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Russia's Dual Roles in Global Politics as a Traditional Great Power and a Rising Power



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#### Article

## The Russian Pursuit of Regional Hegemony

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#### Abstract

During the Yeltsin era, the Russian Federation possessed neither the will nor the capability to assume a dominant role in its interactions with its neighbours. Vladimir Putin, however, assumed office with the aim of redressing the precipitous decline in Russia's presence in the post-Soviet region. Highlights of this policy include efforts to project Russian influence through the establishment (or strengthening) of regional structures, including the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and most recently (and most importantly) the 2015 inauguration of the Eurasian Economic Union. This article argues that these efforts simultaneously serve as a means of demonstrating Russia as the hegemonic leader of a regional bloc, a position that validates the Kremlin's claim to be a great power. This endeavour, however, has been challenged by a number of factors, including the regional and global aftereffects of the Kremlin's annexation of Crimea, as well as the Putin presidency's increasing tendency to conceive of Eurasian integration as a civilizational project.

#### Keywords

Russia, Eurasian Economic Union, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Russian World, Great Power, Regional Integration, Soft Power

#### Introduction

Scholars of the Russian political system are close to unanimous in stressing the importance to the Kremlin that Russia be perceived as a great power, a designation that also serves as a essential component of domestic legitimation. A key question, however, has been the credentials that Russia possesses to lay a credible claim to this status. In this context, the presidency of Vladimir Putin has increasingly sought to expand Russian influence in the post-Soviet republics. The effort is being made to cast Russia as the hegemonic regional leader in a multipolar world in which power is seen as increasingly dispersed with the emergence of regional blocs that challenge Western dominance. To these ends, the Kremlin has sought to strengthen and expand the role of regional structures, including

the Collective Treaty Security Organization (CSTO), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and most recently, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). In particular, the EEU has been depicted as an integration project that could serve as a counterweight to the European Union (EU) and position Russia as a major independent source of power.

This article, however, argues that this endeavour is fraught with difficulty in part because it seeks to fulfil multiple goals that are not necessarily compatible. On the one hand, the Russian leadership views extending its influence in the post-Soviet space, as a national security issue that provides a means of protection against external threats, notably those that are perceived to emanate from the West. This endeavour is also perceived to enhance Russia's position as a regional power in a world in which globalization has accentuated the trend toward mulipolarity and the 'formation of new centres of economic and political power '(Foreign Policy Concept, 2016). On the other hand, the Kremlin's regional projects—whatever their intrinsic merits—have simultaneously been advanced as a means to the end of demonstrating Russia's regional ascendance and its consequent ability to negotiate with the West from a position of greater strength. Here, the Putin presidency continues in the time honoured Russian tradition of preoccupation, and in fact, obsession with the West, as a foreign policy priority. Nonetheless, while Russian discourse is framed in response to the West, the content of the debate as to the relationship of Russia to Europe, has increasingly moved to embrace a discourse that not only celebrates Russia's civilizational identity as a great power, but has also promoted Russian values as a superior alternative to those of a decadent, hedonistic West (see Neumann, 2016).

This rhetoric aspires to a universal attraction but it is nonetheless rooted in a Russocentric vision that traces national identity to a Russian World (Russkiy Mir) in which ethnic Russians constitute the core constituent. The Ukrainian crisis of 2013-2014 provided an opportunity for the Kremlin to reclaim Crimea, with Putin justifying the action as a defence of ethnic Russians. This opportunistic action was foreshadowed by the willingness of the West to selectively support independence movements—notably in the case of Kosovo in 1999—but it nonetheless violated Russia's previous steadfast mantra as to the inviolable character of state sovereignty. For Putin, events in Ukraine were not merely a foreign policy issue. They indicated a potential Colour Revolution scenario that could be replayed in Russia. Moreover, as as Aleksandr Bogomolov and Oleksandr Lygtvynenko (2012,1) noted well before the onset of the Maidan events, the maintenance of Russian influence in Ukraine has been viewed by the Kremlin as an existential (and civilizational) imperative. Both of these developments, unsurprisingly, aroused concern in the post-Soviet space, although to a differential degree. Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Georgia, supported the United Nations General Assembly resolution passed in March 2014 that upheld the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The measure was opposed by Russia, Armenia, and Belarus, while Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan abstained. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan did not vote.

This article proceeds as follows. First, I provide a brief discussion of the evolution of Russian policy toward the post-Soviet region since the onset of the Russian Federation. Secondly, I turn to an examination of the main institutional structures that Russia has sought to develop (or to mould) as a means of projecting influence, with a primary focus on the EEU and the SCO. The third section assesses the effectiveness of the tools that the Kremlin has sought to use in promoting its regional integration projects: these include methods that seek to employ positive incentives, such as the use of soft power techniques and the attempt to project an attractive image, economic benefits, and the offer of security guarantees, as well as hard power attempts at outright compellence. The conclusion examines Russia's regional strategy in the context of its broader foreign policy goals.

#### The Evolution of Russian Policy toward the Post-Soviet Space

The original attitude of the Boris Yeltsin presidency toward the post-Soviet region veered from indifference to outside hostility. Yeltsin was instrumental, along with the leaders of Ukraine and Belarus, in orchestrating the demise of the Soviet Union. A key motivation was to remove Mikhail Gorbachev, the then president of the Soviet Union, as a competitor. But Yeltsin also shared the widespread sentiment of the pro-Western segment of the Russian political elite that the Soviet republics constituted a burden to Russia. Contrary to standard assumptions of empire, this view saw Russia as an 'internal colony' that was preyed upon by the less developed (or poorly endowed) periphery. Although the Belovezh Accord, signed at Belovezhskaya Pusha in Belarus in December 1991, provided for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), it became clear that this was a largely powerless structure that served primarily to sever Russia from its perceived appendages. The subsequent history of the still existent CIS has been undistinguished, with former Soviet republics (apart from the Baltic states) drifting in and out of an organization that has little substantive authority.

The Yeltsin presidency soon discovered, however, that it was neither possible nor prudent to ignore the post-Soviet region. The 1992 Tashkent Treaty of Collective Security laid the groundwork for the emergence of the CSTO. The origins of the SCO lay in the 1996 Treaty on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions signed by the so-called 'Shanghai Five' (China, Russia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan). But a variety of factors, including political upheaval, economic collapse, and Yeltsin's chronic health problems, precluded the institutionalization of structural arrangements with the CIS states. The Russian leadership also soon

came to realize that, whatever their original attitudes toward independence, the regional political elites rapidly embraced the concept of state sovereignty, proving to be highly self-interested in their relationship with Russia.

Putin came to the Kremlin in 2000 with a greater sense of purpose and vision for Russian relations with the post-Soviet region. His presidency also enjoyed the benefits of a vastly improved economy with commensurately expanded Russian capabilities. The CSTO was established in 2002 with the aim of coordinating security cooperation with the CIS states (although membership in the organization has been limited to Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, with Uzbekistan an occasional member). Moscow has sought to present the CSTO as a counterpart (and counterbalance) to NATO and has pushed its somewhat reluctant partners for the development of a rapid deployment force to intervene in instances of conflict. To date, however, the CSTO has never been involved in any real military action (although it holds annual training exercises). Russia itself did not seek CSTO member states' assistance in its 2008 war with Georgia, and Russia similarly did not push for CSTO involvement in 2010 when ethnic conflict broke out between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan. Despite some interest in strengthening the CSTO as a regional organization, the Russian Federation has preferred to become involved in conflict situations unilaterally, in a manner that is presumably perceived as more demonstrative of great power status. For their part, the other CSTO states have been highly ambivalent about Russia's 2008 war with Georgia as well as its 2014 military operation in Ukraine and subsequent annexation of Crimea (see Kropatcheva, 2016). The tensions between CSTO members, as well as the pivotal role of Russia in the structure, were starkly highlighted in the fall of 2016 when its members failed to approve the transfer of the chair of the organization from its long time Russian incumbent, Nikolai Bordyuzha, to an Armenian candidate.

During Putin's first year in office in 2000, the Shanghai Five was reconstituted as the SCO (also including Uzbekistan as a member). The Kremlin had paid very limited attention to the Shanghai Five in the Yeltsin era, leaving China as the driving force behind the organization. The Putin presidency sought to redress this imbalance, while focusing on the structure as a means to preserve Russia's presence in Central Asia. In 2000, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc) was also created with the goal of creating a common economic space. Although five states signed the treaty (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan), only three—Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan—agreed to the conditions established after lengthy negotiations for an actual customs union in 2010. Putin subsequently outlined the concept of the EEU (although the original idea was suggested by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev in 1994) in a 2011 article in *Izvestia* (Putin, 2011). The Customs Union between Russia, Belarus, and Ka-

zakhstan went into effect in 2012, while on 1 January 2015 the EEU was formally established as a broader integration project that includes the free flow of goods, services, capital, and labour. Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan were the founding members, while Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joined the union in Spring 2015. At this point, Tajikistan is contemplating applying for membership.

Putin's 2005 Annual Address to the Federal Assembly lamented the passing of the Soviet Union as a 'major geopolitical disaster of the century' (Putin, 2005). Although this remark has often been interpreted as Putin's desire to restore the Soviet Union, his reference, rather, was to the multiple adverse consequences humanitarian, economic, institutional—of the event. This is not to say, however, that the Kremlin elite is not concerned to restore Russian influence over the region. Then President Dmitri Medvedev gave voice to the sentiment in 2008 when he referred to the post-Soviet area as a 'sphere of privileged interest' (Medvedev, 2008). In the wake of the Soviet collapse, Western influence expanded rapidly into the post-Soviet region, an event that the Kremlin was largely powerless to forestall. The presidential administration of Bill Clinton placed an especial emphasis on democracy promotion and the construction of civil society in the post-Soviet space. The Putin presidency was deeply alarmed by the outbreak of the Colour Revolutions in Georgia in 2003 and Ukraine in 2004 (and to a lesser extent in Kyrgyzstan in 2005), which were interpreted as a deliberate attempt at regime change, that was simultaneously aimed at Russia itself (see Wilson, 2010). Even more ominous, in the eyes of the Kremlin, was the interest of Georgia and Ukraine in joining NATO, a potential outcome viewed as a security threat. Originally, Russia was neutral toward the attempts of the European Union (EU) to forge economic links with the post-Soviet states (specifically Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) through its European Neighborhood Policy. In 2004, Putin even went as far as to announce, in the midst of the events surrounding the Orange Revolution, that Russia had no objections to Ukraine joining the EU (Tsygankov, 2016a, 164). Over time, however, Moscow came to view the EU, like NATO, as a threat to its interests (Gretskiy, Treshchenkov & Golubev, 2014; Tsygankov, 2015). Putin's response was to promote the EEU as a counter weight.

### The EEU as a Structure of Regional Integration

When Putin (2011) proposed the EEU (then labeled the Eurasian Union), he set forth a largely economic rationale for its existence. He stressed the importance of extensive trade liberalization and explicitly referenced the EU as a model of emulation, as well as eventual partnership. Putin denied that the project indicated an effort to restore the Soviet Union, pointedly noting that it served the national interests of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. He did, however, evoke the notion that a dynamic Eurasian Union could become a regional pole that served as a bridge

between Europe and the Asia Pacific Region. As Richard Sakwa (2015, 561) has stressed, Putin insisted that the EEU was not a competitor but a complement to European integration. This notion was strongly reminiscent of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's (1987) evocation of the 'Common European Home' and also reflected themes raised periodically by the Kremlin, calling for the promotion of a Euro-Atlantic security community extending from 'Vancouver to Vladivostok' and a parallel 'harmonious economic community stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok' (Medvedev 2009; Putin 2010). Putin's presentation was not devoid of an underlying geopolitical rationale but his analysis was set within the standard assumptions of functionalist explanations of integration.

This lofty vision has not been not matched by reality. Four years later, the EEU was inaugurated in the midst of an economic downtown that was intensified by the impact of Western sanctions. Both Lukashenko and Nazarbaev have turned out to be staunch defenders of their perceived interests. Although in some ways, its most dedicated proponent, Nazarbaev has insisted that the EEU function solely as an economic not a political structure. Citing the predominance of state sovereignty, Nazarbaev has continuously reiterated that Kazakhstan will not hesitate to withdraw from the EEU if it feels that its interests are threatened. (It was Nazarbaev as well who insisted on the inclusion of the term economic into the title of the EEU, rather than the more ambiguous Eurasian Union) (see Samruk Kazyna, n.d.; Kazakhstan 2050, n.d.) Although less emphatic than Nazarbaev, Lukashenko has similarly described Belarusian participation in the EEU as a matter of cost-benefit calculations: 'Belarus' position on the future EEU will depend on what it can derive; if it is nothing, then what is the point to this alliance?' (Cheng, 2015). The Kremlin was successful in persuading Yerevan to forego its previously concluded Free Trade Agreement with the EU in favor of EEU accession. Both Armenia and Kyrgyzstan (and potentially Tajikistan as a prospective member) benefit from the EEU's policy allowing the free movement of labor as well as relying on Russia as a source of energy and subsidies. Remittances from migrants working in Russia are estimated, for example, to be about 31.5 percent of Kyrgyz GDP (Tarr, 2016, 16). For land-locked Armenia, immersed in a decades long conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, the willingness of Russia to serve as a security guarantor was likely a paramount consideration in membership.

Western (as well as some Russian) analysts are divided as to whether the EEU can succeed as an economic union. Dmitri Trenin (2011, 153-158) argued prior to its establishment that Russia could never succeed in any integration projects in the CIS region in the absence of permanent subsidies. Western economists generally concur that Russian subsidies to the EEU are an attractive inducement to other members but detrimental to Russia itself, an argument with striking parallels to

those put forward by Russian Westernizers in the Gorbachev era (see Roberts & Moshes, 2016; Hartwell, 2016). The EEU is seen as problematic in forcing the other member states to conform to Moscow's relatively high tariff levels, which in the case of Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, are higher than the levels agreed upon as a condition of entry into the WTO. Tarr (2016), however, notes that Russian tariff levels are set to fall 40-50 percent as a consequence of Russia's accession to the WTO. Neo-liberal economists such as Anders Aslund (2016) further stress that the EEU fails to comply with global norms and values (as exemplified by the global financial institutions) and reinforces obsolete Soviet style standards.

Since Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, the Russian narrative on the EEU has evolved to place an increasing stress on its civilizational component. Putin's original vision foresaw the Eurasian Union interacting with the EU in a harmonious and mutually beneficial fashion. On the European side, moreover, the project was considered, at least by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD, 2012), as potentially beneficial to the region. Current discourse, however, has become far more polarized, with Russian analyses constructed in what Alena Vieira (2016, 570) has described as a zero-sum conception of relations with the EU. Commentary emanating from Moscow has come to depict the EEU as an Eurasianist structure, embodying a distinct—and explicitly anti-Western-array of norms and values. In this context, the rationale for the EEU has become more associated with a civilizational perspective that celebrates the primacy of Russian culture and values (defined in distinction to the West), in which the Russian World extends beyond Russia's borders into the Eurasian space (see Laurelle, 2015). In a speech given to the 2014 Seliger Youth Forum, for example, Putin associated the EEU with the 'Eurasian idea' and the 'greater Russian world' (Akapov, 2014). This idea is popular amongst a number of Russian political commentators. Alexander Lukin, for example, argues that a 'clash of values' exists between the West and the Eurasian region. In his view, economic considerations are important, but secondary to the Eurasian integration project (Lukin 2014, 54) What he considers really distinctive and a unifying principle is the common values shared by the peoples of the region—commitment to family, traditional morality, a belief in religion, etc.—that contrast markedly with the relativistic permissive values of the West (Also see Lukin, 2016).

The idea of the EEU as an extension of the Russian World, however, has predictably been poorly received outside of Russia by the other regional elites. Lukashenko noted that the term aroused a sense of alarm in the post-Soviet space, while stressing that Belarus was not a constituent part of the Russian World but a sovereign state (Viera, 2016, 572; Skriba, 2016, 613). The Kazakh political elite, for its part, reacted negatively to other remarks that Putin made at the 2014 Seli-

ger Youth Forum that asserted that Kazakhstan lacked the historical experience of statehood, as well as comments by Vladimir Zhinovosky, the head of Russia's Liberal Democratic Party, who called for the creation of a Russian 'Central Asian Federal Region' within the geographical territory of Kazakhstan (AkZhaiyk, 2014; RFE/RFL, 2014). Kazakhstan's interest in moving itself further from the Russian orbit is also indicated in the decision—contemplated for years—to move from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet by 2025.

#### Russia and the SCO

Although the Kremlin seeks to present the Central Asian region as within its exclusive sphere of influence, the reality is more complicated. Russian hegemony is currently being challenged by China, although this is still largely a prospective scenario. In response, the Kremlin has sought to construct a narrative that posits a shared Russian-Chinese division of responsibilities and roles within the framework of the SCO. Moscow is described as the guarantor of security in Central Asia while Beijing provides the capital for economic development. The result, according to a June 2015 Valdai Discussion Club paper (Bordachev, 2016) is a 'great win-win game' for both states in Central Asia. But this optimistic assessment obscures the competitive aspects of the Russian-Chinese relationship in the region. China does not object to Russian security ties through the CSTO and both states share a convergent interest in the maintenance of stability and the suppression of terrorism and insurgency in the region. However, China has increasingly chafed at Russian efforts to constrict its attempts to launch economic development projects through the mechanism of the SCO. The Chinese delegation has routinely sought the establishment of a SCO development bank, as well as the implementation of a regional free trade zone. The Kremlin, however, has continuously sought to dampen these initiatives (see Gabuey, 2015a).

Beijing's frustration with the SCO as a means of economic cooperation was apparently a factor in its decision to launch the Silk Road project (also known as One Belt One Road [OBOR] or *yi dai yi lu*) (Gabuev, 2015b; Lukin, 2015, 4). It was presumably not a coincidence that Chinese president Xi Jinping announced the land based segment of the initiative during a 2013 visit to Kazakhstan. Unlike the EEU, which seeks to function as an economic community within a prescribed geographic area, the Silk Road initiative is better conceived, as David Arase (2015, 33) has noted as 'policy led trade facilitation.' Much of the emphasis of this still incipient development has been on the construction of large scale infrastructure projects, financed by the newly established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Initially, the Kremlin chose to ignore the Silk Road project, while it declined the Chinese invitation to join the AIIB. Eventually, however, Moscow

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In this sense, the response of the Kremlin paralleled that of the United States, which also chose to ignore the Silk Road initiative. The United States, however, has been openly antagonistic toward the

realized that its options were limited, and that it had no realistic alternative but to seek an accommodation with Beijing. At their May 2015 summit meeting, Putin and Xi released a specific joint declaration that noted their commitment to coordinating the planning processes of the EEU with that of the Silk Road initiative, as well as to implement joint ventures (in reality Chinese projects within the EEU geographic space). In June 2016, China signed an agreement with the EEU (although the 2015 declaration was bilaterally concluded between Russia and China) to begin negotiations on economic cooperation, with talks estimated to last at least ten years in the initial phrase (Gabuev & Shtraks, 2016).

In comparison to Russia, both Belarus and Kazakhstan reacted with enthusiasm to the Silk Road initiative. Kazakhstan is the biggest recipient of Chinese FDI in the former Soviet Union, having received some US 22 billion dollars in investment from 1991 to 2013. In 2014-2015, China and Kazakhstan signed two additional packages of agreements, the first for 14 billion dollars, and the second worth 23.6 billion dollars (Almaganbetov & Kurmanov, 2015; Lim, 2015). Kazakhstan is also a founding member of the AIIB, and is on line to receive funding from China for its Nurly Zhol (Way of Light) infrastructure initiative, which is envisioned to form OBOR's northern transit corridor. For his part, Lukashenko has viewed Sino-Belarusian economic cooperation as a means of decreasing its trade dependence on Russia. China is Belarus' largest Asian trade partner. After upgrading their relationship to a strategic partnership in 2013, Belarus and China have considerably expanded their economic linkages. This includes an estimated 15.7 billion dollar cooperation agreement and some 5.5 billion dollars in loans provided by China during Xi's 2013 visit to Belarus. A key component of this deal is the construction of the Great Stone Industrial Park near Minsk, which will provide Chinese manufacturers with easy access to EU markets (Lim, 2015).<sup>2</sup>

Beijing's decision to focus on OBOR in Central Asia, and in fact, throughout the broader post-Soviet space, is a tacit acknowledgement of its lack of interest in the future direction of the SCO. It appears that the Chinese leadership, having failed to achieve its goal by working within the organization, has selected to bypass it. This has left Russia as the biggest promoter of the SCO, which it has attempted to shape to its preferences. The 2016 meeting of the SCO in Tashkent approved India and Pakistan as incoming members of the organization, with Iran also expected to join in the future. Russia has been the staunchest advocate of the expansion of the SCO, a measure that China has opposed, although not officially. The expansion of the SCO raises questions as to the motivations of the Kremlin, as well as the extent to which this body will evolve into a platform that provides

AIIB, while Gabuev (2015c) argues that Moscow's initial rejection of the invitation to join the bank was a result of the inability of mid-level bureaucrats to realize its geopolitical importance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Richard Griffiths (2017), however, notes that the Great Stone Industrial Park has been the site of numerous delays and mismanagement, with only two fertilizer plants operative in 2016.

Russia will the opportunity to act as a great power on the world stage. Putin himself alluded to the latter scenario in describing the addition of India and Pakistan as a means of turning the SCO into 'a very powerful international association that commands respect and is relevant both in the region and worldwide' (Putin, 2016). If so, the result is likely to be long on rhetoric but short on substance.

#### Russian Influence in the Post-Soviet Region: How Extensive?

Moscow's attempts to project power in the former Soviet republics faces a series of challenges, although the Soviet legacy continues to exert a potentially positive, if steadily diminishing, influence. The Kremlin has access to a variety of soft or hard power resources that it can apply in the attempt to achieve its interests. They vary, depending on the specific circumstances of a given state, and are by no means guaranteed to produce a favorable outcome. After 2012, the Putin leadership came to rely on three primary methods of inducing a more or less voluntary compliance amongst its immediate neighbours: 1) it significantly raised the profile of its soft power program seeking to promote a positive image of Russia; 2) a series of economic incentives were offered as a motivation to joining the EEU (this included the indirect benefits of the free flow of labor, returned to Kyrgyzstan and Armenia through remittances); 3) the Kremlin emphasized its ability, primarily through the CSTO, to offer security guarantees to states (which has been an ongoing aspect of Russian policy). The Ukraine crisis serves as a stark example of the limitations of this approach as well as a reminder that Russia is willing to move beyond persuasion to force if it perceives that its interests are vitally threatened. At the same time, the annexation of Crimea has imposed a very large cost on Russia itself, not least of which has been the negative consequences not only for Russia's relations with the West but also with its immediate neighbours.

In the 2000s, the Kremlin began to work on resurrecting the network of public diplomacy and internationally oriented media structures—i.e. Friendship Associations, cultural exchange programs etc.— that had either collapsed or functioned in severely reduced circumstances with the demise of the Soviet Union. In the 2000s, moreover, the Western notion of soft power (usually translated as *myagkaya sila*) migrated to Russia. A 2007 document released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, called for the development of a soft power strategy for Russia as a means of diversifying its foreign policy, suggesting a greater reliance on cultural initiatives and the utilisation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Obzor, 2007). In February 2012, Putin placed his imprimatur on the topic, announcing that while certain states (implicitly the West) made illicit use of soft power techniques with the goal of destabilizing other countries, soft power, if appropriately employed, was a legitimate tool of foreign policy (Putin, 2012).

Subsequently, Konstatin Kosachev, the former chairman of the Duma Foreign

Relations Committee, was appointed to head *Rossotrudnichestvo* (the Federal Agency for the Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation) in the Spring of 2012. Kosachev's appointment signified a new prominence to the agency, a signal that was reinforced by an unprecedented two day high profile conference in September 2012, which outlined a new soft power strategy that would focus on enhancing Russia's position in the CIS region. Designated policies included the recruitment of students from the CIS area (either to study in Russia or to participate in long distance learning projects), the expansion of Russian Centres of Science and Culture and *Russkii Mir* (Russian World) Centres that would promote Russian language and culture, and the reorientation of humanitarian aid from multilateral structures (primarily the World Bank) to the post-Soviet area (see Wilson, 2015).<sup>3</sup>

Despite plans for an extensive overhaul in function, Rossotrudnichestvo was left to operate on a shoe string budget, in the words of Kosachev, 'a limousine without gas' (Reznik, 2013). Rossotrudnichestvo, as its name implies, also has suffered from a lack of coherence in defining a target audience. In practice, the organization has focused on maintaining language and cultural identity amongst ethnic Russian compatriots, rather than enhancing the language skills or affinity toward Russia among the titular majority in post-Soviet states. The Ukraine events highlighted the structural and conceptual deficiencies of the Kremlin's approach to soft power. In 2012, the USAID budget allocation for Ukraine was almost two times more than Rossotrudnichestvo's total 2012 revenues (Khimshyashvili, 2014). As Valentina Feklyunina (2016), moreover, has noted, the Kremlin greatly overestimated the degree to which its promotion of the notion of the Russian World resonated with the Ukrainian public, including many ethnic Russians and native Russian speakers. This identity was not only inherently hierarchical but also incompatible with or only partially compatible with other identity discourses in Ukraine that posited the importance of state sovereignty. Kosachev himself lamented the failures of Russian soft power policy in Ukraine in which he attributed the success of the United States and EU in promoting the 'European idea' in Ukraine not only to financial resources, but also to a broad-based campaign that focused on the grassroots level of Ukrainian society (Khimshyashvili, 2014).

Although the Russian leadership acknowledges the importance of soft power, it has been disinclined—as Kosachev's remarks indicate—to adopt a Western style approach that stresses the development of an autonomous civil society and the importance of winning the hearts and minds of the local citizenry. Here, the Russian leadership is more comfortable in engaging with local elites, largely through

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The Russian Centres of Science and Culture are based on the Soviet Centres of Science and Culture (many of which disappeared or fell into abeyance with the Soviet collapse). In any case, they did not previously exist in the CIS states, which were then constituent parts of the Soviet Union.

the provision of financial incentives (see Skirba, 2016). The actual package of incentives (which can be combined with implicit or explicit threats) varies, reflecting a complex assessment of costs and benefits, as well as material and political capabilities, on both sides. All the states in the post-Soviet region are susceptible to Russian pressure. This includes the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which despite membership in both NATO and the EU, remain highly dependent on Russia for energy. But a number of regional leaders have calculated that they have better options than to participate in Russian dominated regional structures. At present, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova have signed preferential trade agreements with the EU. This arrangement, tolerated if not welcomed by Moscow, was nonetheless considered a red line for Ukraine (which, however, signed an Association Agreement with the EU in November 2014).

Despite concerns over the maintenance of sovereignty, the leaderships of Belarus and Kazakhstan entered the EEU as voluntary participants, who were convinced of the economic advantages of membership. The energy relationship between Belarus and Russia is not entirely harmonious. Belarus benefits from refining Russia oil and gas and selling it to Europe at a profit. Nonetheless, the two states have been locked in chronic disputes over pricing and transit disputes, with Russia deploying the energy card against Belarus on multiple occasions. For Kazakhstan, the economic benefits of EEU membership are less tangible, and Nazarbaev has been critical of the continued tariff barriers imposed on Kazakhstan and its lack of access to the Russian electricity market (Tarr, 2016, 17). Nazarbaev, however, has been a steadfast adherent to economic integration as a foundational principle. The leaderships of Kyrgyzstan and Armenia appear to have been more reluctant in signing on to the EEU. Almazbek Atambayev, the President of Kyrgyzstan, summarized this sentiment when he noted in December 2013 that Kyrgyzstan, unlike Ukraine, 'unfortunately did not have much of an alternative' [to the Eurasian Union] (Popescu, 2014, 20). Although the Russian annexation of Crimea has instilled a wary sense of caution amongst leaders in the post-Soviet space, it has also paradoxically increased their latitude for bargaining and gaining extractions from Russia in return for continued support of integration initiatives (Krickovic & Bratersky, 2016, 190). Kyrgyzstan, for example, is asking for a one billion dollar subsidy payment from Russia to compensate for the losses incurred from the re-export of Chinese goods to Russia, while Kazakhstan is pressuring Russia to allow it to export its gas to Europe via Russian pipelines without paying export duties.

Russia's military preponderance in the post-Soviet region places it in the position to offer security guarantees to its neighbours, although some of the post-Soviet states—i.e. Georgia, Ukraine—view Moscow itself as the threat. Armenia's entrance into the EEU has been widely interpreted as recognition that Yerevan

perceives Russian military protection as a prerequisite to its survival (see Delcour, 2015). A similar situation pertains in Tajikistan, where Russia continues to maintain a military base, retained since the Tajik Civil War of the 1990s. The Central Asian members of the CSTO exhibit, as does Russia itself, a deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, and its potential spread to the post-Soviet region. This does not mean that states in the region have not sought to play Russia off against the United States. Both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan concluded agreements allowing for the establishment of US military installations, albeit with reluctant Russian acquiescence. Nor does the Russian military seem to be well suited to counter the sort of insurgency movements that pose a threat to the region. The Kremlin's military incursions in Syria and Ukraine, as well as its financial strains, make Central Asia an unlikely locale for military expansion in the future.

#### Conclusion

Russia's preoccupation with great power status has long been a national fixation. So, too, has been its preoccupation with the West, which has served, either as a object of emulation or as a defining other, as a formative element in Russia's national identity construction (see Neumann, 1996, 2016). The importance of this dynamic has only intensified since the 2013-2014 events in Ukraine. The annexation of Crimea (seen through Russian eyes as its return to the motherland) has been highly popular in Russia as a source of national pride and evidence of Russian empowerment, which has also served as an important source of regime legitimacy, especially in conditions of economic distress. The turn to civilizational values in Russia since 2012 should also be seen as a response to its deteriorating relationship with the West, in which Russian identity is formed in opposition to Western civilizational norms (see Tsygankov, 2016).

A number of commentators (see Gabuev 2015d; Lane, 2016; Sakwa, 2016) have stressed that the Kremlin's integration projects in the post-Soviet space should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means to realize the integration of Russia into Europe, through linking the EEU with EU markets. This raises the question as to the extent to which the Putin presidency's civilizational turn is compatible with this goal The Eurasian concept is itself is open to a multitude of interpretations. Nazarbaev, for example, has long promoted a form of 'pragmatic' Eurasianism. But Putin's tendency to associate the Eurasian idea with a specific articulation of the Russian World is a Russocentric vision that hierarchically elevates ethnic Russians over other (ambiguously conceived) inhabitants of the post-Soviet space, as well as assuming Russian leadership over Eurasian integration. This form of ideological Russian nationalism would seem to be of limited appeal to a non-Russian audience, and contrasts markedly with the universalistic message of the Soviet period (see Way, 2015, 695).

As many observers have noted, the loss of Ukraine as a prospective member dealt a severe blow to Russian hopes for the EEU, and no doubt contributed to the intensification of civilizational rhetoric as an alternative ideational construct. At the same time, Russian foreign policy seeks to portray Russian participation in regional structures as contributing to the development of alternative centres of power in an increasingly multipolar system (Foreign Policy Concept, 2016). This includes participation in the BRICs, which the Russian leadership has enthusiastically promoted as a potential counterbalance to Western political and economic hegemony. The insistence that Russia is a great power has been underscored by an increasingly assertive foreign policy.

The Russian Federation, unlike the Soviet Union, lacks the resources to pursue a global foreign policy, but Putin has nonetheless arguably played a weak hand to Russia's best advantage. Of course, there are costs to the Kremlin's strategy e.g. ejection from the G8, economic sanctions—but in the short run Russia has emerged from the sidelines to play a prominent international role. This is especially the case with respect to Russian policy toward Syria, in which the Kremlin has moved to assert its perceived interests while the West has been unable to commit to a decisive course of action. But Russian foreign policy has also turned to staking out claims in the Arctic, strengthening ties with Egypt, and upgrading its relationship with China (although the latter movement is also impelled by a perceived necessity). The ample evidence of populist dissatisfaction in the West with the status quo—seen in the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency and the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom—is also potentially advantageous to Russia. The Kremlin has worked to increase its ties with European right wing parties, as well as promote its traditional values as an alternative to perceived Western decadence. The unanticipated emergence of Russia as a central theme in the 2016 US presidential election campaign, especially in the near omnipresent portrayal of Russia by the political class (with the notable exception of Donald Trump) as a national security threat, paradoxically also served to enhance Russia's image as a great power.

To date, the EEU, although still in an incipient stage of development, cannot be considered an economic success. Even adherents to the project wonder if Russia has the resources to underpin this endeavor (Lukin, 2016, 109). A related issue is whether the Kremlin possesses the will to pursue economic modernization rooted in market concepts of efficiency. This is a goal of some members of the Kremlin political elite, including Dmitry Medvedev, the prime minister. But it has seemed less of a priority to the more traditionally minded Putin. The Russian leadership's discourse concerning Russia's status as a great power incorporates a 'virtual' element that can be viewed as validating to some extent the constructivist view that reality is a social construct, and that states are able to create and project their

own reality to targeted audiences. The empiricist, however, assumes that there are objective limitations to this strategy that will prevail sooner or later. Russia is destined by virtue of geography alone to exercise a prominent role in the Eurasian region. Nonetheless, its ability to succeed as a regional hegemon is dependent on its ability to move beyond the civilizational discourse to present a vibrant economic model that will present it as an attractive alternative to the European Union as well as to China.

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#### Bio

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#### Article

# Russia's Foreign Policy from the Crimean Crisis to the Middle East: Great Power Gamble or Biopolitics?

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#### Abstract

The Crimea Crisis of 2014 and the subsequent conflict in Eastern Ukraine have brought to the fore the troubled relations between Putin's Russia and the West. Observers have been oscillating between disbelief and alarm, trying to figure out Russia's conduct in foreign affairs by referring to imperialism, a new Cold War, or to an inherently autocratic character of Russia to explain its foreign policy. The 2015 Russian intervention in Syria has further buttressed these interpretations. Instead, this paper investigates Russia's foreign policy along three key types of modern power in political history: sovereignty, reason of state, and biopolitics. It highlights how their respective instruments are fielded by Russia in four different cases: South Ossetia (2008), the conflicts in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine (2014 and ongoing) as well as and during the Syrian civil war (esp. since 2015). The aim of the paper is not to explain the reasons underlying Russia's foreign policy but rather to highlight its formal mechanisms, which often resemble those of traditional great powers, including sovereignty and reason of state. However, in the context of global governance, biopolitics plays an increasingly important role for Russia.

#### Keywords

Russia, Crimean Crisis, Syria, Foreign Policy, Biopolitics, Sovereignty.

#### Introduction

The swift occupation of Crimea by unidentified troops in March 2014 and its subsequent incorporation into the Russian Federation has puzzled Western politicians and scholars. The European Union and the United States have reacted by imposing sanctions on selected individuals of the Putin regime and continued to expand sanctions to different sectors of Russia's economy. Analysts have responded by drawing parallels to the Cold War, by identifying a neo-imperialist course in Russia's foreign policy, or by referring to Russian expansionism as means to

secure regime popularity (Petersson 2014). Similarly, the scale and intensity of the diplomatic and military intervention in the Syrian conflict came to the surprise of all those who regarded Russia as struggling with Western-imposed sanctions and an incapability to wield power beyond its direct neighborhood.

This paper seeks to answer the research question whether this foreign policy conduct is really out of the ordinary: how is Russian foreign policy justified, how it is implemented? What aims does it pursue and how? The paper is less concerned with underlying *reasons* of Russian foreign policy, less with *wby* it acted in one way or another, and much more with *how* power is wielded in foreign relations. It argues that contemporary Russia disposes of all types of power typical for a modern political subjectivity. Its foreign policy conduct aims at different things in different regions at different times adopting different styles of power. Russian foreign policy can thus not be reduced simply to common labels such as "great power politics" or "neo-imperialism".

In the following, I will undertake a formal analysis and scrutinize Russia's most recent foreign policy highlighting how different types of power have been exercised by Russia during the Crimean Crisis and in Ukraine as well as in the Syrian Civil war. Hence, I am not interested in the events as such but rather a) how they have been cast in key texts, and b) which power techniques have been deployed to make them happen.

The paper looks at selected foreign policy events through three basic concepts of political theory. Following particularly Foucault's (2007) definitions, it will underscore the changing preferences in the choice of foreign policy tools adopted by the Putin regime since its ascent to power. The basic notions taken into consideration are sovereignty, reason of state and biopolitics. Deploying these concepts involves a selective reading of Foucault and consciously disregards other of his approaches to power. This conscious choice has the clear advantage of providing a coherent framework of analysis. Furthermore, Security, Territory, Population is one of the few texts, in which Foucault openly develops ideas pertaining to international relations, while generally, Foucault is much more concerned with "the domestic arena of liberal societies" (Selby 2007, p. 332). This paper particularly discusses the Russian mimicry of "humanitarian interventions" in 2008 (Georgia) and 2014 (Ukraine) but also extends the discussion to the Russian meddling in the Syrian conflict (2015).

The paper locates itself in the wider field of the growing literature of *International Governmentality Studies* (IGS). IGS includes "a whole series of investigations that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Hence, "forms of power" and "tools" are not the same: three forms of power (sovereignty, reason of state, and biopolitics) are associated respectively with three tools of power ("law and war", "military-diplomacy- economy", and "security") as will be discussed in more detail below.

are putting Foucault's hypotheses to work across the full spectrum of concerns and topics that animate IR" (Walters 2012, p. 83). IGS do not aim at developing grand theories but rather at answering detailed questions about the *functioning* or the *procedures* of IR phenomena. IGS argues that "the world comprises multiple projects of rationalizations and practices of governance, (...) which confront and act upon a reality that they only ever manage to shape partially and incompletely because that reality inevitably frustrates, eludes obstructs their best intentions. The ethos of inquiry becomes one of mapping theses attempts at rationalization, exploring their differences, their successes and failures, their fissures and their mutations (...) – all with as much empirical connections as possible" (Walters 2012, p. 89). Hence, they encourage a *formal* analysis of IR events asking what shape an event did take.

Theoretically, the paper shows that IGS can encourage both a constructivist and realist reading of international relations. Realism and constructivism are but two academic attempts at rationalizing IR. Politicians, too, engage in seeing IR through realist and constructivist lenses. Realism is understood here as a school of thought centered on nation-states ("groupism"), self-interest ("egoism" of states), "anarchy", and "power politics" (Goodin 2010, p. 133). Constructivism, in contrast, "emphasizes the social and relational construction of what states are and what they want" (Goodin 2010, p. 299). In contrast to realism, constructivism does not presume a fixed identity or an objective national interest. Rather, these notions are themselves subject to constant negotiation and renegotiation.

The possibility of a realist interpretation runs against the expectations of what is possible with a Foucauldian toolkit, which is usually posited in the realm of post-structuralism. It also runs against the actual use of Foucauldian terminology in works such as of R.B.J. Walker, Richard Ashley, Jim George or Cynthia Weber. However, while these authors invoke Foucault to refute realist analysis "they owe much more to (...) textual idealists than they do to Foucault" (Walters 2012, p. 328). The main conceptual point this paper wants to make is that a Foucauldian background allows *both* for realist *and* for constructivist/post-structuralist readings of IR.

Empirically, the paper analyzes how Russia used the tools associated with the forms of power of sovereignty, reason of state, and biopolitics since the collapse of the USSR and especially after the intervention in South Ossetia. The paper's main claim is that Russia's military interventions in Georgia, in Ukraine, and Syria do not represent a break with previously professed principles of Russian foreign policy and instruments. Rather, Russia adopts the entire repertoire of devices, means, or mechanisms available to modern states: all the tools of sovereignty, reason of

state, and biopolitics remain present, both in domestic and in foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> The comparison between Russia's use of power suggests that in the Near abroad, Russia tends to adopt a de-territorializing biopolitical stance, undermining the sovereignty of other former Soviet republics and highlighting a *Russkii mir*, i.e. a space without state-borders in which Russian life is placed. Beyond the borders of the former USSR, however, Russia tends to play the territorial game of sovereignty, stressing nation-states in their current borders and their non-violability, emerging once more as a (self-professed) "defender of territoriality" (Nunan 2016: 12).

Methodologically, the paper will adopt a genealogical, discourse-analytical stance and scrutinize key documents published by the Russian government, including Russian federal laws and speeches by key politicians. It will also draw on popular literature issued by publishing houses close to the Kremlin. While the body of literature stems from different periods, this is not to suggest a uniform discursive field, but rather to highlight continuities in foreign policy discourse.<sup>3</sup> The methodology, which this paper leans on, is not Foucauldian archaeology but his genealogy (Foucault 1971). Genealogy is focused on recasting the "family tree" of a phenomenon, in this case: the exercise of power in Russian foreign policy. However, the search for continuities in genealogy can also reveal discontinuities: "Not the enhancement of one's present-day status, or the grounding of a contentious claim, but rather that of introducing elements of contingency and specificity" (Walters 2012, p. 117) into what Russian foreign policy is. Thus, while possibly searching for continuity in "authoritarian imperialism", we might discover that Russian foreign policy actually is "a hodgepodge of bits and pieces" (Walters 2012, p. 118).

The main contribution of this paper consists in providing an analysis of Russian foreign policy adopting a discourse analytical approach, highlighting the rise of biopolitics as determinant of foreign policy decisions in the post-Soviet space and the dominance of sovereignty for Syrian case. The time frame of the study covers the period from 2008-2016, focusing particularly on Russia's interventions in Georgia and Ukraine as well as in Syria.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Modern states and modern societies dispose of distinctive ways of exercising power. They have a characteristic political rationality. Foucault went as far as to state that "One of the numerous reasons why [Fascism and Stalinism] are, for us, so puzzling is that in spite of their historical uniqueness they are not quite original. They used and extended mechanisms already present in most other societies. More than that: in spite of their own internal madness, they used to a large extent the ideas and the devices of our political rationality" (Foucault 1982, p. 779)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Discourse is not understood as merely textual but as of comprising both text and practice. The paper does not adhere to a distinction between texts and facts. Rather, it treats texts as facts and facts as texts. It looks at how "facts" and "texts" interact to form a discourse. Hence, the paper will be particularly concerned both with how political texts, speeches, demands and statements engage in describing IR phenomena, and how mechanisms of power are deployed to make "facts happen."

# Biopolitics in Crimea and in the Near Abroad: Compatriots, Security and the Mimicry of Humanitarian Interventions

If biopolitics means defining a *bios*, a life, or a population, then Russian foreign policy has recently assumed a biopolitical dimension in the Near abroad, emphasizing increasingly the importance of a vaguely defined "Russian life". While the idea of protecting ethnic and other Russian-speakers outside the territory of the Russian Federation is not new and has been acted on in the past too, I will advance evidence to buttress the claim that the *shift* to a biopolitical rationale in Russia's policy to the post-Soviet space is new. While this claim is complicated by the difficulties to define who belongs on which grounds to the Russian population, vagueness of the concept makes it malleable and thus a particularly dangerous notion for the nation-states in the Russian neighborhood. The problem of defining a "Russian" population echoes claims of constructivism that nation-states' policies are about perceptions, about social and relational constructions, such as a *Russian life*.

"Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem" (Foucault 2007, p. 245). Put differently, biopolitics is power exercised on the population. It does neither aim at nor relate to a specific territory and its relation to the sovereign, nor at the state as focal point of all political activity. It is hence a de-territorialized form of power that transgresses borders. The tool Foucault associates with biopolitics is *security* (Foucault 2007, p. 20). Security is encompasses all means to steer, to regulate, and to govern a population taking into account its inherent qualities (Gros 2012, p. 211-218). "Security is related to normality and liberty, not to war and survival, nor with coercion and surveillance. It differs from sovereignty and discipline as it is a cost calculation inside a series of probable events" (Bigo 2008, p. 96).

Humanitarian interventions fit into the scheme of security, because they claim to be specifically aimed at preserving threatened live and go well beyond simple military activity. They deploy a "caring for a population", however continue to work with biopolitical, disciplinary and sovereign technologies, including violence (Piotukh 2015). Humanitarian interventions involve occupation, state-building, economic development, and infrastructure improvements; they reorder space and people, while strike on the "enemies" of humanitarian projects; they attempt to "optimize the health, welfare and life of populations" (Dean 2010 p. 20). While sovereignty requires a territory to be delimited, biopolitics needs a *population* to be defined. The population that is increasingly coming into play and becoming a factor determining or legitimizing Russian foreign policy in the Near abroad is the community of ethnic Russians in the post-Soviet space. Whom exactly to consider belonging to the group of *sootechestvenniki* (compatriots) is, however,

everything but clear.

Already under Yeltsin, efforts have been undertaken to define the "compatriots" and to develop a strategy towards this population. These efforts under Yeltsin, Medvedev and Putin to provide clarity about what it means to be a Russian sootechestvennik, however, resulted in rather murky laws. The Federal Law No. 99-FZ "On state policy toward compatriots living abroad", adopted in May 1999 and amended in July 2010 (Federal Law No. 179-FZ), offers a very broad definition. It even underlines the principle of self-identification as basis for being recognized as sootechestvennik (Kremlin Press Service 2010). 4 For Oxana Shevel, the 2010 law institutionalized ambiguity, because "the official definition of compatriots is (...) vague enough to allow defining compatriots by a virtually infinite combination of ethnic, linguistic, religious, cultural, and even professional characteristics. For example, the compatriots definition in the law can accommodate an interpretation that all former Soviet citizens are Russia's compatriots" (Shevel 2011, p. 89). The law reflects discussions that have been raging in the years before and reflects demands expressed in the wider political discourse. Egor Kholmogorov or Andrei Isaev, for example, underline that Russianness is above all about culture. Isaev stresses that "not soil and blood, but language and culture" determine being Russian. Russianness "is a declarative right" (Isaev 2006, p. 8). Kholmogorov (2006, p. 266) hints that one might also become Russian just by serving the Russian state.

In 2005, Putin highlighted that the end of the USSR, "for the Russian people, became a real drama" (Putin 2008, p. 272). On March 18, 2014, after the Euromaidan and the events on Crimea, he repeated: "Millions of people went to bed in one country and awoke in different ones, overnight becoming ethnic minorities in former Union republics" (Putin 2014a). Security concerns became visible on the issue of migration to Russia. The aim of Russian migration policy is to control the flows of people between Russia and its neighboring countries in order to tackle the perceived demographic problems. Putin declared demography to be one of the most pressing issues in Russia – a problem of "love, women, and children" that can also be tackled by more immigration from former Soviet republics (Putin 2008, p. 330; see also Rotkirch et al. 2007, p. 351-352).

Thus, the care about the compatriots has also a foreign policy side. The defense

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Article 3, for example, reads as follows: "As compatriots are also recognized those persons and their descendants, who live outside the territory of the Russian Federation and usually belong to those people, who historically live on the territory of the Russia, [those] who made a free choice for a spiritual, cultural or juridical connection with the Russian Federation, as well as their relatives in direct ascendant line, who lived on the territory of Russia, including former citizens of the USSR, who live in states, which have been part of the USSR, who received their citizenship or who became stateless", Federal'nii zakon 179-FZ "O vnesenii izmenenii v Federal'nyj zakon 'O gosudarstvennoi politike Rossiiskoi Federatsii v otnoshenii sootechestvennikov za rubežom", 23.07.2010, retrieved 23 January 2017 <a href="http://base.garant.ru/198858/#block\_13">http://base.garant.ru/198858/#block\_13</a>.

of Russian citizens or russophone populations abroad became a key issue and a rationale for justifying the exertion of pressure on neighboring countries (Jackson 2003). The compatriots also figure prominently in the 2013 Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. It underlines that "particular attention will be paid to providing support to compatriots living in the CIS Member States." Another aim will be to negotiate "agreements on the protection of their (...) rights and freedom (...) ensuring comprehensive protection of rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens and compatriots residing abroad, and promoting, in various international formats, Russia's approach to human rights issues" (MFA of Russia 2013).

The intervention in South Ossetia in 2008 was explicitly made on the grounds of saving the lives of the *sootechestvenniki*. After hostilities had started, Dmitri Medvedev affirmed on August 8, 2008: "Civilians (...) are dying today in South Ossetia, and the majority of them are citizens of the Russian Federation. In accordance with the Constitution and the federal laws, as President of the Russian Federation it is my duty to protect the *lives and dignity of Russian citizens* wherever they may be" (Medvedev 2008, emphasis added).

Four days later, it is South Ossetian people and not Russian citizens who are in need of protection. With Ukaz 1194 of August 12, 2008, a day of mourning was declared to commemorate the "humanitarian catastrophe in South Ossetia". The decree underscored that "Georgian forces (...) illegally invaded and attempted to seize South Ossetian territory (...). This act constitutes *genocide against the South Ossetian people*." (Kremlin Press Service 2008, emphasis added). The Notion of Russian citizens disappears, and the protection of the South Ossetian population emerges. However, in both cases it is a life-and-death matter. The reference to South Ossetians and to a humanitarian catastrophe makes the Russian intervention less particularistic and locates it in a universal claim to protect human life. However, the biological category of "South Ossetians" and legal concept of "Russian citizens" are blurred, as Russian authorities handed out of passports in the years preceding the five-day war.

With regard to Crimea and Ukraine, Putin adopted a similar rhetoric. Since Crimeans had no Russian passports, he drew on a broad understanding of compatriots, and stated that in Ukraine "live (...) millions of ethnic Russians, *russophone citizens*, and Russia will always defend their interests with political, diplomatic, and legal means" (Putin 2014a, emphasis added). Whereas under Medvedev in 2008, Russia still maneuvered trying to define South Ossetians as Russians in legal terms, under Putin, policy has tilted towards a broader interpretation of compatriots, which can be ethnic, linguistic, or cultural, and *not only* legal. Under Putin's tenure since 2012 a shift occurred towards stressing a civilizational definition of Russianness, i.e. making it broader on the one hand, because it refers

to multiethnicity (*mnogonatsionalnost*) and yet on the other, assigning to ethnic Russians a special role as "stateforming" people (*gosudarstvoobrazuyushchii narod*) within Russia. These positions come along using the terminology borrowed from Russian nationalism, which Russian official discourse had widely avoided beforehand (Malinova 2013, p. 198–199). The incorporation of Crimea marked the shift from a biopolitical power that justified the occupation of the peninsula to sovereign power that redefined the legal status of Crimea and its inhabitants.

With this shift to biopolitics, Russia also allots to the former Soviet republics a special place in its foreign policy not only due to geographical proximity and resulting socio-economic ties, but because their populations include Russian or russophone minorities, and thus actual or potential compatriots. In this light, it seems, the Kremlin displays an interest in the population of the CIS in the first place, and only then, in the nation-states they inhabit. Russia reserves the right to intervene to protect those populations with whom Russia claims to have "close historical, cultural and economic ties. Protecting these people is in our national interests. (...) We cannot remain indifferent if we see that they are being persecuted, destroyed and humiliated" (Putin 2014a). Foreign Minister Lavrov succinctly put it in a sovereign/legal language on April 23: "Russian citizens being attacked, is an attack against the Russian Federation" (Lavrov 2014). Such an interpretation of compatriots means that the current Russian foreign policy explicitly recognizes a mismatch between the sovereign territory of the Russian Federation and the population for which the Russian state claims responsibility. However, biopolitics is but one form of power wielded by modern Russia. Before turning to sovereignty and Russia's diplomatic and military engagement in the Syrian conflict, I will discuss the "reason of state"-side of Russia's foreign policy, since both biopolitics and sovereignty feed into the rationale raison d'état and thus of increasing the power of the Russian state.

#### Reason of State: Stability, Diplomacy and Balance of Power

Reason of state means to put the state's interests above all other political goals – here the "realist" potential of Foucault's triptych of power comes to the fore, as this form of power rests on the nation-state as key point of reference. Reason of state describes the knowledge necessary to form, preserve, strengthen and expand the state. It is "a certain political consideration that is necessary in all public matters, councils and plans, which must strive solely for the preservation, expansion, and felicity of the state, and for which we must employ the most ready and swift means" (Foucault 2007, p. 339). In this perspective, there is no divine or natural order. The state is the sole principle and aim of governmental ratio, supplanting the key place held beforehand by the prince (chosen by God) under sovereignty. Formerly, it had been all about securing, preserving and increasing the wealth of the *sovereign*, now it was increasingly the *state itself* that had to be secured and ex-

panded. In this sense, reason of state is deeply conservative, it is about conserving and preserving the state: "With raison d'état, politics and government are located firmly in a *material world* characterized by dynamics, processes, and relations of military, economic and social force. The ruler's task is (...) to enable the state to survive and thrive in an environment where it must exist and *compete alongside other states*" (Walters 2012, p. 26, emphasis added).

Its key tool is a military-diplomatic technology that consists in securing and developing the state's forces through a system of alliances and the organization of military forces (Foucault 2007, p. 365). "Key to the operation of this technology is the idea of 'balance' and 'equilibrium' in the system of interacting forces that is now identified with the European world of states" (Walters 2012, p. 27). In addition, the economy becomes a tool in the hand of reason of state. In a mercantilist understanding, the economy has to contribute to the states' greatness (Foucault 2007, p. 439). This logic has never completely changed: while reason of state originates in the 17th century, it continues to be applied, explicitly or implicitly, by all nation-states, not only by Russia, but, alas, with different degrees of intensity. When issues that are considered to be vital interests of a state are at stake, military action can never be considered off the table. Reason of state explicitly allows breaking the law if this serves the state. In this sense, the coup d'état and the state of exception that suspend the validity of law, while running against the principles of sovereignty, would squarely fall into the realm of state reason, because it elevates the state interest above the law or the constitutional order (Foucault 2007, p. 438-440).

Gaddy and Hill (2013) argue that the state is a "mythic entity" in Russia. They interpret Vladimir Putin as a statist, a gosudarstvennik or derzhavnik, appointed to serve the Russian state and restore its greatness. He is, in this perspective, by definition not a sovereign, whose only aim is to preserve his personal power, but rather an executor of the state's interests. This paper has no evidence either to support that he is doing the former, nor that he is the latter. Neither is this the point. However, Putin's well-known statement made in 2005 that "the collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the century" (Putin 2008, p. 272), perfectly reflects raison d'état thinking and at least shows that Putin wishes others to think that the has state interests in mind only. The statement also underscores that in his vision, present-day Russia is an extension of the Soviet Union, which in turn was heir to the Russian empire. Hence, Soviet demise meant a weakening of the Russian state, of its institutions and of its reach. Restoring Russia's power has been a clearly stated goal of Putin's tenure, from its very beginning, and is in line with the principles already in place under Primakov.

The handling of the national economy and especially the crackdown on the Oligarchs' political ambitions provides another good example to see how Russian

policies are in line with reason of state. In a mercantilist fashion, Russian oligarchs have been put at the service of the state. In Russian political discourse, hints abound at such an understanding of the economy. Valerii Fadeev, editor of the renowned Ekspert magazine, declared for example that "the strength of the state consists in being able to organize the activity of the private economy in a way, that it achieves results for the country as a whole and not only for itself" (Fadeev 2006, p. 141). Andrei Kokoshin concurs and underlines that "not all private entrepreneurs can become 'locomotives of national success' without the help of the state. (...) the central role of the state benefits the competitiveness of Russia and of its friends and partners" (Kokoshin 2006, p. 96). In this vision, state and economy are closely intertwined. Not only should Russian companies serve state interests, contribute to Russia's greatness, also, the state comes back as economic player. The energy sector is maybe the most obvious example for how economic and political interests are entangled to bolster state power (Orlov 2006). In view of this statist thinking, two foreign policy tenets of the current leadership come to the fore: a preference for stability over democracy, and the striving for a balance of power.

Firstly, the *stability-over-democracy principle* holds both for domestic and foreign policy. Hence, in the Kremlin's view, Syria's Bashar al-Assad is better than a "radical" and split opposition, Ukraine's Viktor Yanukovich better than "fascists" in power. Official Russia abhors any revolutionary scenario that might tip over the balance of power in disfavor of Russia. As Boris Kolonitsky commented, "after 23 years apart, Russians and Ukrainians have shaped very different narratives from the same Soviet memories. Soviet culture romanticized and sanctified revolution", now, however, "the very term revolution has come to carry negative connotations for Russians" (Kolonitsky 2014). Indeed, while Russia's opposition at first managed to mobilize 50,000 Muscovites to protest against the Kremlin's action in Crimea, later even critical voices such as that of Dmitri Bykov (2014), caution both against a "Ukrainian euphoria" and a Russian "patriotic trance" as well as against revolutions in general. The Kremlin itself obviously rejects any revolutionary scenario. Statements such as "no revolution, no counterrevolution" (Putin 2008, p. 80) must be seen both against the backdrop of the upheavals of the 1990s and against the background of the Color revolutions in Russia's neighborhood, which left a deep mark in the Kremlin (Saari 2009). Hence, Russia seems to be a status quo force, whatever the status quo is. Unless, of course, change is to the advantage of the Russian state, as the Georgian and Crimean cases exemplify.

From the Kremlin's viewpoint, military intervention in South Ossetia was thus a restoration of the status quo: it "was not so much redrawing the map, as aggressively reasserting the status quo that had been in place since 1992-1993, when the two territories de facto seceded from Georgia" (Waal 2011, p. 113). The Russian state could easily accept two dependent territories, de jure belonging to Georgia,

but not their return to into the hands of a Georgia leaning to the West. The internationally not recognized sovereignty of Abkhazia and South Ossetia just cements the dependence of Russia. As a matter of fact, Russian troops refrained from invading all of Georgia, which would have been a step far beyond status quo ante restoration. A similar logic seems to apply to Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. Russia always played a special role on the peninsula and this special role was threatened by feared pro-European takeover in Kiev. The same holds for the Donbas: Russia could accept to have only indirect influence over this territory, but not its loss to Europe. Hence, in these cases, Russia was willing to break international law to maintain the influence it had before.

Secondly, Russia's official vision abhors any turbulence in the international balance of power. With the West perceived as creeping closer to Russia's borders, even swallowing former satellites, and seen as obstructing the planned Eurasian Economic Union this balance is threatened. The Eurasian Union became a cornerstone for Russian attempts to maintain a balance of power and strengthen the bonds between former Soviet republics (Putin 2011). Since at least 2002, the former Soviet space became the top priority of Russian foreign policy, as Putin (2008, p. 106-128) himself declared. In his view, the interests of the CIS and Russia coincide. A shared history and culture, economic interests, the issue of immigration and the Russian diaspora are all elements invoked time and again to stress the importance of the former Soviet Union in the eyes of Russian foreign policy (MFA of Russia 2013). The Near abroad increasingly turned into a "Russian sphere of identity", into a "Russkii mir" that goes beyond the borders of the Russian Federation (Zelevev 2014). A key factor in this identity-based conception of belonging to Russia is the memory of World War II in the Russian official narrative. The foreign policy is unambiguous about the central ideational role the CIS plays for Russia. Hence, "Russia intends to actively contribute to the development of interaction among CIS Member States in the humanitarian sphere on the ground of preserving and increasing common cultural and civilizational heritage" (MFA of Russia 2013). In the same paper, Ukraine is earmarked as a "as a priority partner within the CIS".

The Russian intervention in Syria contradicts thinking in terms of sovereignty because it represents a breach of Syrian sovereignty itself. Russia's position in Syria can be seen less as being concerned about Syria but about its own relations with the West and the balance between Russia and the West in the Middle East. From a reason of state perspective the main concern would be how to maintain an equilibrium between pro-Russian and pro-Western forces, and also generally to oppose that the West once more dictates the course of events in that region. Put differently, the intervention in Syria is a means to reassert Russia as a global player again.

Summing up, both in the Ukrainian crisis and in the Syrian conflict, reason of state and balance of power play a key role. Russian foreign policy course steers to maintain a balance with the European Union regarding Ukraine, and with the West (and Iran) concerning Syria. However, regarding Syria the role of the "more traditional form of power", sovereignty, is the most salient one.

# Sovereignty, "Sovereign Democracy" and the Syrian Crisis: Russia as Defender of Territoriality?

In a speech held at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels in March 2014, Barack Obama extensively commented on the Russian occupation of Crimea and the crisis in Ukraine. In the same speech, he highlighted the importance of "universal" liberal and democratic ideals, which he considered to be threatened by "an older, more traditional view of power", according to which "ordinary men and women (...) surrender their rights to an all-powerful sovereign" (Obama 2014). Indeed, classic political theory texts on sovereignty, starting with Thomas Hobbes, explain that this form of power is about individuals transferring their rights to an almighty and benevolent sovereign, who is primarily concerned with maintaining security within a specific territory. The key tools that sovereignty adopts to this end are laws (to secure an orderly society within) and violence (to enforce these laws internally and to defend the territory from external threats). Sovereignty echoes tenets of realism with nation-states as central actors, which seek to maximize power and it seems much more apt to describe Russia's role in Syria than its conduct regarding Crimea.

The concept of sovereignty dates back to the Renaissance and is thus associated with the post-medieval modernization of monarchic power (Singer & Lorna 2006, p. 451). "The traditional problem of sovereignty" consists in "conquering new territories or holding on to conquered territory, (...) its problem was in a way: (...) how can the territory be demarcated, fixed, protected, or enlarged?" (Foucault 2007, p. 92-93). Foucault calls this "Machiavelli's problem": Sovereignty is all concerned about upholding the relationship between a prince and his territory. It is this relationship alone around which sovereign power revolves. Sovereignty is concerned with upholding itself. In sovereignty, there is no utopian telos or specific vision for state and society. Sovereignty is circular in the sense that the only goal it proposes is an orderly, lawful society, in order to keep-up the relationship between prince and territory. The public good ultimately is obedience to the law. What characterizes the goal of sovereignty is nothing else than submission to this law. The end of sovereignty is self-preservation through authority and law or, put differently: its aim is "its continued exercise, that is, the persistence of sovereign rule over a territory and the subjects' obedience to law" (Singer & Lorna 2006, p. 448). The key danger that sovereignty faces is dispossession. Hence, while sovereignty seems to be a principle of domestic politics it also has a foreign policy dimension, since the prince has both to fend off internal and external enemies who threaten to dispossess the prince.

The traditional tools of sovereignty to uphold the relationship between prince and territory are laws (internally) and war (externally). Sovereignty "consists in laying down a law and fixing a punishment for the person who breaks it, which is the system of the legal code with a binary division between the permitted and the prohibited, and a coupling, comprising the code, between a type of prohibited action and a type of punishment. This, then, is (...) juridical mechanism" (Foucault 2007, p. 20). The hint at "punishment" aptly shows that legitimate violence is a built-in feature of sovereignty. This is in line with other conceptualizations of sovereignty (Singer & Lorna 2006, p. 451-452).

These themes of sovereignty, the concern for territory and the use of laws to defend the relationship between the sovereign and territory all play a role in contemporary Russian politics. It is not a coincidence that "Sovereign democracy" has been for many years of Putin's tenure a key notion used by Russian political pundits to describe the Russian political system, until Medvedev (2006) officially dismissed the term. However, while the term was put aside, its importance in political practice was not (Averre 2007). The insistence on sovereignty meant two things: firstly, that Russia's political system should be considered as a democracy sui generis and every meddling into its affairs is unacceptable. Secondly, it is the stress on lawfulness, internally and externally, in a very narrow understanding. Hence, while there is a difference between "sovereignty" as a concept of political science and "sovereignty" in "sovereign democracy" in Russia, both share the idea of power exercised over a territory and are linked by the emphasis put on the role of one sovereign. Let me briefly discuss both dimensions.

Firstly, sovereign democracy means that "Russia is an independent, active participant of international life, and it has, like other countries, national interests, which you have to take into account and to respect" (Putin 2014). However, Russia perceives itself not as any other country but as a traditional great power with clear spheres of influence. This is in line with the classic precepts of sovereignty in terms of a territory, which has to be defended and preserved. Key texts of Sovereign democracy reflect this concern for Russian uniqueness. While the "democratic order" of Russia emerges out of the European civilization, Russia contains a unique character (Surkov 2008, p. 10). In addition, this sense of belonging to Europe, includes a take-over of the "European economic model", because "the European way is the path of success, of growth" (Surkov 2008, p. 95). However, this belonging to Europe has certain limits, because it means giving up sovereignty. Viacheslav Nikonov, for instance stresses, that EU member states transfer "60-70 percent of the sovereign functions to Brussels" (Nikonov 2007). Sergei Glaz'ev recently echoed Nikonov, pointing out that any association with the EU

means transferring sovereignty over the economy to Brussels (Echo of Moscow 2014). Sergei Karaganov, too, criticizes any possible take-over of European norms as a loss of sovereignty (Karaganov 2004; 2005). Hence, the sense of belonging to Europe visible in early texts on Sovereign democracy is flawed from the start by concerns about Russia's nature and the stress that belonging to Europe does not include a sacrifice of sovereign power. Nikonov predicted already in 2003 that "Russia will be integrated into the international system but always try to follow its own path" (Nikonov 2003). A key problem in Russia's relations to the West remains the use and abuse of international law and its relation to state sovereignty.

Secondly, as early as 2000, Putin promised a "dictatorship of law" (Putin 2000), and, oddly, this promise was fulfilled internally and externally in a specific sense. The influence of the executive branch of power on the judiciary weighs heavily, precisely because the Russian leadership so zealously strives to build its power on law. Political lawsuits thus became common practice in contemporary Russia. The executive branch exploits the courts to use the law against political opponents, treating them as if they were criminals, just because they threaten to destabilize the existing system. The punk-musicians of Pussy Riot, for instance, were convicted on *hooliganism* charges, a broadly defined infraction with a long tradition in Russian history. The Khodorkovsky trials are another case in point. Additionally, what comes into play is the prevailing legal culture. According to these legal traditions, police, prosecutor and judge see themselves as a team that share the goal to convict a criminal and to serve the interests of the state (Reznik 2012). Indeed, after the turbulent 1990s, Putin's regime has promised few other things but order, stability and lawfulness. The Kremlin's policies lack any utopian element, both internally and externally (Prozorov 2010, p. 272). Basically, the existing system is supposed to remain in place as it is. Putin has been unambiguous about this: "I want to be quite clear in saying that we do not and should not fear change (...) But it is time to say firmly that this period is over and there will be neither revolution, nor counterrevolution" (Putin 2008, p. 80). The crackdown on presumed and real criminals, on any forces that threaten to disrupt this order, fits in this vision of a "dictatorship of law".

Law also plays a key role in Russia's foreign policy. Referring to the Western conduct in international affairs, Putin claimed that "our approach is different: we proceed from the conviction that we always act legitimately. I have personally always been an advocate of acting in compliance with international law" (Putin 2014a). Again, on March 18, Putin condemned Russia's "Western partners", stressing that they "prefer not to be guided by international law in their practical policies, but by the rule of the gun. (...) They act as they please: here and there, they use force

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Hooliganism has a specific meaning in the Russian context, cf. Weissmann (1978), Neuberger (1989; 1993), or Konecny (2004).

against sovereign states (...) To make this aggression look legitimate, they force the necessary resolutions from international organizations, and if for some reason this does not work, they simply ignore the UN Security Council and the UN overall" (Putin 2014b). The same theme resurfaced in the context of the Syrian crisis. Foreign minister Sergei Lavrov complained about Western conduct in the Middle East and stressed that the West "need(s) to be trained that the affairs can only be conducted on the basis of equality of rights, balance of interests, and mutual respect" (Lavrov 2013). From a Russian perspective, in Libya and Iraq, the West acted "illegally" and without legitimacy plunged these countries into chaos. Russia claims to act differently in Syria. The sovereign themes of order and lawfulness are seamlessly combined – democracy or dictatorship, respect for or disregard of human rights play a completely secondary role.

Valerii Zor'kin has produced the key text in regard to Russia's official stand on international law and sovereignty. Published as early as in 2004, it has been reprinted several times. Zor'kin fervidly defends state sovereignty and the principles of the "Westphalian system" (Zor'kin 2006). In many ways, it reflects the same concerns voiced by the US foreign policy community after the end of the Cold War, deploring the lack of a principle structuring international relations and the resulting international chaos. As a matter of fact, the Cold War could be seen as modern variant of the Westphalian system, with clear-cut state entities and zones of influence as well as a certain, balance of power sealed in a treaty. Now, Zor'kin identifies two dangers for state sovereignty. First, human rights and the right of self-determination of the peoples that he claims are abused to undermine sovereignty. Second, national states loss of capacity to govern effectively: "We find ourselves in an absolutely chaotic world (...). In this lawless global chaos there is only one law - the one of the strong and aggressive: of the superpowers, of dictators and of the leaders of mafia-like and terrorist groups". The praise for the presumably clear order represented by the Westphalian system, however, ignores its mythical character and that the clear borders it promises only exist against the backdrop of their constant shifting and violations (Coward 2005).

On the one hand, the Russian regime insists on respecting the norms of international laws. In the UN Security Council, Russia can stop resolutions and still enjoys a status on par with other super powers. As a matter of fact, Russia and China repeatedly stopped resolutions against Syria since the outbreak of the civil war. If the UN is bypassed by Western powers, as in 1999 or in 2003, Russian officials deplore the breach of international law and the abuse of the concept of humanitarian intervention. When Russian diplomacy once consented to such an intervention in Libya, it promptly caused a rift in the Russian top-echelons of power (BBC 2011), with many Russian observers highlighting that the West had overstepped the mandate granted by UNSCR S/RES/1973. Since then, the Rus-

sian foreign policy position on military interventions has hardened. Any intervention in Syria, for instance has been regularly dismissed. Russia's own intervention is grounded on a specific invitation by the Syrian regime and is recognized as legal, also internationally.

On the other hand, Russia itself has been very flexible in interpreting international laws and especially the "Responsibility to Protect" in its direct neighborhood, and whenever possible an international legal framework was invoked to support a foreign policy that actually broke international law.<sup>6</sup> Both in the case of the two Georgian breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and in the case of Crimea, Russia invoked the need to protect the local populations against presumed reprisals by Georgian and Ukrainian forces respectively. However, even in these cases a complex legal procedure was staged, upholding Russia's insistence on lawfulness. In the case of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the unclear legal situation allowed Russia to exploit remaining juridical loopholes (Waters 2013). Especially in the case of Crimea's incorporation into the Russian Federation, multiple legal steps were taken to maintain a lawful façade. These complex legal steps included a go-ahead by the Russian Federal court that circumvented Federal Law 6-FKZ (2001) that would have required Ukrainian consent to Crimea becoming part of Russia.8 This prima facie perfectly legal procedure reflects the two tenets of sovereignty, the concern about territory on the one hand, and stress on lawfulness as means to exercise power on the other.

Regarding the intervention in Syria, the biopolitical dimension has less importance in Russia's rationale of power. Reporting on the conflict in Russian media, however, often underscored the threat to the lives of Orthodox Christians. The Russian intervention is, thus, cast as if protecting a community, which is similar to the Russian one. The predominant rationale, however, corresponds to the sovereign and territorial form. Borrowing the notion from Nunan (2016, p. 17), a "post-territorial morality" dominates Russian foreign policy in the Near abroad.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> UNSCR 1674 of April 28, 2006 underscores the states' responsibility to protect their population and the possibility to limit their sovereignty in case of failure to ensure this protection. Cf.: <a href="http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/331/99/PDF/N0633199.pdf">http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/331/99/PDF/N0633199.pdf</a>; Open Element > .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Russia at first even denied to have occupied foreign soil and it took Putin a month to formally acknowledge his decision to send Russian troops. Putin acknowledged the Russian troops' intervention in a Q&A session on Russian TV on April 17, 2014: He also stressed his personal role and the role of Russian special forces in Krym – Put' na rodinu, released on 15.03.2015 on channel Rossia-1. See <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/russia/2015/03/150320\_crimea\_film\_battle">http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/russia/2015/03/150320\_crimea\_film\_battle</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> On March 16, a referendum was hastily conducted on Crimea and a day later, the peninsula declared independence, which Russia promptly recognized. Then, two days later, on March 18, Putin signed the interstate treaty "On the admission of the Republic of Crimea into the Russian Federation and creation of new sub-federal entities" and received the consent from the Supreme Court on March 19. On March 20, the treaty is ratified by the Duma by a 443-1 vote with no abstentions, and ratified by the Federal Council on March 21.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Anastasiia Popova's Syrian diary TV-reports or her interview with Metropolitan Ilarion, which portrays the Syrian civil war as a "tragedy for historical Christianity" (Popova 2013).

Beyond the borders of the CIS, instead, as the Syrian case shows, the defense of the "territoriality of the nation-state" prevails as power rationale.

Thus, foreign policy statements concerning Syria repeatedly stress Syrian integrity, sovereignty, and the illegitimacy of foreign intervention. In an effort to avert Western airstrikes against the Syrian regime after use of chemical weapons was detected in 2013, the Russian state stressed from the start key elements of sovereign power. In an article for the New York Times, Vladimir Putin underlined that "We are not protecting the Syrian government, but international law. We (...) believe that preserving law and order in today's complex and turbulent world is one of the few ways to keep international relations from sliding into chaos. The law is still the law, and we must follow it whether we like it or not" (Putin 2013). Here Putin picks up the classic circular argument of sovereignty, "the law is the law", and law prevents the world from "chaos".

In addition, the 2014 Dushanbe declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit is full of hints at the key themes relating to the sovereign rationale of power. The heads of state stress the need "to strengthen the legal foundations of international relations" and, referring to UN principles, to reciprocally respect "sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity of state, (...) non-interference in internal affairs" (SCO 2014). The declaration specifically mentions to support the "sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity" of Syria as well as the "independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Afghanistan (SCO 2014). By the same token, Sergei Lavrov stressed twice that "it is necessary to fully respect Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity (...) [to] respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic as a multiethnic, multi-religious, democratic and secular state" (Lavrov 2016).

Additionally, it should not be overseen how Russia has deployed in addition to its sovereign apparatus (international law and war) also tools from *reason of state*. If the military-diplomatic technology consists in securing and developing the state's forces through a system of alliances and the organization of military forces, then this perspective brings to the attention the alliances that Russia succeeded (but also failed) to establish to contain the Syrian crisis. The agreement regarding the destruction of the Syrian chemical arsenal was a rare example of US-Russian cooperation, to which the US reluctantly agreed in 2013. Furthermore, Russia managed to establish a division of labor with Iran in Syria, and after having overcome deep disagreements with Turkey, especially after the downing of a Russian military jet by a Turkish plane in November 2015, managed to find common ground with Ankara.

In 2015, Russia undertook unprecedented diplomatic efforts to advance nego-

tiations between the Syrian regime and representatives of the opposition. Sergei Lavrov travelled the Middle East. He even brokered a meeting between Syrian and Saudi security officials (RFI 2015). However, efforts to build a large coalition under Moscow's auspices failed, and especially disagreements with Riyadh remained, while Assad lost ground in Syria. At this point Russia deployed its military and sustained its support until it enabled Moscow to renew its bid for an alliance, this time including parties with as divergent interests as Turkey and Iran.

Thus, Russia might be one of the few states that is on good working terms with Damascus and Ankara, that has good relations to the Kurdish factions in Northern Syria and to the Turkish government, that can talk to Israel and to Iran. However, Russia failed with the Gulf states, showing the limits of its diplomatic capabilities.

## Conclusions: Biopolitics in the Near Abroad and Sovereignty Everywhere Else

This paper has shown that International Governmentality Studies can imply realist and constructivist readings of foreign policy. The territorial exercise of sovereign power, Russia's concern for territorial integrity and sovereignty, all echo main tenets of realism, while the biopolitical definition of a "russkii mir" and of "compatriots" refers to the field of identity politics and constructivism.

The main empirical argument advanced in this paper has been that Russian foreign policy adopts all mechanisms of modern power, however, it fields different rationales in the "Near abroad" and in the "Far abroad". In the post-Soviet space, Russia is increasingly inclined to advance a biopolitical approach, as exemplified by the intervention in Georgia 2008 and by the Crimean Crisis. In the "Far abroad", sovereignty is the predominant rationale, as demonstrated by Russia's Syria policy. However, these are trends and, as demonstrated above, there is a mix of instruments at work.

More in detail, the concern for an ill-defined "Russian" population beyond Russia's borders means that Russia adopts a deterritorialized form of power that transgresses the borders of post-Soviet nation states. Their sovereignty is thus called into question. Because of this mismatch between the territory of the Russian Federation on the one hand, and the *Russkii mir* or its "sphere of identity" on the other, Russian foreign policy contains a constant expansionist potential aimed at preserving influence over territories where the "compatriots" live. The biopolitical rationale seems to prevail over the rationale of sovereignty in the Near abroad. However, the Crimean example shows how at the beginning of the crisis, Russia argued in biopolitical terms ("save compatriots") but then moved on to deploy tools associated with sovereignty and built a whole legal edifice to justify the of-

ficial "reunification" of Crimea with the Russian Federation. To argue in favor of a biopolitical *turn* in Russian foreign and domestic policies seems too a bold statement, which would also run against Foucault's own position. To maintain such a claim would mean to deny pre-Putin Russia any modern subjectivity. Rather, there is a continuum of forms of power. While it might be true that reason of state and sovereignty are "more traditional" forms of power, they are not outdated and continue to play a role in Russian foreign policy, for example in Syria, where claims to "save lives" play a smaller role concerning Russia's involvement. While there have been attempts to cast Russian support for the Syrian government as an effort to save lives, especially those of Syrian Orthodox Christians, the Russian approach there corresponded less to biopolitics and much more to the toolkit of sovereignty and of *raison d'état*.

The preservation of sovereignty and territoriality has become the paramount concern of Russian foreign policy in the "Far abroad". To this aim, Russia has deployed its whole diplomatic apparatus to build alliances with other nation-states. Regarding Syria, Russia has also deployed its military apparatus, especially after initial diplomatic efforts failed in 2015. After the fall of Eastern Aleppo in December 2016, in which Russian support played a key role, Moscow returned to dictate a diplomatic solution summoning the conflict parties to an inconclusive summit at Astana. It did so building an alliance with Turkey and Iran, however, delegating the usual international brokers, such as the United Nations and the European Union to the role of mere bystanders, and sidelining other important players such as the U.S. and the Gulf states as well as the Kurdish YPG. Moreover, from a reason of state perspective it is no contradiction that Russia switches between the roles of mediator and warring party.

Therefore, while Russia might deploy a deterritorialized power in the Near abroad that threatens other states' sovereignty, it paradoxically assumes the role of a champion of territoriality and sovereignty in other parts of the world. Furthermore, it would be too easy to flatly claim that Russia is an "imperialist" state or a "great power" that aims to restore its sphere of influence. While this paper highlighted less the underlying *reasons* for a specific foreign policy, it has shown that different *aims* and different power mechanism (*methods*) are at work, depending on time and place. They even might coexist and overlap. It has focused on the "how" of power and less on its "why". Russian foreign policy is not simply about "restoring territory" but follows different trajectories in different parts of the world adopting a mix of power mechanisms. Hence, while there certainly are long-durée continuities in Russian foreign policy, it also is full of breaks and shifts – it is not in a finite state, but ever-changing and dynamic.

#### Bio

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#### Article

## Geopolitical Economy of Russia's Foreign Policy Duality: Lockean in its East and Hobbesian in its West

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#### Abstract

At a time of critical geopolitical economic changes (i.e. power shift and new energy (dis)order), Russia has been pursuing different foreign policy lines in two sides of the Eurasian landmass: Lockean in its east and Hobbesian in its west. On the one hand, Russia has been intensifying its economic (i.e.energy) ties with Asia-Pacific, particularly with the rising great power China; on the other hand, it has been pursuing aggressive policy against Western powers' interests in its west (i.e. Georgia, Ukraine, Syria). How do we explain this discrepancy of Russian foreign policy? How do those geopolitical economic changes interact with aspiring great power energy giant Russia's foreign policy orientations? Is there any role for leader level perceptions on the country past and future? In order to answer those daunting, but complementary questions requiring different levels of analyses, this paper draws on a neoclassical realist perspective bridging the divide between domestic-international (spatial), ideational-material (cognitive), and temporal (part-present-future). In this light, it argues that at a time of profound global changes, Russian elites' geopolitical economic perceptions of their country's role in the Eurasian landmass have been causing this duality in its foreign policy. The paper concludes that Russian elites' sense of geopolitical exposure and their economic mismanagement have not only prompting discrepancy in Russia's foreign policy, but also undermining its great power status in the 21st century.

### Keywords

Neoclassical Realism, Geopolitical Economy, Power shift, Energy, Russia

The collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century – *President Vladimir Putin* 

If Peter the Great lived now, he would undoubtedly build the capital not in the Baltic region, but at the Pacific Ocean – *Prof. Sergei Karaganov* 

#### Introduction

Due to "global power shift" (Hoge 2004) induced "systemic change"<sup>1</sup>, the political-economic weight of the Asia-Pacific region (APR) - primarily led by China- has been increasing. Those global "geopolitical economic" changes have been reshaping "hierarchy" of international politics<sup>3</sup>, thereby, providing significant opportunities/challenges to the system's "secondary powers" (Williams, et.al. 2012). At a time of new energy (dis)order (i.e. changing trade balance, price volatility, American led "unconventional energy revolution"), this is particularly the case for the "aspiring great power" Russia (Rangsimaporn 2009; Mankoff 2012). As one of the largest energy exporting countries with shrinking European market, Russia dreams of regaining its powerful status in its east, namely "Eastern Vector" or "Pivot to Asia" aims to exploit untapped potential resources – particularly in East Siberia and the Russian Far East (ESRFE)- and exporting them to the widening Asia-Pacific market through Lockean logic.4 Moreover, Sino-Russia military ties have reached "at all time high" culminating in Joint Sea 2016 exercises took place in the disputed South China Sea (RT, 2016). In its west, however, Hobbesian culture dominates the minds of Russian policy makers prompting them to go aggressive in the perceived "Near Abroad" (i.e. Ukraine) and more recently in the Middle East, particularly Syria. To put bluntly, both Hobbesian and Lockean logics haunt the minds of Russian policy makers simultaneously, thereby, push Russia's foreign policy to divergent, if not contradictory, directions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Robert Gilpin (1981:39-41) proposes three (ideal) types of international changes: system change (nature of actors), systemic change (Governance of system) and interactional change (Interstate processes)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Geopolitical economy is a relatively new approach to examine the evolution of the capitalist world order's evolution and its 21st century form of multi-polarity. It assumes the centrality of the state in (de)regulating economy and shaping domestic/foreign economic policies that the role of states in developing and regulating economies is central. States' mutual interactions – conflicting, cooperative and collusive – and the international order they create are understood in terms of the character of national economies, with a stress on their challenges and opportunities. See; Desai 2013; Desai 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Traditionally, international politics is depicted as an anarchical sphere in which there is no higher authority and T. Hobbes' "state of nature" sets the rules of interactions among states. Through critical lenses to this depiction, Lake (2009) asserts that states claim authority over each other according to their positions in international hierarchy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> A.Wendt (1999) proposes a cultural theory of international politics taking whether states view each other as enemies, rivals, or friends as a fundamental determinant. He characterizes these roles as "cultures of anarchy" described as Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian respectively. These cultures are shared ideas which help shape state interests and capabilities, and generate tendencies in the international system.

In this light, the paper's research questions are as follow: How do we explain this discrepancy of Russian foreign policy? How do those geopolitical economic changes interact with aspiring great power energy giant Russia's foreign policy orientations? Is there any role for Russian elite geopolitical economic perceptions on the country past and future? In order to answer those questions, this paper draws on a neoclassical realist perspective bridging the divide between domestic-international (spatial), ideational-material (cognitive), and temporal (present-future), it argues that Russian elites' geopolitical economic perceptions interacting with the country's resource rent based economy cause discrepancy in Russia's foreign (economy) policy. The plan of the study is as follows: Drawing on a neoclassical realist account, the first part provides a geopolitical economic conceptual framework to discern how interacting geopolitical perceptions of state elites and dominant economic sector - for our purposes energy sector- serve as a foreign policy determinant. The second part hinges on two geopolitical economic changes in the international system level - power shift to east and new energy (dis)order -providing both opportunities and challenges for Russia with its resource rent based economy. The third part will shed light on Russia policy-making elite perceptions on aforementioned changes in the international system level and Russia's today and future in this emerging geopolitical economic setting. Moreover, it stresses upon energy sector component of Russia's pivot to Asia as an attempt to adjust itself to those aforementioned geopolitical economic changes. The last part illuminates how Russian sense of geopolitical exposure in its west and mismanagement of its resource rent economy challenges Russia's resurrection. It concludes that both sense of geopolitical exposure and economic mismanagement have been pushing Russia's foreign policy in two diverse directions: Lockean in its east and Hobbesian in its west.

### Geopolitical Economy and Foreign Policy: A Neoclassical Realist Account

P.Kennedy's (1989) seminal study titled "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers" reveals how economic indicators enable researchers to discern which powers were rising, while others were falling in a time period between 1500 and the 1980s. He puts that ascendancy of powers correlate with their economic duration and available resources. Similarly, J.Agnew and S.Corbridge put that "today, as at certain times in the world (for example period between 1500 and 1700 in Western Europe) relative economic power has begun to displace military force and conquest as an important feature of international relations" (Agnew and Corbidge 1995,p. 3-4). As (economic) globalization proceeds in the post-cold war period, even some pundits assert that the world to grow increasingly "flat" (Friedman, 2006).

Without a doubt, globalization has been one of the most important characteristics of international relations; however, one should not exaggerate its magnitude and implications on states' foreign policy orientations. As R.Gilpin (2001,p.18)

reminds us, in along with economic efficiency, national ambitions such as gaining [great power] status are driving forces of globalization and "the economic/ foreign policies of a society reflect the nation's national interest as defined by the dominant elite of that society." Even at a time of accelerated globalization, states endeavor to expand their influence over energy resources (such as oil and natural gas) and trade routes (e.g., critical energy infrastructures, sea lanes) for strategic objectives. As we will discuss below, this is particularly the case in (immobile) energy resources, which could be acquired from a fixed range of geographical locations (i.e.Russia) that are relatively close to rising powers with increasing imported energy needs (i.e.China) in the Eurasian landmass.

Hence, conversably to critical geopolitics' "anti-geopolitics" and "anti-catographic" stance (Kelly 2006; Haverluk, et. al., p. 2014), a holistic geopolitical toolkit would provide relevant and more explanatory analyses to examine how geopolitical economy shapes a given states' foreign policy orientations in the 21st century. In this regard, through its emphasis on domestic factors such as elite perceptions, state-society relations and state motivations in along with relative material considerations in the international system, "neoclassical realism" (NCR) could illuminate the role of geopolitical economic determinant of Russian foreign (economic) policy. G.Rose (1998) summarizes NCR's principal contentions to bridge the domestic (unit-level) –international (structure) spatial gap with these words:

"[Neoclassical realisms'] adherents argue that the scope and ambitions of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specially by its relative material power capabilities... They argue further, however, that the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening unit-level variables [such as decision-makers' perceptions and state's economic structure]" (Rose 1998, p. 146).

In a review article on NCR, M.Foulon (2015,p.653) notes that in along with bridging spatial (domestic-international) gap it fills cognitive (material-ideational), and temporal (past-present-future) divides as well: "state-level assessments and imaginations about future material capabilities create the geopolitical contours for the formation of foreign policy."

This phenomenon is particularly important for aspiring great power energy giant Russia at a time of critical geopolitical economic changes<sup>5</sup> (i.e.power shift to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> One should note Grygiel's (2006, p.1-20) typology of geography, geopolitics and geostrategy enabling researcher to examine the rise and fall of great powers. According to his interpretation, geography is a combination of two factors: immutable geological facts (such as the patterns of lands, seas, rivers, mountain ranges, and climate zones), and the human capacity to adapt to them through changes in production and communications technology. The outcome of this combination of geography and human activities has three variables: the layout of trade routes, the location of resources, and the nature of

east and new energy (dis)order) in the 21st century. Before examining how those geopolitical economic changes have been shaping Russia's foreign policy, it would be plausible to elaborate on those geopolitical economic changes.

## Geopolitical Economic Changes in the 21st Century

"Power shift to east" and "new energy (dis)order" have emerged as the two prominent underlying geopolitical economic changes for aspiring great power Russia's foreign (economic) policy in the 21st century. Before examining how those systemic changes have served as inputs to Russia's foreign (economic) policy output, it would be plausible to shed light on how those profound changes have been (re) shaping hierarchy of international politics in general, Eurasian politics and Russian foreign policy orientation in particular.

### Power shift to the east and China's (re)emergence

The debate on the United States (US) as a declining power and the rise of Asia has been around since the late 1960s. Among those studies, one should note Frank's "ReOrient" through a historical-structuralist perspective. In his study, Frank postulates the re-orientation of global political economy towards Asia with these words;

"Leadership' of the world system...has been temporarily 'centered' in one sector and region (or a few), only to shift again to one or more others. That happened in the nineteenth century, and that appears to be happening again at the beginning of the twenty-first century, as the 'center' of the 'world economy seems to be shifting back to the 'East'" (Frank 1998, p. 7).

Indeed, this phenomenon has become evident in the 2000s, mainly due to the rise of China which has discovered "the seven pillars of Western wisdom" (Mahbubani 2009,p. 51-100) underpinning the West's progress and its success in outperforming Asia for the past two centuries. Among those studies, F. Zakaria's (2008) The Post-American World asserts that "third great power shift" in which "the rise of the rest," has been coming to pass in our times.<sup>7</sup>

state borders. This prompted Grygiel to assume that "geography is a geopolitical reality to which states respond by formulating and pursuing a geostrategy." Geopolitics, which is the human factor within geography such as opening new trade routes and technological innovation in transportation and/or communication, exists independently of politicians' strategic motivations or their geostrategy. On the basis of this intellectual vantage point, he comes up with the main argument: "the most successful states are those that match their geostrategy to the underlying geopolitical reality." States that protect their home territory (and their proxies), and politically control resources and their transportation routes will increase and maintain their relative power. By testing his typology on three great powers (Venice, the Ottoman Empire, and Ming China) of their time, Grygiel concludes that the match/mismatch between changing geopolitics and those great powers' geostrategy played a determining role in their rise and fall.

6 These seven wisdoms of the West are: 1) Freem-Market Economics 2) Science and Technology 3) Meritocray 4) Pragmatism 5)Culture of Peace 6) Rule of Law 7)Education.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The first shift was the rise of the Western world that had begun in the fifteenth century and acceler-

The debate has been reinvigorated following American led global financial crisis in 2008 (Mahbubani 2009; Fouskas and Gökay 2012). Following their analysis on variety of data and projections provided by Carnegie Endowment, Price Water House Coopers, and National Intelligence Council (NIC), Fouskas and Gökay (2012,p.126) put that "the current [American led] financial crisis, and economic downturn will confirm and possibly accelerate the shift in economic power to Asia, in particular China." Mainly due to the success of its socialist market economy as economic development model, rising China overcame from the crisis with minimal negative impacts and became the second largest economy in 2010 (Atlı 2013). Differently expressed, the crisis underlined China's position as the engine of not only the Asian regional economy, but also the global economy (Xinbo 2010). From Beijing's perspective, China has been re-emerging to its rightful place in the international system, arguably harbingering "a return to geopolitical business as usual" (Beeson and Li 2015,p.94).

Compounded by its historic "strategic mistrust" (Jisi, et. al. 2012), Beijing believes that the US's principal objective is to maintain its global hegemonic status, thereby; Washington will attempt (i.e. democracy agenda, maritime control of South Sea and Yellow Sea, arm sales to Taiwan, economic protectionism, TPP, etc.) to prevent re-emergence of China. Some high-ranking Chinese officials even have gone far and openly asserted that "the United States is China's greatest national security threat" (Jisi,et.al. 2012,p.13). Nonetheless, this does not entail China to take aggressive steps to jeopardize its "superficial friendship" (i.e. pretending to be friends despite conflicting interests) with the US at the expense of its "peaceful rise to great-power status" (Bijian 2005; Xuetong 2010). In this context, the authors of the article concur with W.Dong argument that "China has been pursuing a hedging strategy that aims at minimizing strategic risks, increasing freedom of action, diversifying strategic options, and shaping the US' preferences and choices" (Xuetong 2010,p.59). In this parallel, continental power China "marches westwards" through the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and variety multilateral/bilateral initiatives - for our purposes intensified (energy) relations with Russia - to consolidate its rising status, improve its international environment, and promote regional cooperation in the Eurasian landmass (Zhao 2015), rather than practicing "Monroe Doctrine" in its backyard (Navarro 2014).

## Fueling China in the New Energy (Dis) Order

China believes that it is a rising power on the way to become the world's largest economy. However, it has an enormous problem: energy needs (Bender and Rosen, 2015). To put differently, it is vital for China to ensure uninterrupted flow of affordable energy resources to its growing economy. According to BP's projec-

tion, ongoing economic expansion in Asia – particularly in China and India – will drive continued growth (an average of 1.4% annually) in the world's demand for energy over the next 20 years (BP). As the world's most populous country with a fast-growing economy, China has become the world's largest net importer of petroleum and other liquids, in part due to its rising oil consumption by 2013. Its oil consumption growth accounted for about 40% of the world's oil consumption growth in 2014 (EIA). By 2030 it is projected that China will become the world's single largest hydrocarbon importer (80% of its oil and more than 40% of gas consumption) (Energypost). Besides to its substantial oil demand growth, geopolitical uncertainties in those principal oil exporter regions (i.e. Middle East) have led China to import greater amounts of crude oil from a wide range of sources. Nevertheless, it still heavily dependent on oil imports (about 50-55%) from the Middle East and beyond that about 43% of this oil has to navigate through the Strait of Hormuz while 82% of all Chinese maritime oil imports must pass through the Strait of Malacca (Bender and Rosen 2015), in along with deeply destabilized South and East Asia seas. Natural gas consumption in the country has also risen tremendously over the last decade, and China has sought to increase natural gas imports as liquefied natural gas (LNG) passes through aforementioned various fragile chokepoints as well (MAP 1). Accompanied by its "strategic mistrust" of the sea-power US controlling maritime (energy) trade and energy rivalries with American Asian allies (i.e. India, Japan and, S.Korea), continental power China has been exposed to growing levels of "geopolitical risk" at a time of "shifting energy trade balances" (Newell 2013, p.39). As a part of securing China's commercial – for our purposes energy-lines of communication (SLOCs), China has been modernizing its navy forces with a limited but growing capability (Rourke 2016,p.7). With its potential to transform geostrategic character of the whole region, moreover, China has come up with Maritime Silk Road Route initiative, which is a reflection of Chinese growing interests in Indian Ocean ports and projects to construct new overland secure pathways to link China with the Indian Ocean (Brewster 2016).

Energy related "geopolitical risk" is not the sole concern for China though; it has been confronted with "price risk" as well. In the last decade, indeed, by creating a climate of uncertainty and distrust among energy actors, energy price volatility has become the most significant issue facing the global energy industry (Henning, et. al. 2013). Actually, the title of World Energy Council's (WEC 2015) last report is "Energy price volatility: the new normal". In this light, this new energy (dis) order has rendered resource rent based economies such as Russia much more vulnerable.

By enabling to reach previously untapped reserves of oil and gas due to technological advancements, it is expected that "the revolution" will transform the

world's regional supply dynamics (Maugeri, 2012). Indeed, it is projected that the US will turn out to be the largest oil producer by the mid-2020s and a net energy exporter by 2030s. The EIA (2012) also estimates that American gas production increasing from 650 billion cubic meters (bcm) in 2011 to 850 bcm in 2035 - will exceed production rates of Russia. This means that the US's increasing amount of LNG importer position has been shifting to a net LNG exporter with potential triggering effects on spot market prices, the global LNG market, and international price structures for natural gas contracts. Although its impact has been less pronounced than shale gas, the North America's unconventional oil reserve potential (oil sands/tight oil) would likely to cause similar ramifications in global oil markets (Newell and Iller 2013, p. 27). This surge in oil production, in addition to fluctuations in financial markets, is considered among primary reasons for 40% sharp price fall in the period between June 2014 and December 2014 (Economist 2014, Özdemir 2014). Besides to fluctuating prices, those abundant unconventional source discoveries in North America, combined with global demand patters emanating from APR, will likely to transform the globe's energy trade balance (Newell and Iller 2013, p.39). In words of energy guru D. Yegin; "the emergence of shale gas and tight oil in the US, demonstrates once again, how innovation can change the balance of global economic and political power" (Yergin 2014).

Before assessing geopolitical economic implications of this new energy (dis)order, it would be plausible to note three main characteristics of the "revolution" 1) Production growth continues to be driven by North America; 2) Slow down after about 2020 3) Other countries will enter the game - notably Russia and Chinabut their contribution will be limited (Rühl 2014). In this context, it is safe to propose that by having the strategic card of becoming a net energy exporter, the US is the biggest winner. Considering there will be more supplier options in the energy markets with depressed but fluctuating prices, the European Union (EU) with a decline in growth levels (i.e. with or without European shale gas revolution) has proposed measures (i.e. efficiency, completing energy markets, diversification) to decrease its dependence (around 30-35% in natural gas) on Russian resources as indicated in its Energy Security Strategy paper published in response to the most recent Ukrainian crisis (European Commission 2014). In this parallel, pointing out the US led "unconventional energy revolution"; several pundits have proposed forthcoming American energy exports to EU energy market (Cheney 2014). As a more concrete step for diversification away from Russia, the EU has put its political will on the Southern Gas Corridor that is envisaged to import non-Russian natural gas reserves of Caspian Basin - Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz II gas field being in the first place-via Turkey through TANAP and TAP. In light of these favorable developments on the importer side with depressed but fluctuating prices, Russia, with its economy based on energy rents and narrowed EU market, is one of the losers in the new energy (dis)order. As it will be elaborated below these energy

developments have reinforced aspiring great Russia's eastern vector.

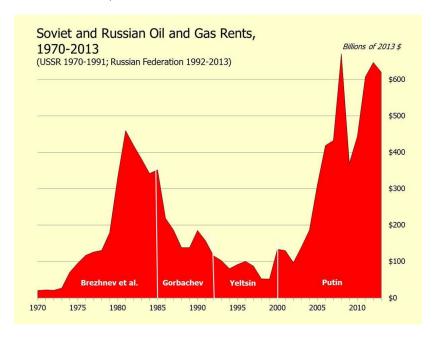
## Aspiring Great Power Russia's Geopolitical Outlook in the New Century

Unlike other major powers (the US, the EU, China), Russia's great power status has been largely diminished from its superpower status in the second half of the twentieth century (Kuchins and Zevelev 2012,p.181). In this light, it is not a surprise to note that at one of his speeches responding to western criticisms on Russia's democratic credentials, President Vladimir Putin stated that "the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geo-political catastrophe of the century" (Independent 2005). This statement of Putin is a clear reflection of Russian elite's traditional mindset utilizing geopolitics as the primary tool of (re)orienting Russia to changing international system. By dividing world into pan-regions (i.e. the near abroad, Europe, Asia), Russia determines international power balance or defines "natural" allies (Leichtova 2014,p.18). To put differently, Russia embarks on creating coalitions to balance the influence of the dominant power block (the West in general, the US in particular) allowing partnering with states (i.e China) all around the world that corresponds "the multi-vector" of its foreign policy. Putting itself in the role of "balancer" (just like Great Britain between the 17th and the 19th centuries) without no eternal friends and enemies in the system, Russia has been placing its own capabilities (i.e. military and energy sectors) to lure those partners not to orient towards the unipolarity under the US (Leichtova 2014,p.25).

This geopolitical outlook correlates with Russia's ambition to (re)gain great power status that is directly linked with its geographical positioning and physical characteristics of the Russia as a security state, which should be powerful to avert prospective threats (i.e. military, separatist groups) that might endanger integrity of its extensive territories in the Eurasian landmass. In this context, following the footsteps of the architect of Russia's multi-vector foreign policy with frequent emphasis on "multi-polarity", former Prime Minister Yevgeni Primakov, President Putin has the vision of transforming Russia into an indispensable great power through "economic modernization" [for our purposes energy sector] and independent foreign policy (Mankoff 2007, 127). To put differently, Kremlin's main objective is to ensure Russia's territorial integrity by paying close attention to domestic concerns (i.e. economic modernization) in eastern regions (i.e. ESRFE), preventing intra-state conflicts (i.e.fundementalsim and separatism), facilitating economic cooperation [particularly in energy sector] with all Eastern states (i.e. China), regardless of their ideological disparity (Rozman, 1999: 5-6; Belokrenitsky and Voskressenski 2004,p. 90). Through strengthening central authority such as "Yukos Affair" in energy sector (Balzer 2005), those efforts have produced positive results in terms of managing internal political-economic disorder, reducing intra-state armed conflicts, and restoring a decent level of social-economic development (Kireeva 2012,p.54).

In foreign policy sphere, Moscow has embarked on pursuing a more independent approach to dealing with the rest of the world. Along with Putin's leadership type and a broad elite consensus about the role that the state should play, an increase in Russia's relative international power – mainly due to incrementally increasing energy revenues and declining American hegemony- have shaped Russia's new foreign policy approach (Mankoff 2012,p. 4-5).

Figure 1: Soviet (1970–1990) and Russian (1991–2013) oil and gas rents (Billions of 2013 USD)



Source: Directly adopted from Gaddy and Ickes (2014)

According to Putin's vision, "Great-power status is...a necessary condition for Russia's more advanced engagement with the world" (Tsygankova 2005,134). With "the greatest fear" that the emerging new geopolitical setting in which the world's major economic powers would be capable to topple down Russia, as an aspiring great power, it has been in a state of transition for geopolitical position and role in the international system (Morozova 2009; Grvosdev and Marsch 2013,p. 4-6).

As it aims to regain its great power status, among Russians there has been a shift of understanding that economic factor, particularly energy wealth, rather than military one, is the primary component of Russia's power in the era (Grvosdev and Marsch 2013,p. 7). In this context, Russia is ready to make whatever it is necessary including changing its foreign (economic) policy orientation or geostrategy. The Foreign Policy Concept (2008), indeed, delineates Russia's foreign policy objectives with these words

"...to preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity, to achieve strong positions of authority in the world community that best meet the interests of the Russian Federation as one of influential centers in the modern world, and...to create favorable external conditions for the modernization of Russia..."

"Will to *derzhava*" (urge to great power status) prevalent among Russian elites as well and this paves them to prescribe policies to restore Russia's "rightful" position – third big player following the US and China – in the international system which is evolving to the multipolarity. In other words, isolationism is not an option for Russia (Grvosdev and Marsch 2013,p. 6).

As it will be discussed below, there are downsides of Russia's geopolitical position and energy sector [and military sector] dependent economy. Fortunately, they also provide Russia the opportunity to reorient its west oriented geostrategy towards other ventures. Historically, much of Russia's economic activity and population have been concentrated in the western part or the so-called European Russia stretching from the Ural Mountains. It is mainly due to the fact that in the last 300 years, Western and European civilizations have been located at the world's political-economic center of gravity. Most recently, thanks to the blessing of its strategic location between Asia and Europe, Russia is set to shift its orientation as power shifts to APR, which could provide resources for the development of those Russian distant places that "communist planners left out of cold", ESRFE (Hill and Gaddy 2003). As indicated in the Foreign Policy Concept (2013):

"Strengthening Russia's presence in ...APR is becoming increasingly important since Russia is an integral part of this fastest-developing geopolitical zone, toward which the center of world economy and politics is gradually shifting. Russia is interested in participating actively in APR integration processes, using the possibilities offered by the APR to implement programs meant to boost Siberian and Far Eastern economy..."

Indeed, Russia's aptitude to cooperate with rising Asian powers (i.e.China) would determine its prospects to maintain its current position at worse, its revival as a great power in international power hierarchy – the third biggest player – at best, in the new geopolitical setting of the twenty-first century. Despite concerns of becoming too dependent and open to geopolitical exposure on China – as will be discussed below – and deteriorating relations with the West at least before the

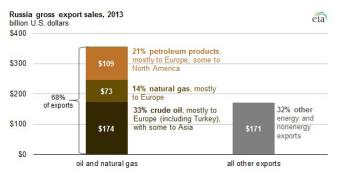
Ukraine crisis, Russia perceives great political-economic potential in its growing partnership with China, which is a natural soulmate on many critical foreign policy issues rendering Russia strong (Legvold 2006). Indeed, through geopolitical lenses, both Russia and China prefers a multi-polar world, rather than the US led unipolarity. On the one hand, Russia considers partnership with China as an opportunity to pursue multi-vector policy to counterbalance the West. China, on the other hand, sees its rapprochement with Russia as an additional hand to offset the US in the Asia-Pacific. Paradoxically, the US serves as a separator factor in their relations as well. This primarily stems from China's relation pattern with US, which is both strategic and largest trading partner for the former at the same time. Contrary to its economic ties with the US, Sino-Russian economic interdependence is limited though, arms trade has the lion share in the trade volume (Russia is the second largest arm exporter to China) and energy trade is growing (Calrlsson, et. al. 2015). Energy sector will likely to provide the primary propulsion for Russia's pivot to Asia.

#### Energy Dimension of the Eastern Vector

Considering that "when a vector joins with a sector, we can see the emergence of foreign policy" (Grvosdev and Marsch 2013, p.10), its dominant energy sector (in along with the military) – contradicting with elite concerns on empowering China though- propel Russia to prioritize its Eastern vector. As Tsygankov (2009) notes, the pro-China position is often favored by energy producers [and military enterprises] seeking feasible contract in growing Asia markets.

As a major producer/exporter of oil and natural gas, Russia's economy heavily relies on its energy exports (Figure 2). In 2012, its energy revenues accounted for 52% of federal budget and over 70% of total exports (EIA). In 2013, Russia's oil production was 10.788 million barrel per day (bbl/d); it's the annual natural gas production of 604.8 billion cubic meters (bcm). Significant portion of those resources have been exported, rendering Russia the world's largest oil and gas exporter in total (BP 2015).





Connected with a variety of oil and natural gas pipeline, historically, Europe has been the main energy partner for Russia. Although Russian energy companies in the 1990s endeavored to diversify away from European market, they did not get the required support from of the Russian state. Today, however, Russia prioritized market diversification (i.e. the Asia-Pacific) and stress on developing resources of "the East's step-son" (i.e. Eastern Siberia and Russia Far East) (Balzer 2005; Pussenkova 2009). As it loses its market share in the European market, Russia expects to increase its share in Asia-Pacific energy market by 2030: from 8% to 25% in oil, from 0% to 20% in natural gas (Energystrategy.ru).

Despite declining rates of production over more than 40 years of operation, West Siberia - notably from the Priobskoye and Samotlor fields - continues to provide bulk of oil supply. In the longer term, however, Sakhalin in the Far East, which contributes only 3% at the moment, along with the untapped oil reserves in Eastern Siberia and the Russian Arctic, is expected increase its share in total production figures (Map 2-4) (EIA). With this optimistic production figures, overshadowing all other projects of the post-Soviet era Russia, in December 2009, the first leg of East Siberia Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline became operational to connect Daqinq Skovorodino in Siberia to the north-east of China. On December 25, 2012, ESPO-2 has become operational to link Skovorodino to Kozmino oil terminal with an annual capacity of 35 million tons (Map 3). This two legged pipeline project will not only enable Russia to diversify its energy markets in Asia, but also, arguably more importantly, bolster prospects for development of ESRFE. Indeed, President Putin asserted that the new pipeline section will "considerably increase the infrastructure capacity of the regions in Russia's Far East" and considered the commissioning a "significant event" (Rousseau 2013).

In natural gas, Urengoy, Yamburg and Medvejye, known as "the big three" located at Northwest and Arctic, are the largest fields with declining production rates though. The oil and natural gas deposits in Yamal Peninsula have also considerable potential. Yamal liquefied natural gas (LNG) project aims to access Asian markets after 2017 (Novatek.ru). The country's current LNG exports are made from Gazprom led Sakhalin 2 LNG project. In along with ongoing "upstream" investments in Sakhalin, those deposits in Arctic /East Siberia have been appealing increasing attention from the world energy sector. Even though production costs are much higher in comparison to the rates in Western Siberia, they appear as the sole factor to compensate declining production figures. Particularly in the Arctic area, there has been going on a fierce competition, partly due to emerging "Northern Sea Route" -as glaciers melts- with potential to change the world's trade routes as transporting goods to Asian economies will be much shorter and less costly.

Recently, Russia has passed an important threshold to process and export Eastern

Siberian natural gas to Asia-Pacific markets. Accordingly, on May 21, 2014, the Russian Gazprom and the Chinese state oil company CNPC signed a 30 year termed purchase and sale gas agreement stipulating annual maximum sale of 38 bcm commencing by 2018. Arguably, this Sino-Russian agreement has been a response of Gazprom to the US led "shale gas" revolution and future export prospects of those unconventional resources to world energy markets notably European and Asian.

## Challenges for Aspiring Great Power Russia

As power shift to east has been (re)shaping the world, aspiring great power Russia has been endeavoring to readjust itself to these new geopolitical economic changes by reorienting its foreign (economic) policy towards the east primarily through its energy sector. In its venture, however, there are two major challenges on Russia: sense of geopolitical exposure and modernizing its resource rent based economy.

## Sense of Geopolitical exposure

Due to its control of vast territories in the Eurasian landmass, in terms of the length of its borders and number of neighbors (the US, Japan, Korea, China, and the EU), Russia is the world's most "exposed" country. Accompanied by historical invasions, its geographical insecure land power status has prompted Russia (and its predecessors) to establish "buffer zones" (Gvosdev and Marsh 2013,p. 5), conceptualized as "near abroad" (Secrieru 2006; Trenin 2009; Camerona and Orenstein 2012) in variety official documents. Referring to Western geopolitical thinkers, R.Kagan (2012,p.155) elaborates,

"Russia is the world's preeminent land power... Land powers are perennially insecure, as Mahan intimated. Without seas to protect them, they are forever dissatisfied and have to keep expanding or be conquered in turn themselves. This is especially true of the Russians, whose flat expanse is almost bereft of natural borders and affords little protection."

On the western flank, the East-West energy corridor (i.e.BTC oil pipeline, TANAP,etc.), Western sponsored color revolutions, NATO's Kosovo intervention, missile defense system, NATO/EU's enlargement/good neighborhood / the Eastern partnership/association agreement policies towards it's "near abroad" have justified Russia's geographical sense of insecurity. Therefore, the Ukraine crisis (2014-), just like the Georgian crisis in 2008, has not erupted out of thin air and served as "the last straw" (Trenin 2014,p. 14) for Russia's security considerations with far-reaching geopolitical repercussions for Eastern Europe and beyond. Regardless of popular arguments in the West overstating Russia's imperial impulses and/or personal ideological commitments over the last crisis, President

Putin castigated Westerns' neglect to treat Russia an equal partner and take into account its security interests with these words:

"[Western states] are constantly trying to sweep us into a corner because we have an independent position, because we maintain it and because we call things like they are and do not engage in hypocrisy. But there is a limit to everything. And with Ukraine, our western partners have crossed the line, playing the bear and acting irresponsibly and unprofessionally" (Washingtonpost 2014).

In this parallel, citing S.Huntington's widely discredited assertion that "For self-definition and motivation, people need enemies" (Huntington 1997, p.130), S.Charap and K.Darden (2014,p.7) put that "after 25 years of the West treating Russia as an enemy in Ukraine, Moscow might have really become one." Criticizing the West's "liberal delusions" for igniting those two crises, J.Mearsheimer (2014) reminds that "This is Geopolitics 101: great powers are always sensitive to potential threats near their home territory." Moscow is clear on what it does not want in its proximity: national security threat, dismantlement of its bilateral economic relations, external assistance to anti-Russians, political-economic instabilities, precedents of Western orchestrated movements toppling down pro-Russian governments (Charap and Darden, 2014:10).

Besides to those aforementioned material concerns, arguably, ideational considerations (i.e. status, prestige, reputation etc.) have played their role as well. Since the end of the Cold War, as Larsona and Shevchenko put, Russia has displayed anger at American unwillingness to grant it the status to which it believes it is entitled, especially during the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, and most recently Russia's takeover of Crimea and the 2014 Ukrainian Crisis (Larson and Shevchenko, 2014). In this parallel, pertaining Russia's pro-Assad regime stance in the Syrian Crisis, A.Bagdonas (2012) argues that it was primarily motivated not solely by material interests, but also by the foreign policy doctrine of multipolarity and the wish to maintain influence and reputation in the region. President Putin, indeed, remarked that "At first they talked about the need to isolate Russia after the well-known events, for example, in Crimea. Then it became clear that this is impossible, and with the beginning of our operations in Syria the understanding of the impossibility of such destructive actions against our country became completely obvious..." (RT 2016).

### Economic Modernizing through resource rents?

Following the collapse of the USSR, the ESRFE have been suffering from deindustrialization and de-population as China increase its presence (Rousseau 2012). In this regard, it is vital for Russia to achieve those eastern provinces' "dual integration", holding them as parts of the country and integrating them with the growing Asian market. In this regard, G. Chufrin concerns about the loss of Russian sovereignty over those territories, mainly due to its poor [economic] governance (Cited in Poussenkova 2009, p.136).

Notwithstanding Moscow's optimism that private sector would make the required investments to develop idle regions under harsh climatic conditions, Russian economy is far from providing proper business climate for feasible investments, thereby, cannot prevent capital outflows at high rates (Yanık 2013, p.237). This also the case for the country's energy sector in which the increasing level of governmental control and the limitations imposed on both domestic private producers and foreign investors have been curtailing investments (Khrushcheva 2012).

Against this backdrop, solving its "Eastern Question" through providing fertile ground for investment is one of the most challenging tasks for Russia. At a time of the Ukraine crisis/annexation of Crimea related Western sanctions imposed on Russian economy (for our purposes energy sector), has further curtailed its prospects to finance/attract required huge (energy) infrastructure investments (i.e.new pipelines, refineries, LNG plants, etc.) to foster development in those provinces. To make things more complicated, the plunging oil prices have been hitting resource rent dependent Russian economy much harder than those sanctions (Birnbaum 2014). This reminds us how Russia is vulnerable to fluctuating energy prices and this jeopardy puts financial restrictions to modernize its economy (Connolly 2011).

Another risk associated with Russia's dependence on its energy sector relates to its pitfalls to exert political economic influence in the eastern vector. Partly due to "the non-conventional energy revolution", Russia will be increasingly faced with harsh competition with other LNG exporters- especially Australia and Middle Eastern origin, namely Qatar - to access Asia-Pacific energy market that has already diversified its imports (Victor 2013,100). Following the nuclear deal with P5+1 countries, Iran will provide additional energy supplies to those markets with depressed prices at the expense of Russia's energy sector (Mills 2015) . To put differently, Russia will be one of the many energy suppliers with limited political-economic influence. Indeed, April 2013 dated Russian Science Academy's report warned Russia would have difficulty of finding customers willing to pay reasonable prices for its energy exports, posing a risk to its energy sector and the economy (Eriras.ru). As its relations with the West has further strained, this risk has escalated as well, particularly on price negotiations favoring China (Panin 2014). Hence, "Russia's pivot to Asia is being reduced to a pivot to China" (Hedlund 2015).

#### Conclusions

As "power shift to east" and "new energy (dis)order" have been reshaping the world's geopolitical economic landscape, thereby, changing "hierarchy" of international politics, this paper has aims to find answers to the following questions: How do we explain this discrepancy of Russian foreign policy? How do those geopolitical changes have been interacting with aspiring great power energy giant Russia's foreign policy orientations? Is there any role for Russian elite geopolitical economic perceptions on the country past and future? In order to answer those daunting questions requiring different levels of analysis, this paper drew on a neoclassical realist account and argued that at a time of profound geopolical economic changes Russian elites' perceptions of their country's role in the Eurasian landmass have been causing this duality in its foreign policy.

In order to materialize its objective, the outline was organized as follow: Drawing on a neoclassical realist account, the first part provided a geopolitical economic conceptual framework to illuminate how interacting geopolitical perceptions of state elites and their (mis)management of the country's energy sector - for our purposes energy sector- serve as a foreign policy determinants for Russia's foreign policy. The second part proposed that two geopolitical economic changes in the international system level - power shift to east and new energy (dis)order -have been providing both opportunities and challenges for Russia with its resource rent based economy. The third part revealed Russia policy-making elite perceptions on aforementioned changes in the international system level and Russia's today and future in this emerging geopolitical economic setting. Moreover, it stresses upon energy sector component of Russia's pivot to Asia as an attempt to adjust itself to those aforementioned geopolitical economic changes. The last part illuminated how Russian sense of geopolitical exposure in its west and mismanagement of its resource rent economy have been challenging Russia's resurrection. Against the backdrop, the paper concludes that it's perceived "geopolitical exposure" particularly in its west and to a lesser extent its east- "problems of modernizing its economy through resource rents" not only pave Russia to play dual roles in its foreign policy, but also, arguably more importantly, curtail its prospects to retain its great power status at a time of critical geopolitical economic changes.

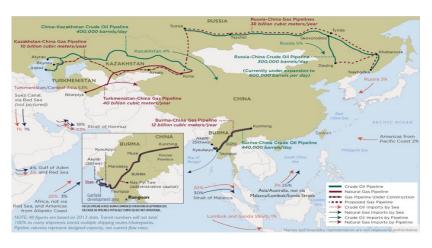
Beyond the scope of this paper, several critical questions come to mind: Should we treat Sino-Russian energized partnership as an anti-Western block? Is APR becoming a new scene for "tragedy of great powers"? The answer of the authors to those questions is not necessarily though. Regardless of its "strategic mistrust" and clashing perspectives (i.e. maritime control, vulnerable financial system, currency rates, etc.), China would not like to hurt its "peaceful rise" that is based on its intense relations with the global hegemon, the US, at least in the foreseeable future. Therefore, China would continue to treat energy giant Russia with its

ailing economy as a "junior partner" to fuel its economy, rather an ally to topple down American hegemonic structure. Actually, this would enable additional supplies to world energy markets with depressed energy prices that might slow the pace of American led "unconventional revolution" temporarily causing further fluctuations in the world energy markets. As a safety cushion to its economic stability, we can expect China to take further steps to diversify away from the USD and urge its trading partners to accept Renmibi instead. By determining Renmibi as a medium in its natural gas deal with Russia, China has taken a robust step in this direction as a direct assault to reserve currency status of the USD (lenta.ru).

Last, but not least, how will the US under Donald Trump react Sino-Russian intensified relations? After Trump's election a new rapprochement could be observed between the US and Russia since the neorealist Trump administration is expected to target China as the number one threat against its own interests unlike the Obama administration that targeted Russia with its neoliberal interventionist approach. In fact, this resembles the strategic choice made by the US in 1971 when President Nixon opted to have warm relations with China in order to contaminate the USSR, main rival, that time. Now the tables have turned and in this geopolitical triangle China seems to be the main rival of US due to shifts in international system and Russia will have to reconsider its situation between the east and the west by taking into consideration of this new reality after Trump with whom Russia could have better relations.

#### Annexes

Map 1: China's Import Transit Routes/Critical Chokepoints



Source: Bender and Rosen 2015

Over 7 bln b Pechora 7 bln bbl ABC **East Siberian** Moscow Over 7 bln bbl West Siberian Sakhalin otential 81 bln bbl ABC1 Over 7 bln bbl Volga Urals potential 15 bln bbl ABC1 ucasus Caspian 81 bln bbl ABC1 Mangyshiak

Map 2: Major Russian Oil Basins

Source: Troika Dialog

RUSSIA ESPO Phase 1 East Siberian oil and gas fields Okhotsk Tomsk Tynda Omsk Skovorodino Taishet Vanino Angarsk Pavlodar KAZAKHSTAN Daging MONGOLIA Kozmino CHINA Nakhodka 3 Tanker Terminal Oil Pipeline ESPO Phase 2 Sea of

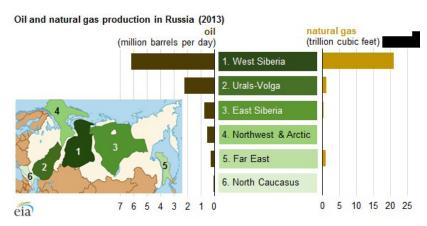
skovorodino to Kozmino

Map 3: ESPO Pipeline Route

Oil & gas field

Source: Platts, J.P. Morgan Commodities Research

Japan



Map 4: ESPO Pipeline Route

Source: Platts, J.P. Morgan Commodities Research

#### Bio

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#### Article

# Russian Power Politics and the Eurasian Economic Union: The Real and the Imagined

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#### Abstract

The paper investigates the discrepancy between the functioning of the Eurasian Economic Union and the perception of this organization in the Russian discourse. The study analyzes the official discourse on the EAEU in Russia produced by high-ranked Russian politicians, as well as the discourse on the EAEU in the Russian academic community. These discourses are chosen given their particular relevance for the Russian foreign policy decision-making. The paper shows that the perception of the EAEU by the Russian observers is strikingly different from the functioning of the organization. While the Russian discourse focuses on the ability of the EAEU to act as a power pole reshaping the global economy and to enhance Russian global influence, precisely in this respect the contribution of the EAEU is relatively limited; at the same time, real advantages of the EAEU are typically deemphasized by the Russian analysis.

### **Keywords**

Eurasian Regionalism, Official Discourse, Expert Discourse, Perception Gap

#### Introduction

The establishment of the Customs Union (CU) of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in 2010, which was transformed into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2015 (and currently includes, in addition to three original members, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan), attracted substantial attention of both academic researchers and policy-makers (Libman and Vinokurov 2012; Dragneva and Wolczuk 2013; Vymyatina and Antonova 2014; Dutkiewicz and Sakwa 2015; Molchanov 2015; Lane and Samokhvalov 2015). While in the past regional organizations in the post-Soviet Eurasia remained mostly rhetorical entities, in the EAEU some progress towards functioning regional economic integration was achieved. In particular, it manifests itself in the existence of the common customs territory and the common customs tariff, as well as a common institution governing trade policy (the Eurasian Economic Commission, EAEC).

The debate on the EAEU in the literature typically perceives this organization through the logic of Russian power and control. The EAEU is seen as a tool of Russian foreign policy of establishing and safeguarding a specific zone of influence in the post-Soviet Eurasia (e.g., Balakishi 2016). From this point of view, the EAEU is interpreted as the Russian reaction on the development of the European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership (Delcour and Kostanyan 2014). In her famous statement, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton explicitly interprets the EAEU as a reincarnation of the Soviet Union.¹ At the same time, this discussion rarely tries to understand the internal logic of functioning of the EAEU, its bodies and its institutions. This task is particularly challenging, because in Russia itself the discourse of the EAEU in politics and expert community and the actual practices of the EAEU are decoupled from each other. It is possible to argue that the epistemic communities of the post-Soviet countries construct their own image of the EAEU, which is only occasionally updated based on the actual experience of the organization.

A gap between the practices of an institution (in particular, a regional organization) and the perception of this institution is not rare. The bureaucratic reality of the EU is certainly different from both the optimism of the pan-European movement and the negative perception of Euroskepticism. However, in case of the EAEU, the gap seems to be particularly large and persistent. The goal of this paper is to critically examine the differences between the actual functioning of the EAEU and the interpretation of the EAEU in the Russian political and expert discourse. In what follows, I will refer to this image of the EAEU created by epistemic communities as an 'imagined' EAEU, to confront it with the 'real' EAEU.<sup>2</sup> The paper argues that while the perception of the EAEU in the political discourse in Russia is indeed highly inaccurate, the way how Russian political elites imagine the EAEU is actually one of the reasons why the 'real' EAEU functions in a certain way and remains different from the 'imagined' one.

# Methodological Remarks

While studying the Russian perceptions of the EAEU, the paper borrows from the tradition of the critical discourse analysis (on discourse analysis see Fairclough 1995; Jorgensen and Philips 2002; Torfing 1999, 2005; Loizides 2015). In particular, it proceeds from the assumption that discourses play a crucial role in the construction of social practices and structures, but are at the same time themselves socially constructed. They play a crucial role in the creation and reproduction of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.ft.com/content/a5b15b14-3fcf-11e2-9f71-00144eabdc0, accessed 30 December 2016

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 'Imagined' here should under no conditions be interpreted as a value judgement to characterize particular discourse as 'wrong' or 'misled'. Rather, it is chosen as a reference to the 'imagined communities' discussion in the literature on nation-building (Anderson 1991). As I will show, similarly to the 'imagined' national identities, 'imagined' EAEU does have substantial implications in the real world.

power structures. The choice of this theoretical perspective is driven by the willingness to explicitly distinguish between the discursive practices and the functioning of the EAEU – alternative approaches to discourse analysis viewing all social practices as essentially discursive ones and discourses only as constitutive (but not as constituted) would not make this distinction possible. Note, however, that the focus in the discourse analysis is typically on how discourses affect the interpretation of international events and are implemented in the foreign policies, as well as reproduce themselves (Milliken 1999). In this study, I deal with a case where policy practices are obviously decoupled from the discursive practices and no approximation of both (from either side) is visible, and try to explain the reasons for this outcome.

My focus is on two discourses on the EAEU existing in Russia. First, I look at the official discourse, i.e., discursive practices produced by high-ranked officials (especially the Russian president). This official discourse includes both official statements (or statements with similar status - e.g., newspaper articles explicitly designed to convey the official position before elections) and the statements made by politicians in non-official context (interviews, conferences etc.). Certainly, it would be incorrect to claim that all members of the Russian political class share the same discourse on the EAEU, but, given the authoritarian nature of the Russian state, the cohesion of the discourse is much higher than one frequently observes in other contexts. Second, I also look at the discourses produced by Russian epistemic communities: academic researchers and policy consultants.3 Again, I look at both statements made by researchers in scholarly publications (academic journals) and in publications directed to the broad public - this is because in Russia the boundary between those is often very vague and, in fact, large groups of Russian academic community view public statements as a more important than academic activity in the narrow sense (e.g., Sokolov 2013).

The focus at these two discourses is due to the following considerations. Official discourse is obviously most likely to affect the policy choices and be affected by them. Discourses of the epistemic communities are crucial in shaping the attitudes and the positions of politicians and bureaucrats: through the university education and (in Russia, to a lesser extent) policy advice academia affects how the politicians view the world. At the same time, the body of texts and statements produced by the epistemic communities is much broader than the (relatively scarce) statements of the officials and frequently offers a more elaborated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In Russia, the strict boundary between academic research and policy consulting typical for the EU or the US (Wallace 1996) is not upheld as rigorously: first, Russian researchers frequently see the development of normative implications and policy advice as their main task, and second, Russian IR emerged out of the tradition of the Soviet scholarship on world politics (*mezhdunarodniki*) with the main task of advising government on foreign policy matters (e.g., Avtonomov 2016). This is somewhat paradoxical, given how small the attention of the politicians to the policy advice actually is.

set of ideas on the EAEU. In the epistemic communities, unlike in the official discourse, one observes multiple discourses on the EAEU competing with each other. Hence, I attempted to extract texts from different discourses to find out the common concepts and ideas – and, as the next section shows, one can indeed identify them for Russia. The paper also looks only at academic discourse occurring in Russian-language publications: this is because publications in international journals are produced by a very small group of Russian academics decoupled from both politics and the majority of their Russian colleagues.

Looking at other discourses (e.g., generated by mass media, opposition, general public) is less attractive in the context of this study. First, the EAEU is a relatively narrow (and, to some extent, technical) topic, and the general public's attention to it is limited. Second, in an authoritarian state like Russia media, opposition and the general public have little influence on the political decision-making. Epistemic communities' impact, at the same time, is non-negligible, but it is present in subtle forms, e.g., through educating and training bureaucrats. Occasionally, epistemic communities also play the role of policy advisors, but in Russia the importance of scientific advice for policymaking is low - the task of advisors is rather to legitimize the already made decisions (Titaev and Sokolov 2013). Finally, discourses also define the set of actors "authorized to speak and to act" (Milliken 1999: 229) on a certain topic, and in Russia the discourse on the EAEU is structured in a way that it is restricted to public officials and epistemic communities. This is not to say that the general public is irrelevant for the evolution of the discourses: but it plays a role not by constructing discourses, but rather by serving as a (sometimes imagined) reference point, which discourses try to speak to (therefore, politicians and academics try to take what they believe to be public expectations into account). For example, authoritarian regimes have to care about their stability and hence think about possible public perception and interpretation of their actions (and try to shape it through propaganda).

## **EAEU** in the Russian Political and Expert Discourse

Unlike the Western discourse on Eurasian regionalism, which only recently became prominent enough, the Russian discourse on the regional integration in the post-Soviet Eurasia has always been substantial. Both policy-makers and experts devoted a lot of attention to this topic. As a result, a certain way of perceiving the regional integration in Eurasia emerged. Libman (2012), in his survey of the scholarly literature, refers to a "standard post-Soviet integration paper", typically based on four claims: that regional integration is inevitably beneficial for the countries of Eurasia; that the only way to integrate Eurasia is to emulate the EU; that the only factor precluding this emulation is the lack of political will of the leaders; and that the West is hostile towards any attempt of reintegrating Eurasia. The EAEU discourse similarly seems to follow a number of common

perceptions and ideas. In what follows, I first review the discussion of the EAEU in the epistemic community; then I proceed to how the EAEU is reflected in the public statements of politicians.

The perception of the EAEU by Russian experts appears to be based on three assumptions.

- First, regionalism is perceived not as a tool of constraining the sovereignty of individual countries (as it is done, e.g., in the EU studies or in many fields of comparative regionalism), but rather as a factor empowering some of them in the world politics. Regional organizations are seen as bargaining coalitions, where countries come together to collectively support their position against other 'power poles', or as tools of promoting economic competitiveness, which should again increase the countries power. Butorina (2005) offers a comprehensive picture of the world consisting of several competing and complementary regional projects aiming to influence the institutions and the structure of the global economy.
- Second, the main task of a country willing to promote its influence in the global economy and its vision of how it should develop, is to join such a regional coalition or to create one's own coalition. Regional organizations (like the EU and NAFTA) and projects (like the Silk Road Economic Belt) are interpreted through this lense: "joining forces makes it easier to fight, to develop, to create a power center in the world of global contradictions and conflicts" (Leshukov 2016). Similarly, the EAEU should become a new power pole in the global world; post-Soviet integration allows its members to "maximize the benefits from globalization and to minimize its inevitable drawbacks" (Glinkina 2015: 12).
- From this follows the third assumption: by creating the EAEU, Russia is able to increase its influence in the global economy and more actively participate in its design. By joining a different coalition, Russia would be forced to accept this coalition's vision of the global economy; within the EAEU, it can protect and develop the Russian position on this matter. Some even go as far as to claim that the EAEU is necessary for the survival of the Eurasian nations in the globalized world (Fonarev 2012).

The reasons for why Eurasian integration is indeed strengthening Russia as a geopolitical player are rarely discussed explicitly: the assumption seems to be that Eurasian regionalism provides Russia with greater resources through cooperation with the neighboring countries and that it safeguards Russian specific 'Eurasian' status, which is necessary to "ensure equal and mutually beneficial sovereign relations to the European Union and the US" (Titarenko 2014: 29). Eurasian inte-

gration is also seen as a way of refocusing the role of the region's economies in the global division of labor from resource export to technology (Lagutina 2015).

There are several specific varieties of this general framework. In particular, Russian observers differ in their perception of hostility of other projects and power poles towards the EAEU. For many of them, while some level of competition between projects is inevitable (because they represent different views on how the global economy should work), there is still substantial space for cooperation and interaction: in fact, precisely this interaction could constitute the main competitive advantage of the EAEU. Others see the dividing lines between the EAEU and other projects as deep and unresolvable: for instance, the EAEU's main goal should be to counter the Western influence in Eurasia. As a result, a continuum of different views on the EAEU emerges, with authors emphasizing the extent of its inherent competition against the West to different extent.

The following papers exemplify different stances of Russian scholars within this continuum. Butorina and Zakharov (2015: 53) represent a less confrontational view of the EAEU. While they clearly subscribe to all three assumptions presented above and argue that "an obvious, but officially not declared mission of the EAEU is to form a pole of geopolitical gravitation and a new center of power, alternative to the European and the American ones", they do not discuss the contradiction between the EAEU and the alternative regional organizations and rather highlight the internal preconditions for the EAEU to live up to its potential. Braterskiy (2015: 59), who again suggests that "the main goal of the Russian foreign policy is to create a regional economic community with substantial economic sovereignty and strong political influence, i.e., a new center of influence in the world economy", is more open in his statements about the possible tensions with the West: while the Russian policy is not seen as anti-American in its nature, it should inevitably lead to limiting the US influence in Eurasia. Vasilyeva (2015: 100) goes further in this direction. After echoing the discussed ideas by claiming that "the idea of Eurasian integration particularly fits the Russian geopolitical interests, as it creates real preconditions for Russia's positioning as a central country of Eurasia", she clearly suggests that the EAEU is designed to limit the fragmentation of the post-Soviet Eurasia in the interests of external actors (China, US and the EU). IERAS (2013: 52) claims that "the main problem in the practical implementation of the developed strategy of Eurasian regional integration is the competition of Russia for influence in the post-Soviet space against other large global players - USA, EU, China. They put substantial effort into implementing their own geopolitical and geoeconomic interests in the region, offering Russian neighbors such projects of international cooperation, which reduce their ... ties to Russia and tie them to other centers of power through economic and political means." Svetlichnyi (2012), finally, takes an extreme stance, suggesting that Eurasian regionalism is the main tool of preventing the US attempts to strip Russia of the status of great power and surround it by hostile nations. Krotov and Muntian (2015) provide a combination of two views (this approach is also echoed by many other observers, and, as it will be shown below, matters a lot in the political discourse): the EAEU is seen as potentially benefitting from cooperation with other regional organizations and willing to engage in it, but unable to do so because of the position of the Western powers (especially the US) and their rejection of the EAEU as a partner (this actually reflects the real skepticism many in the EU and the US express towards cooperating with the EU).

Interestingly, while highlighting the strengthening of the Russian bargaining power through the EAEU and explicitly acknowledging post-Soviet countries as a special "zone of influence" of Russia (Zhuravlev 2015), Russian discourse does not see it as a contradiction to the interests of other, smaller countries of Eurasia. The EAEU is seen as an association of equals (as opposed to the explicitly asymmetric structure of the European Neighborhood Policy, see Krotov and Muntian 2015) or as the only avenue of "independent development following one's own agenda" for countries between competing power poles of China and the EU (Knyazev 2016: 154). While the association of countries with the EAEU is always voluntarily, the association with the EU is forced by external powers. Most likely, this view continues the already described tradition of the "standard post-Soviet integration paper" with its assumption of the beneficial nature of Eurasian integration for all participants; they, however, do not match the discourses developed in the EAEU countries themselves.

The official discourse on the Eurasian regionalism appears to fit that of the expert discourse, although it does not include extreme positions. In the famous article of Vladimir Putin published in *Izvestiya* in 2011 as part of the series of the programmatic texts before the onset of his third term and devoted to the EAEU, he explicitly suggested that the organization should become "a potent supranational community, able to act as one of the poles of the modern world".<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the article did not mention the aspect of geopolitical competition present in the expert discourse; instead, the *Izvestiya* article highlighted the compatibility of the EAEU and the European integration and the need to establish bridges to other regional organizations and structures,<sup>5</sup> especially to the greater Europe, but also to East Asia. The then chairman of the State Duma Sergei Naryshkin in a public statement also suggested that in the period of "growing instability and zones of chaos getting closer to Russian borders" the EAEU should become a new "power center" and a "serious geopolitical player".<sup>6</sup> He also argued that he

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Izvestiya, 4 October 2011.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The idea that the EAEU is fundamentally open to dialogue and cooperation with others was repeated by many high-ranked Russian officials before the Crimean crisis (see Klimov et al. 2012).

<sup>6</sup> http://eurasianclub.ru/11223-11/, accessed 30 December 2016

would be surprised to see a positive reaction of the West on the emergence of such a strong competitor like the Eurasian Economic Union (State Duma 2014) and that some Western politicians explicitly tried to harm the development and the strengthening of the Eurasian integration, thus intervening in the affairs of sovereign nations. Putin, in his statement in December 2015, also argued that the West "did everything to prevent the creation of the common economic space between Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus... Still does not want to talk with the Eurasian Economic Union as a full-scale participant of the international life". Thus, the Russian leadership's rhetoric sees the EAEU as an emerging power pole in the global economy, which the West tries to block and to prevent from developing, but which is – in its nature – not anti-Western.

The hopes for the Eurasian integration's role as a factor strengthening Russian political influence in Eurasia (Savietz 2012) and even offering a Russia-led alternative on the global level (Johnson and Köstem 2016) seem to have increased following the growth of the Russian economy in the first decade of the 2000s. They can be discussed from different perspectives. It is certainly possible to question the fundamental validity of the assumptions underlying the perception of the 'imagined EAEU' by the Russian experts and politicians. Indeed, Russian EAEU discourse seems to be rather unusual if one compares it to the typical debates in the modern IR. The focus on power and competition seems to be closer to the perspective of the realism, which is generally rather skeptical regarding the viability of regional organizations; but a number of recent studies indeed highlight that geopolitics is frequently the driving force behind the establishment of regional economic organizations (e.g., Davis and Pratt 2016). From the point of this paper, however, I am more interested in a different question: whether the actually created CU and EAEU fit the picture of the approach stylized above (which Kheyfets (2015: 35) ironically refers to as "dreaming geopolitics"). This is what the next section will discuss.

## **EAEU** as a Functioning Regional Organization

The picture of the EAEU as a new pole in the global structure of power, which is promoted by the Russian discourse, is strikingly different from the EAEU practice. There is a gap between discursive practices and their operationalization (Milliken 1999) into the policy practices – and, at the same time, lack of reflection of this gap in the discourse. To start with, it is not clear whether the EAEU can be treated as a source of power for Russia at all. The pooling of economic resources through the EAEU hardly improves the economic potential of the Russian economy: EAEU countries are either very small (Kyrgyzstan, Armenia) or crucially

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> http://www.lragir.am/index/rus/0/politics/14090/31012, accessed 30 December 2016

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 8}~{\rm http://ria.ru/economy/20151220/1345648082.html},$  accessed 30 December 2016

dependent on Russian support themselves (Armenia, Belarus). Kazakhstan has a larger economy, which does not require any Russian support, but certainly not to the extent to drastically change Russian international economic power if joining a coalition with Russia. The ability of post-Soviet regionalism to encourage modernization and development of the countries and to free Russia from the dependence on resource exports is also debatable: while some believe that Eurasian regionalism could play a positive role in this respect (Hartwell 2016), others notice that it is unlikely to generate sufficient impetus for technological progress and could just conserve the old trade patterns and interdependencies (Michalopoulos and Tarr 1997). In any case, the EAEU in the current form does not contain any substantial industrial policy agenda, and is, as I will argue in what follows, unlikely to develop any in the future.

An even more important issue is that the internal structure of the EAEU is not designed to promote Russian influence. Generally speaking, there exists a design of regional organizations (which Hancock (2009) refers to as "plutocratic regionalism"), which is explicitly based on the delegation of authorities to the leading country rather than to smaller states: the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) was an example of this approach before the end of apartheid. The EAEU, however, does not follow this approach. Instead, it is structured as an apparent replica of the European Union, with the EAEC as a decision-making body claiming some supranational authorities. The Customs Union Commission (the first governing body of the EAEU) decision-making was based on weighted voting scheme, which provided more power to Russia than to other members. In the EAEC (and thus in the modern EAEU) this mechanism was abandoned in favor of the single majority voting rule (where Russian votes count just as much as votes of other members) or consensus decision-making. The EAEC Board (the main executive body of the EAEU) currently consists of 10 representatives, two from each country, each running one's own agency. While they are able to make decisions through simple majority, de-facto decision-making is always consensusbased: in case of any disagreements, the EAEC bureaucrats seem to have a very strong preference to make no decision at all and instead to shift it to the political leadership - i.e., to the higher-level institutions (EAEC Council, consisting of the deputy prime ministers of the member countries, and the Supreme Eurasian Council, including presidents of the five states), which are intergovernmental in nature and make all decisions by consensus.

As a result, the EAEU clearly does not function as a conduit for implementation of Russian interests. On the contrary, the EAEC is frequently incapable of making any drastic decision in case of contradictions between members. In some cases documented in the literature (Libman and Vinokurov 2016), the EAEC made decisions not in favor of Russia, rather promoting the interests of the smaller

countries. At least in one case, the EAEU blocked a Russian initiative in a policy area, which the Russian leadership considered to be extremely important: in 2014, presidents of Belarus and Kazakhstan rejected the Russian proposal to exit the free trade agreement with Ukraine (which Russia envisioned as a possible reaction on Ukraine's joining the Association Agreement with the EU). Russia still cancelled the free trade regime in 2016, but did it unilaterally and had to introduce additional measures to prevent Ukrainian goods entering Russian market through Belarus. In this case, the existence of the EAEU did not help Russia in mobilizing other Eurasian countries in favor of its foreign policy and in fact rather made it more difficult for Russia to implement the decision it intended.

Here, it is important to notice that the Russian discourse on the EAEU is not identical to how the EAEU is interpreted and discussed by the epistemic communities and officials of other member countries. A detailed discussion of the Kazakhstani, Belarusian, Armenian and Kyrgyzstani discourse on the EAEU constitutes an interesting research question in itself, which would go beyond the framework of this paper (this topic is to some extent discussed in Vysotskaya Guedes Vieira 2016). The epistemic communities of these countries, which traditionally are closely linked to the Russian one (from the Soviet era, when the discourses produced in Moscow had to be reproduced elsewhere in the USSR), indeed replicate some elements of the Russian discourse. However, the focus on power accumulation as the main reason for the existence of the EAEU in the discourses of the smaller EAEU member states is much weaker than in Russia. Also the view of the inevitable competition between the EAEU and other regional organizations is less widespread in some countries of the EAEU (especially Kazakhstan) than in Russia. At the same time, the smaller EAEU members' discourses are much more sensitive to the issue of excessive dependence on Russia, which could emerge from the EAEU.

In Kazakhstan, for example, the EAEU discourse, produced by both president Nazarbayev, politicians and epistemic communities, explicitly highlights that the organization should remain a purely economic alliance not reducing the sovereignty of the country. While the media discourse on the EAEU is unambiguously positive, the epistemic communities appear to be more skeptical, although some of the expert discussions are not conveyed to the public (Schiek 2016). Kazakhstani discourse also highlights the need to develop ties between the EAEU and other regional projects in Eurasia (including the EU) to a much greater extent than the Russian one and deemphasizes the issue of competition between projects, which is sometimes critically seen by Russian observers. In Belarus, similarly, the key

http://www.ng.ru/cis/2016-06-23/3\_kartblansh.html, accessed 5 February 2017; http://www.kisi.kz/ru/categories/news/posts/eaes-i-evrosoyuz-budut-sotrudnichat---nazarbaev, accessed 5 February 2017.

political discourse used by the Lukashenka regime, on the one hand, traditionally points out the importance of cooperation with Russia, but on the other hand, is very critical towards Russia itself as a realm of corruption and dominance of oligarchs, which also gives a natural argument in favor of protecting national sovereignty in the EAEU context. These discourses seem to clearly reflect themselves in the policy practices of the EAEU countries.

The EAEU is associated with an extensive redistribution mechanism in favor of smaller countries (Knobel 2015; Andronova 2016), e.g., through the reallocation of revenue from customs duties and pricing of energy – Belarus was particularly successful in receiving concessions from Russia in terms of export duties on raw oil supplied to Belarusian refineries. This redistribution mechanism is not unique for the EAEU – in many regional organizations with a strong asymmetry of power the leading state accepts the role of a regional paymaster (Mattli 1999). However, if the main goal of the regional organization is indeed defined as increasing global power and influence, it should go hand in hand with greater allegiance of the smaller countries towards foreign policy agenda of the leader, and in Eurasia it does not appear to be the case – in some sense, Russia pays either for benefits from the EAEU it does not value itself (on this topic see Libman et al. 2016) or for the 'imagined' EAEU.

Thus, in the current form, EAEU rather functions as an additional veto player making rapid changes in the economic policy more difficult than in case Russia were doing it alone (Libman and Ushkalova 2013). This situation is unlikely to change in the future. First, as mentioned, smaller states (especially Kazakhstan) clearly try to avoid excessive Russian influence through the EAEU - this factor, in fact, was crucial for the entire evolution of the post-Soviet regionalism (Hancock and Libman 2016). As a result, they are unlikely to agree to any decision-making mechanism or power delegation scheme, which will give too much influence to Russia. Russia, in turn, is constrained in its ability to pressure the smaller members. It is questionable whether it could coerce them through economic measures (again, Kazakhstan is the most prominent case, but even Belarus shows successful resistance to Russian coercion in multiple cases, see Libman 2015b); furthermore, an attempt to systematically exercise coercion against one member would be perceived by other countries as a threat and hence result in Russia loosing international allies - which is an outcome Russia, especially after the Ukrainian crisis, hardly can afford. Second, a general feature of the EAEU countries bureaucracies, which they demonstrate at all levels, is the lack of initiative and attempt to avoid any independent decision-making in a somewhat debatable situation - both because of how bureaucrats are trained and how they are socialized. There is no reason to expect that Russian or Kazakhstani bureaucrats will start behaving in a different way if they are delegated to the EAEC.

In addition, while the Russian rhetoric frequently emphasizes a much broader ambition of the EAEU, the actual language of the EAEU documents and charters shows clear constraints on the scope and objective of the organization (i.e., official discourse of the EAEU itself and Russian discourse on the EAEU contradict each other) Although some studies attempt to link the EAEU to a particular ideology (especially the 'Eurasianism', which is in itself a very broad concept) (Pryce 2013; Lukin 2014), this is mostly done focusing on Russian rhetoric or on interpretation of Russian actions: the EAEU as such carefully avoids any ideological statements or commitments, even to the extent to which they were usual in the preceding organizations like the CIS (Obydenkova and Libman 2016).<sup>10</sup> There is no political integration agenda in the EAEU, mostly because of clear resistance of Kazakhstan, insisting on the EAEU remaining a purely economic organization. Even symbolical political steps (like an EAEU interparliamentary assembly, which was welcomed by high-ranked Russian officials, see Klimov et al. 2012) was ultimately rejected by Kazakhstan. Similarly, differences between economic systems and economic policy objectives of the EAEU countries (the state-led Belarusian economy, the Russian economy with its growing inclination towards protectionism and Kazakhstan with a much more liberal approach) are so large than a common industrial policy is beyond the reach of the EAEU countries - the major progress of the EAEU was achieved in much more basic aspects of integration, like the free movement of people and capital, common customs tariff and abolition of internal customs borders.

This, of course, does not mean that the EAEU is unable to produce any significant benefits for the Russian power policy agenda. The EAEU can be seen as a commitment device, which precludes smaller states from signing association agreements with the EU: because the EAEU is a customs union, any authority to conduct negotiations on the trade regime (an obviously crucial part of the DCFTA's established within the association agreements) is transferred to the EAEC. Russia perceives the signing of association agreements as a risk to its influence on the neighboring countries of Eurasia (whether this perception is true is, of course, a very debatable matter). This effect of the EAEU, however, is really important for merely one of the member countries – Armenia – for other countries association agreements with the EU are irrelevant either because of their geography (Central Asian states) or of their political regimes (Belarus).

Amazingly, from the point of view of the Russian discourse, the EAEU does not appear to be a successful regional organization – although, if one used a different yardstick (that more frequently applied in the comparative regionalism research),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> On how problematic it is to try to fit the 'real' EAEU into the Eurasianist rhetoric see Laruell (2015); again, it is more likely that the EAEU is interpreted by some factions of the member states elites in line with (one of the varieties) of the Eurasianism (Mileski 2015). On the general link between Putin's rhetoric and Eurasianism see e.g., Ersen 2004, Schmidt 2005.

the EAEU would look like a regional organization with much more promise. As mentioned, the EAEU, with a number of exceptions, is a functioning customs union – and the set of regional organizations, which managed to achieve this result, is very small. Even as of 2016 (after Kazakhstan unilaterally adjusted a portion of its customs duties after the country's accession of WTO) about 60% of all tariffs in the EAEU remain harmonized (which makes the EAEU comparable to Mercosur); before 2016, more than 90% of the customs duties were harmonized. Within the EAEU, a regime for free movement of labor and capital is established. The EAEC continues developing a set of common industrial standards. While of course EAEU is not comparable to the EU in terms of the level of delegation of authority, it does produce substantial policy outcomes (Vinokurov 2016). However, most of these outcomes are in the area of purely economic interaction, and in many cases are associated with facilitating exchange between countries rather than strengthening their global power. In the Russian discourse, this is typically seen as insufficient.

Moreover, the fact that EAEU constrains Russian policy in economic matters can actually be seen as a benefit for Russia – it makes it possible to constrain the influence of Russian interest groups on decision-making, which are now forced to interact with the Eurasian bureaucracy and therefore should find it much more difficult to implement their objectives. In the case of the EU, regional integration through transferring sovereignty to the supranational level was in fact used to overcome the reform blockades at the national level (Schmidt 2004). The EAEU is clearly unable to go that far (especially because, as the experience of 2015-2016 shows, Russia can and will act on its own in case it cannot receive sufficient support of the EAEU partners), but even some level of constraining Russian bureaucracy could be beneficial in the long run for Russia itself (Furman and Libman 2015). This argument, of course, is entirely different from that suggested by the three assumptions underlying the 'imagined' EAEU. Although it is not fully absent from the Russian discourse, <sup>11</sup> it is much less important than the line of reasoning presented above.

## Reasons for the Interpretation Gap

Why does the 'imagined' EAEU fit the 'real' EAEU so poorly? Critical discourse analysis offers an intuitive argument for it: discourses reproduce themselves and, more importantly, reproduce the power asymmetries. Stated otherwise, one has to look, for example, at the evolution of the Russian epistemic communities producing the EAEU discourse and their internal power structures, to understand the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> In the already cited *Izvestiya* article Putin refers to the "competition of jurisdictions", i.e., competition of countries for mobile capital, as a benefit from the EAEU; the interjurisdictional competition is recognized in economics as one of the most important tools of constraining the predatory behavior of the government (Brennan and Buchanan 1980).

reasons for the discourse persistence. From the very beginning of the 1990s the discourse on the post-Soviet integration was monopolized by the adherents of the specific school of regional integration research, which emerged in the Soviet era and was based on a very particular view on this process (Shishkov 2006), as well as by former students of COMECON searching for new focus in the academic world after the disappearance of their object of investigation (Libman 2009).

In what follows, I provide three more specific arguments for the existence of the gap between discourse and operationalization. First, as mentioned, it can be a by-product of the particular view on regionalism of the Russian (and, generally, post-Soviet) epistemic communities, and specifically the fact that they consider the EU approach the only legitimate approach to regionalism. Here, discourses are constitutive for social action, but because they are internally contradictory (the power goals, on the one hand, and the legitimacy of the EU, on the other), the gap I study emerges. Second, the gap can be an outcome of the Russian domestic policy concerns. In this case, the main focus is at the official discourse, which tries to take the expectations of the general Russian public into account; but epistemic communities in Russia (for which non-academic audiences are very important) also have strong incentives to adjust to what they believe the general public would be interested in. Third, the gap may be an outcome of a complex trade-off between Russia's attempts to keep EAEU functioning (due to domestic reasons) and the interests of the smaller member countries.

First, the point of view that the design of regional organizations worldwide, regardless of their actual objectives and particular challenges, is strongly influenced by the 'global script' characterizing the EU as the only legitimate design of regional organizations, plays an important role in the comparative regionalism scholarship (Jupille et al. 2013; Börzel et al. 2013). For Russia and Eurasia, it is probably an even more powerful explanation than for some other parts of the world. While in Asia the 'ASEAN Way' and the open regionalism approaches at least attempt to suggest an alternative to the EU model, in the post-Soviet world the perception that the EU represents the only possible design of the successful regionalism is very widespread. Although the EU as such is subjected to a lot of criticism in the current Russian media and political discourse, there is no alternative model of regionalism offered or developed. As a result, as mentioned, the EAEU is also mimicking the EU to a large extent (Dragneva and Wolczuk 2015). It influences both the institutional structure and the focus on trade as the main objective of regionalism. But the EU model requires some level of delegation to a supranational decision-making body rather than to the leading country and the creation of the supranational bureaucracy. Hence, there is a contradiction between two elements of the Russian approach to regionalism - the emulation of the EU and the perception of regionalism as a tool of designing global economy - which

contributes to the EAEU poorly performing in both instances.

Second, the representation of the EAEU in the domestic political and expert discourse can be linked to the demands of the Russian domestic audiences. In Russia, the idea of post-Soviet integration enjoys strong popular support (EDB 2016), and Russians frequently identify their country as a 'Eurasian' one (Rose and Munro 2008). However, this positive assessment seems to be fueled by two different sources: first, the personal connections many Russians still have to other post-Soviet countries (e.g., friends and family networks, personal histories etc.), which make maintaining open borders and close ties to these countries important for them (Sterzhneva 1999), and second, the nostalgia of Russia's past Imperial greatness, which is perceived as linked to dominating post-Soviet Eurasia or, at least, preventing the expansion of the EU and NATO influence onto this territory. The reaction of the Russian society to conflicts against Ukraine and Georgia in 2014-15 and in 2008, which effectively disrupted the existing social ties, but could have been interpreted as Russia regaining its strength and resisting the Western influence in Eurasia, suggests that the second factor is more important for Russians than the first one. In fact, Russians seem to have a negative attitude regarding several aspects of regionalism (e.g., free mobility of labor clearly runs contrary to the Russian widespread xenophobic sentiments, see Schenk 2010; Obydenkova and Libman 2016).

Thus, most likely, the interpretation of the EAEU as a new power pole much better resonates with the preferences of the Russian public. If the goal is to use the development of the EAEU as a further argument in favor of the successes of the Putin regime, the emphasis should be made on its potential ability to reshape the global economy and thus contribute to the growing Russian influence rather than on the actual areas where cooperation is substantial. Here, the EAEU is again very different from the EU – the European population perceived the EU as a tool of constraining individual states and promoting cooperation rather than an instrument of global power and geopolitics from the very beginning.

Of course, the focus on public opinion can explain the development of the political discourse, but not the scientific and expert one, which is driven by its own logic. Here, again, the internal specifics of how the Russian academic community evolved and developed is the crucial factor explaining why a view on the EAEU based on a particular set of assumptions became dominant. Morozov (2009, 2011) shows that for the Russian IR the focus on identity became predominant, playing a larger role than debates on methodology and scientific rigor. Three assumptions on the study of regionalism presented above clearly fit this inherently normative approach. The confrontation between Russia and the EU and the US after the crisis in Crimea most likely reinforces these patterns of thinking among Russian academics: on the one hand, Ukrainian conflict is interpreted as a definitive proof

that competition for power is indeed the most important factor in the modern world politics, and on the other hand, non-academic factors (in particular, attempts to fit into the predominant political discourse, see Libman 2015c) seem to become increasingly important for Russian scholars.

Third, paradoxically, the gap between the 'real' and the 'imagined' EAEU almost inevitably results from the trade-off Russian foreign policy faces regarding this regional organization. On the one hand, the preservation of the EAEU is placed relatively high in the order of political priorities of the Russian leadership: because of the public approval of the post-Soviet regionalism, because of Putin's explicit commitment to the EAEU (in the already cited Izvestiya article) and because the existence of one's own regional integration project is perceived as a sign of great power. On the other hand, however, as mentioned, smaller countries of Eurasia are reluctant to join a regional organization, which only empowers Russia. As a result, to keep the EAEU functioning, Russian leadership has to make concessions to smaller states: limiting the political agenda of the EAEU to the absolute minimum (in line with the demands of Kazakhstan), move from a weighted voting scheme to de-facto consensus-based decision-making, or agree to other requirements of smaller states in areas perceived by the Russian leaders as non-strategic (i.e., not threatening the national security). Hence, Russia accepts the EAEU functioning as an organization constraining its foreign policy (of course, only in some areas, which are perceived as not crucially important) in order to protect the existence of the organization itself. Importantly, Russia embraces the EAEU based on how its leadership 'imagines' it, but in order to protect this 'imagined' EAEU the Russian leadership allows large deviations between it and the 'real' EAEU - hoping that in the future EAEU could become closer to the 'imagined' ideal.

Of course, this mechanism only functions if the EAEU is indeed seen as valuable for the Russian politics (i.e., how much value the Russian leaders assign to the 'imagined' EAEU) and if the concessions made to protect the EAEU are considered as not detrimental for the interests of the Russian leadership. In the early 2010s, both conditions were clearly valid. After the Ukrainian crisis, the situation could have changed. On the one hand, the interpretation of the global politics through the lense of competition of different power poles and geopolitics became more widespread, both because of the higher priority assigned to the factors of power and security and because of reshuffling of Russian leadership, where those more inclined to this type of logic seem to have gained the upper hand. Currently, the Russian leadership relies much more on the traditional hard power (e.g., military force) than on the economic factors and soft power potentially associated with the EAEU. While in 2010–2013 the recognition of the EAEU by the Western partners was perceived as an important sign of recognition of Russia's

great power status, after 2014 the reaction of the EU or the US on the EAEU, given the overall hostility between Russia and the West, became less important in the eyes of the Russian leaders. On the other hand, after 2014, as mentioned, the set of possible allies of Russia became much smaller and hence they became more important, at least in terms of symbolic politics. However, at the same time securitization of the Russian economic policy discourse took place: Russian leadership is now more likely to perceive economic issues as relevant in terms of national security and thus unwilling to make concessions. The protectionist turn in the Russian economic policy (Connolly 2016) may be incompatible with the EAEU.

#### Conclusions

It remains to summarize the main arguments of this paper. The paper suggested that there exists a substantial gap between how the EAEU is interpreted by Russian experts and politicians and how it operates in reality. The 'imagined EAEU' is discussed primarily from the point of view of organization's ability to empower Russia in global politics. The 'real EAEU', actually, seems to be a factor constraining Russian economic policy rather than serving as a tool for Russian power. The fact that Russian policy is constrained by the EAEU is not necessarily harmful - on the contrary, these constraints could improve the quality of economic policy, especially given that overall turn towards more ideological and isolationist economic policy in Russia. The reasons for the gap between the 'real' and the 'imagined' EAEU are, first, the preferences of the Russian domestic audiences (which see the ability of the EAEU to shape the global economy and politics as a much more important achievement than the specific effects of the EAEU on economic policy); second, the trade-off between the overall view on regionalism and the recognition of the EU as the only legitimate form of regionalism in the Russian epistemic communities; and third, the trade-off between the willingness of the Russian leadership to preserve the EAEU and the concerns of smaller states.

The observations made in this paper are important for both the scientific analysis and the policy-making. In terms of academic research, the study highlights the complexities associated with understanding and interpreting the functioning of regional organizations: the self-declared goals of the regional organizations and their public perception can be strikingly different from the actual outcomes (Vinokurov and Libman 2017). From the policy perspective, the gap between the 'real' and the 'imagined' EAEU is one of the most serious challenges for evaluating the possibilities and the forms of interaction between the EAEU and the EU – a topic, which received substantial attention since 2014 (Popescu 2014; Moshes 2014; Krastev and Leonard 2014; Vinokurov 2014; Dragneva and Wolczuk 2015). European and US epistemic communities in many cases replicate the 'imagined' EAEU in their work rather than attempt to find out how the 'real' one works; as a result, the fact that the EAEU actually serves as a tool binding and

constraining Russian policy is ignored – and it is an important argument in favor of more active engagement of the EU with the EAEU (see Libman 2015a). At the same time, any interaction between the EU and the EAEU will be reinterpreted by the Russian leadership in line with the 'imagined' EAEU (most likely, as a sign of recognition of Russia's interests and status), and one has to account for consequences of this interpretation in terms of other aspects of Russian foreign policy (e.g., how assertive it will become) and the domestic legitimacy of Russian regime. As long as the dichotomy between the 'real' and the 'imagined' EAEU persists, finding out an optimal format for interacting with this regional organization will remain an extremely difficult task.

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#### Bio

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#### Article

# Russia's Engagement With Asia Pacific: International Socialization, Multipolarity and Regionalism

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#### Abstract

This paper addresses Russia's growing engagement with the Asia Pacific region from the vantage point of two key concepts that shape Russian foreign policy – multipolarity and socialization. I argue, first, that there is a discrepancy between the declared agenda of the Russian government in Asia Pacific and Moscow's domestic policy toward its Far East territories. Secondly, in Asia Pacific Russia is likely to face a geopolitically chaotic and anarchic situation with a level of conflict potentially even higher than in Europe.

# Keywords

Russian, Asia Pacific, Socialization, Multipolarity, Regionalism

#### Introduction

This paper addresses Russia's growing engagement with the Asia Pacific region from the vantage point of two key concepts that shape Russian foreign policy. The first is the concept of *multipolarity*, the key foundational principle for Russian diplomacy, based on the idea of cultural diversity and political plurality, and a need for a "fair" distribution of power among a variety of poles throughout the globe. Initially the idea of multipolarity implied a balance between Russia's orientation to the West and to the East, yet in the context of the drastic deterioration of Russia's relations with the West since President Putin's third term in office multipolarity has become a concept justifying Russia's voluntary search for an alternative to its relations with Western institutions in a loosely defined Asia. The idea of multipolarity that initially was designed for tuning Russian foreign policy to an increasingly diverse world has ultimately inverted into an explicitly anti-Western policy that justifies an alternative orientation toward an even more complicated and challenging region: Asia Pacific.

Socialization is the second concept used in this analysis to describe Russia's engagement with Asia Pacific. Socialization refers to international institutions and the corresponding binding commitments they take (Epstein, 2012: pp.136-139). The socialization of great or raising powers is seriously hindered by sovereignty and national interests. This has led to the idea of reciprocal socialization that claims that powers socialized into the international order are to simultaneously reshape it (Terhalle, 2011: pp.341-361), which is in line with Russia's overall strategy in a multipolar world.

Asia Pacific plays a particularly important role in Russia's balancing of the Occident and the Orient. This chapter investigates how feasible are Russia's expectations of finding Asia Pacific to be a Russia-friendly model of regional socialization to compensate for its shrinking engagement with the West in general and the EU in particular. This investigation looks at what models of international socialization Russia anticipates finding – and can afford to pursue – in Asia Pacific, and what possible risks and pitfalls these models entail.

My argument is two-fold. First, there is a discrepancy between the declared agenda of the Russian government in Asia Pacific and Moscow's domestic policy toward its Far East territories. Russia's chairmanship in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), culminating in the Vladivostok summit of September 2012, was focused on the principles of liberalization of trade and investment; regional economic integration; food safety and human security; transportation and logistics, including facilitation of border-crossing procedures; and innovative technologies, research, and education. Yet the proclaimed priorities of Russia's APEC strategy have so far remained rather abstract and largely detached from Russia's domestic agenda in the Far East, which is basically focused on stimulating investment in Russia's eastern regions and mitigating the effects of Chinese migration. Yet the key problems Russia faces in its easternmost regions are depopulation, low living standards, high commodity prices, poor incentives for private investments, and underdeveloped transport infrastructure (Popov and Chernyshov, 2013), and to date it seems unlikely that Moscow has a strategy to resolve them.

Second, in Asia Pacific Russia is likely to face a geopolitically chaotic and anarchic situation with a level of conflict potentially even higher than in Europe. In its eastern policy Russia is a relative newcomer to a region that is an arena of two competing strategies - American and Chinese, with multiple formal and semi-formal institutions trying to adjust to the two dominating actors and strike a balance between them. The high level of competition and rivalry, coupled with "thin" (weak and dispersed) institutions, turn Asia Pacific into a pluralist type of international society, to borrow a concept from the English school theory. In this respect Asia Pacific varies dramatically from the EU-centric European international society that can be characterized as "solidarist", with "thick" (binding and

powerful) institutions serving for multilateral policies.

This chapter is grounded in the methodology of critical discourse analysis. Russia's 'turn to Asia' exists as a figure of speech and as a peculiar type of anti-Western political narrative justifying the reorientation of Russia away from the EU and Euro-Atlantic institutions, especially after the annexation of Crimea and the drastic deterioration of Russia's relations with its European and American partners. This discourse is manifest in academic and political discussions, which are the main sources for this research. I have intentionally limited the scope of the empirical material mainly to Russian-language publications as they are the least familiar for international readership and better reflect the ongoing Russian foreign policy debates. The likely policy effects of the discourses examined will also be identified and critically assessed.

# Russia's Turn from Europe to Asia: Internal and External Facets

In this section I will discuss the domestic drivers for Russia's shifting attention to Asia Pacific, as well as explicate this as part of the political logic of Russia's estrangement from Europe.

#### Domestic Debates

From an administrative viewpoint the best vindication for Russia's growing interest in Asia Pacific is the establishment of a new Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East. This is the first time that the Russian government has instituted a region-specific ministerial body. Some experts interpreted the opening of its head office in Khabarovsk as raising this city to the symbolic status of Russia's "third capital" - after Moscow and St. Petersburg (Bordachev and Barabanov, 2013). There are even more radical voices in Russia who advocate the relocation of Russia's capital from Moscow to the Far East (Vladivostok) and the bestowing of greater administrative powers to the regions of Siberia and Far East both domestically and internationally - as full-fledged members of the Kremlin-sponsored Eurasian Union whose stand on the issues of integrating with Asia Pacific would be essential.

These ideas, however speculative they might be, betray a certain skepticism about the federal center's policies towards Russia's Far East - a region that was historically important from a geopolitical viewpoint rather than as a territory requiring investments for ameliorating its citizens' living standards (Larin 2013). Huge — though largely mismanaged — investments in upgrading the infrastructure of Vladivostok as the host city of the 2012 APEC summit signaled Russia's interest in the Asia-Pacific region, which however did not reach far beyond political symbolism. Worse, the APEC summit revealed the scope of mismanagement and profligacy in the Russian government: the bridge to the *Russkiy* island, portrayed

in the official media as technologically advanced, became a notorious example of corruption, poor quality standards and low safety of construction work (Priadkina, 2013).

Asia Pacific is widely believed to be a driver for developing Russia's Far East (Ivanov, 2010). Yet as far as long-term strategy is concerned, reorientation to the East has little effect in fostering economic innovation; most cross-border business projects are in fact energy related (Vlasov 2014). In its dependence on hydrocarbon exports in Asia Pacific, as well as in Europe, Russia follows the much maligned "petrostate" model.

## Away from Europe?

From an international perspective, Russia's change of focus from Europe to Asia is widely accepted as a political trend, yet its logic is subject to various interpretations. According to Konstantin Kosachev, the former head of the *Rossotrudnichestvo* governmental agency, Russia "faces an array of artificial constraints in the West that is eager to push it as far as possible to Siberia and Far East, away from the real and well explored sources of well-being" (Kosachev, 2014). In this interpretation, Russia's partnership with Asian countries is a last resort that regretfully deflects Moscow from its greater interests in the West.

In a different reading, Russia is seen to change its priorities voluntarily and willingly. In fall of 2013 the deputy prime minister Arkady Dvorkovich clearly articulated Russia's dissatisfaction with the Western markets and pathetically declared that "Russia leaves Europe and comes to Asia" (Metelitsa, 2013). Yet the rationale for this U-turn is vague and imprecise. Thus, Fiodor Lukianov, the head of the Council on Foreign and Security Policy, a Moscow-based mainstream think tank, claims that Russia's symbolic eagle turns its head to Europe merely "by inertia" - a statement that ignores a century-long tradition of intentional and deliberate pro-European cultural and economic gravitation towards Europe. Yet Lukianov claims that these traditions of geopolitically anchoring Russia to the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea regions are currently of no import with the Asia Pacific region allegedly evolving into a new magnet for Russia. In justifying a non-Eurocentric strategy of Moscow he deems that "the main events in the future will evidently take place in Asia Pacific" - an often reiterated mantra that might be questioned, for example, by the obvious centrality of the crisis in Russian-Ukrainian relations since 2014 for the international order. Other simplistic justifications for a detour from Europe include statements like "a new Asia is emerging", "Asia is more important than Europe", and "everyone in Asia seems to need Russia" (Lukianov, 2013). Another argument in this series is fully reactive and repetitive - the need for Russia to refocus on Asia Pacific is explained by the U.S. acknowledgement of the importance of this region for American interests.

Experts from the Valdai Club, one of the pro-Kremlin think tanks, claimed that in a long term perspective the West and the South are going to stagnate, which makes the global East Russia's "natural ally". Their report lambasts "an obsolete Euro-centrism of Russian foreign policy thinking" and offers a strategy of rapprochement with Asia as "a new globalization of Russia" (K Velikomu Okeanu... 2012). The accusations against the West contain strong normative claims – the East is portrayed as more tolerant to other traditions and more adaptable to the changing world.

Politically, the strongest argument in the discursive arsenal of Russian pro-Asia-Pacific advocates is the rising doubts about the universality of European model of regional integration that Moscow views as both intrinsically unstable and externally expansive. A similar criticism is vociferously articulated in the post-colonial academic literature. In fact, Russia joined a chorus of voices who deny the "paradigmatic status of the European example" and refuse to judge all other regional projects against the EU achievements (Acharya, 2012: p.7). In this context Asia-Pacific may hypothetically fit into a picture of "anti-hegemonist multipolar international system" to "mark a retreat from universalist liberal agendas of both a political and an economic sort" (Buzan, 2011: p.16, p.18).

The post-colonial idea of Asia as an essentially European construct matches the portrayal of Europe as "the historical departure point for the analysis of international regionalism in general" and the subsequent "European epistemic preeminence in the international regionalism" (Postel-Vinay, 2007: pp.557-558). This might extend to theories either substantiating Western neglect of Asian countries, or looking for "a Western hand undermining Asia's economic growth" (Jones and Smith, 2007: p.170) - a conspiracy theory that many in the Kremlin would certainly be happy to share as well.

This Euroscepticism is sustained in many Asian countries by local lamentations about the insensitivity of Western institutions (International Monetary Fund, the World Bank etc.) to regional needs, which translates to the search for "Asian solutions for Asian problems" (Jones and Smith, 2007: pp.169-176). It is exactly this approach that Russia wishes to pursue in the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea regions, South Caucasus and Central Asia, trying to prevent extra-regional powers (mostly Western) from playing important regional roles in what Russia considers - with mixed results - its sphere of vital interests. Yet with the growing involvement of the United States in South East Asia the very distinction between "regional" and "extra-regional" powers becomes increasingly meaningless, which in a practical sense implies that in this region Russia will not be able to claim its sphere of influence and would have to coordinate its policies with its major competitors.

#### Asia Pacific: Structural Characteristics and Russia's Policies

This section will describe the debate on structural features that define the specificity Asia Pacific regionalism against the backdrop of European experience of regional integration and then discuss the spectrum of Russia's policy options as determined by systemic constraints and opportunities.

## Structural Factors of the Asia Pacific Regionalism

Many Russian authors do their best to distinguish Asian regionalism from its European counter-part, yet most of these attempts remain inconclusive. Thus, the assumption that "in East Asia integration was derivative of the corporate business interest in economic expansion" (Arapova and Baikov, 2012: p.105) hardly differentiates this region from the EU at all. The same goes for a multi-level character of East Asian integration with parallels in the European model. Ultimately, Russian experts end up measuring the developments in Asia Pacific by European standards, claiming that "Japan seems to be the only East Asian country to reach European level of state maturity", or that "East Asia is still years away from the customs union model" (Arapova and Baikov, 2012: p.105). They conclude by admitting that the prospects of a currency union in East Asia are limited, financial markets are under-integrated, and in general Asian regional projects would be better off studying the EU experiences in more detail (Arapova and Baikov, 2012: pp.106).

Against this backdrop, quite persuasive are voices of those experts who claim that "in both Asia and Europe, despite their differences, similar mechanisms such as meta-governance and functional specialization have been used in the establishment of new models of regional governance, mainly aimed at managing transnational problems of various kinds, such as financial flows and non-traditional security challenges" (Hameiri, 2013: p.331). Many concepts – liberalization, securitization, regionalization – are equally applicable to both Europe and Asia. In fact, Russia has itself confirmed on numerous occasions that liberal investment regime, sustainable development, and human capital development – all presumably Western-grounded policies – are part of Asia-Pacific regionalism as well. For instance, the Valdai Club report argued for a transfer of most effective Euro-Atlantic political institutions to the Asian ground, like, for instance, a "Helsinki process for Asia" (K Velikomu Okeanu...).

The key problem is that regional players in Asia may wish to "preserve their autonomy from dominance, neglect, violation or abuse by more powerful central actors" (Acharya 2011: 97-98), but it is very rare that they would produce an alternative set of internationally accepted norms of their own. They are norm-rejectors and norm-adaptors rather than norm-generators. Neither of these non-Western integration projects, despite the wishful thinking of its post-colonial support-

ers, was able to create a set of alternative – presumably non-liberal – norms and rules to challenge the Western normative supremacy. "Most of the regional countries see the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a grouping of authoritarian, state capitalist countries, which are opposed to the dominant group in Asia of democratic, free-enterprise countries, which are the leading technological innovators" (Dibb, 2014). The academic debate on comparative regionalism suggests that non-Western regions are dissimilar to the West in either failing to adapt its normative innovations (like human security, food security, etc.), or having a lower level of interest in democratic practices. Perhaps "the only fundamental norm ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) has reinforced is a realist commitment, not to the region, but to the sovereign inviolability of the nation-state" (Jones and Smith: p.185). This is what Russia certainly values the most, yet the idea of sovereignty, while cherished by many, faces strong challenges from trans-national integration of which the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) patronized by the U.S. is one of the best examples.

Weak norms imply weak institutions, which means that a lot depends "on the distribution of power and the attitude of the powerful" (Buzan, 2011: p.20). Asia-Pacific is widely known as a region with "no nuclear arms control agreements, no conventional forces agreements and no agreements to avoid naval incidents at sea" (Dibb, 2014). The Carnegie Corporation overtly characterizes the whole Asian continent as highly volatile and conflicted, with growing security troubles (territorial disputes, destabilizing rivalries between neighbors, nationalism, arms race, etc.) with the endemic mistrust menacing economic integration (Feigenbaum, 2014). This dismisses simplistic statements that "the East offers to Russia rather easy gains" and that "the Asia-Pacific zone does not create any problems for Russia" as grossly misleading (Leclercq, 2013: p.45, p.46). It is therefore likely that Russia's anti-hegemonic policies in Asia Pacific will see it engaged in power balancing, yet without the institutional and normative constraints, albeit often malfunctioning, that are available in Europe.

## The Repertoire of Russian Policy Models

In Western academic literature there is a common understanding that Russia's resources of influence in Asia Pacific remain limited, and are sometimes substituted by "geopolitical fantasies" (Dibb, 2014). In Russia too experts admit an extremely low level of economic integration with Asian markets and modest military capabilities (Bordachev and Barananov, 2012). Russia's late arrival to Asian institutions is also an issue (Lukianov, 2014). Russia is justifiably portrayed as a weak actor in this region who would need to adapt to the competing projects of integration without visible perspectives of promoting its own – still badly articulated – strategy of socialization.

Many Russian experts adhere to a securitized version of Russia's engagement with Asia Pacific, a region perceived as a source of new risks and threats requiring reaction from the Kremlin. Basic trends in Asia Pacific are the growing competition for leadership; the multiplicity of territorial conflicts with possible militarization; and the primordial role of the U.S. as a potentially "stabilizing force" with whom Russia ought to find a common language (Klimenko, 2013: p.35). In a less optimistic forecast, in Asia Pacific Russia is doomed to a confrontation with the U.S. (Fedorovsky, 2012: p.70) who seeks to pursue its own – much deeper and more radical, in comparison to APEC – project of regional integration. The TPP can be used to contain the Chinese economic expansion through regulating the issues of copyright legislation, environmental protection, social security and competition, and Russia would certainly need to adapt to the U.S. policies.

Against this background, there are several models of Russian foreign policy socialization in Asia Pacific that I will critically address. Three of these models are of realist pedigree: great power management, balance of power, and spheres of influence; while two others - normative convergence and normative plurality – are more identity-based and thus require a social constructivist reading.

The *great-power-management* model (otherwise historically known as a "concert of great powers") is perhaps the optimal for Russia in Asia Pacific. Hypothetically it might be based on a trilateral arrangement of power sharing with the United States and China (Petrovskiy, 2013: p.75). In the meantime, this trilateral forum could evolve in a more inclusive system of relations to replicate the experience of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with consultations on three baskets - security, economics, and humanitarian issues – at its core. The idea of a Helsinki process for Asia Pacific with new formats of security dialogue is part of the Russian debate as well (Petrovskiy, 2013: p.78).

Evidently, Russia has a price to pay for materializing this model through adapting to the key players and thus securing "its seat at the table" (Barabanov and Mankoff, 2013: p.8). A Valdai Club report, in particular, calls for a certain self-constraint: for example, Central Asia is dubbed more as an economically unsustainable region and a burden that Russia has to share with China, than an object of Russian expansion. Another potential move that Russia needs to undertake is the amelioration of its relations with Japan who is America's closest ally in the region. As a report of the Working Group on the Future of U.S.-Russia Relations assumes, Russia would also have to more explicitly recognize the pivotal significance of the East Asia Summit as an organization that reflects the U.S. strategic vision of trans-Pacific relations as based on long-term cooperative commitments of major actors involved (Barabanov and Mankoff, 2013: p.37).

It is hard to say how successful Russia can be in its attempts to foster a great-

power-management type of relations in Asia Pacific. So far Russia's intentions to position itself as an important element in power relations in Asia Pacific are reminiscent of its previous attempts to forge an alliance with the leading Euro-Atlantic nations and thus be recognized as an indispensable global actor. This strategy largely failed, as exemplified by the suspension of Russia's membership in the G8 due to the annexation of Crimea – a very consequential move that might undermine the Russian position in Asia Pacific as well.

**Power balancing** is a second model that Moscow might wish to adhere to in a situation of geopolitical and geoeconomic competition between China and the U.S. over the influence in the region. The idea boils down to the possibility for Russia to play a balancing role vis-à-vis both Beijing and Washington without establishing a bloc-based relationship with either of them.

This model implies the reconceptualization of China as a competitor rather than an ally for Moscow. Some experts warn that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is increasingly under the influence of China (Salin, 2012) who seeks to pursue its own military and economic policies towards the countries Central Asia. In their view, China is pursuing a strategy of joint political declaration with Moscow to get discounts in Russian energy supplies, and is keen on diversifying its external sources of hydrocarbons, with Russia seen as a potential source. However, decade-and-a half-long negotiations between Moscow and Beijing on the price of Russian gas are still underway, making prospects of fruitful energy cooperation between the two countries dubious. Military resources and demographic potential make China a source of strong security pressure for Russia who seeks to avoid over-emphasis on China and thus is eager to diversify its economic relations to include countries seeking to counter-balance Beijing's predominance in the region, including Vietnam, South Korea, and Japan. As a Russian expert claims, "beginning in 2001, Russia's policy in the Asia-Pacific region became, in fact, an attempt to build a system of dialogue with the Pacific countries that would not depend on its relations with China" (Fenenko, 2013). The Customs / Eurasian Union project, as well as Russia's free trade negotiations with Vietnam and New Zealand, could be seen through this prism.

In this scenario Moscow resists Washington's intentions "to build the future Asian security system on the basis of American political alliances" (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.61). This is exactly why Russia would need to rely upon China and ultimately turn into a "soft balancer", or a "swing state" who can afford observing "military containment and rivalry between China and the United States without taking part in it directly" (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.52). This logic is based on pragmatic considerations: "a certain degree of confrontation between the U.S. and China could make it easier for Russia to resolve certain problems" (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.57), yet it is far from clear how exactly Russia might

take advantage of the U.S.-Chinese rivalry in Asia Pacific, and whether it can stay more or less neutral should hostilities erupt.

Spheres of influence is a third Realpolitik model that might have certain traction for Moscow – at least, this is exactly what Russia looks for in its relations with the EU. Yet beyond wider Europe the division of spheres of interests is of a limited significance and can be applicable basically to Russia's policy of blocking Chinese influence in Central Asia – a group of countries whom Russia strategically see as potential members of its Eurasian Union project. It is hard to see how Russia can succeed in negotiating the spheres of influence arrangements with China any more than it did with the EU. Arguably, it is more likely that Russia will be doomed to pursue unilateral policies in Asia Pacific without strong backing from partners or allies.

Normative convergence is a model grounded mainly in the prospect of Russia's gradual acceptance of the principles of economic liberalization in Asia Pacific promoted by the U.S. A normatively convergent Russia, instead of playing a balancing game, would seek to adapt its policies to the rules, procedures and regulations advocated by the dominating powers. In particular, as some experts presume, Russia can gradually develop a more well-disposed attitude towards the TPP. This would be of particular importance should the Eurasian Union project need to be adjusted to Russia's Asia Pacific policy – a perspective that some Russian experts seriously anticipate occurring in the future.

Finally, *normative plurality* as a conceptual model presupposes Russia's role as an autonomous pole whose norms – largely in the economic sphere – do not necessarily converge with those of other actors. Moreover, Russia might consider playing a role of politically representing those governments who "are tired of the ideas of liberalism" (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.60). This stance is likely to put Russia in confrontation with the United States and the U.S.-promoted project of TPP that a Russian expert views as a "prototype for an anti-Chinese political union" (Sino-American rivalry... 2012: p.60). Yet TPP is a factor affecting Russia as well: to a large extent, Moscow's failure to use its rotating presidency in APEC in 2012 for promoting major projects in the region is due to the loss of interest in this organization from the U.S., a key actor in Asia Pacific.

There are many other factors that are likely to foster Russia's unilateral policies, including the disinterest of major Asian countries in Russia's deeper engagement with regional institutions, and impediments for Russia's economic competitiveness in the Asian market due to the relatively high costs of Russian labor force. As Valdai Club's experts avow, "the huge Asia-Pacific economy operating without Russia is an inescapable truth...U.S. businesses in general have no interest in the Russian Far East... Japan, another candidate for the position of a priority partner,

will never make the Russian Far East a target of large-scale investment under conditions of the tight ties of politics and business in that country and unresolved territorial problems" (K Velikomu Okeanu...). This scenario implies that Russia will not be able to normatively and institutionally socialize in the Asia Pacific regional structures and will instead have to act unilaterally – echoing Russia's policies towards the EU and "near abroad" countries.

#### Conclusions

Debates among Russian experts and politicians betray a deep ambiguity about this country's engagement with Asia Pacific. On the one hand, foreign policy experts are duly aware of the existing pitfalls and even perils for Russia in this region. Russian professional discourse – especially that originating from research centers located in Russia's Far East – contains strong arguments conducive to securitizing Russia's relations with China that is often perceived as Russia's rival rather than a strategic ally. The scale of economic investment that new energy supply routes to China would require, as well as the scope of unresolved financial and trade issues with China, are well known to economic researchers (Inozemtsev, 2014) who are skeptical about the added value of Russia's reorientation from European to Asian markets.

On the other hand, the Kremlin is determined to go ahead with the declared rerouting of its economic policies and political priorities from West to East. Moscow assumes that there is a demand for Russia's deeper involvement in the regional milieu. In the mainstream discourse one may find ideas of Russia's mission of "helping to bring together the disunited Asian states... and to create a democratic multipolar community of Asian-Pacific states" (Ivashentsov, 2013). By the same token, other optimistic voices claim that economic cooperation with countries like Japan can compensate for Russia the losses from possible Western economic sanctions (Senina, 2014).

These and similar other arguments betray the deeply political nature of the Russian policy of reorientation from Europe to Asia Pacific. This policy is more a reaction to the troubles Russia faces in its relations with the West than an authentic strategy in its own right. Sergey Naryshkin, the former chairman of the State Duma, has confirmed that Russia's enhanced engagement with its eastern neighbors stems directly from the changing tenor of its relations with the West in his claim that Western sanctions against Moscow in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea would catalyze Russia's rapprochement with Asia Pacific (ITAR-TASS, April 17, 2014). The widely disseminated explanation of Putin's foreign policy as strategically intended to proffer a conservative interpretation of European identity rather than to seek an alternative to it elsewhere (Mezhuev 2014) also casts doubts on the authenticity of the "Asian drive". The idea of multi-

polarity, as seen from Moscow, thus ultimately boils down to winning acceptance and recognition from the West rather than assuming the risks of starting a big game in Asia.

#### Bio

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Andrey Makarychev's record of previous employers includes – along with a number of Russian Universities – Danish Institute for International Studies (Copenhagen), Center for Security Studies, ETH (Zurich), and Institute for East European Studies (Free University, Berlin). He is a group coordinator in two international research projects: "Borders, Peoples and Institutions in the Baltic Sea Region" (the University of Tartu and Free University of Berlin, supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) and "Religion as Soft Power in the South Caucasus" (supported by Swiss National Science Foundation and administered by the University of Fribourg, Switzerland).

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#### Article

## Russia's Renewed Interests in the Horn of Africa As a Traditional and Rising Power

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#### Abstract

During the Cold War, the Horn of Africa became one of the struggle areas in a bipolar world system. In the Post-Cold War period, situation was changed and Russia decreased the level of relations with African states because of economic catastrophe and psychological factors. At the same time, the Horn of Africa has continued to produce deaths and destruction. After the lost years with Yeltsin, Russian foreign policy concept shifted in Putin's presidency. Russia has projected its hard and soft power as a great power in Africa again. Russia's trade with Africa has increased immensely in recent years. Russian armed forces has involved in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Still, Africa is not in the central of Russian foreign policy. But the developments in Gulf of Aden can make Russia more eager to concentrate on the Horn of Africa. This article examines of renewed political, military, economic and cultural links of Russia with the Horn of Africa under Putin leadership, including the reasons for failure and rise in the 21st Century.

### Keywords

Horn of Africa, Russia, Foreign Policy, Rising Power, Conflict

#### Introduction<sup>®</sup>

The Horn of Africa is both geographical and political expression. In general geographical meaning, consists of rhino-horn shaped part of Northeast Africa countries, including Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti and Eritrea. However, geopolitics enlarges the definition of Horn to "the Greater Horn" by attaching Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and South Sudan. This paper will addresses to 'the Horn' as "the Greater Horn". Also, the Horn of Africa has close ties with the petro-states of Arabia, particularly with Egypt and Yemen. The Horn controls the Bab el Man-

<sup>&#</sup>x27;This article was prepared by Mehmet Cem OĞULTÜRK in his personal capacity. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not represent in any way the view of the Turkish Armed Forces or the Republic of Turkey government.

deb Strait which is one of the important global transportation routes, dominates part of the Gulf of Aden, the gateway from the Mediterranean with Suez to the Indian Ocean.

The 20th century demonstrated three different Russia to the world: the Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Russia and the Russian Federation. Although some differences in regional and politically, Russia has always been and named a great power in world politics. Russia and the African states have had relations for more than a century. The sectarian centric contact to Africa which started with Ethiopia in Tsarist Russia era continued in the Cold War years, the Soviet Union was the ideological role model, ally and supporter for many African states seeking self-determination and freedom against the Western colonialist states (Arkhangels-kaya & Shubin 2013, p.6).

Shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced an era of dramatic political transform and uncertainty in the global policy area. A country that was once a superpower in a bipolar world began to raise a suspicion its place in the international system. The end of the USSR left Russia in a state of economic, political, and social chaos, marked by declining economic output and increasing inflation, foreign debt, and budget deficits. (Govella & Aggarwal 2011, p.1).

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union have disrupted the ties of Russia with Africa continent. After the prolonged era of economic trouble and decline, at the beginning of the 2000's, the nation reemerged as a global powerful imminent force. It contributes to BRICS and Shanghai Five of rapidly developing nations which expected to occupy the major places in the world economy of the new century. The years of Vladimir Putin's presidency gives a clear idea about Russia's re-emergence as a global power with interests across the world (Mankoff 2009, p.4).

Since the end of the Cold War – and particularly over the past decade – Africa's status in the international geopolitical order has risen noticeably (Volman 2009, p.6). Also, the Horn of Africa remains one of the world's most conflicted regions which still to struggle with conflict, hunger, poverty, and increasing instability and inequalities. In contrast, the region has a dynamic, young and entrepreneurial population and plenty of natural resources. The region has more than its share of conflict causes a unique challenge for foreign investments (Klomegah, 2016 para.3).

Still, Russia does not regard the Horn of Africa as a top geopolitical strategic region and has demonstrated minimal high-level interest in Africa ((Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2015, p.22). However, by its latest military campaigns in Ukraine and Syria, also relations with US and China, Russia still continues to reconstruct

its role as a great power in global politics. The Horn of Africa, from Suez Canal to Gulf of Aden, was one of the strategic region made Tsarist Russia and Soviet Union great or super power during their ages. The last decade has witnessed Russia's powerful return to the international area under Putin's administration. Russia today is definitely wealthier and more stable than it was at any point during the 1990s. Therefore, we can say that Russia will change the point of view over the Horn of Africa, in terms of to achieve its aim to become a superpower again in the near future.

In this context, the paper focused on examining the foreign policy of Russia respect with the Horn of Africa in general and with each particular state in the Horn after new millennium. The paper may fill the existing literature gap in the Russian foreign policy towards with each Horn of African states after 2000. In this paper, the author will also evaluate changing Russian interests to seek opportunities and challenges in the Horn of Africa region, the recent realization of this aim, and overall Russian objectives in the region.

## Background of Russia and the Horn of Africa Relations

Tsarist Russia could not find a place in colonialist race in 17th and 18th centuries. After the second half of the 19th century, Russia increased the concentration on Ethiopia due to the British and Italian penetration into the Horn of Africa. Different from the other European powers, tsarist Russia was influenced that Ethiopia had huge economic potential with untapped natural resources. Providing with arms, military advisers and medical aids created an important positive effect on relations between Russia and Ethiopia during Italian-Ethiopian war. Russia also provided technical aid in gold mining operations and geological surveys as well as educational training for some Ethiopian students. After the revolutionary turmoil of 1917, the new Bolshevik regime didn't interest the relationship with Ethiopia at first. On the other hand, Ethiopia became a sanctuary for many professional Russian who had fled from Bolsheviks and served as advisers to the Ethiopian government (Patman 2009, pp.27-30).

In the early 1930s, Soviet diplomacy in the Horn began to bear some fruit in the sphere of trade. At the end of 1931, a representative of the Soviet foreign-trade corporation, conducted conversations in Ethiopian government, French Somaliland and Italian colony of Eritrea. On the road to World War II, USSR was one of the first states to condemn Italian aggression and support Ethiopia in the League of Nations. However, neither France nor Britain would take powerful sanctions against Mussolini. Stalin did not make any contrary policy against Italian Fascist annexation nor did he break Soviet ties with Italy. At this point, commercial relations became essential component with Italy and Ethiopia in USSR's policy (Patman 2009, pp.31-2).

During the World War II, the tradition of reciprocal interest relationships reestablished between USSR and Ethiopia as allies in the fight against Nazi Germany and Italy. On the other hand, many of the territories under British military administration experienced nationalist movements in Somalia and Eritrea. After the war, the USSR sought a trusteeship over the territories of unknown status in peace conferences. However, these initiatives could not get any result due to Britain's objection. At Stalin's era Soviet concern was minimal in the Horn of Africa (Patman 2009, p.35). Following the World War II years, USSR placed socialist-communist ideology at the center of its internal and foreign policy. Thus, ethnic or religious boundaries or barriers could easily been exceeded.

#### The Cold War Period

Through the Cold War, Moscow gave high weight to Africa in terms of global competition with USA. The large and fast growth of Moscow's relations with African countries began in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when they were achieving independence respectively. Non-Aligned Movement also provided a momentum to encourage other African communities towards independence, thus, USSR showed its support to the decisions of the Bandung Conference regarding them as anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist, and argued for peaceful coexistence that included respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of states.

Followed by 1956, Khrushchev emphasized the importance of the 'collapse of the colonial system of imperialism' and declared the USSR's 'irreconcilable struggle against colonialism' at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Supporting struggles for national liberation and social progress was aimed in the 1977 Soviet Constitution as a foreign-policy objective. Thus, national liberation movements were considered as 'detachments' of the world anti-imperialist struggle. (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2013, p.6).

American and Soviet foreign policy on the Horn of Africa made more conflict in the decade of the 1970's. Not coincidentally, in the 1970-1980s the Horn of Africa was the arena of strong competition between the U.S. and the USSR for supremacy in regional forward military presence. The interests of the US can be explained in terms of securing some strategic points like the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf also became major in the general American strategy about the Soviet Union in the Cold War era. It was, therefore, in the interests of the US to block any expansion of Soviet power and influence, whether through proxies or not, in the Middle East, Indian Ocean and the Horn of Africa (Mesfin 2011, p.19)

Nevertheless, superpower rivalry was not the only factor for Soviet activism in the Horn of Africa. During the Cold war era, US National Intelligence Council Memorandum 'Soviet Policy and Africa' (1975) determined the USSR's interests in the region as; reducing Western influence, power, and presence; gaining political influence on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea littoral, and supporting and protecting its flanks in the Middle East; securing access to support facilities for its naval forces in the Indian Ocean; countering Chinese influence. All of the interests are related not only geopolitical but also including economic and culturally.

The USSR used military aid as the most effective means of gaining influence and cooperation. In 1962, Moscow gave \$ 32 million credit to Somali in order to raise the number of soldiers to 14,000 and modernize the army. When it came to 1965, the USSR found technical and military assistance to build the Somali Navy. On the other hand, the USSR also made attempts to establish the Ethiopia national armed forces. Socialist leader Mengistu Haile Mariam also played an active role to strengthening of aid on Ethiopia. In 1976, \$ 100 million secret military agreement was signed between the two sides. An estimated 20 000 Ethiopian were trained in the USSR, and thousands graduated from military and political schools. (Öztürk 2016, p.294). In 1977, The United States stopped all military aid, departing it without any influence on the strategic important Horn. This significant loss of influence resulted in total Soviet control over the Horn that made the situation even more complex (Schulz 2011).

On the contrary, the Soviets were not active in the economic field, except for fishing and sea/air port construction. The USSR gave economic credits to almost all the Horn of Africa countries, but could not embolden their use. During the Cold war era, the USSR signed a number of agreements includes military, economic, cultural and other fields with many African countries. In fact, only a small part of the 40 countries in Africa could comply with the agreements signed with the USSR. In the education field, Soviets also trained at least 200,000 specialists on African soil. The USSR made agreements with 37 African countries on technical and economic assistance, and with 42 countries on trade agreements. Also, About 25,000 Africans trained in Soviet universities and technikons in various fields, and thousands graduated from Soviet military and political schools (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2015, p.21).

Somalia-Ethiopia conflicts played an important role for Moscow to determine policy over these countries. In the beginning, The USSR supported both rivaling states, Somalia and Ethiopia. Concerning this geopolitical contest, the socialist bloc had achieved an important outcome. However, Ogaden Battle between Somalia and Ethiopia changed the alliances in region and Somalia joined the Western camp and demonstrated the cliché that "there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies'. While the United States was arming Somalia, the USSR and Cuba were helping Ethiopia. Ogaden Battle became one of the reasons of demise of the SALT II agreement and détente between the Cold War

superpowers. Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski went so far as to declare that "SALT lies buried in the sands of the Ogaden", signifying the death of détente (Woodroofe 2013, p.2).

During the late 1970-80s, each government in the Horn supported rebels fighting its neighbor and rival, but none of these opposition movements received significant backing from the US or USSR. Even the Soviet advisors and Cuban troops helped the Ethiopians in the Ethiopia-Eritrea war in 1978 (Griffiths 2005, p.135). Soviet support for Mengistu was not sufficient to defeat the Eritreans or the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). For a while, after the defeat of the military regime in Ethiopia in 1991, it seemed that there might be a new peaceful order in the Horn. However, along with the end of the superpower rivalry in the region, the United States no longer had any real need for Somalia (Woodward 2002, p.150). The United States finally suspended all financial aid, and it showed the Somali regime's full weakness and suddenly collapse. As a result of Soviet and American proxy war in the Horn of Africa has been one of the most conflict-prone zones in the world (Abbink 2003). Lyons and Samatar (1995) emphasized to the failure of the U.S.-backed UN military intervention in 1992-94, Somalia fell off Washington's radar screen (cited in Lefebvre 2012).

#### Lost Years: Post-Cold War Period

The end of the Soviet Union disrupted the ties of Russia with African countries. The relations with Africa turned into one of the last places among foreign-policy priorities. In 1992, Russia locked nine embassies and four consular offices doors and most cultural missions and centers disappeared on the continent (Korendyasov&Shubin 2009, p.125). On the other hand, it was especially accepted in the 1990s that he African mass media began to insist on the theme "Russia has left Africa to the mercy of fate" (Deich 2009, p.135). Emelyanov attaches that African countries also reduced the number of their representatives in Russia. Heads of African states did not begin to go to Russia until 1997. At that point, Soviet model lost its validity, and there was no longer new model to suggest at hand (cited in Fidan&Aras 2010, p.49).

However, economic failure of Russia in the 1990s cannot explain by itself the declining importance of Africa. Psychological factor also played an important role. Russian pro-Western media and nationalist politicians held negative stances toward Africa as a scapegoat for the troubles, charging that Africans were a heavy burden on the Russian economy. In truth, the USSR's economic co-operation with African countries was equally beneficial. Nonetheless, the claims about Africa proved both damaging and dangerous, because they encouraged expressions of xenophobia and intolerance (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2013, p.7).

After the end of the Cold War, the Horn of Africa has by no means lost its 126

geostrategic importance, but the US effectively unnoticed it from Clinton's 1994 retreating to the August 7, 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania by Al Qaeda. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the US accepted a much more forceful counterterrorism policy in the Horn of Africa (Francis 2010). De Waal (2015) emphasizes that the 1990s was an interim period in the Horn of Africa, the Cold War security perceptions had gone, and the Global War on Terror security perceptions had yet to begin. Thus, the argument of "radical Islamic/ Islamist" became the new threat of the post-Cold War era.

#### Putin's Era

"Yeltsin era" is regarded as a lost decade in terms of Russia's Africa policy by many researchers (Shubin 2010, p.5). In the last period of Yeltsin, even if it was for a short time, the constructive transformation began with the appointment of Yevgeny Primakov to the Foreign Minister and then Prime Minister in January 1996. With "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation" of June 2000, Putin declared the new approach to foreign policy is often seen as the result of the change in leadership from Yeltsin to Putin (Fidan&Aras 2010, p.52). On the other hand, during the 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea war, Russian weapons including aircrafts and rockets were, reported to have been used by both the warring parties (Wezeman 2007, p.3). Thus, Russia and post-Soviet states prevented the role of major arms suppliers in to the conflict regions.

The interruption in relations between Russia and Africa became more dynamic with a determination to return to the region, fostered by con¬cern that growing interests of China, India, Brazil, and especially the Unit¬ed States on Africa with the purpose of secure access to natural resources and energy reserves (Giles 2013, p.8). Thanks to its natural resources Russia closed its debts for a short time and saved itself from the 'monitoring' by the IMF. Thus, Russia has begun to conduct a more independent foreign policy again (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2013, p.7). Another point without a doubt, Russia's participation to the G8 supported this greater self-confidence, signaling its mem¬bership in a "group of the privileged". Although this new position had enhanced Russia's international prestige, "the joining the ex-colonialists club" caused Moscow to pay more attention to its traditional friendly relations with Afri¬can countries (Shubin 2010, p.5).

From the beginning of the new century, several official visits to Russia were performed by the leaders and foreign ministers of African countries including Kenya, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. In turn, Russian ministers and other officials visited African countries. More than 30 political meeting with diplomatic departments of African countries were hold in 2005-2006. The Russian leadership broadened cooperation with African regional organizations, primarily, with the African Union. In 2005, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Ethiopia was accredited

at the Commission of the African Union (Deich 2009, p.135-6). In November 2006, Russia was the host of the G8 Summit. According to the St. Petersburg Summit a document on "Update on Africa" was approved. African problems were also referred in the basic documents of the Summit and President Putin's final press briefing.

President Vladimir Putin signaled Russia's intention to expand business ties with the continent a decade ago in 2006, when he became the first Russian leader to visit Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2007, Putin continued to show Russian interest to Africa with summit of G-8 and pointed to the solution to Africa's energy problem would lead to the continent's development. Putin sent a congratulations message to African presidents and governments on "Africans Day" celebrations. In the same year, the Russian Foreign Ministry published a document "A Comprehensive Look at Russian Federation Foreign Policy" which stated "a new dynamism started to appear in the development of Russia-Africa traditional friendly relations" and confirmed the importance of Africa for Russia (Fidan&Aras 2010, p.53).

In the 2008 Foreign Policy Concept signed by Dmitry Medvedev, Africa was the ninth, followed only by Latin America, on the list of the ten most important regions for Russian interests in the 2008 document (Sergunin 2016, p.160). The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, which President Vladimir Putin signed on 30 December 2016 and like in the earlier version of 2013, Africa, cannot still find the interest of Russia sufficiently. The Concept essentially repeated previous promises by declaring that "Russia will expand relations with the African states in various areas both in bilateral and multilateral settings by improving political dialogue and promoting mutually beneficial trade and economic ties, stepping up comprehensive cooperation that serves common interests, contribute to preventing regional conflicts and crisis situations, as well as facilitate post-conflict settlement in Africa. Promoting partnership ties with the African Union and a sub-regional organization is an important element of this policy".

Another important document is "Russia's National Security Russian Federation to 2020", which President Vladimir Putin approved on 12 May 2009, almost completely neglects Africa. However new version of this document, which President Vladimir Putin approved on 31 December 2015, states that "The Russian Federation is developing political, trade and economic, and military-technical cooperation, collaboration in the field of security, and also humanitarian and educational contacts with states of Latin America and Africa and with regional associations of these states", shows new approach to Africa with the changing situation and Russia's statue in international order as a rising power again after Ukraine and Syrian War.

Russia, compared to other great powers as BRICS country China, India, or EU and USA, keeps an exceptional place among the so called 'rising actors' in Africa, particularly in the Horn of Africa. BRICS has a significant role to gain access to Africa; however Russia has to compete against other BRICS' country for taking a slice from Africa cake. At last, Each BRICS' member country has its own interests in Africa. On the other side, Africa is still risky business with challenges and opportunities for Russia struggling with many conflicts on many fronts. The question that emerges is how Russia will evaluate these challenges and opportunities of Horn of Africa according to its interests and "make Russia superpower again"?

#### Russia's Renewed Interests with each of Horn of African States

Although Russia's superpower status disappeared with the Soviet Union, there is a remarkable consensus in Russia has been, is and will remain a great power on the global arena because of its geopolitical status, rich energy resources, armed forces with nuclear capabilities and its permanent member of the UN Security Council (Oldberg 2007, p.13). In contrast, since the end of the Cold War, particularly over the past decade, Africa's status in the international geopolitical order has risen dramatically. While significant consideration has been paid to the emerging role of China, India, and other new powers in Africa, the return of Russia to its theatre of operations of the Cold War has been mostly ignored, except by a few regional specialists.

In general, Russia's as several interests in Africa, and the Horn of Africa in particular. In order to categorize Russia's renewed interests of today, it will be helpful to identify the Cold War interests in the Horn of Africa which is mentioned above. They were produced in bipolar world rivalry and security approach of the Cold War. Today, Russia's position in international system is different from the Cold War and also Yeltsin's era. Currently, Russia's the Horn of Africa policy is not only focused on the flow rate and volume of natural resources, trade and economic partnership but also is interested in humanitarian issues as peace and education, together with security issue.

Despite the potential natural resources and its geopolitically strategic location, the Horn of Africa is one of the problematic regions of the world with economic threats, internal conflicts and political instability. The key economic and social indicators of the states of the region clearly point to these realities. Even though poverty is widespread in large areas of the region, the area is supposed one of the richest regions of the world in terms of oil and rare metals. Economically, Russia's renewed interest in the Horn of Africa is clear. During Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union years, the region was renowned for its plenty of cheap raw materials such as cotton, livestock, honey and grain. At present, Russia grows more confident in its foreign policy objectives, Rus¬sia and Africa "need each other" in

order to ensure the security and sovereignty of 60 percent of the world's natural resources, which lie in Russia and Africa combined (Shubin 2010, p.6).

At present, Russia, as a major producer and exporter of oil and natural gas, does not need new supplies of energy from Africa. On the other side, to enhance its control over oil and natural gas and lines to support its own economic and political influence is more important strategically all over the world. Nevertheless, Russia is still trying to improve its economic situation from the global financial crisis, due to existing sanctions and other foreign policy priorities. In this respect, Moscow's relationship with the Horn of Africa still remains in the un¬desirable level as in rest of the continent. Losing the influence of the Cold War era to the United States and China, Moscow will likely concentrate on political cooperation, arms sales, and investment into natural resources with the Horn of Africa for the near term (Giles 2013).

## Russia and Ethiopia-Eritrea-Sudan Triangle

Some analysts and researchers have contended that "Africa is increasingly becoming a target of Russia's renewed international assertiveness; its economic and military activity into Africa are often concealed, however, by Russian aggression in the Ukraine including the annexation of Crimea and its military backing of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad" (Pirio & Pitelli 2015, para.1). Therefore, it is noteworthy that Russia's economic and military co-operation with the region countries that have undergone sanctions such as Eritrea and Sudan.

The development of Russia's good relations with, especially in Eritrea, Sudan and the other actors of the Horn of Africa, can be considered as a challenge to reestablish geopolitical influence in the critical Red Sea / Suez Canal region as in the US-Soviet Cold War rivalry. In simply political terms, Moscow's long-term foreign policy goal is a multi-polar international system aimed at countering the unrestrained influence of global forces in Africa, especially the United States and China. A veto in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is Russia's key lever of power in international affairs for African regimes. In return, Moscow supports African nations in the UNSC. Russia's vote against imposing sanc¬tions and arms embargos on African states provides to infiltrate to the future potential arms markets.

Russia is the second largest arms exporter glob¬ally behind the United States (SIPRI 2016). Using arms sales as a point of doorway, Russia has been active reestablishing political, military and business relationships across Africa. Moscow has used this model of arms first, business concession later in many African countries as Sudan and Eritrea. In 2016, Somalia, a long-standing Soviet ally, asked for Russian military equipment against Al-Shabaab. In addition to Russian military cooperation with Sudan and Eritrea in the Horn of Africa region, Russia has been

asking for Egypt, another old ally of the Soviet Union. Given the rising impact of Russian military forces in Syria together with Egyptian, Sudanese and Eritrean military cooperation, it should be seen Russia is on the way to building a forceful presence in the Suez Canal and Red Sea (Pirio&Pitelli 2015, para.2).

Improving relations with the Horn of Africa countries has increasingly gained importance for Russia, but quarrels amid the region countries has revealed the question of which state has a priority for Russia. Even though Eritrea and Sudan have boosted political and economic ties, winning Ethiopia means being in the right track to win the rest of Africa especially in competition with China. Russian strategic investments in Ethiopia's promising energy sector could open the door for a more healthy partnership between the two historically friendly states and should thus describe the focus of Moscow's reengagement with Addis Ababa. As Korybko (2016) stated, in the global context of the accelerated trend towards multi-polarity, Ethiopia may possibly become a reliable anchor in Africa in order to establish a concrete and visible presence on the continent for Russia's urgently needs.

#### Russia and Somalia

Somalia is another option with its geopolitical position for Russia to gain old influence in the Horn of Africa. Somalia was a long-standing Soviet ally as it had a Marxist-Leninist government for much of the Cold War. Today, there is neither ideological nor cultural similarity between these ex-allied states. Somalia, with its untapped oil, gas, uranium, other mineral resources, and prolonged instability, is the microcosm of the region and in need of a strategic partner to help rebuild the state in every sense of the word (Ball & Davies 2015, para.3). On April 19, 2016, Somalia's Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke held a bilateral meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Prime Minister Sharmarke requested Russian assistance to strengthen the Somali military's ability in the fight against Al-Shabaab, an Al-Qaeda affiliate terror organization based in East Africa and to see Russia's support in developing the country's economy. During meeting, Lavrov said Russia is ready to consider military cooperation to help Somalia battle terrorism in the hostile region (Sputnik News 2016). According to Ramani (2016), while Syria has been a focal point of Russia's anti-ISIS efforts in recent months, Sharmarke's demand might change Somalia to future theater of Russia's anti-ISIS campaign with other players.

Of course, indirect or direct Russian military and economic assistance to the Somali government can create a highly positive atmosphere for regional security. It may also strengthen Moscow's superpower status as a leader in combating terrorism besides struggle against ISIS in Syria. After president Erdoğan's apology letter in order to renewing and treating the wounded relations by the downing of

a Russian jet by two Turkish F-16s near the border with Syria in November 2015 (Roth, A & Cunningham 2016). Russia's response in the first hours after the July 2016 coup attempt, and assassination to Russia's Ankara Ambassador Karlov in 19 December 2016, clearly has produced positive results in Turkish-Russian relations along with ceasefire in Syria (Malsin 2016). It is known by international community, Turkey has given a significant economic and military assistance to Somalia. Turkey's first military training center abroad in foreign state will also be an important base to provide military training to all of Africa and it will probably expand Turkey's influence over the region (Sucuoğlu & Stearns 2016).

Still, Djibouti embassy represents Russia in Somalia concurrently, and we can easily say that Russia has no influence in Somalia. As relations between Russia and Turkey remain pretty good, Turkey might help Russia to advance relations with Somalia on security and economic cooperation (Ramani 2016, para.16). Growing Russian military and economic supports to Somalia may create significant security and status advantages. Russia's military and economic assistance to Somalia not only can play an influential role in restoring peace and stability to the Horn of Africa but also will strengthen the claim that Russia is the rising power again.

### Russia and Djibuti

Djibuti is the most important place with small area and low population, insufficient resources, but has great strategic importance and precedence. It has been the most stable state compared to its neighbors dealing with terrorism and piracy threats in the Red Sea, Bab Al-Mandab strait and Gulf of Aden, as well as conflicts in Yemen and Somalia. Djibouti's strategic significance also derives from the fact that it is the key, and sometimes the only, port for land-locked African countries, such as Ethiopia and South Sudan. Also, Ethiopia-Eritrea war increased the strategic significance of Djibouti. Though before the war United States had a hope to cultivate more cooperation with Ethiopia and Eritrea than Djibouti, the war disturbed the situation. So, United States took Djibouti as an important ally due to the increasing of terrorist threats in the Horn of Africa (Woodward, 2006)

In addition to French and American presence, Germany, as well as Japan is maintaining presence in Djibouti. While China has strategic interests in the region, it appears more concentrated on investment (Aluwaisheg 2015, para.10). It also helps that China has just built a railroad between the port of Djibouti and the Addis Ababa, meaning that Russia could clearly use this 'African Silk Road' to boost its own economic relations with the region and create strategic depth to its non-Western economic diversification mission (Korybko 2015). On the other hand, that Russians have tried but failed to convince Djibouti to establish a base, but 'African Intelligence' asserted that China offered Russia to allow the Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov land at its base, so that it could deploy its ves-

sel to Syria at short notice during the summer. It was a great challenge from new rising powers to US and western club in the region.

## Russia and Uganda

Uganda is landlocked and depends on foreign imports for most of its consumer goods and energy requirements. Recently, Uganda is one of the developing countries of Greater Horn of Africa with newly found natural resources. The oil presents Uganda a chance to transform itself into an important economic power in the region (GlobalSecurity 2015, para.1). Uganda has a good relation with Russia since Soviets Union era. At Uganda President Museveni's visit in 2012, Russia showed it's eager to develop military and technical cooperation, as well as cooperation in the energy sector and infrastructural projects with Uganda (The Voice of Russia 2012). On the other hand, Uganda has asked Russia for help in the development of nuclear power to boost its generation capacity to support planned industries under its Vision 2040 development program (Mungai 2016, para.2). Russia appears keener to share its expertise and nuclear technology than other nuclear technology owners and it is a good instrument to develop with countries has energy poverty. In addition, there are over 40,000 Ugandans who studied in Russia and can read and write Russian language (Chimpreports 2016, para.5). This is a significant cultural heritage from Soviets Union to Russia to enhance its soft power in the region.

However, After US President Bill Clinton designated Sudan as a state sponsor of terror; Uganda positioned itself as an ally in the frontline of "Global War on Terror." About 20,000 Ugandans worked in US military bases in Iraq and more than 6,000 peacekeepers in Somalia is still as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM 2016). Despite the developing relations in strategic area as natural resources and nuclear power, it is not easy to see Uganda becomes a strategic partner of Russia in the Greater Horn of Africa, because of ties with USA and its geopolitical position.

## Russia and Kenya

By its geographical aspects, the Republic of Kenya is rich in natural resources, and Nairobi and Mombasa are commercial hubs of the East Africa. Kenya's economy is the largest by GDP in Southeast and Central Africa. Many foreign investors choose Kenya due to it is a politically and socially stable country and a preferred investment destination that serves as a gateway to the burgeoning market in East Africa. Kenya's foreign relation has been on the rise, mostly concentrated on strengthening economic cooperation with foreign countries. On the other side, Kenya is one of the Greater Horn of Africa states which are attacked by the terrorist groups as Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda in many times. As a result of this and other issues has made Kenya closed ally of United States particularly on counter-

terrorism acts. Like Uganda, more than 3,000 peacekeepers of Kenya in Somalia is still as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM 2016).

Nevertheless, Russia has longstanding and cordial relations with Kenya dating back to independence in 1963 (Modern Ghana 2015, para.2). Trade between the two countries, however, is relatively limited, totaling around \$200 million per year (RWR Advisory Group 2016, para.2). Despite limited economic and financial activity between the two countries, Russia demonstrated renewed interest in Kenya following the election of President Uhuru Kenyatta in 2013. Shortly after being President Kenyatta elected, his first overseas visit was to Moscow and then Beijing, calling for closer trade relations. In this connection, Russia launched a new institution in 2015, called the Russian-African Forum, which was founded to nurture new business ties between the two countries ((RWR Advisory Group 2016, para.3). Also, Russia's Senate Speaker Valentina Matviyenko said her country viewed Kenya as a strategic partner in Africa and was keen to see relations between the two countries strengthened (Citizen News 2015).

Like many other African countries, Kenya purchases a significant amount of Russian arms and has a passed a number of its security professionals through Russian-sponsored training programs and scholarships. Kenya purchase of Russian arms has grown considerably in recent years, although Russia is still just one of a number of procurement sources for the country (RWR Advisory Group 2016, para.1). In addition, On May 30, during the 8th international nuclear energy forum- Atomexpo 2016, held in Moscow, Russia's state nuclear energy corporation-Rosatom and the Kenya's Council for Nuclear Energy signed a memorandum for cooperation in peaceful use of nuclear energy (Energy news of Bangladesh 2016, para.1).

As relations with Uganda, despite the developing relations in strategic area as natural resources and nuclear power, it could be said that it is unlikely possible for Russia's relations with Kenya to go beyond the economic dimension, in the Greater Horn of Africa, because of Kenya's ties with USA.

## Using Problems of Soft Power Instruments in the Horn of Africa

Economic interests especially in natural resources and arms trade is the main portion of the relations between Russia and the Horn of Africa countries. However, soft power instruments as ideology of communism, education in Soviets Union and learning Russian language were as important as hard power instruments in the Cold war era. Today, many instruments of 'soft power' that Moscow had used before have been lost. First of all, Russia has not any ideology to export to any state in Africa. As ideology was disappointed by post-Soviet government as a determinant of policy in Russia, the concepts of "economism," "universalism" and

"pragmatism" started to emerge as the guiding principles of Russia's foreign policy. Indeed, the idea of "economization of politics" has taken a top place in the analysis of Russia's foreign policy (Natufe 2011, para.11). As a matter of fact, Russia's forgiveness of \$16 billion in debt that African countries were unable to refund in the Soviet era was another significant step in 2008. Russia maintained this by cancelling \$20 billion in debt in 2012 (Comins & Yermolaev, para.13).

At the Soviet era, 50.000 Africans were educated in its universities from the 1960s to 1991, and gave 200.000 other Africans various kinds of training on the continent. Russia still continues to educate more than 8,000 African students who half are on full scholarships (Comins, & Yermolaev 2015, para.5). However, these are limited attempts at using soft power in the region, as part of a global Russian aim to influence of Russian language and culture compared with other international players such as USA, China and even Turkey. Also, racist and extremist movement against African students needs to be avoided problem for Russia's image in Africa (Deutsche Welle 2011; BBC News 2006). The Russian media's insufficient reporting of Africa developments shows another problem because it focuses on armed conflicts, natural disasters or at best African nature and safaris. Most news comes from western sources as the Russian media has a limited number of African offices (Arkhangelskaya & Shubin 2015, p.21).

One of the important aspects of assistance to Africa was the reduction of the debt burden for the states as Ethiopia in the region under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Russia provided humanitarian aid to countries in the region as Ethiopia and Somalia, including on a bilateral basis (Fituni&Abramova pp.187-8). These aids has had a positive effect on the relations among Russia and countries of the region, on the other side they are not reflective of the true untapped potential in terms of Russia's impact on regions to gain people's hearts and minds.

# Russia's Participation in Anti-Piracy Operation in the Gulf of Aden / the Horn of Africa

Approximately 12% of the world's petroleum passes through the Gulf of Aden, which is one of the world's most important waterways. The piratical attacks often affect the interests of numerous countries, including the cargo owner, transshipment, and destination states (Mekuriyaw 2016, p.135). The struggle against pirates in the Gulf of Aden has been conducted as part of the 2008 EU Naval mission Atalanta and the NATO operation Ocean Shield launched in 2009 (Sputnik News 2015, para.5). Piratical attacks off the Horn of Africa represent a threat to the lives and welfare of the citizens and many nations.

Russia launched its anti-piracy operations on 26 September 2008. The Russian Navy announced the deployment of the Baltic Fleet frigate Neustrashimy to So-

malia with the stated mission of "ensuring security in several regions of the world oceans" and protecting Russian citizens and commercial vessels. The significance of this operation is Russia has chosen to conduct its operations independent of any established task-force, but considers itself to be supporting international anti-piracy efforts. Despite not participating in a multinational anti-piracy task force, Russian naval vessels deployed to the Gulf of Aden reportedly coordinate their actions with other warships operating in the region. Russian naval vessels deployed to the region successfully escorting hundreds of commercial vessels, including non-Russian ships through pirate-infested waters off the Somali (MIT 2009, pp.27-8).

#### Conclusion

At the time of writing this paper, Russian foreign policy is preoccupied with a number of critical concerns including the conflict in Syria, Ukraine, relations with USA, Europe and China. There is an increasing involvement of the politically and economically among powerful actors of the world on the African continent. With a renewed interest in Africa, it has become clear that Russia and Africa need each other. In this context, there has been an increase in Russian investment in several countries in the Horn of Africa, especially in armed sales, natural sources, minerals and nuclear energy. However, Russian trade with the Horn of Africa has been especially insufficient. At the political level, Russia has showed minimum interest in Africa and it may not be an immediate pol¬icy priority, at a longer-term strategic level. These conditions are not probable to appear any change in near time.

In contrast, still rising tensions between Russia and West and thinking of secure line from Suez Canal to Gulf of Aden may build a more clear and defined presence in the region. Russia's economic dependency on natural resources and ongoing conflicts will maintain Kremlin's interests in the Horn of Africa, and a visible return to importance on the list of Russia's foreign policy priorities should be expected. Finding new allies in various regions has become quite important to Russia. Weak governments and blurred future of the Horn of Africa region generates more risk and more benefits. Russia, as being a country with a non-colonial presence in Africa, has a major advantage. Russia has an anti-colonial policies heritage from its predecessors in Africa and its readiness to adopt a policy of equal rights partnership.

Briefly, Tsarist Russia and Soviet Union interest in the Horn of Africa emerged as an inevitable necessity of being a great power in their era. After the destruction of the post-Cold War era, today, Russia strengthen its position with Syrian conflict in Middle East and Ukrainian crisis in Europe against by way of the purpose of establishing a multi-polar order and being a superpower again. In general Africa, in particular the Horn Africa again appears a scramble area of great powers to

protect their long-term energy security, emphasizes the changing dynamics of security. If Russia is thinking to play the great power game in grand chessboard, it should not evaluate the Horn of Africa as a pawn.

#### Bio

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#### Article

# Russia as a Rising Isolated Power and the W(r)est:

# Wrestling Ukraine from the West and the New Euro-Atlantic Puzzle

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### Abstract

There is a temptation to separate Russia – the East – from the rest of the world when going deeper inside the acute security discourse. "The rest" of the world in the light of what can be best known as "Ukraine crisis" is, fist of all, a collective West – the U.S., the EU, and NATO. The author argues, that current relations between East and West which are going through a period of a direct clash of principles and interests on all systemic levels, have been turned into an asymmetric conflict. It tends to be compared with the risk of the "new" Cold War. Such risk directly touches upon sustainability of the Trans-Atlantic security architecture what endangers to preserve the post-Soviet space as a space of turmoil and of total Russian aggressive domination. By punishing Ukraine for its Western aspirations, Moscow openly expressed its geopolitical will to become a global, but isolated power. In this respect, Russia has voluntarily used the scarecrow of the "wicked" West to hide its imperial needs what is discussed further below.

### **Keywords**

Russia, Ukraine, EU, NATO, USA, Crimea

'...one of the ways he defines the success of his policy
is not by results on the ground
but the level of the discomfort
he can create in the rest of the world
and show to his people as the point of his policy.'

- Ash Carter, the U.S. Defense Secretary, 6 January 2017

#### Introduction

An annexation of Crimea, followed by the hybrid war in the East of Ukraine, is a landmark tragedy that split the time for Ukraine to what was "before" and what is "after." Moreover, 2014 became a Rubicon-year for the global system of international relations which overstepped the final point of the post-bipolar destination and stepped into the new post-post-bipolar period (Glebov 2014). Even 9/11, with all its pain and global solidarity, was not sufficient to open the door to a new international epoch (Glebov 2014, p. 105). The global centers of power did not enter significant confrontation neither because of the war in the former Yugoslavia in the late 1990s, nor because of the Five Day war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008. In both cases the Russian Federation and the West renovated their relations up to the stable level to allow them to cooperate as before. Moreover, just after less than one year after the Five Day war was over, in March 2009, already under President Obama and President Medvedev, the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov quite symbolically were pressing this clumsy "Reset" button.

The situation has changed dramatically since then. In general, an aggression of the former superpower – the Russian Federation – against sovereign European state – Ukraine – has split the time to what was "before" and what is "after" also for the vast majority of the rest of the world initiating a U-turn in perceiving Russia as a reliable security partner. In a result, one of the main outcomes of a geopolitical fault in 2014 was an emerging of a dividing line to separate Russia from those 100 countries, who condemned Russian aggression over Ukraine openly. It is enough just to take a look on to the list of these countries voted in March 2014 in favor of General Assembly's Resolution 68/262 "Territorial integrity of Ukraine" and to those only 11 (*Kremlin's Eleven*) which rejected it in order to realize, that Russia stepped into a slimy road of self-isolation from those whom Russia officially stated it was an integral part of.

# Ukraine and the West: Conceptualizing Russian Security Identity

Ironically, but exactly one year before Russian masked troops invaded and occupied key Crimean locations while executing direct Kremlin's order, Russian President approved a previous foreign policy concept. There Russia has identified itself 'as an integral and inseparable part of European civilization' and claimed it had 'common deep-rooted civilizational ties' with 'the Euro-Atlantic states' (Foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation (approved by president of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on 12 February 2013), s. IV, para 54–56). Obviously, before 2014 Russia had a clear passion at least officially to personify itself with the West – this collective wealthy and attractive phenomenon of the "Euro-Atlantic states", which reflected a conceptual unity between liberal conglomerate of the demo-

cratic countries and values-oriented communities. Far before 2014 and nowadays they are basically represented by G7 and by the member-states of the EU and NATO. At the same time, for the current political regime in Russia which pretends to be one of the equal designers of the new world order to be with the West does not mean to be part of the West.

Thus, according to the new acute Foreign policy concept of the Russian federation (approved by president of the Russian federation Vladimir Putin on 30 November 2016), s. II, para 5 where is acknowledged, that 'the world is currently going through fundamental changes related to the emergence of a multipolar international system', while 'the cultural and civilizational diversity of the world and the existence of multiple development models are clearer than ever', Russia has chosen its own pass towards 'formation of new centres of economic and political power.' Claiming in this Concept, s. II, para 5 that 'global power and development potential is becoming decentralised, and is shifting towards the Asia-Pacific Region, eroding the global economic and political dominance of the traditional western powers,' Kremlin even much earlier made a bet ultimately on its military capabilities in order to get back on top of the international politics as a new center of global power.

If not surprisingly, but in the Russian perception as of 2016, there was this "Euro-Atlantic region", namely NATO (what was not new) but also the EU (!) which threatened Russia's intention to be back on top as one of the centers of power in the multipolar system by pursuing 'geopolitical expansion' (Foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation (approved by president of the Russian federation Vladimir Putin on 30 November 2016), s. IV, para 61). This was the first time when the EU was openly accused in the "geopolitical expansion" by the Russian official document. Russia has clearly blamed the West 'in a serious crisis in the relations between Russia and the Western states' because there were NATO and the EU which refused, to Kremlin's mind, 'to begin implementation of political statements regarding the creation of a common European security and cooperation framework...' (Foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation (approved by president of the Russian federation Vladimir Putin on 30 November 2016), s. IV, para 61). In other words, to our mind, Russia has finally signed off in its approach towards itself as to the "victim" of the monopolar - post-bipolar - world which has unilaterally been treated unequally by the Western civilization. Thus, Russia inevitably met a need to confront, as it turned out, those whom Russia yet in the Foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation (approved by president of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on 12 February 2013), s. IV, para 54-56 had been treated as counterparts: a) in 'building up a truly unified region without dividing lines through developing genuine partnership relations between Russia, the European Union and the United States'; b) in 'creating a common space of peace, security and stability based on the principles of indivisible security, equal cooperation and

mutual trust'; and in c) 'creating a common economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific.'

Choosing the option of setting off the West towards itself in its strategy of becoming a rising global power in a multipolar world, Russia has rolled down to a suicidal tactics of being isolated, but the global power at any price. The reason of the emerged contradictions between West and Russia is also clear: opposite strategic interests what was only confirmed later by a military campaign of Russia in Syria on the side of Bashar al-Assad, massive cyber attacks against the U.S. and by propaganda and information warfare with the West. Anyway, taking into consideration, that a question on whose strategic interests are "correct" is rather rhetoric one, an epicenter of such contradictions finally shifted towards Ukraine, which found them "correct" on the side of the West. By choosing not Russian, but Western vision of what is known as "the democracy," but not as "a sovereign democracy" what in general is fundamentals of the Russia-West contradictions (Glebov 2009a), Ukraine inevitably appeared on the way of the Russian global aspirations again. By Revolution of dignity and Euromaidan Ukraine has confirmed its independent and sovereign will to succeed with its strategy towards at least European integration, but not on the side of the Russian Federation with its integrative units in the former-USSR geopolitical space. Yes, the quality of such official position and sincerity of the real steps towards internal reforms and European integration of the so-called "Ukrainian political and economic elites" is another story (Glebov 2015), though it gives no right to Russia to intervene into internal affairs of a sovereign state as the same pattern Russia declines any intervention into its internal affairs. However, the die was cast what motivated Kremlin to act aggressively in order to have Ukraine if not with it, but definitely wrestled off the West in the burden of the hybrid war. Anyhow, Kremlin was eager to ban Ukrainian European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations by initiating and preserving a bleeding fireplace at least in Donbas to keep Ukraine out of Europe and in the post-Soviet space by Russian domination; while successful, democratic and Europeanized Ukraine in the future could pose a danger to Russia (in case, of course, Ukrainians succeed by themselves).

In fact, Russia never departed from its imperialist ambitions after 1991, and remained a superpower in the post-Soviet space; want we or not, but this post-Soviet space has been always associated with Russia and "the rest" where Moscow was successful in making enemies, but not friends; to Russia, the space of global superiority just narrowed and declined from the top level to the regional, what Moscow cannot accept even today. Such ambitions dictate a tough policy towards Russia's "near abroad," including Georgia and Ukraine, in Putin's aspiration to restore the global superiority of the times of the USSR and even earlier. The case of Ukraine is top-instructive (with all respect to Georgia) in the light of Brzezinsky's

well-known thesis on the specific role of Ukraine in such a process, also known much earlier as Lev Trotsky's "There is no Russia without Ukraine" (Олийнык 2012). If paraphrase it these days, there could be Russia as a global power even without Ukraine in case Russia is democratic sometime in the future, but there is just isolated Kremlin with Ukrainian Crimea nowadays.

# Russia's Foreign Policy Defiance and European Response

It will not be an exaggeration to say, that relations between Russia and the USA, Russia and the EU, Russia and NATO for the last three years are being tested for solidity by the sharpest confrontation between "West" and "East" since the times of the Cold War. Under such circumstances, not only the idea "of a common European security and cooperation framework" faced a powerful knock-down. A hypothetical world order based on multipolarity Russia has been insisting on since the break-up of the USSR (in the frame of the UN Charter and under its superiority) appeared under a potential military clash. Paradoxically, but a direct threat of its destruction was expressed exactly from the side of Russia. Such an inadequate and humiliating policy of Russia in the UN became not only evident, but also appeared to be the subject of strong criticism from the vast majority of the UN Security Council members when discussing the situation around Ukraine. There were Russia's colleagues in the UN Security Council which were no longer ready to tolerate a quasi-diplomatic behavior from the side of the Russian UN representatives. As Ambassador Lyall Grant, UK Mission to the UN clearly stated at the Security Council Meeting on Ukraine on August 28, 2014, 'Violating international law and the UN Charter in such a brazen manner is not compatible with Russia's responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council' (Gov.uk. 2014). At the same time, that means that the UN community simply has no adequate diplomatic instruments to influence Russia at least diplomatically because of Russia's aggressive unilateral decisions.

In this context, annexation of Crimea by Russia with the further Russian hybrid aggression over the Eastern part of Ukraine and cynical behavior in the UN Security Council entered the global agenda. This agenda has been shared by all sides involved; it has been best known as the "Ukraine crisis". Even though the author of these lines is not in favor of the loose term of "Ukraine crisis," which tends to be adopted in the world-wide discourse as something "internal Ukrainian," its origin dates back to the Russia-Ukrainian dialog on the Black Sea Fleet of the former-USSR in the 1990s.

It is essential to remind in this context, that a Treaty on friendship, cooperation and partnership between Russian Federation and Ukraine with its principles of mutual respect for territorial integrity and state sovereignty are being now totally ignored was signed exactly after Ukraine has agreed to keep Russia's part of the

Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol until 2017 due to corresponding package of Agreements on the Black Sea Fleet of the former USSR signed just few days before on 28 May 1997. It was clear, that without military presence on the territory of Ukraine having Sevastopol and Crimea at least in a capacity of the formal land lease until 2017, Russia was not able to recognize Ukraine's sovereignty, existing borders and integrity as of the independent actor and as of a subject of international relations with whom Russia officially was ready to establish "friendship, cooperation and partnership" (Glebov 2007b).

Nevertheless, the position of Ukraine was clear from the very beginning: it was Russian military intervention into Ukraine in February 2014 which resulted in the annexation of Crimea – the 'formal act by which a state asserts its sovereignty over a territory previously outside its jurisdiction' as The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia defines term "annexation" (Infoplease.com. 2017). The position of Russia gave no alternative as well: it was peaceful reunification. Meanwhile, the *Charter of the United Nations* (UN.org. 2017) in its chapter 1, article 2, and paragraph 4 forbids any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations. At the same time, as to the practical position of the West, it is not even of the paramount importance what are both Ukraine and Russia doing in "their" post-Soviet "internal showdown". The most important question is where the West finds itself within this conflict.

For example, the position of the EU was also clear and called no doubts where the EU stands in this crisis. Yet on 13 March 2014 the European Parliament in its *Resolution on the invasion of Ukraine by Russia* (Europarl.europa.eu. 2014) firmly condemned 'Russia's act of aggression in invading Crimea, which is an inseparable part of Ukraine and recognised as such by the Russian Federation and by the international community...', called 'for the immediate de-escalation of the crisis, with the immediate withdrawal of all military forces present illegally on Ukrainian territory,' and urged 'full respect for international law and existing conventional obligations.' Later on 20-21 March 2014 the European Council meeting in *European Council Conclusions, para 29* confirmed, that the European Union remained committed to 'uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine' and did not and would not recognize neither 'the illegal referendum in Crimea', nor 'illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation.'

One may accept or not accept a term "annexation", but it is more important in our context, that this is the EU which accepts this term in its official position. Anyhow, all these diplomatic and political rhetoric in 2014 resulted in real sanctions against Russia the EU alongside with the United States enacted. Obviously, some of the EU member-states are not happy from the need to keep sanctions

against Russia for different reasons. For example, quite inspiring for the Russia was a message by the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker which Russian media enjoyed a lot, when he admitted in Passau on 8 October 2015 that the EU 'must make efforts towards a practical relationship with Russia. It is not sexy but that must be the case, we can't go on like this' (BBC News 2015a). Moreover, in this speech Mr. Juncker when referring to the current tensions in EU-Russia relations admitted, neither more nor less, that 'we can't let our relationship with Russia be dictated by Washington.'

In fact, both Brussels and Moscow (the EU tactically, the RF strategically though) have been always concerned by the American factor and to some extent still may be interested in minimizing American impact towards their bilateral relations. Both the EU and RF could be potentially seen as global centers of power in the multipolar world under new world order to narrow American domination in some future (in case the EU is in general intending to become a global power (Glebov 2007a), while the RF is definitely yes). It is even possible to presume that without such tendency towards limitation of America's influence to elaborate effective mechanism towards possible reapportionment with Russia will be an unresolved task; if in principle getting rid of the US gives any positive effect for the EU strategically. Of course, the volume of this "anti-American" interest and a scale of minimization are obviously different for each of them. At the same time, the EU should not underestimate Russian intentions towards itself: while Kremlin is seeking a chance to set off American and European interests towards each other, Russia in parallel is trying to weaken the EU from within. Let us also not to forget, that those Junker's statements were made before Russia initiated massive airstrikes on Aleppo and before Donald Trump was elected as a president of the USA. Both events, besides the "Ukraine crisis," made the EU worry as to the future Euro-Atlantic unity and American presence not only in the Euro-Atlantic security space. Nevertheless, having this test by Ukraine, and after by Syria, and President Trump, the EU's policy towards Russia strategically remains in line with the EU's official vision. President of the European Commission when continued the "Passau speech" did not forget to urge Russia to make a "massive" policy shift, by saying that 'the way they have acted in Crimea and eastern Ukraine is not acceptable' (BBC News 2015a). While choosing between regional interests vis-à-vis Russia and own European and common Euro-Atlantic security, the EU has been doomed to make an existential choice in favor of the latter.

That means, that having Crimea in the very focus of conflict between the EU and Russia, Brussels is doomed to have it in mind and on the table of negotiations with Russia as to the future model of the already changed relationship.

# Asymmetric policies: Normative vs. *Realpolitik* and Political narratives of selfisolation

In fact, such risks like direct clash of value-based political and interest-based military strategies both of the EU and Russia towards each other has been reproduced exactly from the post-Soviet space. The first serious alarm in bilateral relations revealed itself during the Five Day war between Russia and Georgia. For example, Joenniemi and Prozorov (2010) suggest that:

...the war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 revealed that Europe lacks a coherent joint system of security. Not only did the current system fail to prevent the war, it also fared poorly in the task of mediation. Even more importantly, it turned out that there was little common ground as to the very principles on which European security was to be founded.

As it became clear afterwards, the EU was not ready to confront with Russia due to economic and political reasons. Even such foreign policy mechanism like economic sanctions against Russia was not on the table 9 years ago, not talking about any military rivalry both from the side of NATO and its European allies inside the EU. Finally, the constantly growing crisis in bilateral relations with all basic features of the open non-military conflict inevitably took place in February 2014. The city of Simferopol once appeared in the gunpoint of the "polite" "little green men" localized confrontation between the EU and Russia over principles and interests exactly in the Crimean peninsula.

It is essential to outline, that with these "green man" invasion, who appeared to be the main providers of the annexation from the very beginning, the EU-Russia relations' crisis turned bilateral relations into conflict which could be also identified as "asymmetric". That means, that Moscow openly expressed its political will and made it clear to the EU and the rest of the West, that Russia was ready to achieve its goals defending national interests by military instruments of its foreign policy.

Instructively, at first President of Russia Vladimir Putin denied any involvement of Russian Armed Forces, saying, that 'those' men in green 'were local self-defense units' (President of Russia, Official Web Portal 2014). That denial was understandable: by acknowledging the opposite, the act of direct aggression from the side of the UN Security Council constant member would come on the surface of the global politics, taking into account the definition of the "aggression" by the 1974 UN 3314 *Declaration on the Definition of Aggression*. Just to remind, that Article 3 in the paragraph "a" fixed a principle, that regardless of a declaration of war:

...the invasion or attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State, or any military occupation, however temporary, resulting from such invasion or attack, or any annexation by the use of force of the territory of another State or part thereof was qualified as an act of aggression (UN General Assembly, UN. org 1974).

Actually, that was not an unexpected outcome: the issue of Crimea as well as of the Black Sea Fleet and Sevastopol accompanied by aggressively attacking policy of Russia was always on the table of the Russia-Ukraine relations. Here is enough just to remind the decision of the Russian Parliament - Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation - to adopt on 9 July 1993 a decree On the status of the city of Sevastopol (BC PΦ, Bestpravo.ru 1993), which de-jure and de-facto has been Ukrainian. The decree cited 'Russian federal status for the city of Sevastopol within the administrative and territorial borders of the city district as of December 1991' and entrusted appropriate parliamentary committee to incorporate federal status of Sevastopol into the Russian Constitution (BC PΦ, Bestpravo.ru 1993). Just to remind, this first attempt to incorporate Sevastopol into Russian Federation was completely rejected by the UN and failed under the leading role of the UN Security Council with its President Sir. David Hannay in July 1993 (UN Security Council, UN.org 1993). One should not also forget that a risk of a military clash between Russia and Ukraine in Kerch strait was also on the table of bilateral concerns back to 2003 crisis over Tuzla Island.

As it was already mentioned, "Ukraine crisis" had no chance, but to regain both the West and Russia into the diplomatic battlefield. The war of words and meanings simultaneously formed base and background of the so-called "hybrid war" in Ukraine world-wide. It became clear, that an existing until recently quite reliable post-bipolar paradigm of the diplomatic communication and responsibility for the outspoken statements decreased the level of interstate trust dramatically since the end of the Cold War.

The behavior of the Russian president is quite instructive in this sense. First pretending that there was nothing to do with the Russian involvement, Russian president, during a question-and-answer session on 17 April 2014 with Russians in a studio audience, had to confess twice in the end, that those "little green man" in Crimea were Russian soldiers:

'Of course, the Russian servicemen did back the Crimean self-defence forces. They acted in a civil but a decisive and professional manner" and later repeated once again: "Russia did not annex Crimea by force. Russia created conditions — with the help of special armed groups and the Armed Forces, I will say it straight — but only for the free expression of the will of the people living in Crimea and Sevastopol' (Washingtonpost 2014).

There could be no other way around. Yet speaking in the trailer to a forthcoming

Russian TV documentary on the return of Crimea to Russia lately on 15 March 2014 shown on Russian TV, 'Vladimir Putin has admitted for the first time that the plan to annex Crimea was ordered weeks before' (BBC News 2014) the so-called "referendum on self-determination" on 16 March 2014. On 18 March 2014, Mr. Putin signs a bill absorbing Crimea into the Russian Federation, but the decision 'to begin the work to bring Crimea back into Russia,' as documentary "Crimea. The way back home" says, was made during 22-23 February 2014 overnight meeting of the Russian top-officials with Putin after failure of Yanukovych's regime in Ukraine (BBC News 2014).

And one more thing without additional comment: as to the "decisive and professional manner" of the Russian servicemen to take into consideration when dealing with current Russian methods of conducting foreign policy. Being puzzled by Putin's "human-shield", a contributor to Forbes.com Paul Roderick Gregory reflecting Vladimir Putin's press conference on 4 March 2014 stressed out quite instructive quotation to have it here:

In his incredibly frank press conference, VVP called for a highly unorthodox way of protecting Crimean civilians in the following exchange: Putin: "Listen to me carefully here! (interrupting reporter). I want to be very clear on that. If we make this decision we'll do it to protect Ukrainian citizens. And we'll see afterwards if any of their servicemen will dare to shoot on their own people who we'll stay behind, not in front, but behind! I dare them to shoot women and children – I'd like to see who would give such an order in Ukraine (Gregory, P. R. 2014).

In general, such unprecedented case of clumsy attempt to hide annexation as a key feature of the political rhetoric from the side of the Russian president (not even touching upon statements by Russian Ministry for foreign affairs and Constant representative of the Russian Federation to the UN) leaves less hope that dialog between the West and Russia could be easily restored soon on the basis of common understanding of bilateral problems for the sake of common possible solutions. If there is no common and value-based diplomatic ground for understanding, there are no bilateral solutions, only compromises and dangerous concessions to lead for a zero sum game to exclude "win-win" result. It is obvious, that both the West and Russia are heading now to a "loss-loss" outcome.

# "The Black Sea-Balkan" insecurity hole of the Euro-Atlantic: Russia vs. NATO

There is no need to discuss, why NATO matters. As it is stated in the acute "after-annexation" *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (approved by the President of the Russian Federation on 25 December 201, No. Pr.-2976)*, among the main external military risks on the first place is:

build-up of the power potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and vesting NATO with global functions carried out in violation of the rules of international law, bringing the military infrastructure of NATO member countries near the borders of the Russian Federation, including by further expansion of the alliance (s. II, para 12a).

In his "Natofobic" speech on 24 August 2015 for Educational Youth Forum on Klyazma River, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov actually confessed, that because of NATO and "NATO-centrism" which, to Lavrov's mind, did not allow cooperating with Russia, the war in Ukraine became possible:

'... the only way is dialogue, respect for a negotiating partner's interests, and the desire to find consensus, which inevitably implies compromises without diktat or ultimatums... I think if the same principles were accepted by our Western partners, there would have been no confrontation over the advance of NATO's military infrastructure towards Russian borders despite earlier promises to the contrary, nor would there have been the Ukrainian crisis, if things were done through the search for generally acceptable compromise rather than ultimatums, or a "black-and-white" understanding of developments, or the either-with-us-or-against-us dichotomy... Thus, they gave up on the concept of a single and indivisible space of equal security in the Euro-Atlantic area, which had been proclaimed by their leaders. This NATO-centrism, this attempt to preserve the divides represent a systemic problem, while the rest, including the tragedy in Ukraine, is derived from this division into friend or foe.' (En.mid.ru. 2015).

This is not the right place to give a critique on Russia's approach towards "the concept of a single and indivisible space of equal security in the Euro-Atlantic area" and to discuss who is responsible for the fact that this concept had failed in practice. This is another important discourse, the nature of which had been reflected by the author of this chapter some time ago when proposing a concept of the "New Euroatlantism" yet in 2009 (Glebov 2009). At the same time, that was not a secret, according to the Foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation (approved by president of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev on 15 July 2008), that Russia maintained:

its negative attitude towards the expansion of NATO, notably to the plans of admitting Ukraine and Georgia to the membership in the alliance, as well as to bringing the NATO military infrastructure closer to the Russian borders on the whole, which violates the principle of equal security, leads to new dividing lines in Europe and runs counter to the tasks of increasing the effectiveness of joint work in search for responses to real challenges of our time... (s. IV).

As far as Russia prefers to refer to "NATO enlargement" strategy as to "the ex-

pansion of NATO" (what makes difference in Russian language) there is a direct link between "NATO expansion" after-1991 syndrome and annexation of Crimea in 2014. As it turned out, an annexation of Crimea in February-March 2014 was partly justified by Russian President Putin when introducing NATO and its ephemeral intention to expand as a motivation to have Crimea "back home":

If we don't do anything, Ukraine will be drawn into NATO sometime in the future. We'll be told: "This doesn't concern you," and NATO ships will dock in Sevastopol, the city of Russia's naval glory... if NATO troops walk in, they will immediately deploy these forces there. Such a move would be geopolitically sensitive for us because, in this case, Russia would be practically ousted from the Black Sea area...' (Washingtonpost.com 2014).

It is important to stress out, that at the beginning of 2014, contrarily to 2008 though, the issue "of admitting" Ukraine to the membership in the alliance was not and could not be on the table at all (Ukraine even officially possessed a "nonaligned" status since 20 July 2010 until 23 December 2014). Abovementioned "explanation" by Russian President Putin had to be dislocated by existing reality, but in contrast to this turned into rational once being incorporated directly into Kremlin's "anti-NATO" discourse primarily for the Russian audience and adepts of the "Russian spring" outside. Anyway, there is a fear, that this is Russia which is considering Crimea as "an impregnable fortress" (TASS Russian News Agency 2015b) and the bridgehead against NATO. There is a clear interest in Kremlin to turn the peninsula into colossal military base as the one integral fortress of the "Russian world" with its spiritual Orthodox cradle against NATO "expansionism", Americanism and Westernization. Symbolically, but this frontier between "us" and "them" exactly found its epicenter in the ancient Chersonese - now City of Sevastopol where Christianity was spread towards Eastern Slavic lands centuries ago. Thus, when dealing with NATO "expansion/enlargement" case, one should not underestimate the role of Russia within current NATO-Montenegrin relations and its influence on the regional and Euro-Atlantic security in general.

The case of a political disorder in Montenegro with anti-government protests in Podgorica on 24 October 2015 and one year later in October 2016 was not accidental. Once Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic accused Russia of supporting Serbian nationalists in a bid to force a regime change in 2015 (Themoscowtimes.com 2015), situation has changed dramatically. As it turned out, NATO again appeared in the focus of the Russian strategy in the Big Mediterranean. As it was reported in October 2015, 'Djukanovic referred to three past Russian Foreign Ministry statements to support his claim that Russia opposes the country's political course, including its bid for accession into the NATO military alliance' (Themoscowtimes.com 2015). Nevertheless, a formal invitation was issued by the Alliance on 2 December 2015, with accession negotiations con-

cluded with the signature of an accession protocol in May 2016. NATO Deputy Secretary-General Rose Gottemoeller says that she expects that the tiny Balkan country will become a member in spring 2017 after all 28 NATO member states and Montenegro ratify the agreement in their parliaments (Foxnews.com 2016). At the same time, Montenegro officials have accused Russia of standing behind an alleged coup on Election Day in October 2016 to topple the pro-Western government because of its NATO bid (Foxnews.com 2016). This time things went in more dangerous way. A Montenegro prosecutor has accused Russians of planning to assassinate Montenegro's premier. Police arrested 20 Serbian nationals during October's 2016 elections, including a former commander of Serbia's special police forces (DW.COM. 2016). There are also allegations that Russia has backed the opposition and protests against NATO which also accompanied October's 2016 elections in Montenegro against pro-NATO government. So, it looks like now the car with the title "Montenegro" replaced Georgia and Ukraine on the track to NATO, what inevitably led to the meeting with the "Russian rising locomotive" at this track.

At the same time, putting such discourses aside which are subjects for another deep research, and according to such logic of accusations in "NATO-centrism", there is a clear signal from the Russian Federation to be taken into consideration, that Russia is ready to wage hybrid wars and launch preemptive hybrid attacks against any country, including those NATO-members neighboring Russia, which dared to express its security needs opposite to Russia's expectations (Glebov 2016a). In this respect, a special focus should be made on a Turkish-Russian regional knot. Its further development should be fixedly monitored on the permanent basis for the known reasons what has been also analyzed recently (Glebov 2016b), including the outcomes of the Ambassador of the RF Andrey Karlov's assassination in Ankara in December 2016.

# Russia as a rising security challenger to the U.S.

From just verbal cross-fire with the West as an element of the "soft-offensive" foreign policy practice, Russia from the very beginning of the annexation started to flex its muscles in a "hard" security manner with a long-run confrontational perspective both at global and regional levels. This touches upon not only jeered provocations with groups of Russian warplanes conducting large-scale maneuvers in international airspace against NATO member-countries all over the Black, Baltic and North seas and the Atlantic Ocean, or strategic plans of Kremlin towards Crimea. This is also not just an attempt to rely on the Kremlin's invented style of the loose "import substitution" response against economic sanctions on the way to self-isolation *a-la* Stalin's autarky policy during the times of *Industrialization*. Kremlin seems to be ready to confront the West conceptually on the top of the world politics (even though unlike Stalin, Kremlin with its cleptocracy has

nothing to contrapose even to a felonious *Industrialization* of 1930s to strengthen the state from within to confront a "hostile" external environment of the XXI century).

In his speech at the Valdai International Discussion Club on 22 October 2015, Russian President Putin took as 'absolutely natural' 'competition between nations and their alliances' if 'this competition develops within the framework of fixed political, legal and moral norms and rules' (President of Russia, Official Web Portal 2015). As President Putin pointed out:

'Otherwise, competition and conflicts of interest may lead to acute crises and dramatic outbursts... What, for instance, could such uncontrolled competition mean for international security? A growing number of regional conflicts, especially in 'border' areas, where the interests of major nations or blocs meet' (President of Russia, Official Web Portal 2015).

By saying this, Putin actually justified the right of great powers to wage wars "especially in 'border' areas, where the interests of major nations or blocs meet." Ukraine and the Black Sea region appeared exactly the same "border" area where "such uncontrolled competition" takes place. By saying all these, such approach from the side of the Russian President exactly justifies the right of the Russian Federation to attack Ukraine, because it was a victim of the aggressive policy of NATO, of course, as Putin pretends to be sure. It simply works in a manner "we attacked Ukraine, because America pushed us to do this." Even if we accept the phenomenon of the "uncontrolled competition" as the one, which looks like inevitable in international relations nowadays, could annexation of the territory of the foreign independent state be an excuse being itself the act of destruction of the set of previously "fixed political, legal and moral norms and rules"? That means that Ukraine as well as some other states is doomed to become hostages of the global competition between West and Russia. There is a strong need to answer a question on who is responsible for breaking down those "fixed political, legal and moral norms and rules." There is a question to the U.S. and its allies if they believe that great powers have a right to wage wars, what actually opens a new discussion which brings us back to the Interwar period and General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy, best known as a Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928.

Obviously, the USA for many reasons cannot stay away from such developments and new American President Donald Trump has to give right answers sooner or later. A new American leader has to take into account that it was Russia itself which securitized the American factor to introduce it into a security discourse over Ukraine. That had happened from the very beginning when Putin's regime blamed the U.S. for the "Ukraine crisis". In the documentary, which marked a year

since the referendum that saw Russia take control of Crimea,

Mr. Putin described the Ukrainian revolution to oust Viktor Yanukovych in February 2014 as an armed coup "masterminded by our American friends" with the readiness to use nuclear weapons if necessary" (Withnall 2015).

We were ready to do that,' Putin said when asked in a documentary film about Russia's takeover of Crimea if the Kremlin had been prepared to place its nuclear forces on alert. The Russian leader said he warned the U.S. and Europe not to get involved, accusing them of engineering the ouster of Russian-backed Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych. 'That's why I think no one wanted to start a world conflict' (Meyer 2015). There are almost no doubts, that 'Russia's retaking of Crimea could give it a crucial head start in the event of a global conflict' (Kureev 2015). Later in the acute *Russian National Security Strategy of 31 December 2015*, s. II, para 17 Russia officially stated, that 'the support of the United States and the European Union for the anti-constitutional coup d'etat in Ukraine led to a deep split in Ukrainian society and the emergence of an armed conflict.'

When talking about global effects already made by security outcomes of the "Ukraine crisis," an issue of nuclear safety and non-proliferation regime should be discussed immediately.

One should not underestimate a threat of the on-going nuclear rivalry in the Black Sea region as a Russian trend towards nuclearization of the peninsula. Crimea is not just conventional "Russian impregnable fortress," but may become a nuclear one soon. As Mikhail Ulyanov, the head of the Foreign Ministry's non-proliferation department, said in March 2015 'Russia can deploy nuclear weapons in Crimea as the peninsula is part of its territory' (TASS Russian News Agency 2015a).

One should not also forget, that the act of direct aggression from the side of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum's on Security Assurances signatory who confirmed, that it would 'respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine' and 'refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine' (Msz.gov.pl. 1994) ruins not only general principles of the international relations and existing system of international law, but also global nuclear deterrence system. For instance, in the interview for RBC-Ukraine different Members of Parliament from EU countries identified the issue of the Russian nuclear weapons in Crimea as the most challenging for NATO and the USA (Шпайхер 2015).

The deployment of nuclear platforms within striking distance of NATO forces including Iskander tactical ballistic missile systems to the Kaliningrad region,

highlights the role of nuclear weapons in Russia's national security strategy, said Michaela Dodge, a policy analyst at The Heritage Foundation (Peterson 2015). As BBC News defence and diplomatic correspondent Jonathan Marcus admits, that 'Russian President Vladimir Putin has placed a renewed emphasis upon his country's nuclear arsenal' not accidently:

'This is in part a reflection of Russia's continuing conventional military weakness... What most alarms the West is the renewed emphasis in Russian rhetoric on nuclear rather than conventional forces. Threats to deploy short-range nuclear weapons in Crimea have been accompanied by veiled warnings of nuclear targeting against NATO members who might host ballistic missile defences' (BBC News 2015c).

Even out of the global multilateral conventional and strategic military context, "Ukraine crisis" has targeted US-Russia bilateral strategic cooperation in the space field. As NBC with an American space journalist and historian James Oberg alarmed in September 2014,

As the International Space Station gets ready for a routine change of crew using Russia's Soyuz spaceships, the Russian government seems to be initiating a subtle gambit to force the United States into a diplomatic trap over the status of Russian-occupied Crimea. Here's how it works: Either the United States acknowledges the legitimacy of the recent Russian annexation of that Ukrainian province, or it will be forced by existing agreements to disqualify NASA astronauts from flying aboard Russia's spaceships, which currently provide the only means to get astronauts to and from the space station...' (Oberg 2015).

It looks like Russia has additional global trumps in its hands to blackmail the USA in order to enforce the White House to be manageable in the issue of Crimea and wider in more "pro-Russian" way; as James Oberg (2015) concluded, 'no Crimea trip, no space trip.' Expanding this to the rest of the bilateral US-RF agenda, the U.S. did face a challenge in face of Russia which will be bulldozing President Trump in a way "no Crimea trip, no global peace". The ball is on the Trump's side: let us trace what Donald Trump's team responds in America's turn to all Russia's security challenges.

#### Conclusion

Russia, when crossed the red line with Ukraine in February-March 2014, became the first former superpower, the first nuclear state with the second largest nuclear arsenal in the world and the first constant member of the UN Security Council to capture the territory of a neighboring country to integrate it into itself. Sacralization of the fashioned "soft-power" approach and illusion of the omnipotence of

normativism in Europe made tanks and cannons almost not eligible and out of the context of the international dialog, including with Russia before 2014. In fact, Russia has used quite successfully such Western geopolitical purblindness. Moscow, in its turn, openly expressed its geopolitical will and made it clear to the West that Russia was ready to defend its security interests and satisfy own geopolitical ambitions by using military power neglecting international law.

The case of annexation of Crimea showed up not only different strategies, but also resources to pursue purposes and defend interests. While the EU as a "normative" power has limited "soft" instruments of confront "hard" power, the most radical among which are economic sanctions, Russian Federation saw no UN and OSCE diplomatic barriers and ultimately relied on military force. Besides, by using it directly against Ukraine, Russia showed no reverence for the EU and the rest, because it looks like Moscow did not worry too much about outside reaction being in the epicenter of the strong international atmosphere of suspicions about Russian invasion in Crimea. They were only confirmed by Russian president Putin without any reliable chance to hide Russian involvement from the international community.

The war imposed on Ukraine and Russian military aggression brought us decisively back to the times of the Cold War and revived the days of triumph for the neo-realists. This fact requires a profound resetting of the whole system of global and regional security architecture taking into account a military threat coming from Russia's conventional forces and its nuclear bravado the UN, OSCE, the EU, or even NATO cannot handle. All this is rather dramatic, given that Russia is still an actor expanding its global influence. Paradoxically, but potentially remaining one of the global centers of the future multipolar world, Russia made its "best" to block it. Instead, Russia on the way to multipolarity in the frame of the UN has already ruined fundamentals of the multipolar world order when initiated "Ukrainian" campaign. Any kind of world order based on multipolarity should presume, to our mind, sustainability of the global development and stability of an international system under mutual security guarantees which exclude direct military clash between those centers of power. Otherwise, it will not be an order, but permanent chaos on the edge of the global war; what actually is taking place nowadays in the world, which has been splinted into just two confronting centers - East and West with a "wait and see" attitude so far from the potential competitor to both of them - China.

Thus, Russia remains a great power, though already isolated one. Abovementioned observations, however, are launching even more dangerous scenario of the future developments as far as Russia, being entrapped by global dispraise, and in a state of security stress and political despair has been motivated to find the way out by all means in a way "the empty vessel makes the greatest sound". At the same time,

Kremlin has finally separated itself from the West and discarded Russia from the further discourse on creation of a common European and Euro-Atlantic security and cooperation framework. On the way to self-isolation, Kremlin in its orientation to the "greatness" of the USSR risks to repeat its geopolitical destiny. Current military campaign in Syria, danger to lose word competitions, including possible boycott of the Football World Cup 2018, and total militarization in response to the West fully corresponds to the military campaign of the USSR in Afghanistan, boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games-80 and Star Wars military expenditures provocations to facilitate dissolution of the USSR in the end.

All these give no perspectives for the further rapprochement between East and West if not Ukraine is sacrificed by actual and rising global powers for the sake of deceptive peace between two of them. Even in this case all sides involved obtained another red line not to cross in order not to be associated with an isolated aggressor: the United Nations General Assembly on 19 December 2016 voted for a resolution on human rights in Crimea, which became the first international document designating the Russian Federation as an occupying power and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as a temporarily occupied territory; the resolution confirmed the territorial integrity of Ukraine and reaffirmed the non-recognition of the annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula (UNIAN Information Agency 2016).

#### Bio

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#### Article

# Russia in the Middle East: A New Dominant Actor?

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#### Abstract

Like many Arab countries, Syria had to face a massive popular revolt in 2011 that was transformed into an extremely violent civil war, the outcome of which remains uncertain. A collapse of the regime in place could deprive Russia of its main ally in the Arab world, which has been an unwavering support for years with the official justification of the struggle against radical Islam, but above all a will to influence relations between forces and to impose a new multilateralism by resuming its place in a region that can not be ignored on the global geopolitical scene.

# Keywords

Russia, Syria, Arab Uprisings, Multilateralism, Islam

Like most influential countries in the Middle East, Russia quickly positioned itself at the beginning of the Syrian revolt in 2011, appearing as the archetype of the counter-revolutionary regime, because, by opposing, in the name of non-interference with democratic aspirations, it has taken the risk of going against the backdrop of a fundamental trend. From the outset, it hoped that the geopolitical evolutions that would emerge from this insurrection revolt would offer new prospects by allowing it to become again a key actor in the Arab world and beyond. It is the outcome of the Syrian crisis that will determine whether Russia will be able to consolidate its position at the regional and international level or whether, on the contrary, it will halt its willingness to form a counterweight with other emerging countries effective to western hegemony.

In order to evaluate these prospects, the old ties between Moscow and Damascus, and more generally in the Middle East, will be recalled. We will then analyze the extent to which the Syrian crisis constitutes an inadequately assessed risk or is not the fate of the region. Finally, it should be recalled that the question of the muslims of Russia is positioned in the background of its action.

# **Old Links Constantly Renewed**

#### An Ancient Interest

Since Catherine II, who brings to the Russian Empire its "window on the Mediterranean" by founding Sebastopol in 1783, to the buildings of the 5th Soviet Operational Squadron, which criss-cross Mediterranean waters since the 1970s, the Kremlin has continually sought to perpetuate its presence in the Mediterranean basin. Thus, Tsarist Russia (and later the Soviet Union) could not ignore the Arab world or the Middle East as an influential nation, although it was often referred to as a colossus of feet of clay at the beginning of the twentieth century. During the Sykes-Picot negotiations of 1915-1916, it was for a time envisaged to place Palestine under international guardianship, so that it would not be attributed to any particular state since each of them defended divergent interests. Russia was in a good position to integrate this circle of protective states, since among the Palestinians, or rather the Arab natives, if the vast majority is Muslim and Sunni more precisely, there is a non-negligible Christian minority, essentially orthodox, which inevitably creates links with the main power claiming this confession. But the fall of the tsarist empire, followed by the advent of the Soviet system and Stalin, at first anxious to consolidate the communist and partisan grip at the outset of the revolution in one country, moved Russia away from the region, despite the sending of Comintern agents, and then the emergence of Communist movements or parties affiliated to the USSR. Then the collapse of the Axis powers in the Mediterranean during the second world war will provide an opportunity to claim a portion of Libya without success and Stalin does not insist on the refusal of the Westerners. It is generally a cold realism that he adopts as at the time of the "Greek affair" where the supporters of Moscow, soon after the liberation from the German yoke are abandoned by their mentor against the anti-communists, The Soviet regime having obtained a form of non-interference in the countries of its new sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe.

Yet, the Arab-Muslim space, especially the Near and Middle East, will be like the rest of the world a zone of confrontation between the two blocs, with allies more or less aligned, Confrontation will be less virulent than it could be on other fields of operation, if one thinks of Vietnam, Angola or not far from the Arab world, Afghanistan. Thus, South Yemen will be the only truly communist state, although Syria is an important ally since the 1950s<sup>1</sup> and even more so when the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The USSR established diplomatic relations with Syria as early as 1944 (although not yet formally independent), and then military-technical co-operation between the two states began in the mid-1950s. In 1955, Damascus refused thus adhering to the Pact of Baghdad, pro-Western and perceived as too Franco-British. On the other hand, in the name of "positive neutrality", theorized before the Bandoug conference (1955), military cooperation (arms purchases) and then economic cooperation with the USSR began in 1956, especially after the crisis of Suez: Syrian diplomatic choices are therefore comparable to those of Nasser's Egypt. In August 1957 the first treaty of economic co-operation with the USSR was signed, but Syria was far from becoming a "red satellite of the USSR".

Baathists came to power in 1963. Indeed, while remaining close to Egypt, they have renounced a merger in the United Arab Republic (UAR), as this ephemeral political union quickly became unbalanced in favor of Cairo. Nationalists, they can not submit totally to the communist "big brother", but, pragmatic, they realize that in order to be able to maintain a relative strategic and political parity with Israel, they must rely on a military power that can not be the United States, above all anxious to satisfy their Gulf allies (hostile to Arab nationalist, socializing and secular regimes), and increasingly their new hebrew partner.

Moreover, as in Cyprus, we find the same underlying and totally paradoxical religious dimension: an atheist country like the USSR and secular as Syria can not officially put forward the least confessional solidarity. Thus, the Syrian Christian community, at the time mostly close to the Baath Party (or other secular groups such as the Syrian People's Party or the Syrian Communist Party) and which represents much more than the current 5 to 7% orthodox.

Nearly similar relations are forged between the USSR and Iraq by Saddam Hussein, another country which claims to be an Arab nationalist, secular and socialist, and which is particularly hostile to Israel. Initially supported by the USSR, because its Labor founders were supposed to have a certain ideological proximity to Moscow (and also because many of the founders of Zionism were from the Slavic world), the Jewish state would see the Soviets move away to profit of the palestinian cause. Just as the fall of Tsarist Russia had partially and temporarily removed Moscow from the Arab world, the collapse of the USSR would, for nearly a decade, diminish its influence in this area. Thus, in the last years of the twentieth century, it sees its main points of support move away: South Yemen (the only Marxist state in the Arab world) is forced to merge with its brother enemy of the North in 1990, Iraq (who naively believed that his Russian ally could prevent any military pressure to force him to leave Kuwait illegally annexed) was considerably weakened following the 1991 western intervention, and the PLO of Arafat and even Syria were partly distancing themselves from Moscow and felt more or less open to new partners who were likely to weigh more in the fate of the region (the United States in particular). For Russia, priority is at this time to manage the delicate economic and political transition that stemmed from the collapse of soviet structures, and the strategic imperative is to limit western penetration into its immediate geographical environment.

# Progressive and Non-aligned Return

It was above all with Vladimir Putin's coming to power in 2000, which inherited the main attributes of power of the defunct USSR (permanent seat with veto power in the UN Security Council in particular) that Russia confirmed its ancient ties with Syria, somewhat distended by an unresolved debt problem and a cir-

cumstantial rapprochement between Damascus and Washington in the wake of the first Gulf War in 1991. It was true that if it had never really left it, Moscow's influence in the Middle East was declining.

In spite of an agreement at the outset hearty (once is not customary), with the United States, the situation will gradually deteriorate for reasons that concern as much American unilateralism as to considerations specific to the political russain life, and in particular the concern to adopt a nationalist position likely to rally the largest part of the population. September 11 will thus allow the two ex-great Cold War to cooperate on the issue of terrorism, and Russians and Americans become allies almost unstoppable since they now have the same enemies or almost: islamist terrorists. The Russian attacks on human rights in Chechnya, which have been denounced in the past, were forgotten and the United States didn't hesitate to cooperate with the Arab intelligence services (syrians in particular) in the search for extremist jihadists, even if Washington is not the dupe of the double game led by Damas which often closes the eyes on the passage of the supporters of Bin Laden in Iraq from 2003 to the destabilize the "hyperpower".

The first sign of this return was the designation of Russia (together with the United States, the European Union and the United Nations) as a member of the « Quartet for the Middle East » in 2002, an informal structure created to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which was relaunched and aggravated following the second Intifada. Syria, which is then the main ally of Russia in the Middle East, observed with interest this increase in power since 11 September, gradually puts this state in the eye of the cyclone that will ravage the region after the attacks perpetrated on the american ground. The neo-conservative project wanted not only "imposing democracy" in Iraq, which had to be punished for the supposed detention of weapons of mass destruction, but also crushing all those who are not in the Washington line. A message well understood by Libya and Yemen, but Syria still deafened it, which led to the implementation of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (SALSRA) in 2003, which reinforces the sanctions against it and urges Damas leaving Lebanon, considered under occupation, resulting in the Security Council's surprise resolution 1559, on 2 September 2004, premises for the departure of Syrian troops in 2005.

But this interim agreement will not last, first because the United States more or less discreetly support the "colorful revolutions" that take place on the backyard of Russia (in Georgia in 2003, in Ukraine in 2004, or in Asia Central), but also because it sees its economic and military projects thwarted by the iranian crisis or the american presence in Iraq. Thus, the President of the Russian Federation expresses his wish to invest 4 billion dollars "in the immediate future" for the reconstruction of Iraq, and in 27 February 2005 is announced the signing of an agreement on an amount of 800 million dollars for the commissioning of the first

ranian nuclear power plant in Bouchehr, but the pressure of Washington and its allies (Israel in particular) didn't allow these ambitious projects or contracts to deploy in all their plenitude. Moreover, the economic offensive of Russia in the Middle East was not limited to these two countries, as it extended to Egypt, Syria but also to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Israel, where Vladimir Putin was invited on 27 April 2005, when no Russian leader had ever visited the Holy Land, since relations between Moscow and Tel Aviv had hitherto been complicated. Russia is at this time, despite growing tensions with the United States, in the position of a state that wants to get along with everyone and is not aligned with any particular camp.

# The Syrian Revolt: Risk or Opportunity?

# The Revolt in Syria: A Manifest Under Evaluation?

It should be pointed out that for the Russians, the "Arab Spring" is also called the "great islamist uprising"<sup>2</sup>, which is enough to situate Moscow's perception of these events and the least that can be said is that it is embarrassment, mistrust and caution that prevail, more than the enthusiasm or hope of seeing its influence growing in North Africa or the Middle East.

Because arab revolts initially concerned states that were allied or close to the West (Egypt, Tunisia), even recently like Libya<sup>3</sup>, Russia thought that they would not touch Syria, since the last baathist regime would in some way be immune to any risk of contagion and for several reasons: a young president, graduated from a british university and enjoying a certain popularity; a relatively stable country (which fear above all chaos) in a region undermined by violence, an authoritarian and partly corrupt political system, but advocating relative religious freedom. Thus, as it touches its country with a slight lag, President Assad could even afford, arrogantly or unconsciously, to come before the international media to give lessons of good governance, inviting his peers to reform before it is not too late, in early 2011. He didn't knew at this time that the revolt that will shake his power will become the most violent of all those that will overwhelm the arab countries. Russia prefered to see in the revolutionary movements an opportunity to witness the weakening of american imperialism in a region that is part of its privileged zone of influence and from which Moscow has been gradually and partially evicted rather than a threat to its own allies, since Algeria (which mainly buys russian weapons) has hardly been impacted and the revolt has been slow to gain

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> As proposed by the "Valdai Discussion Club" in a report published in June 2012: Transformation in the Arab World and Russia's interests, analytical report, Moscow June 2012 (valdaiclub.com). The latter is close to the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences and therefore to the position of the Russian official authorities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The main rival of Washington, China, simultaneously competing power and punctual ally, being for the moment almost absent from this zone

momentum in Syria.

The libyan affair and its erratic management will help to freeze part of the future Russian attitude, since by abstaining to the UN Security Council during the vote of resolution 1973 of 17 March 2011, Moscow wanted to leave a chance to the forces of the predominantly Western coalition, but it is clear that the Eurasian power was cheated (like China), the spirit and the letter of the UN decision having been quickly violated. The mission of protecting threatened civilian populations quickly became a belligerent operation, with each civilian or military entity associated with libyan power considered a potential threat to opponents of the regime. Russia feared that this precedent could be used to weaken it on its bachyard and contribute to military-humanitarian interventions that could lead to the collapse of allied states or the re-ignition of burnt embers, as in Georgia.

This is why it reacted so strongly during the Franco-American maneuvers aimed at putting Syria in the line of sight again (Trenin 2012a). The fall of the Syrian regime would in turn have an effect on Iran which would see its influence decline and its "Shiite axis" shaken, which would simultaneously weaken Russia, which along with China and other emerging countries, tried to play a role moderator and alternative on the nuclear crisis in that country. But the reasons for this very strong support for this long-standing ally, with which economic and military cooperation is very advanced, are deeper and go beyond the strict framework of a close partnership or the continuation of Bashar Al Assad, is not, contrary to what is often advanced as important to Russia as one would think (Trenin 2013). Nevertheless, the fall of the last baathist system risks bringing more favorable personalities to Washington, because a certain number of them are hosted by that state or because their financing is provided by the Americans or their allies. Then, it is a matter of sending a message to other privileged partners, especially since there are fewer than in the Soviet era: "we support our friends until the end". Politically, there were also elections, and Putin was again a candidate, embodying a more nationalist posture than Medvedev.

Finally, there are unknown and less well-known strategic issues: for Moscow, the West must know that if Russian interests are threatened, a reply will be inevitable, since the question of their maintenance in the Mediterranean (and beyond in Asia) would be the loss of the port of Tartous which certainly does not have the value of Sebastopol, but which is a valuable lever of penetration towards the "warm seas". In addition, there are significant gas discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean (Israel, Lebanon and Cyprus), which bear the seeds of a weakening of Moscow's position as a player in this new energy game. Even if it remains hazardous to analyze the arab geopolitical upheavals through an oil prism, as demonstrated by the american fiasco in Iraq, some do not hesitate to give an energetic reading of the Syrian crisis, stating that Qatar, one of Iran's biggest rival, aimed

to build a gas pipeline that would bypass the straits of Hormuz, Bab El Mandeb and the Suez Canal, via the Arabian Peninsula, Jordan and finally Syria. Bashar al-Assad would have rejected this proposal by privileging an oil pipeline from Iran and passing through Iraq, which would have triggered the wrath of petromonarchies that had also largely invested in Syria in recent years.

It should be emphasized that among the countries that are critical of the western position and even that of the Arab League on Syria, some are old allies of Russia (like Algeria), who would hardly understand a sudden reversal. But there is another risk, the reverse, of alienating pro-american arab countries with which Moscow has tried to improve its relations in recent years and which have strong economic potential, such as Qatar or Saudi Arabia, with whom a number of projects have been put in place or envisaged<sup>4</sup>. Vladimir Putin thus played a very tight game, which he didn't not fully master, and where he had as much to gain as to lose, even if confronted with the stall that can be observed today in Syria (because recent successes of the Syrian regime resemble victories of Pyrrhus), one can not rule out a return of Realpolitik which will oblige the various protagonists of this crisis which is internationalizing to return to less dogmatic positions.

Moreover, a major but not decisive event took place at the end of 2011, with an unprecedented wave of protests against Vladimir Putin following the declaration of the results of the parliamentary elections, considered rigged in favor of power by a party population. Of course, foreign policy is probably not a primary issue for the Russians, but in this country where patriotism is not a vain word, it can not be neglected by the rulers and must be handled with skill. Thus, too much support for authoritarian regimes beyond the arab world alone could increase the resentment of the population (some displaying the portrait of Putin next to that of Gaddafi) and emphasize concomitant western pressure on Moscow to demand more democracy and transparency, a potential tool for lobbying in international fora. The Russian position now obeys a double external and also internal logic and as long as power controls the opposition, disunited and without a large-scale federator, it can continue to display a pro-Assad position, even if this results in relative political and economic isolation, and it will have to make a choice in the long term and to distance with its bulky ally.

### The Syrian Crisis as an Opportunity to Return Definitively to the Middle East?

But Russia's role is not only "defensive", because in its view it can help ensure a non-violent transition in Syria, through its links with a part of the opposition, sometimes resulting from the communist movement, which has been received on several occasions in Russia. Working mainly with the CCNCD (National Coor-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> A "gas OPEC", for example, or initiatives within the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), as will be explained later.

dinating Committee for Democratic Change), hostile to american hegemony and any foreign intervention, it has not joined the Syrian National Council (CNS) and the Syrian National Coalition and includes several personalities from within who had signed the Damascus Declaration. They advocate a gradual transition to a democratic transition, even if it means negotiating and making concessions, rather than playing the all-or-nothing card or the departure of Bashar al-Assad. It should be noted that many successful political transitions in the arab world or elsewhere have resulted in significant concessions to the ruling leaders at the time they were held (Spain, Chile and Yemen). Similarly, Russia was behind a resolution presented to the UN Security Council in december 2011 and condemning the violence in Syria. But it was not really a break with the baathist regime, contrary to the hopes that had arisen from this initiative, since it did not incriminate only Bashar Al Assad, it also took noticed the radicalization of the opposition, which ultimately amounts to adopting the positions of Damascus which considers that the "activists" are more terrorists or armed gangs thirsting for vengeance than civilians in love with democracy and justice.

Rather, it was a question of taking up the initiative to avoid the events, without excluding the possibility of a transition like Yemen's in 2011, which would allow Moscow to preserve the essential, namely its interests in the Mediterranean. It seems that the mission of the Arab League, begun also in December 2011 (but quickly interrupted) has partially met the Russian objectives, since it was not in a anichean logic. In addition, it began as contacts between the CNS and its CCNCD rival began. The latter, which seems to benefit from a more limited audience, acquires at this moment a beginning of recognition, and comes to compete with the first organization, which made an intense lobbying with the main western powers. It can not be ruled out that an opposition close to Russia will eventually be strengthened politically moreover it has hardly any armed relay) since the "pro-Western" current is slow to take hold and that on the ground it didn't manage to really control the activists themselves very divided between jihadists, who gradually rise in power and "nationalists", without real leader and limited armaments.

Then, again in december 2011, a rumor from the israeli press said that President Bashar Al Assad would seek political asylum, and that his vice-president, the sunnite and so far loyal Farouq Al Shareh, would replace him during an interim period, the latter having made an informal trip to Moscow during the same period. It is probably a classic propaganda and disinformation work aimed at destabilizing the regime and supporting opponents, but it confirms the idea that Moscow is truly a key player in the syrian crisis. In june 2012, it supported the Geneva agreement, which stipulated that the Syrians should set up a transitional government that would include personalities from both sides (power and opposition) in

order to resolve the crisis peacefully. But this attempt failed mainly because of the place reserved for Bashar al-Assad: for the Russians, departure was an issue that was to end at the end of the process of power-sharing and reconciliation, and for the majority of opponents of the CNS, supported by westerners and their regional allies, it twas a prerequisite for any serious discussion.

The syrian crisis is therefore more than ever a multi-faceted issue and its outcome will depend in large part on the geopolitical balance that can be drawn from the revolts begun in 2011. Only Bahrain, despite its small population and its narrow territory, is an issue almost equally important, but the outcome, at least in the medium term, is known, while in Syria all scenarios are possible (partition, maintaining of Bashar ElAssad in power, cohabitation). Although a member of the "BRICS", Russia, backed by its position of support to Syria, is closer to the other authoritarian state of the group, China, unlike the emerging and democratic powers formed of Brazil, India (a major purchaser of Russian arms) and South Africa. The latter, which form a distinct trilateralism, consider, however, that Syria does not constitute a threat to international security, and have a critical attitude towards western positions in relation to the arab revolts (a kind of neo-colonialism) but are not systematically obstructed. In some cases, internal issues are not entirely absent, as in the case of Brazil (which is home to a large community of Syrian-Lebanese origin, mostly Christian and therefore skeptical about the syrian islamic alternative). Moreover, it should be remembered that Brazil, which has been close to Tehran (a key ally of Syrian regime) in recent years, has attempted an unsuccessful mediation on this subject with Turkey and that India, which imports Iranian oil (and also many israeli weapons) join the pipeline that will soon link Iran and Pakistan.

If these nations prove that they are the ones that are likely to change the situation in Syria, they nevertheless show the limits of the BRICS group (Abdenur 2016), not united on all issues. Some experts, moreover, believe that the BRICS, or at least the most "moderate" of them, are the only ones that can lead to an exit from the crisis (thanks to an independent and non-aligned mediation able to gain the confidence of both the Russians and the Iranians as well as the United States), the majority of the arab countries being out of the game, like most western nations. However, the BRICS are as much allies as rivals, like China, even if their shift to the atlantist positions could influence that of Moscow.

# A massive Russian intervention in 2015 and a turning point at the end of 2016?

Faced with the stalemate on the ground of the syrian forces, the western procrastination, and the attacks they are subjected to on their soil (in Paris in particular), Russia decides that 2015 is the right moment to take a decisive blow and begins sending weapons and especially war planes in Syria from the month of Septem-

ber (Kozhanov 2015), which prevents any project of creation of "no-fly zone", long hoped by Turkey and its allies in the north of the country. This intervention, which was supposed to last only a few months but finally extends beyond, allowed Russia to show a certain know-how (Trenin 2016), test its weapons and strengthen its status as a leading exporter without too much damage because most of the troops on the ground, those who suffer the most losses in the battles are composed of Syrians loyal to the regime or foreign shiites, framed by Tehran. Though Putin announced a withrawal a few months after, the reality turned out to be quite different (Kozhanov 2016).

The end of the year 2016 marks a turning point probably decisive but which goes far beyond the syrian crisis alone and may determine eventually Russian foreign policy in the region and the future of the latter. The first clap of thunder is the surprise election of Donald Trump at the beginning of november which is caraterized by a desire to cooperate more closely with Russia whose ruler he admires, and seeking to "co-manage" the world. Then came the victory of Aleppo, a month later, which allowed the loyalist forces to regain the integrity of the second city of the country, now largely destroyed. Finally, there is a new Russian-Turkish-Iranian partnership on Syria, an unprecedented success, a direct consequence of the attempted coup in Ankara in July 2001. If Putin was once again designated as the "the most influential man in the world by Forbes magazine », he owes it largely to his action in the Middle East, epicenter of international crises for a long time.

#### Muslims in Russia as a Political Issue

This is often forgotten, but Russia host the largest Muslim minority in Europe, the vast majority of which are indigenous, and the Chechen conflict sometimes tragically recalls this reality<sup>5</sup>. In spite of the often very nationalist posture of the current government, as previously stated, it can not be said that Russian muslims are persecuted, even if the position of Moscow remains ambiguous. In recent years, power seemed to want to give both internal and external pledges, so that Vladimir Putin managed to be invited by the OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference), a first for a non-muslim country and recalled that the majority of the russian autonomous regions are muslim and more surprising that islam was present before christianity in Russia, thus caressing in the sense of the hair its listeners. Putin received support from Iran and the most unexpected one from Saudi Arabia, while wahhabi support for the Chechen cause is notorious. Ryad shows pragmatism and cultivates its relations with a power close to its main opponent, Iran, and also a major player in the oil scene. In 2007, for the first time, a russian head of State visited Saudi Arabia, while King Abdullah visited Moscow in 2003

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> There have been attacks on Russian Muslim religious dignitaries such as the Mufti of Tatarstan in the summer of 2012. See also Alexey Malashenko, "The Dynamics of Russian Islam", February 1, 2013, Carnegie Moscow Center

as the Crown Prince.

It is difficult to estimate the number of muslims in Russia, but it is often assumed that it is between 10 and 15% of the population (14 till 20 millions) and that in Moscow alone there would be nearly one million of muslims out of a total of eight million inhabitants. Sometimes these figures include non-russian muslims who came from the former Soviet republics to work in sometimes precarious conditions. Putin has not, however, formally designated a principal interlocutor or a privileged institution because he prefers to divide the community so that it can, if necessary, constitute a powerful counter-power. Under Boris Yeltsin the parliament was at one time presided over by the Chechen Ruslan Khasbulatov, and that the very strategic post of interior minister was occupied by Rashid Nurgaliev in recent years. The situation in Chechnya now seems to be more under control in recent years, but it remains to be confirmed that the autocrat and heir Ramzan Kadyrov really benefits from genuine legitimacy, which will positively affect the image of Russia in the arab and muslim world. Russia also hopes to contain its own islamist radicals by supporting regimes that try more or less to bring them under control in the arab world, sending them a message and hoping to weaken and contain them in their "living space". But others believe that this position of support for Syria and sometimes its shiite allies (Iran, Iraq) risks further radicalizing sunni extremists active in the Russian Federation or its periphery.

#### Conclusion

Russia has made a strong comeback in recent years in the Middle East and has even become a key player in the various crises in the arab world since the beginning of the revolts that affected it in 2011. If it contributed to its body defending the departure of Colonel Gaddafi, Russia up to now supports the Syrian regime. But this unavoidable position is as much an asset as a formidable challenge, for if its ally is finally ousted and the country sinks into chaos (perspective that Putin first evoked at the end of 2012 (Trenin 2012b)<sup>6</sup>), then it will be reproached its imperium and will lose some of its credit beyond the arab world. If, on the contrary, it maintains itself or contributes to an exit from the crisis, then it will have proved that nothing can be done without it in the region. Finally, it must wait and count on a disaffection of the masses vis-a-vis the islamists to be able to incarnate an alternative vis-a-vis the latter and the pro-american regimes whose legitimacy is of this fact in part disputed. This involvment is probably a search for a genuine multilateralism (Stepanova 2016), thwarted by Washington since the end of the Cold War.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> This position which surprised is not really a "letting go" of Bashar Al Assad. It is also a means of putting pressure on the Syrian regime in order to allow it to consider more flexibility or concessions and to show the Americans or the Syrian opponents that they are not unconditional of the regime and therefore of the credible partners for a negotiation.

#### Bio

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## Article

# Whose Global Governance? Explaining the Evolution of Russia's Approach to Global Governance, 1945-2016

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## Abstract

The global governance literature has generally addressed the provision of global public goods, mechanisms to solve collective action problems, and national strategies towards specific regimes and institutions. However, systematic inquiries on the role of norms and worldviews in the conduct of global governance remain scarce, especially for rising powers. This study thus offers a historical comparative analysis of Russia's approaches to global governance during three case periods (1945-1989, 1990-1999, and 2000-2016), which are systematically compared to those of the United States. Focusing on the contestation of these different worldviews, the paper demonstrates that Russia's approach to global governance is deeply grounded in a state-centric worldview that emphasizes international competition, great power management, classical sovereignty, and centralized authority. This is often at odds with new governance innovations associated with the liberal approach espoused by the United States, which is characterized by global community-building, multilateralism, conditional sovereignty, and decentralized authority. In sum, what Russia envisions is not a radical revision of the global governance system, but rather the preservation of the traditional state-centric approach inherited from past centuries.

# Keywords

Global Governance, Historical Comparative Analysis, State-Centrism, Worldviews, Russia, Great Powers

# Introduction: A Worldviews Approach to Global Governance

The peaceful end of the Cold War once raised high hopes for international peace, but it did not take long for this collective dream to turn into shared despair. After more than two decades of trial-and-error, Russian-Western relations remain highly transactional, marked by ad-hoc arrangements and a minimal level of mutual respect. Since the 2014 onset of the Ukrainian crisis, this fragile

equilibrium has further degenerated into profound enmity. Commentators tend to reduce explanations of this emerging rivalry to the return of geopolitics (e.g. Mearsheimer 2014). This paper does not dismiss this perspective; however, taking a constructivist approach, it demonstrates that the widening gulf between Russian and Western visions of global governance has played a crucial part in renewed confrontation. Indeed, Vladimir Putin contends that this clash is fundamentally about the "confrontation between different visions of how to build the global governance mechanisms in the twenty-first century". (Putin 2016) This question of the *politics* of global governance — who makes what rules, for which purpose, to serve which vision of the future — is a valuable addition to our understanding of the role of rising powers in contemporary international relations.

Since the research program on global governance began in the late 1980s, relevant literature has generally addressed: (1) the provision of global public goods (e.g. international regime analysis); (2) innovative mechanisms to solve collective action problems (e.g. transnational policy networks and global public-private partnerships); and (3) national strategies directed towards specific governance regimes, institutions, and networks. In the context of the role of rising powers, academic debates have mainly focused on the challenges and opportunities of accommodating these actors in the existing (primarily Western-led) architectures of global governance (Ikenberry and Wright 2008), as well as on each rising power's approach to specific international and/or regional institutions (Haibin 2012).

While these studies have produced important insights over time, they remain compartmentalized, scattered across different policy domains with little cross-fertilization. As a result, contemporary analysis remains narrow and lacks the holistic approach required to comprehend the underlying political visions, broad worldviews, and local contexts that inevitably shape each power's overall approach to global governance. This is especially true for rising powers. This knowledge gap reflects a prevailing view in among scholars that inquiries of global governance should focus on the complex linkages between state and non-state actors. Some go as far as to proclaim that "As an analytical approach, global governance rejects the conventional state-centric conception of world politics and world order. The principal unit of analysis is taken to be global, regional or transnational systems of authoritative rule-making and implementation." (McGrew and Held 2002: 9)

My starting point is that this mainstream discourse of decentralized, "liberal" global governance itself is already a reflection of the predominant American and European worldview on how global governance *ought to be* conceptualized. As Andrew Hurrell (2007: 20) insightfully argues, "the language of international or-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For an overview, see Hewson and Sinclair (1999). For a Russian perspective, see the comprehensive report on global governance recently published by the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences (Baranovsky and Ivanova 2015).

der' or 'global governance' is never politically neutral. Indeed a capacity to produce and project proposals, conceptions, and theories of order is a central part of the practice of power." In line with this view, this paper problematizes the very notion of global governance by seeing it neither as a unitary arena of technocratic policy implementation, nor as the domain of value-neutral cooperation among state and non-state actors. Rather, I argue that it is a field of struggle for legitimacy where major actors propose and promote their respective visions of how best to govern the world, often in cooperation with normatively-aligned partners.

In this light, major powers in world politics – hereafter most generically referred to as "great powers" – still play a disproportionately influential role in the process of global rule-making (Zhao 2016). This is the case not only because of their sheer economic weight, but also because they retain the ability to shape certain discourses and practices of global governance – either by supporting and facilitating those they favor, or by obstructing and delegitimizing those they reject. Great power status, in this sense, requires something much more than the simple preponderance of material capabilities. In short, to be a great power is to be a global governor with responsibility, leadership, and a degree of commitment to the maintenance of international order and the provision of global public goods. Shedding light on the visions of powerful states is certainly not about denying the salience of non-state actors, but about investigating how and to what extent these influential state actors do (or do not) frame and shape the overall political environment within which diverse global governance interaction occurs.

Coming back to Russia, a number of constructivist scholars and commentators have acknowledged that Russian great power aspirations dating back centuries endures (e.g. Ward 2014). Yet only a few have paid a closer attention to the implications of this for Russia's engagement in global governance. Even more troubling, many constructivist studies on Russia tend to uncritically embrace cultural essentialism by arguing that the Russian history of highly state-centric, non-liberal domestic governance makes it destined to endlessly replicate this approach in the international arena, effectively ignoring the dynamics of stunning transformations experienced by Russian state, elites, and citizens in recent decades. To address these critical deficits, this paper aims to offer a systematic account of the link between Russia's worldview and its approach to contemporary global governance while also accounting for political transformations and interactions with other major actors, by asking: how have Russia's approaches to global governance evolved over the last seven decades, and how has the Russian approach interacted with other worldviews and approaches?

As a working definition, *worldview* in this study refers to an official vision of an international actor about how the world ought to be governed, which underpins and orients its overall approach towards the discourses and practices of

global governance. It must be noted here that worldviews are always contested; no worldview is "natural' or pre-determined, just as no society is homogenous. I focus on the *mainstream* worldview of those in power for the sake of analytical parsimony, but this is certainly not intended to dismiss the diversity of political values contained in each polity.

Methodologically, this study consciously departs from a simplistic approach that relies on dichotomous constructions, such as democracy vs "autocracy" or liberal vs "illiberal", which are unable to capture the complex dynamics of adaptation, transformation, and interaction. Instead, the matrix approach proposed here defines worldview as an *organic constellation* of several ideational elements. To narrow down the scale of analysis, I pay particular attention to how each actor defines legitimate discourse and practice on four key dimensions of global governance: (i) *governing principle* (competition and the balance of power and/or cooperation and global community-building); (ii) *governance mechanism* (great power management and/or multilateral legalization); (iii) *state sovereignty and intervention* (classical sovereignty of non-interference and/or conditional sovereignty of state responsibility); and (iv) international authority (centralized to mainly state actors and/or decentralized to a complex network of state and no-state actors).<sup>2</sup>

As shown in Table 1. below, half of these elements are grounded in the worldview of statism (which tends to see global governance as the conduct of state actors, led by great powers and maintained by the balance of power),3 while the rest derive from the worldview of *liberalism* (which tends to see global governance as a shared practice of state and non-state actors, institutionalized by multilateral legal instruments, and maintained by shared aspirations of global communitybuilding). Avoiding the limitations of dichotomy, the matrix table allows for the simultaneous presence of two elements in each dimension. For instance, the global non-proliferation regime is driven a hybrid mechanism of great power management (by nuclear states) and multilateral legalization. Here, asking if the regime is a manifestation of great power management or multilateralism makes little sense, since it is the fusion of these elements which makes up the architecture of the regime. What I am interested in is not whether Russia's worldview is statist or liberal, but to what extent Moscow embraced certain elements of statist and liberal visions, and more importantly, how the overall constellation of these elements have (or have not) changed over time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For an excellent summary of the logic of great power management, see Little (2006). These four dimensions were selected by a method of abduction, based on pre-conceptions and a review of relevant literature. Other important dimensions may include institutionalization and human rights, among others.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ironically, the core philosophy of statism can be summarized by the words of John F. Kennedy: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

Table1: Worldviews Matrix

Elements of Liberalism	Dimensions	Elements of Statism
Community/Cooperation	Governing Principle	Balance/Competition
Multilateral Legalization	Governance Mechanism	Great Power Management
Conditional Sovereignty	State Sovereignty	Classical Sovereignty
Decentralized	International Authority	Centralized

To add a comparative angle, my analysis focuses on interaction and contestation between Russian and American worldviews on global governance, since the United States remains the lead global governor after 1945. This study thus offers a historical comparative analysis of Russian visions on global governance during three case periods -1945-1989, 1992-1999, and 2000-2016 - which are systematically compared to those of the United States. These case periods were selected to reflect major transformation of international and domestic environments, delineated by the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the rise of Vladimir Putin after Boris Yeltsin's resignation (2000).

Before moving on to the comparative analysis of worldviews, key limitations of my framework need to be sketched out. To begin with, there is an important difference between established and rising powers in global governance in terms of their overall influence on global governance structures and outcomes (Kahler 2013). Needless to say, there also remains significant military, political, economic, social, cultural, and other forms of disparities between Russia and the United States throughout the selected case study periods, especially after the end of the Cold War. Finally, there are also contextual differences between, for instance, the Soviet-American relationship in the 1960s and the Russian-American relationship in the 2010s.<sup>4</sup>

As such, this study does not by any means posit that the weight of Russian (or Soviet) influence on global/international governance discourses and practices has been constant or always comparable to that of the United States. Indeed, Russia in the early 1990s exhibited much less ambition to play the role of global governor than the Soviet Union during the Cold War era, or Russia under Vladimir Putin. Despite these terminological and contextual differences, however, I argue that my framework of comparative analysis is legitimate for the stated research purpose because its unit of analysis is the mainstream global governance worldview expressed by the political elites of each country (for a similar approach, see Tocci 2008; Lennon and Kozlowski 2008; Nau and Ollapally 2012). In other words, the central aim of this paper is not to investigate the causal extent to which Russia/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out these important differences which may influence one's research design.

the Soviet Union or the United States have *determined* empirical global governance outcomes (which would require a drastically different research design), but to compare and contrast the evolution of Russian and American political elite worldviews on global governance over an extended period of time; and, more importantly, demonstrate how they have *interacted with and counteracted each other* in different contextual settings.

In this sense, I employ the comparative axis of American worldview not as a benchmark against which the Russian worldview is explained, but because – as the United States has been the "significant Other" for Russian policymakers (Tsygankov 2004) – Russian discourses on global/international governance have been often shaped and reshaped in reflection of, and under the influence of, American worldviews (and possibly *vice versa*). With the awareness of the methodological limitations articulated above, the following sections present detailed historical comparative analysis of Russian and American worldviews on global governance during the three case periods. The final section concludes with an analytical synthesis of these three accounts, and outlines potential avenues for future research.

# Case Period I (1945-1989): Great Governors in Checks and Balances

As the Second World War completely shattered the architectures of imperial governance, the worldviews of the Soviet Union and the United States played a uniquely influential role in constructing global governance in the post-war world. Regarding basic governing principles, Moscow and Washington both shared the general conviction that the world should be governed by a concert of superpowers – a system in which competing ideologies of socialism and capitalism checked and balanced each other. American leaders envisioned that "Russia and America were to be cast in the role of two super-policemen, supervising East and West, under the aegis of the United Nations... President Roosevelt was immutably convinced that he, and he alone, could bring about this unlikely miracle." (Wheeler-Bennett and Nicholls 1972: 296).

As Soviet and American elites (at least tacitly) shared this notion of the concert of superpowers, great power management emerged as a prime mechanism of international governance after the war. Despite the initial period of heated confrontation and occasional clashes in the Third World, the two superpowers gradually developed a *modus operandi* of interacting with each other based on the principles of reciprocity and mutual respect (Matheson 1982). In this context, Raymond's research on superpower actions in major events (e.g. 1954 Guatemalan, 1956 Hungarian, 1965 Dominican, and 1968 Czechoslovakian crises) revealed that informal agreements on the mutual acceptance of each other's sphere of influence largely shaped the ways these events were managed (Raymond 1997: 225). While Washington consciously avoided strong condemnation of Soviet actions

in the Eastern European uprisings, Moscow also prudently avoided open support for socialist revolutionary movements in NATO member states, such as Greece (George 1986: 252). These informal deals were sometimes made more explicit. For example, the 1972 Basic Principles Agreement declared that: "Differences in ideology and in the social systems of the USA and the USSR are not obstacles to the bilateral development of normal relations based on the principles of sovereignty, equality, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual advantage."

The format of great power management practiced during the Cold War period was unique in the sense that it departed from naked *realpolitik*, and instead involved a considerably high degree of multilateralism and legalization both at the global and regional levels. As Hans Morgenthau (1954) famously put, "[t] he international government of the United Nations....is really the international government of the United States and the Soviet Union acting in unison." Indeed, this was precisely what President Roosevelt meant by a policy of "containment by integration," emphasizing that a stable postwar order required "offering Moscow a prominent place in it; by making it, so to speak, a member of the club." (Gaddis 2005:9) By design, international governance in a bipolar world involved complex dynamics of competition, consultation, and negotiation. It was the *confluence* of great power management and multilateral legalization that defined the landscape of international governance during the Cold War.

In the worldview of the Soviet Union, the commitment to international organizations was never merely posturing; quite the contrary, it offered substantial legitimizing foundation on which to justify its assumed role of great governor. While Moscow maintained a complex structure of command and control in its sphere of influence, it also regarded multilateral institutions as an indispensable avenue of international governance (Abbott and Snidal 1998: 8). Interestingly, there was a general perception in Moscow that the Soviet commitment to multilateralism was "exploited" by others. For instance, the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) obliged Moscow to export raw materials to its allies at prices well below world-market price, while at the same time importing an immense amount of manufactured products from Eastern Europe at considerably high prices in light of its low quality (Korbonski 1970: 965, 971). While this arrangement placed a disproportionate economic burden on the Union, Moscow continued honoring these commitments under the strong insistence of Eastern European elites. This example demonstrates that the Soviets were not purely driven by the pursuit of material interest, but were equally concerned with leadership in multilateral institutions which was regarded as an essential part of its responsibility to govern.

The international debate on state sovereignty largely evolved within these complex governance arrangements. Embodied by the UN Charter and later reaf-

firmed by the Helsinki Final Accord, sovereignty and non-interference continued to be central principles of the post-war international order. In practice, however, it was a complex constellation of these ideas that defined the Soviet and American worldviews on intervention. While the two superpowers generally accepted the imperative of state sovereignty, both held a view that the prerogative of great power management, and more specifically, the rights and duties conferred in terms of sphere of influence, stood above other norms. Hence, it is not that sovereignty had no place in the bipolar world, but that, instead, it was largely *subordinated* to the cardinal principle of great power management.

In the late 1960s, however, Leonid Brezhnev developed an alternative conception limited sovereignty – better known as the Brezhnev doctrine– that departed from the classical Westphalian notion. First invoked in the Czechoslovakian uprising of 1968, it advanced a communitarian understanding that sovereignty and self-determination of each socialist state cannot stand in opposition to the universal values of global socialism. Therefore, when a socialist government attempts to make "imprudent" decisions, it becomes the right – and indeed the duty– of the international socialist community to intervene and restore the "rightful" order. In other words, sovereignty was not a naturally given trait, but was conditional upon continued commitment to the universal values of socialist internationalism.<sup>5</sup>

In the global arena, however, this new understanding of sovereignty did not resonant widely. As Hasmath (2012: 9) insightfully observed, the idea of conditional sovereignty was at best a *regional* norm only applicable within the socialist international community. It only posited that any action to *reverse* the tide of socialist revolution must be stopped with international intervention; hence, it could not be invoked to interference into capitalist countries, for instance, or in those countries that had never experienced any sort of socialist awakening. In this sense, conditional sovereignty was not much about sovereignty *per se*, but more about the sanctity of spheres of influence. It was this duality of the Soviet worldview on state sovereignty that characterized its approach to international governance: that all states were equally sovereign in a legal sense, but those within a sphere of influence were in practice only *semi-sovereign* (i.e. bound by a duty to adhere to community norms). Great powers, on the other hand, were in practice *more* sovereign than the rest, due to a perceived responsibility to govern their respective spheres as entailed by their privileged position in international relations.

The conjunction of these ideas, particularly the salience of superpower leadership, largely determined the structure of international governance. As both Soviet and American elites held highly state-centric worldviews which favored a more

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It is in this communitarian understanding of state sovereignty, closely tied to the norms and values of an international polity, that the fundamental ideas underlying Brezhnev doctrine resonates with the contested doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

centralized style of international rule-making, many of the important governance outcomes during this time resulted from superpower negations entangled with concert diplomacy - with little or very limited participation of non-state actors. These outcomes included, among others, the UN Charter, the Austrian State Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. As human rights historian Samuel Moyn convincingly demonstrates, even a seemingly-cosmopolitan agreement, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was a direct product of great power negotiation and state-centrism; it "retains, rather than supersedes, the sanctity of nationhood, as its text makes clear." (Moyn 2012: 81)

While the global governance literature addresses the meteoric rise of non-state actors in recent decades (Slaughter 2004), what goes generally unnoticed is the dense networks of socialist non-governmental organizations (NGOs) before and during the Cold War era. While the Soviet worldview remained largely state-centric for the reasons explained above, it is erroneous to ignore the complex ties and transnational networks that socialist civil society actors harnessed over the course of the last century - which, in the eyes of Moscow, offered a unique opportunity to bolster the global moral leadership of the Union. Indeed, the "Stalin constitution" of the Soviet Union adopted in 1936 described voluntary citizen organizations as a crucial building-block of global socialism.

Founded in 1864, the International Workingmen's Association - better known as the First International- was perhaps the world's first secular transnational civil society organization, with more than five million members across and beyond Europe (Payne 1968: 372). Its footprint remains on a great number of international movements calling for labor rights, non-discrimination, gender equality, social cohesion, public ownership, poverty reduction, self-determination, anti-colonialism, and much more. In this context, the discourse of the "withering away of the state" - a Marxist idea that the rise of global socialism coupled with a dense network of self-governing non-governmental forces would eventually make nationstates obsolete in world politics - was proclaimed by Friedreich Engels more than a century ago (Muggah 2016). As the early twentieth century was marked by the notable presence of socialist NGOs, one of the earliest studies on international NGOs featured prominently with the Socialist International, along with labor/ trade unions and religious organizations seeking for global change (White 1951). This socialist momentum eventually inspired the emergence of NGOs during and after the Second World War, such as the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the International Union of Socialist Youth, World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Union of Students and the Christian Peace Conference - many of which received covert or overt financial and moral

support from the Soviet Union (Saari 2014), just as a plurality of today's liberal NGOs are connected to Western governments by a complex network of funding and a career system of revolving door.

Despite the presence of these civil society actors aspiring to operate beyond the borders of the Eastern hemisphere, their collective impact on international governance outcomes was largely negligible; presumably because the state-centric worldview of Soviet leadership meant it did not actively push for greater involvement of these NGOs in international governance. Perhaps more importantly, the U.S. government primarily saw the rise of anti-capitalist civil society actors as a threat to the liberal international order. Deeply fearing socialist uprisings, the 1954 Communist Control Act of 1954 (still in place today) outlawed the Community Party of the United States, and moreover, criminalized memberships and civic participation in any civil society organization which supported socialist aims.<sup>6</sup> For the same reason, many anti-war activists, such as renowned linguist Noam Chomsky and writer Norman Mailer, were occasionally arrested and imprisoned.

This political "cleansing" of anti-capitalist voices resulted in the ideological homogenization of American civil society. Only after the relative decline of socialist internationalism in the early 1980s did the new conservatism of Ronald Regan and Margaret Thatcher revisit the idea of civil society as a means to "outsource" the provision of public goods. In this sense, ironically, the rapid rise of non-state actors in the late 1980s owes much to the *state strategies* of superpowers. In the midst of the Cold War, however, the statist consensus between Moscow and Washington generally hampered the systematic inclusion of civil society actors in international governance.

In sum, the analysis of this case period suggests that the Soviet and American approaches to international governance were less divergent than commonly thought (see Table 2. below). The ideological divide between the two global governors were wide, but both sides were nevertheless committed to the maintenance of a state-centric, bipolar system of international governance based on the principles of reciprocity, mutual respect, and great power responsibility.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> It must be remembered that the pioneering civil society activist Eugene Debs – labor leader and cofounder of the American Socialist Party – was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison in 1918 for publicly pretesting America's participation in the First World War.

Table 2: Soviet (Russian) and American Worldviews on International Governance, 1945-1989

# USSR (Russia)

Elements of Liberalism	Dimensions	Elements of Statism	
Community/Cooperation	Governing Principle	Balance/Competition	
Multilateral Legalization	Governance Mechanism	Great Power Management	
Conditional Sovereignty	State Sovereignty	Classical Sovereignty	
Decentralized	International Authority	Centralized	

#### United States

Elements of Liberalism	Dimensions	Elements of Statism	
Community/Cooperation	Governing Principle	Balance/Competition	
Multilateral Legalization	Governance Mechanism	Great Power Management	
Conditional Sovereignty	State Sovereignty	Classical Sovereignty	
Decentralized	International Authority	Centralized	

In essence, Moscow was acutely aware that it did not have adequate resources to extend its sphere of influence westward, while Washington was reluctant to play the role of a sole global policeman. The two governors occasionally (and sometimes violently) clashed, but global stability prevailed in this era precisely because each needed the other to uphold international stability, based on the competitive principle of checks and balances. In this sense, international governance during the Cold War era was not only about the provision of global public goods, but more profoundly about *negotiating* the way of organizing international affairs. The worldviews of the two superpowers played a disproportionately influential role.

# Case Period II (1990-1999): A Community of Great Governors?

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the prospect for a truly global scale of governance emerged in the early 1990s. Hopes were raised by President George H. W. Bush's declaration of a "new world order" and by the concrete outcomes of cooperative governance, such as the joint operations in the Gulf War, the reunification of Germany, the dismantlement of the Eastern bloc, and the development of collective mechanisms for nuclear non-proliferation in the post-Soviet space. In retrospect, however, this period also a constituted a turning point when the American and Western worldviews began to gradually drift away from that of post-Soviet Russia, whose influence on global governance structures and outcomes was remarkably diminished, especially in the early 1990s.

In the early 1990s, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, new Russia's apparent

enthusiasm for the free market economy, and the demise of global communism together convinced American policymakers that Western liberalism had triumphed as the universally-accepted way of organizing international affairs. Hence, the realm of global governance was no longer conceived as a field of competing visions, but was increasingly seen as a domain of collective policy implementation based on shared liberal values. The governing principle of international competition, with the system of checks and balances it entailed, was rapidly replaced with a new logic of global community-building resting on the assumption that all states are partners in the technocratic pursuit of liberal global governance. In this light, competition came to be seen as the prime obstacle to global governance, an anachronistic power-game amplifying feelings of enmity, compromising the unity of the international community, and diverting scarce resources from the muchneeded alignments of policy priorities among increasingly diverse international actors.

The new landscape of global governance was, however, perceived completely differently by the Kremlin - starting with the fact that Mikhail Gorbachev never intended to overthrow global communism. Quite contrary, he wanted to reform it to meet emerging challenges at home and abroad. In an age of accelerating globalization and rising inequality, the last Soviet leader strongly believed that state socialism and liberal capitalism could engage in mutual learning to borrow the best from each other's systems in order to advance the progress of both, transforming a confrontational bilateral relationship plagued by Cold War discourses of enemy-competitor into one of benign peer-competitor. In this sense, Russia's liberal reformers pushed for state-orchestrated liberalization in order to become more competitive, attractive, and influential in global affairs - certainly not in order to submit Russia to liberal universalism. While the Kremlin increasingly embraced the logic of global community-building, this policy shift in no way diminished its commitment to the traditional system of checks and balances in which Russia was, in the eyes of Moscow, destined to play a uniquely influential role.

In the Russian worldview, the end of the Cold War was much about the enlightened great power leadership of the Soviet Union. Tragically trapped in the mindset of zero-sum games, so the argument went, capitalist democracies refused to take a courageous leap to positively transform Russian-Western relations. Against this backdrop, Gorbachev announced a unilateral reduction of five hundred thousand Soviet troops before the UN General Assembly in 1988 (and indeed, Washington and its allies at first saw this move as a calculated "trick" to make the Soviet Union appear better in the eyes of international observers). The Kremlin unilaterally initiated a new doctrine of the non-use of force within its sphere of influence, and stood by with its new-found commitment to global peace

as the Union collapsed. Russia even agreed to dismantle the Warsaw Pact without demanding reciprocity from NATO. As a former American diplomat in Moscow insightfully describes, "For many Russian elites, Russia/USSR was not 'beaten' in the Cold War, did not 'lose,' but was rather the key force ending the Cold War and transforming the international system. In this view, Russia should not be seen as having its great power status diminished; rather, the country should be lauded." (Clunan 2009: 244). While Russia's commitment to multilateral mechanisms of global governance increased during the time, this policy change was more about showcasing Russia's "greatness" as a responsible global governor. Indeed, even the most pro-Western liberal reformers of the time, such as former Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, still called for the centrality of great power management and of shared responsibility distributed in the form of spheres of influence (Porter and Saivetz 1994).

Struck by Russia's willingness to initiate processes of radical transformation, the Bush and Clinton administrations acknowledged Moscow's role as a joint stabilizer in world affairs, and prudently supported a global governance system marked by a complex mixture of great power management and multilateral legalization. In fact, there was "an informal mutual understanding whereby Russia and the US between them would ascribe to each other unique responsibilities for managing particular regions of the world." (Smith 2012: 135). This worldview was most clearly demonstrated by America's unconditional support for the institutionalization of Russian-led Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which played a decisive role in upholding the fragile post-Soviet regional order and the international nonproliferation regime. Another watershed was Clinton's magnanimous support for Russia's joining in the Group of Seven in 1998, which was largely perceived in Moscow as the integration of Russia into a community of global governors.

As such, while global and regional governance in this turbulent era produced a great deal of multilateral agreements and fostered transnational networks, most pressing matters were still largely managed through great power consultations, exemplified by the management of the Balkan wars. Perhaps the most illustrative case, however, was German re-unification, which unfolded within a format of great power negotiation among both Germanys, the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France - with little or limited participation of other European states and or even representatives of the European Community, despite the half-century-old process of European integration.

As both post-Soviet Russia and the United States affirmed their commitment to shared values, this period is characterized by the notable lack of Western efforts to forcibly promote liberal ideas in the region and across the world. In essence, the core of Fukuyama's end of history thesis was that the liberal political values would

sooner or later *naturally* prevail over others in each polity *without active promotion*. Western policymakers at the time thus demonstrated a continued commitment to classical sovereignty, accepting that all reforms were internal matters of sovereign states – external actors, both state and non-state, were not supposed to interfere into these processes. This meant that they generally eschewed the idea of conditional sovereignty – i.e. that a political regime's claim to sovereignty should be conditioned on its sustained commitment to liberal democratic ideals and respect for human rights.

American and Western leaders at the time were extremely cautious of openly supporting political transformations in the changing world, and at times even attempted to tame excessive popular ambitions. Perhaps most striking demonstration of this restraint was the speech given by President Bush in Kiev on 1 August 1991, which attempted to persuade Ukraine not to seek independence from the Soviet Union. As Bush proclaimed, "Yet freedom is not the same as independence. Americans will not support those who seek independence in order to replace a far-off tyranny with a local despotism. They will not aid those who promote a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred." (Bush 1991)8 Perhaps more than anything, America's explicit promise of non-interference, coupled with its cautious support for emerging popular movements, assured Moscow that the West was not maliciously using the language of democratic transformation as a strategic instrument to weaken Russia. For this purpose, Washington and its allies carefully avoided forging ties with the newly independent states, and an informal code of conduct emerged that any attempt to develop relationships with the former Soviet states should first go through the "cleaning house" of Moscow. This practice prompted two observers to advocate that Washington should develop official bilateral relations with the former Soviet republic rather than treating them as quasi-autonomous peripheries of new Russia (Porter and Saivetz 1994). Ironically, the popular revolutions of the 1990s succeeded precisely because the West at large avoided open support for these movements, thereby minimizing resistance from Russia.

It is in this political context that the landscape of global governance in the 1990s should be placed. Lifting the Iron Curtain considerably accelerated international mobility, which prompted the emergence of various non-state actors and civil society organizations in world politics. With Western assurances that Moscow's core interests would be protected, Russian statesmen at the time had little reason to fear the rise of these new actors, although they still strongly preferred a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> This explains, then, why Fukuyama (2006) later vehemently criticized America's democracy promotion efforts as counter-productive. For a Russian perspective on U.S. democracy promotion, see Davydov (2015).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> The same speech also assured that: "We will work for the good of both of us, which means that we will not meddle in your internal affairs."

state-centric approach to global governance. While the demise of global socialism made it easier for Washington to fully embrace these non-state actors in global governance networks, a shared commitment to state-centrism generally persisted. Especially at critical junctures, the role of non-state actors was still largely subordinated to that of state authorities.

In essence, what was troubling about social movements during this time was the unlikely fusion of liberal ambitions with naked nationalism - which Yael Tamir (1995) termed "liberal nationalism". An indicative case was Yugoslavia, where the democratic, "anti-bureaucratic" revolution led by hundreds of thousands of demonstrations installed Slobodan Milošević. Likewise, most of the former Soviet republics hurried to seek independence - not to deepen the commitment to liberal values, but rather to escape from the sweeping liberal reforms envisaged by Gorbachev's leadership. Even in the Baltics states - the most "liberal" among all the Soviet republics - ethnic nationalism was one of the prime drivers of independence movements, as demonstrated by the introduction of highly discriminatory laws that denied the linguistic rights to the sizable minority of Russians suddenly marooned within the Baltic states. In this sense, the "liberal" reformers in the Baltics had much more common with the ethnocentric ultra-nationalists of various African decolonization movements, who actively sought to abolish the official status of European languages associated with imperial rule. Acutely aware of these unwelcome developments, Washington and its allies in this era made deliberate and concerted efforts to manage the rise of non-state actors within the state-centric framework, and focused on signaling reassurances to Moscow.

The analysis above indicates that global governance in the 1990s was marked by greater mutual trust and cooperation, not just because Moscow embraced a key element of liberalism (the logic of global community-building) but also, and more importantly, because American and Western policymakers also made conscious efforts to respect Russia's statist worldview (see Table 3.). As American support for Ukraine's non-independence from the Soviet Union suggests, the West in this period did not generally capitalize on the rise of democratic reformers. Instead, they took a more cautious line in favor of collectively managing these processes, reinforcing traditional commitments to non-interference and, at least tacitly, to great power management. In short, there is little evidence suggesting that the Western great powers attempted to weaken Russia in this turbulent era. However, with NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 - and NATO's eastward expansion

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> These moves went directly against the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which obliges European states to respect regional and minority languages. Perhaps the "best practice" from a liberal point of view was Kyrgyzstan, which recognized the fundamental human right to speak and to seek education in one's native language, and therefore designated Russian the status of an official state language – even though the proportion of Russian-speaking minority was much smaller than that of the Baltic states.

in violation of post-Cold War promises to forgo this (Shifrinson 2016) - Russian and American worldviews began to show signs of great divergence, which subsequently shaped the dynamics of global governance in the 21st century.

Table 3: Soviet (Russian) and American Worldviews on International Governance, 1990-1999

#### USSR and Russia

Elements of Liberalism	Dimensions	Elements of Statism	
Community/Cooperation	Governing Principle	Balance/Competition	
Multilateral Legalization	Governance Mechanism	Great Power Management	
Conditional Sovereignty	State Sovereignty	Classical Sovereignty	
Decentralized	International Authority	Centralized	

#### **United States**

Elements of Liberalism	Dimensions	Elements of Statism	
Community/Cooperation	Governing Principle	Balance/Competition	
Multilateral Legalization	Governance Mechanism	Great Power Management	
Conditional Sovereignty	State Sovereignty	Classical Sovereignty	
Decentralized	International Authority	Centralized	

# Case Period III (2000-2016): The Clash of Global Governors

Following NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia, the double enlargement of NATO and the European Union (EU), and the spread of "color revolutions" in and beyond the post-Soviet space, the gulf between the diverging Russian and American (and Western) worldviews began to widen. Perhaps for the first time since the end of the Second World War, Russia and America explicitly disagreed on what are, and what ought to be, the governing principles for managing world affairs.

In the eyes of Washington and its allies, international interactions should be governed by the principle of global community-building, with the conduct of global governance reduced to the collective realization of "universal" values. The argument that rising powers are "challenging" or "threatening" the international status-quo evidently demonstrates that the American and Western worldviews consider the current system of global governance to be a just, stable equilibrium to be defended faithfully. From the window of the Kremlin, however, the state of affairs looks radically different. Russia's ultimate verdict is that the logic of global community-building – which Russian elites in the 1990s half-heartedly endorsed – has been revealed to be a calculated ploy designed to conceal the universalist aspirations of Western powers. From this perspective, upholding the governing

principle of competition and balancing becomes not only of strategic importance, but a moral imperative. It therefore follows that, only through promoting the international competition of different worldviews, only through countering the monopoly of liberal global governance, and only through imposing checks and balances on the excessive ideological ambitions of the West, can the governance system attain a healthy state of equilibrium.<sup>10</sup>

Here, what is most striking is that the Russian and Western worldviews hold diametrically opposed visions of both domestic and global governance. For established liberal powers like the United States, the domestic arena is principally governed by the systems of competition with checks and balances – liberal democracy, the free market, and the rule of law– while the international arena is envisioned to be managed by a concert of governing actors with little tolerance for opposition to "universal" liberal standards. <sup>11</sup> For rising powers like Russia, the logic is completely reversed: the international arena should be governed by a competitive system of checks and balances to ensure the survival of global pluralism, and, in order to be competitive and influential at the world stage, the domestic arena should limit internal opposition and consolidate national unity. <sup>12</sup>

Unlike the two previous case periods when the centrality of great power management was explicitly or implicitly acknowledged, American and Western policymakers since 2000 increasingly embraced a universalist worldview where the "ranking" of nations is primarily determined by the degree of each political regime's commitment to the pre-defined package of liberal values. This has resulted in the explicit rejection of great power management, now dismissed as an anachronism hindering sovereign equality and the development of genuinely multilateral forms of global governance.<sup>13</sup>

For Russia, and for a plurality of other rising powers, great power management is about much more than merely a sense of international grandeur: it is the central mechanism by which to coordinate the collective endeavors of global governance while safeguarding global pluralism. From this viewpoint, great power manage-

<sup>10</sup> China's "peaceful rise" doctrine agrees with this point, in the sense that Beijing also sees international peace primarily in terms of balance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> E.H.Carr emphasizes this point: "Just as pleas for 'national solidarity' in domestic politics always come from a dominant group which can use this solidarity to strengthen its own control over the nation as a whole, so pleas for international solidarity and world union come from those dominant nations which may hope to exercise control over a unified world." (Carr 1946: 86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> This point is eloquently elaborated by one Chinese scholar: "In domestic politics, the US government has applied checks and balances to protect democracy and the rule of law, whereas in international politics it seeks to preserve its dominant status so that it can act without constraints." (Xiaoyu 2012: 363)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Interestingly, though, Washington's bipartisan foreign policy elites are deeply convinced of the necessity for America's global leadership - which may be best conceived as the manifestation of a particular form of great power mindset.

ment is not an antithesis to a rule-based international order, as often argued by contemporary Western policymakers. On the contrary, the existence of multiple power-centers is understood as the foundation for a just, stable, and balanced international legal order free from normative domination.<sup>14</sup>

This view is reflected in Moscow's doctrine of polycentrism (polytsentrichnost') and democratization of international relations (demokratizatsiya mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy), which has become a central component of Russian foreign policy since the early 2000s. 15 These ideas envision that the rise of multiple powerhouses in the world would enhance international justice by taming the excessive moral hegemony of the West, which, in turn, would "democratize" the management of international affairs; that is, taking back global decision-making processes from the narrow circles of "cozy Western boardroom" (Patrick and Bennett 2014), which do not reflect the global political diversity. Threatening though it may sound to Western audiences, however, these ideas are deeply rooted in the doctrine of "peaceful coexistence" adopted during the Cold War. Moscow is not categorically opposed to American and Western leadership in global governance per se, nor aims at overthrowing the liberal international order altogether. The ultimate objective in the Russian worldview is modest: to advance a thesis that liberalism is one among many possible ways of organizing global politics and, more importantly, that liberal global powers need "awareness-raising" to understand how to become more attentive and tolerant of alternative, non-liberal approaches.

Seen in this light, it is not hard to understand that Russia's increased commitment to multilateral organizations in recent years is primarily driven by the logic of competition, <sup>16</sup> and that the sponsoring and leading multilateral institutions is a means by which to bolster its regional and global influence. For instance, while Russian liberals pushed for World Trade Organization (WTO) membership as a fast-track ticket to further global economic integration, Moscow's final decision to join the trade pact was largely influenced by the argument that its absence would allow other powers to shape the landscape of international trade. Leading the creation of the supranational Eurasian Economic Union in 2015, a similar argument was put forth by Vladimir Putin: "the accession to the Eurasian Union will also help countries integrate into Europe sooner and from *a stronger position*." (Putin 2011, emphasis added) In this sense, regional multilateralism is seen as a strategy to reinforce regional influence and to counter the global preeminence of the West.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> This line of reasoning finds its roots in the deliberation of the renowned international lawyer Lassa Oppenheim (1920), who once contended that the healthy function of international law requires a global balance of power; just as the domestic rule of law is most firmly upheld by the competitive mechanisms of multi-party systems and institutional checks and balances that prevents the concentration of power.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> For a concise summary of contemporary Russian foreign policy, see Ivanov (2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> For the multilateral dimension of Russian foreign policy, see Rowe and Torjesen (2008).

Along with diverging worldviews on governing principles and mechanisms, sovereignty and the politics of international intervention have emerged as a new fault-line between Russia and the Western powers. With the logic of global community-building, Washington's bipartisan foreign policy elites have generally come to embrace the idea of conditional sovereignty – that the sovereign right to rule is not naturally given, but fundamentally grounded in a political regime's commitment to liberal democratic ideals. In other words, to be a fully respected sovereign state, a nation must embrace a set of universal values. American and European insistence on human rights, good governance, the responsibility to protect, and humanitarian intervention is the concrete operationalization of these ideas, which is increasingly mimicking the logic of international law enforcement.

While space limitations do not allow me to fully unpack the full complexity of the Russian view of state sovereignty today, there are several notable trends. While Western discourse on sovereignty increasingly mirrors the language of the Brezhnev doctrine, Moscow has gradually abandoned the Soviet-era concept of conditional sovereignty and is generally hesitant to embrace notions of moral universalism. While Russian leaders generally insist on the principle of non-interference in the global arena, they have actively sought to bolster Russia's influence in the regional sphere of its "privileged interest".

This duality, however, should not be simply dismissed as evidence of hypocrisy. As noted above, the Russian worldview on global governance departs from the assumption that world affairs need to be managed by international competition, which averts global domination and enhances international justice. For this purpose, there must be several independent poles of state power, including Russia, that are able and willing to check and, when necessary, "speak up" to disagree with the predominant Western powers. It follows, then, that the systemic principle of great power management is placed above that of individual sovereignty, and that while small and middle powers should not be subjugated, they have an international obligation not to actively undermine the interests of great powers. In this sense, Russian elites essentially see the survival and autonomy of the Russian pole as a global public good – i.e. as an integral part of a competitive international system that strives to enhance international justice by the mechanisms of checks and balances.

Russia's reluctance to fully embrace a more decentralized form of global governance largely stems from this state-centric worldview, intricately interwoven with the centrality of great power politics. From a Russian perspective, the majority of so-called "global civil society actors" are either the self-selected circles of special interest groups, or a new mechanism of global social control supported by liberals juj conspiring to eliminate the voices of statism and social conservatism. <sup>17</sup> Indeed, an overwhelming majority of NGOs are headquartered in the Western hemisphere (36% in North America and 33% in Europe), although their activities are predominantly (60%) located in the non-Western world. (Zonova 2013) This extremely skewed geography of non-state actors makes Moscow cast serious doubts on their neutrality and representativeness. As a result, Russia has so far preferred a more exclusive landscape of governance where state actors retain central authority. As former Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov argues, "no matter how many nongovernmental actors take part in international relations today, sovereign states must continue to play the main roles." (Ivanov 2002: 56)

While American policymakers and their Western allies often complain about Russia's skepticism towards global civil society, they tend to conveniently forget that the same paranoia once prompted these liberal states to adopt their own policies of suppression. Precisely for this reason, the aforementioned American anticommunist act criminalized not only the American Communist Party but also all civil society actors which supported the cause of global socialism. Essentially, Western promotion of global civil society is based on a romanticized assumption that all non-state actors embrace a harmonized vision to advance shared goals derived from "universal" liberal values. However, if we depart instead from a neutral view that all citizens across the world have the equal right to form associations to express their independent opinions, then it becomes clear that an Islamic organization calling for a stricter adherence to the Sharia law, the grassroots movements that aided the rise of Donald Trump, and an international NGO advocating for women's rights are all equally part of the same global civil society - despite the obvious fact that their respective goals collide.<sup>18</sup>

In short, contemporary discourses of global civil society and decentralized global governance are never politically neutral, and certainly reflect a specific vision of liberal global governance. Although some may contend that legitimate membership in global civil society is conditioned upon one's commitment to "universal" liberal values, this line of reasoning easily begins to resemble the socialist awareness-raising campaign which assumed that only those civil society actors committed to the "universal" values of global socialism are "genuine" forces for "legitimate" global change. At the moment, the Western strategy for decentralized global governance is at best described as *selective* empowerment of the *liberal* actors whose agendas are implicitly or explicitly aligned with, or at least not directly opposed to, the worldviews of the Western states. As such, any actor speaking up against the liberal international order is not seen as a part of global

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> For a Russian perspective, see Lebedeva and Kharkevich (2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> The seminal work of Mary Kaldor (2003) contends that in a broader sense global civil society encompasses liberals, reformers, and humanitarians, but also nationalists and fundamentalists. For a more open-minded approach to the authority of non-state actors, see Hall and Biersteker (2002).

"civil" society in the first place. An indicative case here is the Occupy Wall Street movements, which was closely surveilled by the National Security Agency (whose primary task is to watch the "threats" to U.S. national security) and resulted in nearly 8,000 arrests in over 120 cities. <sup>19</sup> The state of affairs is no different in Europe: for instance, in a response to the rising anti-austerity civil society group 15-M Movement (which mobilized six to eight million Spaniards against the EU austerity policy), Madrid introduced a repressive "gag law" that imposes fines up to 60,000 euro on unauthorized demonstrations (EUobserver 2015). While these cases by no means disprove the importance of non-state actors in world politics, they certainly highlight the prominence of state actors, and more importantly, of powerful states, in structuring a global arena in which non-state actors pursue their agendas. Table 4. below summarizes the Russian and American worldviews during this contemporary period.

Table 4: Russian and American Worldviews on International Governance, 2000-2016

#### Russia

Elements of Liberalism	Dimensions	Elements of Statism	
Community/Cooperation	Governing Principle	Balance/Competition	
Multilateral Legalization	Governance Mechanism	Great Power Management	
Conditional Sovereignty	State Sovereignty	Classical Sovereignty	
Decentralized	International Authority	Centralized	

# **United States**

Elements of Liberalism	Dimensions	Elements of Statism	
Community/Cooperation	Governing Principle	Balance/Competition	
Multilateral Legalization	Governance Mechanism	Great Power Management	
Conditional Sovereignty	State Sovereignty	Classical Sovereignty	
Decentralized	International Authority	Centralized	

# Conclusion

By its own design, this paper offers neither a controlled analysis of causal variables nor in-depth inquiry into historical texts. As emphasized in the introductory section, Moscow's influence on global governance structures and outcomes has fluctuated over time, and the interactions between Russian and American worldviews have occurred within drastically different contextual settings. That said, it reveals several clear overall trends that help us better understand the evolution of Russia's approach to global governance, and the changing international contexts around it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Data accessible at https://www.stpete4peace.org/occupyarrests.

First, the remarkable continuity in Russia's worldview over time is striking. During the last two decades alone, Russia has undergone radical transformations from a globally-feared communist hegemon to a failed market economy, and finally to an assertive (re-)rising power. Despite these sea-changes, its commitment to the global balance of power and the centrality of great power management have remained consistent, even in the era of liberal reforms. This casts a serious doubt over the (retrospectively constructed) view that "Putin's Russia" is increasingly deviating from the liberal promise of the previous era. Indeed, Polity IV scores show that "Putin's Russia" is more "liberal" than Gorbachev's Soviet Union, 20 and in this sense, "Putin's" approach to global governance is not so much about his own ambitions as it is about staying on the track of trends set by the reformers of the previous era. This point is most clearly underscored by Gorbachev's enthusiastic support for Putin's Crimea policy, as well as his unambiguous statement in 2015 that he is "absolutely convinced that Putin protects Russia's interests better than anyone else." (The Telegraph 2014) This state-centric, great-power-centered worldview is even echoed by a number of liberal anti-regime forces, who essentially see liberalization as a means to make Russia a great leader of the liberal world (Kobayashi 2015).

In this sense, the clash of worldviews we observe today is perhaps not really about an increasingly non-liberal Russia taking on America's liberal international order, but rather a reaction to the rapid departure of American and European worldviews from the state-centric mindset of past centuries. As demonstrated above, American policymakers during the Cold War, and even in the 1990s, largely shared a common language of statism with the Kremlin. In this light, many of the key elements of liberal global governance are relatively new concepts and symbolize *revision* of the classical way of managing international affairs. <sup>21</sup> This resonates with the observation of Hurrell (2006) that what rising powers like Russia prefer is the *preservation* of the centuries-old, state-centric approach to world affairs, while the contemporary Western worldview represents the unwelcome departure from this classical framework.

This point becomes clearer when we carefully look at the contemporary discourses of the Western leaders, who often claim that the balance of power is *no longer* a guiding principle in world politics, great power aspirations are *no longer* legitimate, sovereignty can be *no longer* used to conceal domestic oppressions, and the system of state-centric governance is *no longer* applicable to the rapidly global-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Polity scores range from -10 to +10, and divide political regimes into three categories: autocracies (-10 to -6); anocracies (-5 to +5); and democracies (+6 to +10). The Soviet Union under Gorbachev improved its score from -7 to 0, Yeltin's Russia scored around +3, and Putin's Russia has varied between +4 and +6. Data for Russia is accessible at http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/rus2.htm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> To be fair, for a majority of Western policymakers these elements are not "new" because the Western sphere of liberal influence during the Cold War was largely governed by these principles.

izing world. In this sense, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is right in pointing out that Moscow speaks like a twentieth-century great power (NBC News 2014). Indeed Russia does, and it does so proudly within its worldview which defends modern international order; an order which sustained an unprecedented duration of peace in nineteenth century Europe, which defeated fascism in the second world war and founded the United Nations, and which prevented nuclear annihilation during the Cold War.

Methodologically, the matrix approach proves to be an effective way of capturing the complex thinking that drives the engagement of rising powers in global governance. Most importantly, this study demonstrates that it is the fusion of great power management and multilateral legalization that underlines Russia's approach to global governance. In this sense, the overly simplistic caricature that Russia prefers the realpolitik of great power management to the liberal, legalized, and multilateral format of governance spectacularly fails to capture this complexity. It appears that the Russian line of reasoning finds a wider resonance in the worldviews of other rising powers. Brazil has markedly increased its commitment to regional integration projects primarily to enhance the region's autonomy visà-vis the United States and the EU, and moreover, to demonstrate that Latin America is capable of governing its own region independently without Western interference (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012). For similar reasons, China has also become increasingly active in sponsoring regional multilateral initiatives, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the One Belt One Road (OBOR) project, the Conference of Interaction and Confidence-Building in Asia (CICA), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

The competitive dynamics of regional institutionalization poses perhaps the greatest challenge to conventional institutionalist perspectives in the academic scholarship on global governance and international relations, which have predominantly conceived of international institutions as a source of greater cooperation – thus rendering scholars incapable of viewing them as a strategy for global influence. The emerging reality is that a plurality of rising and regional powers sees multilateral initiatives as a way to bolster their global influence and enhance regional independence. In this sense, greater institutionalization of international relations may actually widen the global and regional political division and hamper greater cooperation and coordination. This is why closer attention needs to be paid to the underlying ideas and worldviews of major international actors when we attempt to explain the phenomenon of global governance. After all, governance is and always will be a political exercise, of which the contract struggle for legitimacy is – for better or worse – an integral part.

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## Article

# Russia's Changing Partners: Sovereign Actors and Unrecognized States

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# Abstract

For several centuries Russian foreign policy was stuck in the realm of sovereign states. When local administrators entered into contact with non-state actors across the border, such relations were often seen as an embarrassment for Moscow or St. Petersburg. Even in the tumultuous first decades of the Soviet era, global Communist activities were ostensibly led by the Comintern, while the state mostly dealt with other sovereign actors. After the break of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation had to cope with the crisis in Chechnya and did everything possible to prevent the international recognition of this breakaway region. Russia's policy was then totally consistent, as no wannabe political entities were officially recognized by Moscow. The situation started to change in 2008–2010, when the independence of Kosovo was proclaimed and widely recognized. Russia's policy has drifted towards a wider recognition of de facto states and aspiring political movements. The Russian Federation still tends to deal with sovereign states, but semi-official contacts with non-recognized actors are common whenever these fall into the sphere of Moscow's Realpolitik.

## Keywords

Russian Foreign Policy, Sovereign States, Comintern, Unrecognized States, Real-politik

# Introduction

Among the traditions of Russian foreign policy there used to be a tendency to deal with great powers or other influential sovereign states which had achieved wide international recognition. Smaller and less influential states were often ignored or treated with contempt. This was even more true of self-proclaimed enti-

ties. While Russian public opinion supported the independence of the Balkan states in the nineteenth century, the Russian Empire preferred to see them as autonomies under Ottoman suzerainty for many years before they could be worth recognition. In the Soviet period, with the growth of sovereign states in Asia, Africa and Oceania, most of them were recognized by Moscow immediately after official decolonization. The contacts with the national liberation movements were officially made by 'public' organizations such as the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, rather than the Soviet state.

Local contacts with would-be states and non-state actors across the Russian/ Soviet border were often seen as an embarrassment for the official foreign policy. One such example was Mongolia's struggle for independence from China in the first decades of the twentieth century. At the local level, Russian merchants and military supported the Mongols. When the Mongolian independence was proclaimed in 1911, a single platoon of Trans-Baikal Cossacks under the command of Grigory Semenov (apparently on his own initiative) disarmed the Chinese garrison and occupied the state bank. Such arbitrariness led the Russian consul to expel Semenov from Mongolia. Russia and China then recognized the autonomy of Outer Mongolia under Chinese suzerainty, but not the independence of all the Mongols as proclaimed. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Chinese troops came back and abolished the autonomy of Outer Mongolia. Then White Russian and Mongolian forces under the command of Baron Ungern von Sternberg expelled the Chinese and restored the country's independence. Afterwards, the Baron tried to reconquer Siberia, but the Red Army and its Mongolian allies defeated the Whites. In 1921 Soviet Russia and Mongolia recognized each other, trying to break the international isolation of both countries. In 1924, in accordance with the Sino-Soviet Treaty, Mongolia was recognized as an integral part of China. The same year the Mongolian People's Republic was proclaimed, and the Soviet Union recognized the new state, although the treaty with China was not annulled. The Soviet diplomats were in favor of the autonomy of Outer Mongolia, while the Executive Committee of the Comintern saw Mongolia as an independent republic which would become a part of the Chinese federation after the eventual victory of the Communists in China (Perepiska 2008, pp. 111 & 119). To further complicate things, in 1941 the Soviet Union and Japan signed a neutrality pact and pledged to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the Mongolian People's Republic and Manchuria (Manchukuo, a Japans' client state proclaimed in 1932). During the Great Patriotic War, Mongolia republic declared war on Germany. In 1944, the Soviet Union and USA agreed on "the maintenance of the Republic of Outer Mongolia as an independent identity" (United States Department of State, Foreign relations of the United States, Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945, p. 378). After the World War II Manchukuo

disappeared, and China recognized the independence of the Mongolian People's Republic. This recognition was then adopted by the Chinese People's Republic, but annulled by Taiwan. The conundrum continued until 1961, when Moscow and the West reached a deal which permitted Mongolia to join the United Nations (in exchange for the admission of Mauritania, previously vetoed by the Soviet delegation). The Mongolian People's Republic remained a client state of the Soviet Union until the 1980s (for more details on Russian-Mongolian relations in the twentieth century see e.g. Murphy 1961, Luzyanin 2003).

# Dualism in the early Soviet policy

Even in the first decades of the Soviet era, during the period of global Communist activities, these were officially led by the Communist International, while the Soviet state tried to deal with other sovereign state actors. Throughout this period, Moscow's foreign policy might be seen as a dual one, and this dualism was aimed at the need to support the world revolution and to secure the USSR's national interests. Early Soviet dualism resulted in a number of diplomatic conflicts. The objectives of Moscow in establishing relations with the bourgeois countries were quite contradictory, as the Kremlin wanted peaceful coexistence with governments rather than capitalist states (Zagladin 1990, pp. 40-45). One basic principle was that that the interests of the governments and the populations in the West could never be the same, while the capitalism existed. The Soviet diplomacy was inspired by this principle, even when the idea of immediate world proletarian revolution was about to vanish. One should also note that Moscow saw the antiimperialist movement as one of the obstacles to an eventual intervention against the USSR. Consequently, the official contacts with foreign states were just a way to maintain balance in international relations, rather than the principal aim of the revolutionary foreign policy. The People's Commissar for Foreign Relations Georgi V. Chicherin told it clearly at the XIV Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) in 1925:

We need urgently the close contact with the Communist parties of other countries. [...] I wish much closer contact between Narkomindel [The People's Commissariat for Foreign Relations] and the Executive Committee of the Comintern.[...] The previous situation of some mis-coordination between the Soviet diplomacy and local Communist parties, is, fortunately, over. We have managed to establish close and permanent (though un-official, absolutely secret) contacts with the local Communist parties of different countries" (Blinov, Nadtocheev & Orehova 1991, p. 122).

The same approach was recognized by one of the Soviet revolutionaries and diplomats Georgi Skalov ("Sinani"), the assistant to the Soviet Russia envoy in Bukhara and, later on, the chairman of the Latin American Secretariat of the

#### Comintern:

The main task of our Legation was not like the work of the common diplomats – it was the political preparation for the sovietization of Buhara and the organization of the Buharan Communist Party (Skalov, G. The autobiography, p.37).

A classic example of dualism in foreign policy was the activity of Stanislav Pestkosky, the Soviet envoy to Mexico in the mid-1920s. We completely agree with William Richardson's conclusion that, while the Soviet diplomacy was trying to settle the possible conflicts with the Mexican government, the Comintern agents were provoking new conflicts (Richardson 1988, P. 102). As a matter of fact, the situation was more complicated; Pestkovsky was not only a diplomat, but also a Comintern emissary (under the alias "Andrei") (Jeifets&Jeifets, 2002). This dualism was not extraordinary, as the Soviet diplomats were ex-revolutionaries or were returning to the Comintern after completing their diplomatic missions. This symbiosis reached the organizational level as well. The top administrators of the Soviet People's Commissariat (Ministry) for Foreign Affairs were also members of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. The case of Mexico, however, was still different from that of the European countries. The USSR saw the Mexican revolution as a similar one, and, consequently, there seemed to be no contradiction between the diplomatic work and the revolutionary activities. Pestkovsky was designated as the Envoy in Mexico City, being the person "able to fulfill the Comintern's American tasks" (Chicherin 1924, P.76). Stanislav Pestkovsky was trying sincerely to broaden the Mexican-Soviet relations, but simultaneously he was making pressure at the local Communist Party in order to change its leadership. The result of this pressure was the rise of the ultra-leftist feelings inside the party and the danger of the rupture between the left-wing militants and the authorities.

The dualism in foreign policy was not absolute. Moscow put the limits to the revolutionary activities of Soviet diplomats and Comintern envoys. Thus, the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Executive Committee of the Comintern were ready to promote the Communist activities in Mexico (without taking into account the possible worsening of official relations with the government), but they proved to be unwilling to support the idea of an armed expedition to Venezuela (proposed by Gustavo Machado, a Venezuelan revolutionary, and supported by Pestkovsky) with the purpose to overthrow the dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gomez. The USSR considered that Gomez was not only dictator, but also an unconditional ally of the US imperialism. However, the Soviet leadership did not see any perspectives of triumph for the revolution in Venezuela and didn't want to waste time and money for such plans. The same destiny awaited the plans of an armed expedition to Cuba (developed by the Cuban revolutionary Julio Antonio Mella) and a Communist revolt in Colombia and Ecuador (with the support of the Rockfeller oil corporation). Moscow preferred to avoid direct participation in

the projects of doubtful promise (Jeifets & Jeifets 2015). The USSR was unwilling to grant support to the non-state actors, if there was no chance for them to win and transform themselves into States.

# The Soviet Union and the Unrecognized States in the Context of Decolonization

The early Soviet dualism disappeared, but there were other challenges to Moscow's foreign policy. In the process of decolonization, quite a few states were proclaimed, but not recognized by the international community. Most of these states did not last, but some of the were able to survive for several years and even decades, This group of quasi-sovereign international actors has remained relatively stable in numbers, and all of them tried to behave like 'normal' states. There have been many attempts at describing these political entities. Various definitions have included 'unrecognized states', 'de facto states', 'self-proclaimed states', 'state-like entities', 'virtual states', 'quasi-states', 'states-within-states', 'statelets' and even 'nonstate states'. The phenomenon has attracted many scholars, from historians to political anthropologists and geographers (see e .g. Berg & Toomla 2009, Caspersen & Stansfield 2011, Dobronravin 2013). Understandably, the analysis of such entities is often far from academic. In the writings supportive to the countries that fell victim to 'illegitimate state-building', the very existence of unrecognized states is negated through the consistent use of terminology delegitimizing them, e.g. 'secessionist regions/entities', 'separatist territories/regimes', 'breakaway territories', 'self-proclaimed republics' or 'illegal entities' (but never 'states').

Many, but not all, unrecognized states are fairly weak and depend on foreign assistance from a third state ("tutor state", "patron state", "external patron/sponsor", "kin-state"). In the 20th century, the political discourse included references to "puppet states", a rather clumsy term, as it covered both unrecognized and sovereign recipients of external assistance. Nowadays, such relations may be better understood as 'outsourcing' (Popescu 2006). The outsourced functions of a patronized state usually include defense and foreign affairs. Nevertheless, no such entity has ever declared that it would not try to enter the arena of international relations. Full-scale recognition, including the membership in international organizations, dominates the political agenda of unrecognized states. All of them have formulated their own foreign policies, even if they are too weak to implement them without an external patron. Seaboard unrecognized states have developed their own maritime policies, following the lines of 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III), even though they could not join the Convention. A number of legitimate or self-proclaimed subnational entities also emulate sovereign states, e.g. in their approach to the seas, maritime boundaries and exclusive economic zones (EEZ). Before 1991, the former Soviet Union

used to avoid open official contacts with unrecognized states. There were very few exceptions (Algeria in 1960-1962, Guinea Bissau in 1973-1974, Communist-controlled Republic of South Vietnam in 1969-1975). In the other cases, no recognition was granted.

A good case was that of Western Sahara. The former Spanish Sahara was claimed by Morocco and Mauritania, while the adjacent Algeria supported those Sahrawis who opted for independence. In 1976, when the intervention of Moroccan forces had already begun, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (POLISARIO) proclaimed the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) without the consent from the former metropolitan state. The majority of the population moved to the refugee camps in Algeria together with the leadership of the new republic. By 1991, the parties to the conflict have exhausted all possibilities for a military solution to the problem of Western Sahara, and a cease-fire was brokered by the United Nations. Algeria has supported POLISARIO and acted as a patron state for the SADR. Nowadays, the former Spanish Sahara is claimed by the effectively exiled de facto Sahrawi state and the Kingdom of Morocco. The POLISARIO front and the government of the selfproclaimed SADR now control about 20 per cent of the territory of the former Spanish Sahara, called "free zones", or "liberated territories". From the perspective of the Moroccan authorities, it is a "buffer zone" ("zone tampon") between Morocco and the neighboring states of Algeria and Mauritania. The SADR has established diplomatic relations with some countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. The republic also joined the African Union. The United Nations see Western Sahara as a territory to be decolonized, although there is no effective colonizing power. All the agreements reached under the auspices of the UN have been signed by the representatives of POLISARIO, and not by the SADR. From the Moroccan perspective, there are three Saharan provinces that make up the future autonomous region in the south.

The territory and the EEZ of Western Sahara have attracted foreign business including a number of Russian companies. Fish resources of Western Sahara's EEZ are as vast as about 11 per cent of world reserves. Since the Spanish rule, these waters have been subjected to predatory fishing. The SADR and various European NGOs struggle against the "illegal use" of fish resources in the EEZ claimed by the republic. Russian policy towards Western Sahara has been influenced by practical interests of the fishermen who used to deal with Moroccan authorities. Neither the Sahrawi independence nor the annexation of Western Sahara by Morocco have been recognized by the former Soviet Union.

# The Russian Federation and the Post-Soviet de Facto States

Since 1991, the Russian Federation initially followed the same approach to the

unrecognized states. In the early 1990s, previous administrative borders were taken as a foundation for new boundaries between the former Soviet republics. Estonia and Latvia tended to disagree with this approach, but had to follow the general principle of Post-Soviet uti possidetis. On the other hand, hardly any new state seemed satisfied with its piece of the Soviet cake. Among the reasons for discontent, there were ethnic or historical conflicts, as in the autonomous region of Nagorno Karabakh, in Northern Kazakhstan or in the Fergana Valley, where the borders of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan were reminiscent of medieval German princedoms. One more reason was often ignored by the media and many politicians alike. The Soviet administrative boundaries could be good, bad and at times utterly ugly, but at least they could be discussed and somehow improved in somebody's favor. However, there remained many tiny and large sections of land where there was no administrative border at all, just some general idea of it on the map. The situation was even worse along any boundary watercourse and particularly confusing on numerous lakes and seas (Caspian, Aral, etc.). One might also remember that many places were not even mentioned or intentionally misrepresented on maps and in the media for defense purposes. The limits of an industrial site or a forest could be traced with more accuracy, but even there a lot of inconsistencies were to be discovered when post-Soviet privatization started. As concerns the reservoirs of oil and natural gas both onshore and offshore, as well as various other mineral and water deposits, it became clear fairly soon that new legislation was needed. As a result, a joint declaration on trans-boundary deposits was adopted by most post-Soviet states as early as 1992. In accordance with this declaration, the deposits found in the immediate borderland of the neighbor state members of the Commonwealth of Independent States should be reserved for common use of the adjacent states. The 1992 declaration had, however, little practical outcome, as most conflicts were to be resolved through bilateral talks.

On the eve of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, some entities started to break away from their republics, e.g. Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan, Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia, Transnistria from Moldova, Chechnya from the Russian Federation, etc. When the new sovereign states were born (or recreated) and recognized by the international community, the de facto entities were eager to emulate them. E.g., the independence of the Azerbaijan Republic was restored on 30 August 1991, and on 2 September the Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) Republic declared its independence from Azerbaijan. The former autonomous region was supported by Armenia as a kin-state. From the perspective of Azerbaijan, there has been a direct Armenian intervention and occupation. The war continued till 1994, when the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh agreed on a ceasefire. Until now, no sovereign state including Armenia has recognized the independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (Kaldor 2007, Dobronravin 2010, pp.163-166).

All the above-mentioned breakaway territories, with the exception of Chechnya, were then transformed into relatively stable unrecognized states. Until 2008, there was a consensus that no such entities should be granted official recognition. In the case of Chechnya, Russia was able to cope with the crisis only after two wars and the reconciliation with some of former secessionists. The government of the Russian Federation used all possible measures to prevent the international recognition of the breakaway region in the Caucasus. Russia's policy was then totally consistent, as neither Chechnya nor any other self-proclaimed states (Abkhazia, etc.) were officially recognized by Moscow.

The post-Soviet de facto states could not be ignored even when there was no war. Russia became the patron state of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria, meaning that all these entities received financial assistance and military protection from forcible re-integration into their "mother states". There were practical reasons for the patronage besides traditional ethnic and political ties. In the case of Transnistria, a local company inherited a section of the Soviet gas transit system. The stability in the de facto state was needed to guarantee gas transit to Moldova, the Balkan states and Turkey. In the case of Abkhazia, Russian business was interested in the sea resources within the limits of the EEZ claimed by Abkhazia, as well as tourism. No such activities could be possible in war time. In this context, it is worth mention that most sea boundaries in the Black Sea region remain undefined. The adjacent states, with the exception of Turkey, have not even finalized all their claims in the area. The agreement of 1978 on continental shelf boundary (extended to the EEZ limits in 1987) between Turkey and the former Soviet Union has remained in force after the collapse of the USSR. That document, however, could not help to resolve the issue of the post-1991 sea boundaries of Russia, Ukraine and Georgia. The geographical position of Abkhazia means that a future discussion on the sea boundaries and EEZ limits of the Russian Federation will have to take this actor into consideration and need its consent.

The post-Soviet consensus on non-recognition of breakaway entities remained in force for more than a decade under the Eltsin and Putin administrations. During that period, fourteen sovereign states were eager to escape from Moscow's control in political, economic and cultural sense. At the same time, Russia also aspired to the West, but the political logic of "escaping from Russia" predominated in post-Soviet Eurasia. Inside Russia, several big corporations, both private and state-controlled, as well as a number of subnational regions and republics became interested in global politics. Some of these regions and corporations did influence Russian foreign policy in the way which would have been unconceivable before 1991. Among the new players one could mention Tatarstan, with its oil company "Tatneft", Gasprom, Rosneft, Rusal, Alrosa and other non-state actors. Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially cooperated with some of them in the coun-

tries and regions where they had business interests.

The case of Tatarstan was of particular interest. The 1990s saw the transformation of this formerly autonomous republic into a vibrant quasi-state without any military conflict with the Russian Federation. Already in 1990, the "Declaration on the State Sovereignty of the Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic" was adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the republic, proclaiming "Tatar state sovereignty" and establishing the "Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic - The Republic of Tatarstan". After the end of the USSR, according to some scholars, Tatarstan joined the list of post-Soviet quasi-states, "including passports, embassies and full control of its substantial oil industry" (Said 2007, p. 136). This is an exaggeration, but it is true that the republic positioned itself as an 'associated state" in its relationship with the Russian Federation, including its own citizenship. In 1994, Russia and Tatarstan signed a treaty, "On Delimitation of Jurisdictional Subjects and Mutual Delegation of Powers between Bodies of Public Authority of the Russian Federation and Bodies of Public Authority of the Republic of Tatarstan" and a few special agreements on oil industry. "Tatneft", a joint stock company with the government of Tatarstan as its major shareholder, established joint ventures with Kalmykia (one more former republic within the Russian Federation) and South Korea, started oil exploration and other businesses beyond the boundaries of the former Soviet Union. The federal government was never happy with the post-Soviet status of Tatarstan. In the 2000s, the legislation of the republic, including the constitution, was amended under the pressure from Moscow. A new "Treaty on Delimitation of Jurisdictional Subjects and Powers between Bodies of Public Authority of the Russian Federation and Bodies of Public Authority of the Republic of Tatarstan", valid for 10 years, was concluded in 2007. The ability of Tatarstan to pursue its own political agenda, including foreign and energy policy, was then reduced to a tolerable minimum.

# Russian Foreign Policy Since 2007: A New Trend

Russian foreign policy started to change by the end of the second Putin's presidency and continued during the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev. Many observers in the West saw February 2007, marked by Vladimir Putin's speech in Munich and his visit to the Middle East, as a watershed in Russian foreign policy. Ariel Cohen (2007) from the Heritage Foundation was one of those who described this shift as a rebirth of both Soviet and Russian imperial past.

To a great degree, contemporary Russian rhetoric has come full circle and resembles the Soviet agenda before President Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness) [...] Russia is following the Soviet model of opposing first the British and then the American presence in the Middle East by playing to anti-Western sentiment in the "street" and among the elites. This is

something that both Wilhelmine Germany and, later, Nazi Germany tried to do as well.

[...] The image of a new Cold War may be too simplistic to describe the emerging relationship with Russia. In fact, Russian foreign policy has a distinctive late 19th century czarist, post-Bismarckian tinge: muscular, arrogant, overestimating its own power, and underestimating the American adversary that it is busily trying to recreate. This policy is likely to become a self-fulfilling prophecy with dangerous consequences and a high price in treasure and ultimately in blood.

Cohen's description is worth attention primarily because his approach has become popular in the Western media. However, such views, mixing together two periods of Russian history as well as various allusions to the past of Germany, are contradictory and thus far from convincing. What remains, in Cohen's own words, is that "while it lacks the global reach of Soviet ideology and the Soviet Union's military muscle, Russian policy nonetheless limits Washington's freedom to maneuver".

By 2007, the relations between Russia and the West had been overshadowed by the events in former Yugoslavia and the Western liberation/occupation of Kosovo and its separation from Serbia. The importance of these events should not be exaggerated, but they did play a certain role in the transformation of Russian foreign policy. Cohen (2007) noticed that "Russia threatened to apply the precedent of Kosovo independence to recognize the independence of Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia" and "supported secessionist statelets seeking to undermine the sovereignty of Moldova and Georgia". The paradox was that Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia grew up as anti-secessionist entities within the former Soviet Union. Cohen also referred to an interview of Vladimir Putin (2007) with Al-Jazeera. When asked about his decision to invite Hamas officials to Moscow, the Russian President remarked that "Hamas won the election" and stressed that "it is better to work with people who have influence among their country's people and try to transform their position through negotiations than to pretend that they do not exist". Putin also confirmed that Russia had "very friendly relations" with the government as well as Hezbollah and other political groups in Lebanon. This position was apparently different from the earlier official state-to-state approach, but understandable in the context of Lebanon, with a special role of Hezbollah, and particularly Palestine. In both cases it would be infeasible to keep contacts with only one local actor.

The change in Russian foreign policy became more pronounced in 2008, when the Republic of Kosovo proclaimed its independence from Serbia. The International Court of Justice (2010) concluded that "the declaration of independence of 17 February 2008 did not violate general international law", because "general

international law contains no applicable prohibition of declarations of independence." Most Western states and several international organizations recognized Kosovo and established diplomatic relations with the new state. Russia saw this approach as rule-changing and a precedent for the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. After the "08/08/08" war with Georgia, President Dmitry Medvedev signed the decrees recognizing the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

[...] Russia continually displayed calm and patience. We repeatedly called for returning to the negotiating table and did not deviate from this position of ours even after the unilateral proclamation of Kosovo's independence. However our persistent proposals to the Georgian side to conclude agreements with Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the non-use of force remained unanswered. Regrettably, they were ignored also by NATO and even at the United Nations.

[...]It is our understanding that after what has happened in Tskhinval and what has been planned for Abkhazia they have the right to decide their destiny by themselves.

The Presidents of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, based on the results of the referendums conducted and on the decisions taken by the Parliaments of the two republics, appealed to Russia to recognize the state sovereignty of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Federation Council and the State Duma voted in support of those appeals.

A decision needs to be taken based on the situation on the ground. Considering the freely expressed will of the Ossetian and Abkhaz peoples and being guided by the provisions of the UN Charter, the 1970 Declaration on the Principles of International Law Governing Friendly Relations Between States, the CSCE Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and other fundamental international instruments, I signed Decrees on the recognition by the Russian Federation of South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence (Medvedev 2008).

The recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia did not mean that Russia was ready to recognize other de facto entities. E.g., recognition was not extended to Transnistria. Russia has supported the territorial integrity of Moldova, even though Russian forces have been stationed in the de facto entity.

More recently, Russian policy drifted towards more intensive contacts with would-be states and aspiring political movements. After Abkhazia and South Ossetia, no de facto entities were recognized, with the well-known exception of Crimea, but the contacts with such states and movements became admissible at the official level, from Azawad to Donetsk.

At the first sight, the contacts between Russian and self-proclaimed Azawad (in Northern Mali) might look like an isolated incident. Since 1960 Moscow has developed friendly relations with Mali. The Tuareg movement in the North used to be treated as "feudal" and "separatist". The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to use the same discourse in the beginning of the new phase of the conflict in 2012.

With the growing concern, Moscow is watching development of the affairs in the North and North-East of the Republic of Mali, where warfare between the illegal armed groups of separatists from the National Movement for Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA) and the governmental military forces continues since the mid of January this year.

Hostilities of MNLA fighters under separatist slogans jeopardize security and stability not only in Mali itself, but also in the vast Sahara-Sahel area in whole [...]

We vigorously condemn the violence and acts of atrocity of the fighters to the captured military men and civilians. We support the measures assumed by Mali government to keep the territorial integrity of the Malian state and to resist the international terrorism" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Press Release, 28 February 2012).

In April 2012 the MNLA proclaimed the independence of Azawad. Within a few months, this movement was defeated and expelled from the cities by the jihadist forces, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa and Ansar Dine. To save Mali from the jihadist menace, France started a military intervention in January 2013, joined by other European and West African states as well as the mission of the United Nations (MINUSMA). When the MNLA and Ansar Dine opened the political dialog with the Malian government, Russia saw both movements as "rebel groupings" and supported the dialog based on the inviolability of Mali's territory (see e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Press Release, 7 December 2012).

The situation suddenly changed in March 2014, when a delegation of the MNLA visited Moscow and met with Mikhail Bogdanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Special Presidential Representative for the Middle East. The level of the talks apparently came as a shock to the Malian leadership. The MNLA delegation had earlier visited Morocco where it was received by King Mohamed VI. Both Morocco and Russia confirmed their respect to the territorial integrity of Mali. However, the MNLA saw the talks in Marrakesh and Moscow as a diplomatic success for the cause of Azawad. From the West African perspective, this visit was explained as an attempt by the MNLA to find a patron state, taking

into account Moscow's reputation of "never letting its friends down" (Middle East Media Research Institute, 14 April 2014).

Russia has continued to support the political dialog in Mali without any open overtures to the supporters of Azawad's independence. Nevertheless, the MNLA visit to Moscow heralded a new approach in Russia's foreign policy. Mikhail Bogdanov continued his work as Special Presidential Representative for the Middle East and Africa, and there have been several public meetings between Russian officials and various delegations from Syria and Libya. These delegations represented the armed opposition to the governments which were recognized by Russia and the United Nations. Even taking into account the complexity of the situation in the Middle East, open official contacts with such forces may be seen as a novelty in Russian foreign policy.

The role of Russia in the Ukrainian "revolution of dignity" and the proclamation of several people's republics (Kharkov, Donetsk, Lugansk, Odessa) in 2014 attracted much more international attention than Russian contacts with nongovernmental forces in Africa and the Middle East. From the Western and post-revolutionary Ukrainian perspective, Russian policy towards Ukraine was identified with a hybrid war, sometimes in an exaggerated way: "The artificial nature of the separatism in Eastern Ukraine and instigation of conflict by Russia makes this type of conflict unprecedented in global practice" (Zarembo 2016, p. 4). The surviving people's republics in Donetsk and Lugansk were seen as a mere smokescreen for a direct Russian intervention. When the leadership of the Lugansk People's Republic invited United States Senator John McCain to visit and monitor local elections, Senator McCain (2015) reacted: "While I do not typically monitor the elections of imaginary countries, I am grateful for this unique invitation. If the so-called 'Luhansk People's Republic' is interested in democratic elections, I suggest its adherents put down their weapons and participate in the next round of elections in a free and united Ukraine." Interestingly, the Western field reports from Eastern Ukraine were often more balanced and took into account the local sources of the rebellion against the "revolution of dignity" (see e.g. Judah 2015). Russia recognized the short-lived independence of Crimea before the region joined the Russian Federation. On the contrary, regular contacts between Russian officials and the leadership of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics have not led to the recognition of these people's republics.

The case of Crimea has parallels with the early Soviet history, not to mention the short-lived republics of Central Lithuania or Hawai'i, even though it may be seen as unprecedented in the post-1991 history of Russia and Ukraine. The attitude towards Donetsk and Lugansk followed the post-2008 line of Russian foreign policy, in negation of the idea that the "guided independence" of Kosovo was unique and could not present a precedent for secession elsewhere in the world

(for the discussion on the subject see e.g. Summers 2011). Supporting the rebels, Russia did not break relations with Ukraine. This "hybrid" approach had been practiced by major Western powers such as the United Kingdom long before it entered Russian foreign policy.

# New Russian Pragmatism and the 2016 Concept of Russia's Foreign Policy

In 2016 a new Concept of Russia's Foreign Policy was adopted, marking a new step in the development of Russian approach to various international issues. According to this Concept, Russian foreign policy is firmly based on the norms of international law (focusing on the UN Charter) and the equal relations among states. At the same time, it is recognized that "assisting the establishment of the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia as modern democratic States, strengthening their international positions, and ensuring reliable security and socioeconomic recovery remains a priority for Russia" (The Russian Federation, 2016, clause 57).. Russia will continue to seek wider international recognition and guaranteed security for these two entities (seen as "modern democratic states"), as well as their socio-economic recovery There are no signs that Russia could renege on the post-2008 agreements with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the normalization of relations with Georgia will only be possible "with due consideration for the current political environment in the South Caucasus".. (The Russian Federation, 2016, clauses 2 and 59). As for "the Transnistrian issue", the Concept stresses the need to respect "the sovereignty, territorial integrity and neutral status of the Republic of Moldova" as well as a future "special status" for Transnistria (The Russian Federation, 2016, clause 58). There is no specific reference to the other post-Soviet wannabe states. These cases are only dealt with in the context of conflict regulation, be it "the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" or "the internal conflict in Ukraine" (The Russian Federation, 2016, clauses 56 and 58). Outside the "post-Soviet space", territorial integrity is mentioned several times in the Concept. In relation to the Middle East and North Africa, Russia "consistently promotes political and diplomatic settlement of conflicts in regional States while respecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity and the right to selfdetermination without outside interference"; as for Syria, "Russia supports the unity, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic as a secular, democratic and pluralistic State with all ethnic and religious groups living in peace and security and enjoying equal rights and opportunities" (The Russian Federation, 2016, clauses 92 and 93). The reference to self-determination is thus not concretized in the Concept, but it becomes clear that the application of this right is not unconditional. The guiding principles of Russian foreign policy are defined as "independence and sovereignty, pragmatism, transparency, predictability, a multidirectional approach and the commitment to pursue national priorities on a non-confrontational basis" (The Russian Federation, 2016, clause 3g).

Among these principles, the reference to pragmatism deserves a special attention. Taking into account current Moscow's policy towards internationally-recognized states as well as partly-recognized and other de facto political entities, we can conclude that Russia is still acting in the realm of states, but official and semi-official contacts with non-sovereign actors are also possible nowadays, especially when they fall into the sphere of Moscow's Realpolitik. New Russian pragmatism, which is not exactly new on the international stage, will give the Kremlin more space for business-like foreign policy.

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#### Article

# Russia's Pragmatist Approach to Energy Governance: Shifting with the Wind while Maintaining its Ground

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#### Abstract

This article analyzes Russia's energy policy in the 21st century to explore its seemingly dual roles in global governance. In the global governance of energy, Russia's strategy demonstrates a balancing act that aims to retain its great power reputation, while integrating it within the rising power initiatives. Russia's foreign policy attempts to accommodate the changes in global energy governance associated with a rise of new actors. In this paper, I will argue that Russia employs a pragmatic position that combines status quo strategy with revisionist elements. I will base this argument on Russia's participation in global and regional intergovernmental organizations designed to deal with the energy sector. The paper contributes to existing work on global governance by demonstrating the ability of a single power to navigate complex energy governance arrangements in pursuit of its objectives. Specifically, it illustrates Russia's ability to assume a dual-role – of a great power and a rising power - simultaneously in the current system of energy governance.

# Keywords

Energy Policy, Global Energy Governance, Intergovernmental Organizations, Power, Russia

#### Introduction

Russia can play a prominent role in global energy governance as it is one of the major powers on the energy market. The country is blessed with abundant energy resources. It has around 80 billion barrels of oil reserves and has the largest reserves of natural gas in the world with 1,688 trillion cubic feet based on the data for 2016 (EIA 2016). Russia is one of the largest energy producers in the world. It is the largest producer of crude oil and second-largest producer of natural gas (EIA 2016). Russia is the "largest energy supplier in the world" and is one of the largest energy-exporting nations (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation

2010, p. 23). These energy exports place Russia in a dominant position in the global energy trade. Russia's energy exports account for 12 percent of world's oil trade and 25 percent of natural gas trade (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010, p. 21). Although Russia is richly endowed in energy resources and is one of the major exporters, it does not guarantee its superior position in global energy governance.

Energy resources figure prominently in Russia's foreign policy. As the former president of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, pointedly suggested "[Russia's] future...depends on how active and sustained... [Russia's policy makers are] in the international arena, [and] in the energy cooperation sphere" (Kremlin 2009). Given the centrality of energy in Russia's economy, one begins to wonder what role does the country play in global energy governance? To answer this question, I examine Russia's participation in global and regional organizations that govern energy. I argue that Russia employs a pragmatist position that combines strategy of status quo with revisionist elements. Specifically, I propose that Russia can either support existing intergovernmental organizations or to develop alternative organizations to govern energy.

This paper contributes to the literature on global energy governance by analyzing the flexibility of established energy governance arrangements to respond to changing interests of individual actors. In doing so, I examine the strategies that Russia has adopted to energy governance at the global level. The first section of this article analyzes Russia's position in energy sector considering the changing energy market. The second section draws links between global energy governance and Russia's foreign energy policy. In the third and fourth sections the article investigates Russia's participation in global and regional organizations. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that in the field of energy governance, Russia has some flexibility in navigating established governance arrangements strategically to attain its goals by adopting a pragmatic approach to global governance.

# Russia's Position in Global Energy Governance

Russia appears to be one of the major powers, yet its position in the sphere of global governance is difficult to classify. Scholars have struggled to classify Russia in terms of its global influence. They have classified Russia as a major/great power (Tsygankov 2005; Haass 2008), a rising power (Armijo 2007; Schirm 2012), a re-emerging power (Macfarlane 2006), and a declining power (Umbach 2000). Although these categories serve as a useful analytical tool, they fail to reach a consensus about Russia's standing in global governance. Russia can also be described as a "state in search of itself" that seeks to "remain a power with global interest and global reach" (Mankoff 2009, p 11 and p 29). This description captures Russia's ambiguous role in global governance and foreshadows that Russia can play a dual

role in global energy governance.

In the energy sector, Russia can be considered as a constrained 'superpower'. Scholars analyzing Russia's position in the energy sector, often classify Russia as an "energy superpower" (Balzer 2005; Bozarovski & Bassin 2011). They propose that Russia may use energy as a tool to alter the distribution of power on a global scale and to strengthen Russia's political position (Balzer 2005; Cameron 2010; Bozarovski & Bassin 2011). Russia's leadership acknowledges that Russia is a "major energy power" (Kremlin 2016a). However, this "superpower" status is constrained by economic factors that prevent Russia from using energy as a tool to attain foreign policy objectives (Hurrell, 2006; Hancock 2007; Ortung and Overland 2011).

Since energy resources are finite and require investment to maintain production, Russia's ability to retain the status of "energy superpower" is dependent on the ability of the Russian state to buttress the development of the energy sector (Cameron 2010; Goldthau 2008). Furhermore, Russia's power in the energy sector is constrained by hydrocarbon prices. Scholars have noted that when hydrocarbon prices are high Russia can act as an "energy superpower" (Newnham 2011; Sevastyanov 2008). Ultimately, Russia's ability to act as an "energy superpower" is not feasible in a market space dominated by multiple actors that export energy (Rutland 2006). Russia is thus aware about the importance of integrating within global energy governance to navigate a complex and shifting energy market.

Energy markets are currently undergoing a transition in consumption patterns. Historically, Russia has developed close energy relations with Europe after they became united by a joint pipeline infrastructure in the 1960s. Since then, a complex network of gas and oil pipelines has led to deeper energy integration between Europe and Russia. Europe is the largest consumer of Russia's energy resources. Russia exported approximately 71 percent of its oil and around 90 percent of its gas to Europe in 2015 (EIA 2016). In comparison, Asia and Oceania have received around 29 percent of oil exports and around 10 percent of the natural gas exported from Russia in 2015 (EIA 2016). The numbers indicate a strong connection between Russia's energy sector and the European market. However, the demand for energy is shifting from Europe to Asia. European demand for energy is projected to decline in the future, while Asian demand for oil and gas is projected to grow at a rapid pace (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010). The shift in the dynamics of energy demand prompts Russia's energy corporations to integrate into both regions, which are advantageously neighbouring Russia.

To adjust to the shifting dynamics in global demand for energy, *Russia's Energy Strategy 2030* urges Russian energy corporations to diversify Russia's energy partners (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010, p 23). Although Eu-

ropean Union will remain the main consumer of Russia's energy, Russia should gradually increase its energy exports to Asia-Pacific to secure markets for its energy exports Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010). However, there will not be an abrupt shift in Russia's export destinations as the *Strategy* advises Russia to maintain "stable relations with...traditional consumers of energy resources" and to develop "equally stable relations...[with] new energy markets" (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010, pp 21-22).

The *Energy Strategy* forecasts that the Asia-Pacific region will account for 22 to 25 percent of Russian oil exports and 19 to 20 percent of natural gas exports by 2030 (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010, p 23). This is commonly referred to as a diversification policy that seeks to expand Russia's energy export markets. Diversification in export destinations should help Russia to cope with the instability on the global energy market, to enhance its position in the energy market, and to ensure its energy security (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010, p. 55). Energy security is commonly defined as "the availability of sufficient supplies at affordable prices" for the energy importing countries and as the "security of demand" for the energy-exporting countries (Yergin 2006, pp. 70-71). Energy security stands in the centre of Russia's diversification policy. A diversification in the composition of Russia's export destination will ultimately strengthen Russia's energy security and increase its power in two of the largest regional energy markets – the European Union and the Asia-Pacific.

Ultimately, Russia's energy policy reflects the dependence of the government's budget on the revenue generated by the sale of hydrocarbon resources. In 2015, almost 43 percent of Russia's budget was generated by the hydrocarbon sector (Russian Ministry of Finance 2016). Since Russia's economic development is dependent on export of hydrocarbon resources, the government incorporates energy considerations in foreign policy. To illustrate, Russian policy makers advocated for a reinterpretation of energy security concept that balances interests of the consumers and producers. At a meeting of the G8 energy ministers, Russian president, Vladimir Putin, proposed that energy security should be conceptualized as a "fair distribution of risks" among producers and consumers of energy to ensure energy security (Kremlin 2006a). This vision was adopted by the G8 leaders in Saint Petersburg (G8 2006). This example demonstrates that Russia's participation in global energy governance can serve to advance Russia's interests in the energy sector.

# Global Energy Governance and Russia's Energy Strategy

Russian policy makers attach a high degree of importance to Russia's membership and participation in international organizations that govern energy issues. Commenting on Russia's participation in global energy governance, the former

president of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, has argued that "[Russia] must not allow questions of energy cooperation, [and] energy talks to take place without...[Russian] participation" (Kremlin 2009). This quote illustrates that Russian policy-makers are interested to ensure Russia's participation at the governance table, where energy questions are discussed. By joining intergovernmental organizations states strengthen their market position, reduce economic and political risks, and promote common geo-strategic interests (Baccini, Lenzi, & Thurner 2013, pp. 1-2). Russian policy makers endorse Russia's participation in global energy governance and advocate that Russia should expand its cooperation with a range of international organizations (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010, p. 58). Russia's pragmatic cooperation with multiple intergovernmental organizations may improve Russia's market position in the energy sector and stimulate bilateral, regional, and international cooperation. Russia's approach to cooperation is however dependent on the current state of global energy governance.

Global energy governance is a relatively modern phenomenon. It was virtually non-existent prior to the 1970s because states treated energy as a sovereign matter and governed it unilaterally (van de Graff 2013, p. 46). As connections among energy consumers and producers began to grow with globalization, states realized that they will benefit from transnational energy governance (Sovacool & Florini 2009). Thus, unilateral governance mechanisms were replaced by global governance arrangements in the energy sector. These global governance arrangements include the "sum of laws, norms, policies, and institutions that define, constitute and mediate transborder relations" (Weiss & Thakur 2010, 31-32). As the definition suggests, global governance is a complex web of mechanisms that govern relations among different actors to ensure global stability.

To ensure global stability, multiple international organizations and actors strive to regulate energy collectively at the global level (Sovacool & Florini 2009, p. 5239). Global energy governance is characterized by a set of overlapping organizations that often act in uncoordinated and competitive manner (Lesage, Van de Graaf, & Westphal 2010, p. 51). In their discussion of the existing scholarly efforts to map global energy governance architecture, Van de Graaf and Colgan (2016) note that the number of organizations and governors in the energy sector ranges from 6 to 50, depending on "how wide the [analytical] net is cast" (p. 4). In this article, I focus predominantly on intergovernmental organizations, such as the International Energy Forum (IEF).

Intergovernmental organizations encapsulate institutional character of a historical period during which they were founded and may come under increasing pressure as actors' interests change or new actors gain power in the system. These organizations are encompassed within international regimes, which are defined

as "implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations" (Krasner 1982, p. 186). In the energy sector, we find "regime complexes", where institutions are overlapping and non-hierarchical (Raustiala and Victor 2004). Since the international regime governing energy is complex, states may use this complexity to their advantage. For example, states that are dissatisfied with the current regime may trigger a change in a given regime by triggering "institutional innovation" (Colgan, Keohane, & Van de Graaf 2012). Colgan, Keohane, & Van de Graaf (2012) outline three possible cases of institutional innovation: development of new institutions; inclusion of new members in existing organizations, and adaptation of the existing organizations (p 119). Institutional innovation is triggered when a state becomes dissatisfied with current governance arrangements.

States may become dissatisfied when external changes reconfigure their interests and agendas. Van de Graaf and Colgan (2016) identify three major external transitions in the current global energy market that served to redefine state's interests in the 21st century: climate change, geopolitical change, and volatile energy commodity markets (p. 2). While climate change and volatile commodity markets have led to important changes in global energy governance, this paper focuses only on geopolitical changes. Geopolitical changes are linked to the rise of the new energy consumers from developing countries and disintegration of the Soviet Union into independent states (Van de Graaf & Colgan 2016, p. 2). These changes revealed that the governance arrangements created by the key players in the 1970s are no longer able to support global energy security as new energy players are currently operating outside of the existing arrangements (Leverett 2010).

Geopolitical changes became even more prominent in the aftermath of Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2007/2008, which exposed weaknesses of the current governance arrangements. The GFC has created a window for change in the global governance as it triggered a power shift that has altered the composition and structure of international organizations (Best 2012; Narlikar 2010). It also produced alternative structures, ideas, and practices that challenged the laissez-faire policies adopted by advanced industrialized countries (Best 2012; Babb 2012; Kahler 2013). A shift in economic and political power from advanced industrialized economies to emerging ones is at the basis of transition in the current global energy governance architecture (Clapp & Helleiner 2012; De Graaff 2012; van Apeldoorn et al. 2012). As a result of these changes, global energy governance is in a period of flux.

This article builds on the notion of "institutional innovation" developed by Colgan, Keohane & Van de Graaf (2012) by tracing changes in Russia's strategy toward intergovernmental organizations designed to govern energy. As institutional

innovation occurs when the states are dissatisfied with the current system, it is not surprising that Russian government appears to seek new responses to global energy governance. In a speech at Saint Petersburg's International Economic Forum's Plenary Session, Russia's former president, Dmitry Medvedev, has noted that the post-GFC period has brought a "new reality" that led to a change of "economic models, financial architecture, technology and social institutions" (Kremlin 2010). In his speech, Medvedev highlighted that it was a "unique time" that Russian policy makers had to "seize...to build a modern, strong, and prosperous Russia, a Russia that will be one of the co-founders of the new global economic order and a full participant in the post-crisis world's collective political leadership" (Kremlin 2010). This moment has opened the door for a reform of the global architecture for energy governance.

The current institutional architecture that underlines global energy governance is very flexible as it lacks a world energy organizations that can enforce and oversee energy governance. In a complex and overlapping world of international organizations, individual states seek to steer intergovernmental institutions in a direction that follows their interests. As any other country in the system, Russia aspires to build a stronger energy governance framework. Russian policy makers are aware that the world energy governance is still incomplete. To illustrate, Vladimir Putin perceives weaknesses in the current interstate energy cooperation, which, as he argues, remains "up in the air" as there is "no...coordinating authority on a global platform" (Kremlin 2013a). Russian leadership is determined to close the gaps in energy governance. During a speech at the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, Putin has declared that "Russia is a consistent advocate of strengthening the energy sector's international legal framework" (Kremlin 2013b). Putin's proposals to strengthen energy governance have moved to calls for reform in 2014. Following the G20 Summit, Vladimir Putin has disclosed his support for "initiating [a] reform of international energy institutions" (Kremlin 2014a).

Ultimately, Russia's position in global energy governance is determined by its activities within intergovernmental organizations that govern energy. Russian policy makers have two options to pursue Russia's energy objectives globally. They can either integrate within existing organizations or to develop alternatives. It is also plausible that international organizations may adjust to incorporate Russia's energy goals. These options broadly resemble Colgan, Keohane & Van de Graaf's (2012) summary of institutional innovation. The first option upholds the status quo and is driven by Russia's great power rationale. By selecting this option, Russia becomes a member of the existing intergovernmental organizations or joins a dialogue with the members. If the integration process fails or does not provide Russia with adequate options, Russian policy makers can challenge the existing organizations and/or resort to development of alternative intergovernmental

organizations. In this case, Russia acts as a revisionist rising power in global energy governance. By choosing this path, Russia becomes a founding member of a new organization and develops alternative intuitional arrangements within it. The future of Russia's role in global energy governance will depend on its ability to balance its dual position within multiple organizations.

# Russia's Integration Within the Existing Arrangements

One of the strategies that Russia pursues in global energy governance is integration into multiple intergovernmental organizations regulating energy. The integration strategy is consistent with one of the options for institutional innovation explored by Colgan, Keohane, & Van de Graaf (2012). By participating in global and regional organizations, Russia establish a strong position in the "game of institutionalized hierarchy" (Hurell 2006). Russia's deeper integration into the global energy governance framework is advocated by the *Russian Energy Strategy* 2030 (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010, p 12).

Russia has successfully integrated into several global, energy regulating, intergovernmental organizations with multilateral membership. In some of these organizations, Russia acts as one of the great powers. For example, Russia is a member of several of the United Nations' bodies that deal with energy issues, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the UN's climate change initiatives under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In the UNFCC Russia took on Annex I Party commitments, that unite advanced, industrialized countries by a joint commitment to combat climate change. In the IAEA, Russia subscribes to the principles on safe use of nuclear energy in nuclear power plants. Beside the United Nations agencies, Russia has gained membership within other global and regional energy agencies, including the IEF, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Russia also supports IEF's JODI oil and JODI gas data initiative by contributing information about its oil and gas sector. In these organizations, Russia appears to take on the rules during the integration process and supports the status quo.

In other intergovernmental organizations, Russia's position is more flexible. While Russia integrates into these organizations and plays by the stipulated rules, it may use the mechanisms available within these associations to side on specific energy issues with the great powers or with the rising powers. An example of such dual behaviour can be observed in the WTO. In 2012, Russia became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) that provides countries with a set of tools to resolve issues related to the energy trade. After Russia became a WTO's member, it gained access to WTO's dispute settlement mechanisms. Russia resorted to this mechanism to resolve regional energy issues. In 2014, Russia filed a

complaint against the EU's "Third Energy Package" citing its inconsistency with the WTO's trade obligations (WTO 2016). Russia's complaint was backed by the rising powers, who support Russia's position on the EU's energy reforms. This litigation illustrates that Russia can use existing mechanisms to challenge interests of other great powers within intergovernmental organizations. Although this dispute is still at the early stages, it serves as a precedent for future negotiations on energy. Specifically, it illustrates that Russia's energy strategy is pragmatic and dual in nature.

# Internal Change of the Organizations to Accommodate a New Player

Russia's pragmatic stance to energy governance becomes even more evident when one analyzes internal changes within the existing organizations that seek to accommodate Russia's interest. This broadly falls under the notion of institutional adaptation advanced by Colgan, Keohane, & Van de Graaf (2012). In this case, intergovernmental organizations develop new practices to ensure that the actors dissatisfied with current governance structure maintain relations with the given organization. This occurs in the global and regional level.

At the global level, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) have developed outreach programmed to incorporate Russia into their dialogues. The OPEC represents the interests of oil-producing countries, while the IEA represents the interests of oil-consuming countries. Although Russia is not a member of either of the two organizations, it participates in the dialogue with both. Since Russia is an energy producer, it engages with the OPEC through the OPEC-Russia Energy Dialogue. The Dialogues were initiated in 2005 to stabilize markets, improve energy security, and facilitate exchange of information (OPEC 2016). Russia's cooperation with the IEA dates to 1994, when they agreed to advance common interests, including energy security, information exchange, and energy efficiency (IEA 2017). The dialogues provide Russia with a mechanism to exchange ideas and promote common goals. At the same time, the dialogues do not bind Russia to follow the mandates of these organizations. Since Russia is not bound by the mandates of the OPEC and the IEA, it has a degree of flexibility in its cooperation with these organizations.

Similarly, Russia can promote internal change within the regional organizations. For instance, Russia may choose to collaborate with existing regional organizations to develop new rules. An illustrative example is Russia's collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) organization. Russia's collaboration with APEC promotes joint investment in energy infrastructure and supports the development of a common energy market. Since regional organizations may prove to be fundamental in laying down the ground rules for regional energy

collaboration, Russia seeks to ensure that its interests are incorporated into the APEC's framework. For instance, Vladimir Putin proposed that APEC can be used to develop "common 'rules of the game' in trade and economic sphere" and may work as a platform to design "new regional architecture" for economic governance (Kremlin 2014c). Given that regional organizations will have an important role in reshaping regional energy governance, their activities will be reshaped by actors in pursuit of their interests.

### Russia's search for alternatives

A failure to integrate into regional or global intergovernmental organizations may act as an incentive for Russia to revise existing global energy governance arrangements. While Russia can opt for status quo and support existing arrangements, it may also resort to developing alternative governance institutions. This is consistent with the third possibility of institutional innovation, namely development of new organizations by powerful actors in the system (Colgan, Keohane, & Van de Graaf 2012). There is evidence that Russia is developing new intergovernmental organizations, where it plays a dominant position (Armijo 2007). These new institutions may challenge existing organizations. In this case, Russia may act as a revisionist rising power in global energy governance by forming alternative institutional arrangements.

Institutional adaptation may fall short of satisfying the interests of involved actors, who may choose to develop alternative governance arrangements. As noted earlier, Russia takes part in the IEA's and OPEC's dialogues, yet these dialogues to not constrain Russia from creating alternative governance arrangements in the hydrocarbon sector. Russia was a founding member of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) as an alternative to the OPEC and the IEA. The GECF is a new global organization that emerged in 2001 to govern natural gas. Russian officials support the forum's activities. At the Second Summit of the GECF, Vladimir Putin has stressed the importance of collaboration among the gas producers to "protect gas exporting countries' interests to strengthen the competitiveness of gas" (Kremlin 2013c). Putin envisions that this cooperation can increase energy security of suppliers by stabilizing global prices, providing information, and developing infrastructure (Kremlin 2013c). Ultimately, the goal of the GECF is to foster a collaborative environment among the producers to increase their market power. At a media conference, Putin has revealed that collaboration among the GECF members can make the energy industry "sustainable and predictable" by developing the "rules of the game" that guarantee energy security (Kremlin 2013d). Thus, new organizations can be used to strengthen energy governance.

Alternative governance arrangements are often a response to a failed integration into the intergovernmental organizations. A failure to integrate into intergovern-

mental organizations may pressure Russia to challenge the existing governance arrangements. Russia has joined the discussions on the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) in 1991. The ECT promotes interstate collaboration in the energy sector including trade, transit, and investment. Although Russia has signed the Energy Charter in 1991, it decided not to ratify the Charter. The ratification process was not in Russia's interest as it would have undermined Russia's transit monopoly and committed Russia to following the rules that did not fit with its agenda (Westphal 2006). The ECT's framework that promotes liberalization of the energy market does not fit well with Russia's state capitalist one, thus leading to a rift in governance arrangements (Romanova 2014). Thus, Russia has withdrawn from the ECT in 2009 and is searching for the alternative governance arrangements.

Another case of failed integration occurred when Russia lost its seat at the Group of 7/8 (G7/8) table. Russia was an active member of the G7/8, which is a group led by the great powers to regulate global political and economic issues. The G7 formed in 1975 and invited Russia to participate in its dialogue in 1997. Since then, Russia was an active member in the G8 until its suspension from the group in 2014. During the period of its membership within the G8, Russia actively championed new energy governance initiatives. During the G8 Summit in Saint Petersburg in 2006, Russia advanced a policy that combined interests of oil producing and consuming countries. Russia's agenda for that meeting, as summarized by Putin during an interview, sought to promote "international energy security" by ensuring a "just distribution of risks" among producers and consumers (Kremlin 2006a). After leaving the G7/G8, Russia had to find alternative venues to discuss energy governance.

Russia's souring relations with the ECT and the G7/G8 has occurred at a time of larger transition in the energy market. Given that the relationship between Russia and Europe is undergoing a period of transition, the outcome of which is hard to determine, Russia has turned to Asia in a pursuit of energy diversification. Energy diversification is a goal of Russia's national energy policy since the 2000s (Shadrina 2016). Russia's switch to the Asian market is motivated by the domestic energy policy that seeks to develop hydrocarbon resources located in the Far East and East Siberia. This move will support Russia's economic and regional development. Russia's Pivot to Asia is accompanied by its deeper integration within the regional organizations that govern energy in the region. Regional initiatives to govern energy are gaining importance in Russia's energy strategy. As the global demand for energy is switching to the Asia-Pacific region, Russia is likely to continue pursuing integration within the regional organizations that govern energy issues. Russia's stronger relations with China "allows Russia to maintain its role as 'great power'" (Hancock 2007).

Russia took this opportunity to develop new outlets for energy collaboration in

Asia. At the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Russia has led the development of new outlets for a joint energy governance. Since its founding in 2001, the SCO's activities focused on the security agenda of its members. Russia was among the first to advocate for the formation of an energy organization within the SCO framework. During a speech at the SCO's meeting in Shanghai in 2006, Vladimir Putin has indicated his support for the "energy club" within the SCO to coordinate regional energy issues among the members (Kremlin 2006b). Economic interests appear to be the driving force for this new organization. Putin anticipates that energy cooperation between the SCO members will act as "a powerful stimulus for regional projects" and will promote regional energy integration (Kremlin 2007). The member countries of the SCO agreed with Putin's proposal and established an energy club to promote regional cooperation on energy issues in 2007 (De Haass 2010). Although the club is fully operational today, its effectiveness in promoting regional energy cooperation remains to be tested. Seeking to stimulate the club's activities, Putin has advised that the club should take on "concrete tasks and objectives" by navigating the regional energy sector (Kremlin 2015a).

Russia is also becoming more involved in the BRICS's led energy initiatives. Russia advocates for an active collaboration in the energy sector amongst the BRICS countries. BRICS begun discussing energy issues during the Yekaterinburg Summit in 2009. During the summit the BRICS agreed to collaborate in the energy sector to ensure energy security, energy efficiency, and support energy-related investment (BRICS information Centre 2008, clauses 8 and 9). In a speech at the BRICS meeting, Vladimir Putin has declared that BRICS have developed "common positions" on global governance, including development, finance, and economy (Kremlin 2016b). In his speeches, Putin supports a development of a BRICS-led Energy Association and an International Centre for Energy Studies and a Fuel Reserve Bank (Kremlin 2014b; Kremlin 2015b). Negotiations about the BRICS-led energy agency began in 2012. Energy became an important topic of discussion in the BRICS summits. It is placed firmly in the upcoming agenda of the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy through 2020 (Kremlin 2015b). The goal is to promote energy security and develop "new instruments and new institutes to [support] trade [in] energy resources" (Kremlin 2014b).

Along with the other BRICS countries, Russia participated in the development of the New Development Bank (NDB). The New Development Bank was formed in 2014. The bank has a capital of \$100 billion USD to provide resources for infrastructure and sustainable development (New Development Bank 2016). The resources could be used to circumvent established donor agencies and create an alternative development structure (Khanna 2014). The bank has committed to provide funds for projects in renewable energy to the BRICS countries. Some

of the NDB's commitments include the following: \$300 million of USD to the Brazil's Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Economic e Social; \$250 million of USD to India's Canara Bank; and \$180 million for South Africa's Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd (Bloomberg 2016). These financial commitments are meant to support renewable energy in the BRICS countries. The Bank can play an alternative to the existing lenders, however its role is still to be determined.

New directions for international cooperation can be forged in the energy sector. Russia's *Energy Strategy* proposes that Russian should work toward a "united European-Russian-Asian energy area" (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010, p 58). However, the *Strategy* does not specify how this new cross-regional energy relations will be governed. It is plausible that new intergovernmental organizations may emerge to govern energy relations between Europe, Russia, and Asia. These new organizations may be supported by the "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) strategy led by China. The OBOR strategy aims to promote economic ties in Eurasia and is backed by Chinese finance via the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund. The finances can be used to support stronger institutional linkages in the energy sector to promote future energy collaboration.

#### Conclusion

Global energy governance is currently undergoing substantial changes driven by shifting interests of large energy consuming and producing nations. The GFC and the rise of new energy consumers in the face of China and India have acted as a stimulus for change in global governance. The geopolitical changes that have redefined the distribution of power have stimulated change in international organizations that govern energy. Russia appears to play an important role in reshaping existing governance arrangements. Russia's position in global energy governance is partially determined by abundant energy reserves and a favorable geography. It is conveniently located close to the largest energy consuming nations in Europe and Asia. Russia's role in global energy governance is partially determined by its internal energy policy. As Russia's economy is dependent on the hydrocarbon revenue, it is invested in supporting a reliable global energy governance.

Russia is forced to adjust to the changing governance dynamics in a pragmatic manner to retain its influence in the energy sector. Russia's strategy in global energy governance is driven by two forces integration and development of alternatives. Russia's decision to integrate to the existing governance arrangements signals that it aspires to be a status quo power. As a status quo power, Russia is interested to cooperate with other great powers in reinforcing existing governance arrangements in the energy sector. However, when these arrangements fail, Russia turns to alternative options. Russia may thus act as a revisionist power in energy

governance by creating alterative intergovernmental organizations that oversee energy. In its attempt to create alternatives, Russia seeks to cultivate relationships with the rising powers. As Russia's energy markets are reorienting to Asia, Russia's integration with emerging powers will most likely continue to grow and reshape Russia's position in global energy governance. Russia's future power in the energy sector will be determined by its ability to integrate firmly within multiple organizations that will govern energy markets. Russia's ability to fit within the two power structures simultaneously exposes Russia's dual role in global energy governance. This duality allows Russia to maintain its ground in the existing governance arrangements, while it shifts with the wind of changes and creates alternative energy organizations.

Russia's activities in global energy governance may have implications for other actors in the global system. For the rising powers, Russia's search for alternatives may present an opportunity to engage in parallel governance arrangements. Rising powers may benefit from new governance outlets that are created to regulate energy issues and may increase their leverage in negotiations. On the other hand, established powers may be prompted to renegotiate existing governance arrangements in the energy sectors. Since alternative and parallel governance arrangements may undermine existing intuitional structures, international organizations may be required to expand their functions and membership to accommodate interests of the rising powers. Ultimately, it appears as though global energy governance is undergoing a slow transition in its attempt to accommodate the diverse needs of multiple states.

#### Bio

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#### Article

# Bound to Change: German Foreign Policy in the Networked Order

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#### Abstract

What are the primary sources of power in the evolving international order? This paper argues that governments of rising regional powers increasingly engage in informal advocacy, mediation and substitution networks to pursue their interests in the multipolar system. It provides empirical evidence for this claim by illustrating how Germany, described by many as Europe's current hegemon, entered or established multilateral networks to ameliorate its negotiation position. As one of the world's most connected states, Germany found itself structurally bound to participating in and seeking to shape multiple informal institutions. Not only due to it's lack of military power, Germany is thus likely to evolve into a state whose foreign policy effectiveness depends to a relatively large degree on its 'network power'. The pecularities of its political system, its European socialization and increasing international demands for German diplomatic leadership present conducive conditions for Berlin to play a protagonist role in the networked world order.

# **Keywords**

International Order, Foreign Policy Networks, German Foreign Policy, Negotiations, G20

#### Introduction

Continuity has been the key feature of German foreign policy for the last 60 years. Or as former foreign minister Klaus Kinkel put it, the most important foreign policy principles are "continuity, continuity, and continuity!" (Cit. in Sandschneider 2012, 5). This, above party line consensus, stands for the credibility, predictability and responsibility of the Federal Republic. Since then, in principle, all governments have referred to the continuity of the following threefold consensus

as the one and only alternative: (1) institutionalized multilateralism of a Europeanized Germany and embeddedness in the transatlantic alliance; (2) self-restraint in the pursuit of national interests, no unilateralism and no power projection; and (3) a civilian focus of foreign policy and the abandonment of military instruments to the greatest possible extent.

Today, the validity of many elements of this consensus is being challenged, and German foreign policy is adapting to the profound transformation of the global order. First, shifts of relative capabilities generated new power poles in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Second, the patterns of behavior and means of foreign policy enactment have changed dramatically. In the past decade, change and innovation in the meshwork of global politics have been induced through formal and informal sites of negotiation and by the establishment of intergovernmental clubs and foreign policy networks. Therefore, third, the procedural culture of international relations has fundamentally changed. The diplomatic culture of the networked world order is marked by an informal multilateralism, through which situational, policy-specific coalitions determine the outcomes of global bargains. And as a consequence of the latter, foreign policy is not exclusively made by diplomats anymore. The effects of globalization assign international dimensions to most issue areas and government departments.

The most visible efforts in adapting German foreign policy to these challenges can be seen in a range of strategy papers for different world regions (Asia, Latin America, and Africa) and diverse internationalizing policies (culture, science, technology and education). These concepts have been developed over the last few years in collaboration among multiple ministries and external experts. In 2013, the then-head of the Federal Foreign Office's policy planning staff highlighted the networking function of the ministry, enabling not only international linkages but also its role as a domestic coordination platform "providing a center in which various issue-specific policies would be bundled and integrated into a coherent foreign policy" (Bagger 2013). In 2015, then German foreign minister Steinmeier contended that while Germany's foreign policy would maintain its basic tenets such as the strong transatlantic alliance and a close German-French partnership within a united Europe, continuity would not suffice to adapt to key challenges of "crisis management, the changing global order, and our [German] position within Europe" (Steinmeier 2015). At the technical level, the Foreign Office established a new Dialogue and Information System (DILGIS) to promote a better internal coordination of different issue-specific cooperation projects with rising powers.

In addition, the Foreign Office coordinated consultations among 13 government departments that led to the announcement of a new approach toward the evolving international order in 2012. In that strategy paper entitled "Shaping Globalization: Expanding Partnerships, Sharing Responsibility" the German government

reaffirms the coordinates of its foreign policy: "Freedom and human rights, democracy and the rule of law, peace and security, prosperity and sustainable development, strong bilateral relations and effective multilateralism are the principles we seek to uphold when defining our goals" (Federal Foreign Office 2012, 6). In a nutshell, the government document heralds the continuity of these principles but a shift in approach. For instance, not only does it attempt to connect civilian identity with shifting international politics, it also responds to increasing expectations to take more global responsibility. The assumption is that, over time, more states and issues will become interconnected in networks of mutual dependence defined by accepted standards of behavior and shared expectations of peaceful change. Germany has initiated the founding of the Group of 20 (G20), has been among the largest donors to budgets of the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN), chaired the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2016, and became involved in institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Yet, beyond this engagement in International Organizations (IO) and international clubs, Berlin's activities in interstate networks arguably make the key difference for its future ability in shaping the global order.

How can states such as Germany which exhibit relatively limited material resources impact the multipolar global order? This article approaches the question in two steps. Its first part develops the concept of 'network power' and discusses its relative advantage for understanding the changes in Germany's evolving foreign policy approach. The second part illustrates the concept's utility by examining the shape and consequences of Germany's recent engagement in mediation, advocacy, and substitution networks. It concludes that the case of Germany demonstrates how a rising power with relatively limited material resources can exploit foreign policy networks to garner international legitimacy and bargaining power. Consecutive German governments in the 2000s have focused on interest-driven intergovernmental groups to pursue international goals. Both domestic constraints to use other power resources as well as the increasing importance of inter-state networks have facilitated this strategic choice, and brought Germany overall in a relatively favorable position to project its power at a global scale.

## German Power in the Shifting Order: A Conceptual Framework

Thinking about reunified Germany's role in this shifting order has to start with its positioning in the global hierarchy of power. A structural account assumes that relative power resources set limits on state action before choice is driven by domestic variables or the constraints imposed by international institutions and, consequently, that foreign policy strategies must be consistent with the opportunities afforded by the international system (Zakaria 1992; Sperling 2001).

A short glance at Berlin's material capabilities shows relatively mediocre results. In terms of military resources, it operates no nuclear capabilities and has been reducing conventional-armament expenditure for the last twenty years, a trend that was only reversed in 2015 when defense minister Ursula von der Leyen announced that the Bundeswehr's overall budget and in particular spending on equipment and maintenance would be increased (Braw 2016). This trend will continue, particularly since the Trump administration stated at the February 2017 NATO summit that Washington's commitments in Europe will depend on the increase of defense spending by European NATO allies. This message delivered by Defense Secretary Mattis was directed mainly to Berlin, as Europe's biggest economy is still far from spending the agreed 2 percent of its GDP on defense.

Even though even though the merits of its often-praised and indeed successful export economy are based on a sound industrial fundament and relatively balanced public finances, this economic success story might be short-lived. Because the prospects of Germany's demographic shrinkage – in sharp contrast to demographic developments in India, Brazil and other rising economies – will likely reduce the German share of the global economy in the medium term. Therefore, even though its hard power deficiencies do not hinder Berlin to be one of the biggest contributors to the UN budget, Germany's classification as a great power largely lacks material substance (Schöllgen 2000; Gujer 2007).

Despite its limited material capabilities, Germany is facing growing external expectations to play a more active and a more robust international role. European observers consider Germany an "indispensable power" (Ash 2011). Public opinion attests to Germany's positive image, which according to a global survey of 16.000 people is perceived as the 'best country' ranked by global performance in areas such as entrepreneurship, cultural influence, business-friendly policies and economic progress (US News 2016). Its leader, Chancellor Angela Merkel, is perceived as the most trusted national leader on handling domestic and international affairs according to a study by Harvard University's Kennedy School and the 'Person of the Year 2015' according to Time Magazine (Saich 2014; Gibbs 2015). In 2011, then Polish foreign minister Radosław Sikorski reminded Berlin of its special responsibility in overcoming the European debt crisis, stating that he "fear[ed] Germany's power less than her inactivity" (Sikorski 2011; for a recent summary of the discussion on Germany's leadership in Europe, see Matthijs 2016). Moreover, Israeli deputy foreign minister Daniel Ayalon emphasized Germany's crucial role in the nuclear negotiations with Iran, demanding that Germany influences European states that import Iranian oil. None of those voices is suspect to argue against the background of historical amnesia. These positive perceptions and expectations reflect and increase the legitimacy of German foreign policy.

Legitimacy and confidence of others are ideational capabilities that impact the global power hierarchy (Nicholson 2015). The sources of Berlin's international recognition can be subsumed to the term "leading by example." Germany's ideational resources consist of representing general and widely shared values (such as multilateralism, democracy, and human rights) on the one hand, and its more specific and partly unique merits (coming to terms with its past, social market economy, cutting edge in green economy, industrial innovation, responsible budgetary policies and smart crisis management) on the other hand. Another example is Berlin's nonnuclear power status, which makes it more credible in lobbying for nonproliferation. Moreover, Germany's nuclear restraint legitimizes its claim for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in accordance with the argument that nonnuclear actors should also be represented in global security policy making.

In view of the superior military capabilities of the United Kingdom and France, a compilation of relative material and ideational resources still reflects a multipolar European system.<sup>1</sup> In fact, as Nicholson poignantly argues, while Germany has successfully expanded its 'soft power' capabilities, its government still has to narrow the gap between the hype about its might and actual foreign policy outcomes (Nicholson 2015). It is therefore surprising and seemingly inappropriate to describe Germany as Europe's new hegemon – even if the term "hegemon" is tempered with attributes like "reluctant" and "overstrained" (Paterson 2011; Kleine-Brockhoff and Maull 2011). To explain this puzzling contradiction between ascribed roles and relative power status, an analysis of how power in general, and German influence in particular, is produced and projected in the multipolar order is needed. In this regard, we will argue in the following that the relative weight of different power types (e.g., material, ideational and institutional) is shifting in favor of those resources Berlin has at its disposal.

The increasing interdependence of states in dealing with the structural deficits of the global financial order and global climate issues reduces the relative significance of military capabilities in global politics. High levels of economic interdependence and, in particular, high expectations of future trade will foster peace (Copeland 1996). The likelihood of great-power wars in the upcoming multipolar order is low because the existing international order is more open, consensual, and rule-based than past international orders ever were. Thus, from the perspective of rising powers, it is easier to join and harder to overturn because they can gradually rise up through the hierarchies of international institutions – especially as the United States has not threatened the vital interests of rising powers (Iran is not considered part of this category) (Ikenberry and Wright 2008). From the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This is illustrated, for example, in surveys on systemic power concentration in Europe in 1985 and 1995 (Sperling 1999, 396–97)

perspective of the United States, it is also advisable to try to reform and consolidate formal institutions, thus enabling them to persist "after hegemony," while also reflecting its own interests and values (Keohane 1984). Both causalities are not applicable to declining powers such as the Russian Federation, which can be expected to produce limited conflicts attempting to maintain at least parts of its former sphere of influence.

From a global perspective, the case of Russia demonstrates that military capabilities are still important, foremost in contributing to prevent great¬-power wars as vehicles of change. The distinct military supremacy of the United States would make it potentially very costly for any single great power or great-power alliance to take a stand against the dominant military power. In addition, because of the possession of nuclear weapons by all established (and some rising) powers, the violent redistribution of power might well be expected to be a zero-sum game. In short, change in the twenty-first century will not come about by military alliance building and great-power wars. Rather, it will be expressed through three parallel processes: (1) the gradual reform, if possible, of outdated formal institutions; (2) the subtle decrease of their significance if they prove to be resistant to reform; and (3) the emergence of network patterns resultant from the strategies and behaviors of state actors who have become discontent with the formalized status quo of the international system (Flemes 2013, 1020).

Against this global background, some attempts to conceptualize German power seem to be more promising than others. The central power approach stresses Germany's role as Europe's most populated country in its geographical center, its bordering of nine states and its projection of power toward Eastern Europe (Volgy and Schwarz 1994; Baumann 2007). Besides its regional focus, the concept overlooks Germany's prospective demographic development and stresses geographic variables that have lost ground in the course of economic, social and media globalization. Most importantly, the term "central power" wrongly suggests a high level of power concentration – as if Europe is marked by a unipolar structure. The trading power concept mono-causally focuses on economic resources and strategies (Rosecrance 1986; Staack, n.d.). Consequently, it also fails to provide an appropriate framework for analysing the interdependence of diverse global issue areas such as transnational terrorism, climate change and global health.

Other conceptualizations of power are more in line with the peculiar composition of German foreign policy resources as well as with the features of the shifting world order. First, the soft power approach is focusing on moral and intellectual leadership and, in particular on co-optive power, which is the ability to shape what others want (Nye 1990; 2004). Co-optive power rests on the attractiveness of one's culture and values. Culture and values are not only projected by the German government, but also by nongovernmental organizations such as German

political foundations, the Goethe Institute, and the German Academic Exchange Service.

Second, the conceptual frameworks of middle and civilian powers promise a great deal of explanatory power for German foreign policy. The overriding goal of middle powers is the creation of global rules and international consensus. Accordingly, middle powers' foreign policy objectives overlap with the "civilian ends" of foreign policy, such as responsibility for the global environment and the diffusion of equality and justice (Duchêne 1973; Maull 1990). These are "milieu goals" rather than "possession goals," to use Arnold Wolfers' distinction - the latter further the national interest, while the former aim to shape the environment in which the state operates (Wolfers 1962, 73-74). Although, milieu goals may only be a means of achieving possession goals, they are also goals that transcend the national interest and are shared widely. In other words, a sense of "global responsibility" is present in the case of a middle power (Schoeman 2003, 351; For a critical view on the concept's utility to account for Germany's future foreign policy agenda, see Kappel 2014, 348-49). According to the behavioral definition, middle powers pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, tend to seek compromise positions in international disputes, and embrace notions of "good international citizenship" to guide diplomacy (Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal 1991, 19).

Third, network power is a subcategory of institutional power focusing on how states project power through interest-driven foreign policy groupings characterized by the cooperative, repeated and enduring interactions among its member states (Katzenstein and Shiraishi 1997). Foreign policy networks lack a legitimate organizational authority to arbitrate and resolve internal disputes. Network power increases with the location at the crossroads of various foreign policy networks, such as mediation, advocacy and substitution networks (Flemes 2013). In the current order, these comparative advantages increase not only with the number of network memberships, but also with the dissimilarity (clubs of established powers, emerging powers, developing countries and clubs of mixed membership) and the looseness of the different foreign policy networks. What ultimately governs international relations is not states, but the connectivity to which states are able to agree (Karp 2005, 71).

Foreign policy networks represent a specific mode of international interaction, which is grounded in three principles: (1) networks' member states are mutually dependent; (2) the ties between member states can serve as channels for the transmission of both material and nonmaterial products; and (3) persistent patterns of association among member states create structures that can define, enable or restrict their foreign policy behavior (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery 2006). Hence, network power that is most pronounced in advocacy networks is a product of the repeated experiences of cooperation and shared learning processes among

network partners, on the one hand, and comparatively greater reliability in the actions of and more familiarity with the policy-specific interests and strategies of their peers, on the other.

Against the conceptual background of co-optive, middle and network power, German foreign policy change is detected in the following by analyzing shifts and adaptations along one antithetic dimension that has been predominantly marked by continuity over the last six decades, namely the shift from a focus on institutionalized organizations toward a stronger engagement in intergovernmental networks. A complex interplay of external and domestic influence factors is conditioning the processes of change in this field, which constitutes one element of a broader reorientation of Germany's foreign policy.

## New Multilateral Deal: From Institutions to Networks

The global trend of increasing bilateralism applies to German foreign policy as well. And the old leitmotiv of cooperation through durable and institutionalized organizations is losing ground. One of the key elements of the civilian power concept refers to the willingness to develop supranational structures to address critical issues of international management (Maull 1990, 93; see also Rosecrance 1986 on trading states). Still, it is argued that "Germany must transfer sovereignty to be able to exert influence", whereas others plead for a German multilateralism that is more flexible (Kleine–Brockhoff and Maull 2011, 60; Sandschneider 2012, 8). The latter view is more instrumental in face of the decreasing significance of reform-resistant institutions that will potentially be challenged by intergovernmental network patterns in the middle-term.

From a global perspective, the paradigm of supra-nationalism always has been highly contested and the changing features of the global order reinforce this tendency. Against the background of globalization in general and the internationalization of formerly domestic policies in particular, the predominant majority of states are not only driven by their national interests, but also increasingly by domestic political calculation. This is not only because of the aforementioned reduced degree of elite autonomy in view of a more critical public, but also because the foreign policy elite itself is expanding with more diverse interests. Therefore, the challenge consists in pursuing national interests by seeking pragmatic solutions for emerging problems in repeated and punctual bargains.

The global system is indicative of the way being paved back to Westphalia (that is if it had ever actually been abandoned). This process is being spearheaded by China, Russia, India and Brazil, who are staunch guardians of the principle of national sovereignty – not least because of their national weaknesses and territorial vulnerabilities (i.e., Tibet, Chechnya, Kashmir and the Amazon). The rising

powers as well as the United States avoid institutionalized binding, let alone supranational treaties. Just as one cannot be a federalist on one's own, one cannot be a supranational institutionalist on one's own either.

In this setting Germany seems to follow a resocialization path in power-political terms as it seeks more power within multilateral institutions like the UNSC, while becoming less willing to transfer sovereignty to them (Hellmann 2004; Kundnani 2011, 35). The German claim to permanent representation in the UNSC gives direction to a new multilateral deal given that nondiscrimination and the indivisibility of rights and duties lie at the heart of orthodox multilateralism (Ruggie 1994). Undermining these principles instead of at least lobbying for a European seat reflects the modus operandi of realpolitik as alien to civilian power.

Instead of a European initiative, Germany preferred to channel its candidacy through an intergovernmental network based on common interests. The G4 lobby with Brazil, India and Japan mainly aims to improve its members' positions in the international power hierarchy, but bases its claim on a civilian power discourse that advocates good global citizenship, solidarity and the diffusion of equality and justice.

The blueprint of network strategies has been delivered by Brazil, China, India, and South Africa. Their approach is reflected in their omnipresence on the global stage in flexible coalitions (e.g., BRICS, IBSA and BASIC), all of which are characterized by a low degree of institutionalization (G3, G5 and O5 of the Heiligendamm process). This network strategy guarantees a maximum of national sovereignty, flexibility and independence to the rising powers' foreign-policy makers. The soft balancing behavior of those state actors discontented with the status quo institutions has brought forth an incremental reform of the international order. One of the most fundamental changes induced by these innovators has been a change in the procedural culture of international relations. What has consequently emerged is a zeitgeist of multilateral informality (Flemes 2013, 1022).

The BRICS format demonstrated how establishing alternative platforms impacts global institutions pushing for the reform of global financial institutions. At the first summit in Russia in 2009, the then BRIC countries advocated for a reform of the IMF voting quota system. In 2010 at the G20 meeting in South Korea the finance ministers and central bank governors of the G20 agreed on a shift in country representation at the IMF of six percent in favor of dynamic emerging markets, which moved the BRIC countries up to be among the top ten shareholders of the IMF.

In comparison with the BRICS states, Berlin's network diplomacy in both number and protagonism of promoted global foreign policy networks is still under-

developed, though evolving. The new playing fields of German foreign policy can be distinguished in mediation, advocacy and substitution networks (Flemes 2013, 1023–27).

First, mediation networks such as the Middle East Quartet and the Six-Party Talks on North Korea tackle global security issues. The established great powers have so far successfully defended these last exclusive domains of high politics. However, the inclusion of Germany in the P5-plus-1 group on the Iranian nuclear issue portends the demise of these prerogatives. The P5-plus-1 exemplifies how mediation networks can successfully downgrade global security threats. Most importantly, Germany played a key role in promoting mediation networks in order to resolve the Ukraine crisis, respectively the conflict between Kiev and Moscow. Foreign minister Steinmeier started a trilateral initiative with his French and Polish colleagues to stop violence at the Maidan in February 2014. Another example is the OSCE roundtable format chaired by German Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger to incent the dialogue between the parties of the Eastern Ukrainian conflict (Nüstling 2014). In general, the government of Chancellor Merkel conducted the European reactions to President Putin's Ukraine policies and determined the rhythm of international sanctions against Russia. Starting by moderating the EU's position after the shooting of flight MH17 in July 2014, Angela Merkel changed her tone in a speech after a confidential bilateral talk with Vladimir Putin at the G20 summit in Brisbane. She accused the Russian President of breaking international law and endangering peace in Europe by destabilizing not only Ukraine, but also Georgia, Moldavia and potentially Serbia (FAZ 2014).

Second, advocacy networks such as the G4 are foreign policy networks among peers linked by common interests in global politics. The origins of such networks primarily stem from soft balancing coalitions; their membership consists mainly of non-status-quo powers. And third, substitution networks as the G20 are the product of the systematic pressures generated by rising powers. They have a mixed membership of established and rising powers and claim to be universally representative. Substitution networks have as their aim the replacement of formal institutions.

The competitive advantages of network powers arise, at least in part, from their privileged access to information. The more network links state actors build, the more powerful and autonomous they will potentially be (Slaughter 2009, 112). In addition, the experiences of cooperation and shared learning processes among network powers allow them to relate to each other on the basis of greater credibility and predictability in their reciprocal behavior. These comparative advantages are most pronounced – and the position of the broker state is most beneficial and influential – when only the actor can connect several clusters of states and resolve interconnected problems of multilateral coordination.

Germany has joined the foreign policy networks of both established and rising powers. Through the G4 it maintains "special relationships" with Brazil and India, and through the G8 Berlin regularly coordinates its global policies with the established great powers. The network analysis perspective suggests that midlevel, open and connected powers like Germany and the IBSA states in particular – skilled at building and exploiting their position in multiple networks – may gain global influence (Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009, 572). Therefore, the asymmetry in influence (decision makers versus decision takers) vis-à-vis their regional neighbors, who are mostly excluded from global advocacy networks, will increase further.

Connectedness in international relations results from establishing multiple network links and leads to the the ability to hold privileged roles as bridge-builders and agenda-setters, which can be decisive power resources in the changing global order. Powerful states in prestigious network positions incrementally become the destination of cooperation proposals and, consequently, have to bear lower search costs than others (Flemes 2013, 1030). Conversely, network opportunities decrease with an increase in the number of hostile relations that exist with single major powers. In this regard, Germany, Brazil and South Africa are all on good terms with the established great powers. This may partially compensate for their hard power deficiencies compared to China and India – both of which maintain a competitive relationship with each other (besides the several further constraints existing in the Asian securit y cluster). However, because of their multiple instances of friendly relations with their peers, network powers are actually relatively independent from single great powers—even though these great powers might command superior material resources (ibid.: 1027).

German foreign-policy makers are challenged by the complex interlinkages and interdependencies of the new world order just as decision makers in any other state. But three clusters of peculiarities of German foreign policy prepare Berlin to better utilize those interlinkages to actively shape the new global order.

First, a comparative advantage for Berlin in the course of the global transformation process outlined above might be that the new multipolarity and the resulting patterns of interaction (such as the increasing need to build multilateral compromise) are deeply rooted in Germany's political system and its vision of international politics. International consensus power – understood as controlling and timing the agenda to permanently compromise on the resulting consensus – finds a domestic equivalent in the German political system: the politics of the third way (Czempiel 1999). The domestic culture of power sharing is the result of processes of permanent bargaining and consensus seeking, which are the result of a political system based on federalism, coalition governments and social partner-ship between labor unions and business associations known as communitarian

corporatism (Katzenstein 1997). This domestic experience influences the structural disposition for similar approaches to solving international problems (Staack 2007, 92). The decentralization of German political power after World War II was a key concern of the Anglo-American occupying authorities, who believed that a centralized German state could lead to the resurrection of military power.

Second, European multipolarity in general, and the EU institutions in particular, have socialized Germany's foreign policy elites. The intergovernmental pillars of the EU can be seen as a laboratory of the networked world order, while the widely accepted EU 3 network (i.e., Germany, France and the United Kingdom) has long been playing a decisive part in European security affairs.

Third, the specific composition of German foreign policy resources with its distinguished weight of ideational capabilities (e.g., international recognition, legitimacy and moral authority) enables Berlin to build consensus in the context of intergovernmental networks.

In the networked world order, consensual and co-optive strategies are and increasingly will be pivotal for conducting diplomacy effectively. In this regard, the German foreign policy approach toward states that are driven by divergent norms and values (e.g., Iran, Russia, and China) is largely based on operationalizing ideational resources, trying to convince, persuade or co-opt them, including them in multilateral contexts, relying on the socializing effects of value-driven reciprocity.

Moreover, Berlin is increasingly looking to project strategic assets such as the country's cutting edge in green economy as well as its excellence in industries, science and innovation through advocacy networks. As Germany forms security alliances with some states and trades with others, it will have to form distinct networks to pursue its climate- and currency-related interests. In the context of the middle power concept, similar foreign policy behavior has been framed as "niche diplomacy" (Cooper 1997) or "functional leadership" (Wood 1988, 3). These attributes are ascribed to states that cannot act effectively alone, but may have a systemic impact in a small group of states and through the employment of their specific capabilities (e.g., peacekeeping) or expertise in specific issue areas (e.g., nuclear nonproliferation). In this regard, it might even be possible to conceive of different major power hierarchies across various issues areas. For instance, both Brazilian and Japanese foreign policies have sought to achieve major power status in climate change politics (Barros-Platiau 2010; Kanie 2011).

The situation will become more complicated following the extension of the G20 agenda beyond purely economic and financial issues. At the G20 summit, held in Seoul in 2010, global problems such as corruption, energy and food security were also discussed. In the post-Copenhagen context, analysts and diplomats have

looked to the G20 as an alternative forum in which to break the current deadlock between the United States, the EU, and the BASIC network. At the 2012 summit in Los Cabos, the Mexican presidency highlighted developmental policies, whereas Russia's G20 presidency in 2013 focused on energy sustainability, but ended up debating a global security issue (Syria conflict). The G20 summit in Brisbane in 2014 was marked by the Ukraine crisis and public considerations by the Australian government to exclude the Russian President Putin from the summit, while the 2015 summit in Antalya focused on terrorism, migration, and climate change. Global health and trade are other potential issue areas that might be negotiated through the G20. An extended G20 agenda can turn the summits into locations of highly complex cross-issue bargaining – for instance, cutbacks in agricultural subsidies in return for the reduction of CO2 emissions.

At the individual analysis level, the informal and situational character of network bargains strengthens the role of political leaders and the impact of their personalities with the respective abilities to negotiate, identify windows of opportunity and manage different communication ties at the same time. At the (inter)state level, governments have to meet two preconditions to not be taken advantage of by their counterparts in the course of cross-policy negotiations. First, there is an increasing need for the coordination and formulation of competence guidelines for foreign policy at the state level, because ministries of environment, health, foreign affairs and trade have to coordinate their specific interests so as to not be played off against each other in the course of multilateral cross-policy bargaining. Second, before being able to build cross-issue coalitions, a state has to find those players that share issue-specific interests and form alliances with them (Flemes 2013, 1030–31).

As mentioned above, the German government has formulated strategy papers for different internationalizing policies. One key example of a policy-specific network seeking to put these policy guidelines into operation is the Renewables Club. On the invitation of Germany's then environment minister, Peter Altmaier, representatives from 10 countries gathered in Berlin in June 2013 to establish the foreign policy network. In addition to Germany, the club's heavyweights are China, France, India, South Africa and the United Kingdom. Believing themselves to be policy pioneers, the common goal of these governments is to scale up the deployment of renewable energy worldwide.

In March 2013, the fourth Petersberg Climate Dialogue took place in Berlin. Under the heading "Shaping the future", Germany and Poland invited 35 ministers from around the world to build consensus on the long-term climate goals to be discussed at the 2013 UN climate summit in Warsaw. The Ministry of Education and Research promotes multilateral cooperation in science, innovation and technology as part of its efforts to build networks and strategic partnerships that

"strengthen Germany's role in the global knowledge society" (Federal Ministry of Education and Research 2008). Another potential area for network building is the fight against transnational organized crime, where Germany could work with the key production, transit and consumer countries of cocaine – Colombia, Brazil and Spain – for more effective measures against drug trafficking and money laundering by connecting European and South American security governance schemes (Flemes and Radseck 2013).

#### Conclusion

This article contributed to understanding Germany's recent foreign policy reorientation in the context of major domestic and international political changes by developing the concept of 'network power'. According to a 2016 study by McKinsey, a consultancy firm, amidst an unprecedented expansion of the global network of goods, services, finance, people, and data and community, Germany is the world's fourth most connected state (adjusted for country size) (McKinsey Global Institute 2016, 12). Given its relatively great stakes in the stability of its networks, Germany's foreign policy is thus bound to change. Based on a distinction between mediation, advocacy, and substitution networks, an analysis of German foreign policy activities within these networks illustrated the increasing relative weight of network connectivity as compared to alternative power resources. In addition, the paper highlighted that Germany is set to benefit from the growing importance of network connectivity.

How Berlin utilizes this comparative advantage in the future depends on its ability to balance its traditional foreign policy pillars, e.g. strong German-French and transatlantic partnerships and Europeanized interests, with evolving priorities regarding maintaining influence in new formal and informal institutions. If the German government manages to reconcile both prerogatives, it has an opportunity to turn Germany's 'unipolar moment' in Europe into value-oriented and interest-driven network power that can contribute to the development of a new global order.

#### Bio

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#### Article

# Brazil's Military Modernization: Is a New Strategic Culture Emerging?

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#### Abstract

Culture has a profound impact in many different fields of human activity, from political and ideological preferences to religious practices and social habits. It influences the way policymakers and strategists think about matters of war and peace, since a deeper understanding of cultural issues can reduce policy failures and advance national interests. In this context, some contemporary scholarship argues that the strategic culture approach offers highly relevant perspectives on foreign policy decision-making, grand strategy, strategic behavior, and military doctrine, since, by applying that approach to certain cases, scholars have been explaining continuity and change in a country's foreign and national security policies. However, such approach is limited by a substantial focus on major powers, particularly the American, Russian, and Chinese cases. This paper seeks to explain how a rising power such as Brazil, still on the periphery of the international system and on the margins of the global distribution of power, has historically behaved, reacted and constructed a discourse that, at the same time, constrains/motivates its decisions, explains its actions, and legitimizes its behavior.

## **Keywords**

Strategic Culture, Brazil, Foreign Policy, Military Modernization

#### Introduction

Brazil is an important player both at regional and global levels. It is one of the world's largest democracies, the fifth most populous country, and the seventh-largest economy, accounting for approximately 60% of South America's GDP, 47% of its territory and 49% of its population. These variables, along with the absence of border disputes and ter-ritorial threats, and its sense of exceptionalism in the region, "have inspired a belief that the country belongs among the global elite" (Brands 2010, p. 6), and that it is destined to greatness and to play a more influential role in global affairs.

Brazil's growing importance has sparked a renaissance of scholarly interest, which, although offering insightful contributions, has focused almost exclusively on the most known aspects of its economy and foreign policy. Very little attention has been paid to analyzing the role of strategic culture in shaping Brazil's security and foreign policy behavior, and how it influences the country's global ambitions.

Despite being depicted by Kennan (1994) as a "monster country" which would help shape global affairs¹ – a qualification that takes into account not only demographic and geographic characteristics, but also economic and political variables – Brazil has never been able to match its material assets with global geostrategic clout. International leadership, after all, involves more than self-aggrandizing perceptions of the self, and demands actions beyond merely criticizing flaws in the global order.

As part of its strategic culture and its preference for negotiated over military solutions, Brazil has traditionally rejected the employment of force in international relations and put a premium on ideational resources of leadership, cultivating the "demonization" of the use of force, and indicating its preference for strategies that favor peaceful means of conflict resolution. As a long-time supporter of the international principles of sovereignty, self-determination, non-intervention, and territorial integrity, Brazil has relied on its soft power resources to forward its foreign policy priorities and to promote international changes conducive to its objectives.

This situation has led the country to largely neglect its military capabilities and needs. Franko (2014, p. 1) sees Brazil as a country that "has come to be seen as a significant economic competitor and dynamic force in world politics", but whose "transformational changes in the economic and political realms have not been accompanied by advances in military power". Likewise, Kenkel (2013, p. 107) suggests that while Brazil has experienced an "unprecedented rise in economic output and political influence over the past decade", its military capabilities have lagged behind. Former Defense Minister Nelson Jobim (2011, p. 4) acknowledged the problem, stating: "I affirm that this gap has now reached worrying proportions, once the defense's limited capacity to support Brazilian foreign policy prevents us from adopting bolder diplomatic initiatives."

However, what happens when a country's traditional strategic culture conflicts with what has been increasingly seen as an aspiring great power identity? This study proposes that despite Brazil's preference for strategies that deploy non-material aspects of power, such as consensus building and persuasion, a recent but noticeable change seems to be under way regarding how Brazilian policymakers understand the legitimacy of the use of power to pursue foreign policy objectives,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Kennan considered only four other nations as "monster countries": the United States, Russia, India and China.

away from more traditional approaches and towards hard power. Recent Brazilian defense and foreign policies seem to be gradually relying more on hard power capabilities than on ideational factors alone, which might reflect a growing understanding that no country has been able to acquire global power status without a solid military power to complement its diplomacy.

Considering Brazil's relevance to the international system, identifying and analyzing the nature of Brazil's strategic culture becomes vital to understand the logic behind the evolution of the country's geopolitics and military doctrine, its foreign policy preferences, its claims for a greater voice in global affairs, and its quest for greatness. The issue becomes more important when one considers that as rising countries move closer to achieving global player status, their strategic preferences could lead to game-changing effects on the international scenario.

This paper aims to discuss the dynamics of strategic cultural change in Brazil and its implications for the country's security and foreign policy decision-making process. Examining how Brazil understands the concept of security and the security scenario with which the country operates is a *sine qua non* condition to assessing Brazil's positioning as a regional and global security actor and to understanding Brazil's national defense policies, and, changes in its strategic culture.

This paper proceeds as follows. The first section provides a short literature review on strategic culture and examines how such concept can be a determinant of a country's foreign policy. It proceeds to discuss the main characteristics of Brazilian strategic culture, and its influence upon the country's foreign policy decision-making process. Next, it analyzes the Brazilian concept of security and the country's regional and global security scenario. Finally, it advocates that, while the strategic culture approach can contribute to discern tendencies in behaviors or preferences, it can change, affecting security and foreign policies and preferences, and providing the rationale for Brazil's ongoing military modernization.

This paper has sought to bridge an important gap in the literature on the subject, which is limited by a substantial focus on major powers. By studying this perspective through the experiences occurred in an emerging country, this paper seeks to contribute to diversify the literature and enrich the understanding of the sources of strategic culture and its implications to a country's foreign and security policies.

# The Strategic Culture Approach

Although cultural approaches to strategic studies have existed for thousands of years, grounded in the writings of Thucydides, Sun Tzu, and Clausewitz, the emergence of the modern idea of strategic culture can be traced back to the 1970s, when scholars such as Snyder, Gray and Jones analyzed Soviet nuclear deterrence policy and concluded that American experts, taking for granted that the Soviets

had the same strategic behavior and would react the same way as the Americans, failed to predict Soviet reactions. As a result, they claimed that each country had a particular way to interpret and react to international events. This conclusion was responsible for bringing national culture issues back to the academic and political agenda, and gave rise to the development of a new analysis tool to understanding and explaining how countries see the world, and what drives their foreign policies practices and preferences.

Strategic culture is more than an alternative way of explaining strategic behavior. It explains what constrains actors from taking certain strategic decisions, seeks to explore causal explanations for regular patterns of state behavior, and attempts to generate generalizations from its conclusions. As Lantis (2006:29) points out, "[i] f one accepts that there are truly different strategic cultural profiles, and that they shape security policy choices around the world, then major powers should tailor their policies to accommodate these cultural differences to the extent possible".

Jones (1990) identified three levels of inputs which permeated all levels of choice and delimited strategic options: a macro-environmental level, which involves a country's history, geographic conditions and ethno-cultural characteristics; a societal level, formed by the political, economic, and social structures of a given society; and a micro level, encompassing military institutions and their relations with civil society. Barnett (1999, p. 11) emphasizes that

[T]he narrative of the national identity provides an understanding of the past, present and future, events are symbolic and constitutive of, and subjectively linked to, that identity, and a particular construction of the past will be the umbilical cord to the present and the future. [...] actors will reconstruct the past as they debate the future, and as they act toward the future they are likely to (re) remember the past.

The literature presents two approaches to analyze strategic culture. One is presented by scholars who define it almost exclusively as the military strategies adopted by nations in its foreign policies. This perspective views strategic culture as a deeply held cultural predisposition for a particular military behaviour or thinking, derived from a country's history, geography, resources, historical traditions and political institutions, a concept that includes the "beliefs about the use of force shared by a national community of military and civilian leaders" (Farrel 2005, p. 8). While Glenn (2009, p. 531) identifies the concept as "the preferred military options that states adopt to achieve particular objectives", Booth (1991, p. 121) believes that "it has influence on the form in which one state interacts with the others concerning security measures, [...] and the ways of solution of problems face to face to threats or to using of force." Likewise, Johnston (1995, p. 46) sees strategic culture as an integrated "system of symbols which acts to establish per-

vasive and long lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs".

However, strategic culture is not a mere consequence of military thought, and its influence is felt in areas like foreign policy. Therefore, the second approach sought to expand its scope and has focused on the "grand strategies of states and include aspects such as economic and diplomatic ways of attaining a state's objectives in addition to military ones" (Howlett 2005, p. 2). Eitelhuber (2009, p. 4-5) contends that "how political power is defined, acquired, legitimized and used and how the outside world is regarded and addressed are thus decisive factors in shaping a state's strategic culture". The foreign policy goals that are to be pursued by a state are then established by its strategic culture.

In this regard, the United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) understands it as "the combination of internal and external influences and experiences [...] that shape and influence the way a country understands its relationship to the rest of the world, and how a state will behave in the international community" (Bitencourt & Vaz 2009. p. 1). This broader approach seeks to harmonize apparently antagonistic concepts, as strategy traditionally refers to how hard power can be used to reach political ends. This second perspective was adopted in this study, as it seems to perfectly coincide with traditional Brazilian strategic thought, thus summarized by former Defense Minister Johim (2011, pp. 3-4):

Brazil is in favour of a holistic view of international security. Such view addresses not only the literal military problematics, but also the deep causes of conflicts between human groups: poverty, hopelessness, tribal hatred, ignorance, etc. Brazil believes there is a causal connection between situations of disfavour and violence.

Considering that this study is about the role of strategic culture in helping to shape a country's foreign and security policies, it proposes that there is a Brazilian strategic culture, which derives from geographic, historical, political, economic, and other variables, influences, and circumstances, and which helps explain why Brazilian policymakers have made the decisions they have. It argues that Brazilian strategic culture has traditionally provided the milieu within which strategic thoughts, foreign policy and security concerns are debated, plans are formulated, and decisions are executed. Thus, if strategic culture really impacts a country's geopolitical thought and international behavior, then we will see Brazilian foreign policies conditioned by the national strategic culture. In this context, it might turn out that Brazilian strategic culture has been causing a non-rational pursuit of great power status, expressed in a security and foreign policy behavior marked by tensions and contradictions.

## Main Features of Brazilian Strategic Culture

In order to overcome the existing power gap and to reach a military balance compatible with the country's global ambitions, then President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva formulated the new Brazilian National Strategy of Defense (END) in 2008, which would provide the conceptual framework for the country's military modernization. In 2011, President Dilma Roussef announced the publication of the new Defense White Paper, which updated the 2008 END, defining the country's security environment and its military needs. The guidelines provided by both documents were designed to take four core assumptions into account:

- 1. The protection of Brazilian territorial sovereignty;
- 2. The prevalence on non-conflictual approaches;
- 3. The indissociable link between defense and development policies; and
- 4. The objective of leading without dominating.

Both documents echoed the First Brazilian National Defense Policy, issued by former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1998, built around an essentially defensive deterrent strategic posture, and upon the following principles:

- "close relationships, based on mutual respect and trust, with neighboring countries and with the international community in general;
- rejection of war of conquest; and
- peaceful resolution of disputes, with resort to the use of force only for self-defense".

These documents provide useful insights to understanding how Brazilian decision-makers and the military see the world, what are their political preferences, how they define and practice security, and what is Brazil's positioning as a global security actor, features that are part of Brazilian strategic culture. These documents make clear that two of the most important traits of the national strategic culture are that the country sees itself as a peaceful nation and a deeply held belief that the Brazil is destined for greatness. These two cultural values have a profound impact upon the country's security thought and foreign policy:

Brazil is a peaceful country, by tradition and conviction. It lives in peace with its neighbors. It runs its international affairs, among other things, adopting the constitutional principles of non-intervention, defense of peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts. This pacifist trait is part of the national identity, and a value that should be preserved by the Brazilian people. Brazil [...] shall rise to the first stage in the world neither promoting hegemony nor domination (2008 END, p. 8).

Joaquim Nabuco, who was the first Brazilian ambassador to the United States, from 1905 to 1910, perfectly captured the essence of the deeply-rooted aspiration for greatness in the country's political thought when he declared that "Brazil has always been conscious of its size, and it has been governed by a prophetic sense with regard to its future" (Lafer 2000:210). Likewise, Ambassador Araújo Castro (1974), who served as Minister of Foreign Affairs during Goulart's administration, stated that "Brazil is destined to greatness, and it is destined to have a great involvement in the affairs of our time".

Since the Republic was proclaimed in 1889, a multitude of variables, which include Brazil's continental dimensions, its leading economic and political role, and its strategic geographic position within South America, the absence of border disputes and ter-ritorial threats, and its sense of exceptionalism in the region have fueled this desire for greatness. These two ingrained and intertwined cultural values, pacifism and quest for greatness, have a profound impact upon the country's security thought and foreign policy. In that regard, for example, Brazilian president from 1995 to 2002, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (2004:255) stated in his memoirs that "of all the misguided quests that Brazil has undertaken over the years, few rivaled our efforts to attain our dream of world prominence."

Over time, Brazil has unequivocally expressed its reliance on and preference for negotiated solutions for conflicts. Even the country's independence from Portugal, in 1822, was more of a negotiated arrangement than a prolonged and violent process. Compared with its Spanish-speaking neighbors, Brazil's independence process was relatively peaceful and uneventful, making the country enter nation-hood with considerably less strife and bloodshed, despite some violent reactions recorded in Recife and Salvador, in what are now the states of Pernambuco and Bahia, respectively. Finally, in August 29, 1825, through the medium of a treaty brokered by the United Kingdom, Portugal acknowledged the independence of Brazil, putting an end to Brazil's fear of an impending massive Portuguese attack.

A little less known historic fact, however, and one that clearly reveals Brazilian preference for negotiated solutions over war and conflicts, is that, in exchange for Brazil's recognition, the then Emperor Pedro agreed to settle Portugal's debts with Britain. Secret clauses of the 1825 treaty determined that Brazil would assume the responsibility to pay about 1.4 million pounds sterling of Portugal's debt to Britain, and give some other 600,000 pounds sterling to Dom João VI, King of Portugal, supposedly as an indemnity for the loss of the former colony and as personal reparation.

At any rate, the identifying features of the Brazilian strategic culture became even more discernible with the end of the monarchical regime and the advent of the Republic, in 1889. In 1902, in the early days of the fledgling Republic, José Ma-

ria da Silva Paranhos Jr., most commonly known as Baron of Rio Branco, was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, retaining office until his death, in 1912, under four different Presidents, a feat unequalled in Brazilian history. Rio Branco – curiously, an ardent monarchist who refused to abandon his title – skillfully combined all the elements of the Brazilian strategic culture to pursue his geopolitical view of a singular and powerful, yet peaceful Brazil, reinforcing the belief about a land destined to greatness, a vision of grandiosity which has inspired generation after generation of diplomats, military officers and policymakers.

Considered "the father – or the patron – of Brazilian diplomacy" and one of the most prominent Brazilian statesmen ever, Rio Branco "epitomizes Brazilian nationalism [...] his political and diplomatic legacy, especially with regard to the demarcation of national borders, is revered as of great importance for the construction of the international identity of Brazil" (Alsina Jr. 2014:9). In fact, Rio Branco's vision shaped both the boundaries of the country and the traditions of Brazilian foreign relations. His most important legacy was his successful endeavor to negotiate territorial disputes between Brazil and some of its neighbors, including Argentina and Bolivia, and consolidate the borders of modern Brazil in a peaceful, yet somewhat expansionist manner. In the words of Lafer (2000:1), a former Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rio Branco "peacefully drew the Brazilian map", and as McCann (1998:64) explains, "in the heyday of international imperialism, he was instrumental in negotiating limits over which the great powers were not to intrude".

Brazil's preference for negotiated over military solutions then became a hallmark of the country's foreign policy. As meaningful examples of this orientation, Brazil, which once was on the verge of acquiring offensive nuclear weapons capabilities, "communicated its decision not to pursue them in the interests of fostering regional and global peace" (Bitencourt & Vaz 2009, p. 9) in the early 1990s. The Brazilian Constitution limits nuclear activities in the national territory only for peaceful purposes and when previously approved by Congress. The way Brazil handled the nuclear proliferation issue clearly reflects its strategic culture, another example of which is the fact that Brazil was the driving force behind the creation of the South American Defense Council, a mechanism established in 2009 whose objective is to consolidate the region as a zone of peace and democratic stability. The Council also seeks a South American identity in the field of defense, through the strengthening of military cooperation, and the implementation of confidence-building measures.

Both the country's Constitution and the END, guided by pacifist, multilateralist traditions, explicitly emphasize and build perceptions of security upon the peaceful resolution of conflicts and legal-normativist approaches to international security issues. The inscription of a traditional peaceful Brazilian identity became

commonplace in both civilian and military literature, in which the national character is depicted as fair and oriented towards the greater common good. However, in order to have a greater voice in global affairs, Brazil has been seeking to raise its profile, but has done so mostly through diplomatic channels, rarely resorting to the threat or use of force.

## The Brazilian Security Scenario

Brazilian decision-makers work with the premise that the Brazilian security scenario is completely different from those that predominate in Europe, the United States, and China, where more traditional Realist notions tend to be predominant in the strategic thinking. Although not necessarily stable, Brazil's regional environment is remarkably peaceful, as, with the exception of the Ecuador-Peru border conflict in 1995 and the 1932 Chaco War, no interstate wars have taken place in South America in the twentieth century. Brazil has not been involved in a regional interstate war for over one 152 years now. Brazil's last border conflicts were settled over one hundred years ago, and the last time when the country engaged in a major international conflict was during the Second World War.

These circumstances have reduced the country's interest in developing the kinds of extensive military capabilities that characterize other emerging powers. The dominant understanding of security in Brazil still relates primarily to the role of nonmilitary phenomena and includes a wider range of potential threats, ranging from development and poverty issues to environment and international trade, leading Kenkel (2013, p. 108) to caution that

To understand Brazil's role as an actor on the international security stage it is paramount that analysis be based on a broadened conception of security. Though they continue to drive strategic analysis in much of the developed world, traditional, hard power-only analytical approaches to security often fail to account for the real chal-lenges to both state and human security faced by states outside the North Atlantic core.

Flemes and Radseck (2009:8) contend that South America's security agenda is extensive, multilevel, and complex, and require the

[S]imultaneous management of domestic crises, interstate conflicts and transnational threats. Though located at different systemic levels (national, international, transnational), the three conflict clusters are often interrelated and tend to overlap in the region's border areas, which is why they are often referred to as "border conflicts".

It is, therefore, of essence to discuss the most important perceived threats to Brazil's security and how they influence national strategic thinking. Stuenkel (2010,

p. 105) argues that "the principal international threat Brazil faces is its own inability to assume regional leadership." By not displaying aggressive behavior towards its neighbors, and by emphasizing social and economic development, Brazil contributes to low levels of interstate conflicts in the hemisphere. However, Brazil's lack of political appetite to exercise a more vigorous leadership has narrowed its ability to influence other governments, in order to discourage or prevent the emergence or escalation of crises that might generate regional instability, leading Jobim (2011, p. 7) to declare: "I affirm in a very straightforward way that our current capacity of regional influence is important, even though it is hindered by domestic gaps and by the low density of military power in the country."

This situation undermines the effectiveness of policies designed to address strategic threats and reduce their scope, particularly when such policies involve some form of cooperation from other countries, whose violence – which stems from terrorism and guerrilla activities to weapons and drug-trafficking – might spill into Brazilian territory. In that context, the weakness of neighboring states, unable to ensure basic levels of public order, might pose a threat to Brazil.

## Interstate Conflicts in South America

The absence of border disputes involving Brazil does not mean that there isn't some level of interstate conflict in South America. A bellicose colonial legacy seems to have influenced the patterns of behavior of countries in the region, as, with the Brazilian exception, every country presents a border issue with at least one neighboring country, of which the most conspicuous are:

- Venezuela-Guyana: these countries have a longstanding border dispute over the Essequibo region, which covers nearly two-thirds of Guyana, dating back to colonial times and giving rise to occasional military scuffles.
- Venezuela-Colombia: this conflict stems primarily from the presence of non-state criminal actors, such as drug-traffickers, Colombian guerrillas and paramilitaries. Colombia has systematically accused Venezuela of providing a safe haven to members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which would then undertake their insurgent activities in Colombia. Bilateral relations reached its lowest level in 2009, when Colombian President Álvaro Uribe instructed his military to prepare for war on that ground. Likewise, Caracas and Bogotá have disputed the maritime border in the Gulf of Venezuela since the 1830s. The discovery of significant oil reserves in the region in the 1980s intensified the conflict, leading both countries to engage in small military skirmishes.
- Colombia-Ecuador: this conflict also stems from the presence of drugtraffickers, Colombian guerrillas and paramilitaries. In December 2006,

Francisco Carrión, Ecuador's Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared a Colombian crop-spraying program which reached Ecuadorian territory a hostile act and recalled his country's ambassador. On March 1, 2008, a larger diplomatic crisis broke out when the Colombian Armed Forces bombed some FARC camps in Ecuador and crossed the border to chase combatants. Ecuador, supported by Venezuelan troops, dispatched its militaries to the region. Diplomatic ties were interrupted and were resumed only in November 2010. Tensions, however, remain in the area.

- Ecuador-Peru: these countries share a long border made up largely of jungle and high mountains. The area known as Cordillera del Condor had been the site of armed disputes between both countries for more than 150 years. Despite claims that the land was part of Ecuador, the area of confrontation was recognized as Peruvian by the 1942 Rio Protocol and other international legal instruments. A military conflict erupted in 1995, resulting in a peace agreement signed in 1999.
- Peru-Chile: After winning the Pacific War (1879-1893) against Bolivia and Peru, Chile imposed its sovereignty on the Peruvian province of Arica, which harbors the strategic Arica Port. Both countries have kept strained relations since then. In 2008, Peru demanded the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to rule its claim to redraw the maritime boundary between both countries. On January 27, 2014, the ICJ basically maintained the borders as they were.
- Chile-Bolivia: As a result of the Pacific War, Bolivia lost its access to the Pacific Ocean and to copper-rich lands, annexed by Chile. Since then Bolivia never gave up of its objective of regaining the lost possessions. On April 24, 2013, Bolivia brought the case before the ICJ, which is still pending. These are the only countries in South America that do not have diplomatic relations.
- Chile-Argentina: Since the 1880s, these countries have disputed over 100 miles of a contested territory known as the Southern Icefields, which is believed to contain one of the largest reserve of potable water in the world. Although an accord was signed in 1998, domestic circumstances in Argentina have led the country's rulers to try to reignite old tensions as a diversionary strategy from the Argentina's dire economic situation.

Although none of these issues can be credibly considered a direct threat to Brazil, they represent sources of regional instability. Consequently, it would be in Brazil's best interest to use its diplomatic, military, and economic weight to develop strategies that favor regional cooperation and the maintenance of a stable and

peaceful continent.

#### The Extra-Continental Scenario

Although "it is evident that South America's borders zones have become 'hot spots' because traditional and new threats tend to overlap and mutually intensify one another in these often poorly patrolled spaces" (Flemes & Radseck 2009, p. 8), Brazil perceives no major threats to its national security. The same cannot be said regarding the extra-continental scenario. Bitencourt and Vaz (2009) argue that the traditional strategy of associating economic development and security as a national goal<sup>2</sup> may have given rise to negative effects, the main downside of which is the emergence of "conspiracy theories". In the Brazilian public mentality, there is a long held belief that developed countries are systematically blocking Brazilian efforts to become a major power. Brands (2010, pp. 11) observes that "Brazilian strategic analysis features a perva-sive sense of danger - a fear that the strictures of the current global order might impede Brazil's develop-ment or otherwise limit its potential." Likewise, Bertonha (2010, p. 114) asserts that "the possibility of Brazil making demands in the international scenario has always been blocked by two variables: less power and no chances given to it by the great powers." Gouvea (2015:138) observed that

In the 1990s and 2000s, Brazil's defense industry suffered a dramatic reduction in size, diversification, and momentum. Beginning in the 1980s and early 1990s, it suffered a missile technology and a supercomputer embargo from the G-7 nations, which hampered the industry's ability to upgrade its defense hardware and software; this in turn dramatically compromised its global penetration capability.

Brazilian policymakers, in general, believe that other nations covet Brazil's natural resources and would take them if necessary. As Amorim (2013), former Minister of Foreign Affairs (1993-1995 and 2003-2011) and Defense (2011-2015) observed,

Brazil's abundance of energy, food, water, and biodiversity increases its stake in a security environment characterized by rising competition for access to, or control of, natural resources. In order to meet the challenges of this complex reality, Brazil's peaceful foreign policy must be supported by a robust defense policy

The way Brazil assesses the international scenario to formulate its security and foreign policies reflect its strategic culture. Although Itamaraty traditionally depicts the country as a *satisfied* or *status quo* nation, deprived of major ambitions,

 $<sup>^2</sup>$  Brazil's END (2009, p. 8) states that "[t]he national strategy of defense is inseparable from the national strategy of development. The latter drives the former. The former provides shielding to the latter. Each one reinforces the other's reasons."

Brazil is anything but satisfied with the current global order, a stance consistent with its drive for greatness. This concept seems to be instrumental and might mean only that Brazil has no territorial ambitions or border conflicts, an approach designed to be consistent with Brazilian peaceful traditions and "not to stir controversy through the identification of neighbours as poten-tial threats" (Kenkel 2013, p. 112). Brands (2010, p. 10) suggests that Brazil's grand strategy

has been rooted in a deeply ambivalent view of the international system. In one sense, Brazil has benefit—ed enormously from "public goods" that the United States and its Western partners provided during the postwar—and now the post—Cold War—era...[n]onetheless, the prevailing global order still strikes many Brazilians as fundamentally inequitable.

In fact, in its eagerness to achieve major power status, Brazil has sometimes adopted an erratic behavior, implementing ineffective, and often contradictory, piecemeal strategies. At times, Brazil has accepted the current status quo and tied its emergence to the fate of the major powers. At different times, it has adopted a revisionist stance, to improve its position in the international system. Brazilians appear to believe that the chaotic, competitive and asymmetric nature of the international system is a source of instability that determines the status of the countries and limit their strategic choices. Consequently, the willingness to provoke changes in the *status quo* demands the development of economic, political, military, and diplomatic capabilities. However, the fundamental contradiction in Brazilian foreign policy is the fact that Brazil presents itself as an indefatigable "champion" of the Global South but spares no efforts to be acknowledged as a potential member of the North, longing to be included in the restrict club of global powers.

For that reason, deprived of hard power capabilities, Brazil has systematically advocated the use of soft power resources as a strategy to promote changes in the international scenario to shape a more favorable environment to the realization of its interests. The concentration of power in the hands of a few countries, which goes against the principle of equality among sovereign countries, is something that Brazil has rejected, the reason why the country has displayed a preferential option for the strengthening of international institutions. In that sense, Brazil's perspective of its role in global politics relies heavily on the efficacy of multilateral institutional power, as a way to structure a more symmetric world order. A robust multilateralism is deemed more convenient for an emerging country to overcome its own status quo and find its place among the great powers. The strategic cornerstones of Brazilian foreign policy have followed from this framework.

Trying to make the transition from rule-taker to rule-maker, Brazil is struggling to have a bigger influence on global issues, and Itamaraty seemed to understand

that there were only two complimentary ways to achieve this objective. The first one is an attempt to gain leverage within existing mechanisms, by adopting a more proactive foreign policy and to engage actively in the activities of multilateral organizations within the framework of the current order. Brazil has been an active member of the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank, a constant presence in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and a key member in the discussions on climatic change, for example.

The second strategy is twofold. On one hand, the country vigorously advocates reforms in the global governance system, which might favor its interests, working to push for reform of the UNSC structure and multilateral financial architecture and institutions. On the other, Brazil tries to take the lead in building political and economic alliances to maximize and spread its influence. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUL), the IBSA Forum, the South American-Arab Countries initiative (ASPA), and the BRICS, whose affiliation is seen as a passport to global leadership, are examples of this strategy. Certainly, such reformist behavior is addressed by neoliberal institutionalist theory, which argues that some degree of revisionism contributes to strengthen international organizations and regimes by updating decision-making processes, including new actors, and encouraging continuous adjustments regarding important issues, reason why it should not be confounded with systemic confrontation, although it does involve some confrontational elements (Keohane 1984).

The problem emerges when the importance conferred to multilateral institutions, norms, and regimes is mostly instrumental to the self-interested achievement of national objectives and priorities. To some extent, Brazil appears to be more concerned with benefits and power distribution issues than with the maximization of existing benefits, reason why, as important as these two strategies might be to Brazil's foreign policy, and as rooted as they are in the country's national identity, Brazilian policymakers seem to more and more acknowledge that soft power alone will not be enough to move forward the country's interests.

In fact, some scholars and countries, particularly in the developing world, argue that Brazil's diplomatic rhetoric is often at variance with its foreign policy behavior, and its initiatives to reform such international organizations would in reality not be about democratizing or giving greater legitimacy to them, "but rather about creating an 'expanded oligarchy" (Stuenkel 2010:126). In this context, Brazil, a traditional critic of the system, would spare no efforts to promote the advancement of its own deeper integration into the system and be acknowledged as a member of the global elite.

Despite Brazil's interest in the stability of the system and in reducing asymmetries of power distribution, its participation in such institutions and regimes ap-

parently also follows two distinct but complementary logics. On the one hand, these collective arrangements can provide Brazil with a geopolitical cover, reducing the impression that the country is merely seeking a superpower role in global affairs, while using them as a platform to advance its national geostrategic interests. On the other, Brazil reinforces its image as a leading developing nation among its counterparts, and reiterates its preference for multilateral solutions to international issues. In that context, a third strategy, based on the strengthening of military capabilities and a more active participation in UN peacekeeping missions, has taken shape and is gradually being implemented. As Amorim (2013), observed, "in an unpredictable world, where old threats are compounded by new challenges, policymakers cannot disregard hard power."

## A Changing Strategic Culture?

Considering that foreign policy choices are mediated through a set of core ideas, beliefs and doctrines that decision-makers use to justify preferences, the traditional focus of this approach has been on continuity or semi-permanence in strategic culture. Although those variables undergo changes along the years, they tend to evolve slowly, becoming semi-permanent features of the national identity. Such relative continuity allows a country to articulate a coherent grand strategy which reflects its world views, to define its foreign policy priorities, and to identify all instruments of power available to pursue its objectives.

However, strategic cultures do change, sometimes radically, due to external shocks, internal constraints, and/or the behavior of rival elites that could influence strategic identities in a state. As part of its strategic culture and its preference for negotiated over military solutions, Brazil has traditionally rejected the employment of force in international relations and put a premium on ideational resources of leadership. As a long-time supporter of the principles of sovereignty, self-determination, and non-intervention, Brazil has historically relied on its soft power resources to forward its foreign policy priorities and promote international changes conducive to its objectives. As Hamann (2012, p. 72) explains,

Brazilian foreign policy is molded by strong non-material aspects and lack of material capacity. When translated into foreign policy, these two conditions act in favour of the use of soft power to deal with international politics, which justifies Brazil's preference for non-coercive measures to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Such stance, however, has led the country to neglect the development of its military capabilities. When it comes to hard power, there is an apparent mismatch between Brazilian global ambitions and its military capabilities. In comparison to its economy and size, Brazil "underspends on its defense" (Franko 2014, p. 10).

Over the course of the last decade, Brazil has spent on average only 1.5% of its GDP annually on defense<sup>3</sup>, ranking only 65th in terms of military expenditure as a percentage of GDP<sup>4</sup> in the world, and 11th in terms of total dollars spent<sup>5</sup>. Its military expenditure reached US\$ 32 billion dollars in 2014, nearly 5% of the United States defense budget and less than one quarter of China's. Over 70% of that amount, however, was allocated to the payment of salaries and benefits, impairing its capacity to modernize military hardware, equip its armed forces, and project force outside its borders. Brazil has also spent less than the other BRICS countries. While military expenditures in Brazil increased only by 22 percent from 2002–2011, China's, Russia's, and India's spending grew by 170 percent, 79 percent, and 66 percent, respectively (Franko 2014).

Within such framework, Brazil's traditional non-confrontational politics might reflect the weakness of its military power. Brazil's perception of its own identity was historically that of a weak marginal state seeking the assistance and protection of more powerful nations. Hamann (2012, p. 75) notes that, "the lack of materiality in Brazilian power has at least two consequences. First, it emphasizes that Brazil does not have the credentials of a global power; Second, Brazil still has to recognize that climbing up to a new level involves responsibilities that go beyond pure diplomacy."

Table 1: Brazil's Defense Budget as a percent of GDP 2005-2014

Year	Budget in U.S. Dollars (billions)	% of GDP
2005	26,502	1.5
2006	27,441	1.5
2007	29,595	1.5
2008	31,488	1.5
2009	34,334	1.6
2010	38,127	1.6
2011	36,932	1.5
2012	37,751	1.5
2013	32,875	1.4
2014	32,860	1.4
2015	31,954	1.4

Source: SIPRI<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> SIPRI Yearbook 2014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> IndexMundi. Available at [http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?t=0&v=132&l=en].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> SIPRI Yearbook 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Available at [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Milex-GDP-share.pdf] and [https://www.

What then happens when a country's traditional strategic culture conflicts with what has been increasingly seen as an aspiring great power identity? Despite Brazil's preference for soft-power strategies, a slow but noticeable change seems to be under way regarding how Brazilian policymakers understand the legitimacy of the use of power to pursue foreign policy objectives.

This changing perception suggests that Brazilian policymakers seem to be relying more on hard power capabilities than on ideational factors alone, as a foreign policy "excessively based on negotiation may show signs of weakness and may generate more damage than benefits" (Bertonha 2010, p. 12). That shift appears to mirror a growing perception among Brazilian decision-makers that if Brazil wants to increase its standing in international politics it must be able to flex its muscles and display military and power projection capabilities and resolve. As the Brazilian END (2008, p. 11) states, "in order to dissuade, one needs to be prepared to combat", and "if Brazil is willing to reach its deserved spot in the world, it will have to be prepared to defend itself not only from aggressions, but equally from threats" (Ministry of Defense 2009, p. 8). Jobim (2011, p. 7) also highlighted this "new" stance: "Soft power separated from hard power means a diminished power or a power that cannot be applied to its full potential." Likewise, former Navy Minister Admiral Mário Flores stated that "pacifism is not conformity, and modern military power should not be improvised. It will be too late if we think of it only in times of need"7.

This stance also seems to reflect a growing understanding that no country has been able to acquire global power status without a solid military power to complement its diplomacy. The American support for India's aspiration to a permanent seat on the UNSC illustrates this point, by fostering the impression that the achievement of the seat depends largely on a country's military power and nuclear status. Compared to stronger players, the renunciation of the use of force can perpetuate asymmetries of power that could block a country's path towards great power, as "without military power, the country is constrained in its relations and autonomy relation to the great powers and even its own national 'soft power' and diplomacy decrease in credibility" (Bertonha 2010, p. 114).

In this context, the development of its nuclear submarine program, the more active participation in UN peacekeeping missions, the purchase of 36 new combat aircraft, with prospects of acquiring another 72, and the ongoing process of modernization of its armed forces seems to fit within the framework of a country that, although tied to its traditions, is recognizing that it must develop its military capabilities if it wants to one day be considered a major power.

sipri.org/sites/default/files/Milex-constant-USD.pdf]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> O Estado de São Paulo. Available at [http://opiniao.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral, defesa-nacional-imp-,1658121].

## **Brazil's Military Modernization**

Adopting the perspective that military power does not need to be used but it needs to be solid and dependable, Brazil is seeking to strengthen its military capabilities in a number of strategic areas, to convey the message that it will be ready to exhibit military power to complement its political-diplomatic and economic capabilities. In that context, the END (2009, pp. 11-23) is based on the main guidelines:

- 1. To dissuade the concentration of hostile forces in the terrestrial borders, in the limits of the Brazilian jurisdictional waters, and prevent them from using the national air space [...].
- 2. To organize the Armed Forces under the aegis of the monitoring/control, mobility and presence trinomial [...].
- 3. To develop the ability to monitor and control the Brazilian air space, the territory and the jurisdictional waters [...].
- 4. To develop the capacity of promptly responding to any threat or aggression backed by the capacity to monitor/control [...].
- 5. To deepen the link between technological and operational aspects of mobility [...].
- 6. To strengthen three strategically important sectors: cybernetics, space and nuclear [...].
- 7. To enhance the presence of Army, Navy and Air Force units in the border areas [...].
- 8. Prioritize the Amazon region.
- 9. To develop logistic capacity, in order to strengthen mobility [...].
- 10. To develop the concept of flexibility in combat to meet the requirements of monitoring/control, mobility and presence [...].
- 11. To structure the strategic potential in terms of capabilities. [...].
- 12. To prepare the Armed Forces to perform growing responsibilities in peacekeeping operations. [...].
- 13. To expand the country's capacity to meet international commitments in terms of search and rescue [...].
- 14. To develop the potential of military and national mobilization to assure

the dissuasive and operational capacity of the Armed Forces. [...].

15. To qualify the national defense industry so that it conquers the necessary autonomy in indispensable technologies to defense purposes.

These guidelines indicate that the END is based on three perspectives: national, regional, and global. The national dimension involves the reorganization of the Armed Forces, and the development of hard power capabilities that can be used as an effective deterrent against any threats to Brazil's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The regional level envisages Brazil as an element of unity and stabilization in South America, while promoting its integration. The third dimension reflects the country's ambition of playing a major role in international affairs, including a more active presence in UN peacekeeping missions.

Brazil is expected to spend US\$190 billion between 2013 and 2019 to upgrade its military capabilities, having already implemented "an offset policy and strategy forcing foreign defense companies to transfer technology and to use local Brazilian domestic companies to produce and assemble defense hardware and software" (Gouvea 2015, p. 139). The strengthening of an indigenous defense technology industry, intrinsically linked to national development, is the central pillar upon which these perspectives are built. The END (2009, p. 18) explicitly called for a robust domestic defense industry with the "technological capacity [...] to gradually rule out the need to purchase imported services and products".

Such endeavor has led the government to establish partnerships not based on ideology and that allows for growth of the defense technology sector. The insistence on offsets and technology transfer in its military modernization process is a crucial part of this effort. A key tenet of the END is the perception that the country will only achieve international prominence through mastery of sensitive technologies in the following strategic sectors: cybernetics; an autonomous space program, including the development project of geostationary satellites to ensure secure communications and to monitor Brazilian territory; and the strengthening of peaceful nuclear capabilities, whose main focus is the development of a nuclear submarine and the generation of energy. In this regard, the END (2009, p. 33) explicitly calls for the following initiatives:

- a) Regarding the nuclear-propelled submarine program, Brazil should complete the full nationalization and the development at industrial scale of the fuel cycle (including gasification and enrichment) and of the reactor construction technology for exclusive use of the country.
- b) Speed up the mapping, ore searching and utilization of uranium deposits.
- c) Develop the potential of designing and building nuclear thermo power

plants with technology and capacities that may end up under the national domain, even if they are developed by means of partnerships with foreign companies and States. [...] and

d) Increase the capacity to use nuclear power for a broad range of activities

Likewise, Brazil is making substantial investments in military hardware, with the objective of not only being able to project power, but also as a message that the country aspires to assume greater responsibilities in global affairs. As Jobim stated, "[w]hat we want is to have voice and vote in the international arena, and this only goes to countries that have a defense structure to deter and to express national power" (Brands 2010, p. 15).

As part of its modernization program, Brazilian Navy signed a contract with a French company for the construction of five highly modern submarines of the *Scorpene* class, one of them nuclear-powered, which could put Brazil ahead of regional competitors regarding the "dispute" for a permanent seat on the UNSC, as no other Latin country possesses that equipment. Navy officers have drawn attention to the fact that all UNSC permanent members possess nuclear submarines. A former Brazilian Admiral, for example, contended that "when Brazil becomes the sixth [member of the UN to possess a nuclear submarine), it will be much bigger as a nation from both military and strategic points of view. It will have solid means to claim a seat on the Security Council" (Rodrigues 2009).

The Navy has also sought to invest in the construction of six escort ships, equipped with up to 12-ton helicopters, eight ocean patrol ships and 15 river patrol ships. It is also modernizing the country's single aircraft carrier, while seeking to acquire another one. The AF-1 Skyhawk jetfighters operating in the São Paulo aircraft carrier are also undergoing a modernization process.

The Army has been developing projects to enhance its power projection capabilities, such as *Combatant of the Future*, which seeks to develop communications and location systems, weapons and night vision equipment, and *Strong Arm*, aimed at acquiring a new caliber rifle model to equip soldiers. As part of its *Guarani* project, the Army has already signed a contract with an Italian company for the construction of two thousand tanks for transportation of their troops. Likewise, 250 German tanks, model Leopard 1A564, have already been purchased.

The Air Force has invested in the purchase of last generation jetfighters and the development of technology to manufacture its own fighter aircrafts, while modernizing all its AMX units. A multi-billion dollars contract was signed with Sweden for the acquisition of 36 Gripen NG jet fighters, of which 15 will be manufactured in Brazil. An important part of this agreement is the transfer of technology to the Brazilian defense industry. Brazil has also acquired the latest

generation of Russian attack helicopters AH-2 Sabre, while Embraer has developed two projects which are already international sales success: the Attack Aircraft A-29 Super Tucano and the medium-sized KC-390 tactical airlifter.

## Peacekeeping and International Projection

States have different motivations to engage in peacekeeping operations (PKOs). Some view them as an opportunity for achieving self-interested objectives. Others believe that it can be translated into greater international prestige. Some consider PKOs as a shortcut to important positions within the structure of an international organization, while some take part merely in the hopes of getting some financial compensation. Peacekeeping can, therefore, be highly useful for states which see international institutions as a means for the pursuit of national interests, as " in no small way peacekeeping has developed as a way for middle powers to demonstrate their power in and their importance to world politics" (Neack 1995, p. 183).

This might be the case of Brazil. A more active participation in PKOs, to raise the country's international profile, increase its involvement in global affairs, and promote a stronger presence in the UN debates is another course of action present in Brazil's END – and something that might change the profile of its strategic culture. The END (2009, p. 62) states that "Brazil shall expand its participation in peacekeeping operations [...] according to the national interests." Likewise, the 2005 Brazilian National Defense Policy (2005, p. 9) states that

To enlarge the country's projection in the world concert and to reaffirm its commitment with the defense of peace and with the cooperation among the peoples, Brazil should intensify its participation in humanitarian actions and in peace missions with the support of multilateral organisms.

Therefore, Brazilian policymakers "have quietly worked on the belief that would-be permanent members of the UNSC need to develop their hard power in order to be able to engage in military interventions and thus meet any potential challenges to international peace and order" (Valença & Carvalho 2014, p. 79). To Hirst and Nasser (2014, p. 1), Brazil's involvement in PKOs "has evolved from being a selective troop contributor to an ambitious innovator in terms of its political approach and stabilisation methods." As Brazil has performed well in PKOs, the END underscores the need for the country to be even more prepared to assume greater responsibilities, to meet UN collective security requirements worldwide. Couching the country's ambitions in diplomatic language, Amorim (2013) argues that

By deterring threats to national sovereignty, military power supports peace; and, in Brazil's case, it underpins our country's constructive role in the pursuit of global stability. That role is more necessary than ever. Over the past two decades,

unilateral actions in disregard of the UN Security Council's primary responsibility in matters of war and peace have led to greater uncertainty and instability. [...] Even as Brazil hardens its soft power, it remains deeply committed to the path of dialogue, conflict prevention, and the negotiated settlement of disputes.

Amorim's words mean that as international norms and practices regarding humanitarian intervention are evolving towards a greater willingness of major powers to intervene militarily in the internal affairs of other nations, Brazil can reliably present itself as a country able to fulfill a mandate received from the UNSC and contribute to international peace and stability, with responsibility and effectiveness.

This new stance began to be adopted in June 2004, when Brazil accepted the command of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), as until then Brazilian contributions were mainly symbolic and concentrated in Portuguese-speaking countries. This change from a secondary participation to an active leadership underscores Brazil's self-perception of its changing international role, leading to shifts in the geographical distribution and scale of involvement of Brazil's participation in PKOs which reflect the reorientation of its foreign policy in its search for greater global influence. Since then, now participating in nine of the 17 UN-led PKOs, with 1,229 troops, Brazil's engagement in PKOs has become one of the central pillars of its search for a new international status.

By accepting greater international responsibilities in the preservation of peace and security, Brazil seeks to assume a role more consistent with its global ambitions. Such reorientation, however, has led Brazil to become involved in controversial external interventions, revealing an unusual power-politics side to Brazil's role in PKOs, beyond the soft power rhetoric. This stance not only contradicts some principles of traditional Brazilian strategic culture, but also seems to indicate a readjustment in the country's international behavior and a shift in the capabilities, tactics, and doctrines of its Armed Forces.

## Conclusions

This study has argued that the impact of strategic culture is important to understanding Brazil's security and foreign policies. Its primary objective was to explain how Brazil has historically behaved, reacted and constructed a discourse that has constrained and motivated its decisions, explained its actions, and legitimized its behavior. It argued that Brazilian strategic culture has traditionally provided the milieu within which strategic thoughts, foreign policy and security concerns are debated, plans are formulated, and decisions are executed.

However, as strategic cultures are not immutable, this study discussed the dynamics of strategic cultural change in Brazil and its implications for the country's

security and foreign policy decision-making process. It examined how Brazil understands security and the security scenario with which the country operates, and found that this is a *sine qua non* condition to assessing Brazil's national defense policies, military strategies, and the changes in its strategic culture.

This research sought to explain that, as part of its strategic culture and its preference for negotiated over military solutions, Brazil has historically rejected the employment of force in international relations and put a premium on ideational resources of leadership. Brazil has not only clearly indicated its preference for strategies that favor peaceful means of conflict resolution, but also relied on its soft power resources to promote international changes conducive to its objectives, a stance that has led the country to neglect the development of its military capabilities.

However, a slow but noticeable change seems to be under way regarding how Brazilian policymakers understand the legitimacy of the use of power to pursue foreign objectives. Brazilian policymakers seem to be gradually relying more on hard power capabilities than on ideational factors alone, what seems to be reflected in the process of military modernization currently being undertaken, which fits within the framework of a country that is gradually recognizing that it must develop and display military and power projection capabilities if it wants to one day be considered a major power.

This behavior might also reflect a growing understanding that no country has been able to acquire global power status without a solid military power to complement its diplomacy. In that context, only historical perspective will be able to tell whether current changes in Brazil's security and foreign policy behavior, and its persistence through time, will have given rise to the emergence of a new strategic culture.

## Bio

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