in the European Parliament after the extraordinary European Council, EP, 1er septembre 2008 (SPEECH/08/401)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_08_401

08.09.01 - EC - Conclusions	Presidency Conclusions (12594/08)	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/01_09_08_eurussia_statement.pdf
08.09.01 - Lavrov - MGIMO	Transcript of Speech by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at the Foreign Ministry's MGIMO University on the Occasion of the New Academic Year, September 1, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1601797/?lang=en
08.09.01 - EC - PC	Transcript: Extraordinary European Council on the situation in Georgia: extracts from the joint press conference by Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic and President in office of the Council of the EU, and José Manuel Barroso	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-058859
08.09.02 - Lavrov - Istanbul	Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference with Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs Ali Babajan, Istanbul, September 2, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1602762/?lang=en
08.09.02 - Medvedev - Euronews	Интервью Дмитрия Медведева телевизионному каналу «Евроньюс» • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1294
08.09.02 - Medvedev - RAI	Интервью итальянскому телевизионному каналу РАИ • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1292
08.09.04 - Lavrov - CSTO	Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference of Foreign Ministers from CSTO Member States and of the CSTO Secretary General, Moscow, September 4, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1603485/?lang=en
08.09.06 - Medvedev - State	Вступительное слово на заседании Государственного	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1314

Council	совета, посвящённом ситуации вокруг Южной Осетии и Абхазии • Президент России	
08.09.08 - Barroso - Peace Plan	Sarkozy and Medvedev agree on peace plan	https://www.france24.com/en/20080908-sarkozy-medvedev-agree-peace-plan-georgian-conflict
08.09.08 - Sarkozy - Begin	Начало встречи с Президентом Франции Николя Саркози • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1329
08.09.08 - Sarkozy - PC	Пресс-конференция по итогам встречи с Президентом Франции Николя Саркози • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1330
08.09.08 - Medvedev - Begin	Начало встречи с Президентом Франции Николя Саркози • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1329
08.09.08 - Medvedev - Nicaragua	Дмитрий Медведев направил послание Президенту Никарагуа Даниэлю Ортеге по поводу признания Республикой Никарагуа независимости Южной Осетии и Абхазии	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1328
08.09.08 - Medvedev - PC	Пресс-конференция по итогам встречи с Президентом Франции Николя Саркози • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1330
08.09.08 - Medvedev - Sarkozy	Состоялась встреча Дмитрия Медведева и Президента Франции Николя Саркози • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1332
08.09.09 - Council - EU-Ukraine Summit	EU-Ukraine Summit Paris, 9 September 2008 (12812/08)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/press_08_247
08.09.09 - Lavrov - MFAs	Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, South Ossetian Foreign Minister Murat Dzhioyev and Abkhaz Foreign Minister Sergei Shamba at Joint Press	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1604992/?lang=en

	Conference, Moscow, September 9, 2008	
08.09.09 - Lavrov - Plassnik	Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference Following Talks with Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ursula Plassnik, Moscow, September 9, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1605187/?lang=en
08.09.09 - Lavrov - Sarkozy	Remarks and Response to a Media Question by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov After Meeting Between President Dmitry Medvedev of the Russian Federation and President Nicolas Sarkozy of the French Republic at Maindorf Castle, Moscow, September 9, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1604714/?lang=en
08.09.10 - Solana - EP	Address By Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament (S297/08)	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/discours/102660.pdf
08.09.10 - Lavrov - Interview	Стенограмма интервью министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова телеканалу «Польское Телевидение», 8 сентября 2008 года	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1605090/
08.09.11 - Lavrov - Gazeta Wyborcza	Interview of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, Published in the Polish Newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza on September 11, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1605659/?lang=en
08.09.11 - Lavrov - Yu	Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference Following Talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea Yu Myung-hwan, Moscow, September 10, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1605540/?lang=en

08.09.12 - Lavrov - Warsaw	Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference with Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski, Warsaw, September 11, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1606018/?lang=en
08.09.12 - Medvedev - Valdai	Стенографический отчет о встрече с участниками международного клуба «Валдай»	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1383
08.09.14 - Lavrov - Sukhum	Transcript of Response to Questions from Russian and Abkhaz Media by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, Sukhum, September 14, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1606487/?lang=en
08.09.15 - Council - Press release	Press release, 2889th meeting of the Council General Affairs and External Relations, External Relations (13030/08)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/press_08_255
08.09.15 - Lavrov - Article	Статья Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова «Мир в поисках нового равновесия», опубликованная в «НГ-Дипкурьер» 15 сентября 2008 года	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1749925/
08.09.16 - Council - Kazakhstan	Tenth meeting of the Cooperation Council between the European Union and Kazakhstan Brussels, 16 September 2008, Press release (13084/08)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/press_08_258
08.09.16 - Council - Uzbekistan	Eighth meeting of the Cooperation Council between the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan, Brussels, 16 September 2008, Press Release (13085/08)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/press_08_259
08.09.16 - Lavrov - Tskhinval	Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference with President	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1606673/?lang=en

	of the Republic of South Ossetia Eduard Kokoity, Tskhinval, September 15, 2008	
08.09.17 - Kremlin - Treaties	Russia signed Treaties on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia today in the Kremlin	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1439
08.09.17 - Medvedev - Treaties	Statements following Signing of the Treaties on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/1436
08.09.18 - Rehn - Conference	Olli Rehn EU Commissioner for Enlargement, The EU and the Western Balkans: the Critical Year of 2009 Czech MFA conference on the EU and Western Balkans, Prague, 18 September 2008 (SPEECH/08/441)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_08_441
08.09.18 - Lavrov - Federation Council	Transcript of Remarks by Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, at an Enlarged Meeting of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee, Moscow, September 18, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1607676/?lang=en
08.09.18 - Lavrov - Media	Transcript of Response to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference with Chairman of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee Mikhail Margelov, Moscow, September 18, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1607718/?lang=en
08.09.23 - Lavrov - Dublin	Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference Following Talks with Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin, Dublin, September 22, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1608683/?lang=en

08.09.24 - Barroso - Letter to US	José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission, A Letter from Brussels to the Next President of the United States of America, 2008, Paul-Henri Spaak Lecture, Harvard University, 24 September 2008 (SPEECH/08/455)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_08_455
08.09.24 - Hübner - Challenges	Danuta Hübner, European Commissioner responsible for Regional Policy, Lecture at Summer Academy on European Integration, Krokowa Castle, Poland, 24 September 2008 (SPEECH/08/454)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_08_454
08.09.28 - Lavrov - UNGA	Address by Sergey V. Lavrov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, at the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly, September 27, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1613310/?lang=en
08.09.29 - Ferrero-Waldner - Business	Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, American Business Forum on Europe and US Council for International Business, New York, 26 September 2008 (SPEECH/08/468)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_08_468
08.09.29 - Lavrov - New York	Transcript of Response to Media Questions by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference, New York, September 29, 2008	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1614810/?lang=en
08.09.30 - Medvedev - Abkhaz Independence Day	Дмитрий Медведев направил Президенту Абхазии Сергею Багапшу поздравительное послание по случаю национального праздника – Дня независимости Республики Абхазия	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1560

Maidan: The Revolution of Dignity (2013/14)

53 documents of the Russian and 99 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse on the events from 21 November 2013 to 22 February 2014:

Code	EU	Russia	Title	Link (last accessed 14 September 2021)
13.11.21 - Ashton - Reaction Suspension			Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on Ukraine (131121/04)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2013/131121_04_en.pdf
13.11.21 - Füle - Opposition			Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/403565163976359937
13.11.21 - Füle - Russia impact			Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/403606050236268545
13.11.22 - Putin - PC Turkey			Пресс-конференция по итогам заседания Совета сотрудничества высшего уровня между Россией и Турцией • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19677
13.11.25 - Barroso & van Rompuy - Joint Statement			Joint statement by the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso and the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy on Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_13_1052
13.11.25 - Füle - Op-ed - ZN			Op-ed by Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle	https://zn.ua/static/file/fule.pdf
13.11.26 - Füle - Ekho Moskvy			Штефан Фюле — Интервью — Эхо Москвы, 26.11.2013	https://echo.msk.ru/programs/beseda/1205698-echo/
13.11.26 - Füle - Euronews			Transcript: EU's Füle rues Ukraine's 'missed chance'	https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x17o3f5

13.11.26 - MID - Comment on EU Statement	Comment by the Information and Press Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regarding the European Union's statement about Ukraine on the 25 November 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/86358
13.11.26 - Putin - Italy Visit	Российско-итальянские межгосударственные консультации • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19701
13.11.27 - Füle - Interview Euronews	EU Commissioner Füle talks to euronews after Ukraine halts Association Agreement	https://www.euronews.com/2013/11/27/eu-commissioner-fule-talks-to-euronews-after-ukraine-halts-association-agreement
13.11.28 - Füle - EaP Business Forum	Speech - Association agreements with Eastern Partners: Opening new doors to investment and trade	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_988
13.11.28 - Füle - Interfax	Евросоюз остается открытым к ассоциации с Украиной	https://www.interfax.ru/world/343905
13.11.28 - Füle - Speech EaP Summit	Speech - Eastern partnership challenges on the road ahead	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_989
13.11.28 - Füle - Tweet Costs	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/405963591981203456
13.11.29 - Ashton - Arriving EaP Summit	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton upon arrival for the second day of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 29 November 2013 (131129/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2013/131129_01_en.pdf
13.11.29 - Barroso - Speech EaP Summit	Statement by President Barroso at the Eastern Partnership Summit	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_1000
13.11.30 - Ashton & Füle - Statement	Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Štefan Füle on last night's events in	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_13_1077

	Ukraine	
13.11.30 - Füle - Freedoms	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/406735373839376384
13.11.30 - Füle - Peaceful Demonstrators	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/406740591092174848
13.12.02 - Barroso - Results conversation with Yanukovich	Results of a phone conversation between the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich and the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_13_1196
13.12.02 - Putin - PC Armenia	Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-армянских переговоров • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19741
13.12.04 - Lavrov - NATO-RUS Council	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his answers to questions from the mass media summarizing the results of the session of the NATO-Russia Council at the level of foreign ministers, Brussels, 4 December 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/85330
13.12.05 - Schmid - OSCE Ministerial Council	Speech by Ms Helga Schmid, Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service at the OSCE Ministerial Council (131205/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2013/131205_01_en.pdf
13.12.05 - Lavrov - PC OSCE	Answers to questions from the mass media by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov summarizing the results of his participation in the OSCE FMC session, Kiev, 5 December - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/85162
13.12.07 - Peskov - Putin-	Песков: Путин и Янукович не обсуждали вопрос о	https://tass.ru/politika/817768

Yanukovych Meeting	присоединении Украины к ТС - Политика	
13.12.08 - Barroso - Call Yanukovych	Results of the phone conversation between President Barroso and President Yanukovych of Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_13_1113
13.12.09 - Ashton - Batkivshcyna office raid	Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on forcible entry into Batkivshcyna office in Kyiv (131209/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2013/131209_01_en.pdf
13.12.09 - Barroso - Address Milan	Address by President Barroso at the Opening of the Milan General Assembly	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_1043
13.12.10 - Baily - Reaction 20bln	Transcript: Ukraine seeks 20 bln euros in EU aid	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sr0UsFM9B8
13.12.10 - Butkevicius (LIT) - Statement	Prime Minister expresses concern over the situation in Ukraine	https://lrv.lt/en/news/prime-minister-expresses-concern-over-the-situation-in-ukraine
13.12.10 - Füle - EP Speech 1 Vilnius EaP Summit	Speech - EU-Ukraine: standing ready to help and support	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_1054
13.12.10 - Füle - EP Speech 2 Vilnius EaP Summit	Speech - Time to get stronger in our commitment to EaP and reforms in Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_1055
13.12.11 - Ashton - Maidan Protesters	Message by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton to Maidan protesters	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_1060
13.12.11 - Ashton - Remarks on visit	Remarks by EU High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton at the end of her visit to Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_13_1141
13.12.11 - Ashton - Statement Maidan	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on recent events in Ukraine on Kiev's Maidan Square (131211/02)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2013/131211_02_en.pdf

13.12.11 - Füle - Tweet Students Euromaidan	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/410833324815712256
13.12.11 - Grybauskaitė (LIT) - Statement	President Grybauskaitė: Ukrainian leaders responsible for unjustifiable violence	https://archive.md/20131215072636/http://en.delfi.lt/59193/president-grybauskaite-ukrainian-leaders-responsible-for-unjustifiable-violence-201359193/#selection-919.28-919.40
13.12.11 - Šefčovič - Preparations for EC Meeting	Speech by Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič on the preparations for the European Council meeting (19-20 December 2013)	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_1058
13.12.12 - Füle - Arbutov PC	EU-Ukraine: Association Agreement is an offer to the country and its people	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_13_1146
13.12.12 - Putin - Address to Federal Assembly	Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly • President of Russia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19825
13.12.14 - Lavrov - Interview Russia-24	Interview by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Russia-24 TV-channel, 14 December 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/84098
13.12.15 - Füle - Reaction UKR demands	Tweet	https://twitter.com/stefanfuleeu/status/412159313747390464
13.12.16 - Ashton - Arriving FA Council	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton upon arrival at the Foreign Affairs Council (161213/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2013/161213_01_en.pdf
13.12.16 - Ashton - Remarks following FA Council	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council, Brussels, 16th December, 2013 (131216/04)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2013/131216_04_en.pdf
13.12.17 - Lavrov - Meeting EU	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his answers to questions from the mass media	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/83530

	summarizing the results of the brunch with foreign ministers from EU member-states and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy for the European Union/Vice-President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton, Brussels, 16 December 2013 - News	
13.12.17 - Putin & Peskov - RUS-UKR Action Plan	Россия даст Украине \$15 млрд и снизит цену газа на треть	https://www.interfax.ru/business/347393
13.12.17 - Putin - Commission1	Заявления для прессы по окончании заседания Российско-Украинской межгосударственной комиссии • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19854
13.12.17 - Putin - Commission2	Начало заседания Российско-Украинской межгосударственной комиссии • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19853
13.12.17 - Putin - Meeting Yanukovich	Встреча с Президентом Украины Виктором Януковичем • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19849
13.12.18 - Ashton - Opening Remarks AFET	Opening remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the meeting of AFET Committee, European Parliament (131218/02)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2013/131218_02_en.pdf
13.12.18 - Lavrov - Government1	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov within the framework of the government hour in the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 18 December 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/83458
13.12.18 - Lavrov - Government2	Answers to questions from the mass media by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov summarizing the results of the government hour in the Council of	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/83434

	Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 18 December 2013 - News	
13.12.19 - Lavrov - RUS-PL Cooperation Strategy	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister and his answers to questions from the mass media summarizing the results of the Committee for the Russian-Polish Cooperation Strategy, Warsaw, 19 December 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/83146
13.12.19 - Peskov - Comment	Д.Песков: Пропаганда - это не имя нарицательное	https://www.rbc.ru/politics/19/12/2013/570414c49a794761c0ce4f60
13.12.19 - Putin - Annual PC	Пресс-конференция Владимира Путина • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19859
13.12.20 - Barroso - final PC EC	Statement by President Barroso following the European Council, 19-20 December 2013	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_13_1084
13.12.20 - EC - Conclusions	Conclusions (EUCO 217/13)	https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-217-2013-INIT/en/pdf
13.12.20 - van Rompuy - final PC EC	Transcript “European Council of Brussels: common final press conference by Herman van Rompuy, José Manuel Barroso, and Dalia Grybauskaite” December 20, 2013	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-084924
13.12.20 - Lavrov - Interview RIA Novosti	Interview by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to RIA Novosti news agency, Moscow, 20 December 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/82922
13.12.21 - Lavrov - Interview Interfax	Interview by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Interfax news agency, 21 December 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/82690
13.12.23 - Ushakov - No Contradiction	Ukraine's association with EU doesn't contradict observer status in Customs Union - Kremlin	https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/183445.html

13.12.24 - Lavrov - Interview RT	Interview by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Russia today TV-channel, Moscow, 24 December 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/82586
13.12.25 - EU Mission UKR - Statement	Statement by the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine	https://www.facebook.com/EUDelegationUkraine/posts/670786499632648
13.12.25 - Füle - Tweet Concern	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/415896926870315008
13.12.26 - MID - Main FP Events	Main foreign policy events of 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/82266
14.01.14 - Barroso - Speech Lithuanian Presidency	Speech by President Barroso on the review of the Lithuanian Presidency	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_15
14.01.16 - Füle - Reaction anti-protest laws	Füle 'shocked, disappointed' at Ukraine's turn from European path	https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/186345.html
14.01.17 - Ashton - Statement UKR Parliament	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on developments in the Ukrainian Parliament (140117/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140117_01_en.pdf
14.01.17 - Füle - Tweet1 anti-protest laws	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/424171596584976384
14.01.17 - Füle - Tweet2 anti-protest laws	Tweet	https://twitter.com/stefanfuleeu/status/424093035535007744
14.01.20 - Ashton - Arrival FA Council	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following upon arrival at the Foreign Affairs Council (140120/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140120_01_en.pdf

14.01.20 - Ashton - Remarks following FA Council	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council 20 January 2014 (20/01/14)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140120_08_en.pdf
14.01.20 - Council - Council Conclusions UKR	Council conclusions on Ukraine	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/29053/140659.pdf
14.01.21 - Lavrov - PC Russian Diplomacy	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his answers to questions from the mass media during the press conference summarising the results of the activities of Russian diplomacy, Moscow, 21 January 2014 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/79890
14.01.22 - Ashton - Statement on Deaths	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on violence and reported deaths of protesters in Kyiv (140122/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140122_01_en.pdf
14.01.22 - Barroso - Statement violence	Statement of the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, on recent events in Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_14_49
14.01.22 - Füle - Tweet People of Ukraine	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/426007322108760064
14.01.22 - Peskov - Interview KP	Дмитрий Песков: «Россия никогда не будет вмешиваться во внутренние дела Украины»	https://www.kp.ru/daily/26184/3073444/
14.01.23 - Ashton - Statement on efforts	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on efforts to support a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine (140123/03)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140123_03_en.pdf
14.01.23 - Barroso - Phone Call Yanukovich	Phone call between President Barroso and President Yanukovich on the situation in Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_14_53

14.01.25 - Füle - Statement after visit	Statement of Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle after his visit to Kiev	https://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission_2010-2014/fule/headlines/news/2014/01/20140125_en.htm
14.01.25 - van Rompuy - Remarks after meeting Tusk	Remarks by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy after his meeting with Prime Minister of Poland Donald Tusk (EUCO 23/14)	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/25873/140790.pdf
14.01.25 - Lavrov - Interview Vesti	Interview given by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to the programme “Vesti v subbotu s Sergeem Brilyovim”, 25 January 2013 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/79354
14.01.27 - Ashton - Statement on latest developments	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the latest developments in Ukraine (140127/05)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140127_05_en.pdf
14.01.27 - EU Mission UKR	IMPORTANT: Local EU statement on recent developments in Ukraine	https://www.facebook.com/EUDelegationUkraine/posts/686730571371574
14.01.28 - Barroso - PC EU-RUS Summit	Statement by President Barroso following the EU-Russia Summit	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_66
14.01.28 - Füle - Tweet1 Inclusive Process	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/428127512959660032
14.01.28 - Füle - Tweet2 People's aspirations	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/428113115700809728
14.01.28 - van Rompuy & Barroso - PC EU-RUS Summit (only coded parts!)	Саммит Россия – Европейский союз • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20113
14.01.28 - van Rompuy - PC	Remarks by President of the European Council Herman	https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/EU/XXV/EU/01/11/

EU-RUS Summit	Van Rompuy following the 32nd EU-Russia Summit (EUCO 27/14)	EU_11119/imfname_10436746.pdf
14.01.28 - Putin - PC EU-RUS Summit	Саммит Россия – Европейский союз • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20113
14.01.29 - Ashton - Remarks during visit	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton during her visit to Ukraine (140129/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140129_01_en.pdf
14.01.29 - Putin - Meeting with Government	Совещание с членами Правительства • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20122
14.01.30 - Barroso - Discours	Speech: Discours du Président Barroso: S'engager pour l'Europe	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_78
14.01.30 - Barroso - Tusk Meeting	Remarks by President Barroso following his meeting with Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of Poland	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_79
14.01.31 - Ashton - Opposition	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following her meeting with Ukrainian opposition (140131/05)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140131_05_en.pdf
14.01.31 - Füle - Tweet Kidnapping	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/429182441803501568
14.01.31 - Rehn - Committee of the Regions	Speech: Keynote speech by Vice-President Olli Rehn at the Committee of the Regions	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_86
14.02.01 - van Rompuy - Speech MSC	Opening speech by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy at the Munich Security Conference (EUCO 32/14)	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/25867/140883.pdf
14.02.01 - Lavrov - Kozhara	Introductory speech by the Russian Foreign Minister,	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/

	Sergey Lavrov, during his meeting with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Leonid Kozhara, Munich, 1 February 2014 - News	/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/78558
14.02.01 - Lavrov - Speech MSC	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, at the 50th Munich Security Conference, Munich, 1 February 2014 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/78502
14.02.03 - Lavrov - Interview Politics	Interview by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to the Serbian newspaper “Politics”, 3 February 2014 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/78430
14.02.03 - Lukashevich - Ashton's PC	Comment by the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Alexander Lukashevich, regarding the refusal given to Russian Journalists to access the briefing of the European Union’s High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, in Kiev - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/78326
14.02.03 - MID - Opposition	Comment by the Information and Press Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the situation in Ukraine - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/78406
14.02.03 - Barroso - Remarks UKR	Transcript “Remarks by Jose Manuel Barroso on Ukraine” February 3, 2014	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-086083
14.02.05 - Ashton - Remarks end of visit	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton at the end of her visit to Kyiv, Ukraine (140205/03)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140205_03_en.pdf
14.02.05 - Füle - EP Speech	Speech: Ukraine: how to find way out of the current crisis	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SP_EECH_14_94

14.02.06 - Lukashевич - Briefing	Briefing by the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Alexander Lukashевич, 6 February 2014 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/796212
14.02.10 - Ashton - Remarks after FA Council	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council (140210/04)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140210_04_en.pdf
14.02.10 - Council - Conclusions on UKR	Council conclusions on Ukraine	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/28984/140960.pdf
14.02.10 - Council - Press Release & Main Results	Press release, 3291st Council meeting, Foreign Affairs (6264/14)	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/28975/140973.pdf
14.02.12 - Füle - Respect & Solidarity	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/433609121175461888
14.02.12 - Füle - Violence	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/433701594538852352
14.02.13 - Füle - Statement Ukrainian Plan	EU-Ukraine: Only a Ukrainian plan can work	https://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission_2010-2014/fule/headlines/news/2014/02/20140213_en.htm
14.02.13 - Lavrov - RUS-EU Article	Article by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, "Russia-EU: Time to Decide" published in the Kommersant newspaper of 13 February 2014 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/76622
14.02.14 - Lavrov - PC Steinmeier	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, during the press conference summarising the results of the negotiations with the German Foreign Minister, FrankWalter Steinmeier, Moscow, 14 February 2014 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/76574
14.02.14 - Zakharova -	Answer by Maria Zakharova, Deputy Director of the	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-

Summoning in Kyiv	Information and Press Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the question from RIA Novosti regarding the summoning of the Minister-Councillor of the Russian Embassy in Kiev to the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - News	/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/76518
14.02.16 - Ashton - Statement evacuation protesters	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the evacuation by protesters of the Kiev City administration (140216/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140216_01_en.pdf
14.02.17 - Lavrov - PC Saleh	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his answers to questions from the mass media during the press conference summarising the results of the negotiations with the Foreign Minister of the State of Eritrea, Osman Saleh, Moscow, 17 February 2014 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/76118
14.02.17 - Lukashevich - Comment US	Comment by the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Alexander Lukashevich, regarding the statement of the U.S. Department of State about events in Ukraine - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/76198
14.02.18 - Ashton - Reaction on Lavrov's article	"Хватит рассуждать о сферах влияния" – Газета Коммерсантъ № 27 (5300) от 18.02.2014	https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2410473
14.02.18 - Ashton - Statement on violence	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on violence in Ukraine (140218/03)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140218_03_en.pdf
14.02.18 - Füle - Tweet Violence	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/435806892787785728
14.02.18 - Lavrov - Reaction Ashton Article	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister (Sergey Lavrov) and his answers to questions from the mass media during	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/76062

	the press conference summarising the results of the negotiations with the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Urmas Paet, Moscow, 18 February 2014 – News	
14.02.18 - MID - Comment Ukraine	Comment by the Information and Press Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the events in Ukraine - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/76006
14.02.19 - Ashton - Statement on deterioration	Statement by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the deterioration of the situation in Ukraine (140219/02)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140219_02_en.pdf
14.02.19 - Barroso - Call Yanukovich	Phone call between President Barroso and President Yanukovich on the situation in Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_14_14
14.02.19 - Barroso - Declaration	Déclaration du Président Barroso avant la réunion conjointe avec le Président François Hollande, la Chancelière Angela Merkel et l'European Roundtable of Industrialists	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_144
14.02.19 - Barroso - Statement violence	Statement by President Barroso on Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_14_13
14.02.19 - Lavrov - PC Kuwait	Answer by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, to the question about the situation in Ukraine, during the joint press conference summarizing the results of the third session of the Russia-CCASG strategic dialogue at ministerial level, Kuwait City, 19 February 2014 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/75622
14.02.19 - MID - Statement Brown Revolution	Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the situation in Ukraine - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/75606

14.02.19 - Peskov - Non-interference	Песков: Кремль следит за событиями на Украине, но не вмешивается	https://ria.ru/20140219/995757095.html
14.02.19 - Peskov - Reaction to violence	Песков: Москва оценивает происходящее на Украине как попытку государственного переворота - Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/983669
14.02.19 - Putin - Call Merkel	Телефонный разговор с канцлером ФРГ Ангелой Меркель • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20292
14.02.20 - Ashton - Arrival FA Council	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton upon arrival to the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council on Ukraine (140220/02)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140220_02_en.pdf
14.02.20 - Ashton - Following FA Council	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council on Ukraine	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140220_03_en.pdf
14.02.20 - Barroso - Statement UKR	Statement by President Barroso on the situation in Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_14_15
14.02.20 - Council - Conclusions on Ukraine	Council conclusions on Ukraine	https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2016-03/EU-Council-conclusions-Ukraine--20-February-2014.pdf
14.02.20 - Füle - Tweet Vote	Tweet	https://twitter.com/stefanfuleeu/status/436616124416155648
14.02.20 - Lavrov - Questions on UKR at PC Zebari	Answer by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, to the question from the mass media about the situation in Ukraine, during the press conference summarising the results of the negotiations with the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Hoshyar Zebari, Baghdad, 20 February 2014 - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/75510
14.02.20 - Lukashевич -	Briefing by the official representative of the Russian	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-

Briefing Ukraine	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alexander Lukashovich, 20 February 2014 - News	/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/796196
14.02.20 - Peskov - Lukin	Лукин направлен на Украину в качестве посредника в переговорах с оппозицией	https://www.interfax.ru/world/359960
14.02.20 - Peskov - Yanukovich myth	Янукович находится в своем рабочем кабинете, заявили в пресс-службе	https://www.interfax.ru/world/360000
14.02.20 - Putin - Call Merkel & Cameron	Телефонные разговоры с Ангелой Меркель и Дэвидом Кэмероном • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20297
14.02.21 - Ashton - Remarks agreement	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton in reaction to the agreement signed between President of Ukraine Yanukovich and the opposition leaders (140221/07)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140221_07_en.pdf
14.02.21 - Ashton - Statement agreement	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on agreement reached between President and 3 opposition leaders in Ukraine (140221/05)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140221_05_en.pdf
14.02.21 - Barroso - Statement Agreement	Statement by President Barroso on Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_14_17
14.02.21 - Füle - Tweet Agreement	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/436879392246358016
14.02.21 - van Rompuy - Statement Agreement	Statement by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, on Ukraine (EUCO 46/14)	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/141122.pdf
14.02.21 - MID - Comment Agreement	Comment by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - News	https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/74182

14.02.22 - Ashton - Statement on UKR	Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the latest developments in Ukraine (140222/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140222_01_en.pdf
--------------------------------------	--	---

The Annexation of Crimea (2014)

42 documents of the Russian and 47 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse from 1 to 31 March 2014:

Code	EU	Russia	Title	Link (last accessed 27 January 2022)
14.03.01 - Ashton - Statement			Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the developments in Ukraine's Crimea (140301/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140301_01_en.pdf
14.03.01 - Barroso - Bridges			Speech by President Barroso: "Tearing down walls – building bridges"	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_168
14.03.01 - Füle - Tweet			Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/439764804753182721
14.03.01 - Churkin - 7124			Security Council, 7124th meeting	https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N14/250/30/pdf/N1425030.pdf?OpenElement
14.03.01 - MID - Crimea			Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the events in Crimea	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1675008/?lang=en
14.03.02 - Putin - Obama			Телефонный разговор с Президентом США Бараком Обамой • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20355
14.03.02 - Putin - UNSG			Телефонный разговор с Генеральным секретарём ООН Пан Ги Мун • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20357
14.03.03 - Ashton - Arrival			Doorstep by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton ahead of extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council on Ukraine (140303/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140303_01_en.pdf
14.03.03 - Ashton -			Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/d

Following	ahead of extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council on Ukraine (140303/02)	ocs/2014/140303_02_en.pdf
14.03.03 - Barroso - Tweet - Minimum	Tweet	https://twitter.com/JMDBarroso/status/440409285550690304
14.03.03 - Council - Conclusions	Council conclusions on Ukraine	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/141291.pdf
14.03.03 - Churkin - 7125	Security Council, 7125th meeting	https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N14/250/46/pdf/N1425046.pdf?OpenElement
14.03.03 - Lavrov - Geneva	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, during the high-level segment of the 25th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva, 3 March 2014	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1676027/?lang=en
14.03.03 - MID - Reaction	Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the statements by the US Secretary of State about the situation in Ukraine	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1676196/?lang=en
14.03.04 - Füle - Georgia	Message of EU support for Georgia	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_14_44
14.03.04 - Füle - Statement	Statement of Commissioner Füle after the meeting with the Prime Minister of Georgia	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_14_45
14.03.04 - Lavrov - Tunis	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной прессконференции по итогам	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1691599/

	переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Туниса М.Хамди, г.Тунис, 4 марта 2014 года	
14.03.04 - Putin - PC	Владимир Путин ответил на вопросы журналистов о ситуации на Украине • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20366
14.03.05 - Barroso - Remarks	Remarks by President Barroso on Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_184
14.03.05 - EEAS - Press Release	Press release, EU and NATO committees meet jointly to discuss Ukraine (140305/02)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140305_02_en.pdf
14.03.05 - Lavrov - Spain	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his answers to questions from the mass media during the press conference summarising the results of the negotiations with the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, José Manuel García-Margallo, Madrid, 5 March 2014	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1692197/?lang=en
14.03.05 - Barroso - PC	Transcript: Press conference by José Manuel Barroso, on Ukraine	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-087168
14.03.06 - EC - Statement	Statement of the Heads of State or Government on Ukraine Brussels, 6 March 2014	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/29285/141372.pdf
14.03.06 - van Rompuy - Remarks	Remarks by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy following the extraordinary meeting of EU Heads of State or Government on Ukraine (EUCO 55/14)	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/25819/141373.pdf
14.03.06 - van Rompuy - Tweet	Tweet	https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/441617724243210240
14.03.06 - Lavrov - Kerry	Comment for the mass media by the Russian Foreign	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/169334

	Minister, Sergey Lavrov, summarising the results of his meeting with the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, Rome, 6 March 2014	1/?lang=en
14.03.06 - Barroso - Interview	Transcript: Barroso: Ukrainian goal is convergence	https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2014/03/06/ukraine-financial-aid-peace-eu-comm-barroso.cnn
14.03.06 - van Rompuy & Barroso - PC	Transcript: Extraordinary meeting of Heads of State or Government of the EU on Ukraine: joint press conference by Herman van Rompuy and José Manuel Barroso	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-087080
14.03.07 - Peskov - Cleansing	Песков заявил, что при новой власти Украины могут пройти «чистки» в Крыму - Газета.Ru	https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2014/03/07/n_5998697.shtml
14.03.07 - Putin - Obama	Телефонный разговор с Президентом США Бараком Обамой • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20395
14.03.08 - Lavrov - Aslov	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his answers to questions from the mass media during the press conference summarising the results of the negotiations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, Sirodjidin Aslov, Moscow, 8 March 2014	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1694461/?lang=en
14.03.09 - Putin - Call	Телефонные разговоры с Дэвидом Кэмероном и Ангелой Меркель • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20442
14.03.11 - MID - Independence	Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the adoption of the Declaration of Independence of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1696564/?lang=en
14.03.12 - Barroso - Tweet	Tweet	https://twitter.com/JMDBarroso/status/443683665550508

Crimea		032
14.03.12 - Barroso - Tweet WWI	Tweet	https://twitter.com/JMDBarroso/status/443777915285950464
14.03.12 - Barroso - Ukraine	Speech: Introductory statement by President Barroso on Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_212
14.03.12 - Füle - Referendum	Speech: Crimea referendum: major threat to the stability of the borders in Europe	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_216
14.03.12 - G7 - Statement	G-7 Leaders Statement	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_14_65
14.03.12 - Barroso - Statement	Transcript: Statement by José Manuel Barroso, on Ukraine	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-087464
14.03.13 - Churkin - 7134	Security Council, 7134th meeting	https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N14/263/70/pdf/N1426370.pdf?OpenElement
14.03.13 - Putin - Security Council	Оперативное совещание с постоянными членами Совета Безопасности • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20523
14.03.14 - Lavrov - Kerry	Introductory speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his answers to questions from the mass media during the press conference summarising the results of negotiations with the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, London, dated 14th March 2014	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1700052/?lang=en
14.03.14 - Putin - UNSG	Телефонный разговор с Генеральным секретарём ООН Пан Ги Муном • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20559

14.03.15 - Churkin - 7138	Security Council, 7138th meeting	https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N14/266/14/pdf/N1426614.pdf?OpenElement
14.03.16 - van Rompuy & Barroso - Statement	Joint statement by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy and President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso on Crimea	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_14_71
14.03.16 - van Rompuy - Tweet Referendum	Tweet	https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/445228949472563200
14.03.16 - van Rompuy - Tweet Solution	Tweet	https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/445229031819329536
14.03.16 - Peskov - KP	Дмитрий Песков - «КП»: Заявления Запада - не повод для корректировок нашей внешней политики	https://www.kp.ru/daily/26207.7/3092238/
14.03.16 - Putin - Merkel	Телефонный разговор с Федеральным канцлером Германии Ангелой Меркель • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20590
14.03.17 - Ashton - Following	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council (140317/01)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140317_04_en.pdf
14.03.17 - Council - Conclusions	Council conclusions on Ukraine	https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7824-2014-INIT/en/pdf
14.03.17 - Council - Sanctions	Council decision 2014/145/CFSP of 17 March 2014 concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014D0145&rid=1
14.03.17 - Füle - Tweet	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/445547655306166272

14.03.17 - Putin - Obama	Телефонный разговор с Президентом США Бараком Обамой • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20593
14.03.17 - Putin - Recognition	Подписан Указ о признании Республики Крым • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20596
14.03.17 - Ashton - PC	Transcript: Foreign Affairs Council, 3304th meeting: press conference by Catherine Ashton	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-087403
14.03.18 - Füle - Tweet Putin	Tweet	https://twitter.com/StefanFuleEU/status/445911770105135105
14.03.18 - van Rompuy & Barroso - Statement	Joint statement on Crimea by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_14_74
14.03.18 - van Rompuy - Tweet Crimea	Tweet	https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/445955316740796416
14.03.18 - van Rompuy - Tweet Sovereignty	Tweet	https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/445955679208366080
14.03.18 - Kremlin - Signing	Подписан Договор о принятии Республики Крым в Российскую Федерацию • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20604
14.03.18 - Kremlin - Treaty	Договор между Российской Федерацией и Республикой Крым о принятии в Российскую Федерацию Республики Крым и образовании в составе Российской Федерации новых субъектов	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20605
14.03.18 - Putin - Lukashenka	Телефонный разговор с Президентом Белоруссии Александром Лукашенко	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20609

14.03.18 - Putin - Miting	Митинг «Мы вместе!» в поддержку принятия Крыма в состав Российской Федерации • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20607
14.03.18 - Putin - Speech	Обращение Президента Российской Федерации • Президент России	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603
14.03.18 - Peskov - BBC	Transcript: Peskov: Ukraine troops must choose sides - HARDtalk - BBC News	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lq6kJyKx1Os
14.03.19 - Rehn - Assistance	Speech - Speaking points by Vice-President Olli Rehn on Macro-Financial Assistance to Ukraine	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_232
14.03.19 - Churkin - 7144	Security Council, 7144th meeting	https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/PRO/N14/269/20/pdf/N1426920.pdf?OpenElement
14.03.20 - Barroso - Tripartite	Speech: Remarks by President Barroso following the Tripartite Social Summit	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_235
14.03.20 - EC - Conclusions	Conclusions on Ukraine	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/141707.pdf
14.03.20 - Lavrov - Duma	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his answers to questions from deputies during the plenary session of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 20 March 2014	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1703939/?lang=en
14.03.20 - Lavrov - Introduction	Introductory speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, at the meeting with representatives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the constituent entities of the Federation, 20 March 2014	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1703722/?lang=en

14.03.20 - MID - Sanctions	Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on retaliatory sanctions with regard to several officials and members of the US Congress	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/official_statement/1704312/?lang=en
14.03.20 - Barroso & van Rompuy - PC	Transcript: European Council of Brussels, 20/03/2014: joint press conference by Herman van Rompuy and José Manuel Barroso	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-087414
14.03.21 - Ashton - Arrival FAC	Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton upon arrival at the Foreign Affairs Council, 17 March 2014 (140317/03)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140317_03_en.pdf
14.03.21 - Council - Sanctions	Council implementing decision 2014/151/CFSP of 21 March 2014 implementing Decision 2014/145/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014D0151&from=GA
14.03.21 - van Rompuy - AA	Statement by President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy at the occasion of the signing ceremony of the political provisions of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Ukraine (EUCO 68/14)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/141733.pdf
14.03.21 - Lavrov - PC	Answers to questions from the mass media by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov summarizing the results of his participation in the extraordinary session of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 21 March 2014	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1705118/?lang=en
14.03.21 - Lavrov - Speech	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his answers to questions from deputies during the 349th extraordinary session of the Federation Council of	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1704852/?lang=en

	the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 21 March 2014	
14.03.21 - Putin - Ceremony	Церемония подписания законов о принятии Крыма и Севастополя в состав России • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20626
14.03.21 - Barroso & van Rompuy - PC	Transcript: European Council of Brussels, 21/03/2014: joint press conference by Herman van Rompuy and José Manuel Barroso	https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-087423
14.03.24 - Füle - Decentralisation	Ukraine: Decentralisation and support for regions important part of EU help	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_14_313
14.03.24 - G7 - Hague	The Hague Declaration following the G7 meeting on 24 March	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_14_82
14.03.25 - Lavrov - The Hague	Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his answers to questions from the mass media during the press conference on the side-lines of the Nuclear Security Summit, The Hague, 24 March 2014	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1706487/?lang=en
14.03.26 - EEAS - Joint Statement	Joint statement, EU-US Summit (140326/02)	https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/ashton/media/statements/docs/2014/140326_02_en.pdf
14.03.26 - van Rompuy & Barroso - Obama	Press Conference by President Obama, European Council President Van Rompuy, and European Commission President Barroso	https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/26/press-conference-president-obama-european-council-president-van-rompuy-a
14.03.27 - Putin - Medvedev	Рабочая встреча с Председателем Правительства Дмитрием Медведевым • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20646
14.03.29 - Lavrov - Interview Vesti	Interview given by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to the programme “Vesti v subbotu s Sergeem	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1709423/?lang=en

	Brilyovim”, Moscow, 29 March 2014	
14.03.30 - Lavrov - Vremya	Interview by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, given to the programme “Voskresnoye vremya” Moscow, 30 March 2014	https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1709647/?lang=en

Protests in Belarus (2020)

52 documents of the Russian and 41 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse on the events from 1 July to 15 November 2020:

Code	EU	Russia	Title	Link (last accessed 12 March 2021)
20.07.14 - Borrell - Belarus			Belarus: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell on the non-registration of presidential candidates	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/82847/belarus-statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-non-registration_en
20.07.23 - EEAS - Ad hoc meeting EU~Belarus			Belarus: Ad hoc meeting of EU and Belarus senior officials	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/83347/belarus-ad-hoc-meeting-eu-and-belarus-senior-officials_en
20.07.30 - MID - Arrested Russians			О задержании белорусской стороной граждан России – Новости	Original is no longer accessible on Russian MFA website. See Facebook-post by Russian Embassy to Romania for content: https://www.facebook.com/AmbasadaRusa/photos/ru-o-zaderzhanii-belorusskoy-storonoj-grazhdan-rossii-odnoznanaj-traktovka-belorussk/249800444696245/
20.07.30 - Peskov - Wagner			Песков: у Кремля нет информации о противоправных действиях задержанных в Белоруссии россиян - Россия	https://www.interfax-russia.ru/main/peskov-u-kremlya-net-informacii-o-protivopravnyh-deystviyah-zaderzhannyh-v-belorussii-rossiyan
20.07.31 - Peskov - Wagner Group			Путин отреагировал на задержание граждан России в Беларуси	https://eurasia.expert/putin-otreagiroval-na-zaderzhanie-grazhdan-rossii-v-belarusi/
20.08.07 - Borrell - Statement Belarus Elections			Belarus: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell ahead of the Presidential Elections	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/83871/belarus-statement-high-representative-josep-borrell-ahead-presidential-elections_en
20.08.10 – Borrell & Varhelyi - Belarus elections			Belarus: Joint Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell and Neighbourhood and	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/83935/belarus-joint-statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-

	Enlargement Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi on the Presidential elections	borrell-and-neighbourhood-and_en
20.08.10 - vdL - election tweet	Tweet	https://twitter.com/vonderleyen/status/1292762483485179904?s=20&fbclid=IwAR2pqNe9vEyprx_zqmKY5Za8AuReJIW7XGff7uEIZQzrdClfVYJLFd2g7ls
20.08.10 - Putin - Congrats	Поздравление Александру Лукашенко с победой на выборах Президента Белоруссии	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63872
20.08.11 - Borrell - Declaration Belarus	Belarus: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the presidential elections	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/08/11/belarus-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-the-presidential-elections/
20.08.13 - Zakharova - Belarus	Брифинг официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой, Москва, 13 августа 2020 года – Брифинги	https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/spokesman/briefings/-/asset_publisher/D2wHaWMCU6Od/content/id/4284195?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_D2wHaWMCU6Od&_101_INSTANCE_D2wHaWMCU6Od_languageId=en_GB
20.08.14 - Borrell - Tweet Belarus	Tweet	https://twitter.com/JosepBorrellF/status/1294333012734287873?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1294333012734287873%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.euronews.com%2F2020%2F08%2F14%2Ffeu-announces-sanctions-against-belarus-o
20.08.14 - Council - Outcomes Foreign Affairs Council	Press release, Video conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers: Main outcomes	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/84103/video-conference-foreign-affairs-ministers-main-outcomes_en

		belarus%2F
20.08.19 - Visegrad - Statement	Statement on Belarus by the Presidents of the Visegrad Group countries	https://www.hrad.cz/en/for-media/press-releases/statement-on-belarus-by-the-presidents-of-the-visegrad-group-countries-15524
20.08.19 - Lavrov - Interview Belarus	Фрагмент интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова телеканалу «Россия», Москва, 19 августа 2020 года - Выступления Министра	https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/4290963?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_7OvQR5KJWVmR&_101_INSTANCE_7OvQR5KJWVmR_languageId=en_GB
20.08.19 - Peskov - Interference	В Кремле заявили о вмешательстве извне в дела Белоруссии	https://www.interfax.ru/russia/722382
20.08.19 - Peskov - PC	Кремль (устаами Пескова) наконец-то подробно высказался о ситуации в Белоруссии. Полная расшифровка — Meduza	https://meduza.io/feature/2020/08/19/kreml-ustami-peskova-nakonets-to-podrobno-vyskazalsya-o-situatsii-v-belorussii-polnaya-rasshifrovka
20.08.20 - Peskov - Belarus	Песков: в Белоруссии наблюдается прямое и косвенное внешнее вмешательство – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/9247285
20.08.21 - Borrell - Lavrov	Russia: High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell spoke to Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/84316/russia-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-spoke-foreign-minister-sergey-lavrov_en
20.08.23 - Lavrov - PC	Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на Всероссийском молодежном образовательном форуме «Территория смыслов», Московская область, Солнечногорск, 23 августа 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4295201?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB

20.08.24 - Peskov - Channel	Кремль заявил об отсутствии каналов связи с белорусской оппозицией :: Политика :: РБК	https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/5f4386949a7947af49838e2c
20.08.24 - Peskov - PC	В Кремле не увидели стремления белорусской оппозиции к сотрудничеству с РФ	https://www.interfax.ru/russia/723007
20.08.25 - Lavrov - PC Biegun	Ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы «Первого канала» по итогам встречи с первым заместителем Госсекретаря США С.Биганом, Москва, 25 августа 2020 года - Выступления Министра	https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/4299276?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_7OvQR5KJWVmR&_101_INSTANCE_7OvQR5KJWVmR_languageId=en_GB
20.08.25 - MID - Press Release Biegun	О российско-американских консультациях – Новости	https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4299286?fbclid=IwAR0NbIHMAGR8NHpM3HJyAzY9xgOn0RSxFc3vr2ABslZHS6xhSC9kWHiYaFs&TSPD_101_R0=08765fb817ab2000537a92acb39bec445f77edafe94e0309134c4b61344d5f8dfe4128c7694fa990083291ee3a1430003ed9c2b732d13ae790b0faa75e6633c8d9f62cd2a84126713f785d55efd7d8484465937b6ba458b6c6b40b5ddabaca41
20.08.25 - Peskov - PC	В Кремле приветствуют заявления белорусской оппозиции о стремлении к сотрудничеству с РФ	https://interfax.by/news/policy/vneshnyaya_politika/1281802/
20.08.26 - Borrell & Champagne - Belarus	Belarus: Joint Statement by HR/VP, Josep Borrell and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, François-Philippe Champagne	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/84437/belarus-joint-statement-hrvp-josep-borrell-and-minister-foreign-affairs-canada-fran%C3%A7ois_en
20.08.27 - MID - Press Release Makei	О телефонном разговоре Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова с Министром иностранных дел Республики Беларусь В.В.Макеем - Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4302482

20.08.27 - Putin - Interview	Интервью телеканалу «Россия» • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63951
20.08.28 - Missions - Belarus statement	Joint Statement by the Missions of the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the European Union on behalf of the EU Member States represented in Minsk on the use of violence and repression in Belarus	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/84521/joint-statement-missions-united-states-united-kingdom%C2%A0switzerland-and-european-union-behalf-eu_en
20.08.28 - Peskov - Belarus	Песков оценил резерв силовиков для возможной помощи Лукашенко :: Политика :: РБК	https://www.rbc.ru/politics/28/08/2020/5f48cb1f9a79476a8a6ab7c9
20.08.30 - Putin - Phone Call Lukashenka	Телефонный разговор с Президентом Белоруссии Александром Лукашенко	http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63966
20.09.01 - Lavrov - MGIMO	Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова перед студентами и профессорско-преподавательским составом МГИМО по случаю начала учебного года, Москва, 1 сентября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4307068?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.01 - Zakharova	Ответ официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой на вопрос СМИ относительно итогов обсуждения отношений Россия-ЕС на неформальной встрече глав внешнеполитических ведомств Евросоюза в Германии – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4307449?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.02 - Lavrov - PC with Makei	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Республики Беларусь В.В.Макеем, Москва, 2 сентября 2020 года - Встречи Министра	https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/4308072?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_7OvQR5KJWVmR&_101_INSTANCE_7OvQR5KJWVmR_languageId=en_GB

20.09.02 - MID - Statement PC with Makei	О переговорах Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова с Министром иностранных дел Республики Беларусь В.В.Макеем - Встречи Министра	https://www.mid.ru/ru/vizity-ministra/-/asset_publisher/ICoYBGcCUgTR/content/id/4308361
20.09.03 - Zakharova - Belarus	Брифинг официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой, Москва, 3 сентября 2020 года – Новости	https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1441143/?lang=en
20.09.07 - Borrell - Belarus	Belarus: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell on arbitrary and unexplained arrests and detentions on political grounds	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/84820/node/84820_en
20.09.09 - Lavrov - PC Tleuberdi	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Республики Казахстан М.Б.Тлеуберди, Москва, 9 сентября 2020 года - Новости	https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1441622/
20.09.09 - Peskov - Kommersant	Песков призвал не сравнивать ситуацию после выборов в Белоруссии и в России	https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4484241
20.09.09 - Peskov - Unification	Песков исключил возможное слияние России и Белоруссии по итогам визита Лукашенко	https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2020/09/09/839314-peskov-otverg-sliyanie-rf-i-belorussii-po-itogam-vizita-lukashenko
20.09.11 - Borrell - Declaration Belarus	Belarus: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the escalation of violence and intimidation against members of the Coordination Council	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/09/11/belarus-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-the-escalation-of-violence-and-intimidation-against-members-of-the-coordination-council/

20.09.11 - Lavrov - PC Yi	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с членом Госсовета, Министром иностранных дел КНР Ван И, Москва, 11 сентября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4335760?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.14 - Peskov - Loan	Песков заявил, что новый кредит нельзя трактовать как вмешательство Москвы в дела Минска – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/9455467
20.09.14 - Peskov - Reform	Путин поддержал инициативу Лукашенко о конституционной реформе в Белоруссии – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/9455581
20.09.14 - Putin - Meeting Lukashenka	Встреча с Президентом Белоруссии Александром Лукашенко • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64031
20.09.15 - Borrell - Remark EP Belarus	Belarus: Remarks by the High Representative / Vice-President Josep Borrell at the EP plenary	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/85147/belarus-remarks-high-representative-vice-president-josep-borrell-ep-plenary_en
20.09.16 - vdL - State of the Union	State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ov/SP_EECH_20_1655
20.09.17 - Lavrov - Interview RTVI	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова телеканалу «RTVI», Москва, 17 сентября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4340741?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.19 - Zakharova - Belarus	Ответ официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой на вопрос СМИ о политике Евросоюза в отношении Белоруссии – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4341538?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB

		NCE cKNonkJE02Bw languageId=en_GB
20.09.21 - Borrell - PC Council	Foreign Affairs Council: Press remarks by the High Representative Josep Borrell	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/85514/foreign-affairs-council-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell_en
20.09.22 - Lavrov - Interview TASS	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова информационному агентству ТАСС, Москва, 22 сентября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4348843?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.24 - Borrell - Statement inauguration Lukashenko	Belarus: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the so-called 'inauguration' of Aleksandr Lukashenko	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/09/24/belarus-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-the-so-called-inauguration-of-aleksandr-lukashenko/
20.09.25 - Michel - UNGA Speech	A stronger and more autonomous European Union powering a fairer world - Speech by President Charles Michel at the UN General Assembly	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/09/25/a-stronger-and-more-autonomous-european-union-powering-a-fairer-world-speech-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-un-general-assembly/
20.09.25 - Peskov - Belarus	Песков: непризнание Лукашенко легитимным президентом противоречит международному праву – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/9550311
20.09.29 - Putin - Forum of Regions	Приветствие участникам пленарного заседания VII Форума регионов России и Белоруссии • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64107
20.10.01 - EC - Conclusions	European Council conclusions on external relations, 1 October 2020	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/10/01/european-council-conclusions-on-external-relations-1-october-2020/

20.10.02 - Council - Press Release	Belarus: EU imposes sanctions for repression and election falsification	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/10/02/belarus-eu-imposes-sanctions-for-repression-and-election-falsification/
20.10.02 - Council - Sanctions	Council Implementing Decision (CFSP) 2020/1388 of 2 October 2020 implementing Decision 2012/642/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Belarus	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020D1388&from=EN
20.10.02 - Michel - Remarks	Remarks by President Charles Michel after the Special European Council meeting on 1 October 2020	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/10/02/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-after-the-special-european-council-meeting-on-1-october-2020/
20.10.02 - Putin - Call Lukashenka	Телефонный разговор с Президентом Белоруссии Александром Лукашенко • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64145
20.10.02 - Zakharova - Sanctions Belarus	Комментарий официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой в связи с принятием Евросоюзом ограничительных мер в отношении Белоруссии - Новости	https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1443397/
20.10.04 - Borrell - Diplomatic Presence	Belarus: Statement by the High Representative on demands to reduce diplomatic presence of some Member States	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/86292/belarus-statement-high-representative-demands-reduce-diplomatic-presence-some-member-states_en
20.10.06 - Michel - Report EP	Report by President Charles Michel at the European Parliament on the Special European Council of 1-2 October 2020	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/10/06/report-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-european-parliament-on-the-special-european-council-of-1-2-october-2020/
20.10.09 - Lavrov - PC Kofod	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4376570?p_

	в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Дании Й.Кофодом, Москва, 9 октября 2020 года - Новости	p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw& 101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw languageId=en GB
20.10.10 - Borrell - Phone Call Makei	Belarus: High Representative/Vice-President Borrell spoke to Foreign Minister Makei	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/86738/belarus-high-representativevice-president-borrell-spoke-foreign-minister-makei_en
20.10.12 - Borrell - PC Council	Foreign Affairs Council: Remarks by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the press conference	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/86850/foreign-affairs-council-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-press_en
20.10.12 - Council - Conclusions Belarus	Council Conclusions on Belarus (11661/20)	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/46076/council-conclusions-on-belarus.pdf
20.10.13 - Borrell - Lavrov	Russia: High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell speaks to Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/86912/russia-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-speaks-foreign-minister-sergey-lavrov_en
20.10.13 - MID - Call Borrell	О телефонном разговоре Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова с Высоким представителем ЕС по иностранным делам и политике безопасности Ж.Боррелем – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4380321?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw& 101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw languageId=en GB
20.10.14 - Lavrov - Interview	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова радиостанциям «Sputnik», «Комсомольская правда» и «Говорит Москва», Москва, 14 октября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4381977?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw& 101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw languageId=en GB
20.10.16 - Peskov - Tsikhanovskaya	Дмитрий Песков заявил, что у РФ нет претензий к Тихановской	https://www.interfax.ru/russia/731793

20.10.22 - Peskov	Песков: вряд ли какая-то страна может достичь столь глубоких отношений с Минском, как РФ	https://tass.ru/politika/9794743
20.10.22 - Putin - Valdai	Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club • President of Russia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64261
20.10.23 - Borrell & Pompeo - Phone Call	EU/US: Joint press release by the EEAS and Department of State on the phone call between J.Borrell and M.Pompeo	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/87472/euus-joint-press-release-eeas-and-department-state-phone-call-between-jborrell-and-mpompeo_en
20.10.26 - Peskov - Babich	Песков опроверг, что Бабич будет курировать от России урегулирование ситуации в Белоруссии – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/9817405
20.10.26 - Peskov - Interference	Песков заявил о недопустимости вмешательства в события в Белоруссии	https://ria.ru/20201026/belorussiya-1581563187.html
20.10.29 - Putin - Investment Forum	Инвестиционный форум «Россия зовёт!» • Президент России	http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64296
20.11.03 - Lavrov - Interview Kommersant	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова газете «Коммерсант», 3 ноября 2020 года - Новости	https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1445950/
20.11.06 - Council - Press Release	Belarus: Alexandr Lukashenko and 14 other officials sanctioned over ongoing repression	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/11/06/belarus-alexandr-lukashenko-and-14-other-officials-sanctioned-over-ongoing-repression/
20.11.06 - Council - Sanctions Belarus	Council Implementing Decision (CFSP) 2020/1650 of 6 November 2020 implementing Decision 2012/642/CFSP concerning restrictive measures against Belarus	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020D1650&from=EN
20.11.10 - Putin - Speech	Вступительное слово Президента России Владимира	https://www.facebook.com/embajadacr/posts/288077090

SCO	Путина в ходе заседания Совета глав государств – членов Шанхайской организации сотрудничества в режиме видеоконференции.	2156210
20.11.12 - Delegation Minsk - Statement Expulsion	Belarus: Statement by the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus on the expulsion of European diplomats	https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/88588/belarus-statement-delegation-european-union-belarus-expulsion-european-diplomats_en
20.11.12 - Lavrov - Interview media	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова российским и иностранным СМИ по актуальным вопросам международной повестки дня, Москва, 12 ноября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4429844?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.11.13 - EEAS - Statement Belarus	Belarus: Statement by the Spokesperson on the death of Raman Bandarenka	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/88675/belarus-statement-spokesperson-death-raman-bandarenka_en

The Poisoning of Alexei Navalny (2020/21)

43 documents of the Russian and 27 documents of the EU's foreign policy discourse from 20 August 2020 to 2 March 2021:

Code	EU	Russia	Title	Link (last accessed 9 March 2021)
20.08.21 - Borrell - Lavrov			Russia: High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell spoke to Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/84316/russia-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-spoke-foreign-minister-sergey-lavrov_en
20.08.24 - Borrell - Statement			Russia: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell on the suspected poisoning of Alexei Navalny	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/84367/russia-statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-suspected-poisoning-alexei_en
20.08.24 - Peskov			Песков сообщил, что Путин не участвовал в решении вопроса о перевозке Навального в ФРГ – Общество	https://tass.ru/obschestvo/9274055
20.08.25 - MID			Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4299310
20.08.26 - Zakharova			Захарова ответила на заявления Запада из-за ситуации с Навальным	https://armdaily.am/?p=104681&l=am%2F&fbclid=IwAR1a2DyL4Sp2PO2YarcGRnkWXtcNNiVif_tQhllLJ1PhTCxWRjloy-TUuTU
20.09.01 - Lavrov - MGIMO			Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова перед студентами и профессорско-преподавательским составом МГИМО по случаю начала учебного года, Москва, 1 сентября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4307068?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.02 - Borrell - Statement			Russia: Statement by High Representative/Vice-President	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-

	Josep Borrell on the poisoning of Alexei Navalny	homepage/84677/russia-statement-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-poisoning-alexei-navalny_en
20.09.02 - Merkel - Statement Poisoning	Pressestatement von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel zum Fall Nawalny am 2. September 2020	https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/bkin-de/aktuelles/pressestatement-von-bundeskanzlerin-merkel-zum-fall-nawalny-am-2-september-2020-1781830
20.09.03 - Borrell - Declaration	Russia: Declaration of the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the poisoning of Alexei Navalny	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/09/03/declaration-of-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-poisoning-of-alexei-navalny/
20.09.03 - Peskov	Песков не считает, что отравление Навального могло быть кому-либо выгодно	https://www.interfax.ru/russia/724409
20.09.04 - Lavrov - PC BRICS	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе прессконференции по итогам видеоконференции министров иностранных дел стран БРИКС, Москва, 4 сентября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4318038?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.06 - Maas	Maas zum Fall Nawalny: "Eine weitere Nebelkerze aus Moskau"	https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/nordstream-nawalny-103.html
20.09.08 - Zakharova - fb	Facebook-post	https://www.facebook.com/maria.zakharova.167/posts/10224168274824280
20.09.09 - Lavrov - PC Teuberdi	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел	https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1441622/

	Республики Казахстан М.Б.Тлеуберди, Москва, 9 сентября 2020 года - Новости	
20.09.09 - MID - Statement Navalny	Заявление МИД России о ситуации вокруг А.Навального - Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4329088?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.10 - Lavrov - PC SCO	Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks and answers to media questions at the press conference following the SCO Foreign Ministers Council Meeting, Moscow, September 10, 2020 - News	https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1441726/?lang=en
20.09.11 - Lavrov - PC Yi	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с членом Госсовета, Министром иностранных дел КНР Ван И, Москва, 11 сентября 2020 года - Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4335760?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.12 - Lavrov	Лавров заявил, что Россия отреагирует на возможные новые санкции Запада – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/9437339
20.09.14 - Lavrov - Interview	Фрагмент интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова телеканалу «RTVI», Москва, 14 сентября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4339134?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.14 - Zakharova	Comment by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova on the latest statement by the German Foreign Minister on the Navalny case	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4339234?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB

20.09.15 - Borrell - Remarks to EP Navalny	Russia / Poisoning of Alexei Navalny: Remarks by the High Representative / VicePresident Josep Borrell at the EP plenary	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/85149/node/85149_ko
20.09.15 - Peskov	В Кремле не планируют встречаться с Навальным, когда он вернется в Россию – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/9460823
20.09.16 - vdL - State of the Union	State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ov/SP_EECH_20_1655
20.09.17 - Lavrov - Interview RTVI	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова телеканалу «RTVI», Москва, 17 сентября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4340741?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.09.21 - Borrell - PC Council	Foreign Affairs Council: Press remarks by the High Representative Josep Borrell	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/85514/foreign-affairs-council-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell_en
20.09.25 - Michel - UNGA Speech	A stronger and more autonomous European Union powering a fairer world - Speech by President Charles Michel at the UN General Assembly	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/09/25/a-stronger-and-more-autonomous-european-union-powering-a-fairer-world-speech-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-un-general-assembly/
20.09.25 - MID - Commentary	Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России к разночтениям и нестыковкам по ситуации вокруг А.Навального – Новости	https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1442803/
20.10.01 - EC - Conclusions	European Council conclusions on external relations, 1 October 2020	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/10/01/european-council-conclusions-on-external-relations-1-october-2020/

20.10.01 - Peskov	Песков заявил, что обвинения Навального в адрес Путина инспирированы ЦРУ, они неприемлемы – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/9601643
20.10.02 - Michel - Remarks	Remarks by President Charles Michel after the Special European Council meeting on 1 October 2020	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/10/02/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-after-the-special-european-council-meeting-on-1-october-2020/
20.10.05 - Lavrov - PC Association of European Businesses	Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на встрече с членами Ассоциации европейского бизнеса в России, Москва, 5 октября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4368405?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.10.06 - Michel - PC	Charles Michel demands Russia investigate chemical attack on Navalny – POLITICO	https://www.politico.eu/article/charles-michel-demands-russia-investigate-chemical-attack-on-navalny/
20.10.06 - Michel - Report	Report by President Charles Michel at the European Parliament on the Special European Council of 1-2 October 2020	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/10/06/report-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-european-parliament-on-the-special-european-council-of-1-2-october-2020/
20.10.07 - Maas & LeDrian - Joint Statement	Joint statement by the foreign ministers of France and Germany on the Navalny case	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/maas-le-drian-navalny/2403036
20.10.09 - Lavrov - PC Kofod	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Дании Й.Кофодом, Москва, 9 октября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4376570?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB

20.10.12 - Borrell - PC Council	Foreign Affairs Council: Remarks by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the press conference	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/86850/foreign-affairs-council-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-press_en
20.10.13 - Borrell - Lavrov	Russia: High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell speaks to Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/86912/russia-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-speaks-foreign-minister-sergey-lavrov_en
20.10.14 - Lavrov - Interview	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова радиостанциям «Sputnik», «Комсомольская правда» и «Говорит Москва», Москва, 14 октября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4381977?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.10.15 - Council - Sanctions	Official Journal of the European Union (L 341)	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2020:341:FULL&from=EN
20.10.22 - Putin - Valdai	Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club • President of Russia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64261
20.10.27 - Lavrov - Interview	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова хорватской газете «Вечерни Лист», 27 октября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4406498?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.11.12 - Lavrov - Interview media	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова российским и иностранным СМИ по актуальным вопросам международной повестки дня, Москва, 12 ноября 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4429844?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.11.30 - OPCW - Diff	Russia accuses Germany of spreading misinformation on	https://www.dw.com/en/russia-accuses-germany-of-

Statements	Navalny News DW	spreading-misinformation-on-navalny/a-55776770
20.12.16 - Lavrov - PC Croatia	Вступительное слово и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных и европейских дел Республики Хорватии Г.Грлич-Радманом, Загреб, 16 декабря 2020 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4487925?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
20.12.17 - Putin - Annual News Conference	Vladimir Putin's annual news conference • President of Russia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64671
20.12.22 - Peskov	Песков заявил, что у Навального наблюдаются мания преследования и мания величия – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/10321505
21.01.18 - vdL - Statement	Statement from the President on Alexei Navalny	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_21_142
21.01.18 - Lavrov - PC	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе прессконференции по итогам деятельности российской дипломатии в 2020 году, Москва, 18 января 2021 года – Новости	https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1414102/
21.01.19 - Peskov	Песков назвал ерундой предположения, что Путин боится Навального	https://www.interfax.ru/russia/745804
21.01.21 - Zakharova - Briefing	Брифинг официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой, Москва, 21 января 2021 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4531975
21.01.22 - Michel - Call Putin	Readout of the telephone conversation between President	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-

	Charles Michel and Russian President Vladimir Putin	releases/2021/01/22/readout-of-the-telephone-conversation-between-president-charles-michel-and-russian-president-vladimir-putin/
21.01.25 - Borrell - PC Council	Foreign Affairs Council: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/92013/foreign-affairs-council-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell_en
21.02.02 - Lavrov - PC with Linde	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Швеции, Действующим председателем ОБСЕ А.Линде, Москва, 2 февраля 2021 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4550431?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
21.02.02 - Peskov - Diplomats	Песков: дипломаты, прибывшие на заседание по делу Навального, не должны давить на суд – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/10603067
21.02.02 - Peskov - Putin	Песков заявил, что Путин не следит за судом над Навальным	https://www.interfax.ru/russia/748991
21.02.03 - Borrell - Declaration	Russia: Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the sentencing of Alexei Navalny	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/02/03/russia-declaration-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-the-sentencing-of-alexei-navalny/
21.02.03 - Lavrov	Лавров отметил, что на Западе из-за Навального "зашкаливает истерика"	https://www.interfax.ru/russia/749219
21.02.04 - Peskov	Кремль не считает критику с Запада из-за Навального поводом для экстренного ответа Путина – Политика	https://tass.ru/politika/10622807

21.02.05 - Borrell - PC Lavrov	Russia: Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the joint press conference with Foreign Minister Lavrov	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/russia-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-joint-press-conference-foreign_en
21.02.05 - Lavrov - PC Borrell	Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks and answers to media questions at a joint news conference following talks with High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission Josep Borrell, Moscow, February 5, 2021	https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1415200/?lang=en
21.02.05 - Lavrov - Remarks Borrell	Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's opening remarks during talks with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice President of the European Commission Josep Borrell, Moscow, February 5, 2021	https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1415142/?lang=en
21.02.08 - Lavrov - Kozak	Ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы СМИ в связи с открытым письмом врачаневролога из Швейцарии В.В.Козака – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4561997?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
21.02.09 - Borrell - EP	Russia: Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the EP debate on his visit to Moscow	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/russia-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep-debate-his-visit-moscow_en
21.02.12 - Lavrov - Solovyov	Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова YouTube-каналу «Соловьев Live», 12 февраля 2021 года - Выступления Министра	https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/4570813?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_7OvQR5KJWVmR&_101_INSTANCE_7OvQR5KJWVmR_languageId=en_GB
21.02.14 - Putin -	Путин отметил, что протесты за Навального прошли	https://www.interfax.ru/russia/750849

Videoconference	на фоне усталости людей	
21.02.15 - Lavrov - PC Haavisto	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Финляндской Республики П.Хаависто, СанктПетербург, 15 февраля 2021 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4574102?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB
21.02.22 - Borrell - PC Council	Foreign Affairs Council: Press remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell	https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/93618/foreign-affairs-council-press-remarks-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell_nl
21.02.25 - Michel	Remarks by President Charles Michel following the first session of the video conference of the members of the European Council	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/02/25/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-following-the-first-session-of-the-video-conference-of-the-members-of-the-european-council/
21.03.02 - Council - Sanctions Press Release	Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime: EU sanctions four people responsible for serious human rights violations in Russia	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/03/02/global-human-rights-sanctions-regime-eu-sanctions-four-people-responsible-for-serious-human-rights-violations-in-russia/
21.03.02 - Lavrov - PC Kamilov	Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Республики Узбекистан А.Х.Камиловым, Москва, 2 марта 2021 года – Новости	https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4604921?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB

Epilogue to Chapter Six

Code	EU	Russia	Title	Link (last accessed 6 December 2022)
22.02.21 - RUS - Putin - Recognition			Address by the President of the Russian Federation • President of Russia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828
22.07.07 - RUS - Putin - Duma			Meeting with State Duma leaders and party faction heads • President of Russia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68836
22.09.30 - RUS - Putin - Annexation			Signing of treaties on accession of Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics and Zaporozhye and Kherson regions to Russia • President of Russia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69465
22.10.27 - RUS - Putin - Valdai			Valdai International Discussion Club meeting • President of Russia	http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69695