



Crimean Crisis: Analysis of Russia's Legitimacy Discourse

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Dedication

To *Nadiya* and *Vasyl*, my lovely parents.

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Abstract

This dissertation critically interprets the international dimension of the Ukrainian crisis in 2013, crisis that intensified in the 2014 and resulted in an armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia in eastern part of Ukraine and occupation of Crimea. It argues this crisis to be simultaneously the result and the intensification of the collision of antagonist and foreign policies towards the contested borders of Ukraine between NATO and Russia.

Notwithstanding Ukrainian domestic dimension related to recent and incomplete transition of the country after Soviet Union collapse and its independence, Ukrainian crisis has an inseparable international dimension to it. Analyzed from an international perspective, the events that started in Kiev in November of 2013 can be linked to the competition between the NATO and Russia for security in their shared neighborhood.

After Soviet Union collapse in 1991, Russia fell into complex crisis in political, social, economic and national identity domains. In the foreign policy sphere, an internal debate started on what role Russia should perform, at regional or on global level in the post-Cold War background. In this context, Ukraine is inseparable ally and shield for Russia from West pressure near Russia borders, from EU enlargement and NATO expansion, which is considered as treat for Russian security.

Russia combined a whole range of arguments to protect its borders, sphere of influence and its citizens in Ukraine. Vladimir Putin in 2014 presented those arguments in his address to the State Duma. This research intends to provide a contribution to the literature on Crimean crisis, Russian foreign policy and political discourse.

Keywords

Ukraine;Russia;NATO;Crimea;foreign policy;discourse;crisis

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Resumo Alargado

A presente dissertação interpreta criticamente a dimensão internacional da crise ucraniana começada em 2013, crise que se intensificou em 2014, e que resultou em conflito armado entre a Ucrânia e a Rússia na parte leste da Ucrânia e a ocupação da Crimeia. A dissertação argumenta também que esta crise é simultaneamente o resultado e a intensificação da colisão entre duas políticas externas antagónicas em relação às contestadas fronteiras da Ucrânia, entre a NATO e a Rússia.

Quanto à esfera doméstica e interna da política ucraniana relacionada com a transição recente e incompleta do país após o colapso da União Soviética em 1991 e da sua independência no mesmo ano, lidando ainda hoje o país com problemas como nepotismo, oligarquismo, abuso de poder, corrupção e violação dos direitos humanos, a crise ucraniana tem uma dimensão internacional inseparável. Na perspetiva internacional, os eventos que ocorreram em Kiev em novembro de 2013 podem ser vinculados à competição entre o expansionismo e alargamento do Ocidente para junto das fronteiras Russas.

O colapso da União Soviética mergulhou a Rússia na profunda crise nos domínios da identidade nacional, nas esferas da política interna e externa, económica e social. A Rússia enfrentou uma das maiores depressões económicas da sua história. A nível geopolítico a Rússia enfrentou uma grande mudança na sua história recente, após perder a sua influência sobre a esfera de influência tradicional da Europa Leste e nos países Bálticos, bem como o fracasso das políticas económicas de Mikhail Gorbachev. As mudanças geopolíticas transformaram o antigo espaço de influência da então União Soviética em um espaço completamente integrado nas organizações supranacionais ocidentais, nomeadamente a NATO e a União Europeia, organizações que continuam as suas políticas expansionsistas na região vital para a segurança Russa.

Apesar disso, a Rússia, exercia os atributos de uma potência mundial, com um assento permanente no Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas, e o segundo maior arsenal nuclear, mas o seu status económico enfraquecido abriu uma contradição entre a aspiração e capacidade do país. Na esfera da política externa, iniciou-se um debate interno sobre que posição e papel a Rússia deveria desempenhar, a nível regional e global no cenário da pós-Guerra Fria. Neste contexto, a Ucrânia é inseparável aliada e escudo, ainda que alguns autores considerem a Ucrânia como um estado *buffer* ou uma espécie de “ponte” para a Rússia das pressões ocidentais próximas das suas fronteiras, que

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impede assim o alargamento e expansão da União Europeia e da NATO para o leste europeu, questões essas que são consideradas essenciais na segurança Russa.

A discussão acerca da identidade nacional russa remonta ao século XIX, um período de grandes mudanças na Rússia, também conhecido como período renascentista Russo, no qual o país eslavo testemunhou grandes mudanças sobretudo na literatura e na filosofia, com grande influência dos autores como Leo Tolstoy e Fyodor Dostoevsky. A elite e a nobreza russa começaram a separar duas escolas distintas, eslavófilia e ocidentalismo. Por um lado, o ocidentalismo incentivava o desenvolvimento do país de acordo com os princípios e valores europeus e ocidentais. Por outro lado, os eslavófilos argumentavam que a Rússia tinha uma missão histórica e cultural e só poderiam desenvolver-se de acordo com as suas tradições inerentes, sem influência do ocidente. A discussão ainda permanece nos dias de hoje, sobre se a Rússia é única nas suas tradições e deve continuar no seu próprio caminho com distanciamento para com o ocidente ou se o país devia seguir o resto do mundo com uma maior aproximação ao ocidente. Vladimir Putin pretende um posicionamento reconhecível e prestigiado da Rússia no sistema internacional, caracterizado por uma identidade russa única, com base na sua história, legado, língua, cultura, tamanho e obrigação de proteger as suas fronteiras e a sua população. Essa identidade revelase em interesses específicos e no reconhecimento de particular valor à independência e soberania do país como uma grande potência. Essa tentativa de afirmação da Rússia como uma grande potência começou logo após a Segunda Guerra Mundial, época na qual a Rússia, cercada pelo medo e pela incerteza que o mundo atravessava, foi obrigada a reagir, porque havia um sentimento e expectativa de que a guerra realmente não tinha terminado e que a qualquer momento poderia começar outra Guerra. Joseph Stalin impressionado com o poder destrutivo das primeiras bombas atômicas dos Estados Unidos da América, nos bombardeamentos atômicos das cidades de Hiroshima e Nagasaki no Japão, evento que ditou fim a Segunda Grande Guerra, ordenou o seu rápido desenvolvimento no território soviético, com ansiedade de que os EUA pudessem realmente utilizar as bombas contra o espaço da União Soviética.

A identidade russa não é suficientemente forte para triunfar e ser reconhecida, está em processo de constante mutação, no qual os interesses internos misturam-se com externos.

A Rússia tal como a Ucrânia são países de democracias recentes. Após a dissolução da antiga União Soviética, a Ucrânia procurou um novo caminho e uma maior aproximação

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com o ocidente, a União Europeia e NATO, o expansionismo e alargamento ao leste europeu dos mesmos eram vistos para o país Ucrainiano como uma oportunidade de se “afastar” da Rússia, que assombrava e exercia um poder e uma influência enormes sobre o país desde a formação da antiga União Soviética até aos dias de hoje. O que a Ucrânia mais desejava, era o que a Rússia mais temia, ambições antagónicas dos dois países.

Em 2013, o expansionismo e alargamento da União Europeia, sobretudo depois de 2004 contava com vários países a leste europeu, inclusive alguns ex-membros da União Soviética, a Ucrânia ambicionava assinar o Acordo de Associação, que colocaria o país a um passo de se tornar um membro da mesma. Víktor Yanukóvytch, ex-presidente Ucrainiano entre 2010-2014, ponderou assinar o acordo, apesar da vontade do povo e do país que ambicionavam um futuro com novos parceiros europeus. No entanto, Víktor Yanukóvytch não chegou a assinar nenhum acordo com União Europeia. De referir que um outro acordo estava nas mãos do Víktor Yanukóvytch, o da União Económica Eurasiática (UEE), Rússia expectava que Ucrânia resistisse e trocasse a União Europeia e a NATO por antigos membros e os seus aliados, nomeadamente voltar a ser um parceiro da Rússia.

Após varias tentativas de resistência do Víktor Yanukóvytch para assinar o Acordo de Associação, Kiev começou a testemunhar vários protestos que se intensificavam a cada dia. Um dos protestos e movimentos mais marcantes ficou conhecido como Euromaidan, que simbolizava a “sede” dos Ucrainianos para o país se tornar membro da União Europeia. A Ucrânia transformou-se num “tabuleiro” geopolítico e estratégico.

A Rússia vê-se obrigada a agir, através das causas externas como a controvérsia geopolítica entre Ocidente e Rússia, a contínua expansão da União Europeia e a NATO nos Bálticos, são dos fatores fulcrais que levaram a Rússia a procurar pontos estratégicos para conter esta aproximação nas suas fronteiras. A intervenção na Crimeia é uma disputa assente na preocupação de Moscovo com os cidadãos da etnia russa na Crimeia (estes constituem mais de metade da população da Crimeia 58,5%), constituindo um dos argumentos principais do discurso do Vladimir Putin ao tentar legalizar a intervenção na Ucrânia.

Assim, o conceito de Mundo Russo, constitui uma figura de imaginação geopolítica, servindo de ferramenta que o Moscovo, sob representação de Vladimir Putin há mais de vinte anos, utiliza para tomar as medidas necessárias para proteger os seus cidadãos fora do país, uma vez que milhões de russos encontravam-se fora do alcance de Moscovo. A

literatura considera que a promoção do conceito de Mundo Russo constitui um elemento da ideia de sonho da restauração da Rússia ou da sua influência nas fronteiras da ex-União Soviética. O conceito serve também para a Rússia como um instrumento para projetar o seu soft power. No caso da Ucrânia, a promoção do Mundo Russo tornou-se associada à intervenção militar russa na parte leste da Ucrânia nas cidades de Donetsk e Lugansk, que fazem fronteira com a Rússia, passando assim de soft power a hard power. Assim a Rússia continua em busca de implementar a sua influência no espaço pós-soviético, usando a diáspora como justificação, onde as relações linguísticas e culturais entre os seus cidadãos no exterior desempenham papel central e, quando necessário, a intervenção pode estar associada ao uso da força (Geórgia 2008, Ucrânia 2014). É imperativo referir que, na influência da política soviética de domínio da língua russa, ainda está presente na Ucrânia. Após a independência em 1991, a língua ucraniana teve a oportunidade de se tornar a língua oficial e de pleno direito. No entanto, territorialmente, a língua ucraniana é assimétrica, o que se reflete nas zonas onde a língua russa predomina e conseqüente bipolaridade da língua ucraniana. Estas circunstâncias estavam entre os principais fatores da erupção de um conflito armado no leste da Ucrânia e da anexação da Península da Crimeia pela Federação Russa em 2014.

Numa perspetiva histórica, a Crimeia foi conquistada pelo Império Russo durante o reinado de Catarina, a Grande, em 1783, e permaneceu como parte da Rússia até ao ano de 1954, sob o commando e ordem de então líder da União Soviética Nikita Khrushchev foi transferida para a Ucrânia. As razões que levaram para tal acordo de transferência da Crimeia sob commando da Rússia para a Ucrânia ainda não são claras e justificadas, continuam a causar polémica e discussão aberta entre os historiadores. No entanto, contrariamente aos mitos russos difundidos nos últimos anos, esse ato, em primeiro lugar, não foi um "presente" solidário de Nikita Khrushchev. A transferência da Crimeia em 1954 para a República Soviética da Ucrânia não teve relevância geopolítica enquanto a URSS existisse.

O Mar Negro é uma região e componente essencial da nova política russa e a sua tentativa de combater a crescente influência que a NATO tem vindo a exercer nas últimas duas décadas. Os principais objetivos da Rússia não são apenas reforçar a sua fronteira a sul, mas também intimidar os seus vizinhos mais desprotegidos e "bloquear" o acesso e aproximação da NATO a países como Ucrânia e Moldávia e toda a região do Cáucaso. Para a Rússia, a longo prazo, parece que a intenção será, em primeiro lugar, garantir que o Mar Negro seja controlado predominantemente pela Rússia.

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A Rússia reuniu os argumentos para proteger suas fronteiras, esfera de influência e os seus cidadãos na Ucrânia. Os argumentos foram apresentados no discurso do presidente da Federação Russa, Vladimir Putin, a 18 de Março de 2014. Discutir os conceitos de anexação, reunificação, autodeterminação dos povos e princípio da integridade territorial torna-se imprescindível para compreender a perspectiva russa. O argumento de Moscovo refere que a Crimeia foi reunificada com a Rússia, e pode ser visível nos discursos políticos e meios de comunicação, pois a reunificação é vista como algo aceitável e uma ação legal, uma perspectiva diferente da ucraniana. Por sua vez, os argumentos dos pró-ucranianos referem-se às ações da Rússia na Crimeia como anexação, uma ação de violação de soberania e integridade territorial ucraniana; os pró-russos, por sua vez, consideram que o território foi reunificado. Essa divisão e uso de palavras e conceitos é importante porque faz com que se perceba qual é a posição adotada quando se discutem as ações da Rússia na Crimeia em 2014.

A decisão do governo da Crimeia, apoiada maioritariamente pelos resultados do referendo de 2014, de solicitar a reunificação com a Federação Russa foi considerada lícita no discurso de Putin. Com a desordem política em Kiev, tanto as forças militares como os cidadãos pró-Russos na Crimeia decidiram agir e organizaram um referendo em 16 de março de 2014, contando com grande suporte por parte da Rússia, que se encarregava de conduzir e monitorizar o referendo. O conteúdo dos boletins era muito controverso, pois oferecia aos eleitores apenas duas opções que tanto a opção 1 como a opção 2 beneficiavam uma maior aproximação da Crimeia a Rússia. Apesar do resultado avassalador de (96.77%) segundo fontes oficiais, dos eleitores terem optado por opção 1 que permitia a Crimeia reunificar com Rússia, o referendo ocorrido na Crimeia é considerado ilegal. Por sua vez, os resultados do mesmo são considerados legais por parte da Rússia.

Através da aplicação da metodologia de análise crítica do discurso, que melhor se enquadra para a presente investigação, torna-se possível e crucial fragmentar e desconstruir o discurso de legitimização de Vladimir Putin e apresentar os resultados sob uma ótica crítica e reflexiva do mesmo.

A Rússia reuniu os argumentos para proteger suas fronteiras, esfera de influência e os seus cidadãos na Ucrânia. Os argumentos foram apresentados no discurso do presidente da Federação Russa, Vladimir Putin, a 18 de Março de 2014. Discutir os conceitos de anexação, reunificação, autodeterminação dos povos e princípio da integridade territorial torna-se imprescindível para compreender a perspectiva russa. O argumento

de Moscovo refere que a Crimeia foi reunificada com a Rússia, e pode ser visível nos discursos políticos e meios de comunicação, pois a reunificação é vista como algo aceitável e uma ação legal, uma perspectiva diferente da ucraniana. Por sua vez, os argumentos dos pró-ucranianos referem-se às ações da Rússia na Crimeia como anexação, uma ação de violação de soberania e integridade territorial ucraniana; os pró-russos, por sua vez, consideram que o território foi reunificado. Essa divisão e uso de palavras e conceitos é importante porque faz com que se perceba qual é a posição adotada quando se discutem as ações da Rússia na Crimeia em 2014.

O lugar da Rússia na ordem internacional mudou significativamente, não apenas devido às ações de 2014 na Ucrânia, mas também ao discurso de criar um novo posicionamento para o país no sistema internacional. Abordar uma Europa pós-Crimeia como realidade social radicalmente diferente devido à intervenção da Rússia na Crimeia é, muito provavelmente, um exagero. Porém, ajuda perceber a estratégia russa no espaço pós-soviético que, perante a impossibilidade de controlar Kiev, opta pela divisão formal (com recurso ao soft e hard power) da Ucrânia em esferas de influência.

Este estudo pretende assim contribuir com a literatura sobre a crise da Crimeia de 2014, a política externa da Rússia e o discurso político.

Palavras-chave

Ucrânia; Rússia; NATO; Crimeia; Mundo Russo; discurso; política externa; crise; conflito; intervenção

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List of Acronyms

USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
EU	European Union
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
UN	United Nations
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
UkSSR	Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
IR	International Relations
USA	United States of America
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
IR	International Relations
WW	World War
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
IHL	International Humanitarian Law

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Introduction

The decision to write the present dissertation on this subject was made in 2014, a year full of important and tragic events in Europe and the whole world. The role of Russia in the international arena became increasingly crucial. Simultaneously, world leaders and organizations started wondering about the future of both Ukraine and Europe, especially due to Vladimir Putin's decisions concerning the actions of Russia in its neighbor countries, such as Ukraine. In 2013, Ukraine was imposed a choice between closer integration with either Brussels or Moscow. Even if both sides denied they were applying any pressure on Kyiv, in truth Ukraine faced a dilemma between two mutually exclusive choices: **on one hand**, closer integration with Moscow meant losing the new path of European integration; on the other hand, closer European integration meant losing the relationship with Russia. Putin started putting pressure over Ukraine through *soft power* and political speeches, but more drastic *hard power* measures have been taken such as promoting an armed conflict in the Eastern part of Ukraine. This dissertation seeks to draw some conclusions on Crimea's Crisis and understand how speaking about it means the inevitability of also speaking about Russia's Foreign Policy and the discourse of Vladimir Putin, who highlights the position of Russia in an address that will be examined.

The research question of present dissertation is: how does Russian political discourse legitimize the referendum on Crimea in 2014? Focusing on the fundamental role of Vladimir Putin, a detailed study of this political leader's discourse may help to better understand every aspect of the policies adopted by Russia in 2014. The objective is to analyze Vladimir Putin's official discourse after the reunification with Crimea in 2014, exhaustively and objectively, as much as possible. The Kremlin's official website¹ provides, the speeches held by all the Presidents of the Russian Federation of the post-Yeltsin era.

The main objective is to understand how Russia's foreign policy is linked to Ukrainian crisis back in 2013 and the link that exists between the internal crisis in Ukraine and subsequent events in Crimea in 2014.

Specific objectives of the dissertation are analyzing Russian foreign policy, understanding and examining the Russian privileged sphere of influence and the importance of Ukraine in this question.

¹ Kremlin.ru (available in Russian and English language).

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The research around this problematic has resulted in the three chapters of the current dissertation. The first two chapters are more comprehensive, focusing on analysis and explanation of Russian national identity and geopolitics. Attention is also drawn to the most significant Putin's speeches about Ukraine and international events. In the concluding third chapter, this dissertation offers results of the proposed research, in order to systematize ideas about Putin's language and way of speaking, what concepts he focusses and addresses more. In order to do so, a specific Vladimir Putin's discourse was selected, related to the Crimean crisis in 2014, with the objective to obtain answers and "legal justifications" that Putin highlights in his discourse, try to understand in what those justifications consist and what they mean.

Since we live in a world of uncertainties, fears and distrust, where information flows at the speed of light, in which many fake news emerge every day, a deep and objective analysis may help to focus on true updates and actual facts. This is a long and hard task to perform in all investigations and fields of study, but it is necessary to obtain a growing comprehension of international relations dynamics. As a researcher I hope that this dissertation can become useful one day, for me or future researchers.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of power is at the core of the realist theory of International Relations, since power is the decisive element in the relations between states and between political communities and determinant to understand the dynamics of peace and war. Realism is just one of the theories for understanding international politics. Neorealism, also called structural realism, emerged in the late seventies of the past century, more precisely in 1979 with the book *Theory of International Politics* of Kenneth Waltz, as a result of some rectification with neoclassical realism. This theoretic perspective fits mainly in Russia and in its relations with its neighbors, but also with the EU. Neorealism considers the International Political System as anarchic and decentralized, there is no formal center of authority power, each state is sovereign and is equal in the system Waltz (1979). Still according to this theory, states are units whose interactions form the structure of the Political System International.

According to Waltz (1979), the structure of international system is defined by three assumptions,

“first by the principle according to which they are organized or ordered, second by the differentiation of units and the specification of their functions, and third by the distribution of capabilities across units. Let us see how the three terms of the definition apply to international politics.” Waltz (1979: 88).

Thus, as an ordering principle, with anarchy in the system (absence of government); the functions of the states, as a result of the ordering principle, are the same - providing for their own survival, occurring the opposite to a hierarchical system, in which each party stands for a different function; and finally, the distribution of capacities between states shows and reflects whether the international system will be unipolar, bipolar or even multipolar. With that, whatever changes in one of these dimensions, it will configure a different structure. States seek to survive in the environment in which they belong, this environment is characterized by constant uncertainties regarding the intentions of other states. States may have several and different objectives, but security dimension is the priority for any one of them, “In anarchy, security is the highest end.”²

The stability of the international system, so long as it remains anarchic, is linked with the fate of its main members. (We can see the composition of Great Powers since 1700 in Table 1).

² *Ibid.*, p.126.

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Table 1 - Great Powers (1700-2020). Adapted from Wright (1965: 647). (For more detailed explanation about the table composition consult A Study of War (1965) - Quincy Wright.

	1700	1800	1875	1910	1935	1945	2020
Turkey	x						
Sweden	x						
Netherlands	x						
Spain	x						
Austria (Austria- Hungary)	x	x	x	x			
France	x	x	x	x	x		
England	x	x	x	x	x		
Prussia (Germany)		x	x	x	x		
Russia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
United States of America				x	x	x	x
Italy			x	x	x		
Japan				x	x		

Wright (1965) suggests that during the last three centuries, the world was composed by variable number of great powers, some of them influenced international system and order for long periods and participated in many wars, others “climbed” when others states “fell”, they just took advantage, but Wright claim that international system is more stable when we have more great powers, As shown in table, the multipolar system lasted for three centuries, because as some states “fell”, others rose to it through the relative increase of their capabilities.

Before twentieth century, the main concern of State was being occupied by other State, and here we are referring again the security dimension of each State. The bipolar system has lasted for more than 70 years now, since the end of the World War II, and almost whole other states fell and lost their capabilities because of the World War II effects, resulting in impressive economic and military losses, and because no third state has been able to develop capabilities comparable to those of the United States and the Russia’s, although this is very discussable in International Relations, because of the rise of States like China and India, specially the first one, can be considered as new Great Power. This table also suggest that only with few exceptions, almost all Great Powers of the time

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participated in big conflicts across the time since 1700, before beginning of the Second World War II, the number of conflicts and wars across Europe were much bigger, but, after first and second World War, the number of these conflicts started to decline, as some authors suggests that after World War II, the world became more peaceful and more constant “since 1945 the world has been stable, and the world of major powers remarkably peaceful.” Waltz (1979: 121).

We can also perceive clear decline also of number of Great Powers in twentieth century, remaining only, United States and Russia (Soviet Union) after World War II, Russian continuity can be explained with huge territory it occupies, but also fast economic growth and military development. Until 1945, the international system was clearly multipolar, and always composed with five or more great powers, besides what Russia as other states will be able to do in international arena, depends on behavior of other states, “То, что Россия сможет позволить себе на мировой арене, в огромной степени будет зависеть от взлетов и падений других держав.” [What Russia can afford on the world stage, will be heavily dependent on ups and downs other powers] Thomas (2010: 118).

Now, in twenty-first century, we have only two states capable to influence world order. According to Wright’s (1965) explanations, with only two great powers, a balance-of-power and international system is unstable now, he argues that four or even more powers are required for its proper functioning. Although we have bipolar world nowadays, the cooperation between states across Europe is clearly visible, which make the international system stable at some point, but it also raised competition among them.

To understand state’s foreign policy, requires knowing in what consist realism as a body of theories of International Relations. Particularly, different approaches of this theory – offensive and defensive realism within the realist tradition, analyses a state’s behavior and intentions in the international system, the explanation of structural realism is shown below (see Figure 1).

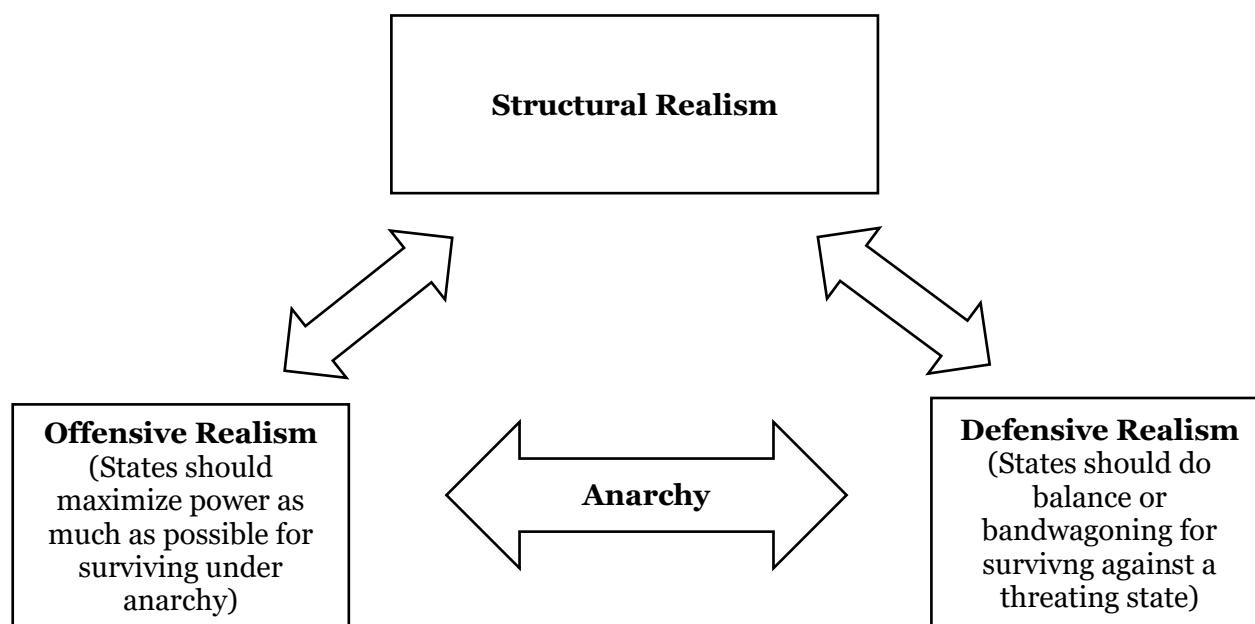


Figure 1 - Explanation of Structural Realism. Source: Figure created by the author.

Over the course of the past twentieth-century and so far, the behavior of states, is based on the idea that: international politics, like all other politics, is a struggle for power (Morgenthau 1948: 13). According to Hans Morgenthau, the absence of a central authority, which is called anarchy³, to maintain peace and balance is cause for alarm because a natural drive for power and glory will encourage humans and states to violence and conflict, this way, anarchy commands and influence state's behavior. Governing without one global government creates a whole complex process, involving participation from multiple actors, frequently sharing different interests and levels of authority. Morgenthau's modern classical realism was the predominant international relations school after WW II. Focused on a negative view of man, this unit-level approach came from human nature. Realists defend that since states are led by people, they also act and behave like people. Even more, states are comparable to wolf pack, hunting same purpose (*power*), this is the reason why they pursue power, a constant competition.

Anarchy suggests that there are different choices for surviving under anarchy, and it is necessary to explain differences between them. For example, offensive realists like Mearsheimer (2001) considers states need power for surviving, which is expressed in expansionism and aggressive foreign policy, he claims that great powers fear each other,

³ Anarchy can be defined as absence of one central government. The concept of anarchy was firstly applied to the international system by Hans Morgenthau (1948) but became widespread. Nowadays, it's commonly recognized among International Relations scholars that the international system is anarchic due to the absence of a world government.

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there is no space for trust among states. Surely, the level of fear differs across time and space, but it cannot be reduced to an insignificant level. From the perspective, for any great power, all other great powers are potential enemies, “States in the international system also aim to guarantee their own survival. Because other states are potential threats, and because there is no higher authority to come to their rescue...” Mearsheimer (2001: 33).

Following Offensive Realism logic, it is imperative to refer, as Springborg (2007: 187) argued that: “in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel: first, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory.” Glory for Hobbes is referred to *power*, as crucial to human behavior, since man has a perpetual and tireless desire for power, to obtain it, State has to gain and fight for it, the more you have, more powerful State is, thus, without strong sovereignty and anarchy, the units would be the scene of chaos and violence, as there is no central power strong enough to guarantee their own security.

States, which are considered the main actors in International Relations, analyze data from other states, mainly economic and military capabilities, to compare and reach the levels that allow them to compete. It is not just a matter of a particular portion of power, but what is important is not to "allow" other state to outnumber the others in those recourses, thus giving rise to a constant search for power, and competition between them as DeRouen (2004: 2) claimed: “This unrelenting pursuit of power means that great powers are inclined to look for opportunities to alter the distribution of world power in their favor.” States fear and suspect from each other, when they desire the same thing (power), it is hard for them to know what is the limit or when power is enough, that’s why they are competing among them continuously, “if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies.” Springborg (2007: 187). The situation of uncertainty about the behavior of states is aggravated by the lack of a central power that can punish possible aggressions, or prevent the development of an armed conflict. The most efficient way for states to guarantee their survival is to increase their power, especially their military strength.

Distinct, offensive, realist, negative, pessimistic, defensive realism ideas like Kenneth Waltz, Stephen Walt, and Robert Jervis argue that although systematic factors have causal effects on state’s behavior, states cannot estimate other states’ actions in advance. Therefore, states efforts to maximize their security by preserving the existing balance of power through mostly defensive strategies, this way, states think strategically about how to survive in the international system - the basic motive driving states is

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survival. Defensive realism, as we discussed before, underline the idea that the international system, while anarchic, follows the idea of “balance of power” and is a self-correcting entity when state actors follow a “defensive” set of policies that seek to maintain their own integrity and survival within the current system and make the most of it.

The idea of “balance of power” played a crucial key role in the nineteenth century, an example of this would be Napoleonic Wars⁴, where the threat of France in upsetting the “balance of power” in European continent forced other states to form alliances and cooperation in order to face Napoleon’s aggressive hegemonic tendencies. State actors were expected adapt to the anarchy of international politics by promoting policies of moderation and defensive cooperation with their neighbors. It’s a way of generosity to the smaller nations, a “word” in the world by suppressing incentive for aggressive and expansionist policies. In summary, defensive realists stand on approach that attempts to avoid and prevent aggression before it begins.

In summary, defensive realism enhances that states develop and maintain policies and programs intended a promoting security through a defensive approach. On the other hand, offensive realism declares that the agendas and policies developed and maintained by states are designed not only at promoting security, but also at increasing their power to dominate the international system.

⁴ 1803-1815.

Research Methodology

The most appropriate methodology⁵ for this research is related to the qualitative method, including the content analysis on political discourse, documentary sources and literature review. In the qualitative research, the data is interpreted and discussions are made in the form of paragraphs and passages. As this research is based on the analysis of Vladimir Putin's 2014 discourse, qualitative techniques have been adopted to interpret the data.

In order to analyze political discourse, the most proper and convenient qualitative methodology is the critical discourse analysis (or CDA). After World War II, the study of political discourses started to emerge with a main objective, "to understand and explain the roles and importance of language and communication in totalitarian regimes and their propaganda" Wodak & Meyer (2008: 17).

Critical discourse analysis is not a direction or school as other approaches in discourse studies and analyses. According to Tannen, Hamilton, & Schiffrin (2015: 466) explanations, CDA aims to offer a different mode of theorizing, analysis and application throughout the whole field. CDA is considered as "cross-discipline" as claimed by Fairclough (1989: 11) to which many established disciplines and fields of study such as linguistics, sociology, anthropology, cognitive psychology among others have contributed. CDA provides common interests in de-mystifying ideologies through the systematic and retroductable⁶ investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual), as explained by Wodak & Meyer (2008: 3) and according to the authors CDA researchers also attempt to make their own positions, conclusions and interests explicit while retaining their respective scientific methodologies and while remaining self-reflective of their own research process.

CDA usually discuss the effective about the study relevant social problems (such as sexism, colonialism, racism, power abuse and other forms of social inequality). Besides, it focuses the relation and also the interrelation between discourse and society spheres, such as politics, culture and economy.

⁵ As stated by Wodak (2015: 16) methodology can be defined as a (normative) theory of how research should be conducted to generate knowledge and contribution. It tells us how research should proceed; it deals with the study (description, explanation, justification) of methods, but does not indicate the methods themselves.

⁶ According to Wodak (2008) and retroductable means that critical discourse analysis should be transparent so that any reader can trace and understand the detailed deep textual analysis as discussed by Fjortoft (2013:68).

Fairclough, regarded as one of the biggest influencers of CDA stated that “My objective, then, is to develop an approach to discourse analysis which could be used as one method amongst others for investigating social changes” (Fairclough 1992: 9). That Author also proposed a three-dimensional conception of discourse⁷ (see figure 2) as an attempt to bring together three analytical traditions, each of which is indispensable for discourse analysis.

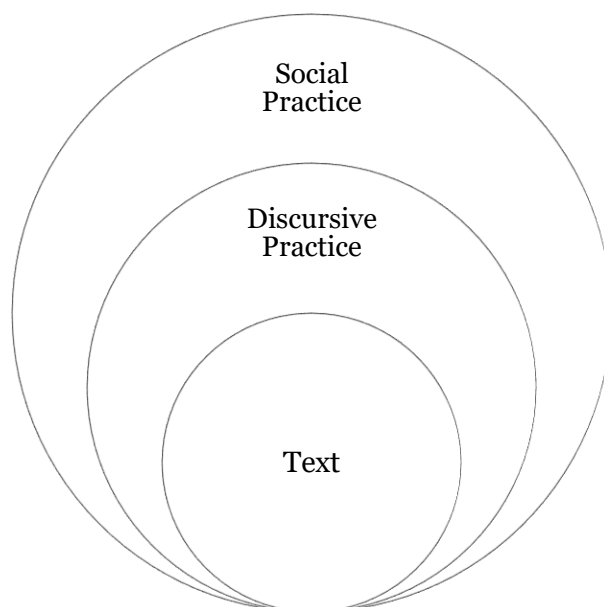


Figure 2 - Fairclough (1992) three-dimensional conception of discourse. Source: Figure created by the author.

According to this Fairclough’s framework, discourse is seen simultaneously as: (1) a text (spoken or written may or not contain visual images or a combination of all), (2) a discourse practice production, consumption and distribution of the text, and (3) a social practice. Subsequently, Fairclough (1995) provides a three-dimensional framework for the analysis of text and discourse: (a) the linguistic *description* of the formal properties of the text; (b) the *interpretation* of the relationship between the discursive processes/interaction and the text, and finally, (c) the *explanation* of the relationship between discourse and social background, Fairclough (1995: 2) “CDA is consolidated here as a 'three-dimensional' framework where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis”. Corresponding to these three dimensions of discourse, description is the stage which is concerned with formal properties of text (grammar, vocabulary, semantics, cohesion). Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction - with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.73.

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process of interpretation. The explanation is related to the relationship between interaction and social context and background.

Thus, to analyze a political discourse throughout a critical discourse analysis (CDA), I will consider a transcribed discourse from the official font. The whole political discourse will be presented in the following sub-chapter 3.3, and before analyzing it, it is essential to read the whole discourse. While reading the discourse, it is central to try to fill in the “gaps” and the unanswered questions that might emerge during the reading and examination. What it is also important is ultimately looking for patterns that may be used to establish suppositions about the discourse. Then to confirm or disconfirm these suppositions it is necessary to search for other related information and data, to confront the discourse data with other sources. This allows to find out questions that need answers with regard to the contextual and political background when the discourse occurred.

Chapter I

Russian Foreign Policy

Differences between domestic and external means of ensuring national interests and security are gradually disappearing.
In this context, our foreign policy becomes one of major instruments of the steady national development and of ensuring its competitiveness in a globalizing world. (Russian Federation 2008).

When we analyze Russia's position, we can consider a more realistic posture in the search for its affirmation in the International System as it puts security issues first and priority, as the national interest and defense of the State also imperative. Russia has already demonstrated that it can use force to reach its objectives, and an example of this was the 2008 Georgia War and the Ukraine Crisis 2013 and the annexation of Crimea 2014, (which will be discussed further). It should also be noted that Russia maintains an institutionalized relationship with former republics, through the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), although the main purpose of the organization is based on a commercial, economic and political nature, these objectives are considered to be "secondary", because the Russia's real intention is to keep post-Soviet states in its orbit (Strzelecki, 2016: 4). In this context, we can consider one of the paradigms of neorealism theory that states act according to a "self-help" logic, states seek their own interests at the expense of the interests of other states, and get closer with more dominant state in their region.

Since 2013 Russian national identity discourse and foreign policy became unified to an extraordinary level. The Kremlin started to look for a place in the international system by relying on domestic discourses and concepts coming from within the country, as well as over reinterpreting Russian history in isolation from West. Subsequently, new national identity, international security discourses and domestic security goals were developed. Within these three spheres, the Kremlin found all kind of threats coming from the outside, from the West. Currently the Russian foreign policy doctrine is more linked to domestic ideas about Russian identity than from existing conceptualizations of the world order that have been established in the theory and practice of international relations. As a result, this has contributed to rise tension in relations between Russia and West, and almost all post-Soviet states.

The current president of Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin and his policies are definitely deeply "rooted" in country's tradition and history according to Hanson-Green

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(2017: 8). Consequently, through a combination of autocratic and personal popularity, President Putin is able to maintain supremacy over not just the internal political system and foreign policy, but also the national political discourse, to include the interpretation of Russian foreign policy, and Russian national identity, he is a “driver” in both spheres, domestic and international. Creating an official narrative of Russian historical identity and its importance is one important aspect of these discourses. Putin “invokes” history into his discourses at media and address to the Federal Assembly, thus Vladimir Putin’s foreign policy is born from inside, from the country’s national identity in which he reviews himself, “Russia serves as an example of such a state where national identity might provide insights into understanding Russian foreign policy.” (Moulioukova, 1948: 5). National identity was one of three dimensions that Vladimir Putin framed for his foreign policy at the beginning of his presidency in 1999/2000 (Cadier & Light 2015: 49). The other two dimensions were the threat to Russia’s territorial integrity, based on its long history of wars and invasions and the threat to Russia’s political sovereignty.

As well-known Italian philosopher Machiavelli⁸ famously argued that it “is better for a ruler to be feared than loved” (Machiavelli, 2014: 65). Considering this, admired is not so bad and also has its own advantages. Get a big amount of support and popularity is a key determinant of the performance of autocratic regimes, such as China’s Xi, Turkey’s Erdogan, Venezuela’s Maduro and others. A major example of this phenomenon in is Russia’s president Vladimir Putin, who has succeeded achieve incomparable high public support and approval ratings for more than 20 years in office. The discussion endures the legitimacy of this ratings and if they are true or not, but one thing is clear, these ratings serve as a source of legitimacy for the President Putin and his regime (Frye, Gehlbach, Marquardt, & Reuter, 2017: 1). Back in Machiavelli era, during fifteenth century and later, there were a several ways to penalize and punish citizens for expressing displeasure and opposition to their ruler or leader and they were legal, thing that wouldn’t happen in modern and contemporary states, in exception of North Korea’s Kim regime. In Russia, opposition usually get banned from internet or get arrested, as pure example we have Alexei Navalny (Sakwa, 2014: 10), Russian lawyer who turned into number one opposition to Vladimir Putin back in 2009, Navalny is constant critic of Putin intern and foreign policy. Navalny faced house arrest back in 2014, he is just one example of what is happening to Russian opposition. Putin doesn’t allow internal policy to distance itself from the design of foreign policy, it must function as a projector, that’s why opposition is silenced when necessary.

⁸ 1469-1527.

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Putin stands for a special place of Russia on a global stage, which is characterized by unique Russian identity, based on its history, legacy, language, culture, size, obligation to protect borders and the sense of being a great power nation. This identity reveals itself in specific interests and the acknowledgment of particular value to independence and sovereignty of the country.

Focusing in the example of Russia, the theoretical driver that fits more to Russia is offensive realism. While many of scholars and authors were focused that Russia will always develop a defensive posture in international arena, things are not so that linear and simple. First of all, Russia was and is always against any Western (EU) and NATO expansions and policies near its borders and all that affects Russia sphere of influence, we have examples of Russia's intervention in the Ukraine crisis in 2013, military involvement in Syria⁹ in 2015, strengthening its diplomatic relations in Persian Gulf and also supporting Venezuela's Maduro regime of financial bankruptcy. This are just some of most recent examples that Russia is not "sleeping bear", "Russian posture on the world stage, which many observers have found surprising. Instead of assuming a defensive position, the Kremlin has launched a counter-offensive, seeking to counter U.S. and Western influence beyond its immediate sphere of 'privileged interests.'" (Deni 2018: 5). It is also crucial to refer that Russia has been acting like "boss" in its area with closer countries, thinking always on strategies and advantages that put Russia ahead of other states, "Overall, Russian foreign policies towards the near abroad have combined different instruments and strategies to preserve asymmetrical relations in the post-Soviet space and reaffirm Russia as the uncontested leader in this area." (Dias 2018: 70). Additional important point to refer is the Russia's military expenditure, with data collected from official fonts, the following graphic will highlight country's military expenses from a period of 2008 to 2018 (see Figure 3).

⁹ Russia has supported the Bashar al-Assad government of Syria since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011 with politically, military aid, and since 30 September 2015 also through direct military involvement.

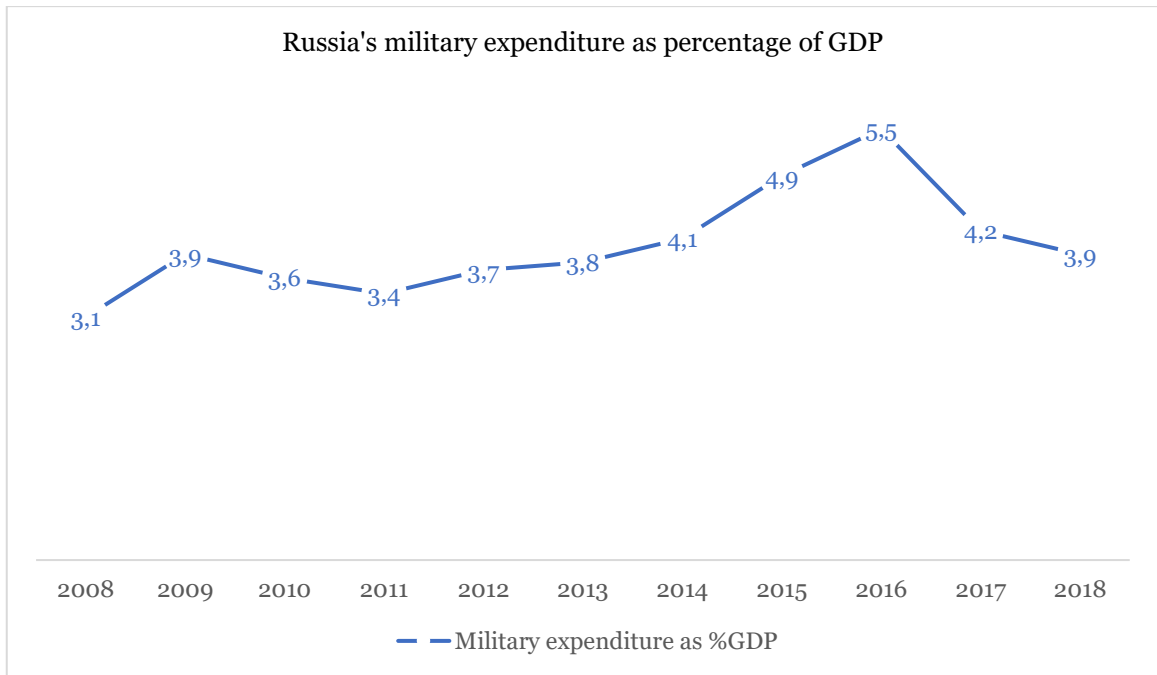


Figure 3 - Russia military expenditure as percentage of gross domestic product (2008-2018). Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database.

As data suggests, Russia’s military expenditure as percentage of GDP since 2008 is gradually increasing with exception in 2010 with world financial crisis¹⁰. It is important to analyze the percentage of spending in military sphere as GDP, because since 2010, Russia’s military spending is slowly raising, which can be explained with intervention in conflicts mentioned before. With concern to put national interest abroad, Kremlin increased military spending every year. In the end of 2017 and 2018, Russia faced many internal problems, as national disasters like fires that affected many regions specially Siberia, Russia spent more money in recovering those areas, so military sphere were reduced and consequently social sphere increased. Despite this, Russia still has put effort in military sphere, because security remains one of the priority domains for Russia, which reflects in percentage of GDP.

After World War II, the states and their economies (especially European, but not only, war affected the whole world) were passing through an extremely difficult phase, the United States of America, through the Marshall Plan¹¹, provided aid to the collapsed European states. Arguably the United States of America were the only

¹⁰ The global financial crisis of 2007–2008 was the most severe since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Some of the world’s best-known financial institutions collapsed or were nationalized, while many others survived only with massive state support Helleiner (2011).

¹¹ The Marshall Plan, also known as the European Recovery Program, was a U.S. program providing aid to Western Europe following the devastation of World War II. It was enacted in 1948 and provided more than \$15 billion (dollars) to help finance rebuilding efforts on the continent. Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

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hegemonic power after World War II, at the best financial position, and militarily capable of confronting any state, and yet the only one with weapons of mass destruction - nuclear bombs.

The world changed since the first nuclear weapon in warfare was used by the USA against Japan cities of Hiroshima, and it took only three days when second bomb was dropped in Nagasaki in 1945¹², almost at the end of World War II, the world changed since there and unfortunately, the story of nuclear weapon development did not stop there, "Nuclear explosives have produced 'the most radical change in the nature of power and the characteristics of power units since the beginning of the modern state system', or perhaps 'since the beginnings of mankind'." (Booth 2011: 27). Russia rounded by fear and uncertainty after end of the World War II, was obligated to react, because there was a feeling and expectation that war did not really over and new war would break out soon. Joseph Stalin impressed by the destructive power of USA bombs, ordered their quick development in Soviet territory, with anxiety that USA could use bomb against Soviet Union, "Stalin feared that the United States would use the bomb to put pressure on the Soviet Union, and he was determined not to let that happen. He adopted a policy of what he called tenacity and steadfastness." (Holloway 2009: 379).

It took only four years to Russia develop and begin first atomic bomb test in 1949.

"...it was not until November 1 and
December 28, 1949, that the Soviet Union had enough plutonium for its
second and third bombs." (Holloway 2009: 380).

These events were "kick-off" for what just was coming, a true arms race. The atomic bomb had a double effect on Soviet politics. First it inspired care and moderation, but it also made the Soviet Union less willing to behave for fear of appearing vulnerable to intimidation. The bomb made the post-war relationship Between Soviet Union and USA even more tense and antagonistic than it would have been in any case, initiating what in history is called the Cold War. Events like fast development of atomic bomb by Soviet Union in 1949 and Korean War¹³ illustrated how fast Soviet Union was recovering from World War II terror, Moscow were capable support North Korea only because it had

¹² On August 6th, at 8:15 A.M., Japanese time, B-29 heavy bomber flying at high altitude dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, more than 66,000 people were killed, and 69,000 were injured. On August 9th, three days later, at 11:02 A.M., another B-29 dropped the second bomb on the Industrial section of the city of Nagasaki, killing 39,000 persons, and injuring 25,000 more. Reed (2014: 8).

¹³ 1950-1953. The first conflict that emerged from the Cold War occurred on June 25th, 1950 between North Korea and South Korea. Both were used in a proxy war for the bipolar system rivals, where the Soviet Union supported North Korea and the United States was supporting South Korea.

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enough arsenal and atomic bomb which could challenge USA position, which were analyzed with concern, because Soviet Union capabilities were growing day by day¹⁴.

That “tension” and arms build-up began nearly after 25 June 1950, when the Korean War started. Truman¹⁵ administration boarded on an arms build-up planned to reverse the perceived Soviet lead in conventional forces. From local Korean conflict, could evolve into a global war, as Soviet Union was looking for allies as China, United States could not have much support from European countries, devastated by war “СССР, который связан с Китаем Пактом Взаимопомощи. Следует ли этого бояться? По-моему, не следует, так как мы вместе будем сильнее, чем США и Англия.” [USSR, which is associated with China Mutual Assistance Pact. Should we be feared? In my opinion, we should not be, since we together we will be stronger than the USA and England] (Torkunov 2000: 116-117).

After Josef Stalin death in 1953, arms race took a new route. His successor, Nikita Khrushchev¹⁶ and was more “elastic” in the sense of expand Soviet assistance to the non-aligned nations, such as Egypt, Laos, Yemen, Afghanistan and India, none of this states were Communist (Ojserkis 2014: 307). Back there, such a decision by the Soviets was to counter American aid programs and expansionism. The aid and support for countries mentioned before cannot be compared to that given to Cuba back in 1962 by Khrushchev, which was known as The Cuban Missile Crisis¹⁷.

This arms race did not stop win Cuba, it lasts still nowadays, according to Defense Intelligence Agency (2017: v) report “Russia continues to modernize its extensive nuclear forces and is developing long range precision-guided conventional weapons systems.” It has been acknowledged that Russia is a recent state and democracy, it is in phase of national identity building. Scholars have slowly divided between those who understand and defend more pro-European approach or let Russia alone on her own

¹⁴ “The estimated Soviet atomic bombing capability is growing at a rate which, sometime in 1952, will find the Communists strong enough to destroy much of our capability of immediate retaliation, and seriously cripple the United States itself. And who doubts any longer that the Soviets will k when ready? The United States has two prime weapons in defense against this threat: (1) A political use now of its diminishing atomic bombing advantage; (2) A fuller and more effective use of its industrial potential” Source: Foreign Relations of the United States, 1951, Volume 1, memorandum from W. Stuart Symington (Chairman of the National Security Resources Board) to the National Security Council (NSC).

¹⁵ Harry S. Truman, was the 33rd president of the United States (1945-1953), succeeding upon the death of Franklin Roosevelt, after serving as vice president.

¹⁶ (1953-1964).

¹⁷ Protect Cuba from United States invasion was crucial to Soviet Union, but getting closer to United States border was also a strategic point, that’s why in May 1962 Khrushchev decided to deploy in Cuba a group of Soviet forces, consisting of 50,000 troops armed with medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, fighter aircraft, light bombers, cruise missiles, naval vessels, and submarines, as well as strategic and tactical nuclear weapons (Holloway 2009: 394).

way, Russia is an example of how internal policy can affect whole range of foreign policy, it is a combination of both factors, “The foreign policy of a state usually is a result of ‘coalitions of active actors and groups situated both inside and outside state boundaries; its substance emanates from issues of both domestic and international politics.’” (Shyrokykh 2018: 4). Even if Russian national identity is in crisis, it is a big influencer in creation of domestic and foreign policies. Most of the recent activities outside Russian borders, like in Ukraine, Syria and Venezuela came from national interests of develop a “shield” outside its common sphere of influence.

As discussed and analyzed, Russia’s foreign policy can be drawn in following assumptions, due to Russia’s constant looking to expand new spheres of influence and taking actions where it never took before and maintain the old ones; looking for economical agreements but always in a “solar system” scope, where Russia wants to play a main role because Russia has enough recourse to influence negotiations; Russia is trying to put together all Russian native speakers in one side of the “battle”, which can be observed in the Ukrainian crisis, (Thorun 2009) in (Cadier & Light 2015: 164): “geopolitical realism (competition between territorialized sphere of influence), geo-economic realism (struggle for markets) and geocultural realism (competition between value systems)”.

It was also possible to debate how Russia is trying to gain space in international system by challenging current great power United States of America, with constant stake in resource and military development, “Ключевые цели России остаются теми же самыми: модернизация экономики и обеспечение стабильности внешней среды, которая должна быть благоприятной для внутреннего социально-экономического развития.” [Russia's key goals remain the same: modernizing the economy and ensuring the stability of the external environment, which should be favorable for internal socio-economic development]. (Kobrinskaya 2014: 4).

1.1. Russian National Identity

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991), a severe debate started over how to formulate the national identity and foreign policy of the new Russian Federation. Debate soon turned on efforts to identify and protect national interests. Russian foreign policy has been adapting to the changes in the international system itself, being itself a crucial element that has contributed to these changes. The changes in Russian foreign policy

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take place in the "intermestic", or that is, in the interconnection between the international and the domestic, demonstrating how internal conditions are inseparable from foreign policy and how Russia assumes this principle as a structuring factor in the definition and implementation of its policies Freire (2017: 36). Starting by a concept of national identity itself, which is subject to constant redefinitions and transformations, like identity, foreign policy and is not at all marked by linearity, and specially for this national identity transformation is slow and gradual, identity doesn't born from overnight (Zevelev 2016).

Russian domestic dimension has triumphed in the formulation of foreign policy, although the optimization of foreign policy results in strengthening, where domestic support is evident. The combination of these two dimensions, is evidenced in cases such as the annexation of Crimea in 2014 or intervention in Syria in 2015. Both of examples given previously reflects in assertive foreign policy with use of power, both of examples play an important role for Russia in terms of its capacity to influence international system, and both cases refer to high levels of domestic approval associated with a discourse confirming and associated to the status of great power, Russia even had social movements where people show and stand for supporting these two subjects of foreign policy.

Diverse sections of the Russian elite differed to choose and define the national interest, "The problem, however, was to determine the basis on which Russia's national interests should be defined and who should define them" mentioned by Hunter (2016: 114) this discussion was intertwined with the wider foreign policy orientations under discussion in early 1990's. The most traditional and "oldest" division is between Westernizers and Slavophiles, which dating back to the period of big shifts in Russia in 1840, "The roots of the current discussion on Russian identity can be traced back to the nineteenth-century debates between Slavophiles and Westernizers." As according to Zevelev (2016: 4).

First of all, a new world-leader is emerging, several scholars, politicians and Western countries are divided and differ in their explanations of the Moscow's foreign policies over last two decades, according to Casula (2014: 2) "Many observers are oscillating between disbelief and alarm, trying to figure out Russia's conduct in foreign affairs by referring to imperialism, the Cold War, or to an inherently autocratic character of Russian politics". In one thing they all agree and is true that Russia is changing and searching for a new national identity, which, in accordance with Sergunin:

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has two dimensions, domestic and international, internal dimension is related to internal cohesion, searching for one national consensus on the vital principles of government and values, where people share some common cultural and spiritual features, in this dimension, a nation perceives itself as a united entity, as a bounded community, people treat and socialize each other, as a member of the same community, as one exceptional community.

The international dimension suggests self-assessment in relation to people that belong to a different community relatively to the same one. The perception of differences between nations and uniqueness of its own nation is vital for the formation of a national identity. (Sergunin 2016: 13).

The discussion of Russian national identity as referred, goes back to the nineteenth century, which was a period of big changes in Russia, also known as renaissance-like period¹⁸, country witnessed mainly big shifts in literature and philosophy. The Russian elitist and nobility began to separate two distinct schools, the Slavophiles¹⁹ and the Westernizers²⁰. By one side, Westernizers encouraged development according to European principles and pathways. By contrast, the Slavophiles argued that Russia has a special historical and cultural legacy mission and could develop only in accordance with inherent traditions.

Attending to Westgate (2018: 2) discussion between Slavophiles and Westernizers spread out: “While the division widened between the two groups, the debate began to appear in journals and intellectual salons. The prominent literati started to incorporate their respective ideologies into novels, pushing the philosophical debate even farther”. But the Slavophiles defenders soon realized that their contemporary society did not represent their ideal. They believed that Tsar Peter I the Great²¹ by introducing reforms based on and imitating the West, had corrupted Russia, driven a wedge between the nobility and the peasantry, and disappointed the natural social relationships. We can find this “blame” in *Russian Thinkers*, Berlin (1978: 117), author provides that it was Peter the Great that sent small group of young men into Western Europe in order to learn languages, cultures, new knowledge, new arts and acquire new skills, to implement those

¹⁸ Authors like Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) in *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) illustrates on the conflict between Slavophiles and Westernizers, which has existed in Russia since the reign of *Tsar Peter the Great* in the 18th century. In Russia these two groups are not only two contradictory value systems, but are also politically different.

¹⁹ Slavophile, in Russian history, member of a 19th century intellectual movement that wanted Russia's future development to be based on values and institutions derived from the country's early history. They considered western Europe, which had adopted the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions, as morally bankrupt and regarded Western political and economic institutions (e.g., constitutional government and capitalism) as outgrowths of a deficient society. Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

²⁰ Westernizer, or Russian Zapadnik, was in 19th-century Russia, especially in the 1840s and 50's, one of the intellectual movements that emphasized Russia's common historic destiny with the West, as opposed to Slavophiles, who believed Russia's traditions and destiny to be separated and unique.

²¹ Reigned between 1682–1725.

ideas in Russia, that period was known as beginning of Westernization in Russia. It was look alike irreversible path of new Russia, getting such close “contact” with West.

According to Shin (2009: 4) there are also scholars and political figures, who defend westernizer-atlanticist²² tradition, which give priority to cooperation and even integration with the West and the international community. West is seen not as a rival for Russia, but rather as a partner in the creation of a new world order. This discussion can also be found in Tsygankov (2016: 4) where author refer that Peter the Great always admired West and its technological and military development, bringing these ideas and implement them in Russia was priority to Tsar Peter, “Westernizers placed the emphasis on Russia’s similarity with the West and viewed the West as the most viable and progressive civilization in the world.” The first wave of Westernizers put focus in West, and Russia was seen as a loyal member of cooperation and strategy for Europe.

Westernizers during the Soviet system saw Russia as standing not too far apart from European social democratic ideas. When Mikhail Gorbachev²³ went to power at 1985, he promised a new era of cooperation when he assumed power, one of Gorbachev favorite positions of thinking were that the Soviet Union had to “purify” itself from Stalinist²⁴ regime and become a more democratic version of socialism, he tried to implant new reforms through *glasnost*²⁵, and *perestroika*²⁶. In his foreign policy, Gorbachev pursued the notion of shared and mutual security with the West and presided over a series of revolutionary arms-control agreements with the United States, as well as over the Soviet military withdrawals from Europe and the third world. By introducing the idea of a mutual European “home”, Gorbachev meant to achieve Russian-European integration based on the principles and values of European democracy. Gorbachev even seek for radical improvement of USSR’s foreign relations and eliminate confrontation with West Dzirkals (1990). Even though Gorbachev was “popular and friend” with the West, he was far less so in his own country, where his constant reforms resulted in the interruption of

²² Shin (2009) discuss that Russia’s westernizer-atlanticist tradition, slavophile-nationalist tradition, and geopolitical-urasianist tradition have developed into a liberalist paradigm, realist paradigm, and geopolitical paradigm respectively after the collapse of Soviet Union (1991). And these paradigms, even though they have more than a little difference in detail, have developed quite similar ways of thoughts on international/world politics to contemporary western IR theory.

²³ Mikhail Gorbachev Era lasted from 1985-1991. Mikhail announced broad political reforms had radically changed the balance between Moscow and other regions. The history of the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991 is a story of its demise as a state. The dissolution of the Soviet Union, which led to its breakdown in 15 independent states, started in early 1985.

²⁴ Joseph Stalin was General Secretary of the Communist Party (1922–1952).

²⁵ Mikhail Gorbachev defined glasnost as tool providing the people more information and transparency about party affairs and exposing corrupt officials and economic managers in the press.

²⁶ According to (Lane, 1990: 13), Gorbachev’s perestroika, briefly, is a set of tactics focused at impose new social reforms. Perestroika is considered as approach or attitude to politics and society.

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the centralized planning system, without the solution and implementation of any real market mechanisms, leading to total chaos.

Finally, the liberal Westernizers in post-Soviet, argued for the affinity of their country with the West based on such shared values as democracy, human rights, and a free market. Authors who belong to the westernizer-atlanticist tradition, argue that priority should be given to cooperation and even integration with the West and the international community. These attitudes towards Russia's place in the world and its internal arrangements are supplemented by a strong Western orientation in foreign policy. They would not place the West as an adversary or rival, but rather as a partner in the creation of a new world order. According to their point of view, the West and Russia now share the same values – democracy, a market economy, and human rights – and may soon be all threatened and compromised by a fast emerging problems which affect all of us, such as migration, terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, and even military aggression from the developing countries in the South, stated by Shin (2009: 4). Staying together, Russia with West is considered the best strategy for Westernizers, not only for collaboration but also a teamwork against problems described above.

Liberal Westernizers warned against relations with former Soviet allies, but by integration CIS²⁷ since 1991, Russia retreated its contact with West and gave step back instead of forward, “Russian Federation in the corresponding regions, paying special attention to the activities of organizations and institutions that contribute to strengthening of integration processes in the CIS space.” (Russian Federation 2008). Losing cooperation between key ex-Soviet States was considered as the worst option and as a big mistake of the Kremlin in the collapse of Soviet Union.

Boris Yeltsin's vision of integration and strategic partnership with the West assumed that Russia would develop liberal democratic institutions and build a market economy “copying” the method of the West, “Although a change of a pro-Western Russian foreign policy could be observed as early as 1993 when Boris Yeltsin was in power; the arrival of Putin marked the beginning point of a new political era for the Russian society. Moreover, following Putin's election, the official Russian foreign policy thinking experienced a dramatic shift”. Kasymov (2012: 59). Moreover, some authors even make a division between two distinct periods of Russian Foreign Policy, one during Yeltsin

²⁷ On the 8 December 1991 in Minsk the leaders of the three Slav Republics of the Soviet Union signed the Declaration by the Heads of State of the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and Ukraine, and the Agreement Establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States. Voitovich (1993).

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period, second period marked by Putin. Putin, for many authors, schools and traditions is considered a Statist²⁸, a faith on power structures, military force, and coercive state power, while excluding civil actors from the political process makes Statists diametrically opposed to Westernists. Their main focus is protection, all exterior to Russian border is considered threat, that's why protection comes as number one priority for Statists, "Critical to statism is the notion of external threats to Russia's security." (Tsygankov 2016: 6).

This rise of statism as Russia's official foreign policy philosophy wouldn't have been possible without gathering security threats both inside of Russia and outside the country, statism also encourage a Russian specificity and its ability to define a form of independent development as referred by Freire (2017: 39). From inside, Russia was leading with the growing challenges of transition of power and instability in the southern regions, like in Chechnya back in 1994, when Yeltsin failed to respond Chechnya's self-announcement of independence in 1991, and late military intervene contributed to a long and bloody period of confrontation. Outside Russian borders, threats started from instabilities and ethnic conflicts in countries like Moldova, central Asia and the Caucasus. By other side, West continuously plan expand towards Russian borders, either EU enlargement of NATO expansion, greatly contributed to the birth and expansion of Statist thinking in the Russia. Statists stand for power as only way to compete with threats either from inside as from outside, as Tsygankov expressed, "Statism assumes that respect and recognition can come only from strength, and weakness is not worthy of respect."²⁹

After Vladimir Putin came to power, who now has been in charge as Russian President over more than 20 years, Putin always had ambitions to put Russia in a world stage and protect national interest. As Cadier & Light (2015: 48) alleged: "Putin's goal since 1999/2000 has been to restore Russia as a great power and world civilization." President Putin always blamed and pointed finger at West for all economic and social difficulties Russia was passing through past years and Russian president always was in mission for searching to establish alliance with other vicinity states and ex-Soviet countries, as according to Shin (2009: 6) "Such a foreign policy shift with its anti-Western tendency included strengthening the near-abroad policy, continuous attempts to form a trilateral

²⁸ One of the reasons and factors leading to Statism approach is the presence or perception of the external threat

to the security of the state. Plans to expand the US military presence in Europe and in the former Soviet territories gave birth of a new wave of Statist thinking because of the perception of immediate threat to Russia's state interests, among other factors. Kasymov (2012).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.98

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alliance with India and China, and a strategic partnership with China.” Establishing contact with these two countries for some authors was considered as selfish comparatively with ex-Soviet countries, Russia was acting like a “Solar System”, acting with other ex-Soviet countries with own national interests when it comes to create new economic and military operations and agreements with other states, “Она покончила с льготными ценами на газ для постсоветских республик и прекратила поставки на Украину.” [She did away with preferential gas prices for post-Soviet republics and cut off supplies to Ukraine] (Trenin 2009: 170).

The idea that Russians were in close contact with the West than ever before was quite popular during the Gorbachev and early Yeltsin eras, before Putin took control of Russia. Russia’s liberal Westernizers blamed Putin for his constant effort on shape Russia as a great power status. Putin’s integration with West nations was mainly economically and discourse over common security threats, Westernizers blamed president Putin over his obsession of power and insisted that Russia was becoming gradually aggressive and opportunist toward ex-Soviet states, especially in economic and natural resources, “Gas was, and still is, the most important element in negotiations not only with Ukraine and Belarus, but with practically all countries bordering Russia” (Mitrova 2014: 15), as known, one of Russian national interest is to possess a *soft power* tool such as gas, which makes it very important instrument for international negotiations and to reinforce its *soft power*, gas can be considered an tool to obtain influence, which allow Russia have impact outside of its borders from internal interests.

Russia is a pure example of national identity crisis, “Russia demonstrates an example of a nation that dwells upon its national identity for centuries, and this has become its elites’ national hobby.” (Shevtsova 2013) Russia, like ex-Soviet states, is independent country in twenty-first century, but is in a constant process of looking for a national identity. “Russia is still at the stage of nation-building.” (Sergunin 2016: 13). Put a Russia in a world stage, to compete for it interest against other states is maybe the biggest and toughest challenge for country in present century. Furthermore, Russia never “existed” within the current borders as an independent state, or had particularly economy, system of government, administrative and societal organization. Russian identity is just not strong enough to triumph and be recognized, is in process of constant mutation as we have seen, “The Russian identity has started to be recreated in the mass consciousness but it has not become strong enough and has not been reflected in a tangible strategy of the country’s development.” (Karaganov 2014: 24). That’s why, some authors point to

the not one, but five different approaches³⁰: (1) A union identity; (2) The Russian nation incorporating all three eastern Slavic peoples; (3) The Russian nation as a community of Russian speakers; (4) The Russian nation defined racially; (5) A civic Russian national identity grounded in the Russian Federation Kuzio (2016). For present dissertation the approach (3) The Russian nation as a community of Russian speakers is very important, in which language variable is the main marker of identity. Putin in his political discourses many times refers to Russian speakers outside Russia as “compatriots”. This “project” of Russian nation as a whole community of Russian speakers is a myth if we look what happened back in 2013 crisis in Ukraine. The conflict proved Putin was wrong about “language unity”, because on the same battle we have Russian speakers fighting against Russian side, that means Ukrainians born who speak Russian, and at the same frontline we have Ukrainians fighting against Ukrainian regime speaking native Ukrainian language. This is the same war between one Russian language, “perhaps” Putin expected that all Russian speaking community would unit in one side of battle, thing that didn’t happen. According to data³¹, 8.3 million citizens identified themselves as Russians 17.3% of Ukraine’s population. Russian was the native language of 29.6% of the population in Ukraine. If all Russian speakers would “unite”, one third of Ukraine were pro-Russian, and maybe we would have had another outcome of the conflict.

The discussion still endures nowadays, concerning whether Russia is unique in its traditions and should continue in the way of its history or the country should follow the rest of the Western world, which is the most appropriate approach? The only change nowadays is in the names, they are no longer called Slavophilism and Westernism, but are instead based on the historical Imperial and Soviet ideology “versus” the capitalist Democracy. Russia is still leading with this dichotomy because it is in a process of formation from a long era of integrity with other states, Russia never was “alone” nor despised as much as now in the international system. Furthermore, national identity crisis is not only linked to the transitional states, if we took example of modern Europe, it would be hard not to find a state which is not thinking about its national identity, leading at the same time with many factors like globalization, terrorism and massive migration that affect mainly Europe.

³⁰ For more detailed description of all five approaches consult *Russian National Identity and the Russia-Ukraine Crisis*. Kuzio (2016).

³¹ According to the data of the last national census conducted in 2001. Source: UCIPR (2017).

Chapter II

Russia's Sphere of Influence

“Needless to say, any territory annexed to the realm of a conquering ruler may or may not be in the same geographical region and share the same language. If it is and the language is shared, the territory will be much easier to hold on to, especially if its people are not used to the freedom of self-government.”

(Machiavelli 2014: 8).

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought indisputably a profound change in the global power balance and geopolitics. It marked the end of the rivalry that saw the struggle of two great powers. Factually, the collapse of the Soviet Union is usually associated to Mikhail Gorbachev and his policies that pursued to reorder the Cold War relations with the West as well as his domestic policies to reform the weak Soviet economy and agitated society. Gorbachev's test policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, as discussed before, set in the chain of events that eventually led to the dissolution of the Union.

The whole geopolitics of Russia during Soviet Union was concerned about its other fourteen Soviet members, but Mikhail Gorbachev chose a new Soviet path distinct from his predecessor's. He pursued an end to the Cold War, from which, author Flint (2006: 13) gives us a short example in what consist geopolitics, “For instance, the Cold War, was a conflict over the control of territory that was provoked and justified through geographically based images of “the Iron Curtain”. This Iron Curtain never existed as a geographical or physical place, it was an expression used to designate the division of Europe into two parts, Eastern Europe and Western Europe as distinct areas of economic and political influence in the post-World War II era. Author also refers that in order to understand, analyze, and be able to critique geopolitics, it requires us to operate with more than one definition³², because it is a concept in constant transformation.

Mikhail also desired to close relations with the West as a step towards saving the weakened Soviet economy, “Gorbachev had ambitious plans to create profoundly different relationship with the West and the rest of the world.” (Aboyade 2018: 75). That agenda, which the Kremlin described as “new political thinking³³”, was initially very

³² *Ibid.*, 13.

³³ New political thinking doctrine was Mikhail Gorbachev's doctrine as part of his reforms of the Soviet Union. Its main objectives were ideologization of international politics, abandoning the concept of class struggle, increasing interdependence of the world, mutual security based on political rather than military

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popular domestically and also well accepted abroad by other states, because it was a step towards cooperation between them. Gorbachev claimed that economy only could be restored and saved if Soviet Union reduced the military costs, “we want termination and not continuation of the arms race and, therefore, offer a freeze of nuclear arsenals, an end to further deployment of missiles.”³⁴ Restore economy through military reduction was the idea of Gorbachev, he also convinced the Union to back off from Afghanistan war³⁵, which was lasting too long and costing the Union a lot of money. Gorbachev went even further and adopted the Charter of Paris for a New Europe³⁶, he intended to reduce confrontation and forge a partnership between the Soviet Union and the West, assuming the compromise with the West.

While Mikhail Gorbachev’s ancestors Nikita Khrushchev with Cuba missiles implementation and Leonid Brezhnev Doctrine³⁷ had different thinking over the Soviet Union geopolitics and foreign policy, while both of them tended to expand Soviet areas of influence out of borders, in different areas of the world, Mikhail Gorbachev was opposingly more careful and conservative. Those power shifts in the Soviet Union brought geopolitical changes, because we should consider geopolitics as not static and frozen in time, but as a target of constant changes and mutations, as some authors consider even give following definition, “Coming up with a specific definition of geopolitics is notoriously difficult, for the meaning of concepts like geopolitics tends to change as historical periods and structures of world order change.” According to Tuathail et al. (1998:1).

Geopolitics is the product of the time and space combined, some of the Russian theorists choose carefully apply “soft” definition to geopolitics, but preserve the importance of spatial or geography as the most important ones (Sergunin 2016: 164). In some periods of time, for any state, geopolitics can be one think and with over time be something

instruments, which constituted a significant shift from the previous principles of the Soviet foreign politics (Lowenkron, 1988: 83).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.75

³⁵ Lasted from 1979-1989. Fought in the context of the Cold War, Soviet forces fought alongside troops of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan against groups of mujahideen guerrillas of different nationalities.

³⁶ The Charter of Paris for a New Europe (also known as the Paris Charter) was adopted by a summit meeting of most European governments in addition to those of Canada, the United States and the Soviet Union, in Paris from 19–21 November 1990. The Paris Summit was the peace conference of the Cold War: Gorbachev’s *perestroika* effort had ultimately put an end to the ideological and political division of the “Iron Curtain”. Pluralist democracy and market economy were together with international law and multilateralism seen as victorious. Source: (OSCE, 1990).

³⁷ The Brezhnev Doctrine was a Soviet foreign policy that proclaimed any threat to socialist rule in any state of the Soviet bloc in Central and Eastern Europe was a threat to them all, and therefore justified the intervention of fellow socialist states. It was proclaimed in order to justify the Soviet-led occupation of Czechoslovakia earlier in 1968. The Soviet Union under Brezhnev had the right to use military force to maintain the strict rule of the Communist Party in nearby socialist countries Rostow (1968).

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completely different, because it is not only policy and geography combined that makes geopolitics, it is more than that, it is also a business, resources, coalitions and rivalry.

In order to understand in what consists Russia's geopolitics in post-Soviet space and under Putin's leadership, this chapter focuses on the most important geopolitical changes on near abroad countries since the collapse of the Soviet Union and examines what were the main impacts of those changes.

As current Russia's president consider that collapse of the Soviet Union was a tragedy, "Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century." (Russian Federation 2005). Russian territory was never so reduced and so "small" as since Soviet collapse, during its Empire era and the Soviet Union period Russia had a lot of land and areas under control, but from now on, the country was on its own destiny. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the relations between Russia and the West have passed ups and downs. Constant failure to reach agreements and dispute for territory in Eastern Europe were the key reasons for stagnation between Russia and West. They reached "boiling point" in Putin's third term as Russian President, and the main reason was Crimean Crisis (Casula 2014: 2), the dispute for this strategic territory in south of Ukraine put the two giants in the arena, in one side the West and in other Russia. Ukraine was the chosen stage in that new conflict in Eastern Europe. Russia desired minimize this geopolitical loss from the expansion of Western institutions – the EU and the NATO, as according to Dias (2018: 78).

Russia was not the only one defeated in geopolitics, in the same century, Europe also lost geopolitical influence across Africa, "After World War II, the West, in turn, began to retreat; the colonial empires disappeared" as according to Tuathail et al. (1998: 163). Decolonization³⁸ brought to Europe a fewer geographical influence in African colonies, (some of them were declared independent earlier than others, but by the end of the twentieth century all the countries were declared independent or fought for independence in colonial wars).

³⁸ In 1960, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV)), known also as the Declaration on Decolonization. By this resolution, the General Assembly, considering the important role of the United Nations in assisting the movement for independence in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories, solemnly proclaimed the necessity of bringing colonialism in all its forms and manifestations to a speedy and unconditional end, and in this context, declared, inter alia, that all people had a right to self-determination. Source: United Nations.

2.1. The “Russian World”

Talking about Russia’s post-Soviet geopolitics is also talking about “Russian World”³⁹ concept. Historically this concept lead us to the eleventh century and it was more linked to the loyalty to the territory, then it remerged in the 1990’s with the end of the Soviet Union and also with different meaning, but it gained more popularity in Russia in 2014, when Vladimir Putin used it to justify Russia’s actions in Crimea Laruelle (2015), the author describes Russian World as a geopolitical imagination, it was a tool that the Kremlin used to protect its citizens abroad, because after the Soviet collapsed many Russians were outside Russia, “Mais relevante, o desmoronamento da URSS deixou cerca de 25 milhões de russos fora das fronteiras da nova Rússia, designadamente noutros países ex-soviéticos.” [More relevantly, the collapse of the USSR left around 25 million Russians out the borders of the new Russia, namely in other ex-Soviet countries] Tomé (2018: 72). They were outside homeland, but not forgotten.

The Russia World concept as Laruelle (2015: 1) explains it is a powerful tool, a *soft power* that Russia uses to claim its right (sometimes also by *hard power* and in interventionist policy) to prevail influence in the post-Soviet space. This concept can be used as author highlights in a geopolitical perspective, as mentioned before, it can be used as a tool to influence other geographical areas where Russian diaspora is located, especially in Ukraine and elsewhere in the former Soviet space. First of all, it serves as a justification for what Russia considers to be its right to oversee the evolution of its neighbors, and sometimes used as interventionist policy. Secondly, its reasoning is for Russia to reconnect with its pre-Soviet and Soviet past through reconciliation with Russian diasporas abroad and language is an important “ingredient”. Lastly, it is a vital instrument for Russia to brand and claim itself on the international level, and to advance its own voice in the world (linked to the international order). In order to continue having influence over post-Soviet areas, Putin had a powerful tool to use as a pretext of having any type of interference whenever he desired, that concept was like an instrument for projecting Russia’s geopolitics, as Casula (2014: 4) highlights “Finally, an element of Russian foreign policy which has steadily gained importance is the concern Russia displays for its “compatriots” (sootechestvenniki).”

Russia continued in search of implementing its influence in the post-Soviet space using as justification diaspora, where language and cultural relations between its citizens play

³⁹ A term commonly used to broadly describe both Russians in Russia and Russian-speaking nationals living in other countries. Sometimes synonymous with the ‘former Soviet Union’. Source: UCIPR (2017: 2).

central role in his speeches, and when needed, the intervention might be using force (i.g., in Georgia 2008, Ukraine 2014). Other authors support the same idea, “One of the particularly difficult elements of Russian doctrine is the protection of Russian “out-of-home” minorities and the Russian armed forces being able to intervene outside their territory to protect their Russian citizens” Referred by Sakwa (2008) in Mendes et al. (2018: 131). Author Gearóid Ó Tuathail (1998), a geopolitical critic considers this space as not necessarily physical, but as a political interest and imaginary, because it does not exist, it is created in the people’s mind who share the same language and culture, that they “almost” belong to the same space as they have so much in common.

Even more, Russia is also seeking another objectives beyond protecting its diaspora in the post-Soviet space, it is also a challenging international order, “challenge the current international order are an integral part of the Russian World in its original conception” Laruelle (2015: 20), promoting its voice and influence in the international system. But Russia cannot challenge world order alone, for that the country needs allies and support territories, with this, (Suslov 2017: 27) refers that “this confrontational policy successfully mobilized the “near abroad” part of Russia’s diaspora, and contributed critically to the annexation of Crimea and subsequent pro-Russian rebellion in Eastern Ukraine.” which emerged in conflict that seems to have no end.

For Ukraine since its independence, language was always a hard barrier to overcome, even if the country had one official language, its “strange” having in Ukraine so many other Russian speakers, one third of the population still speaks Russian, “For a modern, bureaucratic state the official language is one of the main instruments of functioning.” Referred by Olszańsk (2012: 8).

Thus, some particular areas are more strategic and important than others for Russia, Eastern Ukrainian and also at South Crimea, as its population almost exclusively uses Russian and the Ukrainian-speaking community is composed exclusively of the immigrants who arrived there in the last half a century Olszańsk (2012: 42). Furthermore, most of Crimean Tatars (a Muslim ethnic minority) and a substantial part of Ukrainians living in Crimea are Russian speaking. Data from last available census in 2001⁴⁰, Russians comprised the majority (58.5%) of persons in Crimea, followed by Ukrainians (24.4%) and Crimean Tatars (12.1 %). More than 50% of Crimean citizens are Russian ethnic. Additionally, more than (77%) of whole population of Crimean’s said

⁴⁰ The data of the all-Ukrainian population census of 2001. Source: Government of Ukraine (2001), Retrieved from <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/Crimea/>

“disappear”, it takes generations. Besides, all the Ukrainians that speak Russian are considered in Ukraine as pro-Russian or pro-Moscow political and state orientation.

This language duality is still visible in the whole Ukraine, it is commonly considered in the community that if you speak Russian, you are directly defending Russian position and actions in Ukraine, but this is what Putin intended to, and with fast internet and its easy access, Russia took advantage and influenced not only some of the most used websites, but also some of the TV channels, “At the same time the rapid development of the Internet media has given Russia new instruments to exert influence which are being actively and skilfully used.”⁴²

The role of language in identity is multidimensional. To possess a common language is necessary to possess a common consciousness, if we add the perception of a shared territory and that shared consciousness becomes nationality. The reality of Ukrainian society is marked by deep regional contrasts - including linguistic ones. Problems ascend only when these regional differences, including language use, become “political” toll.

2.2. Ukraine as Russian strategic shield

There is a big importance for Russia having Ukraine as a strategic “shield” against EU and NATO expansion near its borders. Regarding NATO enlargement, Russia's position has been known for a long time: the extension of NATO to the eastern European countries is a mistake and seen as provocation. Ukraine tried to join NATO as member several times, but this “relation” between NATO and Ukraine never was close, never happened and always failed, Ukraine as a true member of NATO is a mirage, for some authors as we will discuss it will never happen.

In 2004, NATO has its largest enlargement⁴³ since its foundation (1949), with seven new members, of which four were members of the ex-Soviet Union, “surrounding” Russia on its borders. As Russia always worried about its security, now the Kremlin have even more reasons to worry with NATO advancing at fast steps closer to its borders, “Russian geopolitical concerns focus on the prospective encirclement and encroachment of NATO forces on territories that were previously under the Soviet aegis.” (Mendes et al. 2018:

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.41.

⁴³ On 29 March 2014, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia formally became members of NATO by depositing their instruments of accession with the United States Government. Source: NATO).

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101). As Russia noticed that NATO was getting closer to its borders, Moscow started to worry and look carefully at the behavior of the other states that were not yet members, specifically Ukraine. Ukraine's possible accession as member of NATO, after several attempts, summits and cooperation has been going on for a long time, but the most important meeting between NATO and Ukraine took place in 2008, in Bucharest summit, in which Jaap de Hoop Scheffer⁴⁴, declared and promised that Ukraine, together with Georgia will become members of NATO, “NATO welcomes Ukraine’s and Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO. Both nations have made valuable contributions to Alliance operations” (NATO 2008). As known, these much-wished enlargement did not happen neither for Georgia nor for Ukraine. In the case of Georgia, Moscow did not like Tbilisi’s ambition of joining NATO and the European Union, furthermore South Ossetia and Abkhazia⁴⁵ are disputing territories even today between Georgia and Russia, as Russia recognize them as independent autonomous republics and Georgia clearly denies it, claiming it’s part of Georgian territory, “Russia’s diplomatic recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia created a quandary for both Tbilisi and Moscow.” (Hamilton 2018: 21). Furthermore, United Nations (UN) never recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, of 193 member states only 5 (Russia, Nicaragua, Nauru, Venezuela, and Syria) recognize them internationally (Hamilton 2018: 11).

After NATO Summit in 2008, later that year Russia destabilized Georgia with the invasion in these areas, “After fighting broke out between the Georgian government and South Ossetian separatists, Russian forces took control of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.” (Mearsheimer 2014: 3), the objective was to complicate adherence of Georgia to NATO and postpone it as much as possible, the disputed areas are represented below (see figure 5).



Figure 5 - Abkhazia and South Ossetia as disputed territories between Russia and Georgia in 2008.
Source: FPRI.

⁴⁴ Former Secretary General of NATO (2004-2009).

⁴⁵ The status of Abkhazia is a central issue of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict and Georgia-Russia relations.

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Georgia was a big concern for Russia from South, but Ukraine was important from the West, Ukraine in its turn, failed join NATO back in 2008 due the internal crisis that was facing and failed in applying reforms that NATO requested, besides as mentioned in NATO membership requirements, new members must uphold democracy, including tolerating diversity, but talking about tolerance and democracy in Ukraine is still a “recent” and very contested thing that the country is still leading with. Besides, joining NATO as author Tsygankov (2015) mention “The solution to this is not NATO membership for Ukraine. Such a move will only contribute to turn Russia from an angry but manageable power into a real enemy and, possibly, starting a wider war in Europe.”

Eight years after, in 2016 another NATO summit occurred in Warsaw, where the result of that was the signing of a bilateral, supportive agreement and above all NATO's coordination with Ukraine. That meeting brought together NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the ex-President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko. One of the outcomes and most important for Ukraine back in 2016 was the Comprehensive Assistance Package⁴⁶. NATO enlargement, with the accession of former Warsaw pact members and Soviet republics to the alliance, Russia felt as “worried bear” with these NATO’s actions, played a central role in which Russia's geopolitical imagination developed and also influenced Kremlin’s actions in Ukraine (Svarin, 2016:135). Realists like Mearsheimer have even gone further and claimed that Ukraine crisis is West fault, with its continuous pressures near Russian borders, made Russian actions in Ukraine just more aggressive, adopting hard power. As the realist scholar Mearsheimer argued, NATO enlargement is “climax” for Russian security, and the Ukraine crisis thus West’s fault Mearsheimer (2014). If we look careful to map (see figure 6),

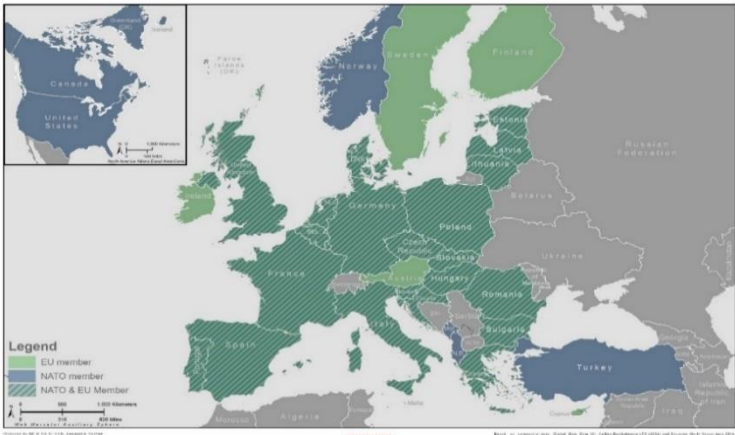


Figure 6 - The European Union and NATO currently have 22 member countries in common (July 2019). Source: NATO HQ Geospatial Section.

⁴⁶ NATO members endorsed a Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine, to make Ukraine’s defense and security institutions more effective, efficient and accountable. This Package included strategic advice and assistance from NATO members. Source: NATO (2017).

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we can clearly see why Russia is taking measures and protecting its borders, and it is also possible to understand why NATO calls the European Union a unique and essential partner, in promoting its enlargement closer to Russian borders. NATO enlargement is the “climax” for Russian security, and the Ukraine crisis thus West’s fault Mearsheimer (2014).

It is almost inevitable the negative impact it would have been if Ukraine have joined NATO in the past years, regarding the issue of NATO enlargement of Ukraine, as Mearsheimer (2014: 11) stated: “The United States and its allies should abandon their plan to westernize Ukraine and instead aim to make it a neutral buffer.” Therefore, Ukraine should work as *buffer state* as he named it, Ukraine cannot be used by the West as an instrument trying to get closer or provoke Russia neither Russia should make use of Ukraine as a shield, Ukraine should be as a “bridge” between the West and Russia, a crucial partner of both. Russia and the West should stop their social engineering effort to influence Ukraine, to achieve stability in that area, the West should abandon any plan that is considered provocation to Russia, because the answer might be colossal, worse than in 2014.

2.3. Crimean crisis in 2014

In order to discuss Crimea’s crisis in 2014 we need first look at background of it, what led to this crisis rise and develop. In fact, we need to go back in time to year 2013, when Ukrainian crisis started. For an in-depth analysis, a brief explanation of more recent crisis in Ukraine, as these effects echo in present.

The Ukrainian crisis is possibly one of the most pressing events in broader framework of the post-cold War European security. Putting a true challenge to the Nobel-awarded⁴⁷ European Union and all its efforts on making and maintaining peace across Europe for more than six decades but several events and conflicts emerged in Europe in last twenty years, first in Balkans then in Kosovo would highlight the security issue in Europe Reis (2017: 144), and now Crimea’s crisis just challenged even more the European security question.

⁴⁷ The Nobel Peace Prize 2012 was awarded to European Union (EU) "for over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe." Source: The Nobel Prize Foundation.

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As Dias (2018: 63) explains that Ukrainian crisis evolved from internal level (domestic) to external (international), it passed borders and has two dimensions. Not excluding its inherent problems since incomplete transition of the Ukraine after its independence (1991), such as structural problems, nepotism, corruption, abuse of power and human rights' violation, Ukrainian crisis has a clear international dimension. Autor Ferreira (2016: 76) discusses that post-Soviet Ukraine were marked by serious endogenous tensions and exogenous factors that conditioned (or prevented) successful transition and condemned Ukrainians to leave their country, originating a large mass of emigrants in search of better life.

When analyzed from international sphere, the events that started in Kiev 2013, which resulted in mass protests such as *Евромайдан* [Euromaidan⁴⁸] resulting in many deaths, political and socioeconomics impacts, "From February 18 to 21, 2014, the bloodiest events of Euromaidan had taken place; the government used weapons against the peaceful protesters, during which 88 Euromaidan participants were killed." Shveda & Ho (2016: 88), cannot be dissociated from competition between the European Union and NATO (though enlargement policies) and Russia for power and security in their shared neighborhood, as discussed previously. The months of long mass civil protests in Ukraine's hearth, resulted not only in regime revolution but also in an essential shift in the popular attitudes toward the country's largest geopolitical neighbors: European Union and Russia.

The armed conflict in the eastern regions of Ukraine (Donbass and Luhansk) with pro-Russians, and the weak European response made Ukraine feeling alone and abandoned and could make Ukrainians reject the idea of full integration or membership into the EU.

Ukrainian crisis had its formal start on 21 November 2013, following the decision of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich not to sign the Association Agreement⁴⁹ with the European Union, as explained before. Ukraine was facing many problems, but the country was specially divided with which path should Ukraine follow, and to make things even more difficult, Ukraine was in a very problematic position in geopolitical way,

⁴⁸ Maidan comes from *Maidan Nezalezhnosti*, which in Ukrainian simply means "Independence Square", the name of the central square in Kiev, where the protesters met. Activists named the *EUROmaidan* movement to express a desire to identify Ukrainian society with Europe. The protest erupted as a reaction against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and his abrupt decision to cancel Association Agreement with European Union in November 2013, leading country plunging the country into an endless conflict in sight.

⁴⁹ The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement aimed to develop political, economic and trade relations between the parties, including the creation of a Comprehensive and Free Trade Area. Source: Association Agreement (2014).

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“Ukraine has found itself in a complex geopolitical situation for many years.” (Stepanenko & Pylynskyi 2015: 115). From one side we have old ally Russia and in the other new opportunity (West).

President Putin realized that the situation in Crimean area threatened the security of Russian citizens living there. Ukraine was unable to show some resistance in Crimea neither military response, since the majority of the population was of Russian origin with great connections and roots to Russia.

With the political disorder in Kiev, the pro-Russian forces and citizens in Crimea decided to act and organized a referendum in 16th March in 2014. The content of the ballots was very controversial, the ballot offered the voters only two options, translated by author, as shown in figure (see figure 7) below.

Приложение 1
к Постановлению Верховной Рады
Автономной Республики Крым
от 6 марта 2014 года № 1702-6/14

Б Ю Л Л Е Т Е Н Ь
для голосования на общекрымском референдуме 16 марта 2014 года

Б Ю Л Л Е Т Е Н Ь
для голосування на загальнокримському референдумі 16 березня 2014 року

2014 сенеси март 16-да умумкырым референдумында рей берильмес ичюн
БЮЛЛЕТЕНЬ

Отметьте любым знаком в квадрате тот вариант ответа, за который Вы голосуете:
Позначте будь-яким знаком у квадраті той варіант відповіді, за який Ви голосуете:

Насыл бир вариант ичюн рей бергенинъизни ишаретнен бельгиленъиз:

1) Вы за воссоединение Крыма с Россией на правах субъекта Российской Федерации? 1) Ви за возз'єднання Криму з Росією на правах суб'єкта Російської Федерації? 1) Русие Федерациону субъекти акъларында Къырым Русиеге къошулмасына разысынъыз?	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Вы за восстановление действия Конституции Республики Крым 1992 года и за статус Крыма как части Украины? 2) Ви за відновлення дії Конституції Республіки Крим 1992 року і за статус Криму як частини України? 2) Сиз Къырым Джумхуриетининъ 1992 сенеси ичюн Анаясаы амельге кечирильмеси ве Къырым Украина къысмы оларакъ статусы ичюн?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Бюллетень, в котором оставлены неотмеченными или отмечены оба варианта ответа, считается недействительным.
Бюллетень, в якому залишено непозначеними або позначено обидва варіанти відповіді, вважається недійсним.
Къайд этильмеген я да эки вариант къайд этильгени заманда бюллетень керчек сайылмаз.

Бюллетень изготавливается размером 210 x 150 мм на бумаге белого цвета.

Figure 7 - The original ballot from Crimean referendum (2014). Source: Regnum.ru (<https://regnum.ru/pictures/2099114/9.html>)

Crimean Crisis

The choice 1: Do you support the reunification of Crimea with Russia with all the rights of the federal subject of the Russian Federation?

The choice 2: Do you support the restoration of the Constitution of the Republic of Crimea in 1992 and the status of the Crimea as part of Ukraine?

The two choices of ballot were written in three major languages of Crimea: Russia, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar.

From this ballot, after some research, it was possible to find the “trick” behind choice number 2. It happens that people who vote for choice 1, clearly wanted to Crimea reunify with Russia, but the choice number 2 has a following specification: when it refers in choice number 2, that if “you support restoration of the Constitution of the Republic of Crimea in 1992”, it happens that, the constitution of 1992 had a particular articles in which Russia and Crimean Republic could take advantage even if choice 2 has won instead of choice 1. After consulting the constitution of the Republic of Crimea in 1992⁵⁰, the specification of article 10: “Республика Крым самостоятельно вступает в отношения с другими государствами и организациями, осуществляет с ними на основе договоров и соглашений взаимовыгодное сотрудничество в экономике, культуре, здравоохранении, образовании, науке и других сферах”⁵¹ [The Republic of Crimea independently enters into relations with other states and organizations, carries out mutually beneficial cooperation with them on the basis of contracts and agreements in the economy, culture, healthcare, education, science and other fields]. The choice made a regression of Crimean adopted Constitution of 1998 to Constitution of 1992, which was the objective of Russia, because with this constitution Russia and Crimea could develop a close contacts and agreements according to Arg.10.

Even if the results of referendum are widely questioned and considered false, official fonts⁵² shows that 1 274 096 people have voted from different regions of Crimea, with 1 233 002 (96,77%) voting for choice 1 and 31 997 (2,51%) people voted for choice 2. Ukraine clearly considers this results illegal and under violation of international law, “The Ukrainian side of the argument is clear: Crimea’s independence and subsequent annexation by Russia was a case of conquest, pure and simple, a blatant violation of international norms.” Litvinenko (2016: 43).

⁵⁰ Available in: (<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/krym/show/rbo76a002-92>).

⁵¹ Art. 10, Конституция Республики Крым Органы власти АРК, Верховная Рада АРК; Закон, Конституция от May 6, 1992 № 76/а-1.

⁵² Data retrieved from official Crimean Government website: (http://crimea.gov.ru/content/uploads/files/info_dep/rezultati.pdf).

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Day after the referendum in 17th March, the Crimean parliament officially declared the independence of the Ukrainian peninsula. Crimea intended also to admit it as a new subject of the Russian Federation with the status of a republic with following conditions: made Russian ruble as the Crimea's official currency and on 30 March the peninsula will switch to Moscow's time. On 18th March the Russian President Putin and the Crimean leaders signed the "Agreement on the incorporation of the Republic of Crimea into the Russian Federation" (Kremlin 2014). Three days after, 21th March, Putin signed agreement that Crimea is part of Russia.

2.3.1. Crimea transfer in 1954

Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire during the reign of Catherine The Great in 1783 and remained part of Russia until 1954, then was transferred to Ukraine under the then Soviet Union leader Nikita Khrushchev.

Other historical political decisions made Crimea intended by Ukraine and Russia, there is a discussion from 1954 that still continues nowadays. In 1954 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union (RSFSR) issued a decree transferring the Crimean Oblast from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkSSR). Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev gave Ukraine a "gift" – Transfer of Crimea. At the time, it seemed like an acceptable move for many reasons, without any impacts, but six decades later, that "gift" is having consequences for both countries, "A oferta da Crimeia à República Socialista Soviética da Ucrânia ocorreu, em 1954, no quadro da URSS e por decisão de N. Kruschev" [Crimea's offer to the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine took place, in 1954, within the framework of the USSR and by decision of N. Kruschev] (Tomé 2018: 74).

First of all, Joseph Stalin death in 1953 started a true dispute for the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, between Georgy Malenkov⁵³ and Nikita Khrushchev, but it was Malenkov who reached the power, although he was obligated to resign in short term for many and unknown reasons CIA (1955: 2), but it is reported that he was demoted because of power abuse and links to Stalin's policies. Khrushchev was critical of Malenkov choice and administration⁵⁴, but soon Khrushchev gained popularity and replaced Malenkov in the same year.

⁵³ Georgy Malenkov (1902-1988) succeeded to all of Stalin's title in 1953 but for short period (5 March – 14 September).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.10.

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After deep research and consulting TSU official web archives, it was possible find a newspaper article in 1954 of the famous Soviet Union magazine named *Молодой ленинец* [Young Leninist], the edition of 28 of February of 1954, in the second page as visible below (see figure 8), the decree about transfer of Crimea from RSFSR to UkSSR

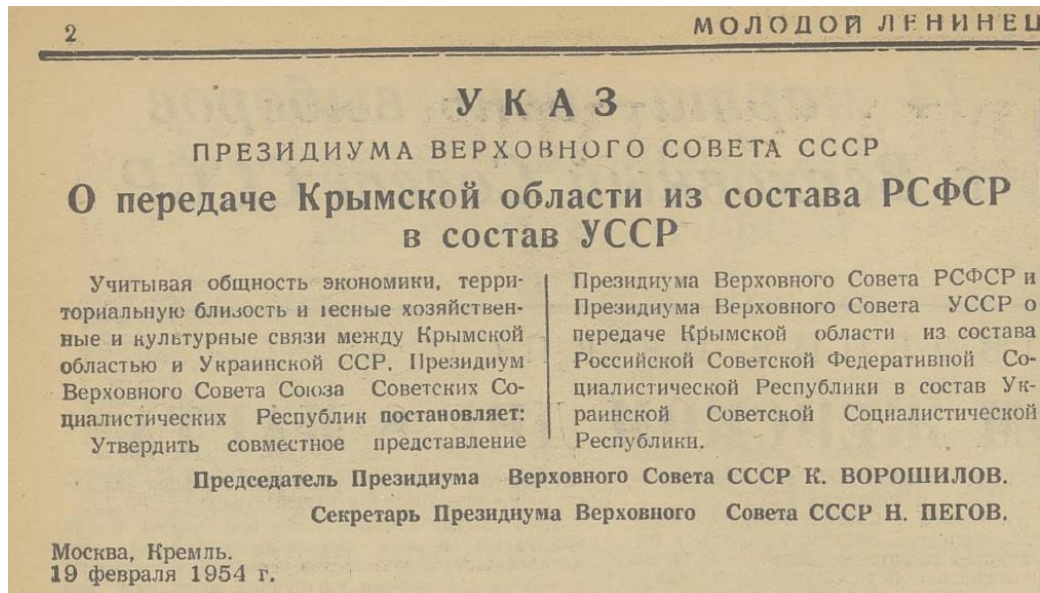


Figure 8 - Excerpt from Soviet magazine Молодой ленинец [Young Leninist] (1954) about the Decree of Transfer of Crimea from RSFSR to UkSSR. Source: TSU.

In Молодой ленинец [Young Leninist] (1954: 2), we can read (authors translation): Decree of the RSFSR Council of Ministers Concerning the Transfer of the Crimean Oblast from the RSFSR to the UkSSR.

Considering the territorial inclination of the Crimean Oblast toward the Ukrainian SSR, the commonality of the economy, and close economic and cultural ties between the Crimean Oblast and the Ukrainian SSR, the RSFSR Council of Ministers decrees: considered it advisable to transfer the Crimean Oblast from the RSFSR to the UkSSR.

Request the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet to consider the issue of a transfer of the Crimean Oblast to the UkSSR and go to the Presidium USSR of the USSR Supreme Soviet with an appropriate decree.

The reasons for this are still not clear and justified and continue to cause controversy among historians. However, contrary to Russian myths widespread in recent years, this act, firstly, was not the solitary “gift” of Nikita Khrushchev. Crimea’s 1954 transfer, to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic was of no practical relevance as long as the USSR continued to exist.

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The arguments of Ukraine's claim to Crimea seems to be that the Crimea was transferred from the Russian Soviet Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic by leader Khrushchev in 1954. There are, however, a several number of problematics, regarding this transfer:

1. The people living in Crimea were not consulted in any way, shape or form.
2. The people of Russia were not consulted.
3. It was not a transfer from one state to another but between two Republics of the Soviet Union.
4. Sevastopol was administered directly from Moscow back in 1954. According to Moscow, it was never transferred.

2.3.2. Crimea's and Black Sea geopolitical importance for Russia

The Black Sea is a key component of the new Russian policy and its attempt to counter the growing influence that NATO has had in the past two decades. Russia's main objectives will not only reinforce its southern border, but also intimidate its most unprotected neighbors and "block" NATO access to countries like Ukraine, Moldova and the entire Caucasus region. For Russia, in the long term it appears that the intention will be, in the first instance, to ensure that the Black Sea is controlled predominantly by Russia.

Following these objectives, Moscow carried out a review of its naval doctrine in July 2015 in which, for the Black Sea region, it set the goals of creating an A2/AD bubble against possible NATO forces and at the same time creating a credible threat on the Alliance's southeastern border. To dominate the Black Sea, "Russia also seeks to project its naval power outward toward Central Europe, the entire Balkan Peninsula and the Eastern Mediterranean." Mentioned by Bugajski & Doran (2016: 5).

Moscow has benefited from the Alliance's supposed lack of concern about the Black Sea region in recent years, which, perhaps because it has concentrated on other fronts, has failed to develop an effective defense architecture in the Black Sea to counter Russian forces.

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Observing at the various theories of geopolitics that exist, Mackinder (1904) predicts that if Russia had control of Heartland⁵⁵, it would also have control of Europe and consequently the world. The annexation of Crimea and the control of part of Ukraine's territory helps Russia in pursuing this objective.

With the situation in Georgia in 2008 and the consequent militarization of that region, Moscow re-established control on the east coast of the Black Sea and was able to extend its influence to the south Caucasus and northern Middle East. Since that year, Russian forces have experienced an increased presence in these territories.

The principal cause of the Ukraine can be found and explained in geopolitics sphere. Being its Russia's mission to control the territory beyond its borders (its near abroad or "Russian world" concept of soft power) or the perceived competition, between the two giants, EU and Russia over the countries in Europe's East or between Russia and the US respectively.

Vladimir Putin in order to not to lose Ukraine from Russia's privileged sphere of influence determines the "formal" division of Ukraine into spheres of influence and the neutralization of southeast of the country. The Crimean crisis and further Russian actions in Ukraine can be described as Moscow's response to the threat of NATO's and EU further expansion near Russia's border. Putin was concerned about Russian citizens living in Ukraine, so he used a Russian Diaspora as pretext or excuse to justify actions in Ukraine. The concept of Russian World has been one of the key drivers of the Kremlin's foreign policy in recent years, especially in Ukraine and elsewhere in the former Soviet space.

There are some particular areas more important and strategical like Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, which have a lot of Russian speakers, after Ukraine adopt constitution of 1996 with new laws over language changes, Russia took its position in protecting all the way Russian speakers in those areas. Starting from soft power with "Russian world" concept, Putin had a pretext to execute any further actions he wished to protect its citizens and Russian speakers in neighbor country. The actions that followed in the eastern part of the country and in Crimea are just examples of what can happen in the post-Soviet space whenever there is wide Russian diaspora and the Kremlin intend to protect it.

⁵⁵ The "heartland" is also referred to as the "pivot area" and as the core of Eurasia, author considered all of Europe and Asia as the World Island Mackinder (1904: 312).

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It is imperative to refer that in influence of the Soviet policy of the Russian language dominance it is still present in Ukraine. After independence in 1991, Ukraine language gained an opportunity to become a fully-fledged and the official state language. However, territorially, it is spread unequally, which is reflected in pronounced bilingualism and language bipolarity. These circumstances were among the main endogenic factors of the eruption of an armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, and annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation in 2014.

Ukraine is in a very complicated geopolitical position, from one side suffering pressures from Moscow, from other side by the West. External actors tend to perceive their cooperation with Ukraine divergently. President Putin actions in Ukraine shows that Moscow is worried about Ukraine's, "because if Kiev joined NATO, the infrastructure of the North Atlantic Alliance would have moved directly towards Russia's border" (Rotaru 2016: 35).

Russia has faced a major geopolitical shift in its recent history, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, after losing its influence over the Eastern Europe, as well as the failure of Gorbachev's economic policies and the authority of the Soviet Communist Party. Geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe transformed the former space of influence of the then Soviet Union in a space completely integrated in Western supranational organizations, notably the North Atlantic (NATO) and the EU, which continue their policies in the region.

Chapter III

Russia's Legitimacy Discourse

“The very narrative and the speech that President Putin made to the Duma after the referendum in the Crimea is the most interesting political text to analyze all the changes that are under way.” (Mendes et al., 2018: 131).

In this chapter we will analyze in what consist Russia's legitimacy discourse and how it is used to protect and legalize Russia's action in Crimea in 2014. The discourse that will be analyzed is the Putin's one of 18 March 2014, the day that Crimean reunified Russia. The importance to analyze Putin's discourse of 2014 resides in looking for arguments that made Russia take that action and consider them legal in Crimea.

3.1. Annexation and reunification

The choice of words of annexation and reunification does matter when we talk about Russian actions in Ukraine back in 2014, they can be considered as an annexation of Crimea as a violation of the international law, or did Russia legally unite Crimea into its territory (reunification)? The status of Crimea and the ongoing armed conflict in the eastern regions of Ukraine, have made the international community of states witness complex and progressive processes of questioning principles of the international law and politics in the post-Soviet space.

First of all, annexation is linked to negative posture and actions like a prohibition of. Besides, sovereignty over the territory of Ukraine involves the threat or use of force, as the annexing State usually occupies the territory in order to assert its sovereignty over it. Annexation is an act of aggression, forbidden by the international law. The International humanitarian law (IHL)⁵⁶ provides that in the event that an Occupying Power annexes all or part of an occupied territory, such as in Crimean case, protected persons therein shall not be deprived of the benefits of the Fourth Geneva Convention United Nations (1949) according to Art.47⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ IHL does not legitimize armed conflict or occupation, the right to use force is regulated by the UN Charter. IHL does not states whether it was legal or illegal to start the war, or who started it. It simply regulates a factual situation by looking to provide protection for civilians and regulating means and methods of warfare.

⁵⁷ ART. 47 of Fourth Geneva Convention of United Nations (1949) — Protected persons who are in occupied territory shall not be deprived, in any case or in any manner whatsoever, of the benefits of the present Convention by any change introduced, as the result of the occupation of a territory, into the institutions or government of the said territory, nor by any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territories and the Occupying Power, nor by any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied

In the Ukrainian perspective, Crimea was annexed because it has been assumed that Russia violated the international law and “took” that territory from Ukrainian part. These positions and arguments can be found in Burke & Panina-Burk (2017: 29) such as “give back” Crimea to Ukraine”. For Ukraine people, Crimea is occupied – annexed by Russia, and they will never recognize Crimea as part of a neighbor country.

Moscow's argument is that Crimea has been reunified with Russia, it can be visible in political discourses, media and journals, as reunification is seen as something acceptable and a lawful action, a different perspective from the Ukrainian one. Therefore, the arguments of the pro-Ukrainians refer to Russia actions in Crimea as annexation, the pro-Russians in turn consider that the territory has been reunified. This division of words is important because it makes one realize which the position is taken when the situation in Crimea in 2014 is discussed.

3.2. Self-Determination and Territorial Integrity

The principle of self-determination is prominently embodied in Article I⁵⁸ - Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Earlier this concept was explicitly embraced by the US President Woodrow Wilson and Lenin, and became the guiding principle for the reconstruction of Europe following World War I. This article highlights that is important, “To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;”⁵⁹ There are no doubts that if we listen carefully to the Crimean authorities, as O’Loughlin & Toal (2019: 7) highlights, their position is clear, “for the Simferopol authorities, the people of Crimea exercised their international right to self-determination and freely chose to “reunify” with Russia through a democratic referendum”. In his point of view and what Crimean authorities defend is that “people” from Crimea used lawfully right to claim their right to decide their future. Similarly, the Russian Federation claimed that the referendum held was in obedience with the international law and norms. In his address of 18th March, President Putin referred, “As it declared independence and decided to hold a referendum, the Supreme Council of Crimea referred to the United Nations Charter, which speaks of the right of

territory. Source: United Nations (Available in https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf).

⁵⁸ The article is available in official font of UN. Source: (<https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html>).

⁵⁹ Article I - Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

nations to self-determination.”⁶⁰ In the excerpt of Putin’s discourse of 2014, he referred that, “the right of nations to self-determination”⁶¹, but Putin ignored that the “population living in Crimea "can hardly be considered to be a “nation”⁶², as mentioned by Merezhko (2015: 183). Crimea never was and never had a status of a nation, it is difficult to qualify Crimean inhabitants as a mixed ethnic group (Russians, Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars etc.) as one population. It is important to clarify that the Constitution of Ukraine⁶³ does not grant Crimea or any other part of the territory the right to secede, Article 2⁶⁴ of the Constitution highlights the sovereignty of Ukraine and the indivisibility and inviolability of its present borders. In fact, the Constitution of Ukraine establishes that the secession of part of the territory of Ukraine cannot be the result of a local referendum.

So, since referendums concerning the change of the Ukrainian territorial *status quo* can only be decided by a referendum held on the national level, Crimea was not lawfully authorized to conduct and organize a local referendum on its withdrawal from Ukraine. For such secession to be constitutional, a constitutional modification would be required, since the Constitution recognizes the Autonomous Republic of Crimea as an “inseparable constituent part of Ukraine”⁶⁵.

3.3. Russia’s Political Discourse Analysis

In this part, first it will be presented the whole discourse⁶⁶ below, transcript from the official Kremlin source, and then its respective analysis.

Date of discourse: 2014-03-18

Time: 15:50:00

⁶⁰ Address by the President of the Russian Federation, 18 March 2014, Source: (<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² The concept of the nation was first developed in Western Europe during the post-Reformation struggles of the sixteen and seventeenth centuries, and was further shaped by the industrial and political revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the nineteenth century, the development of the political power of the middle classes within capitalist states also refined the concept of the nation, as explained in Harrison & Boyd (2003: 38).

⁶³ The constitution was adopted and ratified at the 5th session of the *Verkhovna Rada* (parliament) of Ukraine on June 28th, 1996.

⁶⁴ Article 2: The sovereignty of Ukraine extends throughout its entire territory. Ukraine is a unitary state. The territory of Ukraine within its present border is indivisible and inviolable. Official translation, available at: (<https://rm.coe.int/constitution-of-ukraine/168071f58b>).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Art. 134

⁶⁶ Reference: Address by President of the Russian Federation, 2014-03-18 15:50:00, The Kremlin, Moscow. Available in English, source: (<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>). Russian version of the discourse, source: (<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>).

Crimean Crisis

Place: The Kremlin, Moscow, Russia

President of Russia Vladimir Putin:

Federation Council members, State Duma deputies, good afternoon. Representatives of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol are here among us, citizens of Russia, residents of Crimea and Sevastopol!

Dear friends, we have gathered here today in connection with an issue that is of vital, historic significance to all of us. A referendum was held in Crimea on March 16 in full compliance with democratic procedures and international norms.

More than 82 percent of the electorate took part in the vote. Over 96 percent of them spoke out in favor of reuniting with Russia. These numbers speak for themselves.

To understand the reason behind such a choice it is enough to know the history of Crimea and what Russia and Crimea have always meant for each other.

Everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Chersonesus, where Prince Vladimir was baptized. His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilization and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The graves of Russian soldiers, whose bravery brought Crimea into the Russian empire are also in Crimea. This is also Sevastopol – a legendary city with an outstanding history, a fortress that serves as the birthplace of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Crimea is Balaklava and Kerch, Malakhov Kurgan and Sapun Ridge. Each one of these places is dear to our hearts, symbolising Russian military glory and outstanding valour.

Crimea is a unique blend of different peoples' cultures and traditions. This makes it similar to Russia as a whole, where not a single ethnic group has been lost over the centuries. Russians and Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars and people of other ethnic groups have lived side by side in Crimea, retaining their own identity, traditions, languages and faith.

Incidentally, the total population of the Crimean Peninsula today is 2.2 million people, of whom almost 1.5 million are Russians, 350,000 are Ukrainians who predominantly consider Russian their native language, and about 290,000–300,000 are Crimean Tatars, who, as the referendum has shown, also lean towards Russia.

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True, there was a time when Crimean Tatars were treated unfairly, just as a number of other peoples in the USSR. There is only one thing I can say here: millions of people of various ethnicities suffered during those repressions, and primarily Russians.

Crimean Tatars returned to their homeland. I believe we should make all the necessary political and legislative decisions to finalise the rehabilitation of Crimean Tatars, restore them in their rights and clear their good name.

We have great respect for people of all the ethnic groups living in Crimea. This is their common home, their motherland, and it would be right – I know the local population supports this – for Crimea to have three equal national languages: Russian, Ukrainian and Tatar.

Colleagues,

In people's hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia. This firm conviction is based on truth and justice and was passed from generation to generation, over time, under any circumstances, despite all the dramatic changes our country went through during the entire 20th century.

After the revolution, the Bolsheviks, for a number of reasons – may God judge them – added large sections of the historical South of Russia to the Republic of Ukraine. This was done with no consideration for the ethnic make-up of the population, and today these areas form the southeast of Ukraine. Then, in 1954, a decision was made to transfer Crimean Region to Ukraine, along with Sevastopol, despite the fact that it was a federal city. This was the personal initiative of the Communist Party head Nikita Khrushchev. What stood behind this decision of his – a desire to win the support of the Ukrainian political establishment or to atone for the mass repressions of the 1930's in Ukraine – is for historians to figure out.

What matters now is that this decision was made in clear violation of the constitutional norms that were in place even then. The decision was made behind the scenes. Naturally, in a totalitarian state nobody bothered to ask the citizens of Crimea and Sevastopol. They were faced with the fact. People, of course, wondered why all of a sudden Crimea became part of Ukraine. But on the whole – and we must state this clearly, we all know it – this decision was treated as a formality of sorts because the territory was transferred within the boundaries of a single state. Back then, it was

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impossible to imagine that Ukraine and Russia may split up and become two separate states. However, this has happened.

Unfortunately, what seemed impossible became a reality. The USSR fell apart. Things developed so swiftly that few people realised how truly dramatic those events and their consequences would be. Many people both in Russia and in Ukraine, as well as in other republics hoped that the Commonwealth of Independent States that was created at the time would become the new common form of statehood. They were told that there would be a single currency, a single economic space, joint armed forces; however, all this remained empty promises, while the big country was gone. It was only when Crimea ended up as part of a different country that Russia realised that it was not simply robbed, it was plundered.

At the same time, we have to admit that by launching the sovereignty parade Russia itself aided in the collapse of the Soviet Union. And as this collapse was legalised, everyone forgot about Crimea and Sevastopol -- the main base of the Black Sea Fleet. Millions of people went to bed in one country and awoke in different ones, overnight becoming ethnic minorities in former Union republics, while the Russian nation became one of the biggest, if not the biggest ethnic group in the world to be divided by borders.

Now, many years later, I heard residents of Crimea say that back in 1991 they were handed over like a sack of potatoes. This is hard to disagree with. And what about the Russian state? What about Russia? It humbly accepted the situation. This country was going through such hard times then that realistically it was incapable of protecting its interests. However, the people could not reconcile themselves to this outrageous historical injustice. All these years, citizens and many public figures came back to this issue, saying that Crimea is historically Russian land and Sevastopol is a Russian city. Yes, we all knew this in our hearts and minds, but we had to proceed from the existing reality and build our good-neighbourly relations with independent Ukraine on a new basis. Meanwhile, our relations with Ukraine, with the fraternal Ukrainian people have always been and will remain of foremost importance for us.

Today we can speak about it openly, and I would like to share with you some details of the negotiations that took place in the early 2000s. The then President of Ukraine Mr Kuchma asked me to expedite the process of delimiting the Russian-Ukrainian border. At that time, the process was practically at a standstill. Russia seemed to have recognised Crimea as part of Ukraine, but there were no negotiations on delimiting the borders. Despite the complexity of the situation, I immediately issued instructions to

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Russian government agencies to speed up their work to document the borders, so that everyone had a clear understanding that by agreeing to delimit the border we admitted de facto and de jure that Crimea was Ukrainian territory, thereby closing the issue.

We accommodated Ukraine not only regarding Crimea, but also on such a complicated matter as the maritime boundary in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. What we proceeded from back then was that good relations with Ukraine matter most for us and they should not fall hostage to deadlock territorial disputes. However, we expected Ukraine to remain our good neighbour, we hoped that Russian citizens and Russian speakers in Ukraine, especially its southeast and Crimea, would live in a friendly, democratic and civilised state that would protect their rights in line with the norms of international law.

However, this is not how the situation developed. Time and time again attempts were made to deprive Russians of their historical memory, even of their language and to subject them to forced assimilation. Moreover, Russians, just as other citizens of Ukraine are suffering from the constant political and state crisis that has been rocking the country for over 20 years.

I understand why Ukrainian people wanted change. They have had enough of the authorities in power during the years of Ukraine's independence. Presidents, prime ministers and parliamentarians changed, but their attitude to the country and its people remained the same. They milked the country, fought among themselves for power, assets and cash flows and did not care much about the ordinary people. They did not wonder why it was that millions of Ukrainian citizens saw no prospects at home and went to other countries to work as day labourers. I would like to stress this: it was not some Silicon Valley they fled to, but to become day labourers. Last year alone almost 3 million people found such jobs in Russia. According to some sources, in 2013 their earnings in Russia totalled over \$20 billion, which is about 12% of Ukraine's GDP.

I would like to reiterate that I understand those who came out on Maidan with peaceful slogans against corruption, inefficient state management and poverty. The right to peaceful protest, democratic procedures and elections exist for the sole purpose of replacing the authorities that do not satisfy the people. However, those who stood behind the latest events in Ukraine had a different agenda: they were preparing yet another government takeover; they wanted to seize power and would stop short of nothing. They resorted to terror, murder and riots. Nationalists, neo-Nazis,

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Russophobes and anti-Semites executed this coup. They continue to set the tone in Ukraine to this day.

The new so-called authorities began by introducing a draft law to revise the language policy, which was a direct infringement on the rights of ethnic minorities. However, they were immediately 'disciplined' by the foreign sponsors of these so-called politicians. One has to admit that the mentors of these current authorities are smart and know well what such attempts to build a purely Ukrainian state may lead to. The draft law was set aside, but clearly reserved for the future. Hardly any mention is made of this attempt now, probably on the presumption that people have a short memory. Nevertheless, we can all clearly see the intentions of these ideological heirs of Bandera, Hitler's accomplice during World War II.

It is also obvious that there is no legitimate executive authority in Ukraine now, nobody to talk to. Many government agencies have been taken over by the impostors, but they do not have any control in the country, while they themselves – and I would like to stress this – are often controlled by radicals. In some cases, you need a special permit from the militants on Maidan to meet with certain ministers of the current government. This is not a joke – this is reality.

Those who opposed the coup were immediately threatened with repression. Naturally, the first in line here was Crimea, the Russian-speaking Crimea. In view of this, the residents of Crimea and Sevastopol turned to Russia for help in defending their rights and lives, in preventing the events that were unfolding and are still underway in Kiev, Donetsk, Kharkov and other Ukrainian cities.

Naturally, we could not leave this plea unheeded; we could not abandon Crimea and its residents in distress. This would have been betrayal on our part.

First, we had to help create conditions so that the residents of Crimea for the first time in history were able to peacefully express their free will regarding their own future. However, what do we hear from our colleagues in Western Europe and North America? They say we are violating norms of international law. Firstly, it's a good thing that they at least remember that there exists such a thing as international law – better late than never.

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Secondly, and most importantly – what exactly are we violating? True, the President of the Russian Federation received permission from the Upper House of Parliament to use the Armed Forces in Ukraine. However, strictly speaking, nobody has acted on this permission yet. Russia’s Armed Forces never entered Crimea; they were there already in line with an international agreement. True, we did enhance our forces there; however – this is something I would like everyone to hear and know – we did not exceed the personnel limit of our Armed Forces in Crimea, which is set at 25,000, because there was no need to do so.

Next. As it declared independence and decided to hold a referendum, the Supreme Council of Crimea referred to the United Nations Charter, which speaks of the right of nations to self-determination. Incidentally, I would like to remind you that when Ukraine seceded from the USSR it did exactly the same thing, almost word for word. Ukraine used this right, yet the residents of Crimea are denied it. Why is that?

Moreover, the Crimean authorities referred to the well-known Kosovo precedent – a precedent our western colleagues created with their own hands in a very similar situation, when they agreed that the unilateral separation of Kosovo from Serbia, exactly what Crimea is doing now, was legitimate and did not require any permission from the country’s central authorities. Pursuant to Article 2, Chapter 1 of the United Nations Charter, the UN International Court agreed with this approach and made the following comment in its ruling of July 22, 2010, and I quote: “No general prohibition may be inferred from the practice of the Security Council with regard to declarations of independence,” and “General international law contains no prohibition on declarations of independence.” Crystal clear, as they say.

I do not like to resort to quotes, but in this case, I cannot help it. Here is a quote from another official document: The Written Statement of the United States America of April 17, 2009, submitted to the same UN International Court in connection with the hearings on Kosovo. Again, I quote: “Declarations of independence may, and often do, violate domestic legislation. However, this does not make them violations of international law.” End of quote. They wrote this, disseminated it all over the world, had everyone agree and now they are outraged. Over what? The actions of Crimean people completely fit in with these instructions, as it were. For some reason, things that Kosovo Albanians (and we have full respect for them) were permitted to do, Russians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in Crimea are not allowed. Again, one wonders why.

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We keep hearing from the United States and Western Europe that Kosovo is some special case. What makes it so special in the eyes of our colleagues? It turns out that it is the fact that the conflict in Kosovo resulted in so many human casualties. Is this a legal argument? The ruling of the International Court says nothing about this. This is not even double standards; this is amazing, primitive, blunt cynicism. One should not try so crudely to make everything suit their interests, calling the same thing white today and black tomorrow. According to this logic, we have to make sure every conflict leads to human losses.

I will state clearly — if the Crimean local self-defence units had not taken the situation under control, there could have been casualties as well. Fortunately this did not happen. There was not a single armed confrontation in Crimea and no casualties. Why do you think this was so? The answer is simple: because it is very difficult, practically impossible to fight against the will of the people. Here I would like to thank the Ukrainian military — and this is 22,000 fully armed servicemen. I would like to thank those Ukrainian service members who refrained from bloodshed and did not smear their uniforms in blood.

Other thoughts come to mind in this connection. They keep talking of some Russian intervention in Crimea, some sort of aggression. This is strange to hear. I cannot recall a single case in history of an intervention without a single shot being fired and with no human casualties.

Colleagues,

Like a mirror, the situation in Ukraine reflects what is going on and what has been happening in the world over the past several decades. After the dissolution of bipolarity on the planet, we no longer have stability. Key international institutions are not getting any stronger; on the contrary, in many cases, they are sadly degrading. Our western partners, led by the United States of America, prefer not to be guided by international law in their practical policies, but by the rule of the gun. They have come to believe in their exclusivity and exceptionalism, that they can decide the destinies of the world, that only they can ever be right. They act as they please: here and there, they use force against sovereign states, building coalitions based on the principle “If you are not with us, you are against us.” To make this aggression look legitimate, they force the necessary resolutions from international

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organisations, and if for some reason this does not work, they simply ignore the UN Security Council and the UN overall.

This happened in Yugoslavia; we remember 1999 very well. It was hard to believe, even seeing it with my own eyes, that at the end of the 20th century, one of Europe's capitals, Belgrade, was under missile attack for several weeks, and then came the real intervention. Was there a UN Security Council resolution on this matter, allowing for these actions? Nothing of the sort. And then, they hit Afghanistan, Iraq, and frankly violated the UN Security Council resolution on Libya, when instead of imposing the so-called no-fly zone over it they started bombing it too.

There was a whole series of controlled "colour" revolutions. Clearly, the people in those nations, where these events took place, were sick of tyranny and poverty, of their lack of prospects; but these feelings were taken advantage of cynically. Standards were imposed on these nations that did not in any way correspond to their way of life, traditions, or these peoples' cultures. As a result, instead of democracy and freedom, there was chaos, outbreaks in violence and a series of upheavals. The Arab Spring turned into the Arab Winter.

A similar situation unfolded in Ukraine. In 2004, to push the necessary candidate through at the presidential elections, they thought up some sort of third round that was not stipulated by the law. It was absurd and a mockery of the constitution. And now, they have thrown in an organised and well-equipped army of militants.

We understand what is happening; we understand that these actions were aimed against Ukraine and Russia and against Eurasian integration. And all this while Russia strived to engage in dialogue with our colleagues in the West. We are constantly proposing cooperation on all key issues; we want to strengthen our level of trust and for our relations to be equal, open and fair. But we saw no reciprocal steps.

On the contrary, they have lied to us many times, made decisions behind our backs, placed us before an accomplished fact. This happened with NATO's expansion to the East, as well as the deployment of military infrastructure at our borders. They kept telling us the same thing: "Well, this does not concern you." That's easy to say.

It happened with the deployment of a missile defence system. In spite of all our apprehensions, the project is working and moving forward. It happened with

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the endless foot-dragging in the talks on visa issues, promises of fair competition and free access to global markets.

Today, we are being threatened with sanctions, but we already experience many limitations, ones that are quite significant for us, our economy and our nation. For example, still during the times of the Cold War, the US and subsequently other nations restricted a large list of technologies and equipment from being sold to the USSR, creating the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls list. Today, they have formally been eliminated, but only formally; and in reality, many limitations are still in effect.

In short, we have every reason to assume that the infamous policy of containment, led in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, continues today. They 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.

After all, they were fully aware that there are millions of Russians living in Ukraine and in Crimea. They must have really lacked political instinct and common sense not to foresee all the consequences of their actions. Russia found itself in a position it could not retreat from. If you compress the spring all the way to its limit, it will snap back hard. You must always remember this.

Today, it is imperative to end this hysteria, to refute the rhetoric of the cold war and to accept the obvious fact: Russia is an independent, active participant in international affairs; like other countries, it has its own national interests that need to be taken into account and respected.

At the same time, we are grateful to all those who understood our actions in Crimea; we are grateful to the people of China, whose leaders have always considered the situation in Ukraine and Crimea taking into account the full historical and political context, and greatly appreciate India's reserve and objectivity.

Today, I would like to address the people of the United States of America, the people who, since the foundation of their nation and adoption of the Declaration

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of Independence, have been proud to hold freedom above all else. Isn't the desire of Crimea's residents to freely choose their fate such a value? Please understand us.

I believe that the Europeans, first and foremost, the Germans, will also understand me. Let me remind you that in the course of political consultations on the unification of East and West Germany, at the expert, though very high level, some nations that were then and are now Germany's allies did not support the idea of unification. Our nation, however, unequivocally supported the sincere, unstoppable desire of the Germans for national unity. I am confident that you have not forgotten this, and I expect that the citizens of Germany will also support the aspiration of the Russians, of historical Russia, to restore unity.

I also want to address the people of Ukraine. I sincerely want you to understand us: we do not want to harm you in any way, or to hurt your national feelings. We have always respected the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state, incidentally, unlike those who sacrificed Ukraine's unity for their political ambitions. They flaunt slogans about Ukraine's greatness, but they are the ones who did everything to divide the nation. Today's civil standoff is entirely on their conscience. I want you to hear me, my dear friends. Do not believe those who want you to fear Russia, shouting that other regions will follow Crimea. We do not want to divide Ukraine; we do not need that. As for Crimea, it was and remains a Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean-Tatar land.

I repeat, just as it has been for centuries, it will be a home to all the peoples living there. What it will never be and do is follow in Bandera's footsteps!

Crimea is our common historical legacy and a very important factor in regional stability. And this strategic territory should be part of a strong and stable sovereignty, which today can only be Russian. Otherwise, dear friends (I am addressing both Ukraine and Russia), you and we – the Russians and the Ukrainians – could lose Crimea completely, and that could happen in the near historical perspective. Please think about it.

Let me note too that we have already heard declarations from Kiev about Ukraine soon joining NATO. What would this have meant for Crimea and Sevastopol in the future? It would have meant that NATO's navy would be right there in this city of Russia's military glory, and this would create not an illusory but a perfectly real threat to the whole of southern Russia. These are things that could have become reality were

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it not for the choice the Crimean people made, and I want to say thank you to them for this.

But let me say too that we are not opposed to cooperation with NATO, for this is certainly not the case. For all the internal processes within the organisation, NATO remains a military alliance, and we are against having a military alliance making itself at home right in our backyard or in our historic territory. I simply cannot imagine that we would travel to Sevastopol to visit NATO sailors. Of course, most of them are wonderful guys, but it would be better to have them come and visit us, be our guests, rather than the other way round.

Let me say quite frankly that it pains our hearts to see what is happening in Ukraine at the moment, see the people's suffering and their uncertainty about how to get through today and what awaits them tomorrow. Our concerns are understandable because we are not simply close neighbours but, as I have said many times already, we are one people. Kiev is the mother of Russian cities. Ancient Rus is our common source and we cannot live without each other.

Let me say one other thing too. Millions of Russians and Russian-speaking people live in Ukraine and will continue to do so. Russia will always defend their interests using political, diplomatic and legal means. But it should be above all in Ukraine's own interest to ensure that these people's rights and interests are fully protected. This is the guarantee of Ukraine's state stability and territorial integrity.

We want to be friends with Ukraine and we want Ukraine to be a strong, sovereign and self-sufficient country. Ukraine is one of our biggest partners after all. We have many joint projects and I believe in their success no matter what the current difficulties. Most importantly, we want peace and harmony to reign in Ukraine, and we are ready to work together with other countries to do everything possible to facilitate and support this. But as I said, only Ukraine's own people can put their own house in order.

Residents of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, the whole of Russia admired your courage, dignity and bravery. It was you who decided Crimea's future. We were closer than ever over these days, supporting each other. These were sincere feelings of solidarity. It is at historic turning points such as these that a nation demonstrates its

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maturity and strength of spirit. The Russian people showed this maturity and strength through their united support for their compatriots.

Russia's foreign policy position on this matter drew its firmness from the will of millions of our people, our national unity and the support of our country's main political and public forces. I want to thank everyone for this patriotic spirit, everyone without exception. Now, we need to continue and maintain this kind of consolidation so as to resolve the tasks our country faces on its road ahead.

Obviously, we will encounter external opposition, but this is a decision that we need to make for ourselves. Are we ready to consistently defend our national interests, or will we forever give in, retreat to who knows where? Some Western politicians are already threatening us with not just sanctions but also the prospect of increasingly serious problems on the domestic front. I would like to know what it is they have in mind exactly: action by a fifth column, this disparate bunch of 'national traitors', or are they hoping to put us in a worsening social and economic situation so as to provoke public discontent? We consider such statements irresponsible and clearly aggressive in tone, and we will respond to them accordingly. At the same time, we will never seek confrontation with our partners, whether in the East or the West, but on the contrary, will do everything we can to build civilised and good-neighbourly relations as one is supposed to in the modern world.

Colleagues,

I understand the people of Crimea, who put the question in the clearest possible terms in the referendum: should Crimea be with Ukraine or with Russia? We can be sure in saying that the authorities in Crimea and Sevastopol, the legislative authorities, when they formulated the question, set aside group and political interests and made the people's fundamental interests alone the cornerstone of their work. The particular historic, population, political and economic circumstances of Crimea would have made any other proposed option — however tempting it could be at the first glance — only temporary and fragile and would have inevitably led to further worsening of the situation there, which would have had disastrous effects on people's lives. The people of Crimea thus decided to put the question in firm and uncompromising form, with no grey areas. The referendum was fair and transparent, and the people of Crimea clearly and convincingly expressed their will and stated that they want to be with Russia.

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Russia will also have to make a difficult decision now, taking into account the various domestic and external considerations. What do people here in Russia think? Here, like in any democratic country, people have different points of view, but I want to make the point that the absolute majority of our people clearly do support what is happening.

The most recent public opinion surveys conducted here in Russia show that 95 percent of people think that Russia should protect the interests of Russians and members of other ethnic groups living in Crimea – 95 percent of our citizens. More than 83 percent think that Russia should do this even if it will complicate our relations with some other countries. A total of 86 percent of our people see Crimea as still being Russian territory and part of our country's lands. And one particularly important figure, which corresponds exactly with the result in Crimea's referendum: almost 92 percent of our people support Crimea's reunification with Russia.

Thus we see that the overwhelming majority of people in Crimea and the absolute majority of the Russian Federation's people support the reunification of the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol with Russia.

Now this is a matter for Russia's own political decision, and any decision here can be based only on the people's will, because the people is the ultimate source of all authority.

Members of the Federation Council, deputies of the State Duma, citizens of Russia, residents of Crimea and Sevastopol, today, in accordance with the people's will, I submit to the Federal Assembly a request to consider a Constitutional Law on the creation of two new constituent entities within the Russian Federation: the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, and to ratify the treaty on admitting to the Russian Federation Crimea and Sevastopol, which is already ready for signing. I stand assured of your support.

In the initial part of the discourse, we can highlight three binomials⁶⁷: *Federation Council members, State Duma deputies, Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol, Crimea and Sevastopol*. The informal address *dear friends* introduce a sentence in which Vladimir Putin enhanced the significance of that day for all, and in which it is possible to find a space-time remark and a binomial procedure – norms, *in full compliance with*

⁶⁷ A binomial pair is an expression containing two words that are joined by a conjunction, usually “and” or “or”.

democratic procedures and international norms. Also, in the inaugural part of discourse, after *dear friends*, Putin used *we* as an inclusion, according to Verhoek (2015: 21), *we* in political speech is used “to express for example the notion that the hearer and the speaker have the same ideology, belong together or may be citizens of the same country and, therefore, can be seen as a patriotic *we*; an inclusive *we*.” After, Putin offers data about the referendum, *these numbers speak for themselves* has a figurative meaning, Vladimir Putin reference to referendum data shows that first of all he trusted and believed that percentage (96%) was significant, of course that the result of referendum suggests most of those who voted wanted to rejoin Russia, but what about the many ethnic minorities like Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and even some Russians who did not take part and don't want to leave Ukraine? Vladimir Putin ignored that percentage of population. The results cited above cannot be confirmed or verified, moreover the OSCE⁶⁸ did not send election observers to Crimea.

In the next paragraphs, Vladimir Putin makes frequent use of binomials and trinomials⁶⁹ and often recalls Russia. Binomials are: *Russia and Crimea*, *history and pride*, *Balaklava*⁷⁰ and *Kerch*⁷¹, *Malakhov Kurgan*⁷² and *Sapun Ridge*⁷³, *glory and valor*, *cultures and traditions*, *Russians and Ukrainians*, *Crimean Tatars and people*. The use of trinomials, instead, are: *culture, civilization and human values*, and *Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*. A list of nouns consists of *identity, traditions, languages and faith*. Talking about history, Putin makes use of a symbolic meaning of the sentence *everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride*, the pronoun *our* referred here as Verhoek (2015: 21) mentions “*Our* is used as a rhetorical device to give a specific meaning to the message of solidarity, unity and pride.” With this, Putin refers that Crimea and Russia have common historical past.

Vladimir Putin assigns a poetic function to the words *Each one of these places is dear to our hearts*, after it is possible to detect the discourse marker *Incidentally* and the stance marker *True*. We should highlight the presence of the binomial *common home, motherland*, of the formal address *Colleagues*, and of two other binomials *hearts and*

⁶⁸ OSCE states that Crimean referendum in its current form is illegal and calls for alternative ways to address the Crimean issue (source: <https://www.osce.org/cio/116313>).

⁶⁹ A trinomial is when three words come together, just like a binomial, is a phrase containing three words that are combined together by “and” or “or”.

⁷⁰ Balaklava is a settlement on the Crimean Peninsula and part of the city of Sevastopol.

⁷¹ City of regional significance on the Kerch Peninsula in the east part of the Crimea.

⁷² Malakhov Kurgan is considered sacred for Crimea and Russia. It became famous in the period 1854-1855, as well as in 1942, when the German army tried to seize the city. Today, the Malakhov Kurgan is a memorial complex dedicated to two battles. On 18th March in 2019 (5 years after Crimean reunification) Vladimir Putin visited memorial complex (Source: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60081>).

⁷³ Strategic point for Soviet Union during World War II, located at 240-m-tall, this ridge provided a strong defensive position to the southeast of Sevastopol city.

minds and truth and justice. When Putin talks about the Bolsheviks, he expresses a comment, with the words *may God judge them*. It is possible to read the metonymy⁷⁴ *the historical South of Russia*, the discourse marker *today* and Putin does not take the responsibility of describing Khrushchev's choice back in 1954 (*What stood behind this decision of his... is for historians to figure out*). There are no clear evidences and justifications why back in 1954 Nikita Khrushchev "transferred" Crimea to Ukraine, it was a fast and unpredictable move. When Putin refers *to atone for the mass repressions of the 1930's in Ukraine*. In that period because of *holodomor*⁷⁵ (famines) affected other ex-Soviet Republics but mostly Ukraine. This part, where Putin discusses the transfer of Crimea from the Russian to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic in 1954 suggests that the transfer was not legal and that Khrushchev himself arranged it for enigmatic reasons of his own. It gives the impression that the interpretation of these motivations and events of the past is of no direct political relevance and no mention in Putin's discourse of credible economical, strategical or administrative reasons. Crimea belonging in 1954 to Russia either Ukraine was not so relevant, maybe this Khrushchev move can be found as an excuse to Ukraine people due to *holodomor*.

The next three paragraphs include twice the binomial *Crimea* and *Sevastopol* and the binomial *Ukraine* and *Russia*. Throughout the discourse, President Putin frequently refers to *Russia* and *Soviet Union*. We can find the stance markers *Naturally, of course, Unfortunately* and the discourse marker at the same time. In a state of the nation address given back in April 2005, Putin described the end of the Soviet Union as "the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century."⁷⁶ Emotive words flow from Vladimir Putin to back up his claim that in returning Crimea to Russia he is correcting not just a historical injustice - *this decision was made in clear violation of the constitutional norms that were in place even then*, but a barbarity by ex-Soviet elites. But he does not stop with Crimea: Putin refers to Russian people living in Ukraine as ethnic minorities because they were part of new and different state, *Millions of people went to bed in one country and awoke in different ones, overnight becoming ethnic minorities*. Putin's reference to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fact that the new international boundaries switched a multinational "empire" into multiple states, none of which is ethnically uniform. There are many Russians living in the other successor states

⁷⁴ A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated, as in the use of Washington for the United States government or Kremlin common metonym used to refer to the primary complex of the Government of Russia or the ex-USSR.

⁷⁵ Holodomor is a Ukraine term meaning killing by starvation. This is the name given to the national catastrophe of 1932-1933, which claimed millions of lives. 3.5 to 3.8 million died in Ukraine (1.3 to 1.5 million in Kazakhstan) Graziosi (2004).

⁷⁶ Kremlin (2005) Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. (Source: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931>).

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of the ex-Soviet Union, there are as many non-Russians living as minorities in Russia. The rhetoric of a *divided* implies that, “by rights”, peoples should not be divided - should live together one state. In this part, it is fundamental to highlight that other former Soviet republics with Russian-speaking minorities to send a message that as in Ukraine Putin views Russian compatriots living there as part of a single Russian nation - and therefore conceivably might make all necessary actions to ensure their protection too, this is an evidence of concept Russian World used by Putin.

The following section starts with the discourse marker *Now* and it is about history and present. The section contains a simile *they were handed over like a sack of potatoes*. We can find two rhetorical questions, the stance markers *However* and *Yes*, while the other discourse markers are *Meanwhile* and *Today*. Putin stresses the concept of *relations with the fraternal Ukrainian people*, while *citizens and public figures*, and *hearts and minds* are binomials. Putin frequently stands for the importance of maintaining good relations with Ukraine and with the Ukrainian people, his even adjectives them *fraternal*. But that is not the same of having good relations with the Ukrainian government of 2004 which he claims being illegitimate and never recognized. For many people in Russia, memories of the 1990s, under then President Boris Yeltsin, still have a very unpleasant past. Russia’s post-Soviet society fell into total social and economic disaster after the dissolution of the USSR, characterized also as “period as a time of trouble, hardship, and violent disorder.” Sharafutdinova (2019: 2). Once again, Vladimir Putin assigns a poetic function to the words *All these years, citizens and many public figures came back to this issue, saying that Crimea is historically Russian land and Sevastopol is a Russian city. Yes, we all knew this in our hearts and minds*, here Putin stands for a historic past between Crimea and Russia.

The following paragraphs include the binomials *Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait*, and *southeast and Crimea*; and the trinomials are: *Presidents, prime ministers and parliamentarians*, and *power, assets and cash flows*. Putin gives figurative meaning to the words *they should not fall hostage* and to *They milked the country* with these declarations Putin stands for Ukraine incomplete transition since its independence and problems such as nepotism, corruption, abuse of power and human rights’ violation still shadows the country. It is possible to read the metonymy *Silicon Valley*, and the discourse markers *However* and *Moreover*, with some irony, Putin highlights that 3 million Ukrainians went to work in Russia in 2013, referring that these Ukrainians did not come for some kind of *Silicon Valley*, but at least they were working. Further on, the speaker uses the metonymy *Maidan* and three trinomials: *corruption, management and*

poverty, protest, democratic procedures and elections, and terror, murder and riots. There is only a list of nouns that includes the words *Nationalist, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites* inflammatory words in Putin's argument that the new Ukrainian authorities are illegitimate and Russia has to act to protect its compatriots. Putin claims that new Kiev government is dangerous, Putin's argument stands that any Russian intervention in Ukraine would be based on humanitarian considerations.

The discourse marker *However* can be detected twice and the stance marker *Nevertheless* once. Before talking and comparing Bandera's⁷⁷ actions and ideologies to Hitler ones, Putin uses these challenging words: *so-called authorities* and *so-called politicians* once he does not recognize this government. The periphrasis *Those who opposed the coup* opens the following part of the speech and Putin refer that *the first in line here was Crimea, the Russian-speaking Crimea* to those who were repressed more by new government, after Putin justifying that it is obligation to help its residents in Ukraine and not helping them would be a signal of failure and betrayal *This would have been betrayal on our part.*

Putin starts to count the actions and the reasons that made Russian to protect its citizens and Crimea:

- Firstly, Putin refers that it is necessary to create a "condition" – referendum, of which Putin refers *as conditions so that the residents of Crimea for the first time in history were able to peacefully express their free will regarding their own future.* Putin raises here the importance of self-determination and free democratic referendum. Putin argues that West blame Russia for violating international, but he uses irony *it's a good thing that they at least remember that there exists such a thing as international law,* possibly to reference to the invasion of Iraq⁷⁸.
- The second reason Putin mentions is that he had authorization from the Upper House of Parliament to use Armed Forces in the Ukrainian territory, he admits it but highlights that *hard power* nobody has acted *yet* – but he can use force if necessary. Even if Putin refers that Russia did not exceed limit of 25,000 armed personnel in Crimea, he declared that forces there were *enhanced.* Ahead of the

⁷⁷ Stepan A. Bandera (1909-1959) was Ukrainian radical politician and terrorist of the militant wing of the far-right Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and a leader of Ukrainian ultranationalists. Bandera cooperated with the Germans during World War II and engaged in atrocities against Jews and communists, in Russia he is very despicable.

⁷⁸ President in 2002 advocated preventive use of force, and made clear that the US would not hesitate to act alone. Chitalkar & Malone (2013: 5). This doctrine suggested that the United States of America was free to use force against any nation as a potential threat to its security, at any time of its choosing and with any means at its disposal.

referendum in Crimean, Russian forces and military vehicles have been deployed all over the Crimea, surrounding and establishing checkpoints, as explained by Bebler (2015: 41) “The military take-over of Crimea was obviously well-prepared, rehearsed in advance and professionally executed”.

- Thirdly Putin stands again that referendum in Crimea is lawful according to *the United Nations Charter, which speaks of the right of nations to self-determination*. Putin compares Crimea right to referendum to the referendum held by Ukraine when it seceded from USSR in 1991⁷⁹, “Ukrainian referendum of 1 December 1991 was the opposite: 90.3% voted for the independence of Ukraine and against its being part of the Soviet Union.” as mentioned by Kuczabski & Michalski (2014: 173). Here Putin defends once again that Crimea has same the right to implement referendum. As discussed in previously (sub-chapter 3.2.) the Charter of the United Nations in Article 1 (2), refers the right of self-determination of people as one purpose of the United Nations. This right means that nations under colonial rule have the right to national independence. It does not grant a general right of secession to regions or groupings within a state outside of the colonial context. This way, it only requires that it is possible for people to accomplish self-determination within a state. Crimea before referendum was an autonomous republic. The right of self-determination of people does not grant Crimea separating and independence from Ukraine.
- Fourthly, Putin uses comparison between Kosovo⁸⁰ (2008) situation and Crimea, when he refers *our western colleagues created with their own hands in a very similar situation, when they agreed that the unilateral separation of Kosovo from Serbia, exactly what Crimea is doing now*, even if Putin defends similarities between Kosovo and Crimea, the cases of Kosovo and Crimea differ substantially. In this part, there are presence of several metonymies that can be found in the words *Western Europe and North America, the President of Russian Federation, Upper House of Parliament, Supreme Council of Crimea*,

⁷⁹ From the perspective of international law, since Putin compare two distinct situations – Ukrainian in 1991 and Crimean in 2014. In December of 1991, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the claiming of independence by the republics occurred by the agreement by all parties, which found expression in the Belavezha Accords.

⁸⁰ One important difference between the cases of Kosovo and Crimea is that Crimea’s secession resulted directly from the use of force on the part of the Russian Federation – in violation of international law, without support of any other state. The NATO intervention in Kosovo also involved the use of force in violation of international law but apart Crimean case, it was legally accepted by the UN Security Council, in its Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999. According to this UNSC resolution (as it possible read in official report in: <https://undocs.org/S/1999/672>), authorized the Secretary-General to establish an international civil presence in Kosovo – the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) – in order to provide an interim administration for Kosovo. Following the declaration of independence by the Kosovo in 2008, mission have significantly been modified, focusing primarily on the promotion of security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo.

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United Nations Charter. Crimea and Sevastopol, rights and lives are binomials, as well as Crimea and its residents.

Next Putin uses stylistic sentence, irony in *Kosovo is some special case*. And two rhetorical questions: *What makes it so special in the eyes of our colleagues? And Is this a legal argument?* Putin uses this to refer that the West prefers to give attention and recognition to Kosovo and condemn Crimean case, Putin subjectively discusses here the interpretation of law by the West. In this part, it is notable how important it is for Putin to be able to cite legal justification for Crimea rejoining Moscow. He wants to deny the Western claims that this is some illegal annexation, to make the case at home and abroad that by redrawing the map and add Crimea to Russia, for Putin his actions are completely legitimate. He also blames the West here about inconsistent with the law with resource of a metaphor when he says *calling the same thing white today and black tomorrow*. Putin argues that blood massacre was prevented in Crimea with the following sentence *if the Crimean local self-defence units had not taken the situation under control, there could have been casualties as well. Fortunately this did not happen. There was not a single armed confrontation in Crimea and no casualties*. This particular Putin's argument is ironic, when he thanks Ukrainian troops for abstaining from Crimea, using metaphor *did not smear their uniforms in blood*, but on the other hand it also means that if the Ukrainian troops did not back down, Crimea could have turned into a battlefield.

After Putin starts to deny accusations from West *They keep talking of some Russian intervention in Crimea, some sort of aggression* he highlights that Crimean intervention is a unique historical event, *I cannot recall a single case in history of an intervention without a single shot being fired and with no human casualties*.

The following part is about Putin accusing several times the West, but first he stands that the end of bipolarity system ended stability in world. Putin also refers the crisis of international institutions that has caused in some cases damage is some countries. To all the western countries Putin refers that they all are ruled by United States of America, *Our western partners, led by the United States of America*, and refers that countries do not follow international law as it must be, they are feared of the USA response *but by the rule of the gun*. Other Putin's accusation is related to consider the USA as the ruler of the world in this word *They have come to believe in their exclusivity and exceptionalism, that they can decide the destinies of the world, that only they can ever be right*. After Putin refers how USA acts, *They act as they please: here and there, they use force*

against sovereign states, building coalitions based on the principle “If you are not with us, you are against us.” And then he gives the example of NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999. Afterward, Putin continues to give examples of where the United States of America violated the international law, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and later in Libya. In this part it is central to underline this sentence: *instead of imposing the so-called no-fly zone over it they started bombing it too*, Putin refers to American decisions in recent wars and most of all in Libya.

In the following part of discourse Putin remembers all “color revolutions”⁸¹ that happened in former Soviet, Putin points the finger at the West for the failure of democratization with this sentence *Standards were imposed on these nations that did not in any way correspond to their way of life, traditions, or these peoples’ cultures. As a result, instead of democracy and freedom, there was chaos, outbreaks in violence and a series of upheavals.* Putin does not recognize the Ukrainian government and the current president, so he did in 2004 with the elections that were the third round with elections of Viktor Yushchenko⁸², election which Putin classifies as *that was not stipulated by the law*. The actual Ukrainian government Putin calls it *And now, they have thrown in an organised and well-equipped army of militants*.

The following part of the discourse is particularly worrying, reflecting Putin’s certainty that Ukraine is only the latest in a long running confrontation project between Russia and the West, *We understand what is happening; we understand that these actions were aimed against Ukraine and Russia and against Eurasian integration*⁸³, which is now still open - and which he sees as the result of the West refusing to treat Russia as a partner and frequently acting with double standards, *We are constantly proposing cooperation on all key issues; we want to strengthen our level of trust and for our relations to be equal, open and fair. But we saw no reciprocal steps*.

Next part of discourse is marked by strong statements made by Putin where he calls the West as liars, *they have lied to us many times*, and expresses the metaphor *made decisions behind our backs*. This particular part is marked by Putin’s accusations to NATO expansions towards its borders, *This happened with NATO’s expansion to the*

⁸¹ Related to social and political movements that developed in several countries of the former Soviet Union, during the early 2000’s. Georgia – Rose (2003), Ukraine - Orange (2004), and Kyrgyzstan – Tulip (2005).

⁸² Former Ukrainian politician who was the third President of Ukraine from 23 January of 2005 to 25 February of 2010.

⁸³ Putin is indirectly referring to the EU’s association agreement with Ukraine, which he believes was intended to prevent Ukraine from joining another agreement - the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

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East. Putin's leadership also disrespects and ignores the fact that the countries in the Eastern Europe and the Baltic were concerned in joining NATO.

In the succeeding paragraphs, the discourse marker is very frequently: *Today* (three times), other markers are *In short*, *After all* and *At the same time*. It is also important to refer frequent use of *we* and *our*. The Russian leadership has been leading with big economical costs of the annexation of Crimea. Putin refers that Russia is still leading with sanctions and restrictions since the Cold War, but the sanction and restriction situations got worse for Russia since Russian got involved in Ukraine crisis, *But there is a limit to everything. And with Ukraine, our western partners have crossed the line*. During this part Putin uses a metaphor *They are constantly trying to sweep us to a corner*. With words *we have every reason to assume that the infamous policy of containment, led in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, continues today*. Putin draws a chronological line connecting present-day and historical Russian Empire, claiming that an illegal policy has been directed towards Russia for centuries. But historically, there was no homogeneous block or state in the Western Europe that could confront Russian Empire, but instead a number of great powers (with Russia among them). Putin uses two metaphors in this part, *playing the bear* and *If you compress the spring all the way to its limit, it will snap back hard*.

In the following parts Putin defends Russia as a Great Nation *accept the obvious fact: Russia is an independent, active participant in international affairs*. It is true that Russia is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council⁸⁴.

Then Putin starts to thank *to all those who understood our actions in Crimea*, particularly to China and India. The international community did not react positively to Russian actions in Ukraine and even condemned it, Putin felt lack of support, and one of the outputs of these reactions is non-recognition of Crimea as part of Russia.

The following part of the discourse is directed correspondingly to *United States of America, Europeans*, and Putin calls special attention to *the Germans*. In this part Putin seeks greater recognition from other states, appealing to the Germans to find similarities between German reunification⁸⁵ in 1990 and the process of Russian and Crimean

⁸⁴ The permanent members of the United Nations Security Council are the five sovereign states to whom the UN Charter of 1945 grants a permanent seat on the UN Security Council: China, the French Republic, the Russian Federation (formerly the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the United States of America.

⁸⁵ Separated since World War II, Germany reunification in 1990 in which the German Democratic Republic (GDR) became part of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) to form the reunited nation of Germany.

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unification. In the part *I am confident that you have not forgotten this, and I expect that the citizens of Germany will also support the aspiration of the Russians, of historical Russia, to restore unity*, Putin uses the concept of Russian world, for the second time in this discourse. This part implies that these *Russians* have a legitimate right to live together in one country. This was possible in both, the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire, and the collapse of the Soviet Union is seen as a catastrophe for this reason - all Russians no longer live together in one country.

The following appeal is directed to *people of Ukraine*. Putin expresses with emotive references such as *harm* and *hurt* that he does not want to divide Ukraine and respects *the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state*. This passage is controversial to previous parts of the discourse, Putin says he does not want to divide Ukraine, but leaves open the options of intervening if the situation deteriorates. After this, Putin once again uses controversial figure of Stepan Bandera, *will never be and do is follow in Bandera's footsteps!*

In the next part of discourse, Putin claims that Ukraine historically has no right to claim Crimea. Then Putin suggests that Ukraine is not even a sovereign nation with *strong and stable sovereignty, which today can only be Russian*. This way, only Russia, as a sovereign state, can protect the strategically significant Crimea.

The following part is marked by Putin acknowledgment to the Crimean people choice from preventing a potential war in Crimea with these words *the choice the Crimean people made, and I want to say thank you to them for this*. Then Putin use irony in case of NATO presence in Sevastopol with these sentences, *I simply cannot imagine that we would travel to Sevastopol to visit NATO sailors. Of course, most of them are wonderful guys, but it would be better to have them come and visit us, be our guests, rather than the other way round*.

It's also visible change of emotion for next part of discourse to more emotive and poetic form *Let me say quite frankly that it pains our hearts to see what is happening in Ukraine*. Putin also highlights inseparable historical relation between Ukraine and Russia, *we are one people. Kiev is the mother of Russian cities. Ancient Rus⁸⁶ is our common source and we cannot live without each other*.

⁸⁶ Common historical territory from 9th to 13th century, part of modern Ukraine, Belarus and Russia in eastern part of Europe.

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In the following part, Putin uses again the concept of Russian world in his words, *Millions of Russians and Russian-speaking people live in Ukraine and will continue to do so. Russia will always defend their interests using political, diplomatic and legal means. But it should be above all in Ukraine's own interest to ensure that these people's rights and interests are fully protected.* Then Putin with use of metaphor refers that cooperation between Russia and Ukraine is possible but it depends exclusively on Ukraine, *only Ukraine's own people can put their own house in order.* In this part we can also highlight binomials *Peace and Harmony.*

The next part of discourse Putin addresses to *Residents of Crimea*, where it is possible to observe binomials *maturity and strength* (twice) and the trinomial are *courage, dignity and bravery.* Putin's reference to nation as *maturity and strength of spirit* are unclear here, usually these words would normally be applied to the human being.

After Putin highlights *our national unity and the support of our country's main political and public forces*, since February of 2014, according to Levada Centre polling⁸⁷ the Putin's approval ratings were increasing since, which seems quite obviously linked to the Russian president's actions in Ukraine and the winter Sochi Olympics.

The stance marker *Obviously* opens the next part of the discourse, in which we find a very frequent use of *we* (six times). Putin argues that the West is not only imposing sanctions to Russia, but also trying to destabilize Russia from inside, domestic level, *Some Western politicians are already threatening us with not just sanctions but also the prospect of increasingly serious problems on the domestic front.* In this part Putin is worried about his domestic critics, if they dare to act as "*national traitors*" they will be accused of being a "*fifth column*"⁸⁸ - working for hostile foreign interests inside Russian borders.

The next part of discourse is marked by binomial *Crimea and Sevastopol* and the use of an anadiplosis⁸⁹ of the word *Russia*, *they want to be with Russia. Russia will also.* Putin offers data about the Russian people's consensus, *A total of 86 percent of our people see Crimea as still being Russian territory and part of our country's lands.* These Putin's

⁸⁷ Source of the data – official analytical center: (<https://www.levada.ru/en/2014/03/21/we-treat-him-like-he-s-mad-but-vladimir-putin-s-popularity-has-just-hit-a-3-year-high/>).

⁸⁸ "Fifth column" is a group of secret sympathizers or supporters of an enemy that engage in espionage or sabotage within defense lines or national borders, as defined in Encyclopædia Britannica. Source: (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/fifth-column>).

⁸⁹ Anadiplosis is a form of repetition in which the last word of one clause or sentence is repeated as the first word of the following clause or sentence.

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words prove that Crimea is important to the Russian internal policy and agenda. There is no doubt that the re-uniting of Crimea with Russia is popular in Russia. If Putin was looking for a way to gain popularity and explain to his electorate why they still need him as president in 2016 reelection, this crisis is a big help and boost for that.

The ending part of the discourse (last three paragraphs) are marked by use of the binomials *Russians and members, Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol* (*twice*). Putin ending part is marked by the use of present markers of the time *Thus, Now, today*.

Final Considerations

On 16 of March 2014, people of Crimea were given an opportunity to state their view on what they were desiring their future to be. As discussed, one option was to leave Ukraine and rejoin Russia. Another option was conceding greater autonomy within Ukraine by reinstating the 1992 Constitution. The Ukrainian government and its western supporters had stated that they would not accept the referendum result, and while they were discussing illegal actions of Russia in Ukraine, Putin was presenting a whole range of justifications and arguments that Crimean intervention was necessary and lawful.

In order to respond to the analysis question of this research, the main outputs from Vladimir Putin's discourse consists in the idea of the conflict in Crimea not being an outcome of the Russian irredentism as some would have thought. But it refers to Crimean people's lack of belonging feeling, as the referendum proved with Putin's results highlighting over 96% of the voters spoke out in favor of reuniting with Russia, regardless of how the referendum took place for Putin, it was legal and lawful. Another argument of Putin consists in the ethnic proximity between Russia and Ukraine, he repeated the Russian world concept (subjectively) three times during the discourse. President Vladimir Putin took control over Crimea to protect the ethnic Russians from the far-right extremists rising in Ukraine, government which Russia does not recognize. Putin stands for the principle of self-determination, as international law determines and what took place in the Crimean referendum is considered by Putin legal and he asked for more recognition and support from the West. Putin says Ukraine has become a confrontation project by NATO to destabilize relations between Russia and Ukraine when he refers to Eurasian integration and to NATO expansion towards Russian borders. Sovereignty and protection of Russia are unavoidable and better than Ukraine's for Crimea. From soft power to hard power - Putin was legally given the permission to use military force in Ukraine territory by Upper House of Parliament. He uses pronouns (we and our) many times during the discourse, as confirmed by using advanced computer software SPSS, the frequency of we use is 70 times and our 40 times. The purpose of using these pronouns is to show that he (Putin) himself is part of a society which should provide him moral and legal support in achieving his objectives and policies. The pronouns I and We are also used to show power to the others as a group. Moreover, Putin considers that the historical transfer of Crimea in 1954 was a mistake and should not have happened.

Finally, Vladimir Putin enhances many crucial points, some disagreeable, some agreeable during his discourse and some even disrespectful, but Putin stated three main

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legitimizing points for the reunification: geopolitical (the possibility of NATO advancing into a region where the main Russian fleet is stationed), historical (Crimea and Sevastopol are a part of Russia's past), and ethnic, by reminding that the Russian nation became one of the biggest, if not the biggest ethnic group in the world to be divided by borders.

The decision of the Crimean government supported overwhelmingly by the results of the 2014 referendum, to request reunification with the Russian Federation was considered lawful in Putin's discourse. Russia's place in the international order has significantly changed, not only due its 2014 actions in Ukraine, but also due its discourse of carving out a new place for the country in the international system.

In my Putin's discourse analysis, I considered it throughout one possible lens because to analyze it deeply and with more details, one should need other and more lenses which, should be, in my point of view, essential to provide other interesting perspectives and relevant conclusions about it.

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